



Connection of Evangelization and Education: A Filipino Christian Perspective

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Abstract:

Evangelization and Education are two separate contexts; the execution might be different, as we can say evangelization is purely inspired by religion, while education is more secular. This paper will examine the two different contexts of evangelization and education. However, these two seemingly opposites are important and powerful tools not just for ordained ministers but also for educators to impart knowledge and hone virtues to people. Finding the connection between Evangelization and Education in the present by looking at its overview (Evangelization and education) as well as their important connection to one another. This paper will examine the short historical background of the development of evangelization and education in the Philippines, as well as its main goals and objectives. Exploring the theological foundation of evangelization and education comes from the different studies and research of prominent theologians, educators, and thinkers in these fields to get a concrete idea of where these two schools of thought are coming from and where they will go in the future. This paper will emphasize the importance and role of evangelization and education as means of transmitting faith and morals by looking at the reflection of life and learning experiences of the people in the history of the church, despite the challenges over time through secularization.

Keywords: *Evangelization, Education, Secularism, Pluralism, Christianity*

Introduction

In the “Great Commissioning,” Jesus reminded the disciples to “Go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing people, teaching the people about the Gospel values (c.f. Matthew 28:19-20). This is one of the many biblical passages to be considered a heart of evangelization from the time of the apostles of Jesus up to the present in the modern era of humanity. The instruction of Jesus to the disciples seems simple “to go,” “to make disciples,” “to baptize” and “to teach” “*poreuomai*” yet complicated. “To go” (from *poros*, "passageway") moving something from one destination (port) to another; (figuratively) to go or depart, emphasizing the personal meaning which is attached to reaching the particular destination¹ an indication of a possible extension of work and mission to the whole church. To make disciples “*mathēteuō*” (from 3101 /*mathētēs*, "disciple") – is a way of “helping someone to progressively learn the Word of God to become a matured, growing disciple (literally, “a learner,” a true Christ-follower).”² Helping to train the develop the self in the truths of Scripture and the gospel truth that manifests in the way of life (in belief and practice) as a true disciple of Christ. To baptize as we know a way of pouring water on the forehead or dipping the whole body in water as a form of admission to the Christian community. To teach “*didaskó*” to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, to be a teacher (see *διδάσκαλος*, 6); to discharge the office of teacher, conduct oneself as a teacher,³ meaning to impart knowledge, instructions and to instill doctrine to people. Evangelization, on the other hand, is the obligation not just of the ordained ministers but of every baptized person who partakes in the life of Jesus in the community. We can start our inquiry by asking what is evangelization? Is evangelization relevant today? What are the modern forms of evangelization? How do we evangelize modern members of our society, especially youth? These are the questions that we need to consider as a member of a wider sphere of humanity – the church. Over time, we can say that different strategies and techniques have been carefully developed

¹ Strong’s Concordance, “*poreuomai*.” <https://biblehub.com/greek/4198.htm>. Accessed October 8, 2023.

² Strong’s Concordance, “*mathēteuō*” <https://biblehub.com/greek/3100.htm>. Accessed October 8, 2023.

³ Strong’s Concordance, “*didaskó*” <https://biblehub.com/greek/1321.htm>. Accessed October 8, 2023.

in terms of Evangelization and Education. “The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man.”⁴

In the present, the conduct of Evangelization and Education should adapt to the challenge of modernity to make it more relevant in the present context. In this regard, we can respond fully to the call of the Gospel “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15) However, Evangelization and Education are not just a way of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus to people rather it should touch the every dimension of human situations. In general and holistic approaches whether rich and poor, public, or private sector should know Jesus – even to unbelievers or not in the same faith. With the terms mentioned above it is clear that Evangelization is not just a matter of seeking and reaching out to people to convert them as individuals (like what the earliest Christin did) instead to feel and to be aware of the presence of Jesus (the Emmanuel) in every facet of their life. The essence of evangelization does not end in introducing Jesus and telling people what salvation is in the future glory, but rather the here and now about the concrete example of Jesus teaching to love, to forgive, and most especially to help those in the margins as a concrete response and act of one’s faith. In the present context when we talk about the very essence of education for PLM students, they are aware that this is the only possible way for them to alleviate their life situation in society as most of them are coming from the margins. The essence of education ends with their motivation to have a better life in the future, which is why on the part of a teacher to evangelize, redirect, and include the mission of the church to students' lives.

When we talk about education in general, each field has its own goal, [medicine, aims to produce a better ethical medical practitioner or we can say in the field of philosophy we want to produce critical thinkers], in theology, we want the students to deepen their understanding about their faith and the faith of others through the guidance of the Gospel truth same with the other discipline. However, we know that “a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of the ultimate end and for the good of societies in which as man is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, will share.”⁵ We cannot deny that like the process of Evangelization in the church,

⁴ Paul VI, "Evangelii Nuntiandi," Vatican City. December 8, 1975. Accessed. October 10, 2023.

https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html. par. 3.

⁵ Paul VI, "Gravissimum Educationis." 28 October 1965. Accessed. October 8, 2023.

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html. par., 1.

the Educational system in the country (Philippines) experienced many changes and challenges for a long time even before the start of colonization. If we go back from the discourse of Peter on the morning of Pentecost onwards, has been intermingled and identified with the history of this proclamation of the Good News as a witness to the life and teachings of Jesus.⁶ For us Filipinos, it has been proven in history that we have already an informal education during pre-Spanish colonization in the form of basic knowledge of life through survival skills and livelihood. In the history of humanity, “informal education has been dominant everywhere till the 19th century and still prevails in many parts of the world.”⁷ However, with the rich history of the Philippines, we cannot deny that Evangelization became a tool for Spanish friars to educate the Indio either in a good or bad way. When we look at historical records, we can notice that each colonizer from the Spaniards to Americans up to Japanese rule had a significant impact on today’s educational system in the Philippines even though the medium of language of instruction has an influence today. This is proof that Filipinos can embrace the challenges and impacts (whether good or bad) of Evangelization and Education through time.

Evangelization and Education are different in nature, meaning we need to dig deeper into the essence of Evangelization and Education to fully grasp its basic principles. Most of the time Evangelization is an open invitation and we cannot force other people to believe in the Gospel truth or Jesus because of various factors [culture and diverse beliefs]. Some people think that sharing the Gospel values in such a way is indoctrinating them about religion. Thus, in the present context, education is reduced to a matter of acquiring information about things indicated in the syllabus. Conversely, Evangelization should penetrate the heart and convert the person into a better individual for others while Education keeps on nurturing the mind. Tim Yarbrough says “the goal of education by the grace of God is to create self-governing people who live under the Law of God for the glory of Christ.” We are educating people either through evangelization or secular education not just to acquire knowledge from the subject matter rather we desire to develop the skills and morality for them to discern for themselves and others and God.

⁶ *Evangelii Nuntiandi.*, par. 22.

⁷ Peter van der Veer, “Religion and Education in a Secular Age: A Comparative Perspective.” *Extrême Orient Extrême-Occident*, November 2011. Accessed October 10, 2023. <http://journals.openedition.org/extremeorient/198>. p.236.

Defining Evangelization and Education (Secular)

Evangelization takes place in obedience to the missionary mandate of Jesus as we know that the instructions of Jesus to the disciples is “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative; he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at crossroads, and welcome the outcast.⁸

If we look word for Evangelization it comes from the Greek word “euaggelízō” (from 2095 /eú, "good, well" and angellō, "announce, herald") – properly, proclaim "the good message" (good news). In the NT, 2097 (euaggelízō) refers to sharing the full Gospel of Christ – literally, "gospelizing" that announces the complete message of "the good news" (the Lord's glad tidings).⁹ The translation of the Hebrew word “*basar*” has the same meaning: “to announce good news” or “to bring the good news of salvation”¹⁰ According to Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (On Evangelization in the Modern World) (paraphrase) ‘the touchstone of Evangelization is a way of a person to accept the Word (Jesus) and give him/herself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn.’¹¹ This proclamation - kerygma, preaching, or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization.¹² Furthermore, Cardinal Dulles, stated that there are two folds of Evangelization: first, to announce globally the gospel message to those who do not believe – [it is our duty] to bring human life and the world under the power of God’s Word; and second, those who have not been allowed to believe – [due to political, social and cultural force] but we

⁸ Pope Francis, “Evangelii Gaudium,” Vatican Press. 2013. Par., 24.

⁹ Strong’s Concordance, “euaggelízō”, <https://biblehub.com/greek/2097.htm>. Accessed October 10, 2023.

¹⁰ Mathew Charthakuzhiyil, "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." Sophia Books. Sophia Books. Sophia Books, Malaparamba, Kozhikode, Kerala. 2017. p. 20.

¹¹ Pope Paul VI, “Evangelii Nuntiandi,” Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 1975. par. 24.

¹² EN. par 22.

need to embrace the overall action of the Church and her essential mission.¹³ In other words, we are all invited to share our faith in Jesus with the world. To make it more concrete, Evangelization means “bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself”¹⁴ and that “there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.”¹⁵ We know the fact that primary means of Evangelization in proclaiming the person and whole humanity of Jesus, Public Ministry, passion, death, and resurrection, up to the formation of the earliest Church during Pentecost. The proclamation of the Gospel message should be done through words and living a life of holiness as Jesus is a perfect example of humanhood. It is our task to “carry out of the Church’s duty of proclaiming by word and witness the Gospel of the Lord.”¹⁶

On the other hand, education can be viewed in two ways, either secular or religious. In the Religious sense, education is presented to us by Catholic Schools or Institutions. Thus, the separation of church and state is a common argument of those people who are against the inclusion of religious education in secular settings. Oftentimes, secular education is branded as Public Education but there are some Private schools practicing secularity in terms of education. To be more precise, the very meaning of the “secular” is contested because of the different contexts that influence the word itself. If we go back to its origin, it comes from the Latin *saecularis* which means ‘an age,’ ‘a generation,’ or ‘a long time’ corresponds to the Greek *aeon*, which means ‘of the times’ or ‘of the age’ also resonating with the German *zeitgeist* ‘spirit of the times; commonly in the ecclesiastical Latin, secular means ‘in the world’ as it opposed to in the church.¹⁷ Today people wrongly perceive secularization as a sign of liberation and the capability to envisage life in this world, and human life in general, without any reference to the transcendent.¹⁸ In the present, Is secularism bad for society? In the context of education, secular education is a way of a complete removal of clerical influence and religious doctrine and promoting inclusive respect and equity for all religions even to the

¹³ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 21.

¹⁴ USCCB, “Evangelization,” <https://www.usccb.org/renewing-vision-ministry-evangelization>. Accessed October 15, 2023.

¹⁵ EN, par.22.

¹⁶ Federation of Asian Bishop’s Conference, “Fifty Years of Asian Pastoral Guidance,” Hemmarus Prepress Co., Ltd. 2020. p.7.

¹⁷ Cathy Byrne, “Religion in Secular Education: What, in Heavens Name, Are We Teaching Our Children?” Brill. 2014. p.33.

¹⁸ Synod of Bishops, "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." Vatican City. 2012. Accessed October 5, 2023. par. 52. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html#The_Question_of_a_New_Evangelization.

nonbelievers such as atheists and agnostics a matter of (philosophical and theological neutrality).¹⁹ We cannot assume that secularization has to do with publicly or directly speaking out against God, religion, and Christianity, even though, in some instances, it sounds anti-Christian, anti-religious, and anticlerical, even in these times.²⁰ Instead, secular education deals with the freedom of educational institutions from religious influence. However, there is a doubt that it is impossible to happen for the reasons that the teachers and students have their own sets of beliefs and practices about a certain religion before being enrolled in a secular school. The “saeculum is where believers and non-believers interact and share in a common humanity where the human element is the natural point for faith to enter and, consequently, can become the privileged place for evangelization.”²¹

More often than not, there is still an avenue of exception, especially if we can say that ‘religion may be taught as long as it is in accordance with the standard of which governs all secular education [CHED] objectively because religion, like any other subject matter, is an object of study and must be deal "objectively"²² even in the secular arena. Is the teaching of religion accepted in a secular setting despite the mandate of the governing body? The simple answer is “yes” as long as it did not promote any beliefs or precepts of a particular religion and was treated with neutrality and equality with other members of the community especially those not included in the same faith. How are we going to do so? According to Byrne, there are two streams of secularism which are categorized as, the “hard” and “soft” and ‘argued that the hard tradition was an intellectual, personalized philosophy, which is antagonistic to religion.’²³ “Hard secularism demands complete separation of church from state and the abolition of all religious privileges”²⁴ because it shapes the two different worlds (this world, and the material world). However, "soft" secularism emphasizes religious tolerance and promotes neutrality in every religious belief and tradition existing in one particular place. Soft secularism seeks to eliminate the involvement of any religious doctrine in any state affairs and avoid using the coercive power of the state to promote or favor a particular religion.

¹⁹ “Religion in Secular Education: What, in Heavens Name, Are We Teaching Our Children?” p.35.

²⁰ "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." par. 52.

²¹ "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." par. 54.

²² Randy Huntsberry, "Secular Education and Its Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 42 no. 4 December 1974, p. 734.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

A. Main Goal of Evangelization and Education

A.1. *Evangelization*: - Most of the time you can hear the term separation of Church and State is a public sphere but what is this all about? What is the connection between this separation to the main goal of Evangelization and Education? The separation of church and state will ensure that particular religious views (or anti-religious views) are not imposed by governments because they highlight the authority and power between the clerical and civic functions and their dissimilar sources of authority: the divine being and democratic.²⁵ Evangelization does not stop after an initial conversion of a person to one [Christian] faith, instead, it is a continuous process to a deeper, meaningful, ongoing conversion of life, like the disciples of Jesus. The “Church, is evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new."²⁶ Evangelization is a process or a way of converting another person which leads to them becoming a disciple of Jesus with the mission to evangelize others. The conversion required by the new evangelization is a retrieval of the capacity ‘to listen and understand the words of the Gospel as a living and life-giving message²⁷ not as oppressive dictator teaching of the Church that members have no room for error. Instead, a particular response of any human being to the calling of God to have a deeper and mutual relationship, with [him] God and to our fellow (believers) Christians (Mark 12:30-31).

Furthermore, “the New Evangelization as introduced by Pope John Paul II calls each of us to deepen our faith, believe in the Gospel message and go forth to proclaim the Gospel calling all Catholics to be evangelized and then go forth to evangelize.”²⁸ The Pope reiterated the “new evangelization and the universal mission of the Church is "to proclaim the Gospel, to 'strengthen the brothers' in the faith, to console the Church, to meet people.”²⁹ Pope Benedict XVI's homily on the solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul calls us to "new evangelization", giving emphasis on the term "new" first, because it is not in the content but its inner thrust which is open to the grace of the Holy

²⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁶ EN., par. 18.

²⁷ Paul Grogan and Kirsteen Kim, "The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice." Bloomsbury, 2015. p. 67.

²⁸ USCCB, “New Evangelization.” Accessed. October 10, 2023. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization>.

²⁹ John Paul II, “Redemptoris Missio,” Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 7 December 1990. Accessed. November 26, 2023. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.htmlpar., 63.

Spirit, which constitutes to the new law of the Gospel which is to renew the Church; second, "new" because it is a way that corresponds with the power of the Holy Spirit and which are suited in our present time and situations; and lastly, "new" because of being necessary even in countries that have already received the proclamation of the Gospel.³⁰ Peculiarly, the New Evangelization is focused on proposing the Gospel to those who have experienced a crisis of faith (those who were born and raised catholic but are now in the midst of a spiritual crisis).

There are three main goals of Evangelization: First, to bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others³¹ (cf. GMD³² 46) If the faith of one member of the church is not transforming the self and others, that faith that animates the person is dead. Every evangelizer should be evangelized, and the faith should be deepened to enable them to witness and share the Gospel. It is a concrete act of evangelizing regular members of the church who are not constantly present in the church act of service and worship. Second, to invite all people... whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith³³ (cf. MD 53) Every human being has the right to hear the Gospel of Jesus either they know or doesn't know or didn't have a chance to know Jesus. It is clear in the Gospel, that the mission of Jesus is to bring the people of every nation to the Kingdom of God. We were all invited to partake in Jesus' glory at the end of time. The salvation offered by Jesus in the Gospel is not exclusive to one group of people but instead to the entire human race. Third, to foster Gospel values in our culture, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society; so that the nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ. (cf. GMD 56)³⁴ The transforming power of Christ gives us an awareness to manage our temporal affairs as we carry the Gospel values through practical works of justice, mercy, and compassion acts of charity, promoting the protection of the

³⁰ Benedict XVI, "Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI on the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul." June 28, 2010. Accessed October 10, 2023. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100628_vespiro-pietro-paolo.pdf.

³¹ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 37.

³² GMD refers to Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/evangelization/go-and-make-disciples/go-and-make-disciples-a-national-plan-and-strategy-for-catholic-evangelization-in-the-united-states>.

³³ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 38.

³⁴ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 39.

environment and fostering a peaceful society. This goal invited us to become more ardent in our faith as we share and invite others to share in the community to create a culture of life-giving values for others.

A.2. Education – What should be the focus of education? Is it just a matter of imparting knowledge and skills to students? How about morals or spirituality? Most of the time, in the secular way spirituality is neglected or set aside. Technically, the primary mandate of the educational system whether religious or secular is to prepare the [person] students for success in adulthood. However, the term “success in adulthood” is also considered ambiguous and questionable because we cannot give a precise standard of measuring success. Technically, the system of education in the Philippines has undertaken several stages of development from the pre-Spanish Colonial period up to the present. ‘As early as in pre-Magellanic times, education was informal, unstructured, and devoid of methods. Oftentimes, children were provided more vocational training and less academics (3 Rs)³⁵ by their parents and in the houses of tribal tutors.’³⁶ One of the major changes in education in the Philippine setting was when the tribal tutors were replaced by the Spanish Missionaries as they served the needs of the elite. However, “access to education by the Filipinos was later liberalized through the enactment of the Educational Decree of 1863 which provided for the establishment of at least one primary school for boys and girls in each town under the responsibility of the municipal government; and the establishment of a normal school for male teachers under the supervision of the Jesuits. Primary instruction was free and the teaching of Spanish was compulsory – albeit education during that period was inadequate, suppressed, and controlled.³⁷

Our 21st-century world has seen many changes that no one would have envisioned even 20 to 50 years ago, the classroom and curriculum that evolved with mass education have not adapted.³⁸ In the Philippine context, the educational system particularly “College education should have for its main aim the training in specific vocations,

³⁵ The three Rs are three basic skills taught in schools "Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic". The phrase appears to have been coined at the beginning of the 19th century literature commonly referred to the 3 Rs of education as Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic. This phrase embodied the fundamentals of education and provided the foundation for the 'back to basics' rhetoric. Fast-forward to 2021 the 3 Rs have changed especially Living in a world with COVID-19, the 3 Rs that form the foundation of schooling have morphed into Responsiveness, Resilience and Relationships. “The new “Three Rs of Education”: Responsiveness, Resilience and Relationships” Accessed December 23, 2023. <https://www.janison.com/resources/post/the-new-three-rs-of-education/>.

³⁶ Department of Education, “Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System,” Accessed December 12, 2023. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/about-deped/history/>.

³⁷ “Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System”

³⁸ Human Journey, “Education of Our Times.” Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://humanjourney.us/health-and-education-in-the-modern-world-section/education-in-the-modern-world-solving-for-the-future/>.

with emphasis on service and leadership in community living.”³⁹ The term “specific vocations” is deeply rooted in our culture and religion. If we look closely we can say that the characteristics and purposes of education in any particular society are best understood in the historical context even before the promotion of formal schooling. We can say that humans were determined to learn and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for survival even in the hostile environment in the past. The focus of ancient education was to learn and adapt to the environment and conquer the forces of nature to conform to his undertaking. Modern-age man is searching for more knowledge that transcends the knowledge for survival; now man searches for more wealth, more power, and more prestige.⁴⁰

Thus, the role of education is a central element of religion for the person to learn, understand, and accept the challenge of Evangelization mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew 28:19-20; to be able to go, to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach. The product of teaching or education is to equip the person with knowledge to interpret the religious message and apply it in the context of life in society. Regardless of the Deistic claim of religion, we can say that it is culturally acquired by a person. Family Education is crucial in the formative years of the individual as the parents introduce and evangelize the members of the family about certain beliefs and practices that are later reinforced by formal education. ‘Educated within the families should never forget how important the early socialization within the family is for acquiring particular habits, patterns of thought, both linguistic and extra-linguistic.’⁴¹ In every educational framework, we should know that we are not only engaging in knowledge and skills but also the other portion of education the morals and spiritual dimensions of the person should develop as a form of holistic development of the person. Education can help us develop ‘our faith to enable us to bridge several contradictions, including our core understanding of humanity's relationship to God as a dynamic mystery; holding on to the tensions around Jesus' humanity and divinity, the balance and movement between the concepts of righteousness and grace, judgment, and love.’⁴²

³⁹ A Committee Report in the Superintendents' Convention in Baguio, “Aims and Objectives of Education in the Philippines.” May 10 to 15, 1948. Accessed October 11, 2023.

<https://repository.mainlib.upd.edu.ph/omekas/files/original/8d2195e7ce31360c9d42fdd1a46c26b7aa35b2b3.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Imbalife, “Importance Of Education In The Philippines.” Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://www.imbalife.com/importance-of-education-in-the-philippines>.

⁴¹ “Religion and Education in a Secular Age: A Comparative Perspective.” p.237.

⁴² Nigel Smith, “Educated Guesses: What is the Purpose of Education.” Stimulus, No. 20. 3 Nov 2013, p.34.

In this regard, we can say that with the help of Education, Evangelization is possible in making the gospel more comprehensible in church and to the world as it is similar to proclamation understood in the broadest sense—proclamation in the form of both spoken words and lived experience.⁴³ The main focus of education in general (either religious or secular) is to understand clearly how the gospel message shapes who we are as we live our lives to the fullest in the here and now.

B. Historical Development of Evangelization and Education

We know that we can trace the start of Evangelization to the Public Ministry of Jesus as stated in the Gospel of Luke ‘The spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring Good News to the Poor, proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of the sight of the blind and to proclaim the year acceptable to the Lord (Luke 4:18-19). After the resurrection of Jesus until the time of Pentecost to the Ascension of Jesus to Heaven we know that St. Paul among the disciples of Jesus did the most of Evangelization until reaching Asia Minor. St. Paul elaborated on Six Points to describe the meaning of Evangelization: First, It is personal and Christocentric: the main focus is promoting a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Second, It strongly calls for each one of us to rediscover among believers our missionary spirit. Third, it is not merely oriented outwardly (ad intra) but also inwardly (ad extra). Fourth, Evangelization is not only targeted the individuals but to whole cultures. Fifth, the main task of Evangelization is not merely intended for missionaries, the ordained, or specialists, (including religion/theology teachers) but for all Christians. Lastly, New Evangelization envisions the entire process of Christianization where people have to engage with the risen Lord to such a degree that their whole life changes.⁴⁴

In the Philippine context as we celebrate 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines and commemorate the first Mass that happened at Limasawa on March 31, 1521, we can say that it is a blessing in disguise as we know that among several aims/goals of Imperial Spain is not necessarily for Evangelization instead ‘to acquire a share in the spice trade, to develop contacts with China and Japan to further Christian missionary efforts there, and to convert

⁴³ Diane Hymas J., "Education and Evangelism: Is the Connection Essential?" Christian Education as Evangelism. Fortress Press. 2007. Accessed October 17, 2023., p.20.

⁴⁴ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 59.

the Filipinos to Christianity.”⁴⁵ Technically, the product of Magellan’s circumnavigation and accidental re-discovery of the Philippine island made a lasting impact on the lives of most Filipinos for a long time. According to Fr. Adorable Castillo, CICM, Evangelization of the Philippines was purposely undertaken by several groups of resolute missionaries: the Augustinians (1565), the Franciscans (1578), the Jesuits (1581), the Dominicans (1587), and the Augustinian Recollects (1606).⁴⁶

We can say that Spanish colonization particularly in the lowland Philippines had no separation of power between Church and State, at that time representatives of the state assumed administrative roles in society while the ‘conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity.’⁴⁷ During the Spanish colonization in the Philippines, we can see the significant role played by religion, especially with the attitude of Spaniards toward the indigenous population. Baptism is a way of conversion and a symbol of allegiance to Spanish authority both in Church and State. When *Doctrina Christiana* was published in 1593 as part of the missionary effort to introduce Christianity to the Indigenous people it contained the basic catechism such as “biblical texts, including the Lord’s Prayer, Hail Mary, and the Salve Regina, as well as the Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments of the Holy Church”⁴⁸ written in Spanish Old Tagalog and *Baybayin* the ancient form Filipino writings is a strong indication Filipino form of education even before colonization is existing in the Philippines.

At the start, the Spanish colonizers were more focused on profits and power but later on they “recognized their responsibility to protect the property and personal rights of these new Christians.”⁴⁹ Most of the time, Spanish missionary acts in the Philippines were put in a bad light in our history as the earliest Filipinos experienced the abuse

⁴⁵ Ronald Dolan, Philippines: A Country Studies – “The Early Spanish Period.” Washington DC.1991. Accessed October 12, 2023. <https://countrystudies.us/philippines/4.htm#:~:text=Spain%20had%20three%20objectives%20in,convert%20the%20Filipinos%20to%20Christianity>.

⁴⁶ Adorable Castillo, “Five Hundred Years of Christianity in the Philippines: Some Critical Issues and Challenges for Today’s Missionaries.” CICM Mission.org. Accessed October 12, 2023. <https://www.cicm-mission.org/index.php/en/news-events/from-the-general-administration/44-reflections/157-five-hundred-years-of-christianity-in-the-philippines-some-critical-issues-and-challenges-for-today-s-missionaries>.

⁴⁷ Philippines: A Country Studies – “The Early Spanish Period.”

⁴⁸ Philippine Society.org, “Special Viewing of “Doctrina Christiana” First Printed Manuscript in the Philippines Held at the Library of Congress.” Accessed October 13, 2023. <https://www.usphsociety.org/2019/11/13/special-viewing-of-doctrina-christiana-first-printed-manuscript-in-the-philippines-held-at-the-library-of-congress/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20Doctrina%20Christiana%20includes%20translations,heritage%20of%20the%20Filipino%20people>

⁴⁹ Philippines: A Country Studies – “The Early Spanish Period.”

of power and authority against the Spanish Friars and the authority. Some exceptional missionaries are willing to oppose the tide of colonization in favor of the Filipino people.

Manila became a bishopric in 1579 with Fray Domingo de Salazar, OP, as the first bishop. Salazar was an exceptional breed. He was a zealous “disciple” of Bartolome de las Casas (later bishop of Chiapas in Mexico). In the very first Synod of Manila held in 1582, [Fray Domingo de Salazar, OP] denounced the abuses of colonial officials and held them accountable before God and people, and even refused “absolution” and “holy communion” to those offending Spaniards.⁵⁰

After the Spanish–Philippine War, missionaries who were not Spanish came to the country to continue the missionary activities left behind by the Spanish Friars. We cannot deny the impact of the Evangelization on the Filipino people. After 500 years of the existence of Christianity in the country prestigious schools run by the religious orders [priests and nuns] are the primary source of evangelization of the Church in the school settings. According to studies, the Philippines is the only country in Asia in which Christianity is considered a national religion, this is probably the result of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines for more than 300 years. We can see that religion plays an incredibly significant role in the lives of most Filipinos in various places of the country from celebrating Sunday Masses to personal devotion to Poong Nazareno, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Santo Niño of Cebu and many more. Thus, under the “Spanish colonization, education was largely provided by missionaries and the study of religion was compulsory, but most Filipinos were not included”⁵¹ (the Indio). Only those *mestizo* and the sons of the elite are capable of attending formal schooling run by the Religious orders and those poor are just relying on the teachings of the Friars in the mass.

After the Spanish-American War, when the Philippines was under American rule, The ‘Americans promoted the democratic ideals and way of life and the formation of good citizens [through Secular Education], including the rights and responsibilities of people as well as the promoted loyalty to the state and good citizenship.’⁵²

⁵⁰ “Five Hundred Years of Christianity in the Philippines: Some Critical Issues and Challenges for Today’s Missionaries.”

⁵¹ Oxford Business Group, “Education Reform in the Philippines Aims for Better Quality and More Access. Accessed October 13, 2023. <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/reports/philippines/2017-report/economy/a-thorough-examination-substantial-reform-has-brought-with-it-a-variety-of-challenges>.

⁵² Jove Aguas, “Catholic Education in the Philippines.” Encyclopedia of Teacher Education. 2019. p.1. Accessed October 15, 2023. https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6_147-1.

A highly centralized public school system was installed in 1901 by the Philippine Commission under Act No. 74. The implementation of this Act created a heavy shortage of teachers so the Philippine Commission authorized the Secretary of Public Instruction to bring to the Philippines 600 teachers from the U.S.A. They were the Thomasites.⁵³

It was considered as a milestone for secular education as it focus on establishing public schools and universities for them they need to give ‘consideration to first, non-religious education, second English-language is the medium of instruction used in teaching and three, free primary school education for all.’⁵⁴ Due to many students being flooded into the Public School, they need also to train teachers to address the demand for education which is why their focus is more on Vocation and Adult Education. As we can see the movement of education, from the Spanish rule that gave to private religious institutions to promote Catholic education, was shifted to Secular education during American rule.

During the Japanese rule, other changes happened when educational policies were embodied in Military Order No. 2 in 1942 as the Philippine Executive Commission established the Commission of Education, Health and Public Welfare. The schools were reopened in June 1942 and the Japanese–sponsored Republic created the Ministry of Education.⁵⁵ During the Japanese regime, the teaching of Tagalog and Nihongo, Philippine History, and Character Education (values education) were offered to Filipinos. The Japanese aim to integrate their culture into formal schooling such as ‘love for work and dignity of labor’ as the focus of the Japanese is to create a Co-Prosperity [sic] sphere in Asia, which entailed removing Western influence and replacing it with Japanese influence.⁵⁶ They want to eradicate Western influence and want the Filipinos to become more Asian rather than American however most Filipinos are not receptive to Japanese education program - “Filipinos were too pro-American and their [the Japanese] efforts to ‘filipinize’ us more did not go very well.”⁵⁷

It seems that the battle between two institutions (Secular and Religious) had a profound impact on the lives of the Filipinos which is why, according to Cardinal Dulles, from the 1930s through the 1950s, “Catholic religious educators promoted a new style of kerygmatic theology, in which evangelization was taken to a confident

⁵³ “Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System”

⁵⁴ “Education Reform in the Philippines Aims for Better Quality and More Access.

⁵⁵ “Historical Perspective of the Philippine Educational System”

⁵⁶ “The Japanese Education Program in the Philippines,” Accessed December 23, 2023.

<http://exhibits.usu.edu/exhibits/show/therewerechildrenonthebattle/thejapaneseeducationprogramint>.

⁵⁷ “The Japanese Education Program in the Philippines,”

proclamation of the basic message of God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ"⁵⁸ Deu to the rise of secularism religious educators are in need to change their style of Evangelization to communicate the essence of Christian faith to [people] students [believers and non-believers] in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Moving forward, as we look back to the papacy of Pope John XXIII, the most positive change that happened was the convening of the Second Vatican Council from 1962 -1964. Among many other things that the Council produces is to produce new guidelines and a new awareness for evangelization, while the missionary identity of the Church has been reaffirmed by the Council.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the papacy of Pope Paul VI emphasized the missionary activity of the Church which is the dawn of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as Pope Paul VI says "striving to proclaim the Gospel to all people," as the Synod had a single aim of being the messenger of the Good News of Jesus Christ, by "Put on the new self" and "Be reconciled to God."⁶⁰

Moreover, the papacy of John Paul I was the shortest one lasting only a month and people can describe the good pope as a "smiling Pope". Despite the shortest time in papacy we can look at "a six-point program for his pontificate: renew the church by implementing the Second Vatican Council; complete the revision of the Code of Canon Law; remind Catholics of their duty to preach the Gospel; promote religious unity without compromising doctrine; foster dialogue; and seek world peace and social justice."⁶¹ Pope John Paul II, introduced the New Evangelization which is not the preaching of a "new gospel" nor is it "trimming away from the gospel everything that seems difficult for the contemporary mindset to accept"⁶² Instead it is a way of presenting it to make it more suitable and relatable to the people in their present context and life. Pope Benedict XVI created the Dicastery of The Pontifical Council to promote the New Evangelization as the Church responded to the challenges of the question of new Evangelization. The reason Pope Benedict created the Pontifical Council is clear to "promote a renewed evangelization' to counter 'the progressive secularization' and also to find ways and means 'to propose anew the

⁵⁸ Avery Dulles, "John Paul II and the New Evangelization." *Studia Missionalia*, 48 1999, p. 167.

⁵⁹ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 56.

⁶⁰ EN., No. 2.

⁶¹ Russel Shaw, What the Papacy of John Paul I, 'The September Pope,' Could have Looked Like," *Catholic Review*. August 16, 2023. Accessed December 23, 2023. <https://catholicreview.org/what-the-papacy-of-john-paul-i-the-september-pope-could-have-looked-like/>.

⁶² "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 57.

perennial truth of Christ's Gospel."⁶³ Pope Benedict XVI is consistent in reminding the whole people of God about the obligation and duty of every baptized person everywhere and anywhere at all times to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The reminder of Pope Benedict XVI is giving the impression that Evangelization is deeply attached to our identity as Christians and members of the universal Church.

After the sudden abdication to the Papacy of Pope Benedict XVI last February of 2013 the election to the Papacy of Pope Francis and the Publication of *Evangelii Gaudium* and the call to all "Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ... "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord."⁶⁴ This will become the identity of Pope Francis's Papacy a more pastoral approach in dealing with Evangelization. The Gospel for Pope Francis offers us the chance to live a life with a higher purpose because when the "Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfillment"⁶⁵ which is Jesus. We are always called to live a life to attain and mature in the measure to give life to others like the example of what Jesus did in the Gospel. For Pope Francis there are three ways to bring out the essence of the New Evangelization; first, the area of *Ordinary Pastoral Ministry* which is animated by the fire of the Holy Spirit those who regularly joined the community of worship as well as "those members of faithful who preserve a deep and sincere faith, expressing it in different ways, but seldom taking part in worship." Ordinary pastoral ministry is seeking to "help the believers to grow spiritually so that they can respond to God's love ever more fully in their lives." Second, the area of "*the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism*", reaches those members of the Church who are no longer feel the consolation of their faith. For Pope Francis, the focus of Evangelization should be on those members who no longer experience and feel the joy of faith due to their that lead to lack of commitment to the Gospel. Lastly, let us not forget that "*Evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel* to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him."⁶⁶

C. Gap of Evangelization in the Secular Education

⁶³ "A Catholic Response to the Call of New Evangelization." p. 60.

⁶⁴ Francis, "Evangelii Gaudium." Vatican Press. 2013. Accessed October 21, 2023.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. par., 3.

⁶⁵ "Evangelii Gaudium", par., 10.

⁶⁶ "Evangelii Gaudium", par., 15.

As I have mentioned above, I would consider Christianity in the Philippines as a blessing in disguise because missionary activity is just a secondary reason for the colonizer [Spaniards] to the Philippines. As a person who both receive the impact and influence of Evangelization and Education, it is necessary to remember that both Evangelization and Education may agree or disagree extensively in their ways of doing and its impact on society. Thus, Evangelization and Education may depend on the specific context like what is happening in the Philippines and the approach used by both [Evangelization and Education] in the process. We can cite an example of the good effects of Evangelization in the lives of Filipinos for more than 500 years. *Evangelization offers Spiritual growth that leads people to explore their spirituality and faith in the secular world with the guidance of the Church as they search for their sense of purpose and connection to the existence of God in their lives.* Catholic Schools through Evangelization and Education “develop harmoniously the persons’ physical, moral, and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.”⁶⁷ Through Evangelization, we can say that *Catholic Education nurtures a sense of community belongingness in the aspect of people who share the same faith, the same worship, and the ideals of being a Christian that leads them to become more aware of their duty to help those in the margins.* Instilling the Gospel values of the Corporal Works of Mercy “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40). Hence we can look at Catholic schools are the major contributors in terms of Evangelization and Education to society of producing a good quality statesmen and women and professionals in the different fields and industry. In the present Catholic Schools embrace inclusivity to cater to the needs of students from different faiths and paths of life to hone them to become better individuals and contributors to the betterment of society. Let us remember that we are being called to ‘conversion a call to have a better relationship, both with God and then with God’s people.’⁶⁸ Evangelization most of the time is not just a matter of imparting knowledge to the person, rather it is a way of helping the individual or community to develop to become more ethical, more informed, and more principled individuals living together in the community in goal and spirit.

⁶⁷ “Catholic Education in the Philippines,” p.2.

⁶⁸ “The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context,” p. 68.

Furthermore, the primary goal of Education either secular or religious as they say is to acquire knowledge, to learn new sets of skills, and to become ready and expert in various subjects. It was individually acquired in preparation for one's future career and opportunities outside the classroom. Some say they 'don't like to talk in terms of 'education because it is just about head stuff rather than Faith which is more about the heart.'⁶⁹ However, this notion is misleading because Education although distinct from Evangelization has a big connection with each other. In some respects, the 'moral perspective offered by Education [in the public school] draws the greatest focus because the discussion of morality is deeply linked with diverse religious perspectives.'⁷⁰ In other words [secular] Education cannot negate religion or the discussion of religion because it gives a concrete idea of what is morality all about. Scholar Michael McConnell says that "when secular schools avoid discussions of a religious nature, they tacitly imply that religious teachings are either not "true" or they are irrelevant to learning and public life."⁷¹ Let us not forget that Education is like Evangelization. It is a process of forming the people and relating their faith experience to the real world with concrete people and life situations. We can say that the different life experiences of every student including the life of faith, is a rich, educational resource because they can learn, understand, and relate with others even with the different faith in the community. The role of educators is not just instilling values [as we know] but also guiding the students to reflect on their relationship to God and Neighbor. (Mark 12:30-31)

In terms of [secular] Education, we should look at education as a process not as a program or routine in the classroom that the teacher and students should accomplish on a day-to-day basis. Instead, education is an ongoing conversation among teachers and learners around a subject that leads toward a broader and deeper comprehension and adoption of a student and the teacher in searching for an understanding of the meaning of their faith experience. We can say that 'Education in general is a result of the desire not just of the students but also by the teacher to understand God and to comprehend what it means to live the life of faith to which God is calling us.'⁷²

In the history of the Church, we can view the process of Evangelization happened with the sacrifice of the martyrs who offered their lives for the sake of the Gospel. However, this has not always been the case, because

⁶⁹ "Education and Evangelism: Is the Connection Essential?" p.11.

⁷⁰ Engelhardt Craig, S., "Education Reform: Confronting Secular Ideal." Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. 2013. p.2.

⁷¹ "Education Reform Confronting Secular Ideal." p. 3.

⁷² "Education and Evangelism: Is the Connection Essential?" p. 17.

sometimes, Evangelization can be understood as coercive and abusive on the part of the recipient who resists the new ideology of Christianity. We can look at the “Crusades⁷³ and Spanish Inquisition⁷⁴ as examples of bloody, unjust, and very un-Christian ways of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. This perception is not far away from the experience of the earliest Filipinos who resisted Spanish rule. Technically early Filipinos were fooled by the essence of the false theology of the Spaniards as we patronized “hardships in life and poverty” because of the idea that there is paradise after death that led to the abuse of power whether Friars or Government officials especially when the Spaniards impose “Encomienda” system and “Polo y Servicio to the Filipinos.” Certain definitions of education and evangelization view the two as conflicting/adversarial which is in some sense an avenue to look carefully and might be a point of reconciliation. First, *the acknowledgment of God* we know that one of the products of modernity is to question the existence of God, especially in the scientific and philosophical discourse. We cannot say that some students who are embracing philosophical ideology or those in doubt or confused about their faith life experience need more guidance, understanding, and love even in both Evangelization and Secular Education. Second, regarding the nature of the Origin of life, we know that if you ask the students about their idea of the origin of life they are always in favor of a science-based explanation. However, we know that fact that Evangelization presented by [Religion] and Education [Science] are not opposite instead a complementary body of knowledge that wants to address the two metaphysical and existential questions in life – the origin of life. And finally, *the progressive dealings of state governments regarding their moral and civic education*⁷⁵ Conflicts always arose in the educational settings, especially in Secular Schools especially the discussion of sex education [as some conservative Filipinos considered it as taboos], textbook selection, and moral instructions.

On the part of Education, oftentimes, people perceive Catholic education as for the rich or the upper-class members of society⁷⁶ and secular Education is a matter for the poor or middle- and lower-income students. There is

⁷³ The Crusades were organized by western European Christians after centuries of Muslim wars of expansion. Their primary objectives were to stop the expansion of Muslim states, to reclaim for Christianity the Holy Land in the Middle East, and to recapture territories that had formerly been Christian.

⁷⁴ Spanish Inquisition, (1478–1834), judicial institution ostensibly established to combat heresy in Spain. In practice, the Spanish Inquisition served to consolidate power in the monarchy of the newly unified Spanish kingdom, but it achieved that end through infamously brutal methods. Hundreds of thousands of Spanish Jews, Muslims, and Protestants were forcibly converted, expelled from Spain, or executed

⁷⁵ “Education Reform: Religion Within Modernity’s Public Schools.” pp. 60-64.

⁷⁶ “Catholic Education in the Philippines.” p. 6.

a brand of being elite when someone is studying at the country's Catholic premier university. At this stage, we can conclude that access to quality education is not equal across society. The slogan of the Americans about "education for all" is far from the reality as the ratio of students who graduate continues to decrease along the way due to socio-economic inequality. We can see the biggest gap between the Private and Secular institutions in terms of facilities, equipment, and apparatus not in giving quality education. Since the Separation of Church and State in the Philippines has existed, Catholic schools are exempted from taxes. However, Catholic Institutions didn't receive any financial support from the government as they are relying more on the income coming from their enrollees. Despite the above-mentioned reason, we should remember that Evangelization and Education a ways of developing students' not just their intellectual capacity to comprehend but including their morals and spirituality that withstand the challenge of life employing curing the social ills of society and living in the conviction of their faith by promoting the well-being others.

D. Important Connection between Evangelization and Education

According to Dulles, "Catholics put the accent not so much on the announcement as on teaching, not so much on the message of salvation as on the moral law, the Church, and the sacraments"⁷⁷ but rather looking on others as brothers and sisters. It is a way of looking at our social responsibility to look and attend to the needs of our brothers and sisters in the margin. Pope John Paul II emphasizes that "to evangelize is first of all to bear witness, simply and directly, to God revealed by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to bear witness that in His Son God has loved the world - that in His Incarnate Word He has given being to all things and has called men to eternal life."⁷⁸ In a nutshell, although secularization of Education represented many philosophical, organizational, and curricular changes, 'most religious people continued to accept the strengths and weaknesses of the common educational model that allied state power with "common" conceptions of civic and moral education.'⁷⁹ Thus we should understand that the main reason that the nature of religion is modified through secular Education is because the norm of governing bodies accepts as evidence every human experience. We cannot deny that in a secular context, 'all metaphysical and supernatural truth and claims have to be "bracketed " as Divine intervention and can be recognized on the claim of believers while any

⁷⁷ "John Paull II and the New Evangelization." p. 166.

⁷⁸ EN. par., 26.

⁷⁹ "Education Reform: Religion Within Modernity's Public Schools." p. 54.

causal explanations are made in terms of social-psychological, aesthetic or historical norms.’⁸⁰ Like Evangelization, secular Education gives emphasis and shifts from learning about divine truths and examining thoroughly the questions of humanity about the meaning and values in all their difficulty⁸¹ in life. We cannot separate in terms of religious Education the use of symbols that can relate to the suffering of humanity and what it says about the condition of human life. Let us not forget that Religious studies in a secular context “must be liberal and open, seeking to understand as a part of the community of learning rather than the community of faith.”⁸²

D. Challenges Facing by Evangelization and Education

In the present Evangelization and Education are facing a lot of challenges due to modernity and globalization. In the question posted above if Evangelization is still relevant today in the age of modernity the researcher might say yes because we can easily adapt to the situation and challenge of the world. But the question is what is the real problem faced by Evangelization today? How does the church address that problem? **First**, The age of the *Internet and Social Media* - modern technology and digitalization presents a big challenge to society, although it helps us to move forward and aim for societal progress. In some way, it can be used as an advantage in reaching people either to Evangelize or to Educate people in far-flung areas. However, it is like a double-edged sword that struck us that can give society good outcomes in some sense or the other way around. Internet and Social Media give our society a platform to express voices and opinions which is good, but it is also prone to abuse and most of the time this leads to division. It is “called the digital divide—a form of discrimination dividing the rich from the poor, both within and among nations, based on access, or lack of access, to the new information technology.”⁸³ In this sense it looks like an updated version of an older gap in society between the rich and poor but in the accessing information. Sometimes, the Internet and Social media offer us misinformation that can weaken and twist the existing beliefs and knowledge offered by Evangelization and Education. Pope Benedict XVI said, “The culture of social networks and the changes in the means and styles of communication pose demanding challenges to those who want to speak about truth and

⁸⁰ "Secular Education and Its Religion." p. 735.

⁸¹ "Secular Education and Its Religion." p. 736.

⁸² "Secular Education and Its Religion." p. 737.

⁸³ Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "Ethics in Internet," Vatican City, 2002. par., 10.

values.”⁸⁴ The pope emphasizes that the challenge faced by social networks is how to be truly inclusive, every believer should participate in their desire to share the message and promote the teaching of Jesus and the values of human dignity.⁸⁵ We cannot deny that believers are aware that the Good News is made known in the digital world, but their experience is out of reality in the daily lives of the people. Thus, despite this fact, the Church continues to “preach the Gospel...to announce the Good News of salvation with the help of media of social communication and to instruct men in their proper use.”⁸⁶FABC called to us to evangelize through those most powerful instruments of mass media which modern technology has created but the sad reality is those in power used media to shape public opinion. Thus, The power of the media within a plurality of cultures is to be recognized and appreciated.⁸⁷

Second, *Secularism and Pluralism* – are considered a great threat to Evangelization and Education. Today in the age of modernity, societies keep on embracing secular and pluralistic ideologies. Diversity in religious beliefs is a continuous challenge to Evangelization because of the decreasing emphasis on religious truth in the public sphere. Evangelization and Education can be challenging because they are less open to any religious message in a secular setting. People most of the time are exposed to a diverse perspective that leads to confusion in perceiving the truth. Battling with this situation of Secularism and Pluralism is more difficult for Evangelization and Education. In the long run, people keep on claiming due to secularism religious influence was reduced in education which is the primary source of moral and ethical Education which for some a suppression of religious freedom. However, Evangelization through Education is “modified secular education because the norm governing acceptable evidence is human experience”⁸⁸ meaning we cannot separate the concrete life situation of the students from the learnings acquired in school. In the secular context, all metaphysical, supernatural truth claims have to be "bracketed " Divine intervention is recognized only as a believer's claim, while any causal explanations are made in terms of social-psychological, aesthetic, or historical norms”⁸⁹ in the field of Education and Evangelization. Some people look to

⁸⁴ Pope Benedict XVI. "Social Networks: Portals of Truth and Faith; New Spaces for Evangelization," Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 2013. Accessed October 26, 2023. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20130124_47th-world-communications-day.html. par., 4.

⁸⁵ "Social Networks: Portals of Truth and Faith; New Spaces for Evangelization," par., 5.

⁸⁶ Vatican II Council, "Inter Mirifica," Vatican City. 1963. Accessed October 25, 2023. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19631204_inter-mirifica_en.html. par., 3.

⁸⁷ FABC, par., 3.6 – 3.6.5.

⁸⁸ "Secular Education and Its Religion," p.,735.

⁸⁹ Ibid

oppose the negative effects of secularism as a result of a loss of traditional values or a lack of religious instruction in schools instead the proposal is any form of study about religion ‘must be liberal and open because its purpose is to seek and understand on being a part of the community of learners rather than the community of faith’⁹⁰ because “Education is not meant to be indoctrination.”⁹¹

At the heart of public education in the Philippines and abroad was a triad of influences that worked together to bring about secularization but not necessarily to strengthen the public’s educational efforts as intended. There are three influences presented by secular education: *first*, the focus on a nontraditional (secular) philosophy of knowledge, learning, and human nature. *Second*, a predominant religious perspective that approved a limited place for “secular scientific inquiry” and the schools it spawned so that they retained religious meaning, and *lastly*, a legal collision between traditional religion and the rights of conscience caused by the common education paradigm.⁹² Evangelization proposed by religion actively plays distinct roles in both the acceptance and the empowerment of modern public Public-School Education. That is why it is not a surprise at all because we can say that no matter what happens ‘our religious beliefs, are to be considered as the ideological and motivational frameworks of our lives, not only to the legitimate truth claims and as we move us to action, but are considered controversial to nonbelievers.’⁹³ In a long run, “we could no longer fear about the challenges of Secularism and Pluralism because this context of mass society, religious pluralism need no longer be feared instead of confusing and fragmenting public life, study about the great religious traditions allows the student to see beyond mass society's mediocrity and homogenized tastes.”⁹⁴ While Secularism is considered a treat to the inclusion of Religion in a Public School it is good to note that “the public schools give the students a basic awareness and literacy about religion, then the churches and the home can concentrate their energies upon religious matters, like commitment, decision, action, and worship.”⁹⁵ However, Dignitatis Humanae upholds the dignity of the human person and the right to religious freedom. Religious freedom means that “all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human

⁹⁰ "Secular Education and Its Religion," p.,737.

⁹¹ Robert A. Spivey, "Religion and Public School Education: A Plan for the Future," Journal of Church and State, Volume 10, Issue 2, Spring 1968. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcs/10.2.193>. p., 193.

⁹² "Education Reform: Religion Within Modernity’s Public Schools," p. 54.

⁹³ "Education Reform: Religion Within Modernity’s Public Schools," p. 60.

⁹⁴ "Religion and Public School Education: A Plan for the Future," p., 196.

⁹⁵ "Religion and Public School Education: A Plan for the Future," p., 204.

power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.”⁹⁶

Conclusion

We cannot separate Evangelization and Education [either Secular or Religious] must go hand in hand although they are distinct from each other their main goal is to help in shaping a better individual in the community. We can conclude that despite differences uplifting the dignity of the human person is the primary mandate of both Evangelization and Education. When Evangelization gives us a complex idea about religion Education serves its mandate to understand, internalize, and nourish its meaning and application in our context either in religion or in a secular sphere. We cannot deny the fact that a holistic approach to the Public’s Educational interests remained indebted to religion as the teachers and students are shaped by their own biases and practices before entering school. Our education leaders and policymakers illustrate their functionality on their religious convictions or secular worldviews before they conceptualize meaningful and helpful curricula and teaching methodologies. The verbal proclamation of the Gospel is the classic way of Evangelization but by becoming a witness of Jesus in our own deeds and way of life is the best way to Evangelize people to reconcile its conflict with state policy with the help of education.

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