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Bishop Whittimore's "History"

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Review Article

Bishop Whittemore's "History"

THE Sixtieth General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America which was held in Detroit, Michigan, approved on 22 September of last year a "concordat" with the Philippine Independent Church. By this concordat the Protestant Episcopal Church (hereafter referred to as PEC) admitted the Philippine Independent Church (hereafter referred to as PIC) to full communion, as it had previously petitioned. Moreover, the PEC approved the grant to the PIC of an annual subsidy of \$50,000, or about ₱190,000, as a measure of financial assistance to its personnel and its various educational and pastoral works.

In order to provide the participants in the Convention with information regarding the PIC and thus prepare the way for the ratification of the concordat, Lewis Bliss Whittemore, retired Episcopalian Bishop of Western Michigan, brought out a book entitled *Struggle for Freedom: History of the Philippine Independent Church*.¹ Bishop Whittemore makes it quite

¹ *Struggle for Freedom: History of the Philippine Independent Church*, by Lewis Bliss Whittemore, Seabury Press, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1961, xi-228p. 8" x 5 1/2". Whittemore was born in 1885 in Hartford, Connecticut. He was in the Philippines for a few years and served as a teacher under the American government. Upon his return to America and after brief studies, he was ordained minister in the PEC. In 1936, he was consecrated Bishop, and retired in 1953. Accompanied by the authorities of the PIC, he made a three-month visit to the Philippines before publishing his book.

clear throughout his book that he is fully in favor of full communion between the two churches, and that this was in fact his motive for writing it.² Every bishop of the PEC received a copy of the book with the compliments of Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger.³

The present review directs attention to the first word of the subtitle of the work: "history". This is a work of history. We propose therefore to examine its historical and factual value for the purpose for which it was written, and which, as a matter of fact, it attained.

CONTENTS

Of the 218 pages of the book, inclusive of an appendix, the first 62 are devoted to giving a background of general information regarding the Philippines, with considerable emphasis on prehistory and ethnography; 17 (Chapter XV, pp. 182-198) treat of the Catholic Church in the Philippines; the last 13 pages contain words of advice to the PIC; and 40 pages *passim* are devoted to controversial points. It is in the remaining 86 pages, therefore, that we must seek the "complete history" of the PIC promised on the dust jacket.

The author devotes the greater part of his account to the history of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, that is to say, of the Aglipayan movement before the internal schism of 1947. We shall, for the sake of convenience, designate the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* by the initials IFI, to distinguish it from the PIC, which is the post-1947 Trinitarian branch of the movement led by Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. In treating of the period after 1947, Bishop Whittemore devotes himself

² Cf. for example vii, 9, 180, 202, 203, 214, 215, 216.

³ The House of Bishops of the PEC expressed their appreciation to both Whittemore for his book and Presiding Bishop Arthur Lichtenberger for the gift "to every bishop" of a copy of Whittemore's book. *The Living Church*, Oct. 8, 1961, p. 33.

exclusively to the PIC, either ignoring, or possibly lacking information on, the other eight existing branches of Aglipayanism.⁴

Bishop Whittemore makes a number of undisputed points. He has, for instance, the correct date of Aglipay's birth, 5 May 1860.⁵ He admits that the "peaceful possession" proclamation of Governor General Taft in 1903 "did a great deal to strengthen the growth" of the IFI (p. 131). He recognizes the "episcopal consecration" of Aglipay and his companions to be invalid (p. 124). He notes that the death of Aglipay and Isabelo de los Reyes Sr. "made it possible for the Church to declare its own position" (p. 172). He calls attention to the precarious financial situation of the PIC (pp. 206-207) and suggests "a radical reform of its methods". He deplors the fact that the PIC is "losing much of the cream of its youth" chiefly because of their being sent to Catholic schools (p. 209). He states that the PEC in the Philippines has need of the PIC (p. 214). And finally, he asserts that the doctrinal position of the PIC is identical with that of the Anglican communion.⁶

⁴ At least 8 are registered with the Bureau of Public Libraries for the solemnizing of marriages, as of July 1961, namely: Iglesia Cismática Filipina Nacional, center in Cebu City, under D. Sulcano; Christ Jesus' Holy Church, center in Sta. Maria, Pangasinan, under P. Aglipay; Church of Catholic and Apostolic Aglipayan Memorial, in Roxas, Or. Mindoro, under F. Uagaya; Filipino Christian Church, Dolores, Quezon, under C. de las Llagas; Iglesia Nacional de Filipinas, Sampaloc, Manila, under P. Reyes; Independent Church of Filipino Christians, Rosario, Batangas, under R. Abaya; Philippine Liberal Church, Tondo, Manila, under V. Vergara; Philippine Unitarian Church, Urdaneta, Pangasinan, under A. Bitanga. All these branches are Aglipayan. Of the 1,500,000 Aglipayans in the Philippines, about half a million belong to these branches. Therefore, the PIC cannot have more than a million members.

⁵ The photostatic copy of the baptismal certificate of Aglipay, giving his birth on May 5, 1860 was published in *Philippine Studies*, Dec. 1957 (V) pp. 370-387. It is hoped that the PIC and IFI will once and for all accept this indisputable historical truth. The *Missal*, just published by the PIC, still puts down the birth of Aglipay as May 8.

⁶ This is to be expected, as this was the condition *sine qua non* for the concession of the "apostolic succession" and of the assistance of PEC to PIC way back in 1947.

For the rest, however, this book which is subtitled a "history" is above all a polemical work in which historical perspective is all but lost. Anyone with the slightest familiarity with the Philippines will frequently be amused by the author's disingenuousness; as for those who know nothing of this country, it is much to be feared that they will only derive confusion from a work in which subjective opinion is presented as objective fact.

ERRORS

Objective fact: this is what one has a right to expect from a work of history. This is what one often fails to find in the present work.⁷ Leaving to one side minor inaccuracies, certain myths which have gained wide acceptance as historical events, and the purely personal interpretations of the author,⁸ we shall merely indicate some of the more glaring errors.

On p. 37, it is asserted that Rizal studied under Father Burgos: "Jose Rizal . . . who was studying under the same brilliant priest . . ." Rizal, as is well known, never studied under Father Burgos.

"The Vatican Council . . . confirmed most of the principles of the *Syllabus*" (p. 41; the same idea is repeated on pp. 6, 8). This is simply not true.

"Rizal, purely Malay . . ." (p. 42, repeated on p. 50). One of Rizal's paternal forbears was Chinese.

⁷ In the copy directly received by the authors from the United States, which we will refer to as "American", there is no mention of errata. A copy obtained in Manila contains the errata. The errors indicated herein are mistakes which cannot be ignored in the Philippines, but they would be of no consequence in the United States. For accuracy, we will indicate with (*) the errors which appear in this errata sheet which is pasted in the back cover, although they are not found in the "American" copies.

⁸ Aside from the mistakes which we explicitly mentioned in the text, there are many passages which contain errors, inaccuracies, incidents portrayed as historical facts or false interpretations: For ex. pp. 4, 6, 8, 13, 25, 30, 41, 60, 63, 64, 65, 69, 70, 71, 76, 80, 81, 88, 92, 93, 98, 99, 103, 104, 105, 106, 129, 130, 132, 137, 145, 147, 150, 151, 154, 165, 167, 168, 170, 173, 182, 183, 190, 191.

On p. 54 the author speaks of Marcelo H. del Pilar in 1872, then adds that "ten years later [hence in 1882] he was publishing his paper *Plaridol* in Tagalog." Bishop Whittemore here confuses a pen-name with a periodical. Del Pilar's pen-name was *Plaridel*, but he never published a paper by that name, nor *Plaridol* either. He founded, and wrote articles for, a paper called *Diariong Tagalog*. A paper called *Plaridel* began publication during the American regime, after Del Pilar's death (4 July 1896)—too late, obviously, to have him as a publisher.

On the Malolos Constitution: "The Constitution as it took form followed the United States model" (p. 72). This is directly contrary to what Felipe Calderón, the author of that Constitution, says in his memoirs (*Mis Memorias*, Appendix, pp. 16-18). On this point Bishop Whittemore might also have consulted the more recent and generally available work of Teodoro Agoncillo, *Malolos and the Crisis of the Republic* (Quezon City, 1960).

On pp. 90, 97, 99, it is asserted that Aglipay surrendered to the American authorities on 25 May 1901. This is inaccurate. It is certain that Aglipay surrendered in the month of April; most probably 30 April.

Page 97; Isabelo de los Reyes Sr. arrived in Manila "June or July 1901". Not true; he arrived 15 October of that year. This date has already been established on the basis of *Philippine Insurgent Records*, folder 903, folios 33 and 37-43; but Bishop Whittemore either did not know this or found it difficult to reconcile with his own chronology of events.

On Pedro Brillantes: "On October 19 he was consecrated bishop" (p. 109). Here Bishop Whittemore mistakes Brillantes' letter of the 19th, in which he speaks of his coming "consecration", for the consecration itself.

On pp. 162-163, the following assertions are made. Isabelo de los Reyes Sr. "had been taken to the house of his [Isabelo de los Reyes Jr.'s] sister, Isabel de Barredo, a Roman Catholic nun." This is repeated further on: "the house of his sister who is a nun". And again, that the serious condition of

Isabelo de los Reyes Sr. "at the time of his removal to the nun's house is indisputable". Bishop Whittimore should have known that Mrs. Isabel de Barredo was never a nun, and that at the time of the incident in question she was already married to Mr. Jose Barredo, a well known civic leader in Manila, with whom she has several children. So obvious an error throws considerable doubt on the statement (p. x) that Isabelo de los Reyes Jr., Mrs. Barredo's brother, "has been good enough to read and criticize the *completed* manuscript" (our italics). Did Bishop de los Reyes see this and not correct it? Or did he, in fact, see it? The error is corrected in the errata sheet which accompanies the copies of the book sent to the Philippines; but the copies circulated in the U.S., or at least some of them, do not apparently have this errata sheet. What impression would an American reader form of nuns from the uncorrected text?

Fonacier "was elected a member of the First Philippine Assembly which met in 1907" (p. 166). Not true; Fonacier was elected in 1912 to the *third* Philippine Assembly. And again: "In 1925 he (Fonacier) was elected Senator." The contrary is true: in 1925 Fonacier *lost* his seat in the Senate to Elpidio Quirino.

"Fonacier is still (1961) the leader of a small group of 'bishops' and no more than 10,000 people" (p. 171). The group referred to here is the Independent Church of Filipino Christians (ICFC), the branch of Aglipayanism closest doctrinally to the original IFI. Now it is well known that Fonacier is not the leader of this group, and has not been its leader since 1952. In 1952, he was succeeded by Pedro Ramos, now deceased; then by Mariano Gajeton as acting head; and finally by Ramon Abaya Soto, the incumbent *obispo máximo* of the ICFC. Incidentally, reliable estimates place the following of the ICFC as closer to 150,000 than to 10,000.

On p. 186, it is stated that the religious orders in the Philippines have charge of 310 seminaries. The correct figure is 18. This may be a printer's error; on the other hand, the larger figure fits in well with the context of the chapter, which exaggerates beyond measure the power and influence of the religious orders.

The arithmetic on pp. 185-186 is quite perplexing. Bishop Whittemore cites the following figures on Philippine Catholic parishes: total number of parishes, 1,447; number of parishes administered by religious (mostly foreigners; only a few Filipinos), 446. From these figures he derives the following startling conclusion: "It is *quite evident from the above* that the *great majority* of Roman Catholic parishes are ruled by foreign 'religious' . . ." (our italics). And this assertion had been made earlier (p. 81). Now then: 446 from 1,447 is (if we mistake not) 1,001. This is the number of parishes administered by Filipino secular priests, according to Bishop Whittemore's own figures: 1,001, as against the 466 parishes administered by foreign (or mostly foreign) religious. How, on the basis of simple arithmetic, 446 can constitute not only a majority, but a "great" majority of 1,447, and how this can be "quite evident", is beyond us.

"Binaloan in the province of Tarlac* has a population of 40,000" (p. 204). Three errors in one line. Binalonan (not Binaloan) is in the province of Pangasinan (not Tarlac), and according to the 1960 Census it has a population of 26,861 (not 40,000).

The list can be prolonged, but these examples will probably suffice.⁹ They certainly justify our asking a few questions. Did Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes Jr. really read the "completed manuscript", as stated on p. x? Can the designation, a "history", be properly applied to a work of this nature?

Moreover, there are indications throughout the work that its author did not bother to obtain accurate information about the Catholic Church which he should have, and could easily have obtained.¹⁰ This is particularly evident from his assertion that the Vatican Council made "its own in its dogmatic Constitution *De fide catholica* many of the condemnations of

⁹ On p. 105 for ex., it says "the labor meeting of *August 2nd*", this is not a typographical error; it seems more likely that that here is a pamphlet which is not reliable.

¹⁰ On the source of his frequent attacks on the Catholic Church, cf. down below for the lack of objectivity.

the *Syllabus* of Pius IX (cf. pp. 5, 6, 8, 41). Such a statement simply shows that he has read neither the *Syllabus* nor the Constitution.

The same misinformation is clear from the construction he places on the terms "infallibility" and "act of faith". He qualifies Leo XIII's *Apostolicae curae*, which asserts the invalidity of Anglican Orders, as a "so-called infallible utterance" (pp. 190, 192), and adds that "Roman Catholics must accept this utterance by an act of faith" (p. 190). It is clear that Bishop Whittimore is ignorant of the sense in which the Catholic Church understands "infallible" and "act of faith", for neither of the two are applicable to the document cited.¹¹

INCONSISTENCIES

Frequent inaccuracies and failure to substantiate important statements are serious shortcomings in a work that purports to be history. We may add to these that of inconsistency, of which the following are only a few examples from the book under review.

On p. 13, the University of Santo Tomas was founded in 1619; on p. 25, it was founded in 1610. Apart from the inconsistency in these two dates, neither is correct. The Dominican Fathers opened the College of Santo Tomas in 1611, and Pope Innocent X erected it into an academy, or institution empowered to grant university degrees, in 1645.

With reference to the "Epistolas Fundamentales", Bishop Whittimore says (p. 123) that "from the theological point of

¹¹ Besides the book of Francis Clark S.J., *Anglican Orders*, London, Longmans, 1956, cf. Paul R. Rust, "Leo XIII's Decision on Anglican Orders" in the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, July 1961, pp. 949ff and August 1961, pp. 1041 ff. "It is just sixty-five years ago that Pope Leo XIII published his definitive—but not *de fide*—judgment on Anglican Orders" (p. 949). "The Papal Bull made no infallible commitment" (p. 1052).—What Whittimore says is also false: that the "Filipino Cardinal is ranked by the Papal Nuncio" (p. 186). Had Whittimore consulted the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can. 239, # 1, n. 21, he would have avoided another error. The Cardinal always precedes the Nuncio. This practice is strictly observed everywhere, including the Philippines.

view these Epistles are orthodox." Further on, however (p. 138), he states that Aglipay "had committed himself to the Protestant theory of episcopate in his Fundamental Epistles" — which, from the Episcopalian point of view, is highly unorthodox; and indeed it was precisely for this reason that the PEC decided to give the PIC the "apostolic succession".

Bishop Whittimore, speaking of the membership of the IFI (pp. 128-129), says that "the more conservative estimates (i.e., 1,500,000 members) about the years 1903-1905 were nearer the truth". He arrives at this conclusion, however, by a curious process of reasoning. Since *in 1918*, according to the census of that year, Aglipayans numbered 1,417,418, and since "there were over 600,000 unregistered voters," it follows that "we may as well settle for the figure of 2,000,000 as representing the high point in the years *before 1906*" (italics ours); that is to say, precisely the years 1903-1905! One is naturally moved to inquire on what basis, mathematical or otherwise, 600,000 unregistered voters in 1918 may be added — without exception — to the number of Aglipayans before 1906, that is, in 1903-1905.

On p. 188, the Catholic bishops are condemned for considering as invalid the episcopal consecration of the Aglipayan bishops; immediately afterwards, it is stated that the PEC gave the apostolic succession to the PIC precisely because the consecration received by its bishops had been invalid.

Bishop Whittimore is inconsistent not only with himself but with the official publications of the church whose history he is writing. Thus he states in two places (pp. 11, 204), presumably on the authority of Bishop de los Reyes, that the PIC has a total of 580 priests. Yet the *National Directory of the Philippine Independent Church* for 1961, which went to press at the same time as Bishop Whittimore's book, has a total of only 425 priests; that is to say, 155 or 27% less than Bishop Whittimore's figure.

Similarly, we are informed (p. 204) that "the last accounts" give the total membership of the PIC as from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000. Note the rather generous leeway between the

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Similarly, we are informed (p. 204) that "the last accounts" give the total membership of the PIC as from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000. Note the rather generous leeway between the

two figures: 25%. It is as though we were to say that there are in the Philippines between 15 to 20 million Catholics, or that the population of the United States is 150 million, or possibly as much as 200 million. But the curious thing is that in the *Directory* cited above, which appeared simultaneously with Bishop Whittimore's book, the total membership of the PIC is given (p. 5) as 2,781,990. This is 1,281,990 more than the minimum figure given by Bishop Whittimore; all of 85% more. How was it possible that Bishop de los Reyes, who is said to have read the "completed manuscript", failed to call the author's attention to these glaring discrepancies?¹² It is tempting to cite other examples,¹³ but we must press on.

PREJUDICE

The historian has a duty to be objective. The objectivity of Bishop Whittimore's book — or the lack of it — deserves careful consideration. By objectivity is here meant the presentation of facts as they are, undistorted by personal sentiment or prejudice. It is a violation of objectivity to try to force the facts to fit a theory or some preconceived end. The historian who wishes to be objective must go to the sources; seek and utilize, as far as possible, impartial testimony; and take care to prescind from any ulterior end which may distort his presentation of the facts.

¹²The *Directory* is neither exact nor reliable. For the sake of curiosity, we added all the numbers that appear in the *Directory*. In the *Summary* (p. 5) there appears: "Number of followers: 2,572,216". Summing up the numbers which are given as "followers" by parishes in the *Directory*, the total is 2,138,350; that is, 433,866 less or a difference of almost half a million in their totals. Again: in tracing the parishes one by one through their members, each individual unit of the sum end in 0. Now, how can the final total end in 6? The figures that end in 0 are as follows:

3 parishes end in 0
 71 parishes end in 00
 286 parishes end in 000
 21 parishes end in 0000

These are *all* the parishes. This is the first time that we come across such a statistical miracle. An interesting case for the Bureau of the Census.

¹³Cf. for ex. pp. 97, 100 and 108 about Taft; 102 and 105.

Now then: Bishop Whittemore tells us in the preface to his book that he had a twofold object in writing it. His first aim was to provide the PEC with information pertinent to the admission of the PIC to full communion, a question which was up for discussion at the Detroit Convention; and throughout the book he leaves no doubt as to what side of this discussion he himself supports — he is entirely in favor of full communion.¹⁴ His second aim was to give the PIC itself “a better perspective of its own function as a national Church” (p. vii).¹⁵ It is difficult to see how a book written to encompass this twofold aim can be objective.

Not only the end, but the principles which Bishop Whittemore adopts for writing his history make its being objective antecedently improbable. “It is regrettable,” he says, that historians — and doubtless he has certain historians of Aglipayanism particularly in mind — it is regrettable that certain historians should consider it necessary to “explore every library and look into every corner” to amass details regarding the persons of whom they write (p. 59), and that they should go to such lengths as to dig up even the grades which Aglipay got in examinations (p. 66), and that they should “ransack the libraries and explore the archives from Washington to Manila” for this purpose (p. 113). These authors, for whom Bishop Whittemore has conceived considerable distaste, after “quoting the letters and writings of contemporaries” of Aglipay and the events connected with Aglipay, apparently have the temerity to think that they are thus “allowing anyone to judge for himself” (p. 194). In short: it is not by burrowing in archives that history is written.¹⁶

¹⁴ Cf. for ex. vii, 180, 202, 216.

¹⁵ We do not know if this will please the Aglipayans, it seems that they are not yet fully aware of their proper place.

¹⁶ According to this, it is no wonder that Whittemore is disgusted with the letter of Isabelo de los Reyes Sr. to Retana, dated September 14, 1897, and exhibited in Camp Murphy, Quezon City in 1953. In this letter, Isabelo denies certain slanderous accusations that he had written in *La Sensacional Memoria*. This is why Whittemore says “if genuine”, then he calls it “suspicious” and ends by attributing to the authors who published this unedited letter, things which they never said (pp. 57-58).

It is not therefore surprising that the sources of information utilized in this work, after being manipulated in accordance with such purposes and principles, should emerge well nigh unrecognizable. Every document which does not support the thesis is twisted to make it say something else, and if it does not yield to this treatment it is dismissed as irrelevant. When, for instance, Bishop Whittmore is confronted with the retraction of Isabelo de los Reyes Sr., signed with his own hand, witnessed to by eight witnesses, some of whom were Don Isabelo's own children; when Bishop Whittmore is confronted with a photostatic reproduction of this document, what does he say? Why, he says: "The whole document is worthless" (p. 163).

Similarly with regard to the difficult case of Bishop Brent. Bishop Brent had roundly said "no" to Aglipay's pretensions that he be given the "apostolic succession" by the PEC. Bishop Whittmore's treatment of this subject is as follows. First, he takes it out of its historical context, saying that he would take it up later (p. 137). When he does come around to it (pp. 195-197), he observes that we must of course see it in its historical context — from which he had removed it in the first place! He then turns on those authors who call attention to Brent's denying Aglipay, and accuses them of distorting the incident. He follows this up by observing that the apostolic succession can well be granted to the PIC now, since 1947 and 1961 are after all no longer 1904. And finally, he dismisses the whole thing by saying that Brent did not know the situation at all.

A word on the sources. Whittmore's interest in the approval of the concordat with the PIC was shared by Bishop de los Reyes Jr. Considering this as the objective of both the author and Bishop de los Reyes, who was the petitioner, we can understand the following statement, "Bishop de los Reyes has given constant cooperation and has furnished invaluable resource material. In addition he has been good enough to read and criticize the completed manuscript." (p. viii). Furthermore, if we bear in mind that Whittmore was guided by members of the PIC when he came to the Philippines to gather

materials for his book, we can see whether it is easy for Whittemore to be objective in his work.

It is not strange that Bishop Fonacier, a former rival of Bishop de los Reyes in the dispute which until now divides the IFI into two groups, appears in a very bad light; the information is one-sided (pp. 167-170).

Another source of information comes from Bishop Manuel L. Lagasca, then secretary of the PIC (p. viii). Whittemore accepts the caricaturish description that the former makes of Aglipay's narrative of the behavior of the fathers during his stay at La Ignaciana and in referring to him says: "Bishop Lagasca is a man of honor and he tells the truth" (p. 104). The truth is, Lagasca was not present during the meeting and his narrative is considered a fantasy by those who are familiar with the incident.¹⁷

To obtain the purpose of his book, Whittemore presents a meeting that took place between Aglipay and Quezon in America when both made a visit there in 1931, in which, the President was supposed to have told Aglipay: "You should be here as guests of the American Episcopal Church, not the Unitarians. . .

¹⁷ The authors do not judge the moral veracity of Whittemore or his sources i.e. those that supply him with information. However, they point out, that in several instances, such information have no objective value or historical truth. For example, take the case of Bishop Manuel L. Lagasca, whose testimony he uses to reject the findings of other writers with reference to the retreat of Aglipay at La Ignaciana. Lagasca, he says, "is a man of honor and he tells the truth". (p. 104). We admit the "man of honor", but we maintain that Lagasca was *not* present during this interview, and this is upheld by the testimony of contemporary witnesses. Cf. *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, Vol. I, p. 191; and the second edition of the same book, Manila, 1961, pp. 535-536. It is not inappropriate to mention that this Lagasca was the *same one* who wrote about this in 1939, and in the same context said the following 'truth': "The Philippine Independent Church has twenty million members in all the countries of the world." (p. 33) Similarly: "In Italy itself there are millions of inhabitants who are members of the Waldense Church." However, the Waldenses themselves admit that at the most, they have 30,000 members. After all Bishop Lagasca may tell the truth. . .

Your Church is the equivalent of the Episcopal Church here and is the one that can really understand it" (p. 146). This anecdote fits in with the objective proposed by Whittemore and his sources. On the other hand, Santiago Fonacier, Aglipay's successor and companion during said trip, denied this emphatically, saying that he was with Aglipay during the trip to the United States and no such conversation took place between the latter and President Quezon. Moreover, they did not see each other either in Monrovia or in Washington.¹⁸

CHANGE IN DOCTRINE

Whittemore's failure to achieve objectivity lies in his attempt to explain the inexplicable. He minimizes the importance of the Unitarianism of the IFI, insisting that the majority of its members were orthodox (pp. 151-152). Keeping the General Convention and the approval of the concordat in mind, he reiterates that Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., *has not changed* the doctrine, and that he was always orthodox and a Trinitarian: "There was no *volt-face* on his part as has been claimed" (p. 175; cf. 173-178).

Below are statements for the reader so he may see and judge for himself the objectivity of Bishop Whittemore. The parallel columns contain what the IFI and particularly Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. (IRj) manifested and wrote before the change, and what the PIC and Isabelo de los Reyes professed and wrote *after* the *sensational change* in doctrine. In Whittemore's words, we allow "anyone to judge for himself." (p. 194)¹⁹

¹⁸ Letter to the authors, July 17, 1962. In his long letter, he outlines his itinerary with the precision of a journal, like they used to do in former times, including the religious, political and psychological implications.

¹⁹ These are the books that were used and their corresponding abbreviations. B: *Biblia Filipina*, Barcelona, 1908; CTQ: *Catequesis de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, Manila, 1911; Evol: *Evoluciones y estado actual de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, Manila, 1928; O D: *Oficio Divino de la Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, Barcelona, 1906; S: *Supplement to the Diocesan Chronicle*, September, 1947 (Correspondence and Other Papers Relating to the Petition of the Philippine Independent Church to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.

IFI 1902-1947

1. The *Trinity* is a fiction (CTQ 50). This belief (in the Holy Spirit and the Trinity) is another remnant of paganism. Mt. 18:19, the text on the Trinity, is another apocryphal and false interpolation. (IRj in *Evol.*, 8).

2. We discard *Christ's divinity*. He was by no means God (*Evol.* 4). We acknowledge him (Jesus) not as God but as man, not exempted from certain frailties common to all humans. (IRj in *Cor.* 80).

3. The *Bible* contains many errors (B 8). It gives a thousand harmful passages and absurdities (B 19, 122). We always have maintained that the Bible has many interpolations and inaccuracies. (IRj in *Cor.* 80).

PIC from Aug. 5, 1947

1. We believe in the Holy Trinity ... that in the unity of this Godhead there be three Persons (*Declaration of Faith, signed by IRj.* S. 29).

2. We believe in Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, very and eternal God. (*Ib.* S. 29).

3. The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation (*Ib.* S. 30).

for the Episcopal Consecration of its Bishops); *Cor.*: Cornish, Louis C., *The Philippines Calling*, Philadelphia, 1942; IRj stands for Isabelo de los Reyes Jr.—*Evoluciones* is divided into two parts: the second of which shares the title page, "La Iglesia Filipina Independiente y la Romana comparadas, por Mons. Isabelo de los Reyes y Lopez, Obispo de Manila por la Iglesia Filipina y Rector de la Parroquia de Maria Clara, Manila 1928." Bishop de los Reyes is the author of the booklet, although he may deny it for personal reasons. In 1939, Bishop de los Reyes wrote two accounts for Cornish, who published them in his book with the signature of de los Reyes (p. 79-83): "The Position of the Philippine Independent Church" and "The Seven Sacraments used in the Philippine Independent Church". Besides these, Bishop de los Reyes is the editor of several booklets, *Sensacionales Discursos*, Manila 1924, and *Novenario de la Patria* Manila 1926. These books contain the doctrines of the IFI and IRj, incumbent Obispo Maximo, in the years 1924, 1926, 1928 and 1939. Comparison is made between this doctrine and that of the PIC and Bishop de los Reyes, as it appears in the "Declaration of Faith and Articles of Religion of the Philippine Independent Church", taken from the *Supplement* pp. 28-35. Whittemore copies only a portion in pp. 176-178.

4. We do not admit the possibility of *miracles* (B 129).—We admit no miracles (IRj in Cor. 80).
4. Holy Scripture teaches us that events take place in the natural world but out of its established order (miracles) (*Ib.* S. 33).
5. *Mary* is not God's mother. Only in appearance was God born of *Mary*. (OD 80).
5. *Mary* is the Mother of Jesus Christ; she is the Mother of God. (*Ib.* S. 33).
6. We deny that these sacraments have any intrinsic virtue. We do not hold that *Baptism* cleanses us of original sin. We baptize with clean water in the name of Jesus (IRj in Cor. 81).—*Original sin* is absurd, imaginary, a huge error (B 147). (See for this paragraph OD 201, CTQ 60).
6. Baptism confers grace cleansing from original sin... is administered in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (*Ib.* S 30).
7. The *soul* after death becomes volatilized and enters into the atmosphere. (CTQ 30).
7. Salvation is obtained only through a vital faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (*Ib.* S 30. N.B. Salvation presupposes soul's spirituality and immortality).
8. We do not accept the theory of *apostolic succession* (IRj in Cor. 82).
8. We have unanimously resolved to petition the Episcopal Church ...for the gift of apostolic succession to our episcopate (S. 2. Letter of IRj to the Presiding Bishop).

Therefore, was there or was there not a change in the doctrine of the IFI? What about the doctrine of Bishop de los Reyes, Jr.? What can we conclude from these statements — and the objectivity of Whittmore who denies the changes? Is there anything wrong with change? No, this change is excellent and it represents an improvement for the PIC. So, too, the retraction of Bishop de los Reyes' father was a change, and an excellent one. However, let not deny that there *was* a change.²⁰

²⁰ Can the PIC continue to call itself "aglipayana" and appropriate this name, after abandoning the doctrine of the IFI? On the other hand, why take the middle ground when one is on the way to "orthodoxy"? Why not return to the paternal house instead of looking for "sponsors"?

There is a serious implication in Whittemore's assertion that there was no change either in the doctrine of the IFI or of Bishop de los Reyes. He says, "the Church was quietly going on... administering the Sacraments in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost" (p. 145). This statement raises a two-sided problem:

(1) This means that the ministers trained in the IFI did not learn, during their studies, the essential points required by the IFI. For example, the manner of baptizing in the name of Jesus, and not the Trinity which it denied.²¹ The Decree of Promulgation of the *Oficio Divino* states: "2.° that this book should be taught in our churches and seminaries, and no one shall be ordained nor any license renewed... if the applicant has not been thoroughly examined and approved in said book; 3.° no other rite should be allowed in other churches except this..." (OD 241)

(2) During their ordination, the priests *swear* "to uphold and observe this *Evangelio y Oficio Divino*" (p. 221); the bishops *swear* during their "consecration" to discharge their responsibility "upholding, fulfilling and defending primarily the *Evangelio y Oficio Divino*" (p. 223). Does Whittemore want to convey to us that the priests and bishops of the IFI swore to one thing and did the contrary? What is the technical term for this?

THE ANTI-CATHOLICISM OF WHITTEMORE

Anti-Catholic here means the antagonism towards the Catholic Church which prevails throughout the text. This animosity appears in the first sentences and increases as it goes along.

Again, this shows a lack of objectivity. What Whittemore pretends to prove is colored by his biases; and since the *objective* is to attain the closest possible union between the

²¹ In the OD (201), the *prescribed formula* is: "In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you", with the following note: "(5) The interpolation in the gospel of Matthew is false that they baptize in the name of the Pagan Trinity of the Gods".

PEC and the PIC as called for in the concordat, it is to their advantage that the Catholic Church is presented as the enemy of both. This is a way of psychologically influencing those who are to vote on the concordat. "Their antagonism (of Catholic leaders) is directed with special venom against the Philippine Independent Church... As an ally of this communion the Episcopal Church is also in the direct line of fire" (p.8). In chapter XV, on "The Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines" and speaking of the 'apostolic succession' bestowed by the PEC to the PIC and the forthcoming concordat, it says "the conclusion is inescapable that these two events had thoroughly alarmed the Roman Hierarchy" (p. 195). "The great enemy (of the Catholic Church) is the Philippine Independent Church, with its ally the Episcopal Church of the United States" (pp. 187-188). "The two Churches (PEC and PIC)... resent its attitude (of the Catholic Church) of implacable hostility" (p. 198). "The constant Roman attacks" (p. 199). "The attacks of Rome" (p. 200). "To balance the Roman strength... The menace is real" (p. 214). There is a term for all this in psychology...²²

The anti-Catholic attitude of Whittemore and his lack of objectivity results in two serious and false charges which appear in his work. They are statements which justice and historical truth have to examine and evaluate in a book subtitled as "History". On the other hand, these statements and charges

²² Occasionally, to create a semblance of objectivity, Whittemore inserts a few lines of praise and respect for the Catholic Church, but he does not miss the opportunity to attack it or to make insinuations which aggravate the matter. This is evident in the 62 pp. of Introduction and in Chapter XV. Cf. for ex., pp. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 24, 41, 65, 66, 81, 123, 131, 138, 155, 158, 160, 161, 162, 182, 198, 202, 210... There is all through the book a strong anti-friar and particular anti-Dominican spirit: cf. for ex. pp. 4, 13, 14, 17, 28-32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 46, 48, 49, 54, 55, 61, 67, 81, 103, 138... describes the religious orders and congregations, "these regiments of priests" as obstinate: "It is psychologically impossible for them to sympathize with nationalistic aspirations except in terms of their own specialized vocabulary" (pp. 186-187). Objectivity does not seem to be one of the strong points of Whittemore.

have a clear psychological explanation if we consider the *end* which Whittemore had in mind, of which we already have an inkling.

1) *The case of 'Bishop' Castillo Mendez.* Whittemore dedicates the longest footnote of his book²³ to a serious charge against the Catholic Church. The arguments that he presents together with some of our information are the following:

(a) According to Whittemore, Dom (sic) Luis F. Castillo Mendez is said to be a validly consecrated Bishop, even under Catholic theology, as he was consecrated by a full-fledged Bishop, namely, Carlos Duarte Costa. What Whittemore failed to point out was that Bishop Duarte Costa was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for immoral behavior, and that he also apostatized, and was therefore *no longer* member of the Catholic Church.

Nor does Whittemore mention that the consecration of Castillo Mendez took place *after* the excommunication and apostasy, not only without permission but against the will of Rome, thus incurring for both Costa and Castillo the special excommunication reserved for the Holy See. This is another reason why both do *not pertain* to the Catholic Church.

(b) Whittemore refers to a letter of "Castillo Mendez" to Bishop de los Reyes in which he offers him 'apostolic succession' and protests the desire of the PIC to unite with the PEC in intercommunion (now: full communion). Whittemore does not say that this assumes that his protector "Castillo Mendez" has the idea that neither the PIC nor the PEC have valid consecration.

(c) From these premises Whittemore concludes: All these is "further evidence of the *attempt being made by Rome* (emphasis supplied) to prevent the proposed Concordat between the PIC and the PEC." Whittemore continues that "Castillo Mendez", "bishop of a Catholic body in Brazil having valid succession according to Rome", offers the 'apostolic succession' to the PIC "apparently without any qualms whatever".

²³ Note 10, pp. 223-224 of Chapter XV.

Is it possible and honest to say that Rome and the Catholic Church are trying to prevent intercommunion ("attempt being made by Rome") when we are dealing with one who *does not* belong to Rome and the Catholic Church? "Qualms"? By whom? Does Whittemore want the reader to think that it is a Bishop of Rome who offers episcopal consecration to the PIC and that Rome, through this Bishop who does not belong to its jurisdiction, is trying to prevent intercommunion? What should the reader conclude?²⁴

2) *The case of O'Connor.* In the same line, there is another item which Whittemore calls "an interesting episode" (p. 178) but which can have a tragic ending... He mentions that according to a letter written by the actual Obispo Maximo de los Reyes, the Rev. Patrick O'Connor, Columban priest, went "repeatedly to his home" to visit "in 1945 or 1946". Whittemore says that one morning the latter, in the company of the Superior of the Columbans, another Columban priest and a "high official of the Knights of Columbus" went to visit him and "intimated" that in the event that the IFI would submit to the obedience of the Pope, the bishops of the IFI "would be consecrated in the Roman succession and there would be such marginal benefits as the authority to use the vernacular, permission for the clergy to marry, etc." (p. 178). This occasion would coincide with the negotiations between Bishop de los Reyes and the Episcopalians. To insure the validity of the

²⁴ "Castillo Mendez" appears in quotation marks because there is a notable coincidence between the Castillo Mendez which Bishop de los Reyes mentions and the one Whittemore refers to, and the one mentioned in a letter which appeared in *The Christian Register*, June 1957, p. 2. The circumstances are similar, and *both* describe the order of episcopal consecration *precisely with the same names*: Duarte Costa, Sebastian Leme, Cardinal Alcoverde, Cardinal Rampolla, Leo XIII. Such coincidence! But instead of "Dom Luis F. Castillo Mendez", the signature which appears is "Monsignor Orlando Arce Moya, Obispo Misionario" (sic) of Sao Paolo, Brazil. As distance today is no problem, the authors of this article have obtained enough information about Duarte Costa and Arce Moya. It is evident that the PIC *does not* gain anything by having any connections with these two. Someday, perhaps, we may deal with them.

argument, he adds, "The only witness was Bishop Remollino who has since died."

To those who are familiar with the actuation of the Catholic Church in such cases, with ecclesiastical proceedings and with the said Father O'Connor, this episode appears unlikely from all angles. Perhaps to defend himself, Whittemore continues: "This will doubtless be disavowed by the Roman authorities".

When Fr. O'Connor was asked by the present writers about the above, he replied that he was actually dealing seriously with the people involved in the question and authorized us to use whatever part of his letter we judged fit to remove this false impression which was unjust not only to himself but also to the Columban Society. After denying that he was in the Philippines in 1945 and 1946 he wrote: "Obispo Maximo de los Reyes, quoted in the book as authority for the statement about me, has courteously written me a letter, dated November 8, 1961, in which he says:

Although I do not have a copy of the letter I wrote to Bishop Whittemore pertaining to the discussion on page 178 of his volume 'Struggle for Freedom', I am glad that you have called my attention to the statement in line 12 of this paragraph, wherein it is indicated that you accompanied the Father Superior of the Columbans in the Philippines and another Columban priest from the parish of Malate and an American layman to my house. I am sorry if I gave Bishop Whittemore the impression that you accompanied these callers to my residence, as it is my recollection that you were not present at that time".

In short, Whittemore cites Bishop de los Reyes and says that O'Connor was present; Bishop do los Reyes clearly states that O'Connor was *not* present. We had better let the two of them determine where the truth lies.

In his letter, Fr. O'Connor includes two sworn statements which invalidate the allegations of Whittemore (p. 178). Not only was Fr. O'Connor not present but the "intimations" by the Columbans and by the "high official of the Knights of Columbus are completely without foundation.²⁵ Legally, this

²⁵ The letter of Fr. O'Connor to the authors is dated May 5, 1962. The sworn statements of the two distinct persons will probably give Bishop Whittemore some bad moments. The development of this case promises to be interesting.

presents a very serious case for Whittemore. This may have a tragic ending as the Columban fathers have a right to clear themselves. Besides, this is no longer a case of "this will doubtless be disavowed by the Roman authorities". Bishop de los Reyes has disavowed it! Can Whittemore say that "the whole thing is irrelevant?". Or, that the Catholic Church is after him?

CONCLUSION

In his book, Whittemore uses harsh statements about authors who do not think as he does. He calls the booklet *Aglipayanism Yesterday and Today* by Fr. Nicolas Ll. Rosal "perversion of history" (p. 189) and in several instances he mentions "distortions" (for ex. p. 194). In defending the Church of England and in referring to the question and validity of the anglican orders he says "these claims... are repeated by ignorant or malicious priests, and by teachers in Roman Catholic schools who ought to know better... The Vatican... has shown itself to be very complacent about this practice of telling such tales"... (p. 191)

Having presented the above arguments, examined the errors, inconsistencies, lack of objectiveness, and the anti-Catholic attitude of Whittemore's book, "Struggle for Freedom", we prefer to reserve our judgment, thus "allowing anyone to judge for himself" (p. 194).

We do not know how much influence this book subtitled "History of the Philippine Independent Church" has had on the delegates of the 60th General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church when they voted "yes", thus admitting the PIC to full communion with the PEC. It seems clear, however, that this book of Bishop Whittemore, '*Struggle for Freedom: History of the Philippine Independent Church*' is not history.

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