Bajo De La Campana: The Preservation and Conservation Efforts for Ancient Churches in Rural Philippines

Job D. Paguio
Faculty Member, College of Education, Bataan Peninsula State University, Don Manuel Banzon Avenue, Balanga City 2100 Bataan Philippines
E-mail Address: jobe_heaven@yahoo.com

Abstract- Old Spanish churches in the Philippines symbolize a rich history of the country. It represents the religiosity of the Filipinos and serve as tourist attraction to both foreign and local visitors. This historical study explores the evolution of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century Dominican Churches in Bataan.

The study was intended to cover the 16\textsuperscript{th} century foundation of the Churches in Bataan by the Dominican Orders. Abucay was founded on June 10, 1588. Samal on April 20, 1651. Orani on April 21, 1714; and Pilar on March 10, 1801. The researcher studied the historical growth of these churches by focusing on the major years the churches underwent major renovations and reconstruction. Most of these endeavors took place in the 1980's with the exception of the Orani Church which underwent a steady renovation over the century. Interviews among the faithfuls and parish council members were also done.

It was found out that most of the churches were able to manage eventually the buildings but to a minimal standard. The churches are now faced with a situation where the demand for funds to restore it is increasing inexorably, the support from the government is decreasing and the cause of preserving the church is perhaps becoming less fashionable. Hence, it is recommended that the public must be educated about the historical significance of these churches. An inventory should be conducted on an annual basis recording information such as of the wear and tear of the elements of the building, exterior façade spot repair for the removal of any visible mould, fungus or bird droppings and the condition of equipment and utilities. The establishment of a curator of historic buildings could facilitate the upkeep of these historic buildings. There is also a need for trained professionals among the local population versed with the knowledge of preservation techniques.

Remark: The full paper may be found in www.inrit2011.com or www.ijcim.th.org.