

THE CONCORDAT OF FULL COMMUNION
Between the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and The Episcopal Church
Manila 2006

A. PREAMBLE

In 1961, following a series of cordial fellowship meetings and mission-dialogues, the Philippine Independent Church (PIC), which is known herein as the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA), herein referred to as The Episcopal Church agreed “to establish a concordat of Full Communion” on the basis of mutual acceptance of the following three principles:

- “(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.”

In order to implement the terms of the 1961 Concordat, in 1964 the 61st General Convention of The Episcopal Church with the concurrence of the Supreme Council of Bishops of the IFI approved a ‘Resolution of Implementation’ whereby the Presiding Bishop and the Obispo Maximo, acting together, were authorized to undertake a “reorganization of the structure and membership of the Joint Council of the PECUSA-PIC” with the stated intention that the Joint Council “advance the interests of mutual responsibility and interdependence between the two Churches” and “to aid in the development and mission of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in the Republic of the Philippines.”

Furthermore, the purposes of the 1964 resolution authorizing this reorganization were “recognized as being the following: 1. To promote mutual understanding between the two Churches, 2. To direct a program which will assist the mutual growth and interdependence of these two Churches in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, 3. To assist the PIC and the Philippine Episcopal Church in matters crucial to their life and work, and, 4. To direct and support joint projects of the PIC and Philippine Episcopal Church” (known now as the Episcopal Church of the Philippines and herein as the ECP).

B. CONCORDAT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT

In the two decades following the approval of the Concordat on September 22, 1961, the two churches developed a strong sense of mutual cooperation. The ‘Joint Council’ implemented programs of Theological Education, Leadership Training, Christian Stewardship, Christian Education, College and Youth Work. The work of the Joint Council in the Philippine Context was characterized by positive achievements as well as difficulties. The Joint Council Office which operated nationally found difficulty in making a visible and direct impact in the grassroots-level, falling short on the delivery of services to a largely-dispersed constituency. While there were divergent views on how effective the working of the Joint Council was, it cannot be denied that their work contributed to the progress and development of the IFI and the growth of the Episcopal Church missionary diocese in the Philippines.

As a result of the bestowal of Apostolic Succession to the three bishops of the IFI by the Episcopal Church in 1948, seminarians of the two churches were jointly trained at St. Andrew’s Theological Seminary. In 1961 the Concordat of Full Communion also led to more solid and structured partnerships in mission, such as (1) the acquisition of land where the IFI Cathedral is presently located; (2) joint efforts in ‘capability building’ programs through the Joint Council; and, (3) opening doors for the recognition of the IFI in international and broader ecumenical circles.

The IFI-Episcopal Church Joint Council in the Philippine Context was instrumental in the theological, ecclesiological and ecumenical growth of the IFI as well as the expansion and ultimately the establishment of an autonomous Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP) as ‘daughter-church’ of The Episcopal Church. Currently, as an autonomous Province within the Anglican Communion, the ECP has six dioceses in the Philippines.

C. UPDATING THE CONCORDAT IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT

In order to continue to develop the mission partnership desired at the inception of the Concordat, and reaffirmed within in the Honolulu Agreement, the Concordat shall seek future opportunities by which the IFI and The Episcopal Church may develop a ‘Concordat Mission Statement, Charter and Budget’ to maximize the potential of the Concordat Relationship.

The Episcopal Church and IFI shall also consider ways to develop Joint Mission Programs in the Philippines in the areas of social witness and service (including peace with justice, advocacy, human rights, and refugee/migration issues).

D. CONCORDAT RELATIONSHIPS IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

As the relationship between the IFI and the ECP is being lived in the context of the Philippines, other developments are happening in the American Context. Rapid and ongoing immigration of Filipinos to the United States included many IFI and ECP members seeking spiritual communities in their newly adopted country. The influx of many IFI clergy and laity in the U.S. opened a new dimension within the Concordat relationship.

Reaffirming their commitment to the Concordat, recognizing the aspirations of the IFI members in the U.S. and celebrating the distinctive heritages and cultures of both churches, the IFI Obispo Maximo (OM) and The Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop (PB) signed an agreement (American context) in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1985 with the following four principles:

- “1. The Episcopal Church shall assist the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) in its efforts to minister to IFI members in the U.S.
2. IFI members shall assist and participate in the broader life and work of the Episcopal Church.
3. Both the IFI and the Episcopal Church shall establish appropriate authority lines and structures for the purpose of mutual responsibility and accountability.
4. The OM and the PB shall designate representatives to sit in council to formulate strategies for mission.”

Pursuant to the general principles established in the Honolulu Agreement of 1985, a localized (American setting) Council was formed between the two churches to work out the terms of the new Agreement. There were a number of meetings held which helped to iron out differences as well as to clarify relationships.

Like the Joint Council-Philippine Context, the work of the Joint Council-American Context was also characterized by positive developments as well as difficulties. Such as:

1. The IFI was involved in national activities of Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry (EAM) and some IFI clergy participated actively in the greater life of the Episcopal Church.
2. Many Episcopal Church parishes extended a hand of collegial fellowship to IFI congregations, while others hosted IFI congregations, lay members, and clergy.
3. IFI-USA congregations grew to become known as the PIC missionary diocese in the USA, and later as 'USACADIOS' which included Canada under the authority of an Auxiliary Bishop duly appointed by the OM in collegial consultation with the PB.
4. Some IFI members have joined the Episcopal Church and have been included within Episcopal Church leadership structures.

E. UPDATING THE CONCORDAT IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

In order to preserve gains, enhance possibilities, and maximize the potential of the Concordat Relationship, the Concordat re-affirms past agreements and shall update terms of implementation so that, together, steady growth and more visible results may be achieved for the greater glory of God. Therefore, the terms of this update shall be guided by the following core values:

1. PARTNERSHIP IN CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The Episcopal Church and IFI shall jointly develop strategies for evangelism, mission and congregational development especially in all areas where there are opportunities in doing mission. Such strategies will be developed by 'Concordat Ministry Teams' in regional and national contexts.
- 1.2 The Episcopal Church and the IFI may develop joint congregations through mutual agreement in form and in substance and in accordance with their respective canons.
- 1.3 The IFI and The Episcopal Church shall share and exchange directories, websites, liturgy and music for evangelization and discipleship.

2. MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND COLLEGIALITY

- 2.1 The Episcopal Church and IFI shall define appropriate lines of authority and accountability. In the IFI this shall be in the form of 'duly recognized clergy,' and in the Episcopal Church, this shall be as 'canonically resident clergy.'
- 2.2 Episcopal Church clergy serving IFI congregations may be licensed to officiate by the IFI diocesan bishop and IFI clergy serving within a diocese of the Episcopal Church may be licensed to officiate by an Episcopal Church diocesan bishop.
- 2.3 The IFI and the Episcopal Church shall engage in clergy and lay collegiality and fellowship such as the 'Asian American Clergy Collegia' in the EAM as well as other interfaith and ecumenical opportunities.
- 2.4 The IFI and the Episcopal Church may share participation in the consecration of bishops and other significant liturgical events.

3. SHARING OF PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES

- 3.1 The Episcopal Church shall invite IFI to EAM consultations and other opportunities for clergy and lay training, in regional workshops and conferences.
- 3.2 The Episcopal Church may include IFI on the list of those entities that are eligible to apply for grants such as the United Thank Offering, Episcopal Relief and Development, and Jubilee Ministries in accordance with their respective guidelines.
- 3.3 The Episcopal Church may assist IFI in extending expertise in clergy wellness, retirement savings opportunities and other clergy and lay conferences subject to meeting their application criteria and guidelines.

F. CONCORDAT SIGNATORIES

This updating of Concordat Relations is hereby signed by the Obispo Maximo of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and witnessed by the Prime Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines.

_____(Original Signed)_____
 The Most Rev. Godofredo David
 Obispo Maximo
 Iglesia Filipina Independiente

Date:

_____(Original Signed)_____
 The Most Rev. Frank Griswold, D.D.
 Presiding Bishop and Primate
 The Episcopal Church

Date:

Witnessed by: _____(Original Signed)_____
 The Most Rev. Ignacio Soliba
 Prime Bishop
 The Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Date: