

Historical development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte

Maricris D. Aloc * and Daryl I. Quinito

Graduate School, University of Saint Anthony, Iriga City, Camarines Sur, Philippines.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2026, 20(01), 498–503

Publication history: Received on 31 May 2026; revised on 10 July 2026; accepted on 13 July 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2026.20.1.1455>

Abstract

This study documented and analyzed the historical development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte and examined its perceived contributions to the lives of its members. Using a qualitative historical-descriptive research design, the study drew data from structured interviews, documentary analysis, observation, and the accounts of 35 selected Church members, local leaders, and informants with relevant knowledge of the Church's development in the province. Data were analyzed through thematic organization and historical interpretation. Findings showed that the Church developed from small missionary-led gatherings in rented spaces during the late 1960s to early 1970s into organized congregations supported by local converts, chapel construction, leadership localization, expansion to other municipalities, and the eventual creation of the Daet Stake. Despite early challenges involving language barriers, unfamiliarity, limited resources, and community resistance, the Church gained stability through sustained missionary work, family-based conversion networks, local leadership, and the integration of Filipino values such as bayanihan and family-centered practices. The study further found that members perceived the Church as contributing to family development, education, health, social awareness, cultural development, and political awareness. Based on the findings, a contextualized supplementary reading material titled *From Modest Beginnings to a Growing Faith: The Case of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte* was proposed for Senior High School World Religion classes.

Keywords: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Camarines Norte; Historical Development; Religious Influence; Cultural Adaptation; Supplementary Reading Material

1. Introduction

Religion has long occupied a central place in Filipino social life and identity. In a predominantly Christian and largely Roman Catholic setting, the presence and development of minority Christian denominations provide an important lens for understanding religious diversity, community formation, and cultural adaptation. In the Bicol Region, Roman Catholics constitute the majority of Christians; nevertheless, other religious congregations, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, form part of the region's religious landscape [1].

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints traces its origins to the religious movement founded by Joseph Smith in the United States in 1830. Its teachings center on faith in God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Bible and the Book of Mormon, continuing revelation, missionary work, family-centered religious life, temple ordinances, and genealogical work [2,3]. In the Philippines, early Latter-day Saint presence was connected with servicemen and postwar religious activity, while formal missionary work expanded in the 1960s and later reached different parts of the country [4].

Although national and global histories of the Church have been discussed in institutional and academic sources, the specific historical development of the Church in Camarines Norte remains insufficiently documented. Local accounts

* Corresponding author: Maricris D. Aloc

indicate that many early records, photographs, and historical materials were lost during natural calamities; consequently, oral testimonies, surviving photographs, and recollections of pioneer members and leaders are important sources for reconstructing the Church's local development.

This study aimed to document and analyze the historical development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte. Specifically, it examined the Church's historical background in the province, analyzed its perceived contributions to members in terms of family development, education, health, social awareness, cultural development, and political awareness, and proposed a supplementary reading material for teaching World Religion in Senior High School.

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a qualitative historical-descriptive research design. The historical component was appropriate because the inquiry required the reconstruction and interpretation of past events, oral histories, institutional development, and documentary evidence relating to the establishment and growth of the Church in Camarines Norte [5]. The descriptive component supported the organization of informants' accounts regarding the perceived contributions of the Church to members' personal, family, and community lives.

The informants consisted of selected Church members, local leaders, and individuals knowledgeable about the historical development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte. The manuscript identified 35 qualified respondents who had long-term involvement in the Church and could provide insights regarding its history and influence in the province. Older Church leaders and officials were also considered important sources for historical reconstruction because of their institutional memory and familiarity with early Church development.

Data were gathered through structured interviews, documentary analysis, and observation. The structured interview guide covered the establishment of the Church in Camarines Norte, key individuals and missionaries, early community reception, challenges faced by members and missionaries, expansion to branches and chapels, organizational milestones, local practices, and perceived contributions to family, education, health, social awareness, cultural development, and political awareness. Documentary analysis was used to examine available photographs, Church-related materials, and other records that supported the oral accounts. Observation was used to provide contextual understanding of Church activities and member participation.

Data were analyzed through thematic organization and historical interpretation. Thematic organization was used to group recurring patterns in the responses, while historical interpretation was used to situate these patterns within a chronological account of missionary introduction, local adaptation, institutional consolidation, and continuing community engagement. Ethical safeguards were observed through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, respectful handling of documentary materials, and objective representation of participant accounts.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Historical background of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte

The first statement of the problem examined the historical background of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte. The findings show that the Church developed through a gradual process of missionary introduction, early local conversion, congregational formation, chapel construction, expansion to municipalities, leadership localization, and eventual stake-level organization. The reconstruction of this history depended heavily on oral testimonies and surviving documentary materials because informants noted that several early records and photographs had been lost during natural calamities.

The earliest stage was remembered as a small missionary-led presence during the late 1960s to early 1970s. Although informants gave varying dates, their accounts consistently point to an active Church presence by the early 1970s. Informant 29 recalled, *"Noong 1972, humigit-kumulang labinlimang miyembro ang nagtipon para sa pagsimba sa mga inuupahang gusali habang ang mga misyonero ay nagsagawa ng mga gawaing pangangaral sa bahay-bahay"* (Around 1972, approximately fifteen members gathered for worship in rented buildings while missionaries conducted house-to-house preaching activities). This account indicates that the Church had moved beyond initial exposure and had begun forming an identifiable local congregation despite the absence of a permanent chapel.

A foundational figure repeatedly cited in the narratives was Sister Sofia De Leon-Hofmann. Based on the manuscript account, she was baptized in Manila in June 1970 and later encouraged missionaries to teach her family members, who were also instructed and baptized. Her role demonstrates that early growth was not sustained by foreign missionaries alone. Local converts became cultural intermediaries who connected missionary teaching with families, relatives, friends, and neighbors. This pattern suggests that kinship networks and family-based conversion were important mechanisms in the Church's early development in Camarines Norte.

Missionary work was remembered as both visible and challenging. Informant 1 explained that *"Ang presensya ng mga dayuhang misyonero ay lumikha ng pangkalahatang positibong impresyon sa ilang lokal na residente noong mga unang taon ng Simbahan"* (The presence of foreign missionaries created a generally positive impression among some local residents during the early years of the Church). Informant 29 similarly stated that some residents were receptive and willing to listen to the missionaries. However, the same period was also marked by language and cultural barriers. Informant 21 observed that *"ang mga unang nagbalik-loob ay kadalasang mga edukadong indibidwal na mahusay na nakakapagsalita ng Ingles"* (early converts were often educated individuals who could communicate effectively in English). This indicates that English proficiency and educational exposure influenced early conversion patterns.

The local reception of the Church was initially mixed. Some residents were curious and receptive, while others were hesitant because the Church was unfamiliar within a predominantly Catholic environment. Informant 14 stated, *"Hindi agad tinanggap ng lokal na populasyon ang Simbahan, at maraming residente ang nag-aalangan na makipag-ugnayan sa mga misyonero o sa kanilang mga turo"* (The Church was not immediately accepted by the local population, and many residents were hesitant to engage with the missionaries or their teachings). Informant 15 added that acceptance developed gradually because many people were initially unfamiliar with the religion and its doctrines. These responses show that community acceptance was not immediate; rather, it developed through sustained missionary contact, personal interaction, and increasing familiarity with Church teachings.

Congregational stability became more visible when the Church transitioned from rented venues to permanent worship spaces. Informant 29 shared, *"Bago pa man naitayo ang mga permanenteng kapilya, ang mga pagpupulong ng Simbahan ay isinasagawa sa mga inuupahang lugar tulad ng Dolor Hotel, Mines Hotel, at Wiltan Hotel"* (Before permanent chapels were built, Church meetings were conducted in rented venues such as Dolor Hotel, Mines Hotel, and Wiltan Hotel). The construction of the first chapel in Daet in 1985 represented a turning point because it gave the Church a stable physical presence and increased its public visibility. Informant 14 also noted that in San Vicente, the construction of a Church building became one of the most important factors in making the Church more visible and recognized within the local community.

Expansion beyond Daet followed through missionary work, leadership development, and the creation of additional organizational units. Informant 4 stated that *"Ang mga pagsisikap ng misyonero ay gumanap ng mahalagang papel sa paglaganap at pagpapalawak ng Simbahan sa iba't ibang munisipalidad sa Camarines Norte"* (Missionary efforts played an important role in the spread and expansion of the Church throughout different municipalities in Camarines Norte). Informant 18 added that the faithfulness and cooperation of leaders, missionaries, and ordinary members significantly contributed to the Church's strengthening in the province. These accounts indicate that growth was collective: missionaries introduced and expanded the work, while local leaders and members sustained the organization.

The creation of the Daet Stake marked the strongest evidence of institutional maturity. Informant 30 identified the establishment of the Daet Stake and the movement from branch to ward and from district to stake as major milestones reflecting the organizational maturity of the Church in Camarines Norte. Informant 20 likewise claimed that *"Ang patuloy na espirituwal at bilang ng mga miyembro ay kalaunan ay humantong sa pagkakatatag ng Daet Stake"* (The steady spiritual and numerical growth of membership eventually led to the creation of the Daet Stake). This development shows that the Church had reached a level of membership, leadership capacity, and organizational stability sufficient for regional administration.

The historical development of the Church was also shaped by cultural integration and community engagement. Informant 20 noted that one distinctive practice that developed within the Church was the spirit of bayanihan, where members willingly offered time, effort, and resources to help others regardless of religious affiliation. Informant 29 also stated that Filipino cultural values such as family-centeredness, hospitality, and communal unity became integrated into Church activities and practices. These responses show that the Church became locally meaningful not only through doctrine and organization but also through its adaptation to Filipino social values and community practices.

3.2. Contributions of the Church to the respondents in terms of family development, education, health, social awareness, cultural development, and political awareness

The second statement of the problem examined the perceived contributions of the Church to respondents across six areas: family development, education, health, social awareness, cultural development, and political awareness. The findings indicate that respondents viewed the Church as both a religious institution and a social support system that influences personal conduct, family relationships, learning, community service, civic responsibility, and cultural identity.

In terms of family development, respondents consistently described the Church as strengthening family relationships through prayer, communication, moral guidance, and family-centered activities. Informant A shared, *"The Church helps us become closer as a family because we always have time to pray and talk together."* Informant B added, *"Through church activities, we learned how to talk and listen to each other better at home."* Informant C also noted that whenever families have problems, Church leaders and members are present to guide and support them. These responses show that the Church contributes to family cohesion by providing regular opportunities for spiritual reflection, dialogue, and emotional support. This finding is consistent with studies that associate Latter-day Saint religious participation with strong family practices and marital commitment [8,9].

In terms of education, respondents perceived the Church as encouraging lifelong learning and the balanced pursuit of spiritual and secular knowledge. Informant C stated, *"Hinihikayat tayo ng Simbahan na patuloy na matuto kahit pagkatapos ng klase dahil mahalaga ang edukasyon para sa ating kinabukasan at pananampalataya"* (*The Church motivates us to keep learning even after school because education is important for our future and our faith*). Informant D further explained that Church programs and activities help members learn skills that may be used in school, work, and service to others. These accounts indicate that education is understood not only as academic achievement but also as continuing self-improvement linked to faith, service, and personal development. This supports literature describing Latter-day Saint learning as a pursuit of truth and as part of spiritual formation [6,7].

In terms of health, respondents associated Church teachings with disciplined lifestyle choices, particularly through the Word of Wisdom. Informant D stated, *"Ang pagsunod sa Word of Wisdom ay nakapagbibigay ng magandang kalusugan, iwasan ang mga ipinagbabawal"* (*Following the Word of Wisdom provides good health by avoiding things considered harmful to the body*). This response shows that respondents interpret health not only as physical well-being but also as obedience to religious guidance that encourages preventive habits, self-discipline, and responsible care for the body.

In terms of social awareness, respondents viewed the Church as a strong motivating force for service and compassion. Informant F stated, *"Hinihikayat tayo ng Simbahan na tumulong sa iba, lalo na sa pamamagitan ng paglilingkod sa komunidad at pagtulong sa mga nangangailangan"* (*The Church encourages us to help others, especially through community service and reaching out to those in need*). Informant G added, *"Sa pamamagitan ng Simbahan, mas naging mulat ako sa mga paghihirap ng iba at natuto akong maging mas mahabagin"* (*Through the Church, I became more aware of the struggles of others and learned to be more compassionate*). These responses demonstrate that the Church contributes to social awareness by encouraging members to recognize community needs and translate moral teachings into concrete acts of service. This aligns with literature linking religious involvement with prosocial behavior and charitable participation [10,11].

In terms of cultural development, respondents described the Church as shaping values, behavior, and identity while also adapting selected cultural traditions. Informant H shared, *"Itinuturo sa atin ng Simbahan na mamuhay nang tapat, igalang ang iba, at laging gawin ang tama"* (*The Church teaches us to live honestly, respect others, and always do what is right*). Informant G observed that some traditions are still practiced, but many are now based on Church teachings rather than local customs. These accounts suggest that the Church contributes to cultural development by reinforcing shared values such as honesty, respect, discipline, family-centeredness, hospitality, and communal unity. At the same time, local culture is selectively interpreted through Church teachings, producing a blended religious and cultural identity.

In terms of political awareness, respondents perceived the Church as encouraging responsible citizenship and ethical decision-making rather than partisan political behavior. Informant I stated, *"Pinapaalalahanan tayo ng Simbahan na maging responsableng mamamayan at gumawa ng mabubuting desisyon pagdating sa mga usapin ng komunidad at pamahalaan"* (*The Church reminds us to be responsible citizens and to make good decisions when it comes to community and government matters*). Informant J added, *"Dahil sa mga natutunan ko sa Simbahan, mas naunawaan ko ang aking mga karapatan at tungkulin bilang isang mamamayan"* (*Because of what I learned in the Church, I became more aware of my rights and duties as a citizen*). These responses show that the Church's contribution to political awareness is

primarily moral and civic: it strengthens awareness of duties, rights, responsible participation, and ethical judgment in public life.

Taken together, these responses show that the Church's perceived contributions are multifaceted. The Church strengthens the private sphere of family and personal discipline while also shaping public-oriented values such as compassion, service, cultural responsibility, and civic consciousness. The findings therefore answer the second statement of the problem by showing that respondents experienced Church membership as a source of holistic development across family, educational, health, social, cultural, and civic dimensions.

3.3. Supplementary reading material proposed from the findings

The third statement of the problem asked what supplementary learning material may be proposed for teaching World Religion in Senior High School. Based on the findings, the study proposed a contextualized supplementary reading material titled *From Modest Beginnings to a Growing Faith: The Case of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte*. The material responds to the need for a coherent local resource because the Church's early development in Camarines Norte is incompletely documented and relies substantially on oral testimonies, surviving photographs, and community recollections.

The proposed material is aligned with the World Religion competency requiring learners to understand the historical and geographical contexts of different religions. It presents The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a case of how a global religious movement was introduced, localized, and institutionalized within a Philippine provincial setting. Its content follows the major historical findings of the study, including the late 1960s to early 1970s missionary introduction, early worship in rented spaces, the role of Sister Sofia De Leon-Hofmann, foreign missionary activity, initial community resistance, chapel construction, expansion to municipalities, the creation of the Daet Stake, local leadership development, cultural integration, family-centered practices, humanitarian activities, and community engagement.

The material is also designed to include oral testimonies, interview excerpts, photographs, chronological explanations, and guide questions that will allow students to analyze religion as a lived social and historical experience. By presenting local narratives together with broader concepts of religious diffusion and cultural adaptation, the proposed reader can support religious literacy, interfaith understanding, and appreciation of minority religious traditions in the Philippine context.

Thus, the proposed supplementary reading material is not merely a summary of Church history. It is an instructional resource that organizes fragmented local accounts into a coherent narrative for classroom use. It may help Senior High School learners understand how religious groups develop within specific communities and how faith, culture, geography, leadership, and social memory interact in the historical development of a religious institution.

4. Conclusion

The study concludes that the historical development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Camarines Norte was a gradual process shaped by missionary introduction, local conversion, cultural adaptation, organizational expansion, and institutional consolidation. From small gatherings in rented spaces during the late 1960s to early 1970s, the Church developed into a stable province-wide religious institution with permanent meeting houses, local leadership structures, expanded congregations, and the Daet Stake.

The Church contributed to members' lives by strengthening family relationships, encouraging lifelong learning, promoting healthy lifestyle practices, fostering social responsibility, shaping moral and cultural values, and supporting responsible civic awareness. These contributions were perceived not only as doctrinal influences but also as practical forms of guidance, support, and community participation.

The proposed supplementary reading material is an appropriate output because it organizes fragmented oral testimonies, documentary evidence, and local historical narratives into a coherent resource for teaching World Religion in Senior High School. It may support historical preservation, religious literacy, contextualized instruction, and greater appreciation of religious diversity in Camarines Norte.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

The researcher expresses sincere gratitude to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for grace, wisdom, and guidance throughout the completion of this study. Gratitude is extended to Dr. Jose B. Ballesteros, OIC of the Graduate School and professor in Educ 300 - Thesis Writing, for his encouragement, academic leadership, and inspiration; to Dr. Daryl I. Quinito, thesis adviser, for his guidance, mentorship, valuable insights, and continued support in the refinement of the research; to Dr. Lizette L. Ong, Dr. Delia V. Mendoza, and Imelda V. Fajardo, MAEd, for their comprehensive review, constructive suggestions, and academic assistance; and to Dr. Marilou D. Tino for her support and thoughtful feedback throughout the research process. Appreciation is also extended to the members of the Thesis Committee for their evaluation, criticisms, and recommendations; to Sis. Jocelyn Aban-Camara, Sis. Irene Aloc-Elechicon, Sis. Sofia De Leon-Hofmann, Sis. Maria Teresa Bautista, and Sis. Floricel Mago-Balderama for their encouragement and shared suggestions; to President Abel Mago, Daet Stake President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for his leadership and insights; to the selected Church members whose participation and responses were vital to the study; to the researcher's parents, siblings, spouse, and children for their unconditional love, moral support, and understanding; and to her friends and co-workers for their support, companionship, and valuable insights.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

References

- [1] Philippine Statistics Authority V-Bicol. Religious affiliation in Bicol Region: 2020 Census of Population and Housing. PSA; 2020. Available from: <https://rso05.psa.gov.ph/content/religious-affiliation-bicol-region-2020-census-population-and-housing>
- [2] Melton JG. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS): Description, history, & beliefs. Encyclopedia Britannica; 2025. Available from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Church-of-Jesus-Christ-of-Latter-day-Saints>
- [3] Willingham A. What do Mormons believe? CNN; 2023. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/04/29/us/mormon-beliefs-explained-cec/index.html>
- [4] Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church of Jesus Christ in the Philippines. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; 2021. Available from: <https://ph.churchofjesuschrist.org/about>
- [5] Ahmad SH. An introduction to historical research design. Exploring Academia; 2017. Available from: <https://exploringacademia.com/introduction-to-historical-research-design>
- [6] Calvert I, Bengtzen S, Ashcraft J. Teaching and learning principles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A thematic analysis of the Doctrine and Covenants. Religions. 2024;15(3):356. doi:10.3390/rel15030356
- [7] Buchanan F. Mormon response to secular education. Religious Education. 1986;81:643-654.
- [8] Heaton TB, Goodman KL. Religion and family formation. Review of Religious Research. 1985;26:343-359.
- [9] Johnson BL, Eberly S, Duke JT, Sartain DH. Wives' employment status and marital happiness of religious couples. Review of Religious Research. 1988;29:259-270.
- [10] Dyer WJ, Judd DK, Gale M, Finlinson HG. Religion, mental health, and the Latter-day Saints: A review of literature 2005-2022. Religions. 2023;14(6):701. doi:10.3390/rel14060701
- [11] Ellison CG. Religious involvement and subjective well-being. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. 1991;32:80-99.
- [12] Schoon EW, West AJ. From prophecy to practice: Mutual selection cycles in the routinization of charismatic authority. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. 2017;56(4):781-797.
- [13] Udok MB. Phenomenological study of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as Christians or not. In: Advances in Religious and Cultural Studies (ARCS) Book Series. IGI Global; 2021. p. 229-250. doi:10.4018/978-1-7998-4595-9.ch012