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The Iglesia ni Kristo

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catechesis as word, memory and witness. In discussing catechesis as word, he has some very illuminating lines on catechesis in schools which ought to be read by all administrators of Catholic schools and religion coordinators. When dealing with catechesis as memory (which means that prayer and liturgy are parts of catechesis) he gives a balanced view of the catechetical potentiality of the liturgy. Catechesis as witness refers to the living of the faith, to a Christian style of life. Roche underlines the Synod's insistence on the need for moral norms and rules as the expression of the Christian commitment.

The book is valuable, first, because it makes available once more the text of the "Message". It is a sad fact that all too often important developments do not reach the grass roots level because the texts are not known. Secondly, the commentaries help to unlock the riches of the heavy and compact synodal text. The pre-Synod documents (Position Paper of the Philippine Hierarchy and Statement of the FABC East Asian Regional Meeting) and the interventions (three from Philippine bishops and two from Jesuit Superior General Father Arrupe) included in the volume give one some idea of how the final "Message" came about. The inclusion of Father Arrupe's intervention on "Catechesis and Marxism" is a very happy choice and very helpful in the Philippine context. Likewise, the annotated, selected bibliography by Father Roche, though short, should prove valuable to the practitioner.

Perhaps the "Motu proprio" of 1965, establishing the Synod of Bishops, could have been omitted. There are only few printing mistakes, the most striking on p. 70 where one should read John 17:3 instead of Jn. 7:3.

In his closing address to the Synod (included in the book, p. 97) Paul VI spoke of "successive concentric waves" by which the impulse of the Synod would be communicated to the whole Catholic world. This book is one of the means to pass on the impulse. May it make waves in the Philippine catechetical sea!

Herbert Scholz, S.V.D.

THE IGLESIA NI KRISTO: ITS CHRISTOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY. By Fernando G. Elesterio. Cardinal Bea Studies V. Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute, Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, 1977. ii, 217 pages.

The Iglesia ni Kristo is the first comprehensive doctrinal study of the christology and ecclesiology of this dynamic, disciplined, and fast-growing religious group. The book's intent is non-polemical. Written in the spirit of ecumenical theology, it seeks to promote a virtually non-existent dialogue with the *Iglesia*. The areas of christology and ecclesiology are chosen for two

reasons: "firstly, because the INK traces the fundamental difference between her and the other churches to Christology, and secondly, because the question of the Church is of paramount interest to Iglesiasian writers as evidenced by the significant amount of writings they have produced in comparison with the other areas of theology" (p. 2).

The book is divided into seven chapters, with a foreword by Fr. Pedro S. de Achutegui, S.J. The first chapter is the introduction, followed by a chapter on the historical background of the Iglesia, with a brief sketch of the biography of its founder, Felix Manalo. Chapter 3 presents the christology of the INK, while chapter 4 explains the nature of the Church (according to the INK.) Chapters 5 and 6 set down the INK's teaching on the alleged apostasy or disappearance of the Church founded by Christ, and its reappearance in 1914 as the INK founded by Felix Manalo. Chapter 7 is a comparison of Iglesia belief with the articles of the Creed accepted by the Churches, followed by some practical recommendations on how to promote ecumenical dialogue with INK members. There is a 76-page appendix, followed by a bibliography and an index.

The historical sketch of the organization narrates the rather striking religious pilgrimage of its founder. Born of devout Catholic parents and presumably baptized a Catholic, Manalo suffered his first religious crisis as a result of reading the Bible. He abandoned the religion of his parents and entered Colorumism. In 1904 he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. The following year he studied at the Presbyterian Ellinwood Bible Training School. After three and a half years, he left to join another sect known as the Christian Missionary Alliance or Disciples of Christ in America. Between 1911 and 1912 he left the Disciples of Christ to join the Seventh-Day Adventists. Not content with any of these groups, he finally formed his own group, which was registered on 27 July 1914. The picture one gets of Felix Manalo is that of a restless searcher and later on zealous propagator of his religious vision.

His labors bore fruit in the rapid (if not always immediate) spread of the INK. Three things are worth noting about this spread: (1) the very important role played by the INK's lay missionaries (something that should give church authorities food for thought); (2) the early converts came from the ranks of the illiterate and the ignorant; (3) the membership of the INK (widespread as it is) is in the vicinity of only 600,000 members.

Working from original sources, Professor Elesterio presents the INK's doctrine on the person and mission of Christ. Christ is NOT true God. He is a man, but he is not just an ordinary man because God has given him attributes which set him above all other men and angels. For the INK Jesus is Son of God with an adoptive, and not natural, sonship. His sonship is the same as that of other men in relation to God. Christ's adoptive sonship is superior only because of his greater intimacy with God.

Christ's *mission* is to save mankind or part of it and to be the constant mediator between redeemed mankind and God. But "Christ's blood was not shed for the salvation of all men. The redemptive act of Christ was only for a particular group of men which is the Iglesia. Christ died only for the Iglesia" (p. 39). "It may be said that Christ died and effectively redeemed the members of the Iglesia but for those outside of it there is no effective redemption, therefore, no salvation. They can only enjoy the blessings of redemption if and when they become members of the Iglesia" (p. 40). This note of exclusiveness (which can be very annoying to many, to say the least, and certainly theologically untenable) persists in the ecclesiology of the INK. Only the members of the INK can be saved. Non-members are in a state of sin, and therefore, enemies of God. Being outside the Body of Christ, they are unredeemed and are not children of God nor fellow-heirs of Christ. Their repentance, if any, has no value and God does not even listen to their prayers. They are unable to serve and worship God, and no matter what they do, they remain condemned unless they become members of the Body of Christ (pp. 60-61). In this very exclusiveness perhaps lies a great deal of the appeal and urgency of the INK to some people.

The author meticulously follows and presents in a coherent mosaic (insofar as this is possible) the INK's doctrine on the disappearance of the Church of Christ and its own claim to be the second Church of Christ. One must admire the diligence and cleverness of those who are able to make such a concatenation of arguments to "prove" such an unprovable case.

The final chapter on Conclusions and Recommendations goes through the articles of the Creed and compares the INK's understanding of these articles with the traditional understanding of the Churches. In this, it seems to this reviewer that the author has somehow gone beyond the self-imposed limits of his study. In addition, the treatment is too brief, so that occasionally the conclusion he draws does not seem to be sufficiently justified, as for example on p. 113: "5. *That on the third day Christ resurrected from the dead.*" The Iglesia believes that Christ *was resurrected* from the dead. This is the real meaning of the article for the Iglesia. The man Jesus did not have the power to resurrect himself in his humanity. *Conclusion:* The Iglesiasian's understanding of the article on the resurrection of Christ substantially conforms to that of the Churches. How?

This whole section on the comparison of doctrines really deserves a more extended treatment to allow for necessary nuances.

The author concludes that because of basic doctrinal differences "the Iglesia ni Kristo is outside the main group of historical Christian Churches" (p. 118). Besides, the hostile and too self-assured attitude of the INK officials makes dialogue impossible. Add to this their little regard for the findings of exegetical, theological, and historical scholarship. Is there then any possibility of the ecumenical movement touching the INK? The author believes there

is, but through unofficial channels rather than through official dialogue. Thus much can be accomplished, he believes, through the ecumenical attitude of educators toward the INK youth whom they serve, or through the impartiality of Christian employers toward qualified INK employees. Catholic schools should encourage their students to study INK doctrine critically, and Catholic priests and other ministers should cultivate friendly relationships with ministers of the INK. Catholic lay leaders of other churches can do the same vis-a-vis the lay leaders of the Iglesia. Friendly relationships of professionals of the churches with professionals of the INK can also help bridge the present ecumenical gap. The author could have added a suggestion on cooperation with the INK in social action activities and works of charity.

Anyone, however, who wishes to enter into dialogue with INK officials should be forewarned of the real difficulty of such an undertaking. Professor Elesterio is to be highly commended for the thoroughness with which he has handled his subject matter. The abundant footnotes, the sizeable appendix, the graphs, and the bibliography sufficiently attest to this. No doubt this book will be a necessary reference book for those who want to know seriously the christology and ecclesiology of the INK. There must have been many times in the course of the writing of his book that Dr. Elesterio felt very sorely tempted to engage in polemics, but he has admirably tried to be objective in his presentation without being uncritical.

This reviewer wishes to express the hope that sometime in the future, another work may be produced which would study the ecclesiology of the INK implicit in its structures as expressed in the Interior Constitution of the Church of Christ in the Philippine Islands (contained in the Appendix of the present work, pp. 174-96), and implicit also in the praxis of the INK. However, this will be another major task. For the task that he has already completed, and completed very well, Dr. Elesterio deserves the gratitude of all those who wish to understand this Philippine religious phenomenon, the INK.

Teodoro C. Bacani

THE MANILA AMERICANS (1901-1964). By Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr.
Manila: Carmelo and Bauermann, 1977. xviii, 445 pages.

With this, the most massive of his books, Lewis Gleeck completes the tetralogy which has been appearing over the last several years on the Americans in the Philippines. Gleeck, former Consul-General of the United States in Manila (1962-1968), and now a Manila resident, since the death of A.V.H. Hartendorp has been editor of the *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection* here. His other books — on American institutions, American con-