

# RETORIK

jurnal ilmu humaniora baru

Retorik merupakan jurnal akademik dalam bidang kajian budaya (*cultural studies*) yang diterbitkan oleh Program Magister Ilmu Religi dan Budaya. Penerbitan jurnal ini dimaksudkan untuk menggairahkan penelitian mengenai proses-proses pembentukan budaya dalam masyarakat Indonesia kontemporer. Jurnal ini mengutamakan pendekatan lintas disiplin yang menggabungkan semiotika, filsafat, psikoanalisa dan ilmu sosial. Tema-tema seperti pendidikan kritis, gerakan sosial, ekonomi politik kesenian, pascakolonialitas, dan kajian religi mendapat prioritas.

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# War, Expansion, and Race: American Catholics and the Occupation of The Philippines, 1898-1904

Baskara T. Wardaya

**Abstrak.** *Sebelum tahun 1898 Gereja Katolik di Amerika Serikat mengalami banyak pertentangan internal dan secara nasional posisinya sangat lemah. Namun demikian sejak tahun 1904 suasana itu berubah drastis. Gereja Katolik di Amerika Serikat semakin solid dan secara nasional posisinya semakin dihargai. Salah satu katalis terpenting bagi perubahan tersebut adalah perang antara Amerika Serikat melawan Spanyol yang berbuntut pada penjajahan Amerika Serikat atas Filipina yang nota bene mayoritas penduduknya beragama Katolik. Munculnya sikap pro dan kontra dalam Gereja Katolik atas penjajahan itu justru menghasilkan soliditas dalam Gereja sendiri serta semakin dihormatinya Gereja oleh masyarakat Amerika Serikat pada umumnya.*

**Kata-kata Kunci:** Catholic Church, United States of America, Church-State Relations, Spanish-American War, Democracy, Imperialism, Colonialism.

The turn of the 20th century witnessed significant changes in both the internal affairs of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States as well as in its church-state relations. During the latter part of the 19th century the Church hierarchy had been hurt by the internal divisions that resulted from conflicting opinions on how Church leadership in America should relate to American socio-political situations. A number of Church leaders promoted active participation in American politics and social institutions; others challenged such a notion for fear of weakening the universal character of the Church. By the turn of the century, this division would eventually disappear.

Since its formal organization in 1790, the Church experienced a number of conflicts with the government, but the conflicts were generally local, or statewide at most, in character. There were no conflicts which involved the entire Church organization with the U.S. government. By the end of the 1890s, however, broader conflict between the Church and the U.S. government was no longer avoidable.

The United States' declaration of war against Spain in 1898, which resulted in an American victory and the subsequent occupation of former Spanish colonial territories, brought the Church into conflict with the government.

The war created two separate but closely related situations that made American Catholics anxious. First, it disturbed American Catholics' patriotism, since Spain was a Catholic country. Second, the establishment of an American colonial empire in the former Spanish colonial territories worried many of them, since most of the inhabitants of these territories were Catholic.

Commodore George Dewey's victory in 1898 in the Philippines, followed by the McKinley Administration's decision to occupy islands inhabited by predominantly Catholic population, signified such a situation. Many Catholics supported American control over the islands because they accepted the necessity of spreading American values and tradition to the "lower" races. At the same time many others denounced the occupation, particularly the effort to deprive the population of Catholic faith and provide them instead with Protestant teachings. This study is an attempt to discuss how the American occupation of the Philippines (and the Spanish-American War in general) helped change relations between the Catholic Church in America and the U.S. government, and at the same time helped consolidate the Church itself. It is hoped that a study like this will help generate similar studies on the presence of the Catholic Church in other countries, including Indonesia, and its relations with government's (foreign) policies, along with its impact on the Church's internal and external dynamics within the nation-state.

### **Americanism**

In the late 19th century the Catholic Church in the U.S. suffered from prejudice on the part of many Americans. The Church was considered a "foreign" entity in the American society because of its emphasis on loyalty to the Pope in the Vatican. Catholic leadership in the U.S. was divided on its response to this situation.

Led by Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, Bishop John J. Keane of the Catholic University, and Msgr. Denis J. O'Connell of the North American College in Rome, one group advocated Catholic involvement in American social and political thought. This group supported the idea of "Americanism," emphasizing the national character of the Catholic Church in the U.S., and the Church's greater independence from European interference, including that from the Vatican. Many supporters of this group desired to have a church different from churches in other parts of the world.

Msgr. Denis O'Connell, one of the strongest supporters of Americanism, was a close friend of Archbishop Ireland. One of his letters to the Archbishop showed how strongly he emphasized the distinctive character and duty of the Catholic Church in the U.S. He wrote,

Now God passes the banner to the hands of America to bear it – in the cause of humanity... [A]nd it is your office to make its destiny known to America and [to] become its grand chaplain. Over all America there is certainly a duty higher than the interest of the individual states – even of the national government. The duty to humanity is certainly a real duty, and America cannot certainly with

honor, or fortune, evade its great share in it. Go to America and say, thus saith the Lord! ... Hence I am a partisan of the Anglo-American alliance, together they are invincible and they will impose a new civilization (Reuter, 1967: 209-210).

On a less rhetorical level, promoters of Americanism desired that the Church leadership participate at all levels of American life. They wanted to remove the notion that the Church was a foreign entity, a notion that had been applied to activities of the Catholic Church in the U.S. for many years. They desired a greater involvement of Catholic clergy in education, trade unions, and politics.

Oposing this "liberal" group was another group, led by Archbishop Michael A. Corrigan of New York City and his friend Bishop Bernard McQuaid of Rochester, New York. This group aligned a formidable bulwark of "conservative" bishops, priests, and laymen who objected to the "Americanization" of the Church (McAvoy, 1957: 88-89). Those who sided with this group wanted to limit the clergy's concerns strictly to ecclesiastical matters (Reuter, 1967: 25). They feared that liberalism introduced by "Americanists" (supporters of Americanism) would weaken the Catholic Church and would possibly promote the separation of the Church in the U.S. from the universal Catholic Church. They accused these Americanists of desiring to show the attainment of new intellectual and religious heights in America, distinctive from other parts of the world. They also opposed the Americanists' idea of lowering the barriers between the churches in the United States.

An important part of the dispute over Americanism was the publication of Father Walter Elliot's *The Life of Father Hecker* in 1897, a biography of Father Isaac Hecker, the American founder of the Paulist Fathers. A convert to Catholicism, Hecker emphasized the importance of compatibility of the Church leadership with American political institutions. He also stressed the adaptation of the Church's approach to modern era, making the Church more attractive to Americans in general, and the importance of direct involvement of Catholics in American public affairs (McAvoy, 1957: 157; Reuter, 1967: 26).

While Archbishop Ireland and his friends championed Hecker's idea of the Church leadership actively addressing the problems of American society, Archbishop Corrigan and his conservative followers predicted disaster to the traditional teachings of the Church if this was put into practice. Regarding the publication of Hecker's biography, they considered it an attempt to fulfill the need of Americanists to invent a "saint" in order to justify their own ideas (McAvoy, 1957: 196).

The seriousness of the dispute was well reflected in the fact that Pope Leo XIII himself finally took the matter into his own hands. After careful investigation he issued *Testem Benevolentiae*, a letter on Americanism, to Cardinal Gibbons. The Pope, however, was careful to say that the issue had nothing to do with the legitimate patriotism of the Americans, and that he was not accusing American Catholics of holding these views. The pontiff was merely warning that if such doctrines of

Americanism were being taught, they were erroneous (Leo XIII, 1903: 441-453).

### Total Control

In the late 1890s, while experiencing an internal crisis due to the dispute over the issue of Americanism, the Church was also subject to external pressures. These were brought to the Church by the outbreak of a military conflict between the United States and the Spanish colonial government, a conflict which was generated by a revolution in Cuba.

In the late 1890s there was a Cuban revolutionary uprising for independence from the Spanish colonial government. Initially President William McKinley was reluctant to get the United States involved. However, due to the public pressures following the explosion and sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana Harbor, he shifted his policy and supported American involvement on the side of the Cubans. On April 21, 1898 the U.S. officially declared war against Spain.<sup>1</sup> This war, later known as the Spanish-American War, lasted until August 12, 1898. America won a quick victory. Spain was forced to surrender its colonies, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

At the beginning of the war, many American Catholics were in full support of the American decision to fight against the Spanish. At the Cathedral of St. Paul, Minnesota, Archbishop Ireland urged American Catholics to show loyalty and support to the United States in the war. He said,

The supreme authority of this Republic has declared war against another nation. What is the duty of Christians in our country's present crisis? It is to accept manfully, loyally, the mandate of the supreme power of the nation, it is to co-operate in all manner of means within our reach, as far as we may be demanded to do so, with the government in the prosecution of the war. Beyond all doubt this is our solemn religious duty (*The Catholic Citizen*, May 14, 1898).

Even before the war started the Catholics had demonstrated their loyalty and support to the U.S. by forming The National *Maine* Monument Committee to build a monument in memory of the victims of the *Maine* incident. The committee was made up by "leading men of the country," such as Calvin S. Brice, James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore, William J. Bryan, and Archbishop Corrigan. They called the 250 victims of the *Maine* incident "the Nation's martyrs" (*The Catholic Citizen*, May 6, 1898).

In the course of the war, on May 1, 1898, an American naval squadron under the command of Commodore George Dewey attacked the Philippines. With the support of a Filipino revolutionary by the name of Emilio Aguinaldo, Dewey

<sup>1</sup> In the early days of the war many Americans considered Spain a tyrannical power and believed that its Catholicism was one of the reasons why the U.S. declared war on it. A closer scrutiny, however, showed that behind the war declaration there were also great American economic interests at stake. The war, therefore, was justified by a combination of idealism and self-interest (Maynard, 1941: 529).

completely defeated the Spanish Pacific fleet in Manila Harbor. Dewey's victory, in turn, opened up new possibilities of American imperialistic opportunities and caused an abrupt change in American war aims. The Spanish-American War, which had been originally a war of liberation in Cuba, now became a war which included a possibility of territorial acquisition in the Pacific (Reuter, 1967: 13). The American victory over Spain in the Spanish-American military conflict in the Philippines, then, marked the beginning of the American presence in the islands.

When Dewey and his naval squadron began their presence, the population of the Philippines was approximately 7.8 million. Of these, 6.5 million were Christians (Reuter, 1967: 61) most of them loyal Roman Catholics. The Catholic faith had been introduced to the Filipinos when Spanish missionaries landed with Ferdinand Magellan and claimed the islands as the colonial possession of Spain in 1517. When Magellan's fellow explorers returned to Spain after his murder by local inhabitants, some of these missionaries (better known as the *friars*) remained behind and began to teach Christian faith to the natives (Reuter, 1967: 62). By the end of the 19th century these Filipinos were devout Roman Catholics.<sup>2</sup>

Being devout Roman Catholics, however, did not prevent the Filipinos from wanting freedom from Spanish colonization. Many of them determined to fight for freedom and independence. At the same time, they were outraged by the fact that many Spanish friars participated in suppressing Filipino politicians or movement leaders who might threaten the Spanish colonial authority (Reuter, 1967: 63). Under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo, members of a native secret society called *Katipunan* launched a rebellion in 1896. The rebellion was put down and Aguinaldo went into exile in Hong Kong after the Spanish signed the Treaty of Biacnabato and paid him \$ 400,000 (Reuter, 1967).

While George Dewey and his naval squadron were planning to attack the Spanish fleet at Manila Harbor in 1898, a new rebellion broke out. Dewey then persuaded Aguinaldo and his officers to leave Hong Kong and return to the Philippines and to join the new rebellion, under American protection. Aguinaldo agreed to come home and fight the Spanish with the full support of the Americans forces. He believed in the promise delivered by Dewey and other American leaders that if he joined the American forces, the Americans would help to establish an independent Philippines after the defeat of the Spanish (Paterson et al., 1988). In a very short time American and Filipino forces defeated the Spanish colonial army and compelled the Spanish government to sign a treaty of peace.

In the Treaty of Peace of 1898, Spain formally ceded the Philippine Islands to the United States. The latter, the treaty stipulated, would pay Spain the sum of twenty million dollars within three months after the exchange of its ratification. In return, the U.S. was given formal authority to "occupy and hold the city, bay and harbor of Manila, pending the conclusion of a treaty of peace which shall determine the control, disposition and government of the Philippines" (Malloy, 1910).

2 After spending four years in the Philippines as civil governor, for instance, William Howard Taft was thoroughly convinced of this sincerity of Filipino Catholicism. See Taft (1905: 364).



Following the signing of the treaty, in January 1899 Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Philippine Republic (Reuter, 1967: 64-65). The U.S. government, however, soon rejected the proclamation and any notion regarding Philippine independence. Instead, it wanted to keep the islands under its own control. On May 19, 1898 President McKinley instructed Secretary of War R.A. Alger to occupy the Philippines (Reuter, 1967: 65). Aguinaldo resisted strongly. He rebelled against the Americans and held approximately 130 Spanish clergymen and nuns, including one Bishop, prisoners.<sup>3</sup> In March 1901, after a series of bloody struggles, he was captured by American forces. The struggles continued, and by 1902 over 5,000 Americans and 200,000 Filipinos had lost their lives. Regarding this violent conflict, an American journalist arrogantly wrote, "it is not civilized warfare, but we are not dealing with civilized people. The only thing they know and fear is force, violence, and brutality; and we gave it to them" (Paterson et al., 1988: 208). The end of this "uncivilized warfare" was soon followed by the American military forces having total control over the islands.

### Spirit of Imperialism

In the beginning of the occupation many Catholics in the United States enthusiastically supported American control over the islands. To them the basic concern was the future of the Philippines. They feared that if the islands were returned to Spanish colonial government, it would not be able to stop the native uprisings. They also feared that the Philippines might fall into the hands of non-Catholic powers, such as Japan or Germany. This could result in the expulsion of the Catholic Church from the islands; it would be better if the Philippines were under American control. Under the U. S. government the islands would benefit from American traditions such as democracy and the idea of the separation of Church and state. They even thought that the Catholic Church might become more dynamic due to the competition from Protestant missions. Some of them argued that "if Catholicism had prospered in the free society of the United States, it should prosper in an American-controlled Philippines" (Reuter, 1967: 17).

Many people in the Catholic press supported this view. They looked forward to the day when the Philippine Church would become Americanized and enjoy American religious privileges, such as freedom from the state's interference (Reuter, 1967). A writer by the name of T. St. John Gaffney, for instance, wrote optimistically in *The New York Times*,

Should the Philippines be transferred to the sovereignty of the United States there seems to be no doubt in the minds of the Catholics in this country that it would be greatly to the advantage of the Roman Catholic Church and its members in these islands. Roman Catholicism flourishes where religious freedom is assured to all sects (*The New York Times*, September 7, 1898).

3 There were great concerns regarding the prisoner's well-being in the Vatican and among American Catholics as well. The papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Rampulla, acting through the Apostolic Delegate in Washington, formally requested the American Secretary of State William R. Day for an American intervention to guarantee the safety of the nuns and clergy (Reuter, 1967: 66).

An expression of support for American occupation of the Philippines also appeared clearly when a "National Jubilee of Peace" was held in Chicago on October 18, 1898 to celebrate the end of the Spanish-American War and the American victory. President McKinley and Archbishop Ireland were among the guests of honor at the celebration. On this occasion Archbishop Ireland delivered a fiery speech showing his support for the U.S. government in the war and the American occupation of the Philippines. The Archbishop described the horrors of war, but at the same time acknowledged the occasional necessity of it, particularly when the life of a nation was threatened.

Archbishop Ireland highly praised American patriotism as well as the courage of American soldiers and seamen during the war, noting the "magnificent... sweep of Dewey's squadron into the harbor of Manila" (Ireland, 1904: 75). The victory over Spain, Ireland maintained, signaled America's taking on a new role in the global community, that of being the world's leader in promoting liberty and democracy.

In an interview in New York, when he was on his way to visit the Pope in the Vatican in December 1898, Archbishop Ireland repeated his support for American colonization of the Philippines, "Who in America knows anything about the Philippines? The Church in the Philippines will, I have no doubt, accustom itself to the conditions under the new regime, as it did under the old." He added, "The Church will accept the conditions that are to be just as she accepts them in this country" (*The New York Times*, December 20, 1898). Calling Aguinaldo "a semi-barbarous, ambitious fellow, impatient with the priests because they upheld the ruling power in the interest of law and order," Ireland was optimistic that the U.S. government would cooperate with the Catholic priests in the islands.

A spirit of imperialism regarding the occupation was apparently shared by other members of the Church hierarchy. Cardinal Gibbons, for instance, felt that "the Catholic religion was safer under the American flag than anywhere else" (Maynard, 1941: 530). When President McKinley asked him his opinion about the occupation of the Philippines, Gibbons responded by suggesting that it would be a good thing for the Catholic Church, although it might not be very good for the United States.

### No Voice

Further development, however, suggested that American occupation of the Philippines did not always produce good things for the Catholic Church. It often brought new ecclesiastical problems. Under the occupation, for instance, the normal life of the Church suffered greatly. The departure of the Spanish friars following the occupation resulted in a lack of priests in the islands. From 1898 to 1900 there were almost no bishops in the Philippine dioceses. Fewer than 675 Filipino priests were available to serve the 967 parishes and missions. Since the seminaries had been closed since 1898, by 1900 the number of the priests was even smaller than that. Most of the seminaries would not begin to reopen until 1904 (Schumacher, 1979: 292).

Some Filipino priests were forced to live in the mountains with the guerrillas. Many others had died both as a result of normal causes and the cruelty of the

American occupation. A considerable number of priests were in American prisons for real or suspected connections with the guerrillas. A number of churches, convents, and other ecclesiastical buildings were successively occupied by Spanish, Filipino, and American troops. Many that had not been destroyed or badly damaged often continued to be occupied by the Americans until as late as 1902 (Schumacher, 1979: 292).

Meanwhile, there were reports about American violations of religious freedom in the islands. The *Boston Pilot* published a story about Captain Lynn, who was sent to investigate supplies at the College of St. Catherine in Manila, but instead broke into the convent and, despite the pleas of the nuns, intruded into the privacy of the cloister itself. The *Pilot* reported that one of the two American Catholic chaplains, Fr. Francis B. Doherty, protested the incident to General Otis, who relieved Captain Lynn of his duties and sent him back to the United States (*Boston Pilot*, December 10, 1898). A picture of a church desecration by American military men was published in the front page of *Collier's Weekly*. It showed some men with U.S. military uniform smoking cigars around the altar, with their caps on, while some others were using a telegraphic instrument whose wire was wound around the tabernacle (*The New York Times*, September 16, 1899).<sup>4</sup>

When the U.S. government sent a Peace Commission to Paris in 1898 to negotiate with the Spanish colonial government, none of the commission members was Catholic (Reuter, 1967: 15) despite the fact that the Commission would have to deal with many issues related to the Catholic Church. Similarly, no Catholic was appointed when in 1899 McKinley sent a fact-finding commission to the islands, headed by Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman, president of Cornell University. Based on the recommendation provided by the Schurman Commission,<sup>5</sup> McKinley sent a Second Philippine Commission, headed by William Howard Taft. Despite criticism by the Catholic press of the "anti-Catholic discrimination" of the Schurman Commission, again no Catholic was appointed to this Second Commission (*The New York Freeman's Journal*, July 14, 1900).

Following the occupation, the U.S. government began to establish a public school system to replace the existing Catholic schools, which had been serving the Filipinos during the Spanish colonial period (Reuter, 1967). Most of the teachers assigned to teach in the new school system, however, were reportedly non-Catholics (Maynard, 1941). In this U.S.-controlled public school system, religion

4 These are examples of problems related to violence and desecration suffered by the Church in the Philippines under the American occupation. News about these and some other problems soon reached America and generated strong reactions from the Catholic population. These Americans were irritated by two series of problems. In addition to the problems related to the violence and church desecration, they were also irritated by problems related to U.S. government's attempts to minimize the role of Catholic Church in the islands. They believed that these attempts were done by establishing a public school system which neglected the role of the Catholic Church, by excluding Catholics in the Philippine Commissions, and by greatly supporting the expansion of Protestant missions to the islands.

5 On November 2, 1899, the Schurman Commission submitted its preliminary report to the President. In their recommendation members of the Commission reported their conviction that "Catholicism is the religion, not only of the majority, but of all the civilized Filipinos." (Senate Document, "Religion," in *First Philippine Commission Report*, 109. See Reuter [1967: 70]).

would not be taught. Catholics would have no voice in managing the system, which eventually would make it impossible for the Catholic Church to maintain itself as a teacher of the young (Reuter, 1967).

### To Weaken the Church

The American occupation of the Philippines was followed with great enthusiasm among American Protestants to begin extensive missions in the islands. Members of Protestant missionary societies became enthusiastic "over the prospect of invading these islands and claiming them from Catholicism" (Reuter, 1967: 13). Leaders of these societies then began to discuss the prospect and problems of opening new Protestant missions among Filipinos. By the mid-summer of 1898, in the midst of the debates over whether the U.S. should retain the Philippines or not, the Protestant press strongly supported the idea of retaining the Islands under American control (Reuter, 1967: 13).

On June 11, 1898 *The New York Times* published an article about how one enthusiastic Protestant commission prepared itself to work for the Philippines. The article said, "Yesterday this Army Christian Commission, the name of the body through which all religious agencies now act, started its first consignment of tents and equipment to the Philippine Islands." The equipment included 50,000 letterheads, and a great number of books, chairs, tables, tents, and fans. The article also stated that "never before did war see the Church so emphatically at the front."

In a separate article published on the same day the paper also reported that the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions had just finished a meeting on starting missions in the Philippines. Participants of the meeting agreed that "now is the time for Churches to secure a strong and permanent foothold" in the islands. They wanted the Protestant missions to the Philippines "to enter upon it as soon as American guns and valor make the work practicable."

There were various reactions from the American Catholics regarding developments in the Philippines following the silence of the guns and the beginning of American interference in the daily lives of the natives. Some Catholic reacted by starting their own programs to help the Filipinos. In April 1900, for instance, General Joseph Wheeler, a prominent Catholic in Washington D.C., made a public announcement about his intention to start a movement to help the Philippines shortly after his visit to the Islands. The General also urged American Catholic women to participate in his effort. "During my recent visit to the Philippines... I was much impressed with the great devotion of the women, and it occurred to me that it would be a grateful thing for the Catholic women of our country to show their appreciation of the piety of their sisters of the east in some substantial way" (*The Catholic Citizen*, April 28, 1900).

In general, however, the reactions suggested a tendency of a growing solidarity among Catholics in the nation due to the feeling of being discriminated against, or left out in the Philippine affairs by the government and American public. Many of the Catholics resented this turn in the direction of the war efforts. Not only did they feel that their patriotism had been challenged, but they now also felt that they were asked to fight a war to extend Protestantism into territories that had been

Catholic for centuries (Reuter, 1967: 14-15). They were disillusioned by the reality of American policies toward the newly acquired territory.

When news about violence and church desecration reached the U.S., a great number of American Catholics were outraged. Many of them feared that the deliberate anti-Catholic attitudes in government policies might result in the destruction of the natives' Catholic faith, and turn them over to Protestant missionaries (Reuter, 1967). In reaction to the picture of a church desecration published in the *Collier's Weekly*, for instance, a writer expressed his strong condemnation of such acts, which he considered an act of anti-Catholic arrogance, in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*. At the end of the long letter to the editor he wrote,

... If anybody still doubts that sentimental grievances are even more effective than material... let him consider this case of the altar in a Catholic Church, as the most convenient and sheltered telegraphic station. And let him no longer wonder that there are millions of Filipinos who are ready to die rather than to submit to the indignities that have been inflicted upon them by the doubtless brave and patriotic, doubtless well-meaning but doubtless horribly uncivilized persons ... wearing to our shame the uniform of officers of the United States Army (*The New York Times*, September 16, 1899).

In reaction to attempts to discredit Roman Catholic missions in the Philippines in general, Helene M. Erni wrote in *The New York Times* (September 5, 1898), "let us give the Catholic Church credit and appreciation." Praising the many good works done by the Catholic Church in the islands, Erni also reminded the readers of loyalty and sacrifice offered by American Catholics who "willingly, nay gladly, give the last drop of their blood" to America, just like any other Americans. She argued that any attempt made to weaken the Catholic Church would only strengthen the faith and loyalty of its members to the Church as well as to America.

The *New York Freeman's Journal* condemned the violent way the U.S. government got control over the islands, branding it an act of imperialism based purely on greed. The paper appealed to Americans to oppose the continuation of violence in the Philippines. It read,

It only remains that you, the free Citizens of America, for the glory of your name throughout the world and for the honor of your flag, shall do justice. Thus shall the hands of your noble sons be no longer stained with innocent blood. Thus shall it not be said that the vile inspirations of greed have banished from your hearts those lofty traditions of liberty and philanthropy which you have inherited from your honest forefathers (*New York Freeman's Journal*, July 21, 1900).

The absence of Catholics in the three commissions on the Philippines also generated strong negative reactions among Catholics. They considered this a deliberate anti-Catholic attitude on the part of the U.S. government (*San Francisco Monitor*, November 18, 1899). In reaction to the composition of the Peace Commission of 1898 the Catholic press immediately branded it anti-Catholic. They

also claimed that the large proportion of Catholics in the United States who had done their share in the war effort considered such a lack of wisdom a deliberate injustice. Many Catholics feared that McKinley purposely discriminated against them. As result, until the end of his life McKinley was under constant attack by the Catholic press. "McKinleyism" or "being McKinleyized" became press slogans for alleged acts of anti-Catholicism committed in the islands (*New York Freeman's Journal*, July 14, 1900).

The absence of Catholics in the First and the Second Philippine Commissions compelled the *New York Freeman's Journal* to ask, "Were there no Catholics in the U.S. capable of a place thereon?" It then expressed the fear of some Catholics that President McKinley deliberately intended to discriminate against the Catholics. Suspicious that Protestant Churches were behind such discriminative policies, it further wrote that "Protestantism is hand-in-hand with Infidelity and secret-chamber hypocrites in trying to wipe out Christianity in the Orient" (*New York Freeman's Journal*, July 14, 1900).

Some other Catholics considered the absence part of policies to leave out the Church in the decision making process. Father Frederick Z. Rooker's letter to Msgr. Denis O'Connell, for instance, indicated such a notion. He wrote that neither Secretary of State John Hay nor Secretary of the Navy John Long, who were very influential in McKinley's Philippine policies,

have any use for the Abp. [John Ireland] nor for any other Catholic. They have determined and have made the President determine to go with the settlement of any difficulties which may arise in the new policy of the government absolutely without reference to the existence of Catholic authority. Everything indicates that the Church is to be left out entirely in the final arrangements (quoted in Reuter, 1967: 71).

Initially, many American Catholics supported the new public school system. They believed that since the old, parochial school system had created difficulties for the Church; a new and American system of school was needed. Other Catholics, however, were suspicious of the new system. They feared that the public school system would be used to the disadvantage of the Catholic Church (Reuter, 1967). This kind of fear began when they realized that the Catholic Church was not given sufficient part in planning or running the system. A number of Catholics began to oppose the system publicly.

Articles published in the July edition of the *New York Freeman's Journal* (July 14, 1900) were typical of such reaction. One article considered the system part of an "Anti-Catholic crusade in the Philippines." It stated that the system was clearly a "shameful discrimination against Catholics." It added, "The cry may be 'free religion' or anything else, but it is a notorious fact that Protestantism and unbelief in one form or another are forced upon the children attending public schools."<sup>6</sup>

6 To show the close ties between the government, the new school system, and the Protestant missions the writer of the article suggested that anybody connected with the YMCA or anybody recommended by this organization, could get any privilege and go anywhere at government expense. He also argued that with the support of the government, members of the YMCA did not hesitate to discredit Catholic missions in the islands (*New York Freeman's Journal*, July 14, 1900).

American Catholics' reactions to the expansion of Protestant missions were no less strong. Quoting a letter from the *Boston Herald*, the *Boston Pilot* warned that "powerful influences" had been brought to President McKinley to assure that the Philippines would be cleared of Catholic religious orders and that it would be open to exclusive Protestant missionary activities. The paper also insisted that religious freedom among Filipinos should be guaranteed. It suggested that,

if circumstances compel an American protectorate over the Philippines, we shall not abuse our power by endeavoring to force on the people of those islands any form of religion. The United States is not a Protestant country. Religious freedom is a fundamental principle of our Constitution (*Boston Pilot*, June 18, 1898).

Despite the strong reactions of many Catholics, however, there were Catholics who did not worry too much about Protestant activities in the Philippines. They were more interested in seeing the establishment of a just peace which would at least assure religious freedom. To them competition from Protestant missionaries did not seem too important to worry about (Reuter, 1967: 15).

It is important to note that in general, objections raised by American Catholics were not about the Protestants themselves, but about the Protestants' influence in shaping government policies which were intended to control the islands and eliminate the traditional role of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines (*New York Freeman's Journal*, July 12, 1900). For American Catholics, therefore, the heart of the problem lay in the U.S. government's official policies (Reuter, 1967: 79). They felt that government policies attempted to weaken the Church, and to make difficult, if not impossible, the religious work it was already doing. In addition to the concerns about the proposal to expel the Spanish friars, pushed energetically by most American officials, Catholics were also concerned about attempts to deny the Church its property and the recommendation to establish a public school system which minimized the Church's role. They realized that any effort to deprive the Church of its income-producing properties and its facilities of education and charity would quickly destroy the Church's position among its faithful.

### Eventually Succeeded

Further developments suggested that the concerns and reactions of the Catholics did not go unnoticed. Certain changes occurred in the government's policies.<sup>7</sup> Governor William Howard Taft and President Theodore Roosevelt played a very

<sup>7</sup> An interview given by Archbishop Ireland in London, while he was on his way back to the United States after an audience with Pope Leo XIII in the Vatican, suggested that by the late 1900s there had been some improvement in U.S.-Vatican relations regarding the Philippine issues. In the interview the Archbishop said that the Pope had told him, "We are well pleased with the relations of the American Government to the Church in Cuba and the Philippines." According to the Archbishop, in the Pope's eyes, "The American Government gives proof of good will and exhibit a spirit of justice and respect for the liberty and rights of the Church." Therefore Pope Leo XIII asked Ireland to "thank in my name the President of the Republic for what is being done (*The New York Times*, October 2, 1900).

important role in this. Taft served as a civil governor of the Philippines from 1901 to 1904. As governor he took a liberal stand on behalf of the Catholics, even against the military officials and the municipal government in the islands. He proposed a bill which would guarantee the return of Church properties, which under the provisions of the Treaty of Peace of 1898 were officially given to the U.S. government. Taft maintained this policy should be confirmed by the Congress. It was eventually legalized in the Philippine Civil Government Bill of 1902, which returned the properties back to the Church.

In June, 1902, Taft led a delegation to the Vatican in an attempt to negotiate the problem of the extensive amount of land controlled by various religious orders of the Catholic Church. From the beginning, there was a mutual misunderstanding between the Vatican and the Taft Commission. The Vatican saw the matter purely as a problem of property, while the Commission saw the presence and activities of the religious orders themselves as the central matter. Despite the difficulties in the process, however, the negotiations were finally brought to a successful conclusion in 1903.<sup>8</sup> After patient meetings in Manila between Taft and a new apostolic delegate, Cardinal Giovanni Guidi, agreement was reached on the purchase of Church property and the reduction of the Spanish clergy. The agreement represented an important step in the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the United States (Alvarez, 1992).

Another major factor in changing the government policy on the Philippines was the Roosevelt presidency. Theodore Roosevelt, who assumed the presidency in September 1901, following the assassination of President McKinley, was more sensitive to press criticism than his predecessor (Reuter, 1967: 86). He was concerned that the accusations of the Catholics regarding government's policies in the Philippines might jeopardize his leadership, especially during the congressional election year. The President, for instance, wanted the charges regarding the public school system to be investigated and reported in the media. This was done shortly afterwards. In defense of the Roosevelt Administration, a report from the investigation stated that, "About 2700 native teachers employed in the islands, all of whom are Catholics, ... 2 American Catholic teachers in the normal school, 5 in the Manila schools, and 140 native Catholic teachers in Manila, alone. Exceptional that any graduate is other than Catholic" (*Catholic World*, LXXXV, August 1902).

Roosevelt also maintained good relations with a number of Catholics.<sup>9</sup> Although these relations did not always win the support of many Catholics regarding his Philippine policies, they helped him settle issues which most concerned the Catholic Church. His desire to find a solution to the friar's land problem was an example of his aim to find the fair settlement. The task of finding such a settlement would be left to the Taft Commission to the Vatican which, despite difficulties, eventually succeeded both in settling the matters and helping to improve relations between the U.S. government and the Church (Zwierlein, 1956: 40-55).

8 For analysis on the problems of separation of the Catholic Church from the Philippine government – particularly in matters of land question and education – during the Taft administration as governor, see Reuter (1982).

9 For details on the relations between Theodore Roosevelt and Catholics in the U.S. see Zwierlein (1956).



## Became More Aware

Representing one sixth of the total U.S. population by the late 1890s, the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. was weak, divided, and marked by internal divisions, particularly over the issue of Americanism. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the subsequent issue of colonialism, however, apparently became a turning point in Catholic development in the United States (Reuter, 1967). In this respect, the issue of the Philippine occupation played a very significant role. The government's decision to occupy and then to lay out policies which were not beneficial to the Catholic population generated concerns and reactions among American Catholics.

The response to the concerns and reactions to the occupation policies were important for both the government itself and the Catholic Church in the U.S. To the government, the response helped reduce sharp criticism from the Catholic population. For the Catholics, the controversy over the Philippine occupation helped them to gain a new respect from the government and from the American public in general for their opinions. The government was willing to cooperate with Catholics regarding their desires, when it had never before cooperated. This, in turn, helped begin the process of minimizing the anti-Catholic prejudice which had existed in America for so long (Reuter, 1967).

On February 20, 1902, Pope Leo XIII celebrated the 25th anniversary of his pontificate. Cardinal Gibbons, speaking in the name of the American hierarchy, had sent him a letter of congratulations on March 2, to which the pontiff replied on April 15 with the highest praise for the American Church. Leo XIII told the American bishops that the condition of the Church in the United States cheered his heart with its success in spreading the faith, the provision of educational facilities, the advance of the African-American and Native-American missions, the liberty granted the Church by American law, and the generosity of American Catholics in relieving the poverty of the Holy See (Leo XIII, 1903: 441-453).

By 1904 the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S. not only appeared as a united body, but had also become more aware of the fact that it was the largest single religious body in the nation (Reuter, 1967). There were issues other than colonial questions which helped bring about the greater unity and awareness among American Catholics. Problems related to the occupation of the Philippines, however, became a catalyst which tended to crystallize Catholic opinion nationally. Prior to 1898 the Catholic Church in the U.S. was a church marked by internal controversies such as the dispute over Americanism. It was also a church which lacked national prominence in the nation's socio-political affairs. By 1904, however, the Church became more aware of itself as national body and gained a prominent place in the affairs of the nation.

With regard to Indonesia, it would be interesting to study how the Catholic Church in this country, despite its religious-minority status, responded to various foreign and domestic policies that the Indonesian government conducted and how the response helped shape the position and role of the Church nationally.

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