

also represented at the Congress and demanded that any new Philippine society have the Catholic Church at its base and foundation. The Church gave the Filipino a moral compass, norms, and “sense of identity.”⁵³

When it was time to vote on an amendment to the provisional constitution that would have separated the Church from the State, there was a huge fight between those who favored keeping the Church as part of the government and those who wanted a clean break. The first vote on the amendment ended in a tie. However, the chairman broke the tie and the amendment passed by a margin of one vote.⁵⁴ The Filipino clergy were outraged and felt the revolution’s leadership had betrayed them. The priests who supported the revolution to get rid of the Spanish friars never supported the goal of dissolving the established power and influence of the Catholic Church. Many revolutionary delegates agreed. No one present at the vote needed to be reminded that there would have been no revolution had the Filipino priests not organized a stand against the Spanish friars and the Spanish crown.

The errors of Aguinaldo and Mabini aside, most people were mindful of the friars’ role in the revolutionary cause, including Rizal, who dedicated his second novel, *El Filibusterismo*, to the martyred Filipino priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora. Rizal’s actions, and those taken by Calderon and others, are poignant reminders that nationalism in the Philippines did not mean secularization of the government but instead a “nationalizing” of the Catholic Church. By doing this it was believed the obstacles to education, progress, and freedom would be overcome while at the same time keeping the Philippines a Catholic nation. Unfortunately for the Church and the revolutionaries, those ideas were not fully realized.

In 1898 the Spanish-American War began, with grave consequences for the Philippines. Having defeated the Spanish in short order, the Americans became the new colonial masters of the Philippines, voiding the established Philippine Republic and igniting a new war against the Americans. The Catholic Church had few weapons to combat this new American colonialism, and would see its role diminish in importance as nationalism gave way to a partnership with the Americans. To be Filipino would still mean to be part of the Church, but now America would inject its own influences into the Philippine psyche, including ideas such as liberty, democracy, the Protestant work ethic, and the separation of Church and State.

CHAPTER

2

The American Era: Secular Challenge to the Church

The United States acquired the Philippines as the spoils from the war with Spain, and with them came the Catholic Church-based infrastructure. It was unlike any territory the United States had ever attained. Within American political circles, there were those for and against this acquisition. Some saw the economic and military value of the islands, including their undeniable value as a naval base for America’s emerging Pacific fleet. Others objected to the United States playing the role of an imperialist power. It was, in their view, unjustifiable in light of American political culture, which was founded on the principles of free choice and rule of law. To force the American government and its institutions on a people who did not wish them was in itself un-American, yet President William McKinley and his advisors, mostly in the military, were able to look past any negatives associated with violating American principles and the tradition of anti-imperialism and see the economic, political, and even religious benefits associated with the acquisition of the Philippines.

Estimates of public opinion toward the acquisition of the Philippines after the war were varied. Businessmen viewed the Philippines as the gateway to Asiatic markets and a way for the United States to finally become competitive with what they believed would be the emerging markets in China.¹ In American religious circles, there was almost uniform support for the acceptance of American responsibility for the islands and undertaking a “conquest for Christ.” The fact that more than 80 per cent of Filipinos were Christian did not seem to dampen the American spirit for Protestant proselytizing. Many Americans who were aware of American involvement in the Philippines viewed the acquisition of the islands as divinely inspired.²

Divinely inspired or not, the American regime in the Philippines took power and remained in power throughout the colonial era because of its military might. The Church, long the center of politics in the Philippines, was marginalized. The Church was detached from the government by the American desire to separate Church and State and was marginalized by other factors, such as the United States colonial economic sector and the United States military.

Ignoring the Catholic Church was something the Americans did from the beginning. One of the rallying points for acquiring the Philippines initially as a protectorate was that a conquest of arms must be followed by a conquest for Christ.³ American Protestants simply ignored that more than 80 per cent of the Philippine population was Catholic. The few anti-imperialists, such as Samuel Clemens, Andrew Carnegie, and Charles Francis Adams, who viewed what the United States was undertaking as being in direct opposition to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, were ignored. These gentlemen argued that the Filipino was no more eager for American rule than they were for Spanish misrule. The United States had unmistakably broken with its democratic traditions of equal rights and self-government.⁴ These men's voices, like those of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, were muted by the majority's clamor to take over the islands.

The final decision was McKinley's, and given all the bluster about economics and empire, his description of his own decision lacked any mention of empire building, a desired naval base, or an American counterweight to European expansion in Asia. What he says instead is that the United States had three undesirable alternatives. The islands could not be given back to the Spanish, they could not be turned over to a rival European power, and they could not be left to themselves, because the Filipinos were in his opinion unfit for self government. McKinley thus concluded that there was nothing left to do but to take them and "educate the Filipinos and uplift and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the best we could for them as our fellow men for whom Christ also died."⁵

American colonial authorities never saw themselves for what they were, the first major extension of the American imperialist arm. On the contrary, the official line of the United States was that it had come to the Philippines as a liberator, not as a colonizer, taking up the unenviable

but necessary "white man's burden."⁶ Opinions about the Filipinos themselves were not flattering. Books written at the time described the Filipinos as "spoiled children," "indignant," and grateful for the surfeit of American supplies.⁷ Indeed, the Filipinos were expected to be thankful that a "just" and "noble" imperial master was pacifying them, not a third-rate European power with antiquated politics and a friar-controlled bureaucracy.⁸

American intentions were not all bad. They planned to eventually give the Philippines independence, but in limited steps. There was still support for the policy of filling the Filipinos' stomachs while keeping their heads empty. Yet there was more than pure philanthropy to the American conquest. Many Filipinos did not see the Americans as liberators, but as simply another occupying force, and they met the American army with a revolutionary army of their own.

Spain's defeat by the Americans was in a real sense a defeat of the Catholic Church as well, and it made the Church's cooperative position with the government uncertain. The Spanish friars were not ignorant of the American political culture, but it is likely that the friars themselves did not have a clear idea of how they would be treated by the new American regime. Some probably felt their positions would be sustained against the Filipinos and the indigenous clergy, and others probably felt a mutual working relationship could be worked out between the parishes and the Americans. In either case, the Spanish friars planned on staying in the Philippines without being harassed by either Americans or Filipinos.

In previous centuries the power of the friars was so great that the Spanish government rested upon the Church. The Americans had seldom dealt with a Church whose authority was indistinguishable from that of the secular government, and one was always invoked to sustain the power of the other.⁹ Garel A. Grunder and William E. Livezey summarized the friars' power during the Spanish era quite well, stating that the friars were "supreme" in the life of Filipinos.¹⁰ The priest exerted a determining influence in practically every branch of municipal government. He was president of the boards of health, statistics, and prisons. He presided over taxation and the municipal budget and was a member of the board of partition crown lands. At times, the friars were even in charge of the insular police. They closely supervised whatever public instruction was offered and naturally opposed any liberalizing tendencies or actions that

might undermine their own privileged status or the power of Spain. In a very vital sense, these religious leaders were to the Filipinos the real representatives of Spanish power.

The American administration approached the situation unsure of how to handle a Church that was also a government. The situation was complicated by the actions of some within the Church itself. As it had during the final years of Spanish rule, the Church tried to serve as a rallying point for opposition forces against the Americans. Some elements within the Philippine Church refused to relinquish their dream of independence and did not shy away from violent conflict with the American forces. The most well-known of these clashes occurred on the island of Samar, where the bells of the local parish were used as a signal to launch a brutal assault on Company C of the United States Ninth Infantry. At the sound of the parish bells, Filipinos dressed as mourning women pulled out their bolos (large machete knives) and slaughtered fifty-four soldiers. Retribution from the Americans was swift, and included burning the church and seizing the parish bells. The bells are still in American hands, kept as trophies at F. E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. To this day, Wyoming veterans' groups resist giving them back.¹¹

The soldiers who had rallied around the Filipino clergy to overthrow the Spanish looked again to their parishes for guidance in matters of war. They were fighting a juggernaut in the American military, but it did not stop them from trying. Discovering this, the Americans began to target the Church and the Filipino priests became a major focus of "pacification." To do this would require winning over the clergy, and if they could not be won over they were to be "eliminated."¹²

The exact number of priests targeted, won over, or eliminated is not known. What can be surmised is that the pressure placed on the Catholic Church by the American occupying forces was successful. Gradually, the Church withdrew and was pushed out of any revolutionary role. The revolution gradually transformed into something unrecognizable from the war with the Spanish. As the leadership, Aguinaldo, Mabini, and others distanced themselves more and more from the Church and the revolution lost popular support and died out. Scholars readily acknowledge that the revolution became short-lived when the Church was removed from its center and there was nothing to replace it as the organizational and spiritual force.¹³ In many respects, the revolution failed because it abandoned its religious roots.

The centuries-old conflict between the Christian majority and the Muslim minority in the south was also very much alive during this time. Unlike the Spanish, the Americans had little difficulty in subduing the *moros*. They were, through superior arms, more than a match for the fighters of the *moros*, who were equipped with antiquated firearms and a *keris*. The Muslims ultimately accepted American rule with the signing of the Carpenter Agreement in 1915 between Sultan Jamalul Kiram and Frank Carpenter. They did this hoping that they would be granted a modicum of autonomy and not be forced to submit to the authority of the Christian Filipinos, whose power was centered in Manila.

The Americans, however, should not be viewed as benevolent imperialists who had no other choice but to take the Philippines under their exclusive wing and colonial protection. Elements in the Philippine revolution who had fought against the Spanish before the American victory had declared through their Malolos Constitution of 1899 an independent Philippine state, and the Americans simply ignored this. The Americans did not plan to share their victory or the spoils of the Philippines with the Filipinos. After the dispatch of the Spanish, the United States made it known that the "insurgents" who had previously been Filipino freedom fighters must recognize the authority of the United States.¹⁴

The American administration took the islands, but it also inherited the problems. Problems of education, infrastructure, land reform, and government all taxed the intellectual and material resources of the United States. An elite and educated body of Filipinos existed, but they were few in comparison with the overall population and were not of great use in fostering the American administration.

Among the most important problems facing the new American administration was how to deal with the Church. The Americans had never seen or dealt with a Church-State apparatus that was so intimately intertwined. The indigenous Filipino clergy also had to be dealt with, along with the issue of the Spanish friars. The questions and problems facing the Americans were daunting. They had to pacify a population, deal with the friars, keep the native clergy content, and honor their own American political traditions of separation of Church and State.

To deal with this issue, President McKinley tapped Jacob Gould Schurman, then president of Cornell University, to head a commission to look into these difficulties. By the end of 1899, the commission submitted a report stating that American stewardship was needed for an

indefinite period until the Filipinos themselves were educated and responsible enough for self-government.¹⁵ It did, however, deal concretely with the Catholic Church issues. From the beginning of American rule in the Philippines, it was officially announced that the cardinal principle of policy would be consonant with a fundamental rule of American life: Keep the separation between Church and State “real, entire, and absolute.”¹⁶ As a corollary, there was to be absolute religious freedom. This separation of Church and State was an expression of the American political culture and ideals, not of religious convictions.

A second commission was established under the authority of William Howard Taft. President McKinley gave the Taft Commission legislative and executive authority to put in place the civilian government the Schurman Commission had recommended. In 499 statutes issued between September 1900 and August 1902, the Taft Commission attempted to sweep away more than three centuries of Spanish and Catholic rule and replace them with American-style law. In place of a constitution, the United States passed the Organic Act of 1902, which among other things extended the protections of the Bill of Rights to the Filipinos and imposed, for the first time in Philippine history, an official government mandate for the separation of Church and State.

Declaring the separation on paper did not make it reality. The Catholic Church, the friars, and the power they wielded were still issues that needed to be addressed, and Taft took it upon himself to give them his personal attention. Most of the members of his civilian government were clamoring for the expulsion of the friars from their land and from the Philippines because they had observed that the Spanish friars were the targets of much Filipino animosity. The friars were the reason for the revolution to begin with, and keeping them in their parishes could only hurt America’s effort in the Philippines. Yet at the same time, Article VII of the Treaty of Paris meant the Americans had to protect the friars and their lands.

The Church issue was made more complex by the fact that the Church owned vast estates throughout the Philippines and was also engaged extensively in banking and general businesses.¹⁷ Complicating matters was the Vatican’s handpicked representative, Archbishop Placido Chapelle of New Orleans, who was sent to the Philippines to oversee the transition from Spanish to American control. Archbishop Chapelle arrived on January 2, 1900. Paradoxically, he was the wrong man for the right job.

Once in the Philippines, Chapelle gave the illusion of representing both the Papacy of Rome and the United States, but as a champion of the friars he failed to understand his role as an American representative. His aims for the Church clouded his judgment and ended up superseding any patriotic tendencies.¹⁸ Chapelle pressured the American administration to return the friars to their estates, in plain disregard for the inhibitions against the United States government or its agents being involved with ecclesiastical preferment.¹⁹ He also tried to get recognition for the Church’s exclusive right to control property and charitable or educational works, which under Spanish rule had been mixed civil and ecclesiastical authority.²⁰

Chapelle’s crusade to get exclusive rights to all Church-owned property and even that once held in joint custody by the Spanish secular authorities and the Church frightened many Filipinos, who feared an American-friar alliance. Fortunately for them, his requests were denied, and the fact that the insular government was legally contesting the right of the Church or friars to the property helped satisfy many Filipinos.²¹

The damage Chapelle did to the American efforts to resolve the friar issue was serious. He blatantly supported the friars’ interests, and to many Filipinos he seemed to represent the American view. Coinciding with Chapelle’s seemingly royal treatment by the American authorities was the imprisonment of Adriano Garces, a Filipino priest who was a chief opponent of the Spanish friars. This action seen alongside the pomp and circumstance afforded friars by the Americans, including the military protection of some friars, led many to believe the Americans were getting too cozy with the friars.²² Indeed, it was not uncommon for Catholic dignitaries to be provided army wagons for pastoral tours and occasionally be granted a guard of constabulary at their disposal. Even steamboats were available for the use of the Church’s dignitaries.²³ The Church even managed to pressure the Americans to appoint Catholics to the highest offices overseeing education in the Philippines.²⁴

There may have been more than one way to deal with the friar issue, but Chapelle’s methods were not one of them. Contrary to what Chapelle was purporting to be the American stance, the American authorities set two objectives. The first was the reduction of the economic power of the Catholic Church and the second was the expulsion of the religious orders (friars) from the islands.²⁵ Together the main religious orders—the Dominicans, Augustinians, and Recollects—held almost half a million acres of the best lands and considerable business and political

influence. Given that they were the targets of Filipino animosity, they could not be allowed to stay in the same powerful positions. Taft's commission concluded that the best way to deal with the issues was to purchase the friar lands and resell them to the Filipinos and others who wished to purchase them.

Directions from Washington were clear and echoed Taft's findings. Secretary of War Elihu Root told Taft that separation of Church and State was one of the fundamental and imperative provisions of American government and could not be compromised. Moreover, there was a need to adjust the relations of these agencies in the Philippines from one of close union to one of complete independence.²⁶

McKinley's assassination on September 14, 1901, and his subsequent replacement by Theodore Roosevelt did not change America's Philippine policy. At Roosevelt's request, Taft proceeded to Rome in June 1902 to meet Pope Leo XIII to try to solve the friar problem. The deal Taft eventually struck was to purchase 410,000 acres for roughly US\$7.2 million in gold. Taft believed that unless serious efforts were made to get the Holy See to withdraw all friars, there would be no peace with the elite on whom the American policy of conciliation depended.²⁷ Taft's work continued, and so did progress on the Cooper Bill, which authorized the purchase of friar lands.²⁸

Coupled with the Americans' movement to buy the friar lands and rid the Philippines of them for good were the schismatic movements within the Church itself. Gregorio Aglipay, an ordained priest of the Catholic Church, broke away from the Roman Church to establish his Independent Philippine Church (*Iglesia Filipina Independiente*). Also called the Aglipayan church, it grew out of the Filipino clergy's deep resentment against the Spanish government and the Catholic Church for failing to faithfully carry out the secularization of the church.²⁹

The Aglipayan church was based on the Roman model and was essentially orthodox Catholicism with a nationalist bent, allowing full participation for the indigenous clergy who would join their ranks. Aglipay believed that those who joined his movement would also inherit the church buildings and property of the Catholic Church once the Americans had evicted the Spanish.³⁰ It was this promise and the fact that those who joined his movement also brought ownership of their parishes that fueled the explosive growth of the Aglipayan church.

As the Aglipayan movement built momentum, it began to gobble up the lands and parishes of the Catholic Church. It did so when a parish

priest quit the Roman Church and joined the schismatics or when the congregation voted to do so. However, the purchase of the best friar estates posed difficulties, as did a legal challenge to the movement, which was heard before the Philippine Supreme Court on November 24, 1906. In the case of *Barlin v. Ramires*, the court held that the Catholic Church was the sole legal owner of all disputed churches and other parish properties.³¹ Deprived of its main source of inspiration—the takeover of property—the Aglipayan movement lost momentum and became politically irrelevant within a decade.

The *Iglesia ni Cristo* (INC) is quite a different story. Founded in 1914 by the charismatic Felix Manalo, the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (Tagalog for "Church of Christ") claimed to be the one true Church of Christ. Manalo heralded himself as God's last prophet. Since its founding, it has grown to boast more than 200 congregations in some sixty-seven countries outside the Philippines, including a large and expanding community in the United States. From its humble beginnings, membership grew and current estimates range from three million to ten million members worldwide.

At its onset, the INC poured large amounts of resources and energies into condemning the Catholic Church. Like the Aglipayan movement, it offered dissatisfied Filipino Catholics an alternative to the friars' legacy. However, unlike the Aglipayan church, it did not rely on the seizure of Catholic property to make converts. Thus, when the Church won its legal battle the INC did not falter. It survived and grew and remains politically powerful today, a fact made clear in later chapters.

During this time the Catholic Church itself, made up of a few remaining foreign friars and loyal indigenous clergy, was being pressured on all sides. Schismatic movements such as Aglipay's and the INC, initially drew both property and parishioners away from the Church, and the influx of hostile Protestant missionaries seemed to only exacerbate the problem. The hostility between the Catholic Church and the American Protestant missionaries was real. Many missionaries came to the island with the apparent notion that their first and most imperative duty was to fight the Catholics.³² But the Church was not going away without a fight, and it was prepared to do what was necessary to survive.

Though it is true that the Aglipayan schism, the INC, and the entrance of the American Protestant denominations shook the Church and caused a great deal of consternation, it survived weakened but basically intact. Under the Americans, the Church may not have been the force it

once was, but it retained the nominal adherence of the immense majority of Filipinos in the twentieth century and thus remained a major potential force in Philippine society and politics.³³ The Church and its clergy were wise in the ways of political manipulation and realized that the American regime could be one of two things: the tool to break its hold on the people forever or the instrument allowing it to stay politically relevant and involved in the population's everyday lives. Initially, it seemed a difficult task but later the Catholic cause would be helped along by the Americans themselves.

At the outset, American representatives were distinctly hostile to the Church and were inclined to treat it as if it were identical to the discredited Spanish hierarchy. Further experience in the Philippines brought the Americans to see the immense power the Church wielded. While the land negotiations were ongoing, there grew an American desire to make use of the Church's power as a means of political control, rather than opposing it to keep it continuously against American rule.³⁴ The idea of using the Church to further American aims had existed since Taft's arrival. Taft and many of his associates fully appreciated the fact that the Catholic Church had done much to civilize and stabilize the Philippines. Moreover, Taft believed that the Church's great power and influence could still be used in advancing America's agenda.³⁵

Using the Church to further American aims was a delicate task, helped along by the Church's willingness to find shelter in America's shadow. The Americans had only to be careful not to appear to favor the friars. Moreover, the Americans had to ensure the absolute separation of Church and State and carefully avoid anything resembling concessions to the Church.³⁶ It was a public policy keeping with the political traditions of the United States and also ensured the Filipino who had fought against the friars that the Americans were different and would not forsake their traditions or reinstall the friars to their positions of power.

At the same time, the vast majority of the population still needed and held affection toward their Catholic faith. This affection was used to foster pro-Americanism, making the United States' colonial occupation more tolerable to the Philippines. To accomplish both tasks meant a staunch and very public legal enunciation of the separation of Church and State, paralleling a much less public effort to buy friar lands, sell them to the natives, install American priests where the Spanish had once been, and support the native clergy who were pleasant toward American aims.

The United States was adroit at playing both sides of the card. The Filipinos, who were unable to throw off the yoke of American imperialism, benefited by ridding themselves of the corrupt friars, taking possession of their own lands, and maintaining the faith that had unified them politically, socially, and culturally for more than 300 years. The Church also took steps to continue their internal reforms, structuring the Church to better fit the Philippine model. The *Quae Mari Sinico* issued in Rome on September 17, 1902, increased the number of bishoprics, increased training for the indigenous priests, and elevated their role in Church affairs. Other reforms included replacing the Spanish friar prelates with American bishops in 1903.³⁷

The Manila Council of December 8-29, 1904, took up these and other matters and marked a real turning point in the Church's history in the Philippines. Since then, the Church's political progress has been slow but steady.³⁸ In the end, the Church had successfully rebuffed the Aglipayan schism, and after eighteen years of evangelical work the Protestants had converted only 124,575 Filipinos, or 1.3 per cent of the population.³⁹ The failure by the Protestants or any of the schismatics to make significant progress in the long run is yet another testament to how deep the Church's roots ran in the Philippines.

Divorced from a direct role in political affairs, the Catholic Church attempted to remain relevant by having Filipino clergy attend to the needs of their parishes and parishioners as best they could. Sacraments still needed performing, schools still needed to be run, health care needed to be doled out, and the Church could still dominate in all the places where American forces had yet to penetrate. The Church continued to run its schools and universities, including two universities that remained the premier institutions for Philippine elite. Those were the University of Santo Thomas, the royal and pontifical university of the Philippines, and the Jesuit-established Ateneo de Manila University.

The Catholic Church had to share intellectual, political, and cultural space with the mass appeal of all things American. Americanism itself became sort of a religion, and Uncle Sam's American way was a moral ideal to be emulated. Identification with things American sometimes became as powerful as any religious affiliation. Church leaders struggled to find ways to remain relevant. Understanding that the stiffest competition for the hearts and minds of the populace was not with any anti-clerical ideology but with Americanism, they decided to adopt some aspects of the American way, such as the use of the rule of law

to affect change and remain congruous to the everyday life of the nation's populace.

The Church also pushed parishioners to have a larger voice both in Church affairs and in social affairs. By doing this, it was hoped that Catholics would garner greater political leverage through greater political activity. The logic was that the more the Church expanded parishioners' involvement, the greater the Church's influence would be in secular political institutions.⁴⁰ It would take nearly three decades of constant effort, but eventually it yielded success.

Three decades after the Americans had established control, the Catholic Church managed to regain some political relevancy. The 1930s saw a rejuvenation of Church importance to politics, as Catholic scholars and the secular leadership were brought together in an exchange of ideas. This was the result of the strong foundation and the kind of deeply rooted influence the Church enjoyed in the Philippines, along with the fact that the Catholics still held administrative power in the premier universities. The students they produced were still Catholic, and the majority of the scholars, politicians, and government workers were all still Catholic. It was reasonable, therefore, to assume that when the United States began to get serious about transitional control of its colony to indigenous hands it would turn to the best and brightest of the nation, who just happened to be graduates of Catholic institutions who were influenced considerably by the Church.

In the legal arena, the push for independence was spearheaded by the efforts of Sergio Osmena and Manuel Roxas, who led a mission to the United States between 1931 and 1933. The United States passed the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Law, which provided granting the Philippines independence after a ten-year period. Due to some objectionable provisions, the Philippine Legislature rejected it, and in 1934 Manuel Quezon, himself a graduate of the University of Santo Thomas, led another mission to the United States to secure passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Law, which provided, among other things, establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth before granting independence.

The culmination of these efforts was the 1934 Commonwealth Constitution, the product of the finest Catholic minds assembled from the nation's parishes and universities.⁴¹ From 1898 to 1934, the Catholic Church had been attacked, suppressed, and marginalized by the Americans. The Commonwealth Constitution was proof that the Church was back. It was again a force of legitimacy in the Philippines. The

Commonwealth Constitution is still called the first truly "Christian doctrine" of national law.⁴² This document was to serve as the law of an independent Philippines.

Remarkably, the Catholic Church survived the ideological onslaught of American government, military, and Protestant denominations to re-emerge in 1934 as the co-author the new constitution. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth government outlined in the constitution would never be truly tested. Japanese aggression was growing in East Asia and would spill over into Southeast Asia and the Philippines. Faced with a new enemy, the time for enlightened law in the Philippines had not come. Now was a time for war and national survival.

The price of being America's ally in Asia was high for the Philippines. More than 200,000 lives were lost fighting the Japanese, and the material destruction of Manila and other important cities was almost complete. The fighting was costly, but as they had so many times in the past the Filipino people prevailed, their tenacity as fighters and their survival as a people unquestioned. Their reward was independence. The United States kept its agreement to grant independence. On July 4, 1946, the Philippines declared independence and the third Philippine Republic was inaugurated.

To help the newly independent nation, the Americans offered the Philippines a "mini-Marshall Plan," of \$600 million per year.⁴³ The amount was considerably less than what the European nations were offered. And by the time the money was distributed, the amount was smaller than that offered to rebuild Japan. The miniscule help the United States offered to its former colony and its staunchest ally in Asia bordered on insulting, but the Americans added more salt to the Philippines' wounds.

In 1946, before a single dollar was earmarked for the Philippines, the United States extracted a number of preferential provisions from the nation through two major agreements. The first was the Rehabilitation Act (mini-Marshall Plan), and the second was the Trade Act (Bell Act). Both were implemented in 1946. Provisions in both bills required the Philippines to revise their constitution and civil, criminal, and trade laws so that American citizens and business interests were granted parity with their Philippine counterparts in economic matters.⁴⁴ The latter was reaffirmed in the Laurel-Langley Act of 1956. The problems were made all the more intense by a weakened sense of identity and national morale, weakened by the pre-war American occupation, the Japanese onslaught,

and the diluted Catholic Church and its institutions. If the Philippines were to rebuild and if its poorest elements were to be lifted up, the nation would need a revitalized Church.

During the Spanish era, the Catholic Church had provided governance and guidance, and during the revolution it had provided leadership. However, the American colonial period had effectively weakened the Church-State cooperation that was endemic in Philippine society. The brief Commonwealth period illustrated the Church's resilience and its ability to reclaim its spot as a partner with the Philippine government. It survived the Japanese onslaught and helped the Philippines become the first colony in Asia to gain independence. In doing so, it attracted the respect, admiration, and attention of leaders and revolutionary movements across the region.⁴⁵

The next few decades would witness a reinvigoration of the Catholic Church worldwide. Vatican II, Liberation Theology, and the rise to power of Ferdinand Marcos would all serve, in different ways, to push the Church's activities to the forefront of Philippine politics. The culmination would be the Church's role in the People Power revolution, which played a significant role in bringing down an authoritarian regime and bringing the Church back to the forefront of Philippine politics.

CHAPTER

3

The Total Solution: Marcos vs. the Church

Ferdinand Marcos came to power in the presidential election of 1965 by defeating incumbent President Diosdado Macapagal on a ticket that was one part nationalism, one part charismatic appeal, and one part typical Philippine politics—the bribing of individual voters and the *barrio* leadership. Marcos appealed to the masses for several reasons, including his insistence on his glorious record as a soldier. He was never shy about touting his record as a war hero, which itself was fraudulent. As a candidate, he ran on a platform that promised governmental reform that would lift the Philippines out of the poverty of the Third World. During his tenure as president, he accomplished neither.

He did, however, bring a new level of political oppression, violence, and social chaos to the Philippines. His one-and-a-half terms as a constitutional and legal president were fraught with largesse at the expense of his own people. He had a Napoleonic complex of his own and a marriage of convenience with Imelda Romualdez that suited his political ambitions. Together they looted the Philippine treasury, ignored the suffering of the people, and grew paranoid in their unquenchable thirst for complete authority over the Philippines. Those who got in his way, be they members of the military, his friends, or political foes, did not endure. Organized resistance had a way of falling under the category of subversion and mass arrests, torture, and even murder were used as tools to squash dissent.

Some of his later political targets were the left-leaning progressives within the Catholic Church. In the end, getting at the Church and politically neutralizing it proved the ultimate challenge for Marcos. Targeting the Church politically was one thing; attacking it with the tools of his policy state was another. In a country where the Catholic Church impacts more than 80 per cent of voters, Marcos had to be careful about the type of action he took to silence any opposition to his regime that existed in the Church hierarchy.

STEVEN SHIRLEY

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GUIDED BY GOD

The Legacy of
the Catholic
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