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REQUIREMENTS - FILIPINO DOGMATICS; McAmis; S.T.M., 1961

Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of St. Thomas University, Sta. Clara,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

Robert Ray Garcia

May 1961

10434

Approved by:

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Advisor

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Chairman

10194

REQUIREMENTS FOR A CONFSSIONAL
LUTHERAN DOGMATICS FOR USE IN
TRAINING FILIPINO PASTORS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the Study

In a recent study of Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic Seminaries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Yorke Allen Jr. describes the pitiful condition and neglect of these institutions in every respect. It is pointed out that eight large United States denominations pass well-meaning resolutions on the importance of theological education in the mission fields, and then invest an average of only six per cent of their mission budget for the training of ministers. The neglect has not only been in poor provisions for faculty, buildings and books, but also in the content and techniques which result in an inadequately trained ministry. It is with the latter that this paper is concerned, specifically the techniques used in presenting the doctrinal content to the ministerial student.¹

Our Lutheran Church was late in beginning work in the Philippines. We do not have much time as American missionaries to work in this field. We have a real challenge before us in building an indigenous Lutheran Church in a short time. This paper is concerned with the doctrinal aspect of the indigenous church. If a strong, evangelical Lutheran Church is to take root and grow in the Philippines, it must be built

¹ Yorke Allen, Jr., A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper & Brothers, c.1960), pp. 8-19.

upon the right foundation. This must be done in the training of students for the ministry who can better translate these theological concepts to their own people than the American missionary can ever hope to do. It is the conviction of the author that this can be done through the use of the Lutheran Confession in the teaching of the courses in Dogmatics. Some may argue that this must be done only on the basis of Scripture, but if a truly confessional theology is taught it will, at the same time, be a truly biblical theology.

However, if a confessional theology is to be emphasized in the training program of Filipino pastors, it means that these students must not only become familiar with the doctrinal content of the Book of Concord but they must also be able to apply this doctrinal material in the Philippine setting. Therefore, this study has made an effort to present the many and varied religious influences which are found in the Philippines. Other pertinent influences in the field of education and culture have been briefly analyzed.

Limitations

It has not been the purpose to give a thorough presentation of the historical, cultural, political, and economic forces at work in the Philippines. These materials are readily available in published books and magazines. However, where these influences have a relationship to the religious influences they have been mentioned. The primary assumption has been that in determining the requirements for a "Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics," chiefly the religious influences should be considered. The other influences must not be overlooked in preparing

doctrinal materials that will be relevant to the Philippines. Therefore, it was felt beneficial to present a brief picture of the educational background in the Philippines. As far as is known there has been no similar effort in any other mission field to more closely integrate the Confessions in the teaching of Dogmatics. Most of the information received from other foreign seminaries of the Missouri Synod indicates that the pattern is usually followed that prevails in the seminaries in the United States, i.e., presenting the material in the Book of Concord as a subject separate from Dogmatics in a "Symbolics" course. It is felt that this does not make the doctrinal emphasis of the confession pertinent to the work of the ministry today. It is firmly believed that, since the Lutheran Symbols grew out of a decadent Roman Catholic setting on the one hand and a misguided "Protestantism" on the other, they can be especially meaningful and useful in the Philippines to establish a well-indoctrinated church where a similar situation prevails. This effort must be emphasized in the doctrinal training during the seminary years if it is to filter down to the people and remain a permanent influence in the Philippine Lutheran Church. This study is considered to be only a preliminary step toward the realization of a sound, scriptural theology that will be a wholesome influence in the life of the Christian Church throughout the Philippines.

An effort has been made to gather a fair representation of materials from all sources--American and Filipino, Roman Catholic and Protestant. It is difficult to find ample materials on the religious situation in the Philippines since they became an independent republic on July 4, 1946. Most of the material for this period was taken from

periodicals. Many impressions of the Philippines have been gained through spending five years as a missionary on the large southern island of Mindanao. An effort has been made to give an objective view of the religious influences in a fair manner, pointing out the weak and the strong points of the various influences.

Need for Thorough Training of Clergy

The various religious influences which have been treated are included in the Chapter headings. A sociologist from the University of the Philippines writes:

One could not begin to describe Filipino society without considering the important contribution of the Roman Catholic Church, the challenge of Protestantism, the Moslem culture of the Moros, and the influence of the religious practices and concepts which antedate either Islam or Christianity.²

Another Filipino University professor says:

In the matter of religion and love for Christian virtues we are characterized as a people almost fanatical in faith and deep rooted in beliefs. Our biggest boast which other people readily applaud and never doubt, is that we are the only Christian nation--the only Christian Republic--in this part of the world.³

One of the latest publications indicates the religions in the Philippines are divided as follows: 17,500,000 Roman Catholics; 2,000,000 Philippine Independent Church; 600,000 Protestants; 600,000 Moslems; 500,000 pagans; and about 1,000,000 Buddhists and Shintoists.⁴

²Chester L. Hunt, et. al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 205.

³Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), pp. 7-8.

⁴Eufronio M. Alip, Philippine History: Political, Social, Economic (Manila: Alip & Sons, c.1958), p. 37.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to have a brief history of the Philippines at the beginning of our study. In a speech given before the U. S. House of Representatives on February 27, 1946, just a few months before the Philippines received their independence, Ambassador Carlos P. Romulo said:

The struggle began 425 years ago. In the year 1521 Ferdinand Magellan discovered and claimed our island in the name of the Spanish king. He was killed by a Filipino--the first native protestant against imperialism. From the beginning, the Filipino, like the American of 255 years ago, had no use for kings. He was a peaceful Malayan tiller of the soil but was ready then as now to fight for his land.

But the first siege of the Philippines was won--won by the Christian cross. Muskets and cutlasses had failed, but the priests of Spain, who followed the soldiery, had succeeded in winning the Filipinos and in Christianizing them for all time. What they won, however, was an allegiance to the rule of God, not to the rule of Spain. It was good will, not force that won our hearts. The Christian faith we embraced with joy. The Spanish rule we hated with undying ferocity. We fought Spain for more than three centuries. There was a revolt a year in the Philippines under Spanish rule. At last as the nineteenth century came to a close our victory had become certain.

At that moment, on May 1, 1898, Admiral Dewey brought your proud American ships into Manila Bay. The siege of Manila was on, and it broke Spain's dying grip on the Philippines. This was the beginning of a new era for us, and for all subject peoples everywhere. For, America, too, won us more by good will than by force. America, too, brought us a faith--a political faith that matched the religious faith that was our heritage from Spain.⁵

A recent quote in the South East Asia Journal of Theology indicates the importance of a theology that is relevant to the culture of the people:

The relationship between the gospel and the culture in which

⁵Carlos P. Romulo, The Speeches of Honorable Carlos P. Romulo (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 5-6.

Christian obedience expresses itself is basic both to a relevant theology, and to effective communication, since both of these demand the use of language, symbols and thought forms that are familiar and understood in a particular culture. A theological school that teaches theology in a purely academic fashion, unrelated to the whole texture of thoughts and beliefs by which it is surrounded, will turn out both poor theologians and poor evangelists.⁶

It is strongly believed that a thorough indoctrination in the Lutheran Confessions could serve to overcome these deficiencies and to be a means of turning out both good theologians and effective evangelists. We will analyze the religious situation in the Philippines in trying to see how this use of the Confessions can be made in that culture to achieve this goal.

⁶Editorial in the South East Asia Journal of Theology, I (April, 1960), 4.

CHAPTER II

PAGAN AND MUSLIM INFLUENCE

Pre-Spanish Paganism

The Philippines is said to have been influenced by the culture of India. Dr. Alfred L. Kroeber, an American anthropologist, writes, "There is no tribe in the Philippines, no matter how primitive and remote, in whose culture today elements of Indian origin cannot be traced." The religious influences in Philippine paganism and the names of the gods and legendary heroes are said to be of Hindu origin. The Tagalog term for the supreme being, Bathala, is said to stem from the Sanskrit Bhattara Guru, meaning "the highest of the Gods." In addition many Filipino superstitions are said to stem from India.¹

Bathala was the most general term for the Supreme Being, not only among the Tagalogs, but throughout the islands. The early missionaries used this term as a translation for God. Bathala lived in heaven and was believed to be the Creator of all things. He was omnipotent and omniscient, without beginning and without end. Bathala was so inaccessible to the people that lesser gods were used as intermediaries. Sacrifices were offered at the time of war, hunting, fishing, marriage, planting and harvest.

Other gods were Kaptan who was second only to Bathala. It was he who caused thunder, plant growth, diseases, and had power to raise the

¹Gregorio F. Zaide, Philippine Political and Cultural History (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1949), I, 44-46.

dead. Maguayen brought the dead to hell. Sumpay brought the dead before the judge of the underworld. Lalahon was the goddess of plants and the harvest. Barangao was the god of the rainbow. There were many other lesser deities.

The early Filipinos also practiced the worship of spirits including those of ancestors. The good spirits were called anitos and the bad were called manggalo. Some considered these spirits to be the souls of the dead. Life existed in the objects of nature including mountains, hills, lakes, trees and rivers. Sacrifices were offered to these objects. The religion of the early Filipinos has been called "animism."

Belief in life after death led to the practice of the early Egyptians of burying possessions and even slaves of the noblemen. The wicked went to hell known as kasamaan. The system of morals in pre-Spanish times was aimed at the goal of becoming rich. It was not wrong for children to steal if their parents were present. Adultery with a woman of the upper class was punishable by death, among the lower classes it was a minor offense.²

It has been said that the Filipinos practiced a mixture of monotheism and polytheism. While they spoke of a Supreme Being known as Bathala in the Tagalog language and Laon or Abba in Visayan. This Supreme Deity was generally relegated to the background by many other gods and goddesses who were assigned specific functions more closely related to the daily lives of the people. There was a strong animistic

²Eufronio M. Alip, Philippine History: Political, Social, Economic (Manila: Alip & Sons, c.1958), pp. 56-58.

character in the Philippine religion composed of spirits called anitos or diwatas. The good spirits were of their ancestors, the bad were of their enemies. Prayers and sacrifices were offered to these spirits to gain their favor or avert their wrath. There were many rituals derived for the cure of various sicknesses. Ritual drinking of rice wine was an integral part of many ceremonies to propitiate the gods. This was especially practiced by the Ilocanos, the Tagalogs, and the Bisayans at weddings and funerals. The Pampangans were said to be relatively temperate. The chieftain was bound by custom to provide as much food and drink as his guests could consume. Many times this resulted in the poverty of the datu or chief. The men were heavier drinkers than the women who were separated from the men during this ritual drinking. The Spanish reports indicate that the Filipinos did not become so completely drunken that they ever lost their senses or sense of equilibrium during these drinking bouts.³

The Filipinos, like the Assyrians and Egyptians, were nature worshippers. They gave divine honor to the sun, moon, rainbow, rivers, plants, caves, mountains and trees. They adored animals such as crows, sharks, and crocodiles. They may have been influenced by the Chinese in the practice of ancestor worship. Some of these spirits, anitos, were supposed to serve as intermediaries between the living and the dead. In honor of their ancestors, they made idols of wood and stone. The Filipino had a concept of life after death, the good were

³John L. Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, c.1959), p. 23.

rewarded in a Tagalog kalualhatian or a Visayan ologan. The wicked were punished in an inferno known as kasamaan in Tagalog or solad in Visayan. They also practiced all sorts of magical rites and had many superstitions.

Friar Juan de Plasencia's study of Tagalog customs in 1589 revealed that the ritual sacrifices were performed generally by elderly women known as babaylan or katalonan. The few men who practiced these priestly functions were ordinarily dressed like women.

The Filipinos did not have any temples or buildings set aside exclusively for religious use. They did have sacred groves and caves to take the place of temples. Also, there were no fixed dates of religious observances, but they occurred when an occasion demanded. Human sacrifices were not practiced by the average Filipino as a means of appeasing the spirits. Filipino mythology had no beliefs similar to those of the Aztecs that the gods had to be nourished by a constant flow of human blood.

The Spanish considered that the Filipino religious beliefs indicated the control of the devil, therefore in bringing them Christianity they were "liberating" the Filipinos. Also in altering the share-cropping or debt servitude of the dependent classes, the Spaniards considered that they were thereby "liberating" these lower classes. Therefore in the social and religious realm the Spaniards considered themselves to be "liberators" rather than "conquerors" in the Philippines. The various chieftains of the Philippines were gathered together on the different islands in 1599 to "elect" the Spanish king as their ruler. In return for their allegiance the King of Spain promised to give them

religious instructions, administration of justice and protection from foreign enemies.⁴

Figafetta, the recorder of Magellan's voyage, describes some of the idols or images which he saw when Magellan visited Cebu. An early Spanish priest, Chirino, also tells of idols of stone, wood, bone, of tooth of a crocodile and even some of gold that he saw in his journeys throughout the Philippines. The religious celebrations held by the early Filipinos were always times of feasting and drunkenness.⁵

In pre-Spanish times, religion played an important role in the daily life of the people. There was a veneration of ancestors which served to keep the family unit close together. Ceremonies were performed to insure a good harvest. Sacrifices were offered to cure the sick and funeral rites were held.

Rajah Tupes of Cebu said when the Spaniards arrived under Legazpi in 1565:

We can make an end of them as the men of Makatan did of their predecessors who came here in the days of our grandfathers. . . . our religion is in danger and our prophetesses warn us not to let the Spaniards set foot on our soil, for already they have given a name of their own to the country of the Visayans.⁶

The Filipinos were very religious and ready to defend their religion. They worshipped the souls of departed ancestors in the form of idols called anitos. They were fatalistic and had many myths and

⁴Ibid., pp. 24-26.

⁵David P. Barrows, History of the Philippines (New York: World Book Company, c.1924), p. 21.

⁶Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), p. 272.

superstitions. The fact that they so quickly accepted Mohammedanism and Catholicism indicates that their paganism was neither deep nor sufficient. Pagan beliefs still exist in Romanism and Islam in the Philippines. Many superstitions of their ancestors are still held. The anting-anting is a fetish in the form of a medallion or picture of saints. This is believed to guard from dangers and to give god-like attributes to the wearer.⁷

Laubach gives the following summary of primitive Filipino beliefs before the arrival of the Spanish:

1. The tribes living in the Philippines prior to the Spanish occupation differed widely in their religious practices and beliefs.
2. They had the following characteristics in common:
 - a. All tribes were intensely religious, no detail of life being free from religion and magic.
 - b. Anitos were beings with human intelligence but lacking corporeal bodies. The tribes of the northern islands used the term to cover gods and spirits, but the tribes of the Visayas and Mindanao used anitos to mean the souls of dead human beings, the word diwata being used to denote gods and spirits.
 - c. The anitos were not revered or loved. They were thought of as having the moral frailties of human beings and were feared and bargained with because of their mysterious powers.
 - d. The greatest gods were not intimately connected with the affairs of men and were less often called upon than the minor deities.
 - e. The future life bore a shadowy resemblance to that on this earth.
 - f. Sacrifice and prayer, accompanied by feasting were the

⁷George A. Malcolm, The Commonwealth of the Philippines (New York: D. Appleton - Century Company, Inc. c.1936), pp. 304-305.

- leading form of worship. The prayers were formulas relating myths about gods and heroes.
- g. The purpose of religious rites was to secure health, good crops, fortunate marriages and other material blessings.
 - h. The priestly class consisted of men with women in the majority acting as media for spirits. They therefore ought to be called medians rather than priests.
 - i. Magic was as universal as is the use of medicinal remedies among civilized peoples. This magic was supposed to induce or compel the gods to do the will of the practitioner of magic.
 - j. Omens were multitudinous. The ancient Filipinos saw the footprints of their gods everywhere.
 - k. Divination, particularly by means of the pig's liver, was used to secure the answer of the gods to important questions.
 - l. The Baliti tree was given special reverence as the supposed home of the nonos.
 - m. Myths and fables explaining the origin of all common objects and explaining the origin of customs and mores were very numerous.

Present Paganism

Those who are now classified as pagans by the Philippine Bureau of Census are only a small minority of the entire population. The pigmy-type negritos are perhaps the smallest in number and size and live primarily in the jungles of Luzon. The Bagobos of Mindanao are another small group of pagans of Indonesian stock. Perhaps the largest single group of pagans are the Igorots of Northern Luzon. Many of them have known the influence of civilization and education and are hard

⁸Frank C. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c.1925), pp. 48-49.

working farmers in the mountain rice terrace regions. Others living in remote areas are much as they were long before the arrival of the white man in the Philippines. They still have their pagan rites, including rare cases of head hunting. All of these pagan groups have absorbed much religious influence from their "Christianized" brother. The pagan beliefs and practices that are still extant are a reflection of the pre-Spanish animism that permeated the entire Philippines.

Perhaps, in the present pagan beliefs and practices there remain vestiges of the pre-Spanish paganism that was prevalent throughout the Philippines, and also an indication of the various vestiges of paganism and superstition found in the rural Filipino today. The Ifugao Igorot of the mountains of northern Luzon does not recognize any supreme god. Although the sun as the warrior god could be called the most powerful, the moon, certain stars and "the Deceiver" are also gods of war. The Deceiver possesses men and leads them into danger. Gods of agriculture and reproduction also play a major part in the daily life of the Ifugao.

The noted American anthropologist, R. F. Barton, lists twenty-five classes of minor deities made up of around one thousand members including deified heroes, spirits of localities and more recent ancestors. They keep track of the ancestors for seven or eight generations, and then seem to feel that they no longer have any interest in earthly affairs.

Food offerings, rice wine and betel nuts are given to the Ifugao gods and spirits as a sort of a bribe to avoid their displeasure. The Ifugaos have a system of priests. The more powerful the priest the more likely his offering is to find favor with the gods. These priests

undergo arduous training to memorize the various myths, magical rituals and offerings used in religious ceremonies. By these means the spirits are persuaded to follow the desires of the priests. The priest requires much rice wine in order to conduct the ceremony. After drinking this wine the spirit then is believed to speak through the priest.

The priest offers chickens or larger animals at the Ifugao religious ceremony depending on the importance. The liver and bile are read for omens while the meat is divided among the participants with the priest getting the largest portion. The priesthood is for men, but women assist.

Everyone and everything has "soul stuff," that can be added to by the use of magic, by ceremonies, by offerings and successful head hunts. Soul-catching or enticing is made possible through the recital of the proper myth and carrying out of certain acts.

The universe is in five levels or regions--Ifugao land; the sky world; the underworld; and the upstream and downstream regions. Spirits of the dead go to an afterworld where they live lives so much like that of the present that they must be provided with food and drink.⁹

The fact that many superstitions and forms of paganism still exist even among the educated Filipino at times is indicated by the complaint of a Filipino college instructor in 1952:

I found a group of students in a college class in literature heavily believing in superstition They could not understand how terribly inhibiting of spiritual growth superstition can be They must have felt I was betraying our old customs and traditions; or so their youthfully reproachful faces looked when I debunked their cherished beliefs in the old man of the mountain, the asuangs, mankukulams.¹⁰

⁹Fay-Cooper Cole, The Peoples of Malaysia (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., c.1945), pp. 137-139.

¹⁰Chester L. Hunt, et. al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 212.

Among the more isolated Ilocanos there is reported to be a strange blending of pagan and Christian belief. Every village has a special saint whose day is set aside, then food is placed on a mat. A woman who is noted for her ability then calls on the spirits to come and eat. In the breaking of new ground for irrigation purposes the woman erects a cross, sprinkles sugar cane wine called basi on the ground and reads the omens. If signs are unfavorable work is halted for awhile. After a few days a chicken will be sacrificed and placed by a small "altar" in the field together with an offering of basi, betel nut, and tobacco. When the irrigation ditch is completed a pig's blood is directed into it and the leader of the group says, "Ditch, this blood is spurted in to you in order that your current may be as strong as the current of the blood."

This religio-magical practice is similar to those of the Tinguian people living in the nearby foothills. The Ilocanos and the Tinguians are said to be of the same racial background. They both recognize the great spirit called Kabonian, and have many identical and other similar beliefs. In many cases the Roman Catholic ceremonies have been combined with pagan practices.¹¹

Mohammedanism

Christianity and Mohammedanism both had their beginnings in the Near East. Mohammedanism began in 612 A. D. In reaching out to the Philippines, Islam took a short cut eastward across the mainland of

¹¹Cole, op. cit., pp. 177-179.

Asia, while Christianity went westward via Europe, across the Atlantic and then the Pacific Ocean. As a result Mohammedanism arrived in the Philippines more than one hundred years before Spanish Catholicism.

The faith of Allah reached Mindanao around the year 1380. The names of some of their early missionaries are Makdum, Baginda, Abu Bakr and his son, and Kabunsuwan. The religion of Islam was added to the old and did not become a substitute for it. "For to this day Mohammedanism in Moroland is a veneer." Pagan beliefs are still held and practiced which are forbidden by the Koran. The Muslims still have many pagan myths and gods among whom the chief is Bantugum. Many of these are similar to the Hindu pantheon of gods and goddesses. Bantugum seems to be identical with Indra. The Muslims around Lake Lanao also venerate their departed ancestors and believe that their bones possess special power to avoid harm. They make offerings to the spirit known as dewas and hantus in much the same way a pagan Filipino made offerings to his ancestors. In extreme danger the average Muslim will probably call on Bantugum rather than Allah. When the Muslims under Kabungsuwan invaded Cotabato, they used gunpowder and swords to conquer the inhabitants and forced them to confess "Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet." Those who fled to the hills and would not submit are today the pagan tribes of Mindanao, the Manobos, the Bilaans, Tagabilis and Subanos.¹²

In 1380 Mohammedanism is said to have been introduced in the Philippines by the Arab missionary-scholar, Makdum, when he landed at

¹²Laubach, op. cit., pp. 51-55.

Sulu. In 1450 Abu Bakr, a Muslim leader from Sumatra, married the daughter of Rajah Baginda of Sulu and set himself up as Sultan of Jolo according to the pattern of Arabian Sultanate. He gave the people a code of laws which combined local customs with the Koran. In 1475 Sharif Kabungsuwan successfully invaded Cotabato in Mindanao, married a native princess and set himself up as the first Muslim Sultan of Mindanao. From Sulu and Mindanao, the sword of Islam won other victories in the central islands and even as far north as Manila under Rajah Soliman and Lakan-dula.

Thus when Spain arrived under Legazpi in 1565 to set up a permanent colony in the Philippines, Mohammedanism was in the process of subduing the entire archipelago. Thus the battle at Manila between Legazpi's forces and Rajah Soliman is called a "miniature crusade; it was a fight between the cross and the crescent for supremacy. The triumph of the Spaniards over Soliman's warriors meant the victory of Christianity over Islam."

When Spain's timely arrival stopped the northward advance of Mohammedanism, it retreated to its entrenched territory in Sulu and Mindanao where it successfully defied both political and religious control by Spain. This area was finally brought under control during the American regime, but it still retained the religion of Islam.¹³

In 1600 Dr. Morga is reported by Blair and Robertson as saying:

Had the Spaniards coming been delayed longer, that religion would have spread throughout the islands, and even through others, and and it would have been difficult to extirpate it. The mercy of

¹³Zaide, op. cit., pp. 41-43.

God checked it in time; for because of its being in an early stage, it was uprooted from the islands.¹⁴

The Muslims in the Philippines cannot be classified as orthodox. They do confess Allah as God and Mohammed as his prophet and the Koran as their sacred book but in addition they hold pagan beliefs and ceremonies. Pork and alcoholic beverages are generally taboo. The Filipino Moro occasionally displays his fanaticism when he performs juramentado by killing Christians or when he runs amuck and slashes everyone who gets in his path. The spiritual head of the Muslims in the Sulu area is the Sultan of Sulu. In other places the local Sultan and Datus exercise considerable control over the people, especially in religious questions.¹⁵

In speaking of the possibility of Filipino Muslims being converted to Christianity and serving as missionaries to their neighboring Muslim brethren in nearby countries, Dr. Laubach a former missionary among the Muslims says:

It is perfectly evident that a Christianized Moro nation would turn southward towards the fifty millions of Mohammedans in Borneo, Java, Sumatra and the Straits, and begin to storm those islands for Christianity. The experience of a century ought to have taught us that no white man or thousand white men are going to convert Mohammedans. We do not know the Oriental mind well enough. If we wish to make inroads into the mighty citadel of Islam, our strategy is to lead oriental Mohammedans themselves to do it.¹⁶

Spain had to battle the Moslems for 760 years on their home ground. They pushed them back little by little until in 1492 at the Battle of

¹⁴Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁵George A. Malcolm, First Malayan Republic (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, c.1951), p. 417.

¹⁶Laubach, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

Granada they finally pushed these "Moors" out of Europe into Africa. Now, when Spain arrived in the Philippines she again encountered the Moors or Moros as they became known in this part of the world. Although Spain was not able to push the Muslims out of the southern Philippines, she did drive them out of Luzon and the Central Islands. The Spanish forces arrived just in time to halt the Muslim expansion in the Philippines. Therefore, to Spain goes the credit for stopping the Muslim expansion at their occidental extremity in Europe and at their oriental extremity in Asia. The importance of Spain's actions has been recognized in Europe, but has not been generally known or appreciated in Asia. In dealing with the Muslims Spain did not follow the peaceful policy applied to the other section of the Philippines. For the Moros the policy was--conquer first and convert afterwards. The first attempt to conquer the Mohammedans in Mindanao was made in 1578. There were some temporary victories, but Spain's efforts to break Muslim control in the south were futile. In 1750 the Spanish were able to baptize the Sultan of Sulu, Alimud Din, in Manila. However, when he returned to Zamboanga, the Spanish governor suspected him and placed him and his family under arrest. This action so enraged the other Muslims that they took revenge by raiding towns in the Visayas and by murdering innocent people there. This incident permanently set up a barrier for further evangelization of the Muslims because of this bungling of the governor of Zamboanga.¹⁷

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 56-62.

CHAPTER III

ROMAN CATHOLIC INFLUENCE

Rapid "Conversion" to Catholicism

The most important and permanent religious influence in the Philippines has been the Spanish-type of Roman Catholicism. For almost 350 years Spain was in complete control of the Philippines except for the pagan tribes in the interior and the Muslims in the southern islands. In October 1956, Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay said, "The culture of our people received its most permanent and most universal mark when Spain brought us the Catholic faith."¹ During the sixteenth century the Spaniards considered themselves to be God's chosen people divinely appointed to carry out His plan. Spain's task was to bring about the spiritual unity of the human race by crushing the work of the Reformation in the old world, defeating the infidel Mohammedans who were attacking Christian nations, and finally, bringing the message of the gospel to all the heathen in the Americas and Asia. It was with this great ambition that Spain considered that the Philippines was to serve as a stepping stone in bringing Christianity to the Chinese and Japanese in the same way as the islands of the Caribbean had served as a base for the entering of North and South America. This would result in the conversion of the whole world to Christianity and the end of the world

¹Claude A. Buss, Southeast Asia and the World Today (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., c.1958), p. 175.

would soon follow.² After the Roman Catholic Church had lost a large part of Europe due to the Reformation, they made a special effort to convert the heathen in foreign lands. Spain was the greatest power of this period and the extension of her empire also was considered an extension of the Christian church because of Spain's missionary efforts. Every Spanish expedition from the time of Columbus carried Friars and Priests to convert those whom the Spanish soldiers would conquer. "The Law of Indies" gave special power and importance to the priests on these expeditions. Many of the early priests were men of learning and sincere in winning the heathen. Their efforts helped to alleviate and eliminate the violence and brutality of the Spanish soldiers. The law of the Indies made the Spanish missionary-priests more important than the governor or soldier in North and South America and in the Philippines. These priests became the real governing and civilizing influence in the Spanish colonies.³

On Easter Sunday, March 31, 1521, the first Mass in the Philippines was conducted by Father Pedro de Valderama on the small island of Limasawa just south of Leyte. It was attended by Magellan and two Filipino Chieftains or Datus, Rajah Kolambu, King of Limasawa and his brother Rajah Siagu, King of Butuan. From Limasawa Magellan went to Cebu where the first baptisms were performed on April 14, 1521. Those

²John L. Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, c.1959), pp. 4-5.

³David P. Barrows, History of the Philippines (New York: World Book Company, c.1924), p. 99.

baptized included Rajah Humabon, the King of Cebu, Rajah Kolambu, and Humabon's wife who was the first woman baptized in the Philippines. According to the recorder of Magellan's voyage, Pigafetta, a total of 800 people were baptized on that day.

When Magellan told the people to burn their idols, as they had promised, they were reluctant to do so, because they were still offering sacrifices for the king's sick son. Then Magellan went to the house of the sick man, baptized him and his family, and cured him within five days. When the people saw this they burned all their idols.

Less than two weeks later, the people lost confidence in Magellan and in his religion, when he was defeated and killed in a battle with a Philippine chieftain named Lapu-Lapu on the small neighboring island of Mactan on April 26, 1521. The Spanish ships left the Philippines in disgrace, only one of the original six ships with only eighteen men aboard finally returned to Spain under the command of Sebastian del Cano as the first man to circumnavigate the globe.⁴ Magellan is reported to have left a small wooden image of the infant Jesus in Cebu. This image was found when the Legazpi expedition returned to Cebu in 1565 and had become an object of veneration for the Cebuanos. The Augustinians placed the image in a special structure, and today this image called Santo Nino is still displayed in the Augustinian church in Cebu. Because of this image Cebu is called the "City of the Most Holy Name of Jesus."⁵

⁴Gregorio F. Zaide, Philippine Political and Cultural History (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1949), I, 115-125.

⁵Barrows, op. cit., p. 105.

The first permanent expedition in the Philippines was under the command of Legazpi who had strict orders from King Phillip II to bring about a bloodless occupation of the archipelago. These orders showed the very definite influence of the Dominican theologian, Francisco de Vittoria, of the University of Salamanca. Phillip II did not want to see the repetition of the bloody carnage which had taken place when Spain occupied Mexico and Peru. Legazpi was supposed to inform the Filipinos that Spain meant them no harm but wanted "to explain to them the law of Jesus Christ by which they will be saved."

This peaceful occupation of the Philippines was influenced by the Spanish Dominicans who used the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas as their authority. They argued that Saint Augustine was mistaken when he seemed to imply that pagan people lose their social, political and economic rights merely by coming in contact with a Christian people. Thus the Philippines became a testing ground of winning souls by kindness and friendship. This policy was generally carried out by Legazpi through his grandson, Juan de Salcedo, who peacefully won over large areas of Luzon. This task was made easier by the fact that the Philippines was not an organized nation, but consisted of various disconnected tribes who were sometimes hostile to one another. This policy of occupying large portions of the Philippines was generally successful, although there was some resistance and bloodshed. The population at the time of the Spanish occupation was said to be around one-half million people.⁶

⁶Phelan, op. cit., pp. 8-16.

That the Spanish were prepared to use force in the "Christianizing of the Philippines" is indicated by an order which was sent to Mexico in 1565 requesting "(1) priests, and (2) a goodly number of soldiers and muskets, so that if the natives will not be converted otherwise they may be compelled to it by force of arms."⁷

Spain had three main objectives in mind in gaining control of the Philippines. The first was economic--to secure a share of the spice trade and break Portugal's monopoly. The second and third reasons were religious--to have a base for the evangelization of China and Japan and to Christianize the Filipinos. Only the third of these objectives was ever realized. The Dutch intervened in the Spice Islands, and the penetration of China and Japan did not fully materialize.

If the Spaniards had arrived in the Philippines much later, it is doubtful that even the conversion of the Filipinos would have been as successful as it was. The Muslims had begun to spread over the northern and Central Philippines when the Spanish established their first permanent settlement in Cebu in 1565. As a result of that they were able to overcome the Muslims in all but the southern part of the islands where the Muslims were very firmly entrenched. Here the Spaniards were never able to convert or fully control the Muslim population.⁸

As Spanish control of the Philippines became firmly established throughout the northern and central islands under Legazpi, Spanish monks accompanied the soldiers for the purpose of spreading Christianity.

⁷Homer C. Stuntz, The Philippines and the Far East (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, c.1904), p. 81.

⁸Phelan, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

The priests rapidly learned the dialects and efforts were made to reach the leaders first. In 1565, the first Christian marriage was performed when one of Legazpi's sailors married a member of the royal family of Cebu. In 1568 King Tupas of Cebu was baptized by the Augustinian Father Herrera. The remainder of the Cebuanos followed their King and became Christians. In 1569 Legazpi moved his headquarters to the island of Panay. He continued his policy of winning the Filipinos and converting them to Christianity by the instrumentality of the Augustinian monks.⁹

In 1570 when Legazpi's forces reached Manila they found the area under the control of the Mohammedan king, Soliman, and the neighboring Tondo area under Rajah Lakan-Dula. The superior arms of the Spanish soon brought this area under their control. A last desperate battle was fought by Soliman in Manila Bay in 1571. Rajah Soliman was killed and his forces defeated. This marked the beginning of Spanish rule and the evangelization of the Manila area. The Spanish forces were under the command of Legazpi's grandson, Juan de Salcedo.¹⁰

It was not the superior forces of Spanish arms alone which brought the Filipinos under control, rather it was work of the missionaries who zealously labored to convert the souls to Christianity. These priests gained the good will of the masses and won them for Spain by peaceful means. Christianity was to replace the paganism of the Filipinos by the work of the priests. In exchange for the blessings of Christianity, the Filipinos were to pay tribute and contribute manpower for the glory of Spain.

⁹Zaide, op. cit., I, 146-149.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 149-153.

The main purpose for Spain's colonization of the Philippines was the spread of Christianity. A Filipino non-Catholic historian, Rafael Palma, wrote:

Spanish colonization in the Philippines was characterized by the chief policy of converting the natives to Christianity. Its motive, therefore, was not to exploit the island but to save the souls of their inhabitants. "Missionaries and conquistadores worked side by side in achieving this goal."¹¹

The attempts of the Spanish Friars to spread Christianity throughout the Philippines, met with only little resistance. The people generally acceded to the request of the priests to give up their paganism for the Spanish form of Catholicism. One early historian could write, "They have recognized the errors of their paganism and the truths of the Christian religion. . . . In these islands there is no region or settlement that resists conversion or does not desire it."

In 1591 there were reported to be 667,612 Christian Filipinos under the care of 79 Augustinians, 42 Franciscans and nine Dominicans. This number increased to 6,559,998 by the end of the Spanish regime in 1898 when there were 346 Augustinians, 107 Franciscans, 233 Dominicans, 42 Jesuits, 327 Recollects, 16 Capuchins and six Benedictines.¹²

All of the motives of the Spanish were not so pure and noble as those who thought only of bringing Christianity to the conquered people. The colonists insisted that their ventures must show a profit. This brought the economic and religious interests into conflict from the very beginning. Charles V and Phillip II endeavored to work out a

¹¹Ibid., pp. 157-159.

¹²Ibid., pp. 187-188.

compromise to avoid a complete exploitation of the conquered people.

This was due to an inseparable union of Church and state under the Spanish regime. The Holy See granted the Monarchs authority over Church revenues and ecclesiastical personnel. In return, the state undertook the conversion of the conquered people by the use of military power alongside the missionaries. The state also paid all the salaries of the priests. The religious conquests always helped to establish a firmer political control over the conquered people.¹³

From the early days of the Spanish occupation, there were many proposals made to abandon the Philippines. These proposals were initiated by Spanish merchants of Seville and Andalusia who controlled the textile trade to Mexico. They were afraid that the cheap Chinese silks flooding Mexico via the Philippines would take away their profitable business. These business men were never successful in getting Spain to give up the Philippines, because the missionary orders of the Spanish Court continually reminded the rulers of their solemn commitment to convert the Filipinos and to preserve their Faith. Withdrawal would mean that either the Filipinos would return to paganism, or the Protestant Dutch would take over. Therefore, even though the Philippines was a profitless venture for the Spanish crown, Spain remained there primarily for religious and missionary purposes.¹⁴

The Spanish Period

The task of introducing the Spanish religion and culture in the

¹³Phelan, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 12.

Philippines was carried out by the regulars. The Augustinians were the first to arrive in 1565, they were followed by the Discalced Franciscans in 1578, the Jesuits in 1581, the Dominicans in 1587, and the Augustinian Recollects in 1606. Even though one of the key reforms of the Council of Trent declared that no priest could exercise the care of souls over laymen without himself being under the control of a bishop, this rule was generally violated in the Philippines down to the end of the Spanish rule in 1898. The regulars continued to hold the majority of the benefices, and episcopal visitation was the exception even though various archbishops of Manila tried to enforce the rules. The regulars knew that they held the upper hand, they were irreplaceable. In 1655 there were around sixty secular priests in the islands, in contrast there were 254 regulars. The seculars did not know the Filipino languages and the Filipinos did not know Spanish. Whenever an attempt at visitation would be made the regulars would resign their parishes or threaten to do so and return to their convents in Manila. The civil authorities could not enforce the visitation, because their hold on the people in the provinces was dependent upon the religious authority in control of the regulars.¹⁵

Archbishop Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina (1767-76) attempted to break the strong hold of the regulars by putting Filipino clergy in their place. Most of these Filipino priests were poorly trained and could not hold onto the people. The result of this experiment was to deal a crippling blow to the growth of an indigenous clergy.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 32-33.

The attempt to enforce episcopal visitation was centered around Manila where there were larger and more lucrative parishes. The seculars were willing to turn over all the provincial parishes to the religious if they could have the metropolitan area. The regulars refused to do this saying that the metropolitan churches were necessary to support the less lucrative provincial parishes. One indirect benefit that derived from the controversy was that the orders were not fighting each other in the Philippines, but were united in their battle against the archbishops and the secular priests. The archbishop insisted that some supervision of the orders was necessary to be sure that they were doing the work of the parishes satisfactorily. An investigation by Archbishop Camacho in 1697 and 1698 uncovered such practices as delays of baptism for infants, refusal to administer last rites in the home, excessive sacramental fees, inadequate indoctrination and pressures used in gathering alms from parishioners. Earlier in 1593 corrupt conditions among Augustinians had been uncovered. Some of them were engaged in profitable business enterprises by taking advantage of their parishioners, others were guilty of breaking the vow of celibacy and they were divided into two factions. When the provincial superior Sepulveda was determined to reform the Philippine Augustinians in his own ascetic image, he stirred up such opposition that he was murdered by some of the Friars in his own cell in 1617.

The Augustinians had been the first in the Philippines under the influence of Urdeneta who had sailed as a navigator and later took the Augustinian habit and returned to the Philippines with Legazpi. As a result the Augustinians had more parishes than any other order. They

had obtained lucrative parishes in Tagalog and Pampangan territory in Luzon. In order to supply these parishes they had imported Friars who had taken their orders in Mexico where they had been poorly trained and disciplined. The Discalced Franciscans objected when the Observant branch of the order was sent out from Mexico to visit them. These objections of the Orders go back to the thirteenth century when the federal principal was ecclesiastical polity.

The Jesuits escaped the accusation of poor discipline, because they had a more thorough and stricter training than the Friars in the mendicant orders. Also, the Jesuits had a military chain of command where all are subject to obey the superiors. When Rome spoke, the Jesuits obeyed. This was not true in the case of the other orders. Even the Jesuits had their problems in the Philippines. Fourteen Jesuits in the Visayas were expelled for serious infraction of discipline in the middle of the seventeenth century. The majority of the regulars evidently performed their duties conscientiously, this fact should not be overlooked in considering the glaring vices of the minority.¹⁶

What effect did these clerical abuses have on the Filipinos? The idea of priestly celibacy was introduced by the Spanish, so these abuses were not shocking to them. There is even some evidence that some parents encouraged their daughters to have sexual relations with the priest, because he had access to a far greater source of wealth than any Filipino could imagine, and any child born of such a union

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 33-36.

would probably be well provided for. The immorality of the Friars did not help to raise the moral character of the Filipinos by promoting pre-marital chastity and marital fidelity.

Violation of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience by some of the Friars resulted in a general lowering of morale and morals throughout the Philippines. In setting out to Christianize the Filipinos, the Friars were faced with the danger of "de-Christianizing" themselves. They were isolated from social contact of their own culture, they had great power and prestige in their scattered parishes. They were subject to temptations of all kinds. It is understandable that many went astray, and surprising that more did not do so. The regulars had autonomy in the Philippines that was unknown elsewhere. In spite of many favorable circumstances their work in the Philippines was of limited success as we shall see.¹⁷

The great distance of the Philippines from Spain, and the many separated islands made it very difficult for the Spanish to effectively "evangelize" the whole area. There was always the main handicap of lack of manpower. The total number of priests and friars in the Philippines varied between 254 to 400 during most of the Spanish period. This was woefully inadequate among the millions of inhabitants of the islands. The Mexican-trained creolas did not work out at all in the Philippines. The regulars were not in favor of a Filipino clergy. Therefore it was left to Spain to provide any additional manpower in the priesthood. It took approximately two years for the trip to the

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 39-40.

Philippines via Mexico. Once their missionaries arrived after a ~~they~~ hazardous voyage, the hot and humid tropical climate took a heavy toll. The Philippines seemed like a barren field of labor compared to China and Japan. It was difficult to keep the Friars in the Philippines even after they had arrived.¹⁸

In order to more effectively reach and teach the Filipinos the Spaniards attempted to consolidate them from small Barangays into larger villages or barrios. This attempt was generally unsuccessful, because the Filipino felt a strong tie to the land. By the end of the seventeenth century there were less than twenty villages with a population of over two thousand people. The Filipinos were subsistence and not surplus farmers. They grew the rice they needed by living next to the land. They supplemented their diet by hunting and fishing. Being resettled into barrios would mean a new way of life. Also as villages were built in the Visayas this made a profitable place for a Moro raid.

The most successful attempts at resettlement were around the Tagalog area. The one thing that did attract the people to the larger areas were the colorful worship services on special feast days, f. i., Holy Week, Corpus Christi and the patron saint's fiesta day. Since the people would not move into the town in large numbers, every parish established a number of visita chapels which the non-resident priest visited periodically from the center of the parish, the cabecera, where the priest resided. The cabecera-visita system was a compromise between the scattered population and the shortage of priests. No effort was

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 41-43.

made to reach the people in the smaller areas called sitios, but they were to come to the nearest visita chapel if they wished to worship. This permitted a very superficial indoctrination of the people. This system developed into the modern poblaci6n instead of cabecera and barrio instead of the visita.¹⁹

In 1564, the Council of the Indies in Spain instructed the governor and the bishop of the Philippines to divide the whole area among the four religious orders. All of the orders received some parishes in the Tagalog region around Manila, but most of these went to the Augustinians and Franciscans who had become strongly entrenched there. In addition the Augustinians were assigned the Ilocos and Pampanga areas in Northern Luzon. The Franciscans were given the Bikol-speaking provinces of Camarines in Southern Luzon. These were the choice, heavily populated areas. Dominicans were given the areas of Pangasinan and Cagayan. The Jesuits and Augustinians were to divide the Visayan Islands along linguistic and geographical lines. The Augustinian Recollects being last to arrive received the left-overs of widely-scattered parishes. This arrangement allowed each order to concentrate its linguistic activity in not more than four different languages. One of the principals of Spanish missionary policy was that converts should be indoctrinated in their own tongues. This was to achieve a rapid response from the natives. However, only in Tagalog was extensive study given to the language. The Franciscans also did extensive work in Bikol.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 44-47.

Only a minimum was done in Visayan, Ilocano, Pampanga, and Pangasinan. Very little was done in the languages of Mindanao. All in all, the work done on the language was of a utilitarian character, and did not serve the purpose of reaching into the life of the people.²⁰

The first step of the Spanish in introducing Christianity in the Philippines was the destruction of outward symbols by destroying idols and cutting down sacred groves. The Spanish colonists or encomenderos prepared the way for the priest by first entering an area and breaking the back of any native resistance. Compulsion had to be employed to influence the natives to give up their paganism in some cases.

The people distrusted the Friars from the beginning and would not even provide them with food. The priest would usually request them to turn over some of their children to be educated by him. After the children of the chieftain had been instructed, the datus would usually be persuaded that the priest had good intentions. Special attention was given to children who proved helpful in winning the adults to the new religion.

Another assist in removing the barriers was the popular impression among the Filipinos that baptism not only washed away the sins of the soul but helped to cure all the ills and sicknesses of the body as well. There are many church records of "miraculous" recoveries after receiving baptism. Since their pagan rites had stressed the cures of illnesses, the belief that baptism had this power helped to attract many Filipinos to the priests.²¹

²⁰Ibid., pp. 48-51.

²¹Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The experience of Spain's missionary efforts in Mexico pointed up a need of preliminary instructions before baptism. This pre-baptismal instruction became a rule in the Philippines except in cases of serious illnesses. The convert was expected to renounce all paganism and to express belief in the efficacy of the sacrament of Baptism. He was required to be monogamous. Adult converts were required to recite the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria and the Ten Commandments. Also the meaning of the other sacraments and the obligation to attend mass were conditions to be filled before baptism. These high standards were not always observed, but they served as a guide in most cases.

In the early years the number of baptisms was very small, because of the small number of priests and the linguistic difficulties. As the number of Friars increased, so did the number of baptisms so that by 1622 one-half million baptisms were reported. Some of these may have been by force, but it is believed that most were voluntary. A Jesuit wrote in 1604:

It seems to me that the road to the converting of these natives is now smooth and open with the conversion of the chiefs and the majority of the people, for the excuse which they formerly had saying, "I will become a Christian as soon as the rest do" has now become their incentive towards conversion and they now say, "We desire to become Christians because all the rest are Christians."²²

The pre-baptismal instruction was to be followed by the post-baptismal indoctrination. The Christian doctrine taught to the Filipinos was dogmatic Catholicism reduced to the bare minimum. The Tagalog Christian doctrina of 1593 included the following sections: the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Apostles Creed, the Salve Maria, the fourteen

²²Ibid., pp. 55-57.

articles of faith, the seven sacraments, the seven capital sins, the fourteen works of mercy, the Ten Commandments, the five commandments of the Church and the act of general confession. Later the catechism in use in the Philippines was largely an adaptation and translation of Robert Cardinal Bellarmine's Doctrina Cristiana of 1597.

The catechisms were not printed for the masses, who had a high rate of literacy, because of the great expense. They were for the Spanish priests to help them to translate doctrinal concepts into familiar tongues. In keeping with the policy of a complete break with the pagan past, the distinctive concepts of Christianity were not translated into the Filipino language, nor was an adaption of the Philippine words made by putting new meaning into it. This was to prevent the converts from identifying Christianity with paganism. Generally, the words were left in the Spanish form or sometimes, Latin was used.²³ This accounts for the fact that in most Philippine dialects today such terms as the following are still employed: Dios, Trinidad, Espiritu, Santo, gratia, inferno, cruz, iglesia, bautismo, etc.

The response of the Filipino to his new faith was sometimes very superficial, a fiscal was introduced from Mexico to serve as an intermediary between people and priests. His job was to compel them to perform their religious obligations. One Jesuit observed:

They readily received our religion. Their meager intelligence did not permit them to sound the depths of its mysteries. They also have little care in the fulfillment of their duties to the Christianity which they have adopted; and it is necessary to constrain them by fear of punishment and to govern them like school children.

²³Ibid., pp. 57-58.

The priests had great difficulty in conveying the doctrines of Christianity to the people. They could not comprehend that God did not differentiate between race, wealth, and education of the people. Alcina said that after sixty years of work in the Visayas, very few people had a clear comprehension of the basic teachings of Christianity. The people in the heavily populated areas around Manila received better indoctrination than those in outlying areas. This is simply because the priests lived in the area and taught the people. Although the Jesuits have the best system of teaching, they found it almost impossible for thirty priests to instruct around sixty thousand scattered souls in the Visayan Islands. The Franciscans had the highest quality of indoctrination in the islands, particularly because of their heavily concentrated parishes. In general it can be said, that the quality of indoctrination was poor, or at best a bare minimum throughout the entire island. The people had some vague ideas of the Christian faith but they had not firmly been established in the distinctive teachings of Christianity.²⁴

After baptism it was necessary for a Filipino to learn about the other sacraments of the church before he could become a practicing Catholic. These are, matrimony, penance, and the holy eucharist. The chieftains had the prerogative of practicing polygamy and divorce. For this reason, the chieftains were subject to concentration in indoctrination. Polygamy was easily eliminated, but the indissolubility of marriage was more difficult to inculcate. The Spanish were able to

²⁴Ibid., pp. 59-61.

convince the Filipino to accept the Christian idea of matrimony after many years and many difficulties. The ideal even then was not always followed in pre-marital and marital relations, but they did succeed in setting it up as the standard.

In introducing the sacrament of penance the clergy needed a linguistic ability in the Philippine language. The shortage of priests was another obstacle. In Manila people had to wait in line for fifteen days on some occasions in order to have a priest hear their confession. In the provinces it may be three years between confessions even for the faithful members. This was a new concept to the Filipino. He did not like the idea of reciting all of his sins to the priest. In order to avoid further difficulty, the priest imposed very light penalties such as reciting a few rosaries or visiting a sick person. A series of questions and answers was devised to examine the people. Having no confidence in the veracity of their parishoners, the same questions were asked in different ways. An example of this is in Fernando Rey's confessional.

The sixth commandment caused more trouble than any other for Filipinos since they could not take it seriously. It was also a popular belief that after a confession, the confessee was free to satisfy all lust and passion for another year until it was time to confess again. The enforcing of a pre-marital chastity among men was especially difficult when the example of one priest would cancel the good that others had promoted for many years.²⁵

²⁵Ibid., pp. 61-67.

Communion was not given to the Filipino until he had proven himself well-indoctrinated and worthy to receive it. Sometimes this took years. The Friars sought to impress upon the Filipinos the meaning of the Sacrament in order to obtain the maximum benefit. Incidents were recorded of misfortune befalling natives who received communion without making a proper confession. The practice of administering communion in Mexico became the standard practice of all the orders in the Philippines, the number of those communed each year was relatively small, and generally took place once a year only during the season of Lent.

Confirmation was rarely practiced because of the absence of the bishops in most areas. Even in the populated Laguna de Bay area south of Manila there were no confirmations for a period of twenty-five years. In other places the span was even greater. The regulars were opposed to confirmation because the bishops wanted to use it as an excuse for visitation. This was not a serious omission since theologically confirmation was looked upon as a supplement to baptism in Roman Catholicism. Much more serious was the rarity of Holy Orders and Extreme Unction in the development of a Catholic Church in the Philippines.

In the seventeenth century it became evident that Spain's efforts to Christianize the Philippines had not been wholly successful. There were many failures and shortcomings. There was a general spirit of apathy, routine and discouragement among the missionaries. Missionaries realized their limitations and the magnitude of the task. Much work had been done but the Philippines could not be called a truly Christian nation as a result of the efforts of Spanish Catholicism.²⁶

²⁶Ibid., pp. 68-71.

The Filipinos added their own special emphasis to the form of Catholicism brought to them by the Spanish. "They showed themselves remarkably selective in stressing and de-emphasizing certain features of Spanish Catholicism." Before the Spanish conquest, the pagan religion effected all parts of daily life, the priest tried to replace all these pagan influences with Spanish Catholicism. In the cabeceras the women and children were gathered daily at the foot of a large wooden cross in the town plaza to chant the Rosary. In some areas the children were taught to walk through the streets at sunset chanting the Rosary. Sometimes, a bell was rung in the evening to remind the people to say one Our Father and one Hail Mary for the souls in Purgatory. These methods could only be used in the larger communities with larger populations.

The people from the outlying areas were lured into the cabeceras by the fiesta system. There were generally three main fiestas a year-- Corpus Christi, Holy Week, and the Patron Saint's Day. This provided an opportunity for indoctrination in religious rituals and was a welcome relief from labor in the fields. There was feasting and dancing to make a blend of the sacred and the profane on every fiesta day. The Filipino had a love for pageantry. This gave the ritual and colorful pageantry of Catholicism a strong appeal. The Filipino loved to sing and this led to a development of religious music and chant.²⁷

The lack of indoctrination caused most Filipinos to have only a slight acquaintance with Catholicism which was centered around the

²⁷Ibid., pp. 72-75.

outward ritual. There was much confusion in the minds of the masses in the veneration of the saints, because this was similar to their former idolatry under paganism. The belief in miracles was similar to their former belief in magic and superstition. One type of paganism had been replaced with another under the thin veneer of Christianity in most cases. Many pagan beliefs and superstitions remained. Friar Tomas Ortiz wrote in 1731 that when death occurred the people still observed pagan customs while professing to be Christian. They used the rosary and the cross as they had formerly used heathen charms and fetishes.

The adoption of Spanish Catholicism did not cause the Filipino to relinquish his belief in the spirit world which had to be propitiated on many occasions. Many of these pagan practices blended into the form of Philippine Christianity and lost their pagan identity. They never did develop a confidence in the Spanish clergy and kept many things hidden from their knowledge. In the realm of curing illnesses, the people stubbornly held on to their pagan practices and sacrifices.²⁸

The Filipino Catholic rarely received the Latin rites of Extreme Unction. Two explanations were offered for this. One is the fact that the people were so scattered; the other is the scarcity of priests. Lay people were trained in some cases to serve as substitutes for the priests to those on the point of death. This was a poor substitute and since the people confessed at the most only once a year, this created doubt in the minds of many as to whether or not the deceased

²⁸Ibid., pp. 78-81.

had died in the state of grace. Christian burial was even more rarely administered for the same reason and the additional exorbitant burial fees ranging from fifty to five hundred pesos. Extreme Unction and burial by the clergy were practiced generally only for the wealthy.²⁹

Results of Spanish Efforts

It seems that the Spanish arrived in the Philippines at a time when the Filipinos were ripe for conversion. There was little or no resistance to Spanish missionary efforts. The only delay was the lack of priests.³⁰ The characteristics of Philippine Christianity under the Spanish were:

outward ritual formalism rather than solid doctrinal knowledge, the tendency towards idolatry, superstition and magic, the conspiracy of silence and the infrequency of the sacraments, especially the last rites.

The Spanish Regulars obstinately refused to train a Filipino clergy for selfish reasons. They thought their dominant position would be undermined if Filipinos were to be ordained. Many Spanish Friars conscientiously believed that the Filipinos were not worthy of ordination to serve as priests. They felt that if Filipinos were made priests they would become proud, lazy, and greedy. They felt that the Filipinos would only enter the priesthood from the motivation of personal gain and prestige. They were also afraid that the Filipinos would not respect a Filipino priest. This was the view of the majority of the Spanish. In the eighteenth century some Filipino priests were admitted

²⁹Ibid., pp. 81-84.

³⁰Barrows, op. cit., p. 142.

to subordinate positions in the clergy. This was the situation as long as the Spanish remained in control in the Philippines. The Spanish conceived of themselves as a superior race and the Filipino was far below them.³¹

A well-trained Filipino clergy could have been a big asset in indoctrinating the people and removing their pagan beliefs. The actual result under Spain was the instituting of a Philippine Christianity which possessed many pagan elements and beliefs under the guise of Christianity. The Filipinos absorbed some of the Catholic teachings, but they added their own interpretation which fell short of what Spain had wanted to accomplish. Catholicism had a profound effect on the social life of the people, but the doctrinal influence was very minimum.³²

The Spanish church in the Philippines exercised religious, political and judicial functions. Not only did the bishops and priests conduct the affairs of the church, but because of the union of church and state they were the local rulers in many places. The Archbishop's Court and the Holy Inquisition were active in trying cases relating to Canon Law and heresy. The Inquisition in the Philippines only had jurisdiction over the Spaniards and other white residents.³³

The effect of Spanish Catholicism on the Filipino is said to be salutary from a Filipino Catholic historian. He says that Christianity worked a transformation on the lives of the Filipino. They stopped

³¹Phelan, op. cit., pp. 84-88.

³²Ibid., pp. 88-89.

³³Zaide, op. cit., I, 177-178.

their bloody wars, they exchanged pagan ethics for the Christian code of morals. Usury, intemperance and swearing were minimized. Infanticide, human and animal sacrifices were stopped. Adultery, concubinage and bigamy were checked. Slavery was abolished. The position of women was elevated. Christianity gave a national unity to all the Philippines which had not been present before the arrival of Spain.³⁴

The Spanish Friars have often been censured for much of the evil in the Philippines, but they did make a lasting beneficial contribution to the country. They were responsible for introducing Spanish culture and civilization to the masses. They founded and organized towns and churches throughout the islands, they supervised the building of many roads and bridges. They introduced new plants and animals, and taught the Filipinos new crafts and industries. They established the first schools and colleges, many of which are still in operation today. They introduced the Latin alphabet which is still used by all Filipinos. The first book and printing presses were the works of the regulars. They established libraries and museums. They built the first hospitals and orphanages. They recorded much about the Philippines for posterity. Some of them were musicians who taught Filipinos. The Jesuits introduced science and scientific methods and established the first observatory and weather bureau in the islands. They introduced various forms of art and architecture to the people. All in all they did much to bring civilization and culture to the Philippines.³⁵

³⁴Ibid., pp. 188-189.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 189-204.

The story of the relationship between church and state forms a sad chapter in the history of the Spanish regime in the Philippines. There was a union of church and state which was a constant source of conflict. This brought the Filipinos to the conclusion that "politics and religion do not mix." The clergy were supported by taxes through the state. The Bishop of Manila would act as governor general during a vacancy. There was a running battle to determine whether state or church was supreme. In the beginning of Spanish rule, the priest complained to Spain that the colonists, encomenderos, were mistreating the Filipinos, and that the governor was condoning such abuse. This was said to be the reason why the Filipinos developed a hatred for the Spaniards and a rejection of Christianity. In return the Spanish governors accused the Friars of misleading the people and using them for forced labor in road building and building churches. The Friars were all-powerful and could act without government approval. If people did not learn their lessons in Christian doctrine, the priests "had the chiefs and their wives whipped, and cut off their hair." In one case the governor arrested the archbishop of Manila and had him exiled. The friction between church and state continued until the end of the Spanish regime. These conflicts kept the church from its task of indoctrinating the people. This showed how it is necessary for the power of the church and state to be separated. Each should work in its own sphere in harmony for the welfare of all the people. This principle was firmly established in the minds of the Filipinos during the Spanish regime.³⁶

³⁶Ibid., pp. 205-221.

The Spanish Friar used Manila as a base for missionary endeavors in both China and Japan. Though the Spanish soldiers were unable to establish a base of operations in these countries the Spanish Friars were successful in making some converts in both China and Japan. There was some opposition caused by the fear that the priests were advance agents of Western imperialism. From 1717 until 1858 Christianity was outlawed in China. The Spanish Jesuits were able to make some headway in Japan, but they were opposed by the Portugese Jesuits who claimed exclusive rights to work there. Japan was closed to Christians when the emperor, Hideyoshi, who was preparing to invade the Philippines, heard a false rumor that the missionaries were spies for Spain in a plot to take over Japan. Many priests were killed. In 1836 Japan was closed to all foreigners and 30,000 Japanese Christians were killed. Japan remained closed until 1853 and all relations with the Philippines were halted.

Spain also considered the possibility of taking over Borneo, the Moluccas, Indo-China, Macao, Formosa and the South Sea Islands from their base in the Philippines in order "to convert those souls and bring such great multitudes of heathens to the true knowledge of our Lord God." None of these various schemes to expand the empire and missionary activity were successful. Spain's dream of an oriental empire remained only a dream. These vain forays cost the Filipinos much in material and manpower for many of them were conscripted to serve in the army of Spain.³⁷

³⁷Ibid., pp. 224-237.

Spain had some bloody battles with the Mohammedans of Mindanao and Sulu. These were in the nature of religious wars. After 300 years of fighting the Spanish even with the aid of the Filipinos were unable to subdue the Muslims. The Christian Filipinos and the Muslim Filipinos belonged to the same Malay stock. The Muslims were able to keep their culture, religion and independence all during the Spanish regime. When Spain unsuccessfully attempted to conquer the Muslims in Cotabato, the Muslims retaliated by raiding towns in the Visayas and burning many homes and churches. Spain tried to punish the Muslims, but although she won several important battles, the Muslims maintained their independence. The Muslims by virtue of their sailing ability were able to reach out in bloody revenge all over the southern Philippines even as far as Luzon.³⁸

They struck terror in the hearts of the "Christian" Filipino and this terror remains in the minds of many Filipinos to this day. Spaniards and Filipinos along the coasts lived in constant dread of Islam's sword. The Muslims captured many Filipinos whom they sold as slaves in the East Indies. The priest fought with the soldiers against the Muslims. The battles with the Muslims continued until the American intervention. After this time the Muslims were finally brought under control by the American armies in 1913.

Over the years there were many attempts to revolt against the power of Spain, but none of these revolts had any real organization or power behind them. The first Filipino religious martyr was Hermano Puli,

³⁸Ibid., pp. 306-321.

or Apolonario de la Cruz, who had set up his own religious order without church approval. One Spaniard remarked that the Filipinos were only Christian because of their fear of Spanish power, and that they are ready to revolt at any opportunity. Their Christianity was said to be by force not by conviction.³⁹

In 1705 Pope Clement XI issued a Bull providing that "the right of visiting the parochial regulars belonged to the said archbishops and other bishops." This was meant to correct the situation in the Philippines. For years the regulars in the parishes had refused to submit to episcopal visitation. In spite of the support of the crown, the governor and the pope, the archbishops of Manila were unable to execute the visitation of the parishes where the regulars of the orders were serving. The regulars were able to hold out and were never visited by any one except their own superiors of the orders.

When Filipinos were put in parishes as secular clergy, they did not do a good job because of the lack of proper education. The orders objected to the secularization of the parishes and again a battle of words raged in Manila and Madrid. In 1776 the Spanish king rescinded his order favoring the secularization of the parishes, and the Friars won another victory. Other orders followed removing the secular Filipino priests from their parishes and turning them over to the regulars.⁴⁰

The Filipino priests resented being removed from their parishes

³⁹Ibid., pp. 366-367.

⁴⁰Zaide, op. cit., II, 42-45.

and also they resented the charges that were made against them by the Friars in the newspapers of Madrid and Manila. The Spanish said that "the Filipinos were a race of Indios, infinitely inferior to the Castilian race, of low intelligence, inherently incompetent, and morally debased; hence incapable of discharging the high duties of the priesthood."

An outstanding Filipino priest, Father Pedro Pelaez, became the spokesman for the rights of the Filipinos. He was a graduate of the University of Santo Tomas and even acted as archbishop of Manila for a while in 1862. He was attacked by the Friars, but, by pen and tongue, he attacked the racial discrimination against the Filipino priests and advocated the secularization of the parishes. Father Pelaez died in the Manila cathedral in an earthquake in 1863 without attaining the goals for which he so valiantly fought.

A young Filipino, Father Jose Burgos, who had been a student of Palaez at Santo Tomas, continued the agitation for the rights of Filipino priests. He was assisted by other Filipino clergy, Mariano Gomez, Jacinto Zamora, Marino Sevilla, Agustin Mendoza, and Pedro Dandan. In 1864 he wrote a defense of the Filipino clergy entitled Manifiesto to the Noble Spanish People which the Loyal Filipinos Addressed in Defense of their Honor and Loyalty that Have Been Grievously Offended by the Newspaper "La Verdad" of Madrid. In this publication he deplored the alleged superiority of the white race and pointed out how the Filipino priests whose intellectual and moral qualities were above question were wronged by their treatment in the Philippines.⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 46-47.

Father Burgos concluded his plea with two prayers:

first, to God, so that he may lift our hearts above the pettiness of insults and the painfulness of slander; and secondly, to the Spanish People so that their magnanimity of sentiment and openness of heart will do justice to our feeling of loyalty.⁴²

The plea of Burgos had no immediate effect upon the situation in the parishes. In 1870 there were 792 parishes in the Philippines, 181 of these were under Filipino priests. They were the remote and poor parishes which the Spanish Friars did not want for themselves. In 1870 Archbishop Martinez of Manila wrote to the Spanish ruler that the secularization issue was becoming a racial issue because the people were rallying behind the Filipino priests, and their feelings against the Friars were becoming bitter and anti-Spanish, since the Spanish government stood behind the Friars. The warning of Martinez went unheeded and the revolution against Spain flared up in 1896, with the secularization of the parishes for Filipino priests as one of the main causes.

Previously, Fathers Burgos, Gomez and Zamora were falsely accused of inciting a revolt against Spain in 1872. The trial was a farce and resulted in the execution of the three priests by garroting. The Church did not take an active part in this trial. This was a blunder on the part of the Spanish government and only served to fan the flames of Filipino Nationalism and Spanish hatred. These three men became national heroes, martyrs and in the minds of some, even saints.⁴³ An organization for the overthrow of the Spanish yoke came into existence in 1892. Its full name and translation was Highest and Most Respected Association of

⁴²Ibid., pp. 47-49.

⁴³Ibid., p. 113.

the Sons of the Country. It was generally known by the Tagalog title of Katipunan or the initials, K. K. K. Its purpose was to unite the people of the Philippines and to win independence from Spain. A new member was to subscribe to the following questions and answers:

1. In what condition did the Spaniards find the Filipino when they came?

Answer: When the Spaniards came to the Philippine shores on March 16, 1521, the Filipinos were already in a civilized state. They had freedom of government; they had artillery; they had silk dresses; they carried on commerce with Asia; they had their own religion and their own alphabet. In short, they had liberty and independence.

2. In what condition do they find themselves now?

Answer: The Friars have not really civilized the Filipinos, since enlightenment was contrary to their interests. The Filipinos were merely superficially taught formulas of the catechism for which they paid numerous costly fiestas for the benefit of the Friars.⁴⁴

Every form of nationalism seems to need its national hero. Doctor Jose Rizal is called the George Washington and the Abraham Lincoln of the Philippines. He was born in 1861 and received college training at the Ateneo at Binan and the University of Santo Tomas. He did graduate study in Spain, England, France and Germany. He was a very intelligent student and became famous as a linguist, poet, author, sculptor and doctor of medicine. He was an outspoken champion of freedom for his people in the Philippines.

While in Europe, Rizal was influenced by the Freemasons and free thinkers. Rizal did not advocate violent overthrow of the Spanish government in the Philippines, but hoped that freedom for the Filipinos

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 152.

would be obtained by peaceful means. He organized La Liga Filipina to work for this purpose. He wrote two novels which were very anti-Catholic and pictured the abuses of the Filipinos under the Friars. Spain made a martyr and hero of Rizal by executing him in the year 1896 on a charge of which he was innocent.

In 1956 Rizal was very much alive again as the Filipino congress was considering the compulsory reading of two of Rizal's anti-Catholic novels as a requirement for all Philippine schools, public and private. The Catholic leaders were able to weaken the bill by having it amended, but this incident showed that the politicians and people still feel that Rizal was innocent and that the Spanish regime which was under Church control was guilty.⁴⁵

The Friars in the beginning of the Spanish regime seemed to have a high and noble motive, as they became entrenched they became corrupt and were motivated only by wealth, power and fleshly desire. Rizal wrote of the purpose of his novel, Noli me Tangere as follows:

I have written of the social conditions and life, of our beliefs, our hopes, our longings, our complaints and our sorrows; I have unmasked the hypocrisy which, under the cloak of religion, has come among us to impoverish and brutalize us; I have distinguished the true religion from the false, from the superstition that traffics with the holy word to get money and to make us believe in absurdities for which Catholicism would blush if ever it knew of them.⁴⁶

Rizal speaks of the motives of the Friars very plainly:

⁴⁵Joseph W. Regan, The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), p. 15.

⁴⁶Dwight E. Stevenson, Christianity and the Philippines, in The College of the Bible Quarterly (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible, 1955), p. 9.

I realize that a true faith and a sincere love for humanity guided the first missionaries to our shores: I realize the debt of gratitude we owe to those noble hearts. . . . But because the forefathers were virtuous, should we consent to the abuses of their degenerate descendants? . . . the country does not ask for their expulsion but only for reforms required by the changed circumstances and new needs.⁴⁷

One of Rizal's characters asks about religious conditions:

And thou, Religion preached for suffering humanity, hast thou forgotten the mission of consoling the oppressed in their misery and of humiliating the powerful in their pride? Hast thou now promises only for the rich, for those who can pay thee?⁴⁸

He further condemns the results of Spanish Catholicism when he writes:

You say she (Spain) snatched us from error and gave us true faith, do you call these outward forms, do you call religion this traffic in girdles and scapularies, truth these miracles and wonderful tales? Is this the law of Jesus Christ? For this it was hardly necessary that a God should allow himself to be crucified or that we should be obliged to show eternal gratitude. Superstition existed long before--it was only necessary to systematize it and raise the price of its merchandise!⁴⁹

By 1700 most of the population of the Philippines had been brought into contact with the Roman Church, but comparatively few had been taught the doctrine of the Church. Until 1900 Filipinos were baptized at infancy, attended Mass occasionally, were under control of the priests, built large churches by forced labor, paid their fees to the church and were buried in the church cemetery. There was a nominal Christianity for rich and poor under Spanish Catholicism. Rizal accused

⁴⁷Jose Rizal, The Social Cancer, a complete English version of the Noli Me Tangere from the Spanish by Charles E. Derbyshire (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1927), p. 383.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 382.

the Friars of adding superstitions to those already held by the Filipinos.

The Friars were both the civil and church rulers in most parts of the Philippines. They kept the people under strict control by government power and the power of the confessionals. They obtained many acres of the most fertile land, often at the death bed of the Filipino owner. The orders became wealthy and had huge deposits of money in Hong Kong and Manila. Some of the Friars were consecrated men, but the majority lived immoral lives and had concubines and mistresses. The Filipinos many times revolted against the oppression of the Friars, but they were unorganized and on a local level, they were easily put down by the Spanish soldiers.

In 1872 when the government executed the three Filipino priests, the people regarded the priests as martyrs and they were later canonized by the Philippine Independent Church. From the time of their execution widespread opposition to the Spanish rule began to build up. Jose Rizal pictured the intolerable situation in his novel Noli me Tangere. The rebellion was not against the Roman Church, but against the Spanish control of the Church. The resentment was against white superiority and Spanish arrogance, not against the Church.⁵⁰

The Spanish Church intended to keep a nominal type of Christianity in the Philippines. They wanted the people to be good subjects, nothing more or nothing less. The hierarchy wanted to think for the people,

⁵⁰Donald A. McGavran, "The Independent Church in the Philippines," Encounter, XIX (Summer, 1958), 299-301.

they did not want them to think for themselves. Only the upperclasses were indoctrinated at all to keep them in the Church. Even though Rizal was excommunicated, he did not actively oppose the Church.

The revolt was brought to a head in 1896 by the Katipunan, a secret society under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio. A plan to overthrow the Spanish regime was revealed by a nun. Hundreds were arrested. Rizal was executed. Bonifacio, and his followers, went to the hills to hide out. The control of the revolutionary forces was taken over by Emilio Aguinaldo. Many provinces revolted against Spain. All parts of the islands were under control of the Filipinos except the Manila area. Peace was made in 1897 when Spain promised to make the reforms demanded by the people. Aguinaldo and others agreed to live in exile in Hong Kong. Spain did not keep its word, and reforms were not instituted. Revolt broke out anew, but this time Spain had the advantage and the control over the people in time.

Five months later, in early 1898, the United States declared war on Spain and sank the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in one engagement on May 1. The United States brought in General Aguinaldo who conquered the Spanish and set up a provisional government with a constitution similar to that of the United States. When the United States did not grant immediate independence to the Philippines, Aguinaldo's forces declared war on the Americans until finally they were overcome by the superior force of American arms.⁵¹

One author lists the following abuses of the Spanish rule that

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 301-303.

needed correction at the close of the nineteenth century:

1. Feudal landlordism of rich religious orders bought at the cost of grinding poverty to the poor, who were held in serfdom.
2. Dominance of the civil state by the monasteries.
3. Corruption of justice.
4. The debauchery of Friars and Secular priests.
5. The fostering of superstition in place of real religion.
6. The extortion of exorbitant fees for religious offices.
7. Almost total exclusion of Filipinos from any voice in either Church or State.
8. Suppression of freedom of assembly and of speech.⁵²

As a result of the oppression of the Filipinos, they wrote a provision of the separation of Church and State in their Malolos Constitution of 1898 before they had learned this principle from the United States. They had learned through bitter experience what happens when there is a union of church and state. Today the Philippine government strongly recognizes and stresses that the Church and the State should be separated in their functions and in their powers.

According to Roman Catholic sources the greatest weakness of Spanish Catholicism was the failure to provide a national clergy. After 333 years in the Philippines there was not one Filipino bishop or member of the various orders. There were only a few Filipino secular priests in inferior positions. Some bishops felt a great need of a national clergy and tried to place Filipinos in the parishes even though they had not had the proper training. At one time it was said in Manila,

⁵²Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

"There are no longer any boatmen for the barges because the archbishop has ordained them all." Spain fell into the same error she had made in South America--too few national priests, too poorly trained. Commenting on this Spanish failure after Spain had left the Philippines the Archbishop of Manila, Michael O'Doherty said: "They neglected the Catholic principle that no Church can rest upon a substantial basis unless it is manned by a native clergy."⁵³

Sir John Bowring, the British governor of Hong Kong and composer of the hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," made a visit to the Philippines in the middle of the nineteenth century. He made the following comment about the Spanish purpose in the Philippines:

In America, and the West Indies, all the brutality of military conquerors was exhibited, and the possession and plunder of new territories was encouraged by the Spanish Court, and were the main object of the Spanish invasion, but far different was the policy adopted in the Philippines, where only a small body of soldiers was accompanied by zealous missionaries, whose purpose was rather to convert and Christianize the Indians rather than pillage and destroy them. The Friars gradually obtained a paramount influence over the Indians. . . . to the Spaniards it must be conceded that the religious purpose--be its value what it may--has never been abandoned or forgotten.⁵⁴

Bowring points out that Spanish Catholicism allowed no freedom of religious thought as does Protestantism, but also that Spain has done much more to improve and increase the population of the Philippines than the Protestant countries had done in their colonization programs. He adds: "It has undoubtedly been the boast of the Catholics that

⁵³Regan, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁵⁴Sir John Bowring, A Visit to the Philippine Islands (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1859), p. 94.

Francis de Xavier and his followers won more for the Roman Church in the East than Luther or Calvin ever tore away from it in the West."⁵⁵

Bowring adds an interesting comment on the religious situation during his visit to the islands:

The banian tree (balete, Ficus Indica) is held sacred. They burned incense under it which they obtained from the Friars under various pretenses. How strangely are the rites of idolatry mingled with the Christian observances! . . . "There is no driving out of them," says the Padre, "the cursed belief that the spirit of their ancestors are in the woods and among the roots of the bamboos, and that they can bring good or evil upon them. They will offer sacrifices to them: and all our books and all our preachings have failed to remove the impressions left by an old man whom they choose to call a 'sage.'"⁵⁶

Bowring adds on the religious picture which he observed:

The ancient Indian (Filipino) named for God was Bathala, to whom they attributed the creation of the world. Remnants of the old idolatry remained among the people, and some of the idols are preserved. A few phrases are still retained especially in the remoter parts, as for example, "Magpabathala ca" (let the will of Bathala be done), for the priests had been generally willing to recognize the name as not objectionable in substitution for Dios. The Tagal word adopted for idolatry is Paganito, but to the worship of images they give the term Anito.

Another British author who made an extensive tour of the Philippines towards the close of the nineteenth century had the following opinion of the religious concept of the Filipino:

It appeared evident that the natives understand little of the "inward and spiritual grace" of religion. He is so material and realistic, and so devoid of all conception of things abstract, that his ideas rarely if ever, soar beyond the contemplation of the "outward and visible sign" of Christian beliefs. The symbols of faith and the observance of religious rites are to him religion

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 95.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 135-136.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 157.

itself. He also confounds morality with religion. Natives go to church because it is a custom. Often if a native cannot put on a clean shirt, he abstains from going to Mass in some towns the Barangay Chiefs were fined or beaten if they were absent from church on Sundays and certain feast days.

As to the women, little pressure was necessary to oblige them to attend Mass; many of them passed half of their existence between adoration to the images, Mariolatry, and the Confessional.

Undoubtedly, Roman Catholicism appears to be the form of Christianity most successful in proselytizing uncivilized races, which are impressed more with their eyes than with their understanding.

The pagan idols, which reappeared in the forms of martyrs in primitive times still gratified the instinctive want of visible deities to uncultivated minds. The heathen rites, originally adopted by the Catholic Church to appease the pagans in the earlier stages, such as pompous rituals, lustrous gold and silver vases, magnificent robes, and glittering processions, served where intellectual reasoning would fail, to convince the neophyte of the sanctity of the religious system and the infallibility of its professors' precepts.⁵⁸

Latourette writes:

The official instructions to Legazpi directed that all in the expedition should equip themselves like Christians, honor the name of the Lord and His Mother, accord good treatment to the natives, and not engage in slave trade.⁵⁹

While Christianity had a drastic effect upon life in the Philippines, many of the pagan beliefs stubbornly remained. An Augustinian in the eighteenth century complained that the Filipinos still called on their ancestors and other spirits. A Dominican reported that a place where his colleagues had labored for seventy years was still mostly pagan. Also some of the superstitions of Spanish Roman Catholicism naturally were transferred to the Philippines, f. i., a cross

⁵⁸John Foreman, The Philippine Islands (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), pp. 204-205.

⁵⁹Kenneth Scott Latourette, Three Centuries of Advance: A. D. 1500 - A. D. 1800, in A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1939), III, 309.

with relics was erected in a field to ward off a pestilence. The Jesuits introduced "a procession of blood" in Manila during Lent, in which the participants practiced self-flagellation. Nevertheless by 1800 the Philippines became predominantly Christian. Paganism survived in the mountains and Islam remained in the South. The Filipinos were kept in an inferior position and civilization remained static. The rule of the Spanish remained a generally benevolent one because of the missionary motivation. Christianity in the Philippines was passive and sometimes, in combination with ancestral paganism.⁶⁰

Latourette attributes the success in converting the Philippines to Christianity to the fact that when the Spanish arrived the Filipinos were in a fairly primitive state of culture and the religion was of such type that it gave way to a "higher" faith. The only one of the great faiths to reach the Philippines was Islam, and where it had become established Christianity did not make much headway. "Had Islam been given a century or two more of lee-way it is conceivable that the islands would have become Moslem rather than Christian." The Spanish Friars arrived just in time to prevent this.

Another reason given for Christianity making more headway under Spain in the Philippines than other areas of Southeast Asia where Portugal and the Netherlands had taken over, was that Spain concentrated her energies on missionary activities rather than on commerce. Philip II was a religious zealot, and the missionary enterprise was a chief objective in the land that was named after him. The Philippines

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 316-321.

was a missionary outpost for further work in the East Indies, Indo-China, China, Formosa, and Japan. At the outset the Philippines was to serve as a strategic center for Spain's political and religious conquest of the Far East.⁶¹

The nineteenth century did not have the swift changes in the Philippines that it did in Europe and America, but it did produce changes, some of the liberal ideas which were popular in Spain were introduced in the islands. Masonry, of the continental-anti-clerical type, was introduced. Filipinos who had profited by increased trade were able to send their sons to European universities. A group of these Filipino intellectuals in Spain began agitating for political and religious reform and expulsion of the Friars. Secret societies were formed in the Philippines to overthrow the Spanish rule and to get rid of the Friars. This was the beginning of the end for Spain in the Philippines.⁶²

Present Status of Roman Catholicism

During the Spanish regime the Friars acquired vast areas of land which became a source of much irritation to the masses during the early days of the American administration under Governor William Howard Taft. This issue is known as the "Friar Lands Question."

In 1898 Filipino General Emilio Aguinaldo wrote to the American

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 307-308.

⁶²Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Great Century in the Americas, Austral-Asia, and Africa: A. D. 1800 - A. D. 1914, in A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1943), V, 264-266.

Military Governor:

These priests have been for a long time the absolute masters of life, honor and property of the Filipinos. For this reason, it is a widely known and notorious fact, recognized by all foreigners who have studied Philippine affairs that the primary causes of the Philippine revolution were the ecclesiastical corporations, which taking advantage of the corrupt Spanish government, have robbed the country, preventing progress and liberty.⁶³

Governor Taft was determined to purchase these lands from the Friars to get rid of this basis of friction and to get rid of the Spanish Friars at the same time. He wrote, "on behalf of the Philippine Government it is proposed to buy the lands of the religious orders with the hope that the funds thus furnished may lead to their withdrawal from the islands." Taft mentioned as a reason for the withdrawal of the Spanish Friar "the Americanization of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines."

In order to bring about the purchase of the friar lands it was necessary for Governor Taft to make a special trip to Rome under the direction of President Theodore Roosevelt. He received the admission from Cardinal Rampolla of Rome stating, "the Holy See admits, first of all, that the system under Spanish domination and the mixing up of the Religious in the civil administration might have created for them (the Friars) in a portion of the people a certain ill will." The pope approved the sale of the friar lands, but not the proviso that the Spanish Friars be removed within two years, since there was no one to replace them at this time. There was a promise made to send American missionaries to the Islands to replace the Spanish. Meanwhile, the

⁶³ Edward De Persio, "The Friar Lands Question in the Philippines," World Mission, X (Summer, 1960), 27-31.

Pope said he would restrict the Friars to their spiritual ministry only. "The representative of the Holy See (in the Philippines) was to carefully see that all the religious, of no matter what nationality, Order or congregation, consecrate themselves exclusively to spiritual works." The sale of the friar land was handled by the Apostolic delegate in Manila for the sum of \$7,237,000. The number of Spanish missionaries did decrease, but there are still around 200 Spanish priests working in the Philippines today.⁶⁴

Roman Catholicism remains the dominant faith in the Philippines. Under the United States administration, the Filipino priests began to assume more important posts. The first Filipino bishop was consecrated in 1906. Several new American-staffed orders began working in the Philippines after the United States occupation. The census of 1939 revealed a total population of 16,000,303, of which 78.76 per cent were Roman Catholic; 9.80 per cent members of the Philippine Independent Church; .04 per cent, Muslims; .02 per cent, Protestant; .03 per cent, pagan; with the remaining small minorities divided among the Buddhists, Shintoists, and other groups.⁶⁵

Laubach explains:

The hatred of the Friar did not mean hatred of the Roman Catholic Church. To the Pontificate the Filipino priests were still loyal. In Leyte, where there had never been any Friars, and where there had been no Jesuits for 150 years, but where all the churches were under the Filipino clergy, there was never a break with Rome, and to this day Protestantism finds it is practically impossible to gain a foot hold here, where, on the other hand, the Friars were

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 32-35.

⁶⁵Zaide, op. cit., II, 283.

practically autocratic, the advance of other communions has been easy and rapid. The Friars had become an anachronism, seeking to perpetuate a despotism which had gone out of date.⁶⁶

Possibly because of the bitter lesson learned from the example of the Spaniards in the Philippines Pope Benedict XV said in 1919:

The main care of those who rule the mission should be to raise and train a clergy from amidst the nation among which they dwell, for on this are founded the best hopes for the Church of the future.

Pius XI reiterated the same principle in his encyclical letter,

Rerum Ecclesiae, of 1944:

First of all let Us recall to your attention how important it is that you build up a native clergy. If you do not work with all your might to accomplish this, we maintain that your apostolate will not only be crippled, but it will prove to be an obstacle and an impediment for the establishment and organization of the Church in those countries.⁶⁷

A Filipino Jesuit gives three main causes which blocked the establishing of an indigenous clergy in the Philippines. The first cause was the primitive nature of Philippine civilization when Spain arrived. The second cause was the system which placed ecclesiastical control and support entirely in the hands of the Spanish crown. The third cause was the extension to the Philippines of the conciliar synodal legislation of Spanish America. This kept unworthy candidates out of the priesthood it is true, but it also eliminated any worthy candidates.⁶⁸

If a Filipino priest was incompetent, this was used as an indication to the Spanish that the Filipinos were an inferior race and unworthy

⁶⁶Frank C. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c.1925), p. 115.

⁶⁷Horatio de la Costa, S. J., "The Development of the Native Clergy in the Philippines," Theological Studies, VIII (June 1947), 219.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 230.

of such a high office. If the Filipino priest was competent, he was able to see all the wrongs they committed in the name of religion, and was classified as a "rebel" against Spanish rule. It is no wonder that little effort was exerted to establish a well-trained national clergy. The average Filipino priest received just enough education to resent the way he was being treated by his superiors, but not enough to remedy the situation. As a result he either became apathetic and served in minor positions doing what he was told, or he joined in political agitation for the overthrow of the Spanish regime. The work of the church in the Philippines suffered as a result of this situation and the people were not trained in the Catholic religion.⁶⁹

There is still a drastic shortage of priests in the Philippines. "Today there is only, at best, one priest for 8,609 faithful." In Cebu the ratio is said to drop to one to fifteen thousand. Although Philippine Catholic seminaries are graduating an average of 120 priests per year, this does not increase the ratio of priests, because it does not even keep up with the population growth. Therefore, it is said that the Filipino remains in religious darkness by the Roman Catholics own admission. "The general space of ignorance that has plagued the Philippines is still dangerously present."

The hierarchy in the Philippines plans to send ten thousand trained religious teachers into the public schools. This will be done to instruct the Roman Catholic pupils in the doctrines of the Catholic Church. This indoctrination is not being accomplished by other means. The

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 246-247.

church has 270,000 students enrolled in church schools. Santo Tomas University in Manila has an enrollment of around twenty thousand. Here stress is being laid on the revival of Catholic life through the liturgy and lay apostolate.⁷⁰

It is claimed that even though the Catholic Church had few priests in the early years of the American period that the Protestants made only a little headway, because the Filipino refused to "give up their saints, religious processions and fiestas." The Independent Philippine Catholic Church, despite early successes, soon began to decline after people saw it was only an imitation church. Priests and nuns began to fill the parishes, teach in the schools and open new hospitals. By 1926 Archbishop O'Doherty could write in the Ecclesiastical Review, "Thank God, the crisis is now past." However even by this time, after twenty-seven years of American administration, only one Filipino had been ordained in the Archdiocese of Manila. Just before World War II the Filipinos were finally getting the foreign clergy they badly needed. They still did not have enough national clergy.⁷¹

The Filipino priests in the parishes are not supported by the members because they have never learned to support their pastor. In addition, if a son has a job, it is his duty to support his parents, even if he is a priest. This is the Filipino custom. The parishes include many villages or barrios. "Often a barrio will have a Mass but once a year, on the occasion of a Fiesta." If the Catholic priest does

⁷⁰Bernard G. Murchland, "The Church in the Philippines," Ave Maria (August 24, 1957), p. 22.

⁷¹Regan, op. cit., pp. 19-27.

not attend the Fiesta the people will ask a priest of the Philippine Independent Church to come and baptize their children. Many of them see no difference between the two groups. The Filipinos have a special period of devotion during Holy Week from the Spanish times. They also promote devotion to the Virgin Mary in a very special way throughout the Philippines. Many homes and busses have pictures or statues of Mary.⁷²

Another Roman Catholic source gives the present ratio of priests to people as one to 9,000. A newly ordained priest may be assigned to a parish of from 10,000 to 40,000 souls. The income of the parish is very poor, because the people consider the church to be a wealthy institution. Under the Spanish regime the church was supported by taxes, and even today, the people have not seen the need of supporting their own churches.

Not only does the belief in a rich church exist, but at the same time the people feel that the church is partial to the rich. The Jesuits feel that they must show that they are on the side of the poor and try to help them to improve their status. The priest should be the leader of the community and have the confidence of the people, is the common belief of the church. The national clergy can better fill the role of parish priest while the foreign priest can serve in the areas of conversion of pagans, education, social service, labor organizations, retreats and missions, scientific research and publications.

Mission work is being conducted among the pagans of Bukidnon in Mindanao by the Jesuits. They are also conducting seven schools in

⁷²Ibid., pp. 30-32.

different parts of the islands; the oldest being Ateneo de Manila. A Filipino Jesuit claims that the public school system inaugurated by the United States has resulted in a diversity of religious beliefs, and even the lack of religious beliefs. Because of this, he claims that many have fallen away from their faith entirely, others have become Protestants and still others have become nominal Catholics. These "defections" include some of the most prominent leaders in the Philippine political and educational system.⁷³

The Filipino Jesuit furthermore claims that four out of every five Filipinos is a Christian and has been so for the last three hundred years. He admits that it is strange for a country so anciently Catholic to still be a mission country, and that the Church would fall short without missionary assistance. This is primarily because of the shortage of priests. Even though the Jesuits have been in the Philippines since the sixteenth century, the first Filipino was not received in the Society until the twentieth century. He adds that the reason for this is that the Filipinos were such a primitive people that they first had to be taught the rudiments of civilization, whereas the Japanese Jesuits were received at the very beginning of the work in the highly civilized culture of Japan. The Jesuits were also influenced by the policy of the Spanish who called the Filipinos Indios and treated them like children. When the Jesuits from America started working in the Philippines, they stressed the need for the Filipinos to join the Society. In 1957 after thirty-five years of American Jesuit endeavors

⁷³Horatio de las Costa, S. J., "Thirty-five Years in the Philippines," The Catholic Mind, LV (August, 1957), 324-327.

in the Philippines, there were 240 Filipino Jesuits of the total of 475 in the order throughout the Islands.⁷⁴

After spending five years in the Philippines, an American Maryknoll Father came to the conclusion that the work of making the Philippines a Catholic nation cannot be done by direct work among the people, but only through the schools. There should at least be a secondary school in every parish, he feels, and if possible, also a primary school. "Teaching catechism in released time is not enough. Children require the background of daily religious training." He continues, "Baptized Catholics often know nothing about their faith because no one has instructed them."

He points out that many Filipinos go to church only three times in their lives--to be baptized, married and buried. He decries the shortage of priests where in one place a bishop serves one million members with only fifty-two priests. One parish has 90,000 members and only one priest. How can one priest hear 20,000 confessions? Many people have never been instructed on how to make a confession, he adds. In such a situation it is not surprising to hear priests speaking of "nominal Catholics."⁷⁵

An early American official in the Philippines writes,

The great mass of the people belong to the Catholic Church. Hardly a prominent Filipino can be mentioned who was not at least baptized a Catholic. The ordinary Filipino is loyal to his church and the Church satisfies his religious nature. This is particularly true because of the ceremonies of the Church and its religious processions in which hundreds participate carrying lighted candles and

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 321-324.

⁷⁵Regan, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

singing hymns. Probably as a class the women are more devout than the men. The anomaly is found among some of the men of their joining the Masonic Fraternity and at the same time retaining loose connections with the Church.⁷⁶

In 1956 a Jesuit author claims that out of 21,000,000 people in the Philippines, 81 per cent or 17,000,000 were Roman Catholics. He states that the Catholic faith is at the root of all social life. However, he complains that many do not go beyond the "fiesta" religion, the liturgy is only half-understood, and outside of the city only fifteen per cent practice their religion. He admits the people are ignorant in religious matters. The great problem is the scarcity of priests. It is not rare to find a priest responsible for more than 30,000 souls and many places with 5,000 people or more have no priest at all.

The catechetical instruction is poor. Most parents possess only a blind faith which is grafted on to pagan rites and does not go beyond simple prayers. "The religious sense, natural to the people, but easily degenerating into superstition, often takes the place of sacramental life." The people are ignorant of moral norms and make no distinction between actual and venial sin. The younger Filipinos are not willing to follow a blind faith and are lapsing from the church of which they are ignorant.

The parish priest, if there is one, is so busy with administrative duties that he does not have time to give catechetical instructions. Young girls are often given the assignment of preparing the children for their first communion. Very few men or children attend Sunday mass.

⁷⁶George A. Malcolm, The Commonwealth of the Philippines (New York: D. Appleton-Century Inc., c.1936), pp. 307-308.

The liturgy means less to the people than the "worship of favorite saints" and novenas.⁷⁷

In a sociological study of the Philippines there were these findings listed under "Attitudes Toward Religious Institutions."

Upper Class

- (1) Take positions of leadership in lay movements and like to be considered "patrons" of the church.
- (2) Critical in regard to dogma, but manifest an interest in aesthetic aspects of religion.
- (3) May feel above the need for religion and manifest little interest except when custom demands their attendance on special occasions.

Middle Class

Apt to be responsive to appeals on a moral or intellectual basis. Somewhat uncertain about attitude toward traditional church dogmas. Highly critical of religious practices which seem to be excessively emotional.

Lower Class

- (1) Responsive to emotional services and religious pageantry. Accept dogma uncritically but frequently fail to carry moral injunctions into practice. Readily accept reports of miracles.
- (2) May feel that the church is an upper class institution and be either indifferent or openly hostile.⁷⁸

To some of the rural people the most important part of the Christian religion is the fiesta, the feast day of the patron saint of the village. They feel that this is faith in its purest essence and that too much religion is better than too little so they go all out to have

⁷⁷John Seffer, S. J., "The Catechetical Situation in the Philippines," Lumen Vitae, XI (April-June, 1956), 303-306.

⁷⁸Chester L. Hunt et al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 150.

a big feast. Rizal wrote in El Filibusterismo almost a hundred years ago,

The fiesta is over. The people of the town have again found, as in every other year, that their pocket is poorer, that they have worked, sweated, and stayed awake much without gaining any new friends, and, in a word, they have dearly bought their dissipation and their headaches. But this matters nothing, for the same will be done next year, the same the coming century, since it has always been the custom.⁷⁹

The 1956 report of the Methodist Division of Foreign Missions states that the present policy of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines is as follows:

The Roman Church is determined, if at all possible, to surround, isolate and then eradicate the Protestant Communities. They view Protestants as "heathens" in the same category with Communists, Muslims and pagans.⁸⁰

Despite the fact that the Roman Catholic Church claims eighty per cent of the Filipinos as their members, only one out of every ten Roman Catholics can be called a "practicing churchman."⁸¹

During the Second National Eucharistic Congress held in Manila in 1956, President Ramon Magsaysay together with the Roman Catholic hierarchy dedicated the people of the Philippines to the "sacred heart of Jesus." This act of President Magsaysay brought forth many protests in a country where only one out of every ten members of the Roman Church can be called a practicing Catholic and where there are 6,000,000 non-Roman Filipinos. Cardinal Spellman served in the Eucharistic Congress

⁷⁹Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), pp. 32-38.

⁸⁰Yorke Allen, Jr., A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1960), p. 134.

⁸¹Ibid.

as a papal legatus a latere, received a nineteen gun salute on arrival and stayed in the presidential palace. All of these acts were pointed out as a violation of the constitutional guarantee of the separation of church and state.

As for the Eucharistic Congress the explanation was offered that Magsaysay had participated as a Catholic and that the acts referred only to Catholics. It was furthermore pointed out that during Magsaysay's administration the Roman Catholic Church was extending further influence in the University of the Philippines and in the public schools.⁸²

In 1937 when former President Quezon was invited to play a prominent part in the Eucharistic Congress, he wrote to the archbishop of Manila:

I hope I am a good practical Catholic. As such, in my individual capacity, there is nothing that I shall not be glad to do to give added solemnity to the celebration of the Eucharistic Congress. . . . but, as President of the Philippines, I am not in a position to do what your program calls for.⁸³

After the recent visit to the Philippines one Protestant made the following report on the influences of the Roman Catholic Church today. In pointing out the "residential elements of the old Spanish corruption" he says,

Among these are feudal landlordism, indifference to the economic needs of the common people, the licensing of lotteries, sweepstakes, cock-fights, and other forms of gambling, the impoverishing fiesta system, the power-hungry rule of the priests and friars, the use of violence and intimidation to continue this power. Stonings and job

⁸²Cornelio M. Ferrer, "Churches Assail Magsaysay's Act," Christian Century (December 26, 1956), pp. 1518-1519.

⁸³Joseph R. Hayden, The Philippines: A Study in National Development (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1942), p. 569.

sabotage and refusal are used to keep communicants in line and to punish apostates. Exorbitant fees are charged for masses and christenings. Folk superstitions are encouraged and exploited.⁸⁴

Professor Ricardo Pascual, in writing a report on the Philippines for the Institute of Pacific Relations, gives this estimate of the present situation:

Religion effects both the acting and thinking of the people, particularly the latter. As to ways of doing, the Filipino is highly ceremonious in his affairs. The ceremony attached to religious rites has been carried over by the Philippines to non-religious affairs as well. He is fatalistic in his attitude due to the conviction that God's ways are inexorable and for the best and man can do nothing against them. As a rule, women are even more religious than men. By "religious" here is meant strictly following formal religious practices, such as praying in the home, going to church, and making pilgrimages etc., a curious attitude that religion is more for women than for men had developed from this situation. A Filipino may entertain not the slightest compunction in keeping away from church but feels much reassured and relieved if his wife attends mass faithfully.⁸⁵

Statistics from Roman Catholic sources in 1957 indicate 17,387,444 Filipino Roman Catholics out of a population of 21,203,787 or 81.9 per cent of the entire population. There are 2,938 priests including 1,508 regulars and 1,430 seculars. Of this number 1,511 are foreign missionaries while 1,427 are Filipinos. Over one-third of the priests are in the Manila area where many teach in the various Roman Catholic Schools. Only 261 Filipinos are in the religious orders, most of these being in the Jesuits. This makes a total of one priest for every 10,460 Filipinos or one for every 8,359 Roman Catholics. In Switzerland there is one

⁸⁴Theodore A. Gill, "A Mother of Pearl View," Christian Century (January 30, 1957), pp. 133-136.

⁸⁵Ricardo Pascual, Social and Cultural Development of the Philippines (Manila: Philippine Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), pp. 6-7.

priest for every 440 Catholics; one for every 690 in the United States and one priest for every 5,080 in Mexico. The world average is one priest for every 1,300 Catholics.

In 1957 there were 768 seminarians in the major seminaries and 1,418 in minor seminaries, which means one student preparing for each 8,000 Catholics. There are 270 elementary schools, 458 high schools, and 105 colleges in the hands of the Roman Church. The total enrollment in the Catholic schools is 303,970.

There are twenty-seven religious orders at work in the Philippines. The largest group is the 629 Jesuits. There are 284 Missionaries of the Divine Word; 204 of the Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary; and 174 Columbans. There are thirty-six religious orders for women which include 2,509 nationals and 984 foreign missionaries.

The Catholic Welfare Association, Catholic Action, Catholic Educational Society and the Legion of Mary are very active and zealous at the present time. "A new and popular group, the Barangay of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is spreading like wildfire throughout the islands." The Barangay stresses a nightly rosary, catechetical instruction, hymns and processions. It is made up of representatives of fifteen families and goes to fifteen houses each night. The Filipinos are reported to love to pray the rosary, to sing and to have processions. Five million people are enlisted in this Barangay.⁸⁶

From the Roman Catholic point of view dangers to the church at this time are seven-fold. First, religious indifference, since Protestants are being sent to the islands today. "Because of the absence of

⁸⁶Regan, op. cit., pp. 23-25.

ceremonies in religious rites in its services, there is little in Protestantism that appeals to the majority of Filipinos." The main result of the Protestant effort is said to be the breeding of religious indifference. Second, Aglipayanism, this danger is said to be on the decline and suffering from schism. "In another generation or so, the Aglipayan Church will probably have ceased to exist." Third, Iglesia ni Kristo, which is said to be extremely anti-Catholic. "Its influence is felt principally among the less educated, who may be easily swayed by meaningless words." Fourth, Mohammedanism, number around 700,000 and "not a single conversion had been reported among them" even though some attend Catholic schools in Mindanao. Fifth, Paganism. There are around 500,000 pagans who could be converted, but there are no priests to send. Sixth, Communism. This internal threat was brought under control by Ramon Magsaysay when he was defense secretary. Seventh, an exaggerated sense of nationalism. "In an effort to assert itself as an Asian country, the Philippines may break off too quickly its ties to the Western powers." Also the national language, Tagalog, may exclude English and make the people more susceptible to false propoganda. Finally, the Church may be falsely identified as carrying vestiges of foreign domination and hence rejected.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 25-29.

CHAPTER IV

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH INFLUENCE

Early History

Shortly after Admiral Dewey sank the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, Archbishop Nozaleda sent Father Gregorio Aglipay to try to win the Filipino rebels over to the cause of Spain. The insurgents in turn tried to win Aglipay over to their cause. Aglipay was in the rare position of being a friend of the Friars and also of the rebels. When Bishop Hevia of Neuva Segovia was captured by the rebels, Aglipay was made ecclesiastical governor of his diocese, thus granting Aglipay the prerogatives of a bishop. Never before had such dignity been conferred on a Filipino priest. Archbishop Nozaleda told Aglipay in November 1898 that the Philippines was soon going to be an independent republic, and Aglipay would be the link between the Philippines and the Vatican. The archbishop also approved the transfer of the episcopate from Bishop Hevia to Aglipay, but the consecration was never performed in the ensuing turmoil with the United States. Meanwhile, Father Aglipay was appointed Vicar-General of the rebel forces under Aguinaldo.

Later when Nozaleda excommunicated Aglipay in April, 1899, Aglipay in turn excommunicated the archbishop and appealed his case to the Vatican. When Aglipay was appointed head of the Independent Filipino Church in October, 1899, the church still declared its allegiance to Rome and sought to have the pope appoint Filipino bishops and to

recognize the Filipino clergy.¹

The break with Rome was inevitable. Today, the largest Non-Roman Church in the Philippines is the Philippine Independent Church which is commonly known as the Aglipayan Church. This group sprang up in opposition to the domination of the Spanish priests. It had both religious and political overtones. The revolt against Spain was general throughout the Philippines. The leader of the revolutionary forces, General Emilio Aguinaldo appointed Father Gregoria Aglipay as Chaplain-general of the revolutionary army. When the pope refused to recognize Aglipay's request for consecration as bishop and to elevate Filipino priests to all important posts, Aglipay completely cooperated with the revolutionary government which announced the principle of separation of church and state. After the American regime took over the control of the Philippines from the Spanish, Aglipay joined with others in the formation of an independent Catholic Church.²

In 1910 Archbishop Harty of Manila remarked to the noted Philippine historiographer, James A. Robertson that it was only the providence of God that had saved the Catholic Church in the Philippines. He was referring to the Aglipayan break from the church of Rome, and the fact that the United States intervention and favorable court decisions prevented the Philippine Independent Church from permanently replacing the Roman

¹Frank G. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c.1925), pp. 129-135.

²Chester L. Hunt, "An Arrested Reformation," Christian Century (January 25, 1956), p. 108.

Church throughout the Philippine Islands.³ Aglipay issued several manifestos asking the Filipinos to take over the administration of the church. Aglipay was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Manila. Aglipay then called a National Ecclesiastical Council and drew up a constitution for the Filipino Church. He did not plan to break with Rome, only to win the church from the control of the Spanish Friars. They sent a request to the Pope asking that all parishes be held by Filipinos and also asking for the withdrawal of the Spanish Friars. In return the revolutionary government promised to release all the Spanish prisoners that they held at this time.

Senor Isabello de los Reyes, a Filipino intellectual, was in Madrid and was asked to present this urgent request to the Pope. This was done through the papal nuncio in Madrid. The requests were denied and the Nuncio informed Reyes, "the Holy Father will let all nuns and priests be executed by Aguinaldo, but will never grant the request of the Filipino priests."⁴

In the meantime the forces of Aguinaldo were engaged in a battle with the United States Army, and Aglipay took the field against the United States until he finally surrendered in 1901. The papal delegate sided with the Friars and sent the Friars to replace the Filipino priests once again. The priests in Ilocos Norte and some other areas challenged the authority of the papal delegate. They sent word to the Vatican that

³James A. Robertson, "The Aglipay Schism in the Philippine Islands," The Catholic Historical Review, IX (October, 1918), 316.

⁴Donald A. McGavran, "The Independent Church in the Philippines," Encounter, XIX (Summer, 1958), 303-304.

if the rights of the Filipino priests were not recognized, they would secede from Rome and form an independent church. In 1902, Father Aglipay and some other priests again sent a resolution to Rome but their demands were not granted. Isabello de los Reyes returned from Spain at this time and joined the movement for an independent church with Aglipay as the head. Aglipay was not yet convinced that this action was right.

In August, 1902 (according to Bishop Stuntz, 1901), Aglipay requested a private conference with Protestant ministers to discuss the situation and possibilities of union or co-operation. The meeting was held in the rooms of the American Bible Society, whose representative was present, along with Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, and Senor Isabello de los Reyes. To these American Protestants the movement of Aglipay appeared religiously unacceptable and politically dangerous. It was now clear that Rome intended to destroy the independent movement and that the Protestants would have nothing to do with it.⁵

The demand now came from the people for Aglipay to head an independent church, but Aglipay did not assent. The Jesuits tried to influence Aglipay to halt the movement for an independent church. In return they promised that his excommunication would be rescinded, and he would be made a bishop. When Aglipay wanted these rights of bishops for Filipino priests in general, the leading Jesuit told him, "Filipinos are like carabaos, as you well know, and are unsuited for posts such as you demand." Aglipay was enraged at such a reply. He went to Isabello de los Reyes immediately and told him,

I have just completely cut off all connections with Rome. She will never permit the Filipino the equality of treatment. I accept your proposal to become head of the Independent Church.⁶

⁵Ibid., pp. 304-305.

⁶Ibid., p. 305.

In October 1902 Father Aglipay called a council of Filipino priests and lay men. He was elected as chief bishop and a constitution was accepted. The name Iglesia Filipina Independiente was chosen. The people now came to the new Church in large numbers. Congregation after congregation followed the independent church, and Governor Taft ruled that "the party in peaceful possession of any house of worship shall be deemed the rightful occupant." By 1905 of the seven million Filipinos about one-half had joined the Independent Church.

The new Church sought apostolic succession from the Old Catholic church in Switzerland and from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. The priests felt that they must have this apostolic succession to make their rites valid. Several priests in Ilocos Norte started an insurrection against the American forces. When Archbishop Hertzoc of Berne, Switzerland heard this report, he broke off all communications with the Independent Church. The Episcopalians also did not fully understand the Independent Church and ceased negotiations with them. The Protestants in the Philippines at this time looked upon the Aglipayans as a nationalistic movement only.⁷

The first Presbyterian missionary in the Philippines declares:

The organization of the Independent Filipino Church, commonly known as the Aglipayan Church, made it possible for us to gain more sympathetic hearing. Mgr. Aglipay was always friendly to our work. The daring and courage that he and his colleagues showed in breaking away from humble subservience to the Roman Catholic Church encouraged thousands to do so who perhaps would never have joined our communion.⁸

⁷Ibid., pp. 306-307.

⁸James B. Rodgers, Forty Years in the Philippines (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in United States of America, c.1940), p. 19.

Bishop Stuntz pronounced the following early judgment on the

Aglipayan Church:

It is a Filipino movement. It throws off the yoke of the Pope, and cuts all other ties of a foreign character. Its entire ministry, from the "Arzobispo" to the humblest padre is a Filipino. It is altogether of the soil, and therefore he who does not support it is not a good Filipino. He does not love his fatherland unless he joins the Independent Filipino Catholic Church. This form of pressure is very effective. It brings thousands into the ranks of the "Aglipayanos" who have precious little concern about religious matters.⁹

Aglipay recommended the reading of the Bible by both priests and people. Many copies were purchased by them. The church made no moral demands on people or priests. Stuntz thought that the Aglipayan movement was an indirect aid to Protestantism, because it broke the solid front of Romanism. Hundreds of people left Rome because of the Aglipayan movement and were gathered into Protestant churches and instructed by them. "Aglipay loosens the fruit from the tree, and we gather it."

By 1905 half the Roman Catholics in the Philippines, more than three million souls, became members of the Philippine Independent Church. The Protestants in the Philippines would have nothing to do with this movement. Aglipay approached several Protestant groups for assistance but was told that his church was, "too Roman in ritual, too rationalistic in theology, too Spanish in ethics, and too nationalistic in politics."¹⁰

⁹Homer C. Stuntz, The Philippines and the Far East (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, c.1904), pp. 493-495.

¹⁰Hunt, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

¹¹Hunt, op. cit., pp. 119-121.

In 1906 the Philippine Independent Church suffered a crushing blow from which it has never fully recovered. The Supreme Court reversed Governor Taft's ruling for peaceful possession and ruled that all church property must be returned to Rome. When this happened and the people had no place of worship, the trend was reversed and many Filipinos drifted back to the Roman fold. The Independent Church has steadily lost their numbers since this momentous ruling, and today claims a total membership of around one and one-half million.¹¹

After the church property was returned to Rome by the Supreme Court, the Filipino priests of the Independent Church began to realize what a terrible tragedy this ruling had been. They were inadequately trained for their work, and the only message they had was about hatred of the Friars. They did not have the spiritual power necessary to substitute for the elaborate ceremonies of Rome. They tried to build little bamboo chapels, but this did not seem like the church that the people had known, so they drifted back to Rome by the hundreds of thousands. The bamboo chapels rapidly deteriorated, and in many places were used only for funerals, weddings, baptisms and fiesta days. However when the full shock of the court ruling had been absorbed, the situation of the Independent Church became more stabilized and able to hold on to its members.¹²

Unitarian Influence

The doctrinal position of the church in 1905 was rationalistic,

¹¹McGavran, op. cit., p. 308.

¹²Laubach, op. cit., pp. 149-154.

and in conformity with modern science. It denied the trinity of persons of the divinity, but believed in a trinity of attributes and names. Original sin and the vicarious atonement were also denied. Christ had redeemed us from our errors, passions and weaknesses by his divine attributes and examples. The incarnation was conceived of as a form of docetism. "He was not man as we are but God with us." The resurrection had a purely spiritual interpretation. El Catecismo which was produced by de los Reyes, Sr., in 1912 attempted to reconcile all Christian doctrine with the latest findings of science. The claim was even made that Rizal being more scientific and better educated than Jesus was superior and avoided certain errors into which Jesus had fallen. In 1922 Bishop Aglipay said, "Rizal to us Filipinos, is more than a saint. He is the true Filipino Messiah."¹³

In its beginning stages the Philippine Independent Church developed a rationalistic theology. By 1920 they had a strong Unitarian influence, the Bible was to be judged by science, miracles were rejected, the Trinity was pure paganism and God worked through evolutionary processes. The death of Christ was not an atonement, but merely a seal of the truths he taught. Hell and purgatory were denied. Baptism was a symbol of faith in God and the teachings of Jesus. This was a long way from the position expressed by Aglipay to the Protestants in 1902 when he said that he only wanted "to declare for Catholic doctrine in all its purity."

These were the main reasons for the departure of the Independent

¹³Ibid., pp. 155-156.

Church from Christian truths: The first was that many leaders who had been educated in Spain had been influenced by European rationalism. These included Isabello de los Reyes, Jr., and Jose Rizal. They believed that science was the answer to man's utmost age. Also, William Howard Taft, the Governor-General of the Philippines was a Unitarian who had taken an interest in the Aglipayans. Through him the Aglipayans came in contact with the Unitarian concepts and were invited to Unitarian meetings in the United States. Reyes even said, "In a former incarnation I might have been Sabellius himself." A third reason was that in being rejected and ridiculed by both Rome and the Protestants, the Independent Church defended itself by reacting against both and declared itself, "free from the superstitions of the Church and the Bible." At one time it was even planned to start a Unitarian Seminary in Manila through the influence of Dr. Louis Cornish. Thus the Unitarians had shown an interest in the Aglipayans while the Protestants steered clear of all contact with them and at times even ridiculed them.¹⁴

In 1931 Archbishop Aglipay and Bishop de los Reyes, Sr., visited the Unitarian Churches in the United States. In 1934 they again passed through the United States on the way to Copenhagen to attend the "Triennial Congress of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religions." The Independent Church then joined this international organization.¹⁵

¹⁴ McGavran, op. cit., pp. 308-310.

¹⁵ Louis C. Cornish, The Philippines Calling (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, c.1942), p. 47.

Bishop de los Reyes, Sr., stated that the independent Church proclaimed religious liberalism and believed in progressive religion as its foundation stone. The vestments were retained because of their appeal to the Filipinos. The images were also retained but were to serve only as reminders of the virtues of the saints and not as objects of worship. Love for God and love for our fellowman is said to be "the real teaching" of Jesus. Jesus is "the greatest Master of men, but we acknowledge him not as God but as a man, not exempted to certain frailties common to all humans." Modern science was to be the source of doctrines and all miracles are rejected. Man has reached his present stage by a process of evolution. The Bible is unreliable, but has many excellent examples. "We believe that all the scriptures of the world contain good."

According to de los Reyes, Sr., the Independent Church retains the seven sacraments established by the council of Trent but denies any intrinsic value in the sacraments. They are to be considered as a "collection of ritualistic prayers." Baptism is a visible profession of faith in God and the teachings of Jesus. Confirmation is adult ratification of Church membership. Confession is to God only. Communion is a "survival of the brotherly dinner Jesus held with his poor disciples." Transsubstantiation is denied. There is no sacrifice in the Mass. Extreme Unction is a symbolic application of oil and a prayer for recovery of the sick. Ordination is the commissioning of men for the priesthood. "We do not accept the theory of Apostolic succession." Matrimony makes the legal union of man and wife.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 79-83.

In 1941 the Philippine Independent Church had the following credo included in its liturgy:

I believe in one God, we praise His Holy Name, the Force which fills the Universe as said the prophet Jeremiah; which fills the heavens and the earth; intelligent, eternal, supreme and mysterious; which gives life, directs, moves and sustains all beings; which is the great soul of the universe, the beginning of all life and movement. Although His nature has not yet been completely manifested unto us, we try to apprehend it and to see in His marvelous His power and His admirable wisdom. We hear in the depths of our conscience his most holy voice, we experience His diligence and loving fatherhood in the providential satisfaction of our daily needs. I believe that as God is the Supreme Being, He is also the Supreme Perfection. I believe that God made man to contribute with his virtues and activities to the general well-being and progress; and for this reason, we ought to be useful always and with our work we should seek for the satisfaction of our needs, think and work well, for God will recompense the good in this world, and will punish in this world bad intentions and deeds but not with absurd hell. The inexorable justice of God is perfected through His infinite compassion. I believe that the Eternal as my most loving Father protects me now, and will recognize me at my death, as a good father, full of pity, would recognize His son. As it has been proved by modern science, I shall not disappear for ever but only be transformed. Amen.¹⁷

Isabello de los Reyes, Sr., who had been so instrumental in the rationalistic and Unitarian influence in the Philippine Independent Church returned to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church as an old man just before he died. His son is today the Archbishop of the Independent Church. Two of his daughters are nuns in the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁸

The Philippine Independent Church retained a form of "mass" and Catholic worship. However Christ had very little to do with the faith or life of the members. In general they were spiritually illiterate. The priests were also poorly trained. There was little instruction of

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 87-96.

¹⁸Eufronio M. Alip, Philippine History: Political, Social, Economic (Manila: Alip & Sons, c.1958), p. 86.

any kind for priest or people. The Unitarian beliefs did not sift down to the masses in the churches. The Aglipayans during these years would have accepted any training assistance offered them by Unitarian or Protestant but none was offered.

The church became interested in politics. Bishop Aglipay even ran for the President of the Philippines and lost. He believed that when the Philippines gained their independence from the United States the people would then flock to the Independent Church since an independent government would again restore the church property to the people.

Bishop Aglipay died in 1940 before independence was granted. Bishop Fonacier was elected Obispo Maximo for a three year term. He was later ousted from office by the General Assembly in 1946. He took this matter to the Philippine Court, but finally lost out to Bishop de los Reyes, Jr., the son of the leader in the original founding of the church. The communists tried to gain influence in the Aglipayan church, but were not successful even though they were given a friendly hearing for a time.¹⁹

Aglipay lists three main reasons why the Independent Church lost millions of members after having once gained more than half of the population of the Philippines:

- A. An insufficient number of priests to minister adequately to such a multitude.
- B. The award of all church property to the Roman Catholic Church by the Supreme Court of the Philippines on November 24, 1906.
- C. The unsympathetic attitude of other Christian bodies toward

¹⁹McGavran, op. cit., pp. 310-312.

the movement. The Unitarians alone espoused the cause of the new church with the result that a few of the leaders . . . became infected with the tenets of that movement.²⁰

Post-Independence Developments

According to a recent statement of Supreme Bishop Isabello de los Reyes, Jr., the Philippine Independent Church now subscribes to "the faith of the Ecumenical Councils of the undivided church," and "nothing that cannot be proved by Holy Scripture is to be held as necessary to salvation."²¹

Bishop de los Reyes, Jr., saw the prime need for a better trained clergy. He sought the help of the Protestant Episcopal Church and informed them of the lack of books, the need of training facilities and the desire for apostolic succession. Bishop Binstead responded:

Before we can give you apostolic orders, you must accept the trinitarian doctrine in the historic creed and agree that only that which is found in Holy Scripture will be acceptable to your Church as essential doctrine.

The house of bishops of the Philippine church agreed to accept the historic creeds, use the Episcopal prayer book and train its priests at St. Andrew's Seminary in Manila. Thus on April 17, 1948, apostolic succession was conferred on Bishop de los Reyes, Jr., and others in Manila by Bishop Binstead.²²

The Supreme Bishop of the Philippine Independent Church Mons. Isabello

²⁰Dwight E. Stevenson, Christianity in the Philippines, in The College of the Bible Quarterly (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible, 1955), p. 15.

²¹Ibid.

²²McGavran, op. cit., pp. 312-313.

de los Reyes, Jr., states that at one time Aglipay was attracted by the Unitarian theology, but that today all traces of heretical teaching have been eliminated. In 1947 the Independent Church could issue an "Orthodox Declaration of Faith and Articles of Religion" which was unanimously approved by the Supreme Council of Bishops and the General Assembly. This statement of Faith paved the way for the Protestant Episcopal Church to grant "valid orders to the Independent Church."

Mons. de los Reyes adds:

The Philippine Independent Church is catholic (universal) reformed and autonomous.

It is catholic in that it has preserved the faith and order of the church as it was set forth in the Ecumenical Council of the undivided church. It has always had the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons; it has administered the seven sacraments; it accepts the statement of the faith as contained in the Apostles' and Nicene creeds and the Bible as the word of God and that nothing which cannot be proved by Holy Scripture is to be held as necessary to salvation. It is to be noted that there was a brief period in the history of the church when a reformed creed resembling but not identical with the ancient Catholic creeds was authorized, but never widely used.

The Bishop of the Independent Church continues:

It is reformed in that it abolished the abuses of indulgences, the sale of the so-called "santa bula" condemned Mariolatry, permitted the marriage of clergy, holds the Holy Scriptures alone as the basis of doctrine, and has renounced the claim of the Pope to Universal jurisdiction, together with the doctrine of his infallibility.²³

The Independent Church claims "approximately two million baptized members." It also reports one hundred thousand children baptized, fifty thousand people confirmed, ten thousand marriages and twenty thousand funerals per year. The Obispo Maximo is elected by the General Assembly

²³Ross Apon, editor, Fifty Years of Protestantism in the Philippines (Manila: Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, 1949), pp. 48-49.

for a term of four years. The Supreme Council of Bishops is composed of twelve senior bishops. The General Assembly is composed of bishops, priests and laymen and is the supreme legislative and judicial body of the Church.

The faith and practice of the church is conservative in that it holds the faith taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles and as affirmed by the Ecumenical Councils of the undivided church It observes the Christian year, emphasizing the chief elements in Our Lord's life, the Holy Communion called the Mass is celebrated in a language understood by the people. The order of the Mass was adapted from Roman usage, but this is now being revised to conform more with the Anglican usage. Sermons and instructions in the church are based on the Bible, and the Epistles and Gospels are read in the Mass. The prayers of the church are Scriptural, but the people generally lack an intimate knowledge of the Bible. The church has learned the necessity for a more thorough knowledge of Scriptures on the part of its people and is determined to make up for this deficiency. It deprecates divorce for any cause and does not permit remarriage of divorced persons. It condemns political ideologies which oppress men and rob them of their due freedom. It stands for a social order which insures justice, peace and tolerance to all classes, races and nations, and which permits all men to live honest, healthful lives.²⁴

The church has established a very close relationship with the Episcopal church, but it is still an "Independent" Church. It has not entered into organic union with the Episcopal Church. All of the clergy of the Independent Church are now being trained at the Episcopal Seminary in Manila.

The Independent Philippine Church has been a benefit to even the Roman Church by putting new life into the priests to hold onto their members. Robertson, in his study of the Aglipayan Church, closes with the ominous warning,

Those who know the Philippine Islands need not be told that what has happened there once may happen again. The schism has died

²⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.

down largely because the conditions that fostered its rapid growth have either changed or lost in importance. Given an occasion, it might easily be revived, and this notwithstanding the careful work of Church leaders of the last decade and a half.²⁵

Bishop de los Reyes gives the following summary of the influence of the Philippine Independent Church on the religious life in the Philippines:

The Church has exerted a strong influence on the whole Christian movement in the Philippines. By its courageous stand against the autocratic power and errors of the Roman Church it has made the work of other churches easier, and has been the indirect means of bringing about the reforms within the Roman Church. By its fight for the recognition of the ability and rights of the Filipino priesthood it has made no small contribution to the development of national Christian leadership in the Islands.²⁶

²⁵Robertson, op. cit., pp. 343-344.

²⁶Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

CHAPTER V

PROTESTANT INFLUENCE

Before World War II

After the United States had gained control of the Philippines as a result of defeating Spain in the Spanish-American War in 1898, there was a question about what to do with the Philippines. The decision was finally reached by President William McKinley that the United States should retain control of the Philippines in order to protect them from other foreign powers, to prepare them for self-government and, finally, in the words of President McKinley

there was nothing left for us to do, but to take them all, and to educate Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace, do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died.¹

This high and noble motive of Christianizing the Philippines was identical to that expressed by the ruling powers of Spain three hundred and fifty years earlier when Spain had taken possession of the Philippines. In the case of the United States no doubt it meant the spread of Protestant Christianity rather than the Spanish-type of Catholicism.

Protestantism had earlier had its inception in the Philippines in 1873 when New Testaments were secretly distributed in false covers. By the time of the American occupation in 1898, there were around 400 Protestants meeting in thirty-five small groups in various places throughout

¹Homer C. Stuntz, The Philippines and the Far East (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, c.1904), p. 144.

the Philippines. Since that time the number of Protestants had increased to more than 600,000 in 1957. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (commonly referred to as UCCP) has around 100,000 members; the Methodists, 90,000; the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista en las Islas Filipinas (an independent, indigenous Filipino Methodist group commonly referred to as Iemelif) has 20,000 members; and the Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Cristo (an independent Presbyterian group commonly called Unida), 15,000 members. These are the larger Protestant bodies at the present time.²

The first real Protestant missionary work among the Filipinos was begun by a Methodist layman, Mr. Arthur Prautch, and his wife. With the help of an army chaplain they opened the "Soldiers Institute" and held services there. Five prominent Filipino Masons came to Mr. Prautch and asked him to open the Institute for Filipinos. They promised to fill the meetings with Filipino Masons until other Filipinos could be attracted to attend. "Thus Protestantism in the Philippines began among Masons--and Masonry has been an unfailing friend to the Protestant Church ever since."³

In 1900, one of the early Presbyterian reports on conditions in the Philippines stated:

Never in the history of the American church has such an opportunity been offered or such responsibility been placed upon the American public. Conditions in the Philippines are similar to those in

²Theodore A. Gill, "A Mother of Pearl View," Christian Century (January 30, 1957), pp. 133-134.

³Frank C. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c.1925), pp. 180-181.

Germany when Luther arose: a renegade priesthood, a dead church, a people that have been starved. Conditions are ripe for a wholesale revolt from Rome.⁴

In summarizing the religious situation in the Philippines in the year 1904, Bishop Homer Stuntz states:

The religious situation is one that must appeal to every lover of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a nation ready to be led to the Christ. Sick of the impotence of their old faith, they wait to be helped into the pool of true spiritual healing, will the Protestant Churches of America rise to the novel and urgent demand of the situation? Or will they be content to apply their usual rules to this unusual condition, and go so tardily and so pinchingly about the work of saving a whole people that the doors of opportunity will swing shut in the faces of those who seek most eagerly to enter with the message of a salvation that saves?⁵

Thus Protestantism entered the Philippines shortly after the American troops. The first regular Protestant service was held in Manila on March 2, 1899 by Bishop James M. Thoburn of the Methodist Church. The Presbyterians arrived in the same year. They were followed by the Baptists in 1900; the United Brethren and the Disciples of Christ in 1901; the Congregationalists in 1902; the Seventh Day Adventists in 1905.

The Evangelical Union of the various Protestant Churches was organized in 1901 for the purpose of dividing the Philippines among the various groups. A permanent foothold was gained in the Philippines within a few years for the Protestant Church. In 1903 there were forty-five congregations with four thousand members. In 1918 the total membership had grown to 125,000 and by 1928 to 131,000.

The Protestant Churches made a real contribution in the field of

⁴Ibid., p. 177.

⁵Stuntz, op. cit., p. 393.

education with Silliman University, Central Philippine College, and Union College in Manila. Hospitals were also established in several places in the islands. Many copies of the Bible in English and various Filipino dialects were distributed.⁶

The Episcopalians came into the islands in 1899 to work with the Army chaplains. Bishop Charles H. Brent became leader of Episcopalian efforts in the Philippines in 1910. He did not feel that it was fitting that his church should work among the Roman Catholic population. In Manila they worked among Americans and Chinese. Efforts were also inaugurated toward the Muslims in the south and the pagan Igorots of the mountains of North Luzon.

From the very beginning of Protestant efforts in the Philippines, machinery for co-operation was set up in order to counter the efforts of a united Roman Church majority. The Ministerial Alliance was formed in 1900 and the Evangelical Union of the Philippine Islands in 1901. Union Seminary was begun in 1907 by Presbyterians and Methodists. Rome made efforts to hold its ground by placing the Philippines under an Apostolic Delegate and created four new bishoprics in 1910. American priests arrived and Filipino priests were raised to the episcopate. Filipino priests were trained in seminaries in the United States. Dutch and Belgium priests poured into the Islands. Schools were opened. Rome did not suffer in the transition in the Philippines as much as it has in Latin America. Roman influence has been weakened, but not defeated in the changes at the end of the nineteenth century. The final

⁶Gregorio F. Zaide, Philippine Political and Cultural History (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1949), II, 281-282.

result of American rule was actually a strengthening of Roman Catholicism by the year 1914. A virile Protestantism put new life into a decadent Spanish Catholicism. The religious and moral life of the Filipinos was greatly improved.⁷

Bishop Stuntz stated that the three biggest obstacles to Protestant missionaries were:

The almost invincible tendency to religious formalism on the part of the people, the vicious example of worldly and godless Americans, and the language barriers which arise between us and those to whom we would minister.

The people believed when they had been through the form of the Mass or said their rosary, they were truly Christian and religious regardless of what their life was otherwise. Falsehoods and hatred of fellowmen seemed to be compatible with true religion. The external work seemed to be the only important aspect of religion to the average Filipino. This poses a real problem for the Protestant Churches in reaching the Filipino.⁸

The early Protestants in giving their reason for being at work in the Philippines, said that they were there to correct the error of the Roman Catholic Church which imperils true faith in the individual. Protestants in the Philippines were there "to exalt the word of God" while the Catholics kept the Bible from the people. Bishop Stuntz pointed out the many errors of Rome as being the main purpose of the

⁷Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Great Century in the Americas, Austral-Asia, and Africa: A. D. 1800 - A. D. 1914, in A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1943), V, 271-274.

⁸Stuntz, op. cit., p. 476.

work of the Protestant Church in the Philippines.⁹

An American government official who spent many years in the Philippines said,

The Protestants have had a remarkable growth during the past four decades and exercise an influence out of proportion to their numerical strength. In 1918 the census reported the number of protestants as 124,575. The 1939 figure of 378,361 is more than three times as large and the rate of increase has been rising during the past few years.

The 1939 census showed the total number of Protestant adherents, including children, to be around 650,000. These were served by five hundred pastors, six hundred evangelists, and six hundred seventy deaconesses with the help of about 240 American missionaries. Hayden offers the opinion:

The Protestants have reached a position of importance in the new Philippines through the zeal and ability of the American missionaries, the high spiritual and ethical values which their churches have offered, and their close relationship with the American way of life.¹⁰

Just before the outbreak of World War II the President of the Philippines, Manuel Quezon said to a group of Protestant missionaries, "You have given us an independent thinking citizenship and compelled the Roman Catholic Church to clean house."¹¹

After World War II

The Japanese occupation did not have any permanent effect on the

⁹Ibid., pp. 358-377.

¹⁰Joseph R. Hayden, The Philippines: A Study in National Development (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1942), p. 574.

¹¹Ross Apon, editor, Fifty Years of Protestantism in the Philippines (Manila: Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, 1949), p. 35.

church life of the Philippines. Church life was under strict control by the occupation forces. After a while it was even necessary to submit sermons in advance of preaching schedules for censorship and for the addition of propaganda materials. The enforced union of Protestants into the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines did not last after the war was over. However, the desire for a truly united Protestantism was stronger in the Philippines after the war than it had been before the Japanese occupation.¹² From the beginning of World War I to the beginning of World War II, Protestantism in the Philippines multiplied six-fold. Most of these gains were from nominal Roman Catholics. After World War II the churches showed that they had not been seriously handicapped by the Japanese occupation as they set about rebuilding their churches and continuing the vigor they had displayed before the war. 1948 was the year for the founding of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines by a union of Presbyterian, Congregational Christian, Evangelical United Brethren and some Methodists and Disciples of Christ. In the same year the Philippine Independent Church obtained "Apostolic succession" for three of its bishops from the Protestant Episcopal Church.¹³

The UCCP was organized in 1948 and today has around 100,000 in some 790 congregations. In 1953 this group sent missionaries to the

¹²Dwight E. Stevenson, Christianity in the Philippines, in The College of the Bible Quarterly (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible, 1955), pp. 34-35.

¹³Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1953), p. 1445.

Celebes and Thailand. This is now the largest Protestant body working in the Philippines.¹⁴

The presence of Protestants in the Philippines has been a greater influence than the numbers of adherents would indicate. It has served as a stimulant and a purifier to the Roman Church. Many abuses of the Roman Churches have been corrected. The Protestant emphasis on education and medicine has led Rome to attempt to provide the facilities for the masses and not just for the elite.

About eighty per cent of the Protestants are represented in the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches (referred to as PFCC) which is similar to the National Council of Churches in the United States. The churches in the Federation are those which started working in the Philippines during the early period of the American administration and some of the off-shoots from these groups. Today there are six members of the Federation: The Convention of Philippine Northern Baptists, the Methodist Church, the UCCP, the Iemelif, the Unida, and the Disciples of Christ in the Tagalog area. The largest groups are the Methodists with 90,000 and the UCCP with 100,000 members.¹⁵

The PFCC is composed of most of the Protestant groups in the Philippines. The membership in the Federation includes all of the larger Protestant bodies of the Philippines.

The general convention of the PFCC is composed of the Officers of the Federation, the Executive heads of the member Churches, one delegate for every 10,000 full members of churches . . . and a

¹⁴"Philippine Milestone," Time (September 14, 1953), p. 84.

¹⁵Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

missionary representative from each capital mission related to the churches.¹⁶

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines came into being on May 25, 1948 when the delegates unanimously adopted the following declaration:

- I. That the evangelical Church in the Philippines, the Philippine Methodist Church, and the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines are now and shall be one church known as the United Church of Christ in the Philippines;
- II. That the United Church of Christ in the Philippines places itself in readiness to continue to negotiate for ever expanding Church union with those now in negotiation as well as with others;
- III. That we, the delegates to the Uniting Assembly, hereby formally adopt the plan and Basis of Union formulated by the Joint Commission on Church Union of the Uniting Churches, as the fundamental declaration of faith and plan of government of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and forthwith proceed to organize ourselves accordingly for the furtherance of the redemptive work of Christ in the world.¹⁷

The basis of union referred to in the enabling resolution of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is not indicated but is similar to that of the basis of union adopted in 1929 which read as follows:

Whereas, it is in accord with Divine Will that Christians should be united in worship and in every effort to spread the gospel; Whereas, the Unity of the Church is founded upon the loyalty to the one Lord of the Church and on fidelity to the cause of His Kingdom; Whereas, any unity is first of all a unity of spirit and life; Whereas, having the same spirit and owning the same Lord, we nonetheless recognize the diversity of gifts, administrations, for those who exercise due freedom must always be afforded in differences of interpretation, in forms of worship, and in modes of operation; Therefore, we do hereby agree to associate ourselves

¹⁶Apon, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 42.

in a visible body to be known as "The United Church of Christ in the Philippine Islands" for the furtherance of the redemptive work of Christ in the world and declare the following to be our Confession of Faith.¹⁸

The Confession of Faith referred to is said to represent all of the Protestant parties working in the Philippines today. This Confession reads as follows:

We believe in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Who is Spirit and the Father of our spirits, omnipresent, self-existent, eternal, infinite, unchangeable in His being and attributes; we believe, that this Triune God Created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, visible and invisible; that He sustains, protects, and governs these with gracious regard for the welfare of man.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between man and God, and that God, out of His great love for the world, gave His only Begotten Son to be the Savior of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His Salvation to all men. He, being truly God, became truly man, and that without sin; was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and for us has become the perfect revelation of God. He offered Himself a perfect sacrifice on the Cross to take away the sin of the world; on the third day He arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

We believe in the Holy Spirit Who takes the things of Christ and makes them known unto men. He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He is the ever present Comforter in the Church and bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God, and works in us the fruits of righteousness and true holiness.

We believe that God is revealed in nature, in history and in the heart of man, but that He has made gracious and clearer revelations through men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration, to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelation and the sure witness to Christ as containing all things necessary to salvation, and practice.

We believe that God created man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and forever responsible to his Maker and Lord.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 40.

We believe that man who was created free and able to choose good or evil, being tempted, chose evil, and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God so that they are without excuse and stand in need of salvation through Jesus Christ.

We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Savior of Sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all sufficient salvation to all men. We believe that all who repent and believe in Jesus Christ are regenerated and saved by Him through the work of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the resurrection of the dead; the future general judgment; and an eternal state of rewards, in which the righteous dwell in endless life and the wicked receive the eternal award of their sins.

We believe in the Christian Church, of which Christ is the only Head. We believe that the Church Invisible consists of all the redeemed and the Church Visible embraces all who profess the true faith, together with their children. We receive to our communion all who confess and obey Christ as their Divine Lord and Savior, and we hold fellowship with all believers in Him. We hold that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a spiritual institution, organized for spiritual ends and the depending upon spiritual power, which as the Visible Church, is commissioned by Him to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind, encouraging righteousness, justice, brotherhood, and international good will, until the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

We believe Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the only divinely established sacraments committed to the Church together with the Word as means of grace, made effectual by the Holy Spirit, and always to be observed by Christians with prayer and praise of God.¹⁹

The United Church of Christ has considered the entire Philippines as its territory and has divided the Islands into four different areas and has elected a bishop for each of these areas. These areas are: Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.²⁰

Other larger mission groups in the Philippines which are not in the PFCC are: the Episcopal Church, Assemblies of God, Church of

¹⁹Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰Ibid., p. 41

Christ (Independent--"the Wolfe Group"), Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, International Church of the Four Square Gospel, Pilgrim Holiness Group, Seventh Day Adventists, Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Missions, United Gospel Tabernacles and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. An independent fundamentalist group has established a powerful radio voice in the Philippines known as a Far East Broadcasting Company, Inc. and also the Far East Bible Institute and Seminary, Inc. Since the close of World War II there has been an influx of small pentecostal and fundamentalists groups. Sixty-six of these groups are reported to be working in the Southern Islands of Mindanao. The traditional animism of the Filipino which the Roman Catholic Church has not exterminated makes them fertile fruit for the pentecostal "healing campaigns."²¹

In the memorial book called Fifty Years of Protestantism in the Philippines Free Masonry is presented as an "ally of Protestantism."

The statement is made,

Free masonry is not a religious sect, but a fraternal organization. Its creed of faith, hope and charity; its militant crusade against injustice, intolerance and superstition in any form; its advocacy for the democratic principles and way of life and conformity to the teachings of the Bible make it an ally of Protestantism rather than any other religious sects. One can be a true Protestant and at the same time be a true Mason. But one cannot be a true Roman Catholic and at the same time be a true Mason. Its accent is humanitarianism-service. For Catholicism and Free Masonry are opposite poles that never attract but instead repel each other.²²

The Roman Catholic church still considers the Philippines as a

²¹Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

²²Apon, op. cit., p. 86.

mission field. "It can count only 163 Filipino priests as against 1,511 foreign priests in the islands." The Filipino evangelical churches do not consider the Philippines to be a mission field for American Protestants, at least among the more-established, older Protestant groups in the Philippines. After fifty years of Protestant effort some three thousand congregations have been established and are served by around two thousand ministers. The Philippine churches have sent missionaries to Asia, Africa, Thailand, Okinawa, Indonesia, Borneo, Malaya, Hawaii, Iran and the United States, according to a Filipino source.

It is felt by some Filipino Protestants that although some American missionaries in special and technical fields may be useful in the Philippines, "the pastoral type of missionary is now passé."²³ A Filipino Protestant leader describes the role of the present missionary of the Philippines as follows:

From the Filipino standpoint the missionary should be a sort of athletic coach, and indeed many post-war missionaries accepted this role. But the trouble comes when some of the coaches insist on mixing into the thick of the game, to see to it that their wishes are carried out. The result is that they find it difficult to go along with the Church's aspiration for autonomy. Plans made by the national churches are not always binding on the missionaries, who have their own program laid down by the mission board. They are in a way co-workers with the Church but outside the work. Consequently national leaders are taken for granted almost to the point of being ignored. Nothing hurts more than that.

He adds:

As the wave of nationalism sweeps into all aspects of the Philippine life, actions of our church leaders indicate that they

²³Artemio R. Guillermo, "Missionary Role in the Philippines," Christian Century (April 1, 1959), pp. 388-389.

confidently expect the missionaries to accept the new role. Indeed our nationalism--as the Methodist minister and social philosopher Fidel T. Galang has put it--"is more than a wave; it is rather a consciousness, a conviction, a position gained pointing toward the right direction, a first installment of the freedom that is to come."²⁴

Many of the pastors of the Protestant Churches in the Philippines have not had adequate training to do a capable job in the ministry. An inquiry in 1952 revealed the following information about Protestant ministers in the Philippines: Thirty-eight per cent were seminary graduates, thirty-six had some seminary or Bible school training, twenty-six per cent had no professional training of any kind.²⁵

The library facilities of the Protestant seminaries in the Philippines are all in bad condition. During a 1956 survey of Union theological seminary in Manila there were only forty books on the Roman Catholic Church and twenty books on Protestant Churches. The library of Silliman University College of Theology needed to be brought up to date. "One of the most desolate conditions in the Philippine Church is the lack of books." The survey revealed there is a great need for the following materials:

1. Treatises on Christian doctrines oriented to the actual present social conditions in the Philippines.
2. Short easily read pamphlets on single doctrines such as "The Sacraments," "The Resurrection," etc.
3. Philippine and general Church History.
4. Biographical materials on church leaders.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Yorke Allen, Jr., A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1960), pp. 140-141.

5. Simple Bible commentaries.²⁶

Iglesia ni Kristo

A body which cannot be classified as Protestant but is rather an offshoot of Protestant groups is growing by leaps and bounds at the present time. The Iglesia ni Kristo (Church of Christ) is a truly indigenous Philippine Church which was founded in 1914 by Felix Manalo. They have an elaborate headquarters and many impressive churches in Luzon. Manalo was originally converted from Catholicism to Methodism in 1900. He became dissatisfied with the Methodists and joined the Presbyterians, then the Disciples then finally the Seventh Day Adventists. Not being satisfied with any of these, he established his own church on his own interpretation of Revelation, Chapter Seven identifying himself as a divine messenger and the Philippines as a favored country.

The services of the Iglesia ni Kristo follow a simple pattern and make room for a sixty-minute sermon written by someone in the headquarters in Manila and preached in the various dialects throughout the provinces at the same time. Attendance is required of all members. The sermons emphasize attacks on Roman Catholic teachings and such moral virtues as sobriety, industry, regular giving, church attendance and Bible reading.

There are no educational requirements for the ministry. They are trained by older pastors and then given an intensive course at central

²⁶Ibid., p. 231.

headquarters. All finances are handled from the central office, including the local minister's salary. Their pastor reportedly receives from one hundred to two hundred dollars per month while most Protestant ministers in the Philippines receive less than fifty dollars monthly.²⁷

In 1914 Manalo said he received a divine revelation which made him the Fifth Angel of Revelation 7:2. He says that the reference to the "rising sun" in the same verse means the Philippine Islands. He taught that the Church which Christ founded in Matthew 16:18 disappeared in the early centuries and was non-existent until 1915 when it was revived by him. Iglesia ni Kristo is the only true church and there is no salvation outside of it. Manalo claims to have ordained 2,000 pastors and 4,000,000 members. His headquarters was built by contributions from poor Filipinos and cost one and one-half million dollars.

Manalo is in complete charge of what is taught, how funds are spent and even how members are to vote in public elections. His ministers are taught the art of debate by using certain Bible verses out of context. In this way they usually mislead the un-indoctrinated Filipino.

The church is anti-trinitarian. "They believe that Jesus was only a man, appointed to be savior, he was not the second person of the trinity. Manalo makes himself more important than Christ." He also has a place for Luther as "one of the Angels" of Revelation. The "Holy Supper" is observed only once a year. This group is completely independent of all other groups in the Philippines and it is totally

²⁷Chester L. Hunt, "An Arrested Reformation," Christian Century (January 25, 1956), p. 109.

supported by Filipinos.²⁸

Felix Manalo uses the Bible and interprets it in his own way for his own purposes. He promotes anti-trinitarian doctrine. He makes the claim that his is the only saving church. Yet, Manalo calls Christ the savior of all men. This group now has around 2,000 pastors and more than 1,000,000 followers. Members are received by immersion. The church group is fully self-supporting and is rapidly increasing.²⁹ Most of the members of the Iglesia ni Kristo come from the lower income group. New members receive a minimum of thirty indoctrination periods. Once they are admitted, they must lead a high moral life, give regularly and attend services twice a week. Members who do not live up to these standards are admonished or suspended. Another source says the present membership is more than one-half million and the church leaders claim more than three million.³⁰

²⁸Stevenson, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

²⁹Donald A. McGavran, "The Independent Church in the Philippines," Encounter, XIX (Summer, 1958), 319-321.

³⁰Hunt, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

CHAPTER VI

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES

Cultural Influences

The Filipino culture was deeply rooted when the Spanish came on the scene. They are a tough and flexible people who are unable to absorb new cultural influences without losing their own identity. Even now after more than four hundred years of concentrated Western influence the Filipinos have not lost the Malayan foundation of their culture.¹ Although the Spanish were successful in bringing most of the Philippines under control, the influence of the Spanish culture did not take place in a vacuum, but resulted in a blending of East and West, of Orient and Occident. Much of the pre-Spanish culture of the Filipinos survived the Spanish conquest and is still evident today. It is necessary then to try to gain an understanding of the Filipino way of life before the arrival of the Spaniards in order to understand Filipino culture today.

The Filipinos were not organized, but were made up of social or political groups known as Barangays consisting of from thirty to one hundred families. In these Barangays there were generally four classes of people:

1. The chieftains, called Datus, and their families.
2. Maharlika or the nobles.

¹John L. Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, c.1959), p. 26.

3. The free men called timaguas.
4. The servile, dependent class whom the Spaniards misleadingly called slaves.²

The dependent class was made up of those who were in debt or who had been captured in a raid. They were divided into two classes. The upper class were similar to the share-croppers, while the lower class were more completely under the control of their masters. This lower class had to work gratis three out of every four days and could not marry without the superior consent. The dependent status was hereditary.³

Frequently there was hostility between the Barangays which resulted in head-hunting expeditions. There were also examples of several Barangays uniting for joint endeavors. Some Filipino historians have tried to establish that there were confederations in which one datu was ruler over a whole area of Barangays. According to this theory a native chieftain named Humabon was ruling the entire island of Cebu at the time of Magellan's arrival, and Rajah Soliman was the ruler of central Luzon during the time of Legazpi. While there were probably large Barangays, it is doubtful that the jurisdiction of any one datu was very extensive. The record of Magellan's visit to Cebu indicates that Humabon who reportedly became a Christian could not get the other chiefs to follow suit. Magellan called the chiefs together and told them that if they did not obey Humabon they would all be killed. The chiefs obeyed. Thus, it seems that Magellan promoted

²Ibid., p. 15.

³Ibid., pp. 20-21.

Humabon to rule over this entire area of Cebu and this had not been the case before the arrival of the Spanish. In other words the rule over an extended area was originated by the Spanish and backed up by Spanish power.⁴

The Muslims had instituted a form of political organization in the south under the direction of a Rajah, and they were in the process of instituting the same thing in the central and northern islands when the Legazpi expedition arrived in 1565 and halted the advance of Islam.

In the mountain province of northern Luzon which the Spanish were unable to penetrate, there was no extensive political organization but small tribal or Barangay groups. The Spanish fashioned the Barangay groups into the basis of local government. This was very successful because of the geography of the Philippines. The Archipelago is composed of more than 7,000 islands. The larger ones have mountain ranges where the original inhabitants, the Negritos, have been driven by the Malayan immigrants. These features contribute to political decentralization and language variations. All of the Philippine tongues go back to a common Malayo-Polynesian root form, but they are broken up into six major languages, many minor ones and multiple dialects.

The Filipinos had their own system of writing by means of an alphabet consisting of fourteen consonants and three vowels. This alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet after the Spanish conquest. The first book printed by the Spanish in 1593 was a Tagalog text of Doctrina which was printed in the Latin and the Philippine alphabet.

⁴Ibid., pp. 16-17.

The languages of the Philippines were later all transcribed into the Latin alphabet. Only a few of the pre-Spanish writings were preserved which showed that the Filipinos used vowel points similar to the Hebrew and Arabic languages.

Even the differences in language and separated areas did not prevent many similarities in the culture found throughout the Philippines. The social unit was generally limited to the immediate family and relatives. Polygamy was not generally practiced, except in areas where the Mohammedan influence had been great. However, divorce and remarriage were socially acceptable under certain conditions, but were the exception rather than the rule.

Parents usually made arrangements for the marriage of their children to form advantageous kinship and property alliances. The groom was to provide a dowry and pay his father-in-law a "bride price." It seems that the engaged couple lived under the same roof and marriage was not firmly consummated until after the bride became pregnant.⁵

Today the Filipinos still place a strong emphasis on family units. The large size unit which was known as the Barangay placed the elders at the foremost position in the social unit. Everyone but the elders became submerged in this social unit. This gave a sense of solidarity to the rural communities, but it hindered "rugged individualism." As a result of this family emphasis a claim is made that the rural districts have been impervious to change for centuries. In a study of this situation recently a Filipino university professor states:

⁵Ibid., pp. 17-19.

Even the forms of agricultural economy and its concomitant agricultural culture . . . marriage customs, religious and animistic beliefs, hygienic and health habits, forms of speech, artistic and literary creations, belief in their relations to the forces of nature, expressions of wishful thoughts, etc. . . . have not departed very much from their ancestral structure and this is so in spite of their having long been influenced by a new religion--Christianity. Many of the rites of the transplanted religion have suffered modifications from the form in which they have been introduced during the period of conquest by the Spanish in order to suit the mental habits of the Filipino. So great has been the hold of conservatism in the mind of the Filipinos that anything like a tradition cannot very easily be uprooted. Any hope for further developments must reckon with this social force.

The professor adds that the modern educational system is making its inroads and establishing the value of the individual. A social revolution is taking place, but the traditional mentality is still dominant.

"Thus we see in the Philippines two forces at work, one, the force of social milieu, and the other the force of individuality."⁶

The Filipino culture is largely in an agricultural setting with eighty per cent of the population living in rural communities and engaged in agricultural endeavors. A recent study indicates,

The Philippines continues to be a land chiefly of rural, agricultural peoples. Different origins and times of arrival means that these people came with different methods of how to utilize the separate landscapes. Some of their practices were simple and have not changed greatly with the centuries. Other land use patterns have changed markedly as new cultural influences have come in, particularly during the last five hundred years. New people have come into the islands--Moslem, Malays, Christian Spaniards and Americans, Buddhist and Confucianist, Chinese--new, political, social and economic patterns. They brought new crops, new tools, new cultivation practices. With them came new ways of transports, new arrangements of housing and residential settlements, new patterns of trade, new weapons and tricks of warfare. Also there came new religions, new forms of recreation, new

⁶Ricardo Pascual, Social and Cultural Development of the Philippines (Manila: Philippine Council Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), p. 1.

values for old products, new values on human labor, new cultural mores and new objectives in life.⁷

The Moslem Malays and Chinese began coming into the islands before the arrival of the Spaniards. The Malay influences were largely social and religious but were becoming political by the time the Spaniards arrived. They were expressed chiefly in the far south of the islands, but worked northward. The influence of the Chinese was primarily economic.

Spanish influences were more far reaching than those of the Malays or Chinese, but they did not penetrate every nook and corner of the Islands. They left blocks of the uplands and many island interiors at Moslem southern sector of the islands relatively untouched. Certain patterns, harmful in the long run, such as the positions of power and wealth held by tribal chiefs and the nobility--were only fixed more firmly by the Spaniards. Some long run problems, for which no remedial steps were taken, made their appearance with the Spaniards. Overpopulation and serious tenancy conditions were the chief of these though confined to certain provinces. Urbanization appeared under the Spanish rule, to set up a fundamental divergence of forces. A regional division of the islands into the Moslem Southern fringe and the Christian central and north was another significant result of Spanish and Malay influences.⁸

It is difficult to give an exact picture of the culture of the Philippines and life in the Philippines today. There are so many variations, contradictions and extremes in every area of life that it makes it impossible to generalize as to the whole picture of the whole Philippine situation today. One author makes the following attempt to summarize the present situation:

The Philippines today possesses an unstable agricultural economy which is deeply embroiled in internal trade. The people are

⁷J. E. Spencer, Land and People in the Philippines (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, c.1952), pp. 219-220.

⁸Ibid.

attracted to the occident, tied by bonds to the Orient, and threatened by the advance of what aspires to be the soviet world. The islands and their population are chiefly agricultural, chiefly rural, chiefly literate, chiefly Christian and politically sophisticated, but each time this leads to over-generalization. An urban resident might wish to add the phrase, chiefly capitalistic; but a rural critic would certainly counter with, pre-capitalistic. Heterogeneity--inter-mixture of diverse elements and trends in the economy and culture of the Philippines--is far more prevalent than our unity and conformity.⁹

An American historian, James A. LeRoy, said:

It is perfectly safe to say that in no other part of the Orient have women relatively so much freedom or do they play so large a part in the control of the family or in social or even industrial affairs. . . . there seems every reason for ascribing this relative improvement of the position of women in the Philippines as compared with surrounding countries in the Orient to the influence of the Christian religion.¹⁰

In outlining the characteristics of the Filipino from a sympathetic American point of view, Judge Malcolm points out that the Filipino is different from other nationalities. He is extremely sensitive. He resents the word "native" as conveying a derogatory meaning. Although the Filipino has been characterized as being lazy, given the opportunity and motivation he becomes very industrious. On the negative side are proneness to imitation, lack of business thrift, easy-going way of life, "his evasion of refusal to indirection," lack of civic spirit and love of gambling. There is an explanation for each of these faults. He is a poor business man because nature abundantly provides the necessities of life. The easy-going life is a combination of fatalism, natural dignity and a protest against haste. "It contrasts sharply with the

⁹Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁰Gregorio F. Zaide, Philippine Political and Cultural History (Manila: Philippine Education Company, c.1949), II, 79-80.

behavior of those Americans who try to hustle the East and soon rest beneath a few feet of sod." When a Filipino does not tell the truth, it may be a desire to be polite in saying what pleases the hearer. Gambling is the means of brightening up a dull existence.

On the positive side of the Filipino character there is an inbred courtesy and kindness, his sobriety, his generous hospitality to strangers, his respect for elders and his personal cleanliness. Many other traits could be named, but, as a Filipino journalist has said, "the Filipinos are one kind of people when they are among themselves, and another when there is present, for instance, an American." This makes it difficult to give a general description of Filipinos for the exceptions will sometimes be greater than the rules.¹¹

A Filipino historian gives much the same summary of the Filipino character:

In truth, the Filipinos have certain defects in their national character, such as their love of gambling and politics, their addiction to oratory and luxurious living, their easy-going ways and fatalistic outlook on life, their lack of patience and perseverance in business enterprises, their proneness to blind imitation, and their lack of foresight in planning their future.¹²

Fatalism is mentioned again and again as a characteristic that is ingrained into the Filipino character. This seems to not only be true of the Filipinos but of Asiatics in general. A sociological study says: "In the traditional Asiatic society there is no pretense of equality and people take it for granted that fate has placed them in the position

¹¹George A. Malcolm, First Malayan Republic (Boston: Christopher Publishing House, c.1951), pp. 39-42.

¹²Zaide, op. cit., I, 29.

they occupy."¹³

This fatalism seems to be blended in many cases with a form of belief in the providence of God. A Filipino college professor is reported to have declared, "It is God's duty to take care of me, so why should I worry too much about working. If the Lord cannot take good care of me he should resign." Another university professor writes:

The Tagalog beliefs known as talaga ng Diyos (ordained by God) and Utos ng Tadhana (decree of faith) together with the Ilocano counterpart of Gasat (destiny) and the Visayan adoption of the Spanish suerte (luck) abundantly supplant the already fatalistic outlook of Bahala na.¹⁴

He gives this illustration from the life of a farmer. The farmer prepares his ground, waits for rain, sows his seed, transplants his seedlings. After this he stores his plow, hastens to the cock pit or loafs at the village store while Mother Nature takes her course. Bahala na! Then comes the harvest. If it is good, all thanks to God who willed it. If it is poor because of rats, drought or typhoon, why should one complain about one's fate. Talaga ng Diyos! It was decreed by God! What shall the farmer and his family do? Bahala na! In the last war when the Filipino was forced to fight for his survival, he did much to overcome the Talaga ng Diyos or Utos ng Tadhana attitude. In so doing he managed to survive and help to drive the Japanese invaders away. Then came liberation with its bright hopes of tomorrow and what happened, the Filipino went back to normal. Let tomorrow take

¹³Chester L. Hunt, et al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), p. 133.

¹⁴Delfin Fl. Batacan, Looking at Ourselves (Manila: Philaw Publishing, c.1956), p. 28.

care of itself. Bahala na! Will it take another war to overcome this social trait, asks the professor?¹⁵

Fatalism seems to be much more prevalent in the rural communities than in the larger cities. A sociologist says, "the stark poverty, cultural backwardness and fatalism of the rural community are major obstacles to progress."¹⁶

The farmer is habituated to resignation to circumstances instead of adopting the urbanites' philosophy of social manipulation. The farmer often develops submission to the forces of his environment and holds to the idea that no amount of manipulation will change things as nature meant them to be. In contrast with this view is the idea of the urbanites that one can fix things if he knows the right people and pulls the right strings. Therefore the city person frequently concentrates on cultivating the right connections to get what he wants, while the farmer often accepts what fate bestows upon him.¹⁷

The outlook of one with a rural background makes improvements difficult which ordinarily would be easy. This attitude calls for much patience. "The fatalistic acceptance of the situation, the persistence of spending habits which renders thrift impossible and the resistance to scientific planning are attitudes often associated with the rural personality pattern."

H. Welton Rotz makes the following analysis in an article entitled "The Rural Resistance":

A worker with rural persons can speak for hours on end about cleanliness, pride in his barrio, to become diligent about health and sanitation, to give up his extravagance at gambling and cock fighting, and get busy with his neighbors to raise the level of

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁶Hunt, op. cit., p. 237.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 255.

living of his barrio. But the worker is dismayed that among all these presentations there is nothing that seems to have strong persuasion enough to change even one behavior pattern. . . . why does the rural person so often seem indifferent to his own health, financial security and enjoyment of life? . . . we find some part of the answer in the past of the farmer. For centuries he has been a victim of many adverse forces. Ignorance has caused the misuse of the land and a decrease in productivity. He gathered less and less on his field and became more and more desperately at the mercy of the money lenders. Bad weather, typhoons, swarms of insects, bands of rats have all continued to defeat his efforts. no matter how hard he tried something would happen to reduce or destroy his crops. For generations he lost over one-half of his children, his own health was poor. . . . After hundreds of years of such experience, he had developed a fatalistic outlook on life and a tremendous characteristic of resistance to any change.¹⁸

All of these various cultural influences and blendings must be taken into consideration even in the teaching of Christian doctrine. If the Filipino pastor is to be thoroughly equipped to deal with the majority of people living in the agricultural area of the Philippines he must be firmly grounded in such a way that he can know their problems and be able to reach them with a message that will convince them of God's love in Christ.

Roman Catholic Education

Before 1899 education in the Philippines was in the hands of the Roman Church and religious instructions were the chief goal. Spain did establish some schools in the Philippines under the care of various religious orders, especially the Jesuits and the Dominicans took an interest in developing educational institutions. The aim of these schools was:

1. To promote the Christian religion,

¹⁸Ibid., p. 255-257.

2. To spread the Spanish culture, and
3. To impart the Spanish language.

Religion was the main part of the curriculum, the main purpose being to prepare Filipinos for life in heaven rather than for life on earth.

In 1863 a decree to establish Public Schools was issued. The curriculum consisted of Christian Doctrine, reading, writing, arithmetic, Spanish grammar and history, etc. The parish priest was to serve as local inspector of schools. The Filipinos were quick and eager to learn. In 1867 there were 593 public primary schools with 138,990 pupils. At the end of the Spanish regime there were 2,150 public schools with a total enrollment exceeding 200,000. This effort gave the Philippines a high rate of literacy in comparison to other Oriental Cultures. The Spanish also introduced a Latin alphabet through their efforts.¹⁹

In 1869 a Dominican wrote of the public schools, "In the provinces every village has its public school. Schools in which instruction is obligatory; thus, besides reading and writing, only Christian doctrine and church music are taught."²⁰ Although the Spanish regime had established 1,052 primary schools for boys and 1,091 for girls by 1897, it is said that this educational attempt of 200,000 children was a failure. The reasons given for this failure are:

want of proper administration by local authorities; lack of

¹⁹Zaide, op. cit., II, 89-96.

²⁰Frank C. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c. 1925), p. 315.

interest in primary studies not directly related to moral training and religious instruction of the pupils; the ridiculously small salaries paid to teachers; the selection of instructors incapable of teaching Spanish; and the distance of the places where the primary schools were usually located.²¹

In 1936 Archbishop Michael J. O'Doherty of Manila stressed the importance of Roman schools in the program of the church:

The Catholic Church has always looked upon education as a distinct help in propagating her religion. Her purpose is not only to train the intellect but also to develop and strengthen the moral side of man as well. She believes that a well-informed Catholic will make a good citizen, but she also knows by long experience that unless the heart be practiced in virtue and fortified with sound principles of moral conduct, education may easily prove a curse rather than a blessing.²²

The separation between church and state which was introduced by the American regime has been continued down to the present time by the Republic of the Philippines.

The most important question concerning the relations between a religious institution and a government which had arisen during the present period is the problem of religious instruction in the public schools. The Filipinos are essentially a religious people. . . . There is grave doubt as to whether moral and ethical standards can be maintained in the Philippines save upon a religious basis. Religious work in the Islands contributes to an essential, natural need of the people. The importance of strengthening the moral foundations of Philippine society through the schools is universally recognized. Concerning the methods by which this purpose shall be accomplished, and particularly the role which religious organizations shall play in the process, there is not only disagreement but also strong feeling.²³

The Catholic schools with an enrollment of 270,000 give good catechetical instructions in the Roman teaching. This is not true in

²¹Pascual, op. cit., p. 3.

²²Zaide, op. cit., I, 193.

²³Joseph R. Hayden, The Philippines: A Study in National Development (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1942), pp. 560-561.

the public and private schools. Religious classes can be held in the public schools if the parents consent, but there are only a few catechists to handle the assignment. Even when some older students teach the younger ones they generally have no books and only teach memorization of prayers. In order to assist the catechists the Roman church has decided on a new national catechism to replace the old manuals in which "morals occupy a predominant place over dogma." In 1952 the apostolic nuncio to the Philippines, Mgr. Vagnozzi, said,

to fight the growing laicization of education, we must learn to integrate religion into the program of social studies and make sure that the catechism is given in a course which is pedagogic methods which aim at getting the mind to work rather than at routine memorization of the letter of the catechism.

Vagnozzi deplored the hypocrisy of the young people who have fallen away from the church because they have not been properly instructed.

The "Barangay" movement is being organized by the Legion of Mary in an effort to reach the rural areas. Efforts are being made to increase the catechetical instructions at the parish level. The Sunday sermon is to be a "real religious instruction." Catechism study for adults is encouraged on Sunday afternoons in open forums. The priest is encouraged to use every occasion to explain doctrine in a simple manner. The number of professional catechists is being increased. Campaigns to reach parents as religious teachers are suggested. For solving the problem of the catechism in the Roman Church the author suggests a closer collaboration between the national and foreign clergy.²⁴

²⁴John Seffer, S. J., "The Catechetical Situation in the Philippines," Lumen Vitae, XI (April-June, 1956), 306-308.

Public Education

At the end of the Spanish era, education in the Philippines was limited to only a few select pupils, the bulk of the population was illiterate. During the American era schools were widespread but education still remains one of the biggest problems of the young republic today. Some of the sixth grade graduates do not even learn to read English which is the medium of instruction. Many still have the idea that education is supposed to assure an easy living and escape from manual labor. Private schools sometimes turn out graduates just in order to collect the tuition fee. Even half-trained doctors, engineers, lawyers and teachers are graduated from some colleges. One big problem in education is the different language used throughout the islands. The literacy rate had increased from twenty per cent in 1903 to sixty per cent in 1948, but much remains to be done to develop a strong educational system in order to insure a bright future for this young nation.²⁵

The American influence in the Philippines stimulated cultural, political and economic life. Principles were given for the future development of small land owners. A representative form of government was established. Education and business practices were inaugurated by Americans. Peace between Muslims and Christians was the result of the separation between church and state. The United States attacked many problems, such as the purchase of church lands, but many others were

²⁵Hunt, op. cit., pp. 391-403.

unsolved. Some of the problems of the Philippines today were created by the United States, others were left unsolved from the previous regime. This means that many other problems have to be solved at the same time as the educational problem.²⁶

It has been said that Warsaw was the only large city which suffered more damage than Manila during World War II. Many other cities and towns throughout the Philippines were completely destroyed. War-time losses had been estimated at four billion dollars for the entire Philippines, but this does not include the reverses in educational, moral and spiritual life which were inevitable.

Philippine independence in July, 1946 came before a recovery program had begun in the islands. Government and educational programs of reconstruction had to be carried out. Economic conditions were at the low ebb. In addition internal strife caused by communist-inspired Hukbalahap cost the government much money and effort.²⁷

The democratic ideals brought to the Philippines by the United States found the fertile ground in the Islands and immediately took root from among these people who had always loved liberty and independence. One Filipino briefly summarized the difference between Spanish and United States rule as follows:

More than three centuries of Spain's domination made the Filipinos feel their inferiority and they looked up to the haughty Spaniards as their masters. With the spread of American democratic ideals however, they learned to take pride in their race and cast off

²⁶Spencer, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 222-225.

their inferiority complex.²⁸

The American government stressed public education in the Philippines and schools were established in all parts of the islands. By 1935 there were 7,330 public schools with a total enrollment of 1,229,242 and a staff of 27,885 teachers. The English language became the most widely known language--"today English is more widely used than any of the native dialects."²⁹

Education is one of the major problems of the Philippines today. In 1947 there were 14,443 public schools staffed by 58,947 teachers with a total enrollment of 3,272,294 pupils. Private education has seen a remarkable increase since the close of World War II.³⁰ In 1900 there were 6,900 pupils in public elementary schools. By 1952 the number of pupils in public schools had increased to 4,018,476 with another 772,850 in private schools.³¹

The Filipinos have an earnest desire for education. During the period of revolts from Spain, the constitution drawn up at Malolos had the provision: "to make education compulsory, and to divorce it from the control of the religious orders." One of the greatest delights to the Filipino during the American administration was the establishment of free public schools throughout the Islands in the English language. The goals of this education were not religious as they had been under

²⁸Zaide, op. cit., II, 275.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 302-303.

³⁰Ibid., p. 391.

³¹Hunt, op. cit., p. 123.

the Spanish, but were to transplant the ideals of Democracy and citizenship. After the Philippines became an independent republic, emphasis was continued on public education. The support of the schools requires one-third of the income of the federal government.³²

Not all elements in the Philippines have been in favor of the public schools. Some have been its outspoken opponents. According to a Jesuit, the public school influence explains the fact that while the Philippines is a Catholic country, the leadership is indifferent or even hostile to religion. Religion has been excluded from the public schools. The Catholic Church is looked upon as an enemy of freedom, progress and science. He says that the church needs men who have convictions of the only truth by which man is saved in this life and the life to come. The purpose of the Jesuit schools is to produce men of this caliber. This faith must lead men to recognize the Mass as the "central sacrifice of our worship"; the Mass not merely said or heard but lived.³³

The Roman Church in the Philippines has always considered the public school a threat to the Church. As a result, they have vigorously tried to set up church schools where possible. In addition the Roman Church has been advocating religion in the public schools while the Protestants and Aglipayans have opposed this idea. The Protestants were willing to introduce the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Twenty-third psalm and other "non-controversial selections from the Bible" in

³²Pascual, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

³³Horatio de la Costa, Jr., S. J., "Thirty-five Years in the Philippines," *The Catholic Mind*, LV (August, 1957), 328-329.

the public schools, but the Catholics were not willing to permit the use of the Bible without notes or explanations.³⁴

The four biggest enemies of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines are said to be--the public schools, the Aglipayan Church, the Protestant Churches, and American culture and ideals. The Church of Rome has been trying to overcome these dangers by sending some of her ablest workers to the Philippines. They have also endeavored to establish schools as rapidly as possible. Between 1903 and 1918 they established 903 schools. The Presbyterian report of 1918 says:

We wish to sound the alarm against relying on the public school system to educate people. The Roman Catholic is planting private schools everywhere. With Belgium, Dutch, and English priests in charge of the parishes, they are dominating the people more and more, to the destruction of the public school system, and in a few years they shall supplant them entirely with their own schools. They are well-organized and are drawing the net around the people again, so that they are recovering in a large measure what seemed but a short time ago lost to them.³⁵

The Jesuits have been particularly effective in the field of education. The teaching is done in the high schools and colleges primarily by American Jesuits. All instruction is in English.³⁶ An American Catholic priest in the Philippines recently said that during the American administration the Freemasons obtained a predominant position in the public schools which they maintain to this day. He adds that under the late President Magsaysay the situation improved when a Catholic was appointed to head the Board of Education and

³⁴Laubach, *op. cit.*, pp. 333-335.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 450.

³⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 450-454.

Catholic children were given the opportunity for religious instruction during school hours.³⁷

The Roman Catholics do not have the only schools in the Philippines rather many of their schools were stimulated because the Protestants had already established their schools from the very beginning. Protestants in the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges operate sixty-five schools with a total enrollment of 30,000 students. Filipinos have a great love for education and parents will make real sacrifices to provide for an education for their children. At least one member of the family will try to go all the way through the college years even though the other members of the family may have to make a great sacrifice to accomplish this. There are reported to be more than 100,000 college students in the Manila area alone.³⁸

The public educational system in the Philippines still faces many dire and stressing problems. On the last day of his life, before he was tragically killed in a plane crash, President Magsaysay spoke at three commencement exercises in the city of Cebu. In each one of these speeches he referred to the educational problems of the Philippines and he described the educational system at the present time as "a failure."³⁹ At the present time the picture in the educational field is not bright. The situation seems to be deteriorating rather than improving.

³⁷Joseph W. Regan, The Philippines: Christian Bulwark in Asia (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Maryknoll Publications, 1957), p. 18.

³⁸Dwight E. Stevenson, Christianity in the Philippines in The College of the Bible Quarterly (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible, 1955), pp. 20-23.

³⁹"Magsaysay's Last Week," Philippine Free Press (March 23, 1957), p. 64.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The Confessions and Religion

What can be said of the religious situation which is found in the Philippines? A sociological study gives the following summary:

Religious pluralism is the pattern in the Philippines, although a majority of the populace is Roman Catholic. Separation of Church and State is recognized in the constitution, but many difficult questions arise carrying this policy into practice. On the community level, there is both a general spirit of tolerance and also many specific incidents of friction between members of different religious groups.

The leadership of the Filipino Churches had been drawn in large part, from foreign nationals and the various churches are agencies of international contact. The majority of the people are either Christian or Moslem, although many practices and beliefs persist which are foreign to either belief. The entire culture is permeated by religious patterns which appear in both sacred and secular situations, while the immediate influence of the churches is limited by the relative scarcity of clergymen. Religious institutions operate in a social setting and, in recent years, have welcomed sociological analysis of the cultural context in which they function.¹

A prominent Filipino Protestant has said:

In the Philippines there are three branches of Christianity: Aglipayanism, Protestantism, and Catholicism. All are one in the recognition of the fatherhood of God, the neighborliness of nations, and the brotherhood of man. Aglipayanism tends to be more efficacious in nationalizing Filipino spiritual life; Protestantism, in democratizing it; and Catholicism, in internationalizing it. All of these are contributive to the peoples striving for the highest and best in human life, for the divinely righteous, for Godliness itself.²

¹Chester Hunt, et al., Sociology in the Philippine Setting (Manila: Alemar's, c.1954), pp. 230-231.

²Ibid., p. 205.

These statements remind us of the superficial nature of the various religions in the Philippines. The biggest factor is the shortage of clergy in all groups. This leads to the conclusion that there is a superficial paganism, a superficial Mohammedanism, a superficial Catholicism, a superficial Aglipayanism and, in many cases a superficial Protestantism which is inclined toward syncretism and unionism. In such a religious situation, what part can the Lutheran Confessions play in establishing a well-indoctrinated, evangelical, expanding Philippine Lutheran Church? It is the contention of the author that the Confessions can play an invaluable, almost indispensable, role in providing the thoroughly indoctrinated national clergy.

In the religious picture, the Lutheran Confessions can be used as the basis for a course in dogmatics which will give these future pastors a thorough doctrinal foundation. This is not an innovation for we are told, "The dogmaticians in the centuries following Luther's death built their systems upon the Confessional books."³ Lutheranism in the Philippines will be threatened by error of all kinds. In the history of the Church when this has happened, the Lutheran Church has been forced again and again to return to its Confessions in order to correct its doctrinal position.

Wherever the Lutheran Church ignored her symbols or rejected all or some of them, there she fell an easy prey to her enemies. But wherever she held fast to her God-given crown, esteemed and studied her Confessions, and actually made them a norm and standard of her entire life and practice, there the Lutheran Church

³William Dau Allbeck, Studies in the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1952), p. ix.

of the Lutheran Church. In preserving this as a
 face, not to be a clear witness to the scriptural faith. Is such it
 p. iv.

flourished and confounded all her enemies.⁴

It must always be recognized that the Confessions have a historical background which must be presented to gain a full appreciation of the various documents. However, in the teaching of dogmatics on the basis of the Confessions, it will be recognized that the Book of Concord has a theological basis which transcends history. It will be this doctrinal content that will be systematically presented in a course in dogmatics based on the Confessions. This will stress the unity of all the symbols which is built around the doctrine of justification by faith. All other doctrines will be related to this central focal point. Emphases will be given to the doctrines which are relevant to the Philippine religious picture.

In this way the Confessions will be a sufficient basis for the varied doctrines and will be a real source of sound theology. The Augsburg Confession in itself contains a sufficient basis for discussion with other Christian groups. It was written to show that the followers of Luther were also followers of the Apostolic Doctrine. In order to give a thorough doctrinal foundation to future pastors, the entire Book of Concord should be used to get a complete picture of the doctrinal foundation of the Lutheran Church. In presenting this as a basis for dogmatics, it will require systematic treatment and special emphasis applied to the Philippines if it is to fill a real need. The Confessions were not written to be a systematic theology and dogmatic form, but to be a clear witness to the scriptural faith. As such it

⁴Triglot Concordia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. iv.

has become the Grundbekenntnis of the Lutheran Church.⁵

Lutheran ministers subscribe to the Confessions not quatenus, insofar as they agree, but quia, because they agree with Scripture.⁶ Therefore it is true that a Confessional Dogmatics will be a truly scriptural dogmatics. This will be as true in the Philippines as it is in Germany or in the United States. This is the real source of strength of the Confessions which needs more emphasis. There is no better place to demonstrate this than in the training program in the clergy in the young Philippine Lutheran Church. And in this way, the pastors of this Church can be a real wholesome influence within and without the Lutheran Church in the Philippines.

In this way the Confessions can serve to stimulate and contribute toward a truly ecumenical theology in the Philippines. For it is true that the Confessions have an ecumenical character because of their scriptural foundation and their relationship to the early Christian Church. The Lutheran Confessions have gone beyond the Confessions of the Ecumenical Councils especially in the doctrine of salvation, but this expansion is based upon the clear teaching of Scripture. The Eastern Church and the Latin Church are not clear on this doctrine.⁷ The Lutheran Confessions can serve as a basis of discussion with other Protestant groups and exert a theological influence to guide them in the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church of all lands, ages and cultures.

⁵Allbeck, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶Ibid., p. 9

⁷Ibid., pp. 12-14.

The Confessions and Culture

Can the Lutheran Confessions serve in the cultural situations which are found in the Philippines, or must new Confessions be written to be relevant to this blending of cultures we find in this oriental nation? One observer makes the following diagnosis of the Philippine situation:

To the superficial eye, Manila looks so much like America that American visitors cannot fully realize just how different it really is. The English language, American automobiles, and American movies and advertising are all very misleading. The American veneer in the Philippines is overlaid upon an Oriental heart which at the same time is not Oriental in the usual sense of the term. Moreover, in the sections of Manila not reached by the tourists and in outlying provinces, it becomes at once apparent that the Philippines is an almost primitive rural economy and that it lives as if it were just at the edge of the jungle of primitivism in religion as in economics.⁸

Philippine culture is built upon a pagan background. It has been influenced by three and one-half centuries of Spanish Christianity and more than fifty years of modern American culture.

To preach Christ will mean putting Christianity dynamically and meaningfully into the context of a westernizing cultural pattern and using any elements in the situation which will reinforce the Christian way of life.⁹

This indicates the westernizing influence in the eastern land of the Philippines which must be taken into consideration in the preparation and teaching of national pastors. An American seminary professor

⁸Dwight E. Stevenson, Christianity in the Philippines, in The College of the Bible Quarterly (Lexington, Ky.: The College of the Bible), pp. 42-43.

⁹David L. Hamm, "Western Culture and Philippine Life," The International Review of Missions, LXVII (October, 1958), 400.

servicing in Southeast Asia gives the following estimate in regard to the teaching of the future ministers for the church in Asia.

The hand of the missionary past lays nowhere in Southeast Asia and the Far East more heavily than upon theological education. The founding fathers from the West, concerned to raise up an adequate ministry, duplicated the facilities for training in which they themselves studied. Those seminaries remain today essentially unchanged. Westerners hold more theological teaching posts proportionately than they do other positions in the Asian churches. If Protestant Christianity is to become indigenous to Asia, theological education must be committed to the Asian Christians who have not become de-culturalized by extended contacts with the West, and the curriculum of Asian seminaries must interpret the Gospel in the several psychological, sociological, and cultural languages.

Asian Christians who are concerned to remove its exotic trappings are inquiring into the development of a system of theological instruction to supplement or even to supplant that which has served the coming of Protestantism. Theological education in India is predominantly British, the Dutch proto-types have molded theological instruction in Indonesia. Those in Thailand, Burma, and the Philippines are copies of the American: only in Japan is there a discernable adaption, a consequence both of pre-war devotion and the Japanese predilection for continental dialectic rather than for American pragmatism despite the preponderance of American missionaries in Japan.¹⁰

Parent church bodies may want to have a Western staff in the foreign seminaries to guard against doctrinal aberrations or indifference. The reluctance to commit the teaching of theology to nationals is characteristic of Roman Catholicism, but is also found among many Protestants. Also sending churches who would not give large sums for the support of foreign seminaries, will spend large sums to support a staff in the seminary. In addition, this is the place where the Westerner can be most inconspicuous in the development of a nationally-sensitive mission church. Few nationals have been trained to take over

¹⁰Winburn T. Thomas, "Teaching Theology in Asia," Theology Today, XIII (July, 1956), 202.

these positions of theological instructors, therefore the Westerners continue in these positions even in the more established Younger Churches.¹¹

If the churches in Western Asia are to become indigenous the program of theological education must be placed in the hands of nationals. Only they can properly interpret the Christian Gospel to their own teachings. This certainly includes the teaching of homiletics, pastoral theology and religious education which must be geared to the psychology and sociology of a given people while it is based on the unchanging truths of the Gospel. Also the teaching of systematic theology and exegesis should be taught by men who are not only familiar with the content, but also with the mental, psychological and religious background of the learner, and knows to whom they will later minister. The Church must train Asians to teach Asians in order that the voice of the Gospel may be understood by the hearer. The standards for theological teachers must be high, but not so high that no national can ever reach them. It will take time to reach this goal, but this should be in the planning from the very beginning and progress should be evident toward this goal. In the teaching it is important that emphasis be placed on the national religious groups, Christian and non-Christian, rather than on the Western development and theology.¹² This must be done on a biblical basis, and for Lutheran Christians, the Confessional basis can also be employed. The Confessions have stood the test of

¹¹Ibid., pp. 202-203.

¹²Ibid., pp. 203-207.

time in different cultures and reflect a true scriptural foundation so that they can truly be used in the cultural situation found in the Philippines to a very great advantage. In the foreseeable future this teaching of the Confessions should be done in English by using the 1959 edition of the Book of Concord which was translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert. A project, however, should soon be adopted by the national clergy to translate at least the Augsburg Confession into the various major dialects of the Philippines.

A Chinese seminary professor in Formosa makes an interesting comment:

If we can speak about the "obedience of theology in the West" meaning that Western theologians try to respond to God's revelations within the setting of Western life and thought, nothing could be more natural than that the Eastern Christians should examine the contents of the Christian faith in the light of the life and thought with which they are organically bound. In other words, "the obedience of theology in Asia" (emphasizing the phrase "in Asia") is a responsibility which they cannot escape. They have to think very hard, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, about implications of the Christian faith so that they may discover what God wants them to say in Asia. If theologians or Church leaders in Asia still keep on putting off fulfilling this important task and satisfying themselves with repeating what Western theologians have said in the past and are saying at the present time, no true theological response will come out of Asian soil. . . . If we do not wish to relegate the Christian gospel to a mere ideology, or to a means among many others of establishing social welfare or of building a corpus of moral codes by which men could lead a decent and respectable life, we have to let God speak to us concerning his plan of salvation in Asia.¹³

Professor Song points out that theological students in Asia are not trained to think philosophically or theologically. They have not been trained to think critically. The result has been that they find

¹³Choan-Sing Song, "The Obedience of Theology in Asia," South East Journal of Theology, II (October, 1960), 9.

themselves unable to cope with the pressures and challenges of non-Christian cultures and religions. In such a situation they usually are unable to speak to outsiders, or they fall into syncretism as a means of having a point of interest.

The Asian student must not only be drilled in the field of systematic theology, but he must be taught to work for himself in exegetical theology and to apply this discipline in practical theology. This must be done in the language of the people for whom it is meant.¹⁴

The Bible must serve as a source of theology in East and West. The Old Testament must not be forgotten. It can become especially meaningful in the Orient where the world view is strikingly similar to that of the Old Testament. The people must become familiar with the theological concept of the Bible at first hand. This theology must be set forth in a meaningful way in the particular culture, religious background and language of the people for whom it is meant. Here our Confessions can also cross the boundaries of culture and language to help to bring the message of the Gospel in a meaningful way to those for whom it was meant in the Philippines and throughout Southeast Asia.

A Filipino or an Oriental will not approach theology by disregarding its development in the West. He will rather study the history of theology in all ages and places. He will learn about the West and apply it to the East. Western theology has much to offer to Christian thought. The history of the Christian Church is the story of the way God has brought the message of salvation to men in all parts of the

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 10-15.

world. The Church must find its unity and uniqueness in the person of Jesus Christ. The message of Christ is the basis of theology in the East and the West. As the East can learn from the West in history, so it can be also hoped that the West can learn from the East as the Church develops and takes root in this part of the world. The East can also speak to the West in theological concepts, and not merely of some dramatic conversion of a head-hunting tribe. The Oriental theologian however should not be unduly influenced by nationalism or sectionalism, but remember that he is speaking to the living Body of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Here it is felt that the Confessions can be especially significant. However, just as the Old Testament prophets spoke to particular people in a specific context, so the spokesman of today will speak to a particular people in a particular context. In this way and only in this way the message will have real meaning to the hearer. An affirmative answer can be given to the question which was asked at the beginning of this section. Yes, the Lutheran Confessions can speak to the cultural situation which we find in the Philippines in a very useful theological manner.

Philippine Mission Potential

Since the Lutheran Church has been busy just becoming established in various places throughout the Philippines, it has not had time to look around itself and realize the vast potential that a strong active well-indoctrinated Lutheran Church could develop in the future under the blessings of God. A recent study of the situation in the Philippines brought forth the following comment:

The Philippine Islands is one of the foremost missionary opportunities in the world today. The Filipino may be the key to Christianization of all Southeast Asia. But it is also apparent that none of this evangelization can be the work of paternalistic missions; it must be the product of the great fraternity in which Orient and Occident share as yoke-fellows.¹⁵

Southeast Asia is made up of nine independent nations. The only nation of this immediate family in which our Lutheran Church is at work is the Philippines. Once a strong Church could be established here the Filipino Church could reach out to their fellow-man of the same race living in the other nations of Southeast Asia. These nations are Indonesia, Thailand, Burma, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Malaya, Cambodia and Laos. There is a close racial affinity between the 185,000,000 people living in the rapidly expanding area. Indonesia and Malaya are predominantly Muslim. Thailand, Burma and Laos are strongly Buddhist. The Philippines is called ninety-five per cent Christian with an eighty per cent Roman Catholic majority. Many of the misunderstandings and tensions in Southeast Asia are said to be caused by the religious differences between these nations.¹⁶

President Garcia gave his impression of the importance of the Philippines in world affairs in a speech before the United States Congress in June, 1958:

The Filipinos happen to have a culture that is an amalgam of the best in the Asian, Latin and Anglo-American cultures. It is the only country in Southeast Asia where the overwhelming majority of the people profess the Christian faith. By Geography and racial affinity we are of the East, and by culture we are of the West.

¹⁵Stevenson, op. cit., p. 44.

¹⁶Claude A. Buss, Southeast Asia and the World Today (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., c.1958), pp. 8-11.

Our jurisprudence is a confluence of Asia, Latin and Anglo-American jurisprudences. The greatest of our writers wrote in Spanish, Tagalog and other vernaculars, and the modern ones in English. Thus, the breadth and depth of our culture, its varied and multi-lateral quality, permits us to claim, without being immodest, a fair understanding of both the East and the West and to become a bridge of understanding between the two. This is a role which we would be happy to perform in the higher interests of the free world and in the service of world peace.¹⁷

Years ago Dr. Laubach says that he set out to write the book, The People of the Philippines, in an attempt to answer three questions: "What is the trend of Philippine religion?" "What is the unmet want in the Filipino heart?" "What may the Filipino people become if they give God a perfect chance?" In attempting to find the answer Dr. Laubach said that the greatest discovery becomes the theme of his book. "The preparation of the Filipino people for their spiritual leadership of the Far East and perhaps of the whole world." He adds:

The Reformation which occurred in Europe four centuries ago began in the Philippines a quarter of a century ago and has been swifter and more thorough-going than in the days of Martin Luther. Perhaps it has not yet found its Luther. Perhaps there will be many Luthers.¹⁸

Could this not be a challenge to our Lutheran Church to present Lutheran theology in such a way that the Philippines could produce a Filipino "Luther" which could be a real blessing to the Christian church throughout this area of the world.

Certainly we cannot over-emphasize the seminary training program in the foreign mission field today. The students must be trained in a

¹⁷Carlos P. Garcia, "Philippines an Effective Force for Democracy in Asia," Vital Speeches of the Day, XXIV (July 15, 1958), 579.

¹⁸Frank C. Laubach, The People of the Philippines (New York: George H. Doran Company, c.1925), pp. vii-viii.

sound theology which will be relevant to the culture in which they live. This will not be an easy task for the professor or for the student. But standards of high scholarship and attainment should be maintained. After a survey of all Christian seminaries outside of North America the following conclusion was reached:

It would seem to be almost axiomatic that the more thorough the training given to carefully selected seminary students, the greater will be the success in the long run of any church, whether young or old. The record achieved by the Society of Jesus in this respect, and the failure of the various Eastern Churches to recover their former eminence, may be in part attributed to the degree in which each of these organizations have provided for the theological education of their future leaders.¹⁹

Can we not see in this analysis the need for stressing a high quality seminary training program which gives emphasis to sound doctrine. What better way could this emphasis be given than by using the Lutheran Confessions as a source of teaching these students dogmatic theology.

Many people are familiar with Rudyard Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West." Most people can repeat from memory the first two lines of this poem, but very few know the remaining lines of the stanza. When we think of establishing a mission church in the East, it is significant that this poem can speak to us also, for where men are strongly grounded in the faith of Jesus Christ, all barriers of cultures and language can be successfully overcome. The entire stanza reads as follows:

Oh, East is East, and West is West
 And never the twain shall meet,
 But there is neither East nor West,
 Border nor Breed nor Birth
 When two strong men stand face to face,
 Though they come from the ends of the earth.

¹⁹Yorke Allen, Jr., A Seminary Survey (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1960), p. 568.

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