

The Establishment and the Development of Religious Education in the Philippine Public School : 1900s-1950s.

フィリピンの公立学校における宗教教育制度：1900年代～1950年代

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[Abstract] Religion is allowed to be taught in Philippine public elementary and high schools. As an issue of educational policy, it was so critical that controversies have arisen several times since its establishment in 1900s. Among others, a controversy in the 1950s affected personnel matters of the Education Department as well as a presidential election, and thus religious education became one of the major political issues of the time. Then the provision was immensely modified, which resulted in increasing popularity of the practice, a state of affairs which has continued up to the present. The Catholic Church played an important role in the development. In its need to expand Catechism, the Church insisted on liberalizing the provision. Since the Church had an influence on the result of elections, the pressure from it drastically changed the policy of Congress and the Presidents on religious education. While the Church's campaign was, in a sense, a pursuit of its interest, it also represented the wish of many Filipinos that religious education be widely provided.

キーワード

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In Philippine public elementary and high schools, religion is allowed to be taught to pupils by instructors assigned from religious organizations. At present this education is provided mostly by the Catholic Church, which has been dominant since the Spanish colonial period

(which continued for more than three hundred years until the end of the 19th century). Its method, curriculum and practice vary by place. In urban areas wealthy churches can usually afford to cover all schools under their jurisdiction, while in some rural areas religious education is supported by devout lay people who work as instructors for low or no pay. In some other areas religious education is simply not given. According to a survey conducted by the Church in the early 1990s which covered three fourths of the nationwide dioceses, 70 percent of pupils in those dioceses received religious education in public elementary schools.¹

Since the United States of America, the following ruler of the islands, gave priority to popular education instead of elite education, the Philippine public school system was established at the beginning of the 20th century, decades earlier than other developing countries. Religious education was introduced into the public schools at this point, which means it already has more than one hundred years of history. During this history, controversies over religious education have arisen several times. Among others, a controversy in the 1950s affected personnel matters of the Education Department as well as a presidential election, and thus religious education became one of the major political issues of the time. It is expected that studies on the Philippine case would provide unique and valuable insights, which have not been gained from previous studies, mostly on cases of industrialized countries. This paper will look into major controversies on religious education and following developments in the Philippines from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1950s. Attention will be paid to roles of the Catholic Church and other religious organizations.

1. Establishment of the System by American Colonial Government

The present public school system in the Philippines was established in 1901 by the United States of America, which had just taken the sovereignty of the islands from Spain. In drafting a bill prescribing the major framework of schools, the most heated debate was on whether Catholic education should be allowed, which had been one of major school subjects under the Spanish regime. The homeland of the American rulers was then on the way to establishing a secular school system, which taught civics instead of Christian ethics, with the belief that the public school should aim to foster independent intellectual citizens. Therefore most Americans supported a proposal to prohibit Catholic education, which might reinforce people's dependence upon the Church and thus would impede the aim of the schools.

However, some other Americans proposed to permit religious education under certain restrictions. They argued that a school system without Catholic education might be rejected by Filipino people most of whom were devout Catholics, and turn out to be a failure, and that, on the contrary, schools with religious education would be more acceptable and would spread more smoothly.² William Howard. Taft, who would be the first Governor, succeeded in persuading the opponents and permission of religious education was enacted as follows:

...it shall be lawful for the priest or minister of any church established in the pueblo where

a public school is situated, either in person or by a designated teacher of religion, to teach religion for one half an hour three times a week in the school building to those public school pupils whose parents or guardians desire it and express their desire therefor in writing filed with the principal teacher of the school, to be forwarded to the division superintendent, who shall fix the hours and rooms for such teaching....³

It should be noted that the Americans who supported the approval of religious education did not appreciate its contribution to the character formation of pupils. Even Taft acknowledged its possible adverse effect on the aim of public schools which might turn out to be a major obstacle. However, they expected that restrictions such as maximum number of periods would prevent religious education from affecting the functions of public schools. Taft even mentioned his intention of possible elimination of religious education in future. Americans who proposed to permit religious education were by no means willing to do this, but their recognition of the ticklish religious situation in Philippine society forced them to conditionally permit religious education as a compromise.

Under the circumstances, religious education in public schools was strictly restricted. It was optional, and if parents wanted religious education for their children, they had to submit applications beforehand. School teachers were not allowed to teach religion, but instructors assigned from churches and religious institutions were to teach it. This meant religious education would not be given in schools where churches failed to send instructors due to financial or other problems. In addition to these restrictions prescribed by the law above, religion classes used to be scheduled outside of regular school hours, that is, before the first morning period, at the noon recess or after the last afternoon period. This practice, later included by a bylaw,⁴ served to separate religion classes clearly from the regular school curriculum.

Among groups other than American rulers, a representative of the Catholic Church claimed, at a public hearing preceding the enactment of the bill, that Catholic education should be obligatory, though the Filipino elite insisted upon its prohibition.⁵ Taft later pointed out that the elite did so for fear of Church's regaining power.⁶ Directly after the Spanish regime, anticlericalism prevailed among the Filipino elite who were worried that the Church might retake their newly given status of privilege.

At the beginning, the Catholic Church rejected newly established public schools whose regular curriculum did not include religion in accordance with the aforementioned ruling. Assignment of many Protestant Americans as teachers aggravated it. Some churchmen accused public schools of allowing Protestant missionary activities within. Michael J. O'Doherty, the then Archbishop of Manila criticized public schools, saying that "Perhaps the greatest menace to-day to the faith is the public school, which has done more real harm than all other elements combined."⁷ Although more thorough investigation into historical records

is needed to confirm the authenticity of the accusations, there is no question about Church's distrust of public schools. This was to affect later campaigns by the Church over the issue.

Ordinary Filipino people, on the other hand, mostly wished religious education to be given in public schools. This was pointed out in reports by American education administrators assigned in various parts of the islands. As mentioned above, religious education would not be provided in a public school unless a local church sent an instructor. Due to the rejection of public schools as well as financial deficiency, churches took a negative attitude toward the religious education scheme. Thus religion classes were given in very few schools. This was a disappointment for the people, which an American school superintendent described as follows:

The second reason for the lack of the moral support of the people at large is that the children are not instructed in the religious teachings and catechism of the church in the public schools, and this in their eyes is a fatal defect in our system, which otherwise is well liked by those Filipinos who have become familiar with it.⁸

Despite its distrust of the public school, the Church made a policy change a few decades later and began making use of the religious education scheme. As a result, a certain number of pupils in public elementary and high schools underwent religious education in the early 1930s. In 1934, more than 15% of pupils were enrolled in the education (see Table 1). After this policy change, the Church began to pursue a relaxation of restrictions on religious education with the aim of promoting it as described below.

Table 1: Pupils Enrolled in Optional Religious Instruction from School Year 1934 to 1960

School Year	Annual Enrollment	Pupils Enrolled in Optional Religious Instruction		Catholic Pupils Enrolled in Optional Religious Instruction	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage to Enrolled Pupils
1934	1,202,888	186,228	15.5	184,720	99.2
1947	3,539,620	169,743	4.8	169,436	99.9
1948	3,891,146	284,008	7.3	281,501	99.1
1949	4,173,061	380,957	9.1	377,812	99.2
1950	4,132,725	429,345	10.4	424,525	98.9
1951	4,018,476	419,649	10.4	414,720	98.8
1952	3,660,775	483,911	13.2	476,753	98.5
1953	3,591,478	735,441	20.5	722,711	98.3
1954	3,538,229	766,258	21.7	753,781	98.4
1955	3,580,525	1,114,686	31.1	1,075,895	96.5
1956	3,750,496	1,030,808	27.5	1,006,733	97.7
1957	3,807,643	1,038,440	27.3	1,016,403	97.9
1958	4,040,732	1,040,734	25.8	1,020,113	98.0
1959	4,216,942	1,196,142	28.4	1,175,114	98.2
1960	4,257,610	1,181,686	27.8	1,165,156	98.6

Source: Annual Statistical Bulletins of the Department of Education.

In 1935, a constitution took effect, which had been composed by Filipino delegates. On religious education in the public school, it prescribed the maintenance of the then practice in the following article:

Optional religious instruction shall be maintained in the public schools as now authorized by law.⁹

Afterward almost no attempts were made to make religious education obligatory nor to prohibit it. Different from Taft's intention of future abolishment of the practice, it became permanent. Since then the major focus was on alterations of bylaws within constitutional framework, concerning the rule on its time schedule among others.

2. Rejection of the Church's Claim by President Quezon

The Filipino parliament and government were granted autonomy in education policy in 1935 at the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth, with independence scheduled ten years later. Since that time elected Filipino Presidents have occupied a role as chief of the government in place of American Governors. The post of the Secretary of Education has been occupied by Filipinos as well. Less than a year later the Catholic Church started a campaign urging the government to promote religious education in public schools. Manila Archbishop's Committee on Education petitioned Sergio Osmeña, Vice President and the Secretary of Education that religious education be given during regular periods of public schools. Osmeña dismissed it on the grounds that alteration of related laws or regulations was unconstitutional. Then next year, five assemblymen sent a letter of similar petition to Osmeña. Although the letter was attached with signatures by 63 assemblymen and thus drew attention, Osmeña dismissed it again.

It is presumed that behind the petitions was the Catholic Church's growing expectation for a policy of promoting religious education. Differing from American rulers, who did not appreciate religious education, most Filipinos believed it would work as character formation of children and youths. In addition, among representatives and high-ranking educational officials were those who had sympathies with the Church. Some even spoke for it. Among others, Osmeña was known as a devout Catholic of the time, and probably the Church relied on him so heavily that his negative responses caused harsh criticism and denouncement. In a speech O'Doherty blamed Osmeña, saying, " To my great astonishment the act of the representatives was resented and opposed by ... from whom we should have never expected such action."¹⁰

It is presumed that Osmeña acted against the Catholic Church, at least partly because he followed the intention of President Manuel Luis Quezon. Shortly after the petition by the Manila Archdiocese, Quezon expressed his intention of hampering its action. Unlike the other Presidents mentioned below, Quezon, who was unfriendly to the Church, oftentimes clashed with it. One reason is said to be his freemasonic career. It should also be noted that his solid

political foundation made it possible for him to contend with the Church.

In 1938, a bill was submitted which ordered to allocate more favorable time schedule for religious education. The Catholic Church was engaged in a campaign calling for support for the bill. In the aforementioned speech, O'Doherty stated as follows:

Society should not be content with teaching religion in private schools where there are only 100,000 children. Society should pay attention to the other 1,200,000 children in public schools.¹¹

In its pursuit of support for the bill, the Church also put direct pressure on assemblymen by mobilizing a large number of lay church members. A newspaper article reported as follows:

A Catholic mobilization behind the religious instruction bill (No.3307) was believed on today by the members of the National Assembly when letters, telegrams, and resolutions urging individual members of the Assembly to support the bill continued to pour in at the Legislative Building. The office of Speaker Montilla was literally swamped with such communications.¹²

Under pressure from the Church and Quezon's influence against it, Assembly's debate on the bill "was the freest, the most searching, and the most heated ... in the brief history of that body."¹³ The article of the bill on time allocation for religious education underwent several rewrites during its deliberation and was finalized as follows:

...regarding optional religious instruction, it shall be the duty of the division superintendent of schools to fix an appropriate and reasonable hour for the students, which shall neither be too early nor too late; neither shall it be an hour which coincide with other school activities, such as athletics, military training, singing, literary and musical programs and rehearsals, society meetings, recesses and recreations, cleaning by the students of the school premises, nor shall athletics and military training take place immediately before the classes in religion...¹⁴

The above clauses reveal the manner in which religious education was treated in public schools and Church's discontent over it. When the bill was finally put to a vote, it was approved with a majority of 48 voting in favor, 24 against, one abstaining and 20 absent¹⁵. The result indicates political influence of the Church.

However, when the bill was submitted to the President for approval, it was vetoed on the grounds of its unconstitutionality. Some bishops issued a pastoral letter, protesting the veto. Quezon made a press statement, blaming the bishops for the pastoral letter. The development provoked deep hostility between them which remained for some time.

Major issues of the argument at that time were neither about the functions of religious education nor the significance of having it in the public school. Instead, they were about interpretation of the article of the Constitution which restricted amendment of regulations regarding religious education, and about whether the Catholic Church ought to participate in political affairs. Quezon stated as follows:

The ecclesiastical authorities should understand therefore that any attempt on their part to intervene in affairs which are within the jurisdiction of the government will not be tolerated In purely ecclesiastical matters the Catholic bishops may or may not speak for Filipino Catholics. But when it is a question of expressing the will of the Filipino people as a political entity on any matter concerning legislation or measures of government, the Catholic bishops, some of whom are not Filipinos, presume too much when they claim to speak for our people...¹⁶

On the other hand, the bishops protested against the criticism of their support for the bill in the pastoral letter, as follows:

We believe that in a democracy any citizen, be he a public official, a bishop, or a poor worker, has the right to express his opinion, to discuss and to interest himself in whatever bill affects the common good. No one can deny that right to bishops and priests. We want to make it clear that we bishops and priests do not wish to be less than any other as regards the use and exercise of our rights of citizenship.¹⁷

Schumacher, a researcher of Philippine church history, stressed that the above letter signifies Church's acceptance of democratic procedures and its regaining of influence within the new political framework.¹⁸ Later, successors to Quezon again faced this political influence from the Church over the issue of religious education, after Japanese occupation during which religious education in the public school was temporarily prohibited.

3. Concession to the Church by President Quirino

In 1953 when Philippine schools had almost recovered from the damage caused by the World War II and the Japanese occupation, the Catholic Church launched a new campaign for the promotion of religious education. Then President Elpidio Quirino, whose political foundation was less solid than Quezon, was unable to resist and gave way. At that time the government was in danger of overthrow by Hukbalahap, a communist military. Quirino failed both in subduing it and in peace talks, which ruined his popularity, and he became uncertain of his reelection in the presidential election in November. Accordingly, it was unfortunate for him that the campaign of the Catholic Church, a major voting block, started early in the year.

This campaign was triggered by a suspicion against three high-ranking educational

officials including Education Secretary. A Catholic weekly reported in January that the three had participated in a freemasonic committee "for the elimination of religious instruction in the public schools" which had been active for one year in 1948. According to the weekly, it made a final report, including a recommendation to "show the dangers and adverse effect of religious instruction in public schools."¹⁹ The Catholic Church, which had long been discontent with restrictions on religious education such as time allocation, started to claim that those restrictions were kept in force by officials with the intention of hampering religious education. The Church urged its nationwide lay members to send letters and telegrams to Quirino and representatives, calling for investigation on the suspicion and dismissal of the officials. In February the hierarchy publicized a pastoral letter on the matter in major newspapers. Both Houses adopted resolutions to investigate the case, and the lower house committee on education held hearings. It summoned the parties concerned including representatives of the Catholic Church and other religious sects as well as school personnel, while the Secretary and the other two did not appear due to disapproval of Quirino, and the committee failed to reach a conclusion. Meanwhile, another investigation was carried out by a special investigator appointed by Quirino. The three officials appeared before its hearing and denied the accusation.

In April Quirino issued an administrative order, which amended the regulation by allowing religious education during regular school periods. A few more administrative measures followed for promotion of religious education. All these steps taken by Quirino administration seem to be a compromise, that is, Quirino yielded to the Catholic Church by amending regulations of religious education (which was presumably a minor concern for him), in place of personnel matters which would directly affect his government. After a cooling-off period, acquittals of the three officials were announced in September.

The above mentioned administrative order allowed religious education during regular periods in the following clause.

...upon written petition of the parents of the students in any public school, religious instruction be given one-half hour three times a week during, before or after the school session and at such hours and rooms in the public school building as may be fixed by the Superintendent of Schools, taking into consideration the peculiar conditions obtaining in the different communities in his division, and providing the best facilities available for the proper implementation of the constitutional provision concerning religious instruction in public schools.²⁰

It is supposed that, put into regular hours, pupils would consider religion more important and closer to other school subjects. A greater number of pupils were expected to attend religion classes than before when they had been given outside of regular hours. Besides, religion instructors could work more efficiently now, because their religion classes could be arranged

subsequently during regular hours and thus they could teach more classes in one day. In this way religious education was promoted both in quality and in quantity.

Despite the fact the administrative order brought about a drastic change of religious education, which Quezon turned down after a fierce dispute, it contained only the revised part of the article. Neither the aim of the revision nor the significance of allowing religious education in public schools was expressed therein. Thus Quirino's government never disclosed its policy on religious education. On the other hand, in the statement of the three officials' acquittal, it was revealed that the amendment of the regulation was connected with their suspicion. The statement mentioned the amendment as follows:

In this connection, let it be stated that [bylaw of time allocation for religion] has been changed and liberalized. Further discussion of said section and of the old practice and policy in consonance therewith, which were vigorously impugned by counsel for the complainants as prescribing an inconvenient or unholy hour for the teaching of religion in the public schools, is therefore no longer necessary, the matter having become purely academic.²¹

It thus appears that Quirino's government did not have a clear and consistent vision. The accusation against the three officials attracted so much attention that issues such as significance of religious education or its relation with the constitutional provision of church-state separation were overlooked, and Quirino did not dare to express his stand on those issues. Thus, without thorough public debate, the Catholic Church attained its long-desired goal of alteration of regulations on religious education.

During its campaign the Catholic Church seemed to have gained broad support from the public. Some editorials and contributions in national newspapers criticized Church's political interference in education policy and personnel matters, but a larger number of them were for promotion of religious education. For example, one editorial noted that "the teaching of religion should contribute a great deal in training the youth, especially in the moral sphere. Such training is badly needed in the country today."²² It is presumed that most Filipinos, considering religion as foundation for morals, wished religious education widely provided. At this particular time, due to an increase in juvenile delinquency, many people expected religious education to work as a solution. Under the threat of Hukbalahap, it was also expected as an effective measure against the spread of communism. The Church's campaign for the promotion of religious education in public schools was, in a sense, a pursuit of its interest in public education, while it also represented the wish of many Filipinos.

4. Favorable Stand to the Church by President Magsaysay

The Catholic Church indicated the aims of its campaign in the aforementioned pastoral

letter as follows:

Your objectives are definite, reasonable and just: first, an open, free and searching inquiry by the proper authorities ... of the officials at the head of our educational system; and second, the provision of practical and permanent safeguards to ensure full implementation of our laws regarding religious instruction in public schools.²³

Though the second aim had been achieved, concerning the first, Quirino's actions didn't satisfy the Church's desire. The Church persisted in the replacement of Education Secretary, presumably because it had a feeling that the education authority had not been cooperative in carrying out religious education. The Church's aforementioned distrust of public schools since the American period had been confirmed, rather than wiped out, by encountering various obstacles such as troublesome procedures to be completed at the beginning of each semester which oftentimes caused delays in starting religious education. It is not certain whether these attitudes of education authority and personnel arose simply from their faithfulness to the policy maintained from the American period, or whether some of them were actually from their hostilities toward the Church as it claimed. However, the Church believed that the situation would be changed if a sympathizer for the Church and religious education assumed the office of Education Secretary. Thus Quirino's decision not to dismiss the Secretary of Education turned out to be a cause of the Church's not voting for him in the presidential election in November.

On the other hand, his opponent Ramon Magsaysay, who had been highly successful in subduing Huk, was a popular hero among religious institutions who hated communism. The Magsaysay camp itself desired to secure more support from the Catholic Church. Thus, after Quirino fell into disfavor with the Church for acquitting the Education Secretary, Magsaysay made contact with the Catholic Lawyers' Guild and promised "to appoint to the key positions of the department of education men representing the sentiments of the Catholics"²⁴ if elected. During the campaign he also declared his intention to promote religious education, stating in a speech "deep realization of the existence of God and the proper understanding of true moral values will certainly fortify children in the formative stage against alluring enticements of communism."²⁵ The entire bishops' group officially stayed neutral, though some did not and called for voting for Magsaysay. Especially in the provinces, priests, Catholic organizations and schools openly took part in campaigns for Magsaysay.

After the announcement of Magsaysay's victory, a bishop of Panay Island sent him a congratulatory telegram, which reads "The Catholic votes in the island of Panay ... have been most solid in your favor."²⁶ The Quirino camp claimed that his defeat was attributed to the fact that the Church "used the pulpits to campaign for the minority party."²⁷

Magsaysay kept his promise. Upon inauguration, he made his selection for Education Secretary in accordance with the Church's wish. First appointed was Pastor M. Endencia, an

associate justice of the court of appeals, who was known as a devout Catholic of the time for his membership of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, with the highest degree, as well as his receiving a Papal medal for his distinguished services to the Church. This appointment implied that "the Catholic hierarchy had preempted the secretaryship of education."²⁸ His successor, Gregorio Hernandez, Jr., was chosen also from among Catholic leaders. He was a dean of the Law Faculty of Santo Tomas University, which was the core body of the Catholic Lawyers' Guild.

In 1955 Hernandez issued Department Order No. 5, which was intended for the promotion of religious education in the public school. The order not only reiterated the permission for religious education during regular hours granted by the aforementioned Quirino's administrative order, but also provided detailed instructions to be followed by school principals in order that religious education could be carried out smoothly.²⁹ Thus the Catholic spokespersons' assumption of office as Education Secretary resulted in a policy of promoting religious education.

While the Catholic Church welcomed the order, some other groups including Protestant churches protested against it. In June the Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, a major Protestant organization, submitted a note of protest to the Department of Education. After a few unsuccessful dialogues with the department, the federation, together with civil organizations, organized a mass protest rally of ten thousand people at the end of August.³⁰ Philippine Protestant churches, some of whose leaders were Americans or had studied in America, presumably shared a common view about religious matters in the public school and therefore could not tolerate the policy of the Education Department to promote religious education in the public school. In addition, the Protestant churches accused the Catholic Church of its interference in public education. The aforementioned note reads as follows:

We firmly believe that the Philippine public school should be absolutely free from all church interference ... This Department Order might be the first backward step toward a return to the ecclesiastical domination of the public school during the Spanish regime. In this connection, it is significant that the representatives of a certain Church are enthusiastic over the promulgation of the Department Order³¹

The Catholic Church defended the order and blamed the Protestant churches for their protest. The Catholic Church's harsh response was presumably attributed to its long-carried grudge caused by competition for membership since the beginning of Protestant missionary work in the American period. An editorial in the Catholic weekly reads as follows:

We believe that the real reason [of Protestants' protest] is not any violation of religious liberties, as they claim, but the fear that if the Catholic Church makes full use of the order and went about instructing Catholic public school children as never before, the sects

would have no more uninstructed Catholics to proselytize.³²

Thus the controversy over religious education led to a revival of the historical feud between the two churches. The feud caused turmoil in one school. In July parents of a school in Cebu city, with indignation against one teacher who criticized Catholics, organized a strike of 160 pupils. The Education Department assigned an investigator from Manila, and classes were suspended for some time.³³

In September a petition was submitted to the Supreme Court, calling for a prohibition on enforcing the order and for a declaration of unconstitutionality of the order, by a PTA president of one elementary school in Manila. Although he was a Catholic, probably he had not been involved in the aforementioned campaigns of the Catholic Church. Thus the Protestant churches, which had been preparing a similar lawsuit, lost their opportunity to take part in a court debate over the issue. The Court dismissed the petition without substantial deliberation on the grounds that religion had been taught to the son of the PTA president in the school and that requirement for requesting a Supreme Court's decision on constitutionality was not met.³⁴ This resolution of the Court was said to have indirectly supported "the policy of cooperation of the Church and State in promoting religious instruction of children studying in public schools,"³⁵ because it did not suspend the education order. The controversy over religious education ended, once again, without sufficient deliberation.

Some results of these policy changes of the Quirino and Magsaysay administrations are obvious in the proportion of enrollments in religious education to the student population presented in Table 1. The enrollment rate, which had just recovered to the prewar level of approximately 13 percent in the school year 1952, soared to 20 percent and 31 percent respectively in the school years 1953 and 1955. These figures suggest the effect of the policy changes as well as simultaneous efforts of the Catholic Church to make maximum use of the scheme. It should also be noted that in every school year in Table 1, the ratio of Catholics to the entire enrollments is higher than 96 percent, 10 percent higher than the ratio to the general population. This implies that the Catholic Church almost exclusively utilized the religious education scheme.

Conclusion

This paper has described the establishment and the development of religious education in the Philippine public school until the 1950s, and demonstrated the following points.

First, the provision was modified immensely in the 1950s. Until that time, religious education was given only outside of the regular school periods, but in 1953 President Quirino's administrative Order permitted religious education during, as well as outside of, the regular periods. The new provision was reiterated in the Education Order of 1955. This modification resulted in increasing popularity of the practice, a state of affairs which has continued up to

the present.

Second, as an issue of educational policy, religious education was so critical that the argument influenced personnel matters within the Department of Education and the presidential election results in the 1950s. In 1953, the Catholic Church loudly accused the Secretary of Education and two other officials of having neglected the implementation of religious education. In the presidential election later that year, the Church supported candidate Magsaysay, who promised the Church that he would appoint as Secretary of Education a man representing the sentiments of Catholics. And in 1955, in opposition to the drastic change in policy, a petition was filed with the Supreme Court to test the validity of the Education Order.

Third, the Catholic Church played an important role in the development of the practice. In its need to expand religious education and provide more opportunities to teach Catechism, the Church insisted on liberalizing the provision. Since the Church had an influence on the result of elections, the pressure from it drastically changed the policy of Congress and the Presidents on religious education.

Fourth, the demand for religious education was strong among the Filipino people, most of whom were devout Catholics. The demand was so strong that at the beginning of the last century many people did not send their children to newly established public schools where the Catechism was not taught. This demand was urgent in the early 1950s because of the problem of juvenile delinquency and the threat of the army of the Communist party.

These results lead to the conclusion that religion is a more critical issue in Philippine education history since the American period than has been previously understood.

Notes

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