

National, Catholic, and Ecumenical

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Abstract: The Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) is one of the most remarkable churches in the Philippines, yet, its history is largely underresearched. This paper uses newly researched archival resources from the archives of this church and of partner churches to explore the way in which this “revolutionary church” came to be accepted as part of the broader ecumenical movement. Special attention is given to two of the most prominent full communion partners of this church, the Episcopal Church and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. In this way, it is also clear that the IFI came to be recognized as a fully catholic church by other catholic churches, moving beyond any doubt of lingering Unitarianism (as it was part of the later theology of Gregorio Aglipay). The study also shows how various national, even nationalist churches were able to enter into international and intercultural relations with each other, thus creating a fellowship that spans the globe.

Keywords: *Iglesia Filipina Independiente; Gregorio Aglipay; Aglipayanism; Episcopal Church; Ecumenism; Old Catholic Church; Second Vatican Council*

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Introduction

The history of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI) remains a little researched topic, which applies both to the history of this indigenous catholic church in the Philippines as well as to its broad network of international contacts.¹ This contribution researches the contacts between the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* with another group of independent catholic churches, the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht that had existed out of communion with Rome, but recognized by Rome, since the early 18th century (Utrecht schism, 1723/1724) and the later 19th century (Old Catholic movement following the First Vatican Council; independent catholic Polish immigrant churches in the USA).² These two (communions of) churches established communion with one another in 1965, thus helping the IFI to emerge out of a relative isolation. However, the road towards this event has been little studied and is often seen as a kind of mystery, given that it seems that two Filipino bishops simply travelled to Europe, to Vienna, met for one day with their Old Catholic counterparts, and signed an agreement of full communion. By asking and answering the question what kind of diplomacy and negotiations preceded this, this paper sheds some light on a previously little known aspect of Philippine church history. As such, it also constitutes a case study in Philippine involvement in ecumenism.

¹The author is grateful to Mr. Philip Whittaker, Haarlem, for proofreading this paper and providing a “native check.”

See, however, Peter-Ben Smit, *Old Catholic and Philippine Independent Ecclesiologies in History. The Catholic Church in Every Place* Brill’s Series in Church History 52 (Leiden: Brill, 2011); idem/ Franz Segbers, *Catholicity in Times of Globalization. Remembering Alberto Ramento, Martyred Bishop of Workers and Peasants* (Luzern: Exodus, 2011); Wim H. de Boer, *In necessariis unitas. Hintergründe zu den ökumenischen Beziehungen zwischen der Iglesia Filipina Independiente, den Kirchen der Anglikanischen Gemeinschaft und den Altkatholischen Kirchen der Utrechter Union*, Studien zur Interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums 155 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012); idem, ‘De weg naar kerkelijke gemeenschap tussen de *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* en de Oud-Katholieke Kerken van de Unie van Utrecht (1965),’ in: Kees van der Kooi/Liuwe Westra/Peter-Ben Smit (ed.), *Vele gaven, één Geest. Meedenken met Martien Parmentier op het gebied van oecumenica, patristiek en theologie van de charismatische vernieuwing* (Ekklesia: Gorinchem, 2012), 79-95. The latter publication focuses on the same topic from the perspective of the Old Catholic Churches.

² See in general: Urs von Arx, ‘The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht,’ in: Paul Avis (Hg.), *The Christian Church. An Introduction to the Major Traditions* (London: SPCK, 2002), 157-185; Jan Visser, ‘The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht,’ *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 3 (2003), 68–84; Smit, *Ecclesiologies*. – It is of some importance to underline that this concerns the Old Catholic Churches of the *Union of Utrecht*, as there were (and are) churches aplenty that use the designation “Old Catholic” without being in communion with either the churches of the Union of Utrecht (of with the IFI, for that matter).

The paper is based on research in the archives of the IFI that are kept in St. Andrew's Theological Seminary, Quezon City (Manila), in the archives of the Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands (kept in Amersfoort, Netherlands), and in the archives of the Old Catholic observer at the Second Vatican Council (in private possession of Mrs. S.C. Smit-Maan, IJmuiden, NL – the author thanks her for the courtesy of consulting these archives). In order to put the developments on which this paper focuses into context historically, some attention to the history of the IFI prior to 1965 will be necessary as well, as it needs to be made clear from where the IFI came when it entered into ecumenical relationships. For the same reason, some attention also needs to be given to IFI- Episcopal relations before turning towards the Old Catholics proper, given that the IFI – Episcopal, and subsequently: IFI – Anglican relations provide an essential background to the establishment of IFI – Old Catholic communion.

The Establishment and Early History of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*

The IFI was proclaimed on 2 August 1902 by the politician and journalist Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., at a meeting of the labor union *Unión Obrera Democrática* in Manila.³ De los Reyes, Sr., understood the IFI as the continuation of the autonomous catholic church of the Philippines as it had existed during the First Philippine Republic. The Filipino priest Gregorio Aglipay y Labayan was nominated for the leadership (*Obispo Maximo*) of this newly proclaimed church. He, however, was not in ecclesial service at that moment and not even present at the meeting; in fact, following his surrender some months earlier, he had been living the life of a “pacified” guerrillero general that had fought the US American occupation of the Philippines from 1898-1901. In spite of this situation, Aglipay accepted the office to which he was nominated and led the IFI for the next (nearly) four decades, until his death in 1940; as there were no bishops in apostolic succession available (or willing) to consecrate the bishops for the newly proclaimed IFI and Aglipay did not want to make his church dependent on the benevolence of foreign bishops (again), the first bishops were consecrated by a group of priests. During his long tenure, which cannot be discussed in detail here,⁴ Aglipay sought to further two causes: 1) the independence of the Philippines and, in line with this, the independence of the national church of the Philippines, i.e. the IFI; 2) the *ressourcement* and modernization of the faith and worship of his church, attempting to reconcile religion and modern science. Both are expressed in the heraldic motto of the IFI, which on the one hand mentions “pro

³ See for this and the following: Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 98-168.

⁴ See however, Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 233-265, and the literature mentioned there.

Deo et patria” and on the other the four words “Scripturae, scientia, libertas, caritas.” Aglipay’s own theology, or rather religious philosophy, eventually received the name “religious Philippinism,” which illustrates well what was just said.⁵ During his ministry as *Obispo Maximo*, Aglipay, was much under the influence of thinkers and politicians such as De los Reyes, Sr., and Apolinario Mabini, while seeking to do justice to the heritage of 19th century thinkers such as José Rizal. However, he was also in touch with a variety of leaders of other churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, various protestant churches that had come to evangelize the Philippines in the wake of the American colonization, the Episcopal Church that had (also) started its own jurisdiction in the Philippines, as well as with European Old Catholics, notably with the bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, the New Testament scholar and ecumenist Eduard Herzog.⁶ However, as Aglipay developed his own thinking more and more into a liberal religious and eventually unitarian and even agnostic direction, the only contacts that would last were with representatives of liberal Christian groups and churches, including American Unitarians that, like Aglipay, were critical of the American dominion over the Philippines.⁷ When Aglipay died on 1 september 1940, he was formally the head of a church with a liberal Christian doctrine and a (seemingly) catholic liturgy. However, as the unfolding of the events after his passing show, this theology and doctrine had probably only taken root in Aglipay himself and a few of his clergy, as radical changes were planned virtually immediately, while also contacts with other churches began again; for example, the head of the Episcopal jurisdiction in the Philippines, bishop Norman S. Binsted, reestablished contact with the IFI, in the light of the threatening invasion of the Philippines by Japanese forces and in order to explore cooperation in general. The death of Aglipay, in other words, constituted a turning point in the history of the IFI and the beginning of the IFI’s development of a broader network of ecumenical contacts (at the same time, the contacts with liberal Christian groups would diminish and eventually disappear). With this general picture of the theological and ecumenical development of the IFI during its first four decades of existence out of communion with Rome, we will now consider in more detail the theological and ecumenical history of the IFI from 1940 onwards.

⁵ See Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 252.

⁶ See for the course of this correspondence: Wim de Boer en Peter-Ben Smit, ‘Die frühen Beziehungen zwischen der Iglesia Filipina Independiente und den altkatholischen Kirchen der Utrechter Union,’ *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 98 (2008), 122-144.169-190.

⁷ See Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 233-265.

The Death of Gregorio Aglipay and the Changed Course of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente from 1940 onwards

In 1940, when a successor to Aglipay as *Obispo Maximo* had to be elected, bishop Santiago Fonacier was chosen, but only after he had committed himself to steering the IFI back to a more “orthodox”, that is to say Trinitarian theology and liturgy, away from Aglipay’s (Unitarian) religious Philippinism.⁸ This pledge of Fonacier already shows how shallow Aglipay’s theology had been rooted in his church. As already indicated, in the same period, only weeks after Aglipay’s departure, first conversations took place between representatives of the IFI and the Episcopal Church, both because of the threat of a Japanese invasion of the Philippines and its consequent dangers for the Episcopal Church and its largely American clergy, and as a matter of ecumenical principle on the part of the Episcopal Church that fulfilled a leading role in ecumenism worldwide in this period. While the IFI would indeed play a (small) role in the pastoral care for the Episcopal faithful during the internment of American clergy, more intensive cooperation, which went hand in hand with the fulfillment of Fonacier’s promise to steer the IFI back into Trinitarian waters, only began after the reconquest of the Philippines by American forces. In the meantime, however, the leadership of the IFI had changed again, since Fonacier had been deposed and, after a brief interregnum of Gerardo Bayaca, replaced by a son of Isabelo de los Reyes, Sr., Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., who would serve as *Obispo Maximo* until his death in 1971.⁹ Following his election, De los Reyes, Jr. would initiate the work on a renewed creed of the IFI and a revision of its theological principles, as had been agreed in 1940. The ecclesial and theological reorientation of the IFI that then began to unfold also included the regularization of the orders of the IFI. These had been based on episcopal consecrations being performed by priests in 1902 because of the unwillingness of bishops present in the Philippines to perform such consecrations for the IFI and Aglipay’s resistance to becoming dependent on foreign bishops (again), and were thus deficient, from a catholic theological point of view.¹⁰ After the doctrinal basis of the IFI had been revised by means of documents that were clearly drafted under heavy Episcopal influence, seeking orders in a more generally

⁸ See Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 265-278.

⁹ Isabelo de los Reyes Jr. (Madrid, 14 February, 1900 – Manila, 10 October, 1971) was ordained to the priesthood in the IFI after having served in the US Navy in 1923; in 1925, he was appointed Bishop of Manila and on 1 September 1946, he was elected as the fourth *Obispo Maximo* of his church, in which office he would serve until his death. See: H. Ellsworth Chandlee, *De los Reyes. Supreme Bishop in the Philippines*, New York 1962, Macario V. Ga, ‘Obispo Maximo De los Reyes, Jr. A Brief Biography’, *The Christian Register* 20:11-12 (1971), 3-4, and especially: Pedro de Achútegui, ‘Bishop Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr.: An Ecumenical Tribute’, *Philippine Studies* 19 (1971), 557-572.

¹⁰ See Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 151-152.

recognized form of apostolic succession was a logical step, and the Episcopal Church was the logical source for such orders (even though these orders were not, and are still not recognized by the majority church in the Philippines, i.e. the Roman Catholic Church). Therefore, supported by bishop Binsted and his advisors, on 9 August 1947, De los Reyes, Jr. wrote to his American counterpart, the *Presiding Bishop* of the Episcopal Church, Henry Sherrill Knox:

The Supreme Council of Bishops and the General Assembly of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente in their sessions held respectively August 4th and 5th 1947, in the city of Manila, with the Rt. Rev. Norman S. Binsted, as our honored guest and valued adviser, have unanimously authorized the undersigned, as Supreme Head of the said Church, to prayerfully petition the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America the gift of Apostolic Succession for our Episcopate. To make feasible the granting of the blessing of Apostolic Succession to our Episcopate, the Supreme Council of Bishops and the General Assembly have unanimously passed and adopted the Articles of Faith, Articles of Religion, Constitution, and Canons herein attached, and have proclaimed the same as our official doctrines and law.¹¹

The *House of Bishops* of the Episcopal Church, of which Sherrill as *Presiding Bishop* was the chairperson, reacted positively and the consecration that De los Reyes, Jr. had requested was scheduled for 7 April 1948. For this event, also another (potential) ecumenical partner was invited: the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches, in the person of the secretary of the international bishops' synod of this communion of churches, the bishop of the Old Catholic of Switzerland, Adolf Küry. Küry was unable to come, but the invitation did mean the reestablishment of contact between the two churches after the correspondence between Aglipay and Herzog had been terminated in 1912. In his response to Aglipay, Küry also gives his view of the IFI:

I had liked very much to follow this invitation if the circumstances had allowed me to travel. It would have been an especially great opportunity to me because the former bishop, the Rt. Rev. Aglipay, had got in touch with my predecessor the Rt. Rev. Edward Herzog, D.D. But later, this relation had been interrupted. I am very glad that through the consecration of the three bishops the Iglesia Filipina Independiente is entering in the apostolic

¹¹ See: IFI Archives (SATS), OM 1.4, 1946-1960, Box 3a Folder 7a. See also IFI Archives (SATS), OM 1.4 June - Aug 1947, Box 4, Folder 8, for a circular of 19 August 1947, in which De los Reyes, Jr. communicates the decisions of the *Supreme Council of Bishops* and the *General Assembly* of the IFI of 4 and 5 August, 1947 in order to approve and implement the new doctrinal and canonical basis of the IFI.

succession and therefore can be recognized as a full member of the One Catholic Church.¹²

As Küry clearly indicates, he recognizes the validity of Anglican orders, as had been common in Old Catholicism for decades already, and as it had found its formal expression in the 1931 Bonn Agreement that would formalize the relationship of communion between Anglicans and Old Catholics.¹³

The Broader Ecumenical Recognition of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*

The episcopal consecration that took place as just outlined, meant for the IFI a regularisation of its orders and also a clear and public recognition as a catholic church by a church that was a trailblazer in ecumenism in the middle of the 20th century, i.e. the Episcopal Church. As the reaction of bishop Küry already indicated, this recognition by and relationship with the Episcopal Church opened many ecumenical doors for the IFI, including a membership of the World Council of Churches, of which the IFI became a member in 1958, having established contact already in 1948.¹⁴ In particular, however, the consecrations of 1948 paved the way for a much tighter connection between the IFI and the churches of the Anglican Communion. How this could be developed from the point of view of the Anglican Communion is apparent from a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, in which he reacts to a letter from De los Reyes, Jr., who had written to Fisher, stating that the relationship between the IFI and the Episcopal Church had developed in such a way that a formal establishment of communion would now be possible:

Your cablegram with the glad news that the Philippine Independent Church were ready to enter into full Communion with all the Anglican Churches, filled my heart with profound thankfulness to the Almighty God. ...

No doubt, with Bishop Ogilby, you will now work out agreed terms on which full Communion can be established between your own Church and the Episcopal Church of the United States: when that step is taken, I hope that you will inform me, so that I can invite the Church of England to follow in the footsteps of the Episcopal Church of the United States. No doubt the Presiding Bishop will also communicate with all the Provinces

¹² Published in: Ramon A. Alipit, 'The Position of the Philippine Independent Church', *Southeast Asian Journal of Theology* 4 (1962), 32–36, 34.

¹³ On which see, e.g., Klaus Heinrich Neuhoff, *Building on the Bonn Agreement* (Amersfoort/Sliedrecht: Oud-Katholieke Boekhuis/Merweboek, 2010).

¹⁴ See further: Smit, *Ecclesiologies*, 320-325.

of the Anglican Communion inviting them to do alike, and I know that Bishop Bayne is eager to do whatever is needed to see all this fulfilled.¹⁵

Both bishops that are mentioned here, Lyman C. Ogilby of *Episcopal Church* in the Philippines (and the successor of bishop Binsted) and Stephen Bayne,¹⁶ at this moment the *Executive Officer of Anglican Communion*, as well as the conditions that were formulated by Fisher would indeed be of importance. These conditions included, apart from the already realized new theological basis of the IFI and the regularization of its orders, also the revision of its liturgical books, since Aglipay had not only introduced a revised doctrinal basis for his church, but also a revised liturgy. While this liturgy was not formally in use anymore, but instead the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church, it was still necessary that the IFI develop its own liturgical books. This revision, a long process, was concluded in 1961 with the publication of the *Filipino Missal*¹⁷ and the *Filipino Ritual*,¹⁸ both books again showing the strong Episcopal influence on the theological and liturgical course of the IFI in these years.¹⁹

From 1960 onwards, the broader ecclesial public was also prepared for the establishment of communion between the IFI and, in the first place, the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. This took place through a variety of publications by the aforementioned bishop Stephen Bayne, a true spin-doctor, in multiple Anglican journals, which doubtless found their way into other churches as well. The Old Catholic Churches, for example, were informed through translations of

¹⁵ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4 Jan. July 1960 Box 15 Folder 32, Geoffrey Fisher – Isabelo De los Reyes Jr., 19 May 1960.

¹⁶ Stephen Fielding Bayne (11 May, 1908 – 18 January, 1974), was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood in 1932 and 1933, following studies at Amhurst College and General Theological Seminary. Subsequently he served in pastoral capacities in a number of parishes, from 1947 to 1959 as Bishop of Olympia (USA), in the period 1960-1964 as the first *Executive Officer of the Advisory Council on Missionary Strategy, the Consultative Body of the Lambeth Conference*, in years 1964-1968 as head of the *Overseas Department of the Episcopal Church*, and finally from 1970 until 1973 as professor voor *Christian Mission and Ascetical Theology* at *General Theological Seminary*, serving as dean in 1972-1973. See Donald S. Armentrout en Robert Boak Slocum, *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, New York 2000, 40.

¹⁷ The Supreme Council of Bishops of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente, The Filipino Missal (Book of Divine Office). The Liturgy for Holy Mass According to the Use of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. Including the Pontifical, Ordinal and Articles of Religion*, Manila, 1961.

¹⁸ The Supreme Council of Bishop of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente, The Filipino Ritual*, Manila, 1961.

¹⁹ In the meantime also a juridical conflict between the former *Obispo Maximo* Fonacier and his followers, who had been deposed in 1946, but, protesting his deposal had laid claim to the property of the IFI in the name of his own group, c.q. church, had come to an end. The court decision in this matter, in favor of De los Reyes, Jr., and the IFI, made clear which church was indeed the real IFI for the law.

Bayne's work in the German *Alt-Katholischer Informationsdienst*, which also published information derived from the IFI's own magazine, *The Christian Register*.²⁰ Also, in 1961, a book by the Episcopal Whittemore,²¹ and the new liturgical books of the IFI, printed with a subsidy from the Episcopal Church, were widely distributed, especially to leaders within the Anglican communion.²²

Amidst all of these preparations, the formal process leading towards the establishment of communion between the IFI and the Episcopal church continues with the following resolution of the IFI's *Supreme Council of Bishops and General Assembly* of 8 May, 1960:

Resolved that the Supreme Council of Bishops of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* propose that a relationship of full communion be established between the two Churches and approve the following statement, based upon the Bonn Agreement between the Old Catholic Churches and the Churches of the Anglican Communion, as a definition of this relationship, and agree to the establishment of full communion on this basis: (1) Each Communion recognizes the Catholicity and independence of the other and maintains its own; (2) Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the Sacraments; (3) Full Communion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith.²³

At the same meeting of the two bodies, also the new liturgical books of the IFI were approved, i.e. the aforementioned *Filipino Missal* and *Filipino Ritual*, while also the statute of the IFI was lightly revised.²⁴ The reaction of the *House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church* to the diplomatically well-prepared proposal of the IFI was

²⁰ See: IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4 Jan. July 1960 Box 15 Folder 32, Wolfgang Krahl – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 18 June, 1960.

²¹ Lewis Bliss Whittemore, *Struggle for Freedom. History of the Philippine Independent Church*, Greenwich 1961. Whittemore was a former bishop of the (Episcopal) Diocese of Western Michigan.

²² For this, see, e.g. Smit, 'Die Entwicklung der ökumenischen Kontate der Iglesia Filipina Independiente zwischen 1961,' in: de Boer/Smit, *Necessarii*, 53-125.

²³ See: Whittemore, *Struggle* 200-202. The language of this resolution strongly echoes that of the 1931 Bonn Agreement between Anglicans and Old Catholics, which runs as follows: 1) Each Communion recognises the Catholicity and independence of the other, and maintains its own; 2) Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the Sacraments; 3) Intercommunion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith.

²⁴ See on the development of the liturgy of the IFI in general: H. Ellsworth Chandlee, 'The Liturgy of the Philippine Independent Church,' in: Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), *Studies in Philippine Church History*, Ithaca 1969, 256-276.

positive,²⁵ because in November 1960, this body agreed with the IFI's proposal,²⁶ upon which the synod of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines made a formal proposal to the Episcopal Church at large for a concordat of full communion with the IFI in January 1961.²⁷

De los Reyes, Jr. lost no time in communicating these events to various ecclesial leaders, especially Anglican, often in the same letter that accompanied the new Missal of the IFI when he sent it around the world.²⁸ The letter by Archbishop

²⁵ See, e.g., the documentation in IFI Archives (SATS), OM 1.4, 1946-1960, Box 3a Folder 7a: Lyman C. Ogilby – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 12 mei, 1960: Ogilby thanks for the “Resolutions passed by the Supreme Council of Bishops and the General Assembly of the Philippine Independent Church pertaining to the concordat of full communion,” and adds that “you will surely understand that our Presiding Bishop at this time can only be expected to give these resolutions preliminary study as he does not yet have all the documents as evidence of the standards of doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, which are cited in the resolutions, namely the Filipino Missal and Filipino Ritual.” One day later, on 12 May, 1960, Bayne writes from London (Lambeth Palace) to de los Reyes, Jr., and provides similar information and advice: “All that remains now is to take the detailed procedural steps as swiftly as we can. Initially I suppose your first relationship must be with Bishop Lichtenberger and our American bishops. We will be prepared of course to take action of some sort at the next Meeting of the House of Bishops; I myself would hope that we could conclude the whole matter, as far as the American Church is concerned, at the next Bishops’ Meeting in November, with perhaps a formal ratification of all this by the General Convention of Detroit in 1961. But Bishop Lichtenberger will doubtlessly write you about all these matters. My part in it is, as you know, to see to it that the intercommunion established with the Episcopal Church in the first instance becomes as once a fact throughout our whole Anglican Communion. Probably what we shall want to do will be to take whatever concordat is established between the American Church and your own and simply ask each Anglican Church to ratify it. Of course they will do this with warm pleasure and it is little more than a formality now.”

²⁶ See in IFI Archives (SATS), OM 1.4, 1946-1960, Box 3a, Folder 7a, Arthur Lichtenberger – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. (cable), 16 November, 1960: “Proposal for concordat favorably received by House.”

²⁷ See: Whittemore, *Struggle*, 202.

²⁸ See, e.g., in IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4 Jan. July 1961, Box 16, Folder 34, Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. - H. H. Clark (Primate of the *Anglican Church in Canada*), 17 maart, 1961 (response: 5 april, 1961); Isabelo de los Reyes - Leonard James Beecher (Primate of the *Church of the Province of East Africa*), 17 maart, 1961 (response: 24 maart, 1963). See further also in IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4 Aug - Dec 1961, Box 16, Folder 35, Luis C. R. Pereira (bishop elect of the Lusitanian Church of Portugal) – Isabelo de los Reyes, 16 August, 1961: “Thank you so much for your letter of March 17th and the Missal and the Ritual of your Church which have just arrived. We rejoice at the Concordat of for full communion that is about to be entered upon between your Church and the American Episcopal Church. We are glad to be able to tell Your Grace that the Lusitanian Church is about to do the same thing. Until now, being a small Church, we have had a provisional Council of bishops formed by Irish Anglican Bishops. I must say, we have a great debt towards the Church of Ireland, as since our restoration as an independent branch of the Holy Catholic Church, and until we had a Bishop of our own, all episcopal ministrations were carried out by Irish Bishops. Now, following Lambeth’s leading towards a greater Episcopal fellowship, we are planning a wider episcopal council which would include not merely representatives of the Anglican Communion but also those of other Catholic bodies as the Old Catholic Communion, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church and the Iglesia Católica Filipina Independiente. At the last meeting of the Standing Committee of the Synod,

Fisher, as quoted above, is, in fact, a reaction to the events of 1960-1961 that were just outlined. It shows that the IFI's contacts with the churches of the Anglican Communion increased steadily. Because of this developing web of good relations and the intensive and careful preparations on both the side of the IFI and the Episcopal Church, notably its jurisdiction in the Philippines, on 22 September 1961, during the *General Convention* of the *Episcopal Church* in Detroit, communion could be formally established between the *IFI* and the *Episcopal Church* as a whole. As Archbishop Fisher had proposed in his letter quoted above, this would indeed be the first step of communion of the IFI with all the churches of the Anglican Communion. Bishop Stephen Bayne, also already mentioned, immediately coordinated this process with De los Reyes, Jr., following the Detroit General Convention of the Episcopal Church:

You ask me what our next steps should be. I think there are two kinds of steps to be thought about. First, there is the matter of establishing similar Concordats or other agreements for full communion with the churches of our Anglican family. Second, there is the matter of whatever relationships you want to propose to other churches, such as the Old Catholic Churches, which are technically outside the Anglican family but yet are in closest touch with us.

As for the first, I think the best procedure would be for you to write me an official letter, telling me of the wish of you and your Church to enter into full communion with all of the churches of the Anglican Communion. In this letter you could quite properly ask me to be your messenger in opening whatever negotiations were needed. I could then write to each of the Primates concerned, enclosing a copy of your letter to me and at the same time sending them the full outline of the Concordat now concluded between your Church and the American Church.

...

With respect to the Wider Episcopal Fellowship - the Old Catholic Churches, the Polish National Church, etc., - I probably would not be directly involved. Probably it would be appropriate and wisest for you to write direct to the Archbishop of Utrecht, who is the Primate of the Old Catholic Churches. But perhaps we can write or talk about this - I should think that this matter might well be left until after the negotiations had been begun with the rest of our Anglican household.²⁹

it was decided that I should approach Your Grace on the subject. So, I would very much appreciate a word from you about this. Quoting Bishop Bayne, with whom we had a long conversation on the subject, this Council of Bishops would be not merely a court of appeal for the Lusitanian Church but rather a college and brotherhood of bishops."

²⁹ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4, 1961-1965, Box 3a, Folder 7b, Stephen F. Bayne – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 24 September, 1961.

In line with this proposal, the IFI appointed Bayne as its fully authorized agent in this matter,³⁰ and, losing little time, he sent a letter with a copy of a concordat of full communion ready for signing to all the provinces of the Anglican Communion in the beginning of 1962, and received consistently positive responses in return.³¹ While some provinces, that is to say: their primates, responded to Bayne by return mail (or virtually so), others requested further information, or sought the advice of trusted ecumenical partners. The Church of England, for example, consulted the Old Catholic Churches, specifically the Archbishop of Utrecht, Andreas Rinkel, asking whether the IFI could be regarded as a catholic church. Rinkel replied to this question affirmatively, having studied the IFI new doctrinal basis.³² Also from another Old Catholic Church, the IFI received an affirming reaction. since De los Reyes, Jr. had also written to the leadership of the Old Catholic Church in the USA and Canada, the *Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC)*. Its bishops Thaddeus F. Zielinski and Leon Grochowski replied that they could identify with the IFI, especially also concerning its history of formation, given that also the PNCC's origins are to be found in a church-political conflict in which cultural and ethnic differences played a major role.³³ In line with this, the IFI was also invited, by bishop Bayne, to participate in the *Wider Episcopal Fellowship*.³⁴ This fellowship was an initiative of the *Lambeth*

³⁰ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4, 1961-1965, Box 3a, Folder 7b, Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. – Stephen F. Bayne, 1 November, 1961: “The governing bodies of the ‘Iglesia Filipina Independiente,’ after careful deliberation, have instructed me to inform you that it is our vehement wish to enter into full communion with the Church of England and with each and every other member of the Anglican Communion on the same basis of the full communion and Concordat adopted by the General Convention of the American Episcopal Church in Detroit, Michigan, last September. We need your aid and guidance in the matter, and officially authorize you to negotiate Concordats of full Communion with all member Churches of the Anglican family of Churches and our Church. Please consider yourself with full powers to negotiate for the Filipino Church, and to speak for myself as Obispo Maximo or Supreme Bishop.”

³¹ See, e.g., in IFI Archives (SATS) Box 17, OM 1.4 folder 37, June - Dec 1962, Alan John Knight, Archbishop of the *Province of the West-Indies* – Isabelo de los Reyes Jr., 6 September, 1962, who informs him that his provincial synod had agreed with the concordat of full communion with the IFI in August 1962. On 24 September, 1962, Bayne writes to De los Reyes, Jr., that all is going splendidly (IFI Archives (SATS) Box 17, OM 1.4 folder 37, June - Dec 1962): de *Nippon Seiko Kai*, the *Church of the West Indies*, and the *Church of West Africa* have all been able to establish communion as well, while the *Church of the Province of Central Africa* will do so shortly. Many other such affirmations can be found in the same archives, these examples should suffice here.

³² See: Ernst-Wilhelm Heese, ‘Die Philippinische Unabhängige Kirche,’ *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 54 (1964), 57-82, 80-82.

³³ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 18.1, Box 62, Folder 145, Tadeusz J. Zielinski – Isabelo de los Reyes Jr., 6 maart 1963.

³⁴ The *Wider Episcopal Fellowship* was formed on the basis of a resolution of the *Lambeth Conference* of 1958 that confirmed a resolution of the *Lambeth Conference* of 1948. See: Lambeth Conference, *The Lambeth Conference 1948. The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops; together with Resolutions and Reports*, London 1948, 78-79; Lambeth Conference, *Lambeth Conference 1958. The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops together with the Resolutions and Reports*, London - New York 1958) 1.35. See verder ook

Conferences of 1948 and 1958 with the aim of bringing together autonomous Catholic churches, including Anglicans and Old Catholics.³⁵

Having outlined how a web of ecumenical relationship grew around the IFI, especially through the agency of the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, and their officers, which also began to include the Old Catholic Churches, with whom there were incidental contacts, we can now turn to the establishment of communion between the IFI and the Old Catholics proper.

Old Catholic Interest in the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* and the Establishment of Communion

As outlined above, the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht become part of the web of ecumenical relationships of the IFI mainly through Anglican agency and the correspondence of De los Reyes, Jr., who usually acts on the advice of Bishop Bayne. This led to a process of consultation and reflection, during which Old Catholic bishops and theologians sought to acquire more information about the IFI, both from Anglican sources, from direct contact with the IFI, but also through the contacts of the Old Catholic observer at the Second Vatican Council that was, of course, taking place during the same years.³⁶ The Old Catholic observer, the Dutch priest and scholar Peter J. Maan, met a number of times with a missionary bishop, Cornelio (Kees) de Wit MHM, like Maan a native of the town of Hilversum, NL, of the territorial prelature of San José de Antique, who informed him about the IFI. Bishop De Wit told Maan, for example, that there were good relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the IFI in the Philippines, while church membership was often not determined by theological or confessional factors, but by

James B. Simpson en Edward M. Story, *The Long Shadows of Lambeth X*, New York 1969, 241-244. In 1978 the *Wider Episcopal Fellowship* was dissolved; see resolutie 14 van de *Lambeth Conference* van dat jaar in: Lambeth Conference, *The Report of the Lambeth Conference 1978*, London 1978, 42. The first meeting of the *Fellowship* took place in St. Augustine's College in Canterbury (13-17 April, 1964), with participants from "the Anglican Churches, the Church of Finland, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the Old Catholic Churches, the Philippine Independent Catholic Church, the Polish National Catholic Church of America, the Church of South India, and the Church of Sweden." See voor dit laatste: Lambeth Conference, *The Lambeth Conference 1968, Resolutions and Reports*, London - New York 1968, 147. Documentatie met dank aan Urs von Arx te Liebefeld.

³⁵ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.4 Aug - Dec 1961, Box 16, Folder 35, Stephen F. Bayne – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 8 September, 1961.

³⁶ On this observer, see: Peter-Ben Smit, 'Oud-katholieke waarnemers op het Tweede Vaticaans Concilie (1962-1965),' *Trajecta* 22 (2013), 29-56.

‘non-theological’ factors.³⁷ However, a substitute for Maan as observer at the council, the German professor Werner Küppers, learned in other conversations that IFI was doing very poorly in terms of numbers and ethos.³⁸ The information that the Old Catholics received from sources at the Second Vatican Council was, in other words, not always consistent. While these contacts had a more informal and occasional character, the bishop of the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, Urs Küry (a son of bishop Adolf Küry who figured earlier) also commissioned a theologian to write a study of the IFI; the theologian in question, Ernst-Wilhelm Heese, was in touch with Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr. directly for this purpose, introducing himself and his task as follows:

Recently the Old Catholic bishop of Switzerland, Mgr. Dr. Küry, invited me to write an article on the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. This essay is to be published in the *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, the theological quarterly of the Old Catholic churches. He supplied me with some material about your church, which will help me to form an idea of the Independent Philippine Church, its aims, its doctrines, its organisation, etc. We are especially interested in the relations of full communion now existing between Your church and The Episcopal Church of the USA, since these are based on the so called Bonn Agreement of 1931, which is the basis of the relations between the Old Catholic and Anglican Churches.³⁹

In the course of this correspondence, Heese also comments on the earlier contacts between Aglipay and Herzog, as they were mentioned already, having come to an end in 1912, while stressing the catholicity of the IFI in its current form. Heese also indicated that it might be a good idea to establish communion with the Church of England first and to contact the Archbishop of Utrecht with a proposal for a similar relationship subsequently.⁴⁰ Besides offering such comments, which, in fact, suited the Anglican tactic to position the IFI in the broader ecumenical world very well, Heese also completed the study of the IFI that he had been commissioned to make and published it in the Old Catholic theological journal *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift* in 1964,⁴¹ together with a translation of the *Declaration of Faith and Articles*

³⁷ See Peter J. Maan – International Bishops’ Conference, 4 December, 1962, (Maan archives 1); See also Peter J. Maan-Gezin, 10 October, 1963 (Maan archives 4).

³⁸ Werner Küppers – International Bishops’ Conference, 16 November, 1963 (Maan archives 1), 1.

³⁹ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 18.1, Box 62, Folder 145, Ernst-Wilhelm Heese – Isabelo de los Reyes Jr., 22 June, 1963.

⁴⁰ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 18.1, Box 62, Folder 145, Ernst-Wilhelm Heese – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 30 June, 1963.

⁴¹ Heese, ‘Kirche’.

of Religion of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*⁴² and the letter of Archbishop Rinkel to Archbishop Fisher mentioned above.

In the same year, 1964, De los Reyes, Jr. also got the opportunity to make further ecumenical contacts, by means of a long journey to the meeting of the Wider Episcopal Fellowship, with stops in Spain (visiting the *Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal*), Portugal (visiting the *Igreja Lusitana Católica Apostólica Evangélica*), Rome (received by Cardinal Augustin Bea), and Constantinople (received by the ecumenical patriarch, Athenagoras). At the meeting of the Wider Episcopal Fellowship, De los Reyes, Jr. also met Archbishop Rinkel and the Bishop of Deventer, Peter J. Jans, who accompanied Rinkel, and, subsequently, took part in the consecration of two Anglican bishops. Having returned to the Philippines, De los Reyes, Jr. sent Rinkel the liturgical books that he had sent to Anglican leaders earlier; Rinkel reacted as follows:

Some days ago I received your valuable set of books, Missal, Ritual and Prayer Book, where for I bring your great thanks!

I am studying them and realize myself that your Church is in its faith and liturgy as sound Catholic as ours.

Therefore I am very thankful for the honor that we have met and made acquaintance at Canterbury and together took part in the consecration of the two Bishops of the venerable Anglican Church, expressing in this holy act at the same time our mutual catholicity and fellowship in the One, holy catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and His Apostles.

There have many things happened after the beginning of this century as your Church leaders made the first contact with our church in the person of Bishop Dr. Ed. Herzog of Switzerland. I think if in those days the status of your Church had been like now there would be already for many years a great bond of fellowship between our churches. Therefore we may hope that such a fellowship may be realized in our times.

I am glad to tell you that the two Iberian Churches (Spain and Portugal) in the persons of their bishops Molina and Dr. Pereira, already have asked us to realize an agreement with our Churches on the basis of full-communication like it is existing since 1931 between the Anglican Churches and our Old Catholic Churches. I suppose such an agreement might be also possible between us, although I know that the far distance might for the present such an agreement make only of theoretical significance, but nevertheless a great factor for the sake of unity.⁴³

⁴² See: Heese, 'Kirche', 76-80.

⁴³ IFI Archives (SATS), Andreas Rinkel – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 15 July, 1964, See also: *The*

Thus, Rinkel also confirms vis-à-vis De los Reyes, Jr. that he thinks that the IFI is indeed a catholic church, as he had done earlier vis-à-vis Archbishop Fisher, and suggests strongly that a relationship of communion, including a formal concordat that expresses as much, will be possible in the near future. As might be expected, De los Reyes, Jr. responded favorably, which led Rinkel to reply as follows again:

According to your letter of August 10, 1964, in which you are proposing a concordat of full Communion between your Church and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, I may remember you that we intend to have our International Congress of Old Catholics in Vienna from Wednesday, 22 September, 1965 till Saturday, 25 September. On the days Tuesday and Wednesday 21 and 22 September, the Conference of Old Catholic Bishops will come together in Vienna, where the question of the concordat of full communion will be considered.

We hope that it will be possible that your Church should send a representative with full authority, in the case that the Bishops' Conference might need your information for this important matter.⁴⁴

De los Reyes, Jr. however, received this invitation at a moment when he was already committed to travel to Canada for a formal inauguration and celebration of the establishment of full communion between the Anglican Church of Canada. For this reason, he intended to decline the invitation to Vienna (and with that, establishing communion with the Old Catholics). As soon as Bishop Bayne learned of this, however, he tried to change De los Reyes' mind immediately:

Thank you for your letter of July 21st, and the copies of your correspondence with Archbishop Rinkel. Is there any possible way in which you could reverse your decision, with respect to the International Congress of Old Catholics in Vienna? I have the feeling that attendance by yourself - at least for the two days of the conference of Old Catholic Bishops, September 21st and 22nd, might be of very-high (sic) importance. I should be glad to undertake to meet any additional expenses involved, if you felt that you could make yourself free to go; and perhaps one of my colleagues here would be able to go with you, which would help to illustrate our full communion.

Of course I do not know what schedule may have been planned for you in Canada. But I would regard this opportunity to meet with the Old Catholic Bishops when a possible concordat is being considered, as of high

Christian Register (July 1964), 2.

⁴⁴ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.5, June -Sept. 1965, Box 23, Andreas Rinkel – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 16 June, 1965.

significance - enough to justify running away from Canada for at least three or four days, if nothing more than that.⁴⁵

De los Reyes, Jr., was indeed convinced by this and adjusted his travelling plans. Bishop Bayne, of course, was glad to hear this and let De los Reyes know that also bishop Scaife of the diocese of Western New York, a keen ecumenist, would travel to Vienna in order to provide support and company.⁴⁶

At the meeting in Vienna, i.e. at the meeting of the International Bishops' Conference that coincided with the International Old Catholics' Congress, the contacts with the IFI are considered as a result of the meeting of the Wider Episcopal Fellowship of the preceding year. The president of the conference, namely, Archbishop Rinkel, introduced the request of the IFI to establish full communion with the Old Catholic Churches (together with similar requests from the Spanish *Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal* and the Portuguese *Igreja Lusitana Católica Apostólica Evangélica*) as part of his report on the Wider Episcopal Fellowship's meeting.⁴⁷ The bishop of Deventer, who had also taken part in the meeting, presented sketches of the history and theology of the three churches requesting communion. Based on this personal study, and earlier contacts, the Old Catholic bishops established, on 21 September, 1965 communion between their own churches, the IFI, and the two other churches involved. This decision was communicated to the bishops of these churches that were present in Vienna, to wit: De los Reyes Jr., Camilo C. Diel (accompanying De los Reyes), M. Molina and Luis C.R. Pereira, in a meeting that also served to clarify some remaining details and to provide the opportunity for signing the appertaining agreements. Subsequently, these developments were announced at the congress.⁴⁸ With that, communion between the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht was a fact.

⁴⁵ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.5, June -Sept. 1965, Box 23, Stephen F. Bayne – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 28 July, 1965.

⁴⁶ IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.5, June -Sept. 1965, Box 23, Stephen F. Bayne – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 6 August, 1965, See ook: IFI Archives (SATS) OM 1.5, June -Sept. 1965, Box 23, Stephen F. Bayne – Isabelo de los Reyes, Jr., 9 August, 1965. Also bishop Camilo C. Diel, who was travelling with his *Obispo Maximo* went to Vienna.

⁴⁷ See: Harald Rein, *Kirchengemeinschaft. Die anglikanisch-alkatholisch-orthodoxen Beziehungen von 1870 bis 1990 und ihre ökumenische Relevanz* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1993), 409-411.

⁴⁸ See: Ernst Kreuzeder (ed.), *Bericht über den XIX. Internationalen Altkatholiken-Kongress*, Wien 1965, 11-12.

Conclusions

Based on the above considerations, the following conclusions can be drawn about the establishment of communion between the IFI and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht.

First, it has become clear what the contours of the ecumenical road of the IFI are in general. That is to say: following Aglipay's death in 1940 and the IFI's subsequent return to a Trinitarian faith, first new relations were established with the presence of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines. Episcopal bishops and theologians helped the IFI to accomplish what it had decided in 1940, namely to return to a Trinitarian faith, which saw a first stage reached in 1947, with the introduction of a new basis of its faith. In this process, the desire on the part of the IFI to have orders in the apostolic succession led to the development of an even closer relationship with the Episcopal Church, from whom these orders were received in 1948, which, in turn, led to a process of growing towards communion between the two churches, involving also the development of a new liturgy for the IFI and culminating in the formal establishment of communion in 1961. This relationship between the IFI and the Episcopal Church (and subsequently the Anglican Communion) also found expression in much direct theological and material aid, as well in rather direct coaching, especially on the part of Bishop Bayne, when it came to the IFI's navigation of the ecumenical waters.

Second, it has also become clear that establishing communion with the Episcopal Church was considered as a first step on the road towards communion between the IFI, then all the churches of the Anglican Communion as well as a number of churches beyond this, including the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. As soon as the communion between the IFI and the Episcopal Church was a fact, namely, all other churches of the Anglican Communion were invited to follow suit – and they indeed did so. In this context, the IFI is also invited to send delegates to the *Wider Episcopal Fellowship*, which leads to face-to-face meetings with, for example, Old Catholic bishops, and thus to a strengthening of ties. The 1964 meeting of the Wider Episcopal Fellowship was an immediate prelude to the establishment of communion between the IFI and the Old Catholic churches on 21 september 1965. Thus, the Old Catholics were part of a third “circle” of (bilateral) ecumenical partners of the IFI, the first consisting of the Episcopal Church and the second the churches of the Anglican Communion. **PS**

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