

RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1898-1907

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THE UNITED STATES INHERITED MULTIFARIOUS PROBLEMS from Spain when the former acquired the Philippines. Among these were religious issues centering on the friars,¹ i.e., anti-friar sentiment among the Filipinos, disposition of friarlands, and the Aglipayan schism, with their ramifications in almost every phase of Philippine life. The continued presence of the friars in the Philippines was a potential source of trouble since they had become synonymous with the Spanish Government and had become the focus for anti-colonial hatred. The United States, as the new colonial power, naturally desired a prompt solution to these problems since they involved the success or failure of the United States' campaign to pacify the country and to establish a permanent foothold in the Philippines. Officially, then, the United States viewed the religious problem on the basis of its connection to purely political matters affecting the administration of the Philippines.

To American Catholics in the United States, however, the new possession was more than just a "piece of real estate" because it was a Catholic country. Conditions existing at the time drew the American hierarchy into the religious affairs of the Philippines, and although the Vatican had the final word in the more important questions of what to do with the friars and the friarlands, the American Catholic clergy, individually or as a group, became involved in the friar problem either in attempting to influence its settlement *vis-a-vis* the Vatican, or in trying to pressure the United States to adopt a more conciliatory policy in matters related to religious affairs in the Philippines. What this involvement entailed, and the role that the American Catholic Church played in the solution of these questions during the crucial years of the American occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1907, will be the focus of this paper. By 1907, internal threats to the stability of the American Government in the Philippines were virtually gone. Moreover, the religious issues had been virtually solved and no longer posed a threat to peace and order.

¹The term "friar" as used in this paper, refers to the members of the Dominican, Augustinian, Franciscan and Recollect Orders. The Jesuits, who had mainly devoted themselves to teaching and mission work, did not draw the hostility shown by the Filipinos toward the four named Orders.

The American occupation of the Philippines in 1898 generated spontaneous response among different segments of the American people, and voice was given to both the pros and cons of permanently acquiring the archipelago. The expansionist policy of the United States and the course that should be taken by the government came under scrutiny. Religious groups formed part of the "audience" whose visions were immediately focused overseas upon the Philippines. The Catholic minority in the United States felt that it had a larger share in the question because of the predominant Catholic populace in the Philippines. While it did not generally favor the expansionist policy of the government, a segment of the American Catholics, expressing their views in the *Catholic World*, a newsweekly journal of liberal persuasion, agreed to the acquisition of the Philippines as a chance for the United States to obtain a coaling station and a harbor of defense in the Pacific in anticipation of "great events impending" in the area; as an opportunity for Americans to bring to their new possessions the "blessing of American political institutions"; and as a means of planting "among the orientals the seeds of the freest and best government on the face of the earth."²

When the clamor to acquire the Philippines became stronger, the bigger problem for some of the American Catholic hierarchy was to obtain concessions at the Peace Conference in Paris favorable to the interests of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

The Peace Commissioners of Spain and the United States who were presently to determine the final arrangements regarding the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, would have to find a solution to the problem of Catholic Church properties and rights in those island possessions. The Vatican was anxious to obtain favorable concessions for the Catholic Church. It had, in fact, directed Archbishop Placide Louis Chapelle of the Archdiocese of Louisiana to go to Paris and represent the interests of the Catholic Church in the treaty negotiations.³

Archbishop Chapelle's appointment was a shrewd move on the part of the Vatican. Being an American, Chapelle was in a better position to present the side of the Church to the American Peace Commissioners. As expected, he made a good impression on them. Writing in his diary, Whitelaw Reid, one of the Commissioners, said of Chapelle:⁴

The Archbishop evidently made a most agreeable impression upon the commissioners. Senator Gray and some others (said) that the Church had acted with its usual worldly wisdom in selecting such a person for this work. (He was) an American by long residence, familiar with the French and Spanish languages, obviously conciliatory and naturally disposed, as far as possible to aid the authorities in bringing the Cuban priests to a knowledge and acceptance of American ways.

² Julius Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898*, (Baltimore, 1936), 309-311.

³ H. W. Morgan (Ed.), *Making Peace with Spain*, (Austin, 1965), 66.

⁴ Morgan, *Making Peace*, 67.

Probably influenced by the good reception he got from the Peace Commissioners, Archbishop Chapelle wrote James Cardinal Gibbons⁵ from Paris, on October 25, 1898:⁶

I am obliged to remain here during the sittings of the Hispano-American Commission. So far, matters are going on satisfactorily and I have well grounded hopes that by the Treaty of Peace the interests of the Church will be protected.

Chapelle's behind-the-scenes activity obtained a favorable legal position for the Church in the Treaty of Paris. The religious and property rights of private persons and corporations were protected by the 8th, 9th, and 10th provisions of the treaty.⁷ Guaranteed, too, were the rights of Spaniards, including clerics, to stay in the Philippines even without requiring them to become American citizens.⁸

The benevolent attitude shown by the United States Government towards the Catholic Church somewhat eased the fears of the Vatican. It appeared that the Catholic Church in the Philippines would be better off if the government were under the Americans than if the Philippine Revolution had succeeded. By its very presence as a stabilizing force, the United States was thus assuring the safety of the friars who remained in the Philippines, in addition to safeguarding the rights of the Church. The Vatican's apparent preference for the United States, even though it was for the preservation of stability rather than the democratic values associated with the American way of life, indicates Rome's indifference to the idea of a native Church in the Philippines. The Vatican's position would be far less threatened by a secular America than by an independent Philippines with a National Church.

Probably in recognition of America's role in the Philippines as a stabilizer, and because the Vatican had desired to establish diplomatic relations with the United States, as shown by the setting up of an Apostolic Legation in Washington in 1892, the Vatican was disposed to negotiate with the United States. This attitude was demonstrated by the Papal Secretary of State, Mariano Cardinal Rampolla, when he turned down several petitions made in the name of Filipino leaders for the establishment of direct and official relations between the Phil-

⁵ Cardinal Gibbons, as the Archbishop of Baltimore, was considered the highest official in the American Catholic Church. The Archdiocese of Baltimore traditionally enjoyed the distinction of being the center of the Catholic Church in the United States on matters concerning discipline affecting the whole country in relation to Rome.

⁶ Letter of Archbishop Chapelle to Cardinal Gibbons, in *Gibbons Papers*, Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, (referred to hereafter as AAB).

⁷ For the text of the Treaty of Paris, see Maximo Kalaw, *The Case for the Filipinos*, (New York, 1916), Appendix A, 249-259.

⁸ John Farrell, "Background of the Taft Mission to Rome," *Catholic Historical Review*, (April, 1950), 12.

ippines and the Vatican.⁹ With these overtures, the Vatican could have directly intervened in the Philippine religious problems, but "the Vatican chose to seek the help of the United States as a concession and as an expression of goodwill."¹⁰ Although the United States did not recognize the Vatican on a diplomatic level, goodwill was generated by the Vatican's gestures.

The cordial relations between the United States and the Vatican consequently bolstered the position of the American Catholic Church, in the sense that it was given the responsibility of providing candidates for ecclesiastical positions in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. In addition, the Vatican favored American Catholic Churchmen in the handling of religious problems in the Philippines and other new island possessions of the United States. The appointment of Archbishop Chappelle, first as the Catholic Church's representative to the Paris Peace Conference and then as Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, was taken by the Vatican in order to give American more responsibility for ecclesiastical affairs in the new colonial possessions of the United States.

In the highly centralized structure of the Catholic Church, an arrangement of this sort was a rather exceptional one. Much leeway was granted the American Church, first, in matters of nominations, which were as good as appointments, and second, in making it easier for the American Churchmen to adjust the Church in the island possessions to the new American regime. For all practical purposes, this pattern was an extension into the twentieth century of the right of Royal Patronage. This arrangement opened the way for the American Government to have a hand in the appointment of ecclesiastical officials in the Philippines, but while President William McKinley was in office, he chose not to involve himself in religious matters. It was President Theodore Roosevelt who, through a member of the American hierarchy, made known his preference for some ecclesiastical appointments in the Philippines.¹¹ Generally, Archbishop John Ireland or Cardinal Gibbons were consulted on these points, and they in turn directed the choice through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington. It is within this set-up that much

⁹ Statement of Archbishop Ireland, printed in *Times Herald*, October 2, 1900, and quoted by H. H. Van Meter, *The Truth About the Philippines*, (Chicago, 1900), 404-405.

¹⁰ John Farrell, "Background of Taft Mission," *Catholic Historical Review*, (April, 1951), 6-7.

¹¹ An example of this prerogative was President Roosevelt's preference for Father Thomas Hendrick to become Archbishop of Manila. Bishop McQuaid, the immediate superior of Father Hendrick, received three letters in succession from Father John Wynne, Archbishop Farley, and Cardinal Gibbons, informing him of the President's choice and asking his opinion on the matter. Though Monsignor Jeremiah J. Harty became the Vatican's choice for the position, Father Hendrick was named Bishop of Cebu. See F. Zwierlein, *Theodore Roosevelt and Catholics* (Rochester, 1956), 77-79.

of the role of the American Church in the settlement of Church affairs in the Philippines is to be assessed.

At the turn of the century, the American Catholic Church was still essentially conservative in its conformity to the traditional Roman Catholic Church doctrines, although there existed liberalizing tendencies within the Church especially on matters dealing with the "adaptation of Catholic practices to the American milieu."¹² The Churchmen who revolved around McKinley and Roosevelt were of liberal persuasion; their acknowledged spokesmen, Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland, staunchly defended American ideals and institutions. Through them the re-adjustment of questions arising out of Church-State relations was carried out, the most pressing of which were those relating to the friars and friarlands. One of these questions pertained to an appeal made in 1898, by the Apostolic Delegate of Hong Kong to Cardinal Gibbons, for the release of one hundred Spanish friars held captive by the Philippine revolutionary forces. This appeal was followed up by a Vatican request that Cardinal Gibbons look into the possibility of arousing public opinion in the United States against alleged barbarous treatment shown toward the captive Spanish friars.¹³ Accordingly, Cardinal Gibbons wrote Russel Alger, the Secretary of War, urging the Government to "take steps for the relief of the captives."¹⁴ The Cardinal's "intervention" resulted in the dispatch of letters from Secretary Alger to the military commanders of the United States forces in the Philippines, General Elwell Otis and Admiral George Dewey, asking them to work for the release of the prisoners. General Otis replied that steps had already been taken to win the release of the Spanish friars.¹⁵

The majority of the American hierarchy sympathized with the friars. Through the Catholic press and lay organizations the clergy sought to win public opinion to its side and thereby influence the United States Government in its decision on the problem. An extensive discussion of the Taft Mission to the Vatican in 1902 will make this point clearer.

The idea of sending an American mission to Rome in order to discuss the religious problems in the Philippines came from Vatican quarters, and was first broached by the Papal Secretary of State Cardinal Rampolla in a letter to Archbishop Ireland in May 1901.¹⁶ It was, however, a

¹²Thomas McAvoy, *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History, 1895-1910*, (Chicago, 1957), x.

¹³John T. Ellis, *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons*, (Milwaukee, 1952), 94.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵For the exchange of letters between General Otis and General Emilio Aguinaldo regarding the release of Spanish prisoners, see Van Meter, *The Truth about the Philippines*, 260-270.

¹⁶James Moynihan, *The Life of Archbishop John Ireland*, (New York, 1963), 180. See letter of Ireland to Gibbons, August 25, 1901, AAB. In this letter Ireland informed Cardinal Gibbons of the formal request made by Rampolla to "have some representative from Washington to go to Rome to treat with the Vatican about property and other questions relating to the Philippines."

new idea as far as the United States was concerned, since, in the first place, it was at variance with American traditions, and in the second place, the United States did not have diplomatic relations with the Vatican. The task of persuading the civil authorities to comply with the Papal request fell on the shoulders of Archbishop Ireland, with the able support of Cardinal Gibbons.¹⁷ President Roosevelt, in a conversation with Cardinal Gibbons towards the end of October, 1901, broached the desire of the American Government to come to a settlement with Rome on the friarland question because of its tie-in with the peace and order situation in the Philippines. The tenants of the friar estates in the areas of Cavite, Laguna, Manila Province (now Rizal), Bulacan, Morong, and Bataan refused to pay their rent to the religious orders, arguing that those lands had been "nationalized" by the Philippine Revolutionary Government. The civil officials resorted to armed force to make the tenants pay their rents. Disorder and unrest were bound to follow unless the Civil Government acted to remedy the situation.

With the Government's willingness to negotiate, Cardinal Gibbons promised to obtain a settlement, paving the way for the dispatch of an "informal" mission to Rome.¹⁸ Cardinal Gibbons did write Cardinal Rampolla about this but much of the "spade work" was done by Archbishop Ireland. By December 3rd, 1901, Archbishop Ireland could write Bellamy Storer, United States Minister to Spain, that the Roman mission had been definitely decided upon.¹⁹ To allay fears of Protestant dissent, Archbishop Ireland was dispatched by President Roosevelt to see the editors of the influential Protestant weekly journals, *The Outlook* and *The Independent*, to sound them out on the project.²⁰ Archbishop Ireland elicited enthusiastic response to the project from both editors, but unexpected opposition came not from the Protestant sector, but from Catholic groups.²¹ The news of the plan to send a special mission to Rome leaked out through the *Baltimore Sun*, and from there was picked up by Catholic newspapers.²² Since the details of the American proposals were not yet known, Catholic reaction was not as strong as later, when the results of the negotiations were announced. Too, the United States War Department put forth Governor Taft's mission to Rome as merely a stopover on his way to the Philippines, as a means of preventing possible protests from religious groups.

¹⁷ See Farrell, "Background of Taft Mission," for a full treatment of events leading to the Mission.

¹⁸ Allen Will, *The Life of Cardinal Gibbons*, (New York, 1922), 614-615.

¹⁹ Letter of Ireland to Bellamy Storer, reprinted in Maria Storer, *In Memoriam*, 58. The members of the Mission aside from Taft were James Smith, then a member of the Philippine Supreme Court; Major John Porter of the Judge Advocate Department; and Bishop Thomas O'Gorman who served in an unofficial capacity as the liaison between the Mission and the Vatican.

²⁰ Letter of Ireland to Bellamy Storer, December 8, 1901, in Storer, *In Memoriam*, 61-62.

²¹ Letter of Ireland to Gibbons, December 15, 1901, in AAB.

²² *New World*, March 8, 1902.

Meanwhile, upon the recommendation of the Philippine Commission, Congressman Henry Cooper of Wisconsin presented a bill in the United States Congress which, among other things, gave the Insular Government the right of eminent domain by way of backing up the proposed purchase of friarlands. It also authorized the floating of bonds with which to complete the transaction. The bill became the Philippine Government Act of July 1, 1902.²³

While the bill was being discussed in the Senate, Catholic newspapers bitterly criticized the Taft Mission. The *New York Freeman's Journal*, newsweekly of the New York City diocese, said:²⁴

...A long succession of public representation has arraigned the friars as the foes of popular government in the Philippines... Contrary to the revered teaching of our constitution, and the Hallowed Traditions of Our Fathers, the Taft Commission was empowered to interfere in ecclesiastical as well as civil matters in the Philippines.

The proposals of the Taft Mission outlined the mechanics of the transaction regarding the sale of estates belonging to the Dominicans and Augustinians, and asked for the withdrawal of the Spanish friars belonging to the Augustinian, Dominican, Franciscan and Recollect orders from the Philippines within two years from the first payment, as a necessary requisite to convincing the Filipinos that the ancient regime of the Spanish friars was ended.²⁵

The Vatican reply to the American proposals was a general acquiescence to the sale of the friarlands, and an announcement of the Vatican's intention to substitute gradually priests of other nationalities, and "so far as possible from the United States,"²⁶ for the Spanish friars, with the end goal of fitting Filipinos for the clergy. It was also proposed that all pending matters should be turned over for settlement to a conference between an Apostolic Delegate and the officers of the Insular Government.²⁷ The Vatican, however, declined to withdraw the friar orders from the Islands because "it did not desire, by such a stipulation, to reflect upon the Spanish Religious Orders," in addition to its desire not to offend Spain.²⁸

In consideration of the Vatican's reluctance to take drastic action against the religious corporations, the Taft Mission amended its previous demand, (a) by suggesting the replacement of Spanish friars with the clergy of the same order in the management of schools and univer-

²³ Charles Elliott, *The Philippines to the End of the Commission Government*, (Indianapolis, 1907), 47.

²⁴ *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 26, 1902.

²⁵ Taft to Rampolla, July 3, 1901, in *Correspondence between the Holy See and the Honorable William H. Taft*, (Manila, 1902), 20.

²⁶ Rampolla to Taft, June 21, 1902, in *Correspondence*, 12.

²⁷ William H. Taft, "The Church and our Government in the Philippines," *Ave Maria*, (October 15, 1904), 515.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

sities, and (2) by proposing that "only secular priests or members of religious orders that are not Spanish and whose presence shall not disturb the peace" be appointed as parish priests.²⁹ But no agreement on these points was reached. The negotiations were broken off but Taft continued his talks with the Apostolic Delegate in Manila in a "piecemeal" fashion. Meanwhile, the friarlands involved had been sold by the Dominicans, the Augustinians, and the Recollects to private companies, and therefore the Insular Government had to deal with the representatives of the titleholders to the land, in addition to negotiating with the Apostolic Delegate. It appeared that the Dominicans had transferred their holdings to a Mr. Andrews, who in turn organized a company known as the "Philippine Sugar Estates Developing Company (Limited)"; the Augustinians had conveyed their landholdings to a Spanish corporation, the "Sociedad Agricola de Ultramar"; and the Recollects had conveyed their "Imus Estate," containing 18,419 hectares, to the British Manila Estates Company (Limited).³⁰ The Apostolic Delegate to the Philippines, Archbishop Ambrose Guidi, and Taft bargained on the purchase of the lands until December, 1903. A final purchase price of \$7,239,000 was agreed upon for 410,000 acres of land.³¹

During the summer of 1902, a vigorous attack, led by conservative elements, was launched by the Catholic press against the purchase of the friarlands. In July, a protest meeting against the expulsion of the friars was held at Grand Rapids, Michigan, with 4,600 people in attendance.³² Articles, like that of Father John Wynne entitled "The Friars Must Stay," appeared in several Catholic publications. A sympathetic resolution from the American Augustinians in support of their "brethren" in the Philippines was presented to President Roosevelt on July 16.³³ During the convention of the American Federation of Catholic Societies in Chicago on August 5, Bishops James McFaul of Trenton and Sebastian Messmer of Wisconsin spoke in support of demands to determine the facts concerning the friars.³⁴ For this purpose, American clergymen who had been to the Philippines were sought as advisers. Among them were Fathers Patrick Hart and Gleason. Father Gleason offered two suggestions to solve the friar problem: (1) the establishment of monasteries all over the Philippines where the friars would be called upon to assist the secular priests in charge of the parishes, and (2) the secularization of the religious orders.³⁵

The flurry of excitement that accompanied what the conservative American Catholic elements deemed drastic and prejudicial proposals

²⁹ Letter of Taft to Rampolla, July 3, 1901, in *Correspondence*, 18.

³⁰ *Report of the Philippine Commission*, (Washington, 1903), part I, 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

³² *New York Freeman's Journal*, July 26, 1903.

³³ *Ibid.*, August 9, 1902.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, August 16, 1902.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, October 4, 1902.

of the United States Government against the friar orders in the Philippines, intensified demands to examine other aspects of American rule in the Philippines. These included charges that no Catholic representation was made in the membership of the Philippine Commission⁸⁶ and raised serious questions regarding the educational policy of the Insular Government.

One of the earliest tasks undertaken by the United States Government was to lay down the foundations of a public school system in the Philippines, a necessary adjunct to its intention of divorcing the Church from the State. Under the military government, seven schools had been established, with a Catholic Chaplain, Father William McKinnon, being temporarily appointed as Superintendent of Public Schools in Manila.⁸⁷ By 1901 there had been a big influx of American teachers to man the educational system. To the American Catholic hierarchy the establishment of a public school system was, to begin with, unfair to the predominantly Catholic populace of the Philippines. A letter of protest addressed to President Roosevelt dated July 10, 1902, and signed by Archbishop William Henry Elder of Cincinnati, Bishop Michael Tierney of Hartford, and the priests of their dioceses, set forth in clear terms the conservative tone of their stand on the matter:⁸⁸

We respectfully submit that the clause of the Constitution which requires the absolute separation of Church and State was intended by the framers of the document to meet the conditions in the United States of America and not those which obtain in the Orient and among a people unanimously of one form of religious belief. Your Excellency, we are profoundly convinced that the Filipino people, deeply Catholic at heart, will deem it an unjust invasion of their rights to be taxed for the maintenance of a system of education which cannot command the free and full approval of their conscience.

The tenor of the statement was one of recognizing the efficacy of the doctrine of the Separation of Church and State for conditions in the United States but disallowing the same to be applied to the Philippines where Catholicism was the dominant religion. Father Wynne in his article, "The Friars Must Stay," went on to say that if the Government could not insist on introducing trial by jury in the Philippines, a fundamental tenet in the American Constitution, the Government should not insist on separating the Church and the State. The conservatives were therefore questioning the attempt of the Government to control and secularize education by way of buttressing their support for the religious education implanted by the friars. Similar statements of protest directed to the President and to members of Congress were made by the bishops and priests from the dioceses of Leavenworth and

⁸⁶ The appointment of Catholic James Smith to the Commission later on was partly a concession of Theodore Roosevelt to this charge.

⁸⁷ *New World*, November 12, 1898.

⁸⁸ Text reprinted in John Wynne, "The Friars Must Stay," 18-19.

Denver, the Advisory Board of the Federation of American Catholic Societies, the Federated Societies of New Jersey, the German Catholic Societies of Pennsylvania, the State League of German Catholic Societies of New York, the German Catholic Societies of Cleveland, and the Catholic Truth Society of Pittsburgh.³⁹ The core of their protests, against the secularization of education, carried with it the charge that virtually all the teachers sent to the Philippines were Protestants who were using the public schools to proselytize in favor of Protestantism, and that top American administrators of the school system were themselves "of no faith or of a faith at variance with the teachings of Catholicity."⁴⁰ The charges got a rebuttal from Governor Luke E. Wright, defending the position of the Government. Governor Wright's telegram to the Secretary of War dated July 9, 1902 read as follows:⁴¹

Referring to telegram from your office of the 6th instant, charges made by *Catholic Times* unfounded in every essential particular. Untrue that nearly all Americans are Protestant preachers and proselytizers. The fact is, one division superintendent was preaching in the United States a short time ago, then became teacher. Bryan, head of Normal School, was never clergyman and never occupied a pulpit here or elsewhere.

There are now two American Catholic teachers in school of instruction (Normal School) and five in Manila city schools. Native teachers in city, numbering one hundred forty, all Catholics. Untrue that teachers of normal school are proselytizing and that school graduates only Protestants... Untrue that Filipino is taught that Protestantism is bringing enlightenment and Catholicism is ignorance and tyranny...

We have shown your cable to the Reverend William McKinnon, Catholic priest, and a member of the Advisory Board General Instruction who confirms the statement of facts made by me above. Law to inaugurate public school system forbids religious instruction in school or school buildings by teachers, but allows same three days per week in school buildings by priests or preachers, out of school hours, upon request of parents... No discrimination against Catholic teachers.

Archbishop Ireland, taking the liberal side, openly supported the government position. He was of the belief that cooperation rather than an attitude of criticism and hostility would be much more effective in achieving results. His own position was borne out of the conviction that the government officials were fair in their dealings with religious problems.⁴² In an interview with the Associated Press, he took to task the different Catholic Societies and editors of Catholic newspapers for protesting at all about religious matters in the Philippines. The direction of Catholic affairs, according to the Archbishop, was the business of the Pope, "not that of irresponsible Church societies or newspaper

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Catholic News*, June 14, 1902.

⁴¹ Reprinted in *Catholic News*, July 19, 1902.

⁴² Moynihan, *Archbishop John Ireland*, 189.

editors; when he informs Catholics that any one matter is in his hands, they ought to step aside and allow him to have charge of it."⁴³

In answer to charges made by conservative elements regarding the public school system in the Philippines, Archbishop Ireland had this statement to make:⁴⁴

None of the prelates of the Roman Catholic Church, whose duty it is to safeguard the interests of their Church, and who are familiar with the facts, have made any such charges as are referred to in the inquiry addressed to Governor Wright, and in his answer above quoted. I am confident that they know better what the true facts are than the unknown and irresponsible sources of these adverse statements.

In another interview published in the *Catholic Citizen*, Archbishop Ireland gave more explicit data when he said:⁴⁵

As to schools in the Philippines, why not, when the presence of non-Catholic teachers is talked of, state that out of a total of 5000, 3500 are Filipino Catholics? Why not state that Father McKinnon is a member of the school board of Manila?... And why not remember that by the law of the islands clergymen, who are ministers in any place of organized congregations, may three times a week teach religion in the schools of the place, the condition that they be ministers of organized congregations, virtually confining the privilege to the Catholic priesthood?

Partly through the help of Archbishop Ireland, the Roosevelt administration managed to weather these popular protests.

The Taft Mission to Rome had meaningful consequences and results. The United States at least got an assurance that the Spanish friars would be replaced by those of other nationalities as an alternative to its demand that the friars be expelled altogether from the Philippines, thereby easing the tension that existed between the Filipinos and the friars. Outside of its intent to see American priests appointed to the Philippines, however, the United States Government, by its inability to secure the complete withdrawal of the friars, failed to get the support of nationalists who were sympathetic to the cause of the Filipino clergy.

More significantly, the Insular Government became preoccupied with the political overtones of the religious issues involved in the establishment of the Philippine Independent Church. The immediate impetus for the schism was the failure of the Taft Mission to secure the withdrawal of the friars from the Philippines. While a promise of Filipinization was made in the Papal Bull, "Mari Sinico," of Leo XIII, it did not meet the demands of the nationalists for the Filipinization of the clergy. In the first place, the Papal Bull created four new dioceses but said nothing about the appointment of Filipinos to head them. In the second place, the Bull recognized the utility of having a native clergy

⁴³ *New York Freeman's Journal*, August 16, 1902.

⁴⁴ *Catholic News*, June 14, 1902.

⁴⁵ Quoted by Moynihan, *Archbishop John Ireland*, 196.

but concrete steps to attain this end were not outlined. Implied in the said Bull was a limited degree of Filipinization. The nationalistic aspect of the movement and its connection to the peace and order situation in the country deeply concerned the American Government.

With the rapid spread of the Aglipayan Church⁴⁶ in all parts of the Philippines, and its assumption of a national character, the Americans had cause to suspect the movement as seditious. Even though Bishop Gregorio Aglipay had taken the oath of allegiance to the American Government, he had, after all, participated in the guerrilla movement against American forces. Isabelo de los Reyes, the real founder of the Philippine Independent Church, was, on the other hand, deeply interested in the laboring classes, and had been entangled in a series of strikes and agitations which led to his incarceration for short periods of time.⁴⁷ There were even reports that the Aglipayan Church was nothing but a facade for a movement to oust the American sovereignty in the Philippines under the cloak of religion.⁴⁸ Whether or not this suspicion had factual basis, the American Government had ample reasons to be alarmed.

The establishment and the popularity of the Aglipayan Church elicited the attention of the American Catholic Press and the American hierarchy. Particularly interesting to them was the link of the "schismatic church" to the Filipinos' hatred for the friars. The conservative elements had viewed Aglipayanism as a "concoction" of Americans and pro-American Filipinos to buttress the hatred for the friars and the claim of the United States Government that troubles in the Philippines would never be thoroughly settled until the friars had gone.⁴⁹ This opinion was expressed by the *New World*, Catholic weekly of the Archdiocese of Chicago, which had earlier suggested that Aglipayanism was being financed by American Protestants. The paper claimed to have established a connection between the raising of \$1,000,000 by J. Pierpont Morgan, Senator Mark Hanna and others to be spent in "fostering Christianity" in the Philippines and the simultaneous establishment of the Philippine Inde-

⁴⁶ The Philippine Independent Church was otherwise referred to as the Aglipayan Church because of the prominent role played by Bishop Gregorio Aglipay in the Movement. For the "genesis," rise and spread of the movement, the following reading materials are recommended: Gregorio Aglipay, "The Independent Catholic Church in the Philippines," *The Independent*, (October 29, 1903), 2571-2575; Juan Rivera, "The Aglipayan Movement," *Philippine Social Science Review*, (December 1937), 301-328; Donald Parker, "Church and State in the Philippines, (1896-1906)," *Philippine Social Science Review*, (November 1938), 354-357; William Henry Scott, "The Philippine Independent Church in History," *Silliman Journal*, (3rd quarter, 1963), 298-310; Pedro Achutegui and Miguel Bernad, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Vol. 1, (Manila, 1960); Lewis Whittemore, *Struggle for Freedom*, (Connecticut, 1961).

⁴⁷ Parker, "Church and State," 366.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Hendrick's letter to Theodore Roosevelt, September 28, 1904, in AAB.

⁴⁹ *Catholic News*, January 24, 1903.

pendent Church.⁵⁰ These reactions failed to consider the nationalistic aspect of Aglipayanism and showed a bias against Protestantism, but by maintaining the news coverage on the progress of Aglipayanism, the Catholic press continued to play up the interests of the friars, and to attack the allegedly anti-Catholic acts of the Insular Government.

Some evidence is available to connect the change in outlook of the American Catholic hierarchy towards the Insular Government with the spread of the Aglipayan Movement. The unfriendly attitude of the hierarchy turned by 1904 to one of support for American rule in the Philippines when the rapid spread of the Aglipayan Movement showed signs that it might mean the downfall of the Catholic Church itself. The following dispatch to the *Evening Post* clearly set this forth:⁵¹

The Catholic Church believes that the Republican Administration stands in the Philippine Islands for the maintenance of the claim of the Roman organization to the Church property, as against the demands of the Aglipayan schismatics...in helping to save the islands from the Aglipayan Movement, which was believed to be at heart as much devoted to an independent government as to an independent church, the Roman Catholics feel kindly disposed toward the Republican administration. More than that they believe that to set the Filipinos adrift as an independent policy would lead to an independent church; and from this time forth the Catholic Church can probably be counted as in favor of maintaining the status quo in the archipelago...

Another indication is the change of Cardinal Gibbon's opinion on Philippine independence. Cardinal Gibbons, along with other Catholic prelates like Archbishop P.J. Ryan of Pennsylvania, Bishop J.L. Spalding of Illinois, and Bishop W.N. McVickar of Rhode Island, were members of a group formed by prominent Americans in 1903 called the Philippine Independence Committee. It was mostly composed of university presidents, professors, and religious leaders. As gleaned from its Manifesto addressed to the political parties assembled in their national conventions, the Committee's aim was to obtain an immediate declaration that the United States would give the Filipinos independence "as soon as, with the countenance and aid and under the protection of this Republic, they can install a free government of their own."⁵²

The membership of the Catholic bishops, and especially of Cardinal Gibbons, in the Committee gave the impression that the Church was in favor of Philippine independence. It is however inaccurate to equate the stand of a few bishops with those of the whole hierarchy. The conspicuous absence of Cardinal Gibbon's signature in the Manifesto of the Committee, published in 1904, urging the independence of the Philippines, indicated a change of position of the Cardinal. A letter from

⁵⁰ *New World*, November 1, 1902.

⁵¹ Text reprinted in Henry Willis, *Our Philippine Problem*, (New York, 1905), 203-204.

⁵² *Philippine Independence Committee*, 3.

President Theodore Roosevelt pointing out that an independent Philippines would make it difficult for the Insular Government to continue protecting the American bishops in the Philippines, was instrumental in the Cardinal's change of mind.⁵³ The clear threat of the Aglipayan movement to the Catholic Church, and the stake of the American Church in the Philippines through its American bishops, made Cardinal Gibbons' decision logical and understandable, and the changed atmosphere within the ranks of the American Church had its effects on the Insular Government.

The Insular Government, fearing that the Filipinos were planning a new revolt against the authority of the United States under the guise of religion, and seeing the possibility of getting the help of the American hierarchy in the Philippines as an agent of political control, considered defections from the Catholic Church as a material weakening in the hierarchy and may have committed itself to do what it could to suppress the schism.

In a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt on July 27, 1903, Luke E. Wright spoke of his belief that when the American bishops assume authority in the Philippines, "they will be able to give direction to Church affairs in such a way as will end the schism and produce order and quiet. They, as Americans, will be able, I am sure, to appreciate both our methods and to determine how far, with advantage either to the Government or to the Church, the friar can be made useful." Wright further contended that replacing the friars with American or Filipino priests would end Aglipayan's influence because this act would destroy the only reason for the existence of the Aglipayan Movement.⁵⁴

President Roosevelt, in a letter to Governor Taft, indicated his willingness to help the American bishops in their task of adjusting Church problems in the Philippines. On Bishop Rooker's request that the houses of the bishops under government control be given back to them, he said:⁵⁵

I am earnestly desirous of showing these American Bishops that we want to do everything we can to help them. I think it important from the standpoint of securing good government and order and peace, and it will of course show our friendliness.

Meanwhile, in 1906, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled that all Roman Catholic Church property taken over by the Aglipayan Church should be returned to its rightful owner. With the return of Church buildings to the Roman Catholic Church, "a great bulk of the member-

⁵³ Letter of Theodore Roosevelt to Cardinal Gibbons, April 26, 1904, reprinted in John Gallagher (ed.), "The Theodore Roosevelt Letters to Cardinal Gibbons," *The Catholic Historical Review*, (January 1959), 444.

⁵⁴ Letter of Luke E. Wright to Theodore Roosevelt, July 27, 1903, reprinted in Zwierlein, *Theodore Roosevelt*, 80-81.

⁵⁵ Letter of Roosevelt to Taft, August 15, 1903, reprinted in Zwierlein, *Ibid.*, 75.

ship of those Churches remained to worship in them as if nothing had ever occurred."⁵⁶ The big loss in its membership was the beginning of the decline in popularity of the Aglipayan Church. As more Filipino bishops were appointed in later years by the Vatican, the appeal of the Aglipayan Church to patriotism began to lose force. These factors, in addition to weaknesses within the Aglipayan Church's own structure, such as the lack of schools and seminaries, and the lack of sufficient leadership, retarded the growth of the Aglipayan Church.⁵⁷

The involvement of the American Catholic Church in Philippine religious questions took the form of either bridging the gap between the United States Government and the Vatican, or reacting against the United States' attitude toward the friars, the friarlands question, and related matters. The reactions of the American Catholic Church were determined according to the persuasions of the members of the American hierarchy. Generally, liberal elements supported the religious policies of the Administration in the Philippines, while the conservative groups followed the lines dictated by the traditionalism of the Roman Catholic religion.

The interests of the Vatican and the United States Government were mutually served by the negotiations to end the religious problems in the Philippines. By agreeing to negotiate with the United States, the Vatican was assuring the security and maintenance of the Catholic Church in the Philippines. A victory by the Philippine Revolutionary Government may have meant an end to the Vatican control of the Philippine Catholic Church. The United States, on the other hand, had secured concessions from the Vatican which foresaw the accomplishment of its goal of pacifying the country through the solution of the friar question. Through the purchase of the friarlands and the assurance that the friars could expect no favors from the Government, the friar question was virtually eliminated, thereby relaxing the tense situation in the Philippines.

Although the American Catholic Church was split into liberal and conservative groups in relation to Philippine religious problems, there is no clearcut division between the gains of the two groups. After the Aglipayan schism, which posed a threat to the future of Catholicism in the Philippines, the American Catholic hierarchy reached a fairly unified stand on Philippine matters.

⁵⁶ Rivera, "The Aglipayan Movement," 30.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 30-31.