

# Cebu Archdiocesan Commission for Cultural Heritage of the Church – in the Service of Professional Heritage Conservation

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## Abstract

*This research analyzes the history, statutes, and opportunities of the Cebu Archdiocesan Commission for Cultural Heritage of the Church (CACCHC) to increase its efficiency. As the representative of the Archbishop of Cebu, the Commission carries the responsibility for the quality and quantity of architectural conservation activities of the Archdiocese which are still dominated by amateurish approaches. The Archdiocese is seriously interested in heritage conservation but ignorance and lack of resources create obstacles. This study's main objective is to analyze the reasons of inefficiency and to offer an updated operational model. The results and findings of the study may contribute to the making of an efficient Commission that promotes knowledge on the history of architecture in Cebu and understanding the Filipino cultural identity through a better state of sacred heritage.*

*The study's scope includes objective and subjective factors of the Commission's efficiency and the proposed new model. The research was limited to the field of competency of the Commission. Its study population consists of persons who were involved in the work of the Commission from 2014 to 2015, the timeframe of the research. The research design is envisioned to lead to a better operational model based on cross-sectional descriptive data from interviews, documents, and case studies which made it possible to compare the Commission's performance with its intentions. To achieve the intended output, input variables (i.e., financial and manpower resources, and field of responsibility) were analyzed and recommended to be enhanced.*

**Keywords:** heritage conservation, monument management, church administration, sacred architecture, concept of heritage

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## I. Introduction

Successful heritage conservation depends not only on technical aspects, but also on the owner's attitude. This observation is apparent in the present study on the Cebu Archdiocesan Commission for Cultural Heritage of the Church (CACCHC, further: Commission) which coordinates the conservation of sacred architecture in Cebu and is responsible for the quality and quantity of conservation activities in the Archdiocese. The main inspiration of the research was made possible due to the interconnection between the Department of Architecture of the University of San Carlos (USC) and the Commission, as well as the assistance of highly professional volunteers. Being both an Architecture instructor and a member of a Catholic religious order, the researcher has been exposed to the different experiences and feedback from all stakeholders of the architectural heritage conservation in the Archdiocese. Among them are members of the Commission and the Parish Council, heritage documenters, designers and contractors. With the growing national consciousness in the Philippines, religious heritage structures have become part of the national identity, regardless of one's confessional affiliation. After calamities, successful heritage retrofitting is a powerful sign of hope through architecture.

The Commission was established by His Eminence Ricardo Cardinal Vidal through a foundation decree in 2002, for the purpose of more effective heritage conservation. The Executive Report of the Cebu Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church formulates its role as *"to superintend all the conservation, restoration, preservation initiatives of all parochial churches and their adjunct structures and their holdings therein."* (CACCHC, 2011) In short, the main task of the Commission is to *"preserve the patrimony"*. The Commission is supported by linkages to ecclesiastic, governmental and educational institutions.

For better implementation, three years later, a document of the Archdiocese was published: *Circular No. 10/05 on May 25, 2005, Re: Norms Governing Church Restoration* which directly refers to new-evangelization. The Archbishop declared the following norms for the Archdiocese:

1. "All proposed projects for the restoration, preservation and remodeling of parochial churches and chapels be submitted to our Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church for its qualified perusal.
2. The proposal shall consist of the architectural plan, site development plan, pictures and bills of materials to be attached to covering letter of intent duly signed by the Resident Parish Priest.
3. The aforementioned Commission shall study the proposal and shall conduct an ocular inspection of the site to ascertain its conformity with the requirements of civil law on buildings and constructions, on conservation principles as well as canonical legislation on liturgical environment.
4. After its study and ocular inspection, the Archdiocesan Commission shall transmit its observation and recommendations in a written report, to the Archbishop of Cebu for his prudent judgment.
5. No parish may commence restoration or remodeling work without the expressed permission of the Archbishop of Cebu, either directly through his office or through his pastoral arm, the Archdiocesan Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church" (Archdiocese of Cebu, 2005).

Later, the Commission issued a systematic Manual for the Registry of Heritage Structures and Objects of the Archdiocese of Cebu (CACCHC, 2010). After a description of the "patrimony of the Church", it gives a theological reasoning for patrimony as recognition of previous generations of faithful Cebuanos, and a detailed instruction of the Commission's duties. As results of the Manual, the Commission successfully started with the conservation of many churches, and also published a book on the "Sacred Treasures of the Archdiocese of Cebu".

Architect Becker-Ritterspach (2014) states the objectives and conditions. "Individual knowledge and competence must be coordinated. Independent actions have to be avoided without consent of the owner or without permission by competent authority or without financial means will lead to disastrous results". Furthermore, "the competent authority has to be identified on the basis of the legal budget and the organization. Every step and decision taken has to be based on this structure and must include the units (persons) concerned with the various tasks of maintenance and reconstruction".

In an effort to search for a more efficient operational model for the Commission, the research was endorsed by His Excellency Archbishop Jose Palma, Archbishop of Cebu, and Architect Joseph Michael Espina, Dean of the University of San Carlos College of Architecture, Fine Arts and Design (USC-CAFA), who supervised the College's Conservation and Heritage Research Institute and Workshop (CHERISH), the heritage institution of USC-CAFA. It is assumed that an effective heritage commission will be the adequate response of the Church to the funds coming from the Government and from abroad for heritage conservation of churches. This improvement can be achieved by a qualitatively new operational model of the commission, which this research intends to deliver. It

is hoped that with the new operational model, along with enhanced resources and enhanced field of operation, can be useful to other religious heritage conservation stakeholders.

Regarding the concept of ecclesiastic heritage work, an address of John Paul II in 1997 provided a clear overview, identifying three categories of heritage awareness. First, there are goods "placed at the service of the Church's mission" which has its focal point in the liturgy. The second group comprises goods at the service of culture and Church history. The third group includes goods produced by means of mass communications which also bear artistic and ecclesial values (Pope John Paul II, 1997).

Regarding higher local ecclesiastic organizational structures, the Permanent Committee for the Cultural Heritage of the Church of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) is important, with clear by-laws. However, as each diocese is autonomous in the Catholic Church, a hierarchic recourse cannot be done through the above mentioned bodies but only in the official way: parish priests, diocesan bishop, archbishop, and Vatican through the Nunciature according to Rev. Father Ted Toralba. The structure and functioning of the Committee is also inspired by the well-known governmental committees like the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), which deals with heritage issues.

## **II. Methodology**

The first part of the analysis is a presentation of the most basic documents on the overall competency of the Commission, followed by documents on the factual operation of the Commission, and records on physical observations regarding the state of heritage entrusted to the Archdiocese of Cebu. Based on these data, an analysis was made focusing on the inefficiency of the Commission in architectural heritage conservation. The interviews showed that efforts were made. However the operational and architectural records proved that these efforts frequently do not meet the original intention due to inefficiency or has not been met. If the Commission is not efficient, how can its efficiency be improved? Given the intentions of the Commission, its operation can be realized with a new operational model. The research is limited to organizational abilities, competencies and performances of the Commission. In particular, it is conducted only among the members of the Committee on Sacred Places, Arts and Architecture, which is one of the four committees of the Commission. Statements about heritage structures have only supportive function. The research was based on a single cross-sectional descriptive data gathering method based on interviews, documents, and case studies conducted in 2014.

The data are based on the interviews, documents, and case studies, which were compared with the expected outcome based on the Committee's regulating documents with records regarding the Committee's real time institutional behavior (responsiveness), and records on physical, and non-physical outcomes of the Committee's work. These interviews constitute the primary source of my research.

The research was conducted with permission, and blessing of the leaders of the Commission: His Excellency Archbishop Palma and Rev. Fr. Brian Brigoli. Aside from granting the interview, both of them made all relevant documents available for the researcher. The researcher first interviewed members of the Commission, then priests and parishioners who handled architectural heritage conservation projects in the archdiocese. In March 2014, the researcher made the first interviews with the following leaders and members of the Commission: Archbishop Palma, Fr. Brigoli, Archt. Melva Java, and Archt. Maxwell Espina. In the next months up to August 2014, the researcher managed to interview Msgr. Carlito Pono, Dr. Jocelyn Gerra, and the financial adviser of the Commission Fr. Generoso Rebayla SVD, who as Vice-President for Finances of the University of San Carlos, is an experienced finance expert. The academic resource persons were also contacted. The heritage professionals of USC-CHERISH included Ar. Vangie Ulila and Ar. Rey Osal, who were very much willing to express their opinions. From both sources of the Commission and USC the researcher tried to find out where the cooperation between heritage experts and parishes of the Archdiocese was successful and where it was problematic. The parish of Fr. Pono in Carcar City was one of the enlightening examples. Another successful cooperation was noted in the Cebu-Pardo Parish where Fr. Ancajes and the Vice-President of the Parish Council Engr. Tomanda were glad to explain their experiences and their recommendations. The researcher also wanted to interview “problem cases”, parishes where both Commission members and USC-CHERISH experts saw problems. The researcher believed that the respective parish priests have pointed out some difficulties and voice out their recommendations. Although the researcher made maximum efforts and was supported by a written recommendation of the Archbishops in approaching these parishes, seven such stakeholders, who in fact carried out important projects connected with the Archdiocese's sacred heritage, had decline to give an interview.

### III. Results and Analysis

The data gathered include the following documents: interview transcripts, rules and regulations of the Commission. The researcher's own observation records were strongly supported by heritage survey records carried out by German heritage specialist and architect, Dr. Raymund Becker-Ritterspach, accompanied by USC-CHERISH heritage experts. At the end of the research paper, the elaborated new operational model is presented that aims to enhance the financial and manpower resources of the archdiocese.

While observation records demonstrate the factual physical state of heritage objects of the Archdiocese of Cebu, the interviewed users presented intentions, approaches, and efforts which are very different from the needs that have been formulated by technical, architectural and heritage conservation experts. The very different views of heritage users and heritage experts call for reconciliation of their ideas. The contrast between the experts' objective architectural observations and the users'

subjective intentions proves that one of the greatest challenges of the Commission is caused by misconceptions of priests and parishioners. They think that conservation is mainly beautification, thus it will easily degrade its value if it contrasted with accommodating the needs or financial problems. Others accuse conservation of “turning churches into museums” which would find alternative the living faith. One who uses an old building, even just because he cannot build a new one, must care for its static stability. In particular after natural disasters, experts dedicated themselves to the question, if it is still worthy to rebuild these churches. The question is challenging and responding to it is not the task of this research. Once the decision has been made to keep old buildings, measures against possible collapse should be done.

One of the frequently misunderstood problems is the load-bearing capacity of coral stone masonry. Erroneous renovations and lack of maintenance weakened the disaster-resistance of heritage churches. According to Architect Java, if the new material – reinforced concrete or steel – takes over forces from higher portions of masonry, the coral stone might fall, because it is softer than contemporary materials.

Another general problem is the old, and leaking roof which is made of materials not available any more. Lacking safety on church construction sites constitutes a grave problem, mostly because parishioners in “community extension” lack professional training, or the parish focuses on spirituality rather than on bodily needs. As Becker-Ritterspach (2014) stated: “The cost arising from neglecting regular maintenance and repair are [sic] immensely high and frequently lead [sic] to the total loss of a monument or parts thereof – due to lack of major funds then needed”. He documented several hazardous practices in the minutes of his inspections (see in Appendix), with support of well-known governmental committees like NHCP which deal with heritage issues.



**Figure 1.** Boljoon church, erroneous roofing.

*Source: Becker-Ritterspach (2016 Visitation at Cebu-East)*

**Table 1.** Assessment on Time Management.

Task (# as in the Manual)	Expert Work (Preparation)	Expert Work (Decision)	Assistant Work	Remarks
1.1. Ocular Inspection with Interviews	2 days	1 day	2 days	---
1.2. Production of a Significance Assessment	---	1 day	---	---
2.1. Literature Documents Research	3 days	---	2 days	---
2.2. Detailed Information from Applicable Disciplines	2 days	---	3 days	---
2.3. Scientific Physical Investigation	2 days	1 day	2 days	---
2.4. Archaeological Excavation	(2 days)	(2 days)	(60 days)	If funds are available.
3.1. Prepare Registration Certificate with Correct Wording	1 day	---	---	---

**Table 2.** Desired outcomes and their realization according to the Commission's Heritage Manual.

Desired Outcome as in the Heritage Manual	Stage of realization	Remarks
2.1. Registration	Not realized	It is necessary to create own registry for the Archdiocese.
2.2. Permanent markers (prepared by Archdiocese)	Not realized	Some informants say that the Archdiocese could accept markers put up on expenses covered by the Government.
2.3. Repair or Retrofitting (if needed)	In a few cases finished, in some cases started, in many cases not even started. <i>Remark:</i> The preparation works was not performed by CACCH, nor by contractors, but <i>by</i> <i>CHERISH</i> (free of charge).	This should be based on the registration (respectively the documents that justify the registration)
2.4. Maintenance	Not organized.	It needs a permanent system which is independent from construction measurements.
2.5. Documentation (after repair/reconstruction or retrofitting)	The preparation was not made by the Commission, nor by the Contractor, but by <i>CHERISH</i>	It needs a permanent system which is independent from construction measurements.

The interviews with different stakeholders proved the same violations. The Commission has often managed to intervene successfully. Sometimes however, as stated in interviews with all stakeholders, it failed to push through with the correct principles or would require an intervention of the Archbishop. Msgr. Carlito Pono Jr. related that Cardinal Vidal was very supportive of the Commission. He always called out on priests who violated rules and requested a change. Msgr. Pono also explained that during the time of Archbishop Palma, there were much less violations, thus he never needed to report violators.

### **A. Conditions**

The core problem stems from the belief that many priests and parishioners cannot fully accept yet the Commission as a competent authority. This impression was unavoidable when the researcher was documenting the comments from architect members of the Commission and also observing reactions of priests and parishioners.

### **B. Finances**

Financial problems might not seem to be a major issue because, at present, the enthusiasm of the Commission members neutralizes financial difficulties. As volunteers they pay for their own fuel while going on field trips, and they often generously offer the Church many other resources. However, with growing tasks, financial limitations will soon become an obstacle because the number of generous volunteers is limited. Interviews with former or present members of the Commission showed that parishes sometimes did not take the Commission seriously because of their lack of budget. In fact, most of the parishes have to find the money themselves to use for conservation purposes. Small parishes are in a difficult situation because their finances are rather limited. They do not have many Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) expatriation. Although no parishes would question the importance of instructions coming from the Archdiocese itself, they feel handicapped in providing for their practical needs. Some interviewees mentioned that there were attempts from the parishes to support the trips and the professional work of the Commission members from their own money. This is actually contrary to what is stated in the Manual.

### **C. Time Management**

Similar to governmental heritage offices, the Commission has to carry out a complicated registration procedure before physical conservation works. This procedure is tested from the aspects of time, budget, and organizational structure. The researcher created an assessment table (Table 1) which analyzes the time for each operation required by the Heritage Manual. Thus, 10 days (or 12 days with archaeological excavation) of expert preparatory work, three days of expert decision work (or five days with archaeological excavation), and nine days of assistant work (or 69 days with archaeological excavation) are needed for each object. The biggest difference would appear in case of archeological excavations, or if the place of the heritage structure is far from Cebu City, the

headquarters of the Commission. We can state that with the present manpower of the Commission, it is impossible to carry the required high time-consuming activity just for the preparatory operations. Table 1 presents the actual needed time to satisfy demands presented in the Commissions Manual. Even with best efforts, this is not possible. This fact generates the call for a new, more efficient functional model.

### **D. Organizational Competence**

Several present or former members of the Commission mentioned that they did not experience the expected support from the parishes. Asking for the reason, the researcher was told that although the priests knew about the Commission, they were not aware how far the principles can be implemented in reality. Since they themselves solicit the money, the parishes feel the emotional need to be included into the conservation process as another authority which would sometimes compete with the Commission. Members of the Commission also observed hesitation among priests to allow the registration of their buildings. The previous parish priest in Argao was afraid to let buildings of the parish be registered because he thought that the parish would “lose” them according to Msgr. Pono. Archt. Java stated that others were afraid that they will have to pay the execution of important requirements which cost more than the support to be received in return from the government or the Archdiocese. On the other hand, both Dr. Jocelyn Gerra and Ar. Omar Maxwell Espina said that others requested the members of the Commission to follow their professional training for competence since not all are architects nor archeologists.

### **E. Features of the New Operating Model**

The tasks that the Heritage Manual of the Archdiocese expects from the Commission are a consequence of required procedures from registration to completed conservation according to international standards. Regarding performance, time consumption of each outcome can hardly be estimated without precise data. Table 2 assesses their stage of realization with some remarks.

1. The first task is the decision to register an object. According to the interviewees, no official registry of cultural heritage objects of the Church has been created yet. Although the Commission has made big efforts, until now no formal decisions have been published by the Archdiocese. If the preparatory procedure is correctly done as previously described, decisions can be done very fast and at no expense. However, negative reactions from the parishes might cause delay or expenses.
2. The second task is to provide registered buildings with a permanent marker. Theoretically, no expenses from the Commission might come up because all costs should be covered by the respective parish.
3. The physical construction work should be determined by the parish itself because it will carry the cost. By now, the Commission has successfully supported a

number of church renovations, mostly due to the enthusiasm and generous voluntarism of its members.

4. A regular supervision of state of preservation is required from the Commission. It is difficult to estimate the time, finances and organizational efforts needed for this. It demands more efforts than the current practice.
5. Maintenance is a clear obligation of all heritage owners.
6. Documentation is to be done before, during and after the conservation process. Although the Commission makes great efforts towards carrying out its assignments arising from the Manual, Table 2 assesses many of the shortcomings.

### **F. Urgency to Introduce the New Model**

The proposed operational model should have the following attributes: first, the Commission should improve its human resource conditions. Second, some additional fields of heritage conservation should be included.

1. At present, the manpower of the two volunteer architects is not sufficient. They work without any remuneration, not even for their transportation expenses. They do not have enough time to carry out the work perfectly. Although their enthusiasm is admirable, there are physical and financial limitations on a person's capacity.
2. Providing solid resources of time, finances, and organizational strength are necessary for successful heritage management.
3. Providing these resources is not a waste of Church's resources and it does not weaken voluntarism. To the contrary, success as a consequence will strengthen the desire to carry out conservations in a professional way and encourage volunteers to invest their time and money in support of conservation activities. It will also encourage young professionals to choose the career path of conservation, instead of better paying opportunities.
4. Serious and expensive conservation needs an efficient coordinating body with more manpower and financial support that will complement generous, unpaid voluntarism.

## **IV. A Proposed Model to Enhance Field of Operation**

### **A. Towards a Centralized Monument Care**

Until now there is no system of registration of these experts. Based on the German conservation experiences, Ar. Becker-Ritterspach recommends a central pool of materials/equipments/experts, mostly for physical construction works that can help wherever it is needed. This must be a form of encouragement for professionals to be ambitious and become real experts in aspiring to be included into the registration (Becker-Ritterspach, 2014).

The researcher recommends that only the decision-making task of the experts, who are mainly architects, should be

pure and voluntary in order to maintain their credibility. In line with this, the preparatory part of the experts' and the assistants' work should be paid. The necessary amount should be calculated and charged to the expenses of physical operations. Also, income from cultural institutions of the Archdiocese like the Archdiocesan Museum should support the Commission. As Ar. Becker-Ritterspach (2014) stated, "Solid financing is a prerequisite for successful building results. It is necessary to have both a budget plan on the one hand and also cost estimates/calculations according to the state of planning knowledge." Big parishes should share conservation expenses with small parishes that have heritage objects. Partnerships should be promoted. Moreover, a central fund of the Archdiocese can be created to support these small parishes by donations from bigger parishes. In order to spread heritage consciousness among Catholic parishioners, the Commission should promote Heritage Councils in each parish that also include parishioners with relevant professions from different sites of heritage awareness. The Commission should find international funding for heritage work. For this task, the presence of a permanent staff like a secretary is recommended.

In addition to this, he suggests a centralization of monument planning. But he adds: "It has to be kept in mind, however, that it will take time to establish such a team with long-term experience. The advantage will only develop if the continuity of personnel is part of a strong administration. It is recommended that CHERISH will be a steady partner of this team" (Becker-Ritterspach, 2014).

The situation in the Archdiocese of Cebu is different from that of European conditions. The Archdiocese is not used to perform construction works. However, the big number of believers and parishioners led most parishes finding parishioners in their own circle who have equipment. In some cases, only small contractors are willing to work on church heritage renovations. They are afraid of losing jobs if the Archdiocese itself would carry out construction works or provide equipment.

### **B. Church-specific Heritage Issues**

Since the reconceptualized Commission will be able to perform more assignments, it will be the best host for Church-specific research regarding heritage structures. Areas of research include history of sacred buildings, and materials to replace coral stone, historic roofing or flooring. With the Archdiocese as almost as its only "costumer", the Commission is in the position to take steps towards organizing and promoting these fields in a more efficient way in cooperation with NHCP's Materials Research Conservation Division. Ar. Becker-Ritterspach (2014) wrote: "With regard to large scale reconstructions (having in mind the limited funds available) it will be unavoidable to develop an artificial substitute for coral stone. The design of such a product should not be left to the contractors. It became clear that the data found at the examples show a wide range of chemical and physical variation. Therefore, tests on the site will be unavoidable in order to collect own experience. It is recommended to make full use of the offer of NHCP to assist in material research of monuments".

1. The Archdiocese possesses site equipment for maintenance only. There must be a person appointed in-charge of this equipment.
2. Structural Engineers should also be part of the Commission.
3. The decision making mechanism of the Commission should allow "veto" of the professional member whose field is in question.

In exchange, members who are experts of another professional field, should limit their interventions to fields where they are not experts.

Resource persons, Architect Java and Monsignor Pono, reported that it became a problem when both the Church and the Government wanted to put up markers on heritage buildings at the same time. In many countries, both markers are present on ecclesiastic buildings. The researcher confirms the decision to provide permanent markers.

### **C. Training**

Training initiatives should be continued. A seminar for municipal and city engineers under the jurisdiction of the Province of Cebu has been completed as the first of a series of training-workshops jointly sponsored by CACCHC, the Province of Cebu and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) on May 21, 2014. The next seminar will be for private engineering contractors in Cebu, followed by a third batch for priests. The Commission should also continue its publication activities.

### **V. Conclusion**

This study and the achievements in the years after its completion serve as testament to the fact that the Archdiocese of Cebu has made a lot of efforts to open the discourse on heritage issues. Since this kind of openness is relatively new, the study serves as a breakthrough. Msgr. Pono, the first leader of the Commission had the difficult job altering the consciousness towards acceptance of the seriousness of heritage issues and experts' opinion. Under his successor Fr. Brigoli, who is professionally qualified to undertake such discourse, the cooperation between owner (Archdiocese), authorities and experts (USC-CHERISH and others) became efficient. The recommendations of the study have been partly accepted. Heritage conservation now enjoys a better financial support from the Archdiocese. Although there is still much room for improvement, the present study is a contribution to reducing mistrust among stakeholders, which used to be dominant before. The Commission, in the meantime, was successful not only in planning and implementing building conservations, but also in issuing new documents. The most important accomplishment is the newly launched book of Ar. Melva Java, FUAP, and Dr. Raimund Becker-Ritterspach, "Illustrated Manual for the Repair and Maintenance of Spanish Period Structures in the Philippines" (in 2018). This work is based on the work of both the Commission and University of San Carlos, published by USC Press in Cebu City. This kind of

heartfelt cooperation is a proof of further efficiency. The Archdiocese of Cebu's experience could encourage other Philippine provinces to aim for a better cooperation of all heritage stakeholders.

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## Appendix

(Examples to: 3. *Misconceptions and Hazardous Practices in the Archdiocese of Cebu*)

- *Unprepared decisions, in particular in structural issues which require participation of structural engineers with experience in heritage conservation and sensitivity towards architecture and theology.* The expert wrote: “At all sites visited there was no or not sufficient cooperation between Architect and Structural Engineer (SE).”
- *Lack of respect for the existing structure.* Average practitioners of structural engineering might not be sensitive to the complexity of heritage structures which have used today unknown materials and have undergone numerous alterations.
- *Ignorance of traditional techniques,* like “use of binding stones at intervals or horizontal pinning along the courses. This practice will help to avoid that large parts of stone-veneer will peel off from the mamposteria core.”
- *Building constructions unknown to contemporary engineers and architects are misunderstood and neglected.* Typical for this are the buttresses. Since buttresses are not needed in new buildings, their role is frequently underestimated in old buildings. The expert commented these parts in Samboan.
- *Unprepared removal of debris.* The expert warned contactors that “heavy debris has to be removed from the upper level. This will lead to all types of vibration, even shocks if heavy blocks touch other parts of the belfry. As a result the remains suddenly can break down.”
- *Use of untested finishing materials, even on Sto. Niño Basilica in Cebu City:* “The closing of cracks with car-repair plaster is a doubtful procedure anyhow. Material testing of the plaster (gypsum?) would be advisable. It is also advisable to check the bonding of the plaster to its ground.”
- *Use of incorrect painting and plastering materials.* “Plaster should be applied on lime base, not with Portland cement as apparently used at the nave walls.”
- *Ceilings* “had been repaired and altered without retaining the original details.”
- *Lacking replacement for deteriorated gutters and spouts.* “Missing gutters and spouts have to be completed at the eave façades to protect the masonry from water attack.”
- *Ignorance of traditional roofing technologies.* In Boljoon, “the roof cover was replaced by GI sheeting and decorated with tile roofing.”
- *Electrical wiring with no respect to the historical decoration.* (Becker-Ritterspach, 2014)
- *Heritage Law is being violated.* Although many stakeholders hope that laws will not be executed, a growing heritage awareness (caused by globalization and international trends) in the Philippines makes it obvious that offenders will be punished as it is stated in the National Cultural Heritage Act. (Congress of the Philippines, 2010)



**Figure 2.** Samboan Church showing the lack of maintenance.

Source: Becker-Ritterspach. (2014, June 7. Visitation at Cebu Province.



**Figure 3.** Cebu Cathedral.

Source: Photo c/o the author.

## Closing Dedication

The researcher is very thankful for, at least partial acceptance of the findings of the research which contributed to the present success of conservation works in the Archdiocese. May this research continue to strengthen the efforts of the Commission towards a more professional heritage conservation and may its recommendations make the work of the Commission more efficient in assisting the Archbishop of Cebu in his decisions. The researcher dedicates this work to the Archbishop of Cebu and the indefatigable activists of the Commission.