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THE CONCEPT OF UNITY IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 1927-1983
A Historical-Analytical Study

JOHN JOSEPH COLE

A Dissertation submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada



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ISBN 0-315-75022-7

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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

JOHN JOSEPH COLE received the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland in 1975 and the Bachelor of Divinity degree from St. Patrick's College, Ireland in 1978. Also from Memorial University in 1980, he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree. In 1983, he obtained the Master of Arts degree in Religion from the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.

DEDICATION

DEDICATED

TO THE HONOUR OF MARY

MOTHER OF THE CHURCH OF THE TRIUNE GOD

THAT SHE ASSIST US AS WE CONTINUE TO PRAY AND WORK FOR UNITY

SO THAT THE WHOLE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS LORD AND SAVIOUR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was completed with the help and encouragement of a number of people. I am deeply grateful for their support and cooperation.

A few of these people deserve special mention. I am first indebted to Dr. Elisabeth J. Lacelle, Chairperson of the Religious Studies Department of the University of Ottawa and Professor of Contemporary Ecumenism, for helping me choose ecumenism as a field of study. Under her generous and patient direction this work took its present concrete form. From her own extensive expertise and involvement in ecumenical research and with a deep sensitivity to the historical development of Christian doctrines, Dr. Lacelle helped me acquire a much deeper knowledge and appreciation of the richness of the ecumenical tradition. Aside from her timely and constructive criticisms, I am specially thankful for her friendship, understanding, assistance, and invaluable encouragement.

I would like to thank Professor Jean M.R. Tillard O.P., vice-moderator of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches and consultant to the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, for his friendship, expert advice and kind interest in the whole of my research work. His significant comments and questions helped me sharpen my focus on the subject. Though continually with a plane ticket in-hand, he always found time to receive me during my frequent impromptu visits. On the basis of Dr. Tillard's recommendation, I was privileged to be invited by the Pontifical Council to attend the 1989 Budapest (Hungary) plenary meeting of the Faith and Order Commission.

I also extend deep gratitude to Professor Roger Lapointe. From the outset he took a hands-on interest in my research. Despite his own busy schedule, he found time to read each chapter of my draft manuscript. Many of the ideas which came out of our stimulating discussions were incorporated into this study. Also, I also thank Professors Emilien Lamirande and Norman Pagé for taking the time to read and comment upon selected chapters of this work. Appreciation is also extend to Dr. Ans J. van der Bent and the staff of the WCC Archives for their assistance during my period of research in Geneva.

For providing invaluable assistance in so many practical ways, I extend my appreciation to Lise Hotte - Office Administration Assistant for Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa. Grateful thanks are due to Bonita Power and Murray Littlejohn for proof-reading sections of this work. A special thanks is also extended to Sr. G. Roberts for providing me a home away-from-home during my stay at Ottawa. Last, but not least, I like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement during the research and writing of this thesis. Especially, I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my father and other close relatives who were called to their eternal home while I was engaged in this work.

KEY ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Ang.</u>	Anglican
<u>Bapt.</u>	Baptist
<u>BEM</u>	<u>Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry Text</u>
<u>CC</u>	Central Committee (of the WCC)
<u>Congr.</u>	Congregationalist
<u>DH</u>	<u>A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963</u> (Edited by L. Vischer)
<u>ED</u>	<u>Ecumenical Directory</u>
<u>ER</u>	<u>The Ecumenical Review</u> , A Quarterly Journal. Geneva (Switzerland), WCC, 1948-
<u>F&O</u>	Faith and Order
<u>FOC</u>	Commission on Faith and Order
<u>HEM</u>	<u>A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948.</u> (Edited by R. Rouse and S.C. Neill)
<u>HEM II</u>	<u>The Ecumenical Advance. A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2, 1948-1968.</u> (Edited by H.F. Fey).
<u>IMC</u>	International Missionary Council
<u>JWG</u>	Joint Working Group (between RCC and WCC)
<u>Lausanne 1927, Amsterdam 1948, etc.</u>	Shorthand which refers to the year an international ecumenical conference was held and the city in which it took place.
<u>L&O</u>	Life and Work
<u>LG</u>	<u>Lumen Gentium</u>
<u>Luth.</u>	Lutheran
<u>Meth.</u>	Methodist
<u>Orth.</u>	Orthodox
<u>Presby.</u>	Presbyterian

<u>Ref.</u>	Reformed
<u>RC</u>	Roman Catholic
<u>RCC</u>	Roman Catholic Church
<u>SPCU</u>	Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity
<u>TCCC</u>	Theological Commission on Christ and the Church
<u>TCTT</u>	Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions
<u>TCW</u>	Theological Commission on Worship
<u>Toronto Statement</u>	<u>The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches. The Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches (1950).</u>
<u>UR</u>	<u>Unitatis Redintegratio</u>
<u>Vatican II</u>	Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)
<u>WCC</u>	World Council of Churches

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INTRODUCTION

Briefly stated this research and thesis deal with the contemporary search for Christian unity by the member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and more specifically the concept of unity as it has developed in its doctrinal Commission on Faith and Order (FOC) from 1927 to 1983. The FOC has constantly made the point that the problematic nature concerning the essence and form of church unity is primarily ecclesiological and doctrinal rather than social and ethical. For this reason, I have come to examine more closely the concept of unity that has developed in the FOC, its context, its content, and its structure of formation and implications for the Christian tradition.

Some of the main observations that I have noted are the following:

- * In a manner unprecedented, all major Christian churches in the 20th century have come to recognize that division, dissension, and estrangement which they all carry are contrary to the understanding of the church of God as witnessed in Jesus Christ and to the New Testament testimony of Christian communion (koinônia).
- * Though the churches may concur on the goal, they are not in accord on how this unity ought to be manifested and what means should be used to bring about a Christian unity that would be visible.
- * In the WCC, the member churches are free to interpret the doctrinal basis of church unity according to their faith; and their multilateral dialogue constantly has to keep together these diverse views.
- * Through dialogue these views which are shared, confronted and discussed lead to a new church consciousness of unity while retaining divergences.
- * From 1910 to 1927, this dialogue has realized important steps towards church unity which the development of the thesis will establish.

- * The concept of unity as it has developed has brought about a process of formulation which characterizes ecumenical theological thought: scriptural data as reexamined in the light of contemporary exegesis; history of tradition, dogma, worship, church organization; interpretation, contemporary hermeneutical achievements; contextual approach, the integration of the socio-cultural consciousness into doctrinal thought. All become structural of the concept of unity.
- * The actual status quaestionis reveals that while the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC had defined in 1948 the "deepest difference" in the concept of unity as - "Catholic" and "Protestant" - this still prevails in the search for visible unity. Nevertheless a shift has occurred and this shift can be stated as a thesis which I will demonstrate.

From within the context of the multilateral dialogue of the FOC (and its tradition) from 1927 to 1983, this is a study of the development, content, formulation and contribution of contemporary Christian thought on doctrinal unity. For the development of the subject and problem, it will be useful here to briefly explain the way the four key concepts in the title - unity, FOC, WCC, F&O documents - will be understood and provide a focus for this research.

With John 17 as the point of departure, "unity" will be understood as the kind of fellowship Christ has given to and wills for his mystical body, the church. As is implicit in the title, this unity is considered from an "ecumenical" perspective. According to the context, the janus-faced term "ecumenical", from the Greek word oikoumene ("the whole inhabited world"), can take a variety of meanings. Unless otherwise indicated, this term will be used in this research to refer to the pursuit by the separated Christian churches for full unity into the one church of Christ. Though a complete investigation of the ecumenical movement would also require a thorough study of the

missionary contribution, this writing (with precedents set by such scholars as Lukas Vischer) will use "ecumenical" almost exclusively to refer to the quest for unity among Christian churches from the ecumenical perspective.

Though the FOC of the WCC technically dates back to 1948, it arose out of a rich ecumenical faith and order tradition. The birth of the modern ecumenical movement is generally traced back to Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910 (Edinburgh 1910). In search for the greater vision of unity glimpsed by Edinburgh 1910 (and its Continuation Committee which in 1921 became the International Missionary Council (IMC)), the Faith and Order (F&O) and Life and Work (L&W) movements emerged. With John Mott (Meth.), the so called "father" of the modern ecumenical movement, as its founding inspiration and force, the Protestant IMC concentrated on mission and evangelization. Initiated by Canadian born Bishop Charles Brent (American Episcopal) in 1910, F&O attempted to achieve Christian unity on the basis of doctrinal and ecclesial polity. Under Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Soderblom, L&W aimed to unite Christians on praxis and ethics. With the IMC to join in 1961, F&O and L&W in 1948 formally coalesced to form the WCC. With this integration, the F&O movement became FOC of the WCC.

The paradoxical and problematical nature of the WCC stems from the fact that it is the common fruit of both the L&W and F&O movements. Though in quest of the same end, their use of different methods in the search for unity often created friction. This was clearly reflected in an early L&W slogan: "service unites, doctrine divides". Indicative of their formation, some churches concentrated on the practical task of Christendom while others searched to find a solution to doctrinal and ecclesiological dissension.

As contained in its constitution, the WCC "Basis of Membership" declares that the "WCC" is "a fellowship of churches which confess Jesus Christ as God

and Saviour according to Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit". The member churches, however, are free to give their own interpretation to this doctrinal basis. Although its roots go back to the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, the WCC came together in its present structure after the Second World War at its Inaugural Assembly at Amsterdam in 1948. At the fifth assembly of the the WCC in 1975, the WCC amended its constitution to place the quest for Christian unity at the heart of all its activities. Hence, the WCC is constituted for the following functions and purposes: "to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance that unity in order that the world may believe".

Some of the major events that mark the development of ecumenical unity include Edinburgh 1910, the First World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne in 1927, the inaugural Assembly of the WCC at Amsterdam in 1948, the Third World Council Assembly held at New Delhi in 1961 and the Sixth World Council Assembly held at Vancouver in 1983. Some documents in this thesis which will deserve a thorough exegesis of the text are: the "Final Report of the First World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, the so-called "Toronto statement" of the Central Committee of the WCC in 1950, the unity formula of the Third World Assembly of the WCC in 1961 and the widely acclaimed FOC Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry document of 1982.

Within the WCC, the FOC holds a special position by the fact that it is composed not merely of WCC member churches but also of non-members. The FOC intended that the theological conversation on unity in Christ should be as broadly based as possible. The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) is a concrete example in that it is a full member of the FOC of the WCC even though a

non-member of the WCC. Though the RCC, by far the largest of all Christian denominations, has not sought membership in the WCC, it became an official member of the FOC in 1968. The ecumenical movement and the RCC mutually influenced each other. I will examine some ways in which official RC dogmatic definitions and papal pronouncements have influenced the FOC in its understanding of the essence and form of church unity. Chapter five will give special consideration to the Vatican II documents Lumen Gentium and Unitatis Redintegratio because of the impact they have generated on the whole ecumenical movement in the search for visible Christian unity.

In appraising ecumenical documents, however, the WCC itself has specified a certain order of importance which the writer recognizes as such: 1) final F&O section reports accepted at assemblies of the WCC are normally presented with the rubric - Commended to the Churches for study and action; 2) the Faith and Order documents produced at world conferences on Faith and Order and at plenary meetings of the FOC are said to be "no more than a first attempt to formulate a consensus" which is attained namine contradicente; 3) and F&O preparatory works, which are merely the first steps in the whole process of ecumenical reports and have little or no connection with "authority".

One more clarification about WCC documents is in order. These reports do not have the same status as the writings of an Ecumenical Council of the early church. Dr. Lukas Vischer remarked in his Documentary History that "the reports of ecumenical conferences are documents of a rather special kind". The FOC reports, for example, "in both content and form" are characterized by tension and division. This is highlighted by explicitly delineating the differences between the divided churches. F&O documents are intentionally ambiguous so that they are open to different interpretations by the ecumenical community. Since the WCC has no magisterium, the WCC documents and statements are radically different from official documents of the RCC (e.g. council

documents, papal encyclicals). The authority that WCC statements bear (if any) is not institutional nor juridical but come solely from the reception of these statements by the member churches.

For an extensive account of the history of the ecumenical movement readers are especially referred to A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948 and A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1948-1968, respectively by Rouse and Nell (eds.) and Fey (ed.). Among the more important texts on the history and functions of the WCC are David P. Gaines, The World Council of Churches. A Study of Its Background and History (1966); W.A. Visser't Hooft, Genesis and Formation of the WCC (1982); and Ans J. van der Bent What In the World is the WCC (1978).

Though in most ecumenical literature the sociological dimension of the term "ecumenism" overshadows its prime doctrinal and religious significance there are some important works published with respect to a methodological approach to Faith and Order documents and doctrinal unity. In A Documentary History (1963), Dr. Vischer has brought together the major documents published by F&O from 1925-1961. This text provides useful principles of how to judge the importance of different material published by the FOC of the WCC.

Over the past two decades some penetrating works have deepened and furthered, from an ecumenical perspective, the theological understanding of the nature of the church and its unity. Edited by R. Groscurtha, the FOC commissioned report What Unity Implies: Six Essays after Uppsala (1969) illustrates a new and more inclusive dimensions of the unity of the church has emerged. The contributions to this report were from leading ecumenists of the time: N. Nissiotis, E. Schlink, K. Skydsgaard, L. Vischer, R. Nelson, L. Newbigin. In Eglise d'eglises: L'ecclésiologie de communion (1987), J.M.R. Tillard presents an ecclesiological conception of communion as a

contribution to the quest for visible unity of the church. Influential works that demonstrated a new willingness to accept a lesser degree of doctrinal unity for the church include: L' Unité par la diversité: son fondement et le problème de sa réalisation (1986) by Oscar Cullman; Unity in the Churches: An Actual Possibility (1985) by Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner; Diversity and Community (1984) by Congar; Ecumenism - A movement in Christian Unity (1983) by Rusch. In Models in Ecumenical Dialogue (1981), Kuncheria Pathil gives an excellent account of the methodological development of the FOC documentation. J.M.R. Tillard, in his Bishop of Rome, has expanded upon the importance of a petrine ministry for a reunited church. Yves Congar, the so called RC "father" of ecumenism, in a recent work Diversity and Communion (1984), contended that there can be a "diversity of dogmatics in the unity of faith," and research should be conducted towards a unity based on a "necessary but sufficient minimum of common doctrine". Not an investigation of what those doctrines may be, this work is an impressive statement of the presuppositions of such an investigation.

What is the relevance of this research? This present study covers the whole period of the FOC from its pre-1948 history to its amalgamation into the WCC at Amsterdam in 1948 to the sixth World Assembly held in Vancouver in 1983. On the basis of a thorough research, part of which was carried out at the WCC archives in Geneva, Switzerland, I found that no extensive academic study has been published on the history of the doctrinal unity in the FOC. Considering the emphasis that doctrine has come to receive in the WCC, this dissertation is intended to make a contribution to the historical study of Christian thought, namely ecclesiology.

Based on a prior procedural decision, this present study considers only FOC material that deal explicitly with doctrinal unity in the ecclesiastical

context. This complex body of material has been produced in the World Council Assemblies, the Faith and Order Conferences, the FOC reports and its appointed committees. In the discussion of the chosen F&O documents (and official RC texts), the study generally follows the chronological order of their promulgation as a matter of personal choice. Each of the five chapters combines a historical and systematic study of the issues. The unfolding of this research will be largely historical because the concept of doctrinal unity is a process of gradual development in the WCC's quest for visible unity of the Church. For a critical evaluation of the concept as it effects the question of the nature of the church and its unity, a systematic theological reflection is necessary. Christian unity as a theme necessarily calls for interdisciplinary approach. This study adopts a wide front to bring in data and insights from church history and ecumenism, ecclesiology, christology, pneumatology, contextual theologies, and sacramentology. For the same reason, the method of investigation is mixed and the aspects inter-related: sometimes descriptive, at other times comparative, argumentative, expository or evaluative; according to what the writer deems most adequate to further the progress of the work at any given stage.

Since the ecumenical movement is primary an intellectual movement, events are important to the extent that they express the historical development of doctrine. In the WCC practical efforts towards reunion achieve their full meaning in the doctrinal framework. Though historical events figure significantly, the primary task of this study is to put into focus doctrinal viewpoints on unity in light of their historical development in the FOC of the WCC. This study, therefore, naturally attempts to discern the factors that have generated a new impetus to a close study of ecclesiology -

life and activity of the churches themselves, and the rapidly changing world the churches find themselves in today.

An objective of this study is to examine how doctrinal unity developed and came to be understood in the documents of the FOC. Produced in different ways (final reports of WCC assemblies, or F&O world conferences, or F&O plenary meetings, or study commissions, etc.), these documents differ significantly in importance. With regard to the RCC, this thesis will consider officially approved documents from the Holy See (e.g. council documents, papal encyclicals, Holy Office reports, etc.). The officially published material can be readily obtained.

While attending the 1989 Budapest plenary meeting of the FOC, the writer acquired a deeper appreciation of subtle changes that may occur in written drafts between the working paper and the final document. A possible limitation to this study is that it generally provides a critical examination of the final reports only of F&O documents. To the extent that no in-depth examination was undertaken of the various drafts, the research does not generally elaborate upon significant changes that might have occurred during successive drafts on any particular issue. This is somewhat compensated for, however, by taking account of the major changes that occurred between the initial working paper prepared for the conference and the final report. Moreover, it is only the final published statements which become part of the body of teaching and which are the subject of evaluation and study.

Following the topic and aim of this study, the work is presented in five chapters. As stated in the title this is a historical and analytical study of the concept of unity in the documents of the FOC. The first chapter traces the history of the F&O movement from its birth at Edinburgh 1910 until its integration into the WCC in 1948 as its FOC. The second chapter discusses how

the Protestant dominated WCC from 1948-1954 understood its own being, its relationship to the member churches and the ecclesia, and what it is considered the greatest obstacle to Christian unity. The third chapter considers how from 1955 to 1968, the WCC moved away from a neutral stand to adopt and develop a description of the kind of unity the ecumenical movement should pray for and work towards as its ultimate goal; a formula both its Catholic and Protestant members could accept. Together with a discussion on how FOC expanded its traditional mandate to include not only a study of the unity of the church but also a study of the unity of humankind (secular ecumenism), Chapter IV will discuss how the FOC was further able to develop the the unity formula to the extent it did justice to the unity of the church both at the local and universal level. This proved to be instrumental in helping achieve among the churches a theological convergence on issues that had divided the churches of Catholic and Protestant traditions for centuries. Chapter V will examine how the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) moved from a cautious, sometimes negative attitude, to "pan Christian" movements to embrace non-Roman Christians as fellow pilgrims on the road to Christian fellowship in the one ecumenical movement. The main reason for allotting a full chapter to the RCC is that larger than all other Christian churches together the Church of Rome is a non-Member of the WCC (though a full member of its FOC since 1968). With a deeply developed and evolving understanding of the nature of the one church of Christ and its doctrine of unity, Rome whether in opposition, aloofness, or participation has profoundly influenced the development of the whole ecumenical movement. Chapter 5 will be followed by conclusions and reflections.

The conclusions will sum up this writer's thesis. From within the context of the multilateral dialogue of the FOC (and its tradition), this study will,

via a thorough examination of F&O reports and documents, attempt to confirm the following: 1) From its symbolic starting point at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910 culminating at the WCC's Second Assembly in 1954, the ecumenical movement (as represented and understood through the FOC) has moved progressively away from the search for unity based on doctrinal homogeneity because of a growing thought that the reunited church should be marked by doctrinal comprehensiveness (according to the Anglican view of comprehensiveness). 2) From 1955 to 1983 (the 1982 Lima Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document and sixth assembly of the WCC's acceptance of the eucharistic vision of unity) this movement has steadily moved towards a "Catholic" understanding of doctrinal unity; and 3) the "deepest difference" which was clearly revealed and confirmed at the inaugural assembly of the WCC in 1948, the difference between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" conceptions of the church has not been resolved.

CHAPTER ONE

STEPS TOWARDS DOCTRINAL UNITY

FROM EDINBURGH TO AMSTERDAM (1910-1948): NEW BEGINNINGS

A. Introduction

Actuated by a quest for global evangelism, a highly organized missionary enterprise, facilitated by modern transportation and communication, had by the turn of the 20th century deployed missionaries to all parts of the world.¹ Assembled from 14-23 June 1910 at Edinburgh, Scotland, the World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh 1910)² disclosed that in mission lands evangelism was being trammled by lack of inter-ecclesiastical cooperation and doctrinal accord. The more than 1200 officially appointed representatives from 159 Protestant missionary agencies deplored the anomaly of Christian division as contrary to God's will, a scandal to non-Christians and an impediment to the church as the witness of Christ's mission to the contemporary world.

Especially framed to examine the contribution made by the Faith and Order (F&O) movement, the purpose of this chapter is to trace the history of the modern ecumenical movement from Edinburgh 1910 to 1948.

¹For a thorough study of the missionary movement see William R. Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth Century Background (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952). Cf., Barry Till, The Churches Search for Unity (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 176-82.

²Each major ecumenical conferences in this research will be identified by the city in which it took place and the year it occurred.

Directly inspired by Edinburgh 1910, the Faith and Order (F&O) movement was created to assist the multiplicity of denominations overcome doctrinal barriers on the way to ecclesial unity. Amid the rise of other independent movements (e.g. International Missionary Council (IMC); Life and Work (L&W) movement), F&O concentrated on the concept of ecclesial unity in all its complexity. Enabled by its study of various church-dividing elements (e.g. faith, grace, sacraments, ministry, the nature of the church), F&O challenged and assisted the empirical churches involved in the ecumenical enterprise acquire a deeper appreciation of their common fundamental unity.

Abetted by ecumenical developments, Protestantism progressively rediscovered the historical and visible nature of the church and the resilient and permanent nature of its indivisible unity. Prior to the reification of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948, the F&O movement had already determined that the deepest cleavage among the disparate churches emanated from diverse conceptions of the una sancta ecclesia (one, holy church). Based on apparently two irreconcilable conceptions of the church (or variants of the same), ecumenical thought vacillated as to whether doctrinal homogeneity or comprehensiveness is the most appropriate basis for a reunited church. Even though the pre-WCC ecumenical method (comparative ecclesiology) had exposed the core ecumenical problem, it was unable to penetrate to the root causes in a way which would allow healing to occur.

B. Birth of a Movement: Edinburgh 1910

Most ecumenical scholars are wont to date the genesis of the modern

ecumenical movement (with roots in the missionary enterprise and Christian student movements) to Edinburgh 1910.³ Situated between the peace and optimism of the 19th century and the war and pessimism of the 20th century, Edinburgh 1910 heralded a new era for Christendom. Exercising pivotal roles in its orchestration, J.R. Mott and J.H. Oldham (Presby.) were respectively appointed chairperson and secretary.

Appropriately, this watershed Conference has been depicted as a crucial "part of the metamorphosis from 'ecclesiastical colonialism' to global fellowship".⁴ Designed as a study and consultative conference to promote among missionaries greater harmony and to formulate a common Protestant mission strategy, Edinburgh 1910 avoided the demonstrative character exhibited by its predecessors (e.g. the Ecumenical Missionary Conference held in New York in 1900). This assemblage of missionary experts gave birth to a new vision of Christian reunion within one visible body. Animated by an awareness that the indigenous churches found the denominational system adverse and repulsive to their mindset, some missionaries shared their nascent ecumenical dream to plant in every non-Christian land the "one undivided church of Christ".⁵

Integral to the preparation for Edinburgh 1910, an international committee was appointed. As a concession to procure the participation of

³Cf. George H. Tavard, Two Centuries of Ecumenism (New York: The American Library, 1962), p. 75. Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, (eds.) A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), p. 362; hereafter cited HEM.

⁴Hogg, p. 101.

⁵World Missionary Conference, Vol. 8, (New York: Revell Co., 1910), pp. 83, 195-97; hereafter cited WMC.

high-church Anglicans, the committee agreed to eschew discussion on all doctrinal issues. Steadfast in the judgment that the churches alone were competent to discuss weighty faith and order matters, Anglo-Catholics assumed that an assembly of diverse Protestant confessions would be indifferent to and debase doctrinal issues.⁶ Enriched by high Anglican participation, Edinburgh 1910 could not be designated merely as another pan-Protestant missionary assembly. Anglicanism, from the outset, instilled into the ecumenical movement an appreciation of the ecclesial nature of Christ's mystical body and the necessity of doctrinal unity.

Even though much of its program had been previously broached at other missionary conferences, Edinburgh 1910 obtained benchmark status as a prototype conference. Analogous to a "lens" it culled out and pulled together the finest of the scattered efforts of "a century's attempts at missionary co-operation, focussing them, and projecting them for the future in a unified, meaningful, determinative pattern".⁷ Correspondent to the eight missionary topics placed on its agenda, an equal number of commissions were formed to conduct exploratory studies

⁶ Willem A. Visser't Hooft maintained that all existing Protestant denominations can be traced back to one of four major confessional families to emerge from the Reformation: Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism (which claims to be both "Catholic" and "Protestant") and Free Churches (a group of independent churches with no links to the state). Today most denominations accept "catholicity" as an essential attribute of Christ's church. Except when the context indicates otherwise, however, this research will use the term "Catholic" with a capital "C" to refer to particular denominations that have particularly stressed the catholic dimension of the church (e.g. RC, Orthodox, Old Catholic, High-church Anglican). W.A. Visser't Hooft and J.H. Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company, 1937), pp. 25-46.

⁷ Ibid., p. 98.

and to prepare written reports. Open to meet the challenges and demands of a world-wide Christian fellowship, Edinburgh 1910 was able to draw from the reports "new creative sources of power".⁸ Headed by Sir Andrew R.H. Fraser, Section VIII was entitled "Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity". Its report (Fraser Report) stressed the importance of Christian fellowship for mission.⁹ Instrumental in the creation of a continuation committee, the Fraser Commission was cognizant that it had taken a small step towards the ultimate reunion of all Christians.

Significantly, many of the Edinburgh delegates held responsible and authoritative positions in their own churches. Moreover, some of the missionary organizations represented were intimately bonded to the life of particular denominations. Hence, there is merit to the claim that at Edinburgh 1910 the churches "began to do certain things together" and they with the creation of a continuation committee "made organized provision for this".¹⁰ Intensified by the increased dilapidation of homogeneous societies, this marked the first common step towards global unification by the churches that had emerged from the Reformation. John Mott, the versatile moderator of Edinburgh 1910, sounded this new noetic note in the initial verses of his closing plenary address to the Edinburgh delegates: "The end of the Conference is the beginning of the conquest. The end of the planning is the beginning of the doing".¹¹

⁸ Ibid., p. 99.

⁹ WMC, vol. 9.

¹⁰ Hogg, p. 99.

¹¹ WMC, vol. 8, p. 131.

1. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference and Doctrine

In sharp contrast to the diatribe and vituperations that had marked Interchurch relations for centuries, the "Minutes" of Edinburgh 1910 confirm that its diurnal tasks were enveloped and nurtured in common orisons and devotional activities.¹² Faithful to its prearranged agreement, the Conference apprised the delegates "that as a Conference we express no opinion, we enter into no debate on any matter of doctrine or of Church government on which we differ".¹³ Organically linked to the Anglican Communion, the Anglo-Catholic missionary enterprise embodied a highly developed conception of what was required for organic unity. It portrayed a propensity for doctrinal unity. If they did not actually violate, then Anglo-Catholic delegates in statements which called for Christian reunification often bended the principle upon which their communion so insisted.¹⁴ By its decision to shun heuristic debate

¹²Ibid., vol. 9, pp. 72-107.

¹³Ibid., p. 143.

¹⁴Based on discussions held in Chicago in 1886 and Lambeth Palace (London) in 1888, Anglican bishops in a declaration known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral agreed upon four irreducible and essential elements of the Christian faith integral to any satisfactory unity within the Anglican Communion as well as with other denominations. These elements are as follows: Holy Scripture as the rule and final standard of faith; the recognition of the ancient creeds as an adequate statement of the faith; the acceptance of the two sacraments instituted by Christ - baptism and eucharist; and the recognition of the "historic episcopate" as the basis for governmental unity. Reformulated and forming the kernel of the 1920 Lambeth Palace statement, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral has had a profound influence on the whole ecumenical movement. Cf. George K.A. Bell, (ed.), "An Appeal To All Christian People," Documents on Christian Unity, 1920-1930 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 1-10.

(Footnote Continued)

on doctrinal concerns, Edinburgh 1910 robbed itself of the opportunity to examine the underlying reasons for church disunity. One ecumenical historian attests that by excluding faith and order issues (the axle upon which "the unity of the churches turn") from its purview, Edinburgh 1910, irrespective of the delegates views on ecclesial unity, "could not begin to discuss the deepest issues underlying this unity".¹⁵

2. Fraser Report on Doctrine and Unity

Of Edinburgh 1910's sectional reports, the Fraser Report provides the best account of how Protestant missionaries during this period understood unity. Not only did it focus upon and give direction to cooperation and unity thrusts, the Fraser Report set the precedent for what came to be called "ecumenical conversations". It was said to be "ecumenical in both title and intention".¹⁶ Cognizant of the special limitations that had been imposed on Edinburgh 1910, the Fraser Commission insisted that ultimately only the churches themselves have the authority to judge faith and order issues and to determine the preferable way to church unity. Thus it expressed the view:

(Footnote Continued)

Within the Anglican Communion some attribute sacramental status to the episcopate while others merely value it as a form of functional ecclesial polity honoured by tradition. Because of this lack of consensus, the Quadrilateral advocated no specific interpretation of the nature of the office itself as a necessary condition for reunion.

¹⁵N. Goodall, The Ecumenical Movement (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 42.

¹⁶Kenneth S. Latourette, "Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Council," HEM, p. 358.

This Conference has no authority of an ecclesiastical character, and it has no power to deal with ecclesiastical questions. Therefore we have considered that we were precluded from discussion and decision in regard to any different schemes of union between different sections of the Church of Christ. We have deliberately abstained from this because we have felt that the responsibility for the proposal, discussion, and decision of these schemes must rest with the ecclesiastical authorities concerned, and in the same way we have abstained from deciding which is the preferable method of linking up the different sections of the Church of Christ, whether by organic union or by federation, because we think that this question must also be left to the Churches themselves.¹⁷

Throughout its history the IMC adhered to this policy.¹⁸

Rendered powerless to explore doctrinal issues, the Fraser Report expanded upon spiritual sodality. Profoundly affected by their personal experiences, many missionaries speculated that Christian unity is attainable to the extent that the essential elements (to the exclusion of non-essential factors) are preached and realized. Although it conceded that some obstacles to Christian unity appear insurmountable, the Fraser Commission testified that it had before it "a vision of unity, a vision fair and beautiful, far better and far higher than anything we have dreamt of before".¹⁹ Unable to envisage the way to a reunited Christendom, the report of Section VIII referred to the chaotic condition of Christian disunion as "lamentable and dangerous".²⁰ Hence,

¹⁷WMC, vol. 8, p. 187.

¹⁸At a meeting in Oxford in July 1923, the IMC stated that it "has never sought, nor is it its function, to work out a body of doctrinal opinions of its own". G.J. Slosser, Christian Unity, Its History and Challenge (New York: Dutton, 1929), pp. 256-57.

¹⁹WMC, vol. 8, p. 190.

²⁰Ibid.

the Commission brought before an international missionary conference the surfacing, global Christian need for greater spiritual fellowship.

a) Two Models of Union

While some missionaries favored a Christian union based on organic (or corporate) unity, others called for federal union. Fundamental to organic union, the coalescing constituent churches underwent adjustment in creed, worship and ecclesial polity. Enthusiastically welcomed by churches with the same ecclesiastical affinities, the proponents of this kind of unity claimed that the existence of denominations undermined the organic union of Christ's one ecclesial body.²¹

Federalism permitted the member churches to retain their autonomy together with full freedom of faith, cult, and church government. The subjacent basis for federalism was said to be practical cooperation on issues of mutual concern and interest. This form of union was preferred by churches with a relationship based on ideological or geographical

²¹ Ibid., pp. 117-18. Assisted by the bilateral dialogues that began after Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Protestant churches progressively came to understand and appreciate that organic or corporate union is not a form of union synonymous with uniformity. Diversity is a very important component of organic unity. Though the Eastern Uniate churches, for example, are organically united to form one body with the larger Church of Rome, they still retain their traditional ecclesial identities.

Prominent Anglican theologian Professor John Macquarrie in the mid-1970s highly recommended this "uniate" (or "typology of churches") model as "the best existing model for Christian union". He continues: "the uniate relation is one in which there is no attempt to set up a unitary or uniform church, either by absorbing one body into the other, or trying to work out some sort of hybrid". J. Macquarrie, Christian Unity and Christian Diversity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 43, 46.

factors, such as local proximity.²² Though adamant that all Christians were already one in Christ, federalists regarded organic union, at best, as a distant possibility. They claimed that for a reunited Christendom it is sufficient for the churches to be united in practical work and share a cooperative life which permitted intercommunion.

Despite the explicit declaration that it was not its place to dictate to the churches the preferable method by which to work for Christian unity, the Fraser Commission betrayed a slight bias in favor of organic unity. Though open to the possibility that federation allowed "more room for diversities of gifts and methods by the same Spirit," the Fraser Report insisted that it is organic union which "more clearly presents that united front which Christian Mission, in face of the phalanxes of heathenism, so universally desire".²³

b) Support for the Edinburgh Continuation Committee

Both the proponents of federalism and organic union gave their inordinate support for the creation of a continuation committee. The champions of federal union welcomed it as concrete testimony that the establishment of a federation of churches was imminent. For organic union to have any chance of success, the supporters of organic union

²² WMC, Vol. 8, pp. 115-17.

²³ Ibid., p. 118. Interestingly, from 1910 to 1952, the churches favoured organic union. Compared to only seven federal union type mergers (and six additional unions which merely entailed a form of intercommunion), there were 32 mergers which involved full organic union (15 of which were of the trans-confessional kind). "Table of Plans of Union and Reunion 1910-1952," HEM, pp. 496-505.

deemed the creation of such a permanent organization as imperative. Importantly, it provided the churches with an instrument for "Indispensable personal contact and exchange of views".²⁴ Without foregoing major structural changes, this organization in 1921 at Lake Mohonk was superseded by the IMC.²⁵

Since the ecumenical movement continues, how is one to evaluate its worth or make any reliable judgment on its future prospect? To do justice to such a task necessarily demands a knowledge of the spiritual and intellectual milieu out of which the ecumenical movement emerged and was set forth on its mission. Also, this entails an acquaintance with the thoughts of the leaders who created and nourished this Spirit inspired movement. Because the Edinburgh debate touched upon both the immediate and the more remote aspects of the question of Christian sodality, it is also vital to keep the context for the exchange of views in sight. The Fraser Report specifies that the "immediate question alone" before Edinburgh 1910 was "the taking of a single, small, proximate step towards giving effect to the demands that had been made from all quarters and for some machinery of co-operation".²⁶

²⁴W.H.T. Gairdner, Edinburgh 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), p. 205.

²⁵The aim of the IMC was "to stimulate thinking and investigation on questions related to mission ... and bring out united action." Cf., "Constitution of the IMC" in David P. Gaines, The World Council of Churches: A Study of Its Background and History (Petersborough: R. Smith, 1966), p. 23.

²⁶Gairdner, p. 189.

3. The Delegates, the Fraser Report and Unity

As a consequence of prayer and sodality experienced at Edinburgh 1910, the delegates were more inclined to tendentiously propagate the communion already shared because of a common unity in Christ. But in contrast to the perfect unity which Christ prayed for his church, the visible oneness manifested among the denominations was shallow and insufficient. Though divided in their fealties between federation and organic union (or variants of the same), the delegates generally agreed that the apostolic faith is the determinative factor for Christian unity and intercommunion. Focused on the immutability of truth, some missionaries (e.g. Bishop Charles Brent) maintained that doctrinal unity in essentials of the faith is a sine qua non for reunion.

An able proponent of federation, Professor James Denney of the United Free Church of Scotland delivered a powerful, thought provoking address. He believed that it was essential for the ecclesia to recover a consciousness of its own nature and vocation.²⁷ Due to many demands and responsibilities which flow from extensive missionary tasks, the churches have an obligation and a duty to unite. Rather than a precise corpus of doctrinal formularies, Professor Denney advocated that the basis for this communion exists in unconditional loyalty in faith to "Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of sinners".²⁸ One unnamed American delegate carried this stand to the extreme. In a vitriolic and

²⁷ WMC, Vol. 9, p. 323.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 325-26.

Iconoclastic tirade on organic union, he alleged that doctrinal creeds were completely without value because they divide the churches.²⁹

Occasionally, even delegates loyal to the same ecclesiastical affinities differed as to the most appropriate method to reunite the churches. An Australian Congregationalist abjured "any outward organic union" as a curse and a bête noire to a reunited Christendom. Adverse to such picayune remarks, a fellow Congregationalist from South India maintained that federation and cooperation were satisfactory kinds of ecclesiological communion "in proportion as they have their ultimate end in Christian union, in a great united organisation!"³⁰

Chang Ching-yi of the London Mission Society in China and J. Campbell Gibson (a Presbyterian missionary to Swatow, China) applauded the success of federation. Yet they both regarded this form of unity merely as an immediate step towards a higher unity. Ching-yi recognized that organic union is the more viable form of unity because it entails "a united Christian Church without any denomination distinctions".³¹ Cognizant of the need for an organized expression of unity, J.C. Gibson stated that divided Christendom must not settle for mere cooperation. Rather than become inured to some lower form of ecclesial unity, all Christians must continue to seek the highest communion of all, "the unity of the Church of God, of which we have robbed ourselves too long

²⁹ Gairdner, p. 206.

³⁰ Ibid., (Emphasis in original.)

³¹ WMC, vol. 8, pp. 195-97.

and which it may cause ourselves weary years to restore".³²

An avid promoter of organic union, Bishop E.S. Talbot of Southwark grasped the need for ecclesial unity as the paramount and most pressing problem which confronted the churches. He concurred with fellow Anglican delegate, William Gascoyne-Cecil of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG),³³ that in Christ all denominations share a common unity. Entrusted with different elements of the divine truth, each church has the God-given duty and responsibility to ensure that the spiritual treasures received in isolation is preserved and incorporated into the future reunited church. Opposed to doctrinal compromise, he intransigently rejected the myopic view of "unity by slenderness" as an unworkable solution for overcoming the disunity existing among the churches.³⁴ Bishop Talbot attested that genuine unity is something which Christians must grow towards and become worthy to possess. This communion encompasses "something richer, grandeur, more comprehensive than anything which we can see at present". Though open to a rich diversity of method, moral temperament and expression, the fullness of Christian fellowship of necessity "would express itself mentally in unity of conviction; morally in unity of heart or feeling, and of conduct or purpose; and structurally in the unity of order".³⁵

³²Ibid., p. 213.

³³Ibid., pp. 209-10.

³⁴Ibid., p. 202.

³⁵Ibid., p. 232.

a) Edinburgh 1910 and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches

Neither Roman Catholic (RC) nor Orthodox missionary societies were invited to send representatives to the Edinburgh Conference. From their respective theologies, each of these churches lays claim to be the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church which goes back through an unbroken continuity to Christ and his apostles. Also, both churches adhered fixedly to the conviction that unity (and profession) of faith, communion in sacraments and oneness in ecclesial polity are fundamental conditions for any Christian reunion. However, the Fraser Commission conducted, as part the preparations for Edinburgh 1910, a limited correspondence with Archbishop Nicola of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Tokyo. The Orthodox prelate informed this Commission that though his flock was on friendly terms with Protestant missions, they were far from "real and full unity" because they were "divided in Christian doctrine".³⁶ As long as Christian dogma was flouted with impunity, the prospect of obtaining visible unity in the faith remained a chimerical dream.

The Commission also confirmed that RC missionaries, even though they shunned all attempts at practical cooperation, maintained cordial relations with missionaries from other churches.³⁷ Moreover, it verified the claim that throughout the missions there existed an intense

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

and growing desire for a more intimate fellowship and for "the healing of the broken unity of the Church of Christ".³⁸

Some perspicacious delegates recognized the potential for the promotion and advancement of a wider church unity. It was suggested that the ecclesia was a broken unity because of the RC and Orthodox Churches. Bishop Talbot, for example, argued that it was fruitless to talk about establishment of the "one Christian Church in China" if no provision is made for the RCC.³⁹ Genuine ecumenical plans for the whole church cannot exclude as de trop any one confessional body.

Episcopalian Silas McBee, vice-chairperson of Commission VIII, read to the Conference a letter from the RC archbishop Bonomelli, an alleged personal friend of the pope. Pouring accolades upon the Conference, the aged RC prelate inferred that at Edinburgh 1910 there were sufficient elements of the faith present "to constitute a common ground of agreement, and to afford a sound basis for further discussion, tending to promote the union of all believers in Christ".⁴⁰

This challenge was not lost on delegates like Charles Brent (American Episcopalian bishop to the Philippines). Sensitive to the reality that the RC and the Orthodox Churches are an integral part of the ecclesia and kingdom of God, Bishop Brent admonished the architects of theological and practical unity schemes to make provision for these churches. He acclaimed that at Edinburgh 1910, God had disclosed a new

³⁸ Ibid., p. 131.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 201

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 222-23. Cf. for full text pp. 216-23.

insight. As usual, this disclosure is not without cost for "whenever God gives a vision, he also points to some new responsibility".⁴¹ Whereas the dream was that of a reunited church, the delegates had the ongoing responsibility and task to draw Rome out of its "proud aloneness" and the Orthodox church away from her "starved Orthodoxy". The ideal is not to seek church union for the few but for "the whole of Christendom".⁴²

The mantic utterances of Bonomelli, Talbot and Brent aroused novel and strange ideas about the urgent need to seek out RC and Orthodox participation. Importantly, the Edinburgh debate attenuated to some degree the traditional Protestant distrust of the RCC. R. Wardlaw Thompson (Congr.), Secretary of the London Missionary Society, admitted that he was profoundly affected by the Fraser Commission discussions. Buoyed with hope, anticipation and confidence, he envisaged a world conference on faith and order issues. At this conference duly elected delegates from all Christian churches would sit down as equals in Christ "to talk frankly to each other about the things in which we differ as well as the things on which we agree recognizing we are members of the Body of Christ". By means of the doctrinal comparative approach, he believed the Spirit would lead the church of Christ into "the larger and fuller truth which comprehends the different opinions".⁴³

b) Anglicanism - "Catholic" or "Protestant"?

⁴¹ WMC, Vol. 9, p.330.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 330-34.

⁴³ Ibid., Vol. 8, pp. 215-16.

Sustained by the conviction that the members of his Communion were "Anglicans first, and Protestants in parts," Bishop H.H. Montgomery (Ang.) of the SPG indicated that his church's contribution to Edinburgh 1910 flowed primarily from its Catholic basis. He described the Anglican presence at Edinburgh 1910 as a "High Church lion" in "an enormous den of Daniels". Except for "the nature of the Church and what its essentials are," Bishop Montgomery said Anglicanism in its exposition of the faith could agree with Protestants in all things. A proponent of the school that church unity must be based on doctrinal comprehension, he avouched that Anglicans had no taste for a Christian unity based on minimum dogmatic exigencies. Bishop Montgomery professed that Anglicanism envision a communion which encapsuled the "great common measure". Concurrently, he expressed respect for Protestant churches and sorrow that they are not in unity with the Anglican Communion. Confidently, he declared that some day, "not yet in sight", God would restore the higher unity which Christians had shattered. This full unity will assure that the deepest convictions and needs of the individual churches are met and satisfied, "not whittled away".⁴⁴

4. Summary

Without hesitation, Anglican William Temple (who had ushered at Edinburgh 1910) unequivocally stated on the occasion of his investiture to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1942 that the modern ecumenical

⁴⁴WMC, Vol. 8, pp. 213-14.

movement is "the great new fact of our era".⁴⁵ Because it marked a fresh juncture in inter-Christian relations, Edinburgh 1910 itself is a monumental event in the history of Christianity. It provided nothing less than the foundation upon which the whole organized expressions of the ecumenical movement have built.

Recognized by some delegates, the Conference's ban on the discussion of doctrinal issues brought proceedings to a cul-de-sac. Clearly, the separation of Christian witness and praxis from doctrine and church polity vitiates the overall quality of ecclesial life. Already evident at Edinburgh 1910, it took decades for this insight to be firmly entrenched in ecumenical thought. Just as it took time for L&W to recognize that pragmatic Christianity is inseparable from theology, F&O slowly learned that it had to account for the so-called "non-theological" factors which sustain church divisions. Hence, vital questions which continue to be raised in ecumenical discussions were already present at Edinburgh 1910. These include: How does one distinguish or relate "theological" and "non-theological" factors? To what extent is visible, ecclesial unity possible?

Acutely conscience of the growing desire expressed on the mission field for Christian unity, the Edinburgh delegates experienced a new harmony and unity. The Edinburgh Conference arrived at the inevitable conclusion that ecclesiological differences in doctrine, sacraments and ecclesial polity need not stymie cooperative missionary action. While different concepts of what unity involves and requires continued to

⁴⁵Cited in Hogg, p. 1.

persist, the Edinburgh delegates were united in the belief that God in Christ intended that all Christians be one in a visible fellowship. All were of one mind that "the ideal object of missionary work is to plant in every non-Christian nation one united Church of Christ".⁴⁶

C. Life and Work Movement: Applied Christianity

During World War I, the churches had demonstrated a weakness in their futile attempts to unite in common peace initiatives. Lutheran Archbishop Nathan Soederblom of Uppsala (Sweden) ruminated that the churches needed a forum to discuss, form and express a common Christian consensus on major religious, social, political, and economical concerns. At a meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches in September 1919 at Oud Wassenaer (Holland), he offered a resolution for an "Ecumenical Council of Churches" (organized on the pattern of Edinburgh 1910) empowered to speak and act on behalf of all Christians on global problems.⁴⁷ The

⁴⁶ WMC, Vol. 8, p. 131.

⁴⁷ Nils Karlstrom, "Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work 1910-1925," HEM, p. 533. In 1902, the Ecumenical Patriarch (Joachim III) in his correspondence to all autocephalous Orthodox Churches broached the subject of whether the time was "propitious" to initiate an enquiry into the interest of establishing a mutual relationship with other churches. This question was given a new impetus with the founding of the League of Nations in April 1919. The constituting of this world body stimulated some visionary church leaders (acting independently) to propose a similar league for the churches. Under the leadership of the locus tenens Metropolitan Dorotheos, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in January 1920, issued to all Christendom a synodical encyclical proposing a "koinonia ton ekklesion" ("fellowship of churches"). With a view to the ultimate rapprochement of all churches, the proposed organization, without

(Footnote Continued)

first world conference on L&W was held at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925 (Stockholm 1925) and the second convened at Oxford, England, in 1937 (Oxford 1937).⁴⁸ At Oxford 1937, L&W approved the establishment of the WCC. In May 1938, it handed over its responsibilities to the Provisional Committee of the WCC in "Process of Formation".

1. Life and Work Shuns Doctrinal Unity

Convinced that any debate on theological differences would further divide the denominations, the L&W movement worked for a Christian unity based on love and pragmatical action. Initially conceived to exclude all theological discussion, L&W stated its aim as follows:

(Footnote Continued)

authority to commit the member churches, would promote mutual help and social cooperation. The Ecumenical Patriarchate's understanding of koinonia was primarily scriptural (i.e., I Peter 1:22 and Ephesians 4:15). Its two explicit references to the "League of Nations" indicate that the meaning it gave to koinonia was also influenced by the political developments of its day. See, Bell, pp. 17-21. In June 1920 at Crans, J.H. Oldham (who was in personal contact with some of the key architects of the "League of Nations" charter) presented a memorandum proposing the formation of the International Missionary Commission which, he indicated, would "probably have before long to give way to something that may represent the beginnings of a league of churches". See, W.A. Visser't Hooft, The Genesis and Foundation of the World Council of Churches (Geneva: WCC, 1982), pp. 1-11.

⁴⁸ Because RC and Orthodox had not received invitations from the committee in charge of arrangements for the proposed world conference, the Anglican Communion refused to send representatives to the 1920 L&W preliminary meeting in Geneva. Bishop Soederblom insisted that all Christian denominations must have the opportunity to be represented at the planned general assembly. Expeditiously, he invited an Orthodox delegation (in Geneva for the 1920 F&O preparatory conference) to attend the L&W meeting as observers. During the proceedings, he assured the Orthodox observers that the objectives of the planned world conference on L&W (Stockholm 1925) were similar to those enumerated in the Ecumenical Patriarchate's encyclical of January 1920.

The Conference on Life and Work, without entering into questions of Faith and Order, aims to unite the different Churches in common practical work, to furnish the Christian conscience with an organ of expression in the midst of the great spiritual movement of our time, and to insist that the principles of the Gospel be applied to the solution of the contemporary social and international problems.⁴⁹

For many of the supporters of L&W, faith was perceived as a religious experience that could be expressed in diverse ways. They insisted that behind the facade of theological and doctrinal differences Christians were already united in Christ. Bishop Soederblom avowed that "unity of faith can exist even where confessions of faith are different".⁵⁰ The churches one common underlying invisible inheritance transcends doctrinal discord. Hence, all Christians, in one common voice, were expected to address the ongoing global issues.

Robert H. Gardiner, the Secretary of the F&O Continuation Committee, wrote L&W in 1922 with the request that both organizations hold their inaugural conferences in the same city about the identical time. This arrangement would benefit ecumenical leaders involved in both movements. In August of the same year, L&W responded in a letter signed by its two leading officers - Bishop Soederblom and Henry A. Atkinson. Though L&W congratulated F&O on its excellent and arduous work in the quest for ecclesial unity, it rejected the F&O predicate that doctrinal

⁴⁹ Slosser, p. 294.

⁵⁰ Karlstrom, HEM, p. 527. Out of his deep respect for the diversities of local churches, Soederblom rejected the idea of any ecclesial unity based on uniformity. Since he understood Christian unity as a religious unity anchored in the cross of Christ, he believed that the cross has power to unite all Christians despite their differences. Ibid.

unity is necessary and prerequisite for interchurch collaboration. The L&W leadership judged as remote the prospect that F&O would achieve its ultimate goal in the foreseeable future. It expressed confidence, however, that with minimum effort a way could be found to unite the churches in the application of Christian ethical principles to global moral and socio-political problems. Hence, the L&W believed that its work would be seriously hampered if it became too closely associated with theological discussion. Along with the implication that the question of doctrinal truth was of little concern to the L&W movement, the letter quotes with approval the facile shibboleth: "doctrine divides, service unites". The F&O request was rejected:

Meanwhile, we are of the opinion that the two movements had better be kept distinct. Life and Work confining itself in the main to the co-operation of the churches in the application of the Spirit and Teaching of Christ to social, national and international relationships, while Faith and Order devotes its attention to the ultimate, but more remote goal of unity in Doctrine and Church Order.⁵¹

Primarily concerned with self-preservation, the L&W and F&O movements for the next fifteen years continued to solicit and vie for the limited resources (e.g. personnel, time, monies) available for ecumenical work.

2. The First World Conference on Life and Work, Stockholm 1925

⁵¹See Charles S. MacFarland, Steps Toward the World Council (New York: F.R. Revell, 1938), pp. 109-11.

Significantly, Stockholm 1925 marked the first time that ecumenical delegates attended an interconfessional conference as duly appointed representatives of their respective churches. The Orthodox presence provided the ecumenical movement with a new element of authenticity.⁵² Composed of over 600 representatives from churches and religious organizations, Stockholm 1925 highlighted the past failures of the churches and their ongoing task and responsibility to bring the Christian gospel to each and every facet of human existence.⁵³

Regrettably enough Stockholm 1925 remained in the same ballpark as Edinburgh 1910 because of its deliberate choice to eschew theological discussion on issues underlying questions of ethics and Christian action. Hence, it failed in its attempt to deal in a forthright manner with the more practical Christian concerns. Established by Stockholm 1925 to carry out its resolutions, the continuation committee (with a permanent office at Geneva) appointed a theological commission to analyze the doctrinal foundations of Christian ethics and praxis.

But not even Stockholm 1925 could stymie or evade all theological discussion. It soon became evident that the delegates espoused divergent

⁵²Most of the larger Orthodox churches did not enter the WCC till 1961. Moreover, prior to Second Vatican Council, the RCC practically shunned all direct contact with the movement. This relationship between the RCC and the ecumenical movement (especially with Faith and Order) will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this study.

⁵³Stockholm 1925 discussed the following topics: the purpose of God for humanity and the duty of the church for the world, the church and economic industrial problems, the church and social and moral problems, the church and international relations, the church and Christian education, and methods of co-operation and federation efforts by Christian communities. Cf. William A. Brown, Towards a United Church: Three Decades of Ecumenical Christianity (New York: Scribners, 1946), p. 72.

views of God's kingdom. While some delegates stressed the immanence of God's reign, others emphasized its transcendence and eschatological character. When an Anglican bishop indicated that the kingdom of God which had already been fully established in Christ had to be continually experienced anew on earth (realized eschatology), a Lutheran bishop (entering the fray that same day) uttered: "Nothing could be more mistaken or more disastrous than to suppose that we mortal men have to build up God's kingdom in the world".⁵⁴ At Stockholm 1925, the church was essentially understood as a fortuitous conglomeration of individuals rather than a sacramental communion. To bring about God's reign, the Stockholm "Message" stressed the role of individual Christians:

Leaving aside our differences in Faith and Order, our aim has been to secure practical action in Christian Life and Work.... Let each man, following his own conscience, and putting his convictions to practical life, accept his full personal responsibility for doing God's will on earth as in heaven, and for working for God's Kingdom. Let him in entire loyalty to his own Church seek to have a share in the wider friendship and co-operation of the Christian Churches of which this conference is a promise and a pledge.⁵⁵

Through indefatigable determination, Archbishop Soederblom made his vision a reality. Hence, there is more veracity than exaggeration to the claim that Archbishop Soederblom himself was Stockholm 1925.⁵⁶ The

⁵⁴ Cited by Nils Ehrenstrom, "Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work, 1925-1948," HEM, p. 547.

⁵⁵ Bell, pp. 266-70.

⁵⁶ Nils Ehrenstrom, "Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work, 1925-1948," HEM, pp. 547-49.

Stockholm continuation committee restructured itself into a permanent council in 1930 and adopted the designation the "United Christian Council for Life and Work". Moreover, it began to inculcate theological principles into its research.

3. The Second World Conference on Life and Work, Oxford 1937

The economical, political, international and social climate under which Oxford 1937 met was radically different from the optimistic conditions under which Stockholm 1925 had gathered.⁵⁷ From the outset, Oxford 1937 directed considerable attention to the theological elements which undergirded the questions of Christian ethics and practical polity. According to one of the officers of Oxford 1937, L&W had to resolve the dialectical tension between "ecumenical universalism" which rejected ecclesial differences and "denominational parochialism" which sought for a dominant confessional nuance.⁵⁸ This dilemma was resolved by focusing upon

belief in the Una Sancta, a reality which operates in and through the diverse Churches, and which is the unifying center of their life and witness before the world. Consequently the goal of their actions must be not simply broader co-operation for social ends, but that the Churches in so cooperating may manifest and carry

⁵⁷Under the theme "Church, Community and State", nearly 850 official participants from 120 denominations and religious organizations discussed the following themes: the church and community, church and state, and church, community and state in relation to economical order, in relation to education and in relation to the world of nations. Cf. Brown, p. 92; Ehrenstrom in HEM, p. 588.

⁵⁸Adolf Keller, "Stockholm 1925 in the Light of 1950" ER, 2 (Summer 1950), p. 368.

towards⁵⁹ its fullness their common life in the one body of Christ.

Subsequent to the early 1930s, Nazi Germany casted a large shadow over the ecumenical movement. It came to be seen that with respect to ecclesiastical issues there existed a major discrepancy between Nazi policy and actions. Supported by Hitler himself, the official German church advocated a synthesis between Christianity and German socialist ideology. As a propaganda tactic, the Third Reich set itself up as a protector of the church and a promoter of "positive Christianity". In 1933, it entered a concordat with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). This compact seemingly assured the RCC of its legal rights and privileges in the German state.⁶⁰ Until the day its totalitarian system was firmly established, the Hitler régime appeared content to use God as a "vote-catcher" and to assign to the churches "the role of useful idiots who supported and encouraged this miserable game of exploiting God".⁶¹ Though implicit in his thought from as early as 1933, the Fuhrer in 1941 explicitly stated that the churches were destined to "rot away" like "a

⁵⁹Ehrenstrom, p. 574.

⁶⁰Peter Matheson contends that Hitler saw this concordat merely as "a short term political expedient, to neutralise the Centre Party at home and to legitimise the Third Reich abroad". Not only did the Nazi government break virtually every clause, the concordat "fatally compromised Catholic moral resistance to Hitler". P. Matheson, ed., The Third Reich and the Christian State (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans 1971), pp. 29-30.

⁶¹Pinchas Lapide, "No Balm in - Barmen? A Jewish Debit Account," ER, 36(October 1984), p. 422.

gangrenous limb".⁶² The Nazi régime not only attempted to control the German church but it also sought to enshrine into the church its own Aryan ideology to the point where it would no longer Christ's church. Opposed to the nazification of the church, the "Confessing Church" (Bekennende Kirche) claimed that the "official" German church in its published tenets advocated the abolition of the Hebrew canon, the exclusion of "the Jewish theology of Paul," the rejection of the theologia crucis, and the like.⁶³ The "Confessing Church" launched its attack especially against "the false doctrine of the German Christians" which affirmed the German state (alongside scripture) as "a second source of revelation". It was here that "German Christians" especially betray themselves as believers in "another God".⁶⁴

The official German Church was opposed to ecumenism. At Geneva, the ecumenical leaders sided with the "Confessing Church" in its struggle against Nazi attempts to control and to gravely disfigure by its own ideology the one church. Despite its own policy not to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs and to respect the legal rights and privileges of the church in the state, the Nazi Government refused to allow delegates from the "Confessing Church" to attend international ecumenical

⁶²Pinchas, p. 425.

⁶³The "Confessing Church" was "the movement within the German Evangelical church which carried on the struggle against the attempts of the Nazi regime and the 'German Christians' party to introduce into the churches ideas and practices reflecting national socialist rather than biblical teaching". W.A. Visser't Hooft, Memoirs (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 99. Cf. Karl Barth, The German Church Conflict. Ecumenical Studies in History No. 1. (Richmond, Virginia, 1967), p. 16.

⁶⁴Karl Barth, The German Church Conflict, p. 16.

conferences. This influenced the Oxford Conference to focus its whole agenda on the supra-national nature of the church of Christ. Oxford 1937 advocated that the church's paramount duty and service to humanity is to be itself in "confessing the true faith, committed to the fulfillment of the will of Christ ... and united in him in a fellowship of love and service".⁶⁵ Hence, its aim was to draw the confessional churches away from false entanglement of state or culture to a true ecumenicity.

Oxford 1937's cogent analysis and statements on various issues (e.g. religious freedom and the nature of society) were not void of a theological reflection. Assessed to be fundamentally religious, social and political questions were considered "a legitimate and necessary province of theological investigation".⁶⁶ It is understandable that in its quest to promote interchurch cooperation on socio-political issues, L&W would come to adopt this attitude since by their very nature the churches themselves are faith directed. By 1937, the L&W movement had come to recognize that the church and its unity were among the most acute problems to which ecumenical thought had to be directed.⁶⁷

4. Summary

⁶⁵Cited in Gaines, p. 72. Led by Friedrich Werner, eleven leaders of the official German church signed a declaration in 1939 which contained such scandalous affirmations: "All supra-national or international churchliness of a Roman Catholic or World-Protestantism type is a political degeneration of Christianity"; "The Christian faith is the unbridgable opposite to Judaism". Visser't Hooft, Memoirs, p. 95.

⁶⁶Ehrenstrom, HEM, p. 592.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 574.

From its conception, the L&W movement worked to obtain Christian unity through interchurch cooperation on practical issues. Complemented by a full staff at its permanent headquarters in Geneva, L&W considered it part of its mandate to issue to the international community statements intended to express the judgement of the Christian conscience on current affairs. Though it originally intended to avoid doctrinal discussion, L&W gradually recognized that it was not as simple as first thought to divorce "applied Christianity" from theological issues. Questions on the nature of humanity, the kingdom of God and the church demanded reflection from a faith perspective. Hence, L&W gradually came to espouse the noetic position that its approach to unity had to give due consideration to faith and order elements. For example, when the Nazi government attempted to set up its own pseudo-church, L&W came to focus on Christ's one church as an entity transcending all national boundaries. Enriched by a deeper appreciation of theology for its own work, the L&W movement moved towards a merger with Faith and Order.

D. The Faith and Order Movement: Doctrinal Unity

Formed over an extended period of isolation and fuelled by polemics, suspicions, and misunderstandings, the caricatures the churches had formed of each other's deepest convictions stymied Christian truth and charity. Positive that genuine Christian unity could not be realized until the various confessions settled their major doctrinal differences, Bishop Brent promoted the idea that the time was ripe for a conference along the lines of Edinburgh 1910 to discuss questions of faith and church polity. Driven by an inexorable

determination, he persuaded the 1910 Episcopal General Conference in Cincinnati (Ohio) to adopt a resolution which invited all Christian churches throughout the world which confess "Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour" to a world conference on faith and order.⁶⁸ Bishop Brent believed that the proposed conference (in which the churches were to explain their official positions) would effect an immediate step on the pilgrimage towards ultimate unity. A Joint Commission was appointed to make the arrangements. Stymied by World War I, the F&O movement eventually held its first world conference in August 1927 at Lausanne, Sweden, (Lausanne 1927) and a second world conference at Edinburgh, Scotland, in August 1937 (Edinburgh 1937).⁶⁹ In 1948, the F&O movement

⁶⁸ Faith and Order Paper, First Series 1910-1948 (hereinafter cited FO I), No. 1, Joint Commission Appointed to Arrange For a World Conference on Faith and Order (1910), p. 3. Consisting of 103 officially numbered papers, this "Series" was published over the span from 1910-1948. FO I, Nos. 1-32 were published by the Joint Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Conference of the United America of America and the remaining numbers by the Continuation Committee of Faith and Order, Geneva. With the formation of the WCC a Second Series of numbered Faith and Order Papers (FO II) was started in 1948 (still ongoing) and published by the Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC, Geneva. For a full list of F&O I and II (up to 1970) see An Index to the Doctrines, Persons, Events, etc. of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches given in English Editions, Official, Numbered Publications, 1910-1948 and Check List Faith and Order Commission, Official Numbered Publications Series I, 1910-1948; Series II, 1948-1970. Edited by A.T. De Groot. (Geneva: WCC, 1970), pp. 198-256. In the footnotes references to F&O numbered papers will generally list only series and number (see bibliography for title and year of publication).

⁶⁹ The official accounts of discussion and reports of these conferences are respectively found in the following works: H.N. Bate (ed.), Faith and Order Proceedings of the World Conference, Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927 (New York: G.H. Doran, 1927). Hereafter this work is cited Lausanne 1927. Leonard Hodgson (ed.), The Second World Conference on Faith and Order held at Edinburgh at Edinburgh, August 3-18, 1937 (London: Christian Movement Press, 1938). Hereafter cited Edinburgh (Footnote Continued)

became the FOC of the WCC. Prior to its inaugural conference in 1927, the F&O set forth its principles and entrenched the idea that Christian unity demands a doctrinal foundation.

1. The Faith and Order Movement, 1910-1927: The Call to Unity

From the outset, the Joint Commission indicated that the proposed study and discussion conference would not be able to negotiate, legislate, or adopt terms of unity which would commit the churches. Such powers belonged to the jurisdiction of the member churches themselves. The conference was to have merely a facilitating role.⁷⁰ To help the churches move from provincialism into ecumenical conference, the committee recommended a doctrinal comparative approach to unity. Destined to dominate F&O debate and studies until the 1950s, this methodology ascertained that "the beginnings of unity are to be found in a clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as of those things in which we are one".⁷¹

(Footnote Continued)

¹⁹³⁷. For the period covering 1927 to 1964, the reports of the various world conference on F&O and the sectional reports of WCC assemblies directly related to F&O issues are conveniently contained in the following text: Lukas Vischer (ed.), A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963 (St. Louis, Missouri: The Bethany, 1963). Hereafter cited DH.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 5; also, F&O I, No. 3, p. 3.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 4. From its earliest planning stage, F&O incorporated into its work a christological basis, a comparative approach to ecclesiology, a self-defined role as instrument of the churches and a demand that delegates to Conferences of F&O be duly elected by their respective churches. Explicitly articulated by the Executive Committee of F&O in 1937, these four tenets found their way into the By-laws of

(Footnote Continued)

This approach proved useful in highlighting the unanimity which already existed among the denominations. Prior to the ecumenical movement the separated churches remained sharply divided on various aspects of God's revelation. Nevertheless, there was already present a broad consensus that the churches were united in faith in the triune God, in acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour and in a common witness to the same scripture. On the basis of such unity, it was postulated that common accord could be reached on other issues. By frankly recording both ecclesial convergences and divergences, F&O rejected a least common denominator type of approach to unity. A major weakness of comparative ecclesiology was its inability to penetrate behind these disagreements so as to enable healing to occur.

The Anglican Communion in its quest for a reunited Christendom disapproved of any unity which countenanced compromise or uniformity: "We must constantly desire not compromise, but comprehension, not

(Footnote Continued)

the FOC which were drawn up in 1952 and approved by the second assembly of the WCC in 1954. These principles are as stated: "1) Its main work is to draw churches out of isolation into conference, in which none is to be asked to be disloyal to or to compromise its convictions, but to seek to explain them to others while seeking to understand their points of view. Irreconcilable differences are to be recorded as honestly as agreements. 2) Its conferences are to be conferences of delegates officially appointed by the churches to represent them. 3) Invitations to take part in these conferences are to be issued to 'all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. 4) Only churches themselves are competent to take actual steps towards reunion by entering into negotiations with one another. The work of the movement is not to formulate schemes and tell the churches what they ought to do but to act as the handmaid of the churches in the preparatory work of clearing away misunderstandings, discussing obstacles to reunion, and issuing reports which are submitted to the churches for their approval". Edinburgh 1937, pp. 3, 194.

uniformity, but unity".⁷² It was not expected that the churches would arrive quickly at a common conception of the unity for which they should seek. The Joint Commission, however, was partial to organic union, though it advocated no particular way to achieve this unity.

Even though it took no responsibility for any "statement or opinion" expressed therein, the Joint Commission found Rev. James Hall's (Ang.) paper, which lauded the merits of organic unity, worthy of publication as one of its own numbered papers. Rev. Hall declared that no form of federation can replace the interior unity for which Christ prayed for his church. Genuine unity in the church's doctrine and social life required "an organic union of all genuine Christians".⁷³ Except for Catholic-type churches, he ascertained that very few Protestant churches had to that point come to identify a reunited Christendom with organic unity or the demise of denominational distinctions.⁷⁴ Via comparative ecclesiology, Anglican leaders sought to get the churches to clarify their position on the nature of the ecclesia and its unity. If mutual understanding could be reached, it was hoped that the churches could eventually be in a more advantageous position to jointly express a common visible unity based on "uniformity in creeds, beliefs, rites, practices and structures".⁷⁵

⁷²F&O I, No. 1, p. 4.

⁷³Francis J. Hall, The World Conference and the Problem of Unity, F&O I, No. 12, pp. 22-23, 28.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 21.

⁷⁵Kuncheria Pathi, Models in Ecumenical Dialogue (Bangalore: Dharmaran Publications, 1981), p. 402.

a) Bishop Brent's Conception of Church Unity

Though firm in the belief that Christians are spiritually bonded to one another in Christ, Bishop Brent was of the mind that the church of Christ had been so broken by the sin of human divisions that it no longer existed de jure. So that God's reign might be established on earth, Christ through his Spirit continually beacons the churches to external unity. He claimed that every denomination had contributed to the loss of pristine unity. Now with their enlightened understanding of the sinful nature and failure of Christian sectarianism, all churches have the joint responsibility to work towards the restoration of the unity of the fragmented church. A preliminary meeting on faith and order was held in 1920 in Geneva. In his address, Brent described the F&O movement ("a pilgrimage in search of Unity") as the Christian response to this divine invitation.⁷⁶ The recovery of organic union was contingent on the churches finding unity on faith and order issues.⁷⁷

Confident that God would eventually guide the denominations into the type of unity willed for the church, Bishop Brent combatted the notion that it would consist in the absorption of one church by another or a confederation of churches. Trustingly making themselves vulnerable to the Holy Spirit's action, the multiplicity of denominations in their

⁷⁶Tatlow, "The World Conference on Faith and Order," HEM, p. 417. Importantly, at the 1920 Geneva meeting, the American Episcopal Church handed over full responsibility for the preparations for the proposed conference on faith and order to an international committee.

⁷⁷F&O I, No., 33, A Pilgrimage to Unity, Report of the Preliminary Meeting to Plan a World Conference on Faith and Order, 1920, p. 17.

desire for unity must boldly take the initial step in the faith "not knowing quite where God would eventually lead" them.⁷⁸

Making a distinction between unity and reunion, Bishop Brent did not perceive of ecclesial unity as a return to a fellowship that was previously lost. In the future church, he argued the denominations would retain most of the distinct spiritual treasures they gained "locally and in isolation" and place them at the disposal of the whole body.⁷⁹ Would the F&O movement forsake those churches (e.g. the RCC) who had refused invitations to dialogue? Indicative of the magnanimity of his spirit, Brent answered deftly: "God forbid! We shall not. We can aim at nothing less than the unity of the whole of Christendom".⁸⁰

Influenced by the existential philosophies and dialectical theologies which burgeoned after World War I, many Protestants were less optimistic about the possibility and viability of the churches seeking substantive synthesis on doctrinal issues. Accentuating the qualitative difference between the Creator and people, the dialectical theologies directed attention to the inherent conflicting tensions pertaining to God's being and revelation. Rather than attempt to reconcile unresolved disagreements between the diverse churches, they argued that it is more productive to keep them in productive tension. Since Christians are

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 19.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 22-23. Avowing that the RCC embodied within herself the fullness of unity God intended for his church and that her doors were open to non-Roman Christians to return, Pope Benedict XV (as did his successor Pope Pius XI) politely declined F&O and L&W invitations for RC representation. See Chapter V for fuller account.

unable to bring about visible unity, they must wait upon Christ to restore it. One effect of such thinking led to the strengthening of confessional identities. Hence, many delegates to Lausanne 1927 were more apt to focus on the partial truths imbued in their denominations than the fullness of truth endowed in the whole Christian tradition.

2. First World Conference on Faith and Order - Lausanne 1927

Under the presidency of the chairman of the F&O movement (Bishop Brent), 394 delegates (included nine women) and twelve staff officers from 108 separate churches convened at Lausanne 1927 to list both their doctrinal agreements and disagreements, and to suggest possible ways to extend the former.⁸¹ Divided into sections, each group debated its assigned topic (and wrote a sectional report) on some aspect related to the nature of the church and the degree of doctrinal unity necessary for a reunited Christendom.⁸² Exhibiting Anglican and Orthodox ecclesial subtleties, the report of Lausanne 1927 leaned towards the position that the invisible unity Christians share with each other in Christ is an

⁸¹Cf. Tislington Tatlow, "The World Conference on Faith and Order" in HEM, pp. 420-21; DH, No. 2/p.27.

⁸²Prepared by both the Conference officers and the sectional functionaries, the report on the "Call to Unity" was unanimously adopted by the full plenary session. Each received nemine contradicenti, the reports of Sections II-VII (which respectively took up topics about the nature and proclamation of the gospel, the nature of the church, a common confession of faith, ministry, sacraments and "The unity of Christendom and the Relation Thereto of Existing Churches". For "Final Report " of Lausanne 1927 see DH, Nos 1-56, pp. 27-39.

insufficient basis (even in practical affairs) for full koinonia. A genuine reunited Christendom required a doctrinal foundation.

a) The Nature of the Church and Its Unity

Though the Lausanne delegates concurred that the church presently exists, they differed on its interpretation. Aside from the nuances unique to each denomination, the debate pursued at Lausanne 1927 disclosed that representatives of churches from Catholic traditions (e.g. Orthodox, Anglo-Catholic) and those from Protestant bodies espoused antithetical conceptions of the nature of the church. On this subject, delegates from classical Protestantism (Lutheran and Reformed) and Free churches (e.g. Congregationalists, Quakers) differed significantly. If visible unity was to be manifest, it was crucial they lucidly state their conceptions of the ecclesia.

With their episcopal structure, historical succession, sacramental continuance and canonical discipline, the churches of Catholic traditions stressed the given theandric nature of the church. Antecedent to its membership, the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is both a visible and invisible society. Both the Orthodox and the high-church Anglicans introduced a deep ecclesiastical-sacramental mentality and thrust into the F&O discussion and process.

According to her representatives, the Orthodox Church alone is the ecclesial body derived from Christ and the apostles. In history, the fullness (pleroma) and continuity of the church of Christ is preserved and guaranteed by a divinely-constituted hierarchy which can only be

transmitted by the unbroken apostolic succession.⁸³ Opposed to any ecclesial reunion by absorption, the Orthodox allowed for liberty of interpretation on things not deemed essential to the totality of faith. But this individual freedom is circumscribed by what the whole church determines as essential for the faith. Hence, the Orthodox stated that "reunion can take place only on the basis of the common faith and the confession of the ancient, undivided church of the seven ecumenical councils and of the first eight centuries".⁸⁴

Archbishop Temple expounded upon the Anglo-Catholic position. He espoused the view that the church of Christ like every living organism requires a definite structure which regulates the kind of body it will become. As God's living salvific instrument for the redemption of all creation, its organic structure is based on "Scripture and formulated in the historic creeds", sacraments, ministry and "the living relation of the Church to Christ himself".⁸⁵

In contradistinction to Catholicism, Protestantism rejected the theandric nature of the church. Interpreting traditional Catholic terminology in new ways, Lutheran and Reformed delegates often depicted the nature of the church (and its unity) in terms of "visible" and "invisible". The Lausanne Conference left it ambiguous as to whether

⁸³Cf. Sergius Bulgakow, in Lausanne 1927, p. 262.

⁸⁴Cf. Lausanne 1927, pp. 21, 384.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 136-37. The Orthodox concurred that the church's mission is directed to the sanctification of humanity and the building up of God's kingdom. Ibid., p. 110.

these concepts were to be used to distinguish between different aspects of the one identical reality or two separate entities.⁸⁶

Generally, the representatives from classical Protestantism agreed that the true church of God is "invisible in itself but symbolically represented in the actual churches".⁸⁷ With its quantitative membership known to God alone, the invisible society of the "communion of saints" (the "elect of God") is united by bonds of faith, hope, love, word and sacraments. By the ministry of the word and sacraments, the true church is made present.⁸⁸ Whereas, the Reform delegates viewed the visible church more as the congregation of believers gathered to worship, Lutherans contended that God works through the visible structures of the una sancta ecclesia to transmit grace and salvation to all humankind. In faith, the visibility of this church is recognized by the action of grace. The church on earth is the instrument which God uses to communicate his grace to humankind.

⁸⁶ Calvin himself used the terms to refer to two different aspects of the one church. In conformity with the Catholic tradition, he maintained that the visible church is composed of all Christians on earth (both genuine believers and hypocrites). Deviating significantly from Catholic teaching he espoused the view that the invisible, true church (even as it exists in the world) includes only God's elect. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion. Edited by J.M. McNeill. The Library of Christian Classics (Volume 20). (London: SCM Press, c.1961), IV,1,7/pp.1022-23

⁸⁷ Lausanne 1927, p. 158.

⁸⁸ Article VII of the Augsburg Confession gives the traditional Lutheran definition of the church: "They teach the one Holy Church will remain forever. Now this Church is the congregation of the Saints, in which the Gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments is rightly administered". Cf. Henry Betherson (ed.), Documents of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 298.

Keeping with the spirit of their traditions, the Lutheran and Reformed delegates advocated that the preached word and the proper administration of the two sacraments instituted by Christ are essential elements not only to the nature of the church but also to its unity.⁸⁹ To consciously sever oneself from the church is a rejection of Christ.⁹⁰

Originated from the Reformation principle that the ministry of the word and sacraments is antecedent to the church, Reformed and Lutheran delegates defended the stand that no particular form of ecclesial ministry (or government) is fundamental to the essence of the church. Nevertheless, the ordained ministry (considered a sine qua non for ecclesial good ordering) was accepted as a God-given gift to the church.⁹¹ Loyal to their classical Protestant roots, these delegates, rather than accept any one kind of ecclesial ministry as divinely-constituted by Christ himself, allowed for great diversity in

⁸⁹As written in article VII of the Augsburg Confession: "And for that true unity of the Church it is enough to have unity of belief concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments". Betterson, p. 298. Calvin writes: "The pure ministry and pure mode of celebrating the sacraments are ... sufficient pledge and guarantee that we may safely embrace as church any society in which both these marks exists". Calvin, IV,i,12/p.1025.

⁹⁰Luther and Calvin made it clear that the church is necessary for salvation. Luther advocated that in the world, God did communicate his grace to men and women through the visible congregation (Gemeinde). Calvin avows that departure from "the Church is a denial of God and Christ". Cf., H.T. Kerr (ed.) A Compendium of Luther's Theology (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), pp. 123-24. John Calvin, IV,I,10/p.1024.

⁹¹According to Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession public teaching in church and the ministry is reserved to those "duly called". Betterson, p. 296.

matters of church polity.⁹² Though highly supportive of substantial diversity in cult and ecclesial discipline, Lutheran delegates concurred with Catholic representatives that doctrine must not be compromised in the search for church unity.⁹³

Portraying the unique nuances of particular churches, delegates from Free church traditions stressed the primacy of the individual Christian experience as the basis for the church.⁹⁴ They accentuated the direct communion between the Holy Spirit and the individual believer without the hindrance of any absolute ecclesial structures. Guided by the Holy Spirit to confess faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour all committed believers constitute the invisible church as the body of Christ in the world. As the voluntary, covenantal fellowship of believers, the church in any particular place is the functioning, local

⁹²Rubem A. Alves (Presby.) explained the reason Protestants (except for functional efficiency) protested against the Catholic understanding of the ordained ministry: "The Protestant mentality in its origins ... Inferred a radical rejection of the final or sacred character of all structures. Paul Tillich came to perceive in this critical element regarding all structures what he termed the Protestant principle". Cf. "Protestantism in Latin America: Its Ideological Function and its Utopian Possibilities," ER, 22 (January 1970), p. 7.

⁹³Cf. "Declaration of the Lutheran Communion", Lausanne 1927, p. 374.

⁹⁴Ibid, p. 46. W.H. van de Pol divides the Free churches into principal types: Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers (Society of Friends), Methodists, Mennonites, Disciples of Christs, and Fundamentalists. Like the national or state churches, the free churches are "rooted in Reformation principles". Among the reasons they separated from state churches were as follows: they believed that "the state has no authority in matters ecclesiastic and religious;" and, they often differed with national churches "on the manner in which ecclesiatic authority should be exercised, and on the form this authority should take". Cf. W.H. van de Pol, World Protestantism (London: Sheed & Ward, 1964), p. 269, 295.

congregation (or "gathered church"). Ruled by Christ alone, his will for his organized church is discerned through prayer and discussion. As an "event", the "gathered church" recognizes no authority except that which emerges from its own constituted membership.

To varying degrees, the members of this group of churches were very suspicious of any standardized form of creed, cult or church government. While most of the Free churches' delegates willingly acknowledged the functional value of the ministry and the symbolic importance of the two "ordinances" (baptism and the Lord's supper), they generally did not attribute to them saving value. Since the church is under the ongoing action of the Holy Spirit, all conceptions of the nature of the church were said to be "tentative and predictive rather than absolute and final". Hence, these delegates wanted a church united by the widest degree of flexibility and diversity in doctrine and polity.⁹⁵

b) Towards a Common Protestant Description of Church

After several revisions, the final version of the report of Section III on the nature of the church was received nemine contradicente by a

⁹⁵Cf. S. Parkes Cadman (Congr.) in *Ibid.*, pp. 123-126. From the more subjective congregations (e.g. Quakers) to the more moderate bodies in the group (e.g. Methodists) that allowed for some standardize institutional forms and credal formulas, the Free churches gave a very liberal interpretation to the "gathered church" conception of the church of Christ. Consequently, in ecumenical discussions, they advocated a church unity based on the greatest possible liberty rather than uniformity. Visser't Hooft described this as follows: "This attitude is based on the ideal that the church is essentially based on a community of believers rather than a community of ... corporated faith". Visser't Hooft and Oldsman, p. 42.

plenary session of the Lausanne Conference to be sent to the churches. Its description of church, though open to different interpretations, was accepted by the majority of Protestant delegates. Constituted by God's will, the una sancta ecclesia has Christ as its head and the Spirit as its life. Built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, this church is depicted as the koinonia of Christian believers. To denote something of the extent of the church's mystery, the report utilized different biblical images (e.g. "Body of Christ", "Temple of God"). The Lausanne Conference acknowledged that the one church is the divinely chosen instrument by which Christ through his Spirit reconciles the whole of creation to God's sovereignty.⁹⁶

In its report, Section III dealt with the difficult problem of how to discern the una sancta ecclesia in the churches. It claimed that from apostolic times, the one true church has continued to possess and interpret the scriptures, to administer the sacraments, and to maintain a ministry and to assemble in fellowship and service.⁹⁷ Within this consensus, however, the report noted that there are many disagreements. These differences pertain to such matters as the extent and form of Christ's abiding presence in the ecclesia, the nature of the church visible and invisible (and the relationship to one another), its membership and polity, and the significance of ecclesial divisions.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ DH, Nos. 16-19/pp.30-31.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Nos. 21-26/pp.31-33.

⁹⁸ DH, No. 21/pp.31-32. The report, for example, confirmed that the members differed among themselves as to whether the church invisible existed exclusively in heaven or included believers on earth; whether
(Footnote Continued)

In a common declaration, the Orthodox delegates disassociated themselves from the Lausanne "Final Report" (sectional reports). They claimed, for example, that the report of Section III was drawn up on "a basis of compromise between ... conflicting ideas and meanings, in order to arrive at an external agreement in the letter alone". Furthermore, the declaration stated the Orthodox conviction that "in matters of faith and conscience there is room for no compromise".⁹⁹ Gradually, the F&O movement came to discern that all major differences which exist among the churches (e.g. on unity, on sacraments, on ministry) stem from diverse conceptions of the meaning of church.

c) Lausanne 1927 and Organic Unity

Summoned to Lausanne 1927 at "the urgent behest of Jesus Christ", the delegates were reminded by Bishop Brent of the need for doctrinal unity. Without doctrinal unity even Christian cooperation will fail:

We try to get together in matters of practical import, but as often as not we find ourselves thrown back on our conception of Christ, the nature of the Church, God's mode of governing his Church, the substance of the Gospel message. Christology may not

(Footnote Continued)

the visible visage of the one church had been permanently fixed by Christ or whether it can, under the guidance of the Spirit, express itself in varying forms; whether the true church is to be found in only one existing church or some (or all) of the existing churches taken together; and whether or not one form of ministry is necessary to the esse of the church.

⁹⁹"Declaration on behalf of the Orthodox Church", Lausanne 1927, pp. 383-84

be slighted. The value of theology must be admitted. The history of Christianity must be studied, if we are to get anywhere.¹⁰⁰

Though the purpose of the conference was not to make concrete plans for immediate reunion, it debated ways to advance doctrinal accord.¹⁰¹ When it came to organic union, the Conference differed as to whether to emphasize the traditional creedal route (as an expression of a living experience) or a relational approach. At Lausanne 1927, Professor J.M. Shaw of the United Church of Canada commented upon the two methods being proposed to achieve organic unity.

The proponents of one approach argued that the churches must search for "a doctrinal and sacramental union, a union ... on the basis of a common creed and common order".¹⁰² Within the ecumenical family, the Orthodox and Anglicans were among the greatest champions of this approach. In their own declaration, the Orthodox avowed that reunion was possible only on the basis of the faith and dogmatic definitions defined by the first seven ecumenical conferences of the first millennium.¹⁰³ An Anglican delegate said that the life of the reintegrated church must be simultaneously characterized by a oneness in faith, sacraments and ministry. He left little doubt that this ministry referred to the "acceptance of the episcopacy and episcopal ordination".¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Lausanne 1927, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰¹ DH, No. 2/p.27.

¹⁰² Lausanne 1927, p. 347.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 384.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 333.

The other way to approach organic union was often referred to as "the method of ethical or moral union". Specifically, it referred to a union of "all Christian bodies in the law of love of Christ, regardless of diversities of faith, worship and order, a union in practical fellowship".¹⁰⁵ This method was highly endorsed by delegates from the various Free churches. These delegates assigned to it the special emphasis of their respective ecclesiological communities.

Though in general agreement that some degree of unity in faith would be essential in a reunited church, the Lausanne delegates expressed diametrically opposed views as to the necessity or desirability of explicitly stating this faith in the form of a creed. The Free churches were extremely doubtful whether creeds and historic orders could make a positive contribution to the quest for unity. Rather unity depended on bonds of personal relationship with Christ.¹⁰⁶ To an Orthodox comment that "we must declare our loyalty to the Nicene Creed," a Congregationalist sharply retorted: "Well, I think we should clear all that old lumber out of the way".¹⁰⁷

All Protestant churches to come directly out of the Reformation generally recognized the value of common historic creeds. Nevertheless at Lausanne 1927 (with faith and order issues notwithstanding), a number of delegates from some of these churches insisted that genuine unity must ultimately be rooted in a personal relationship between the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 348.

¹⁰⁶ Lausanne, pp. 210-11.

¹⁰⁷ HEM, p. 422.

individual and Christ.¹⁰⁸ Representatives from the Reformed tradition rejected the contention (generally held by Anglicans and Lutherans) that a common creed is an absolute requirement for a reunited church. Adamant that Christ transcends any creed (which for the Reformed Church must be always subordinated to scripture), Reformed delegates (e.g. André Bertrand) argued against the imposition of any historic creed.¹⁰⁹

Bishop Balakian of the Armenian Church opposed the suggestion that the churches ought to replace the ancient creeds with a new confession of faith. He insisted that for unity, Christians are not in need of more creeds but a renewal of Christian love. He was confident that through fellowship in work "the impossible goal of unity can be realized".¹¹⁰

Professor Shaw suggested a third possible way in which Protestant churches might attain closer organic union. Based on the acceptance of diversity, he recommended that the kind of organic union which should characterize the future reunited church was aptly described by a theologian of a earlier century: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in both essentials and non-essentials charity".¹¹¹

The report of Section VII provides the best account of how the majority of delegates at Lausanne 1927 understood unity. Archbishop Soederblom, the moderator for Section VII, attests that the unity of the reunited church ought to be expressed in love, in faith, and in the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 206; Also see, p. 201

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 395.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 353.

organization of the church.¹¹² In presenting the report, he discussed unity in the context of institutionalism, spiritualism (with stress on worshipping the trine God in "spirit and truth") and incarnationism.

Bishop Soederblom claimed that sacramental institutionalism is a grave obstacle to unity. Associated with a strong emphasis on sacred and perpetual institutions, it is often perceived to give more emphasis to the ministry than to the divinity. If forced to choose between institutionalism and spiritualism, he would opt for the latter. By its neglect, however, to take faith and order issues seriously, spiritualism has the tendency to become "too much dependent on men's capacity or incapacity".¹¹³ Incarnationism values both faith and order issues and the spiritual element of worship. It recognizes "that religion is not a essential body, a fixed form ... but primarily a soul, a spirit".¹¹⁴

The initial draft of the report of Section VII affirmed "the idea of one church united in the essentials of faith and order, and including diverse types of doctrinal statements and the administration of diverse ordinances". This draft enumerated six essential elements of a reunited church. Aside from some slight modification in the wording of two of these essential traits, they were repeated in the second draft:

- 1) A common Faith, a Common Message to the World. 2) Baptism as the rite of Incorporation into the one Church. 3) Holy Communion as expressing the corporate life of the Church and as its signal act of worship. 4) A ministry accepted throughout the universal Church. 5) Freedom of interpretation about sacramental grace and

¹¹² Ibid., p. 321.

¹¹³ Lausanne 1927, p. 324.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 324-25.

ministerial order and authority. 6) Due provision for the exercise of the prophetic gift.¹¹⁵

A footnote to item 5 confirmed that the members of Section VII differed as to the extent of this freedom. Convinced that it compromised the ancient tradition which accepted both scripture and tradition as norma fidei, the Orthodox rejected the "freedom of interpretation" clause.¹¹⁶

Skewed too much towards the "applied Christianity" promoted by the L&W movement, some Anglicans maintained that the report of Section VII was too presumptuous in prescribing the characteristics that ought to define a reunited church. Other delegates claimed the report overly stressed diversity to the neglect of the duty of the churches to unite in the common faith. Bishop Charles Gore, for example, argued that it had "been drawn up in such a way as to make it very difficult for those whose standpoint was Catholic to continue their participation in the movement". Though in agreement that the future reunited church must be able to exhibit great capacity for diversity, tolerance and freedom, he predicated that it must also be able to preserve concurrently a unity in faith, a unity in ministry and a unity in sacramental fellowship. Bishop Gore recommended that in the second draft the controversial "freedom of interpretation" clause be altered to read "liberty of interpretation with regard to all matters not accepted as essential". Furthermore, he

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 438. In the first draft, numbers 4 and 5 requirements for a reunited Church were stated as follows: "4) A ministry in all parts of the church recognized by the whole Body. 5) For all the uniting Communion, liberty in regard to interpretations about sacramental grace and ministerial order and authority". Ibid., p. 398.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 398.

deemed it necessary that the report explicitly state that a common moral discipline is an essential characteristic of a reunited church.¹¹⁷

Outraged that the second draft did not make the requested substantial changes, the opponents insisted that the report of Section VII be referred to the continuation committee for further discussion and re-editing. Contrary to the objections of many, the Chair concurred. In December 1927, the revised report was transmitted to the churches.¹¹⁸

d) Doctrinal Homogeneity or Unity in Diversity

Within the ecumenical community, the churches often regarded the diversity which existed among themselves as an adequate reason for divisions. By means of the unity movement they wanted to put all the spiritual treasures found in individual churches at the service of all. Even at the Lausanne Conference in 1927 many ecumenical participants had difficulty with a future reunited church based on doctrinal homogeneity.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 402. Bishop Gore recommended that in the second draft the paragraph should read: "We envisage the characteristics of the united Church as follows: 1. A common moral Standard and discipline. 2. A common confession of faith. 3. A common administration of the sacraments conditions recognized as necessary. 4. A ministry recognized throughout the whole universal church. 5. Liberty of Interpretation with regard to all matters not accepted as essential. 6. Due provision for the exercise of the prophetic gift". Ibid., p. 403.

¹¹⁸ The report did not identify unity with uniformity. In a reunited church there must be at once both unity and diversity. The Lausanne Report indicated that "there is widespread agreement that there must be some unity of faith and practice and some liberty of interpretation as to the nature of sacramental grace of ministerial order and authority". For this revised report see George K. A. Bell, Documents on Christian Unity: A Selection 1920-1930 (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 174-80, especially pp. 176-77.

Dr. Adolf Kury, in his comments upon Section VII, predicted that a reunited Church would be characterized by a diversity in unity.¹¹⁹ For G.F. Barbour (United Church of Scotland) a church union based on "that conception of utter uniformity was impossible ... unchristian".¹²⁰

At Lausanne 1927, the Orthodox delegation agreed that a reunited church did not mean a uniform church. It remained intransigent, however, that there had to be absolute uniformity with respect to the essentials of the faith, "for according to the Orthodox Church where the totality of the faith is absent there can be no communicatio in sacris".¹²¹ Also, it spelled out unmistakably that these essentials "have been already determined in the old symbols and decisions of the seven ecumenical Synods of the undivided church of the first eight centuries".¹²²

The problem is to get the churches to concur on the essentials for a reunited church. For Bishop Hognestad (Luth.) of Norway, church unity resides in the faith. He could not imagine that the Lutheran Church would replace with a uniform church the richer unity which manifests itself in a variety of forms in the denominations.¹²³ Since there is diversity in the unity of God, he alleged that Christians can be united in faith even though they espouse different conceptions of the church. Hence, he posed the question: "If God is three in one, why should not

¹¹⁹Lausanne 1927, p. 355.

¹²⁰Ibid., p. 359.

¹²¹Bell, p. 185.

¹²²Ibid., pp. 18-23, especially pp., 20-21.

¹²³Lausanne 1927, p. 363.

His Church be three in one or many in one"?¹²⁴ Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the churches should learn anew to distinguish between the essentials and the nonessentials which will facilitate a union of the churches.¹²⁵ Along with the acceptance of doctrine, some churches (e.g. Anglican Communion, Orthodox Church) made it clear that they also regarded a specific form of church order as essential for church unity.

e) The Lausanne Report's Conception of Unity

As a symbol of the common faith founded in scripture, the Lausanne Conference in its "Final Report" supported the church's adherence to the ancient creeds (Nicene and Apostles'). This step was taken with strong reservations: "Finally, we desire to leave on our solemn and unanimous testimony that no external and written standards can suffice without an inward and personal experience of union with God in Christ".¹²⁶ As to the church's historic order, the Lausanne report recorded that there were serious difficulties.

As part of its contribution to the "Final Report," Section VII insisted that (as long as essentials are protected) a unity in doctrine and faith did not imply a unity in uniformity. Furthermore, Section VII stressed that it is still advantageous to establish a league of churches for practical purposes even though the churches remain separated on

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 363.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 366.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 466-67.

doctrinal issues. It stated: "there is general agreement that ultimately life, work, faith, and order are expressions of an existing spiritual unity, and that each require the other for its complete fruition".¹²⁷

Presumed in many of the early F&O presentations was the view that the one church did not presently exist. The future ecumenical church will be a synthesis of all the present denominations separated in practice. United in origin and substance, this church would be broadly diversified as to doctrine and discipline in nonessentials. But how are the churches to determine these essentials? Confidently the Orthodox witnessed that these essentials had already been determined and are found in the ancient creeds and decisions of the first seven ecumenical councils. These essentials must "constitute the basis of the reunion of the Churches".¹²⁸ Undaunted in the face of conflicting positions and opposition and highly motivated by the conviction that "God wills unity", the Lausanne delegates confidently acclaimed that "with faith ... we move forward".¹²⁹ Accompanied by a humble assessment of its worth, the "Concluding Statement" affirmed: "We have taken a step on a long journey. The Conference was only a new starting point".¹³⁰

3. The Churches Response to the Lausanne Report

¹²⁷ Bell, p. 175.

¹²⁸ Lausanne 1927, p. 21.

¹²⁹ Cf., DH, Nos. 5&8/pp.28-9.

¹³⁰ See "Concluding Statement," Bell, p. 181.

After compiling and editing its report, Lausanne 1967 presented it to the churches for study and comment. Its continuation committee requested that the churches comment upon the necessity for a common faith, common sacraments and a common ministry.

a) Oneness in faith

To what extent is unity in faith essential to the unity of a reunited church? According to the basis on which the F&O Movement was founded, it is a prerequisite to such unity. The Lausanne Report declared, that not barring doctrinal differences, the churches were united in a common Christian faith proclaimed in Holy Scripture and witnessed to and safeguarded in the Nicene and Apostles' creeds.¹³¹ But this statement was radically qualified by the insertion that "external and written" creeds are only of value to the extent that the individuals to whom they apply have a spiritual experience of God in Jesus.¹³² This suggests, as the "Notes" attached to the Report confirm, that there was no clear consensus among the delegates as to degree of faith deemed essential for a united church and how this faith should be enshrined.¹³³

For some churches (e.g., the Methodist Church in England), an expression of "Faith in Christ Himself as Lord and Saviour" formed a

¹³¹ DH, No. 28/p.33.

¹³² Ibid., No. 30/p.33.

¹³³ Ibid., Nos. 31-33/pp.33-4.

sufficient basis for church union.¹³⁴ The majority of responses (including those from the Seventh Day Baptist Convention, U.S.A. and the National Union of Reformed Evangelical Churches in France) asserted that the requirement of faith for a reunited Church is the acceptance of scripture.¹³⁵ Many of these churches further indicated that in a reunited Church it will be highly desirable, if not essential, to have one or more creeds to express unity in faith.¹³⁶

b) Oneness in Sacraments

The Lausanne "Final Report" bears witness that the true church is known is through the "observance of the sacraments".¹³⁷ Moreover, it affirms that the sacraments are of "divine appointment" and notes that among the churches there exists "an increasing sense of the significance of sacraments".¹³⁸ While found to be necessary, the report acknowledged major cleavages in the churches' interpretations of the nature and the

¹³⁴ Convictions: A Selection of Responses of the Church to the Report of the World Conference on Faith and Order, held in Lausanne in 1927. Edited by L. Hodgson. (London: SCM, 1934), p. 40. Hereafter cited Convictions.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 59, 109.

¹³⁶ See, for example, the Church of Scotland, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, the Church of England, Ibid., pp. 85, 115, 175.

¹³⁷ DH, No. 20/p.31.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Nos. 49-50/p.38.

proper manner of administration of the sacraments.¹³⁹ There were three important positions taken at the Conference with respect to sacraments: some churches (i.e. Orthodox churches) accepted seven sacraments or "mysteries," most Protestant churches (i.e. Lutheran churches) accepted only two sacraments (baptism and eucharist) sacraments and some (i.e. Society of Friends) accepted no sacraments as being essential in a reunited church.¹⁴⁰ Not in a position to probe behind the different interpretations given the sacraments, the Report was merely satisfied to register the agreements and disagreements.¹⁴¹

Pertinent to the sacraments, the majority of the churches in their replies testified that only Baptism and the Lord's Supper (accompanied by their different interpretations) are necessary for church union.¹⁴² The Society of Friends of Great Britain insisted that no sacramental rites were essential for Christian communion.¹⁴³ For the Orthodox, the

¹³⁹ Ibid., No. 55/p.39.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., No. 52/p.39.

¹⁴¹ During the discussion some delegates attempted to delve behind the two dominant conceptions of sacraments. A Lutheran representative, Dr. D. Schoell, for example, explained the difference as depending on whether one viewed God Himself from a metaphysical or an ethical perspective. For the former, the sacraments (by the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit) are imbued with the divine essence which can penetrate human nature. Holding that the amount of grace is constant, supporters of the latter position aver that the sacraments do not contain objective grace. Focusing on the ethical dimension of God, who wills the salvation of all his people, the sacraments are proofs and reminders of God's love. It confirms that through Christ God has restored his people their sonship and daughtership. Cf., Lausanne 1927, pp. 309-12.

¹⁴² For positions held by the National Union of the Reformed Churches in France, the Church of Norway, see Convictions, pp. 111, 149.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 107. At Lausanne 1927, most delegates from Free
(Footnote Continued)

seven sacraments (or "mysteries" of God's action), together with their proper form, proper matter, and proper ministry, are all equally important. For the Orthodox Church, a reunited church must incorporate all seven sacraments¹⁴⁴

c) Oneness in Order

The report of Lausanne 1927 made it clear that the una sancta ecclesia is recognized not only by its proclamation of the word and administration of the sacraments but also by its "ministry for the pastoral office".¹⁴⁵ Yet, it also acknowledged that the churches differ significantly in the way they understand the nature and function of this ministry. Many of the churches represented in the F&O movement adopted the position that no particular form of ministry is essential to the being of the church. Essentially, Lausanne 1927's discussion on ministry focused on two dominant conceptions.¹⁴⁶ One position defended the view that within the context of the wider Christian ministry, Christ instituted for all time a special ministry, with a "divinely-constituted

(Footnote Continued)

churches were willing at least to give some "symbolic" value to the "ordinances" of baptism and eucharist. J. Vernon Bartlet (Congr.) advocated that as mere symbolic acts of the church, they complement the preached word and subjectively influence Christians. Lausanne 1927, p. 300.

¹⁴⁴DH., No. 52/p.39; Edinburgh 1927, p. 286. August Lang (Ref.) maintained that all Protestants who accept baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments can to some degree accept the other five Catholic sacraments as "ecclesiastical rites". Ibid., p. 302.

¹⁴⁵DH., No. 20/p.31.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., No.47/ p.37; See, Lausanne 1927, pp. 233-48; 248-63.

Hierarchy" (e.g., Orthodox) limited to a few. The other major stance postulated that in the Spirit directed church there is no fixed, unchangeable form of ministry. The special ministry to the word and sacraments is open to all Christian professions. Even as it pertains to an ordained ministry, diversity of orders are wholly in agreement with likeness in essentials.

Contrary to the majority of responses, some churches (i.e. the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland) disagreed with the assessment that a special ordained ministry is essential to the essence and well-being of the church.¹⁴⁷ Most Protestant concurred that a reunited church must allow for great diversity on this issue.¹⁴⁸ Within the Church of England itself there was discord as to whether the ordained ministry is the esse or bene esse of the church.¹⁴⁹ For the Orthodox, the three-fold ordained ministry (with its division of bishops, presbyters and deacons centered on the unbroken apostolic succession) has a sacramental character and is God's appointed channel in Christ to spread the means of grace. Hence, the Orthodox confessed that such a ministry is integral to the being of the church.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Convictions, p. 62-63.

¹⁴⁸ For positions of Northern Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Presbyterian Church of Wales, the South India United Church, the Church of Sweden, and the , see, Convictions pp. 56, 93, 124, 129.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 185.

¹⁵⁰ DH, No. 44/p.37. Orthodox prelate Serguis Bulgakow informed the Lausanne Conference that Russian theology employed the term sobornost to describe the essential essence of church unity. Embodying the organic unity of the church it "connotes alike the catholicity of the Church-the integral totality of its being-and its spiritual character as the

(Footnote Continued)

d) Oneness in Ecclesial Polity

The Lausanne "Final Report" made specific suggestions about the possible organization of a future reunited church. Together with the claim for New Testament legitimacy, three specific forms of church polity (the episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of church government) were highlighted.¹⁵¹ Since each denomination espouses one or more of these forms of ecclesial polity to maintain good-order, Lausanne 1927 recommended that all three systems have "an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited church".¹⁵²

Most of the responses received from the churches appeared to support the view that no one form of church polity is essential for the unity of the church. Whereas the Lausanne debate left the impression the churches were open to make modification and compromise in this area, the churches in their response to the "Final Report" avoided any direct comment. As expected, they made no reference to a papal government, a form of polity which the RCC considers essential to any church union.

(Footnote Continued)

oneness of its members in faith and love; its outer aspect, as at all points resting on the freely-chosen unanimity of its members, and lastly its ecumenical character, which links it to all nations and subordinates to it all local churches". Underlying the Orthodox conception of the "doctrine of hierarchy", sobornost highlights the inextricably relationship existing between the clergy and laity. "Priesthood within the church is related inseparably to the laity, and the relationship is not merely that of ruler to subject; it is also a relation of mutual help and of unity within the sobornost". Cf. Lausanne 1927, pp. 258-63.

¹⁵¹ DH., No. 47/p.37.

¹⁵² Ibid., No. 39/p.35.

As requested, the participants registered the standard doctrinal positions of their respective churches on various topics. On grounds that it compromised doctrinal principles and conscience, the Orthodox delegation refused to endorse the Lausanne report. The Orthodox delegates reiterated their conviction that "in matters of faith and conscience there is room for no compromise".¹⁵³ Before adjournment, a continuation committee was established with the mandate to continue the work of the F&O movement, to edit and circulate the Lausanne report to the churches, to record forthcoming responses and to plan for the next conference.

e) The F&O Movement Between 1927-1937

Zealous to advance the cause of doctrinal unity, the continuation committee perused the Lausanne report (and accounts of the Lausanne debate) and the churches' responses to the same. Based on its assessment of this material, the Lausanne continuation committee decided to focus its attention on the theme "The Church in the Purpose of God". At its 1935 Denmark meeting, however, the continuation committee rescinded its earlier decision on grounds that the churches were not yet ready for "a frontal attack on the problems presented by the doctrine of the church".¹⁵⁴ Under Archbishop William Temple of York (moderator of the

¹⁵³ "Declaration on Behalf of the Eastern Orthodox Church," in Lausanne 1927, p. 384.

¹⁵⁴ Edinburgh 1937, p. 10. During the mid-1930s, the F&O movement became more aware that doctrinal problems were more complex than first

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F&O movement from 1929 to 1946), the continuation committee set up four international theological commissions on the following topics: the doctrine of grace; the church of God and the word of God; ministry and sacraments; church unity in life and work.¹⁵⁵

4. Second World Conference of Faith and Order - Edinburgh 1937

At Edinburgh 1937, the 443 official participants from 123 churches were divided into four sections (with the same titles as the reports of the theological commissions) to discuss four major themes. These were as follows: the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the church of Christ and the word of God, the church of Christ—ministry and sacraments, and the

(Footnote Continued)

anticipated. Even the churches themselves were sharply divided as to the difference which posed the greatest stumbling block to a reunited church. Whereas the continental European churches insisted that Christian divisions stems from disagreements on doctrinal issues (e.g. grace, word of God); the Anglican churches argued that it was imperative to concentrate ecumenical debate on ecclesial polity. The American churches were more apt to support a F&O program designed to explore the effect of the "non-theological" factors (e.g. racism, politics) on ecclesial unity. The agenda of Edinburgh 1937 was intentionally designed to reflect these various concerns. Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Prepared under Bishop Arthur C. Headlam (Ang.) the reports of commissions on grace and on the ministry and sacraments are respectively listed in FO I as nos. 66 and 81. With Wilhelm Zoelner (Evang.), the report of the commission on the word of God is listed in the same "Series" as No. 87. The Chairperson of the commission on unity in life and worship (Willard Sperry) submitted a report composed of five separate studies (Nos. 1-V). In FO I, these studies are respectively listed as follows: No. 82 ("The Meaning of Unity"); 83 ("The Communion of Saints"); 84 ("The Non-Theological Factors in the Making and Breaking of Church Union"); 85 ("Next Steps on the Road to a United Church"). F&O did not include as one of its numbered papers report number 4 of Commission IV: H. Paul Douglass, A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity (New York: Harper, 1937).

church's unity in life and work.¹⁵⁶ Based on the exploratory material prepared for it, each section respectively produced a report on its assigned topic. Except for Section I (which used a christological methodology which was not to come into vogue till the 1950s), the sectional reports utilized comparative ecclesiology.¹⁵⁷ Edinburgh 1937 demonstrated no marked desire to move away from a very basic scriptural conception of the nature of the church and its inner unity (as developed at the Lausanne Conference). Hence, the Edinburgh Conference was in no position to make any significant progress (except for some clarification and elaboration) in resolving major obstacles stemming from the nature of the church (e.g. question which pertain to sacraments and ministry).

a) Fundamental Agreements Obtained at Edinburgh 1937

¹⁵⁶Cf. Tatlow, HEM, pp. 431-32. For "Final Report" of Edinburgh 1937 see DH, Nos. 1-197/pp.40-74. At the request of Section IV, which discussed the topic, the full Conference agreed to accept the statement on "The Communion of Saints" as a separate sectional report with its own place in the Conference's "Final Report". Cf. Edinburgh 1937, p. 10.

¹⁵⁷Whereas comparative ecclesiology had its point of departure in the reality of different denominations (their agreements and disagreement), the Christological method is based on the "given" unity all Christians share in Christ. Since it also used other methods (biblical, historical, eschatological), Pathi claims it could be more aptly depicted as the Christological-Biblical-Historical-Eschatological Method". He describes this method as "a way and programme to penetrate the apparently irreconcilable traditional differences, into the reality of our common fundamental faith and unity in Jesus Christ, and from there with this strong Christological basis together with the common authority of Sacred Scriptures return to the areas of differences in order to remove or transcend or illuminate them, employing historical methods coupled with an eschatological perspective". Cf. K. Pathi, pp. 314-316.

Basing his opening sermon on Ephesians 4:13, Archbishop Temple reminded the delegates that God has already graced his church with unity. Hence, the churches' task is not to create ecclesial unity but to make it visible. He avowed: "the unity of the church of God is a perpetual fact; our task is not to create it but to exhibit it".¹⁵⁸ By sounding this prophetic note, he claimed that the nature of the church is ultimately rooted in a trinitarian context (rather than merely a christological ethos).

Due to the hamartiological or sinful nature of Christian division, the ecclesia has been hampered in its mission of effectively proclaiming the gospel. The sinfulness of disunity is most acutely experienced around the Lord's Table (which Bishop Temple described as "the greatest scandal in the face of the world"). Temple advocated that all churches must be lead to repentance since all had contributed to separation. As accomplices to division, Dr. Temple maintained that each church has lost some of its spiritual treasures. In their present state of disunity, the diverse confessions cannot jointly present to the world the whole of Christian revelation. He found encouragement, however, in the recent objective gains which were being made towards church union.¹⁵⁹

Endeavoring to break new ground, Archbishop Temple requested that each church examine ways the others could contribute to the fullness of truth in a reunited church. Satisfied that the churches already had sufficient knowledge of each other's convictions, he sounded the clarion

¹⁵⁸ Edinburgh 1937, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 15-19.

call to move beyond comparative ecclesiology. He said: "We shall never make headway if we only reiterate the different convictions that hold us apart".¹⁶⁰ Related to the growth of doctrinal confessional-consciousness that had occurred since 1927, however, the majority of the Edinburgh delegates were not ready to make this leap.

The delegates assigned to Section I were under the direction of Bishop A.E. Lehtonen (Luth.) and Dr. W.F. Lofthouse (Meth.). With the report of Commission I as its basic text, this section discussed various aspects of grace: the meaning of grace, justification and sanctification, predestination and free will, the sola gratia, grace in the sacraments, and the church and grace. Unexpectedly, the section was able to reach fundamental agreement on a subject which since the Reformation had been the cause of many controversies. Central to the structure of the report of Section I is the meaning attached to grace and its intimate relation to human salvation: "The meaning of Divine Grace is truly known only to those who know God is Love, and that all He does is done in Love in fulfillment of his righteous purposes".¹⁶¹

Metropolitan Stephan of Bulgaria, in his comments on the first draft report, said that if the other sections were to achieve the same success as Section I then "the Rubicon has been crossed".¹⁶² This idea was carried forward in the final draft when the whole Conference

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 119.

concurred "that there is in connection with this subject no ground for maintaining division between the Churches".¹⁶³

Though Section II was able to obtain considerable consensus on the inspired character of scripture, the Orthodox delegates opposed the Protestant claim that the written and preached "word" (rather than the church) is primary in the work of human salvation. For the Orthodox, the scripture is God's gift to the church. Moreover, contrary to the Protestant conception of the "invisible" church existing in the world, the Orthodox insisted that "the Church on earth is visible and that only one true Church can be visible and exist upon earth".¹⁶⁴ Section IV could reach no consensus on whether intercommunion should be encouraged as an instrument to advance unity or as the final act of a church unity already fully realized. The Orthodox delegates criticized Edinburgh 1937 for its encouragement of intercommunion despite the basic doctrinal disunity which continue to exist among the churches. Though the fundamental differences remained, Section IV made some progress in clarifying the meaning of devotion to the Theotokos and the saints.

On topics pertinent to the nature of the ministry, apostolic succession, the nature and number of sacraments, the problem of validity and the like, the Edinburgh 1937 debate made no significant advance over the Lausanne 1927 discussions. Except for baptism, the Orthodox delegation maintained that all other sacraments are rendered valid only through an ordained ministry (which for the Orthodox is also a

¹⁶³DH, No. 1/p.40.

¹⁶⁴Edinburgh 1937, p. 155.

sacrament). The delegation was extremely disappointed that Edinburgh 1937 in its detailed treatment of baptism and eucharist did not explore the sacramental nature of the ordained ministry. Promptly, the delegation reminded the Conference that their view of "orders" is not something unique to the Orthodox Church. Rather it is a phenomenon "shared by all those who, calling themselves Catholics, insist on faithfulness to the doctrine and practice of the undivided Church".¹⁶⁵

b) Edinburgh 1937 and the Nature of the Church

In his "Presidential Address," Dr. Temple had asked all delegates to keep before them, in their respective sections, the searing question: "What is the nature of the Church"? By keeping this question in front and center, Section III, for example, found itself in a more advantageous position to discern whether "the nature of the Church is such that its structure is vitally relevant to its functions, or whether its structure is to be determined in time by practical utility".¹⁶⁶

At Edinburgh 1937, some delegates vented their dissatisfaction with Lausanne 1927's simple creedal definition of the nature of the church. Cognizant of the need for a theological definition of the church, an Orthodox delegate suggested that the major problem with

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 156.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pp. 65-6.

ecclesiology is that there is "no dogmatic definition of the Church coming from earliest years".¹⁶⁷

c) Several Conceptions of Church Union

In its "Final Report" sent to the churches, Edinburgh 1937 had pointed to several realizable forms of unity which had been respectively proposed as a possible foundation for a reunited Christendom. Specifically it had referred to unity of alliance for the purpose of witness, unity of mutual recognition and intercommunion, and unity of organic (or corporate) union.¹⁶⁸ Whereas Lausanne 1927 hesitated to choose between models of unity, Edinburgh 1937 accepted the unity of alliance and mutual recognition as merely partial realizations of the God-given unity of the church. They could not project to the world the true nature of the church as simultaneously a fellowship of faith and service. Rather, the Conference favored organic unity as the ultimate expression of the church's unity.¹⁶⁹

Some churches (e.g. Evangelical Methodist Church of France), in their responses to the Lausanne Report, referred to federation as the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement.¹⁷⁰ These churches wanted to retain their own autonomy while extending mutual recognition to the

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 67.

¹⁶⁸ DH, No. 2/p.36.

¹⁶⁹ Edinburgh, pp. 250-69, especially pp. 251-52.

¹⁷⁰ Convictions, p. 45.

extent of intercommunion. Other denominations advocated that federation ought to be taken as an immediate step towards a fuller union.¹⁷¹

Without defining the type, the Reformed Church of the U.S.A. was among the churches supportive of organic union.¹⁷² Identified respectively with the unity found in their separate communions, both the Anglican and Orthodox churches preferred organic union. The Anglican delegates were firm that organic unity rather than "the half-way house of federation" must remain the major objective of the F&O movement.¹⁷³ Contrary to the positions of some churches (i.e. Northern Baptist Convention, U.S.A.),¹⁷⁴ the Edinburgh Conference report stated that the majority of Christians favor organic union as the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement.¹⁷⁵

From Lausanne 1927 to Edinburgh 1937, Anglo-Catholicism gradually shifted away from its firmly entrenched position that doctrinal uniformity in the essentials are fundamental to a reunited church. Archbishop Temple, in his presidential capacity, had requested the delegates to consider whether doctrinal differences should be permitted to prevent the Christian unity. He avowed: "Definition is not desirable

¹⁷¹This position was espoused by such churches as the Presbyterian Church of U.S.A. and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France. Ibid., p. 165.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 221.

¹⁷³Edinburgh 1937, pp. 50-51.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 55.

¹⁷⁵DH, No. 123/p.63.

in relation to the things of the spirit".¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, the report of Edinburgh 1937 attests that the organic unity for which the ecumenical movement seeks does not necessarily require a central authority. Rather, "what we desire is the unity of a living organism, with the diverse characteristics of members of a healthy body".¹⁷⁷ Some of the requirements necessary for such unity include essential unity in the apostolic faith, sacramental fellowship and unity in ministry (and polity) as a catalyst for union.¹⁷⁸

Eager for Christian reunion and impatient with the dry bones of theological discussion, the missionary delegates put pressure on Edinburgh 1937 to frame a more progressive report. As evident from the number of footnotes in the text, however, the Orthodox influenced the Conference to write a more balanced report which continued to endorse the need for unity based on doctrinal homogeneity in the essentials of the faith. Though adamant that doctrinal uniformity is not essential for cooperative action, the report advocated that unity in faith is a basic requirement of corporate union.

The Edinburgh Conference 1937 indicated that in the search for doctrinal unity the most difficult concerns to address are ones which combine faith and order issues. Integral to the faith life of the Orthodox community, for example, is the conviction its ecclesial polity is divinely-constituted. Also, in addition to faith and order elements,

¹⁷⁶ Edinburgh 1937, p. 64.

¹⁷⁷ DH, No. 22/p.63.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Ibid., Nos. 127-44/pp.64-7.

Edinburgh 1937 affirmed that historical and cultural factors played a role in church divisions.

Edinburgh 1937 came to the conclusion that the crux of the difficulties pertaining to unity were the divergent conceptions of church operative in the ecumenical movement. These differences were described as the divergence between the "personal" (or "spiritual") and the "authoritarian" (or "Institutional") conceptions of the nature of the church.¹⁷⁹ Whereas the former tendency stressed the prophetic, invisible dimension of the church, the latter (with its variants) emphasized the givenness of its divinely established visible institutions. Edinburgh 1937 described unity as an attempt "to realize the idea of the Church as one living body worshipping and serving God in Christ".¹⁸⁰ The oneness sought involves both a spiritual fellowship and a outward unity. In laconic fashion, Edinburgh 1937 declared:

The unity we seek is not simple but complex. It has two aspects: (a) the inner spiritual unity known in its completeness to God alone; and (b) the outward unity which express itself in mutual recognition, co-operative action and corporate or institutional unity.¹⁸¹

Hence, the Edinburgh Conference concluded that the challenge and task facing the F&O movement "is to find in God, to receive in God as His

¹⁷⁹ DH, No. 146/p.67; Convictions, p. 15. Amsterdam 1948 used the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" to describe this same basic problem.

¹⁸⁰ DH, No. 112/p.61.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., No. 158/p.69.

gift, a unity which can take up and preserve in one beloved community all the spiritual gifts which he has given us in our separations".¹⁸²

d) Affirmation of Unity

Before adjournment, Edinburgh 1937 made its "Affirmation of Union of Allegiance to Jesus Christ". Because the delegates were divided on creedal and doctrinal matters, this "Allegiance" statement was not much more than a simple, religious affirmation. It declared:

We are one in faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.... This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills. It is founded in Jesus Christ Himself ... Who ... dwells in His Church..... Our unity is in heart and spirit.... We humbly acknowledge that our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ.... We are convinced that our unity of spirit and aim must be embodied in a way that will make it manifest to the world, though we do not yet clearly see what outward form it should take.... We ... declare to all men everywhere our assurance that Christ is the one hope of unity for the world in face of the destruction and dissensions of this present time.¹⁸³

Edinburgh 1937 appointed a continuation committee to continue its work. Furthermore, the committee was empowered to act on behalf of the F&O movement in ongoing merger talks with other ecumenical organizations.

5. The World Council of Churches in the Process of Formation

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 252

¹⁸³ DH, Nos. 188-197/pp.72-73.

Stemming from the initiatives of William A. Brown and Archbishop Temple, a consultation of ecumenical leaders from the various unity movements was formed in 1933 to discuss ecumenical problems. Eventually, on 8 July 1937 at a meeting at Westfield College (London), the idea of what was to become the WCC (a name suggested by Samuel M. Cavert) emerged. The L&W and F&O movements were perceived as two complementary streams of the one ecumenical movement. Hence, it was proposed that L&W and F&O fuse together into a more permanent and comprehensive body. More representative of the churches, this new body was to care for the interests of each movement. Convinced that such a merger would have a synergistic effect on the whole ecumenical movement, L&W and F&O (that same year at their respective world conferences) approved the plan.¹⁸⁴

A joint L&W and F&O committee of fourteen members (and a similar number of alternates) was formed and authorized to draft a constitution. In consultation with invited representatives from various churches, this committee at Utrecht (Holland) in May 1938 adopted a provisional constitution for the proposed WCC. Indicating a christological thrust

¹⁸⁴ Fearing that the F&O movement might be absorbed by L&W, Edinburgh 1937 instructed its Continuation Committee to agree to amalgamation only if the following guarantees were accepted: "1) In the first instant, the Continuation appointed by Edinburgh 1937 should be the Commission on Faith and Order for the WCC. 2) All members appointed to this Commission should belong to churches which 'Jesus Christ as God and Saviour'. 3) There exist a Commission on Faith and Order in the WCC to carry on the mandate of the F&O movement. 4) Aside from having its own Theological Secretariat, the Council in consultation with the Commission is to make adequate funds available for its work. 5) In matters pertaining to Faith and Order, the whole Council should proceed in accordance with that theological basis. Cf. Edinburgh 1937, pp. 271-72; The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches; held at Amsterdam, August 22nd to September 4th, 1948. Edited by W.A. Visser't Hooft. (London: SCM Press, 1949), pp. 200-01; hereafter cited Amsterdam 1948.

for the new organization, the Committee surprisingly chose as the "Basis" for the WCC constitution the traditional F&O formula (which affirmed Jesus Christ as God and Saviour). Eventually ratified at the Inaugural assembly of the WCC, the "Basis" read: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour".¹⁸⁵ Due to the Orthodox influence, the "Basis" was revised at the third assembly of the WCC in 1961 to explicitly reflect a more trinitarian and scriptural frame: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".¹⁸⁶

To anticipate and facilitate the amalgamation and consummation of F&O and the L&W movements, a provisional committee of the WCC in "Process of Formation" was formed. At Oxford 1937, the L&W movement transferred its functions and responsibilities over to this

¹⁸⁵Amsterdam 1948, p. 197. Though not a confession, the "Basis" of the World Council's constitution determines the context for the whole life and activity of this world organization. It essentially performs three functions "1) It indicates the nature of fellowship which the churches in the Council seek to establish among themselves. 2) It provides the orientation point for the work which the World Council itself undertakes. 3) It indicates the range of the fellowship which the churches in the Council seek to establish". WCC, The Evanston Report: The Second Assembly of the WCC, 1954. Edited by Visser't Hooft. (London: SCM Press, 1955), p. 306; hereafter cited as Evanston 1954.

¹⁸⁶The New Delhi Report; The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961. Edited by W.A. Visser't Hooft. (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 152 and 426; hereafter cited New Delhi 1961.

committee.¹⁸⁷ The F&O movement, however, choose to remain an independent entity until the inaugural assembly of the WCC. In January 1939, Willem A. Visser 't Hooft (Ref.), director of the World Student Christian Association, was appointed General Secretary of the new organization. He served in this post until 1966 and proved to be a religious administrator par excellence.¹⁸⁸ Planned for August 1941, the WCC inaugural assembly (because of the intervention of World War II) was postponed. Eventually it was formally established in 1948. Meanwhile, in the interim, the WCC in the "process of formation" continued to etch out its nebulous existence as a "privileged instrument" of ecumenism.

6. Summary

The ambience of Lausanne 1927 and Edinburgh 1937 demonstrated that the separated churches could meet for amicable discussions even on divisive faith and order issues. As verified by the "Notes" attached to the official reports of the two Conferences, F&O did not delude itself as to the deep discord existing among the churches. It recognized, for example, the churches differed sharply on the degree of doctrinal consensus deemed essential for a reunited church and the most appropriate way in which to present and safeguard this unity. Through

¹⁸⁷ Ehrenstrom, "Movements..." HEM, p. 592.

¹⁸⁸ Since its formation the WCC have had four general secretaries: W.A. Visser 't Hooft (Ref.) - 1948-1966; Carson Blake (Presby.) - 1966-1972, Philip Potter (Meth.) - 1972-1983; Emilio Castro (Meth.), 1983-present.

their witness and separate declarations, the Orthodox gave the most exact catholic account of the faith deemed essential for unity.

Whereas Lausanne 1927 was ambiguous, Edinburgh 1937 was more definite that there is only one church which has to be visibly manifested. With the growing confessional consciousness, Protestant theology wielded considerably more influence at Edinburgh 1937 than it did ten years earlier. Hence, in contrast to Lausanne 1927, Edinburgh 1937 took a much more positive approach to federation as a legitimate form of unity. Apropos to a renewal of the confessional identity, the churches in 1937 stressed the need to acquire unity in diversity rather than in doctrinal uniformity.

E. Conclusion

Influenced by the breakdown of the culus regio eius religio tenet, global organized efforts were made to promote a Christian fellowship more inclusive than national and regional loyalties. From 1910 to 1948, these ecumenical efforts gathered momentum and furnished the disparate churches (acting collectively) with an international forum. As an integral component of the ecumenical movement, the F&O movement sought to find a doctrinal foundation for Christian unity. It strived to bring the divided churches into conference in order to discuss both the things on which they agreed and the things on which they differed. Guided by the F&O movement, the churches came to appreciate the need to expose, compare and analyze their underlying doctrines and structures. The F&O movement came to acknowledge that "non-theological" factors had contributed to the genesis and furtherment of Christian divisions. More

importantly, it continued to demonstrate that there can be no true unity without doctrinal accord on faith and order issues. In its attempts to narrow the field of differences and extend the area of agreements, F&O envisaged the organic merger of churches into larger and larger bodies. Both Lausanne 1927 and Edinburgh 1937 demonstrated that estranged churches could come together in a congenial manner to frankly discuss their deepest convictions.

At Lausanne 1927, Protestant delegates from various bodies agreed that the church presently exists in a way in which all Christians can participate. Ten years later, F&O discerned more clearly that all issues which divide the churches stem from the various concepts of the church. Significantly, it noted that Catholic churches stressed the "givenness" of the church and Protestant bodies emphasized to varying degrees its "gathered" character.

Corresponding to the different conceptions of the ecclesia, Edinburgh 1937 officially recognized that the form of a future reunited church must incorporate elements of three major forms of church polity: "episcopacy", "presbytery", "congregation". It moved away from an earlier position that Christians had to recover the church's lost unity. Rather it advanced the idea that ecclesial unity is a perpetual fact. Since unity is God's prevenient grace to his church, the churches are not called to create but to manifest unity.

The reports of Lausanne 1927 and Edinburgh 1937 confirmed that among the churches there existed essential doctrinal agreement in their doctrine of God, revelation, humankind, creation, salvation history, and eternal life. These documents also acknowledged the grave differences exists on issues which pertain to the church's essence, membership,

ministry, the necessity and efficacy of the sacraments and the significance of ecclesiological divisions. The conflict between a Catholic authoritarian view and a Protestant personalistic view of the nature of the church proved to be the most difficult obstacle to an essential unity in faith which is to be manifested in sacramental and co-operative life. Comparative ecclesiology was unable to penetrate to the root cause for this all-embracing divergence.

Subsequent to Lausanne 1927, the F&O movement (despite strong opposition from the Orthodox) came to prefer a unity characterized by comprehensiveness to doctrinal uniformity. The variegated doctrine and polity found within the churches came to be portrayed as healthy signs of the riches of the gifts of Christ and his Paraclete. By their decision to assume direct responsibility for the ecumenical movement in 1948, the churches raised the quest for the external unity of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church to a higher level of urgency and priority. Using the WCC as its instrument, the churches made new efforts to manifest the church unity already given by God in Christ. The next chapter will proceed to examine from 1948 to 1954 the WCC's understanding of its own essence, the ecumenical goal, and the kind of unity it promoted.

CHAPTER TWO

AMSTERDAM TO EVANSTON:

TWO IRRECONCILABLE CONCEPTION OF THE CHURCH?

A. Introduction

Amid the spawning problems of post-World War II society, the WCC held two world assemblies. The inaugural assembly was launched in Amsterdam, Holland, in August–September 1948 (Amsterdam 1948) and the second assembly convened in Evanston, Illinois, in August 1954 (Evanston 1954). Now a Commission within the WCC, F&O sponsored its third world conference at Lund, Sweden, in August 1952 (Lund 1952).¹ Inundated with post-war related concerns, the WCC gave only secondary consideration to doctrinal issues. The Secretary General of the WCC indicated, however, that it is insufficient for the churches merely to speak and listen to each other. Ultimately, ecumenical dialogue has meaning to the extent that the churches together are ready "to learn more about their common Lord and about His will for the church".²

¹For discussions and reports see: Amsterdam 1948; Evanston 1954; The Third World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lund, August 15th to 28th, 1952. Edited by O.S. Tomkins. (London: SCM Press, 1952). (Hereafter cited Lund 1952. These Reports also found in DH).

Generally only a relatively small part of an agenda for an assembly of the WCC is reserved for discussion on traditional F&O issues. As reflecting the mind of the whole assembly, these debates deeply influences the way FOC will develop its thought.

²Cf., "Editorial", ER, 1(Autumn, 1948), p. 2.

By examining the major F&O preparatory material for and the reports produced by ecumenical conferences from 1948-54, this chapter will examine how the WCC defined its own being, its relationship to member churches and the ecclesia. It will endeavor to determine: Did the ecumenical movement during this period advance the cause of Christian unity? What kind of unity did it pursue? Did the WCC continue to support the F&O trend of the 1930s that a reunited church ought to be characterized by doctrinal comprehensiveness rather than uniformity?

B. Amsterdam 1948: Man's Disorder And God's Design

The Provisional Committee of the WCC in 1946 chose the main theme for its proposed inaugural assembly. Framed under four subsidiary themes, it was defined as "Man's Disorder and God's Design".³ Four International and Interconfessional commissions were appointed to make a preliminary study of each sub-theme. Each commission published its essays (including report) in a separate volume which bore the same title as the Amsterdam section for which it was prepared.⁴ With respect to the sectional documents of World Council assemblies, this research will be essentially restricted to an examination of those reports in which F&O had a direct input.

³According to the WCC constitution, an "assembly" constitutes "the principle authority in the Council". Amsterdam 1948, p. 198.

⁴Along with providing the 351 official delegates with "a general orientation and knowledge" of the issues to be discussed, each preparatory volume was meant to serve "as the focus-point of a valuable process of ecumenical thinking" and a current source of ecumenical ideas for public study. Ibid., p. 48.

Germane to the F&O tradition, Commission I prepared for Section I of Amsterdam 1948 a working volume entitled "The Universal Church in God's Design".⁵ Divided into four parts (the doctrine of the church, the shame and glory of the church, signs of his coming and the ecumenical movement), the thrust of the preparatory volume focused on doctrinal and ecclesiastical unity. At Amsterdam 1948, many of the influential members of the FOC were assigned to Section I. After this working report was discussed and revised first by Section I and then by the whole plenary assembly, it (as were the other section reports) was transmitted to the member churches of the WCC for study and action.

In the volume prepared for Section I, leading Christian thinkers from various denominations concurred that God in Christ had already given unity to the church.⁶ Since the churches had no common dogmatic definition of the nature of the church, these scholars agreed that the core problem of the ecclesia is the existence of the churches.⁷ They differed significantly, however, in their personal interpretation of the biblical foundation for the nature of the church. Based on the dilemma of the church's given unity and manifested disunity, Commission I called attention to the challenges facing the denominations. Realistically,

⁵Internationally known scholars like G. Aulén, C.T. Craig, O.S. Tomkins, K. Barth, G. Florovsky, R. Niebuhr, A.M. Ramsey, and others were involved in the work of Commission I. For a complete list of members see: WCC, The Universal Church in God's Design (New York: Harper, 1948), p.201. (Hereafter cited as Universal Church).

⁶The major contributors were: Barth, Craig, Devanandan, Fjellbu, Florovsky, Gregg, Niebuhr, Schlunk, Skydsgaard, Tomkins, Villain, Visser't Hooft and Wyon. Cf. Ibid., p. 12

⁷Ibid., p. 17.

they had to undertake a joint scriptural study into their given unity and seek ways to manifest a common witness to the world.

1. Commission I on the Church

Lutheran bishop Gustaf Aulén of Strangnas (Sweden) believed that sin and division affected not only the ecclesiastical membership but touched the very being of the church as the body of Christ. But as the "new koinonia" indissolubly united to the headship of Christ and his sanctifying Spirit, the church is a "Communion of Saints". Through its two constitutive elements, the word and the sacraments (baptism and eucharist), Christ continues his ministry of reconciliation.⁸

Bishop Aulén used the scriptural image of the ecclesia as the body of Christ to support the position that the empirical churches were already in communion with one another because they belong to the same body. More than merely a subjective experience, the fellowship obtained through the word and sacraments had an objective reality. Likewise, he insisted that the unity of the church illuminated in scripture is unity in diversity and not uniformity - "neither uniformity of doctrine, nor orders, nor uniformity of life and religious experience".⁹

According to Professor Clarence Craig (Meth.) of Yale Divinity School, the church is primarily a koinonia, a participation by believers

⁸Cf. G. Aulén, "The Church in the Light of the New Testament," Universal Church, pp. 18-28.

⁹Ibid., p. 28.

in the gifts of the Spirit.¹⁰ Constituted to be a witnessing community to the diverse gifts of the same Spirit, the church, according to Craig, has no form of fixed organization which is essential to its being.¹¹ For him, the description of the church as the body of Christ is the most important scriptural image to illustrate what the church ought to be. Significantly, it strongly supports the proposition that ecclesial unity is based on diversity. Through the visible church the invisibly risen and ascended Christ continues his God-given mission to the world while building up and transforming the ecclesia from within.¹²

Georges Florovsky of the Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris indicated that the working out of a dogmatic definition of the church is still in the "pre-theological stage". Spiritually attuned to its own ineffable "glorious reality", the church, for nearly fifteen centuries, experienced no need to "define what is self-evident". As for post-Reformation formulations, they were marked by polemical nuances.¹³

¹⁰C. Craig, "The Church of the New Testament," Universal Church, p. 35.

¹¹Ibid., p. 39.

¹²Ibid., pp. 39-41.

¹³G. Florovsky, "The Church: Her Nature and Task", Universal Church, p. 43. This lack of a dogmatic definition for the church has ramifications for the interpretation of the principle "extra ecclesium nulla salus". While admitting that schisms posed "real impediments" to the reunion of all Christians in the one church (which he identified with the Orthodox Church), Dr. Florovsky did not restrict membership to the church built "on a rock" to those possessing canonical and institutional credentials. Admitting to degrees of church membership, he maintained that "the true interpretation of the antinomy of the Christian schism can be reached only in the context of a balanced doctrine of the church". Cf. Florovsky, "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem", in ER 2 (Winter, 1950), pp. 156, 160-61.

According to Professor Florovsky, the essence of the church as a "sacramental" and eschatological" society is constituted and effected by the "social sacraments" of baptism and eucharist. The apostolic succession of the three-fold ministry of the sacramental priesthood assures the church's historical continuity and mystical identity. Hence, the episcopacy embodies "not so much a canonical as the mystical foundation of Church unity".¹⁴

Since the Spirit-filled community is the body of Christ and "not an Incarnation of the Holy Ghost," Florovsky cautioned against the tendency to opt for an individualistic rather than a corporate interpretation of the church. He recommended that the FOC support a christological rather than a pneumatological orientation in theology.¹⁵ By incarnating the new life of the risen and ascended Christ in word and deed, the proclamation of the Gospel is the primary task of this Spirit-imbued historical institution. Being "not of this world" but "in the world" the pilgrim church of Christ is torn between two self contradictory programs - a tendency to move toward global monasticism and the desire to construct the Christian state. For any program to have relevance for the contemporary situation, Florovsky asserted that it must emerge from "a restored understanding of the nature and essence of the church".¹⁶

¹⁴Ibid., p. 52. Professor Florovsky was of the mind that unity is of the very essence of the church's being and nature. Though Christendom is divided, he was adamant that it was impossible for division to occur within the infallible and essentially indivisible church. Florovsky, "The Doctrine of the Church ...", Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 53-54.

¹⁶Cf. Ibid., pp. 55-58

Concentrating on the four notes of the church, John A.F. Gregg, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, attested to the objective reality of the church in space and time. In and through the church, the graced filled life of Christ in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit is made available to all human beings. Having received in Christ a "give-ness" in doctrine, the church's unity is constituted by a common loyalty to Christ.¹⁷ Referring to the four basic requirements for unity enshrined in the Lambeth Quadrilateral, Dr. Gregg expounded the position that the Anglican Communion would find it impossible to enter into unity with any church who lacks these essentials and had no desire to recover them. No matter how desirable unity may be, he argued that unity built on "comprehension at the cost of unlawful compromise would be no better than a bridge which broke in the middle".¹⁸

Dr. Karl Barth of the University of Basel claimed that God alone can solve global disorder. This revered professor of theology deemed that the church (the living, worshipping congregation of the risen and ascended Christ) is continually being recreated. He averred that a permanently constituted church order (presbyterian-synodal, papal, episcopal, etc.) would stymie the free movement between God and the congregation.¹⁹ Living in the final period of history, the church is the Ereignis (loosely translated as "event"). Responding in faith to

¹⁷John A. F. Gregg, "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church," Universal Church, pp. 61-2.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁹Karl Barth, "The Church-The Living Congregation of the Living Jesus Christ," Universal Church, p. 75.

the proclamation of word enshrined in scripture, the congregation is the witness to the divine victory achieved in Christ. Ultimately in this period Christ will manifest all things to himself.

Though not involved in its organization, Dr. Barth profoundly influenced the orientation of the WCC. At Amsterdam 1948, for example, Section I applied the Barthian dialectical method to their discussions in an attempt to discover the doctrinal agreements within disagreements and vice versa existing among the churches. Dr. Visser't Hooft credited Barth with giving the WCC its "spiritual substance".²⁰

2. The F&O Section: The Universal Church In God's Design

At Amsterdam 1948, the 351 delegates representing 147 churches unanimously ratified the WCC's constitution with its pithy doctrinal "Basis".²¹ While some would have preferred a more trinitarian emphasis, all were receptive to the traditional F&O christological formula.

Unfortunately, the constitution did not explicitly state whether the goal of the WCC was to advance toward doctrinal and ecclesial unity. As the first of seven functions it felt duty bound to discharge, the WCC confirmed the commitment "to carry on the work of the two world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work". To the neglect of

²⁰Visser't Hooft, Memories (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 37. One former WCC staff worker avouched that under Visser't Hooft the Reformed sense of Church replaced the Anglican one which was previously employed in F&O documentation. J.C. Hoekendijk, The Church Inside Out, trans. I.C. Rottenberg (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 24.

²¹Amsterdam 1948, p. 197.

doctrine, the other six functions focused on L&W issues.²² The Council's preoccupation with social concerns posed a real threat that the objectives of F&O would become dormant within the WCC structure.

a) Introduction to the Theme of Section I

Section I mirrored the traditional F&O emphasis for doctrine and ecclesial unity. On August 24, Professors Craig, Florovsky and Regin Prenter introduced the theme of Section I to a plenary session.

Dr. Craig focused on major interconfessional theological agreements and differences relevant to the origin, marks and unity of the church.²³ Specifically, he referred to seven important points of accord reflected in the preparatory volume for Section I which affirmed: God is the author of the church; redemption is God's saving action in Christ, the center of the church; the Holy Spirit animates the whole life of church; the church, set apart in holiness, is a worshipping community; the church with a membership of forgiven sinners is related to both the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God; God has imbued the church with a diversity of gifts and the church is one. Moreover, Craig pointed out that the churches still differed on such salient matters as the proper relationship between the local church and the universal church; the authority of tradition versus scripture; and whether the

²²The other functions were designed to facilitate and promote common action, cooperation for study, ecumenical consciousness, interrelation between other ecumenical entities, the creation of world ecumenical conferences and evangelism. Amsterdam 1948, pp. 197-98.

²³Cf. Amsterdam 1948, pp. 33-34; Gaines, p. 260.

"horizontal" or "vertical" relationship best represents the nature of the continuity of the one church of Christ.²⁴

Dr. Florovsky offered a caveat against the practice of posing "easy", "elrenical" solutions to the problem of unity.²⁵ Confessing that the church is governed by the divine directive and not merely by human practical expediency, he insisted that the churches must come to the realization that in God's "purpose and design" unity must begin with

²⁴"Horizontal" continuity maintains that individual believers come to God in Christ through the visible, historical church; and "vertical" continuity accents the direct inner spiritual relationship between God and humans. Amsterdam 1948, p. 34.

²⁵At Amsterdam the Orthodox world was represented merely by delegates from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Church of Greece, the Church of Cyprus and three theologians from the exiled Russians in Paris. Prior to Amsterdam 1948, the heads of all the autocephalous Orthodox churches (with the exception of Jerusalem) met at Moscow to help the Russian Orthodox Church celebrate its fifth centenary of its independence. From the 8-13 July 1948, the Patriarchate of Russia turned this gathering turned into a kind of pan-Orthodox synod. Based on the claim that only the Ecumenical Patriarchate had the traditional right to convoke such meeting, the representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece refused to share in its discussions and signed none of its conclusions.

One declaration emanating from the Moscow Consultation and signed by all who partook was the common refusal to participate in the ecumenical movement in its present form. It contended that to pursue its interest in United Nation type concerns the ecumenical movement had renounced its original thrust of seeking doctrinal unity. It noted the merger of the L&W and the F&O movements and the lack of doctrinal study that had been conducted since 1938-1948. This was perceived as additional steps towards the realization of the Protestant goal of acquiring a type of union that would enable it to vie with the Vatican on the world stage. Concerned primarily with its own self-protection and the route of least resistance, Protestantism (according to the document) is intent upon obtaining an abstract union on social, economic and political grounds. In its plans for future action, the ecumenical movement bases itself on the theoretical idea of creating a new external apparatus, a "Ecumenical Church", an institution within the State, which would be linked in some way to the state and exert temporal influence. Cf. "The Moscow Patriarchate and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches", ER, I (Winter 1949), pp, 188-196.

the repentance and renewal of the churches.²⁶

In his presentation on the theme, Dr. Prenter of the University of Aarhus (Denmark) indicated that history and tradition are among the non-theological factors which had stymied Christian reunion. To its discredit and shame, the church set up uniformity against diversity as indicative of the "veritable strength of the community". Having profound implications "to every sphere of life", Prenter rejoiced in the "signs" appearing in all existing churches of the coming glory of Christ.²⁷

b) Final Report of Section I

The Report of Section I was prepared under the chairpersonship of Johannes E.R. Lilje of the Evangelical Church of Germany. After passing through a plenary session and drafting committee, the report was resubmitted to a subsequent plenary session where the revised version was unanimously received without discussion. Consisting of six parts - our given unity, our deepest difference, common beliefs and common problems, the unity in our differences, the glory of the church and the shame of the churches, and the World Council of Churches - it was transmitted to the churches for serious study and appropriate action.

The report notes that the Amsterdam Assembly delegates were from lands, traditions and denominations which "misunderstood, ignored, and misrepresented" one another. It went on to assert that the churches were

²⁶ Amsterdam Report, p. 34.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 35-36; Gaines, p. 259-60.

becoming more aware of "our given unity".²⁸ Not of human construction, this unity was God's gift to his church.

Because of "a hard core of disagreement" between contradictory ways of apprehending the one church of Christ, the churches had failed to manifest this unity in their structure and practice.²⁹ Accordingly, the fundamental crux of the ecumenical problem ("our deepest difference") was found to be located in the dichotomy between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" conceptions of the church. Those churches from Catholic traditions concentrated on the visible and horizontal continuity of the ecclesia. On the other hand, the churches from Protestant traditions focused on the eschatological and the direct relationship between God and the individual believer.³⁰ From the perspective of their respective

²⁸"Universal Church in God's Design," DH, Nos. 2-4/p.76. William Nicholls claimed "our given unity" is the basis for the whole ecumenical movement. He said "it would be generally recognized that the ecumenical consciousness involves three elements, a recognition of an existing unity, a sense of sin at divisions which exists between us within this unity, and a movement of repentance for this division which takes the concrete form of a search for another kind of unity which we do not yet possess, a greater outward and visible unity, however, that may be defined. Thus, the basis of the movement is what is commonly called our given unity". W. Nicholls, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Doctrine of the Church," ER, 4(1951), p. 21.

²⁹DH, No. 7/p.77.

³⁰A footnote attached to the Report declares that "Catholic" is given a more inclusive meaning than Roman Catholic and in Europe, "Protestant" is better rendered "Evangelical". In the "Catholic" tradition stress is placed on the corporate or institutional understanding of church - "the visible continuity of the Church in the apostolic succession of the episcopate". The "Protestant" emphasis focused on "the initiative of the Word of God and the response of faith", commonly expressed by the doctrine of justification by faith alone (sola fide). Ibid., No. 7/p.77. Three years earlier, F&O used the same terminology in its Commission's report "On the Nature of the Church". Dr. Visser't Hooft agreed with the moderator of the report (Footnote Continued)

traditions both Catholic and Protestant churches perceive "the Christian faith and life as a self-consistent whole". Their ways of apprehending the whole, however, are "inconsistent with each other".³¹ Confronting the churches is the challenge to present the wholeness of truth of both positions so they are mutually acceptable to one another.³²

Through its adroit use of the dialectical method, Section I was able to delineate some major disagreements contained in the common belief that Christ constituted the church through which he continues his saving mission. Some of the major problems concerned the relationship between individual salvation and objective redemption; the nexus between scripture and tradition; and the church as institution and contemporary event. The need was expressed for common studies on the sacraments, on continuity in the ministry and on the nature of invisible unity.

Section I declared that the church, together with its duty to worship God, had been entrusted with a mission to proclaim the gospel in word and deed to all humanity. Disagreements on this commonly held conviction gravitated on such issues as the proper bond between worship and witness-cum-service, the extent to which God's reign is already

(Footnote Continued)

that the major challenge facing the churches was how to reconcile the "Catholic" and "Protestant" conceptions of the church. With strong scholarship supporting both positions, he maintained that to realize unity this dichotomy must be reconciled in a way that would do justice to the truth found in both traditions. CC, The Formative Years, 1938-1948 (Geneva: WCC, 1948), p. 23.

³¹ Ibid., No. 6/ pp.77-77.

³² Ibid., No. 8/p.77.

realized in the una sancta ecclesia and the nature of the church's responsibility to the secular world.³³

At Amsterdam 1948, the churches through their representatives confirmed that the common unity they had begun to experience in Christ prevented them from following their own separated paths.³⁴ To depict how their experiences had fostered a deeper theological understanding of ecclesial unity, the report of Section I employed the scriptural terminology of sin, penitence and renewal. Later at Evanston 1954, this approach ignited a great deal of controversy.

While God's love is the basis for the her "glory", the church's shame stems from her divisions. Due in part to "genuine convictions and loyalty to truth itself," these separations were also caused and perpetuated by "our sin" of too close an alignment with worldly evils such as class division, segregation of race, "ecclesiastical officialism".³⁵ With this kind of terminology, the WCC made its first attempt to theologically describe the new awareness of unity and the difficulty of the task of realizing a reunited Christendom.

Without indicating the nature of the WCC or its relationship to the churches, Section I thanked God for the WCC and expressed the hope that the churches would continue to overcome division as they are led to seek the unity God wills for the una sancta ecclesia.³⁶ Striving to do

³³ Ibid., Nos. 1-20/p.79.

³⁴ Ibid., Nos. 23-34/pp.79-85.

³⁵ Ibid., No. 26/pp.80-1.

³⁶ Ibid., Nos. 30-31/p.81.

justice to the ecumenical movement, the delegates of Section I expressed their commitment to remain open to God's will for his church and to encourage the denominations to assume responsibility for one another.

c) Plenary Discussion on the Report of Section I

The plenary discussion on the report of Section I highlighted that not all delegates agreed that the "Catholic" and "Protestant" conceptions were the only (or even most appropriate) ways to apprehend the one church of Christ. Claiming that the report's definition of "Protestant" more aptly described a Christian than a church, Dr. Douglas Horton (Congr.) pointed out that many of the WCC member churches could not recognize their own particular communities in either the "Catholic" or "Protestant" conception of the church. He expressed deep disappointment that the report did not officially endorse the "gathered church" view which stressed fellowship of the Spirit as a third way of apprehending the una sancta ecclesia. The proponents of this view attest that as they were drawn closer in the Spirit to Christ, they were simultaneously more deeply bonded to one another.³⁷

The Bishop of London argued that by simply identifying a particular church as belonging to either the "Catholic" or "Protestant" tradition did a disservice to those ecclesial bodies which thought of themselves as both.³⁸ Claiming that the terms were frequently misunderstood, he

³⁷ Amsterdam 1948, p. 57.

³⁸ Ibid.

noted that many used "Protestant" to mean "anti-papal" and "Catholic" to mean "papal". While acknowledging a difference between "Catholic" and "Protestant" theology, he did not consider this deepest cleavage to be irreconcilable. Thus he insisted that a way must be found to bring these traditions together so as to provide "a fully comprehensive grasp of the whole Gospel".³⁹

Canon Hodgson and Professor Florovsky supported the position that the "Catholic" and "Protestant" views of the church were indeed theologically irreconcilable. Without compromise, Canon Hodgson considered it an impossible task to reconcile the Catholic conception "that the church was meant to be a body in space and time" with the "Protestant" position that the only continuity necessary for the church was found in "the invisible sphere of our risen Lord Jesus Christ".⁴⁰ While sensitive to the position of those who held a "gathered church" conception of the nature of the una sancta ecclesia, Dr. Florovsky maintained that to include a third type of church in the report would generate confusion. He was convinced, however, that the differences between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" positions was more than a dialectic - "they were two completely different blocs of belief, which could be reconciled only by a compromise".⁴¹ Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the "Catholic" and "Protestant" positions would prove bootless without genuine theological reconciliation.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 59.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 60.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 61.

Acting on the influential advice of delegates such as Pastor Niemoller, the Amsterdam Assembly resisted pressure to incorporate Dr. Horton's recommendation.⁴² Nevertheless, the report acknowledged that both the "Catholic" and "Protestant" conceptions contained within themselves "schools of thought" which cut across different confessions. In practice (to a lesser or greater extent), the Catholic "horizontal" element was present in all Protestant churches and the Protestant "vertical" characteristic was present in Catholic churches. Hence the official report of Amsterdam 1948 acknowledged points of contact between those who viewed the church as "given" and those of the diametrically opposed understanding that the church is "gathered".

3. Summary

Though issued directly by a World Council Assembly, the report of Section I (as later confirmed by Lund 1952) was in complete harmony with the F&O tradition. Received by the WCC highest governing body (an assembly), this report stressed that the churches did not have to create unity because God in Christ had already made a gift of this unity to his church. Consequently the churches have a responsibility to seek to better understand and manifest this unity in their lives.

In the "Message" addressed to the member churches, the Amsterdam Assembly frankly stated that the churches were divided "in matters of faith, order and tradition" as well as "by pride of nation, class and

⁴² Ibid.

race".⁴³ It confirmed that in their search for Christ the churches had found each other. As the instrument of the churches, the WCC declared that despite their differences the churches, in accordance with God's design for the church, has taken a stand: "We intend to stay together".⁴⁴ Progressively the churches came to understand that they must harken to the will of God in Christ who alone can overcome the sin of division and "create the unity of the Holy Catholic Church".⁴⁵

C. The Dogmatic Basis and Nature of the WCC

Before and after Amsterdam 1948, Dr. Visser't Hooft did most of the seminal and constructive thinking on questions which pertained to the nature and the functions of the WCC.⁴⁶ With unremitting efforts coupled with precise views, he addressed questions pertinent to the problem of

⁴³At a meeting of the FOC in 1949, Dr. Oliver Tomkins (Ang.) voiced the opinion that Amsterdam 1948 demonstrated clearly how sick the church really was. Before taking the necessary steps to effect the cure, Tomkins insisted that it was essential to have such a knowledge of the church's diseased state. Cf. F&O II, No. 2, p. 17.

⁴⁴Amsterdam 1948, p. 9. In the report of Section I, the delegates expressed their intent to grow together. According to one of the influential delegates and member of the FOC (Angus Dun), the designation "we" referred to each individual church and the church universal. Cf. Ecumenical Review 2(Autumn 1950), p. 267. The Ecumenical Review (the official journal of the WCC) will hereafter be cited ER.

⁴⁵Amsterdam 1948, pp. 9-11.

⁴⁶Within a year after its composition in 1945, Visser't Hooft published a paper entitled "The World Council of Churches: Its nature and limits". Recognizing the important views contained in this paper should be "widely circulated, for comments and criticism," Commission I published the paper in revised form in its preparatory volume for the Amsterdam Assembly. In the Secretary Report to the Amsterdam Assembly many of the major views were reiterated. Genesis, p. 71

authority in the World Council and the implications of membership. At a meeting of the Central Committee (hereafter abbreviated CC)⁴⁷ of the WCC at Toronto in 1950, he presented a document which after further revisions was adopted as an officially agreed declaration on how the World Council understood its own being and purpose.

1. The Secretary General's Personal Views

With vastly different understandings of the person of Jesus Christ and his mission, the member churches gave different interpretations to the phrase "fellowship of churches".⁴⁸ Embodying within itself the fundamental dualistic characteristics of L&W and F&O, the WCC (at times) considered itself more than merely an instrument for facilitating the unity of the church. Occasionally it viewed itself as the organ which brought about the real, but incomplete church unity already achieved.⁴⁹

Being de jure and de facto a Council of Churches, the World Council

⁴⁷At each World Council Assembly a new Central Committee (from 90 to 145 members) is elected to serve as the highest WCC governing body between assemblies. With the Secretary General, the CC moderator is very influential in setting the direction the Council will follow over a specific time frame. Since the formation of the WCC in 1948, there have been five CC moderators: George Bell (Ang., 1948-1954), Franklin C. Fry (Luth., 1954-1968), M.M. Thomas (Orth. 1968-1975), Edward W. Scott (Ang., 1975-1973), Heinz-Joachim Held (Ref., 1983-present).

⁴⁸Oliver Tomkins, "The Church, the Churches and the Council," ER 4 (1951-1952), 259.

⁴⁹Genesis, p. 71; Universal Church, pp. 179-81. Though making no claims to being the *Una Sancta*, it is the body where (at least from the vertical perspective) it has pleased God "the *kolnonia* in the one faith may become (and has become) at least partially visible". Universal Church, p. 178.

is more than a symbol of the practical and humanitarian relationship which exist between the churches. Though not a union of churches, the WCC "represents the churches directly and officially". An essential reason for its being is to seek for a common proclamation of the gospel.⁵⁰ As such, Dr. Visser't Hooft insisted the World Council cannot return "to the 'as if' theology" of Stockholm 1925 which required that "we shall act 'as if' we were one in faith". Ecumenical experience had proved that a failure of the church to witness to a common faith makes "our unity in 'life and work' impotent".⁵¹ More than an interpreter in interchurch doctrinal dialogues, the World Council claims that it is part of its mandate to proclaim the unity that Christ had already given to his church and "to prepare the way for a much fuller and much deeper expression of that unity".⁵²

Lacking the "notae ecclesiae" (the essential "notes" of the church) and unable to provide a common witness and sacramental life, Dr. Visser't Hooft maintained that the WCC is not the Una Sancta to which the traditional creeds refer.⁵³ He acknowledged that within the history of the ecumenical movement there had been "a strong element of relativism and lack of concern for the truth of God" which blinded the churches to their own sickness. With their existing "confusion of tongues", the churches were unable to consistently manifest the Una

⁵⁰Universal Church, p. 181.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 184.

⁵²Amsterdam 1948, p. 29.

⁵³Universal Church, pp. 182-83.

Sancta in a way which corresponds to its nature. Any unity which the WCC might be able to force under such conditions would be "far too much a unity of compromise" rather than "the biblical unity in truth".⁵⁴ Until the churches recognize their need for a change of heart (metanoia) "there can be no real representation of the Una Sancta".⁵⁵

Created by the churches and having no life of its own, the World Council is "an emergency solution" till the time the various church bodies reunite in time or in heaven. With no ecclesial status, the World Council has no right to "legislate" to the churches.⁵⁶ Uninterested in becoming "a single unified church" controlled by a "centralized administrative authority," the World Council seeks the unity that springs from the love of Christ Jesus which unites the churches to himself and to one another.⁵⁷ Having no authority to act in itself, the authority of World Council statements rests solely on their "own strength and wisdom" as reflecting the mind of influential church leaders by which the Spirit might influence the whole Church.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 183. In 1955 Visser't Hooft again insisted that the WCC did not want unity at any price. It was interested only in helping the churches obtain that greater unity which was rooted in "obedience to the truth". Because doctrinal relativism undermined such a quest, the WCC did not give it any support. Visser't Hooft, "Various Meanings of Unity and the Unity the World Council Seeks to Promote". (Hereafter cited "Various Meanings," ER, 8 (October, 1955), pp. 22-23.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 183-84.

⁵⁶The World Council's constitution prevents such action. See "Report of Committee II" (policy) Amsterdam 1948, p. 127; DH, No. 1, p. 168.

⁵⁷DH, No. 1, p. 168.

⁵⁸Cf. Amsterdam 1948, pp. 198, 210; Universal Church, pp. 181, 195.

While conceding the traditional influence of latitudinarian attitudes on the ecumenical movement, Dr. Visser't Hooft indicated that the World Council had never officially endorsed any particular theory of church. In accordance with the Christological basis of its constitution, membership is open to all Christian churches. Even a church which makes an exclusive claim to be the one and only true Church can join the WCC without compromise to its convictions. Further, there existed no official Council policy which requires that each member church accept the other member churches as equally true churches.⁵⁹

In September 1949 at the Istina Centre in Paris, Dr. Visser't Hooft presented a trenchant explanation of the nature of the WCC to leading R.C. ecumenists. Adroitly formulating his thoughts into a series of negative and positive theses, the Council's chief executive officer expounded on what the WCC is and is not.⁶⁰ As a follow up, he obtained permission from the WCC's Executive Committee (at its February 1949

⁵⁹Universal Church, p.191. See also "Secretary General's Report" in ER 2 (Autumn 1949), pp. 61-62.

⁶⁰In his attempt to describe the ecclesiology of the WCC, Visser't Hooft contend that the WCC is neither a "super" church nor a union broker. Moreover, it does not prejudice the means and ways to church unity, relativize doctrinal truth, or officially endorse any specific doctrine of the nature of the church. The presuppositions underlying WCC membership are: Christ is the head of his church; the church of Christ is one; membership in the Church is more inclusive than in one's denomination; member churches have a common obligation to examine its own exclusiveness; each member church recognizes in other member churches at least some elements of the Una Sancta; the membership concur that their common Lord would have them seek a united witness to the world; membership involve fraternal solidarity and responsibilities; and the constituent churches enter into a "spiritual relationship" designed to help build up in one another the body of Christ. Cf. DH, Nos. 6-15, pp. 171-76. The two theses pertaining to Christian solidarity and mutual spiritual aid had been incorporated into his scheme only after his meeting with the RC ecumenists. Genesis, pp. 74-76.

meeting) to present the document which had formed the basis for his lecture at the Istina Centre to the CC at its July 1950 meeting in Toronto, Canada.⁶¹ After discussion and further revision, the CC adopted the document to send to the churches "as a generally agreed statement of the Council's understanding of itself".⁶²

2. Toronto Statement: The WCC Defines its own Nature

Despite its time constraints and congested agenda, the Amsterdam Assembly attempted to officially address some of the questions the churches and critics asked about the WCC (e.g. its nature, the authority of its statements and utterances). Coming to the front after 1948 were related questions which pertained to the life expectancy of the WCC and the implications of membership. Their import was such that the World Council leadership understood that to set a steady course it was imperative to come to an official understanding of its own theological foundation. By receiving the "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches - The Ecclesiological Significance of the World

⁶¹ Assisted by the director of the FOC (O. Tomkins), Visser't Hooft redrafted this document in language more appropriate to a meeting composed of representatives from various traditions. Before the theses were discussed by the full CC, they were abridged and rearranged by a sub-committee of the same. In one of his later writings Visser't Hooft pointed out all his theses were accepted by the sub-committee except the one which stated "that membership of the Council did not imply the acceptance of the doctrine that unity of the Church consisted in the unity of the invisible Church". Cf. Genesis, pp. 74-77.

⁶² Genesis, pp. 74-76. After delivering his paper at the Istina Centre, Dr. Visser't added two additional theses pertaining to Christian solidarity and mutual spiritual aid between the churches.

Council of Churches" document (commonly referred to as the "Toronto statement"), the CC at its 1950 meeting took an important step towards the manifestation of Christian unity.

a) Delegates Discuss "Toronto Statement"

Lively discussion on the theses contained in the working paper provided for the Toronto meeting revealed various ecclesiologies. Two items of special interest concerned the intended life span of the WCC and whether membership required that all member churches accept one another as "church" in the full sense of the term.

There was growing support among CC members from Free churches that the WCC itself and not organic unity is the final form of unity God wills for the church. This view sparked strong opposition to the part of the proposed document which stated that the WCC had provisional rather than permanent status. Consequently the claim that the WCC "exists in order to deal in a provisional way with an abnormal situation" was eventually amended to read that the WCC "deals in a provisional way with divisions between existing churches, which ought not to be because they contradict the very nature of the church".⁶³ It remained a moot question whether "all division, and the Council itself, should be superseded by a

⁶³WCC, Minutes and Reports of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, Toronto (Canada) July 9-15, 1950 (Geneva: WCC, 1950), pp. 14-15. (Hereafter cited as Toronto 1950); Visser't Hooft, Genesis, p. 77.

united church".⁶⁴

The CC members were deeply divided on the thesis that membership in the WCC does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as "true, healthy or complete" churches in the true and full sense of the word. With opposition coming from Protestant members, many delegates, such as Presbyterians Henry P. Van Dusen and John MacKay, questioned whether the WCC could be deemed a ecclesial fellowship if member churches on some theory of ecclesial order could "unchurch" other member churches. Claiming that the major forms of ecclesial order could be traced back to the New Testament church, MacKay argued that the churches are relative to one another and to the higher form of unity to which they all aspire.⁶⁵

Regarding this thesis to be essential for their full participation in the WCC, Catholic members of the CC rejected any attempt to change the substance of this statement. An able exponent of the Orthodox view of ecclesiology, George Florovsky reminded the CC members that the Orthodox Communion confesses that all other churches are "essentially incomplete". Aware that within the WCC the churches which held "a high doctrine of Church" were at a minimum, he strongly recommended that on issue under discussion it was better for the WCC to appease the demands of the minority. He made it clear that the Orthodox Church would have no choice but to withdraw its membership if the Council was to change the principle upon which paragraph IV:4 was based.

⁶⁴Genesis, p. 77.

⁶⁵Toronto 1950, p. 15.

The sharp exchange of views on this issue created one of those "moments of anxiety" which threatened to tear the WCC apart.⁶⁶ Except for linguistic changes, the General Secretary realized that to change the "substance" of para. IV: 4 would force churches from Catholic traditions out of the World Council.⁶⁷ Determined to prevent this, the drafting committee resisted pressures to make fundamental changes to para. IV: 4. In its various drafts of the working document. Worded to win the support of the minority, the final version of para. IV: 4 read:

The member churches of the World Council consider the relationship of other churches to the Holy Catholic Church which the creeds profess as a subject of mutual consideration. Nevertheless, membership does not imply that each church must regard the other member churches as churches in the true and full sense of the word.⁶⁸

The opponents to the membership thesis were unplaced by this cosmetic change.⁶⁹ As stated, however, the thesis did find support from many of the CC members (from the major churches to come directly out of the Reformation). Dr. John Baillie of the Church of Scotland maintained that no matter how desirable it may be to have all constituent churches greet each other as equally true churches, it must be remembered that this constitutes the goal and not the beginning of the ecumenical process. He reminded the CC that the WCC exists precisely because "it

⁶⁶Visser't Hooft, "World Diary," ER

⁶⁷Visser't Hooft, Genesis, p. 72.

⁶⁸DH, No. 11, p. 173.

⁶⁹Toronto 1950, p. 15.

has included those who "unchurch" each other".⁷⁰ Surprised at the extent of reaction from CC members representing Free churches, P. Maury of the Reformed Church of France indicated he did not accept any church (including his own) as "a full and true church". He suggested that the CC receive the document and commend it to the churches for study and comment as "the Minutes of one stage or moment of the churches seeking their unity and each other". His recommendation was accepted.

Though supporting no particular theory of the nature of the church and its unity, the "Toronto statement" called into question the viability of denominationalism by declaring that existing sectarian divisions are "contrary to the very nature of the Church".⁷¹ By their membership in the WCC, the diverse churches admitted that to varying degrees they recognized in each other elements of the true church of Christ (vestigia ecclesiae). According to the "Toronto statement", the churches enter into dialogue with each other in the hope that these elements will lead to the fullness of truth. Interestingly, however, the "Toronto statement" declared that no church not even the "Church of Rome" advocates a complete identity between the membership of the "Church Universal" and the membership of its "own church body".⁷²

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17

⁷¹DH, No. 2/p.168.

⁷²On this, it appears that the "Toronto statement" misunderstood the RCC's official pre-Vatican II teaching. Though it embraces the axiom extra ecclesiam nulla salus ("outside the church there is no salvation"), the RCC has always confessed that it is possible to belong to the church by implicit desire (voto implicito) as well as by full membership (re). Prior to Vatican II, however, Rome did not interpret this to mean that the RCC is not identified solely with the one church of Christ. Even
(Footnote Continued)

Though adamant that unity is of the essence of the ecclesia, the "Toronto statement" confirmed that the constituent churches of the WCC differed as to how this unity is to be realized. While rejecting the charge that the World Council supported a "spiritualized conception of unity", the "Toronto statement" acknowledged that some member churches did espouse a spiritual view of unity.⁷³ Interestingly, however, the document went on to declare that it cannot visualize how such unity could unite the churches while they remained divided on basic doctrinal issues. With the churches differing in their interpretations as to the kind of unity Christ intended for his church, the CC (though raising the question) was not ready to provide an answer. It was agreed that the task of the WCC is to bring all these diverse views into dynamic contact with one another.⁷⁴ Upon the fourth draft, the statement was accepted by the CC and commended to the churches for study and comment.⁷⁵

(Footnote Continued)

though as early as the 1930s some prominent RC theologians (e.g. Yves Congar) recognized the ecclesial status of Protestant churches, this did not represent Rome's official position. Indeed, Rome maintained that all baptized individuals fall under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic code of canon law. Rather than say that the RCC together with other Christian communities comprise the Universal Church, the RCC (as confirmed in Pope Pius XII's encyclicals Mystici Corporis (1943) and Humani Generis (1950)) identified membership in the mystical body of Christ solely with membership in the "one, holy, catholic, apostolic Roman Church".

⁷³Ibid., No. 7, p. 171.

⁷⁴The major unity positions identified in the "Toronto Statement" were: i) full doctrinal(credal) agreement; ii) cultic and order consensus; iii) unity based on both i) and ii); unity founded on essential faith and order elements and iv) unity rooted in universal spiritual fellowship. DH, No. 7, p. 171.

⁷⁵With Visser't Hooft, the subcommittee for the final draft were: G.K. Bell (chairperson of the CC), Van Dusen, Ernest Brown (Baptist)

(Footnote Continued)

b) Post Toronto Comments

The April 1951 edition of the The Ecumenical Review pursued the Toronto debate on the WCC's ecclesiological significance. Among leading ecumenists to contribute articles were: C.T. Craig, Peter Brunner (Luth.), Ivor S. Watkins (Ang.), Henry van der Linde (Reformed), Yngve Brilioth (Luth.), Henry van Dusen (Congr.), and Bishop Lesslie Newbigin of the Church of South India. From the diverse responses, it was evident that the "Toronto statement" did not contain the final word on the WCC's understanding of its own being, its functions and its relationship to the ecclesia.

Dean Craig of Drew Theological Seminary challenged the view that all Christians are one in Christ but disunited as churches. This claim ran counter to the Pauline image of the church as the body of Christ. For the churches to exhibit doctrinal variations in their theory of church and its unity was interpreted by Dean Craig as a normal and healthy sign of divine activity.⁷⁶ With reference to the "Toronto statement" he pointed out that even the practical action of churches perpetuated from their experiences and beliefs about God. Dr. Craig claimed that the "Toronto statement" "shows conclusively" the importance of F&O matters. Because the World Council is the body through which the churches manifest their actual unity, Dr. Craig suggested that for it to

(Footnote Continued)

Union of Great Britain and Ireland), Ray Whitehorn (Presbyterian Church of England), Bishop Angus Dun, Franklin C. Fry (Lutheran United Church, U.S.A.) and Georges Florovsky. CC, Toronto 1950, p. 18.

⁷⁶Clarence T. Craig, "The Reality of the Church and Our Doctrine About the Church," ER, 3(April, 1951), p. 214.

support a particular theory of church would signify the collapse of unity before the juggernaut of "exclusive dogmaticism".⁷⁷

Together with providing a framework for a theory of the nature of the church, the "Toronto statement", according to Professor Brunner of the University of Heidelberg, provided an outline for a dogmatic declaration of the church. It maintained a balance between the immediate spiritual experience and "binding dogmatic truth".⁷⁸

Bishop Watkins of Malmesbury vigorously declared that there can be no "Reunion of Christendom" without the participation of the RCC and the Orthodox Church. Focusing on the implications of membership in the World Council, he found it deeply significant that to keep the small "Catholic" minority in the World Council the original substance of thesis IV:4 was not changed. He suggested that if the Toronto meeting had to change this thesis in a way which would have forced the Orthodox to withdraw its membership the Anglican Communion would not have been able to support a pan-Protestant fellowship.⁷⁹

The Study Secretary of the Ecumenical Council of the Netherlands, Henry Van Der Linde, focused on the spiritual nature of the ecumenical movement. He maintained that to present a common front to the world the churches had no need for a strategic type of unity, a unity achieved via "syncretism or pragmatic relativism".⁸⁰ On occasions when all its

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 218-219.

⁷⁸ Peter Brunner, "The Realism of the Holy Spirit," ER 3 (1950-51), 222.

⁷⁹ Bishop Malmesbury, "Can We Stay Together?" ER 3(1950-51), p. 236.

(Footnote Continued)

member churches issue a united message, the WCC reflects something of a "growing and recovering church unity".⁸¹

Archbishop Brilioth, Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala (Chairperson of FOC from 1948 to 1957), advocated that no external church structure was divinely constituted. While agreeing that thesis IV:4 reflected the true reality of existing interchurch relationships, he contended that the willingness to become a member of the WCC is in itself a "tacit concession" on the part of each member church that the real Una Sancta is in the process of formation.⁸²

The "Toronto statement" was described by Dr. Van Dusen as "masterly". Nevertheless, he criticized its overly "Continental Reformed" perspective. Asserting that it was unreasonably framed to pacify supporters of the "somewhat 'Catholic' conviction," he concluded that it was something "less than fully and truly ecumenical".⁸³

With reference to the three pre-WCC conceptions of church (episcopal, presbyterian, congregational) sanctioned by the F&O movement, he was

(Footnote Continued)

⁸⁰H. Van Der Linde, "The Nature and Significance of the World Council of Churches," ER, pp. 238, 241.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 246.

⁸²Ibid., p. 251. He believed, however, that membership in the WCC implied a tacit concession on the part of the churches that the true Church of God does not yet exist, but is in the process of formation. Ibid.

⁸³Comments on "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches", ER, pp. 254-55.

less than satisfied with the Council's position which recognized only two major alternate views of the church - "Catholic" and "Protestant".⁸⁴

Grounded in the conviction that sectarian division is contrary to the genuine nature of the ecclesia, Bishop Newbigin questioned the right of the churches to exist as separate denominations. If the WCC wanted to avoid becoming merely a "debating society", Newbigin insisted that the World Council could not ultimately support "ecclesiological neutrality" as a permanent principle. He hoped the World Council would eventually amend the thesis "no church is obliged to change its ecclesiology as a consequence of fellowship in the World Council", to read "no church is obliged to change its ecclesiology as a condition of membership in the World Council".⁸⁵ Commenting upon Newbigin's view, Visser't Hooft admitted that the "Toronto statement" never gave sufficient attention to the fact that as churches enter into deeper fellowship "their aim should be to widen their area of agreement".⁸⁶

3. Summary

By pointing to the negative propositions in Toronto statement, the churches (especially the Orthodox) were able to justify their membership

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 256.

⁸⁵"Comments on the Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches" in ER, pp. 254-55.

⁸⁶Genesis, p. 80. In 1955, Dr. Visser't Hooft pointed out that the WCC had yet to solve the dilemma of whether to stay completely neutral or to present its ideas on church union to the churches for discussion. Visser't Hooft, "Various Meanings of Unity and the Unity the World Council of Churches Seeks to Promote," ER, 8(October, 1955), pp. 19-20.

In the WCC in terms of their own ecclesiological convictions. The positive affirmations underlined the importance of the ongoing quest to define more exactly what membership in the WCC means for the divided churches. Though it raised the question, the "Toronto statement" did not address the kind of unity the WCC intended to seek.

Taking no sides in the ongoing doctrinal disputes of its member churches, the WCC, with justification, rejected charges of being tainted with latitudinarianism. But whereas the WCC was committed to no conception of the nature of the church and church unity, the churches strived anew to come to a greater appreciation and understanding of their unity. There was a growing contention that doctrinal homogeneity was not imperative for the union of churches. To what extent did this conviction influence Lund 1952 and Evanston 1954?

D. Major F&O Commission Reports

Edinburgh 1937 left no doubt that the moratorium on studies pertaining to a "frontal attack" on the nature and meaning of the church and its unity could no longer be justifiably postponed. Its continuation committee appointed an international theological commission to study and write a report on the nature of the church. This was followed with the appointment of two related commissions on worship and intercommunion. At its 1949 Chichester (England) meeting, the FOC announced that the third world conference on Faith and Order would convene at Lund, Sweden, in 1952 (Lund 1952). Since the agenda for the proposed conference was

to be built around the work of the three commissions, their reports were sent to delegates chosen to attend the Lund Conference.⁸⁷

1. Commission on the Nature of the Church

In the summer of 1938 under the leadership of Dr. Newton Flew (Meth.), the theological commission on "The Church" was appointed. Cooperating in the study, the American Section of Faith and Order in 1939 set up its own theological committee with Dr. George W. Richards (Evan. and Ref.) as moderator. Nearly two years after its completion (in 1945), the American Section published its report. Due to difficulties encountered by the European Section, the Flew Commission published its report in 1951.⁸⁸ Stymied by its use of comparative ecclesiology, the Commission was unable to advance F&O's theological understanding of the nature of the church and its unity. Its report and voluminous book of essays are valuable to the extent they contain accurate accounts of how the various confessions understood the nature of the church. Since, however, the Commission on "The Church" was unable to provide a draft for a common doctrine of the church, it is necessary here only to provide a brief overview of the commission's findings.

⁸⁷Cf. R. Newton Flew, ed. The Nature of the Church (London: SCM Press, 1952); D. Baillie and J. Marsh, eds. Intercommunion (London: SCM Press, 1952); P. Edward, E. Hayman, W.D. Maxwell, eds. Ways of Worship (London: SCM Press, 1951). Each volume contains the report and the preparatory essays.

⁸⁸The Official Report was simply entitled The Church and was published as F&O Paper, Series II, No. 7. In 1952, the Commission's report and essays were published together in The Nature of the Church, Ibid.

Divided into two parts, the volume of essays produced by the Commission formed the primary background material for its report. Part I reflects the work of the European Section and Part II records the findings of the American Section. Much more than their American counterparts in Part I of the report, the European Section gave considerably more emphasis to the theology of the body of Christ and the absolute authority of Christ. The American authors in Part II stressed that Christ in his church is primarily concerned with confronting individuals with an "absolute ethic".

In its report persistent problems were considered under such headings as the limits of the church; continuity; unity; the sacraments; authority; priesthood; and sacrifice. Aside from dampening any enthusiasm that church union is imminent, the Commission findings claimed that all doctrinal differences among the churches had their basis in what Amsterdam 1948 came to define as the Catholic and Protestant cleavage.

Based upon the theological and non-theological differences which were found to exist between the churches, the Commission held that the differences of the churches were currently irreducible: "We are led to wonder whether at present union would not mean for each of us the exclusion of the point of view implied in the other".⁸⁹ Continuing in a more encouraging strain, however, the report stated that this deep difference is between those who do not believe in and acknowledge the reality of Christ. The Commission suggested that this so-called

⁸⁹The Theological Commission Report on "The Church," The Nature of the Church, p. 62.

irreducible cleavage between "Catholicism" and "Protestantism" is capable of being reduced into a serious difference.

The report of the Commission on "The Church" acknowledged the presence of a new ecumenical understanding and appreciation of fellowship among the churches. While continuing to honestly and frankly articulate their deepest convictions, the churches earlier aggressive self-confident declarations had been tempered by a growing need for mutual repentance and an openness to reciprocal fraternal correction. By articulating their distinctive contributions to the church universal, the empirical churches came to know themselves more fully. In the search for unity in truth, the churches came to a deeper understanding of the need to analyze the whole life of the church:

Within the various communions there appear to be four points around which unity has been realized: confession or creedal statements, liturgical worship, church order, and church action. While it would be untrue to suggest that any one of these was the sole focus of unity within any one communion, it will be recognized that one or other of these focal points provides the pattern of much existing unity within the various communities.⁹⁰

2. Theological Commission on Worship.

By the 1930s, it became more evident to the ecumenical movement that worship of God in Christ is the very locus of all church life. Reflection on Edinburgh 1937 (and the responses to the same) had convinced the Edinburgh continuation committee that to more effectively understand the cause of ecclesial divisions a study of Christian worship

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 61.

was imperative. At its 1939 Clarens (Switzerland) meeting, the F&O continuation committee approved the appointment of G. van der Leeuw (Ref.) to head up the theological commission on "Ways of Worship".

The Commission on Worship hoped to advance mutual understanding among the churches by coming to terms with the doctrinal issues underlying the different liturgical practices of the churches. Stymied by the war, the Commission did its most efficient work on the subject from 1947 to the end of 1950. Its report provided a survey of the churches views of worship and current developments in the field.⁹¹

Advocating that worship is primarily God-centered rather than human centered, the commission testified that worship can be either "free" or "liturgical". These different forms can be centered in the eucharist (i.e. Orthodox) or in preaching (i.e. Reformed) or "waiting upon the Spirit" (i.e. Quakers). Indicating that their boundaries are becoming more fluid, the report stated that "views supposedly incompatible are not necessarily impossible to hold in a united Church".⁹²

Sparked by a rediscovery of the sacramental character of worship, most churches advanced towards liturgical renewal. With attempts to restore worship to the center of Christian life, the various confessions came to understand more clearly that when "measured by the standards of

⁹¹In addition to "The Report of the Commission", the composite volume produced by this commission contained the background material to this report. In the volume essays from contributors of various churches is arranged in a three part division: "The Elements of Liturgy" (eleven essays); "The Inner Meanings of Word and Sacrament" (eleven essays); and "Liturgy and Devotion" (four essays on Mariology and a concluding essay on "An Approach to the Work of Reunion through Common Devotion Understanding"). Cf. Ways of Worship.

⁹²Cf. "Report of the Commission," Ways of Worship, pp. 17-20.

the New Testament and the early Church, none of our current ways of worship is fully adequate".⁹³ In connection with the question of ecclesial unity, ecumenical discussions on the liturgy considered questions relevant to liturgical principles and traditions, corporate worship, free or set prayers, eucharistic worship ("Real Presence" and sacrifice) and baptism.⁹⁴

Based on contemporary biblical research from both Catholic and Protestant scholars, the report rejected the traditionally Protestant position that the scriptural basis of faith had been vitiated and corrupted by the effects of tradition.⁹⁵ Despite the new congenial spirit introduced into the scripture versus tradition controversy, the report advised the churches that in the search for doctrinal accord they continue the arduous work of attempting to "discriminate between tradition and tradition, measuring them by the standard of Holy Writ". It was agreed that the churches could realize "essential unity" in worship only if it is not permitted to become "a devotional escape from doctrinal difficulties". Hence the report rejected the view that interconfessional worship was a much better approach to the development of mutual understanding and unity than doctrinal discussions.⁹⁶ The commission recognized that differences in forms of worship and devotion (e.g., Mariology) perpetuated from differences in doctrine: "If it be

⁹³ Ibid., p. 21.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 21-36.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 22-25.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 23

true that worship comes first and doctrine afterwards, it is equally true that doctrine is contained in worship and that every type of worship implies a type of confession".⁹⁷

The nexus between liturgical renewal and the concern for church order is explained by the fact that worship is essentially corporate in character. Despite the stress on the special priesthood, the Commission did not ignore the role of the laity in worship. A well known adage attests to their complementarity: "What is lacking in the grocer is something of the priest, and what is lacking in the priest is something of the grocer".⁹⁸ Also noted was the swing to a revival of the monastic life among Protestant churches - for example, the Reformed (Cluny and Iona) and Lutheran (Berneuchen). This is indicative of a feeling that liturgical renewal itself is insufficient itself to reform the church in a way its life becomes totally consecrated to God's reign:

What is needed is a rule and a life wholly devoted to bringing the Church back to its primitive sense of being the custodian of the means, of Sacraments as well as the Word entrusted by God for the salvation of mankind—a rule and a life which is the order of battle for the Kingdom of God. This is what monasticism has meant in all the history of the Church. Some felt that nothing short of a definite monastic order can attain this end. Others feel satisfied with obeying a rule and making 'retreats'. All try to live in real koinonia and thus to set an example to the whole church.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 23-24

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 27

While aware of the value of both "set" and "free" liturgies, the Commission supported the position that for all public worship gatherings all prayer should be prepared beforehand in some way.¹⁰⁰ Not content to merely focus upon the eucharist as a foretaste of an eternal banquet or an act of thanksgiving for Christ's death, the report reacted favorably to Catholic eucharistic beliefs on the "Real Presence" and sacrifice. Facilitated by a deeper understanding of the relationship between the material and spiritual coupled with new insights into "the association of divine power with matter," there was a new awareness that the supposed opposition between the word and the eucharist is unscriptural.¹⁰¹ By replacing the idea of repetition with that of re-presentation and by considering communion and offering as two sides of the one truth, the report was more receptive than was previously the case in Protestant circles to the idea of eucharist as sacrifice.¹⁰²

On the issue of baptism, the report showed its preference for the baptism of infants and rejected the view that immersion was necessary for baptism.¹⁰³ To the Lund delegates, it suggested they consider the question of how differences in the ways of worship are mistakenly taken as sufficient reasons for disunity on doctrinal grounds.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 28-33.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 33-35.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 36-39.

Along with providing the churches with a mutual understanding of each other's worship, the theological commission "On Worship" sought to discover "how far different ways of worship are incompatible in a single united church". The excellent work accomplished by this commission helped the ecumenical movement in general come to a deeper appreciation of how theology had a bearing on worship and how the various theological traditions caused Christians to worship in ways which are both externally and intrinsically different.

3. Theological Commission on Intercommunion

At its 1939 meeting, the F&O continuation committee adopted the resolution that a theological commission be appointed on Intercommunion. This commission was divided into American and European sections. Delayed by World War II, it was not until 1946 that the European Section under Professor D.M. Baillie of the Church of Scotland was finalized. Meeting on four separate occasions between 1940-1941, the corresponding American Section published its report in 1942. It was not until the summer of 1950, however, that the final report of the Commission was drafted and made ready for publication.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ The three-part volume that the Commission sent to the Lund delegates contained its report, historical studies on the problem of intercommunion and independent essays by selected authors on current discussions on intercommunion. Together with an introduction and a summary of conclusions, the report was structured around such issues as terminology, the nature of the problem, whether intercommunion can precede reunion, the divergence of sacramental doctrine as a barrier to intercommunion, the divergence of order as an obstacle to intercommunion, the problem of communion services at ecumenical

(Footnote Continued)

Because of doctrine and to a greater degree order, the churches had been unable to resolve the problem of intercommunion. With some exceptions (e.g. Lutherans), Protestants argued that intercommunion should be practiced as a means to bring about the reunion of the churches. Understanding the eucharist as the sign of the consummate fulfillment of a unity already effected, Catholics (except on an individual basis in extraordinary cases) generally forbade the practice of intercommunion. The tragedy of Christian division around the Lord's Table, a phenomenon which the late William Temple depicted as "the greatest of all scandals in the face of the world", was especially evident at ecumenical gatherings.¹⁰⁶ From the Commission, no adequate solutions to the problem were articulated.

Suspecting that many churches would be unhappy with its report, the Commission admitted that it too shared in their disappointment. The reason for the failure was contributed to the fact neither the Commission nor the churches "have yet gone deeply enough into the penitence from which healing may arise". But until this occurred the churches will have to continue to struggle with the embarrassment of being separated at the altar of their common Lord.

E. The Third World Conference of Faith and Order - Lund 1952

(Footnote Continued)

gatherings and the summary of conclusions. Cf. Intercommunion, pp. 32-3, 49-59.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 43.

Under the presidency of Archbishop Brillioth, 225 official delegates from the 114 churches met at Lund 1952 to primarily discuss the nature of the church.¹⁰⁷ Influential addresses from delegates such as Dr. Visser't Hooft, Professor Edmund Schlöck and Dr. Tomkins helped set a new direction for Faith and Order.

In introducing the three theological commission reports, Visser't Hooft called for an end to the comparative ecclesiology: "Can we go on for ever and ever, round and round in the same circle explaining ourselves to one another?"¹⁰⁸ He insisted that in its task to witness to the truth the ecclesia needed both the Catholic conception of church with its primary stress on the divine activity and the Protestant point of view with its main stress on the human response.¹⁰⁹ Between these two conceptions of church, there existed a need for a synthesis.

Without due consideration to the Catholic and Protestant cleavage, Visser't Hooft encouraged the Lund Conference to make every possible attempt to surmount discord as it resolutely prepared to manifest the biblical understanding of the one, tangibly united, visible church. Though the denominations no longer lived in isolation, he stated that

¹⁰⁷Lund 1952, p. 101. Even though questioning the feasibility to sending representatives to F&O conferences in a January 1952 encyclical letter, the Ecumenical Patriarchate eventually sent a delegation headed by Metropolitan Athenagoras to Lund 1952. In his opening address to the Conference, Athenagoras made it clear that in the Orthodox Church only the whole hierarchy has the right to judge the faith. While steering clear of doctrinal disputes, Orthodox delegates appointed to attend ecumenical conferences were expected to witness to the Orthodox faith. Ibid., p. 125.

¹⁰⁸"The Task of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order," Lund 1952, p. 122.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 116-19.

their doctrinal divisions were too serious to justify the claim that a "World Church" presently existed as a historical reality.¹¹⁰

As the pilgrim people of God journeying between the two advents of Christ, the church "under the cross", according to Professor Edmund Schlöcker of Heidelberg, must fix its sights on what lies ahead and not on what was left behind. As long as they fail to manifest the unity they continually proclaim to possess, the churches accept, at least implicitly, "a docetic concept of church and an unreal 'spirituality'". The given unity of the church needed to be manifested "for the body of Christ is always simultaneously a visible community of its members in word, sacrament and ministry". To deepen and manifest the given unity of the church, Professor Schlöcker challenged F&O, the "vanguard of the pilgrim church of God", to move away from comparative ecclesiology which had already yielded its fruits. Schlöcker attributed the ecumenical "crisis" in methodology to the fact that in practice F&O was much further along the road to unity than its theory seemed to warrant.¹¹¹

Oliver S. Tomkins, the F&O Secretary, advocated that the churches must work towards the demise of the WCC because it was incompatible with the New Testament idea of church. Claiming that as separate churches, the denominations "must die", he insisted that the ecumenical movement must not be satisfied with the unity of a "Council of Denominations".¹¹² For him, the crux of the ecumenical problem was contained in the dilemma

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 134-35.

¹¹¹ "The Pilgrim People of God", Lund 1952, pp. 151-52

¹¹² Lund Report, pp. 167, 169.

that while the denominations claim to have unity in Christ, they cannot manifest this unity in the one visible church.¹¹³ With reference to the importance of the churches coming to a deeper understanding of the unity they already possess, Tomkins uttered this significant statement:

I believe that if we took seriously our 'given unity in Christ,' it would, in the course of time, completely reverse our normal structure of church organization. The implication of our confessed unity in Christ, beneath and above our divisions, is that we should do together everything except that what irreconcilable difference of sincere conviction compels us to do separately.¹¹⁴

1. The Final Report of Lund 1952

Lund 1952 was cognizant that it could not examine the nature of the church, the ways of worship and intercommunion to the extent that this had already been achieved by the three theological commissions. Rather the Lund Conference hoped that in its "Final Report" (which dealt with these issues) the churches would find "a pointer to the further study of those other reports and volumes".¹¹⁵ Over previous F&O Conferences,

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 172.

¹¹⁴ Lund 1952, p. 170. In its "Word to the Churches" statement, Lund 1952 adopted for its own the essence of Tomkin's address: "The measure of unity which it has been given to the Church to experience together must find clear manifestation Should not our churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other Churches, and whether they should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately". DH, No. 3/p.86.

¹¹⁵ Lund Report, p. 12. In addition to a "Preface", the Lund Report ("The Report to the Churches") was divided into six chapters: a word to the churches; Christ and his church; continuity and unity; ways of (Footnote Continued)

Lund 1952 made an advancement on two fronts: it initiated the use of a new F&O method to "explore the underlying theological problem" and it gave considerably more discussion than was previously the rule to the "non-theological" elements involved in unity.¹¹⁶

The question of the nature of the church was the predominant note at Lund 1952. Acknowledging that comparative ecclesiology was no longer able to advance doctrinal unity, the Report expressed the need to probe behind the cleavages of the churches to a fuller understanding of the mystery of that God-given unity which exists between Christ and his Church.¹¹⁷ In obedience and in penitence all Christians must seek unity

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worship; intercommunion; and where do we stand. It was the composite work of Three Sections on the Church (the chairperson respectively for Sections I-III were Dr. P.M. Dawley of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Professor H.E.W. d' Espine of the Swiss Protestant Church Federation, and Congregationalist Dr. D. Horton), a Fourth Section on worship (Lutheran bishop H. Lilje occupied the Chair), and a Fifth Section on Intercommunion (Chairperson for Section V was Baptist Dr. E. A. Payne). After each was discussed in plenary session and received nemine contradicente, the whole report was likewise discussed and received on August 28 and commended to the member churches for consideration.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 12. While the subject of "non-theological" factors never came up for separate study at Lund, the so-called "C.H. Dodd Letter" of 1949 and F&O paper, II, No. 10 (which was published for the Conference) had a pervasive influence on the whole report, especially Chapters IV and VI. In the "preface" to its "Final Report", Lund 1952 referred to the the promise and potential of the new method for bringing Christians closer together: "We have seen clearly that we can make no real advance towards unity if we only compare our several conceptions of the nature of the Church and the traditions in which they are embodied. But once again it has been proven true that as we draw closer to Christ we come closer to one another. We need, therefore, to penetrate behind our divisions to a deeper and richer understanding of the mystery of the God-given union of Christ with his Church. We need increasingly to realize that the separate histories of our churches find full meaning only if seen in the perspective of God's dealing with the whole people". Lund 1972, pp. 165-66.

¹¹⁷DH, No. 2/pp.85-6.

and to manifest it more clearly in their witness to the world.¹¹⁸ Lund 1952 claimed that the key to understanding the nature of the Church and its oneness centers in the unity of Christ: "From the unity of Christ we seek to understand the unity of the Church on earth, and from the unity of Christ and his Body we seek the means of realizing that unity in the actual state of our divisions on earth".¹¹⁹

Focusing upon the inseparable relationship between Christ and his church, the Lund Report proposed to examine the key ecumenical problem of the doctrine of the church in close proximity with both christology and pneumatology.¹²⁰ Living between the incarnation and the parousia, the church must be understood within the context of both vertical and horizontal movements.

In its chapter on "Continuity and Unity," the Lund Report confirmed that the various denominations were still divided on how to understand the unity of the ecclesia. While some held the church was already given the fullness of Christ (even if inadequately understood), others averred that the manifestation of this unity was eschatologically situated in the second coming of Christ. Even though the church's continuity is primarily assured by the activity of Christ in the Spirit, the report

¹¹⁸ Ibid., Nos. 3-5/p.86.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., No. 11/p.88.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Nos. 10-18/pp.87-89. When the draft document on "Christ and his Church" came before the full Conference, T.A. Kantonen suggested that it could have significantly strengthened if it had to be incorporated with the doctrine of Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In the redrafting of this document amendments were made to incorporate this suggestion. Cf. Lund 1952, pp. 298-99.

recognized the need of some kind of continuity "in history".¹²¹ At present seemingly irreconcilable discord "arises on the question whether some form of ministerial order is essential to the continuity of the church".¹²² Many Protestants, in good conscience, preferred to root the church's continuity in the history of some form of Christian experience.

The Lund Report favored the interpretation that Christian denominations reflects "breaches within than from the Church".¹²³ An ecumenical study on the relation between the problem of nature of the church, unity and the vestigia ecclesiae was recommended. It was hoped that such ecumenical research would lead the denominations to acquire a greater appreciation for their shared beliefs. Because the common confession of "faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour" opened itself to certain differences of interpretation, most delegates at Lund 1952 referred to their differences as "diversity" rather than divisions.

While collaboration in the ecumenical movement is one tangible source of proof that the unity already given by Christ already exists, the Report reiterated that the churches differ in their understanding of the relation of their given unity in Christ to the una sancta. Where Lausanne 1927 created the impression that there was an invisible and a visible church, Lund 1952 left no such image. The ecclesia of Christ is "one Church which must find visible expression on earth, but we differ in our belief as to whether certain doctrine sacramental and ministerial

¹²¹ Ibid., No. 34/p.94.

¹²² Ibid., No. 35/p.94.

¹²³ Ibid., No. 44/pp.97-98.

forms are of the essence of the Church itself". Despite their diverse views of what constitutes the unity of the church on earth, the Report was definite that "none of us look forward to an institution with a rigid governmental structure and all of us look forward to ... unrestricted communion in sacrament and fellowship with one another".¹²⁴

The preamble to Chapter IV of the Report stated that the liturgy, like faith and order, is essential to the essence of the church.¹²⁵ By listing divergences that came up for debate by its theological commission on the "Ways of Worship" the chapter prepared the stage for further discussion and study. Since certain differences in worship could be reduced to "non-theological" factors operative in the responses of the churches to one another rather than dogmatic differences, the report concluded that historical, psychological and cultural factors had continually played a vital role in creating ecclesial divisions.¹²⁶

Supportive of the position that the churches still had a great distance to go before reunion, Lund 1952 sounded the urgent need to examine questions which presented obstacles to "eucharistic fellowship". Qualifying the term "communion" with such adjectives as "full" "inter", "open", "mutual", "limited open" and "closed", the Lund Report provided the churches with a common vocabulary.¹²⁷ Since it understands the

¹²⁴Ibid., No. 63/p.103.

¹²⁵Ibid., No.90/p.106.

¹²⁶Cf. Ibid., Nos. 119-125/pp.111-14.

¹²⁷Ibid., Nos. 143-49/p.119-19. The F&O Working Committee in its 1969 "Beyond Intercommunion: On the Way to Communion in the Eucharist" report revised this classification. It uses the term "communion" solely
(Footnote Continued)

eucharistic liturgy to be the fullness expression of fellowship in doctrine and ¹²⁸life, the Orthodox Church rejects any form of intercommunion.

Despite different interpretations on the essence of the eucharist, the Lund Report recommended the widespread practice of intercommunion as a means to prepare for the greater unity the churches seek. This reflected the situation that many Protestant churches had come to the point where they recognized in each other sufficient elements to Una Sancta to justify intercommunion without complete organic union. According to this view intercommunion may precede reunion. Claiming that this recommendation necessarily implied that the very conception of the Lord's Supper is insignificant, the Orthodox, Anglican and some Lutheran churches opposed the practice of intercommunion.

Chapter VI testified to the common faith of the churches in the "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church which is God's gift for the salvation of the world". It acknowledged, however, that the ecumenical debate had disclosed serious cleavages between the churches, especially on convictions "about the authority of the Church, its limits and the mode of definition".¹²⁹ In upholding its distinctive convictions, the Lund Report challenges each church to distinguish between its essence and the forms in which it is presented. Together with penitentially

(Footnote Continued)

to refer to the culmination of the ecumenical vision (full organic visible union). The classification of the various forms of interconfessional eucharistic fellowship takes account of both admission and celebration. Cf. Study Encounter, Vol. V., No. 3, 1969, pp. 94-114.

¹²⁸ Ibid., No. 131/pp.115-16.

¹²⁹ Ibid., No. 178/p.126.

facing and healing their doctrinal disagreements, the churches needed to obtain a better understanding of the influences of non-theological factors upon such divisions. Accordingly, Chapter VI called the churches to make a more determined effort to come to a fuller consciousness of their common God given faith and to a more resolute effort to visibly manifest this unity in the world.¹³⁰

2. Faith and Order - Revised Constitution

After its amalgamation into the WCC, F&O continued to operate as an autonomous commission of about 100 members. With the reorganization of its constitution at Lund 1952, F&O maintained that its primary tasks within the WCC was to examine the Council's theological functions, to explore and articulate the theological samenesses and differences between the churches and to supply information on initiatives taken by the churches towards unity.¹³¹ At its second assembly, the WCC approved F&O's revised constitution. Seeking to intergrate the FOC into the WCC's whole life, F&O was made a department in the Division on Studies.¹³² By placing its FOC in the Division of Studies, the WCC undermined the fact that theology is not only reflection but action orientated. As a

¹³⁰ Ibid., Nos. 190-92/pp.129-130.

¹³¹ Cf. For constitution and FOC members see Lund 1952, pp. 359-371.

¹³² To better coordinate and integrate all the activities of the WCC, Evanston 1954 approved and implemented a CC report which restructured the World Council around three Divisions (Studies, Ecumenical Action, Inter-Church Action and Service to Refugees) with each consisting of various departments. The FOC was placed in Studies together with departments on Evangelism; Church and Society; and Mission.

component of the Division of Studies, however, the FOC was able to retain to a considerable extent its theological autonomy.

3. Summary

Lausanne 1925 and Edinburgh 1937 had concluded that neither compromise nor alternations could bring about the desired unity. Lund 1952 accepted Amsterdam 1948's axiom that the God-given unity of the Church already existed. To arrive at a greater appreciation of the unity they already shared the churches were encouraged to forego confrontation in favor of joint studies on questions of doctrine and church polity. For Dr. Tomkins, this attempt to inculcate "deep-digging together theologically" into the core of F&O work was the most significant achievement to come out of the Lund Conference.¹³³ This "deep-digging" on fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith offered a new challenge to the churches to accept in penitence and in obedience the will of God in whatever this deepened appreciation of unity implied.

F. Evanston 1954: Christ - the Hope of the World

Convened under the main theme "Christ - the Hope of the World," the WCC Second Assembly was held from 15-31 August 1954 at Evanston, Illinois (Evanston 1954). The primary task of the approximately 500 delegates from the 163 member Council was to "examine the unity given to

¹³³Cf. K.E. Skydsgaard, "Faith and Order - Our Oneness in Christ and Disunity as Churches," ER, 6(October 1953), pp. 11-12.

the Churches" since Amsterdam 1948 and to "determine those areas in which disunity was most apparent and in which unity was most efficient".¹³⁴ In addition to the main theme, each of the six sections of Evanston 1954 was assigned a special topic. The delegates in Section I discussed the subsidiary theme chosen for it by the FOC at Lund 1952: "Faith and Order: Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches".¹³⁵ Drawn up by theologians from various confessions, the Main Theme Report was also in harmony with the F&O tradition.

More interested with providing a message of Christian hope to a world beset with serious social and economic problems, Evanston 1954 downplayed faith and order issues. Even a request from its highest level of leadership to accept Lund 1952's invitation to probe behind the doctrinal differences to a fuller understanding of the "God-given union of Christ with His Church" was not enough to sway the Assembly to reflect seriously on doctrinal concerns.¹³⁶ With many Protestants still

¹³⁴Evanston 1954, p. 4.

¹³⁵The five other sections respectively dealt with evangelism, social relations, international affairs, inter-group relations and the laity.

¹³⁶Cf. "The General Secretary's Statement to the Assembly," ER 7 (1954), p. 78. Attending Evanston 1954 as a reporter, Eve-Marie Jung, a RC professor from the Institute of European History, described the theological method employed at the Assembly as "vague and compromising". Contrary to the better judgment of the WCC officials, Dr. Jung observed that many of the missionaries and some Free Church delegates were too easily inclined to gloss over serious divergences in reaching ecumenical doctrinal agreement. She claimed there was a need for an ecumenical method which would attempt to resolve doctrinal disagreements not on the basis of "a minimum formulation, but rather with a search for the ultimate and speculative roots of those disagreements". Eva-Maria Jung, "Roman Catholic Impression of the Evanston Assembly," ER 7 (October, 1954), p. 124.

undermining the visible dimension of the church, there was concern that a discussion on the question of the nature of the unity might create controversies that could hamper mutual sharing among member churches.¹³⁷

With confidence in Christ, however, the scripturally orientated Evanston Assembly assured a world deeply in need of hope that the churches intend not only to "stay together" but to "grow together" into one.¹³⁸

1. Preparation of the Main Theme Report

After selecting Christian hope as the main theme for Evanston 1954, the CC at its 1950 Toronto meeting recommended that an Advisory Commission of about 25 of the "most creative thinkers" from its member churches be set up to prepare a report on the subject.¹³⁹ In what up to then was "perhaps the most thorough ecumenical discussions of modern times," the Commission from 1951-53 met on three occasions. During these meetings, the Commission's own thinking on the topic underwent

¹³⁷Cf., Juhanon Mar Thomas, "Faith and Order-'Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches' " In ER 9 (1954), p. 28.

¹³⁸Cf. Evanston 1954, p. 137. In its part of the Evanston Report, Section I stated: "we dedicate ourselves to God anew, that he may enable us to grow together". DH, No. 31/p.141.

¹³⁹Cf. Toronto 1950, pp. 32-33. Aside from the foreward and summary, the report was divided into three major chapters: Christ our hope; Christ and his people; Christ and the world. Serving on the Commission which composed the report were scholars of international repute: J. Baillie, K. Barth, K. Bliss, E. Brunner, R.L. Calhoun, O. Chadwick, C.H. Dodd, T.S. Eliot, G. Florovsky, H. Kraemer, R. Niebuhr, E. Schlögl, P.H. Van Dusen and others. For a complete list of Commission members see, WCC, "Report on the Advisory Commission on the Main Theme of the Second Assembly," in The Christian Hope and Task of the Church New York: Harper Brothers, 1954. (Hereafter cited as Christian Hope).

evolutionary change.¹⁴⁰ Striving for a report that was "biblically founded" and "ecumenically unifying," the Commission sent, after each session, copies of the provisional report to the member churches for study and comments.¹⁴¹ Their comments were integrated into the final document. As indicated in the foreward to its Main Theme Report the Advisory Commission entertained the idea that Evanston 1954 "might choose to adopt the Report in some way as its own".¹⁴²

a) The Main Theme Report: Christ-the Hope of the World

Within the context of doctrinal statements pertaining to the triune God and the Christ event, the Main Theme Report attested that Christ, as God's sacrament, continues to exercise through the ecclesia his divinely given ministry of destroying the remnants of sin and finalizing God's reign in history. By perpetuating Christ's ministry through the ministry of the word and sacraments, the church, according to the report of Section I of Evanston 1954, is not merely Christ's instrument for establishing God's reign but is itself a living testimony that the reign

¹⁴⁰ While the first draft of the commission emphasized the apocalyptic dimension of Christian hope, the final draft (much more in line with the thinking of Lund 1952) provided a much more balanced position between futuristic eschatology and eschatology already realized in the temporal sphere. One participant at the meetings maintained that whereas the term "polemical" aptly described the first session, the second and third meetings of the commission were "Irenical and constructive". Cf. Paul S. Minear, "Christ - The Hope of the World," ER 6 (October 1953), pp. 1-2.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Cf. Minutes ... Central Committee ... Luchnow (India), ... 1953, pp. 12-13; Christian Hope, p. iv.

of God is already being realized in the church (though imperfectly because of sin).

Established for the salvation of all humanity, the church in the unity of Christ is one. Yet, Evanston 1954 contended that because of the individual sins of the membership, the church had lost her external unity. It is the responsibility of the fragmented church to seek to regain this lost unity. The task is possible because the ecclesia, despite sin, has retained the holy presence of God who at opportune times still enlivens her to action. This is the source of the Christian hope. The Theme Report asserts, that contrary to the false hopes offered by democratic humanism, scientific humanism, atheistic Marxism, political and religious nationalism (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamism) and various existential philosophies, Christian hope gives genuine meaning to history.¹⁴³ In this context the Commission recommended that Evanston 1954 examine the present condition of the church to determine whether she is in accordance with the divine design "the Church of Hope".¹⁴⁴

2. Evanston Assembly Discussion the Main Theme Report

The Main Theme Report was introduced to the Evanston Assembly by Professors Edmund Schlink and Robert L. Calhoun (Congr.). Though both speakers related Christian hope to the eschaton, they exhibited differences characteristic of differences between European and North

¹⁴³The Christian Hope, pp. 28-41.

¹⁴⁴Cf. Ibid., pp. 48-51.

American Protestant theology. Whereas the former place the ultimate hope in the coming of Christ at the parousia, the latter focused on Christian hope in the present world. Insisting that eschatology does not merely refer to the final things, Calhoun stated that "eschatology is the doctrine concerned with the limits or boundaries of our living, in time and existence, toward which every moment of our whole life tend".¹⁴⁵

Divided into 15 groups, the Assembly delegates studied the Main Theme Report for four days. A coordinating committee under Bishop Hans Lilje (Luth.) noted the views of the groups on the Main Theme Report. In presenting the findings to a plenary session, Bishop Lilje claimed that the Report mapped out the right direction to follow with its claim that all hopes are directed towards Christ.¹⁴⁶ Supplemented by its own codicil, Evanston 1954 decided to send the Main Theme Report without changes to the churches for study and edification. Reflecting the group and plenary discussions, the Assembly's statement of critique praised the Report as a noteworthy presentation of the need for a contemporary Christian witness in a world of "rival hopes".¹⁴⁷ Though in agreement with much of the Report's doctrinal content, the critique severely criticized the Report for the following: overly stressing the futuristic character of Christian hope nature of Christian hope to the neglect of relating and making Christ meaningful to everyday secular happenings, for omissions (e.g. on the operation of the Spirit, on the role of human

¹⁴⁵Cf. ER 7 (January 1955), p. 141.

¹⁴⁶Evanston Report, p. 70.

¹⁴⁷Evanston 1954, p. 70.

reason, on an inadequate treatment of personal resurrection) and for the employment of lifeless, joyless, abstract and gloomy language. Further, since Christ is the center of both church and world history, the Assembly questioned the Report's self-righteousness in its over-handed negative judgment on all other human and religious hopes. Because of the Report's underlying assumption that the una sancta ecclesia can consist of various denominations and that her external unity needed recovery, the Orthodox rejected it.

Unsolicited responses by some member churches to the CC on the Main Theme Report indicated that all critical comments focused upon whether it was to be understood in a theological or sociological manner.¹⁴⁸ The churches considered it important that the document be appraised on the basis of correct doctrinal teaching, individual hopes, ethical and evangelical value. Attesting that all pragmatic human hopes were grounded in genuine dogmatic teaching, the Lutheran United Church was critical that the Report was framed within a christological rather than a trinitarian structure. This Church also suggested that unless the "kingdom of grace and the kingdom of law" were kept separated, there was a grave risk that the churches would move towards "social-gospel humanism" or "a Barthian neglect of judgment because of grace".¹⁴⁹

Some churches (Evangelical Church of Wurttemberg, Reformed Church of Alsace and Lorraine and the Evangelical of Silesia) criticized the Report for not providing a clearer understanding of the personal,

¹⁴⁸ WCC, Responses to Evanston, (Geneva: WCC, 1956), p. 63.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 63.

temporary nature of Christian hope.¹⁵⁰ While concurring with the Report's premise that the basis of ethics lies in the sovereignty of Christ, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of Hungary were disappointed that it did not provide a concise criterion for Christian action.¹⁵¹ Having implications for evangelism, the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) maintained that the Report overemphasized the eschatological unity of the church to the neglect of the unity already given in the Holy Spirit.¹⁵²

More suited to the missionary thrust of the church than to its doctrinal dimension, the report on the Main Theme did little to advance the unity of the Church. According to the chief executive of the WCC, Christian hope suggested itself as the main theme for Evanston 1954.¹⁵³ With little relation to the themes of the various sections, however, it was later judged by many as been an inappropriate choice.¹⁵⁴

3. Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁵³ Lund 1952, p. 131.

¹⁵⁴ Finding very little correlation between the main theme and the subsidiary subjects of the sections, a editor of one widely read Christian journal contended that the CC made an "unhappy" choice of theme for Evanston 1954. It stressed the parousia without prior agreement as to whether it is preceded by christology, anthropology or soteriology. While the Assembly did achieve some genuine accomplishments in the social realm, he suggested that Evanston 1954 did not advance the cause of Christian unity except perhaps to show how distant it is. "Evanston Retrospect," The Christian Century, LXXXI, (22 September 1954) pp. 1125-27, 1131.

Directly related to its own statement on "Christ and His Church", Lund 1952 chose to further pursue this topic in Section I at the Evanston Assembly under the paradoxical title "Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches."¹⁵⁵ As part of preparatory material for Section I, a theological commission prepared a working document (with the same title as the Section).¹⁵⁶ The objective of the commission was to better acquaint the members of Section I with the contemporary attitude of the churches to unity. Based upon the "Toronto Statement" and other significant post-Amsterdam 1948 ecumenical documents, the preparatory commission surveyed the impact contemporary ecumenical thought was having on the churches understanding of themselves, other churches and the church universal. Further, it explored the implications of Christian hope for unity and mission. Its report was extensively used by Section I and much of the content was incorporated into the official report of Section I.¹⁵⁷

a) Theme for Section I Introduced to Assembly

¹⁵⁵ Determine to make clear what it believed about the churches given unity, the quest of Section I was aligned to the task assigned to the Evanston Assembly as a whole which was to "examine the unity given to the churches in the past six years of life in the World Council and to determine those areas in which disunity was most apparent and in which unity was most efficient". Evanston 1954, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Six Ecumenical Surveys; Preparatory Material for the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Edited by W.A. Visser't Hooft (London, 1955, 1954), pp. 1-55. J.N. Nelson, P.W. Bartlett, A. Dun, R.N. Flew, G. Florovsky, E. Schlögl, K.E. Skydsgaard, T.F. Torrance and other eminent theologians were involved in the work of Preparatory Commission I. For a complete list of Commission members see The Christian Hope, pp. 57-58.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

Addresses by Bishop Anders Nygren from the Church of Sweden, Professors V.E. Devadutt (Bapt.) and Florovsky set the frame for the discussions in Section I. Reiterating the recommendation of Lund 1952, Bishop Nygren suggested that Christ himself must be made the focus of all ecumenical dialogue pertaining to unity. Acclaiming that the church of Christ is already one, he maintained that as the churches draw closer to unity the nearer they come to its center - Christ.¹⁵⁸

Though the F&O movement had long recognized the differences which divide Christians, Professor Florovsky claimed that no progress had been made in healing the discord. Willing to accept that all Christian divisions were basically caused by loyalty to Christ and the zeal for scripture, he suggested that the ecumenical movement was at an impasse with respect to unity. Hence, he declared that existing Christian division reflects not only the "stigma of sin" but is also "a witness to a deep disagreement about truth".¹⁵⁹ A proponent of the school that comparative ecclesiology had already yielded its harvest, he strongly urged the member churches of the WCC to map out a new direction by a common return to the genuine Christian tradition. To locate where true Christian unity had been lost, the churches must be ready to submit their current convictions to the test of ecclesiastical tradition.¹⁶⁰

Professor Devadutt claimed that the basic unity which the churches share with one another is rooted not in their "objective confessions of

¹⁵⁸ Evanston 1954, p. 32.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

faith" but objectively in Christ. Convinced that Christ did not want the churches to bar one another from worship based on subjective interpretation of the faith, he argued that church union should not be identified with doctrinal uniformity or the acceptance of a centralized church government. He claimed that church union basically means "the unity of ministry and the unity of the sacraments".¹⁶¹

4. The Assembly Report of Section I

Generally portraying a distinctly Protestant nuance, the three part report of Section I of Evanston 1954 provided a dogmatic exposition on the church, the unity of the church and ways to surmount visible disunity. With a stress upon the invisible and eschatological nature of "perfect" church unity, the report advocated that the pilgrim church is simultaneously both justified and sinner (simul justus et peccator).

Rather than reiterate how each denomination understood the nature of the church, the delegates in Section I (in an attempt to discover their mutual convictions and clarify their positions theologically) penetrated more deeply in scripture in an attempt to discover how ecclesial unity was understood in the time of the historical Jesus. At variance with some delegates who believed that biblical images for the church (e.g. "vine") should be understood as a figure of speech, the report of Section I used numerous biblical citations (which depicted the church under such images as the body of Christ, pilgrim people, the

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 33.

Bride, the Temple and Building) to verify 1952's claim that the ecclesia on earth is a true but not fully comprehensible body of Christ. The church has a given unity because of Christ's self-identification with his people. Rather than being sentimental or sociological, this unity is "indissoluble" and "indestructible".¹⁶² Despite the existence and divisions of various denominations, the report declared that the churches already affirm a unity in the one church of Christ by a common faith in Christ, a claim to possess common ecclesial gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g. scripture, sacraments) and membership in the WCC. their divisions) shared in the God-given of the one church of Christ.

Prone to human discord and sin from its beginnings, however, the church has been able to fully realized its perfect unity. Hence on its "earthly pilgrimage", the church is commissioned to advance the "growth from its unity, as given, to its unity as fully manifested".¹⁶³ As long as the churches are able to partially manifest the given unity of the church "our disunity as churches contradicts our unity in Christ".¹⁶⁴

Distinguishing between diversity and division, the second part of the report associated Christian divisions with sin. It advocated that only diversity which ruptures the realized unity of the church can be labeled "sinful" division.¹⁶⁵ The report claimed that the principal

¹⁶² DH, Nos. 1-2/pp.131-32.

¹⁶³ Ibid., No. 5/p.133-34.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., No. 14/p.136.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., No. 15/p.136.

divisions of Christian fellowship were attributable to the dictates of conscience and "obedience to the will of God". It acknowledged, however, that the churches through more recent God-given insights have come to recognize more clearly the sinfulness of continuing separation. With penitence and sacrifices, the churches have a duty to work towards the manifestation of external church unity.¹⁶⁶

In light of the churches unity in Christ, the third part of the report suggested eight practical steps or "actions of faith" to advance church unity. Among the ways suggested to overcome disunity were the following: acquiring a deeper understanding of disunity, a fuller grasp of the faith positions of other churches, common studies (on such topics as scripture, baptism, eucharist and ministry as well as non-theological factors), and a recognition of the need of prayer for unity.¹⁶⁷

5. The Orthodox Statement on Section I

Based on the assessment of the report of Section I, it became publicly evident at Amsterdam 1954 that the Orthodox delegation differed significantly with the assembly on doctrinal issues. In a separate declaration presented to the assembly, the delegation declared that the "whole approach to the problem of reunion is entirely unacceptable from the standpoint of the Orthodox Church".¹⁶⁸ While the first part of the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., Nos. 16-18, pp. 136-38.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Ibid., Nos. 20-31, pp. 138-141.

¹⁶⁸ Evanston 1954, p. 93.

report of Section I was accepted as an "able exposition" of the scriptural conception of the church, the Orthodox insisted that the other two parts did not "logically and consistently" follow.¹⁶⁹

Firm in the conviction that it is impossible to divide the one church of Christ, the Orthodox asseverated that the acceptance of total faith (which included the three-fold ministry in continuity with the apostolic succession) "without subtraction or alteration" is integral to the indivisible unity of the church. The Orthodox statement claimed that the report of Section I was the result of compromise and the undermining of doctrine which was considered to be disposable. The Orthodox faith allowed for "no rigid distinction between essential and non-essential doctrine and there is no room for comprehensiveness in the Faith".¹⁷⁰

Reacting to Section I's invisible and eschatological interpretation of perfect church unity, the Orthodox rejected the stand that this unity is a spiritualized ideal which had never been realized in Christendom. Despite internal conflicts, the Orthodox argued that for centuries nearly all Christians existed in one undivided community with specific concrete forms and expressions of their oneness. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the church, ecclesial unity is realized in the world as a "present reality" and all, who accept Christ, are directed, to it.¹⁷¹ The one church derived from Christ and the apostles have remained undivided even though at times individuals and communities have

¹⁶⁹For complete document see "The Declaration of the Orthodox Delegates Concerning Faith and Order," in DH, Nos. 32-38/pp.141-43.

¹⁷⁰DH, No. 33/pp.141-42.

¹⁷¹Ibid., Nos. 34-36/pp.142-43.

deemed fit to separate from her. In contradistinction to the Evanston report, the declaration maintained that the church (intrinsically holy in her being) has never been touched by sin and thus needed no repentance (even though this did not apply to the membership of the una sancta ecclesia).¹⁷² It closed with a strong reminder that the Orthodox Church alone has preserved without loss "the faith once delivered to the saints".¹⁷³

By the very fact that this strongly worded declaration did not tear the WCC apart was testimony to the churches firm resolve that they were not merely going "to stay together" but "to grow together". The Orthodox statement spurred the Council's leadership to give more consideration to the Catholic conception of the church and its unity.

6. Some Further Reactions to Evanston Report

In introducing the report of Section I to the plenary session of the Assembly, Archbishop Brilioth of Sweden pointed out that the paradoxical title captured the essence of basic ecumenical problem.¹⁷⁴ While some delegates found general agreement with the report, other delegates, such as the Bishop of Armidale, described it as "static".¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Ibid., No. 37/p.143.

¹⁷³ Ibid., No. 38/p. 143.

¹⁷⁴ Evanston 1954, p. 92.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Among the forty-three churches that sent comments on the Evanston Report, there was basic accord that the section report of Section I acted as a stimulus which heightened their thinking about church unity and disunity. Aside from criticizing the report for its "synthetic" theology and its use of ambiguous terms, the churches also noted its lack of correlation with the major theme chosen for the Assembly.¹⁷⁶ While there was unanimity that the church is one, the churches differed on whether present church unity is perfect and whether the analogy of an individual at once justified and sinner can be applied to the church.¹⁷⁷

While some churches (e.g. United Presbyterian Church) maintained that the report gave a useful distinction between diversity and unity, other churches (e.g. Church of Denmark) maintained that this distinction was inadequate since it did not articulate which diversities are illegitimate.¹⁷⁸ Not all agreed with the report's contention that ecclesial division is sinful and even among the majority who did, there was no consensus whether the churches ought to repent for the sins of their ancestors from which the separations dated. Further, there was strong difference of opinion over whether a church can break down the barriers of division by "dying with Christ". For some churches such a statement was too general (e.g. Church of England) or scripturally and theologically suspect (Church of Denmark).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶WCC, Responses to Evanston (Geneva: WCC, 1954), p. 13.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

7. Summary

Though Section I of Evanston 1954 discussed the causes of Christian discord, the Catholic and Protestant dilemma remained. Confessing the church is one because Christ is one, the majority of the constituent churches of the WCC endorsed a low church Protestant position that doctrinal differences do not destroy the given unity existing among the churches. Meanwhile, the members churches from Catholic traditions (e.g. Orthodox) insisted the ecclesia cannot embrace contradictory doctrines.

The Evanston Assembly's "Message" issued to the churches appealed to the need for Christian unity and the sanctification in the truth. Despite fundamental differences, the churches, through their delegates, pledged that as "the Holy Spirit may guide us, we intend to unite".

G. Conclusion

At the Amsterdam Assembly the churches themselves took direct responsibility for the ecumenical movement. With few Catholic member churches, the WCC during this period was essentially composed of Protestant churches from Europe and North America. Though seemingly more interested during this period in United Nations type affairs, the WCC did pursue in a secondary manner theological debate on issues of unity.

The report of Amsterdam 1948 advocated that the una sancta ecclesia currently exists and unity is God's unfailing gift to it. Intimately linked to ecclesial renewal, the denominations had the obligation to manifest this unity. Using a dialectical methodology, Amsterdam 1948 verified earlier F&O findings that the deepest difference between the

churches was rooted in different conceptions of the church which it described in terms of "Catholic" and "Protestant". With each embodying Christian faith and life as a self-consistent whole, their separate conceptions of that whole were found to be contrary to each other. Though clarifying the agreements among disagreements (and vice versa), the dialectical method was incapable of obtaining a synthesis between the Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the church.

Rejecting claims to any kind of ecclesial status or doctrinal authority, the WCC in the landmark 1950 "Toronto statement" defined its own understanding of its ecclesiological significance. Adopted by both Catholic and Protestant member churches as a type of charter, the "Toronto statement" endorsed no particular theory of the nature of the church or doctrine on the unity of the church. It confirmed that a church did not have to compromise its deepest convictions for World Council membership. Membership in the WCC does imply, however, that to varying degrees, each member church recognizes in fellow churches the vestigia ecclesiae of the one church. This obliges the churches to move out of isolation into ecumenical encounter in hope that the elements they share will lead them to the fullness of unity in the truth.

At Lund 1952, the FOC dealt the coup de grâce to mere comparative ecclesiology. By inviting the churches to penetrate beyond their divisions to mystery of Christ and his church as the source and nourishment their ecclesial unity, Lund 1952 initiated a significant change in regard to the ecumenical approach to Christian unity. Focusing on Christ as the locus of the given unity of the church, Lund 1952 challenged the churches to make concrete their given unity.

Too near in time to benefit from Lund 1952's recommendations, the report of Section I of Evanston 1954 emphasized the spiritual unity of the churches founded on their common loyalties to one another in Christ. Stressing the eschatological character of the church, it declared that the church's given unity can only be partly manifested in this world. The complete realization of perfect church unity is an eschatological event reserved until the parousia. As signs of the richness of the gifts and freedom of Christ and his Spirit, the report advocated a visible unity based on diversity in doctrine, cult and ecclesial code.

In a separate declaration presented to a plenary session of Evanston 1954, the Orthodox delegation rejected the underlying tenets of Section I which pertained to the nature of the church and the unity of the church. It was evident that if the WCC was to retain its Catholic members radical changes needed to be chartered. The extent to which the WCC was able to use the new insights obtained by the Christological approach to establish between Catholics and Protestants a more creative synthesis on the basic truths of the faith and visible koinonia will be examined in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

EVANSTON TO UPPSALA (1954-1968):

TYPE OF UNITY REQUIRED IN A REUNITED CHURCH

A. Introduction

At Evanston 1954, the World Council had no clear idea of the kind of unity to pursue as its ultimate goal. Even the "Toronto statement" appeared to militate against the possibility of the WCC ever espousing any one particular concept of church unity. Dramatically, however, amid differences that threatened to disintegrate the WCC, its member churches expressed their commitment to covenant themselves not only to "stay together" but to "grow together". After a mere lapse of seven years, the WCC was able to reap the first fruits of such courageous faith.

The WCC held its third assembly at New Delhi, India in 1961 (New Delhi 1961). Because of the efforts of the FOC, New Delhi 1961 was able to present to the member churches for their consideration a definition of unity for which the ecumenical movement should pray, work and move towards as its final goal. That this unity formula was not so far removed from a Catholic understanding of unity indicates something of the scope of the radical change of direction which since Evanston 1954 had taken place in WCC thought. Seven years later at its fourth assembly which convened from 4-19 July 1968 at Uppsala, Sweden (Uppsala 1968), the WCC amplified and enriched this unity formula.

With the ultimate objective of finding the genuine structure of the ecclesia and the kind of unity the church should seek, the FOC from

1952-1968 sponsored a number of international theological commissions and smaller research projects. This chapter will commence with an examination of some of these major studies which deepened and expanded the WCC theological understanding of the church. Following this examination, the focus will turn to the breakthrough shift of ecumenical thinking for this epoch which allowed the WCC to partially surmount some of the most difficult obstacles preventing the churches from clearly manifesting visible fellowship.

B. Research Commissions Break New Ground

At Bossey in 1953, the FOC set up four international commissions to respectively study the nature of the church, tradition, non-theological factors (which affect church unity and disunity) and Christian worship. Applying to their work the new christological methodology adopted by Lund 1952, these commissions produced four outstanding ecumenical reports.¹ These reports were transmitted to the fourth world conference on faith and order held at Montreal in July 1963 (Montreal 1963).²

¹Numbers 37-40 of F&O II are contained in Faith and Order Findings. The Final Report of the Theological Commissions to the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963. Edited by Paul S. Minear. (London: SCM Press, 1963). Hereinafter F&O Paper No. cited.

²Deeply influenced by the reports of the four commissions, Montreal 1963 produced its own general report which consists of the reports of its five sections: "The Church in the Purpose of God"; "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions"; "The Redemptive Work of Christ and the Ministry of His Church"; "Worship and the Oneness of Christ Church"; " 'All in Each Place': the Process of Growing Together". Cf. "Section Reports" in The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order. The Report From Montreal 1963. Edited by P.C. Rodger and L. Vischer. (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 41-90. Hereinafter cited Montreal 1963.

Subsequent to Montreal 1963, the FOC at its 1964 Aarhus (Denmark) meeting instituted four major theological studies on creation and redemption, Christ and ministry, the eucharist, and the Spirit and Institution. Also undertaken were more limited studies on such subjects as patristics, councils, and biblical hermeneutics.³

These studies treated both general themes and the more practical questions which obstructed the reunion of denominations involved in church union negotiations. The leadership of the FOC deemed the two types of studies both essential and complementary. Lukas Vischer inferred that it is necessary first to clarify the presuppositions which undergird "the whole life and doctrine of the church" before analyzing the more specific issues (e.g. intercommunion) that thwart "the reunion of particular historical churches". To do otherwise would have lead to a cul de sac for "the specific problems refused to be treated apart from the deeper questions".⁴ With the theme of unity central to its whole program, these F&O studies (from different perspectives) attempted to articulate answers to underlying questions concerning the genuine nature and structure of the one church. In turn, this provided the ecumenical movement with a deeper understanding of the church's unity.

1. Theological Commission on Christ and the Church.

³F&O II, No. 44, pp. 41-42.

⁴Lukas Vischer, "The Faith and Order Movement at the Beginnings of a New Period," Mid Stream, 4(Winter, 1964), pp. 12-13.

Requiring a more comprehensive statement on ecclesiology, Lund 1952 strongly recommended a study on the subject using its newly adopted christological method.⁵ If investigated "in close unity both to the doctrine of Christ and to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit,"⁶ Lund 1952 expressed confidence that this project would illuminate how the church is wholly dependent on Christ and has in him the source of its unity. With the establishment of a Theological Commission on Christ and the Church (TCCC) in 1953, the recommendation was implemented.

The TCCC was divided into European and North American sections which were chaired respectively by Bishop A. Nygren (Ch. of Sweden) and Professor R.L. Calhoun (United Ch. of Christ).⁷ Prior to the publication of its final report, the two sections in 1959 produced together an interim report entitled "One Lord, One Baptism".⁸ With few

⁵For a full study on this method see Pathil, Methods In Ecumenical Dialogue, pp. 314-45.

⁶Lund 1952, p. 15.

⁷For full report of TCCC see F&O Paper, Series II, No. 38 (1963), pp. 1-62. Since this report itself consists of two distinct reports, it is appropriate to point out that North American report begins on p. 7 and the European report on p. 35. G.R. Cragg (United Ch. of Canada), G. Florovsky, and P.S. Minear (United Ch. of Christ) were among the specialists assigned to serve on the American section; and G.W.H. Lampe, O. Cullmann, E.W.L. Schlögl (Luth.) and T.F. Torrance (Presby.) were among the distinguished scholars who served on the European Section. For a full membership list for sections, respectively, see pp. 34, 62.

⁸Interim Report: One Lord, One Baptism. FO II, No. 29. (London: SCM Press, 1960). This report consisted of two separate documents - "The Divine Trinity and the Unity of the Church" and the "Meaning of Baptism". The former focused on the theological history of the christological method and the direction the TCCC was pursuing; whereas, the latter concentrated on how Christ's baptism symbolized his whole saving mission (a task in which his church intimately participates).

of the TCCC's members from churches of Catholic traditions, its final report reflected primarily a Protestant theological nuance.⁹

Discussions on the relationship of Christ and the Holy Spirit's to the church developed the TCCC's own sense of awareness that even in itself a christological ecclesiology imposed restrictions on the debate of faith and order issues. Focusing on the nexus of the Christ-event to the redemptive role of the church, the TCCC advocated that in the divine purpose the church was eternally linked to the sending of Christ. A gift of the triune God in Christ, the church's unity is rooted in the perfect oneness of the triune God. In a move towards establishing a trinitarian ecclesiology, the TCCC declared that as the Father's "universal family," the Son's "community of the reconciled," and the Holy Spirit's "communion of saints," the triune God continues to create, redeem and sanctify the church.¹⁰ Such a theological approach promised to provide the churches with a new basis for understanding one another.

In the tradition of Protestant theology, the report of the TCCC particularly emphasized the invisible nature of the church. Not accepting any particular institutional structure as essential to the essence of the ecclesia, the TCCC espoused the position that despite doctrinal differences all who confess Christ as Lord and Saviour belong to the una sancta ecclesia which is rooted in the indivisible unity of

⁹ According to its membership list, 27 of the 29 members of the TCCC were from Protestant churches. At Montreal 1963, however, 16 of the 83 members of Section II (which discussed the report of the TCCC in an attempt to bring it forward) were clearly from Catholic churches. See, F&O II, No. 38, pp. 34, 62; Montreal 1968, p. 92-94.

¹⁰ F&O II, No. 38, pp. 38, 46-47; Cf., "The Divine Trinity and the Unity of the Church," One Lord, One Baptism. F&O II, No. 29, pp. 13-14.

the triune God. Hence, the church is described as "that corporate union we have with Christ through the communion of the Spirit".¹¹ Contending that disunities occur "within" rather than "from" the church, the TCCC averred that the Spirit spiritually unites all Christians in Christ to one another and to the one church in a unity that cannot be broken.¹²

With its firm rejection that the true church of Christ is purely an invisible entity, the TCCC affirmed that Christ historically founded his one, holy, catholic church upon the apostles.¹³ They are the concrete foundation and gates upon which the church, the koinonia of the Holy Spirit, took visible expression. In its apostolic witness to God's revelatory event which reached its culmination in Christ, the church (in the historical and social situation) manifests its concreteness through its visible institutional structures. Because the Spirit imbues and vivifies these structures, Christ's church is both event or charisma (act of God in history) and institution (specific form or structure assumed by the event).¹⁴ Hence as a visible institution (and through its own institutions), the church assures its own historical continuity. Since in traditional Protestant theology, the church is essentially

¹¹Ibid., p. 43. See also p. 9.

¹²Ibid., p. 51.

¹³F&O II, No. 38, p. 54.

¹⁴Specifically with reference to the church, the Commission understood "event" to refer to "the dynamic energizing by Christ and the Spirit in the Church, the spontaneous quality of the human response, and the 'processive' character of the community's life of grace". It used the term "institution" to connote "the established relationships and patterns of historic and social order, stable forms and definite structures". Cf. Ibid., pp. 26-28.

"event", the report averred that no specific institutional structures are essential to the nature and continuity of the una sancta ecclesia.¹⁵

Despite differences over the relation between "believer's baptism" and "infant baptism," the TCCC affirmed in its interim report the importance of this sacrament for the Christian life. By baptism the individual becomes incorporated into the Body of Christ, the koinonia of the Holy Spirit. While demanding a response in faith, baptism is seen as an act of the triune God in building up the Church and the reference point for all its other sacred actions.¹⁶

Many of the objections to a Protestant understanding of church unity (as expounded in the Orthodox declaration issued at Evanston 1954) continued to persist in the TCCC's report. More than a fellowship or service, Christ's church (from the Catholic stance) is an invisible and visible entity in full accord on doctrine, sacramentality and the unbroken apostolic succession of the threefold ministry.

Catholicism, generally, does not interpret doctrinal divisions among churches as merely internal splitting within the one church. The Orthodox Church (the most Catholic member of the WCC), for example, is tenaciously convinced that it alone is the true church. To a greater or lesser degree, all other Christian denominations are considered to have separated themselves from the una sancta ecclesia. Contrary to the Catholic position that the visible church is given in its ministry a specific, essential institutional structure, the TCCC report insisted

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 28, 51.

¹⁶ Cf. F&O II, No. 29, pp. 45-47, 70.

that no one ordering of ministry must be enthroned as "exclusive or even indispensable agencies for the Lord's work".¹⁷

a) Montreal 1963 and the Report of the TCCC

At Montreal 1963, the report of the TCCC provided the basic working document for Section I which was entitled "The Church in the Purpose of God".¹⁸ Along with the entry of Protestant churches from Africa, Asia and Latin America (which included some Pentecostal churches), the Orthodox churches in the 1960s (beginning with New Delhi 1961) entered the WCC en masse.¹⁹ Moreover, in the light of Vatican II, the RC presence at Montreal 1963 (with a large number of official observers and participating guests) played a significant role. This necessitated that the consensus obtained in the report of the TCCC (as in the ecumenical movement in general) be rethought in the wider ecumenical family.

Reflecting the influence of post-Bultmannian scholarship, Section I called attention to the doctrine of the suffering church. Given the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Divided into four sub-sections—"Christ, New Creation, Creation"; "The Church: Act and Institution"; "Christ, the Church and the Churches"; and "The Church and the World Council of Churches"—the officers for Section I were G.R. Cragg, G. Florovsky, and G.W.E. Lampe. Montreal 1963, pp. 22, 92-94.

¹⁹ The Orthodox churches included the autocephalous and autonomous churches of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the autonomous but not autocephalous churches known as Orthodoxy and the Oriental Orthodox churches (which though not in communion with the Eastern Orthodox churches are considered to belong to the family of Eastern churches. Cf. Vasil T. Istavridis, "The Orthodox Churches in the Ecumenical Movement (1948-1968)," HEM II, p. 289.

existential situation of the day, the glory of the church - the new creation - was appraised in terms of its "obedient discipleship," genuine service and "solidarity with the suffering world".²⁰ But the increased Catholic participation reminded Faith and Order that the church of Christ shares in the resurrection of Christ as well as in his cross. Hence, the Bultmannian influence could not completely dislodge from the report the theology of those who also thought of the church in terms of the "ecclesia triumphans".²¹

Despite their formal character, Section I continued to use the terms "event" and "institution" to describe Christ's redeeming ministry in and through his church. Intimately related and drawing life from one another, they are the God-given means through which God is continually made present to the church. Avowing that Christ's church is fundamentally tied to both institution and event, Section I insisted it is an ecclesiastical error to play one against the other.²²

Within the context of this discussion, Section I averred that the four traditional attributes or marks of the church - unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity - are not merely gifts but tasks to be gratefully received and fulfilled in faith. For it is in keeping with the gracious self-giving of the triune God and the living response of Christ's church "that what is given once and for all is given ever anew

²⁰ Cf. Montreal 1963, pp. 42-4.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 22-3.

²² Ibid., p. 45.

and must be received ever anew".²³ As an example, the section explained how the "newness" of Christ's church is both gift and task: "the Church which is one in Jesus Christ becomes one in him as it receives in faith the good news of oneness and seeks to pattern its existence in accordance with its reality".²⁴ This terminology encouraged the churches to understand these attributes in more dynamic terms thus allowing for more flexibility in the faith.

Though different views persisted as to what constitutes genuine eucharistic worship, Section II agreed that the eucharist itself is the foundation for ecclesiastical oneness. Manifesting the catholicity of the whole church in that place, the local church (congregation) could seek and achieve no higher unification than that of communion around the Lord's Table. As the fundamental unity on which other forms of indivisibility must be judged, eucharistic unity is explicitly linked to Christian faith, worship and ministry.²⁵

At Montreal 1963, a large percentage of the 232 delegates sought to gain for the WCC some kind of ecclesiastical significance and recognition. So determined were the Orthodox in their opposition that no progress was possible. Thus after 1963, the "Toronto statement" of 1950 remained virtually unchanged.²⁶

²³ Montreal 1963, p. 45.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 45-47.

²⁶ Disappointed but undaunted by the Montreal Conference's failure to make an advance on the Toronto Statement of 1950, Dr. Visser't Hooft in commenting upon his report presented to the Central Committee
(Footnote Continued)

b) Ministry Returns to the FOC Agenda

Discussions at Lausanne 1927 and Edinburgh 1937 aptly indicated to the churches that the issues of ministry and order are acute sources of visible disunity. Surprisingly, after Edinburgh 1937, this issue disappeared from the ecumenical agenda for more than a generation.²⁷ Responding to a request from the Department of the Laity of the WCC for a study of the relation between the total corporate ministry of the

(Footnote Continued)

acknowledged: "It is better to live with a reality which transcends definition than to live with a definition which claims more substance than we have reality". CC, Minutes... Rochester... 1963.

Still suspicious that the WCC had designs on becoming a "super-church" (contrary to its claims), the Orthodox adamantly opposed any move towards an "ecclesiological definition" of the World Council. Within this context, John Meyendorff explained that the reason for the Orthodox opposition to the IMC merger into the WCC at New Delhi 1961 was due to the fact that this "was understood by many as an expression of the 'churchly' character of the WCC; one of the essential elements of the church's task in the world was being assumed, to a certain extent, by the World Council. Could it be so, if the Council was not 'something of the Church'?" He goes on the claim that the Protestant world has certain designs on turning the Council into a world church. Meyendorff says: "This tendency to 'churchify' the Council expresses a definite longing of the Protestants towards the Church; unable, or unwilling, to identify any of the existing denominations with 'the Church' in its fullness, they are looking for something wider, more united, more consistent and more universal, and many see all that precisely in the World Council of Churches. However, if the WCC assumes a 'churchly' character would Orthodox participation remain possible, since Orthodoxy considers itself as already being 'the Church'?" J. Meyendorff, "Montreal 1963", St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly 7(1963), p. 154.

²⁷One F&O participant speculated the reason for such reluctance to discuss this issue and why progress on the same will be slow is because many churches and ministers identify themselves with the Church's institutional order: "The very fact that for many Church order provides the main thread of continuity, at least in their own self-understanding, means that reaction to change in this order will be strong. 'Organizational inertia' mounts to a well-nigh immovable force where organizational identity is in question". Handspicer, HEM II., p. 159.

whole apostolic church and its ordained ministry, the F&O Working Committee placed the subject on the program for Montreal 1963.

While after Lund 1952 there was no commission appointed to examine ministry, the TCCC did give it some thought. While pledging to be ever present and active in his Spirit, Christ historically founded his church on the apostles. As a sign and structured focus for its total corporate ministry, special ministries (such as the ordained ministry) were recognized as integral to the being of the apostolic community.²⁸ Contrary to Catholic thinking, the European Section contended that there is no direct, visible, non-broken ministerial continuity between the apostolic and post-apostolic ministries. By the perpetual ministry of the indwelling Spirit, however, the apostolic deposit is continually preserved, transmitted and actualized in Christ's Community in time and space. This continuity of the apostolic tradition "is not less real for its being invisible".²⁹

At Montreal 1963, the subject of ministry was assigned to Section III ("The Redemptive Work of Christ and the Ministry of the Church") which was chaired by J.D. McCaughey (Presby.). Providing a focal point for discussion was a paper prepared by the Department of Laity entitled "Christ's Ministry and the Ministry of the Church".³⁰

Using the new Lund methodology and the findings of modern biblical scholars, Section II discussed the ordained priesthood in the wider

²⁸F&O II, No. 38, p. 29.

²⁹Ibid, pp. 58-9.

³⁰"Christ's Ministry and Ministry in the Church," Laity Bulletin No. 15 (May 1963). Relevant parts of the report of TCCC were discussed.

context of the ministry of Christ and the royal priesthood of the whole church. Rather than return to the unresolved issues (the types of ministerial orders or the validity of the same), the section took a more pragmatic approach and focused on what all churches could proclaim together about the function of ministry. It was affirmed that the church always had and must continue to have a special ministry. Moreover, the section was one in accord that the exercise of a special ministry by an individual or group requires "the acknowledgement and confirmation of the Church".³¹ Such confirmation takes place through ordination. The orderly transmission of authority in ecclesial ministry was interpreted by the report as an essential means of safeguarding the church's continuity from generation to generation in the apostolic faith.³² There were profound differences as to necessity of the ordained ministry for safeguarding this faith. While the Orthodox, for example, confessed that the three-fold ministry was of the esse of the church, the Quakers argued there was not evidence to warrant ordination.

While the Montreal discussions provided a fresh way to approach to ecclesial unity, it concentrated more on the practical dimension of ministry. Its debate on ministry made no doctrinal progress on the

³¹ Montreal 1963, p. 66.

³² Ibid., p. 65. While a general consensus prevailed that such continuity is vital to the being of the church, the churches, in their return to comparative ecclesiology when the discussion turned to a point of order, differed as to the essentialness (or inessentialness) of the orderly transmission of authority. On one end of the gamut there were some churches (for example, the Orthodox) who insisted on "the unbroken succession of episcopal ordination from the apostles," and on the other end some churches (for example, the Quakers) which assert that there is not sufficient biblical authority to warrant ordination. Ibid. pp. 65-6.

major difficulties raised with regard to this subject by earlier F&O world conferences. No attempt is made, for example, to determine which ministerial order is imperative to the church. The churches were offered no assistance on how to overcome obstacles which bar the way leading to a ministry accepted by both Catholics and Protestants.

c) Related Studies: New Context for Church Unity

At New Delhi 1961, the ecumenical movement began to direct more attention to the fact that the Head of the church is the King of all creation (the kosmokrator). The distinction between sacred history and secular history became more blurred and ecumenical debate began to shift to link the unity of the church and the unity of the world.³³

With humankind headed towards global unity, the Montreal 1963 delegates were sensitive to the reality that redemption makes sense to modern men and women to the extent it embraces both their historical and natural aspects. Cognizant of the Christian need for a deeper knowledge of the bond between the universality of the church of Christ and the history of all humankind, the Commission called for a study on the relation between the doctrines of creation and redemption.³⁴

³³Based on his Interpretation of Colossians 1:15-20 (and Eastern patristic insights), Joseph Sittler (Luth.) vigorously advocated that the doctrine of redemption has value only within the wider doctrine of creation. New Delhi 1962, p. 15. For full text of his address, see, "Called to Unity," in ER, 1962, especially, pp. 178-181.

³⁴Cf. Montreal 1963, pp. 39, 42-44, 56.

The creation-nature-redemption theme was more thoroughly discussed by the FOC at its meeting at Aarhus, Denmark in 1964. Key addresses reminded the commission that humankind, under scientific influence, has come to recognize itself as participant and bond between nature and history.³⁵ Using this kind of rationale, the Aarhus meeting instituted study on "Creation, New Creation and the Unity of the Church".³⁶

Not all the participants supported the proposed study. Its opponents expressed anxiety that it would embroil Faith and Order into "an uncharted and immeasurable ocean of theology".³⁷ But the majority expressed support for the position that, as part of the world, the church must show itself to be irretrievably involved with its development towards unity. The prevailing impression was that for too long Christians had permitted the church to appear to the secular world as insular and exclusive; for too long "we have allowed 'Church unity' to appear as a domestic and inward-looking affair, unrelated to the unity of all things in Christ of which the New Testament Speaks".³⁸

As a starting point for the "Creation, New Creation and the Unity of the Church" project, Professor Hendrikus Berkhof (Ref.) in 1965

³⁵The addresses by Paul Evdokimov (Orth.), Geoffrey W.H. Lampe (Ang.), and Wilhelm Dantine (Luth.)-respectively entitled: "Nature"; "The New Testament Doctrine of Ktisis"; and "Creation and Redemption"-are printed in Mid-Stream, 4 (Winter, 1964).

³⁶Aarhus Report, pp. 43-6. This study was later combined with the one by the Division of Studies which was entitled "The Finality of Jesus Christ in the Age of Universal History".

³⁷Patrick Rodger, "Towards the Wholeness of Christ," ER., 17(April, 1965), 154.

³⁸Ibid.

wrote a working paper on the subject entitled "God in Nature and History".³⁹ The author used history to analyze the tie between nature and its Creator and "the ambiguities involved in judgments concerning this relationship, and draws some consequences for the understanding of the Church".⁴⁰ This paper was circulated widely among individuals and some regional groups for comment. On the basis of the replies from theologians, historians and scientists, a consultation thoroughly revised the paper and transmitted it as its own document to the FOC meeting in Bristol, England in 1967 for evaluation and action.⁴¹

At the Bristol meeting, the FOC examined the question of the unity of creation, history and the church. Not only did Bristol delegates accept the document on "God In Nature and History," It also approved the follow up study on "Man in Nature and History". With this study the FOC directly confronted the question of "Man". Welcoming this "new dimension" in Faith and Order work, Oliver Tomkins insisted that to discern the "New Man in Christ" and discover "the form of a true humanity," is "to understand afresh the form of the Church". For him "The New Man cannot be a schizophrenic" and the scandal of "a divided Church obscures from humanity the forms of its own destiny".⁴²

2. Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions

³⁹"God in Nature and History," in Study Encounter 1 (3, 1965).

⁴⁰M. B. Handspecks, Ibid., p. 153.

⁴¹Cf. New Delhi to Uppsala (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 50; FO II, No. 50.

⁴²F&O II, No. 50, p. 164.

Both churches from "Catholic" and "Protestant" traditions agree that the Bible is a corpus of books written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As such, it is the normative and authentic expression of divine revelation which embodies salvific truth which is free from error. Since the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, however, Catholics and Protestants have had a different interpretation of the bond between scripture and tradition and the relative status and authority of each for the church. These diverse views have perpetuated and nurtured Christian disunity. While Protestants exalted the principle of scripture alone (sola scriptura) and displaced tradition to merely a human activity; Churches from Catholic traditions insisted that Yahweh continually manifests himself in both scripture and tradition.⁴³ Entrusted to the church, the Bible can be interpreted authoritatively only by ecclesial authority. Contrary to the Catholic stand, Protestantism in general rejected any infallible authority for the church.⁴⁴ Protestants advocated that scripture is superior to the church and touchstone for all its human traditions. As long as such diametrically opposed positions persisted and were left unexamined, a reunited Christendom remained remote.

⁴³While concurring with western catholicism that God in Christ is made known both in scripture and tradition, the Eastern Church has continually insisted that tradition can only be correctly interpreted in an ecumenical council involving the whole church.

⁴⁴This position had a telling influence on the North American section of the TCCC. It refused to recognize any claim that an individual, group, or even the visible, institutional church itself could be invested with the infallible authority that belongs to God alone. Cf., F&O II, No. 8, p. 27.

At an early stage in its development, the F&O movement was challenged by the Orthodox to face the question of the primordial character of church tradition. The Lausanne Conference attempted to find the link between scripture and tradition (as reflected in the early creeds). A decade later at Edinburgh 1937, tradition was acknowledged to be the "living stream of the Church's life".⁴⁵ Modern biblical and historical studies contributed new insights to the subject. Hence, A.C. Outler (Meth.) and G. Florovsky (Orth.) enticed Lund 1952 to call for a theological committee to investigate the whole question of Tradition in the church and churches. It was designed to focus on "that common history" between churches which is "longer, larger and richer" than their separate histories. In the light of the churches' common relationship to Christ, the committee was expected to examine both "hard core of disagreements" and the "various levels of" unity which existed among the denominations.⁴⁶ Superseding the Interim Committee (set up in 1953 to examine the crucial issue of "Tradition in its biblical and historical aspects,"⁴⁷, the F&O Working Committee in 1954 approved a

⁴⁵Cf., Edinburgh 1937, p. 229; Lausanne 1927, pp. 466-67.

⁴⁶DH, No. 39, p. 96. For Dr. Outler, the common Christian history is "the sense and insight which Christians have that God has been at work in our history and in the histories of others and that these histories have been the medium appointed or permitted through which his revelation has been transmitted through space and time. Such a conception implies that the history which separates us from the event of Christ (as traditum) is also the indispensable nexus which connects us with that event (in the actus tradenti of the Holy Spirit). The histories which separate us from each other contain the common history which hold us together". A.C. Outler, "Our Common History as Christians," in The Nature of the Unity We Seek, p. 85.

⁴⁷F&O II, no. 17, p. 36.

"Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions". (TCTT).⁴⁸ Able to build upon the work of the TCTT, Montreal 1963 produced its most notable statement on "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions."

a) Theological Commission on Tradition and Traditions

Under A.C. Outler and K.E. Skydsgaard respectively the North American and European sections of the TCTT studied and produced a final report on tradition.⁴⁹ While the European group theologically examined the inseparable bond between scripture and tradition, their American counterparts took a more historical stance by asking if it was ecumenically meaningful to continue "to speak of the identity and the continuity of the Christian reality in historical terms".⁵⁰

Over the course of its enquiry, both sections of the TCTT developed a new working vocabulary to deal with the key terms: Tradition (with a capital "T"), tradition (with a small "t") and traditions. This achievement considerably facilitated the TCTT's discussions.

⁴⁸Under the chairperson of A.L. Outler (Meth.) and vice-chairperson G. Florovsky (Orth.), membership of the American section had included: D.W. Hay, S.E. Ahlstrom, R.P. Beaver, W.A. Clebsch, E.R. Fairweather, D.N. Mathers, J.J. Pelikan, G. Routt, H.H. Walsh. Under chairperson K. E. Skydsgaard (Luth.) and Vice-Chairperson S.L. Greenslade (Ang.) other members of the European Section had included: K. Bonis (Church of Greece), G.B. Caird (Evangelical Church of Germany), E.F. Van Leer (Ref.), Jean-Louis Leuba (Swiss Protestant Church Federation) and E. Molland (Luth.). F&O II, No. 40, pp. 28, 64. The North American and European parts of the report begin, respectively on p. 5 and p. 31.

⁴⁹FO II, No. 40. For its interim report see "Report on Tradition and Traditions," The Old and New in the Church. FO II, No. 34.

⁵⁰Cf., F&O II, No. 34, p. 14.

Admitting an inability to provide an exact definition, the Commission used Tradition (or the Tradition) to refer to the Christian gospel. Tradition is the "divine origination, maintenance and prolepsis of the people of God in their historical existence".⁵¹ With a small "t," tradition means the act of "traditioning" (actus tradendi) of the traditum (the original act of tradition). Traditions referred to the welter of denominations each with its separate and diverse history.⁵² Christian scripture referred to the writings canonized by the early church as the normative apostolic witness to the Tradition.⁵³

⁵¹F&O II, No. 40, p. 18. With its own characteristic salvific stress, the North American section virtually agreed: "The Tradition is the self-giveness of God in the self-giving of Jesus Christ, 'for us men and our salvation'." On the other hand, putting the primary stress on the revelatory dimension of tradition, the European section maintained that Tradition is "the act in which through his Spirit, and in the shape of earthly words and acts, Jesus Christ comes present here and now". Ibid., pp. 47.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 16-18, 46. With little change in substance, Montreal 1963 adopted this terminology: "By the Tradition is meant the Gospel itself, transmitted from generation to generation in and by the Church, Christ himself present in the life of the Church. By tradition is meant the traditionary process. The term traditions is used in two senses, to indicate both the diversity of the forms of expression and also what we call confessional traditions, for instance the Lutheran tradition or the Reformed tradition". Montreal 1963, No. 50/p. 50.

⁵³Containing the apostolic witness to the revelation of the triune God as manifested in Jesus Christ, the TCTT makes it clear that scripture itself is not the revelation. Though divinely inspired, scripture is the work of human authors. The TCTT declared, however, that when scripture is used by the Holy Spirit to make known the Tradition (God's act in Christ) it becomes invested with a divine authority which is superior to that of the church. It writes: "As a historical document it bears witness to the Church's experience of faith; as the Word of God it is not only the witness of the faith of the primitive Church, but the bearer of the very Word of God which creates the Church and its faith, and which has, therefore, an absolute priority in relation to the faith of the Church through all ages". Ibid., p.53. For Catholics, scripture (as the church's book) is always subordinate to the church.

Even though it maintained that the church is primarily an invisible entity grounded in the triune God, the TCTT did not dispute that the una sancta ecclesia exists as a visible society in the world. In its visible reality, the church is the "locus of God's revelation". The church is the place and the instrument by which God makes himself known to men and women. Nevertheless, the TCTT understood the term "church" primarily (from the Barthian perspective) as "event" rather than "institution".⁵⁴ Protestant theology stemming from this view did not allow for the kind of divine-human intermingling associated with the institutional view of church. As an event, the visible church is only assured of its existence in this world to the extent it continued to proclaim the word and administer the sacraments. By being faithful to this task, the church prepares the ground for the Tradition to take place. As God's frail instrument, the church (according to the report of the TCTT) cannot possess and hand-on the Tradition (God self-giveness in the Christ event). Hence, the report claimed that "the church is the locus of God's revelation but not the proprietor thereof".⁵⁵

As the primordial witness to God's revelation in Christ, the TCTT maintained that in the church the Holy Spirit dramatically transmits the Tradition to all places and times. Acting in the Church, the Tradition provides all Christians (despite their doctrinal divisions) with their guaranteed source of invisible unity.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Cf. Universal Church, p. 73.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 19, 51.

The TCTT recognized that the church in time and space does find concrete expression as a historical institution. But it insisted that the unity of the church is not founded on any combination of doctrinal sameness and institutional oneness (identified with an institutional understanding of church). Rather the normative kolnonia which Tradition bestows upon the community of Christ is "unity in faith".⁵⁷

Invisibly acting through the historical church, the Holy Spirit confronts people with the Tradition. Responding in faith, Christians from all denomination are united in their public witness that Christ Jesus is God and Saviour. This in itself is the effective sign of the the unity of the church in Christ.⁵⁸ This unity is manifested to the world whenever and wherever the word is preached and the sacraments are rightly administered. Since these signs are given to the church by the Tradition, they have an important role to play with respect to the church's continuity. Uniting all Christians in all times and places, the TCTT contended that this continuity is essentially invisible. In the faithful witness down through the centuries that Christ is Lord and Saviour, this continuity is given visible, historical expression. It is this kind of confession that is the essential content of preaching and sacraments, and which must be present in every Christian tradition.

Both the European and North American sections of the TCTT acknowledged that Tradition is a divine action which is simultaneously revelatory and salvific. However, there was a difference of emphasis.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁸ At New Delhi 1961, the WCC Basis as defined at Amsterdam 1948 was expanded to include the Trinity. Cf., New Delhi 1961.

While the European part concentrated on the revelatory aspect of Tradition, the American component focused on its salvific dimension.

The European section of the report highlighted that (in Tradition) God the Father from generation to generation, in all times and places, continuously communicates and transmits His own active Word (Christ) in the Spirit to humankind. This self-giving of God is from moment to moment mediated through human witnesses; that is, "by the apostolic testimony in the canonical scriptures and the continuing actions of the Holy Spirit in the people of God through all the visible elements of the Church".⁵⁹

The American section highlighted the ongoing salvific dimension of Tradition; that is, the ongoing event of the handing over of God's Son in the Spirit to sinful humanity in all times and places so as to awaken saving faith. Through the proclamation of the word and the administration of the sacraments humanity is confronted with Tradition, "the self-giveness of God in the self-giveness of Jesus Christ, 'for us men and for our salvation'".⁶⁰

Attached as an appendix to the report of the European section is a paper by Jean-Louis Leuba (Ref.) entitled "Position and Problems".⁶¹ Endorsed by this essentially Protestant section to be an accurate commentary on its work, this two-part paper highlighted four points where agreement were possible and two outstanding areas of discord.

⁵⁹TCTT Report, p. 36.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 18.

⁶¹See, F&O II, No. 40, pp. 56-63.

While still allowing for some disagreements, Leuba indicated that a general consensus existed among the churches on the following: the legitimacy of the subject; the acceptance of Tradition as the work of God's Spirit; the difference between Tradition and the traditions (and the need for a criterion to define the difference); and that scripture and church are the two elements which enable Christians to find the criterion.⁶² While not resolving all Protestant and Catholic cleavages on the subject, these agreements confirmed that Protestants now viewed tradition much more positively. Dr. Leuba (in his comments on the legitimacy of the subject), for example, stressed that the European section confirmed that modern Protestantism is in a more advantageous position (than were the Reformers) to admit that tradition is an indispensable concept in the explanation of how Christ is present to his church. Thus Protestants are much more sympathetic to the legitimacy and validity of a Catholic claim that scripture cannot be divorced from "the 'historical', dimension of the reality of Christ".⁶³

On the other points of accord, Dr. Leuba indicated that that there existed a general consensus among WCC member churches that the Holy Spirit does not create any new revelation in dynamically transmitting the Tradition (e.g. Christ) through the ages. Despite disagreements as to whether Tradition is to be fully found in one church or in many confessional churches, Catholic and Protestant traditions concur that there is a difference between Tradition and the traditions. Moreover,

⁶²Ibid., pp. 56-59.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 56-57.

there is general agreement that scripture and church provide a criterion by which the two can be distinguished.⁶⁴

Dr. Leuba ascertained that it was not yet possible to find a via media between two seemingly insurmountable problems where Protestantism (to a lesser or greater extent) finds itself diametrically opposed to Catholicism: the relation between scripture and church; and the identity of faith and the development of knowledge. Where Protestants insist that scripture alone determines whether and where the genuine church exists, Catholics avow that by the power of the indwelling Spirit, the church (despite the sinfulness of its membership) is continually present as a visible society. For Catholic churches, scripture belongs to the church and must be interpreted in accordance with the doctrine of the una sancta ecclesia. Optimistically, however, Dr. Leuba contended that with Catholicism becoming more scripturally minded and Protestantism more attuned to the divine aspect of tradition as it pertains to the gospel, there is hope that there might be a way out of this impasse.⁶⁵

As to the second unresolved problem, Dr. Leuba maintained that while agreeing with the Orthodox that the Christian faith always remains the same, Protestantism rejects a RCC position (permitting considerable freedom for the Spirit within subsequent church history) which allows for the development of Christian dogma. A ray of hope in overcoming this division is that RCC is making a determinative attempt to show that most of its traditions are not infallible. Moreover, Protestantism is

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 57-9.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 59-61.

more conscious that each subsequent generation of Christians must make the Tradition relevant to their own particular epoch.

b) Montreal 1963: Scripture, Tradition and Traditions

Prior to Montreal 1963 a F&O consultation with the Orthodox clearly illustrated that Protestants and the Orthodox fundamentally differed on the degree to which God has allowed himself to become identified with the fallible church.⁶⁶ Earlier that same year a similar consultation was held with representative of the RCC. Yves Congar (RC) tersely summarized the major difference between the TCTT and a catholic understanding of Tradition. Congar contended that the report of the TCTT left the impression that the church is not the historical "Subject" but merely the place in which the Holy Spirit actualizes the Tradition of the Gospel. He denoted that the Catholic position attributes Tradition "first to the Church" and the indwelling Holy Spirit confirms and guarantees its unity, continuity and life in truth.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Cf., "Report of Consultation Between Orthodox and Non-Orthodox Theologians. Montreal, July 8-11, 1963," ER, 16 (October, 1963), pp. 109-111. The implications of this difference was highlighted in an earlier consultation between the two in Kifissia (Greece) in 1959. Expounding a Protestant position, Charles Westphal (Ref.), insisted that Scripture, the norm of Christian faith, is superior to the Institutional Church. Taking a contrary position, G. Florovsky insisted that the church is so empowered by the Holy Spirit that it is not tied by "the letter". Cf., C. Westphal, "The Marks of the Church," and G. Florovsky, "The Ethos of the Orthodox Church," in ER, 12 (January, 1960), pp. 179, 183.

⁶⁷Yves Congar, "Roman Catholic Reactions to Faith and Order Reports", II. June 1963, p. 3, Paper in WCC archives. Profoundly encouraged By Pope Plus XII's 1943 encyclical letter Divino Afflante
(Footnote Continued)

Based on the report of the TCTT and a Geneva prepared working paper summarizing the TCTT's work, Section II, under E. Molland (Luth.), produced its own report on "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions".⁶⁸ Stressing the whole presence of Christ in Tradition, Section II agreed with the TCTT that Tradition is both a revelatory and salvific divine event.⁶⁹ Moreover, it emphasized the importance of this continuous trinitarian activity which, through the mediation of the apostolic witness, is made present in many forms from generation to generation.

Though open to different views depending on whether the individual churches accepted scripture as the sole or one of many elements of truth (e.g., tradition) in governing the ongoing life of the church, Section II made the following significant statement:

Thus we can say that we exist as Christians by the Tradition of the Gospel (the paradosis of the kerygma) testified in Scripture, transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit. Tradition taken in this sense is actualized in the preaching of the Word, in the administration of the Sacraments

(Footnote Continued)

Spiritu, RC exegesis underwent dramatic change when RC scholars began to apply scientific textual criticism and form criticism to help interpret the literal meaning of biblical texts (without ignoring their spiritual or theological sense). By the time of Vatican II, the RCC was in a position to articulate a more comprehensive understanding of the bond between scripture and tradition. Rather than refer to scripture and tradition as two separate sources of divine revelation, Vatican II presents them as the dynamic medium through which the word of God is continually made present to the Christian community.

⁶⁸ Mirroring the structure of the Section, the report was divided into three subsections; "The Role of Scripture in the Traditionary process"; "The Unity of Tradition and the Diversity of Traditions"; and "The Christian Tradition and Cultural Diversity". Cf. P.C. Rodger & L. Vischer (Eds.) The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order. The Report From Montreal 1963 (London: SCM Press, 1963). Henceforth, this report will be cited as Montreal 1963

⁶⁹ Montreal 1963, para. 46, p. 52.

and worship, in Christian teaching and theology, in mission, and witness to Christ in the lives of the members of the Church.⁷⁰

In an effort to understand scripture (which the report of Section II described as "the Tradition in its written form"), the individual churches (from those that allowed no normative value for tradition in interpreting scripture to those that did) applied various hermeneutical principles.⁷¹ The delegates to Montreal 1963, however, reached no consensus on the correct way to interpret Holy Writ.

Supportive of the Protestant tenet that the church is called into being by the written word, Protestant delegates continued to embrace the view that the authority of scripture is ultimately superior to that of the church. They opposed the Catholic position of the normative value of the church's understanding of scripture for its interpretation. Nevertheless, there was a move away from the Reformation stand on sola scriptura. Though unable to agree on the precise connection between scripture and tradition, Protestant delegates testified that there is no conflict between scripture and tradition as correctly understood.

Without explicitly abandoning the ultimate authority of scripture, Protestant delegates at Montreal 1963 firmly acknowledged that tradition is an essential element in the life of every church. Even the written apostolic witness to the Tradition is inseparable from the traditions of the various communities to which the apostles preached. Since the Tradition continually confirms this apostolic witness to God's

⁷⁰ Ibid., No. 45/pp.51-52.

⁷¹ Ibid., No. 53/p.53.

revelation in Christ, the church (as opposed to private judgement) must interpret scripture in every new situation it finds itself.

Though in general agreement that scripture rightly interpreted must provide the criterion for the Tradition, the members of the TCTT was unable to reach consensus on what is meant by "right interpretation". Even though this problem has confronted the church from its early years, Section II maintained that it was important to have some interpretative criterion to be able to discern the Tradition amid the various traditions. It acknowledged that modern exegetical studies have done much to direct the denominations towards the Tradition.⁷²

Rooted in different conceptions of the nature of the church, there were essentially two views of Tradition prevalent among the Montreal 1963 delegates. Importantly, delegates from both the Catholic (as typified by the Orthodox delegates and RC observers) and Protestant traditions agreed that Tradition is "the act of God in Christ". Protestants, however, understood this normative Tradition solely as a divine activity which is manifested in various ways in the different churches. Integral to the Catholic stance on Tradition was the view that it included the church's infallible understanding of this divine act as actualized through defined activities. Protestants contended that such doctrinal formulations which attempt to understand Tradition are germane only to human tasks indicative in the study of traditions.

⁷²Ibid., No. 55, p. 54.

Despite these contrary views, Montreal 1963 attested to the good will of all churches to overcome the ongoing state of separation.⁷³

With the acceptance of tradition as an essential element in the life of any church, Protestantism took a major step towards overcoming a controversy that had distinguished it from the Catholic tradition for centuries. With the increased numbers of Orthodox delegates (and RC official observers and guests), Protestant delegates at Montreal began to give more attention to what the patristic writers and the church through the ages had to say about the Tradition. Such testimony enticed Protestantism away from a more provincial view of tradition towards a better appreciation and limited acceptance of the Catholic vision. At Montreal 1963, Catholics came to appreciate more fully that Protestant churches do uphold some sound Christian principles. Resulting from such positive gains, the Conference in its message to the churches was justified to some extent in its claim: "We are on the way to Christian unity. At Montreal we have shown that the Lord of all the world is at work, whatever we may do".⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

⁷⁴ "A Word to the Churches" in Montreal 1963, p. 38. This statement was prepared on behalf of the Conference by its officers: O. Tomkins, H. d'Espine, C. Konstantinidis and A.C. Outler. To help foster this unity, the "Word" directly asks five questions which arises from the sections to each church: "Will you join us in the attempt to submit all that our churches mean to us, and all we can understand of others to the judgements of Christ, Lord of all...? Will you try to understand other churches as deeply as your own...? Will you recognize that Christ calls the whole Church into his whole ministry, so that we may have a fresh understanding of the various ministries which he gives within the whole ministry? Will you, as you worship God, seek to learn from other traditions more of what true worship is meant to be in all its depth and range...? Will you humbly recognize that many of God's gifts to his

(Footnote Continued)

The Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the nature of the church remained intact at Montreal 1963. While more Protestant delegates wanted to attribute more ecclesiological status to the WCC, Catholic delegates in general (e.g. Orthodox, Roman Catholics) rejected any such notion. Convinced that the church is sinful (though justified) and perennially in need of reform, Protestants essentially opposed the traditional Catholic principles that the una sancta ecclesia is immaculate, infallible and irreformable. Perceptive to the reality that the churches from Catholic and Protestant traditions were still fundamentally opposed in their understanding of the nature of the church a number of delegates at Montreal 1963 called for further studies on this subject. Indeed, this recognition was one of Montreal 1963's outstanding achievements.⁷⁵

c) Related Studies

(Footnote Continued)

whole Church cannot be received by us in our local churches until we become the one people of God in each place, and are prepared to realize this by new bold ventures of living faith"? Ibid., p.40.

⁷⁵ According to Meyendorff one of the most significant happenings at Montreal 1963 was "the sudden realization that another dialogue - perhaps the ecumenical dialogue, par excellence - had to take place on a bilateral bases, between the Orthodox and Protestants, for the entire Protestant world, in spite of its extreme internal variety, originated on the bases of certain common presuppositions, which are precisely rejected by the Orthodox...." He agreed with Professor Mehl that no clear debate took place at Montreal 1963: "If this was done, many supposed achievements of modern Protestant ecumenical theology would probably have to be revised and many problems, supposedly solved, would have to be taken over from the very beginning.... If a fuller Orthodox participation is to bring the ecumenical movement to a crisis, it is important for the Orthodox theologians involved in the process to make everybody realize that this necessary crisis is a truly 'ecumenical' one, that its ultimate result would be a brotherly clarification of issue, and not the end of the dialogue". "Montreal 1963", p. 154.

Stemming from the Montreal report of Section II emerged further studies on biblical hermeneutics, on the patristics and the conciliar process in the early church.⁷⁶ These studies were presented to and discussed by Section IV of the FOC Bristol meeting in 1967.

(1) The Hermeneutical Problem

In its 1964 Aarhus meeting, the FOC approved a study on "The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem for the Ecumenical Movement". Carried out jointly with the Division of Studies, a preparatory consultation was established.. Utilizing selected scriptural verses, five American and European based regional groups were asked "to analyze the hermeneutical principles used in the course of its exegesis and interpretation."⁷⁷ At Heidelberg in 1967 two representatives from each group met to compare their work and draw up a report.

The report confirmed a growing ecumenical consensus on biblical interpretation. Further, it was generally acknowledged that to properly study the bible, the use of literary and historical methods were required. Continued to be influenced by the Bultmannian school of exegesis, many Protestant denominations continued to place less stress on the authority of written scripture and more emphasis on the role of the church (rather than the individual) in the interpretation of scripture. As to the current condition of ecumenical discussion on

⁷⁶For the texts of the reports see FO II, No. 50.

⁷⁷"The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem...", Ibid, p. 32.

Scripture, the Montreal report attested that Christians exist by the Tradition of the gospel which is confirmed in scripture and through the power of the Holy Spirit is transmitted in and by the church. But the churches continued to differ as to whether Scripture is the sole element of truth, a complement to tradition, or one of many elements of truth found in the life of the church.⁷⁸

(2) Patristic Studies from an Ecumenical Viewpoint

Aware that the churches confront one another in time as well as in space, the FOC approved a study on "Patristic Studies from an Ecumenical Standpoint". The churches differed significantly in the authority they allotted to their commonly shared patristic foundation. From 1962-1964, on four separate occasions, a patristic study group (composed of an equal representation of Orthodox and non-Orthodox theologians from member churches of the World Council) met to discuss the ecumenical significance of the patristics for church unity. Using historical critical analysis, the group mainly carried out a theological evaluation of Basil of Caesarea's De Spiritu Sancto ("On the Holy Spirit") treatise of 375 A.D.. By making some progress in clarifying the authority and significance of church "fathers" in the early church, the study group was able to shed light on their importance for the contemporary church and on the methods which could be applied in future patristic research.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

It was highly recommended that in ongoing ecumenical dialogue, the study of the patristic writers be given a much higher profile.

In its evaluation of the Report, Section IV of the 1967 Bristol meeting of the FOC pointed that a understanding of biblical hermeneutics was fundamental to both the study on scripture and the study on the patristics. Both studies also shared "common problems of unity and diversity".⁷⁹ The Bristol group also requested further clarification on "the nature of the authority of the Fathers".⁸⁰

(3) Conciliar Process

So that the WCC might become more attuned to its own nature and to what authority should exist in the church, Lund 1952 recommended that a study be set up on the early conciliar process.⁸¹ More aware than past assemblies of the WCC that the quest for unity involves the exercise and the recognition of some form of authority in the church, New Delhi 1952 reiterated this request. At its Aarhus meeting, the FOC approved this study on the "Importance of the Conciliar Process in the Ancient Church in the Ecumenical Movement". On the basis of meetings in England (1965) and Austria (1966), a study group consisting of equal representation from the Orthodox and Protestant churches drew up its report.⁸²

⁷⁹"Patristics Studies from a Ecumenical Viewpoint," Ibid., p. 49.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Lund 1952, para. 47, p. 131.

⁸²This important report was divided into four sections : "Council
(Footnote Continued)

This F&O study of conciliar history provided the WCC with important insights into the true nature of church authority. With its rediscovery as an integral element in the structure of the church, conciliarity was found to inextricably coupled to ecclesial unity. For guiding worship, healing broken koinonia and for the sake of strengthening unity "the church as a historical entity in all times needs Assemblies to represent it".⁸³ A major function of such councils is to make decisions even though they were not always received by all sections of the ecclesia.⁸⁴

While the conciliar process has continued among the churches, ecclesial division put an end to genuine ecumenical councils. Though present ecumenical may decisively advance unity, a united church which is able to live in eucharistic fellowship is deemed essential for a true ecumenical council. Insisting that such councils were still desirable, the report asks that "individual churches recognize and develop conciliarity as a necessary element in the life of the Church".⁸⁵

This report was approved by Section IV at the Bristol meeting. But it did so with the caveat that the ecumenical movement and the WCC "cannot convene a Council," though it can "contribute towards creating the conditions which will enable all our churches to participate in a

(Footnote Continued)
and Church"; "The Pattern of Councils"; "Authority and the Impact of Councils"; and "Conciliarity and the Church Today".

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 50-52.

⁸⁴ "By 'reception' we designate the process by which the local churches accept decisions of a Council and thereby recognize its authority". Ibid., p. 55.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 57.

truly Ecumenical Council".⁸⁶ Cognizant of importance of a correct understanding of the early councils for ecumenical dialogue, Bristol 1967 recommended the patristic study be joined with the one on councils and that a new study group be formed to examine the Council of Chalcedon and its reception in the church.⁸⁷ Convinced that the three studies on biblical hermeneutics, patristics and early councils emphasized the problem of authority, Section IV recommended "a comprehensive study on authority, especially on the authority of the Bible".⁸⁸

d) Summary

There was present in the work of the TCTT a tension between the proper relationship of the divine and the human elements in Tradition. In the European section it comes to the fore as the problem of the given divine unity and continuity of the church and the plurality of denominations which appeared to deny this unity. The task which faced this predominantly Protestant Commission was to discover the divine in nature. While the problem remained unresolved, a serious attempt was initiated to become familiar with the complexity of the problem.⁸⁹

As Protestants began to direct its attention away from the historical Jesus to the apostolic community, it began to place more

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

importance on the institutional, historical church. Gradually it came to realize that the church itself is the foundation which contains the beginnings of all Christian faith. Reflecting this change of position, the findings of the TCTT moved away from a prevalent Protestant idea that Tradition was strictly outside the parameters of human history. By recognizing that scripture is itself tradition and the church creates all Christian faith, Protestantism moved closer to a Catholic stance.

3. International Study Commission on Institutionalism

The churches are divided not merely on doctrine but by a pervasive variety of social, cultural, political, economical, racial and psychological factors. This was confirmed in a pioneering report on the subject which appeared as part of the preparatory material for Edinburgh 1937.⁹⁰ Aware that the infrastructure of ecclesiological institutions manifest both unity and disunity, the F&O Working Committee at its 1955 Davos (Switzerland) meeting authorized a International Study Commission on Institutionalism.⁹¹ Dean Walter Muelder was selected to chair this Study Commission.⁹² Composed of theologians, sociologists and

⁹⁰W.L. Speery, "The Non-theological Factors in the Making and Unmaking of Church Unity," FO I, No. 84.

⁹¹This choice was prompted by the paper of American Dean Walter Muelder (Meth.) which he delivered to the Working Committee of the WCC in 1955. Paper printed in ER, 9(January, 1956), pp. 113-126.

⁹²Other Commission members were: Americans - N. Ehrenstrom (Luth.), J.M. Gustafson (United Ch.), F.E. Rector (Disciples) and F.A. Shippey (Meth.); Canadians - C.R. Feilding (Ang.), W.S.F. Pickering (Ang.); Europeans - J.M. Gustafson (United Ch.) H. Dombols (Evang.), B.
(Footnote Continued)

historians, the perimeter of its task was to examine how the positive and negative aspects of institutionalism affected "the self-criticism of churches by which they see their own structures sociologically as well as theologically" and their relationship to one another.⁹³

Integrating an interdisciplinary theological and a sociological approach (with the major stress on the latter), the Commission examined the nature and functions of ecclesiological institutions. It also focused on the ecclesia itself as koinonia and institution, and the polarity between order and organization. This sociological analysis of institutional infrastructure was enriched with illustrative case studies on the influence of institutional factors in historical church unions.⁹⁴

In its examination of ecclesiological institutions, the Commission used the concept "institution" in the broad operational and sociological sense to mean "a definite and established structure, built around one or more social functions, and characterized by such traits as durability, persistence and stability".⁹⁵ For Protestantism on the whole, the term "institution" had for a long time evoked images of legalism, impersonalism and lack of Spirit. In contrast, koinonia was identified with common love, common faith and common fellowship. Based on its

(Footnote Continued)

Gustafson (Ch. of Sweden), H-H Schery (Evang.). "The Report of the Study Commission on Institutionalism" (1963) F&O II, No. 37, p. 30.

⁹³Minutes of the Working Committee, Davos, Switzerland, 1955. F&O II, No. 22, p. 11.

⁹⁴Cf. N. Ehrenstrom and W. Muelder (eds.) Institutionalism and Church Unity (Symposium prepared by the Commission) (London: SCM Press, 1963).

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 27.

research, the Commission opposed "the insidious temptation of modern Protestantism," to draw a dichotomy between these two concepts. Even the New Testament witnesses to a "structured", rather than a structureless, koinonia. Ecclesiastical institutions were found to facilitate, rather than vitiate, Christian koinonia and make possible a more comprehensive understanding of human existence. They provide an ordered structure for the common life through which the triune-God graces his people and "makes a personal existence in freedom and responsibility manifest".⁹⁶

Itself a God-given institution for salvation, the church contains within itself a variety of institutions (preaching, administration of the sacraments, missions). Of crucial importance to the church's identity and continuity throughout history are its three "dominical" institutions of gospel, the sacraments, and the ministry through which they are administered. Responding to these institutions and their function, different ages and traditions have embodied them with both constitutive and derivative institutional elements. Often the genuine value of these elements had been distorted to the extent where they become ends in themselves and are found undesirable by those churches that do not already possess them.

Ministry, for example, had proven itself a very thorny problem for the ecumenical movement. Though readily concurring that ministry is a "dominical" institution, Christian accord disintegrates as to whether the office of episcopate is a permanent or contingent institutional form. At various times and places, the episcopacy acquired a social

⁹⁶F&O II, No. 37, p. 20.

character whereby it became associated with social and ecclesial advancement. Together with tainting any real relevance that the episcopacy may have for the life of the church, it biased the non-episcopal churches against the episcopal form of church polity to the degree that it still hinders the quest for unity. Thus a major challenge facing the ecumenical movement is to find the criterion which will enable the churches to determine if the elements under consideration belong to the "order" or "organization" of that ecclesiastical institution.⁹⁷

As a subject for further theological reflection and sociological analysis, the report of this Study Commission which was submitted to Montreal 1963 recommended an enquiry into what "constitutes the divinely instituted 'order' of the one Church" and the ways it finds "appropriate forms of 'organization' in the present ecumenical age".⁹⁸ With the New Delhi unity formula, the Muelder Commission provided the main working for Section V ("All in Each Place": the Process of Growing Together").

a) Related Studies

⁹⁷See the 1960 Interim Report of the Study Commission on Institutionalism entitled "Institutionalism and Unity," in The Old and New in the Church: Two Interim Reports F&O II, No. 34, p. 78. The North American Conference on F&O in 1957 F&O distinguished between a "primary" organization or "order" and a "secondary" organization or "organization". The former differs from the latter in that it is "essential to the continuous existence and identity of the visible Church, and the variety of structures through which this "order" can be made operative". Unity We Seek. Edited by Paul S. Minear (St Louis: Bethany Press, 1957), p. 232.

⁹⁸F&O II, No. 37, p. 28.

The Study Commission on Institution showed that the church (and denominations) has an inherent resistance to change. At its 1964 Aarhus meeting, the FOC expressed a determination to continue this line of investigation by initiating a study on "Spirit, Order and Organization". By examining the process of change in the church as an institution and interpreting the task of Christ's Spirit in terms of organization, the FOC sought to shed some light on the nexus between ecclesiology and pneumatology and the church as a dimension of the created order.⁹⁹

Though there were two consultations on the subject, the study due to a lack of funding could not be completed. Overall, the consultations contributed little to existing knowledge on the subject. They never got around to clarifying the link between the Holy Spirit and the ecclesiastical organization even though "the whole set up of the Study called for a revision of the antagonism between Protest/Spirit and Order/Spirit".¹⁰⁰ Importantly, however, these empirical studies were bold attempts to treat sensitive and thorny questions such as the relation of authority to power. Their findings attest to the fact that the ecumenical movement's quest for unity must necessarily include a search for ecumenical institutionalism.

4. Theological Commission on Worship

⁹⁹F&O II, Nos. 44 & 50, respectively, pp. 58-60; p. 56.

¹⁰⁰"Faith and Order Louvain 1971: Study Reports and Documents," FO II, No. 59, p. 129.

Subsequent to Lund 1952, the F&O Working Committee appointed a Theological Commission on Worship (TCW) to advance the pre-Lund work on this subject. The TCW was divided into European, East Asian and North American sections which were respectively chaired by Regin Prenter (Luth.), Principle Russel Chandran (Church of South India), and Joseph Sittler.¹⁰¹ As an overall objective, the TCW undertook a comprehensive theological enquiry of "the place and function of worship in God's whole work of redemption, and its relationship to the whole life of the Church".¹⁰² Approaching this task from different perspectives, the European component concentrated on the nexus of Christian worship (leiturgia) to the doctrines pertaining to creation and the Christ event. Meanwhile, the other two sections focused on the relationship of worship to culture and its relevancy for contemporary humanity.

Perceived from a biblical perspective, humankind was created for worship - to know, love, and serve God. Through disobedience and the worshipping of gods of its own making, the human species moved away from its true vocation. But the European section averred that even this idolatry attests that humanity was created to worship.¹⁰³ With genuine

¹⁰¹For list of members of TCW see: "Report of the Theological Commission on Worship," F&O II, No. 39, pp. 24-5; 44-5; 49. Since the report of the TCW itself consists of three distinct reports, it is appropriate to point out that the European report begins on p. 5, the East Asian report on p. 27, and the American report on p. 47.

¹⁰²WCC, Evanston to New Delhi 1954-1951; report of the Central Committee to the 3rd Assembly of the World Council of Churches. (Geneva: WCC), 1961, p. 39.

¹⁰³F&O II, No. 39, pp. 16-18.

leiturgia restored through the Christ event, all men and women are set free and offered the possibility of assuming their genuine vocation.

Through its worship the church, the representative of the new humanity, shares in Christ's work for the redemption of all humankind. As a response to God in the totality of existence, the worship offered by the church includes the public celebration of the liturgy, praise, thanksgiving, prayer, intercession, love and service to humanity.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, the TCW adopted the theological position that individual worship always had ecclesial implications because it is conducted in Christ through the Spirit. Since through baptism all are integrated into the one Body of Christ, Christian worship (private or public) always of a communal identity.¹⁰⁵ This corporate character of the church, "the koinonia of the Holy Spirit" is expressed most clearly in the Eucharistic liturgy.¹⁰⁶

Christian worship is both christological and trinitarian. It is the church's "proclamation of the good news of God's redemption and re-creation of humanity in Christ".¹⁰⁷ Since the triune God is fully involved in salvation history, Christian worship embodies the "mighty acts of God". In history, these mighty acts are "wrought" in the hearts of men and women by the Father's Word and Spirit.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 17, 54.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Both the European and East Asian parts of the report stressed the vital importance of the pneumatological dimension in Christian worship. Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has continued to bring together and govern the people of God. Without the continuous presence of the Spirit in the church, no Christian worship is possible. Together with "creating the corporateness of Christian worship," through which the church is continually renewed, the Spirit-imbued leiturgia conveys to God's people a conviction of sin, forgiveness and new life. The Spirit's presence a pledge of the church's eschatological fulfillment and victory.

From within the cultural context in which people live out their lives, an encounter with the "mighty acts of God" demand a total response in obedience and self-offering. Placed over all creation, humankind is free to use all created things to glorify the triune God. Nevertheless, the report of the Commission testified that for a growing number of contemporary men and women, worship has dwindling importance. Lacking power to instill meaning, worship services frequently portray "a sense of lack of contact" with the contemporary daily lifestyle. The Commission recognized that it is difficult for the casual church-goer and the "serene secularist" to discern how worship can renew and sanctify day-to-day living when it is restricted to the sanctuary.¹⁰⁹

Since the tenet of indigenization is inherent in doctrines pertaining to creation and the Christ-event, the Commission acknowledged that human culture is part of the total response of its life to God's revelation. By using the cultural elements found in particular cultural

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 18, 36.

situations, the church communicates its faith and life more effectively. Nevertheless, these indigenous thought forms, associated with the "fallen condition" of humankind, may have to be exposed to the redeeming and reconciling power of Christ restored to their essential function of glorifying the triune God. At this point these cultural forms can be incorporated into Christian worship.¹¹⁰

For the cleavage existing between cultic life and daily life, the Commission expressed a deep concern. A contributing factor in this separation may lie in the fact that in later Christianity, the Lord's Day (Christian Sunday) came to coincide with the day the nation normally takes its rest and recreation. In performing its responsibilities of bringing humankind into a daily encounter with the vitality of prayer, the church has to assure that its prayer life is broad enough to encompass "all the relationships of human life".¹¹¹

In the modern church, divisions on the theology of worship are found not only between various denominations but also "within" churches. Each particular church has to front a tension between a "tradition" theology which attempts "to provide real content to the biblical and traditional language of worship" and "modern" theology which offers a modern reinterpretation of the subject.¹¹² Together with diverse understandings of issues pertaining to creed and ecclesial polity, different Christian cultic practices also contributed to the ongoing

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 18.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 9-10.

divisions among the churches in their allegiance to the faith. Nevertheless, the Commission expressed an optimism that many of the problems associated with cult could be resolved. It attested: "We are convinced that many of the current differences in worship need not be the obstacles to unity as they are supposed to be".¹¹³

While responses may vary with the types of worship, all Christians who share in Christ a common faith and baptism are called to partake in a common worship to God.¹¹⁴ Since Christ is the church's one source of unity, individual worshipping communities in every culture regardless of time or space are both local and catholic. No Christian or local church can worship in isolation; for Christian worship involves the sharing of the whole people of God in a common heritage rooted in the bible and unfolded in the history of the church.

The European section advocated that the eucharist liturgy which embodies the unique covenant God has initiated in Christ with his people is the central corporate act of Christian worship.¹¹⁵ Though present to all his creation, Christ is present in a unique way the proclamation of the word and sacraments, through which he exercises in and through his church his high priesthood, kingship and prophetic office.¹¹⁶

Endeavoring to understand and cope with the major problems many modern people encounter with worship, the TCW helped clarify the reasons

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 13, 15.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

why Christian worship is integral to faith and unity. As the composite report of mostly Protestant theologians from liturgical and non-liturgical type churches, it made advances on some of the major differences left unsolved from the pre-Lund 1952 treatment of leiturgia. Upon completion, the report of the TCW was transmitted to Montreal 1963.

a) Montreal 1963

At Montreal 1963, the work of the TCW provided the main source of preparatory material for Section IV ("Worship and the Oneness of Christ's Church") under J.I. McCord (Presby.).¹¹⁷ Based on discussions on many of the themes contained in the work of the TCW, Section IV drew up its own report (McCord report). According to its chairperson, the report's most important feature is that it marks the interaction of the ecumenical movement with the liturgical movement.¹¹⁸

The McCord report provided a solid trinitarian framework for its understanding of Christian leiturgia. While acknowledging the irrelevancy of many liturgical forms and the excessive use of

¹¹⁷Both "liturgical" and "non-liturgical" churches were represented by the more than 80 participants assigned to Section IV. Some of the main representatives for the various denominations represented included: H. Alivisatos (Orth.), W. Booth (Salvation Army), W.R. Bouman (Luth. - Missouri Synod), A. Buthi (Ref.), R. Cain (Meth.), J.R. Chandran (Ch. of South India), E. Chavez Campos (Pentecostal Ch. of Chile), H.H. Clarke (Ang.), M.A. Creasey (Society of Friends), J. G. Gatu (Presby.), R.B. Hannen (American Baptist Convention), W.M. Kelly (United Ch. of Canada), E. Lamirande (RCC), A.M. Pennybacker (Disciples), J.A. Sittler, (Luth.), T. F. Zielinski (Old Catholic). For a full list of membership (and churches they represented) for Section IV see Ibid., pp. 99-102.

¹¹⁸For full report see Montreal 1963, pp. 69-89.

ecclesiological language, the McCord report from the outset declares that Christian worship is deeply relevant for "all" modern men and women.¹¹⁹ Descriptive of the existential nature of the Church, the leiturgia is "the determinative act of the Church's life".¹²⁰ Section IV expressed confidence that by studying the various patterns of worship, it would obtain new insights into the relationship between God, the church, and creation. Its work reaffirmed the bond that exists between the unity of the Church and its worship.

With its cultic life anchored in Christ's ministry (before and after his resurrection), the church in its worship finds its oneness with all creation and offers it anew to the triune God in Christ. This worship is never the sole act of one individual Christian or a group of Christians but the corporate act of the una sancta ecclesia. Hence, Section IV declared that Christian disunity is contrary to genuine leiturgia : "Ecclesial divisions among the churches ... contradict true worship, because they represent a failure to carry the common ministry of reconciliation to which we all are called in Christ".¹²¹

In its report, Section IV discussed the relation of worship to mission, indigenization and to contemporary men and women. However, its primary efforts were directed towards an exploration of the nature and sacramental character of Christian worship. Traditionally, Protestantism stressed that the proclaimed word is the locus for Christian worship.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., No. 105/p.69.

¹²⁰ Ibid., No.106/p.69.

¹²¹ Ibid., para. 108, pp. 70-71.

Though Catholics confess that in any act of liturgical worship the word and sacrament jointly complemented one another, it often appeared that churches from Catholic traditions (in their reaction to Protestantism) stressed the sacramental dimension as the primary focus for worship.

From the outset F&O emphasized the implications of baptism and eucharist for Christian unity. Despite the ongoing "infant" versus "believer" baptism controversy, the churches were moving towards a convergence in their understanding of the essence of this sacrament. As for the eucharist, the Catholic and Protestant controversies in the past left the impression that differences between the two traditions on various facets of the sacrament were insurmountable.

Among the Protestant Reformers, Ulrich Zwingli had reacted to the inadequacies of transubstantiationist theologies. In time, Protestantism in general came to understand the eucharist in purely symbolic terms. The Lord's Supper was reduced to no more than a memorial of a past happening.

Though many unsolved issues on this thorny ecumenical subject remained, Section IV, as confirmed in its report, took a remarkable step towards eucharistic rapprochement. This convergence recognized both the "Real Presence" and "sacrificial" character of the eucharist. Indicative of the influence churches from Catholic traditions have had on the ecumenical movement, Section IV declared that as a gift of the triune God to Christ's church, the Lord's Supper is a "sacrament of the presence of the crucified and glorified Christ until he comes, and a

means whereby the sacrifice of the cross, which we proclaim, is operative in the Church".¹²²

On the issue of intercommunion at ecumenical gatherings, the Montreal 1963 discussions did not make any substantial progress over those which took place at Lund 1952. While Protestants in general argued that "table fellowship is demanded by Christian fellowship," this position runs contrary to Orthodox ecclesiology which sees in the Eucharist the very expression of the unity of the una sancta ecclesia. For the Orthodox, there can be no intercommunion - for eucharistic "table fellowship" is the crown of a unity fully achieved. Sensitive to these two distinctive positions, Section IV indicated that any move on its part to enshrine either of these views would be "widely regarded as an ecumenical disaster with widespread and unfortunate consequences".¹²³

The McCord Report asseverated that the Eucharist sustains and expresses the unity of the body of Christ. As God's gift, the Lord's Supper is a constitutive element of Christ's community. By it, over time and space, the members of the body of Christ are "sustained in their unity" with Christ and through this union they are able to worship God as Christ's one body.¹²⁴ Every time the people of God celebrates the eucharist the unity of the one church is visibly manifested. This has implications for the local church. Through its

¹²² Ibid., No. 117/p.73.

¹²³ Ibid., para. 135, p. 77.

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 73-4.

eucharistic liturgy, a congregation expresses its visible unity with the church in heaven and on earth.¹²⁵ Thus assisted by the liturgical renewal, the delegates of various churches were able to achieve at Montreal 1963 a consensus on the eucharist which had long eluded ecumenical efforts.

b) Post Montreal Worship: Stress on Eucharist

After Montreal 1963, the FOC decided to focus its attention on the Eucharist. In 1964, it authorized a study entitled "The Eucharist: A Sacrament of Unity" and its report was later presented to the FOC at its 1967 Bristol plenary meeting. The emphasis was on its analysis of the Eucharist in terms of "anamnetic and epikletic character, namely in terms of the way it functions as representation and anticipation, and the way in which it necessarily includes the invocation of the Holy Spirit".¹²⁶ As a challenge to Christians everywhere, the report accented the catholic character of the Eucharist which is contrary to the lack of unity existing among the plurality of churches.

The F&O research on worship clearly revealed that while many believers still found meaning in their various forms of worship with its biblical thought patterns, a growing number of modern men and women found no relationship between worship and their daily secular living. Increasing pressure was applied to the WCC to directly deal with this

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 74.

¹²⁶ FO II, No. 50, p. 61.

important topic at its highest decision making level. Thus the subject appeared for the first time on a world council assembly agenda at the Fourth World Council Assembly which under the encompassing theme "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5) was held from 4-19 July 1968 at Uppsala, Sweden (Uppsala 1968).¹²⁷

c) Uppsala 1968 and Worship

The draft document prepared for Section V of Uppsala 1968 (to which the subject of worship was assigned) was entitled "The Worship of God in a Secular Age".¹²⁸ Culling from themes found in the work of the TCW, this working text for Section V focused primarily on a western capitalistic understanding of the phenomenon of secularization and the need for the church's worship to reflect the ever changing secular conditions.

Sidestepping the doctrinal aspects of worship, the draft document for Section V predominantly reflected the non-liturgical churches' view of worship of praising God through the social gospel. The more liturgical churches of both the East and West, however, had serious misgivings with the draft text for the way it ignored the more vertical, God directed dimension of worship. Especially for the Orthodox, Christian worship calls believers from the world to participate in the "new creation". With a view to re-working the subject, Section V

¹²⁷The Uppsala Report 1968. (Hereinafter cited Uppsala 1968). Edited by Norman Goodall. (Geneva: WCC, 1968), p. 74.

¹²⁸Cf., Drafts for Sections: Uppsala Geneva: WCC, 1967.

(presided over by Orthodox John Meyendorff) decided to retain the Draft document. Upon the request of Section V, the final draft was simply entitled "Worship" (cited hereafter as the Meyendorff Report).¹²⁹

In the Introduction of the subject for Section V, Professor Meyendorff contested the view that the church ought to permit a secular world to determine its tenets of worship. Through its worship, the church separates itself from the spirit of the world in order to celebrate in Christ the "new creation". Perceiving a world that needed to be "saved", he opined that Christian worship must act as both the impetus and the catalyst to draw the world towards this new creation.¹³⁰

J.-J. von Allmen, the vice-moderator for Section V, insisted the church must contend itself with both the process of the secularization of the church and the world. In obedience to the will of Christ, the church in fulfillment of its mission must always be open to assume the appropriate forms of the "age" to which it is sent. In a secular world which wants to act in "an adult" way, the church must be ready both to witness to the "new creation" and to challenge the justice of contemporary society with its own. In this way it is imperative that the church's worship simultaneously embody elements of "protest" and "witness".¹³¹

¹²⁹Reflecting the interests of the Section the four parts were entitled: "The Challenge of Secularization"; "Continuity and Change"; "Preaching, Baptism and Eucharist"; and "Helping People to Worship".
The Uppsala Report 1968.

¹³⁰Ibid., pp. 74-5.

¹³¹Ibid., pp. 75-6.

With its anthropological point of departure, the Meyendorff Report stressed the positive character of the process of secularization in its openness to the future while being appreciative of the good and value in the world. Section V made a deliberate effort not to affirm the reality of God in daily events at the expense of undermining the reality of humankind and the world. While witnessing to the reality of God in creation, it acknowledged the need to equally stress the solidarity between humankind and the world.

Further, it attested that the "crisis in worship" is not merely caused by the phenomenon of secularization. Behind this crisis is the "crisis in faith". While affirming that it is important to search for more relevant liturgical forms which will be more comprehensible for modern humanity, Section V requested the churches and the WCC to "undertake a study of fundamental Christian faith".¹³² The Section was fully aware that unless the Christian faith is active there can be no genuine worship. Paradoxically, however, Christian worship itself is the source for nurturing, purifying and inflaming the Christian faith.

In addition to the secularization theme, the Meyendorff Report gave much more doctrinal attention (than did the draft document) to the Orthodox understanding of worship. There was general agreement that "Christian worship both celebrate God's mighty act in Jesus•Christ and draw us in communion with him".

Section V insisted that the proclamation of the word (which it considered to be essential to Christian worship) needed to be made

¹³²Ibid.

alive. Hence, it is imperative that the ecclesia present the word in ways that are meaningful to the "age" and the people it intends to reach. Referring to the significant agreement that the churches have reached on the sacrament of baptism, Section V reiterated that through baptism individuals are initiated into the life of the worshipping church. As to be expected with the addition of many more denominations, Uppsala 1968 was unable to obtain the same level of agreement that F&O had been able to achieve at Montreal 1963 and at its meeting in Bristol in 1963. In a fellowship where many of its members churches do not give an important place to the eucharist, it is significant that Section V was able to recommend a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper.¹³³

Meeting at Sigtuna (Sweden) in July 1968, the F&O Working Committee expressed its disappointment that Section V found it so extremely difficult to obtain any agreements. Some questioned why the FOC had not been more directly involved in preparing its working draft. Though the report of Section V of Uppsala 1968 addressed its various recommendations to the FOC, the Working Committee indicated that it is not obliged to carry through on such requests, especially, those deviating from the FOC's own program.¹³⁴

Though basically a sound document, the Meyendorff Report could have been considerably more impressive if it had taken time to link the

¹³³It is interesting to note the change in the RCC approach to its understanding of Eucharist. Traditionally where Roman Catholicism would have discussed Eucharist in the context of priesthood, the Dominican J.M.R. Tillard, an official Roman Catholic observer-cum-advisor delegated to Section V, insisted that the Eucharist must be treated in the context of community.

¹³⁴F&O II, No. 53, p. 16.

secularization theme with the vertical dimension of worship. J.M.R. Tillard opined that it was neither a "very good" nor "bad" document partially because these two themes, like "two strands crossing each other," were left unjoined. He suggested to the plenary session that shortcoming could have been easily rectified by adding a sentence or so to the report affirming the following:

Worship introduces into the process of secularization the latter's very germ of salvation, which will enable it not to go off course by falling into secularism - it ensures that it will remain open to God, recognized as the source of the world's reality and of ¹³⁵man's power, to whose authority God has entrusted the universe.

Furthermore, Tillard observed that, unlike the churches in the East, the Western churches presentation of the problem of Christian worship was "lacking in depth". He maintained that it was mostly due to the interventions of the Eastern churches that the final report of Section V was able to achieved the doctrinal depth that it did.

In his requested response to Section V, David L. Edwards (Ang.)-Dean of King's College - lauded the WCC for placing the subject of worship on the agenda for Uppsala 1968. This clearly demonstrated that the World Council was no longer satisfied in leaving so vital a subject merely to the "respectable obscurity" of its FOC. While providing the source for Christian service, worship in Christ is primarily God

¹³⁵J.M.R. Tillard, "The Uppsala Document on Worship," O In C p. 156. He suggested that one possible place where this link could had been effectively made was in the Section dealing with the Eucharist. In this way the Eucharist, given its anamnesis and epiklesis nature "would have regained its position as the focal point of the Church's worship and service". Ibid., pp. 166-67.

orientated. Edwards insisted that reform in Christian worship is impossible until modern Christendom finds the courage and determination to examine fundamental questions and propositions which currently challenge key doctrines. Hence, he pondered: "Perhaps, for the sake of the world, the next Assembly should be more theological".¹³⁶

C. The WCC Attempts To Define the Unity It Seeks

Among the changes to the WCC's structure approved by Evanston 1954 was the assignment of the FOC (together with other departments) to the Division on Studies. This was evaluated by some F&O supporters as a demotion. Indeed, it did suggest that the WCC associated the FOC more with reflective thought than action. Aside from access to additional funds, however, the FOC was placed in a more strategic position to have a more profound influence on the whole of ecumenical thought.

Concurrently with this change, the Executive Committee of the CC in February 1957 suggested that the FOC clarify its future role in the WCC. In response to the challenge, the F&O Working Committee at its 1957 New Haven meeting appointed a Commission on the Future of Faith and Order. This special committee submitted an interim report to the 1958 Geneva meeting of the Working Committee. Based on problems raised by the CC at its 1958 (Nyborg Strand, Denmark) and 1959 (Rhodes) meetings, F&O further revised the draft document. Unanimously approved by the FOC at

¹³⁶Uppsala 1968, p. 85.

its 1960 plenary meeting, the report was received by the CC and submitted to Section I of the third assembly of the WCC in 1961.

The report described F&O's most important function as follows:

"To proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ and to keep prominently before the World Council of Churches and the churches the obligation to manifest that unity and its urgency for the work of evangelism".¹³⁷ Though in agreement with the "Toronto statement" that no one definition of unity can be made a condition for WCC membership, the FOC, nevertheless, contended that the WCC cannot hope to take a neutral stand on the unity Christ demands for the church. In unison with the "Toronto statement", it averred that the WCC exists precisely to break deadlocks among the churches.¹³⁸ As such, the report advocated that the WCC must concern itself more with "churchly unity" than "organization unity" which leaves unfulfilled many of the basic elements

¹³⁷The interim report listed four more F&O functions: To study questions of faith, order and worship with the relevant social, cultural, political, racial, and other factors in their bearing on the unity of the Church to study the theological implications of the existence of the ecumenical movement.... To study matters in the present relationship of the Church to one another which cause difficulties and need theological clarification..... To provide information concerning actual steps taken by the churches towards reunion". CC, Minutes... Nyborg Strand... 1958, pp. 114-16.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 114-15. Keith R. Bridstom (F&O executive secretary) pointed out that the Interim Report took note of the theological paradox contained in the "Toronto statement" which advocated that each member church was free to retain its own doctrine of church unity and at the same time declared that the WCC existed to break "the deadlock between churches". Like any paradox, Bridstom maintained that this theological dilemma would become a "pure contradiction if it is not recognized". Even in a council where the churches are free to hold their own positions there must be room for "the possibility of changes in ecclesiologies, for without such change the deadlocks cannot be broken". Cf. 11 (April 1959), p. 253.

of ecclesial life. It claimed that the present structure of the WCC did not adequately reflect F&O as a necessary and integral part of the whole ecumenical movement.¹³⁹ Hence, the F&O leadership, through its report, reminded the World Council that it was again time "to define more clearly what exactly is the function of the World Council with regard to church unity".¹⁴⁰

Prior to full debate on the future of F&O, the World Council itself praised the persistence of F&O for keeping before the WCC the subject of ecclesiology. It conceded that the core issue of ecclesiology is prior to the issue of organization. Professor Henry van Dusen indicated there were within the WCC two alternative views pertaining to the unity of the church - the "conciliar association view" and the "Catholic" conception. The distinguishing characteristic of the former position among the various associations of councils of churches (which is realized most fully in the WCC) is fellowship and cooperative action. To the extent that the full mutual recognition of member churches by one another is yet to be realized, the WCC is still an imperfect anticipation of the ultimate ecclesiological unity. Professor van Dusen described the latter view as being similar to the situation existing among the autocephalous churches of Eastern Orthodoxy. With the increased importance that was attributed to eschatology post Amsterdam 1948, Professor van Dusen,

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 119.

¹⁴⁰"World Council Diary," ER, 9, 4(1959), p. 323.

claimed that within the WCC the former view was gaining in acceptance over the latter.¹⁴¹

But during this period the FOC continued to press for organic or corporate union. In the report on the Future of Faith and Order, F&O challenged the apparent contradiction in the "Toronto Statement" which claimed that it existed to break "the deadlock between the churches," while holding that membership in the WCC "does not imply the acceptance of a specific doctrine concerning the nature of church unity". F&O reminded the WCC that it could not take a neutral stand on the question: What kind of unity does God demand of His church? Rather the WCC must both seek to find the true form of unity and work to obtain it. Though the "Toronto statement" declared that member churches are free to retain their own doctrine of church unity, the FOC reminded the CC that the same document also stated that the WCC existed to break the "deadlock" between churches. The FOC Interim Report clearly affirmed:

It is our strong conviction that to proclaim the essential oneness of the Church of Christ involves facing the question, what kind of unity does God demand of His Church? The WCC can have no 'neutrality, on whether this question is answered or not--events are forcing upon us various kinds of Christian cooperation, and if we do not find the right form of churchly unity we shall find ourselves remaining content with a form of organizational unity which leaves¹⁴² unfulfilled many of the requirements of the Church's life.

¹⁴¹H. van Dusen, "The Significance of Conciliar Ecumenicity," ER, 12, 3 (1960), p. 315.

¹⁴²Cf. FO II, No. 26, 1958.

Chiefly due to the efforts of Lesslie Newbigin, the FOC was able to draw up its own definition of the kind of unity the WCC ought to work towards as its ultimate objective. This unity formula was placed at the beginning of the report on "The Future of Faith and Order. With the main problem to unity being the impasse between Catholic and Protestant understanding of the nature of the church, Professor H. D'Espine pointed out to the CC that it was important for the World Council to adopt the FOC position on ecclesial unity. Received by the CC, this definition of unity was presented to New Delhi 1961.

After thorough discussion, New Delhi 1961 adopted the unity formula and prepared to send it to the member churches for their consideration. This marked the first time that an assembly of the WCC was able to agree on a common description of the ecumenical goal. While not neglectful of the note of "catholicity", the New Delhi unity formula focused on the local church unity of "all in each place" characterized by a common profession of the one apostolic faith, eucharistic fellowship, common prayer, and corporate life in witness and service. The statement read:

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his church is made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages, in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls

his people. It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.¹⁴³

Whereas Evanston 1954 highlighted the invisible and eschatological nature of the church, the New Delhi unity formula stressed the visible and concreteness of fully committed ecumenical koinonia. Marking a significant shift away from the earlier emphasis on the value of a "variety of traditions as reflecting the infinite riches of God," F&O began to concentrate on visible church unity characterized by unity in doctrine, unity of ministry, unity of liturgy, and unity of apostolic praxis. The New Delhi unity declaration attests that all Christians in each place are united to and form one Body with all Christians in every place and time.

Even though the unity statement does not bind the WCC member churches, Dr. D'Espine claimed that it would challenge churches who reject the unity formula to ask themselves whether they do so on "valid

¹⁴³DH, pp. 144-45. To the CC at its 1960 St Andrews meeting, the FOC gave the following account of the unity which it believed the WCC must "work and pray": "The Commission on Faith and Order understands that the unity which is both God's will and His gift to His Church is one which brings all in each place who confess Christ Jesus as Lord into a fully committed fellowship with one another through one baptism into Him, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel and breaking the one bread, and having the corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all; and which at the same time unites them with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such ways that ministry and members are acknowledged by all, and that all can act and speak together as the occasion requires for the tasks to which God call the Church We recognize that the brief definition of our objective which we have given above leaves many questions unanswered. In particular we would state emphatically that the unity we seek is not one of uniformity, and that on the interpretation and the means of achieving certain of the matters specified in the preceding paragraph we are not yet of a common mind". Cf., D'Espine, "The Role of the WCC in Regard to Unity," ER, 12 (1960), p. 15.

biblical or theological reasons".¹⁴⁴ By refusing to examine this unity formula, member churches might find themselves turning away from the light that God is giving them into the unity that is constitutive of the church of Christ. With the majority of the leaders of the FOC becoming increasingly impatient with the impotent reality of denominationalism, it was hoped that the New Delhi unity formula would speed up the process which would ultimately lead to the demise of denominationalism.

The adoption of the New Delhi unity formula did not blind the FOC to the fact that many questions in this area still needed to be tackled and solved. It was frankly stated in the text that the Assembly was not of a "common mind on the interpretation and the means of achieving the goal we have described". It was certain, however, that while the definition of unity proposed is compatible with considerable organizational and liturgical diversity, it is "neither 'federal' nor merely 'spiritual'." Moreover, just as visible unity does not mean unity of rite or expression, it does not mean a uniform centralized ecclesiastical institution.¹⁴⁵

After New Delhi 1961, the churches continued to differ as to whether the "conciliar" or the "Catholic" approach is the most effective for manifesting the "given" unity of the church. While it may be certain that all Christians are somehow united to one another in Christ,

¹⁴⁴D'Espine, Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁴⁵H. D'Espine, "The Role of the WCC In Regard to Unity," ER, 13 (1960), p. 15. Despite various interpretations concerning the nature of the unity of the Church, Professor H. D' Espine, at St. Andrew's in 1960, reminded the CC that the FOC is convinced that that "the unity we seek is not one of uniformity, nor a monolithic power structure".

Professor D'Espine questions a WCC contention that unity is "fully given" to all the churches and all that is left to do is to "manifest it. If this was simply the case, he asks, "would the manifestation of this unity still meet with so many obstacles"? ¹⁴⁶ Hence, after Lund 1952, the the FOC progressively underwent a positive christological and ecclesiological development. Through its FOC, the WCC, as a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement, made considerable advance in understanding the nature of the church and the unity which Christ willed for his mystical body.

1. Montreal 1963 and Unity

In his opening address ("The Ecumenical Situation") to Montreal 1963 which consisted of nearly 490 participants (which included more than 230 official delegates from various churches), Professor Roger Mehl (Ref.) referred to the New Delhi unity-statement as one of four events which created the context and atmosphere for the fourth world conference on Faith and Order.¹⁴⁷ Along with the report of the Study Commission on Institutionalism, Section V ("'All in Each Place': the Process of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁴⁷ The other three events were As follows: the dramatically changed relationship between the RCC and the WCC; the mass entry of the Orthodox Churches at New Delhi 1961; and the increased number of church union negotiations. R. Mehl, "The Ecumenical Situation," ER, 16 (October, 1963), pp. 6-12. Given this wider participation, the FOC would be required to re-examine its previous consensus statements. This wider ecumenical dialogue involving all major churches offered considerable promise for the ecumenical movement. Hence one delegate aptly described Montreal 1963 as "promising chaos". Cf. Montreal 1963, p. 7.

Growing Together"), which was presided over by Dean Muelder, used the New Delhi unity formula as its basic text. Divided into three parts, Section V concentrated on the unity of the local church, especially "the meaning of the phrase in the New Delhi statement 'In each place'".¹⁴⁸

The report advocated that the scandal of Christian disunity is experienced most acutely in the local church. It is here that the existence of various churches which are caused by theological and non-theological factors are "particularly conspicuous and injurious".¹⁴⁹ While denominations have some relationship to the church, they are not to be thought of as being "church" in the sense of the local church or the church universal. While denominations have enriched the Christian experience in some ways, they cannot be regarded as "an essential form of church life". Such "denomination fragmentation ... distorts the true nature of the Church and obstructs the communication of the Gospel".¹⁵⁰

Based on its work, the officers (O. Tomkins, Henry D'Espine, C. Konstantinides, and A.C. Outler) on behalf of the Montreal 1963 sent to the churches a statement called "A Word to the Churches". While confirming that the churches were on the way to Christian unity, it insisted that many of the gifts that God has given to Christ's church

¹⁴⁸ Montreal 1963, p. 31. In addition to Dean Muelder, the other officers for this section were: N. Ehrenstrom (Luth.), J.R. Fleming (Ch. of Scotland), I. Hazim (Orth.) and E. Varga (Ref.). For a full list of the more than sixty members assigned to this Section see Montreal 1968, pp. 102-04.

¹⁴⁹ Montreal 1963, No. 145, p. 81. Some delegates opposed the use of the term "non-theological" factors because it suggested that human beings are "disembodied intelligences and that matter is outside the operation of God's care". Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., No. 162. 84-85.

cannot be shared by the churches until they become "the one people of God in each place, and are prepared to realize this by new and bold ventures of living faith".¹⁵¹

2) Uppsala 1968: The Catholicity and Unity of the Church

Lukas Vischer, Vitaly Borovoy, and Claude Welch, in preparation for Montreal 1963, each wrote an important article on the catholicity of the church.¹⁵² Essentially, Vischer and Borovoy called attention to the fact that the activity of the Holy Spirit finds expression in the church's catholicity which is God's gift to the church. It is not merely a possession, however, but a fundamental task of the church which must be continually accepted anew.¹⁵³ Dr. Welch admitted that Protestantism finds itself at a disadvantage in its response to the "new and rich formulations of catholicity in Roman and Orthodox thought". He further advocated that Protestantism over the past decade had considerably rectified this situation through its focus on the "qualitative" meaning of catholicity.¹⁵⁴ With the stress on local ecumenicity, Montreal 1963 gave little consideration to the universal aspect of the church's unity. This task was taken up by Uppsala 1968.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 36; Nos. 164, pp. 39-40.

¹⁵²L. Vischer, "The Meaning of Catholicity, Preface"; V. Borovoy, "The Meaning of Catholicity"; C. Welch, "Catholicity," ER 16 (October 1963 - December 1964), pp. 24-42.

¹⁵³Cf., Vischer,, p. 25; Borovoy, p. 32.

¹⁵⁴Welch, p. 34.

The Uppsala Assembly of the WCC approved the RCC's full membership in its FOC. Of Uppsala 1968's 704 official delegates, the Orthodox Church for the first time composed the largest confessional group. Supported by the presence of observers from RCC, the Orthodox was in a position to provide a new nuance to ecumenical deliberations. It was basically because of their influence that the Assembly reports are less secular in tone and content than they might otherwise have been. Aside from the section report on "Worship", the report of Section I ("The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church") was germane to the FOC contribution to the development of doctrinal unity.

a) Section I: The Holy Spirit and Catholicity

Despite ecumenical progress, churches from Catholics and Protestant traditions remained fundamentally divided on their understanding of the nature of the church. Not dodging the issue, Section I attempted to explore more fully the relationship between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the church. The title itself refers to the invisible (Holy Spirit) and the visible (catholicity) elements of the church. For Protestants, the Holy Spirit is testimony that God's action is not restricted to visible ecclesiological structures. The further one goes to the left in Protestantism the more pronounced this view becomes. With connotations associated with an essential outward structure, the concept "Catholic" came to be regarded by Protestantism in general as contrary to its spirit.

At the 1967 Crete meeting of the CC, a sizable number of the members from Protestant churches tried unsuccessfully to prevent the

term "catholic" from appearing in the title of the working document prepared for Section I. Divided into three sections, the first part of the preparatory text maintained that the theme catholicity was chosen to illustrate the insoluble nexus between the local and universal church which was emphasized in the New Delhi unity statement. In the context of catholicity as a gift, the second section highlighted the visible ways in which to discern the presence of the Holy Spirit within the church. Along with a consideration of secular related concerns, the third part discussed specific aspects of catholicity: the quest for diversity, the search for the unity of the whole church, and the quest for the unity of humankind.

(1) Presentation of Preparatory Draft to Assembly

The vice-moderator for Section V, Bishop Karekin Sarkissian (Armenian Apostolic Church, Lebanon), presented the theme of its work to a plenary session of Uppsala 1968.¹⁵⁵ In a preparatory document prepared for Section V, the churches were challenged to rethink their own fundamental assumptions on the catholicity of the church both on the local and universal levels. For Sarkissian this was the document's most impressive feature. Replacing the more interior conception of catholicism with a more progressive view, Bishop Sarkissian pointed out

¹⁵⁵Emmanuel Lanne, O.S.B., "Unity and Catholicity, Uppsala, 1968," One In Christ, 5 (1969), 134-137. For a thorough study of the development of the concept of "catholicity" in F&O documents up until 1968 see, Patrick W. Fuerth, The Concept of Catholicity in the Documents of the World Council of Churches 1948-1968 (Roma: Editrice Anselmina, 1973).

that as God's gift made present in the Spirit, Christ's church "has to become catholic constantly anew".¹⁵⁶

Encouraged that the preparatory text viewed catholicity not as a "state of being but rather a way of living," Sarkissian reminded the plenary assembly that Christian service to humanity must not be given priority over the service to God. If catholicity is not to become identified with pan-humanism, it was imperative that the churches shift their thinking from "the purely horizontal to the vertical".¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, he criticized the working text for putting too much stress on catholicity as a "futuristic and utopian attitude," as "something to be achieved" at the close of history rather than a concrete reality. According to the Catholic view, the ecclesia is catholic by nature and she "becomes" catholic in the sense "she needs make manifest that quality of life and witness which has to become the life and witness of all men, in each and all places, now and at all times".¹⁵⁸

(2) Section I - Final Report

Within a trinitarian context, the report commences with a note of thanksgiving for the improved relations among the churches.¹⁵⁹ While

¹⁵⁶Uppsala 1968, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁵⁹For the complete text of the Report see Uppsala 1968, pp. 11-19. After providing an overview on how Uppsala 1968 understood "Catholicity" (Nos. 1-16/pp.11-15), the report discussed Catholicity in the context of
(Footnote Continued)

inside and outside the ecclesia, the Spirit is active creating unity; there is simultaneously at work "demonic forces" which attempt to downgrade the genuine freedom and liberties of humanity.¹⁶⁰ Within the report, the catholicity of the church is inextricably linked to the oneness, holiness and apostolicity of the church.¹⁶¹ An integral attribute of the church, catholicity was described as "the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, the integrity, and totality of life in Christ" (no. 7).¹⁶² It is a necessary element for the church's unity. This unity can be perceived in the proclamation of the word, in the ministry of sacraments (e.g. baptism, eucharist), in the church's historical continuity, in the diversity of gifts in the church and so

(Footnote Continued)

the quest for the unity of the whole church (Nos. 17-19/p.19), the quest for the unity of "mankind" (Nos. 20-24/pp.17-19), the quest for diversity (Nos. 12-13/p.15) and the quest for continuity (Nos. 14-16/p.16).

¹⁶⁰Ibid., Nos. 1-5; pp. 11-13.

¹⁶¹In the report, the concept "catholicity" was used in a way to interrelate the unity of the church (Christian ecumenism) to the unity of humankind (secular ecumenism): "It is within this very world that God makes catholicity available to all men through the ministry of Christ in his Church. The purpose of Christ is to bring people of all times, of all races, of all places, of all conditions, into an organic and living unity in Christ by the Holy Spirit under the universal fatherhood of God. This unity is not solely external; it has a deeper, internal dimension, which is also expressed by the term 'catholicity'. Catholicity reaches its completion when what God has already begun in history is finally disclosed and fulfilled". Ibid., No. 6/p.13.

¹⁶²From a RC perspective, Richard P. McBrien advocates that "Catholicism" is identified by a both/and rather than an either/or approach. Hence, it is characterized by "a radical openness to all truth and to every value. It is comprehensive and all-embracing toward the totality of Christian experience and tradition, in all the theological, doctrinal, spiritual, liturgical, canonical, institutional, and social richness and diversity of that experience and tradition". R.P. McBrien, Catholicism (Minneapolis: Winston, 1980), p. 1173.

on. Presently, however, the oneness of Christ's church is splintered by "sinful divisions". Though it did not clearly distinguish between unity and catholicity, the report claimed that like unity, the church's catholicity is both God's "gift" and a "task" to be achieved.¹⁶³ For it to be real, it has to be expressed in worship, witness, and service.

Aside from the quest for ecclesiological unity, the catholicity of the church is affirmed by the quest for diversity, continuity, and unity of the whole world. Blessed by the Holy Spirit with a plethora of gifts, the church is simultaneously "being called out of the world and being sent into the world". With a catholicity strengthened by a diversity of gifts, the church's unity is possible and real.¹⁶⁴

The quest for continuity is another route by which the gift of catholicity is affirmed. It is made real in the witness of the "faith once given to the saints," in the church's cultic life, in the apostolic service of the community to the needs of humanity. Clearly, these aspects, herein enumerated by the report, reflect a very Catholic nuance. Seemingly, the majority of Protestant member churches of the WCC was ready to accept an increased Catholic influence on major

¹⁶³ Ibid., Nos. 7-8, pp. 13-14. Though the "Catholic substance" nor the "Protestant principle" belongs exclusively to any one church, Anglican John Macquarrie conceded that the RCC is in "a unique way, the guardian of catholicity". Apart from this truly International church, any Christian reunion will be merely "denominational realignments". Hence, he concluded: "this is why it is so important for Rome to be involved in the movements towards unity and why we must see Rome as the centre of unity". Macquarrie, p. 71.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Nos 12-13, p. 15.

ecumenical documents.¹⁶⁵ The Uppsala Assembly regarded the WCC "as a transitional opportunity for eventually a true universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life and witness". It goes on to urge the constituent churches of the WCC should jointly make preparation "for the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians, and lead the way into the future".¹⁶⁶ Endowed with a catholicity that is simultaneously vertical and horizontal, the Catholic Church is "bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of humankind".¹⁶⁷

(3) Delegates Critique the Report of Section I

The report of Section I was approved by both Protestant and Catholic traditions. According to James I. McCord (Presby.), the moderator for Section I, the section report reflects the serious attempt on the part of delegates to understand the catholicity of the church as it pertains both to God and the world. It is addressed to those who confess that Christ's church is not "finished and done for".¹⁶⁸ Appraising the report as "a work of ecumenical theology," Michael Wagner

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., No. 14, p. 15.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁶⁷ Vatican II had used similar language to describe the church as "a kind of sacrament of the intimate union with God, and the unity of all mankind, that is, she is a sign and an instrument of such union and unity". "Lumen Gentium" in The Documents of Vatican II. Edited by Walter. M. Abbot, S.J.. New York: Guild Press, 1966, p. 15.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

(Ref.) expressed his satisfaction that its emphasis on the unity of Christians in all places rightly balanced the New Delhi 1961 stress on Christian unity in each place.¹⁶⁹ Another Reformed delegate, Hans Rut, commended the report for drawing attention to the fact that the measure of Christian unity is "conditioned by the contribution of the churches to the unity and catholicity of the world".¹⁷⁰

Though Vladimir Rodzianko (Orth.) considered it a basically sound report, he expressed some misgivings about the different ways in which it could be interpreted. He particularly wanted the Section to include a statement to clarify the difference in the Orthodox and Protestant approaches to the catholicity. Pointing to an unbroken eucharist unity which have always existed in the Orthodox Church, he contended that the catholicity of the church already exists. This he said was not in accord with the Protestant view which insisted that the church's catholicity was "invisible or would be visible only in the future when all now separated communities become one".¹⁷¹ Though criticizing the report for an inadequate treatment of the eschatological dimension of catholicity, Archbishop Athenagoras (Orth.) gave high praise for the view reflected in paragraph 7 of the report which contended that catholicity is both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a task.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷¹Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 10.

After presenting their report to the whole assembly, members of Section I asked the Assembly to approve the substance of the same and "commend it to the churches for study and appropriate action".¹⁷³ John Weller (Congr.), General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, John Weller (Congr.), in his requested commentary on the report attested that Uppsala 1968's most notable characteristic was its clear affirmation of Christian solidarity with humanity. As such the report of Section I, at least in part, provided the theological basis for its work.¹⁷⁴ With its "Christ-centered and Church-centered," foundation, the report of Section I, as a Lutheran delegate correctly predicted, would show "the way forward to the next Assembly".¹⁷⁵

D. Conclusion

Subsequent to Evanston 1954, there was general agreement among the churches that participated in the ecumenical movement that God will's unity for the church. Aside from the recognition that the deepest problem to unity pertained to different conceptions of the nature of the church, the FOC acknowledged that differences exhibited by the churches on all church-dividing issues (e.g. ministry, sacraments) stem from this deepest difference. It was clear that progress in ecclesial unity is

¹⁷³Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 11. The F&O Working Committee at its July 1968 meeting expressed satisfaction with the report of Section I. Indeed it was a better report than "many had dared to expect". F&O II, No. 53, p. 14.

Inextricably linked to the advancement of the churches towards a common theology of the ecclesia.

At Lund 1952, the FOC replaced its traditional comparative ecclesiological approach to unity with a christological methodology. Proving extremely fruitful, this method was used extensively in F&O research. It enabled the FOC to make important steps towards a common conception of church and a description of the kind of unity the ecumenical movement should move towards as its goal. Subsequent to New Delhi 1961, the FOC was able to make further progress in its understanding of ecclesiology by a shift from a christology frame to a more trinitarian perspective.

In the late 1950s and early 60s, the FOC clarified the role of F&O within the WCC. Essentially, its role is to stand for ecclesial unity as the will of God and to challenge the WCC and its constituent churches to steadily work towards the concrete manifestation of the church's unity. After informing the CC at 1958 Nyborg Strand meeting that the WCC cannot hope to retain a neutral stand on the kind of unity God wills for his church, the FOC articulated its own terse statement on the type of ecclesial unity the ecumenical movement ought to work towards. Officially accepted by New Delhi 1961 this unity formula was with great urgency transmitted to the member churches for study and appropriate action. Though this description of unity did not ignore the universal dimension of the church, it focused upon and identified the elements which it believed characterized ecclesial unity among churches at the local level. The fact that both Catholic and Protestant delegates were able to agree to the content of this statement marked a significant step in the quest for full Christian communion.

To clarify the New Delhi unity formula of how unity in one place relates to unity in another "place", Montreal 1963 utilized the concept "catholicity". Eventually from within the dynamic context of the triune God, the FOC (in major studies such as "Creation, New Creation and the Unity of the Church," and "One Lord, One Baptism; The Divine Trinity and the Unity of the Church") began to explore the relationship of the church not only to God but to creation and redemption. Hence, Section I of Uppsala 1968 was thus in a position to relate the concept of "catholicity" not only to diversity, continuity and the search for church unity but also to the quest for the unity of humankind (secular ecumenism). By using this term (despite strong objections) to highlight the unity of the local church and the church universal, the WCC was able to articulate more clearly its understanding of the common goal of the ecumenical movement. Apart from working for "a genuinely universal council ... for all Christians," the report of Section I of Uppsala 1968 also pledged its commitment to a truly catholic church that is "bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of mankind". The degree to which F&O began to expand its traditional mandate to provide a theological foundation for the concerns of secular ecumenism will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

UPPSALA TO VANCOUVER (1968-1983): LANDMARK DOCTRINAL CONVERGENCE

A. Introduction

Subsequent to Uppsala 1968, the WCC held its fifth and sixth assemblies respectively at Nairobi, Africa, in 1975 (Nairobi 1975) and Vancouver, Canada, in 1983 (Vancouver 1983).¹ Though there was no world conference on F&O after Montreal 1963, the FOC convened full plenary meetings at Louvain, Belgium, in 1971 (Louvain 1971); Accra, Ghana in 1974 (Accra 1974); Bangalore, India, in 1978 (Bangalore 1978); Lima, Peru, in 1982 (Lima 1982).² By broadening its scope to include the world as a second context for the study of Christian unity, F&O thought for this period underwent a dramatic and substantial shift.

¹For discussions and minutes for these assemblies see: Breaking Barriers, Nairobi 1975; the Official Report of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 23 November-10 December 1975. Edited by D.M. Paton. (London: SPCA, 1976); (hereafter cited Nairobi 1975). Gathered for Life: Official Report, VI Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada, 24 July-10 August 1983. Edited by David Gill. (Geneva: WCC, 1983); (hereafter cited Vancouver 1983).

²For official documents of discussions and reports for these FOC meetings see: Faith and Order Louvain 1971, Study Reports and Documents. FO II, No. 59. (Geneva: WCC, 1971). Accra 1974: Uniting in Hope, Reports and Documents from the Meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, 23 July-5 August, 1974, University of Ghana, Legon F&O II, No. 72. (Geneva: WCC, 1975); Bangalore 1978: Sharing in One Hope; Reports and Documents from the Meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, 15-30 August, 1978, Eastern Christian Centre, Bangalore, India. FO II, No. 92. (Geneva: WCC, 1978). Towards Visible Unity: Commission on Faith and Order. Edited by M. Kinnanon. FO II, Nos. 112-113. (Geneva: WCC, 1982). Hereafter these documents will be cited respectively as Louvain 1971; Accra 1974; Bangalore 1978; Lima 1982.

While loyal to its raison d'être (the quest for full and visible Christian koinonia), the FOC progressively began to seek this goal within the context of a more comprehensive unity - the unity of humankind (secular ecumenism). No longer satisfied to merely explore the question of unity exclusively in confessional terms, the Commission began to study non-theological issues (e.g. racism, sexism) which, from a theological perspective, divide both the church and humanity. Through various studies, the FOC attempted to understand and articulate the consequences of Christian unity for human communities and how the global situation itself affected the church's understanding of unity.

In this chapter, I will examine how subsequent to 1968 the FOC was able to significantly advance the search for church unity by studying it within the context of secular ecumenism. Specifically, it will be demonstrated that the FOC, through its development of such concepts as "conciliar fellowship" and "eucharistic vision", assisted the WCC and its member churches to realize more lucidly that the horizontal dimension of Christianity is inseparable from its vertical orientation. By its verification that the unifying power of the church (and her sacraments) is intimately intertwined with humanization (and social justice), the FOC was able to present to the WCC and the ecumenical movement a kind of unity for diverse, pluralistic communities without harmful division. This chapter will also show how the revised organizational structure of the WCC and the 1982 theological consensus on the church-dividing issues of baptism, eucharist, and ministry advanced the search for Christian unity.

B. From Uppsala 1968 to Nairobi 1975: Towards Conciliar Fellowship

Though Dr. Eugene Carson Blake succeeded to the office of the General Secretary of the WCC in 1966, Dr. Visser't Hooft continued to remain actively involved in ecumenical activities. He remained adamant that it is important to maintain a proper balance between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of Christianity. Dr. Visser't Hooft avowed that the secret of Christianity lies in the fact that (just like its founder) it is "man-centered because it is God-centered".³ Adverse to the view that the WCC ascribed too much importance to church unity, he stated that it was vital for the Council to retain this stress because unity belongs to the very nature of the church and "that it belongs to its witness to present to the world the image of a new humanity which knows no walls of separation within its own life".⁴ Subsequent to Uppsala 1968, the WCC was better equipped to maintain the balance between the vertical and the horizontal aspects. Within this context, the WCC attempts to stimulate and help the churches to integrate in

³Uppsala 1968, p. 318. Visser't Hooft maintained that a responsible Christianity must take account of both its vertical and horizontal aspects. Claiming that there can be "no horizontal advance" either in the church or the world "without vertical orientation", he stated that "a Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt and is not only insipid in itself, but useless for the world". Nevertheless, he asserts that "a Christianity which would use the vertical preoccupation as a means to escape from its responsibility for and in the common life of man is a denial of the Incarnation, of God's love for the world manifested in Christ". Ibid., p. 318.

⁴Ibid., p. 318. During his long association with the WCC, Dr. Visser't Hooft never tired of reminding the WCC's leadership that the Council's raison d'être was not founded on "nice-weather ecumenism". Though unable to attend Vancouver 1983, he pointed out to the delegates via letter that the underlying motive for the creation of the ecumenical movement was the recognized need for Christian unity: "It was simply to respond to the urgent prayer of our Lord, that his disciples should be one". Cf. Vancouver 1983, p. 211.

their lives the search for one eucharistic fellowship, a common ecclesial witness to the gospel and a joint participation in the struggle of humanity for justice, peace and unity.

1. FOC: The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind

Without any intention to move away from the traditional F&O mandate, the F&O Working Committee at its 1968 Sigtuna (Sweden) meeting picked up on Uppsala 1968's stress on "universal stewardship". With conflicts of opinions as to whether God's salvation comes via Christ and his church or through creation, the Working Committee conceded that it was no longer possible to deal adequately with the problem of church unity in isolation from the problem of the unity of "mankind" and creation. Hence it expressed the FOC's intent to pursue its traditional task within the broader context secular ecumenism.

Through increased contact with the other divisions and departments of the WCC and through "interdisciplinary dialogue between Christian theologians and sociologists, historians and physicists", the FOC aimed for a more profound influence upon the whole ecumenical movement.⁵ "To provoke discussion and to inaugurate dialogue" on a sequel to the "God and Nature" study, the F&O Working Committee at its 1969 Canterbury meeting introduced the initial draft on the "Unity of the Church and the

⁵Minutes of the Commission and Working Committee 1968 Uppsala and Sigtuna, FO II, No. 53, pp. 14-19. Though sensitive to the current situation, the Orthodox representatives (e.g. Professors Florovsky, Meyendorff, Voronov, and Bishop K. Sarkissian) insisted that the point of departure for the work of the FOC must continue to be the reality of Christ's church and the need for Christian unity. Idid., pp. 18-19.

Unity of Mankind" study.⁶ If it was to remain faithful to its vocation vocation of proclaiming that the unity of the church is the sign of the coming unity of humanity, the FOC recognized that any meaningful search for a reunited Christendom had to take into account its secular context.⁷ From 1968 to 1970, the F&O Working Committee continued to improve on the original draft of the "Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" study.⁸ At its 1970 Geneva and Crêt-Bérard meeting, the

⁶Cf. Study Encounter 5(1969), p. 163-178. The point of departure for the study were the questions posed by the FOC at Bristol 1967: What is the function of the Church in relation to the unifying purpose of God for the world? What ... is the relation of the churches' quest for unity among themselves to the hope for the unity of mankind"? Cf. Bristol 1967, p.113. The "Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" study eventually reached its conclusion in 1978 with the FOC's publication of the following work: Unity in Today's World: The Faith and Order Studies on 'Unity of the Church-The Unity of Humankind'. Edited by G. Müller-Fahrenholz. FO II, No. 88, (Geneva: WCC, 1978).

⁷Minutes... Crêt-Bérard, FO II, No. 57, p. 41. Professor John Deschner of Chicago indicated that in taking up the "unity of mankind" study, the FOC was rediscovering a vital component in the original vision of the ecumenical movement. If the unity of the church is integral to the unity of humanity, then the FOC is faced with three immediate tasks: "First, while safeguarding the relative autonomy of the secular, it must make more explicit what church unity means for the variegated problems facing humankind. Second, the FOC must better articulate how a more comprehensive understanding of social issues is deepening and enriching the ecumenical movement's understanding of the unity of the Church. The third task entails "working toward the right and creative understanding of church order". Ibid., pp. 41-43.

⁸Ibid., p. 180. Based upon comments from regional study groups and their own observations, the F&O Working Committee (in preparing the final draft for Louvain 1971) accepted the initial draft's position that the unity of humankind should provide the starting point for the "Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" study. Nevertheless, the Working Committee insisted that this kind of unity cannot be made the foundation for the doctrinal unity of the church except by way of christology and pneumatology. Moreover, it corrected the initial draft's one-sided emphasis on the solidarity of humankind as a "community of becoming". It claimed that such a view belittled the "given and permanent elements" which created an "inherent solidarity" between all people irregardless

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Working Committee approved the main theme for Louvain 1971: "Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind".⁹ Focusing primarily on the church and its unity, this study was designed to take account of the humanum studies since anthropological questions shed light on the problem of ecclesial unity.¹⁰

a) A Common Ecumenical Goal—"Genuinely Universal Council"?

In presenting the report of the Executive Committee to the CC at its August 1969 Canterbury (England) meeting, M.M. Thomas of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (chairperson of the CC), cautioned the members not to misinterpret the Council's recent preoccupation with political and

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of space and time. Also, according to the Christian understanding of unity, all human coming leads to Christ. By highlighting the positive relationship between the unity of the church and the unity of humankind, Christians express the universal unity of Christ. Christianity militates against all natural and historical forces which reject this claim.

Within the context of pluralistic society, the Working Committee challenged the churches to determine how the natural and historical diversities can be given their rightful value within the context of Christian unity. Another fundamental challenge posed to the church by the contemporary world is how she can simultaneously "embody the priestly mission of reconciliation among men, and the prophetic mission of rebuking evil and making militant cause against its attack upon God's creatures and upon the People of God in particular"? Full text of the revised draft and F&O Working Committee comments printed in Study Encounter, 5(1969), pp. 163-181.

⁹FO II, No. 57. To provide a more thorough account of all that had happened since Bristol 1967, the Working Committee chose "The Goal of the Ecumenical Movement" as its secondary theme. Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁰Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Committee 1969 Canterbury, F&O II, No. 54, pp. 6-7. According to Canon D.E. Jenkins the "humanum study" is an "exploration and a search" by men and women with "the simple aim of enabling the Church to find its way in helping man to find his way" through contemporary problems and challenges. Cf. CC...Minutes and Reports... Canterbury ... 1969, p. 237.

sociological issues. The WCC had not abandoned its theological work in favor of mere collaboration. Indeed, its leaning towards the "studies of man and the humanum" were theologically grounded in God's involvement in saving and recreating human beings in history.¹¹ In its own letter to the member churches, the CC relayed this same message.¹² Aside from practical reasons, the CC stated that the main motive for continuing the search for unity lies in "the calling of our Lord".¹³

At this CC meeting, Lukas Vischer (Director of FOC) presented a paper entitled "A Genuinely Universal Council".¹⁴ He advocated that with the churches progressively moving out of dialogue into fellowship

¹¹"Report of the Executive Committee from the Chairman," CC, Minutes and Reports ... Canterbury ... 1969, pp. 124-28. Since Uppsala 1968 tried to highlight both the theological and sociological dimensions of what it means to be human, Thomas pointed out that the report of section I (Catholicity and the Holy Spirit"), for example, "gives the unity of mankind as the context and substance of the efforts of the Church to manifest its unity". Ibid., pp. 125-26.

¹²While confirming that a change of emphasis towards unity had taken place at Uppsala 1968, the CC attested that the WCC had not relinquished its search for the unity of all churches in the una sancta ecclesia. The churches were requested to work together to surmount all obstacles that made it impossible for them to recognize each other fully and which obstruct eucharistic fellowship. Ibid., p. 20.

¹³Ibid., p. 21. Confirming its commitment to mission, the letter pointed out that at Uppsala 1968 the WCC came to realize more clearly that mission is directed to all six continents and that the churches existed for one another. Hence "the call to conversion remains central to mission, enabling us to participate joyfully in God's purpose as He revealed it in Jesus Christ. At Uppsala we agreed that the frontiers of mission run through every area of society". Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁴When used in the context of church, the English term "council" is ambiguous. It can denote a conciliar assembly of local churches in full koinonia which speaks and decides with authority or it can mean a more informal association of churches not in full communion. Other languages use two terms to denote these two distinct realities. For example, the Latin utilizes concilium and consilium; the French concile and conseil; the German konzil and rat.

the time was ripe for the churches to articulate the goal of ecumenical fellowship. He averred that until the churches have developed a common fellowship, doctrinal consensus will do little to advance the cause of unity. For Dr. Vischer it was not enough for the churches to come together to simply consult (consell) as a WCC. With reference to Uppsala 1968, he promoted a "genuinely universal council" as the goal of ecumenical fellowship. So that such fellowship might become a reality, he encouraged the ecumenical movement to work towards the day when a genuinely ecumenical council (concile) would again speak authoritatively for all Christians.¹⁵

Advocating that to be vital and effective genuine universal fellowship does not require any centralized authority or uniformity, Vischer claimed that the churches needed to make significant changes in their understanding of structure. They must come to recognize that the church as fellowship is characterized more by structures of change than by those of unchangeable permanence. He averred that present church structures are either too centralized or ineffective to facilitate a genuinely universal council: "The existing structures are marked by a heritage of centralism, authoritarianism and a tendency to uniformity,

¹⁵Cf. Before the possibility of a concilium, Vischer underlined four conditions which the churches would have already realized: a readiness to approach dialogue in a way which leads to genuine acts of worship; no impediments to or lack of will to embrace full eucharist worship; a mature and developed sense of "universal solidarity" (in thought and action); surmounted both confessional differences and the divisive barriers (e.g. sexism, racism) which separate God's family from each other at every level of contemporary living. He indicated that in the coming years the FOC would expend much of its energy thoroughly examining these issues. Ibid., pp. 186-89.

or else are so lacking in effectiveness that they provoke opposition".¹⁶

(1) CC Discusses and Accepts the Vischer Paper

In the discussions which ensued Methodist Bishop Roy C. Nichols indicated that the acceptance of a "genuinely universal council" as the goal of Christian fellowship would allow for a unity without uniformity. As long as the churches could share a common eucharistic fellowship, he considered it a matter of little importance if they disagreed on "points of doctrine". Anglican Bishop Frank Woods of Australia expressed the hope that the FOC would take up Dr. Vischer's position.

The Orthodox members (e.g. Parthenios-Aris, T. Paul Verghese, Bishop Juvenaly (Vladimir F. Poyakkov)) were sharply more critical of Dr. Vischer's position. Indicating that the holding of a universal council presupposes that full ecclesial union has already been achieved, they contended that the ecumenical quest for the unity of the church must not be replaced for the goal of a universal council.¹⁷ They

¹⁶Ibid, p. 186.

¹⁷Cyrille Argenti (Orth.) described a genuine church council in this way: "A true 'council' whether local or universal (ecumenical), is really the visible expression of a unity of faith already lived out within the communities lived in it; it ensures that this unity is given common expression in spite of local differences, which are legitimate when they are simply different embodiments of the common faith. By giving a single expression to the faith the council guarantees its continuity and unity through time and space". Argenti, "Christian Unity," ER, 28(December 1976), p. 33.

John Deschner suggested that every general council of the early church reflected the following pattern; a general problem; a meeting of
(Footnote Continued)

contended that Vischer's over-emphasis on change was revolutionary. For them some uniformity is just as essential to unity as multiformity.¹⁸ Hence, it was the Orthodox position that change must be retained in a dialectical relationship with permanence. The CC received Vischer's paper.¹⁹

(2) Ecumenical Goal: The Need for Clarification

Discussion on a genuinely universal council re-emerged in the 23rd CC meeting which convened in 1971 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). In the debate upon the FOC report, some members (e.g. Anglican archbishop Frank

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the leaders; open discussion by these leaders; a decision by the president of the council and an announcement of conclusions. Cf. "Visible Unity as Conciliar Fellowship", Ibid., pp. 22-7.

¹⁸For discussions see Ibid. pp. 40-41. Commenting upon Vischer's report, C. Parthenios-Aris stated that he considered the goal of the ecumenical movement to be the unity of the church and not a universal council. In the Orthodox Tradition, an ecumenical council is just an event in the life of the church and not her essence. While confident that Dr. Vischer recognized and personally espoused the view that a genuinely universal council (in the sense of the ecumenical councils of the ancient church) presupposes a full unity already achieved, he was not sure about the World Council on the whole. Hence he stated: "It is my belief that when speaking about a genuinely universal council of the one Church of Christians who are united, not divided.... But is it possible that the World Council aim for the genuinely universal council without the one Church, without the union of churches? I do not believe it. And I do not believe today the World Council of Churches is the genuinely Universal Council. I believe, however, that only the One Church can call and hold a genuinely universal council". Cf. "Reactions to a 'Genuinely Universal Council'" in ER 22(April 1970), p. 108.

¹⁹Without accepting all the suggestions contained in the paper, the CC was in full accord with Vischer's profound concern "regarding the necessity of 1) a renewed commitment to the task, which is common to all the churches, to move forward on the way to unity; and 11) new efforts to help in overcoming the differences which still exists". Ibid., p. 41.

Woods) wondered whether the goal of ecumenical fellowship had shifted from ecclesial union to a genuinely universal council. Oliver Tomkins replied that in the next phase of its work, the FOC intended to produce a comprehensive statement which would integrate the New Delhi unity statement and the new emphasis on a genuinely universal council. Dr. Visser indicated he was deep satisfied with the quality of discussion on the issue of an universal council. He said that the "genuinely universal council" goal cannot be divorced from the quest for ecclesial unity.²⁰ The Orthodox members reiterated the position that full communion in the one faith is a prerequisite for a true council.²¹ The CC accepted the report of the FOC and expressed the hope that Louvain 1971 would contribute to its clarification.²²

2. Louvain 1971: Genuine Council or Conciliar Fellowship?

²⁰Ibid., p. 51. Dr. Vischer indicated that the major reason for broaching the issue of a universal council was for the purpose of enabling the churches to envisage a common goal towards which their various efforts for unity could converge. Behind the diverse concepts of unity, he recognized the reality of Christ who draws all his people to himself. Ibid.

²¹For comments see Ibid., 49-51.

²²The recommendation read: "The member churches of the Council, in seeking to fulfill the purpose of overcoming the present divisions and manifesting the unity of the Church, need to formulate as concretely as possible the commonly accepted goal of the unity of the Church. In the context, the suggestion set forth at Uppsala 1968 concerning the conception of the goal as a genuinely universal council (Cf. sect. I, para. 18) has provided a developing interest. It is therefore recommended that the Commission on Faith and Order endeavor to clarify the conception yet further at its next meeting in 1971". CC, Minutes ... Addis Ababa ... 1971, p. 49.

Meeting under the general theme "The Unity of the Church - the Unity of Mankind", Louvain 1971 marked the first time that a FOC plenary meeting did not debate the question of ecclesial unity solely along denominational lines. Officially the question was now being discussed within the context of the unity of all humanity. In harmony with the line of thought of New Delhi 1961 and Uppsala 1968, Louvain 1971 further refined the meaning of the terms "unity of the church" and "unity of mankind", the relevance of unity in the social context, and the nexus between church and "mankind".²³

Grouped into five sections, the Louvain delegates discussed the unity of the church in relation to the struggle for unity, the encounter with living faiths, the struggle against racism, the handicapped in society and differences in culture.²⁴ Despite the FOC's new interest in

²³ Prior to Louvain 1971, a small group met at Bossey to clarify some of the terms associated with "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" study. The "unity of mankind" was to be understood as the growing interdependence of "mankind" because of scientific and theological advances. This unity simultaneously creates new fellowships and divisions. Uppsala 1968's usage of the "coming" unity of mankind was clarified to read: "What does it imply for the church in the present situation of growing interdependence to see itself as a sign of that unity which God brings to perfection in His Kingdom"? It was confirmed that the "unity of the church" is not an idea or ideal but a living reality. In this present world, the church is a sign of reconciliation of sinners in Christ with the triune God. Manifested concretely through local and universal structures, the unity of the church expresses itself in rich diversity. Nevertheless, the group acknowledged that the present divisions among the churches are a testimony that the "sign" aspect of the unity of the church is "broken". Rather than being factors in reconciliation, they create divisions. As to the best approach to this subject, the Bossey group recommended the inter-contextual method. More specifically, it suggested that the two thematic concepts "unity of the church" and "unity of mankind" be considered the context for examining each other. Cf. Louvain 1971, pp. 186-187.

²⁴ Faith and Order, Louvain 1971, Study Reports and Documents
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secular ecumenism, Louvain 1971 reaffirmed the raison d'être of the ecumenical movement: "the ecumenical movement is concerned with the purpose of God for all mankind as it is revealed in Jesus Christ and with the Church as the instrument and first-fruit of that purpose".²⁵

a) Major Presentation on the Main Theme

In his introductory address on the "Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind" theme, John Meyendorff of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary noted that since Montreal 1963 there had been a major shift in emphasis from "theology" to "anthropology". Because the churches had opted for various secular anthropologies rather than a "theocentric" anthropology, he suggested that up to the present "anthropology" had not contributed much to the ecumenical movement.²⁶ By reducing the church to a human

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(1971), FO II, No. 59, p. 185. In addition, committees of FOC debated and reacted to study reports that had been in preparation since Bristol 1967 (e.g. studies on baptism, eucharist and ministry; conciliarity).

²⁵Louvain 1971, p. 208. Addressing a plenary session of Louvain 1971, L.J. Cardinal Suenens touched upon the link between the unity of the church and the unity of mankind. Though not identical, these two kinds of unity were interrelated. At the "heart" of the world with all its diverse riches, the church provides the world with "reasons for living". Both the church and the world are called to a "plural unity" where "particularism itself is opened up from within and calls for mankind as a whole". He avouched that only the Holy Spirit can restore genuine plural unity. For as the creator of all life and the single source of all diversity, the Holy Spirit reconciles the tension between the one and the many. Cf. Louvain 1971, pp. 172-79.

²⁶For full text see, John Meyendorff, "Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind," ER, 24(January, 1972), pp. 30-46.

organization, secular anthropology rules out Christian ecclesiology.²⁷

Affirming a "eucharistic-centered eschatology", he contended that eucharistic fellowship anticipated the reign of God. In the eucharist, the local ecclesial community finds its center of human liberation from the bonds of secular enslavement and the source of its unity as fellow citizens by anticipation of God's kingdom. Though the community's working for the betterment of society is justified and valuable, this work is "peripheral to the main issues of the Christian faith - the ultimate and eternal destiny of man". The church's prime responsibility is to the eucharistic centered church and only secondly to the betterment of humankind and society. Hence, he dismissed current cosmic theologies and secular ecclesiologies which advocated politics as the way to secure justice as deficient in their understanding of spiritual freedom and personal evil.

The unity of the church is primarily a unity between God and humankind and only secondly a unity of human beings with one another. Though believing that the Church and "mankind" will only be fully united at the parousia, he contended that the eucharist provides a foretaste and experience of this anticipated future unity. True Christian service to society must be rooted in and flow from the eucharist.²⁸

(1) Discussions Develop Meyendorff's Thought

²⁷Ibid., p. 35.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 43-4.

In response to Meyendorff's presentation, José M. Bonino (Meth.) from his South America political background focused on the phrase "eschatological eucharist". While supportive of its stress on the local church as the eucharistic center of unity, he claimed that to focus on "eschatological eucharist" as the center of unity runs the grave risk of removing theology out of the realm of human living. He asserted that not only does this transcendental approach lead to conservatism but it leaves the status quo unaffected.²⁹ Bonino pointed out that demonic evils (e.g. racism, caste,) are not restricted to secular communities but are also found within eucharistic fellowships.

From the African tribal perspective, John Gatu (Presby.) expressed support for the anthropological approach to church unity. Rev. Gatu insisted that Christian freedom is not confined to the transcendent, to spiritual liberation. It is just as capable of liberating human beings from the oppression that they have inflicted on fellow human beings. Hence, in this sense, the politics of justice, for Gatu, anticipate in some some fragmentary manner the reign of God. Moreover, to become truly effective and liberating, it is vital that the Christian faith become indigenous to the milieu in which it finds itself.³⁰

The FOC "Beyond Intercommunion: On the Way to Communion in the Eucharist" report espoused the view that the eucharist itself is intimately concerned with the betterment of society. It speaks of the

²⁹Bonino, "Comments on 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind'," ER, 24 (1972), pp. 47-50.

³⁰Gatu, "Comments on the 'Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind'," ER 24(1972), pp. 51-54.

struggles for secular fraternity as bringing to light new understandings of intentions long articulated in eucharistic celebrations. These intentions are replete with eucharistic symbolism and significance. For the "Beyond Intercommunion" document the central question as it pertains to the eucharist is that of "the true nature of the human community it both expresses and makes possible; the ecclesia is at the same time a historical, social reality, a participation in the life of God".³¹

Approved by the CC at its January 1971 Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) meeting, the FOC was encouraged to further develop and clarify the study. Within this context, the FOC attempted to define the kind of visible fellowship which is the goal of the ecumenical movement in terms of the closely related concepts "genuinely universal council" and conciliarity.

(2) Clarifying the Unity Sought - Conciliarity

Within this new context, the FOC attempted to describe the visible unity which the church seeks under the terminology of conciliarity. The FOC's initial efforts to formulate its insights into this concept was described in the report of Committee IV. Familiar not only to supporters of churches from Catholic traditions, the sixteenth century Reformers enshrined the "conciliar" principle as an essential element of Protestantism.³²

³¹Louvain 1971, p. 56.

³² As early as 1930, John T. McNeill pointed out that Luther and Calvin (as did the rest of the Reformers) in their opposition to a monarchical type of church polity revived the tenets of the medieval
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The report of Committee IV used the term "conciliarity" to define the coming together of Christians at various levels (e.g. local, global) for "common prayer, counsel and decision" with the conviction that God's Spirit can use such gatherings to renew and guide the church towards the fullness of love and truth.³³ Though conciliarity has assumed many forms down through the centuries, it has always been an essential element in the life of the church. Based on its reflections of how this concept was expressed at Uppsala 1968, Committee IV indicated that conciliarity is simultaneously a "permanent feature of the Church's life" and "an event which may once take place". Committee IV advocated that the churches at all levels of their existence have an obligation to

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conciliarists and opted for the constitutional principle of conciliarism as the "underlying characteristic of the Protestant church polities". Zealous to prevent the loss of the church's corporate character and to prevent individual chaos and private religion, Luther and Calvin (in the spirit of medieval conciliarists) called for free ecclesial councils. Thus from the outset conciliarism became "the normal principle of church government for Protestantism".

With emphasis on the royal priesthood of the whole Christian people, the authority of conciliar church polity (analogous to constitutional government) rests ultimately on the whole church. Though some Protestant denominations considerably modified the conciliar polity (e.g. Anglicans endorse a "constitutional episcopate"; Luther departed from his own ideal when he permitted the state to appoint consistories to govern Lutheran churches), McNeill argues they did not abandon it.

From his research, McNeill concludes that "communion" rather than "obedience" or "private judgement" is the virtue of Protestantism. He insists that no church polity is an end in itself. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that conciliarism simultaneously gives to Protestant churches both "order and freedom to exercise of the spirit of communion and the priesthood of the people". He continues: The social experience of communion is the true objective of enlightened Christianity. If Protestantism is animated by a desire to attain that end, as some signs of the times seem to indicate, the means are at its disposal as never before." J.T. McNeill, Unitive Protestantism. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1930). pp. 89, 113-129

³³ Louvain 1971., No. 3, p. 226.

develop and enrich their forms of conciliar life. Marked by diversity rather than uniformity, these new forms need to be flexible enough to support both the plural unity of the church and the world.³⁴

The Louvain report acknowledged that, unlike the councils of the early church, the councils (conseils) created by the ecumenical movement do not have the fullness of koinonia. As a prerequisite for a (concile), the churches must be ready to accept that it was guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Hence, "its decisions are accepted by the Church as fully authoritative, and that it has been marked by or has led to eucharistic fellowship". By providing a structure in which conciliarity can develop, the contemporary ecumenical councils are said to contain in "anticipatory form - the character of conciliarity".³⁵

(3) Ernest Lange Comments on Conciliarity

³⁴Ibid., Nos. 3&4, pp. 226-27. Paul Verghes (Orth.) indicated that "unity" both in the church and the world involves the interplay between three vying elements which appear to be threatened by one another, namely, identity, openness (or relation) and structure. He suggested that the churches need a structure for unity which simultaneously integrate these elements and an eschatological understanding of how unity grows as "this eschatological goal appears in time as a source of identity and as an orientation towards a direction on the horizon (thus as 'authority' or the capacity to direct power)". Ibid., pp. 194-95.

³⁵Ibid., No. 6, pp. 227-8, no. 6. In addition to councils, Geoffrey Wainwright (Meth.) enumerated seven more conciliar features characteristic of churches in full fellowship: the apostolic bond, fellowship in prayer, interchurch aid, hospitality, eucharistic assembly by a visiting bishop, eucharistic fermentum and eucharistic fellowship. Cf. G. Wainwright, The Ecumenical Moment (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 80-88.

Ernest Lange (Ref.), in an important critical work on Louvain 1971, averred that conciliarity, with its Spirit guided democratic character, has been from the earliest Christian generations an identifying element in the una sancta ecclesia.³⁶ As the "applied, actualized, doctrine of the Trinity", the Christian conciliar formula generates diversity and tension at every level of church life.³⁷ According to Lange, the FOC indicated that conciliarity, at all levels of church life, embodies a creative tension in the quest for the truth. Rather than sources of division, the variegated graces which the triune God has bestowed on the churches should be a source for unity.³⁸

³⁶E. Lange, And Yet It Moves, Dream and Reality of the Ecumenical Movement (Belfast/Geneva: Christian Journals Ltd./WCC, 1979), pp. 112-3.

³⁷Relating the conciliar model of church to the Trinitarian life Lange writes: "The Immanent Idea of the Trinity reflects and safeguards the economic Trinity.... Among other things, it is a question of being able to understand and hold firm the conflict in God - of which the cross is the most mysterious sign.... The conciliar unity of the church, in full consensus with this, is therefore anything but a conflictless unity. It is a struggle for truth, waged in the common hope of the coming victory of truth. Not even unity and conflict are to be divided." Ibid., p. 114.

³⁸Ibid., p. 114. In his address to Louvain 1971, Cardinal Suenens indicated that diversity is a legitimate component of the plural unity of the church (just as it is a vital characteristic of the divine life). Nevertheless, Suenens makes it clear that every aspect of the diverse richness of ecclesial life contains within itself a fundamental unity. Hence, the essential unity contained at the core of diversity at every aspect of ecclesial life of local churches must be safeguarded. He says: "Plurality takes the form of local churches which are themselves laden with, which embody and reveal, the mystery of the one Church of Christ. They are the concrete, historical, spatial incarnation of that mystery. But if the plurality has its own rightful place from the very outset, so that it is never right to identify unity with uniformity, nevertheless we must equally insist that the unity of the one undivided Church of God also exists from the very beginning at the very heart of diversity. So there cannot be any question of federalism or of

Louvain 1971 was clear that the fullness of conciliarity among the churches does not presently exist. By assisting the churches to construct modern conciliar structures for the different levels of church life, the WCC and the ecumenical movement has clearly demonstrated that the conciliar model of unity does at least partly exist. According to Lange the fullness of conciliarity will allow for a "genuinely universal council" which will be characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit, a common eucharist and the full reception of its decisions. Though considering the report on conciliarity a "brilliant achievement" which would move the ecumenical movement forward, he judged that it was vulnerable in that it allowed for both a "maximal" and a "minimal" interpretation.³⁹ Lange also criticized the Louvain report for not giving any new directions on how to advance preparatory work on the "one faith" - another fundamental element of visible unity.⁴⁰

(Footnote Continued)

Juxtaposition of Churches, the communion which is to unite all Christians transcends our defective human categories; it is rooted in the communion of the Divine Trinity", Louvain 1971, p. 172.

³⁹ By means of a "minimal" interpretation of the conciliar model, ecclesial bodies can escape from the pressures that are placed on them from the ecumenical movement. Rather than actively attempting to manifest unity or champion new approaches to unity, proponents of such a view are more inclined to endorse the Gamaliel strategy - "wait and see if it is of God". Based on its conflict-oriented strategy, the "maximal" interpretation of the conciliar formula legitimizes every confrontation within the church. Hence, when carried to the extreme, the conciliar model's "fondness for concretizing the universal into the particular encourages the neurotic preoccupation of every minority, every brand of separatism, with its own image". Ibid., p. 118.

⁴⁰ Although the issue was raised, the majority of delegates believed that the time was not ripe to work on a new ecumenical expression of the faith. Ibid., p. 119-20.

Louvain 1971 located the question of the unity and disunity of the ecclesia within the frame of the unity and the disunity of humankind. Based on Uppsala's understanding of conciliarity as a permanent feature of the church, Louvain 1971 indicated that the churches can deepen this element within their lives not through uniformity but through its struggle to work through the conflicts which divided humanity and the churches. Furthermore, since conciliarity is also "an event that may once take place", the Louvain meeting (in accordance with Uppsala 1968) confirmed that contemporary ecumenical councils (unlike early church councils) are not yet councils in the full sense of the term. Nevertheless the WCC is providing the forum where the churches are beginning to deepen the elements essential for genuine and full conciliarity (e.g. increased eucharistic fellowship).

Professor John Deschner (Meth.) summarized the whole discussion of Louvain into two questions. He called the first question an exercise in vision and formulated it as follows: "Is it possible and productive to view our historic theme of Church unity in a new context, specifically in the context of the human, not simply denominational divisions?"⁴¹ For him, the answer was affirmative. The second question was: "What new insights can be obtained concerning the task of church unity by thinking about it in these new contexts".⁴² He averred that this question was insufficiently dealt with and the answer is partial and tentative. The

⁴¹ Louvain 1971, p. 184.

⁴² Ibid.

renewed importance the WCC gave to this search was reflected in its new structural design and revised constitution.

3. Impact of Major WCC Structural Changes on FOC

With the growth in the size and diversity of its membership and the complexity of its agenda, the WCC increasingly found its divisional and department structure (approved at Evanston 1954) cumbersome and a impediment to its work. Authorized by Uppsala 1968, the CC appointed a structural committee under Bishop James K. Matthews (Meth.) to design a structural plan for the WCC so it could more effectively cope with the new challenges presented by a changing church and contemporary society. At the 1971 CC meeting at Addis Ababa, the Matthews committee's report was presented, accepted and approved.⁴³

Based on the claim that there was no predetermined "right" structure and no "theology of structure," the committee presented a scheme that was based on pragmatic reasons. Aside from a design which would enable the World Council to make more efficient use of its limited human and monetary resources, the report declared that the new structure would enable the WCC to more effectively define its program priorities. This structural change enabled the WCC acquire a deeper awareness of the recent ecclesiastical positions and the challenges of contemporary spiritual movements which had substantially altered the position of the church in pluralistic society. The Council was now in a considerably

⁴³ Cf. CC, Minutes and Reports of the Twenty Fourth Meeting, Addis Ababa, January 10th-21st, 1971 (Geneva: WCC, 1971), pp. 136-86.

more favorable position to integrate its three primary concerns for unity, mission and service.⁴⁴

To simplify its organization, the WCC was divided into three flexible program units each composed of various sub-units. Along with sub-units on world mission and evangelism, church and society, dialogue with men of living faiths and ideologies, the FOC was placed in Program Unit I - Faith and Witness.⁴⁵ Though the administrative units created had a broad mandate, their design allowed for the possibility of focusing on more specific issues. Moreover, it was intended that the program unit structure would overcome the cleavage between study and action and stimulate greater participation by member churches in the Council's work. To illustrate the interrelationship of the total work of the Council, the structural committee deliberately placed in each Program Unit several sub-units in "creative tension".

Overall, Program Unit I was expected to take major responsibility for most of the theological issues that arose in the WCC. The structural committee stated its main objective as follows:

To seek God's will for the unity of the Church, to assist the churches to explore the content and meaning of the Gospel for their faith and mission, to encourage dialogue with men of other faiths and ideologies, and to enquire into the bearing of

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 142-43.

⁴⁵Unit Programme II was composed of the following five sub-Units on International affairs; Interchurch aid, refugee and world service; programme to combat racism; the churches' participation in Development; and Christian medical commission. The sub-Units of Unit Programme III focused on Christian education; programme on theological education; renewal and congregational life; women in church and community; and youth. Ibid., pp. 201-03

Christian belief on the spiritual and ethical issues posed for society by science and technology".⁴⁶

Of the eight functions indexed for Program Unit I, function 2 was listed as the special duty of sub-unit I (FOC). The task of function 2 was "to proclaim the oneness of the Church and to keep prominently before the Council and churches, within and outside its membership, the obligation to recover their unity in faith and worship".⁴⁷ Obviously, this restructuring had constitutional consequences.

a) Unity given Priority in the Constitution

To the 1971 CC meeting, the FOC presented the recommendation that the first function and purpose in the proposed revision of the WCC constitution reflect the Council's concern for church unity. Even the moderator (M.M. Thomas) of the powerful CC indicated in his report that the whole focus of the work of the WCC is theological rather than social-ethical. He stated:

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 162-63. In various combinations, the FOC shared responsibility with the other subunits for function 1 ("to gather churches for common reflection on the content of the Gospel and the manner of its proclamation and witness"), for function 3 ("to promote and carry out theological studies on the nature of the Christian life and witness as demanded with the contemporary world and from concerns of the various branches of the ecumenical movement") and for function 5 ("to study the theological implications of the existence and growth of the ecumenical movement and its various manifestations and to cultivate relations with non-member churches and world confessional movements"). The FOC is not listed as having any special responsibility for functions 4, 6, 7, and 8 (which respectively focused upon the promotion of missionary tasks, interfaith dialogue, promotion of interdisciplinary study and the administration of the Programme Unit. Cf. Ibid., pp. 162-63.

The fellowship of Churches which we are, is centered in our common confession of faith in Jesus Christ, and our glorification of the Triune God through the common pursuit of our common calling inherent in this confession. The central concern is faith expressed through obedience. The central concern is theological ... Christ-centered, and therefore seeking and acting.⁴⁸

A year later at its Utrecht meeting, the CC adopted the revised constitution and sent it to the member churches for their approval. According to the revised constitution (which was later ratified by Nairobi 1975) the first purpose and function of the WCC is as stated:

To call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.⁴⁹

(1) The CC Elects a New General Secretary

At its Utrecht meeting, the CC was significantly influenced in a theological manner by its main theme "Committed to Fellowship". A letter adopted for circulation to the member churches described the WCC as growing, seeking and active fellowship. It claimed that "a true witness to unity of the church contains a crucial contribution for the problems which divide mankind and that to take these human conflicts seriously provides the right context for discovering the way forward in

⁴⁸"The Report of the Executive Committee by the Chairperson," ER, 23(April 1971), p. 96.

⁴⁹Cf. Minutes ... Utrecht ... 1972, pp. 220-21. A similar "Aim" is stated in the By-Laws of the FOC: "The Aim of the Commission is to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe". Nairobi 1975, p. 402.

our vocation of Church unity".⁵⁰ John Deschner in a plenary address reported, that globally, activity toward church union is "growing and progressing" despite the nebulous atmosphere depicted in much of the current WCC debate on the topic.⁵¹

In the report of the general secretary, Dr. Blake attested that the WCC's quest for unity is basically dependent upon the theological work of the FOC. Despite the impatience of the activists, he was convinced that church unity could only come about, through "careful academic theological study". Within the contemporary situation, it is necessary to frame this theological quest for church unity in the search for the unity of humankind.⁵² Since "the kairos for each member church and for the World Council itself centers about the liturgy and the Holy Table of

⁵⁰"Commitment to Fellowship-A Letter to the Churches," ER 24(October 1972), p. 475.

⁵¹"Development in the Field of Church Unity," Ibid., p. 449.

⁵²Ibid., p. 414. The first two of FOC's six stated functions in its "By-laws" stress the importance of theological study and the need to make it relevant to the modern world. The first two functions are: a) "to study such questions of faith, order, and worship as bear on this task and to examine such social cultural, political racial, and other factors as affect the unity of the church; b) to study the theological implications of the existence and development of the ecumenical movement and to keep prominently before the Council the obligation to work for unity". Nairobi 1975, p. 402.

Like Dr. Blake, the current Secretary General of the WCC (Emilio Castro) has emphasized that the FOC must remain the focal point on which the WCC pursues its search for visible unity. Pointing out that this quest underlies all the Council's programs, Dr. Castro in his report to the 1985 CC meeting at Buenos Aires stated that within the WCC the FOC has "the specific task of expressing our awareness of this unity by reference to the great doctrinal affirmation which gives us our Christian identity". Cf., ER, 24(October 1985), p. 482.

Communion", the eucharist must form the basis of the church's search for unity.⁵³

When Dr. Blake chose not to seek a second term as the WCC's chief executive officer, the CC at its 1971 meeting appointed a nomination committee under José Bonino to prepare nominations. Acting upon the advice of the nomination committee, the CC at its 1972 meeting appointed Rev. Philip Potter (Meth.) with the transfer of office to take place on the 1 November 1972. In an adopted statement of tribute to Dr. Blake, the CC described his tenure as General Secretary (1966-1972) as a period of "fruitful transition and development". Under his leadership, the WCC had become "more representative, more closely knit, clearer in its understanding of the range and unity of its tasks, and more determined to pursue in the name of the Lord of the one Church the path of sacrificial service for and witness to mankind".⁵⁴

⁵³Ibid., p. 420. When he address the FOC in 1971 for the last time as General Secretary, Dr. Blake pointed out that the WCC refuses to make an either/or choice between "academic study with systematic theological reflection" and pragmatic life and work type programmes. Both complement each other: "we have agreed that action without sufficient theological reflection leads to frustration and that academic theology which does not give light and stimulus for action leads to futility". With the new WCC structural changes he expected two results from the FOC: "1. That you will bring a systematization and a wholeness to our needed theological reflection, and 2. that your own traditional Faith and Order work will be enriched by the insights that do not so easily penetrate the scholar's study, but arise out of the struggles in the arena of the world by those who make their primary witness to Christ by action and in existential decision". Cf. "Secretary General's Address," ER 24 (January 1972), pp. 26-9.

⁵⁴Minutes ... Utrecht ... 1972., p. 84. As moderator of the CC, Dr. M.M. Thomas worked closely with Dr. Blake. He says that Dr. Blake set for himself the goal of restructuring the secretariat of the World Council so as to make it more representative of its growing international and interconfessional character and to set in place

(Footnote Continued)

(2) General Secretary: "Committed to Fellowship"

After paying tribute to his two predecessors for their outstanding leadership in making the WCC a global community, Dr. Potter indicated in his short acceptance speech that he would work towards making the WCC more "alive and real". Potter wanted each church "to be itself as part of the whole of the catholicity which we seek, a wholeness which is not just the sum of the parts but an organic relationship of interaction".⁵⁵ He maintained that for the ecumenical movement to separate the vertical and horizontal elements of Christian unity is a denial of the gospel.⁵⁶

In his report to the CC at its 1973 Geneva meeting, Dr. Potter stated that Christ is the only firm foundation for Christian unity and conciliarity; for "where Christ is, there is the Church". He claimed that the nearer the churches come to Christ, who united broken humanity at the price of his own life, the closer they come to achieving the unity of the Una Sancta. Accordingly "a meaningful conciliarity and growth in unity can only take place in a context of the unambiguous call to faith in Christ". The churches must be willing to permit the demise of all "those stubborn institutions and historic structures" which

(Footnote Continued)

concrete action programmes to advance international social justice. While aware that these structures and programmes may continue to evolve and change, Dr. Thomas suggested that "the ecumenical vision which Blake shared on the *koinonia* of a worldwide church, spiritually penetrating the modern world, revealing human community and relationship, presenting Christ as Saviour and Lord, becoming a sign of the kingdom to come must continue to inspire new generations of ecumenical leadership". Cf. "Editorial" in ER, 37 (October 1985), p. 386.

⁵⁵P. Potter, "Dear Friends" in ER 24(October 1972), p. 472.

⁵⁶Ibid, p. 473.

stymie "God's purpose for His people" so "our churches and councils may find new life".⁵⁷ Potter expressed confidence that conciliarity can facilitate a more genuine witness to the peoples of the world. By living a "credible fellowship" within the conflicts and diversities of the contemporary society of which they form a part, the churches perform their best service to the world. Hence, he affirmed: "A truly multicultural, multilingual, multiconfessional form of conciliarity could become a tremendous source of enrichment, encouragement and of deeper insights into the purpose of God".⁵⁸

Louvain 1971 called for the FOC to direct much more attention to the means of achieving visible unity within a pluralistic situation. As Vischer asserted: "Vague ideas about the desirability of unity get us nowhere... we must concentrate our thinking much more vigorously on the problem of achieving unity".⁵⁹ At a 1973 FOC consultation at Salamanca (Spain) on "Concepts of Church Unity and Models of Church Union", the concept of conciliarity was again taken up and further developed.⁶⁰

4. The Salamanca Consultation of 1973

⁵⁷"Report of the General Secretary" ER, 25 (October 1973), p. 425.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹What Kind of Unity? (1974) FO II, No. 69, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁰Louvain 1971's "conspectus of studies to be carried out", suggested that the FOC focus its attention upon four major areas: common expression of faith, unity of the church and the unity of mankind, concepts of church unity and models of church union, and ministry and sacraments in the church local and universal. Cf. Louvain 1971, pp. 239-42.

Acting upon the recommendation of Louvain 1971, the FOC in September 1973 at Salamanca (Spain) sponsored a consultation on the concept of unity and the models of union. Both the report and the papers of the consultation pointed to the wholeness of the vision of unity and effective Christian witness in the modern world.⁶¹ The Salamanca consultation used "concepts of unity" to refer to the different conceptions of unity each church brings to the ecumenical movement and "models of union" to indicate general schemes for uniting these churches with their different views of unity.⁶²

For ecumenists from diverse confessions, Lukas Vischer maintained that it was important that they have a common definition of the terms related to conciliar fellowship. He suggested that the term "conciliar fellowship" be used to refer to the unity which the church experienced before the major divisions.⁶³ Since the churches presently lack the fullness of conciliarity, he contended that the conciliar structures created by the modern ecumenical movement are not the fruit of conciliar

⁶¹Some of the papers and the report are printed in ER 26 (1974).

⁶²Written under the direction of Lukas Vischer, a draft preparatory document for the consultation referred to five important concepts of unity, each with various variations: spiritual unity; the unity preserved by living tradition; unity safeguarded by episcopal structure, unity preserved when "Gospel rightly preached and sacraments rightly administered" and unity acquired through practical cooperation. Four important models of union are those based on "interconfession movements" (e.g. Evangelical Alliance for Socialism), federations or councils of churches (e.g. WCC), full mutual recognition (e.g. Anglican and Old Catholic Church) and organic union. Organic union is the only model of the four which allows for two or more churches to come together and form a new fellowship with a new identity. Cf. L. Vischer "Drawn and Held Together by the Reconciling Power of Christ", in ER 25 (April 1974), pp. 172-76.

⁶³Cf., Ibid., pp. 160-190.

fellowship. These structures are at best pre-conciliar which facilitate the growth of the divided ecclesial communities towards full koinonia.

Vischer picked up on the distinction made by Uppsala 1968 on living in conciliar fellowship and working towards the time when Christians are so united that a universal council is possible. He suggested that the goal of the ecumenical movement is not to work for a universal council. Rather it is to establish and foster relations among the churches where they are able to sustain full conciliar fellowship so they are in a position to receive from the Spirit the gift of a truly universal council if the need arises.

The churches have a responsibility to one another to explain how they understand the truth of the gospel of Christ. With doctrinal unity as its goal, full conciliar fellowship will always seek to retain unity even when relations are very strained or have even disintegrated. Since conciliar fellowship is fully realized and actualized in eucharistic fellowship, Vischer advocated that eucharistic oneness is just as much a prerequisite for conciliar fellowship as it is for organic union.⁶⁴ Furthermore, conciliar fellowship is an appropriate description of the goal of the ecumenical movement because it preserves the necessity of the diversity in the church which arises out a plurality of cultures and social situations.

Vischer suggested that the fullness of church consists in the totality of the churches. Even though the unity of the church has been realized in part, it is not fully manifested as universal organic unity.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 31.

Conciliar fellowship is viewed as an appropriate term for describing the growth towards the conditions which will lead to the realization of a genuinely universal council (e.g. full mutual commitment in eucharistic fellowship and organic union).

a) Contributions to Discussion

Gerald G. Moede (Meth.), in his "Church Union as a Model of Church Unity" paper pointed out that the conciliarity of the church provided an opportunity to every member of the church to participate and contribute at some level of the process. Seemingly, he was much more influenced by a democratic parliament type of conciliarity than the traditional catholic understanding of conciliarity in which the local churches are represented by bishops rather than democratically chosen delegates.⁶⁵

Prof. Ion Bria (Orth.) advocated that an ecumenical council is a meeting of "sister churches".⁶⁶ From the Orthodox perspective, an ecumenical council "presupposes and expresses the unity and catholicity of the Church". He insisted that before such a council could be held the assembly of local churches would have to recognize each other as fully belonging to the one church of Christ.

b) The Report of the Salamanca Consultation

⁶⁵Cf. Ibid, pp. 87-105

⁶⁶Cf. "Living In the One Tradition", Ibid., pp. 65-74.

The Salamanca Consultation recast the New Delhi 1961 description of the goal of the ecumenical movement in terms of conciliar fellowship.⁶⁷ Adopted at Nairobi 1975, it offered the churches the following vision of the ultimate goal:

Jesus Christ founded one Church. Today we live in diverse churches divided from one another. Yet our vision of the future is that we shall once again live ... in one undivided Church. We offer the following description to the churches for their consideration. The one Church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united. In this conciliar fellowship each local church possesses, in communion with the others, the fullness of catholicity, witnesses to the same apostolic faith and therefore recognizes the others as belonging to the same Church of Christ and guided by the same Spirit. As the New Delhi Assembly pointed out, they are bound together because they have received the same baptism and share in the same eucharist; they recognize each other's members and ministries. They are one in their common commitment to confess the Gospel of Christ by proclamation and service to the world. To this end, each church aims at maintaining sustained and sustaining relationships with her sister churches, expressed in conciliar gatherings, whenever required for the fulfillment of their common calling.⁶⁸

In its development of conciliar fellowship as the ecumenical goal, the Salamanca Consultation made it clear that the member churches of the WCC sought for the unity of the una sancta ecclesia so that they may live as one and give responsible witness and service to humankind. While church unity is still stymied and frustrated not only by major

⁶⁷The Salamanca report consisted of Part A (the context; the unity of the church in God's purpose for the world; the vision of a united church as a conciliar fellowship; conciliar fellowship and organic unity; different levels of unity - complementarity and interaction; and identity, change and unity) and Part B (more than a consensus; the role of the world confessional families in the ecumenical movement).

⁶⁸"The Unity of the Church: Next Steps," What Kind of Unity (1974), FO II, No. 26, p. 121.

confessional differences but by new divisions created by historical, political and cultural factors, the consultation expressed a confidence that the unity for which Christ prayed will be realized in ever new ways.⁶⁹ After describing a reunited church in terms of conciliar fellowship, it went on to elaborate in detail on the implications.⁷⁰

In the examination and manifestation of their given unity, the churches had made remarkable progress. This could be attributed in large part to multilateral and bilateral discussions, the movements for church union, and actual fellowship of interconfession worship, service and witness.⁷¹

Since unity is God's gift to the church and God's design embraces the whole of creation, ecclesiological unity is a sign and sacrament of the unity He wills for the world. As a participant in both humanity's unities and disunities, the integrity of the church is manifested in her struggles to overcome the barriers which human beings place between one another.⁷² In its development of the term "conciliar fellowship", the consultation clarified the meaning of the term "local church" as used in the context "conciliar fellowship of churches" and the relationship between conciliar fellowship and organic unity.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 119-120.

⁷⁰Cf. FO II, No. 69, pp. 121-25.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 119.

⁷²In a provocative paper presented to the consultation, José M. Bonino (Meth.) maintained that the search for the unity of the church in the Latin America situation is the "struggle for the Church as it strives to take shape in the quest for a new kind of life in a new society". ER 25 (April 1974), p. 219.

(1) Elements of Conciliar fellowship

If the churches are to consent to conciliar fellowship as their goal, the Salamanca consultation enumerated certain conditions that need to be fulfilled.⁷³ The existence of such fellowship among the churches (as well as within each church) requires that they profess the same apostolic truth; a common participation in a common eucharist; a form of government that adequately represents all the membership at each and every level. Since conciliar fellowship is a confessing koinonia, the churches must be able to engage in a common service in light of the contemporary situation and problems of the world.

(2) Steps to hasten Conciliar Fellowship

After having listed the conditions necessary for conciliar fellowship, the report then proposed some concrete steps that could be taken to quicken the process of conciliar fellowship. The churches had to recognize that progress in conciliar fellowship depends on their own initiative. As active partners in the conciliar process, the churches had to articulate more clearly and propose concrete steps as to how this unity can be materialized among them.⁷⁴

It is important that the churches work towards common perspectives and mutual understanding of contemporary social and political issues.

⁷³Cf. Ibid. pp. 122-23.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 123.

This will clear the way for the unity of the churches.⁷⁵ In accordance with Uppsala 1968, it affirmed that the various preconciliar councils are "a transitional opportunity for eventually actualizing a truly universal, ecumenical form of life and witness".⁷⁶ According to the report, present ecumenical councils have an important role to play in coordinating the efforts of the churches towards unity.⁷⁷

Based upon the conception of unity mapped out by New Delhi 1961 and Uppsala 1968, the Salamanca Consultation clarified for the churches how the quest for visible ecclesial unity ought to be conducted here and now. While some doubted the achieving of visible unity could ever be realized, the Consultation expressed the firm conviction that the unity for which Christ prayed for his disciples will be realized in ever new ways.⁷⁸ Seen as not an alternative to organic union, the concept of conciliar fellowship was again taken up at the FOC plenary meeting in 1974 for further clarification.

5. Accra 1974 and Conciliarity

"Unity of the Church: the Goal and the Way" was one of the two major themes studied by the FOC at its July-August 1974 meeting at Accra

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 122.

⁷⁷FO II, No. 69/p.123.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 120.

(Ghana).⁷⁹ To further clarify FOC's understanding of visible unity, Accra 1974 elucidated upon the concept of conciliar fellowship.

a) Unity: The Way of Conciliar Fellowship

In its effort to clarify the concept of conciliarity, the Accra report of Committee I acknowledged that it was unable to "give sufficient theological clarity to the terms 'conciliarity' and 'organic union' and the relation between them". It rejected, however, the view that the conciliarity proposed as the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is similar to the unity already acquired by the contemporary local, regional and world council of churches. Rather both the current association of councils of churches and the federalist character of confessional bodies were inadequate forms of union for sustaining a reunited church. Hence, the report indicated that the confessional churches would have to make substantial changes before they could possibly realize the goal of conciliar fellowship. While safeguarding freedom and diversity, genuine conciliarity assures that true organic union is contained at every level of ecclesial life.⁸⁰

Intimately intertwined with the conception of the church as sacrament and sign, the conciliar nature of church is manifested by a koinonia of local churches in each place truly united as one. Further,

⁷⁹The report on the "Unity of the Church: the Goal and the Way" was divided into six parts: understanding the context; describing the goal; moving into the fullness of conciliar fellowship; taking the next steps; moving towards full koinonia. Cf. Accra 1974.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 115.

Accra 1974 pointed out that conciliarity is also a viable model for safeguarding the legitimate right of churches to freedom and diversity in expression.⁸¹ Despite the fears expressed between "organic" and "organization", the report insisted that the concept of conciliar fellowship is not an alternative to that of organic union.

b) Unity: The Way of Conciliar Fellowship

The Accra report understood conciliarity as both an appropriate way of describing the ultimate ecumenical goal and the means to realizing it. With no uniform blueprint to guide the churches on the journey into conciliar fellowship, the Accra report recognized that this pilgrimage will involve the churches in a long, tedious process of common striving towards and into that fullness of koinonia.⁸² Nevertheless, the report did enumerate nine practical aspects which will mark the churches growth into the fullness of conciliar fellowship:

Unity in the truth of the Gospel.... Unity around the table of the Lord.... Fellowship in the Church is for the sake of the quality of human life in the world.... Unity in each place is basic.... Conciliar fellowship requires the mutual acceptance of appropriate representatives of each expression of the Church.... The fullness of fellowship will thus be an interlocking scale of corporate relationships, in which each grouping will have its proper autonomy (in mission responsibility to the surrounding world) and its proper dependence on the Church as a whole.... The conciliar fellowship must also lead into exploration of the proper forms of fellowship at the universal level.... The counterpart of mutual pastoral responsibility in interdependence is that councils of the Church at every level are invested with

⁸¹ Ibid., 227.

⁸² Ibid., p. 116.

an appropriate authority.... Finally, the whole structure of conciliar fellowship depends essentially upon the active presence of the Holy Spirit and on the Church's active acknowledgment of his leading.⁸³

Accra further clarified and deepened the understanding of conciliar fellowship that emerged from Uppsala 1968 and was further articulated and expanded upon at Louvain 1971 and Salamanca 1973. Rather than continue to focus on the clarification of the theological and ecclesiological dimension of the "Unity of the Church - Unity of Humankind" study, Accra 1974 recommended that the FOC continue this study in collaboration with other units and sub-units of the WCC (e.g. Community of Men and Women in the Church).⁸⁴ The stage was set for the WCC to officially approve this model at its Fifth Assembly at Nairobi in 1975 (Nairobi 1975).

6. The Orthodox and Conciliar Fellowship

Though both Orthodox and Protestants accepted the report of Section I of Uppsala 1968, John Deschner observed they were still not really in a position to frankly discuss their differences. His suggestion that Orthodox be put into the role of proponents by frequently asking them to formulate the draft reports was warmly received by the Orthodox.⁸⁵

⁸³ Cf. Ibid., pp. 117-20.

⁸⁴ FO II, No. 71, p. 88.

⁸⁵ Minutes...Sigtuna, F&O II, No. 53, p. 15. The more active role of the Orthodox in formulating World Council documents and other forms of participation did not go unnoticed by Protestants. At the 1969 CC
(Footnote Continued)

In preparation for Nairobi 1975, a Task Force of Orthodox theologians met on various occasions between 1968-1975 to consider questions directed towards the Orthodox Church by other churches and the world. Out of these conversations emerged two significant documents: "How Do Orthodox Look at the Problem of 'Concepts of Unity and Models in Union'" and "the Struggle for Justice and the Unity of the Church". Though the theological positions embodied in these documents did not necessarily reflect those traditionally endorsed by the Orthodox Church, the new theological perspectives provided a clear sense of the direction towards which Orthodox theology was moving. The new Orthodox theology took account of both the unity of the church and ways to make this unity more relevant to modern civilization.

On the one hand, there is a recovery of the sense of the unity of the universal faith in ecclesial life, based on the indivisibility of unity and faith; on the other hand, a sense of the need for the Church to be prepared and able to move out of the impasse in which it finds itself in order to proclaim the Gospel to the secularized world of today.⁸⁶

a) "Concepts of Unity and Models of Union"

Suggesting that the report of the Salamanca consultation would make an important contribution to Section II of the forthcoming Nairobi

(Footnote Continued)

meeting, for example, a Protestant member jokingly remarked that "a separate statement by the Protestants may come soon". Cf. "Ecumenical Diary", ER, 21(October 1969), p. 376. While some Protestants did resent such active Orthodox involvement, others recognized that the time was ripe for a dialogue between the eastern and western understanding of the Christian faith.

⁸⁶"How Do Orthodox Look at the Problem of 'Concepts of Unity and Models of Union'?" In Orthodox Contributions to Nairobi, p. 6.

Assembly, the Orthodox Task Force maintained that the more divided Christendom rediscovers the one living Tradition, the closer it will come to restoring full Christian koinonia.⁸⁷

Even when unrecognized or manifested by individual members, the Task Force declared that the divine gift of ontological and indivisible unity of the body of Christ has been continually realized and preserved without interruption in the Orthodox Church (in her creed, cult and code).⁸⁸ Except for identifying the one church with the Orthodox Church, the Task Force acknowledged that various churches in the ecumenical movement profess the same belief.

Nevertheless, these churches identify the one church with another historical church or advocate that while the continuity of the church in faith is to be preserved it cannot be identified with any one historical church. According to the Task Force, this divergence lies at the very heart of the ecumenical movement. Hence, it referred to the need to distinguish between the unchangeable essentials and the historically conditional, changeable forms of ecclesial life.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ From the beginning, according to the Task Force, "Holy Tradition" has safeguarded the unity of the one church of Christ. Through the power of the indwelling Spirit, the ecclesia founded visibly by Christ on the apostles is continually perpetuated in space and time. Hence, the Orthodox declared: "It is by the living Tradition, which is the form taken by Christ's 'economy' through the Spirit for the Salvation of the World, that the Church is one". Enabled by a ministry in continuity with the apostolic ministry, the unity of the one church finds fulness of her expression in the Eucharistic liturgy. Through it God continually renews his historical community and affirms its historical solidarity with all the saints throughout the ages. Ibid., p. 11.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Though affirming that the one church of Christ is found in the
(Footnote Continued)

b) Struggle for Justice and the Unity of the Church

At its 7-14 March 1975 consultation in Crete, the Task Force provided a more explicit definition of the Orthodox understanding of the concept of union. Though not expecting the separated churches to embrace Orthodoxy as manifested in its traditional historical and cultural forms, the Task Force recommended that the diverse ecclesial communities strive to deepen the fullness of the apostolic faith contained within their own heritage. In the words of the Task Force: "No church is therefore required to uproot itself, to cut itself off from its cultural heritage or to lose its distinctive character. Each would contribute to the enrichment of all".⁹⁰

According to this consultation, the unity of the church is to be seen as the leaven for the unity of humankind. Through her prayers and

(Footnote Continued)

Orthodox Church, the Task Force opted to leave the ecclesial status of the other churches to the judgment of God and concentrate on witnessing to the truth. In their dialogue with Protestants, Orthodox scholars are expected to inquire into how is it possible to safeguard and express the unity of the church "without a permanent and visible criterion of unity in the midst of infinite variations and even contradictions in creed and church structure created by historical change" As for the Uppsala 1968 suggestion that the churches should work towards a "genuinely universal council", the Task Force pointed out that since such a council presupposes and expresses the unity and catholicity of the church it could be held only when "all its members recognize each other, as belonging to the same Church of Christ, guided by the same Spirit". Ibid., pp. 11-12

⁹⁰...The Struggle for Justice and the Unity of the Church, "Orthodox Contributions to Nairobi", p. 24. This stance placed a greater responsibility on the individual churches to come more alive to the whole Tradition through their own historical ecclesial communities, the obligation is placed upon these churches to bring the ecclesial unity they have been given to perfect fellowship that will be fully revealed at the parousia.

liturgy, the church performs a service (diakonia) for the world to which she is inextricably bonded by "the nature of the salvation offered to us by Christ".⁹¹ Hence, it is part of the design of God that the church labour for the unity of all humanity.

For the Orthodox, the essence of Christian unity is conciliar life shared together. Not to be taken in any juridical sense, the true meaning of real conciliar life is embodied in the term "communion, a harmony in Christ between members within the Church and between the Churches". The Task Force confirmed that the definition of unity suggested by the FOC to the forthcoming Nairobi Assembly of the WCC was a good point of departure for the Orthodox vision of unity.⁹²

c) The JWG Comments on "What Unity Requires"

From 16-20 June in Rome, the Joint Working Group of the RCC and the WCC sponsored a consultation by 21 RC and F&O theologians on two major subjects to be discussed at the forthcoming Nairobi World Assembly, namely, "Confessing Christ Today" and "What Unity Requires".⁹³ It welcomed the Salamanca statement as a further development of the effort to state together the kind of unity sought. Offering some practical

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., p. 31.

⁹³ The WCC representatives were: A-M Aagaard, V. Borovoi, S. Coe, O. Costas, C. Howard, J. Meyendorff, R. Nelson, L. Vischer, R. Welsh and T. Wieser. The RC participants were: A. Javiere, E. Lanne, B. Meeking, C. Moeller, T.F. Stansky, J.M.R. Tillard and R. Tucci. Cf. "Unity and Witness" in Study Encounter, SE/80, Volume XI, No. 3, 1975, pp. 1-7.

suggestions, it advised Nairobi not to lose sight of the fact that the church has two essential dimensions - the universal and the local - which necessarily belong together.⁹⁴ In addition to referring to the relationship between churches, conciliarity also referred to an aspect of the church's life at every level. This quality of "good ordering" is "rooted in the fact that Christ as Good Shepherd knows each of his people by name and wills that each one should play his proper part in the life of the whole".⁹⁵ Further, the consultation indicated that conciliarity cannot be properly understood apart from the role of the Holy Spirit who is bringing about the unity within local congregations as well as those within the universal church.⁹⁶

Since the councils of the ecumenical movement at all levels do not enjoy a united sacramental fellowship (as do Orthodox and RCC churches within their own bodies), the consultation clarified and confirmed their status as pre-conciliar.⁹⁷ Broaching the topic of appropriate

⁹⁴Ibid., No.1/p.19. With the stress that had been given to the church universal in international conversations since New Delhi 1961, all churches expressed concern that unity at the local level was being by-passed. The Consultation also pointed out that both the RC and Orthodox Churches had serious difficulty with the "union of Churches in one locality which does not carry with it the union of participating churches at the global level". Ibid., No. 3/p.19.

⁹⁵Ibid., No. 6/p.20.

⁹⁶Ibid., No. 8/p.21.

⁹⁷Ibid., No. 5/p.20. With the WCC stress on conciliarity, the SPCU, just prior to the Nairobi 1975 published the document "Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National and Local Levels," SPCU, No. 26 (1975), pp. 8-31. It describes the RCC's understanding of conciliarity in this way: "The conciliarity which marks the life of the Catholic Church and is sometimes expressed in ecumenical and provincial councils ('conciles') is based on a full and substantial communion of local
(Footnote Continued)

leadership for councils (in the form of the episcopate as well as corporate leadership in the form of synods), it recommended a study to define the necessary role of each and to avoid conflicts that had arisen in the past.⁹⁸ Though the contemporary problems of humanity create new tensions between the churches, the consultation pointed out that the churches must not ignore the cause of the tensions nor ought they allow them to disrupt the growth of ecumenical fellowship.⁹⁹

7. Nairobi 1975: Explicit Description of the Ecumenical Goal

Meeting under the general theme "Jesus Christ Frees and Unites" over 676 delegates from 286 member churches gathered in 1975 at Nairobi, Kenya, for the Fifth Assembly of the WCC (Nairobi 1975). Prepared by the FOC, Section II was entitled "What Unity Requires".¹⁰⁰ Major presentations on the theme (with its emphasis on conciliarity) were made by Archimandrite Cyrille Argenti and John Deschner.

(Footnote Continued)

churches, among themselves and with the Church of Rome which presides over the whole assembly of charity. This communion finds expression in the confession of the faith, the celebration of the Sacraments, the exercise of the ministry and the reception of previous councils. In this sense a council is a means enabling a local Church, a certain group of local churches, or all of the local churches in communion with the bishop of Rome, to express the communion of the Catholic Church". Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁹⁸ Ibid., No. 7/ p.21.

⁹⁹ Ibid., No. 9/pp. 21-2.

¹⁰⁰ Sections I, III-VI focused, respectively, on the traditional concerns of IMC and L&W: confessing Christ today; seeking community; education for liberation and community; structures of injustice and struggles for liberation; human development.

a) Unity from the Orthodox Perspective

Advocating that the mystical body is the foundation of the unity of the church, Cyrille Argenti pointed out that Christian koinonia is concretely expressed and fully lived out in eucharistic assembly. As well as constituting the church of Christ, the one eucharistic communion is also the foundation for the unity of the una sancta ecclesia. Further, since the Head of the church is also the Lord of all creation, the unity of the church witnesses to the coming unity of all humankind.

By depicting a true council to be a visible expression of the faith already being lived in the one eucharistic fellowship by the communities that are represented in it, Argenti brings out the very close link between Christian unity and conciliarity. By seeking to make the church a true image of the triune God, true authentic Christian conciliarity continually reminds the local churches of their duty to evolve more deeply into the life of Christ. Together with growth in Christ, a local church becomes ecclesia as it enters into communion with other local communities.¹⁰¹ Confident that the model of conciliar fellowship held out great promise for future ecclesial unity, he expressed the hope that the Holy Spirit will lead all churches to "a deeper growth in Christ" and to the time when "the Nth Assembly will be recognized by the whole

¹⁰¹Cf., Argenti, "Christian Unity," ER 28(January, 1976), pp. 28-34.

Christian people as the 8th Ecumenical Council of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ".¹⁰²

b) John Deschner On Visible Unity as Conciliar Fellowship

From his detailed reflection on the conciliar structures operative at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15 and Galatians 2), John Deschner concluded that present ecumenical councils, with their insufficiently developed conciliar elements, are pre-conciliar.¹⁰³ So that the separated churches might come to live a conciliar existence, he suggested that the WCC must help them obtain full visible unity in the one apostolic faith and in one eucharistic communion. Intimately linked to the quest for unity, the question of conciliar teaching and its reception needed to be developed in a way to enable the recovery of true authority for ecumenical teaching without structures of dominance or subservience. If the church is to be a credible sign of the coming unity of humankind, the local churches must live in conciliar fellowship. With present ecumenical councils unable to choose between any two opposing

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 28-34.

¹⁰³ Deschner suggests that present WCC assemblies are pre-conciliar for the following reasons: they are reflective of ongoing relations among churches; the delegates do not mutually recognize each other as a representative spokesperson for a particular church and the universal church; there is no common eucharist celebration; primary stress is put into reaching consensus rather than seeking to discern the mind of Christ; the local churches do not hear and receive as authoritative the utterance and statements of the councils. Cf. "Visible Unity as Conciliar Fellowship," ER, 28(1976), pp. 22-27.

views, he challenged the delegates to evaluate their own preparedness to accept conciliar fellowship as the means to visible church unity.

c) Nairobi 1975: "What Kind of Unity"?

Within the context of the diversified unity of humankind, Section II of Nairobi 1975 expounded on the kind of unity the ecumenical movement seeks as its ultimate goal. In general reference to unity, the report pointed out that God precedes both the freedom for which he sets humanity free and the unity by which he binds his people together in his freedom. The delegates acclaimed they came to know God better "as the one who frees us for unity in himself and the one who unites us in his freedom".¹⁰⁴ Whereas New Delhi 1961 stressed the unity of the church on the local level and Uppsala 1968 emphasized unity of the church on the universal level, the report of Section II (though slightly skewed in favor of the former) achieved a much better equilibrium between the two. The key concept in its definition of unity was "conciliar fellowship".

Dependent on the terminology and findings of Louvain 1971 and the Salamanca Consultation of 1973, Nairobi 1975 clarified further the New Delhi 1961 and the Uppsala 1968 definition of unity. It thus envisions the one church of Christ as "a conciliar fellowship of local churches

¹⁰⁴ Nairobi 1975, No. 1/p.60. In addition to an introduction (No. 1/60), the other four parts of the report of Section II attempt to give a description of a commonly accepted goal (nos. 2-7), a deeper understanding of the context (Nos. 8-12), a interpretation of the way ahead in hope and struggle (Nos. 13-18), and a series of recommendations addressed to churches, which point to tasks and efforts which unity requires today (Nos. 19-22).

which are themselves truly united..."¹⁰⁵ Aside from its strong ecclesiological emphasis, the conciliar concept of unity was viewed to be intimately bonded to the cross.¹⁰⁶

In its attempt to clarify further the concept of conciliarity, the report of Section II indicated that it was intended to describe a feature of the life of the una sancta ecclesia at all levels. It expresses the interior unity of the churches separated by space, culture and time, and also depicts the quality of life within each local church. Rooted in the life of the triune God, conciliar fellowship was understood as the kind of unity Christ prayed for his church. Conciliar fellowship actively desires unity in diversity while it safeguards and promotes the special gifts of each individual and local ecclesial community. With the church rather than the world as its pivotal point, conciliarity preserves "the integrity of the one apostolic faith" and places unity in the context in which all humankind is drawn to the

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., No. 3/p.60.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Nos 8-18/pp.60-6. Hosted by the United Church of Canada, the Toronto Consultation of United and Uniting Churches was held from the 2-9 June 1975. Its report presents its own interpretation of conciliar fellowship and a message to the united churches, the WCC and the like. While it acknowledged that Christ had given unity to his people, the Consultation claimed that the "sacramental unity of Christ's Church" has not been manifested to "the world as the unity of his body". It expounded upon the idea that the quest for the visible unity of the church is intimately bonded to the mystery of "Christ's cross and glory". In an appeal for the "organic union" of the churches, the report contends that the unity of the church is not an end itself. As God's Instrument the church is directed towards drawing all humanity to the unity of Christ. Cf. Growing Together into Unity; Texts of Commission on Conciliar Fellowship. Edited by Choan-seng Song. (Madras and Geneva: The Christian Literature and the WCC, 1978), pp. 13-17.

humanity of Christ. Favorable to contextual nuances and different interpretations, the report declares that the church must be open to "men and women of every nation and culture, of every place, of every ability and disability".¹⁰⁷

To encourage a mutual effort to confess Christian truth and to promote a more common witness and mission, the report of Section II recommended that the churches make every effort "to receive, re-appropriate, and confess together, as contemporary occasion requires, the Christian truth and faith, delivered through the Apostles and handed down through the centuries". This action must strive "to clarify and to embody the unity and diversity which are proper to the Church's life and mission". Nairobi 1975 rejected the idea that a universal conciliar fellowship offers a vision of growing into unity by a type of association which is less bureaucratic than the present interchurch councils and yet a little less dramatic than organic unity. Convinced that full Christian koinonia presupposes the organic unity of the church, conciliar fellowship was not regarded as an alternate model to organic unity but "an aspect of the life of the one undivided Church at all levels".¹⁰⁸ This report also recommended increased inter-church

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Nos. 4-13/ pp. 60-64.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. For the Lutherans, the description of unity as conciliar fellowship did not make it clear enough that the full fellowship of churches did not mean the death of denominationalism (but further reconciliation). To supplement the conciliar view, the World Lutheran Federation at its June 1977 Dar es Salaam assembly offered the ecumenical movement a vision of unity based on reconciled diversity. This position is based on the view that the diversity of denominational

(Footnote Continued)

solidarity, a fresh view of ecumenical commitments and further studies on such issues as the integration of the disabled, women and church unity and conciliar fellowship.

7. Summary

Between 1968 and 1975, the terms "genuinely universal council" and "conciliar fellowship" was given high priority on the ecumenical agenda. Progressively the WCC adopted the term "conciliar fellowship" to describe the kind of unity it seeks as its ultimate ecumenical goal. The churches themselves, however, remained divided as to whether it was to be understood as the final goal of full koinonia in faith, cult and code or whether it meant achieving eucharistic fellowship first on the basis of what the churches already shared and then gradually deepen this fellowship. Nairobi 1975 advised that both approaches be treated as complementary rather than mutually exclusive did not resolve the problems obstructing unity.

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heritages are legitimate and that in a reunited church, the various confessional heritages would enhance "the richness of life in the Church universal". Cf. Gunther Gassmann and Harding Meyer, The Unity of the Church: Requirements and Structure. LWF Report No. 15. Geneva: Lutheran World Confederation, 1983, pp. 9, 27-31.

The 1973 Leuenberg Agreement (signed by Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe along with churches that grew out of them and related pre-Reformation churches, the Waldessian Church and the Church of the Czech Brethren) reflects the reconciled unity vision. While retaining their own separate identities, the signatory churches to this "Concord" "accord each other fellowship in word and sacrament and strive for the fullest possible cooperation in witness and service to the world". Cf. ER 25 (July 1973), pp. 355-59.

C. Nairobi 1975 - Vancouver 1983: Towards A Eucharist Vision

After Nairobi 1975 core groups of the various sub-units of the WCC met to discuss and formulate programs on the basis of the Assembly's report. At Geneva in 1977, the CC approved for the Unit on Faith and Justice (on the basis its sub-groups recommendations) a program of study which concentrated on "the common confession of faith, the unity of the church; dialogue in community; a just, participatory and sustainable society; and renewal of education".¹⁰⁹ Sub-unit I (FOC) of this Unit was to continue its study on the concept of conciliar fellowship; contemporary formulations of Christian faith; the unity of the church and the unity of humankind; and consensus statements on baptism, eucharist and ministry.¹¹⁰

1. The meaning of the term "local church"

With the ecumenical dialogue giving increasing importance to the concept of "local church", Nairobi 1975 recommended that the FOC "clarify the varied meanings given to the phrase 'local church' and the

¹⁰⁹"Ecumenical Diary" in ER 28 (October 1976), p. 467. Overall, the CC approved four major programme thrusts for the whole WCC: "The expression and communication of one faith in the triune God: the search for a justice, participatory and sustainable society; the unity of the church and its relation to the unity of humankind; education and renewal in search for true unity". Ibid., p. 466.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 466-67.

relation of the local church to the full reality of the church".¹¹¹ Not able to accept "the fragmentation of the common celebration of the eucharist," the Salamanca report (1973) leaned towards a Catholic position and used the term primarily in the sense of a eucharistic community in a given time and place.¹¹² Since the form of unity that is appropriate for the church on the national, regional and global levels may not be appropriate for the local church, the local churches needed a form of unity that would make them truly one. The WCC found this type of unity in conciliar fellowship and discovered that the local eucharistic communities themselves are the basic units of this form of unity which must find expression at all levels of church life.¹¹³ In December 1976, a small F&O consultation continued the discussion and drew up a report. Lesslie Newbigin (Ref.) and Fred H. Kaan (Reformed) presented position papers.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Nairobi 1975, p. 69.

¹¹²Salamanca Report in ER p. 190.

¹¹³The Salamanca report indicated that conciliar fellowship is not an alternative to organic union but both are intimately joined. It advocated that in a reunited church conciliar fellowship could balance both the legitimate expressions of human diversities found among the local churches and provide ways of expressing the universal dimension of Christian unity. With the eucharist at its center, conciliar unity was not a monolithic unity but a most apt description of "the one church we are seeking to achieve, because it includes a dynamic concept of diversity". Upon the churches rests the responsibility to give visible institutional form to the conciliar community in which all human estrangements are overcome by providing opportunities for their members to celebrate the word and sacraments together.Ibid., pp. 123-24.

¹¹⁴Other participants included: R. Beaupère (RC), D. Gill (Congr.), L. Vischer (Ref.), G. Müller-Fahrenholz (Luth.), G. Wainwright (Meth.), J.D. Zizioulas (Orth.), J. Mugambi. Cf. For complete list see: WCC, In Each Place: Towards a Fellowship of Local Churches Truly United. Geneva: WCC, 1977), p. 13; (hereafter cited In Each Place).

Focusing upon the key terms in the conciliar phrase "local churches which are truly united", Bishop Newbigin claimed the "local church" is each "place" amid the present realities where Christians gather to hear God's word and share in the eucharistic feast which prepare them for the common life of service and witness. The local church is a sign of the breaking forth of God's reign in the world.¹¹⁵

Fred Kaan (Ref.), an officer in the World Alliance of Reformed churches, indicated that Congregationalists (influenced by the increased diversification of society) gave the "gathered-church principle" wide application to meet diverse needs. Nevertheless, he claimed that in this ecumenical era each individual believer must come to understand the church in its most concrete form as the body of believers "gathered together into church order". Rather than being magistral (which he groups with such adjectives as "coercive" and "legalistic"), Rev. Kaan maintains that church order at all levels is spiritual and ministerial.¹¹⁶

The meaning any confessional tradition gives the term "local church" varies on whether it operates under the episcopal, presbyteral or congregational system of church government. In drawing up its report, however, the consultation noted that for each local church "a network of 'sustained and sustaining' relations exists". It states that the term local church "refers to an area where Christians can easily meet and

¹¹⁵ L. Newbigin, "What is 'a local church truly united'?", In Each Place, pp. 14-29.

¹¹⁶ F. H. Kaan, "The local church: Some Congregational voices," In Each Place, pp. 30-38.

form one committed fellowship in witness and service". Even if the local conditions of an area necessitate separate ecclesial services, the sacramental nature of the church is such that "it must be made evident that these communities understand themselves as one eucharistic fellowship". Ecumenical efforts towards the unity of the una sancta ecclesial must focus on "enabling 'all in each place' to form one 'local church'". The diverse denominational traditions "may have a continuing life in the united Church as long as they nourish the witness of the local church and do not diminish its capacity for responding to the needs of the people whom it is called to serve".¹¹⁷

In an article published in The Ecumenical Review, Professor Stanley S. Harakas of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology confessed that the eucharist and the bishop (and his priests) constitute the local church (diocese and parish). It is the confluence of the bishop (or his delegate, the priest) and his people in the eucharist. It is bonded to the church universal as a community intimately linked by spiritual and institutional ties to a whole series of local churches. Hence in a true local church "all of the conditions of ecclesial existence are fully present: orthodoxy of faith, canonicity and sufficiency of order, eucharistic and sacramental unity, the fellowship of love and obedience

¹¹⁷"Report of the Consultation: A fellowship of local churches truly united," In Each Place, pp. 3-12. The ecclesiological and sacramental nature of the "local church" was stressed especially in position papers presented by R. Beauprère ("The term 'local church' in the ecumenical context," In Each Place, pp. 39-49) and J.D. Zizioulas ("The local church in a eucharistic perspective - an Orthodox contribution," In Each Place, pp. 50-61).

and organic wholeness".¹¹⁸

Though interconfessional councils were by the mid-1970s widely recognized to be preconciliar, their importance remained undiminished. While in a reunited church an ecumenical council might be required only when serious issues pertaining to truth and the unity of the church were at stake, the regular representative gatherings were found to be very useful in preventing legitimate diversity from deteriorating into division. For the separated churches of the same Christ, these gatherings provided a means of mutual edification and correction. The more the churches related and interacted, the more they came to appreciate that in contemporary society the regular conciliar practice of convening representative gatherings is a sine qua non factor to the

¹¹⁸Cf. S. Harakas, "The Local Church: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective," ER, 29 (April 1977), pp. 142-45.

Contributing to this aspect of the ecumenical dialogue J.M.R. Tillard pointed out that the local church is not merely a part of the church universal. Rather every local eucharistic community presided over by the bishop in union with the other local bishops manifests in itself the fullness of the church universal. Tillard says: "Comme koinônia de foi, de charité, d'espérance, L'Église locale - celle à laquelle préside chaque évêque - n'est pas simplement une parcelle de l'Église du Christ. Elle est celle-ci en une de ses manifestations hic et nunc. La synaxe eucharistique du Theou en ce lieu et dans cette situation historique. La communauté eucharistique n'est pas une fraction du mystère de l'Église universelle mais l'apparition - le 'symbole' au sens plein du terme - de cette Église, en communion avec le Père et en communion fraternelle, dans le Christ Seigneur. C'est pourquoi chaque communion fraternelle, soudée en elle-même par l'Eucharistie, se trouve du fait même en pleine unité avec les autres communautés locales, où qu'elles soient de par le monde, non pas 'en vertu d'une structure externe surimposée, mais en vertu du Christ totale présence en chacune d'elles'..." J.M.R. Tillard, "L'horizon la 'primauté' de L'évêque de Rome," Proche Orient Chrétien 25(1975), p. 233.

proclamation of the gospel and the continual mission of the church.¹¹⁹

2. Bangalore 1978 - Three Crucial Requirements For Unity

During the second week of its August 1978 plenary meeting at Bangalore (India), the FOC, with the Nairobi report of Section II as its focal point, continued in its attempt to develop and refine methods to make the search for unity more relevant and meaningful for the churches and the ecumenical movement. The report of Committee I is particularly useful for gauging the FOC's understanding of unity in 1978.¹²⁰

Reiterating that the divided churches are not living in conciliar fellowship, the report of Committee I used the term "pre-conciliar" to refer to the various efforts and developments which prepare for and herald future conciliar fellowship".¹²¹

a) Essential Requirements for Unity

¹¹⁹FO II, No. 69, p. 121.

¹²⁰In addition to the report of Committee I, Bangalore 1978 also received reports from the other four Committees. The report of Committee II focused on a common confession of the one apostolic faith and towards a common way of teaching and decision making; Committee III reviewed the reaction to the agreed statements reached at Accra 1974 on baptism, eucharist and ministry; Committee IV discussed the unity of the church in the broader frame of the unity of humankind. This Committee highlighted the unity of the church and dialogue with other living faiths and ideologies, the unity of the church and the unity of the community of men and women and unity in relation to interchurch aid. Committee V examined new ecumenical experiences and existing ecumenical structures.

¹²¹Ibid, p. 241.

With the realization that the term conciliar fellowship needed further clarification, the report of Section II suggested that the FOC in the coming years concentrate primarily on an examination of the essential requirements of full visible koinonia. It defined conciliar fellowship to mean "a communion of local churches which is capable of holding assemblies or synods of authorized representatives of the various local churches."¹²² The report of Committee II enumerated three minimum requirements that must be met if the churches are to advance towards conciliar koinonia.

Again and again three requirements were mentioned: a) consensus in the apostolic faith; b) mutual recognition of baptism, the eucharist and ministry; c) structures making possible common teaching and decision-making. It was felt that the study of more general ecclesiological issues should not defer the exploration of these three requirements nor the drawing¹²³ of practical consequences from the findings already obtained.

(1) A Common Confession of Faith

In a major position paper on "Towards a Common Profession of Faith, J.M.R. Tillard advocated that unity in the apostolic faith is essential for conciliar fellowship. For the churches to realize the fullness of authentic Christian koinonia in truth and mission, Tillard elaborated upon what he judged to be id quod requiritur et sufficit in the faith. He deemed it important that the search for the Christian truth in faith not be divorced from the life of the Christian community in the world.

¹²²Ibid., p. 239.

¹²³Bangalore 1978, p. 243.

Essentially, the sacraments and ministry receive their meaning from the apostolic faith.¹²⁴ Prerequisite to any productive search for conciliar communion entails that the churches had reached a consensus on principles relative to both theology and methodology. After taking account of how the faith is expressed both in confessional documents and Christian praxis, the churches, in deciding on what form the common confession will take, must distinguish between what is essential and non-essential to faith as regards "formulas of faith and ecclesial praxis". On the assumption that these tenets are accepted, Tillard contends that the churches are confronted with a two-fold assignment: collectively, the churches (if they seek a truly ecumenical council) must determine "the content of the faith quod requiritur et sufficit"; individually, each church, on the basis of its own doctrinal tradition and experiences must distinguish between what is integral and peripheral to the faith while remaining careful not "to require of others more than is really required, while still being convinced that by consenting to the quod sufficit it is not selling the faith short".¹²⁵

Section II was aware that faith as the human response of commitment in hope and love to God's grace was more important than its doctrinal formulations. Nevertheless, it recognized the importance of the churches

¹²⁴Relating the ministry and sacraments to the faith of the church he says: "Ecclesial koinonia is the community of believers, the sacraments are the sacraments of the faith, and the 'authoritative' teaching of the ministers is the teaching of the faith, and its creditability is proportionate to its fidelity to the faith". Cf. Tillard, "Towards a Common Profession of Faith," ER, 31 (January 1979), p. 51.

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 52-57.

being able to state a common faith. Aside from the common acceptance of Ephesians 1:3-15 (a common faith in the triune-God's involvement in all human history, humanity's complete dependence on God's "redeeming and liberating grace", the reality of the Christ event, and the assurance of the God's reign), the churches were able to "confess the reality of the Church, being the Body of Christ, called to be the nucleus and servant of the unity of humankind and of the whole universe".¹²⁶

(2) Authoritative And Authentic Teaching

The quest of the churches for visible unity is inextricably linked to the problem of teaching authority. Clearly as long as the churches continue to adhere to diverse understandings of the function of church authority, many incompatible ecclesologies will continue to exist. Initiated by Accra 1974, Nairobi 1971 approved the "How does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today"? study. To stimulate and guide the study process a small F&O consultation which met in February 1976 at Geneva prepared a draft document. The importance of the project was explained in terms of the responsibility of the churches to give an account of the gospel of Christ. This working text focused on two basic questions: What is the content of the gospel? How is this gospel presented today?

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 246. In his visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva in 1984, John Paul II stated that the churches will not be able to give one common witness until the churches "reach unity in the common apostolic faith" for "unity in the profession of faith conditions the outcome of all the efforts made in common, while these efforts in their turn are an important means of progressing towards this unity in faith". Cf. ER 36 (October 1984), pp. 440-42.

Challenged to rise above their canonical understanding of the ecclesia, all churches were requested to "reflect on the possibility of recognizing other churches as holding the same apostolic faith and sharing the eucharistic fellowship".¹²⁷

In its October 1977 Odessa (USSR) report, F&O claimed that the churches differed significantly in the way they understood what they teach authoritatively to be in authentic continuity with the gospel.¹²⁸ These views are intimately linked to conflicting positions on who speaks and decides authoritatively on behalf of the church.¹²⁹

Though present on the agenda as a topic for discussion, Bangalore 1978 did not undertake a thorough debate on ecclesial authority. From the many recommendations of Committee II, it is evident that the ecumenical movement has only yet scratched the surface of some of the many problems associated with this thorny subject.

¹²⁷Bangalore 1978, p. 240. Of the questiones disputa which obstruct Christian unity, the question of ecclesial authority is the most difficult. John Macquarrie claimed that for the separated churches to reunite in "a new unity in diversity will demand an intricate adjustment between the need for some cohesive authority and the legitimate Christian exercise of freedom and autonomy". Macquarrie, p. 97.

¹²⁸To verify and confirm the authenticity of their teaching, churches differ as to whether they attribute their authority to a certain ecclesiological office, or to confessional creeds, or to the collective consciousness of God's people, or to communal (or individual) charisms. Ibid, p. 82.

¹²⁹The ongoing teaching authority of the church can at various times and in different ways be distinguished for its personal, ministerial or corporate character - personal credibility by words and actions (e.g. monks, saints); ministerial authority to preach and teach (e.g. bishops, priests); corporate teaching by representative gatherings (councils, synods).

Committee II noted, however, that as long as there are no ecclesial structures which will allow for common teaching and decision-making there can be no consensus on the apostolic faith and sacramental order. Because the church receives her existential life from the triune God who sustains her as Christ's mystical body, Section II advocated that the church "exists and lives" before she "performs acts of teaching".¹³⁰ Though aware that through the power of the Spirit every member of the body of Christ has been entrusted with an authority to teach Christ's gospel, Bangalore 1978 concerned itself primarily with the exercise of communal authority in the church. While this authority is embodied in all the charisms of the Holy Spirit, it is most clearly manifested in the ecclesiological ministry. Not merely the "unifying factor" for all the other diverse charisms, the ministry is considered "the instrument of expressing the common witness of truth according to the Word of God received in the community". As a conciliar event imbued at all levels of the church's life, the ecclesiological authority is "especially expressed through synods".¹³¹ At its 1982 Lima (Peru) plenary meeting, the FOC reached monumental theological convergence on the three church dividing issues of baptism, eucharist and ministry. There still remain, however, major differences among the churches with regard to various aspects of these realities which still need to be redressed.

3. FOC and Contextual Theology

¹³⁰ Bangalore 1978, p. 258.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 258.

The FOC (as its predecessor the F&O Movement) has always been able to obtain the services of some of the best theological minds from the various churches. For most (if not all) of its history, classical continental theology has dominated F&O proceedings. After she was installed in the office of Deputy General Secretary in 1980, Marie Assaad of the Egyptian Coptic Church stated that she came to recognize "how much male dominated, how Western dominated and ... how much Germany theology dominated, the whole theological enterprise really still is".¹³² In an attempt to make theology more acceptable to modern, pluralistic culture, the WCC in the 1970s placed a new emphasis on doing theology".¹³³ Hence, the WCC opened its doors to various contextual theologies (e.g. black, various types of liberation, feminist). In 1980 at a World Conference on the churches facing racism, contextual theology was referred to as "theology in action, a living out of faith as Christians," based upon a thorough understanding of one's immediate context. This Conference made it clear, however, that at best all such theology is "partial" and it must be complemented by some kind of universal theology.¹³⁴

Not impervious to a change of style for appropriate occasions, the FOC, in some important studies, has made significant use of contextual

¹³²Howell, p. 68.

¹³³Adamant that theology belonged to the daily lives of people, Dr. Potter asserts: "In the past decades a new emphasis has been placed on doing theology. Theology is not something ontological and eternal but it is very earthly because it is the encounter of the Word of God with the words of people in the realities which they live. Anyone pretending to universal theology is denying the incarnation". Ibid., p. 67.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 68.

theology. The FOC used this "doing theology" approach in its "Giving Account of the Hope that is in Us" study ("Hope" study) and the "Community of Women and Men in the Church" ("Community" study), a joint study it co-sponsored with the sub-unit on Women in Church and Society.

a) The "Hope" Study

In modern, pluralistic society which had stripped religious language of its meaning and validity, Louvain 1971 launched the "Hope" study in an attempt to rediscover and articulate in terms meaningful to contemporary men and women both the basis and goal of Christian faith. To a world deafened by the silence of God, the "Hope" study specifically sought to determine in the context of the modern world "to what extent and in what way can we express together what has been entrusted to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ"?¹³⁵ At the invitation of the FOC, various Christians (churches, international commissions, groups and individuals) studied the theme and prepared accounts of their faith and hope from the perspective of particular social, political and religious contexts.

At its 1974 Accra (Ghana) plenary meeting, the FOC examined a selection of the different particular accounts of hope and the necessity for a common expression of Christian hope. A summary of this work is contained in Accra's "Affirmation of Hope in Christ" statement. In scriptural language, the Accra report on the "Hope" study deals with the one hope which unites all Christians; the many particular accounts of

¹³⁵Louvain 1971, p. 239.

hope; the commitment from the churches to form one fellowship of witness and service (despite the diversity of expressions) and a number of testimonies of hope.¹³⁶ The FOC expressed confidence that the "Hope" study would help the churches in their quest for visible unity by "letting themselves be reconstituted by the truth of the Gospel".¹³⁷

In 1977 and 1978, the FOC continued to evaluate additional responses to the "Hope" study.¹³⁸ During the first week of proceedings at its August 1978 Bangalore (India) plenary meeting, the FOC centered its work on the "Giving an Account of the Hope that is Within Us" theme. Based on a study of a representative selection of the contemporary testimonies of Christian Hope, the Commission was able to unanimously adopt the "common account of hope" statement.¹³⁹ Characterized by a very high doctrinal content, the fact that such a statement could be drawn together from the various accounts of hope to form one "common hope" was considered by one ecumenist to be "almost miraculous".¹⁴⁰ A central affirmation of the document reads: "The Christian hope is a resistance movement against fatalism". Throughout the "Hope" report there is a strong biblical emphasis on the Christian hope in Christ and

¹³⁶"Uniting in Hope: Accra 1974," FO II, No. 72, Geneva 1975.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 25.

¹³⁸Cf. "Giving Account of the Hope Together" FO II, No. 86, 1978.

¹³⁹Divided into seven parts (thanksgiving, hope encounters hopes, our hope in God, the church a communion of hope, shared hopes in the face of the common future, hope as the invitation of risk), the text is printed in "Sharing in One Hope: Bangalore 1978" FO II, No. 92, 1979, pp. 1-11.

¹⁴⁰Bangalore 1978, p. 14.

on the biblical commandment to share this hope with others. In this sense, the work was complemented by the publication in 1980 of The Bible: Its Interpretation and Authority in the Ecumenical Movement, a volume which brought together five major F&O studies on Scripture.¹⁴¹

b) The "Community" Study

Prior to Nairobi 1975, few of the delegates who attended assemblies of the WCC were women. Hence, both at the WCC assemblies and on the powerful CC (which is the WCC's administrative organ between assemblies), the voice of women was inadequately represented. Gradually, the WCC came to realize that unless women were made full partners with men in decision-making there can be no true unity of the church and unity of humankind. Nairobi 1975 made a concerted effort to include women as equal partners at all levels of decision-making in the WCC.¹⁴²

The "Community" study was conducted over the years from 1978-1981. As a theological study of the community of men and women in the church this Inter-Program Unit project affected many people and drew upon a large contingent of grassroot Christians all around the world. Though it convoked strong and heated debate on controversial issues like the

¹⁴¹ Nairobi to Vancouver, pp. 79-80

¹⁴² Nairobi 1975, p. 207. In percentage the number of women delegates at the past six assemblies were: 6 (Amsterdam 1945), 8.7 (Evanston 1954), 7.5 (New Delhi 1961), 7.2 (Uppsala 1968), 22 (Nairobi 1975) and 29.58 (Vancouver 1983). The percentage of women who have served on the various CC between WCC assemblies were: 2.2, 4.2, 4.0, 5.0, 20.5 and 23.4. Cf., Anna K. Hamer, "After Forty Years - Churches in Solidarity with Women" In ER 40(July-August 1988), pp. 528-38.

ordination of women and the proportion of women in leadership roles in the WCC, the defined purpose of the study was to examine issues which pertained to authentic, participating community in church. As its point of departure, it took the contemporary experiences of women in church and society. It adopted a contextual methodology composed of local groups (consisting of both men and women) "to work through a specially prepared study book and send reports on their experiences to Geneva".¹⁴³

The response to the "Community" study was overwhelming. There were reports submitted from over 150 local groups, from several regional conference and from three specialized meetings (on the ordination of women, questions of theological anthropology and the authority of scripture and its relation to women in church). This three year study process culminated in July 1981 in Sheffield (England) with an international consultation on men and women in the church. formed part of the rich background material for the global consultation on the subject which brought together in June 1981 at Sheffield, England, men and women from 55 countries and 100 member churches. Described as celebrative in tone, the two sexes discussed issues which separated them.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Nairobi to Vancouver, p. 85. In 1978, a WCC committee under Constance Parvey designed a three part study guide ("Sharing in Hope") which attempted to examine the decision making and leadership roles of women in the church. Published in 13 languages, three questions were the tenuous thread running throughout this work: What is the present situation in your church (and why are things the way they are)?; What is your vision for the community of men and women?; How can you move from where the Church is to your vision of community? Howell, p. 71.

¹⁴⁴At the Sheffield Conference, the 160 men and women delegates
(Footnote Continued)

In the opening plenary address, the Secretary General of the WCC warned that the "Community" study tests the faith of the whole ecumenical enterprise, "for it challenges the unity of the whole people of God". Dr. Potter said that the study poses serious questions to the ecumenical movement on such issues as follows: the whole understanding of the authority and interpretation of scripture, the notion of conciliar fellowship, the genuine meaning of Tradition and traditions, the whole question of the special ministry of the church, the vocation of the whole people of God to mission and service, the meaning of human sexuality, the nexus between identity and community.¹⁴⁵

Women participants from Third World countries reminded the Sheffield conference that the concern for women issues is inextricably linked to liberation from race and class oppression. Recommendations from the Sheffield Conference were forwarded to the CC meeting in Dresden (Germany) and to the FOC at its 1982 Lima plenary conference. sent to Lima 1982 and the CC in preparation for Vancouver. Though the "Community" study culminated in the Sheffield consultation, it raised many theological issues which still have to be treated more thoroughly by FOC.¹⁴⁶ Continuing the earlier F&O studies on "The Unity of the

(Footnote Continued)

from over fifty countries were divided into seven sections, each of which was assigned one of the following subjects: freedom and justice; ministry and worship; marriage, family and lifestyle; identity and relationships; tradition and traditions.

¹⁴⁵ Philip Potter, "The Community of Women and Men in the Church," Mid-Stream. 21 (July, 1982), p. 319.

¹⁴⁶ Among its recommendations, the Sheffield Conference requested that the FOC make a thorough study of a number of theological issues pertaining to the diverse ecclesial structures which foster or obstruct
(Footnote Continued)

Church - The Unity of Humankind" and the "Community of Men and Women in the Church", the FOC at Lima 1982 initiated "The Unity of the Church and The Renewal of Human Community" study, which was later approved at Vancouver 1983.¹⁴⁷

4. Lima 1982: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.

At its 1982 meeting at Lima (Peru), the FOC was able to achieve a breakthrough theological consensus in three basic areas that use to be highly divisive: baptism, eucharist and ministry. Signed by the two leading officers of FOC, W.H. Lazareth (Director) and N. Nissiotis (Moderator), the Preface to the official text entitled Baptism,

(Footnote Continued)

the search for a renewed community; the significance of sexual discrimination as a barrier to ordination and unity; the question of what it means to be human in the image of God; problems pertaining to language, imagery, and symbols, of God in cultic celebrations and theology. C.F. Parvey, ed. The Community of Women and Men in the Church. The Sheffield Report. WCC: Geneva 1983; Nairobi to Vancouver, p. 85. Barbel von Wartenberg, director of the sub-unit on women in church and society indicated that the post-Sheffield for the this sub-unit will be "enabling and strengthening women to participate fully with men in an equal dialogue on the issues raised". She contends that the Sheffield dialogue provided the mandate "to go on drawing the attention of church women everywhere to the burning issues of social injustice".

¹⁴⁷Reaffirming the "Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community" study, Vancouver 1983 stressed its "strategic significance for the whole orientation of the work of the WCC". In accordance with the general orientation of all F&O work, this study was given an ecclesiological focus. The study process was designed to draw upon the experiences and reflections of Christians from various parts of the world. It had ecclesiological implications for the involvement of the churches in justice and concern for more adequate forms of community for men and women in the church. In this study, the FOC sought to integrate its work on the more traditional doctrinal issues with efforts to break down the barriers of race, sex, class and other divisions in the church and the world.

Eucharist and Ministry (hereafter cited BEM) stated that the Holy Spirit has guided the churches to this "kairos of the ecumenical movement when sadly divided churches have been enabled to arrive at substantial theological agreements". That the BEM text could be unanimously accepted by "theologians of such widely different traditions ... is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement". The FOC invited each church, at "the highest appropriate level of authority," to indicate to what extent it recognized in the BEM text "the faith of the church through the ages" and the extent the document might influence its ecumenical relations and its whole ecclesial life.¹⁴⁸

a) Baptism: Incorporated into the Mystery of Christ

Theologically, the Baptism section of BEM is the most satisfactory.¹⁴⁹ Administered with water in the name of the triune God, baptism incorporates its recipients into the mystery of the Christ event. Baptism marks its receivers with a "seal" by the power of the Holy Spirit. From this sacrament, the initiated are endowed with the "first installment of their inheritance" as God's children (B5).

¹⁴⁸Cf. WCC, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry FO II, No. 111, 1982, pp. ix-x. This document will be hereafter cited as BEM. Reference to the section on Baptism (abbreviated as B), on Eucharist (abbreviated as E) and on Ministry (abbreviated as M) will be according to the paragraph numbers in the official text.

¹⁴⁹The Section on Baptism is divided into six parts: the institution of baptism (B1), the meaning of baptism (B2-B7), baptism and faith (B8-B10), baptismal practice (B11-B14) and the celebration of baptism (B17-B32). Cf. BEM, pp. 1-7.

Steering carefully through the "infant baptism vs. believer's baptism" debate, the commentary to B12 highlighted that "both forms of baptism embody God's own initiative in Christ and express a response of faith made within the believing community". Baptism is intimately linked to "the pentecostal gifts of the Holy Spirit" (confirmation). The BEM text makes it unequivocally clear that baptism is an "unrepeatable act". Hence it maintained that "any practice which might be interpreted as 're-baptism' must be avoided" (cf. B13-B14).

As a "sign and seal" of incorporation into the mystical body of Christ, baptism has immediate implications for the unity of the church. Through baptism, the initiated are united to Christ and in him to one another by "a common bond of unity". It allows Christians, at all facets of human living, to make a genuine witness to the "healing and reconciling love of God" (B6-B7). If the churches are to realize full koinonia it is necessary that they recover the baptismal unity which is at the very core of ecclesial unity. Hence to advance the ecumenical goal BEM appealed for an explicit and mutual recognition of baptism among the Christian churches (B15). As subjects for further reflection, the text calls for further study on issues linked to the baptismal practice of bestowing on believers "Christian" names which are contrary to their cultural tradition; indiscriminate baptism by various churches; and the practice of baptism of the Spirit through laying on of hands (without water).

b) Eucharist: Life of the Mystical Body

With the New Testament eucharistic texts as its point of departure, the section on the Eucharist reflects a profound Catholic nuance.¹⁵⁰ Identified under many names (e.g. "sign of the kingdom", anamnesis (or memorial) of Christ's death and resurrection, sacramental meal, Lord's Supper, mass the eucharist), the report acknowledged that the eucharistic celebration is the fundamental act of the church's worship (E1).

Composed of both word and sacrament, the eucharist is God's gift of Himself to his church. It is "the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on the behalf of all creation" (Cf. E2-E4). As the anamnesis of Christ, the Lord's Supper is "the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us" (E8).

Quoting Jesus' words of Institution whose divinity is confessed, E13 affirms the "real presence" of the risen Christ in the Eucharist.¹⁵¹ The text appears to accept the traditional Catholic position that the "real presence" of Christ in the eucharist is objectively independent both of the faith of the celebrant and the communicant. BEM avoided any discussion of the necessity of valid orders for the celebration of the

¹⁵⁰The Eucharist Section is divided into three parts: the Institution of the Eucharist (E1), the meaning of the Eucharist (E2-E26) and the celebration of the Eucharist (E27-E33). Cf. BEM, pp. 9-17.

¹⁵¹The commentary to E13 pointed out that there was a difference of opinion of how this "Real Presence" is to be interpreted. It confirmed that many churches adhere to the position that at the words of Institution by the power of the Holy Spirit the sacramental elements of bread and wine become "in a real though mystical manner the body and blood of the risen Christ". While accepting the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist, the proponents of the second position do not link the "Real Presence" as "definitely" with the sacramental elements, Ibid., p. 12.

eucharist. In its elaboration upon its eucharistic ecclesiology, BEM concentrates on the essential invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiklesis) and the special nature of the eucharist as a living memorial (anamnesis). Steering away from the term "intercommunion", BEM simply suggested that the widening theological consensus obtained by the FOC "may allow some churches to attain a greater measure of eucharistic communion among themselves" (E32). Significantly, the BEM text links the eucharist with the task to work for a better socio-political and economic life which radically challenges "all kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom".

c) Ministry: Catalyst for Unity of the Church

Though less satisfactory than the sections on baptism and the eucharist, the section on "Ministry" does make significant gains on this thorny issue.¹⁵² Since the genesis and continuous life of the church is anchored in the life of the triune God, the document begins with the affirmation that the whole people of God are called to ministry for building up the body of Christ and for service for all humankind and creation. Unfortunately, after upholding this point, this important text moves to almost an exclusive discussion on the ordained ministry.

¹⁵²Divided into six sections the document addresses the following: the calling of the whole people of God (M1-M6), the Church and the ordained ministry (M7-M18), the forms of the ordained ministry (M19-M32), succession in the apostolic tradition (M34-M38), ordination (M39-M50) and towards the mutual recognition of the ordained ministries (M51-55). Cf. BEM, pp. 19-32.

This section could have been much stronger if it had undertaken a more comprehensive study of the royal priesthood of the whole people of God.

BEM advocates that the ordained ministry is the catalyst for the unity of the church and "constitutive for the life and witness of the church". In the text, ordained ministers are referred to as God's special representatives to the ecclesial community. They are a sign and a reminder to the ecclesial community of God's initiative (M8 and M12). Within the people of God, the main responsibility of ordained ministers is "to assemble and build up the people of God". They do this through the ministry of the word and sacrament and by providing God's people with leadership in worship, mission and service (M13).

This section brought out the intimate connection between the ordained ministry and a eucharistic conception of the church. The document pointed out that it is in the celebration of the eucharist that the ordained minister reflects to the community "the deep and all-embracing communion between Christ and the members of his body". At ordination, ministers are (by the power of the Holy Spirit) invested with a share in the authority of Christ. In cooperation with the whole people of God, ministers are expected to use this authority of ministry for the edification and growth of the whole community (M16 and M17).

Firm that all baptized Christians share in the priesthood of Christ and his church, M17 stated that ordained ministers "may appropriately be called priests" because "they fulfill a particular priestly service by strengthening and building up the royal and prophetic priesthood of the faithful". Though the document notes a variety of patterns of ministry in the New Testament church, it gives special consideration to the threefold ministry of bishop-presbyter-deacon. While it does not go as

far as to affirm that the three-fold ministry is constitutive for the church's being, the document acknowledges that the Spirit moved the whole church to adopt this pattern as early as the third century.

The report creates a strong impression that unless the non-episcopal churches are willing to accept the necessity of the three-fold structure the prospect of ever achieving ecclesial unity is impossible. M24-27 recommends, however, that the episcopal churches need to reform the way they exercise the office of the three-fold ministry.

Aside from the lack of elaboration on any other structure ordering ministry, the BEM text subtly undermines the traditional Protestant axiom that in essence no fundamental difference exists between the ordained ministry and the ministry of the royal priesthood of all the faithful.¹⁵³ The sacramental type language used in connection with the ordained ministry gives additional weight to this assumption.

While not explicitly stating that ordination (like baptism and eucharist) is a sacrament, M39-M44 strongly suggests that the Lima document was oriented in that direction. Furthermore, M53 recommends

¹⁵³ Interpreting the necessity for an ordained ministry for utility and traditional reasons, Geoffrey Wainwright (Meth.), who chaired the final session of the Lima meeting which produced the BEM text, holds that this does not make any distinction in nature between the royal priesthood of all the baptized and the ordained ministry. He says: "The notion of the ordained ministry as a focalizing and enabling 'representation' is good, and helps to break through the badly formulated alternative of a difference in kind of degree between the ordained and the rest". Moreover, he does not offer much hope for any additional significant progress on the issues of baptism, eucharist and ministry. For him the BEM text "comes as close as we are historically likely to come to substantial and practical treatment on the stated themes". Cf., G. Wainwright The Ecumenical Moment: Crisis and Opportunity for the Church (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), pp. 5-6.

that the non-episcopal recover the sign of episcopal apostolic succession, the laying on of hands, as a "strong expression" of continuity with the apostolic church. The recovery of the episcopal ministry will continue to "strengthen and deepen that continuity". It avers that the laying on of hands is a symbol of the Holy Spirit's bestowal of the visible gift of ordination (a gift "instituted in the revelation accomplished by Christ"). From the overall sacramental thrust of BEM, it appears that the gift of sacramental ordination can only be validly administered by bishops. Simultaneously, ordination embodies the "Invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiklesis), sacramental sign; acknowledgement of gifts and commitment". Nevertheless, M53 also calls on the episcopal churches to recognize the "apostolic content" and the "ministry of episkopé" in churches lacking episcopal succession. Furthermore, the document stated that with ordination God "enters sacramentally into contingent, historical forms of human relationships and uses them for his purpose".

d) CC Lauds the BEM text

A four member delegation (N. Nissiotis, J. Deschner, Mercy O. Oduyoye and J.M.R. Tillard) of the FOC presented the BEM text to the CC at its July 1982 Geneva meeting. The delegation stressed that BEM text is anchored in the life of the church. This approach introduced a new way to reach consensus on church-dividing issues and to reflect on the nexus between the unity of the church and the unity of humankind. Rooted in the faith of the church, Tillard described the text as an "authentic ecumenical event" which, if accepted by the churches, represented a

significant step towards unity.¹⁵⁴ Ms. Oduyoye of the Methodist Church in Nigeria referred to the BEM document as a kind of "miracle". She regretted that it had not been possible to say more about the ordination of women. In her call for further study on this issue, however, she indicated that it did not concern civil rights as such but the fundamental implications of baptism for the ministry of men and women in the church.¹⁵⁵

Professor Deschner indicated that the churches have the task to interpret the meaning of the BEM text from the deepest levels of their experiences. In such an evaluation, each church must not merely determine whether the content of the document is compatible with its own faith and life but must seriously consider whether it could serve as an instrument to foster greater unity with other churches. Apart from preparing an official response to BEM as part of the important reception process, it was hoped that each church would integrate BEM into their worship, ethical, educational and spiritual life.¹⁵⁶

Dr. Paul Crow (Disciples) averred that with the FOC's acceptance of BEM, the ecumenical movement would never be the same again.¹⁵⁷ With an expression of hope that the BEM text would constitute an important step

¹⁵⁴Central Committee, Minutes of the Thirty-Fourth Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, 19-28 July 1982, Geneva: WCC, 1982), p. 16.

¹⁵⁵Ms. Oduyoye emphasized that ultimately the value of BEM will be determined on whether or not it enabled the churches to truly be one. If the report is truly genuine, the churches will be continually challenged by it and judged by the continual existence of unjust relations in the world. Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

towards the advance of visible unity, the CC cautioned against triumphalism.¹⁵⁸ With regards to the BEM text, the CC accepted the recommendation of its policy reference committee:

The Central Committee should earnestly request the member churches to enable the widest possible involvement of the whole people of God at all levels of church life in the spiritual process of receiving this text. It should invite each member church to prepare an official response at the highest appropriate level of authority in the way outlined in the preface to the Document.¹⁵⁹

5. Vancouver 1983: Jesus Christ - The Life of the World

Under the theme "Jesus Christ - the Life of the World," the sixth assembly of the WCC was held from 24 July-10 August 1983 at Vancouver, Canada (Vancouver 1983).¹⁶⁰ The 847 voting delegates from the 301 member churches representing some two-fifths of a billion people were grouped into eight "Issue Groups" to discuss and take appropriate action. Other non-member churches of the Council (i.e. RCC) also sent delegated observers.¹⁶¹ The F&O traditional concern for Christian unity

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 56-7.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Vancouver 1983.

¹⁶¹ Up to Vancouver 1983, the following Protestant churches and groups were non-members of the WCC: the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Salvation Army, most Pentecostal congregations, many of the more conservative evangelical denominations, practically all Christian cults and sects, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Lutheran Missouri Synod.

was discussed by Issue Group 2 ("Taking Steps Toward Unity").¹⁶²

a) Vancouver 1983: Worship and Lima Liturgy

A distinguishing characteristic of Vancouver 1983 was the variety, quality and intensity of its public and private prayer life. With its large canvas prayer tent which quickly became the symbol for the whole assembly, David Gill, the influential Protestant author of the official report for the assembly, claimed that in the quality of its liturgical life, Vancouver 1983 "towers above" prior assemblies.¹⁶³

For many delegates, the high point of the whole Assembly came when six men and women ministers from various denominations gathered around Anglican Archbishop Runcie to concelebrate the experimental Lima Liturgy.¹⁶⁴ This Liturgy incorporated theological convergences expressed in the BEM document and liturgical elements from the various Christian traditions. While their own church faith and disciplines prevented some delegates (e.g. Orthodox) and official delegated observers (e.g. RC) from participation in the principal part of this liturgy, they shared in acceptable prayers and readings. For the

¹⁶²The other seven Issue Groups discussed the following topics: witnessing in a divided world, moving towards participation, healing and sharing life in community, confronting threats to peace and survival, struggling for justice and human dignity, learning in community and communicating credibly.

¹⁶³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 10. First used at the closing service of Lima 1983 on 15 January 1982, the so called Lima Liturgy incorporated theological convergences expressed in the BEM document.

churches who were unable to fully share in the Lima Liturgy at Vancouver 1983, the question remained which of its celebrants (if any) had full and valid Holy Orders and whether women can validly receive the same.

If prayer undergirds Christian belief, Vancouver 1983 went a long way in advancing a sense of ecclesial unity among the delegates. The BEM text and the Lima Liturgy will continue to direct the nonliturgical and nonsacramental churches to the importance that many other churches and even the WCC give to liturgy. Liturgical differences between the Orthodox and Protestant churches should lead to a deeper examination and understanding of the nexus between church and liturgy. If these churches can come to accept the eucharistic celebration as the highest expression of this unity, the ecumenical movement will have reached a milestone. The high value placed on worship complemented the stress the Assembly gave to its reception of the doctrinal BEM document.

b) General Secretary Focuses on Conciliar Fellowship

Based upon his reflection on the church under the Petrine image of "the house of living stones" (I Peter 2:4-5), Secretary General Potter envisioned the divided churches as those living stones whose corner stone is Christ. In addition to being a fellowship of confessing, learning, participating, sharing, healing, and expecting, Dr. Potter indicated that in the contemporary world, the "living stones" must be a fellowship of unity. He expressed the view that conciliar fellowship is the way forward. For him "unity consists in the living stones being constantly built into the house of the living God and not in

rearrangements within static structures".¹⁶⁵ This conveys an impression, however, that the una sancta ecclesia exists to the extent that its key stone (Christ) and its living (through scattered) stones still exist. It seems to suggest that these stones need to be brought together and constructed anew around its key stone.¹⁶⁶

c) The Report of Issue Group 2: "Taking Steps Towards Unity"

The discussion of Issue Group 2 provided the most current views on church unity among the WCC member churches.¹⁶⁷ With reference to the

¹⁶⁵Cf., "Report of the General Secretary" in Vancouver 1983, p. 207.

¹⁶⁶At the request of the CC (in 1981), the Orthodox Task Force met in February 1982 to discuss the main theme for Vancouver 1983. Based on the conviction that the Orthodox communion of autocephalous (and autonomous) churches is the embodiment of the one church derived from Christ, the Task Force reiterated that the unity of the church can be realized only by a return to the doctrinal heritage of the first seven centuries. Not simply something that is confessed in the creeds, the unity of the church (which is to be consummated and fully manifested at the parousia) is "experience in the local church, as the eucharistic community presided over by the bishop with his presbyters and deacons". The Force claims it is not with our power to judge the church "for Christ with his church is the Judge of the world itself...."

Though in possession of full unity of which Christ gave his church, the Task Force indicated that the Orthodox Church still must take very seriously the quest for unity by the churches (of which the WCC is a privileged instrument). A fully united Christendom could more effectively minister to a "world hungering for life". However, the Task Force insisted "that union of churches has to be based on their unity with the one true church, the church of Christ in the triune God which the Orthodox confess in "the Creed, and experience in history". Orthodox ecumenical participants are cautioned "not to be pressured into any minimal conception of Christian unity and therefore 'intercommunion'." Cf. Jesus Christ - the Life of the World. Edited by Ion Bria (Geneva: WCC, 1982), pp. 12-14.

¹⁶⁷The 32 numbered paragraphs of the report were divided into five
(Footnote Continued)

World Council's first purpose and function as stated in its constitution, the report of Issue Group 2 declared that the unity and renewal of the church in response to God's will is "vital to the health of the church and to the future of the human family"(No. 1/pp.43-44). Influenced by the BEM text and the Vancouver 1983's strong sense of worship, the report indicated that the churches had grown to a deeper awareness of the importance of unity of the church both for the benefit of the church itself and for the future of the whole human community.

Though aware that some aspects of the vision of unity which were perceived and stressed by past assemblies needed fresh reflection (e.g. conciliar fellowship), the report of Issue Group 2 focused its attention to that of "eucharistic vision". This vision stressed the interrelationship between church/eucharist/world. It acknowledged that issues which pertain to the question of church unity cannot be separated from human renewal in community: "As Christians we want to affirm there can be no such division between unity and human renewal, either in the church or in the agenda of the WCC".¹⁶⁸

This eucharistic vision enabled the delegates to penetrate deeper into the mystery of Christian unity in all its diversity. It also heightened the scandal of division which separates Christians from Christians at the Table of the Lamb. The report stated:

(Footnote Continued)

parts: church unity as a credible sign and witness (nos. 1-4); marks of such a witnessing community (nos. 5-9); steps we can take now towards the goal (nos. 10-20); towards a fifth world conference on faith and order (nos. 27-8); and the World Council of Churches within the one ecumenical movement (29-32). Vancouver 1983, pp. 45-51.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., No. 22, p. 49.

Our eucharistic vision thus encompasses the whole reality of Christian worship, life and witness, and tends - when truly discovered - to shed new light on Christian unity in its full richness of diversity. It also sharpens the pain of our present division at the table of the Lord; but in bringing forth the organic unity of Christian commitment and of its unique source in the incarnate self-sacrifice of Christ, the eucharistic vision provides us with a new and inspiring guidance on our journey towards a full and credible realization of our given unity.¹⁶⁹

Hence by its integration of the horizontal and vertical dimensions of Christian life, the eucharistic vision underlies the fact that the search for church unity cannot be separated from the quest for human renewal and unity in the world. Through this vision Vancouver 1983 dealt with its dual concern for church unity with regard to its implications for Christian living (as amplified by BEM) and its implications for the future of human community (as highlighted by the Assembly's concern for justice and peace). It was evident that the eucharist vision enveloped the whole Christian mystery. Through the eucharist, Christ, the life of the world, unites the divine and the human, the spiritual and the mundane, heaven and earth, and the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of worship (No. 4/p.45).

Through their delegates, the member churches of the WCC at Vancouver 1983 indicated by action that they were prepared to go further than merely define the ecumenical goal. As a credible sign to the world, the church seeks to manifest a witnessing unity that overcomes divisions of injustice, sexism and racism. As identified by Bangalore 1978, the report of Issue Group 2 stated explicitly three requirements deemed essential before all Christian churches can give a united witness to the

¹⁶⁹Vancouver 1983, No. 4/p. 45.)

world. For the churches to manifest this oneness, they must mutually embody a common understanding of the apostolic faith; a common possession of baptism, eucharist and ministry; and common ways of teaching authoritatively and decision-making. Though the churches concur that these requirements are necessary they differ in their interpretations of these common characteristics (Nos. 6-9/p.45).

While further thought still needs to be invested into the goal of ecclesial unity, Issue Group 2 declared in its report that presently one of the most essential needs in the ecumenical movement is for the churches to take practical steps to advance towards the goal. Issue Group 1 outlined some practical steps that the churches could take in their own lives and in their relations with each other. It recommended that the WCC promote the reception of BEM among the ecclesial communities; clarify the meaning of "a common understanding of the apostolic faith"; assist the churches to examine and articulate the nexus between the unity of the church and the unity of humankind; promote the eucharistic fellowship of believers and the transformation of human community; to advance "the churches' common quest on common ways of decision-making and teaching authoritatively" (Nos. 10-26/pp. 45-50).

Noting the significant progress that had occurred in ecumenical relations and the reception of documents (e.g. BEM) since Montreal 1963, Issue Group 2 strongly recommended that the Assembly approve the calling of a fifth world conference on Faith and Order for 1987 or 1988. Aside from harvesting ecumenical fruits and surveying the present landscape, it could perform an important function by addressing various doctrinal

and pastoral problems that have emerged on the way towards the ecumenical goal (No. 28/p.51).

Within the umbrella of the ecumenical movement, the WCC is a privileged instrument serving the cause of visible unity of the una sancta ecclesia (No. 29/p.51). With the scriptural text John 17:21 providing the source both for the Christian need to manifest God-given unity and for world-directed mission, Issue Group II affirmed in its report that these two inextricably linked realities "constitute the inter-related central core of the World Council's permanent agenda" (No. 30/p.52). The report maintained that the fellowship which the WCC member churches now share is a foretaste of the unity God wills for his one church and for which Christians pray and work. Though the WCC renders an invaluable service to the ecumenical movement as a forum and an instrument for Christian cooperation, the report affirmed that the "real agents" are the churches themselves (No. 31/p.52).

At Vancouver 1983, nearly 30 percent of the official delegates were women. While this marked a significant increase over past WCC assemblies, women still remained underrepresented.¹⁷⁰ In its "Message" from Vancouver 1983, the WCC renewed its commitment to the ecumenical vision. While admitting that the steps are slow, it remained convinced "the direction is essential to our faithfulness". Predicting that the

¹⁷⁰ At Amsterdam 1948, Evanston 1954, New Delhi 1961, Uppsala 1968, and Nairobi 1975 the number of women delegates as a percentage of the total number of official delegates attending the various assemblies were respectively: 6, 8.7, 7.5, 7.2 and 22. Concurrently the number of women (in percentage) serving on the powerful CC over the periods 1948-1954; 1954-1961; 1961-1968, 1968-1975, 1975-1983, and 1983-present were: 2, 5, 4, 6, 25, and 34.

BEM text will "enable decisive steps towards eucharistic fellowship", the Assembly in its "Message" thanked God for giving this new hope to the churches in their quest for unity. Moreover, it called for widespread response to this new theological convergent statement.¹⁷¹

4. Summary

Between 1975 and 1983, the F&O program focused jointly on the unity of the church and the nexus between the unity of the church and the renewal of human community. As essential requirements for a reunited visible church, Bangalore 1978 identified the the common understanding of the apostolic faith; a mutual possession of baptism, eucharist and ministry; and common ways of teaching authoritatively and decision making. The report of Issue Group 2 of Vancouver 1983 concurred.

Encouraged that it was able to produce a common account of Christian hope ("Hope" study), the FOC (since Lima 1982) continues to expend considerable effort on its study, "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today". The unanimous acceptance by the FOC at its 1982 meeting that the BEM text was ready to be sent to the churches for "official response" as an initial step in a more binding process of reception marked a significant step towards the realization of visible unity in eucharistic and conciliar communion. Intimately related with the other two requirements, the FOC still has much work to do before the churches are capable of agreeing on common conciliar structures capable

¹⁷¹See, ER, 35(October 1983), p. 406.

of authoritative teaching and decision-making. The FOC on the basis of two consultations has already published its "How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today"? study.

After Nairobi 1975, the FOC has continued to examine the nexus between the unity of the church and the renewal of human community. Much more than was the case at Uppsala 1968 and Nairobi 1975, Vancouver 1983 (with its strong sense of worship and attention given to the Lima Liturgy and BEM text) balanced secular ecumenism with a more ecclesial ecumenism. From an ecclesiological frame, the FOC (through such studies as "The Community of Women and Men in the Church" and "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community") has continued to clarify how factors such as sex, race, physical or mental disability can create obstacles to fuller Christian koinonia.

D. Conclusion

Subsequent to Uppsala 1968, the FOC of the WCC attempted to describe the kind of unity it seeks in terms of "conciliar fellowship". Both the "constitution" of the WCC and the "bylaws" of the FOC enshrined the principle that the reunited church is to be realized as a conciliar fellowship of local churches truly united among themselves. This is to be accomplished by acquiring sufficient unity in the faith and in one eucharist fellowship. Though it advocated that discussions on the unity of the church is to be carried out in the broader context of the unity and renewal of all humankind, the FOC recognized that there is no way of restoring unity among the divided churches unless doctrinal unity is achieved among them on the one apostolic faith and sacramental unity.

The Bangalore meeting of 1978 explicitly identified three essential minimum requirements that must be met before unity is obtainable - unity in the apostolic faith, unity on the three church dividing issues of baptism, eucharist and ministry, and consensus on authoritative teaching and decision making in the church. At Vancouver 1983, this was confirmed by the highest decision-making authority of the WCC - an assembly.

At Lima 1982, the FOC was able to make a significant breakthrough on reaching theological convergence on the three church-dividing issues of baptism, eucharist and ministry. Cognizant of the importance of this great ecumenical achievement, Vancouver 1983 invited all member churches (and those associated to varying degrees with its FOC) to evaluate the BEM text at the highest appropriate highest level. Remindful of an earlier ecumenist who maintained that disunity at the table of the Lord was the greatest scandal facing the world, Vancouver 1983 stressed unity in terms of the "eucharistic vision" of fellowship. In this great mystery, the vertical and horizontal dimensions of both the church and the world were brought into unity. At Vancouver, worship played a significant role. The celebration of the Lima Liturgy by many of the member churches is a foretaste of the one eucharistic fellowship onto which all Christian churches are called to commonly share.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (1927-1983)
FELLOW PILGRIMS ON THE ROAD TO UNITY IN THE ONE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT.

A. Introduction

Stemming from differences more politically-cum-culturally induced than doctrinally motivated, a great tragedy of Christianity occurred in 1054 when the Eastern (Orthodox) and Western (Roman) sections of the church excommunicated each other. The monolithic religious unity of the Western Christendom experienced another serious rupture in 1517 when discrete and diverse groups of Christians opposed (to varying degrees) to papal primacy and its interpretation of the faith began to set down, crystallize, and articulate distinctive doctrines. Spurred by the hardening of positions which ensued, Roman Catholics and Protestants, for all practical purposes, came to live in separate religious spheres.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the stand of the RCC towards the ecumenical movement. Though the official attitude of the Holy See to the ecumenical movement has vacillated from outright condemnation to full acceptance, it will be demonstrated that Rome has never been indifferent to this movement. Flowing from its deepest doctrinal convictions, the RCC takes very seriously the concern for unity. By being herself, the church of Rome (through her prayer, silence, dialogue and collaboration) has played an integral role in the Protestant ecumenical rediscovery of the church and its formulation of a common vision of unity. From its earliest contacts with ecumenism, the

RCC has continued to develop, deepen and enrich her own understanding of the nature of the church and its unity.

B. Pre-Vatican II Attitude to the Ecumenical Movement

Together with the claim to possess the fullness of divine truth, the post-Tridentine RCC (up to Vatican II) explicitly identified the una sancta ecclesia with its own visible hierarchically structured society. Yet while it refused to recognize the ecclesiastical status of any Christian community to come out of the Reformation, the Holy See taught that it was possible for all just men and women to find grace and salvation. From the pontificate of Pope Pius IX to Vatican II, Rome adopted a very cautious attitude to the ecumenical movement. Yet, the Holy See always remained committed to the full realization of Christ's apostolic prayer "that they may all be one" (John 17).

1. The RCC Articulates Ecumenical Principles

During the pontificate of Pius IX, Rome issued the first official documents which enunciated the principles that determine its position with non-RC reunion movements.¹ For a reunited Christendom, the Holy See embraced a model of unity which dictated that dissident Christians

¹Cf., "Apostolicae sedi" (pp. 91-95) and "Quod vos" (pp. 97-104) in Rome and Reunion: A Collection of Papal Pronouncements. Edited by E.C. Messenger (London: Burns, Oates & Washborne, 1934).

had to "return" to Rome in unconditional capitulation.² It was not until Vatican II that this approach was displaced by one which embodied a common vision towards renewal and reconciliation.

a) Pope Pius IX (1846-78) and Reunion

Though a devout client of Mary, Pope Pius IX (1846-78) used the traditional controversy on the question of her conception to further the papal claim to universal primacy and infallibility (which the First Vatican Council, on 8 July 1870, solemnly decreed as dogma).³ Convinced

²One prominent RC scholar has noted that this return model of ecumenism conveyed the impression that "unity was to come about by 'agglutination' (in the linguistic sense of the term) to a core of full ecclesiality, the fullness of this core spreading to the groups which return to it and seizing them in its grasp". J.M.R. Tillard, "An Ecclesiological Assessment of United Churches," Unity In Each Place ... In All Places, ed. Michael Kinnamon (Geneva: WCC, 1983), pp. 62-63.

Among the member churches of the WCC, the Orthodox confesses to be the one church derived from Christ and the apostles. John Meyendorff states that full Christian reunion will entail a "return to the faith of the apostles and fathers of which the Orthodox Church is conscious of having preserved in its fullness". Cf., J. Meyendorff, The Orthodox Church (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1981), p. 221.

³Based on his understanding of the teaching of Vatican I on papal primacy and infallibility, Bismarck (the German Chancellor) issued on 14 May 1872 a circular letter in which he claimed that bishops were no more than mere papal officials with no responsibility of their own. In early 1875, the German Catholic hierarchy circulated a collective letter which repudiated this view as a complete misunderstanding of the RC faith and Vatican I teaching. Later that same year, Pope Pius IX in an apostolic brief fully endorsed the content of the German bishops' declaration. He stated: "... your declaration is an expression of that true Catholic doctrine, which is the teaching of the Vatican Council and of the Holy See". This important document of the German prelates denotes the way the relationship between papal and episcopal authority was understood immediately after Vatican I. The letter affirms as part of RC faith the following: "The constitution of the Church rests in all essential points on divine ordinances and is exempt from all human

(Footnote Continued)

that Infallibility was a personal prerogative of the pope, he solemnly defined on 4 December 1854 by papal bull ("Ineffabilis Deus") the dogma of the "Immaculate Conception". His immediate predecessor had dismissed requests for such action as inopportune and untimely. Subsequently, Pius IX's successors adroitly used the apparitions associated with this dogma as support for infallible papal authority.⁴

(Footnote Continued)

arbitration. It is in virtue of the same divine institution upon which the Papacy rests that the episcopate also exists; it, too, has its rights and its duties, because of the ordinance of God himself, and the Pope has neither the right nor the power to change them". Rather than mere papal tools whose powers have been absorbed by the pope, the declaration quoted the claim of Vatican I that bishops are "appointed by the Holy Spirit, occupying the place of the Apostles, they nourish and rule, as true shepherds, the flock committed to their charge". Cf., Hans Kung, The Council and Reunion (London: Herder & Herder, 1962), pp. 283-295

⁴One of the requests that the Blessed Virgin Mary made of Catherine Labouré in a July 1830 apparition was that a medal be casted inscribed with the words "Mary conceived without sin" and to have copies of it distributed to the faithful. At a time when humanity was beginning to awaken to the first stirrings of a more modern world waiting to be born, the "miraculous medal" became widely accepted by numerous Roman Catholics. Deeply impressed with the medal's success, Pius IX employed it in his plan to restore traditional piety and to strengthen papal authority itself: "It is of divine inspiration. It will be a resource for the Church". Cf. Bernard St John, The Blessed Virgin in the 19th Century (London: Burns & Oates, 1906), p. 60.

Four years after the new dogma had been promulgated, Mary (in an alleged apparition to Bernadette of Lourdes) confirmed and endorsed the validity of the new dogma. The importance of this apparition as another reason for the faithful accepting an infallible papal ministry was not lost on Pope Pius XII who in an encyclical of July 1958 remarked: "Certainly the infallible word of the Roman Pontiff, the authentic interpreter of revealed truth, needed no heavenly confirmation that it might be accepted by the faithful. But with what emotion and gratitude did the Christian people and their pastors receive from the lips of Bernadette this answer which came from heaven: 'I am the Immaculate Conception'." Cf. Pope Pius XII, "Le Pèlerinage de Lourdes" in The Papal Documents 1939-1958. Edited by C.C. Ihm. A Consortium Book. (USA: McGrath Publishing Co. 1981), pp. 341-42. Interestingly, these apparitions were the first of their kind in Christian history that were hierarchically approved.

Inspired by the Oxford Movement, Rev. Frederick G. Lee (Ang.), in 1857, established the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity (APCU). It envisioned the corporate reunion of the Roman Catholic (RC), Orthodox and Anglican churches. Opposed to APCU's basic assumption that the church is divided, the Holy Office in its September 1864 Apostolicae sedi communication to the Catholic hierarchy of England prohibited RC involvement in the non-RC led APCU on grounds that it "turned upside down the Divine constitution of the Church" and it promoted religious indifference and introduces scandal.⁵

To clarify the APCU position, 198 Anglican clergy in 1865 sent a collective letter to the Prefect of the Holy Office (C. Cardinal Patrizi). This rejoinder to the Apostolicae sedi directive pointed out that the APCU did not support the "branch theory" as describing the nature of the church (de jure) but that RC, Orthodox and Anglican bodies claim the title "Catholic" (de facto). Aware that any union not founded on doctrinal agreement will eventually lead to discord, the signatories stated that the aim of the APCU was the restoration of intercommunion rather than the coalescence of these three catholic bodies.⁶

Brooking no intention of mitigating the Holy Office's proscription of the APCU, Cardinal Patrizi in his November 1865 Quod vos responded to the remonstrance of the Anglican clergy. Aptly and vigorously, he expounded the principles embodied in Apostolicae sedi. Retaining its historical identity and unity in the RCC, the one church of Christ

⁵Messenger, pp. 91-94.

⁶"Address from Anglican Clergy to Cardinal Patrizi," in Messenger, pp. 95-7.

derived from Christ and the apostles exists both de jure and de facto.⁷ Composed of both mystical and visible elements, the RCC through its communion with the successors of the apostles (with Peter as head), possesses a divinely endowed perfect and indefectible unity.⁸ With the pope (Peter's legitimate successor jure divino) as head, the episcopal college has a special responsibility to safeguard the apostolic faith, to teach, and govern Christ's church in space and time.⁹ Hence, Patrizi, in his communication, asserts that the RCC alone has the right to the title "Catholic".¹⁰ Furthermore, he indicated that not only is there no salvation outside the church, there is no salvation for those who have severed themselves from the RCC while consciously knowing her to be the true church. He strongly urged non-RC Christians to "return" to the one true church in which salvation is found.¹¹

Always cognizant of the inextricable link between the visible and invisible elements of the church, the RCC (in its polemics with those who denied the former) stressed the perfect, visible and judicial nature of Christ's church. For those who would restrict the boundaries of the church to the local congregation or the national church, Rome emphasized the universal dimension of Christ's mystical body. Yet, the Holy See has always taught that the fullness of the whole church is present in any

⁷Cf., Messenger, pp. 92-93, 97-98.

⁸Ibid., pp. 93-94, 98-100.

⁹Cf. Messenger, pp. 92-93; pp. 97-98.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 93-94, 98-100.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 93-94, 98, 102-04.

local church whose bishop is in communion with Rome. Convinced that her institutions were continually animated, coordinated and perfected by the Spirit, Rome defined her task as one of glorifying God and drawing all humanity into her mystical life. At the parousia, Christ will hand his mystical body over to the Father so that "God may be all in all".

b) Pope Leo XIII Makes Quest for Reunion a Priority

More at ease than were his predecessors with the modern world which emerged from the French Revolution (1789), Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) is generally credited by scholars with laying within the RCC a more dynamic foundation for modern ecumenical thinking. Without modifying doctrine or deviating from the return to the "mother church" approach to Christian unity, he initiated a new Vatican strategy of working towards the rapprochement and return of all Christian groups. To refer to non-Roman Christians, he employed a more congenial language (e.g. "dissident" rather than "heretic" or "schismatic"). He undertook during his pontificate a theological reflection into ecumenical problems (e.g. legitimate liturgical diversity) and their implications. As part of his ministry to persuade dissidents to return to the RCC, Pope Leo XIII, in the first two papal encyclicals ever dedicated to Christian unity (Praeclara gratulationes, 1894; Satis cognitum, 1896), Pope Leo XII expounded upon the lineaments of the church, especially her unity.¹² From the context of the RC tradition, he thoroughly examined such

¹²Pope Leo XIII, "Praeclara Gratulations," in Messenger, pp. 3-13; "Satis Cognitum," The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903, pp. 387-403.

subjects as the basis and purpose of the church, church jurisdiction, the magisterium, episcopal power and papal primacy. To a lesser or greater degree, his approach to Christian unity was emulated by his successors and had a profound influence on the Second Vatican Council.

While her primary purpose is spiritual, the church on earth, according to Pope Leo is "external and necessarily visible".¹³ This Roman supreme pontiff asseverated that, under the direct jurisdiction of its divinely appointed head, the Church of Rome is the source and fount of sacerdotal unity for the whole confederation of local catholic churches which form one visible body. In the words of St. Cyprian, he declares that this is so because the Church of Rome is "the root and mother of the Catholic Church, the chair of Peter, and the principal Church whence sacerdotal unity has its source".¹⁴ Adamant that all revealed truths must be accepted for unity of faith, he stated that those who reject any part of doctrine separate themselves from the unbroken Catholic unity.

Pope Leo XIII invited dissidents (for their own benefit and salvation) to return to the RCC with its divinely constituted unity in faith and church polity. Especially, he evinced a special interest for Eastern churches. Except for the papacy, the differences between the RC and Orthodox churches are "not so great". By his attempts to reassure the Orthodox that when they reestablish full union with the Holy See their special patriarchal rights and privileges, traditions and customs

¹³"Satis cognitum", p. 388.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 399.

will be fully respected and safe guarded, he affirmed the tenet of legitimate diversity.¹⁵ In a passionate plea to the "Protestant nations," he entreated them to listen to the call of their "most loving mother," (the mother they have "not yet fully known, or culpably abandoned") to return to the one true visible fold with its one chief visible shepherd.¹⁶ While applauding the Protestant initiative in working to establish Christian union in mutual charity, he assures them that unless there is also accord in faith it will prove inadequate.

Though his ecumenical writings focused primarily upon the visible dimension of the church, Pope Leo's Divinum Illud Munus marked a significant step towards correcting this imbalance. With his pontificate coming to a close, he recalled that the major two goals of his ministry had been to restore Christian principles to society and to promote the return of Christ's other "sheep" who through schism and heresy had strayed from the Roman fold. "Since it is undoubtedly the will of Christ that all should be united in one flock under one Shepherd", he

¹⁵Cf. "Praceclara Gratulations", pp. 6-8. In his letter of 7 March 1971 to Patriarch Athenagoras, Pope Paul VI re-echoed the thoughts of Pope Leo when he claimed that between their two churches "there exists already a almost total communion, though it is not yet perfect; it results from joint participation in the mystery of Christ and of His Church". Cf. L' Osservatore Romano, 7 (March 1971).

Prior to the involvement of the RCC in the ecumenical movement some eminent Orthodox ecumenists felt that in presenting the Orthodox stand, they were also putting forward the RC position. Except for the issue of doctrinal primacy, they maintained there were no major differences in faith between them: "We repeat: dogmatically and canonically, the main factor of the Oriental schism is refusal to admit to the primacy of the Roman See". Cited in Yves Congar, After Nine Hundred Years (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), p. 89.

¹⁶Pope Leo XIII, "Satis Cognitum," The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903, pp. 409-410.

worked energetically for Christian unity.¹⁷ Seemingly dependent on the non-utilized first chapter of the schema on the constitution of the church prepared for the First Vatican Council (which defined the church in terms of the biblically inspired mystical body of Christ), Pope Leo presented an exposition on the spiritual dimension of the church. One of his greatest contributions to ecumenism was to establish between the Ascension and Pentecost a novena of prayers for Christian unity.¹⁸

In search for the unity in truth willed by Christ, Pope Leo advocated that genuine reunion cannot be achieved by glossing over

¹⁷"*Divinum Illud Munus*", The Papal Documents 1878-1903, p. 410.

¹⁸Ibid., p 416. Prayer, a necessary prerequisite to approaching and addressing theological problems, has always been at the very core of the RCC's approach to unity. Though organized in the early 1930s by two papalist Anglican priests (Spencer Jones and Lewis Watson, the Chair of Unity Octave was well received by the RCC. With its thrust being the return of dissidents to Rome, it received the blessing of Pope Pius X and Pope Benedict XV enriched it with indulgences and extended throughout the whole world. Cf., Rouse, "Voluntary Movements and Changing Ecumenical Climate," HEM, P. 348

Abbé Paul Couturier (of France), however, made it truly ecumenical. Recognizing that it was unrealistic to expect dissident Christians to join RCs in common supplications for their own submission to Rome, he set out in the early 1930s to make the Chair of Unity Octave so ecumenical that all Christians could participate without reservations. Employing a method he called "spiritual emulation", he developed and promoted the idea that Christians unity must be sought as God's gift rather than as the fruit of human efforts and ecclesial politics. He encouraged all Christians to pray for the unity Christ wants to give his people and for the means he wants to bring it about. Renamed the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity", the practice spread widely during his apostolate. In 1942, F&O changed a twenty-two year custom so that its own Prayer for Unity would coincide with the RCC's Prayer Octave. Since 1960, the FOC (of the WCC) and the RCC have prepared jointly the annual material used by the churches for the "Week of Prayer". Ibid. Confessing that inner conversion, holiness of life and prayer constitute the "soul" of the ecumenical movement in its totality, Second Vatican Council says that prayer can be rightly designated "spiritual ecumenism". Cf., W. Abbot, ed., The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966), p. 352.

doctrinal differences. This conviction was amplified in his 18 September 1896 encyclical Apostolicae curae encyclical. Supported by the conclusions of an appointed Vatican commission, he upheld the decrees of his predecessors that Anglican rites of ordination, having deviated from Catholic intention, are absolutely null and void.¹⁹ But despite setbacks and disappointments, the quest for reunion continued.

2. The Holy See's Negative Appraisal of Ecumenism

Pope Pius X (1903-1914) spent the better part of his pontificate combatting the fundamental errors of modernism which belittled for the Christian faith the role of revelation, of dogma and of ecclesiastical authority.²⁰ Though no Roman Catholic representatives were invited to attend the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, it is a strong possibility that Bishop Bonomelli's encouraging letter to the Conference reflected the thoughts of his alleged personal friend,

¹⁹Pope Leo XIII, "Apostolicae Curae," in Messenger, pp. 110-124, especially p. 124. In acknowledging the reply of the Anglican primates of Canterbury and York to this Bull, Pope Leo pointed out that the decision reached was based upon the principles of Christian doctrine. Further, he remarks: "It is also plain in what you yourselves say about the said ordinations, the Priesthood, the Eucharist, and the Sacrifice, that you are far removed from what is laid down by the Catholic and Roman Church". Not unmindful of the vestigia ecclesiae found outside the RCC, however, he goes on to say that conscientious non-RCs who are ignorant of the truth "may be sincere and in good faith" if they live faithfully the doctrines in which they had been imbued in their youth. Letter cited in Messenger, pp. 28-29.

²⁰See his 1907 encyclical on modernism entitled "Pascendi Dominici Gregis" in The Papal Encyclicals 1903-1939, pp. 72-98.

Pope Pius X.²¹ Moreover, it was during his papal ministry that a correspondence was initiated between Cardinal Gaspari (Vatican Secretary of State) and Robert Gardiner (Secretary of F&O movement).

Via letter on 2 November 1914, F&O informed the Holy See of its intention to call an international conference on faith and order. In acknowledgement, the Vatican replied that the pope, "the source and cause of the unity of the Church" was pleased with F&O's proposed project to examine "the essential form of the Church".²² Receiving a F&O deputation on 8 May 1919, Pope Benedict XV graciously declined its request for RC participation at the planned F&O conference. As the "successor of St. Peter and vicar of Christ," Pope Benedict stated he had no greater desire than there be but one fold and one shepherd. The Holy See, however, could not participate "in such a Congress as the one proposed".²³ At the close of the papal audience, the delegation was handed a statement which explained the reason for the refusal. It reiterated Rome's position that the unity of the church of Christ is to be found only in the RCC. It is to this church alone that the seekers of

²¹See Chapter I above, pp. 15-16. Prophetically Charles Brent referred to the letter as "the little cloud not larger than a man's hand today, destined tomorrow to cover the Roman heavens.... Already the true greatness of the Roman Catholic Church is busy at her heart.... The Bishop of Cremona ... consciously or unconsciously, voiced the mind of a growing minority who are the soul of his community". Quoted in C.H. Robinson, History of Christian Mission (New York: T&T Clark, 1915), p. 505.

²²For text see Messenger, pp. 105-06. Karl Barth advocated that the churches could obtain unity on all issues that divide them (including the papacy and sacraments) if they could reach agreement on their different conceptions of the church. Barth, The Church and the Churches (Chicago: W.E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1936), p. 92.

²³Cf., Messenger, p. 107.

genuine unity are invited to return.²⁴ A few months later, the Holy Office, in its decree (Catholicorum societatis), stated that its 1864 ban against RC involvement in ecumenical movement was still in effect.²⁵

In February 1921, the L&W (in accordance with a decision made at Geneva in 1920) sent a letter of invitation to the pope requesting RC representation at its proposed world conference on L&W issues. Responding on behalf of the Holy See, Cardinal Gaspari in April 1921 informed L&W's perillustres viri ("most illustrious men") that it could not accept the invitation.²⁶ Even though some individual RCs helped prepare the working material for its second world conference in 1937, there are no extant records to suggest that L&W invited the RCC.²⁷

In refusing to join other churches in an attempt to recover the unity of the church of Christ, Pope Benedict XV, in conformity with RC tradition, insisted that the fullness of unity Christ gave his church has always existed in the RCC. By refusing to join F&O in a search for the kind of unity Christ intended for his church, Pope Benedict remained consistent with the RC understanding of divine truth. Dr. Tavard said

²⁴Ibid., pp. 415-16; Marc Boegner The Long Road to Unity: Memories and Anticipations. Trans. by R. Hague. London: Collins, 1970), pp. 57-8. The disputation was handed copies of Apostolicae Sedis (September, 1864) and Quod vos (November, 1885). These Holy Office decrees set forth the RC conception of the true doctrine of unity.

²⁵Cf. "Decree of the Holy Office" in Messenger, p. 108.

²⁶Tavard, Two Centuries of Ecumenism, pp. 93-94.

²⁷Ibid., p. 98.

that "the Protestant world is under an illusion if it imagines that the Catholic Church can change her doctrine on unity".²⁸

a) Rome Condemns the Ecumenical Movement

Rome sent no representation to Stockholm 1925 or Lausanne 1927.²⁹ With F&O satisfied to merely compare diverse theologies and L&W avoiding all doctrinal discussion ("doctrine divides, service unites"), Rome was not impressed. In his January 1928 encyclical letter Mortalium animos ("Fostering True Religious Unity"), Pope Pius XI (1922-29) issued the first official Vatican response to the ecumenical movement. The pope interpreted the dominant ecumenical thrusts of "pan-Christians" as a denial of the visibility of the church, the rejection of the RCC as the autonomous and perfect society of Christ and the promotion of the false view that church unity could be achieved without doctrinal unity. These ecumenical positions were more characteristic of the L&W movement than Faith and Order. Mortalium animos pointed out that Roman Catholics were forbidden to participate in the ecumenical movement.

Adverse to false religious indifferentism, Pope Pius XI insisted that God's revelation reached its perfection in Christ Jesus. To his one church founded Peter and the apostles (and continues in their legitimate successors), Christ entrusted the immutable deposit of doctrinal truth.

²⁸Ibid., p. 94.

²⁹Prior to Lausanne 1927, the Holy Office issued a papal approved text reminding RCs that they were prohibited from attending such conferences. For text see, Messenger, p. 109.

Since divine truth is absolute, Mortalium animos insisted no element of such truth is negotiable or of optional importance. As revealed in scripture and tradition, all God's revelation (as taught by councils and popes) is a sine qua non for true ecclesial unity.³⁰ For Pope Pius XI, the reunification of Christendom was conditioned on the return of separated Christians to the Holy See, the "root and matrix" of the one true church, from which they once "unhappily" withdrew.³¹

b) Mortalium Animos and the Critics

As to be expected, the non-Roman Christians found Mortalium animos to be extremely negative and disconcerting. Based on his initial impression, Pastor Marc Boegner (Ref.) believed that this papal document would have a very negative impact upon the future of the ecumenical venture.³² Archbishop Soederblom found it to be caricature of the ecumenical movement. He was especially critical that the document did not distinguish between "faith as intellectual assent and faith as the trustful submission of the soul to God, and to establish correctly the relationship between faith and love".³³ Clearly not all churches involved in the ecumenical movement (e.g. Orthodox) were indifferent to

³⁰Pope Pius XI, "Mortalium Animos" in The Papal Documents 1903-1939. Claudia C. Ihm, ed., A Consortium Book. (USA: McGrath Publishing Company., 1981), pp. 313-319, especially, pp. 315-16.

³¹Ibid., p. 319.

³²Boegner, p. 68.

³³HEM, p. 684.

doctrine. From the vantage point of nearly two decades, one ecumenical historian described the impact of Mortalium animos as "a dash of cold water in the face of burgeoning ecumenical hopes".³⁴

Though they were in general accord with the content of Mortalium animos, it would take another generation for avant garde RC ecumenists to win the Holy See's official confidence. In his 1937 seminal study Chrétiens désunis: principes d'un 'oecuménisme' catholique (which appeared two years later in English as Divided Christendom), Dominican Yves M.J. Congar (whom Visser't Hooft described as the RC "father" of ecumenism) was sharply critical of the ecumenical movement.³⁵ His own analysis of this movement led him to the conclusion that it lacked a strong theological foundation and reflected a mindset formed on the basis of dualism, nominalism, rationalism, and pragmatic positivism.³⁶ Convinced that the ecumenical movement lacked any adequate theological

³⁴Robert McAfee Brown, The Ecumenical Revolution: An Interpretation of the Catholic Protestant Dialogue. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1967), p. 50.

³⁵Cf. Divided Christendom. Translated by M.A. Bowsfield. (London: The Centenary Press, 1939). Dr. M. Boegner (Ref.), one of the leading pioneers of the ecumenical movement described this work (which explains the RCC's understanding of unity and catholicity, examines non-RC churches, and develops a basis for uniting all Christians) as "an ecumenical event of importance which was more significant in that it took place within the Roman Catholic Church". Cf. M Boegner, The Long Road to Unity, p. 119.

³⁶Ibid. p. 120. Congar attributed Rome's refusal to attend Stockholm 1925 to the fact that L&W's basic position emerged from "merely human considerations" rather than "supernatural faith". He criticized the "Stockholm Ideology" for reducing the Christian position to a "philosophy of religion" and failing to comprehend that the nature of the Christian faith is the "very substance of the Church and its unity". Ibid., p. 125.

foundation, he entered into dialogue with the movement in order to foster its growth.

True to its own convictions, the RC magisterium reacted forcefully against widely held ecumenical positions that the true church no longer existed as a single institution (and at best is embodied in all churches together) and the unity of the church has been lost (and needed recovery). If indeed the unity of the church can be lost or diminished when Christian individuals or groups separate, then there is no guarantee that the fullness of Christian revelation can be found in any historical church. While in 1937 the ecumenical movement could no longer be equated with the pan-Christianity condemned by Pius XI, Congar argued that the doctrinal value of the document remains unchanged.³⁷

Together with the RCC, Congar ascertained that all other Christian communities (to varying degrees) are part of the una sancta ecclesia. As with RCs, the recipients of baptism from all other Christian churches are incorporated into the mystery of the una sancta ecclesia. Congar insisted, however, that Christians who grow up outside the perimeters of

³⁷ Ibid, p. 127. Indicative of his own ecumenical development, Fr. Congar, in later works, admitted that it is no longer possible for the divided churches to solve the traditional doctrinal issues which divide them without taking account that even in its interior life the church "exists for the sake of...the world". Reflecting back on his work of 1937, he admits to being too overly critical and insensitive to the potential of L&W for advancing unity. He avowed that "over-assumed intellectism" and some pragmatic "Protestantism formulations" blinded him to the potential of practical Christianity as "a most effective way towards unity, and unity on the theological level". It was not the ecumenical movement itself but the modernistic tendencies which he had perceived in it that were subversive. Cf. Yves Congar, "Do the New Problems of our Secular World make Ecumenism Irrelevant?" in Post Ecumenical Christianity. Edited by Hans Kung. The New Concilium, Volume 54. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 14-15.

the RCC are deprived of some means of grace vital to their full development. All Christians have the responsibility to pray and work for Christian unity. He advocated that in a reunited Christendom the Church of Rome will be beneficially changed even though she possesses every fundamental element essential to the being of Christ's one church. She will be able, for example, to manifest more effectively her gift of catholicity.

According to Congar, the RCC, with her concern for safeguarding the purity of the whole deposit of the apostolic faith, has done more to further the best interests and development of the ecumenical movement than the diverse and partial groups which constitute it. Indeed, he says that "the more recent developments of the Movement owe much to the uncompromising attitude taken by the Catholic Church".³⁸ Though his studies of the nature of the church led him to conclude that dissident baptized Christians are incorporated into the one true church, he maintained that though real this membership remained incomplete.³⁹

³⁸ Ibid., p. 143. In the 1930s, the theological weakness of the ecumenical movement as a whole came in for sharp criticism from two influential Protestant thinkers - Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. In defending the Confessing church against the State imposed church, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was very deeply interested in subjects pertaining to the relation between the visible and invisible church, the question of communion, and the importance of true Christ-centered doctrine. In the late 1930s, he lamented that one of weaknesses of the ecumenical movement is its lack of theology and importance given to doctrine. Cf. Bonhoeffer, No Rusty Swords (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); pp. 157-73.

Even one of the RCC's sharpest critics, Karl Barth, at a July 1935 ecumenical seminar in Geneva, declared that he could not find fault with Rome's criticism of the ecumenical movement which strives to manufacture the unity of the church: "It was and is needful that someone make a stand against the excessive claims of all Church movements". Cf. F&O I, No. 76, p. 31.

Furthermore, he came to recognize to varying degrees the ecclesial reality of their communities. In them were elements that belonged to the one true church.⁴⁰ Congar's work had a profound influence on the direction and development of RC thought with regard to understanding the ecclesial status of dissident Christians and their communities.

3. Ecumenicity Ameliorates Attitudes of the Churches

Influenced by statements from the Holy See and the writings of RC ecumenists, the leaders of the ecumenical movement began to understand more clearly why the Holy See continued to remain aloof. The RCC distanced itself because of a deep genuine concern for the nature of the church and its unity rather than unmitigated pride or fear of losing

(Footnote Continued)

³⁹ Congar affirms that all recipients of baptism who are united by faith, hope and charity in Christ are members of the true church. Since dissident Christians living outside the visible structure of the RCC are deprived of some of the means of grace vital for full membership, their membership in the mystical body is real but not fully developed. Ibid., pp. 221-237.

⁴⁰ Fr. Congar claimed that all the divinely ordained elements (apostolic faith, sacraments, sacred polity) which constitute the genuine church is to be found only in the RCC. For Congar, a local church in space and time is bonded through apostolic succession in continuity with all the constitutive elements. But to embody the true church, the local congregation must be joined through apostolic succession to the universal church. Moreover, he contends that there can not be full union of local church with the universal church unless that local congregation is in union with the See of Peter. These churches (or "communions", however, even while not in full communion with the Church of Rome, have retained (to varying degrees) a genuine ecclesial reality. For their members, they are instruments of salvation. But in comparison to the RCC, the ecclesial reality of these communions are imperfect. Though adamant that the church is perfect in the essence of her catholicity, Fr. Congar pointed out that in the world this catholicity is open to further development. Ibid., pp. 236-41.

worldly power. Influenced by such thinkers as Barth and Tillich, Protestantism experienced a doctrinal revival away from theological liberalism to a stress on the transcendence of God in relating to human beings. The ecumenical movement was now in a better position to assess and appreciate why Rome was not overly impressed with its obsession for pragmatic action (rather than dogma) as the way to Christian unity. Though non-Roman ecumenists were often outraged by some of the Vatican's actions and documents which appeared to put new obstacles in the way of a reunited Christendom the F&O movement continued to reach out to the Holy See for spiritual and theological contacts. For instance, the chairperson of the F&O continuation committee, in a letter dated September 1936, extended to the RC archbishop of St. Andrews and Edinburgh an open invitation to send to Edinburgh 1937 official representatives. Once again, the RCC graciously declined the offer to participate in the ecumenical enterprise.⁴¹

After the L&W inaugural conference in 1925, the ecumenical movement in general began to take the doctrinal concerns which preoccupied F&O much more seriously. If there was to be a reunited church, doctrinal and ecclesiological issues could not be ignored. Moreover, the ecumenical leaders gradually became convinced that the various denominations must aim for more than a federation of churches. It was not enough for the churches to be joined merely by a common desire to work together so as

⁴¹ Along with sending a letter to the Conference conveying his prayer for its success, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Edinburgh did grant permission to four priest and a member of the laity to attend the Conference as unofficial observers. Cf. Edinburgh 1937, p. 40; G.K.A. Bell, The Kingship of Christ (Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1954), p. 69.

to present a common front to the world. Any true koinonia had to be based on unity in doctrine and life.

Increasingly after the mid-1920s, the ideal of organic unity came to the front as the ecumenical movement's main objective. Cognizant of this redirection, the RCC, ever cautious, slowly began to express a more positive attitude to the movement. Moving away from doctrinal relativity (without losing track of the doctrinal divergences among the churches), the ecumenical movement began to focus on the nature of the church and its unity. While remaining true to their convictions, the churches conceded to the mystery of the ecclesia with the hope that by God's grace the differences existing among them would be surmounted. Taking note of this shift in ecumenical thinking, the Holy See gave the necessary permission to five Roman Catholics to attend Edinburgh 1937 in a private capacity.

During the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958), the Catholic hierarchy took a much more positive hands on approach to ecumenism. In a February 1939 courtesy letter, Archbishop Temple (moderator of the Provisional Committee) informed the Holy See of its intention to constitute the WCC. Moreover, he inquired whether the Holy See would permit the Council to exchange data with the appropriate agencies of the RCC and to unofficially consult with RC theologians and scholars on issues of mutual interest. In July 1939, Dr. Temple was informed that Rome had no objections to the request (though RC theologians could only reply in their own name).⁴² Delayed by World War II, the quest to

⁴²G.K.A. Bell, Documents of Unity, pp. 219-20

formally call the WCC into existence came to a stall and the Holy See focused on doctrine.

a) Towards a Balanced Conception of the Church

Stimulated by the widespread post-World War I interest in the subject of the body of Christ and the grave errors associated with the same ("false mysticism" and "false quietism"), Pope Pius XII in June 1943 presented an exposition of this doctrine in his Mystici Corporis Christi ("Mystical Body of Christ"). This encyclical provided the necessary impetus which effectively liberated reflection on the nature of church from its apologetical straitjacket and placed it in the realm of theology. As its point of departure, this encyclical continued to stress the post-Tridentine theology of the church as a visible hierarchical society. Importantly, however, it began to embody into this theology the richness of the patristic and scholastic insights on the interior reality of grace and the dynamic role of the Holy Spirit. Hence, Mystici Corporis became the catalyst for the working out of a more balanced definition of the nature of the Church with its human, divine and theandric facets. Systematically, Pius XII contended that the one true church of Christ and the "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church" is the one and same reality (reaffirmed in the encyclical letter Humani Generis, 1950). He said that there is no more fitting term to define the nature of the church with its eucharistic kolnonia than the

biblical concept "mystical body of Jesus Christ".⁴³ Distinguished from Christ's physical body (born of woman and now at God's throne) and from any other physical or moral body, the church is a mystical body because Christ is its founder and head and the Holy Spirit is its "soul".⁴⁴

As one, undivided body composed of individual members (including sinners) whose pre-eminent head is Christ, the visible, hierarchical church is endowed with the means of salvation. Pope Pius XII distinguished between real (reapse) church members and those who are members only in voto. The encyclical letter Mystici Corporis teaches that a "real" (reapse) member of the church of Christ is baptized, professes the true apostolic faith and is bonded in a ecclesial communion to the visible church (which has not been severed either voluntarily or through excommunication). While these threefold conditions exclusively restrict membership in the visible church to RCs, Pope Pius acknowledged that non-Roman Catholics can be ordered to the unasancta ecclesia by some "unconscious desire and longing". But even these cannot be assured of their salvation because they do not have access to many of the graces and helps available only in the RCC. For those living in such a state, Mystici Corporis made an impassioned plea that they return to the Catholic unity of "their father's house" in which the eucharist is the symbol of full unity effected and achieved.⁴⁵

⁴³"Mystici Corporis Christi," The Papal Documents 1939-1958, p. 39

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 53-54, 58

In its entirety, the sacramental and charismatic character of this perfect, organic society is essentially social. Though inferior to the church as spiritual organism, the exterior aspect of the church also attests to the wisdom of its Creator. Working in a mystical way within the inner life of God's people, the Spirit of Christ uses the visible church to make supernatural gifts and graces available for the sanctification and salvation of all humanity.

The encyclical rejected a "false mysticism" which arises out of a theology which overly emphasizes the inner aspect of the mystical body to the neglect of the visible church with its salvation-endowed elements. It is strongly affirmed that the Holy Spirit is the divine "soul" of the church.⁴⁶ In a way analogous to the hypostatic union, the Holy Spirit imbues and is continually present to the ecclesia. With the Spirit as its very life and invisible principle of unity, the members of the mystical body are united to their head and to one another.

Reflecting traits indicative of the Incarnate Word's own unique nature, the Church embodies and continues his God-given mission. Acting through the Spirit, Christ continues to renew, enliven and direct the church's grace filled institutions. The activity of the theandric body of Christ is directed not merely towards the salvation of humankind but also towards its own sanctification. By rendering all glory to God and Christ and by working for the salvation of all human beings, the "Mystical Body of Christ" seeks to continually become what she is by esse, the pleroma Christi.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 54, 57.

4. The RCC and the World Council of Churches

As part of the preparatory volume for Section I of the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC, Professor K.E. Skydsgaard of the University of Heildburg contributed an article entitled "The Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement". This article marked a significant advance by a leading Protestant scholar towards a more appreciative understanding of the RC position. He contended that the reason the Holy See does not send representatives to ecumenical conferences is not due to some provisional, confessional attitude or fear of losing ecclesiological power. For him, the cause is found in Rome's unique understanding of the nature of the church and its unity.⁴⁷ He claimed that the RCC is more concerned about Christian reunion than most (if not all) churches.

Demonstrating a deep insight into the nature of papal documents, Professor Skydsgaard argued that Mortalium animos's condemnation of the ecumenical movement didn't express the Holy See's whole attitude on the ecumenical question. This encyclical merely condemned a particular kind of ecumenical movement; the kind exemplified at Stockholm 1925 which stressed the sufficiency of a pragmatic unity while allowing for dogmatic relativism. He points out that even Karl Barth had to admit that the RCC proposed a profound challenge to Protestant churches.⁴⁸

⁴⁷K.E. Skydsgaard, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement," The Universal Church, pp. 156-57.

⁴⁸Professor Barth remarked that in the RCC "there is an ecclesiological substance, a knowledge that the Church is the house of
(Footnote Continued)

In a "Supplementary Note" to this article, Fr. Maurice Villain (RC) expressed gratitude that scholars such as Professor Skydsgaard were becoming more sensitive to the real reasons which keep the RCC from directly entering the ecumenical movement. Villain claimed the Church of Rome, through her prayers and her silence, is already collaborating to the search for unity. Through her prayers (i.e. Christ Week of Prayer) which is the basis for all ecumenical ventures, the RCC participates in the ecumenical movement. In her silence, Rome played an integral role in guiding the unity movement towards "dogmatic essentials" which were practically nebulous at Stockholm 1925 debate. Even by her absence at Lausanne 1925, the RCC "orchestrated ...the demands of Anglicans and Orthodox for a more constructive theology of the Incarnation and sacraments". Further, it provided the impetus for Protestants to study the "structure of the Church as an apostolic-hierarchical institution; and what doubt can there be that one day it will pose this very question as being one of primary importance".⁴⁹

In April 1947, the Provisional Committee decided to invite some RC theologians to Amsterdam 1948 as "unofficial observers". The Roman authorities made it clear, however, that if the Holy See decides to be represented at Amsterdam 1948 it would select its own delegates. In view of the forthcoming Assembly, the Holy Office, on 5 June 1948, issued Cum compertum sit. Referring to canon 1325, this monitum reminded RCs

(Footnote Continued)

God - corrupted, unrecognizable substance perhaps, but nevertheless not lost substance". Ibid., pp. 161-62.

⁴⁹"A Supplementary Note by a Roman Catholic Writer," The Universal Church, p. 167-69.

that they were forbidden to attend ecumenical conferences unless they had prior permission from the Holy See (or the local ordinary in cases of grave need).⁵⁰ On June 18, the Holy See informed Cardinal de Jong that no permission would be granted to any RC to attend the Amsterdam Assembly; and, on July 31, the Dutch Episcopate (no doubt with the knowledge of Rome) sent a pastoral letter to their flock expounding the RCC's position on Christian unity.⁵¹

In their pastoral letter, the Dutch bishops pointed out that unity in the apostolic faith is essential to Christian unity. The Dutch prelates claimed that the fullness of this faith is found only in the RCC where it is preserved and interpreted by the living infallible magisterium.⁵² The letter claimed that dissident Christians can only receive true unity by a return to the true fold. Since RCs have not always preserved Catholic unity and true charity, the Dutch bishops frankly admitted that they too must share in the guilt associated with the dire and fatal consequences of division. For the Assembly's success, the Dutch bishops organized (for Sunday, August 9) a solemn mass to be said in every church. Rather than take a "forward" step towards reunion

⁵⁰With regard to the joint participation of RCs and Protestants in common worship (communicatio in sacris), the document (with reference to canons 1258 and 731) reiterated that "all communication in sacred things is entirely forbidden". Cf. G.K.A. Bell, ed. Documents on Christian Unity. London: Oxford University Press, 1948-57), pp. 15-16.

⁵¹Visser't Hooft, "The Roman Catholic Church and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches," ER, 1 (Winter 1949); p. 200. Due to what the Dutch Hierarchy described as "a regrettable misunderstanding" a copy of this letter dated 31 July 1948 did not reach the WCC until 31 August 1948. Amsterdam 1948, pp. 31-32.

⁵²Cf., "Pastoral Letter," Documents in Christian Unity, Vol. 3, pp. 18-9.

with the "mother Church," the letter expressed concern that Amsterdam 1948 might take a "backward" step by remaining content with some apparent form of unity.⁵³

Due to the burgeoning RC interest in the ongoing preparations for Amsterdam 1948, the Secretary General expressed to the Assembly his disappointment that the Holy See chose not to send observers.⁵⁴ As indicated by the extensive coverage the Amsterdam Assembly received in RC papers, a growing number of RCs shared Visser't Hooft's regret.⁵⁵ Leading RC ecumenists pointed out, however, that Rome's absence from Amsterdam 1948 ought not be misinterpreted to mean that the Holy See had adopted an isolationist attitude to unity or that it could only support a return model of unity. For example, Yves Congar, in an interview with Le Monde (7 September 1948), indicated that the Church of Rome is very conscious of the "unity and apostolicity entrusted to her". Though loving "definiteness", the Holy See "keeps surprises up its sleeve". While it may be essential and definitive from the doctrinal perspective that all dissidents return to the mother church, Congar seriously

⁵³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁵⁴ Amsterdam 1948, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁵ In the "Report of the General Secretary" presented to the CC meeting in July 1949 at Chichester, Dr. Visser't Hooft pointed out that the most "outstanding factor" in the WCC's relations with the Vatican has been the great interest RCs from "all walks of life" expressed in Amsterdam 1948. Nevertheless, the fact that the "highest leadership" in the Vatican refused to grant permission to any of the membership to attend the Assembly is of deep concern. Its ongoing attempts to foster and develop ties with the RCC might lead to a "blind alley". Cf. ER 2 (Autumn 1959), p. 64. For a summary of RC comments on Amsterdam 1948 as presented in leading newspapers and journals. Cf. ER 1 (Winter 1949), pp. 202-12.

questioned whether "this aspect of 'return' exhausts all the possibilities which the Catholic position allows".⁵⁶

5. RCC Permits Limited Participation in the Ecumenical Movement

While still remaining very coy, the RCC in 1949 formally recognized the Holy Spirit behind the ecumenical movement. This culminated in 1962 in the creation of Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (SPCU), with biblical scholar Cardinal Bea as its president. There were, however, some new obstacles (e.g., dogma of the Assumption of Mary) which thwarted the developing relationship between the RCC and other Christian denominations during this period.

a) "Ecclesia Catholica" - An Experiment

Issued by the Holy Office on 20 December 1949, the Instructio Ecclesia Catholica ("Instruction to the Local Ordinaries on the Ecumenical Movement") document fostered a new emphasis in ecumenism and the study of contemporary issues. From the outset, it reiterated that the RCC does not participate in the ecumenical movement. The Instructio, in unprecedented language, extolled the excellent work for the "reunion" of all Christians which had arisen in non-RC communities. Not explainable by merely humanitarian factors, the Instructio explicitly states that this quest for visible unity is attributable to the movement

⁵⁶ Ibid., n.8/62.

of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ In response to prayer, the Holy Spirit had gradually drawn the movement away from the grave errors of its fledgling years. The Instructio claimed that the work for "reunion" is an integral part of bishops' pastoral care for the church universal. Under cautionary safeguards, the Holy Office transmitted to local bishops full authority for local ecumenical activity.⁵⁸

Assisted by selected priest helpers, bishops were to prudently supervise, foster and guide all RC sponsored ecumenical activities. They were cautioned to be on guard against doctrinal indifference and "irencism" which whittles away the truth. While it allowed for approved common prayer, the Instructio strictly forbade common worship (communicatio in sacris, especially intercommunion. In ecumenical conversations on faith and moral issues, bishops were to assure that the "whole and entire" Catholic teaching on the subject was presented.⁵⁹

The Instructio augured an encouraging new beginning. Up to Vatican II, it remained the Magna Carta of the RC approach to ecumenism. The WCC leadership rejected as "misleading" the Holy Office statement's claim that the ecumenical movement had no other raison d'être than "return" to Rome. With guarded optimism, however, the WCC appraised the Holy Office

⁵⁷"Ecclesia Catholica," Christian Documents on Unity, Vol. 3, p. 22.

⁵⁸ In interfaith gatherings the bishops are to assure that there is no communicatio in sacris, that the meetings are duly controlled and supervised and that reports are regularly sent to the Holy Office
Ibid, p. 25.

⁵⁹Ibid, pp. 23-5.

document to be of "considerable ecumenical significance".⁶⁰ For the WCC, the document was proof that the ecumenical movement posed a challenge to the RCC. That RCs were allowed to join "dissidents" in the common recitation of the Lord's prayer (or other church approved prayer) was pointed out as the breakthrough which comes nearest to a new point of departure in the change of attitude to non-Roman Christians.

b) No Salvation outside the Church

Even as late as 1949, some RC clergy (e.g. a group associated with St. Benedict's College, Boston) interpreted the patristic dictum extra ecclesiam nulla salus to preclude divine grace and salvation to those outside the visible RCC. While it continued to purport the tenet, the Holy Office in a letter to Archbishop Cushing on 8 August 1949 insisted that this doctrine must be interpreted in the manner the Holy See had always understood it. Though it remains true that in order to be saved an individual must be in some way related to the church, this does not imply that actual membership is absolutely required. Referring to the possibility of salvation through implicit intention, the Holy Office, with reference to the encyclical Mystici Corporis, declared that unconsciously many individuals do belong to the church and are saved by the graces they receive from belonging to her by "desire" and "longing".⁶¹ Even though God's salvific will is for all, this letter

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 93-94, 98, 102-04.

⁶¹ Cf. full text cited in The American Ecclesiastical Review 127
(Footnote Continued)

leaves the impression, at least from an ontological perspective, that baptized persons are more related than the unbaptized to the church.

(1) Rome Continues to Exercise Caution

The exchange of views that Dr. Visser't Hooft had with an avant garde group of RC ecumenical theologians at Istina Centre in Paris in September 1949 had a profound influence on the drafting of the vitally important WCC "Toronto statement".⁶² It assured the Catholic type member churches that the error which pertained to a spiritualized understanding of unity referred to in the encyclical Mystici Corporis does not apply to the WCC. Even though churches are included in its fellowship that have a spiritual conception of unity, the World Council's basis for membership is not determined by the presupposition that the doctrine of the unity of the Church is rooted in the invisible. Allowing for the existence of divisions, the WCC frankly admits it cannot envisage an invisible Church with churches united to one another merely by spiritual bonds.

According to the "Toronto statement", all churches are in accord with the RC position, which it interprets to "hold that there is no complete identity between membership of the Church Universal and the

(Footnote Continued)

(1952), pp. 307-15. Not denying the possibility of damnation, Second Vatican Council maintain that those who leave or refuse to enter the RCC (while knowing that the RCC is the necessary means of salvation ordained by God) are not "saved". Cf. Documents of Vatican 11. Edited by W.A. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. 32-3.

⁶²Vischer, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church", p. 320.

membership of its own Church". In commenting upon this World Council document, the Anglican Bishop of Malmesbury pointed out that the World Council had to take care not to widen the gap between Catholicism and Protestantism which was already in effect. Though the RC interpretation of the Catholic tradition was not represented at Amsterdam, there was a real danger that the WCC might become "anti-Roman rather than non-Roman".⁶³ If such a position had to win the day the Catholic position in general would have suffered and the ecumenical movement on the whole would have received a major blow.

Though Pope Pius XII in his 1943 encyclical letter Divino Afflante Spiritu encouraged biblical scholars in the use modern methods of historical exegesis, he deplored the way these findings were interpreted. Issued in August 1950, his multi-facet encyclical letter Humani Generis reacted against certain theological and philosophical trends which had emerged (especially in France). Humani Generis asserts that the new theology and philosophy contained errors which posed a grave a grave threat to the basis of Catholic doctrine.⁶⁴ Warning against the "fictitious tenets of evolution" and the "Imprudent eirenism", the encyclical reminded RC theologians and philosophers that Catholic doctrine cannot be reduced to a minimum merely because it is not comprehended by the human intellect. For him any reunion constructed upon the specious foundation of dogmatic relativism will ultimately lead to destruction. In ecumenical dialogues, the real doctrinal obstacles to

⁶³ Bishop of Malmesbury, "Can We Stay Together"?, ER (April, 1951), 236.

⁶⁴ Ihm, The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958, pp. 175-184.

reunion cannot be avoided or mutually assimilated.⁶⁵ Reiterating the position of his predecessors, Pope Pius insisted that the magisterium alone has the God-given authority to interpret definitively the inexhaustible treasure of truth engrained in revealed doctrine entrusted to Christ's Mystical Body, the RCC.⁶⁶ In addition to scripture and tradition, RC scholars in their attempts to probe into and illuminate the inexhaustible treasures of divine truth must give due submission to the magisterium. If RC ecumenists are to be successful in their ecumenical discussions, they must present the whole Catholic faith as taught in the Church of Rome.

This encyclical, according to Lukas Vischer (director of FOC), stymied ecumenical relations between the RCC and the ecumenical movement. Roman Catholics who publicly manifested sympathy with the movement were censured. Dr. Vischer points out, however, that many of the views condemned by the encyclical as errors (e.g. distinguishing the boundaries of the mystical body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church, undifferentiating between the formulations and the content of doctrinal truth) were later favorably received at Vatican II.⁶⁷

On 1 November 1950 (after consulting by letter all RC bishops) Pope Pius XII, speaking ex cathedra, solemnly promulgated the Bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as an article of faith binding

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 176-78.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 178-79.

⁶⁷ L. Vischer "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church" in HEM II, p. 317.

upon the whole church.⁶⁸ Finding no basis for this dogma in Scripture, most Protestants opposed this definition as an obstacle to ecumenical dialogue. With the defining of this new dogma despite Protestant protests, the Holy See was accused of harbouring doctrinal error and lacking any interest in Christian unity.⁶⁹

(a) Church of Rome Sends Official Observers to Lund 1952

The officials of the the WCC recognized, however, that the WCC could not pretend that the RCC did not exist. Dr. Oliver Tomkins, in his capacity as associate secretary of the WCC and executive secretary of FOC, acknowledged in 1952 that the WCC owed a debt to the RCC which stood as a "perpetual commentary" upon its work.⁷⁰ Stemming from talks between Lutheran Archbishop Yngve Brilioth and the Vicar Apostolic of Sweden, the RCC selected four priests to attend the Lund 1952 as official observers. At the Conference, they were welcomed as "accredited

⁶⁸Cf. "Munificentissimus Deus," Four Marian Encyclicals of Pope Pius XII. Edited by E.R. Lawler. (New York: Paulist Press, 1959) pp. 19-48.

⁶⁹Vischer, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church", pp. 317-18.

⁷⁰Dr. Tomkins pointed out that the RCC, despite all her contradictions, is a "perpetual reminder" to the WCC member churches "that to speak of unity in Christ is not to speak of an abstract ideal but of something which must be expressed in history and in flesh and blood. Whether as a warning or encouragement, whether as an offense or as a model (and in many of us, always something of both), Rome stands over against all our tentative efforts, as unity embodied and impossible to ignore". Though the member churches differed as to the proper stance to Rome, they commonly affirmed: "we are clearly united in not accepting the form of unity which she offers - though some are near to doing so and others very far". Cf. Oliver. S. Tomkins, "The Church, the Churches and the Council," ER 4 (April 1953), p.267.

visitors". Their presence was a testimony that the "great Church of Rome" was not indifferent to the quest for Christian unity.⁷¹ Increasing the works of RC authors on the theological dimension of the WCC research began to have a greater influence in the WCC. While acknowledging this influence, Dr. Boegner rejected the criticism that the World Council was "drawing the Protestant Churches in the direction of Rome" as unjustified.⁷² The same year Fathers Frans Thijssen and Jan Willebrands founded the "Conférence catholique pour les questions oecuméniques". While its initial goal was to bring Catholic theologians together to discuss ecumenical issues, it made direct contact with the WCC the following year.

(b) RCC Shuns Second Assembly of the WCC

Unfortunately, The Holy See sent no representatives to Evanston 1954. Prior to the Evanston Assembly of the WCC, Cardinal Stritch (apparently with the knowledge of both the U.S. Episcopate and the Vatican) issued a pastoral letter which declared that no permission would be coming for RCs to attend the Assembly in the capacity as observers. Believing that such interchurch conferences were of little

⁷¹Lund 1952, p. 106. Augustin Bea, Edward J. Duff, Ivan Extross, M.J. le Gillou, and Jan C. Grost were the first RC's ever chosen to attend as official observers a non-RC religious gathering. Gaines, p. 1037. Fifteen years earlier the president of Edinburgh 1937 (Archbishop Temple) made reference to the absence to the "great Church of Rome" that "Church which more than any other has known how to speak to the nations so that the nations hear". Cf. Edinburgh 1937, p. 20.

⁷²Marc Boegner, "An Appraisal of the World Council of Churches," ER, 4 (July, 1954), 368.

(if any use), he pointed out that RCs were completely forbidden to enter into such dialogues as equals to discuss the nature of the church and its unity. For him, the RCC had no need to search for the truth, for "she is, as she has always been, the one and only Spouse of Christ, the one and only mystical Body of Christ, the one and only Church of Christ".⁷³ While the RCC fervently strives for the unity of all Christians, the Cardinal insisted that it did not support any "unity forged according to fallible human conceptions".⁷⁴ After Evanston, Rome initiated a new policy of sending official observers to major World Council assemblies.

With the assistance of theologians such as Father Congar, the "Conférence catholique" drafted an extensive document on the Evanston Assembly theme ("Christ-the Hope of the World"). Because it was late in reaching the Evanston Assembly, it was merely duplicated and distributed to the delegates. If it had arrived earlier, the director of the FOC had no doubts "that it would certainly have made an even deeper mark on the discussion and the reports".⁷⁵

Despite strong resistance from some member churches, the WCC by 1954 was generally in favor of courting RCC participation. This was especially true of those churches which called for a doctrinal unity. There was also the recognition that to exclude off hand the RCC with its strong concern for doctrinal issues would seriously undermine the whole

⁷³Galnes, p. 809.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Vischer, "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church," pp. 320-21.

ecumenical process. Professor Ernest Kinder (Luth.) of the University of Munster maintained that "any ecumenical thought and action which definitely excluded the Roman Catholic Church because of the difficulties involved would no longer be truly ecumenical".⁷⁶ Further he goes on to ask quite frankly whether some member churches use a different standard in judging the RCC: "Do we not find many of the other member churches incomprehensible, strange and annoying"? ⁷⁷

A characteristic of RC literature on the ecumenical movement of the period was its almost total preoccupation with the realization of full ecclesial unity in creed, cult and code. This did not go undetected by high ranking World Council officers. While acknowledging that such a stress made the WCC cognizant that faith and order issues were indeed the most decisive for Rome, Dr. Visser't Hooft criticized the RCC for having a limited vision of the ecumenical movement. For him, the WCC can only treat these issues in the context of the whole ecumenical question. Before the churches are able to unite on weighty divisive faith and order matters, they first must be able to trust one another in a living relationship. He asserted:

To understand the significance of the World Council one must be able not only to ask what specific progress is made to arrive at greater doctrinal agreement, one must at the same time watch to what extent the participating churches are in fact engaged in the process of of spiritual cross-fertilization, to what extent their life is renewed through more intimate contact with the other churches, to what extent they learn to render a common witness to the world. It might be that we are in a period of ecumenical history in which the churches have to learn to live together and

⁷⁶Cf. Gaines, pp. 812-13.

⁷⁷Ibid, p. 813.

to grow together before they can take far-reaching steps in the realm of reunion.⁷⁸

In his report to the CC of the WCC meeting at St. Andrews in 1960, Dr. Visser't Hooft indicated that the WCC must avoid two dangers in its relationship with the RCC. In its concern for the unity of all Christians, it must not set itself up as an alternative to the Church of Rome. Since the WCC is the fruit of both the L&W and the F&O traditions, the report maintained that the WCC must not bow to pressure from RC theologians who suggest that the whole life of the Council ought to be tied up with "theological study and conversation about issues of reunion of the churches". Visser't Hooft avers that the practical tasks are both vital to the life of the WCC and go a long way in advancing unity.⁷⁹ Further reflection on the effect of such factors on the nature of the Church and its unity led the Holy See to replace its "return" model of reunion for one of common repentance, reconciliation and renewal.

6. Pope John XXIII and Christian Unity

Touched by the "disheartening" sight of the modern world the grave problems confronting religion, and Christian division, Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), on 25 January 1959, in an address to a group of cardinals, unexpectedly announced his decision to convoke an ecumenical council of

⁷⁸Visser't Hooft, "Notes on Roman Catholic Writings," ER 8 (January, 1956), p. 192.

⁷⁹Minutes and Reports of the Central Committee, 1960, p. 110.

the Church universal. Radiating a joyful optimism, he was convinced that an aggiornamento ("bringing up to date") of the Church would be of immense benefit for the whole world and an inducement for separated Christians to follow the RCC in the quest for "unity and grace".⁸⁰

In his 1959 Ad Petri Cathedram encyclical, Pope John confirmed that the deepest motive which prompted him to call an ecumenical council was the vision: "There will be one fold and one shepherd" (John 10:16). By undertaking an examination of the nature of the church and its unity, Vatican II was intended to foster growth towards this goal. Pope John claimed that the RCC is set apart and distinguished from all other Christian communities by her unity of doctrine, unity of polity and unity of worship. In anticipation of a reunited Christendom, he addressed those separated from the Holy See as "sons and brethren". He further stated: We address ... as brethren, all who are separated from us" and whether they like it or not they will continue to be brethren as long as they continue to recite the "Our Father". In Rome's request that they return to the unity of the church, he asked the separated brethren to observe that "we are not inviting you to a strange home, but to your own, to the abode of your forefathers". Where religious truth was not known with certainty, Pope John was wont to refer with approval to the theological adage "In essentials, unity, in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, charity".⁸¹

⁸⁰For text text of address see, T.C. Cranney Pope John and Christian Uity. Graystone, NY.: Graymore Press, p. 36.

⁸¹Cf., Ihm, The Papal Encyclical 1958-1951, pp. 11-13.

In the realm of theology, he distinguished between the formulation and content (or substance) of doctrines.⁸² While adamant that all revealed doctrine in scripture and tradition (which has been so defined by popes and legitimate ecumenical councils) are sacrosanct and have to be believed, Pope John insisted that the doctrine need not be identified with the way it has been traditionally presented. He advocated the application of the latest methods of modern research in the study of doctrine so that their timeless truths are made more accessible to the conceptual and literary forms of modern thought.

Predictably Pope John's "aggiornamento" deeply affected the RCC's understanding of the WCC and its approach to Christian unity. Within a month after the announcement of the Council, the Executive Committee of the WCC discussed the implications of the proposed Ecumenical Council of the RCC. It was hoped that it would pave the way for greater cooperation between the RCC and the WCC in areas of social justice, peace, theological conversations and religious freedom.⁸³

By his June 1960 motu proprio "Superno dei nutu," Pope John gave a new impetus to ecumenical endeavors with the establishment of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity (SPCU). Appointed as its president, Cardinal Bea chose Jan Willebrands as his executive secretary. Not merely a concrete testimony of the Holy See's good will

⁸²At Vatican II, Pope John (in his opening allocution) reminded the bishops: "The substance of the ancient doctrine is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another". Cf. Abbott, p. 715é

⁸³"Report of the Executive Committee to the Central Committee," Minutes and Reports...Central Committee, Rhodes, Greece, August 19-27, 1959, pp. 94-95.

towards dissident Christians, Pope John intended that the SPCU be used to facilitate their understanding of Second Vatican Council and to aid them on their path to unity.⁸⁴ Firmly convinced that "ecumenism thrives on knowledge," Cardinal Bea was determined that from the beginning a fundamental task of the SPCU would be "the provision of various information".⁸⁵ While anticipating no problems in joint cooperation between the Church of Rome and ecumenical bodies on issues pertaining to social justice, promotion of peace, and charitable works, Cardinal Bea maintained that they must take a long range view towards reunion.

Aside from doctrinal problems to be overcome, the WCC had no authoritative organ that could speak and act for it in a way the SPCU could for the RCC.⁸⁶ In a message addressed to the CC of the WCC meeting in St. Andrews, the Executive Committee of the WCC avowed that the creation of the SPCU "means that the real problems will come to the fore".⁸⁷ Given Rome's unprecedented decision to invite other Christians to Vatican II, the Executive Committee of the CC recommended that the CC accept the Holy See's invitation to send two official observers to the Council. In anticipation that this request would be accepted, the Executive Committee appointed Lukas Vischer, Secretary in

⁸⁴Pope John XXIII, "Address to SPCU," in TPS, 8 (1962), p. 28. Prior to the public announcement of the establishment of the SPCU, the Vatican, out of courtesy, informed the Secretary General of the WCC of its decision.

⁸⁵"Introduction: His Eminence Cardinal Bea," SPCU-Info, 1 (1968), p. 3.

⁸⁶Galnes, pp. 818-819.

⁸⁷Minutes and Report ... Central Committee, St Andrews, 1960, pp. 103-04.

the FOC, as one of its official delegates. At the next meeting of the CC, the recommendation was accepted as requested.⁸⁸

Prior to public announcement of the Vatican decision to establish SPCU, the Secretary General of the WCC was notified of the intention. Fruitful meetings between the leading officers of the WCC and the SPCU took place at St. Andrews in August 1960 and in Milan in September 1961. In August 1962, Visser't Hooft publicly announced that the WCC would be sending three observers to the forthcoming Ecumenical Council because "we must realize that the Council is our affair as well".⁸⁹ Such statements helped foster ecumenical contacts between the RCC and the WCC. On 15 April 1964, the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the SPCU and the WCC was established.⁹⁰

⁸⁸CC, Minutes...Paris, France, August 7-16, 1962, pp. 79.

⁸⁹Quoted by Cardinal Bea, Ibid. With the new ecumenical openness, the RCC sent official observers to the Third Assembly of the WCC (New Delhi 1961), the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order (Montreal 1963) and to the annual meetings of the CC of the WCC. At a special meeting, prior to Montreal 1963, the FOC discussed the agenda with RC officials. At the conference itself, the RC official observers and guests took an active part in all proceedings (except voting) and Dr. Raymond Brown gave a keynote address to the plenary assembly. With the presence of all the major traditions present, the President of the Conference made reference to the "promising chaos" of Montreal. Cf. "The Ecumenical Movement and the Roman Catholic Church" in HEM II, pp. 332-33.

⁹⁰Ibid. Cardinal Bea described the JWG as "a striking innovation of the post-conciliar epoch". Over the years covering its inception in 1965 to the sixth assembly of the WCC in 1983, the JWG has submitted five official reports which have been approved by competent authorities from both the RCC and WCC. Having no negotiating or decision making power, the aim of the JWG is to study the possibilities for ecumenical dialogue and collaboration, to examine together problems, and to bring their respective findings back to their respective authorities. It also would study problems surfacing from "bilateral dialogue" between the RCC and WCC member churches, problems pertaining to the mutual exchange of

(Footnote Continued)

Akin in spirit and thought to Pope John, Cardinal Bea insisted that baptism unites all Christians into a divine life which must be nurtured to full maturity. This sacrament of initiation unites all Christians in the church by bond of visible unity. Cardinal Bea was very influential in shaping Vatican II's teaching on ecumenism. Along with the promotion of the SPCU to the rank of a conciliar commission, the influence of its president increased accordingly.

7. Summary

From the birth of the ecumenical movement in 1910 to the establishment of the WCC in 1948, the Holy See was a non-participant in the ecumenical movement. Perceiving that it pertained grave errors, Rome prohibited its membership from participating in it. Rooted in its dogmatic conviction that the RCC is the one true Church of Christ, the magisterium worked towards getting all dissident Christian communities to return to the true fold.

While some of its avant garde ecumenists recognized that by reason of baptism all baptized believers are incorporated into the Church and that non-RC Christian communities have some imperfect form of ecclesial

(Footnote Continued)

observers, collaboration in social and charitable tasks, prayer for Christian unity, questions concerning lay men and women in the church, the role of women in the church and the world. Ibid, pp. 3-4. Given its importance, the JWG is composed of some of the most influential people from both sides. For example list of members first appointed to the fourteen member JWG were: from the WCC side - W.A. Visser't Hooft, V. Borovoy, R.H.E. Espy, N.A. Nissiotis, E. Schlunk, O.S. Tomkins, P. Verghese, L. Vischer; from the RCC side - J.G.M. Willebrands, T. Holland, W.W. Baum, C. Boyer, P. Duprey, J. Hamer. SPCU-Info, 1967, p. 4.

status, the Holy See was not prepared to move that far. With Mystici Corporis in 1943, Rome indicated its intent to move away from an one-sided emphasis on the visible Church to a more balanced definition of the nature of the Church as the mystical body of Christ. Theological reflections upon this encyclical lead the Holy See to a new appreciation of the ecumenical movement, the membership of dissident Christians in the Church and the ecclesial status of their communities.

Taking a very cautious attitude, the Church of Rome up to the time of Pope John XXIII remained outside the one ecumenical movement. Keeping well informed about its workings, the Holy See condemned in the 1928 the ecumenical movement for grave errors with respect to the nature of the church and for undermining doctrinal unity. Constantly testing the ecumenical movement to determine whether it was of God, the Holy See gave the first official indication that it was in Instructio Ecclesia Catholica of 1948. With Pope John XXIII the RCC set out on a new path of renewal and reform in which separated Christians were invited to join. Vatican II was the watershed event in which the RCC became a full partner in the one ecumenical movement.

For the WCC, which is a privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement, the RCC has been a sign of contradiction. While some member churches see the Church of Rome as something the WCC should not become, it becomes for other a reminder of the disunity that exists in the WCC. All member churches are aware of the debt they owe to the RCC.

C. Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and Christian Unity

At Vatican II, the magisterium confronted the thorny question of the ecclesial reality and status of non-RC Christians and their churches and communities. Though its conciliar response is imbued in all sixteen documents produced by the Council, it is explicitly expounded in the two documents "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" or Lumen Gentium (hereafter cited LG)⁹¹ and the "Decree on Ecumenism" or Unitatis Redintegratio (hereafter cited UR).⁹² Based on the ecclesiology explicitly expressed in LG, the magisterium, in UR, defined the role of the Church of Rome in the ecumenical movement. In places, however, UR's treatment of the general tenets which underpinned Rome's participation in the ecumenical movement helped both clarify and develop LG's conception of the nature of the church.

1. Vatican II's Teaching on the Nature of the Church

On 21 November 1964, LG was solemnly promulgated.⁹³ From the start

⁹¹"Lumen Gentium" in Abbott, nn. 1-69, pp. 14-96. In its eight chapters LG deals with the following topics: the Church as mystery (nn.1-8), the people of God (nn.9-17), hierarchy (especially episcopacy) (nn.18-29), the laity (nn.30-38), the call to holiness (nn.39-72), religious (nn.43-47), eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church (nn.48-51), Mary's role in salvation history (52-69).

⁹²"Unitatis Redintegratio" in Abbott, nos. 1-24, pp. 341-66. In addition to its Introduction (n.1), UR consists of three chapters: Catholic Principles on Ecumenism (nn.2-4), The Practice of Ecumenism (nn. 5-12) and Churches and Ecclesial Communities separated from the Roman Apostolic See (nn.13-24).

⁹³A Protestant commentator, Albert C. Outler, declared that LG may be described as "the masterpiece of Vatican II" because it was "the first full-orbed conciliar exposition of the doctrine of the Church in Christian history", and for "its truly pastoral tone and ecumenical spirit". Cf. Abbott, pp. 103-06; especially p. 103.

It made clear that the church can not be scientifically analyzed as merely a socio-historical institution. By an "excellent analogy" when compared to the mystery of its theandric head (Christ), the church is one complex reality composed of divine and human elements. Moving away from the Counter-Reformation Reformers stress on the visible church, LG placed the emphasis on the inner and spiritual communion which existed between the head and members of the mystical body. As the constant source of life and nourishment for the church, Christ unites his mystical body in himself to the triune God and to one another.

As the title for chapter 1 ("The Mystery of the Church") suggests, the church is foremost a "mystery" (LG n.1).⁹⁴ It is indissolubly bonded to the ineffable mystery of the crucified and risen Christ who revealed and manifested God's kingdom in his person and work. The Holy Spirit continually gives testimony that Christ, the refulgent light of all nations, is always present to his church. Depicted as God's very own organism, the church both announces God's kingdom as realised in Christ and experiences it as a present reality (n.5). On 29 September 1963, in his opening address to the second session of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI appropriately reminded the Council that the church is primarily the sacrament of Christ, "a mystery, a mystic reality, steeped in the presence of God".⁹⁵ Reflecting this papal understanding, LG placed its primary emphasis on the invisible aspect of the Church. Even though the

⁹⁴Originally as indicated by the title of the draft for chapter I "The Nature of the Church Militant", the drafters intended to focus the discussion around the visible dimension of the Church.

⁹⁵Cf. "Salvete Fratres," TPS 9(1963-64), p. 131.

Church as an instrument of salvation is an hierarchically structured society, its first importance lies in the fact that it embodies and reflects the mystery of triune God. Though but a "small flock" in the world, the church, as a communion of "life, charity and truth," is a sacrament of an intimate union with the triune God and a "sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation" for all humankind (LG nn.189).

The church, though visibly founded by Christ on the apostles, has eternally existed in the hidden purposes of the triune God. Flowing out of the eternal love of the Father for humankind, it is made one by the power of the Holy Spirit. Perpetually renewed and sanctified by the indwelling Spirit, the Church, as the visible symbol and instrument of invisible grace, is embraced and made "one with the unity of the Father, Son and Spirit (LG n.4). Without elaboration, the Council affirmed the ancient Catholic axiom that all human beings are justified by Christ. In him all just men and women, from the first just man "Abel" till the last just human being "will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church" (LG n.2). The Council avowed that the church alone is God's divinely-constituted instrument of salvation. Hence, even in this pluralistic world the church is necessary for the salvation of humankind (LG nn.9&14). However, within the world, other Catholics, Protestants, non-Christians are related to the RCC (in which the fullness of the church of Christ subsists) in different ways (nn. 13-17).

By treating the kingdom (or reign) of God and the Church as two distinct entities, Vatican II took an important step away from an earlier ecclesiology which explicitly identified the two concepts (for example, Pope Pius XI in his Quas Primas, 1925). The church is subordinate to the God's kingdom which will obtain its eschatological

fulfillment on earth only at the parousia (LG, n.5). At this time all creation will be re-established and consummated in Christ to the glory of the triune God. Despite the important distinctions between the two terms, the Council recognized that the pilgrim church is very intimately tied up with the kingdom of God. Being the primordial sacrament of Christ, the church (as the messianic, pilgrim people of God) is the kingdom of God in mystery.⁹⁶ Not only is the church a tangible sign to the world that the all embracing reign of God in creation has already begun, it, through word and sacrament, witnesses to and prepares for the full manifestation of the kingdom in time and history (LG n.48).

Through the sacraments, especially baptism and eucharist, individual believers become strongly united to the head (Christ) and to the members of the mystical body. As the soul and principle of this body, the Holy Spirit "mystically" incorporates all recipients of baptism into the church. At the moment of baptism, they are initiated into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and thereby joined in union with the Head and members of that body (LG n.7). Brought into communion with Christ, the members of the body are formed into the image of the head (Christ) who is "the image of the invisible God and in him all things came into being" (LG n.7).

The new inner life and unity which is symbolized and effected by baptism is nourished and brought to organic perfection through the eucharist by which "we are taken up into communion with Him and with one

⁹⁶ Vatican II (e.g. LG, Chapter II) often uses the image "people of God" (or a variant of the same) to describe the nature of the church. It refers to those united to the mystical body of Christ.

another" (LG n.7). As "the fount and apex of the whole Christian life," the eucharist expresses and brings about the highest possible koinonia or communion (LG nn.3&11). It lies at the very core of the mystery of the ecclesia. The Council draws upon a number of biblical images taken from various avenues of life to help deepen its understandings of the nature of the church - for example: sheepfold, the field of God, vineyard, edifice of God, Our Mother, spotless spouse (LG n.6/).

Though its major focus was upon the inner mystery of the Church, Vatican II insisted that in the world the Church is constituted and organized as a hierarchal, juridical and visible society. While Vatican II acknowledged that the mystical body of Christ is more inclusive than the the RCC, Vatican II reaffirmed the specialness of the latter.⁹⁷ For on earth the one church subsists in the RCC "which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops" in "hierarchical communion" with him (nos.).⁹⁸ Through episcopal consecration one receives the fullness of the sacrament of order. In full eucharistic fellowship with one

⁹⁷By concentrating on the spiritual communion existing between the Head and the members in the mystical body, Vatican II further developed Mystical Corporis's conception of the body of Christ. Though the mystical body and the RCC are of the same reality, the former was said to transcend the latter (LG n.8). Much more than Mystical Corporis, Vatican II took into account the ecclesial status of non-RC Christian communities.

⁹⁸The Prefatory Note of Explanation on Chapter 3 of LG says that "Communion" (koinonia) is a concept that holds a place of high honour in the ancient Church of the East. While not giving a precise definition for the term, it is pointed out that the term is not to be understood as "a certain vague feeling but of an organic reality which demands a juridical form, and is simultaneously animated by charity". Abbott, pp. 99-100. It is at once a sacramental unity which unites all Christians to Christ and a visible community of life, truth and love founded by Christ on his apostles.

another and the bishop of Rome as head, the bishops succeed the apostles as shepherds of God's people. This college has full and supreme authority over the universal church of Christ (nn.22&23). The koinonia which exists within the episcopal college is a reflection of the church's own collegial nature. In every fully constituted local community, the una sancta ecclesia is realized and made present. Hence, the RCC was seen as a communion of local churches united by bonds of faith, charity and service (nn.23&26). Forming one interlocking complex reality with the invisible aspect of the church, the Holy Spirit, through the visible structures and institutions of the church "vivifies, unifies, and moves the whole body" in order to sanctify and save human beings (LG nn.7&8).

While all just men and women by reason of Christ's salvific will are joined to the people of God by spiritual bonds (LG n.15), all are not necessarily in full communion with his one, visible church. Full incorporation into the ecclesia requires possession of the Holy Spirit, acceptance of its entire system of ecclesial organization, acceptance of all its means of salvation and union "with it as part of its visible bodily structure, and through it with Christ, who rules it" through his viceroy and bishops (LG n.14).

LG taught that elements which belong properly to the RCC can be found outside her visible boundaries. RCs are especially linked to non-RC Christians by various visible and invisible bonds, for example, baptism (and to some by other sacraments), common faith in the triune God and acceptance of Christ as God and Saviour, prayer and other

spiritual benefits.⁹⁹ More importantly "we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them, He gives his gifts and graces, and is thereby operative among them with His sanctifying grace" (LG n.15). Hence, LG implicitly allowed for the possibility that the one true Church of Christ subsists imperfectly in other Christian communities. It is only within the RCC, however, that all the elements of truth and sanctification are fully incorporated (LG n.14).

Simultaneously embodying holiness and called to pursue and cultivate a life of sanctification (nn.39-42), the church has need of visible institutions and structures in its vocation of nurturing the faithful in truth and charity. Though in her essence the church is without sin, Vatican II declared that in the concrete situation her human institutions and structures are constantly in need of purification and renewal (n.15). The Holy Spirit, the principle of unity in doctrine and fellowship, simultaneously arouses the desire for unity and brings together into communion all Christ's people (13&15).

2. Vatican II and the Unity of the Church

⁹⁹ Though RCs and Protestants share common ecclesial elements, Vatican II indicated that this does not negate that both might still be far apart on the ways they understand them. Though both RCs and Protestants share generally the same scripture, for example, there exists a major methodological difference in their approach to it: "But when Christians separated from us affirm the divine authority of the Sacred Books, they think differently from us ... about the relationship between the Scriptures and the Church. In the Church, according to the Catholic belief, an authentic teaching office plays a special role in the explanation and proclamation of the written word of God (UR n.21/363)".

Prior to the start of Vatican II, the bishops were aware of two draft texts on Christian unity which had been prepared for Council discussion. Composed by the Commission of the Oriental Churches, "Ecclesiae Unitate" placed a one-sided emphasis on the importance of the Eastern tradition for achieving Christian unity. Meanwhile, Chapter XI ("De Ecumenismo") of a draft on the dogmatic constitution of the church (which was issued by the Theological Committee) left no room for a treatment of the other Christian communities. Upon receiving equal standing with the other conciliar commissions, the SPCU was also in a position to bring before the Council its own draft. At the first session, the bishops voted that members from each of the above groups get together and compose a common draft.¹⁰⁰ The final document which was approved by the Council (by a vote of 2137 to 11) on 21 November 1964 reflected a fusion of these draft texts.

With the promulgation of UR that very same day by Pope Paul VI, the RCC fully entered into the one ecumenical movement. Consistent with the Council's desire for the reintegration of all Christians into Christ's "one and unique" church, UR's program of reform aimed at facilitating this process (UR n.1/341). It injected a new dynamism, a new direction into the quest for unity. Welcoming the sincere and indefatigable efforts on the part of the separated brethren to recover the gift of

¹⁰⁰For the full texts see "The Documents Behind the Decree on Ecumenism," One in Christ 3 (1967), 472-500. On 22 October 1962, Pope John XXIII made the SPCU equal in rank to the other ten conciliar commissions. Hence, the SPCU was able to assume a more dynamic role in shaping the Council's proceedings. Paul VI in his 13 January 1966 Apostolic Letter "Finis Concilio" reestablished the SPCU as a permanent commission of the Holy See with the mandate (in consultation with the pope) to direct and coordinate the catholic principles of ecumenism.

unity which Christ gave to the ecclesia (UR n.1/342), Rome was no longer content to wait till they returned to her in mass. Disregarding her Tridentine defense mentality, the RCC extended an invitation to separated Christian churches to join her in a common pilgrimage towards the one church of Christ. Vatican II expressed the hope that the ecumenical movement could guide all Christians to "full and perfect unity" (UR n.5/350).

Based on its understanding of what revelation has disclosed about about the nature of the church and its unity, UR taught that Christ, from the beginning, gave the gift of unity to his church as one of its distinguishing characteristics. After fully manifesting the church by his life, death and glorification, Christ sent His Spirit to be her principle of unity. By distributing various "spiritual gifts and ministries," the Spirit gathers "the people of the New Covenant" into a spiritual communion of "faith, hope and charity" (UR n.2/443-44). Since Christ also founded his church visibly on the apostles, the people of God are called to express its communion in the ecclesial structures of this institution. By divino jure, the apostolic college (with Peter as head) and its legitimate successor, the episcopal college (with the pope as head), have the divine mandate to govern the church and preserve its unity. "The highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit" (n.2/344). It is from this total framework that UR examines the ecclesial status of other Christian communities.

On his church, Christ bestowed the gift of unity. Despite the fact that large Christian communions have separated from the church and are no longer in full communion with her, the church has never lost its

unity which is destined to grow (in answer to Christ's own priestly prayer "ut unum sint") until the parousia (UR n.4/348). According to UR the unity which Christ bestowed upon his church from the start "dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time" (UR n.4/348).

Unfortunately to varying degrees, various Christian communities are no longer in full unity with the Church of Rome. Such separation is contrary to God's will, scandalizes the world and stymies the preaching of the Gospel to all the humankind. Indicating that men and women from both sides must share the blame for such sinful division, Rome asks pardon for the part her members played in creating this tragedy (UR n.3/345). Till all Christians are reunited in the one Church, Christian divisions will continue to prevent the church from realizing the "fullness of catholicity" and expressing it in every facet of human life.

Because RC and non-RC Christians share a sincere faith in Jesus Christ, they are already united in grace and charity in a way that transcends all their confessional differences. United to one another by visible and invisible bonds, especially by the sacrament of baptism, Vatican II recognized that other baptized Christians are incorporated into Christ's church. As instruments of salvation, their communions have ecclesial status.

Though to varying degrees, the non-RC communities subsist in the one true Church, Vatican II makes it clear that the RCC alone is "the all-embracing means of salvation". Entrusted by Christ with "all the blessings of the New Covenant," UR advocates that the full, visible unity which all Christians are seeking can only be realized in communion

with the apostolic college with the pope as its head. As the churches through ecumenical study and dialogue gradually overcome obstacles to perfect ecclesiological unity, they will be drawn into common celebration of the Eucharist which is a sign and effective cause of the fullness of visible unity with which Christ blessed his church.

a) The Question of Incorporation into the Church

Constituting a "sacramental bond of unity" baptism is the gate through which human beings enter the visible church which is "necessary for salvation" (UR n.22/364; LG n.14/32).¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, baptism is orientated towards the fullness of visible unity in doctrine, cult and church government which finds its fullest expression in the Eucharist. While the separated churches share, to a greater or lesser degree, many ecclesial bonds of unity with the RCC, they are not fully incorporated into the "society of the Church". For full incorporation into the RCC the baptized person must possess the Holy Spirit, acceptance of all means of salvation, union with Christ within the visible structure of the church which is governed by the bishops (in union with Christ's viceroy), and a union which is effected by "bonds of professed faith, of the sacraments, of ecclesial government, and of communion" (LG n.14/13). Hence, even though separated Christians were in the church, they lack the fullness of unity which ought to naturally flow from

¹⁰¹Addressing the SPCU on 28 April 1967. Pope Paul VI maintained that there already exists a "basic unity" between the RCC and all baptised persons by their faith in Jesus Christ to the glory of the trine God. Cf. TPS 12 (1967), p. 99.

baptism (UR n.22/364). Because of their divisions, the RCC is unable to effect in dissident Christians joined to her in baptism the "fullness of catholicity proper to her" (UR n.4/349).

b) The Ecclesial Reality of Separated Churches

Complementing the image of the church as the body of Christ with other rich biblical images (e.g. "new people of God", communion), Vatican II taught that the church of Christ transcends its visible boundaries. The unique fullness of the Una Sancta "subsists" in the RCC. Since the church does transcend the RCC, Vatican II was led to the conclusion that the church is realized, though imperfectly, in other Christian communities. These communities are in communion with the RCC to a greater or lesser degree depending on the extent they embody the various elements (e.g. sacraments, episcopal structure) which the magisterium deems essential for visible unity. Possessing many visible and invisible ecclesial bonds which properly belong to the RCC, these incomplete ecclesiastical bodies are for their members vehicles of grace and salvation. Being instruments of the Holy Spirit, they are "not deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation" (UR n.3/346). The Orthodox Church and to a far lesser extent the Anglican Communion merited special mention. Not only separated Christians, but those who explicitly believe in God and even atheists who strive to live

a good life are joined in some way to the mystery of the one church of Christ (LG nos.13,16/32,34-5).¹⁰²

c) Unity Embodies Legitimate Diversity

Without abandoning anything indispensable to its doctrine and life, UR insisted, that for the restoration of Christian unity, there has to be "unity in essentials" (UR n.4/349). Since the church's catholicity, apostolicity, and missionary thrusts strongly support and promote the particularity of the local churches in union with the Holy See, the unity of the church is not to be identified with uniformity. The church's beauty, richness, and endowments are embodied and manifested in the plurality of its liturgy, discipline, and theological formation of divine truth. Hence, legitimate diversity is a basic prerequisite for the reunion of Christendom (UR n.16/360).

According to UR, liturgical pluralism is compatible with "unity in essentials". The diverse rites which are sanctioned by the RCC give a richer expression to its catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.

¹⁰²Prior to the promulgation of UR, Pope Paul VI published in August 1964 his Ecclesiam Suam ("His Church") encyclical. It characterized the Church's mission vis-à-vis the world as a "dialogue of salvation". He contends that it is imperative that the church and the modern world get to know and love one another (n.3). Using the image of concentric circles with the RCC at the hub, Pope Paul stressed the Church of Rome's need to dialogue with humankind at every level - all men and women, all religious people, all Christians, all Catholics. Pope Paul indicates that ecumenical dialogue will vary and take different forms depending on the partners and the situation (nos. 96-113). Cf., Papal Encyclicals 1958-1981. Nos. 1-120, pp. 135-60.

Within the RCC, the Eastern Catholic (Uniate) Churches adhere to their own liturgical tradition (UR n.4/349).

While advocating "unity in essentials", the Decree taught that there are diverse ways to formulate revealed truth. These diverse ways of articulating the essence of doctrine must be viewed as complementary rather than conflicting. The theological heritage of the East, for example, belongs to the full catholic and apostolic heritage of the church (UR n.7/349; n.17/360).

3. Non-Roman Christians Comment on "Decree on Ecumenism"

Generally, Vatican II was well received by official non-RC observers.¹⁰³ Impressed with its dominant notes of reform and renewal, these influential Christian leaders described the importance of this Council in such glowing terms as "revolutionary" and "epoch-making". These commentators were very impressed that the Council, without deviating from RC ecclesiology, was able to present a "surprisingly new mode of expression". By clearly stating the RC teaching on the apostolic faith, Vatican II rejected the sentimental, irenical approach to ecumenism. The observers were in full accord with Vatican II's ecumenical frankness and honesty. They recognized that any consensus founded on a distortion of truth where significant differences between

¹⁰³Cf. O. Cullman, R. McAfee Brown, P. Evdokimov, J.R. Chandra, H. Roux, O. Tomkins, J. M. Bonino, "Comments on the Decree on Ecumenism," ER 13 (April 1965), pp. 93-112.

churches had been glossed over will ultimately inflict great harm on the ecumenical movement and lead to "great disappointment".

The observers noted the new RC openness in its distinction between the church in its esse and its institutional expression in the world. As a significant advance forward, UR acknowledged that the RCC too must share the responsibility for the guilt of sins against Christian unity which have led to a ruptured Christendom. While sidestepping the issue of whether the church itself is capable of sin, UR concedes that in the world the church embraces sinful members. Hence, the text connects the the quest for the unity of the church with its ongoing inner renewal.

Aside from its ecumenical frankness and honesty, the Council's reference to the fact "that there is an hierarchy of truths in Catholic doctrine, by reason of their differing relationship to the bases of the Christian faith" came in for special comment.¹⁰⁴ Imbued in this truth is potential for significant advance in Christian unity. For while all RCs are required to accept the whole of revealed supernatural truth, the magisterium made it clear that all doctrines are not on the same level. For while some doctrines are foundational (e.g. Incarnation), other are derivative (Assumption). This suggests the possibility that the RCC could enter into full communion with another Christian community even though that church cannot endorse a specific dogma (e.g. Assumption).

The official observers commented upon other areas which attest to Rome's new openness and commitment to renewal and reform: recognition of the "ecclesial reality" of other Christian communions, new openness

¹⁰⁴Dr. Cullman appraised this passage to be "the most revolutionary" of all the Council's schemas. Ibid pp. 94-5.

to mixed worship, and new attitude to ecumenical dialogue and cooperation in social activities. It was pointed out, however, that the post-Vatican Church would still have to answer such questions, as to the extent Rome is willing to recognize the "ecclesial reality" of the communities of dissident Christians and the extent to which it would move away from its reunion by return model. While welcoming the RCC into the ecumenical movement, one commentator expressed his hope that Rome would not isolate some issues as "non-negotiable" nor the separated churches would reject its claims outright.¹⁰⁵

4. Summary

By balancing conciliar and papal texts with biblical and patristic teaching, Vatican II opened the door for ecclesial renewal and reform in a way that made the church more relevant to RCs, dissident Christians and indeed all humankind. Through its documents LG and UR, the Council took steps to inaugurate the "aggiornamento" for which it called.

Its deep insight into the church as mystery and not merely as a means of salvation enabled the magisterium to state unequivocally that all just men and women form part of the people of God. All recipients

¹⁰⁵In ecumenical dialogue, the RCC must be willing to expose for reconsideration even such essentials as the "papal principle", which other churches must consider seriously. For in the words of José M. Bonino: "It is to be hoped that, while remaining faithful to its own understanding of the truth, the Roman Catholic Church will not bracket this question out of discussion as 'non-negotiable,' and that the other churches will not entrench themselves behind a declamatory rejection of the 'claims' of Rome and refuse to come to grips with the basic question which these claims pose". Ibid., p. 112.

of baptism are incorporated into the church and orientated towards full communion with Christ and one another by both invisible and visible bonds. Furthermore, the magisterium acknowledged that the vestigia ecclesiae which properly belong to the RCC can, to varying degrees, be found in the communities of the separated brethren. Using these communities as divine instruments, the Holy Spirit brings salvation to their members. Making a very important ecclesiological shift away from the post-Tridentine mentality which did "unchurch" Protestant communities, Vatican II recognized that they do embody within themselves an incomplete realization of the Una Sancta. Given their ecclesial reality, non-RC Christian communities are to varying degrees in imperfect communion with the normative RC communion. By acknowledging these communities as ecclesial realities (Spirit imbued instruments of grace and salvation), the RCC could, with a clear conscience, move away from the return model of Christian reunion to one of renewal and restoration.

D. The Church of Rome and the WCC from 1965-1983

After Vatican II, the ecumenical collaboration between the RCC and the WCC continued to increase. During this period the SPCU issued the "Ecumenical Directory" and other important documents which explained the practical implications of ecumenical principles contained in UR. The JWG between the RCC and the WCC issued four official reports which were approved by the parent bodies. The RCC sent official observers to both the Uppsala and Nairobi Assemblies of the WCC. Moreover, at the Uppsala Assembly in 1968, the RCC opted for full participation in the FOC.

Moreover, Pope Paul VI gave a new impetus to the ecumenical movement by visiting the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. Fifteen years later, Pope John Paul II also visited the same Centre.

1. Joint Working Group Issues Official Reports

At a meeting in Milan in April 1964, Vatican SPCU and WCC representatives proposed the setting up of a Joint Working Group (JWG) with the mandate to explore the possibilities and ways of structuring and developing ecumenical dialogue and practical collaboration. Empowered with advisory rather than decision-making capacities, the JWG was officially formed in 1965. With due consideration given to confessional and regional representation, the JWG was composed of six RC members and eight WCC representatives.¹⁰⁶ Prior to Uppsala 1968, the JWG presented two official reports to competent authorities in the RCC and WCC. Before Nairobi 1975, the JWG issued its third and fourth reports. In addition to accepting the reports, the SPCU and the CC of the WCC (and Nairobi 1975) gave each report wide publication.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The first eight WCC members to serve on the Group were: W.A. Visser't Hooft, V. Borovoy, R.H.E. Epsy, N.A. Nissiotis, E. Schlink, O.S. Tomkins, P. Verghese and L. Vischer. The RC members were: J.G.M. Willebrands, T. Holland, W. Baum, C. Boyer, P. Dumphrey and J. Hamer. Cf. ER, 17(1965).

¹⁰⁷ For full texts of official reports see, ER 18(April 1966), pp. 234ff; ER 19(October 1967, pp. 461-67; ER (January 1971), pp. 45ff; Nairobi 1975, pp. 271ff.

a) The First and Second JWG Reports

As confirmed by its first two official reports, the JWG in its experimental stage was preoccupied with such basic issues as the nature of the ecumenical movement, the aims of ecumenical dialogue, the methods of ecumenical collaboration and the nexus between bilateral. Over this period, the JWG ascertained that the core and focus for the whole ecumenical movement is the one church of Christ. Using an ecumenical methodology in which all participating churches conduct dialogue on an "equal footing", the JWG indicated that the WCC is a "unique instrument" of the ecumenical movement. So that the Church might fulfill its mission to the world, it is imperative that all churches be able to give a common witness to the gospel. As equal partners in a common pilgrimage towards visible unity, the churches have to strive towards obtaining the necessary visible unity in doctrine and life sufficient to live together in full communion or koinonia. Though Christians and their churches are already united to one another by many ecclesial bonds, they still haven't reached sufficient unity to enable them to receive one another's treasures and live together in communion. Until this occurs, the various churches will not be able to give a common witness to humankind.

The two reports confirm that during this phase, the JWG made considerable progress in initiating theological studies, an area that was of special interest to the FOC. Acting upon the proposal contained in the JWG's first report, the SPCU and the WCC created a Theological Commission with its first assignment to make a broad exploratory study

of "Catholicity and Apostolicity".¹⁰⁸ There were other JWG sponsored theological sub-Commissions whose reports simultaneously contributed to the mutual enrichment of both partners and highlighted some of the unity hindering obstacles which needed ecumenical consideration. Some of the more important study texts which had implications for unity were: "On the Ecumenical Dialogue" and "Common Worship and Proselytism".

Aside from collaboration on issues relating to the faith and worship of the churches, these reports enumerated that the WCC and the RCC were developing collaboration in areas pertaining to unity and mission, laity and mission, church and society, service activities and international affairs, and development, justice and peace. Further, discussions took place on common practical problems as mixed marriages, a fixed date for Easter, proselytism, the mandate and composition of the JWG.

b) The Second and Third Working Group Reports

After the Uppsala Assembly, the JWG gave considerable attention to the theme of unity. After Nairobi 1975, it concentrated its efforts on

¹⁰⁸CF., ER "8(April, 1966). For the WCC, the Commission members were: S.C. Agourides (Orth.), J. Bosc (Ref.), J. Meyendorff (Orth.), L. Vischer (Director of FOC), H. Root (Ang.), P. Minear (United). RC members were G. Alberigo, R.F. Brown, A. Ganaczy, J. Hamer, D.E. Lanne, R. Schnackenburg, J. Witte. Cf. ER, 19 (October 1967), p. 463.

In 1969, the Commission completed its task. In addition to the "Catholicity and Apostolicity" document there were seven appendices: "Apostle" in the New Testament; Identity, Change and Norm; Ministry and Episcopate; the Sacramental Aspect of Apostolicity; Conciliarity and Primacy; Unity and Plurality; the Local Church and the Church Universal. Cf. One in Christ 6(1970), pp. 452-82.

"The Unity of the Church - the Goal and the Way" as one of its three priority themes. The other two themes focused on "Common Witness" and "Justice, Development and Peace". It recommended summarizing existing agreements on the "Concepts of Unity", on the apostolic faith, on baptism, eucharist and ministry, on authority, on the elaboration of the study "Unity in one Faith". As a consultative body, the JWG maintained that it must continue to seek and clarify new ways of strengthening the real, though imperfect, existing communion among the churches.¹⁰⁹

2. SPCU Issues Post-Conciliar Documents

After Vatican II, the SPCU continued to clarify the doctrine behind the RC principles of ecumenism (as especially embodied in LG and UR). Before Nairobi 1975, these principles were implemented in important SPCU documents pertaining to intercommunion, ecumenical dialogue and ecumenism in higher Institutes of learning.

a) SPCU Issues "Ecumenical Directory"

¹⁰⁹In relation to the fourth report of the JWG, Cardinal Willebrands wrote a letter to the Secretary General of the WCC on 19 November 1975. He pointed out that this report has special relevance to the FOC and hence to the unity the ecumenical movement is seeking. Though a multi-faceted enterprise, the ecumenical movement would lose its meaning unless "it has both its initial impulse and its ultimate goal in the unity which is God's gift to his people". Continuing, he indicates that the focal point of the whole movement has to be the reaching out for the visible unity of the one, true, universal church which has been commissioned by God to go out to the whole world with the good news of salvation. Cf. SPCU-Info, No. 30 1/1976, p. 24.

In April 1967, Pope Paul VI approved and ordered the SPCU document Ecumenical Directory: Part I (ED I) to be published.¹¹⁰ This terse 24 page text was prepared to provide bishops with a practical normative guide for interpreting and implementing the general principles in UR. In April 1969, the SPCU published the second part of this work.

(1) "Ecumenical Directory: Part I"

Divided into four chapters, ED I examines the setting up of diocesan and ecumenical organizations, problems of the validity of baptism, spiritual ecumenism, and the sharing spiritual activity and resources with separated Christians. This document's treatment of baptism is based on two principles: namely, baptism is necessary for salvation and it can be received only once. Condemning the use of indiscriminate conditional baptism for separated Christians who seek full communion with the RCC, ED I insists that unless there is grave doubt, baptisms administered by other churches are to be respected as valid.¹¹¹ Moreover, as the "sacramental sign of unity," ED I avers that baptism unites all Christians to Christ and in some mysterious way to his one church.

¹¹⁰Full text cited in SPCU-Info 1968/11. Pope Paul VI indicated that for the Holy See this document "is not a compendium of mere advice that may be accepted or disregarded at will. It is a veritable Instruction, a Statement of discipline which must be observed by those who truly want to observe the cause of ecumenism". Cf. Pope Paul VI, "Patient Progress Towards Unity," TPS 13(1969), p. 321,

¹¹¹Ibid., Nos. 14-15, pp. 6-7.

Claiming that the call for metanoia ("a change of heart"), repentance and for prayer is the essence of the whole ecumenical movement, ED I encouraged the adherents of the RCC to share with separated Christian in communicatio in spiritualibus (that is in spiritual activities such as prayer, the sharing of the Word, sacred places). Except in very specified cases, this common spiritual sharing does extend to common worship (communicatio in sacris) with respect to the eucharist, confession and the anointing of the sick.¹¹² Communicatio in sacris is generally prohibited because it a sign of full ecclesial communion already achieved. But as a means of grace and nourishment, however, common liturgical worship is sometimes commended.

At Vatican II, the RCC ameliorated its traditional opposition to shared liturgical worship. According to UR common worship is ruled by two principles: "it should signify the unity of the Church; it should provide a sharing in the means of grace". While the former principle generally forbids common worship, the latter sometimes commends it (UR n.8/352). By permitting and even encouraging some limited and prudent, reciprocal common worship with the Orthodox, Vatican II indicated, at least in principle, common worship can be discriminately employed to advance the restoration of Christian unity. While the ED I did further clarify the two principles relative to the Orthodox, this normative

¹¹²Appendixed to the first official report, the JWG had attached a study document on "Joint Worship at Ecumenical Gatherings" which noted that Christians from the various churches became most acutely conscious of their differences when they came together for worship. It avers that ecumenical worship (especially eucharistic centered worship) must be based on theological, ecclesiological and pastoral considerations for "any fellowship in worship which is not confirmed by fellowship in life does not further the ecumenical cause". Cf. ER 18(April 1966), p. 263.

document remained somewhat ambiguous on how to apply these principles with regard to other separated Christians.

The ED I maintains that in cases of urgent need (e.g. danger of death, imprisonment, persecution, or other grave urgency so determined by the local bishop) separated Anglicans and Protestants can be permitted to share fully in liturgical worship. This is conditional on the basis that all the other criteria are validated. According to ED I any separated individual believer who spontaneously asks for the eucharist and possesses both a faith in that sacrament compatible with the church's and is spiritually well-disposed can be permitted to share fully in common worship for adequate reasons.¹¹³ Aside from danger of death, imprisonment and persecution, the local ordinary (unless the Holy See or episcopal conferences have determined other directives) has to determine whether the need is grave enough to warrant common worship on an individual basis. In similar circumstances a RC may request the sacraments only from those whom the Holy See recognizes as validly ordained ministers (e.g. Orthodox and Old Catholic clergy). Again, ED I remained very ambiguous as to whether there are some special occasions (e.g., mixed marriages, ecumenical gatherings) where common worship may be used as a means to advance unity.

2) Ecumenical Directory: Part II

¹¹³Ibid., n.55/p.11.

Consisting of an introduction and four chapters, the ecumenical purpose of Ecumenical Directory: Part II (ED II) was to promote the Second Vatican Council's teaching on ecumenism in institutes of higher learning (e.g. seminaries and universities).¹¹⁴ It attests that this can be most effectively accomplished by integrating the fundamental tenets of the Catholic faith, sound pedagogical principles and common sense.

Undergirding this ecumenical handbook is the assumption that if genuine ecumenical dialogue is to be fostered, ecumenical participants must first of all have a firm knowledge and firm commitment to their own faith.¹¹⁵ This in turn calls for a truly ecumenical openness of mind. While respecting the conscience and convictions of other Christians involved in the dialogue, the ecumenical participant ought to be able to use the fuller knowledge obtained from the ecumenical sharing to deepen one own faith life. To avoid compromising the ecumenical training and endangering the formation of prospective ecumenists, ED II contends that high priority has to be given to the maturity and preparation of the participants in planning ecumenical experiments and contacts. The document itself makes a distinction between those who are still doing theological courses and those who have completed theological program and have gone on to graduate school to specialize.¹¹⁶ Exhibiting considerable flexibility, ED II from the outset recognizes the need for

¹¹⁴"Ecumenical Directory: Part II," in SPCU-Info 10(June 1970/ii), nos. 64-94/3-10.

¹¹⁵Ibid., nos. 68&76/3, 6.

¹¹⁶Ibid., n. 76/6.

episcopal conferences to adjust the application of the rules to make them relevant to their local conditions and circumstances. Moreover, it suggests that the episcopal authorities associate with them in this task various experts from various fields (including the student representatives themselves).¹¹⁷

b) SPCU Clarifies Principles Governing Common Worship

On 6 October 1968, the SPCU issued a "Note on Intercommunion" stating that the norms governing intercommunion and intercelebration were being violated.¹¹⁸ This common sharing as a means of grace is only permitted when all the criteria as specified in ED I are verified. Further, the "Note" pointed out that common worship is also conditioned by the fact that the separated brethren are unable to approach a

¹¹⁷ Ibid., n.65/p.3.

¹¹⁸ TPS 13 (1968), pp. 327-328. It appears that this "Note" was especially issued in response to the action taken at the Second Conference of the Latin American bishops when five non-RC observers upon request received permission from bishops to receive the Eucharist. Cf. "Ecumenical Notes," The Ecumenist, VI (September-October 1968), p. 189.

In an address to the plenary session of the SPCU on 13 November 1968, Pope Paul VI declared that the "Note" "authoritatively and unequivocally reiterated the position of the Catholic Church on this matter". He maintains that the pilgrimage towards unity is long and arduous because "we cannot avoid theological truth and the exigencies proper to the visible, communitarian aspect of the assembly of believers". By untimely gestures of intercommunion and intercelebration RCs are retarding rather than progressing the ecumenical movement. According to Pope Paul VI, those responsible for such precipitous actions "fail to take account of the essential ties between the mystery of Eucharist and the Mystery of the Church; and they presuppose an agreement-not yet fully reached at present-on the nature of the ministry and the Eucharist". Cf. Pope Paul VI, "Patient Progress Towards Unity," pp. 321-23.

minister minister of their own communion. Such strict interpretation, at least for the present, bans any indiscriminate use of communicatio in sacris for the reintegration of Christian unity.

(1) The Question of Intercommunion

Because of the theological, pastoral and ecumenical significance of intercommunion, the SPCU, on 7 January 1970 issued Declaration of the Catholic Church on the Celebration of the Eucharist in common by Christians of Different Confessions.¹¹⁹ This document merely confirmed Rome's position concerning the doctrinal and pastoral rules governing a common eucharist with non-Roman Christians as set out in UR and explained in ED I. It reminds RCs that ED I is "not a compendium of mere advice that may be accepted or disregarded at will". Rather it is "a veritable instruction, a statement of discipline which must be observed by those who truly want to serve the cause of ecumenism".¹²⁰ While insisting that there was no need to modify the rules in ED I, the SPCU asserted that any changes in its norms governing intercommunion "will be in strict accordance with the Church's profession of faith and it will be of service to the spiritual life of the Church members".¹²¹

(2) On Admitting to Communion in the RCC

¹¹⁹ Full text cited in TPS 15(1970), nos. 1-10/pp. 59-63.

¹²⁰ Ibid., n.8/62.

¹²¹ Ibid., n.110/63.

After receiving papal approval on 25 May 1972, the SPCU issued the document Instruction: On Admitting Other Christians to Eucharistic Communion in the Catholic Church.¹²² Without modifying existing rules but to make their application easier, the Instruction explained the doctrinal principles on which the existing rules governing intercommunion are based. Since the eucharist embodies the Christ given "ministerial power" of the ordained ministry, the unity of the ministry" and the "faith of the Church", this document inextricably relates the mystery of the eucharist to the mystery of the church. It maintains that even as a source of grace, the eucharist is far more than an individual act, but one which involves the whole church. Hence, since eucharistic sharing is a sign of ecclesial community already achieved, it is vital that in permitting separated Christians to communion both principles (eucharist as a sign of unity and means of grace) be safeguarded.¹²³ Because the RCC and the Protestant churches still fundamentally differ in their understanding of the nature of the church and the sacraments, intercommunion, for the RCC, is not possible.¹²⁴ Thus while the RCC

¹²²Full text cited TPS 17(1972), nos. 1-6/173-79.

¹²³In October 1973, the SPCU, without changing any norms governing common worship as contained in ED I, issued another "Note" pertaining to certain inaccurate interpretations about the SPCU Instruction of 1972. It points out that the Instruction do not change any of norms governing common worship at outlined in ED I. Cf. SPCU-Info, 23(1974), nos.1-10/25-26.

¹²⁴Even though the BEM document recorded unprecedented convergences between the Roman Catholics and Protestants on the nature of the Eucharist, the RCC unlike the Reformed Church, for example, still links a valid eucharistic celebration with the ordained hierarchical priesthood. Cf. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, The Ratzinger Report (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), pp. 133, 160, 163-64.

permits intercommunion in exceptional cases, the "catholic" and "protestant" conceptions of the nature of the Church remains too fundamentally opposed to permit general intercommunion.

3. SPCU Issues Document on Ecumenical Dialogue

In August 1970 the SPCU issued to all RC bishops a unjudicial Dialogue Guide, which reflected upon the nature, aim, basis, conditions, method, subject and forms of ecumenical dialogue.¹²⁵ Attempting to present pragmatic suggestions that had a doctrinal basis, the document is a working guide on ecumenical dialogue. Broadly based, its authority derives from three years of theological reflection on conciliar documents, the JWG study report on the subject, suggestions from bishops and episcopal conferences, reports of experts, various SPCU discussions and practical experience in the field.¹²⁶

¹²⁵SPCU, "Reflections and Suggestions on Ecumenical Dialogue," TPS 15(1971), pp. 418-31.

¹²⁶Issued in 1967, the JWG's theological study document "On the Ecumenical Dialogue" insisted that the ecumenical dialogue must be directed towards mutual growth in koinonia. Contending that "unity in essentials is not synonymous with uniformity in everything," it suggested that all ecumenical themes take account of history since all Christian division "have arisen within (and because of) a certain situation of understanding and formulating doctrine, within (and because of) a certain form of piety and of church-life". Advocating that a particular church and its theology form an organic unity in which there are cardinal truths, this study text suggests that ecumenical themes ought to be chosen with caution. For instance, the ecumenical study of mariology will be feasible to the extent fruitful ecumenical research has already been conducted on such themes as salvation, the status of religious knowledge, and hermeneutics. Since Christ for the Christian churches lies at the core of all truth and reality "one should always revert to Christianity, in order to tackle the issue at root". Cf. JWG, "On the Ecumenical Dialogue," ER 19(1976), pp. 471-72, 490.

From the theological basis, the Dialogue Guide aimed to help bishops apply the principles contained in UR to the pastoral situation. Based on the 1964 conciliar decree, the Dialogue Guide explains the process of ecumenical dialogue. According to this SPCU document, the "fullness" of unity of the church is for Christ to bestow in his own way and in his own time.¹²⁷ The Dialogue Guide reiterated that the RCC already enjoys a "certain communion" with non-Roman ecclesial communities because "reborn by baptism" they are endowed with various spiritual gifts. It discusses the problem associated with equal/unequal terminology that some churches bring to ecumenical discussions. While these conversations take place on an equal footing ("par cum pari"), it is not necessarily the case that the churches accept one another as equal visible manifestations of the una sancta ecclesia. Nevertheless, the document positively affirms that in the presentation of doctrine, the RCC accepts legitimate diversity and that "there is a 'hierarchy' of truths in Catholic doctrine, because of their diverse connections with the foundations of the Christian faith".

For the Holy See, the goal of ecumenical dialogue is not for the individual ecclesial communities to score points at the other's expense. Rather, the churches must probe behind the differences so that together they might seek the truth in charity which will permit healing to occur. By presenting the full doctrine of the various churches it is hoped that a genuine synthesis can be obtained. While dialogue is seen as

¹²⁷ This statement provided a nuance to the contention of UR that the unity of the church of Christ subsists in the RCC.

essential, the participants recognize it will not resolve all problems and that some will be seen to be irreducible.

4. SPCU issues Ecumenical Collaboration

With papal approval the SPCU, in 1975, published Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National and Local Levels. As the title indicates, this text contains some important guidelines for the ecumenical development of doctrinal, pastoral and social cooperation at the various levels of ecclesial life.

Special mention is made of the importance of the local church (e.g., particular church, cathedral church) under the local bishop in union with the episcopal college as possessing the fullness of unity. Embodying within itself the fullness of the church universal, the local church (with the local bishop as its visible principle of the fullness of unity) is the visible symbol of the whole church.

Though the diverse Christian churches have real unity by reason of baptism, this unity is incomplete. The ecumenical movement offers opportunities toward the fullness of unity while simultaneously presenting the obstacles that remain to be resolved in keeping with the RCC principles of ecumenism.

Since councils of churches differ in their constitutions and activities, the document noted that the diocesan on the local level and the conference of bishops on the national level must make the theological decision themselves as whether to join such organizations. It maintained that the purpose of such councils is for consultations (consilium) rather than communion (concilium). The SPCU does not think

that any of the various councils of churches "contain in embryo the beginnings of a new Church" which can replace the RCC. Moreover, these councils "do not claim to be churches nor do they claim authority to commission a ministry of word and sacrament".

5. Membership of the RCC in the WCC?

During the period from 1968-1975, the RCC took a more active role in the WCC even though it refused to seek membership. Nevertheless, it did accept full membership into its FOC. Filled with symbolic importance, the Pope made a formal visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva soon after the Fourth Assembly of the WCC.

a) The RCC and Uppsala 1968

By the time of Uppsala 1968, the relationship between the RCC and the WCC had greatly improved. To the Fourth Assembly of the WCC, the Holy See sent 14 official observers. While retaining its status as a non-member, the RCC accepted full official membership into the FOC of the WCC. The SPCU chose the RC theologians that were to serve on the Commission.¹²⁸ Now that the RCC was fully involved in the theological

¹²⁸Before it named the nine RC theologians appointed to the FOC, the SPCU at its November 1968 plenary meeting noted that membership to the FOC is not one of churches but of qualified persons who enjoy the confidence of their respective churches. The RCC members were as follows: A. Betti, R.J. Burghardt, T.Tshibangu, B. Dupuy, D.E. Lanne, J. Medina, J. Ratzinger. Cf. SPCU-Info, 7(May 1969), p. 14; New Directions in Faith and Order 1967, pp. 93, 97; E. Lanne, "Unity & Catholicity," One in Christ, 5(1969), p. 143.

work of the WCC, the JWG, in a supplementary note too its two official reports, suggested that as a general rule all major theological issues should thereafter be treated within the domain of the FOC and not be given to special theological commissions.¹²⁹

In the "editorial" to the official report the editor concurred with the wise decision of the planners of Assembly to keep the question of possible RCC membership in the World Council off the official agenda. For it was clearly recognized that the question of RC membership in the WCC "clearly raises ecclesiological and practical issues the consequences of which for both sides could yet be scarcely be envisaged".¹³⁰ For the present, the JWG also maintained that this was the wisest choice. As the first RC to ever address a WCC assembly, Robert Tucci delivered a paper entitled "the Ecumenical Movement, the WCC, and the RCC". He did not rule out the possibility of Rome applying for WCC membership. He maintained that this problem had to be eventually faced or else the churches run the risk of eschewing significant issues concerning the nature of the church and its unity.

¹²⁹ Uppsala Report, p. 345.

¹³⁰ Uppsala Report, p. XVI. As the first RC ever to address an Assembly of the WCC, the Jesuit Roberto Tucci concurred with the majority opinion that RC ecclesiology did not rule out the possibility of its membership in the WCC. For him, RCs are expecting that the Assembly continue to "place the churches at the service of the contemporary world"; "to set the example of a fruitful consideration of the problems raised by the 'death of God theology' and the new exegesis". He goes on to say that RCs is especially gauging the attitude of the Orthodox churches (whom the RCC considers "sister-churches") and their increasing participation in it. He speculates that this "constitutes a highly important testing-place for the development of future relations" of the RCC and the WCC. Cf. Ibid., p.327-29.

Pope Paul VI and Cardinal Bea (representing the SPCU) sent personal messages to Uppsala 1968. The Pope expressed his church's "lively Interest" in the Uppsala Assembly and its efforts to advance the cause of unity will be blessed by God.¹³¹ While commenting on the Improved relations the RCC and the WCC, he reminded the Assembly that in the midst of all its preoccupations, prayer for unity must take first place, for every other activity has value to the extent "it finds there its inspiration and the principles of its dynamism".¹³²

While rejoicing in the unity that already existed among Christians, Cardinal Bea reminded the Assembly of the fact that divisions which go to the very core of the Christian faith and life still exist. Penitence should mark the beginning of the ecumenical journey which bind Christians one to another. While remaining mindful of existing discord, all Christians must seek to fulfill the will of the Lord attested to in Scripture that "all Christians should be gathered together and united together in the communion of a single Church".¹³³ Cooperating with divine grace, the churches must work together at solving basic divergences so that they may commonly come to realize full ecclesial unity. For him, Uppsala 1968 was more than merely another stage on the way towards ecumenical unity but an event.

¹³¹Uppsala Report, p. 403.

¹³²Ibid., p. 403.

¹³³Ibid., p. 404.

Overall, the RC observers who attended the Assembly were impressed with its results. They summed up their impressions of Uppsala 1968 "as a happy event, filled with promise".¹³⁴

b) Pope Paul VI gives Ecumenical Movement a Boost

Attempting to defuse the suspicion circulating among some Vatican officials that the ecumenical movement was responsible for the growing radical element in the RCC, Secretary General Blake, in January 1969, visited Pope Paul VI. Dr. Blake assured Pope Paul VI that the WCC was confronted with the same problem of how to strike a balance between progressive and conservative factions. A few days later, in his appointment of Bishop Willebrands to replace Cardinal Bea (who died in November 1968) as president of the SPCU, the Pope gave a clear signal that he intended to commit the RCC fully to the ecumenical movement. On 10 June 1969, Pope Paul made a formal visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, a visit full of symbolic importance.¹³⁵

Responding to Secretary General Potter's welcoming address, he praised the WCC as a "marvelous" Christian movement in search for a "recomposition in unity". Frankly, however, he reminded his listeners of the divine establishment of the papal ministry and the divine purpose

¹³⁴ SPCU-Info, 5 (1968), p. 8. Among the observer consultants were: P. Duprey, J. Hamer, T.F. Stransky, and J.M.R. Tillard.

¹³⁵ Cf. "Allocutions of His Holiness Pope Paul VI," ER 21 (July 1969), pp. 267-68.

of his visit: "We are here among you. Our name is Peter".¹³⁶ Further, he reminded his hosts that the "name of Paul which we have assumed" is indicative of the pastoral orientation he wished for his ministry. He expressed joy over the increasing collaboration between Rome and Geneva. Raising the uncomfortable issue of RCC membership in the WCC, Pope Paul franking admitted that it is still only a "hypothesis" because of the "serious theological and pastoral implications" involved.¹³⁷

Some commentators were severely critical of the Pope for his remarks on the papacy and the question of RCC's membership in the WCC. Dr. Blake, however, in his report to the CC meeting at Canterbury in August 1969, commended Paul VI for presenting his deepest convictions in fraternal love without having recourse to hiding them in diplomatic terminology. By criticizing the right of the Pope to publicly state the convictions of the RCC, the critics were indirectly calling into question the right of any church to express its distinctive treasures. Hence, Dr. Blake maintained that Pope Paul had a better understanding of the true purpose of the ecumenical movement than did his critics. While the critics were quick to jump on the Pope's remarks on the papacy, he noticed that little attention was made of the Pope's reference to the Pauline orientation of his ministry. By raising the question of

¹³⁶ Ibid. Over a year earlier (28 April 1968) in an address to a plenary session of the SPCU, Pope Paul VI claimed that the pope, "the indispensable principle of truth, charity and unity," is "undoubtedly the gravest obstacle in the path of ecumenism," SPCU-Info (1967/2), p. 4.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

membership, Pope Paul provided the stimulus which placed this issue for the first time on the ecumenical agenda of the JWG.¹³⁸

6. Possible Shape of Future Unity: "Communion of Communions"

On 18 January 1970, Cardinal Willebrands, in a lecture at Great St. Mary's (Cambridge), officially put the typos model of unity on the ecumenical agenda. Predicting that within five years theologians would have reached sufficient convergence on essential truths of the faith (and subsequent consequences) to warrant a consideration of the concrete forms in which communion might be effected, he proposed that visible unity would be realized in a plurality of types (typoi) of churches within the one universal church.¹³⁹

Drawing from the ongoing fruitful theological discussions on the subject (and actualization of this model in the unity between the RCC and the Eastern (Uniate) Catholic Churches), Cardinal Willebrands indicated that this form of unity permits the churches to manifest common visible unity in faith and morals, sacramental oneness, and share one apostolic ministry while retaining their own theological method,

¹³⁸Cf. "Report of the Central Committee by the Secretary General, Minutes ... Canterbury ... August 12-22, 1969, p.142.

¹³⁹To be distinguished from a diocesan or national church, a typoi has its own phenomenological features and theological meaning. He said: "where there is a long coherent tradition, commanding men's love and loyalty, creating and sustaining a harmonious and organic whole of complementary elements, each of which supports and strengthens the other, you have the reality of a typos". SPCU-Info, 11(July 1970/III), p. 14.

canonical discipline, spiritual and liturgical traditions.¹⁴⁰ This concept of typos moves the divided churches beyond their own identity (without sacrificing their own uniqueness) into full Christian fellowship. In a plurality of typoi, the various churches (e.g., Roman, Orthodox, Anglican, Reformed) can together express the catholicity and apostolicity of one, holy Church. While this model still needs further clarification, it appears that this model can incorporate various insights coming from other models (e.g., the conciliar fellowship model proposed by the WCC; the unity in diversity model present in the Lutheran World Fellowship).

¹⁴⁰ Based on thorough research on the apostolic and patristic tradition, J.M.R. Tillard, one of the chief architects and expounders of this model, contends that the one Church in this normative era was understood as a "communion of communions" with each local community or church (of baptized believers) called together by the Holy Spirit. Integrated into the mystery of the triune God, these communions reflected their unity in the one eucharistic mystery. In the words of Dr. Tillard: "La nature de l'Église telle que la comprend la première Tradition est donc résumée dans la communio, la koinonía. Elle est Églises d'Églises. Saisie en toute son ampleur, elle est communio de communions, apparaissant comme communio d'Églises locales, répandues de par le monde, dont chacune est elle-même communion de baptisés rassemblés en communautés par l'Esprit Saint, sur la base de leur baptême, dans la synaxe par l'Esprit Saint, sur la base de leur baptême, dans la synaxe eucharistique. Cet être de communion constitue son essence. Et la relation à la communion du Père, du Fils et de l'Esprit indique son enracinement jusque dans l'éternelle réalité du mystère de Dieu". Cf. J.M.R. Tillard Église d'Églises. L'ecclésiologie de Communion Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1987, pp. 46-47.

Dr. Tillard's insights on this scriptural and tradition concept has had a significant impact on various international bilateral dialogues, especially the famous RC and Anglican dialogue which led to the "Final Report" text in 1982. Fr. Tillard himself was actively involved in this dialogue. More inclusive, this model also comes in for important consideration in the famous BEM document of the WCC. Referring to himself at the 1989 Budapest Plenary Meeting of Faith and Order as one of the "grand-fathers" of this document, it is to be expected that Fr. Tillard's insights into church as koinonía has made an impact on what has probably been the most significant ecumenical document ever produced.

7. The RCC and the WCC: 1975-1983

The RCC sent a record sixteen official delegates as observers to the Nairobi Assembly in 1975. At the Assembly, Messages were read from Pope Paul VI and Cardinal Jan Willebrands. The Fourth Report of the JWG between the WCC was accepted by the Assembly.¹⁴¹ Pledging "fraternal solidarity" to the WCC, Pope Paul assured the Assembly that "our desire for unity coincides with our own." Between the two partners of the one ecumenical movement, he called for the continuance and development of collaboration wherever possible.¹⁴² Similarly, while applauding the worthy aims of the Assembly, Cardinal Willebrands confirmed that the RCC would continue to direct its best ecumenical endeavors towards overcoming the unresolved barriers preventing unity and finding a more appropriate terminology to express the unity that already exists among Christians.¹⁴³

Commenting on the different aspects of Nairobi 1975, the Vatican SPCU expressed overall satisfaction with the gradual progress that had made towards a common ecumenical description of unity. The goal of a universal council was found to be unacceptable by both RC and Orthodox representatives. Hence, the FOC replaced its 1971 idea to prepare for a truly ecumenical council with the conciliar fellowship theme. The SPCU suggested that at Nairobi 1975 an important new stage was reached in

¹⁴¹For a full text of this IV Report see SPCU-Info, no. 20, 1976/1, pp. 18-23.

¹⁴²"The Fifth Assembly of the WCC," SPCU-Info, 30 (1976), p. 1.

¹⁴³Ibid., p. 2.

the ongoing process of clarifying the conciliar fellowship model of unity. While there are still many ambiguities engrained in the very components of this model, it "at least offers a setting and perspective into which it will be possible to insert the future studies of the F&O commission".¹⁴⁴

At the plenary session, Father Duprey stated that the document of Section II, in harmony with the New Delhi and Uppsala unity documents, marks a "great step forward" in the churches' common pursuit of the unity the Lord wills for the church. But while the Section II document provided a broad framework and perspective for the continuing work of the FOC, Father Duprey suggested that much effort will have to be spent so that the convergences sketched with regard to such issues as unity in faith, unity in sacramental life and worship, and unity of ministry, may be accentuated.¹⁴⁵ At another intervention on behalf of the RCC observers, he suggested that the WCC has reached a new level of maturity. It demonstrated a greater willingness to probe deeper into both the spiritual and active dimensions of its life. This could only help the progress towards that unity which will deepen respect for the diversity of ecclesial traditions and find its foundation in the "whole truth of Christ's Gospel".¹⁴⁶

In their report to the SPCU, the RC observers to Nairobi 1975 gave high praise to the slow but steady work being done by the FOC in its

¹⁴⁴SPCU-Info, no. 30, 1976.i, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 17.

"description of the unity we are seeking". The observers remarked that this task is filled with promise. Overall, they concluded that the Nairobi Assembly seemed to mark a new and important beginning in the pursuit of unity.¹⁴⁷

Along with full membership in the FOC of the WCC, the Vatican took a keen interest in its major study on baptism, eucharist and ministry. When the F&O Working Group responsible for the BEM study received a papal audience on 3 November 1981, Pope John Paul II personally expressed Rome's special interest in this project. Among the delegation were Nikos Nissiotis (chairperson of the Working Group) and Max Thurian. The pope reminded the members of the delegation that by their examination of these issues, they were at once studying realities that lie at the very core of the mystery of the church and her structure and with questions which were the cause of Christian divisions. He maintained that the reunion of Christians is impossible as long as they cannot express a common faith in these aspects of the divine mystery.¹⁴⁸

Nissiotis expressed the FOC's salutations for the pastor of "a church we all respect as, par excellence, the apostolic Church and the Church of Martyrs". He confirmed that F&O was at a "delicate stage" in the BEM study. Indicating that these elements have played a large part in Christian separation, Nissiotis stated that the Working Group wished

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁴⁸SPCU Info, No. 45 (1/1981), p. 2.

to submit to the pope an account of its work and ask both for his theological comments and his blessing.¹⁴⁹

Max Thurian stated that the F&O text on baptism expressed the general agreement of all Christian churches.¹⁵⁰ Also, a new understanding of the biblical view of "memorial" and the acceptance of the real presence as it applied to the eucharist, had enabled "the great majority of Christians" from the various churches to draw much closer to each other.¹⁵¹ While confirming that much work still needed to be

¹⁴⁹Cf. SPCU-Info, No. 45 (1/1975) pp. 2-3.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 3. Being a full member of the FOC and recognizing the significance of the BEM text, the Holy See received it for study and official comment. As part of the process in preparing this response, the Vatican submitted the document to all national bishop conferences and Catholic theological institutions for examination. This unprecedented action marked the first time that the Church of Rome has ever officially accepted for a document that was produced outside her own jurisdiction. Transmitted to the FOC in August, the Vatican response described the BEM statement as a remarkable achievement in ecumenism, which if accepted by the churches, has great potential for advancing unity. Specifically, on the section on baptism, Rome concurs with BEM's basic tenets that baptism is unrepeatable, and that the traditions behind both "believer" and "infant" baptism are both valid. Nevertheless, the Vatican response finds fault with BEM's use of "believer" baptism rather than "adult" baptism to distinguish it from "infant" baptism (for in the RC tradition the baptised infant is also a believer who is incorporated into the church. It also criticized for an inadequate treatment of the doctrine of original sin and confirmation (which the RC tradition accepts as a sacrament). The RC response confirmed that on the basis of baptism "a real, though imperfect communion already exists between divided Christians". Cf. "Roman Catholic Church" in Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" Vol. VI. Edited By Max Thurian. FO II, No. 144. WCC: Geneva, 1988), pp. 1-40.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 3. In her official response, the Church of Rome commended the BEM text for affirming the eucharist as the central act of the church's worship". To obtain a deeper understanding of the eucharist, F&O studied the "classical liturgies as points of reference along with scripture and tradition. Rome was highly impressed with this approach. From the Roman perspective, however, the treatment on the eucharist included the following shortcomings: an insufficient

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done with regard to the ministry, Thurian admitted that there has been a rediscovery of the meaning of the episcopate, the relationship between the episcopate and presbyterate and the doctrine of apostolic succession. Especially there has been a new awakening to the fact that through the ordained ministry the Spirit is active in the church and its tradition. In his address Pope John Paul remarked that the question of the ministry remains a key question for the "re-establishment of full communion".¹⁵²

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examination of the nature of reconciliation in the eucharist (which in the RC tradition is inextricably bonded to an understanding of the sacrament of penance); ambiguity with reference to Christ's presence in the eucharist and the duration of that presence after the celebration. Overall, the Vatican response heralded the consensus reached on the eucharist as a significant development. It advocated that if Protestants can accept BEM's theological understanding and description of the eucharistic celebration and implement it as part of their normal life, they now stand at a new level in regard to achieving faith in the eucharist. Cf. FO II, No. 144, pp. 1-40.

¹⁵²Ibid., pp. 1-3. The official response to the final BEM text acknowledged the complexity of the issue and the difficulty of articulating it in a multilateral ecumenical document: "Perhaps none of the churches or ecclesial communities ... can find its faith and practice in regard to ministry fully reflected and stated in this document in precisely the way that it has understood and experienced it". Rome praised the text for the strong "trinitarian, christological emphasis" it gives the ordained ministry. Using both scripture and tradition, F&O was able to arrive at a common theological foundation through which it was able to provide a "well-balanced description of the ordained ministry" which combined elements of God's call and the church's commissioning. Among the difficulties Rome experienced with the text included: insufficient reference to the ordination as a sacrament or the need for competent ordained ministers; BEM's approach to the ancient tradition is "incomplete because too often it involves only a statement of fact and is insufficiently supported by theological reflection on the normativity" of some of these traditions; a fuller ecclesiology is needed from the Catholic perspective "to put the ordained minister in clear perspective" and to develop adequately the theology of authority, apostolic succession and the ministry of unity in the ordained ministry; while the BEM text recognizes both the common priesthood and the special role of the ordained priesthood, it does not

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The RCC sent a record 20 official observers to the sixth world assembly of the WCC held in 1983 at Vancouver, Canada (Vancouver). Moreover, Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Willebrands sent messages to the assembly. Being involved both in its planning and proceedings, Vancouver 1983 was generally well received by the RCC. Some time in advance of the Sixth Assembly, the SPCU wrote to all episcopal conferences and their ecumenical commissions requesting that they promote Vancouver 1983 as a occasion for prayer and a renewal of their own commitment to the ecumenical quest. At Rome in 1982, two consultations of RC scholars contributed to the preparatory study process for the Assembly.¹⁵³

Prior to Vancouver 1983, the CC of the WCC held its annual meeting at Geneva from 19-23 July 1982. At this meeting, the two SPCU appointed observers revealed the RCC's hopes for the Vancouver Assembly. It was pointed out that the RCC judges F&O issues to be at the very core of all WCC undertakings, the fulcrum of the ecumenical movement and inextricably linked to its goal. Though secular concerns are important, they cannot be permitted to displace F&O concerns as the raison d'être

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state sufficiently, from the Catholic perspective, a belief that these two "differ from one another in essence and not only in degree". The Vatican response approved "the nuanced way in which the "ministry of men and women in the church" is treated. It acknowledged as "a challenge to our position" the experience of churches which ordain women. It said, however, that when the BEM text noted that many churches think their traditions "must not be changed" the Holy See would consider it "much more accurate to say that we have no authority to change it, since we believe it belongs to the apostolic tradition of the church". Cf. FO II, No. 144, pp. 1-40

¹⁵³For text of the consultations, see SPCU-Info, no. 50, 1982/1v, pp. 130-49.

of the ecumenical movement. Accordingly, the RCC prays that the Vancouver Assembly "may make a significant response to the double mandate, for the unity of the Church and for the renewal of humankind".¹⁵⁴ Specifically, it was hoped that the Assembly assure that in the forthcoming years significant attention would be given to the Lima Text on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry".¹⁵⁵

Conveying his message through the RC primate of Vancouver, Pope John Paul II assured the Assembly of "his deep personal interest and closeness in prayer". Pleased with the Assembly's choice of theme ("Jesus Christ - The Life of the World"), he reminded the participants of the janus faced challenges and obstacles in the way of a reunited Christendom. If Christ's prayer for unity is to be fulfilled, all Christians must conform to the will of God, cooperate with his grace, persevere in faith and steadfast hope, and most importantly to persist in "constant prayer and continual conversion".¹⁵⁶

a) Vancouver 1983 and the Fifth Official Report of JWG

¹⁵⁴Cf. SPCU-Info 51(1983/I-II), pp.54-5.

¹⁵⁵By attempting to give content rather than merely define the terms, the SPCU maintains that the Lima document on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" has made a very important contribution to the ecumenical understanding of the nature of the Church and the goal of Christian unity. In keeping with the specific task of the FOC, the BEM text specifically describes the goal of unity in terms of the conciliar fellowship of local churches truly united. Ibid. pp.33-4.

¹⁵⁶For text see, "Message from the Pope," Vancouver 1983, pp. 210-11.

Faithful to the proposals presented in its fourth report, the JWG after Nairobi 1975 focused its efforts on "The Unity of the Church - the Goal and the Way" (in addition to common witness and social collaboration). Assisted by the FOC, the JWG in 1980 issued an important study document entitled "Towards a Confession of the Common Faith". In its fifth official report, the JWG made known its intention to further pursue the themes that has occupied its attention since Nairobi. Especially, it makes mention of the importance of taking initiatives to develop ecumenical consciousness and encourage the churches to take practical, visible steps on the way to unity. For even the greatly improved relations that exist among Christians, the churches cannot ignore the poison that remains in divisions.

The scandal of Christian divisions and their deleterious effect on Christian witness continues to obscure the saving power of Christ's grace. God's plan to sum up all things in Christ requires to be shown forth in common proclamation of one apostolic faith and eucharistic fellowship to be an active power in drawing the human community into reconciliation and oneness. Hence the need to deepen an understanding of the mystery of Christ.¹⁵⁷

As to the question of RCC membership in the WCC, the report provided the same answer as it gave in the 1970s; "not in the immediate future". The reasons given for this particular stance of the RCC had to do with the ways its differed from the WCC in authority, structure and operation.

¹⁵⁷For text see, "Fifth Report of the JWG to the Vancouver Assembly," in ER 35 (1982), pp. 198-218.

It believes itself to be constituted as a 'universal fellowship with a universal mission and structure as essential elements of its identity'..... Thus it gives importance to the difference of structure between itself and the WCC member churches, and the differences of of operation on the world level.¹⁵⁸

Before it was received by the Vancouver Assembly, the SPCU had already given general approval to the fifth report of the JWG. In an official letter notifying General Secretary Potter of the RCC's decision (a letter that was included as part of the Minutes of the Vancouver Assembly), Cardinal Willebrands put particular stress on the fact that the RCC does not favor any ecumenical relationship that downplays the ecclesiological reality that the Church is "inseparably spiritual reality and visible structure". Using an expression of Pope Paul VI, he indicated that the relationship between the RCC and the WCC can be more aptly described as "fraternal solidarity" than collaboration.¹⁵⁹ Cardinal Willebrands makes it clear that the RCC will not participate in any projects that would compromise its own understanding of the nature of the church and its unity. On this point he stated:

The Roman Catholic Church puts strong emphasis on the unity given by Christ through the Holy Spirit and sees it as central to its own existence. It finds its own reality as Church both in the variety of the local churches and in the communion among them, building up the Body of Christ in one Holy Spirit. This reality finds also expression in its constitution 'as a universal fellowship with a universal mission and structure'. Likewise it understands the being of the Church, as mystery of Christ and sacramental sign of his salvation, to be inseparably spiritual reality and spiritual structure. Hence it cannot admit in its

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁵⁹ "Letter of Cardinal Willebrands," SPCU-Info 53(1983/4).

ecumenical relations any action or action which may seem to sit lightly to or reject these ecclesiological realities.¹⁶⁰

He suggests that the WCC in carrying out its tasks, functions and increasing concern with secular concerns keep in mind that "the basic anomaly is the division among Christians and the attitudes of mind and heart which perpetuate it". He indicated that the RCC experienced satisfaction with the decision of Nairobi 1975 that the foremost objective of the WCC was "the visibility of the churches". He recognizes that the presence of RC beliefs and traditions in BEM can present problems for the WCC. Indeed, the future RCC/WCC relationship will depend to a considerable extent on the BEM process.¹⁶¹ Coming into being after two generations of persistent efforts, this document official report of the JWG. It maintained that it gave "a frank, realistic description of the present ecumenical situation, an accurate summary of the activities of the JWG since the Nairobi Assembly, and clear proposals for future work".¹⁶² In accepting the JWG report, the Assembly maintained: "The JWG in itself is important for the visibility which it gives to the RCC/WCC relationship - a symbol of shared commitment to the one ecumenical movement".¹⁶³ The PRC I in approving the document took note of a Letter written by Cardinal Willebrands.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁶² Vancouver 1983, p. 118.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 121.

At the special Lima Liturgy, the RCC, as did the Orthodox Churches, did not participate in the Eucharist. They officially participated only in the Liturgy of the Word. This was in keeping with their traditional position concerning Eucharistic doctrine and discipline regarding communicatio in sacris.

In their report to the SPCU, the RC delegated observers to commented favorably upon the high priority given to worship and the theological thrust generated by the BEM document. According to their assessment, however, the Vancouver Assembly did not broach any novel ecumenical approaches. Rather it attempted to arrive at a fuller understanding of certain facets of the ecumenical agenda and the interrelationship existing between its various programs. In its discussion on the relationship between the World Council as an institution and its constituent member churches, the observers judged that the Assembly "may have strengthened the conviction that the search for church unity in a confession of faith, as in the renewal of society, is the direct responsibility of the member churches as well as of the Council".¹⁶⁴ Rome is convinced that increasingly the ecumenical movement must come to focus on ecclesiology as the core ecumenical issue.

¹⁶⁴Though RCs and Protestants share common ecclesial elements, Vatican II indicated that this does not negate that both might still be far apart on the ways they understand them. Though both RCs and Protestants share generally the same scripture, for example, there exists a major methodological difference in their approach to it: "But when Christians separated from us affirm the divine authority of the Sacred Books, they think differently from us ... about the relationship between the Scriptures and the Church. In the Church, according to the Catholic belief, an authentic teaching office plays a special role in the explanation and proclamation of the written word of God (UR n.21/363)".

Since criticisms on the BEM text were rooted in the church, they were unlikely to be resolved ecumenically unless extended to include the broader area of ecclesiology, Rome encouraged the FOC to undertake a major study of this subject. Nevertheless, the BEM text "demonstrates clearly that serious progress is being made in the quest for visible Christian unity."¹⁶⁵

G. Conclusion

Facilitated by common biblical and liturgical research, ecumenical dialogue and collaboration, the Church of Rome, since Vatican II, has come to accept more fully that the separated churches (to varying degrees) contribute even to the edification of the RCC. Without ignoring that there are still many major obstacles in the way to a reunited Christendom, the Holy See has recognized that the churches are more united than divided in the apostolic faith. At the highest level of authority, Rome has renewed its pledge to finding ways of overcoming the doctrinal and other differences which stymie the reunion of Christendom. On the 12 June 1983, Pope John Paul II made a three hour official trip to the Ecumenical Centre at Geneva (90 minutes of which focused around a worship service). He reiterated that the RCC's commitment to the ecumenical movement is "irreversible" and that the quest for unity is given high priority in his own pastoral ministry.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Cf. FO II, No. 144, pp. 1-40.

¹⁶⁶Cf. ER, 36(October 1984), para. 1, p. 438. The New Code of
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Flowing from a common faith in Christ, Pope John Paul II indicated that the RCC and the member churches of the WCC are already united in a real, though incomplete way, in the mystery of the Church. Reminiscent of Pope Paul VI's visit, fifteen years earlier, Pope John Paul reminded the WCC of the RCC's conviction that in the papal ministry it has safeguarded "the visible pole and guarantee of unity in full fidelity to the apostolic tradition and to the faith of the fathers." While cognizant of difficulties that such a conviction presents to Christians of other churches, Pope John Paul candidly avowed that "fidelity to Christ forbids us to give it up". Indeed, he insisted that if the Holy Spirit really leads the ecumenical movement, this subject will evidently have to be discussed in all frankness and friendship.¹⁶⁷

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Canon Law state that, in conformity with Christ's will for Christian unity, bishops have the obligation to promote the ecumenical movement.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., para. 2, pp. 438-39. As a point of departure for his seminal reflections on the bishop of Rome, Fr. Tillard, from among his many official ecumenical experiences, notes the new dogmatic openness with regard to the papacy among churches that had one time broken away from the episcopal see of Rome. In considering the prospect of seeking communion with Rome, these churches are more ready to accept some exercise as "desirable" and to some extent "required". Cf. Bishop Of Rome (Willington, U.S.A.: Michael Glazier, 1983), p.4. Some recent statements by the heads of major churches confirm Tillard's observations.

Patriarch Demitrios I, in his fraternal visit to Pope John Paul II and the Rome See from 3-7 September 1987, favourably spoke of the Episcopal See of Rome's "primacy of honour" and its responsibility to "preside in charity". He could foresee a reunited RC-Orthodox Church with the pope and a council sharing power. While defending papal primacy, Pope John Paul in his response to the Patriarch did not rule out possible new forms of exercising the papal ministry. SPCU 66(1987/1), p. 25.

The Primate of Canterbury has also admitted that a papal ministry is vital in any reunited church. Surprising, Archbishop Robert Runcie opened up the 1988 Anglican Conference with an address entitled the "Unity We Seek". Attesting that the Anglican Communion has never

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When, however, the topic of papal ministry finds its way on the ecumenical agenda, it may be found that many delegates from the various denominations will affirm that the papal ministry will exercise a vital, dynamic leadership in the future of the whole church. Of the many prerogatives attributed to the bishop of Rome, papal infallibility creates the greatest obstacle to its acceptance by most Christians from other churches.¹⁶⁸

Pope John Paul II indicated that wherever possible common study and collaboration between the RCC and the WCC ought to increase between. Special mention was made of the fundamental importance of the task of the FOC. Its work is of basic importance for "unity in profession of faith conditions the outcome of all the efforts made in common while these efforts in their turn are an important means of progressing

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claimed to be more than a part of the one Universal Church, he avers that bishops and synods are by themselves insufficient to serve the Gospel and safeguard unity in a reunited church. Indicating that Anglicanism has never rejected the papal principle, he indicated that the papal ministry "is an instrument of unity we have been lacking since Henry VIII's juridical break with Rome in the sixteenth century". Before it can become viable in a reunited church, however, he insists that there is a need to renew and reform the papal ministry. Cf. "The Nature of the Unity We Seek," Ecumenism 93(March 1989), pp. 6, 10.

¹⁶⁸ John Macquarrie claimed that the pope is a "sacramental person, an embodiment of the whole church". As such, the pope (especially in union with the bishops and the whole people of God) has a special gift and responsibility to promote the unity of the whole church. Even though many "Anglicans and Protestants" can accept a vital role for the pope in a reunited church, Professor Macquarrie maintained that papal infallibility still presented a formidable obstacle to the acceptance of the papal ministry by the churches. He stated: "I must frankly acknowledge that I do not see any way in which this doctrine could ever become acceptable to Anglicans and Protestants". Macquarrie, pp. 19-20.

towards this unity in the faith".¹⁶⁹ On its part, Pope John Paul pledged the RCC's "firm determination" to do everything possible to clarify doctrinal misunderstandings which will lead to the unity of all Christians in the confession of the apostolic faith. When the churches arrive at this point, Pope John Paul contends that the deeply longed for "restored koinonia" will "shine forth".¹⁷⁰

Both the President of the SPCU (Cardinal Willebrands) and the General Secretary of the WCC (Dr. Potter) issued a prepared "Joint Statement" after the papal visitation. Stimulated by Pope John Paul's visit, the "Statement" reflected a renewed sense of optimism that the two partners in the one ecumenical movement would increase efforts to deepen and further their relationship. While mindful of the partial unity that has already been achieved, the "Statement" frankly recognized that the RCC and the member churches of the WCC were still divided on some outstanding doctrinal disagreements and in their approaches to social issues and pastoral practices. Yet both partners were acutely remindful of the need to overcome obstacles to visible unity so that the whole of Christendom could give to the world a common witness to the one apostolic faith.¹⁷¹

While the ecumenical movement has made much progress towards its goal, the visibility of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of the triune God is still veiled by the scandal of disunity. Fundamental

¹⁶⁹Ibid., paras. 8 & 14, pp. 440-41.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., para. 14, p. 442.

¹⁷¹"Joint Statement," Ibid.

differences concerning God's revelation in Christ, which for centuries have separated (to a greater or lesser extent) the RCC from other Christian churches, could not be resolved in a matter of decades. What was explicitly stated at Amsterdam 1948 (but affirmed much earlier by the F&O movement) still holds true today - "Catholicism" and "Protestantism" are still two alternate ways of understanding and living the Christian faith.¹⁷² Nevertheless, by listening to and allowing for the Holy Spirit's guidance, the Christian churches have travelled a long way towards the restoration of Christian unity. By keeping attuned to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in prayer, life and common studies (e.g. scriptural, theological, liturgical), the RCC in ecumenical dialogue and collaboration with the member churches of the WCC (and other Christian churches) seek to continually advance Christian unity. Despite the scandal of division, the churches must avoid any perforced form of unity which leave major church dividing issues unresolved. Taking their sensitive and onerous responsibilities seriously the RCC and their partner churches in the ecumenical movement look forward in eschatological hope to the time when in good conscience they can share together the eucharistic meal in faithfulness to Christ's priestly prayer "ut unum sint" (John 17).

¹⁷² This reality is even publicly acknowledged by even the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Concurring at the time with the position taken in a document on ecumenism by the Italian Waldensian and Methodist Churches that Catholicism and Protestantism are two mutually different ways rather than complementary avenues of embracing the whole Gospel, Cardinal Ratzinger insisted that the reality of the situation is "that theological progress and a few common documents do not signify a really thoroughgoing rapprochement". Cf. Ratzinger, p. 163.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated that the ongoing modern ecumenical movement launched at Edinburgh 1910 has come to embrace the whole church, the whole gospel and the whole world. Confident that it is not God's purpose that Christianity be fragmented, the Protestant missionary delegates testified that Christian divisions were contrary to God's will for the church, a scandal to non-Christians and a major obstacle to evangelization. Though doctrinal debate had been explicitly excluded from the Edinburgh agenda, the delegates glimpsed a vision of a broader and richer Christian unity. Confessing that in Christ the churches already possessed a spiritual unity, Edinburgh 1910 (and its continuation committee which in 1921 became the IMC) advocated that Yahweh has made the attainment of Christian unity a precondition to the establishment of the one church of Christ in every land.

The Edinburgh 1910 vision of greater unity gave rise to independent international organizations which despite major differences in philosophies and methodological approaches gradually discovered their underlying unity. From different perspectives, the IMC (on common witness), F&O (on doctrinal unity) and L&W (on common Christian praxis) recognized that in pluralistic societies the deepest need is for faith in a living God who holds the initiative. To be joined in 1961 by the IMC, the F&O and L&W movements, while retaining their separate functions, officially integrated in 1948 to become the WCC (a body which became the focal point and a privileged instrument of the whole ecumenical movement).

When they took over direct responsibility for the WCC, the churches no longer left their official relationship to the ecumenical movement undefined. On the basis of a common belief in Christ, the WCC provided the necessary forum where the different churches from the various cultures could get to know and relate to one another on a par cum pari basis. With the WCC as their instrument, the churches raised the quest for unity to a new level of urgency and ecclesiological priority. Through the WCC structures, the member churches for the first time in their history were able to extend their witness to the whole world. Via common prayer, discussion, cooperation and action, the WCC sought to promote and to realize a reunited Christendom. For the first seven years the WCC, in the then typically Protestant fashion, preoccupied itself with United Nations type questions and problems to the neglect of doctrinal issues.

By providing the impulse for the ecumenical movement, it is apparent that many Protestant denominations fostered a willingness to tolerate the invisibility of the ecclesia for only as long as the visible dimension was being assumed by the Christian state. The secularization and dechristianization of Christian societies in the 19th and 20th centuries deprived many national churches (Landeskirchen) of classical Protestantism of the visibility of their own proper socio-political organization. Now, they could no longer point to their relationship with the state as the kingdom of God in anticipation.

With the disintegration of the "holy alliance" between the church and state, many Protestant churches had to look for their visibility somewhere else; hence, in an ecumenical super-organization. Even if this ecumenical body proved incapable of restoring to Protestantism its

socio-political dimension, it would be able to bring together under one umbrella both churches that emphasized Christian doctrine (F&O) and denominations that stressed Christian praxis and ethics (L&W).

Through its employment of dialectical methodology, Section I of the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC confirmed earlier F&O insights that the "deepest difference" between the churches (from which all other church-dividing problems derive) is rooted in two seemingly contradictory ways of understanding the nature of the church. Amsterdam 1948 described this difference in terms of the "Catholic" and "Protestant" antithesis, in which the former stressed the horizontal relationship between Christ and the church and the latter emphasized the vertical dimension of this same relation. With its focus on the divine presence in tradition, Catholicism concentrated on the visible continuity of the church in unbroken apostolic and episcopal succession. Retaining a firm separation between sacred history (Heilsgeschichte) and world history, Protestantism centered on the initiative of the word of God and justification by faith alone.

From Anglican, classical Protestant (e.g. Lutheran, Reformed) and Free church traditions, the Protestant denominations that participated in the ecumenical movement from 1910 to 1954 exhibited remarkable differences in their conception of the church and its unity. Even without the Catholic involvement in the ecumenical movement, a brief analysis of these Protestant bodies confirm that (barring compromise, or comprehension, or proselytism) it was highly improbable that these churches could have achieved among themselves a horizontal or a vertical unity. Preparations for Edinburgh 1937, for example, revealed that Protestant churches were very divided as to whether the chief obstacles

to unity were contained in ecclesial polity (Anglo-Catholicism), in doctrine (European classical Protestantism) or in "non-theological" factors (American Free church type denominations). At Evanston 1954, the European churches declared that the source for their hope is the parousia. With rigorous vitality, however, the American churches affirmed their hope in the world here and now.

It was the epistemological conviction of the Anglican Communion, which confessed to be both Catholic and Protestant, that unity can be sensibly perceived. All Anglican churches to varying degrees (depending on whether a particular congregation is more evangelical or high church oriented) confessed that the church is a God-given visible society endowed with an inherent dignity and nature. As a teaching community, the church imparts to the people the deposit of divinely-revealed truth.

To a significantly greater degree than all other churches to come out of the sixteenth century Reformation, Anglicans placed considerably more emphasis on the essentialness of the church's sacramental and ministerial structure. Through the church's sacramental institutions God and human beings are brought together in unity. Though deeply divided on whether the episcopacy is of divine institution, Anglicans were committed to the form of this office as a necessary, if not essential, element for the church's life and mission. After long association with the state, the Anglican Communion at the beginning of the ecumenical movement expressed the view that the church's primary task consisted in recovering her lost unity (e.g. "Branch Theory").

Even though all non-Anglican Protestant churches adhered to the "gathered church" concept, their interpretations of the term displayed great variance. Churches from classical Protestant traditions (e.g.

Lutheran, Reformed) were apt to understand it much more conservatively than denominations from the Free (or Independent) traditions (e.g. Baptists, Congregationalist).

Generally, classical Protestantism attests that the una sancta ecclesia is called into being and constituted by the written word - Holy Scripture. For its continuity, the church is solely dependent on the ministry of the word and sacraments (baptism and eucharist). To different degrees, the churches from Lutheran and Reformed traditions had consistently cultivated strong socio-political bonds with various European civil societies. No iconoclasts of doctrine, they stated what was perceived to be the original properties of the ecclesia into doctrinal propositions (e.g. Augsburg Confession).

For the good-ordering and structuring of the church, churches of classical Protestantism accepted the ordained ministry as a God-given gift to the church. They, however, espoused the view that no particular ministerial form had been divinely sanctioned as constitutive for ecclesial life and witness. These churches allowed for great diversity and development in forms of ecclesial polity. At all levels of the governing structure, however, they insisted that the functional authority of those holding special offices is received by delegation. For these churches the true invisible church is to be found in all the churches taken collectively.

Increasingly, however, since the 1940s, influential thinkers from churches from classical Protestantism took issue against the Reformation stance that the true church of Christ is invisible. Karl Barth contended that to appeal to the invisible church concept to solve the question of unity was more in line with platonistic speculation than with the mind

of Christ. Due to this dissatisfaction, Protestants came more disposed to give a fairer appraisal of the Catholic stance.

From traditions that never fostered any socio-political ties with the profane institutions of the state, the Free churches (e.g. Congregationalist, Baptist) focused on individuality and freedom. Hence, they gave the "gathered church" concept a considerably more liberal interpretation. Drawn by the Holy Spirit, the church is an "event"- the voluntary gathering of individual believers. To a much greater degree than Anglicans and Protestants of classical tradition, the Free churches were not readily disposed to accept administrative ministries (e.g. teaching) as among the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. With their disdain for doctrinal propositions and sacred institutions, the Free churches professed that for Christians to express their faith in Christ as God and Saviour was a sufficient basis for Christian unity. Except for the authority which arose directly from the congregation itself or the voluntary association of congregations, these ecclesial communities recognized no authority. Influenced by Kantianism, pragmatism, relativism, rationalism, there were many strong minded ecumenists from these types of congregations (e.g. Henry van Dunsen) who were convinced that, except as an ideal, the church and its unity had never existed as a concrete corporate reality. As a means to advance unity, the Free churches reminded the ecumenical movement of the importance of churches being able to come together for Christian diakonia to humanity.

Where as Protestantism in general embodied a mystical conception of church, churches from Catholic traditions reflected an understanding of the nature of church that is at once mystical and sacred. Of the churches that participated in the ecumenical movement, the Orthodox

provided the strongest Catholic witness. For this confessional body, the church of Christ which can never lose its unity is fully embodied in the communion of autonomous and autocephalous Orthodox churches. Unscathed by secularization, the Orthodox claimed that the unity of the church is not for pragmatic purposes. Rather, as illustrated in John 17:22-3, the unity of the mystical body of Christ is rooted in and reflects the very life of the triune-God. To experience the unity of the church with its divinely-instituted hierarchy (endowed with sacramental grace, teaching authority, and jurisdiction) is analogous to experiencing the unity of the triune God. The Orthodox advocated that the restoration of Christian unity involves the return to the doctrinal heritage expounded by the first seven ecumenical councils.

The extent to which Catholics and Protestants can reach theological consensus on any faith element is inextricably related to the extent they can narrow the chasm between their deepest difference. For example, up to 1954 Catholics and Protestants remained fundamentally opposed on the nature of salvation and the necessity of the church for salvation. Though open to misinterpretation, the extra ecclesiam nulla salus principle was accepted by Catholics as a fundamental tenet of faith. Based on the belief that salvation is the acquisition of a new immortal nature, Catholics insist that, in accordance with God's salvation plan, incorporation into the visible, hierarchical society of the successors of the apostles jure divino is imperative for salvation. As Christ's sacrament, it is there that God communicates to human beings the graces to aspire to and realize the interior change necessary to acquire and live the new humanity in Christ (a sharing in the divine).

Compared to the traditional Protestant conception of the true church as the "gathered" community of individual believers who are already saved, the extra ecclesiam nulla salus principle held little meaning. Rather than affirm the need for a change of nature, Protestantism has generally understood salvation in terms of a change of relationship with the God of scripture based on faith and trust. Subordinating the church to the individual believers' freedom and liberty, the adherents of the various "gathered" type churches attributed (to varying degrees) to the church a peripheral role in salvation. As an instrument of God, the church was considered beneficial to the extent that it helps believers do more readily the mission and service for which God's grace has already prepared them.

Seeking to arrive at the fullness of doctrinal truth, F&O from the outset played a prominent part in challenging and assisting the churches come to the realization that a reunited Christendom is impossible without a commonly accepted doctrinal foundation. It progressively attempted to discover and clarify what degree of unity in the faith the churches considered necessary and sufficient for a reunited church. An analysis of the modern ecumenical movement from 1910-1954 demonstrated that it progressively came to embody and promote a more and more Protestant conception of unity.

By the time of Edinburgh 1937, F&O had moved away from the Lausanne 1927 position that the unity of the church had been lost. Understanding unity to be God's perpetual gift to the church, Edinburgh 1937 officially declared that the churches were not required to create unity but to manifest it. Despite growing insistence that ecclesial unity based on diversity of creed, sacraments and church polity is a strong

testimony to God's Infinite wisdom and variegated gifts, Edinburgh 1937 reiterated in its report the F&O position that doctrinal homogeneity is an essential basis for obtaining organic unity. Not merely spiritual, the church's unity needs to be concretely realized in mutual recognition, cooperative action and institutional oneness. In spite of strong opposition especially from delegates of Free churches, Edinburgh 1937 stressed the necessity of adherence to the ancient creeds as giving intellectual expression to this faith.

With only a minority of churches from Catholic traditions participating in the ecumenical movement, the WCC was governed by Protestant theology and preoccupied with practical action to the neglect of dogma. On grounds that the WCC was concerned primarily with setting up a socio-political organization as an alternative to the Vatican, the majority of autocephalous Eastern Orthodox churches at the Moscow synod in 1948 decided not to send delegates to the WCC's inaugural assembly.

Though continuing to remain officially aloof from direct ecumenical participation, the RCC was cognizant that the ecumenical movement had moved steadily away from views condemned in the encyclical Mortalium animos in 1928. Even if Protestants still refused to identify the church with one historical confession, they generally no longer doubted that the visible church is not merely a human organization but the one mystical body of Christ with a unity that cannot be lost. By officially recognizing the Spirit's presence behind the ecumenical movement and by handing over responsibility to diocesan bishops for local ecumenical activities, the Holy Office in its Instructio Ecclesiae Catholicae text indicated Rome's willingness for limited participation in the ecumenical enterprise.

Though the Amsterdam Assembly as a whole was preoccupied with post-World War I problems, its F&O section described unity in terms of givenness in Jesus Christ. The need was recognized to move to a deeper unity in faith and in eucharistic fellowship and the common proclamation of the Lord. Importantly, Amsterdam 1948 linked the quest for unity to the continuing need for inner ecclesial renewal and the responsibility of the churches for one another in Christ. Indeed, the WCC itself owed its existence to such a recognition.

Repudiating charges that the WCC had designs on becoming a "super" (or "world") church and that it was tainted by latitudinarism, the CC in the 1950 "Toronto statement" pointed out that though standing for unity, the WCC is prevented by its constitution to support any one concept of church unity as its goal. Taking account of the precarious position of the Orthodox in the WCC, the document stated that membership in the WCC did not require that the constituent churches recognize each other as full churches in the true sense of the word. But maintaining that the one church of Christ is more inclusive than any one historical confession, the "Toronto statement" claimed that the churches recognize in each other to varying degrees the vestigia ecclesiae of the one church. By claiming that no historical church identify the church universal fully with its own membership, the report did not absolutely rule out the possibility that if all the churches could fully unite in the WCC then it could be said the membership of the WCC corresponds with the membership of the church universal.

At Lund 1952, F&O accepted as axiomatic Amsterdam 1948's claim of the givenness of unity. Clearing up confusion that was generated at Lausanne 1927 and to a lesser extent at Edinburgh 1937, Lund 1952 stated

bluntly the church is one rather than two distinct entities - a visible and invisible church. In line with the thought of Edinburgh 1937, Lund 1952 advocated that the church's unity is not only interior but outward. This outward unity must be manifested to the world in doctrinal, sacramental and ministerial forms. By stressing visibility as one of the characteristics of unity, F&O challenged the WCC to move away from the status quo and search for visible unity.

With emphasis on the church as a responsible society, Evanston 1954 showed that the larger constituency of the WCC still lagged behind its FOC. In a very scripturally worded report which was open to various interpretations, the F&O section of Evanston 1954 presented a very Protestant understanding of unity. Focusing on unity the denominations share with each other in Christ, Evanston 1954 highlighted the eschatological nature of Christian unity. Though one in Christ, the churches are destined to remain somewhat divided, even doctrinally, because of sin until the parousia. Despite divisions on the essence of the eucharist, Evanston 1954 (as did Lund 1952) recommended the widespread practice of intercommunion as the best means to prepare for the fuller unity toward which the churches are working. Judging the report to be doctrinally comprehensive, the Orthodox delegation utterly rejected much of the WCC's approach to unity.

Despite the existing disagreements between churches from Catholic and Protestant traditions, Protestant churches which participated in the ecumenical movement from 1910-1948 made considerable progress in developing a theology of church, of understanding the deepest difference separating the churches and coming to a greater appreciation of the importance of Christian tradition. Under the guise of searching for

unity, Protestantism progressively came to recognize that beneath the influence of secularization it had lost many elements of the traditional Christian faith (e.g. eucharist as a sacrifice). Without becoming Protestants, the Catholic participants of the ecumenical movement were challenged to become more secularized.

The mere fact that Catholics and Protestants were able to come together in the ecumenical movement to discuss elements of faith, Christian witness and praxis testified to a new openness to one another. To the extent that they were able to come together in the WCC to take over direct responsibility for the ecumenical movement, it is clear they already obtained some degree of the full koinonia for which they seek. In spite of threatening tensions, the churches at Evanston 1954 not only reaffirmed their Amsterdam 1948 commitment to each other to stay together but they further pledged to grow together and unite.

Recognizing that no further advance in Christian unity was possible until the churches were able to achieve a more common understanding of the true nature of the ecclesia, the FOC subsequent to Lund 1952 / Evanston 1954 instituted many theological commissions to study various elements of the faith in order to answer the vital questions: What is the kind of unity the ecumenical movement should work towards as its goal? What is the true nature of the one church of Christ?

With comparative ecclesiology having reached its limits, the FOC was able to achieve significant success through its use of the christological method which had been officially adopted at Lund 1952. Using essentially Protestant theology, the non-Catholic controlled commissions reached such conclusions as the following: the typically Protestant affirmation that the church invisible (Holy Spirit) is

expressed visibly by institutions, but none of which is constitutive of the essence of the church; the rejection of dogmatic development, an element affirmed by Catholics; the approval of special ministers but no transmission by ordination; the acceptance of Tradition in addition to Scripture and, yet, the former is only found in the latter; the rejection of the resurrection by the Bultmannians as an event. Though the study commissions left unresolved many issues between Catholics and Protestants, the commission reports clearly illustrate that Protestant theology had moved away from dogmatic liberalism and individualism. Coming to accept the "church" as an element of faith, Protestants conceded that it is God's will that the church be one and that the primary goal of the ecumenical movement was to facilitate this cause.

Importantly in its report on the "Future of Faith and Order" submitted to the CC of the WCC at its 1958 Nyborg Strand meeting, the FOC challenged the World Council to make a thorough search for the unity God wills for the church and to work towards this unity as its ecumenical goal (seemingly in apparent contradiction to WCC's "Toronto statement") even if it means the withdrawal of membership by some member churches. To the front of this report, the FOC at its 1960 St. Andrews meeting approved its own definition of "churchly unity". Unanimously adopted by New Delhi assembly of the WCC to be sent to member churches for study and appropriate action.

A masterpiece of ambiguity, the New Delhi unity formula remained open to the various interpretations by its member churches and to the best means of achieving the matters specified. It left unclear, for example, whether this definition of unity was a utopian vision or program, whether Jesus is God or not, whether baptism and eucharist are

sacred realities or symbols; how the apostolic faith is to be interpreted. Nevertheless, this definition decisively confirmed that the WCC was moving towards a Catholic approach to unity since it defined what makes a Christian over the head of individual churches. The unity involved is sameness, that is doctrinal uniformity in the essentials of faith, rather than complementarity. Significantly at New Delhi 1961, the traditional Protestant emphasis on individual believers had shifted to a consideration of local churches.

Marking a significant shift away from the spiritual and eschatological nature stressed by Evanston 1954, the New Delhi unity formula emphasized that the unity of the church is visible because God manifests it by unity in doctrine, unity in ministry, unity in worship, and unity in apostolic witness and service. In describing the unity for which the ecumenical movement works and prays, the unity formula focused on the local unity of "all in each place". Importantly (even though the characteristics were not given), the unity formula attested that the local fellowship was joined in communion with all Christians in all places and all times. This kind of visible unity which incorporated a local and universal (catholic) aspect was in keeping with the traditional Catholic understanding of the ecclesial unity.

In presenting this unity formula to the member churches for appropriate study and action, the New Delhi report pointed out that the unity given to the church is the unity of the triune God who transforms the new humanity given in Christ. To stress the importance that was expected to be given the unity formula, New Delhi 1961 indicated that failure to pursue the formula's full implications was to call down judgment by turning away from the light given by God on the unity willed

for the church. For any church which finds its own denominational tenets to be at variance with this description of unity, the report of the Assembly referred to the need for denominations to die to all traditional life forms that impeded universal communion with the other churches.

With the WCC's endorsement of the New Delhi unity formula there was a dramatic move from the ecclesiastical neutrality of the "Toronto statement" towards the goal of realizing unity through the local churches. Shifting its focus from concentrating on the unity given in Christ, the WCC was now expected to create a specific outward form by which this unity becomes visible on the local, regional and universal levels. By accepting the New Delhi unity formula, the WCC rejected the vision of federal union which saw the mutual recognition existing within a fellowship of permanent churches as a sufficient expression of the unity of the church. With the unity definition as its long range aim, the New Delhi Assembly committed the WCC to specific theological tasks involving its wider constituency and involving future work. With its stress on local unity, the unity formula found wide acceptability among the grassroots ecclesial leaders and laity because they could now begin to understand what the reunion of the churches would mean for them in the places where they lived out their daily lives.

Subsequent to New Delhi 1961, however, the emphasis shifted from the local dimension of the church to a stress on its universality. The calling of Vatican II marked a new beginning in relations between non-Roman churches and the RCC (a church that is very aware of its catholicity). Vatican II centered upon ecclesiology as its theme. By undertaking a thorough examination of the nature of the one church of

Christ (which it described as subsisting in the the RCC) and the doctrine of its unity, the Holy See was able to justify full participation in the ecumenical movement. On the basis of an appraisal of Vatican II produced documents, notably LG and UR, leading Protestant thinkers aver that Vatican II created an ecumenical revolution.

With large numbers of delegates from Catholic traditions (including observers from the RCC) present, Montreal 1963 made considerable progress on clarifying the qualitative character of catholicity. Within a christological frame, catholicity was stressed among the diversity of theologies in different times and places. Though differences between the Catholic and Protestant view on the relation between scripture and tradition remained, Protestantism at Montreal 1963 moved away from the battle cry of the 16th century Reformers sola scriptura. Moreover, Montreal 1963 stressed the Catholic character of the eucharist by acknowledging it as a sacrament of the presence of the crucified and glorified Christ and a means to proclaim the gospel as it operates within the church. At its 1967 Bristol meeting, the FOC came closer to the Catholic position on eucharist by stressing its "anamnetic and epikletic " nature.

Related is the fact that from 1964 to 1968 the FOC discussed ecclesiology within a trinitarian context and began to examine what catholicity implies for the kind of unity sought. The Uppsala report expressed the clear hope that all churches would be able to come together to speak and act through a universal council. Christians seek reunion not merely as an end in itself but because they believe that the unity of the church is a sign and sacrament for the eventual unity of all humankind. Steadily and cumulatively, the FOC began to clarify

the ambiguities contained in the New Delhi 1961's description of the kind of unity the ecumenical movement seeks as its goal.

Using Colossians 15 and Orthodox patristics insights (and a view not unlike the one developed by Teilhard de Chardin, S.J.), Sittler's New Delhi 1961 presentation on unity, in which he advocated that the doctrine of redemption made sense only within the broader context of the doctrine of creation and the cosmic kingship of Christ, had an immediate influence on the WCC and its FOC. One major implication of this view was that the 1950s distinction between Heilsgeschichte and secular history became steadily blurred. Stressing that the Head of the church is also the kosmokrator, there was a growing realization that the unity of the church (Christian ecumenism) had to be examined within the context of the unity of humankind (secular ecumenism). By the time of Uppsala 1968 many Protestants saw that the world rather than the church as the main arena for God's actions. They advocated that the real aim of the ecumenical movement should focus on secular ecumenism rather than Christian ecumenism.

Each of the working drafts prepared for Uppsala 1968 placed great emphasis upon the human quality of life. Influenced by the focus upon humanity, many Christians (as indicated in the F&O section of the report of Uppsala 1968) questioned whether the quest for church unity was relevant to the immediate crises of modern times. Even the working draft which was transmitted to section I on worship was extremely secular in tone and content. Rather than merely stress the vertical dimension, the working report made the claim that worship must be ethically orientated. Because of the increased number of Orthodox delegates (and RC observers) at Uppsala 1963, this working draft was radically modified. The F&O

section itself placed stress on God's on-going action in the world to make all things new and to bring all people of all cultures, places and conditions into a living unity in the cosmic king by the Holy Spirit under the "universal fatherhood of God". While reaffirming as its goal the search for visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship as its raison d'être, the FOC at its 1971 Louvain meeting decided to pursue this quest in relation to secular ecumenism. Immediately it instituted the "Unity of the Church - Unity of Mankind" study which was completed in 1978 and taken up from another perspective in 1983 in its ongoing "Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community" study.

Increasingly in the 1970s, the WCC put stress on action-reflection theology whereby the emphasis was on the problems and possibilities of doing theology. Depending on the context, the WCC used contextual theologies (e.g. black theology, various kinds of liberation theology, feminist theologies) in numerous consultations. This approach was used by the FOC in two important studies: the "Hope Study" and the "Community of Men and Women in the Church" study. By its endorsement of contextual theologies, the WCC emphasized that faith in the triune God is closely tied to socio-political involvement. By focusing on what it means and what is involved in being human, contextual theologies proved successful in helping men and women discover hopes, encouragements, corrections and resources in all they have to encounter.

The various contextual theologies have made the churches more cognizant that if the gospel is to fully penetrate into each society, one must use the specific categories and means of each society. Nevertheless, Catholic confessions have helped the churches involved in the ecumenical movement realize that they must not become so identified

with a particular cultural context that they are no longer sensitive to the universal (or catholic) character of the Christian faith. To fall victim to this temptation would distort the full gospel message and to lose the authority to speak out prophetically. The ecumenical movement provides an opportunity for the churches to urge and to assist each other to speak not only for the church local but also for the church universal.

Significantly, Nairobi 1975 consolidated the conviction that faith in the triune God and socio-political activities belong together. Approving changes to the WCC's structure (which made it more theologically orientated) and constitution, Nairobi 1975 adopted the FOC's primary task of seeking the unity of the church in one eucharistic fellowship as the main goal of the whole WCC.

At Nairobi 1975, the WCC continued to develop the unity formula adopted at New Delhi 1961 and expanded at Uppsala 1968. Using the term "conciliar fellowship" which had been used at Louvain 1971 and further clarified and refined at the Salamanca Consultation of 1973, Nairobi 1975 described the church as "a conciliar fellowship of local churches, which are themselves truly united". Anchoring the church's unity in the life of the triune God, the Nairobi Assembly's description of ecclesial unity (through its understanding of "conciliar fellowship") was able to achieve a better balance between New Delhi 1961's emphasis on the local and Uppsala 1968's stress on the universal. With the church as the focal point, conciliar unity was used to describe both the unity in diversity of churches separated by distance, culture and time, and to refer to the quality of life that should continually develop within each local church. With the large contingent of Orthodox delegates (from Eastern,

Orthodoxy and Oriental churches) and the presence of many official observers from the RCC (which though a non-member of the WCC is since 1968 a full member of its FOC), Nairobi 1975, more than previous assemblies of the WCC, was better able to integrate the traditional Protestant kerygmatic emphasis and the Catholic sacramental interest. Believing that this description of the form that unity should take were not appreciative enough of the value of denominationalism and doctrinal difference, Lutheranism in 1978 supplemented this understanding of unity with a model of reconciled diversity. As further clarifications and developments of "conciliar fellowship", some other churches have suggested possible forms that the final unity of Christendom should take - for example, the RCC suggested the "communions in communion" form.

An ecumenical milestone was reached when all the members of the FOC at its January 1982 plenary meeting unanimously agreed that the BEM convergence text was mature enough to be transmitted to the churches for their responses (at the highest appropriate levels) and eventual reception. It used an ecumenical theology to integrate the Catholic sacramental concern for the fullness of the apostolic faith and Protestant emphasis on kerygmatic witness and service to the world. Touching upon issues close to the life and faith of Christians in all churches, the BEM text expresses unprecedented theological convergences on basic Christian affirmations which clearly thwarted the churches in their growth towards the fullness of truth.

As an ongoing process which draws the churches back to the doctrinal heritage of the early church, BEM created a new ecumenical situation, a moment of truth and decision for all the churches. Though still in the early stages of the process, the BEM document has become

the most widely discussed ecumenical document of modern times. By continuing to incorporate BEM into their inner life and to seek other ways to extend the process, it is clear that the churches have extended to each other the basis of a new relationship as they struggle on the pilgrimage towards the reunion of the Christian churches and the renewal of human community. Indeed BEM has heralded a new season of grace for the churches. The FOC has requested that all Christians give thanks to God for all the graces and blessings which have arisen around the "BEM" process as the churches take new steps to manifest universal communion.

Overall, the BEM text confirms that Protestantism can no longer be considered merely a religion of the word. BEM's acknowledgement of the Eucharist as the focus of the whole Christian worship and its apparent implicit recognition of the ordained ministry as a sacrament suggests that Protestantism has moved a long way towards accepting a Catholic understanding of the church. By signing the BEM text, it is clear that the representatives of Free churches are inclined to accept the Catholic position that individualized Christianity only has meaning within the context of the whole Christian community. Again by accepting sacraments to be more than arbitrary signs but visible symbols of God's presence, the Free church representatives have moved away from their historical position that the encounter between the transcendental God and an individual takes place only in the inner conscience. The BEM text attests that Protestants are now open to the Catholic stance that God's encounter with human beings (and vice versa) is a historical event which is always mediated sacramentally through finite realities. Traditionally, Protestants reacted strongly against this practice of identifying God with some finite realities (e.g. world, sacraments,

ministeries, sacraments, church). Indeed with this Protestant principle (Tillich) was carried to the extreme some radical Protestants even refused to identify Christ with God.

Nevertheless, there are still some serious problems pertaining to the realities of baptism, eucharist and ministry which still keep many churches apart and thus need further reflection and clarification. Unresolved issues stemming from the BEM process include questions pertaining to the nature of the church, the concept of sacrament and sacramentality, the nexus between word and sacrament, the relationship between scripture and tradition and the threefold ministry. These points of conflict need to be reconsidered within the context of a major FOC sponsored study on the broader ecumenical question of ecclesiology. Nevertheless, given its strong stress on sacramentality, mediation and communion, churches from Catholic traditions find it much more easy to accept the BEM text than the Protestant churches which had been essentially a religion of the word.

Deliberately conceived as a participatory assembly, Vancouver 1983 made considerable progress in putting forth a eucharistic vision which intimately intertwined both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Christian faith. For Christians who would discount the search for unity in faith and eucharistic fellowship as irrelevant and perhaps detrimental to the struggle for peace, justice and human dignity, the Vancouver Assembly strongly affirmed that in the church there can be no genuine division between the quest for unity and human renewal. With reference to the BEM text, Vancouver 1983 officially endorsed the stand that baptism, eucharist and ministry are the healing and uniting signs of God's solidarity with the poor, the suffering, oppressed and

marginalized of the world. To deny the sacramental aspect of the church is to reject God's sacramental presence in human life itself. If this is the case then Christian mission and service are just human solidarity with human problems faced by human beings (without the sacramental presence of God's sacrament - Christ). Nevertheless to use the sacraments as merely liturgical rites of piety without any concern for the need for a renewed and reconciled humanity is to undermine that they are also signs of the ushering in of God's kingdom in solidarity with the poor, the suffering and the oppressed. Any vertical oneness in eucharistic worship is only consummated when extended horizontally to incorporate the struggle against racism, sexism, class domination and all that would deny the right of every person to justice and human dignity.

Further, Vancouver 1983 marked the first time an assembly of the WCC attempted to give content rather than merely describe the Council's understanding of unity. Vancouver 1983 publicly endorsed Bangalore 1978's assessment that before the churches could be reunited in the one church of Christ they would need to be able to recognize in each other three credible marks of a witnessing conciliar fellowship - a common possession (and administration) of baptism, eucharist and ministry; a mutual understanding and affirmation of the apostolic faith; and common ways of teaching authoritatively and of decision-making.

Joined by six ministers from other denominations, the Archbishop of Canterbury celebrated for the whole Assembly the "Lima Liturgy" which reflected the BEM document's theological convergences. Importantly, (even if doctrine and the canon laws of their own confessions prevented participation the "Liturgy of the Eucharist"), the Orthodox delegates

and the RC official observers participated fully with all the other Christian churches in the "Liturgy of the Word" part of the service.

On the ecumenical journey, the churches have made considerable progress toward redressing problems (pertaining, for example, to such issues as ecclesiology, tradition, soteriology, the sacraments, the ministry, "non-theological" factors") which had stymied Christian unity for centuries. With a new emphasis on the Church as the whole People of God, there is ecumenical consensus that the church is by its very nature catholic. In the world, the one church of Christ is a koinonia of local churches. As long as this communion is sustained, each local church embodies fully within itself the church catholic. With Christ as Head, the body of Christ is composed of all Christian churches. This does not imply, however, that all or any of these churches embody all the essential elements integral to the body of Christ.

As God's People, the church is called to participate in and continue in history Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly ministry for the sake of God's reign in justice, peace and freedom. As the BEM ecclesiology confirmed the church's mission is not solely defined in terms of the ministry of the word and the sacrament. This ministry of kerygma and leitourgia is intimately intertwined with the ministry of Christian diakonia to all human beings at every level of their existence.

It is evident, however, that Catholics and Protestants still have a long way to travel before reaching the full vertical and horizontal koinonia characteristic of the body of Christ described in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. Indeed, it would have been a delusion to think that the problems pertaining to doctrinal issues and

"non-theological factors" which have divided the churches for centuries could have been resolved in a matter of decades.

In fact, there are still major theological problems that frustrate Christian unity which are still to appear on the FOC's agenda (e.g. petrine ministry, mariology). Even though recent popes have explicitly stated that the petrine ministry (or papacy) presents the greatest obstacle to Christian unity, the modern ecumenical community is yet to examine what role, if any, the papal ministry might exercise in a reunited, pluralistic church. Accepting the petrine ministry as a constitutive institutional element, Roman Catholicism insists that the papal ministry is integral to the integrity of the apostolic koinonia of churches as the body of Christ. Any local church not in communion with the local church of which the successor of Peter is head lacks a constitutive element essential to its fullness.

Inspired by the ecumenical movement, the RCC at Vatican II (after an in-depth examination of the nature of the una sancta ecclesia) concluded that all Christian communities are incorporated into the body of Christ. Because all other ecclesiastical communities lack the petrine ministry (not to mention, to varying degree, other essential elements) the Church of Rome continues to insist that she alone embodies all the elements integral to the body of Christ in its life and mission. From this perspective, the fullness of the body of Christ "subsists" only in the RCC. Hence, until theological consensus is reached on the petrine ministry, there exists a limit to how far the churches can grow together towards full Christian communion.

Encouragingly, the bilateral dialogues have disclosed that some major non-Roman Catholic churches recognize that a renewed and reformed

papacy within a collegial decision-making context which respects the legitimate diversity of denominations could serve as an instrument and focus of unity for the koinonia of churches. Without undermining the papal prerogatives, Vatican II moved away from a centralized, monolithic power structure to one that placed the accent on decentralization and the principle of subsidiarity. By placing the supreme authority in the the episcopal college (with pope as head), Vatican II reaffirmed that the petrine office has been divinely endowed with a spiritual authority that is intimately linked to the ministry of the word and sacraments (kerygma and leitourgia) and service (diakonia).

Though the pace is slow, churches from both Catholic and Protestant traditions are still continuing to grow together into unity. Influenced by Protestants, Catholics have taken a renewed interest in the socio-political implications of the Christian gospel. In exercising the prophetic calling of the church, Protestantism has continued to make Catholicism more cognizant that, reflective of fragmented society in general, the churches are divided by racism, sexism and other inequities. Clearly as long as Christians remain separated by such divisions, the world is not going to accept the unity of the church as a credible sign of the ultimate renewal and unity of human community.

While themselves becoming more secularized, churches from Catholic traditions continue to impart to the ecumenical movement a profound sense of God's sacramental presence in the church (the sacrament of Christ). To churches that have a tendency to focus on the social gospel, Catholic ecclesial bodies strongly witness that the world's brokenness is not essentially social but a denial of the sacramental life given by God. The Catholic witness in the ecumenical movement continually poses

such challenging and vital questions to all churches: Do they in their concern for human problems take their point of departure from general ethical imperatives or from Christ, the Light of the world (who transforms the world and gives his church the authority to be the transforming power in the world)? Are they in their work for Christian ecumenism and secular ecumenism motivated by their own denominational concerns or by the certainty that Christ is gathering all his flock into the full Catholic communion of his one church?

Even though the churches have experienced some dry years on their ecumenical pilgrimage, the ecumenical movement, in words uttered by William Temple in 1942 (on his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury), can still be aptly described as "the great new fact of our era". Presently embodying the committed participation of churches from all major trinitarian traditions, the future of the ecumenical movement depends on the rediscovery by every new generation of Christians that the one ecumenical movement (though open to all churches from both Catholic and Protestant traditions) belongs to the one Head of the church and kosmokrator - Jesus Christ. Within the ecumenical movement there is general acceptance that the churches must be real agents for promoting a better quality of life for all humanity who, despite shortcomings, is made in the image of God. As they prepare to enter into the third millennium, it is the Christian hope that the seventh assembly of the WCC (to be held in Canberra, Australia, in February 1991)¹ and

¹See Appendix I for "The Unity of the Church - Gift and Calling" statement which will be submitted by the FOC to the 1991 WCC Assembly at Canberra. If accepted without radical revision at Canberra, this
(Footnote Continued)

the upcoming fifth world conference on Faith and Order in 1993 will move the churches closer towards the realization of Christ's apostolic prayer that all his flock might be united in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church so the world might believe (John 17).

(Footnote Continued)

statement appears to have the potential to create in the years ahead a New Delhi 1961 unity formula impact. The main architects for this draft were Gunther Gassmann (Director of the FOC) and Jean -M.R. Tillard (Vice-Moderator of the FOC).

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APPENDIX I

SECOND REVISION - FO/90:11
THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH - GIFT AND CALLING

APPENDIX I (Second Revision)

FO/90:11

World Council of Churches
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH - GIFT AND CALLING

The 1987 Central Committee of the WCC requested Faith and Order to undertake "a fresh consideration of the concepts and forms of the 'Unity We Seek' and to prepare a draft statement to be submitted to the 1991 WCC Assembly at Canberra". Drawing on preparatory considerations by the Faith and Order Standing and Plenary Commission in 1983 and 1989, a Faith and Order consultation at Etchmiadzin, Armenia, USSR, in July 1990, prepared the following statement in which the word 'we' is intended to refer to the WCC Assembly.

I. 1 The Church of Jesus Christ, within God's purpose, is one. It is called to glorify God. The Holy Spirit at Pentecost manifested the dynamic unity in diversity of the church. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit enable the one church to live as sign and servant of the reign of God and the reconciliation which God provides for the whole creation. Yet the churches are painfully divided. Their scandalous division endangers and damages the credibility of their witness to the world and worship and service. God therefore summons the churches to repentance. The Lord

calls them to overcome all human barriers, to make visible the church's oneness in the world today, and to live out fully God's gift of unity in Christ and the Spirit.

I. 2 We acknowledge with gratitude that through the ecumenical movement the churches have been led closer to one another in mutual understanding, theological convergence, common prayer, shared witness and service. The churches recognize that in their own life and in their relationship with one another unity is present and active, but in different ways and degrees. Yet we also recognize with pain that many Christian and churches, who have developed their own ways of co-operation and shared life do not feel able to belong to a common ecumenical movement. Old divisions still persist and new ones arise both in doctrine and over moral and socio-political issues. The churches also have often failed to draw the consequences for their life from the agreements which they have already achieved. They have also often remained satisfied to co-exist in division.

II. 1 The unity of the church to which we are called joins us in pilgrimage together. The goal in history of this pilgrimage is a unity in apostolic faith confessed in common; it is the communion, koinonia, formed and sustained by the Word of God in a common sacramental life, entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship, a life together in which members and ministeries are mutually recognized and reconciled. In this life together we follow as co-workers Christ's mission to the world, as witness is given to the gospel of God's grace, and service is offered to all.

Thus the search for the full realization of unity consists in the efforts guided by the Holy Spirit, to reach a point where all the churches can perceive in one another the one body of Christ and can enter into living eucharistic communion with one another, a communion which is a credible sign of God's love for humankind and of the new creation.

II. 2 This communion, rooted in the proclamation of the word in one eucharistic fellowship, must be fully manifested both on a local and a universal level by means of conciliar forms of life and action. In such conciliar communion churches are bound together at all levels in sustained and sustaining relationships, through confessing in one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action. Personal, collegial and communal forms of ministry are intended to serve the life together in this communion. Conciliar communion allows for different organizational expressions of unity and for diversities arising from theological traditions and from various cultural, ethnic, and historical contexts. Difference and diversity are integral to the nature of communion; yet there are limits to the difference and diversity. In communion differences and diversities are to be brought together and transformed in such a way that, as gifts of the Spirit, they contribute to the richness and fullness of the one church of Christ.

III. 1 The unity of the church to which we are called demands mutual respect, sensitivity, caring and accountability. In taking specific steps together we express and encourage the enrichment and renewal of Christian life, as we learn from one another, work together for justice

and peace, care together for God's creation, suffer and rejoice together in solidarity; and pray with and for one another. Thus the churches will grow together towards that oneness which is given by God.

III. 2 The unity of the church, as God's gift and calling, is not for the good of the churches alone. It is for God's glory in the fulfillment of God's purpose for the world into which Jesus Christ came. Enabled by the Holy Spirit, this unity is a sign of reconciliation for the renewal of humankind, a means through which God gives healing for a broken and threatened world. Thus in the conciliar communion in which this unity finds expression, the churches look beyond themselves and await that perfect unity when God will be all in all.

APPENDIX II

ABSTRACT OF

THE CONCEPT OF UNITY IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMISSION OF
FAITH AND ORDER OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 1927-1983
A Historical-Analytical Study

ABSTRACT

of

THE CONCEPT OF UNITY IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES 1927-1983

*A Historical-Analytical Study*¹

This thesis is a historical and analytical study of the concept of unity that has developed in the documents of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and its tradition from 1910 to 1983. The Introduction, in addition to summarizing the contents of the thesis, briefly discusses some of the key terminology used in this research.

Chapter I traces the history of the modern ecumenical movement from 1910 to 1948, with special emphasis on the rise of the Faith and Order movement. Following a chronological framework, an examination of various Faith and Order documents are examined in an attempt to discover what unity development had occurred and what consensus had been reached in each area of concern. It argues that the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, from its earliest history to the present, has always sought to be true to its purpose and to seek truth and to be a genuine part of the modern ecumenical movement.

Chapter II focuses on how the World Council of Churches understood the nature of its own being and its relationship with the member

¹John J. Cole doctrinal thesis presented to the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada, April, 1992.

churches and the one church of Christ. At its inaugural assembly in 1948, the World Council of Churches confirmed earlier Faith and Order insights that the variance between the "Catholic" and "Protestant" understanding of the nature of the church was the "deepest difference" which divided the churches. This chapter attempts to demonstrate that during the years from 1948 to 1964 the FOC of the WCC, dominated by Protestant churches from Europe and North America, promoted an essentially Protestant understanding of the nature of the church and its unity.

The next two chapters deal specifically with how in the 1960s the Protestant concern for witness and mission was supplemented by a Catholic stress on ecclesiological issues. Moreover, a new ecumenical stage began when, with Vatican II (1962-1965), the Roman Catholic Church came into the modern ecumenical movement as full partners. Chapter III shows that the World Council of Churches, based on the work of its Commission on Faith and Order, was able to put forward and further develop a definition of the unity the ecumenical movement should seek as its goal. By taking account of both the local and catholic dimensions of the one church of Christ, this definition was acceptable to churches from both Catholic and Protestant traditions. Chapter IV demonstrates that the World Council of Churches, through its use of the terms "conciliar fellowship" and "eucharistic fellowship", was further able to expand upon and clarify its unity formula. Though the "deepest difference" remains, this chapter argues that churches from Protestant traditions, as confirmed by the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" text of the Faith and Order Commission have moved a great distance toward

accepting a Catholic understanding of the nature of the church and its doctrine of unity.

The concluding chapter, Chapter V, deals with the Roman Catholic Church and its participation in the modern ecumenical movement. It traces how Roman Catholic involvement has gone through a series of negative and positive attitudes; and examines the implications of this for the whole ecumenical community. The formal Conclusion to the thesis summarizes and reflects upon the central arguments of some of the themes introduced earlier.