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Reply to Mr. Scott

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that the perusal of documents will lead to that truth. Since the publication of *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, he has directed that these archives be closed to future Jesuit research. Perhaps he has become a wiser man by observing what can happen to documents when they become a sort of sacred cow.

W. H. SCOTT

Reply to Mr. Scott

I

The first document which Mr. Scott mentions is the baptismal entry in the church register in Batac, Ilocos Norte. In fairness to us, we would like Mr. Scott—and our readers—to review with us the reasons why we have attached so much importance to that baptismal entry.

Before we published our article on "The True Birth Date of Gregorio Aglipay" to which Mr. Scott objects, there had been some confusion about the exact date of Aglipay's birth. The exact date—indeed the exact year—was a controverted point. The *Encyclopedia Americana* said that he was born "about 1864." The well-known *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada* of Espasa gave his birth date as 7 May 1870. Here then were two standard encyclopedias giving two different years for Aglipay's birth. On the other hand, almost all other writers gave an entirely different year; namely, 1860.

Which of these three years was correct?

Among those who were agreed on the year 1860, there was a difference of opinion as to the exact day: some believed it was the 7th of May; others, the 8th; others, the 9th. Again, which of these three dates was correct?

The 7th of May had few adherents but they included two well known names: Retana and Foreman. The 9th of May had many more adherents. These included Camilo Osias, George Malcolm, Manuel Artigas, Juan M. Ruiz, Leon O. Ty, James Robertson, as well as the *Directorio biográfico filipino*. The weekly newspaper *La Verdad*, which espoused the Aglipayan cause, in its issue of 21 January 1903 carried the statement: "*El Arzobispo Aglipay nació en Batak, Ilocos Norte, el 9 de Mayo de 1860.*" An Aglipayan calendar of 1904 contained the following entry for 9 May: "*Nacimiento del Ilustro Gregorio Aglipay en 1860*"¹

The 9th of May, therefore, seemed to enjoy the weight of authority—except that the 8th of May also had many adherents, including,

¹ For bibliographical details see *Philippine Studies*, 5 (1957), 370-387.

apparently, Aglipay himself. The commemorative tablet which the Philippines Historical Committee erected at Aglipay's birthplace in 1949 states that he "was born 8 May, 1860." The same date is given by Zoilo Galang in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*, although Camilo Osias, in another volume of the same encyclopedia, gives a different date.² To this day the Philippine Independent Church celebrates Aglipay's birthday on the 8th of May, as may be seen in their new "Filipino Missal" published only recently.

In view of this controversy, how can one be expected to take Aglipay's word that he was born on May 8th, on the ground that Aglipay should have known what his birth day was? In view of the fact that so much had been written about Aglipay and his church, it seemed to us strange that so little attempt seems to have been made to verify the point by consulting a primary source, for instance the baptismal register at Batac.

The testimony of the baptismal entry seemed to us decisive: on the 9th of May 1860, Gregorio Aglipay Cruz, son of Pedro Aglipay Cruz and Victoriana Labayan Hilario, was baptized by Father Domingo Agbayani. The child was then five days old—"niño de cinco dias." This would mean that he was born on or about the 5th of May 1860.

II

Mr. Scott asks why we could not have just cited this document briefly, instead of devoting an 18-page article to it. The reason must be evident to anyone who would read dispassionately both that article and the first volume of our book, *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*. So many statements had been made, not only without documentary proof, but even in direct contradiction of documentary evidence, that it was necessary to show the necessity of consulting primary sources. A few examples will illustrate this point.

Example 1.—Gregorio Aglipay, writing in *The Manila Times* for 25 December 1902, claimed that the Iglesia Filipina Independiente had three million adherents. Isabelo de los Reyes Sr., writing only ten months later, claimed that the IFI had five million members. He added that his figures were official, furnished by the secretariate general of the church. Aglipay in September 1905 told Taft that his church had three and a half million members. These statements, by the two supreme leaders of the church, could not all have been correct.³

Example 2.—It was stated in official publications of the IFI that Gregorio Aglipay had been conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity

² *Ibid.*

³ See *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, I: 222-227.

by the University of Chicago. The documentary evidence is quite otherwise.⁴

Example 3.—It was stated by a well-known writer (now an honored member of the Philippine Senate) that Aglipay's education was supervised by his mother. But we know from the parish records at Batac, as well as from the testimony of Simeon Mandac who knew him well, that Aglipay's mother died when he was an infant.⁵

Example 4.—It was stated by other biographers that Aglipay was orphaned of both parents when he was young. But the documents which are still extant show that Aglipay obtained a leave of absence to visit his sick father in Dagupan in 1895, when he was thirty-five years old.⁶

Example 5.—It was stated that in March 1939 Aglipay married a "childhood friend" and that "to the union was born an only child who subsequently died." The evidence of the documents and of the tombstone is that the "child" died one year before the marriage was celebrated and that she was twenty-four years old at the time of her death. Moreover, the term "childhood friend" would have to be interpreted in a special way, since there was a fourteen-year difference between Aglipay and his wife.⁷

Example 6.—It was stated by several biographers that in 1898, in order to obtain permission from his ecclesiastical superiors to go to Manila, Aglipay concocted a fictitious reason by alleging a sickness of the eyes. One biographer puts the matter this way: "Aglipay... came to Manila *feigning* sickness of the eyes. His arrival in Manila coincided with the coming of the Americans in May, 1898."⁸ Both parts of that statement are contradicted by the documentary material at hand. In the first place, Aglipay's arrival in Manila did not coincide with that of the Americans in May 1898: he was in Manila from February onwards. In the second place, the sickness of the eyes could not have been feigned, since there are two medical certificates, signed by two different physicians of standing, attesting to the existence of sclero-coroiditis in Aglipay's right eye.⁹ (It is of course possible to say that those physicians had been suborned to issue false medical certificates: but such an accusation would be a serious one and no honest historian would make it without offering conclusive proof.)

These are only a few examples of the many statements concerning Aglipay and his church which are contradicted by the documentary

⁴ *Ibid.*, I: 466-468.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I: 3-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I: 7. See also *Philippine Studies*, 6 (1958), 193.

⁷ *Religious Revolution*, I: 498-501.

⁸ Tomas Fonacier, *Gregorio Aglipay y Labayan, a Short Biography* (Manila, 1954), p. 12. Emphasis added.

⁹ For the documents in these cases, see *Philippine Studies*, 6 (1958), 186-193.

evidence. It is true that many of these points are trivial; but the cumulative effect of a series of misstatements (even if individually trivial) is not to be discounted.

Hence, no true biography or true history of Aglipay can be written unless we are sure of the facts. And we cannot be sure of the facts if we neglect the documentary evidence that is at hand.

III

Mr. Scott finds fault with our dismissal as a myth of the story that Aglipay's decision to become a priest had been suggested to him by Rizal. Such a story, if it were supported by reliable documentary evidence, would of course have to be accepted as fact. In the absence of documentary proof, the story must be tested by internal evidence as well as by the other ordinary criteria of likelihood. Mr. Scott, apparently, accepts the story as true. That is his privilege. We reject it as unlikely: that is what we mean when we call it a myth. We invite the reader to form his own judgment. The story is contained in Zoilo Galang's *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*.¹⁰

IV

Mr. Scott disagrees with our judgment of Bishop Brent. Brent impressed us as a sincere man with large ideas, great tolerance, and an uncompromising detestation for moral evil. Such a man commands respect. Mr. Scott, however, does not seem to share our respect for Brent. He considers him an imperialist, an inconsiderate and insulting person, and one who had no understanding or sympathy for the Filipino. On this point we will not quarrel with Mr. Scott. We will just ask him two questions:

First, why is it that the Episcopalians, in writing the official biography of Brent, have completely omitted all the correspondence and other documents in which Brent expressed his judgment of Aglipay and the Aglipayan church? These documents are in the Library of Congress in Washington, in the National Archives (also in Washington), and some are in the Episcopal seminary of St. Andrew in Quezon City. Why were they omitted?¹¹

Second, Mr. Scott quotes a long passage in which Bishop Brent disparages the Roman Catholic clergy. If Mr. Scott accepts Brent's testimony against Catholic priests, why does he not accept Brent's testimony against Aglipay and the Aglipayan clergy?

¹⁰ Enc. Phil, 1st ed. (11935-36) IX:27. For our own judgment on the story and for other references, see *Religious Revolution*, I: 11-12.

¹¹ *Bishop Brent, Crusader for Christian Unity* by Alexander C. Zabriskie (Philadelphia, 1948). See *Religious Revolution*, I: 387 ff.

V

Mr. Scott objects to our publication of the letters written by the superintendent of the Episcopal mission in Sagada, Jaime Masferré, to his Episcopalian superiors, the Reverend John Staunton and Bishop Charles Brent. In these letters, Mr. Masferré describes in detail how Aglipay behaved both in a private office and in the municipal building, in which Masferré was assaulted, both verbally and physically, by Aglipay. Mr. Scott does not reject Masferré's testimony as a lie. Indeed there were others present at the incident, including the Episcopalian minister, White. Mr. Scott objects to the publication of these letters because "the incident is insignificant, and the letters are insignificant." But Bishop Brent, the head of the Episcopal mission in the Philippines at the time, did not seem to think so. He considered the incident of sufficient importance to communicate to the American Secretary of War.

We ourselves do not think that the incident or the letters are insignificant. We believe that this detailed description of Aglipay's conduct is revelatory of Aglipay's character. The reader may judge for himself. He may read the letters in Appendix B of our first volume, or he may consult the originals in the National Archives in Washington.

On one point Mr. Scott is quite right: the writer of those letters was entirely unknown to us. So unknown that, as Mr. Scott correctly says, we could not even identify him correctly. We thought Jaime Masferré was an Episcopalian minister and therefore we referred to him—in the first edition of Volume I of *Religious Revolution*—as "Reverend." This error was pointed out to us by many friends and we have corrected it in detail in the second edition (Manila, 1961). Mr. Scott has apparently not seen our second edition.

VI

Mr. Scott says: "Mons. Isabelo de los Reyes... cooperated with the research of Fathers Achútegui and Bernad in good faith, candidly answering questions in personal interviews and lending documents from the Aglipayan archives." That is not quite accurate. Bishop Reyes granted us one interview before the publication of our book (a fact which we gratefully acknowledged in the preface), and he granted us one other interview afterwards. There has since been a cordial interchange of letters. It is not correct to say that Bishop Reyes lent us documents from Aglipayan archives. The documents mentioned in the first edition of our first volume were not supplied by Bishop Reyes. They were in the possession of others. It was *after* the publication of our first volume that Father Bernad visited the library of

Saint Andrew's Seminary at the invitation of Bishop Ogilby. There he was shown every courtesy and was allowed to see the archives of the Philippine Independent Church. This courtesy we have also gratefully acknowledged in the "Preface to the Second Edition" of our first volume. Subsequently, Father Bernad wrote Bishop Reyes asking him for his curriculum vitae, with the intention of including it in our second volume which is now in preparation. The request was not granted.

VII

Mr. Scott accuses us of "perversity" in "flying in the face of even such public documents as a Supreme Court decision simply by failing to mention them." The Supreme Court decision to which he refers was in the case of *Santiago Fonacier vs. Court of Appeals et al.* (G.R. No. L-5917). We assure Mr. Scott that we are not flying in the face of that document or any of the court decisions in the multiple litigation that has been going on within Aglipayan ranks since 1946. Our first volume of *Religious Revolution in the Philippines* was an account of the life and church of Gregorio Aglipay from his birth in 1860 to his death in 1940. Our second volume takes up the story from 1940 to the present. The Supreme Court decision to which Mr. Scott refers was handed down on 28 January 1955. It is an important decision and forms the bulk of two chapters in our second volume, which we hope will soon be published.

VIII

We are grateful to Mr. Scott for his attention. We agree with him that documents do not tell the entire story of any man or any movement. We disagree with him in the weight that should be given to documentary evidence. We regret that he considers our conduct dishonest. We value our honesty and our good name, and we would naturally wish that others would also give us the credit of being honest men.

One thing, however, consoles us. If Mr. Scott does not entertain a high opinion of us, there are others who do, even among those who disagree with us. Father Conrad Myrick of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a professor at the Episcopal Seminary in which the ministers of the Philippine Independent Church are trained, says in a review of our book:

First the authors have amassed a large collection of useful documents on the subject... Second, the book takes the Philippine Independent Church History out of the realm of pamphlets and chapters and articles, and puts it within the framework of historical study and *obras grandes*, at last.¹²

¹² *The South East Asia Journal of Theology*, 4 (July 1962), 75-76.

He ends by saying that *Religious Revolution in the Philippines* is a "timely" work. Father Myrick is not alone in his kind praise of the book. Moreover, the review-article in which we corrected the historical misstatements of Bishop Whittmore's *Struggle for Freedom: History of the Philippine Independent Church* (to which Mr. Scott also refers) has drawn praise from several Protestant leaders, including President Benjamin I. Guansing of the Union Theological Seminary, in a letter which he kindly wrote to us under date of 26 December 1962.

PEDRO S. DE ACHÚTEGUI S.J.
MIGUEL A. BERNAD S.J.

The Soutane

The French clergy of the Diocese of Paris have changed their clerical street wear from the soutane to a conservative dark grey or black suit with a clerical white collar. The change was authorized in July 1962 by Cardinal Feltin of Paris after a detailed inquiry among all the French Bishops. Thus far the change is in effect only in Paris, but it is expected to spread soon to all of France. The move is also expected to have repercussions in both Spain and Italy where the soutane is still worn in the street.

Newspaper reactions in Paris ranged from genuine shock to surprised gratification. "Revolution in the Church," editorialized one paper, while André Billy, writing in *Le Figaro* with tongue-in-cheek, said, "Will not ecclesiastical gentility be definitely lost with the advent of the dark grey suit? And how are its wearers to greet anyone? What will be substituted for the hat, already too often replaced by the simple *beret*? Ah! How one laments the disappearance of the old ecclesiastical headdress, and the sash with its silk fringe, and the "demoiselles," those small suspenders whose function was to support the sash at the waist. How one misses the buckled shoes, evocative of the little abbés of the eighteenth century! And what will become of the wadded greatcoat? The greatcoat is done for! It will be replaced by the hideous overcoat, ready-made just like the suit."

"Tradition Overthrown," but as one observer put it, tradition should never be followed simply for the sake of tradition. The thinking behind the new regulation would seem to be that in France the soutane had become more of a hindrance to the priest than a help. It stood as a psychological barrier between him and those he most wanted to reach, a class symbol which separated the priest from the worker. An adaptation was clearly in order.