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AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY RECORD OF PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITY IN WORLD-WIDE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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THE MISSIONARY REVIEW



OF THE WORLD



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Old Series

FEBRUARY, 1916

Vol. XXIX, No. 2
New Series

■ SIGNS OF THE TIMES ■

PRAY FOR THE PANAMA CONGRESS

THE Congress on Christian Work in Latin America is to convene in Panama February 10th, and about three hundred delegates are expected. The difficulties of transportation and the limited accommodations have turned aside many who planned to attend, but the delegates are leading men and women of evangelical churches and represent practically all the Protestant denominations of North America and sixty-seven missionaries and Latin Americans.

The daylight sessions will be devoted to the discussion of the Commission reports and the evening sessions to popular meetings, each address by one North American and one Latin American. There will also be evening evangelistic meetings in Spanish and English for the benefit of the people of the Isthmus—North Americans and other residents.

The Congress will be held in Hotel Tivoli. There will be a frank and friendly discussion of actual conditions in Latin American lands, with freedom of speech, so far as it is Christian in spirit and relates to vital facts, but without bigotry or unnecessary acidity. It is expected that Dr. Robert E. Speer will be President of the Congress, and his presence in the chair will insure courtesy, constructiveness, spirituality, and prayer as characteristic of the sessions.

Among the distinguished delegates from the United States are Dr. and Mrs. John R. Mott, Dr. and Mrs. Lemuel C. Barnes (Baptist), Prof. Harlan P. Beach (Yale), Bishop Henry D. Aves (Mexico), Bishop Wm. C. Brown (Virginia), Miss Belle H. Bennett (Kentucky), Dr. John W. Butler (Mexico), Dr. S. H. Chester (Presbyterian), Dr. E. F.

Progress in the Philippines

A TRAVELER'S IMPRESSIONS OF PRESENT CONDITIONS

BY ROBERT E. SPEER, NEW YORK

Author of "Missions and Modern History," etc.



If a traveler were blindfolded in Siam and transported to the Philippine Islands and the blind removed he might at first doubt whether he had left Siam at all. He would see around him the familiar domestic animals, most conspicuous among them the uncouth but indispensable carabao. Paddy-fields, just like those in Siam, stretch about him, edged with palm trees, skilfully terraced and irrigated and filled at the same planting season with cheerful companies of brightly drest village folk setting out the rice plants. Many cadences of the native songs sound like the strains heard on the streams and the roadways in Siam. The houses of bamboo and nipa thatch, the banana-groves, the women's skirts, at least in the island of Panay, the sun and the seasons, the betel-nut, and, indeed, most of the outward forms of life might lead a traveler to wonder whether he had not been led on some long, circuitous journey which left him still in Siam.

One day's experience, however, would show that he had passed into conditions differing from those he had seen as day differs from night. The spirit of Siam is quiescent, inert. "What profit can there be in struggle?" it seems to ask. "Did not our lord Buddha teach that all desire is empty?

"What pleasure can we have to strive with evil?

And is there any peace in ever climbing up the climbing wave?"

"We are ambitious only to be as we have been. Do not disturb us with restless dreams."

The contrast in the Philippine Islands is instantaneous and complete. Here are eager people, full of life and hope, drinking eagerly at the fountains of new life and energy, cheerful, happy in their greetings, pushing hard against old limitations. In fifteen years they have swung clear out of the back eddies of resignation in which the great mass of the Siamese people are sleeping into the great stream of earnest life and joyous effort which sweeps through the modern world. It is exhilarating to come into this atmosphere of freedom and democratic joy after having felt the heavy pressure of the weight of inert or despairing hopelessness which rests on the mainlands of eastern Asia.

It is due to the Roman Church and to the Spanish government that neither the narcotic influence of Buddhism nor the sterility of Islam, nor the wayward wastefulness of animism has destroyed the spirit of the Filipinos. They taught the people to believe in God and in the great personalizing and renewing principles of Christianity, and they gave them elements of the ideals of thought and

standards of action which determine the values of life. The American spirit has unreservedly recognized this debt of the Philippine Islands to the past and has erected on the sea-front looking out over Manila Bay a great monument in which Legaspi, the soldier, and Urdineta, the priest, stand on either side of a cross, typifying the three great forces which for four hundred years wrought upon the spirit of a not unresponsive people.

But when all this has been said, no one can fail to see that it is the efficiency and unselfishness of the service that America has rendered in the Philippine Islands during the past fifteen years which is chiefly responsible for the present conditions. In these fifteen years the Islands have made almost as marked progress, intellectually and economically, as in the previous four centuries, and every year marks a further advancement immeasurably greater than the Siamese government is accomplishing for a population about equal, but with a governmental revenue more than double that of the Philippines. Americans have a right to be proud of the achievement of these fifteen years. The spirit of a whole people has been changed from suspicion to good will, from despair to hope, from inequality and privilege to democracy and brotherhood. A national unification has begun and is rapidly advancing, not only unchecked but inspired and promoted by the American administration, not only without fear but with joy and of set purpose. The whole process has been free and living, and guided by moral forces which have made no use of the mechanical and militaristic agencies to which other lands have resorted.

American Education

The most remarkable and effective of the agencies which the government has used has been the new educational system. The Philippine public-school system, as its director says, is probably the most highly centralized system in the world, and it is hard for any one who has not seen its work, ramifying through all the provinces of the Islands and rapidly pervading the whole body of society, to realize its power. When the Americans came to the Islands they found no public-school system. The Roman Church had its own higher schools, but the few primary schools in existence were negligible. In March, 1915, there were 3,837 primary schools, 309 intermediate schools, and 41 secondary schools, a total of 4,187, with a total teaching force of 9,845. More than half of all the children of school age in the Islands were enrolled.

When the schools were first opened the people were uninterested or suspicious or opposed, now the schools are their most popular institutions. The first act of the Filipino legislature after its inauguration was to pass an appropriation for school purposes. One-fourth of the entire budget of the insular government is devoted to education. Everywhere the people freely vote taxes for educational purposes and contribute from their personal funds for the support of schools and furnish labor and materials for school buildings. Within a few years the great mass of the population will have been given a primary education, so that every one will be able to read and write. An intermediate education will have been given to the substantial middle class of

the country, and higher instruction will have been provided for those who are to assume leadership.

The Filipino people never have been a unity. They had no common language or literature. But a small fraction of them were able to speak Spanish, and while, to this extent, Spanish constituted a bond of union, it was also an agency of separation among the people and of aristocratic domination. The schools made English the language of instruction because a common language was essential for national unity, because English gave the fullest contact with the ideals of democracy and because it is the commercial language of the world, especially of the Far East. Now it is estimated many more people speak English than ever spoke Spanish, and a generation is growing up to which English will be the Filipino language. The change that has already taken place is illustrated in the fact that during the half year ending December 1, 1913, 4,377 applicants took the civil service examinations in English and 490 in Spanish, while six years ago the number taking the examinations in English was 4,223 and in Spanish 1,975, and in the year ending July 1, 1914, 2,443 were examined in English and 3,011 in Spanish.

The effect of athletics and of industrial education in the schools has been equally remarkable. Clean games have brought with them noticeable improvement in the physical development of the people, who stood in great need of such influences. Sports have developed energy, organizing ability, and the faculty of cooperation, and have replaced the spirit of

jealousy and of tribal strife with generous rivalry.

Industrial instruction has steadily changed the viewpoint of the people respecting manual labor, has raised the standard of living, improved the home and home life, taught better methods of cooking, sanitation and the care of children, provided vocations and developed national resources. No normal pupil is promoted from a primary or intermediate grade without participating in industrial work. Already the effects of the schools are apparent in every department of the life of the people. In many provinces men under thirty are no longer seen at the cock-pits, and every year the revenue from the licensed cock-fighting diminishes. In every province farmers are multiplying their tilled areas, having learned better methods, and realizing now that the old days of insecurity and oppression are gone.

Wherever we traveled through the Islands in the dozen provinces which we visited we attended the schools and came away with new courage and hope in the remembrance of this great host of eager, responsive, enthusiastic young lives drinking in the streams of truth and democracy, and dreaming for themselves and for their Islands the great dreams which may not always yield the great deeds, but without which certainly the great deeds can not be. These boys and girls in the high and intermediate schools constitute one of the great opportunities of the evangelical missions. Wherever these missions have any chapels in the neighborhood of the schools, a large part of the congregation is sure to be made up of students. They come from and go

back to the better-class homes, to which it has been most difficult thus far to secure access. Their education has raised questions in their minds which they are not willing to evade and which bring them to religious teachers who do not forbid them to think and who are willing to lead them forward into the new land of liberty. Within the next ten years tens of thousands of these young people for whom mere ecclesiastical authority has no meaning should be brought into a living faith in Christ.

The educational achievement of the last fifteen years in the Philippine Islands is vividly seen by comparing it with the educational system of Siam.

	<i>Siam.</i>	<i>Philippine Islands.</i>
Total Government		
Income	\$28,070,774	\$11,275,074
Devoted to Education	\$623,499	\$2,082,172
Total number of		
schools under the		
Department of		
Public Instruction	394	4,187
Pupils in these		
Schools	25,486	610,519

The Siamese government estimates that there are approximately 2,900 local and private schools with 95,000 scholars not under the ministry of public instruction. Let such schools and scholars be excluded in the Philippine Islands and included in Siam, and the latter would have 3,294 schools and 120,486 scholars in a population about the same as that of the Philippines.

The land which these young people are being trained to develop is a far more attractive and habitable and homelike land than it is easy for us in America to conceive. The Islands are not all swamp and forest and tropical jungle. The cornfields of

Cebu look very much like hillside cornfields in America. Altho nearly half the area of the Islands is estimated to be forest, we traveled widely through the islands and only twice came in touch with the forests.

Mindanao alone has, in an area about equal to Holland, Belgium, and Denmark combined, only 626,086 inhabitants, or seventeen to the square mile, while Java, whose physical conditions are similar, has 590 to the square mile. It has the best climate in the Islands, 22,000 square miles of forest, and as good grazing ground as can be found anywhere in the world. If you ask for anything in the Philippine Islands that you have not found elsewhere, you are met with the reply, "O, yes, you will find it in Mindanao."

Thousands from other islands are moving thither. Whole evangelical congregations from Cebu have removed to northern Mindanao. Young men from Silliman Institute have scattered along the north coast carrying with them the seeds of the new life which they got at Dumaguete. The communities are wide open to the Gospel. When the representative of the Congregational Church to which Mindanao is assigned in the distribution of responsibility for the evangelization of the Philippines came to Cagayan, the governor, treasurer, presidents, and all the chief officials welcomed him, calling for a hospital, a college, a dormitory, a church. After the slaughter in the cock-pit Sunday afternoon it was offered for a meeting, at which the crowds drank in the words of the preacher. The next day the chief political paper of the city called upon the people of the province to

give the missionaries their friendship and support. Similar doors of opportunity are wide ajar on every side.

The Failure of Romanism

The Roman Church had its unhindered opportunity for four hundred years. I have already borne ungrudging testimony to some of the good that it accomplished, but it wrought also much evil and it showed itself, through its divisions, its inefficiency, and its despotism, incapable of doing alone the work which needed to be done. It was divided and is divided still. The friars contended with one another and with the Filipino clergy, from whom they sought to take away the parochial care of their own people. In 1849 only one-fifth, and those the poorest, of the 168 parishes under the Archbishopric of Manila, belonged to the Filipinos, and this number was steadily reduced, for the decree of September 10, 1861, gave power to the *Recoletos* "to administer the parishes of Cavite province and other parishes now under the native clergy as they are being vacated." The friars' orders, which are now regaining something of their strength, are again a source of disunion and conflict. The Church was and is inefficient. One of its own lawyers, as well as officials whose business brought them into relation with it, told me that they were amazed at its business incapacity and at the losses that it had suffered in consequence. No one can look at the present ineffective and misapplied activities of the Church, missing so much of the wonderful opportunity of the present day, without marveling at its want of insight and intelligent direction.

Every one who longs to see the Roman Church purified and set free must look with sorrow upon it as it stands divided and confused among the havoc which it helped to make and among the mighty forces of freedom and hope which are repairing that havoc and building in its stead a structure of truth and liberty.

Evangelical Opportunity

The present situation offers what Paul would call "a wide door and effectual" to the work of the evangelical missions. Fifteen years ago the churches entered this door with zeal and wisdom. In a spirit not of exclusive claim but of distributed responsibility, they divided the task, assigning central and northern Luzon to the Methodists, southern Luzon to the Presbyterians, the Visayas to the Baptists and Presbyterians, Mindanao to the Congregationalists. Later, room was made in Luzon for the United Brethren and the Disciples. The Episcopalians, who had begun their work for Americans and the non-Christian tribes, were led on by the very compulsion of the need to share in the general work for the Filipino people in Manila.

These determinations of responsibility have been of the greatest value. They have secured a far wider evangelization than would otherwise have been possible, and they have ministered to the unification of the people through the subordination of all denominational division and the co-ordination of the results of the work of almost all the missions, not only in an evangelical union of the workers, but in a church union of the congregations in the one "Evangelical Christian Church of the Philippine

Islands." The Church is woefully weak as yet in wholly self-supporting local units, and there appears to have been temporarily a subsidence of the zeal and momentum of the first days. "Five years from now," said one of the most intelligent and energetic Filipino leaders, "you will find that the tide has returned with fuller strength than ever. The thought of the people is concentrated at present on political discussion, but within a few years this will have passed by. Policies will have been clearly settled, and will have become understood. Then, again, the mind of the people will turn to the deepest problems and necessities, and multitudes both of the older people to whom the old religious forms are meaningless, and of the younger people to whom they are unreal and untrue, and who, believing intellectually in God and Christ, are still seeking a vital experience, will turn to the Bible and to the Church which is not afraid to open its pages to the people and answer the questions which the people ask."

But our observation and experience would lead to the conclusion that there is no need of waiting for five years; that the door is just as wide open now as it was fifteen years ago, and wider; that in almost every *municipio* and *barrio* in the Islands there are men and women accessible and waiting; and that nowhere in the world is there a richer and more immediate possibility of an evangelistic harvest and of a great molding of character in individuals and in a nation than among the 50,000 students enrolled in the intermediate and secondary schools, who are dead ripe for friendship and for every

true and tactful influence which will lead them to take Christ into their lives as their living Master.

One sees no hope of any self-generated movements of religious revival in the Islands. Aglipayanism is disintegrating, and, in the process, is passing through a pitiful degeneration. It began as a great revolt within the Roman Church, but it represented no vital intellectual or spiritual principle. It was a rebellion, not a reform, and it met its death-blow when the courts awarded the Church properties to the Roman organization. A few church-buildings were built. Some of these are still maintained in shabby disrepair. Some of the people have returned to their old superstitions, and even deepened the fraud and falsehood which they repudiated, as in the case of the church in Santa Cruz worshiping and making money out of the Virgin of Malove, which is nothing but a curiously shaped knot of wood. Aglipay himself, under the influence of one of his followers who has dug up the remains of Renan, has now taken up with a charlatan rationalism. There is in him and his movement no hope whatever of religious or moral helpfulness to the Filipino people.

The spirit of truth and freedom is borne far and wide over the land today by men who have come from America or who have been raised up from the Islands, whose sign is not A. M., the monogram of Ave Maria, which takes the place of the figure of the Savior over the altar in some of the great Manila churches, but A. D., the day of Mary's Son, and who carry not so much cross or crucifix, as the living Christ.