

The Catholic Church in Ecumenical Dialogue 2002

*Articles by Members of the Staff of the Pontifical Council
for Promoting Christian Unity*



Vatican City

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Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement

Prolusio from PCPCU Plenary Meeting, Vatican City, November 12-17, 2001



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I. Ecumenism in a Changing Situation

The following report on the activities of the Pontifical Council during the three years since the last Plenary limits itself to a short period. Nevertheless, as we hold our first Plenary in the new millennium, this report cannot avoid facing the much larger question: Where are we ecumenically at the beginning of the new millennium? What have we achieved in the last thirty-five years since the Catholic Church officially entered the ecumenical movement with the Second Vatican Council? What have been the positive outcomes? What new problems and new challenges do we face? My reflections on these issues have been deliberately placed under the heading “Ecumenism in a Changing Situation.”

I will not and can not enter into all the details of the thirteen different dialogues being carried out at the present time, and into all the many other activities of our Council. You have the detailed reports before you; you are invited to present questions during the general discussion for any further information or clarification. At this point I want to highlight some general elements of the present situation and to reflect on the changes that seem to me to be characteristic. I want to put forward the thesis that a new ecumenical situation is emerging.

In a certain sense we can speak of a crisis. But the term “crisis” is not to be understood one-sidedly, in the negative sense of a breakdown or collapse of what has been built up in the last decades—and that is not negligible. Here the term “crisis” is meant in the original sense of the Greek term, meaning a situation

where things are hanging in the balance, where they are on a knife-edge; indeed, this state can either be positive or negative. Both are possible. A crisis situation is a situation in which old ways come to an end but room opens for new possibilities. A crisis situation therefore presents itself as a challenge and a time for decision.

If we look back over the last three years, and especially at the Jubilee Year 2000, it is clear that there is no one-sided form of crisis. In 1999 in Augsburg we not only signed but also celebrated the signing of the *Joint Declaration on Justification* with the Lutheran World Federation. As Pope John Paul II expressed, this was a real milestone: on the one hand, it was the result of many ecumenical dialogues on the international and national levels during the preceding years; on the other hand, however, we had reached only a differentiated consensus and are still far from the goal we are seeking. But even so, the event was seen by many Christians as offering the world a sign of hope. They rejoiced that centuries-old polemics and differences that had divided the churches over a central and fundamental point of her message could be overcome through serious ecumenical dialogue.

During the Jubilee Year we had the joy of celebrating some important prophetic ecumenical events, as delineated by the pope in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001): the opening of the Holy Door in St. Paul’s Outside the Walls; the Day of Pardon on the first Sunday in Lent; and the commemoration of the new martyrs (or, better, witnesses) of the twentieth century at the Colosseum. At the first and the last of these three

events, more ecumenical delegates were present than during the Second Vatican Council. All of the delegates were deeply moved. For was it not moving that at the beginning of the new millennium the Bishop of Rome, as the first of all the bishops—together and united with the representatives of the churches and ecclesial communities of the East, the delegate of the Ecumenical Patriarch, and the representative of the churches and ecclesial communities of the West, the Archbishop of Canterbury—entering the Basilica of St. Paul, took some steps together, albeit not many, and that towards the end of the solemn liturgy all the bishops and leaders of the separated churches and ecclesial communities shared the sign of peace with the Bishop of Rome? Even more moving for me was the celebration of the witnesses of the twentieth century, which, more than any previous century, had been the century of martyrs in all the churches and in all ecclesial communities. The commemoration of this common heritage of martyrdom is a source of hope, because “*sanguis martyrum semen christianorum*” (Tertullian) and *semen christianorum unitatis* as well.

We recall in this context all the visits of the Holy Father: to Egypt and Mount Sinai; to the Holy Land; before that to Romania; then to Greece, Syria, Ukraine, and Armenia. These visits were very important from the ecumenical point of view and are—as are the letters that the Holy Father exchanges regularly with the heads of other churches—much more than an expression of diplomacy and courtesy. They have a deeper ecclesial meaning. For just as in the tradition of the church of the first centuries, they are expressions of church communion that today is already real and deep, even if still incomplete. As such they were the result, the fruit, and the summary of thirty-five years of ecumenical work.

All this shows very clearly the positive new ecumenical situation and is proof of what has grown during the last decades. Besides all the precious individual results of the dialogues, these events demonstrate an essential historical shift and a new historical situation. Pope John Paul II in his ecumenical encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (UUS) (1995) describes and appreciates the fruits of the dialogues as “brotherhood rediscovered” (no. 41). Christians of the different churches and ecclesial communities are no longer enemies or

indifferent neighbors; they meet as brothers, as sisters, and as friends; they are on the same common way, on the same pilgrimage towards full communion.

We cannot and will not go back behind this rich ecumenical heritage. We must build on it. Nevertheless, we would be blind if we did not see that there is a new situation emerging that is not only the continuation of the last thirty-five years. The Jubilee Year celebrated these fruits but at the same time highlighted that, in different ways at the beginning of the new millennium, we face a new situation that can be called a “crisis situation” in the dual sense of the term.

Let us first take a quick glance at some of the dialogues and then make some general observations. First, the dialogue with the Oriental and the Orthodox churches—theologically they are nearest to us. Since 1980 we have achieved good and profound results in the dialogue. The exchange of delegates between Rome and Constantinople for respective feast days, and the visits to Moscow, Bucharest, and many other centers, prove that the new spirit exists despite all the problems that have arisen, especially with the Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, in reference to the situation in the western Ukraine. But although these churches are theologically very close to us, they are extremely remote both mentally and culturally, much more so than the Protestant ecclesial communities. This often creates suspicion and misunderstandings and makes the dialogue sometimes difficult and emotional.

The tensions evident on the universal level correspond to tensions among these churches themselves. Today they find themselves in a new situation. For the first time in their long history, most of them are free—free from the Byzantine emperors, from the Ottoman rulers, from the tsar, from communist oppression and persecution. Thus, the Orthodox world today is confronted by a new situation, and the churches need time to find their direction and to define their identity. This requires time and patience on our side. But it also creates fear and tensions among the churches and fosters the temptation to close in upon themselves. Moreover, during the time of persecution, many of their members fled to the West. Now these churches are no longer only Eastern

churches but also have a large diaspora in Europe, America, and Australia, and therefore within the pluralistic Western culture. This is also a new situation that, up to now, has not yet found a satisfactory solution. The problem and the accusation of proselytism and so-called “uniatism” is to some degree a projection of fear and a form of self-protection.

However, the demand of the Orthodox churches to discuss and solve first the problem of “uniatism” before continuing with the agreed agenda of the dialogue has led to a dead end. How can we solve these problems without speaking about the Petrine ministry, which is the very rationale of the existence of the Catholic Oriental churches? After the sad experiences at the last Plenary of the Joint International Theological Commission in Emmitsburg/Baltimore, I do not see how we can continue with the dialogue on this level. Thanks to God, good relations continue with single Patriarchates and on the regional level, the level of bishops’ conferences, of dioceses, of monasteries, of many personal contacts, and of institutions like Church in Need, Renovabis, and others.

The dialogue with the Anglican Communion (ARCIC) has also produced good and valuable documents, especially the last one on *The Gift of Authority* (1998). Enormous progress has been made, not least regarding the question of the Petrine ministry. The climate and atmosphere on the theological level and on the hierarchical level are excellent. In contrast to the Orthodox churches, one feels that we come from the same Latin tradition and live in the same Western world. One could think that unity must be possible very soon. But as we saw in Toronto last year during a meeting with all the Anglican primates—a meeting held in an exceptionally fraternal atmosphere—there is in both churches a lack of reception of our common documents. There are strong tensions within the Anglican Communion, and one may even ask whether these dialogue documents are representative of the whole or even of the majority of Anglicans. In particular, the introduction of women’s ordination to the priesthood and, in some Anglican provinces, also to the episcopacy presents a new, difficult obstacle and remains an unresolved problem within the Anglican Communion itself. But here at least the

structures and the spirit of dialogue are still intact so that we can hope and go ahead. And we will do so.

The situation with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is similar. There have been good results and excellent personal relations. No doubt, the *Joint Declaration on Justification* was an important step forwards and a breakthrough about which we can and must rejoice. This declaration brought a new dimension and a new intensity to our mutual relations, which are rather different from the relations with other ecclesial communities that issued from the Reformation. Nonetheless, there were different expectations about the consequences of the differentiated agreement on justification, which afterwards sometimes led to disappointment and frustration. Many Lutherans thought, even though we had denied it clearly from the very beginning, that Eucharistic sharing or at least Eucharistic hospitality should be the consequence of this agreement. Moreover, it is the ecclesiological problems that now arise for us: the problem of the ministries in the church, especially the episcopate and the apostolic succession. In this regard, it was my impression at the last session of the International Dialogue Commission in Denmark two months ago that, despite the warm atmosphere, hardly any progress has been made on these ecclesiological problems.

In this context, we might also bear in mind that there are also unresolved problems between the different Lutheran churches: the Porvoo churches in Scandinavia, which have the intention of introducing the historical episcopacy, and a similar intention in the United States; the Leuenberg churches on the European continent, with tendencies towards a new United church including the Reformed churches under the common umbrella of the EKD (*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*) in Germany, etc. It is my impression that we still have a long intermediate period to face with these communities. And this is even more so for the other ecclesial communities of the Reformation.

I will not discuss in this frame of reference the dialogues with the other ecclesial communities (Reformed, Methodists, Mennonites, etc.) and the new dialogues that we are starting, for example, with the Seventh-Day Adventists, even though many

positive results could be reported. I finally only want to mention the dialogues with the new communities, the Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. They best represent the new situation. These communities are growing very fast while the traditional Protestant churches worldwide are shrinking. In ethical questions they are often nearer to us than to the historical Protestant churches and to the World Council of Churches (WCC). Often they are committed Christians who take seriously the biblical message, the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and the commandments of God. With some of them we have good dialogues and firm friendships, or at least positive and promising contacts. To be sure, in terms of ecclesiological questions they are distant from us. So necessarily these dialogues have a quite different character than those with the Orthodox. Their goal is not the unity of the church but the overcoming of misunderstandings, better mutual understanding, friendship, and cooperation where that is possible. The dialogues can have a maieutic function and help these communities to question and to clarify their own identity and raise questions that they had not hitherto discerned. So the ecumenical scene is also changing very much in this respect.

The new communities mentioned here should be distinguished from the older and newer sects and from the many new “mushroom churches” in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. They too are part of the new scene. But because of their fundamentalist, often very aggressive, proselytizing and syncretistic attitudes and practices, they can hardly be partners in the ecumenical dialogue. However, those communities that are open to ecumenical dialogue present a real challenge, enabling us to stand together and give common witness to Christian brotherhood despite all the differences and problems that still exist.

The new situation affects also the situation of the WCC and our relations with it. Cooperation in the Faith and Order Commission is good, and in the Joint Working Group the participation is effective, collaborative, and friendly. But the WCC is also in crisis. The Oriental and Orthodox churches do not feel really at home and are threatening to leave unless substantial changes are made in matters of procedure and in issues pertaining to the agenda. Many new communities do not want to join the WCC because

of what they perceive to be its liberal positions. This has led to debate about the creation of a forum that would include all ecclesial communities and groups—whatever form this will eventually take. Within the WCC we can see a diminishing interest in classical theological discussions and often a paradigmatic shift towards a so-called secular ecumenism with the emphasis on common witness in questions of justice and peace, sometimes also with pressure groups in favor of gender questions, etc. On the basis of our past relationship, the Pontifical Council is determined to continue in its loyal and friendly, albeit sometimes critically constructive, cooperation that is appreciated by our partners as well.

This presentation is only a superficial report of some aspects and is by no means complete, and at some points is necessarily generalized. I will not insist on every word. What I wanted to say is only an introduction to a definition of the elements of the merging and changing new situation that we should discuss afterwards.

1. A first element of a changing or, better, of an already changed situation is the simple distance of thirty-five years from the Second Vatican Council and its *Decree on Ecumenism* that declared the restoration of the unity among Christians to be one of its principal concerns (*Unitatis Redintegratio* [UR], no. 1). To some degree the crisis of the ecumenical movement is paradoxically the result of its success. Ecumenism for many became obvious. But the closer we come to one another, the more painful is the perception that we are not yet in full communion. We are hurt by what still separates us and hinders us from joining around the table of the Lord; we are increasingly dissatisfied with the ecumenical status quo; in this atmosphere, ecumenical frustration and sometimes even opposition develops. Paradoxically it is the same ecumenical progress that is also the cause for the ecumenical malaise.

There is also a second aspect to the distance in time. For my generation, the Second Vatican Council and its decision in favor of the ecumenical movement was a great and to some extent a new experience. In the meantime we have a new generation of Catholic people and young priests who “knew not Joseph”; they were

not yet born at the time of the Council, so they do not really understand what, how, and why things have changed. They do not understand our theological problems, and they are not bothered by them. So the ecumenical questions have lost their fascination. This is very often connected with a lack of catechetical and homiletic instruction. Many do not know what Catholic or Protestant doctrine is all about and what the differences are. Often they have only a superficial and patchy knowledge through the mass media.

In this situation we are faced with a double task and challenge. First, we have to promote ecumenical education and the reception of ecumenical results. The results of ecumenical progress have not yet penetrated into the hearts and into the flesh of our church and of the other churches as well. Ecumenical theology is not present as an inner dimension in theological programs. Often TV determines the reception while, as the German debates after the Joint Declaration showed, even serious theologians believe: ecumenical *non leguntur*. Second, we must clarify and renew the ecumenical vision; we need a new ecumenical push and verve. We are in danger of losing a whole generation of young people if we do not give them a vision. This means catechetical, homiletic, theological endeavor, but even more a spiritual renewal and a new start.

2. A second element in our situation is the new emphasis on identity. The search for openness and dialogue under a more secular aspect can be seen as a part, an aspect, or a form of globalization. This tendency in the meantime is challenged by a new search for cultural, national, ethnic, confessional, and also personal identity. The new question is: Who are we? Who am I? How can we, how can I, avoid being absorbed in a faceless, bigger whole?

The question is obvious in the Orthodox world but is also found in some Lutheran reactions to the Joint Declaration, and in some Roman Catholic circles as well. In extreme forms the question is alive in fundamentalist movements that are to some degree a reaction to postmodern pluralism. The identity question is a form of self-affirmation and often an expression of the fear of losing oneself. Thus, ecumenism is often accused of or, better, is misunderstood as abolishing confessional identity and leading to an arbitrary plural-

ism, to indifference, relativism, and syncretism. "Ecumenism" has often become a negative term.

Surely the question of identity as such is legitimate and even essential; as such, genuine dialogue is possible only with persons who have established their proper identity. But the question can also obstruct and confine. The task will be to reach an open identity because identity is a relational reality: I have my identity only in relation with others, and in sharing with others. In this sense the concept of ecumenism must be clarified. In this context we should see the problem and the advantage of *Dominus Iesus*, which stressed the identity question. We must make it clear that serious ecumenism is different from confessional indifference and relativism that tends to meet on the lowest common denominator. Ecumenism must be understood as the open and shared Catholic identity, as a genuine expression but also the significance of Catholicity in the profound sense of the term.

3. A third element is the inner differentiation within the great confessional world families. The Pontifical Council decided right at the beginning of the ecumenical movement to engage in dialogues with all the Orthodox churches together, with the World Federations of the Protestant churches (LWF, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, etc.), and with the WCC and its subunits like the Faith and Order Commission. This was a reasonable decision even though these federations and associations clearly do not constitute individual churches; indeed, it would have been impossible, for example, to enter into dialogues with the different *Landeskirchen* (Evangelical Lutheran churches).

This perspective leads to a consideration of the increasing awareness of the fact that the Orthodox church does not really exist. There are autocephalous Orthodox churches that are often jealous of their independence and live in tension with their own sister churches. Constantinople at this moment seems no longer to be able to integrate the different autocephalous Orthodox churches, and its primacy of honor is questioned especially by Moscow. With Moscow, the dialogue on the universal level at this moment is very difficult. The situation is improving with Greece, while in the Middle East, in the territory

of the ancient See of Antioch, we have a completely different situation, one in which almost full communion already exists.

We have already mentioned the tensions within the Lutheran world about church ministries, and the tensions within the Anglican Communion. Besides these tensions about institutional questions there are tensions about ethical questions like abortion, homosexuality, bioethics, and questions of political ethics like peace and justice in the world, etc.

These are only some examples, but examples that raise the question of whether we will have in the future a two-speed—or even a many-speed—ecumenism. This seems to be likely, but it is not without dangers and not without new problems. We must avoid giving the impression of a “*divide et impera*.” It would be bad ecumenism to create new divisions within other churches or confessional families, or to aim at a new form of uniatism. Therefore a two-speed ecumenism is a very delicate thing that needs to be handled with great discretion. But in the given situation there is no realistic alternative. The implementation of this concept needs an ecumenical responsibility that is balanced between the universal Church and the local churches. The local churches must assume their responsibility; they cannot expect everything from the center. Our Plenary should issue an encouragement in this direction.

4. A fourth and last point: In his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994), the pope had expressed the hope that by the year of the Jubilee we would have reached full communion with the Orthodox churches, or at least have come close to it (no. 34). After the Jubilee, in *Novo Millennio Ineunte* he was much more cautious, expressing the view that there is still a long way to go (nos. 12, 48). This seems to me to be very realistic. The time for an enthusiastic ecumenism that was characteristic of the period immediately following the Council has gone.

The consequences are sometimes disappointment and even skepticism, often also harsh criticism of the official church (“*Amtskirche*”), attitudes, and acts of protest or of a wild ecumenism that disregards the official rules drawn up for instance in the *Directory*

for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism. This wild ecumenism is counterproductive because, instead of more communion, it creates new divisions. I personally prefer to speak of a new realistic approach and of a maturing and adult ecumenism that has gone beyond the enthusiasm of youth but also the loutish behaviour of adolescence and has become mature and realistic.

This means that we have to envisage a longer period during which we will continue living in the present situation of an already existing and profound communion, but which is still not a full communion. It means a situation in which we have left behind the old hostility and indifference and where we have rediscovered the brotherhood of all Christians. This seems to me to be the most important result of the last decades of ecumenism. But we must remain realistic and not make blueprints of abstract models of unity that sooner or later lead only to new disappointments. So now the question arises of how to give life and structure to our situation that will probably last longer than we thought before. How can we live, and how can we shape this intermediate situation? We shall come back to this point further on.

II. The Catholic Concept of *Communio* as the Ecumenical Vision

1. We start with a surprising discovery. Although none of the dialogues of the last thirty-five years have ever been held according to a preconceived plan, it is all the more astonishing that they converge in a surprising way. All the dialogues converge in the fact that they revolve around the concept of *communio* as their key concept. All dialogues define the visible unity of all Christians as *communio*-unity, and agree in understanding it—in analogy with the original Trinitarian model—not as uniformity but as unity in diversity and diversity in unity. This convergence in the concept of *communio* corresponds to the vision of the Second Vatican Council. The Extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985 stated that the *communio*-ecclesiology is the “central and basic idea of the Council documents.”

2. As we have already seen, the present situation is complex and many-layered. The dialogue documents show convergence about the concept of *communio*;

but on closer inspection, different understandings are hidden behind the term. The common concept of *communio* has different meanings and thus calls forth different expectations and projected goals. This necessarily leads to misunderstandings on one's own part and that of the partners. Convergence about one and the same concept, however, is also—apart from other factors—the cause for confusion. The differences in understanding reflect different ecclesiologies of the various churches and ecclesial communities. But often the theological understanding of *communio* is also replaced or overlaid by an anthropological or sociological understanding. The secularized use of the word *communio* leads to a secular understanding of an ecumenism that is characterized by non-theological, general social criteria and plausibilities.

In its secularized meaning, *communio* is understood in a “horizontal” way as a community of people resulting from the individuals’ desire for community. *Communio* in this sense is the result of an association of partners who are in principle free and equal. Such an understanding applied to the Church describes the church “from below”: that is, the “base” church against the “established” church and its official ecumenism. But *communio* can be also understood in the sense of neo-Romanticism, as a naturally grown, personal community based on primary personal relations; this understanding involves personal nearness and warmth in a familiar and friendly atmosphere. This results in a brotherly-sisterly understanding of the Church, a model that has been frequently attempted in monastic communities and fraternities, as well as in some Free Churches and pietistic communities. Nowadays it is often practiced in small groups, in base communities, and especially in the more recent spiritual communities. However, if this model of a fraternal ecclesiology is applied to the Church as a whole, it can lead to a “cuddle-corner ecclesiology” that chafes against the institutional reality of a large church instead of attempting to establish a constructive relation with it.

On the other hand, a one-sided institutional understanding of *communio* can also lead to misunderstandings. It often leads to a misleading understanding of the Church as a *communio hierarchica*, in the sense in which this term was usually understood in

pre-Conciliar theology: Church as *societas perfecta inaequalis* or *inaequalium*. The Council tried to overcome such a one-sidedly hierarchical understanding and re-emphasized the biblical and early church doctrine of the priesthood of all the baptized, as well as the doctrine of the *sensus* and *consensus fidelium* that derives from it. This does not lead to a democratic understanding but to a participative concept of *communio* with graduated rights of cooperation.

The Church therefore is neither a democracy nor a monarchy—not even a constitutional monarchy. She is hierarchical in the original sense of the word, meaning “holy origin”; that is, she has to be understood on the basis of what is holy, by the gifts of salvation, by Word and sacrament as signs and means of the Holy Spirit’s effectiveness. This brings us to the original and authentic theological understanding of *communio* as the Catholic vision of unity.

3. The Greek word for *communio*, “*koinonia*,” in its original sense does not mean community but participation (*participatio*). The verb “*koinoneo*” means “to share, to participate, to have something in common.” This is part of the overall message of the Bible: that God gathers his people and that he will bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, Jesus Christ (Eph 1:10).

According to the Acts of the Apostles, the early church in Jerusalem constituted a *koinonia* in the breaking of the bread and in prayer (Acts 2:42); they held everything in common (Acts 2:44, 4:23). According to Paul we have *koinonia* with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:9), with the Gospel (Phil 1:5), in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:13), in the faith (Phil 6), of suffering and comfort (2 Cor 1: 5, 7; Phil 3:10). The first and second letters of Peter speak of the *koinonia* of the glory to come (1 Pt 5:1) and of the divine nature (2 Pt 1:4); the first letter of John mentions *koinonia* with the Father and the Son and consequently among us (1 Jn 1:3). Basis and measure of this communion is the unity of Father and Son (Jn 17:21-23).

The sacramental basis of this *communio* is the one Baptism through which we are baptized in the one Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12f; cf. Rm 12:4ff; Ep 4:3ff); and therefore, through Baptism we are one

in Christ (Gal 3:26-28). The summit of communion is the Eucharistic celebration. So in the history of theology, the most important text was to become 1 Corinthians 10:16ff: “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” This text states that the *koinonia* in the one Eucharistic bread is the source and sign of the *koinonia* in the one body of the Church; the one Eucharistic body of Christ is source and sign of the one ecclesial Body of Christ.

This statement must not lead to a one-sidedly Eucharistic *communio* ecclesiology. The communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit also affects the communion of brothers among each other and especially the communion with the suffering. *Koinonia/communio* therefore has a theological and communal and social dimension as well. It would be as wrong to limit the ecclesial significance of *koinonia/communio* to the area of sacraments and worship, or even just to the Eucharist, as it would be to emphasize only the social dimension. There is, so to speak, a vertical and a horizontal dimension of communion. The sacraments are the foundation of the Church, and the sacramentally founded church celebrates the sacraments; and the sacramental communion expresses itself in communal and social behavior.

However, different emphases can be placed on the different aspects of the one *communio* reality. Thus, different and sometimes even opposing *communio*-ecclesiologies can be derived from the one common basic term *koinonia/communio*. There have been different confessional developments in terms of a far-reaching ecumenical agreement in this concept.

4. First, we might take a look at the new Eucharistic ecclesiology of the churches of the East. It is not uncontroversial in inner-Orthodox circles; it is not simply “the” Orthodox position. Ecumenically, however, it has become influential. The starting-point for the Eucharistic ecclesiology according to 1 Corinthians 10:16ff is the inner connection between ecclesial and Eucharistic *communio*, meaning that the Church is realized in the local church gathered for the

Eucharist. The local church celebrating the Eucharist is the church gathered around the bishop. Since the one Christ and the one Church are present in every local church, no local church can be isolated; every local church is necessarily and essentially in *koinonia/communio* with all other local churches that are celebrating the Eucharist. The universal Church is a *communio*-unity of churches.

For Orthodox theologians, this Eucharistic ecclesiology often has an anti-primatial intention. Since every local church is Church in the fullest sense, there can be no ecclesial ministry or authority higher than the bishop. There may have been from early days a precedence of the metropolitan sees and of the patriarchs, but it is synodically embedded. The Petrine ministry also is exercised by all the bishops, individually and in synodical communion. Therefore, in the view of the Orthodox churches, the problem of the primacy of Rome can only be considered in connection with the synodical or conciliar structure of the church. Orthodox partners always refer to Canon 34 of the “*Apostolic canones*,” which states that the first bishop can only take important decisions in agreement with the other bishops, and these only in agreement with the first bishop (cf. Valamo Document, 1988). In this sense, the Orthodox churches can in general accept that Rome holds the “primacy in love” (Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Rom, prooem.*); but they understand this normally as an honorary primacy and exclude any primacy of jurisdiction. Whether this fully corresponds to the first millennium is another question.

The ecclesiology of the Reformers arrives at a similar problem. In his early works, Luther is still very much aware of the connection between Holy Communion and the Church. But in Lutheran and Reformed theology the Church is generally understood as based on the proclamation of the Word rather than on the sacraments and defined as *creatura verbi*. According to Reformation understanding, the Church is where the Word of God is preached in its purity, and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. Thus, the *communio sanctorum* becomes synonymous with the *congregatio fidelium*—a term for the church that was already usual in the Middle Ages. In this sense there exists a basic agreement between the Catholic and the Reformation under-

standing of *communio* not as founded “from below” by the association of the faithful but as constituted by Word and sacrament.

But the difference is also clear. For the Reformers, the Church becomes real in the worshipping community of the local congregation. Luther wants to replace the, for him, dark and obscure word “church” with the word “congregation” (“*Gemeine*”). The Reformation understanding of the Church has its basis and center of gravity in the congregation. The worshipping assembly of the local congregation is the visible realization and manifestation of the Church; it lacks nothing of what is constitutive for the Church. The criticism of the theological distinction between episcopate and pastorate, and especially of the “papal monarchy” of the universal Church, basically arises out of this concentration on the local congregation. According to the usually accepted Reformation understanding, the episcopate differs only functionally from the pastorate; it is the ministry of the pastor exercising a church leadership function.

But even regarding this question of episcopacy, some convergence can be detected nowadays. Not even in Reformation times was it possible to maintain an approach that was exclusively centered on the local congregation; even then the question of the *episkopé* arose, of the ministry of supervision and oversight in the form of a ministry of visitation. Further progress was made in the twentieth century. It became clear that the Church realizes itself on different levels: on the local, the regional, and the universal level. On each of these levels the “with and over against” of ministry and congregation is constitutive. This raises anew the question of the quality of leadership ministries in the Church on the regional and universal level. With this new openness to a more universalistic viewpoint, the question of the possibility of a universal ministry of unity has been raised in several of the dialogues.

At present, however, the approach centered on the local church and local congregation still prevails. The ecumenical goal accepted today by most of the church communities of the Reformation is conciliar fellowship, or communion of churches that remain independent but recognize each other as churches and

agree to have altar and pulpit fellowship as well as mutually accepted ministries and services. This idea in particular is the basis of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (1973). This concept is also behind the model of “reconciled diversity” favored by the LWF. So the question arises of whether the Reformation model of unity as a network of local congregations, of local churches, or nowadays of confessional families is compatible with the Catholic ecclesiological approach. Though some progress has been made in formulating the problem, and possible lines of convergence are beginning to appear, a firm ecumenical consensus is still not in sight.

5. For a systematic presentation of the Catholic *communio* ecclesiology we start with the Council’s constitution *Lumen Gentium* (LG). In the eighth chapter, which tries to define where the Church is really and concretely to be found, the ecumenical question arises with the famous “*subsistit in.*” The constitution states that the Church of Jesus Christ is concretely real in the Catholic Church, in communion with the pope and the bishops in communion with him. In this statement lies the nerve of the ecumenical dialogue, and the declaration *Dominus Iesus* (2000) and consequent debate have shown very clearly that the nerve here is raw, and the pain threshold correspondingly low.

The ecumenically crucial question is how the two statements relate to each other: how, on the one hand, the one Church of Jesus Christ is concretely real and present in the Roman Catholic Church, and, on the other hand, how the many and essential elements of the Church of Jesus Christ can be found outside the institutional boundaries of the Catholic Church (LG, nos. 8, 15; UR, no. 3) and, in the case of the churches of the East, even genuine particular churches (UR, no. 14).

Dominus Iesus, which goes beyond the Council’s words and affirms that the Church of Jesus Christ is “fully” realized only in the Catholic Church, provides a hint for an appropriate answer. This statement logically implies that, although outside the Catholic Church there is no full realization of the Church of Jesus Christ, there still is an imperfect realization. Outside the Catholic Church therefore there is no

ecclesial vacuum (UUS, no. 13). There may not be “the” Church, but there is church reality. Consistently, *Dominus Iesus* does not state that the ecclesial communities that issued from the Reformation are not churches; it only maintains that they are not churches in the proper sense, which means, positively, that in an improper sense, analogous to the Catholic Church, they are *Church*. Indeed, they have a different understanding of the Church; they do not want to be Church in the Catholic sense.

If one asks further what concretely constitutes the fullness of what is Catholic, the Council texts show that this fullness does not concern salvation or its subjective realization. The Spirit works also in the separated churches and ecclesial communities (UR, no. 3); outside the Catholic Church there exist forms of holiness, even of martyrdom. Conversely, the Catholic Church is also a church of sinners; it needs purification and repentance. The full reality and fullness of what is Catholic does not refer to subjective holiness but to the sacramental and institutional means of salvation, the sacraments and the ministries. Only in this sacramental and institutional respect can the Council find a lack (*defectus*) in the churches and ecclesial communities of the Reformation (UR, no. 22). Both Catholic fullness and the *defectus* of the others are therefore sacramental and institutional, and not existential or even moral in nature; they are on the level of the signs and instruments of grace, not on the level of the *res*, the grace of salvation itself.

The consequence of the thesis that the one Church of Jesus Christ subsists in the Catholic Church is that, at present, unity is not given in fragments and is therefore a future ecumenical goal. Indeed, unity subsists in the Catholic Church; it is already real in it (UR, no. 4). This does not mean that full communion as the goal of the ecumenical endeavor has to be understood as the simple return of the separated brothers and churches in the bosom of the Catholic mother church. In the situation of division, unity in the Catholic Church is not concretely realized in all its fullness; the divisions remain a wound for the Catholic Church too. Only the ecumenical endeavor to help the existing, real, but incomplete communion grow into the full communion in truth and love will

lead to the realization of Catholicity in all its fullness (UR, no. 4; UUS, no. 14). In this sense the ecumenical endeavor is a common pilgrimage to the fullness of catholicity that Jesus Christ wants for his Church.

This ecumenical process is not a one-way street in which only others have to learn from us and, ultimately, to join us. Ecumenism happens by way of a mutual exchange of gifts and mutual enrichment (UUS, no. 28). Catholic theology can accept everything that the Orthodox *communio* ecclesiology has to say positively because Catholic ecclesiology also maintains that, wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, the Church of Jesus Christ is present. From Reformation theology it has learned that the proclamation of the Word of God also has the function of establishing Church and *communio*. Conversely, the Catholic Church is convinced that its institutional “elements,” such as episcopacy and the Petrine ministry, are gifts of the Spirit for all Christians; therefore, it wants to offer them as a contribution in a spiritually renewed form to the ideal of fuller ecumenical unity. This does not mean association, or the insertion of other Christians into a given “system,” but mutual enrichment. The closer we come to Christ in this way, the closer we come to each other in order, ultimately, to be fully one in Christ.

Our understanding of the “*subsistit*” makes clear that, according to Catholic understanding, unity is more than a network and *communio*-unity of local churches. Although every local church is fully the one Church (LG, nos. 26, 28), it is not the whole Church. The one Church exists in and out of the local churches (LG, no. 23), but the local churches also exist in and out of the one Church (*Communiones Notio*, nos. 9)—they are shaped in its image (LG, no. 23). Local churches are not subdivisions, simple departments, or provinces of the one Church, but neither is the one Church the sum of local churches, nor the result of their association, their mutual recognition, or their mutual interpenetration. The one Church is real in the *communio* of the local churches but it does not grow out of it; it is pre-given and subsists in the Catholic Church. Taking both together, this means that the one Church and the diversity of local churches are simultaneous; they are interior to each other (perichoretic).

Within this perichoresis the unity of the Church has priority over the diversity of the local churches. The fact that unity has priority over all particular interests is really blindingly obvious in the New Testament (1 Cor 1:10ff). For the Bible the one Church corresponds to the one God, the one Christ, the one Spirit, the one Baptism (cf. Eph 4:5ff). According to the model of the early community of Jerusalem (Acts 2:42), despite all legitimate diversities, she is one through the preaching of the one Gospel, the administration of the same sacraments, and the one apostolic governing in love (LG, no. 13; UR, no. 2).

The thesis of the priority of unity, however, is in opposition to the postmodern mentality of fundamental pluralism, for which there no longer is the one truth, but only truths. Therefore, the Catholic position has difficulties at present in public debates. Catholic ecclesiology, so to speak, sails against the winds of the spirit of the age. That need not be a weakness; it can also be its strength. Its concrete expression finds the Catholic understanding of the *communio*-unity of the Church in the Petrine ministry. We will discuss the problem later on the basis of a particular paper.

Finally, the whole problem of the *subsistit* and the specific Catholic understanding of *communio* has one more deeper dimension. The whole problem must be seen against the background of the specific Catholic understanding of the relation between Jesus Christ and the Church. The differentiating “*subsistit in*” aims at indicating that there is a differentiated relation between Jesus Christ and the Church. They must not be identified with each other, or confused, but neither can they be separated from or simply placed alongside each other. The Church is not Christ continuing alive, but Jesus Christ living and working in the Church as his Body. In this differentiated togetherness they make—according to St. Augustine—the “whole Christ.” So for us the *solus Christus* is at the same time the *totus Christus*, *caput et membra*.

Only on this general basis can discussions with the Reformation position be held in all their depth. For the Reformation view tends to oppose Jesus Christ as

the head of the Church to the Church itself. This becomes obvious when, in the case of ecclesial doctrines, reservations about their definitively binding character are registered about whether they are in accordance with Scripture; the Protestant position tends here to a certain revisionism. A similar problem arises when it comes to admittance to the Eucharist, and when it is argued that, since Jesus Christ invites everybody, the Church cannot deny access. Such argumentation is impossible for Catholics since Jesus Christ only invites in the Church and through the Church.

If one recognizes the fundamental nature of these problems, one realizes that despite encouraging progress, the way ahead still appears to be difficult and perhaps long (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 12). All the more important to ask: What can we do already, here and now? What are the next steps?

III. Ecumenical Praxis During the Transition Period

It is essential for the Church to acknowledge that she lives in an intermediate situation between the “already” and the “not yet.” Full communion in the complete sense can therefore be only an eschatological hope. Here on earth the Church will always be a pilgrim church struggling with tensions, schisms, and apostasy. As a church of sinners she cannot be a perfect church. But as pointed out by Johann Adam Möhler, who inspired Yves Congar, one of the fathers of Catholic ecumenical theology, we have to distinguish between tensions, which belong to life and are a sign of life, and contradictions, which make impossible and destroy communal life and lead to excommunication. The ecumenical task therefore cannot be to abolish all tensions, but only to transform contradictory affirmations into complementary affirmations and into constructive tensions—that is, to find a degree of a substantial consensus permitting us to lift excommunications.

We reached this goal in the Christological agreements with the Ancient Churches of the East and in the *Joint Declaration on Justification*. In other questions, particularly issues regarding the ministries in the

Church, we have not yet been successful. Thus, we live still in a transitional period, which will probably last for some time to come.

We have to fill this transitional period, of a real if not complete church *communio*, with real life. To the “ecumenism of love” and the “ecumenism of truth,” which both naturally remain very important, must be added an “ecumenism of life.” The churches did not only diverge through discussion; they diverged through the way they lived, through alienation and estrangement. Therefore, they need to come closer to each other again in their lives; they must get accustomed to each other, pray together, work together, live together, bearing the sting of the incompleteness of the *communio* and of the still impossible Eucharistic communion around the Lord’s table. I want to stress six points that should be discussed and concretized in the following discussion.

1. This transitional period must have its own “ethos” involving renunciation of all kinds of open or hidden proselytism, awareness that all “inside” decisions touch also our partners, healing for the wounds left by history (purification of memories), and wider reception of the ecumenical dialogues and agreements already achieved. Without danger to our faith or our conscience, we could already do much more together than we actually do: common Bible study; exchange of spiritual experiences; gathering of liturgical texts; joint worship in services of the Word; better understanding of our common tradition as well as existing differences; cooperation in theology, in mission, in cultural and social witness; and cooperation in the area of development and the preservation of the environment, in mass media, etc. Ecumenical reception and formation are particularly important for this transitional period, as we have already pointed out. In this context we should recall what was said, but unfortunately mostly forgotten, in the last Plenary.

2. We must find institutional forms and structures for the present transitional period and for the above-mentioned “ecumenism of life.” This can be undertaken in particular through councils of churches on the regional and national level. They do not constitute a super-church, and they require none of the churches to abandon their own self-understanding.

Responsibility for the ecumenical journey ultimately remains with the churches themselves. But they are an important instrument and a forum for cooperation between the churches and instrument for the promotion of unity (cf. *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 1993, 166–171). This point too was already dealt with in one of the last Plenaries.

3. The changing situation does not prevent us from continuing with our dialogues. After the substantial clarification of the central content of the faith (Christology, soteriology, and doctrine of justification), it is the question of the Church and her mission that becomes central. It will be necessary to clarify the understanding of Church and *communio* and to come to an agreement on the final goal of the ecumenical pilgrimage. All churches will have to do their homework in order to understand and explain better the nature and mission of the Church. In doing so we have to present our agreements and our differences; this is the only way to come to a clarification and, ultimately, to a consensus. False irenicism leads us nowhere. In this sense we support and cooperate in the multilateral consultation process of the Commission for Faith and Order, “Nature and Purpose of the Church.” For the year 2002 we plan an international theological Congress with the theme “Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement.” The Congress aims at clarifying the definitive Catholic ecumenical vision.

4. Part of the discussion of the understanding of *communio* relates to ministries in the Church. This is at present the crucial point of the ecumenical dialogue. Particularly at stake is the episcopate in apostolic succession and—in answering the question and the request of Pope John Paul II in the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (no. 95)—the future exercise of the Petrine ministry within the new ecumenical situation. We should make it clear that both are a gift for the Church that we want to share for the good of all. But it is not only others who can learn from us—we, too, can learn from the Orthodox and Reformation traditions and consider further how best to integrate the episcopate and the Petrine ministry with synodical and collegial structures. Such an effort to strengthen and develop the synodal and collegial structures in

our own church without giving up the essential nature of personal responsibility is the only way in which an ecumenical consensus could be reached about the Petrine and episcopal ministries.

5. In this interim stage, two forms of ecumenism are important and interrelated: ecumenism *ad extra* through ecumenical encounters, dialogues, and cooperation, and ecumenism *ad intra* through reform and renewal of the Catholic Church herself. There is no ecumenism without conversion and reform (UR, nos. 6-8; UUS, nos. 15-17). It is particularly important for us also to develop a “spirituality of *communio*” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, nos. 42ff), in our own church and between the churches. Only if in this way we are able to restore the recently lost confidence will further steps be possible. In more concrete terms, only through a balanced relationship between the universal Church and the local churches can we conceive a two-speed ecumenism and—what is even more important—find credibility for the ecumenical concept of *communio* as unity within diversity and diversity within unity.

6. Last but not least, from its very beginning the ecumenical movement has been and will continue to be an impulse and a gift of the Holy Spirit (UR, nos. 1, 4). So pre-eminence among all ecumenical activities belongs to spiritual ecumenism, which is the heart of all ecumenism (UR, nos. 7-8; UUS, nos. 21-27). Often less ecumenical activism would be more; in this light, spiritual ecumenism should be more strongly promoted, and relations with and between ecumenically concerned monasteries, movements, brotherhoods, and groups should be strengthened.

As we embark upon the new millennium, we need new ecumenical enthusiasm. But this does not mean devising unrealistic utopias of the future. Patience is the little sister of Christian hope. Instead of staring at the impossible and chafing against it, we have to live the already given and possible *communio* and do what is possible today. By advancing in this way, step by step, we may hope that, with the help of God’s Spirit who is always ready with surprises, we will find the way towards a better common future. In this sense, “*Duc in altum!*”: “Put out into the deep!” (Lk 5:4).

Relationship with the World Council of Churches



JOHN MUTISO-MBINDA

The relationship between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) takes place within the framework of the Joint Working Group (JWG). Established in 1965 for the purpose of exploring possibilities of dialogue and ecumenical collaboration, the JWG has an advisory role to its parent bodies, namely the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Assembly of the WCC, to which the JWG presents an account of its activities every seven years.

In this collaboration, the Catholic Church through the PCPCU appoints twelve Catholic theologians as members of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission, seventeen members of the JWG, about twelve experts invited regularly to different programs of the WCC, and two full-time Catholic staff members appointed by the PCPCU. Currently, Sr. Elizabeth Moran works at the WCC Office on Mission and Evangelization, and Rev. Fr. Gosbert Byamungu is full-time professor at the WCC Ecumenical Institute of Bossey.

This article focuses on three aspects of the relationship: (1) the main activities of the JWG during 2001; (2) bilateral relations between the partners; and (3) future prospects in this relationship.

1. Main Activities of the JWG During 2001

The year started with the meeting of the JWG Executive that took place in Rome in March, mainly to plan the agenda of the Plenary that met in Dromantine (near Newry), Northern Ireland, from

May 25-31, 2001. The agenda at this meeting included several major topics of study. Among these topics is a study on *the nature and purpose of ecumenical dialogue*. This theme is being studied on the basis of various documents of the Catholic Church (*Ut Unum Sint* [UUS], nos. 28-38; *Unitatis Redintegratio* [UR], nos. 161-165; *Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue* [PCPCU, 1970]) and one study document of the JWG on *Ecumenical Dialogue*, 1967.

After thirty-five years of experience in ecumenical dialogues at various levels, in bilateral dialogues between the Catholic Church and its partners (most of whom are members of the WCC), and in multilateral dialogue within the umbrella of Faith and Order, is there anything that partners have learned? What are the effects, the results, and the implications of ecumenical dialogue? The JWG, therefore, intends to focus on several aspects of ecumenical dialogue: (a) towards a definition of ecumenical dialogue; (b) models and types of ecumenical dialogue; and (c) concrete consequences of ecumenical dialogue (including the goal, themes, structure, method, and reception). The starting point of the study will be the philosophical and anthropological basis that leads immediately into examining the theological foundations of dialogue, exploring in particular the Christological and ecclesiological framework of ecumenical dialogue.

Other themes of study on the agenda of the JWG include ecclesiological consequences of Baptism, role of councils of churches, theological anthropology, and social thought and action (social and ethical concerns). At the last meeting of the JWG Executive in October 2001, discussion on these topics focused on

clarifying the purpose and method of each theme, as well as establishing subgroups to work on each topic and give a progress report at the next Plenary of the JWG in May 2002.

2. Bilateral Relations Between Partners

Another level of relationship between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches takes place through bilateral relations between the WCC Geneva Office and the PCPCU. The first aspect at this level involves mutual invitations to each others' major events. Thus, for example, the WCC sent Bishop Jonas Jonson (Church of Sweden, Bishop of Stängnäs and co-president of the JWG) as its representative to Rome on the occasion of the closing of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity presided over by the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, on January 25, 2001. Soon after that, at the invitation of the WCC, the PCPCU sent two delegated observers to the 158-member WCC Central Committee that took place in Potsdam, Germany, from January 29 to February 6.

A second aspect of bilateral relations takes place through an exchange of visits between the WCC staff in Geneva and those of the PCPCU in Rome. Among the visits during the year was that made by the staff team of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) from October 22-24, 2001. The purpose of the visit was to exchange information on questions of mission and evangelization and to get to know Catholic experts who are currently working in the same field with a view to future collaboration. The group was received by heads of some dicasteries—Pontifical Councils for Christian Unity, Justice and Peace, Interrreligious Dialogue, and Health Care. They were also received by the rector of the Pontifical

Urbaniana University, along with the dean and staff of the Faculty of Missiology, and by representatives of the International Union of Superiors General (IUSG women religious) and the Union of Superiors General (USG men religious).

Another visit from the WCC was the annual visit to Rome by thirty-eight students and staff of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey from November 20-27, 2001. During the one-week program organized by the PCPCU, the group participated in the Weekly General Audience of the Holy Father and was received by some dicasteries of the Roman Curia. The students were also received by the Focolare Movement, the Community of St. Egidio, the University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Ecumenical Department), and Centro Pro Unione, and they had a session with representatives of International Union of Superiors General (IUSG). The program also included guided tours of the major basilicas of Rome, the catacombs, the Vatican museums, and the Vatican radio studios. The purpose of this annual study visit is to help the students to get to know the Catholic Church better as part of their ecumenical formation.

3. Prospects for the Future

The first event in this relationship will be the meeting of the JWG Executive in Rome from March 1-2. The main purpose of that meeting will be to plan the details of the agenda for the next Plenary of the JWG that is foreseen to take place in Stängnäs, Sweden, from May 25-31, 2002. The JWG will continue its work within two general concerns in its mandate: (a) issues that affect the unity of the Church; and (b) common concerns facing member churches of the WCC and the Catholic Church.

Faith and Order



JOHN A. RADANO

Recent Successes, Coming Challenges

The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches in Geneva has been one of the successful arenas of ecumenical progress. Because its 120 members have included theologians from almost every Christian tradition—including, after 1968, theologians from the Catholic Church—the Commission is the most widely representative international ecumenical theological body in the world. While the full Plenary Commission meets only once or twice in the seven-year period between General Assemblies of the WCC, its Standing Commission of thirty members has met annually, or at least once within eighteen months, in order to oversee the development of Faith and Order studies and other ongoing aspects of its work. The present major study-projects concern ecclesiology (perhaps the most prominent), anthropology, hermeneutics, and Baptism; and one concerns ethnic identity, national identity, and the search for Christian unity. Some ongoing Faith and Order tasks include, among others, supporting and recording the progress of “united and uniting churches,” as well as collaborating with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (since 1966) in the preparation of material for the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which is used in many parts of the world.

BEM: Two Decades of Reception (1982-2002)

The Commission has produced many important ecumenical documents, the best known of them being perhaps *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (BEM). The product of more than fifty years of Faith and Order study, this convergence text became, after its publication in 1982, the most widely circulated ecumenical

text. Because there were also about two hundred official responses to it—mostly by member churches of the WCC but by others as well, including the Catholic Church—it became an ecumenical reference point used widely for helping separated Christian communions to understand each other better, and even assisting some churches in changing their relationship to one another. One can trace the impact of BEM and its growing reception of the text by churches and ecclesial communities over the twenty-year period since its publication, 1982-2002. In fact, the eighth meeting of the Forum for Bilateral Dialogue in May 2001, a Forum that meets periodically to assess the progress of dialogues, traced in a concise way some of the impact of BEM and also of other dialogues during those twenty years. Since people are not always aware of the ecumenical progress being made—and indeed, some have questioned whether any significant progress is being made—we mention here, making use of the Forum’s report, some ways in which BEM has made a difference.

Saying that the impact of BEM and other dialogue reports “has been dramatic,” the Forum report illustrated how this has been the case on three continents. We focus here only on BEM. For Australia, the report cites a collection of dialogue reports (*Stages on the Way: Documents from the Bilateral Conversations Between Churches in Australia*, 1994), which stated that “the frequent references to BEM in the documents from many of the Australian dialogues is an indication of the extent to which its challenges and implications are being addressed.” To mention one, that collection speaks of the Uniting Church-Lutheran Church dialogue’s statement on the Eucharist (1985). “The Uniting Church,” it said,

“is reclaiming the notion of sacrifice in the way that *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* suggests. Other categories that are of importance are memorial (anamnesis) and invocation of the Spirit.”

Several examples from Europe can be mentioned. The *Meissen Agreement* (1989) between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Germany includes ten agreements in faith that refer to BEM. In the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1996), which brings together the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland and Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches into a considerable degree of communion, the agreement on episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church refers to the ministry section of BEM, among other documents. The recent agreement of expanded church fellowship between the Lutheran Church of Norway and the Methodist Church in Norway, called *Fellowship of Grace* (1994), as the Forum report notes, was facilitated by the renewal undertaken by Methodists there and elsewhere of their understanding of Baptism along the lines suggested by BEM.

Concerning the United States, to give an example, the Consultation on Church Union—a movement, which started in 1960, of nine mainline American churches, Protestant and episcopal—will take an important step in 2002 and will become “Churches Uniting in Christ,” which represents an agreement based on BEM, as that document provided the theological basis for the original proposal.

We can add, finally, that within the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II has mentioned BEM on a number of occasions. In *Ut Unum Sint*, for example, the pope, in a chapter in which he reflects on the results of dialogue, states that “the fundamental role of Baptism in building up the Church has been clearly brought out thanks to multilateral dialogues,” and he documents this statement by referring to BEM (no. 42).

Much more evidence showing the impact of BEM could be given, but space does not permit it to be given here. The main lesson is that dialogue, in fact,

is very effective in helping Christians move toward reconciliation.

Challenges to Faith and Order

The Faith and Order Commission will be able to celebrate the impressive results of its work in August 2002, when there will be a commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne, Switzerland (1927), where the commemoration will be held. At the same time, significant challenges may lie ahead. At its recent meeting, January 9-16, 2002, the Faith and Order Standing Commission, while reviewing its various studies and activities, took steps towards preparing for its next Plenary Meeting in July-August 2004 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Standing Commission began the process of formulating themes and subthemes for the Plenary, keeping clearly in mind the challenge of the fact that the meeting will be held in an area where the majority of the population are members of other world religions and Christians are a minority. In what way should this reality be reflected in the Plenary Meeting?

Perhaps there will be an even greater challenge. This will be the first Plenary to meet under the terms of the new bylaws of Faith and Order established by the WCC with Faith and Order’s approval in 1999. In the former bylaws, the whole Plenary Commission was charged with initiating the study program of the Commission, laying down general guidelines for it, which the Standing Commission would then formulate and carry through. According to the revised bylaws now in place, it is the smaller Standing Commission that is responsible for initiating, implementing, and laying down general guidelines of the program of Faith and Order in consultation with the Program Committee of the WCC. The Plenary Commission, on the other hand, provides a “broader frame of reference for the activities of the Standing Commission,” a forum for debate and a source of membership for participation in study groups and consultations. Now that the Plenary no longer seems to have the same responsibility as previously, there is

a danger that Faith and Order could lose some of its ecumenical prestige. A major reason for its prominence has been the fact, already stated, that with 120 members it is the most widely representative international theological body in the world. Under the new bylaws—which shift the major responsibilities that the Plenary previously had to the Standing Commission of thirty members—unless the Plenary Meeting is designed and implemented properly, and unless its broad representative nature is seen as still effectively involved in processes leading to the studies

that issue from Faith and Order, there is danger that the subsequent Faith and Order Commission’s study documents may not be seen to have the same broad representative backing as before, and its prestige could possibly be diminished. The coming Plenary Meeting must therefore be designed and implemented so as to make clear that the study documents published have the same representative backing as those—for example, BEM—in the past. In this writer’s view, this is an important challenge facing Faith and Order today.

Relations with the Orthodox Churches



ELEUTERIO F. FORTINO

Relations between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches took many forms in 2001. There was not, however, a Plenary Meeting of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue, nor had one been scheduled.

A Pan-Christian Event

The new millennium began with a pan-Christian celebration on January 25, 2001, at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome. A celebration of the Word of God was presided over by Pope John Paul II and attended by delegations from almost all the Orthodox churches, the Ancient Churches of the East, and the Christian communions of the West.

This common prayer was a sign of a common effort by the churches and ecclesial communities to proceed into the future together in order to announce Christ as “the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn 14:6).

On the Orthodox side, the following delegations were present: the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople; the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria; and the churches of Greece, Poland, and Albania. Also, from the Ancient Churches of the East were the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, the Syro-Malankara Church, the Armenian Catholicossates of Etchmiadzin and Cilicia, and the Assyrian Church of the East. There was a striking variety of traditions and languages, all with the common purpose of celebrating the single Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and of praying for the “stability of the holy Churches of God and the union

of all,” as suggested by the litany of peace of the Byzantine tradition.

The Commission for Theological Dialogue

The last meeting of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches took place in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 9-19, 2000. The theme examined was “The Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of Uniatism.” The meeting was meant to continue the study of uniatism that had begun in 1993 at Balamand, Lebanon. The theme was to include a thorough examination of the problem, proceeding from a consideration of the facts—the historical reality of the origin and existence of the Eastern Catholic churches and the acceptance of their right to exist and to function—to an ecclesiological and canonical analysis. It was not possible to move towards convergence on this issue. The communiqué given to the mass media was very clear:

The discussions of this plenary were far-reaching, intense, and thorough. They touched upon many theological and canonical questions connected with the existence and the activities of the Eastern Catholic churches. However, since agreement was not reached on the basic theological concept of Uniatism, it was decided not to have a common statement at this time.

Nevertheless, there was a desire to find new ways to deal with the issue, as well as a proposal to seek counsel from the authorities of the various churches involved. The communiqué made these important points: (a) “the Commission sees the need for further

study of the theological, pastoral, historical and canonical questions related to this issue”; (b) in this sense there is an appeal to the churches in dialogue: “The members will report to their Churches who will indicate how to overcome this obstacle for the peaceful continuation of the dialogue.”

The Baltimore session was not in vain. It revealed the true nature of the problem under discussion. The existence of the Eastern Catholic churches is closely connected to the primacy of the Bishop of Rome within the Church of Christ. The exact understanding of the dimensions of the problem will, sooner or later, facilitate a solution. In any case, the dialogue with the Orthodox churches could not have avoided this issue. During the past year, this topic constantly came up in all contacts with the individual Orthodox churches, and also among the Orthodox churches themselves. In particular, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity discussed the issue with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which has the role of coordinating pan-Orthodox questions.

There was also a comment in the message of Patriarch Bartholomew I to the Holy Father and in the pope’s address to the delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate during its visit to Rome on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29, 2001). The Holy Father said,

The fraternal relations between the particular Catholic and Orthodox churches must be intensified. It is important to confront and clarify what remains of the theological dispute, relying on Holy Scripture and Tradition. The work of the Joint Commission must be completed in accordance with the program it has chosen. I know that the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox co-presidents of the Joint Commission are in close contact to decide together on the best way to resume the dialogue.

References to the same theme are also found in the exchange of messages on the feast of St. Andrew (November 30, 2001) at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the presence of the Roman delegation led by the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Pilgrimage to Athens and Damascus

For the first time in history, a pope visited Athens. This took place on May 4-5, 2001, when John Paul II stopped there in the context of his pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Paul. The president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity accompanied the Holy Father.

The pope paid a visit to His Beatitude Archbishop Christodoulos and was received by the Holy Synod. This visit was preceded by demonstrations in various parts of the country, which were sharply critical and generally contrary to ecumenical relations. However, the visit seems to have moved things forward and made it possible to hope that, with time, relations will improve. The welcoming address by the archbishop of Athens included explicit references to the difficulties the Greek church has in its relations with Rome. The Holy Father, at the meeting with the Holy Synod, gave a well-received speech that reduced the centuries-old tension. The pope stressed the need “for a liberating process of purification of memory.” He said, “For all the occasions past and present, when sons and daughters of the Catholic Church have sinned by action or omission against their Orthodox brothers and sisters, may the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of Him.” The Holy Father mentioned a particular historical event when he said,

I am thinking of the disastrous sack of the imperial city of Constantinople, which was for so long the bastion of Christianity in the East. It is tragic that the assailants, who had set out to secure free access for Christians to the Holy Land turned against their own brethren in the faith. The fact that they were Latin Christians fills Catholics with deep regret. How can we fail to see here the *mysterium iniquitatis* at work in the human heart? To God alone belongs judgment, and therefore we entrust the heavy burden of the past to his endless mercy, imploring Him to heal the wounds which still cause suffering to the spirit of the Greek people.

A common declaration, signed by the pope and the archbishop and read at the Areopagus, concluded the papal visit. The pope and the archbishop once again

took up the appeal of St. Paul to the Corinthians: “We appeal to you, brethren, that all of you agree and that there be no schisms among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Cor 1:10). They also referred to improper attitudes in ecumenism and looked forward to better relations: “We condemn all recourse to violence, proselytism and fanaticism in the name of religion. We especially maintain that relations between Christians, in all their manifestations, should be characterized by honesty, prudence and knowledge of the matters in question.”

The rest of the declaration called upon Catholics and Orthodox to work together to solve society’s problems. It also called for cooperation in efforts to ensure a Christian presence in the new European Union.

On June 13, 2001, Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, paid a courtesy visit to His Beatitude Christodoulos, archbishop of Athens, and had a positive conversation on mutual relations and dialogue.

In Damascus (May 5-8, 2001), the Holy Father was warmly received by the three local patriarchs: His Beatitude Ignatius IV Hazim (Greek Orthodox), His Beatitude Zakka I Iwas (Syriac Orthodox), and His Beatitude Gregory Laham (Melkite Greek Catholic). A very large number of people took part in the event. This was a sign of the cordial relations that exist among the shepherds of the various churches in Damascus.

The pope addressed the clergy, religious men and women, and laity—Catholics and Orthodox together—at the Syriac Orthodox Cathedral. This was no formal courtesy or mere traditional hospitality, but a deeply Christian welcome. The pope recalled that the formation of this spirit has deep roots. For example, he mentioned the fact that the present Syriac Orthodox patriarch had been an observer at the Second Vatican Council and had visited Rome several times.

Turning to the Greek Orthodox patriarch, the pope mentioned this Patriarchate’s positive contribution to relations with the Catholic Church:

The quest for unity between the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Patriarchates of Antioch is clearly part of the wider process of reunion between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches. That is why I reaffirm my sincere desire that the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue may soon be able to continue its work in the most appropriate way. The more this dialogue touches upon central questions, the more demanding it will become. This is no cause for surprise, and still less an excuse for lethargy. I wish to thank most sincerely Patriarch Ignatius IV for the positive and effective contribution which the Patriarchate of Antioch and its representatives have constantly made to this process of theological dialogue.

In October 2001, His Beatitude Ignatius IV of Antioch paid a visit to Rome and was received by the Holy Father in a private audience on October 22.

The dialogue continues in various forms and at different levels. From September 2-4, 2001, an inter-Christian Symposium organized by the Athenaeum Antonianum of Rome and the Aristotle University of Thessalonica took place in Reggio Calabria, Italy. The topic was “Soteriological Perspectives in the Traditions of the Christian East and West.” The undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity was also present. The Holy Father sent a congratulatory message to the organizers and participants.

From December 19-20, 2001, on the initiative of His Holiness Bartholomew I, a conference on “God’s Peace on Earth: Peaceful Coexistence Among the Great Monotheistic Religions” took place in Bruxelles, Belgium. The Catholic Church responded to the invitation and was represented by the presidents of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and a number of others.

In general these various forms of encounter have in view the strengthening of the dialogue of love among the churches and the restoration of full communion.

In other words, they aim at the progressive strengthening of a sense of fraternity and cooperation.

Day of Prayer for Peace

Inter-Christian relations are also important because of their impact on society and on a possible resolution of its problems. Christians live alongside men and women of other religious affiliations and opinions. For the sake of common good, Christians have always been ready to live and work together with them. On the Day of Prayer for Peace held at the pope's invitation at Assisi, Italy, on January 24, 2002, there was a united response from other Christians. The

Orthodox churches were present almost in their entirety. This participation shows the level of relations achieved by the Catholic Church with each of these churches and with all of them together, in spite of the real and difficult problems that still must be resolved.

In his encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* on commitment to ecumenism, the Holy Father John Paul II clearly summed up, as one of the fruits of the dialogue, this new situation when he stated that “the universal brotherhood of Christians has become a firm ecumenical conviction” (no. 41).

Relations with the Moscow Patriarchate



JOSEF MAJ, SJ

In the 1990s, with the return to normality of the Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine and the creation of hierarchical structures for the Roman Catholic Church in the territory of the former Soviet Union, a complicated phase in the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church began. Questions relative to the existence of Eastern Catholics were not limited to this Orthodox Church and therefore they were also brought up in the (international) theological dialogue. The Orthodox members requested that this dialogue be limited to the subject of so-called “uniatism.”

The reason why the Moscow Patriarchate refuses to open up to numerous gestures coming from the Catholic Church and has set conditions for an eventual renewal of relations is the accusation of proselytism and Catholic expansion on the territory of the Patriarchate as well as the destruction of its three eparchies (dioceses) in western Ukraine. While, according to the many statements of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, Catholic proselytism was being practiced in the Russian Federation, in Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine, the destruction of the eparchies at the beginning of the 1990s in western Ukraine has been followed by the presumed persecutions inflicted upon Orthodox faithful of the Patriarchate of Moscow by Greek-Catholics.

The accusations indicated have been repeated by representatives of the Patriarchate of Moscow all through the year 2001, but particularly following upon the pastoral visit of the Holy Father John Paul II in Ukraine from June 23-27 in response to the invitation of the Catholic Church of Latin and Byzantine rites as well as of the president of Ukraine.

According to the Patriarchate of Moscow, the visit of the Holy Father should not have taken place because of the problems that continue to exist in western Ukraine up to the present. His Beatitude Volodymyr, metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine, also wrote in this sense to the Holy Father. In his letter of January 22, 2001, the metropolitan conveyed his request to postpone the visit already in preparation because of the existence of problems not yet resolved in the relations between Orthodox and Greek-Catholics in western Ukraine.

It is well known that the Greek-Catholic Church was pronounced nonexistent by the so-called “Synod of Lviv” in 1946, organized with the contribution of the communist regime. The church “freely reunited with the Mother Church”—the Russian Orthodox Church. The three Greek-Catholic eparchies, in light of that decision, were considered Orthodox. The properties of the Greek-Catholic Church confiscated by the regime were partially handed over to the Orthodox church. The Greek-Catholic Church with its bishops, priests, religious, and faithful was subjected to long years of persecution and destruction through judicial processes, deportations, and violations of fundamental human rights. Nonetheless, this church survived clandestinely, organizing, where possible, its own chain of pastoral care of the faithful.

The year 1989 marked the return to public existence of the Greek-Catholic Church. It involved a spontaneous movement as soon as the situation of freedom permitted. It was by no means planned nor guided by any controlling center of the Catholic Church, as some would still like to insist today.

On the other hand, it is undeniable that, during the process of the return to normal church life of the communities that had been despoiled of their properties, there were disputes and even direct encounters around the places of worship used from 1946 on by the Orthodox church to which they had been transferred by the regime. Events of this type have been objects of consultations between delegations of the Holy See and the Moscow Patriarchate during bilateral meetings held from 1990 on. The difficulty of analyzing objectively situations of conflict outside their proper context led the two delegations to reach an agreement in 1999 about the necessity of creating a mixed commission in Ukraine made up of representatives of the Greek-Catholic Church and of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, with the participation of two observers from the Holy See and two from the Patriarchate of Moscow. Already in March 2000 the Greek-Catholic Church announced the names of its own representatives for the mixed commission; two observers of the Holy See were also named. But until now there has been no communication from the Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

In this context, the answer of the Holy Father to the letter of Metropolitan Volodymyr mentioned above takes on great significance:

My coming visit, therefore, also wishes to display a constant and respectful consideration of my Orthodox brothers as well as my determined commitment to continue to walk along the way of dialogue in truth and charity. A sign of this profound intention, destined to overcome every eventual problem which might come up between us, is the mixed commission of members of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church—which includes two representatives of the Patriarchate of Moscow and two of the Holy See—recently established to meet the desire of His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II to examine relations between Catholics and Orthodox in western Ukraine. It is my fervent hope that such a commission may begin its work as soon as possible. (March 26, 2001)

“The respectful consideration of my Orthodox brothers” clearly marked the visit of the Holy Father in Ukraine from the moment of his arrival in Kyiv. In his greetings at the airport the pope addressed himself to all those who,

even though not belonging to the Catholic Church, have a heart open to dialogue and cooperation. I wish to assure them that I have not come here with the intention of proselytizing but to give testimony to Christ along with all Christians of every church and ecclesial community and to invite all the sons and daughters of this noble land to turn their gaze towards him who gave his life for the salvation of the world.

Referring to the relations between the Church of Rome and the Church of Kyiv, the Holy Father not only brought into relief those pages of history that “knew periods of light” but also remembered moments

during which the icon of the love of Christ has been obscured: prostrate before our common Lord, let us recognize our faults. As we ask pardon for the errors committed in the more ancient as well as the more recent past, we on our part give assurance of forgiveness for the evils experienced.

The Holy Father’s consideration for our Orthodox brothers, his desire to turn his gaze together with the Christian brothers of Ukraine towards Christ the Savior, his desire to “hope in a future of ever greater understanding along the path toward full unity,” the strength of a charity that asks for forgiveness and offers it unconditionally—all of this was widely received by many believers in Ukraine, Catholics and Orthodox alike. Not only Catholic faithful were present in Kyiv; they were accompanied by many Orthodox brothers who were able to see the true face of the Catholic Church, different from the image that sadly has been presented to them in a distorted way. In their presence one could uncover the great desire to walk together in concord and to render common testimony to their faith in Christ to a world that has need of it.

The assurances given by the Holy Father to the Orthodox of Ukraine that he had come without the least intention of proselytism have the value of a principle that goes beyond the boundaries of the country on whose soil these words were pronounced. The position of the Catholic Church concerning proselytism is very clear and was affirmed in a solemn way at the Second Vatican Council in the *Decree on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)*:

In spreading religious belief and in introducing religious practices everybody must at all times avoid any action which seems to suggest coercion or dishonest or unworthy persuasion especially when dealing with the uneducated and the poor. Such a manner of acting must be considered an abuse of one's own right and an infringement on the rights of others. (no. 4)

The Catholic Church therefore has not had and does not have the intention of conducting proselytical activities in the countries mentioned above, including the Russian Federation. Such activity would be in jarring contradiction to the generous, unconditional, and brotherly aid that the Catholic Church, through its own dioceses, charitable organizations, and assistance agencies, offers every year to the Russian Orthodox Church, to its eparchies, seminaries, and monasteries. The Holy Father and the Holy See continually stimulate the generosity of these Catholic organizations. Such concern is and intends to be exclusively a fraternal concern and nothing else.

The Catholic Church wishes to fulfill its own obligations to the Catholic faithful in Russia who have long been deprived of pastoral care; she also desires that the Russian Orthodox Church can accomplish her own mission that she is called to carry out in her own country. Nonetheless, the challenges presented today to both churches are not limited to one or another country. Today more than ever the whole of

Europe needs their common witness. The presence of Christian values in Europe and the face of Europe itself will depend in great measure on the harmonious coexistence of the Western and Eastern traditions. It is they who formed Europe, and only they are its future.

Despite the difficult climate existing, a climate that could easily be removed, there are numerous contacts between the two churches. These contacts are concrete and undeniable signs of a certain communion that already exists between the two churches. In fact, at the local level, thanks to the above-mentioned aid given by Catholic dioceses and Catholic agencies, there exist fruitful contacts with many eparchies, seminaries, and monasteries of the Russian church. At the level of contacts between the two churches, one must note the presence of a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church at the inauguration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the opening of the Holy Door in the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls on January 18, 2000; at the ecumenical commemoration of the witnesses to the faith during the twentieth century, presided over by the Holy Father John Paul II together with other churches and ecclesial communities at the Colosseum on May 7, 2000; at the celebration of the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on January 25, 2001; as well as at the Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops during the month of September 2001. It was likewise significant that a delegation of the Patriarchate of Moscow was also present at the prayer for peace held in Assisi on January 24 of this year.

On various occasions it has been brought to mind that the Catholic Church wishes to have with the Russian Orthodox Church not only good and correct relations, but also brotherly and fruitful cooperation. The Catholic Church has not ceased and will not cease to work and pray that it will be possible to walk together for the cause of the Gospel and the good of the world.

Relations with the Ancient Churches of the East



JOHAN BONNY

Today ecumenism is a part of the life of the Church, just as a river is part of the countryside that surrounds it. And just as the calm current of a river can become so taken for granted that people hardly notice it anymore, ecumenism runs the risk of becoming routine. To be sure, it is still discussed. But for the most part this takes place by way of exception: in times of abundance or drought. Today the river of ecumenism has to overflow the calm banks in which it flows—or run dry—if it is to be noticed. It is good to focus on the more notable events in a way that does not lose sight of that which is lived day to day, with great simplicity of heart and spirit.

Reviewing the relations between the Catholic Church and the Ancient Churches of the East in 2001, we will look first of all at the normal course of the flow of fraternal relations at the level of the local churches. In Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Armenia, India, and Iraq, Catholic and Ancient Eastern communities have ventured down new paths of dialogue, reconciliation, and collaboration. Patriarchs regularly consulting with one another, bishops meeting once a month, parishes or schools working together in catechesis, interchurch families deepening their double ecclesial relationships, religious making Christian unity the first intention of their prayer, groups of young people praying and working together, shared efforts to prevent a further increase of Christian emigration, common initiatives for peace among peoples and nations—all this constitutes the front line of the ecumenical current that determines and changes the life of the churches in the Middle East. Before turning to the more exceptional events, it is important to emphasize this daily ecumenism.

The Syriac Orthodox Church

The relations between the Catholic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church were marked first of all by the visit of Pope John Paul II to Syria from May 5-8, 2001. His Holiness Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas was one of the three patriarchs who welcomed the pope and accompanied him during the entire visit. On the afternoon of May 6, in the Syriac Orthodox Cathedral of St. George in Damascus, Pope John Paul II met with the clergy, religious, and lay people of the Catholic and Orthodox churches of Syria. In his speech, the Holy Father affirmed,

Here in Damascus I wish to pay homage to the entire Syrian tradition, with its rich unity in diversity. Saints Paul, Ignatius of Antioch, Ephraem, John Chrysostom, Simeon Stylites, John Damascene and so many others are luminous teachers for us all. In them we see that the obedience of faith and the suffering of the Cross never fail to bear fruits of salvation. The wonderful creativity of your tradition appears in a figure like Saint Ephraem of Nisibis, the “harp of the Holy Spirit,” whose works were quickly translated into all the languages of Christian antiquity. May such an exchange of gifts never cease! It is my fervent hope that Christians everywhere will once again open their hearts to the spiritual and doctrinal treasures of the Churches of the Syrian tradition.

The Malankara Orthodox Church of India

From October 14-19, 2001, two meetings took place in India, one after the other: a meeting of the Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic

Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. In 2000 the theological dialogue had resumed in parallel fashion with these two branches of the Malankara Orthodox Church. As in the previous years, three main themes were studied in the course of the meeting: first, ecclesiological questions concerning in a particular way the structures of communion in the Syriac tradition; second, questions concerning the historical fractures that gave rise to the divisions in Malankarese Christianity from the time of Portuguese colonization; and finally, pastoral matters concerning various forms of practical collaboration in the formation of future priests, common witness, and mixed marriages. To facilitate access to the working documents presented in the course of previous meetings, the Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church recently published a volume entitled *Papers and Joint Statements 1989-2000*.¹

The Armenian Apostolic Church

For the Armenian Church, 2001 was a Jubilee year that was particularly rich in commemorative celebrations. In various places and at different times, the Armenian community celebrated the 1700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia. In fact it was in 301 that St. Gregory the Illuminator baptized King Tiridates III, thus setting in motion the Christian history of the Armenian people.

At the Catholicosate of Antelias, the main celebrations took place from May 25-27, 2001. A delegation from the Holy See presided over by Walter Cardinal Kasper participated in the program of events those days. On May 25 the delegation participated in the consecration of the Holy Chrism, one of the most solemn liturgies of the Armenian tradition, presided over by His Holiness Catholicos Aram I. On May 26, at an ecumenical liturgy, Walter Cardinal Kasper gave to the catholicos a relic of St. Gregory the Illuminator, preserved for centuries at the Convent of St. Gregory

the Armenian in Naples. Pope John Paul II wished to offer this relic to Catholicos Aram I as a sign of spiritual communion.

Then, at the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, the jubilee celebrations took place from September 21-23, 2001. A delegation from the Holy See, presided over by Walter Cardinal Kasper, participated here also in the entire program of celebrations. On September 22 His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II consecrated the Holy Chrism on the new altar situated within the walls of the Catholicosate, the same altar on which Pope John Paul II would celebrate the Eucharist a few days later. On September 23 the delegation assisted at the consecration of the new cathedral in Yerevan, the cathedral for which Pope John Paul II offered a relic of St. Gregory the Illuminator to Catholicos Karekin II during his visit to Rome from November 9-11, 2000.

The event that most illustrated the participation of the Catholic Church in the jubilee celebrations of the Armenian Church was the visit of Pope John Paul II to Armenia from September 25-27, 2001. After having delayed this journey first because of the poor health of Catholicos Karekin I and then by his premature death, in going to Armenia the Holy Father was able to realize a desire that he'd had for a number of years.

In addition to a pastoral visit to the Catholic faithful of Armenia, the Holy Father also wished to carry out an ecumenical visit to the Catholicosate and Holy See of Etchmiadzin. The fact that the catholicos invited the pope to stay at the Armenian Catholicosate during His Holiness's entire visit was appreciated by all as an exemplary gesture of welcome and fraternal hospitality. Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Karekin together visited the most illustrious holy places of the Armenian Church and people: the ancient cathedral of Etchmiadzin, the monastery of Khor Virap where St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned, the genocide monument, and the new cathedral in Yerevan. For his part, the catholicos also assisted at the Eucharistic celebration in the Latin rite presided over by Pope John Paul II on the new altar situated at the entry of the

1 This book is available at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Catholicossate. The visit crowned a long process of rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Catholicossate of Etchmiadzin, a process to which Catholicos Vasken I, Catholicos Karekin I, and the present Catholicos Karekin II all contributed. It also gave new impulse to the initiatives that must reinforce collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Church and lead them finally to full communion.

The Assyrian Church of the East

An event of great importance for relations between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East was the publication of “Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East,”² guidelines that were accompanied by a note, “Admission to the Eucharist in Situations of Pastoral Necessity: Provision Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.”³ Given the great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, both in their countries of origin and in the diaspora, impeding for many of them a normal sacramental life according to their own tradition, and in the ecumenical context of the bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, a request had been made to provide for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East in cases of grave pastoral necessity, as provided for in the *Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches* and the *Ecumenical Directory*. The main question for the Catholic Church concerning the response to this request had to do with the problem of the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the anaphora of Addai and Mari in its shorter form, i.e., without a coherent or *ad litteram* recitation of the institution narrative. Following a lengthy in-depth study of the anaphora of Addai and Mari from a historical, liturgical, and theological point of view, the Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith reached the conclusion that this anaphora could be considered valid, a conclusion that was approved by Pope John Paul II. This decision now allows the competent authorities of the Chaldean and Assyrian Churches together to draft particular procedures and to furnish appropriate pastoral instructions for the realization of this admission to the Eucharist in cases of pastoral necessity.

From November 7-11, 2001, the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East held its seventh annual meeting in Rome. It put the finishing touches on the draft of a common document on the sacramental life in the Church of the East. This document, once it is approved by the competent authorities of the churches involved, would bring to a conclusion the second phase of this theological dialogue. In the meantime, the Joint Commission has begun the third phase of its activity, during which certain ecclesiological questions will be considered. Several historical and theological studies regarding the structures of communion in the Eastern and Western traditions, especially during the first millennium, were examined in the first common reflection. The Joint Commission hopes to concentrate its attention on this subject for several more years for the purpose of drafting a common document on the matter.

Conclusion

At this time of new and serious tensions in the Middle East, we nourish the hope that the churches and ecclesial communities present in the region might be able to contribute, through a sincere and courageous ecumenism, to the promotion of peace between peoples and nations. This is an integral part of their common mission, irreplaceable at this critical moment in history.

2 *L'Osservatore Romano*, (October 26, 2001): 7-8; *English Weekly Edition*, no. 44 (1716) (October 31, 2002): 4.

3 *L'Osservatore Romano*, (October 26, 2001): 7-8; *English Weekly Edition*, no. 46 (1718) (November 14, 2001): 6-7.

Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations



DONALD BOLEN

1. The ecumenical journey may be long and difficult, as the Holy Father suggests in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (no. 12); but progress is ongoing, and new initiatives carry with them new hope. One such new initiative in Anglican-Catholic relations was the formation this past year of a new international “Working Group,” which will be known as the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).

Set up by the Vatican’s Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Anglican Communion, the new Commission is intended to complement the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), which has been and remains the official instrument for Anglican-Catholic theological dialogue. The majority of the members of the new Commission are bishops, and their task will involve reviewing the relationship between Catholics and Anglicans worldwide, consolidating the results of more than thirty years of ecumenical contact and dialogue, and charting a course for the future.

The new Commission has its origins in the 1996 Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. George Carey. With obstacles relating to the ordination of women blocking the clear way forward, the Common Declaration suggested that “it may be opportune at this stage in our journey to consult further about how the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church is to progress.” The further consultation called for led to last year’s International Meeting of Anglican and Catholic Bishops in Mississauga, Canada, where it was affirmed that despite obstacles, the partial communion we share “is even now a rich and life-giving, multifaceted communion” (from the Mississauga meeting’s concluding statement, *Communion in Mission*, no. 5). It was this meeting’s

recommendation that a new international commission be established.

IARCCUM held its first meeting in London and Rome from November 20-24, 2001, under the chairmanship of Bishop David Beetge, Anglican bishop of the Highveld, South Africa, and Archbishop John Bathersby, Catholic archbishop of Brisbane, Australia. Conversations with the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Carey and Pope John Paul II were the chief focus of the inaugural meeting.

In London, Archbishop Carey shared his vision for the work of the new Commission and assured the members of the Commission of his prayerful support for their work. He stressed the importance of building on the foundations of ARCIC and all previous work that has fostered Anglican-Roman Catholic relations. In a message that he sent with the new Commission to the Holy Father, he articulated his hope that IARCCUM would enable us to “put into practice the mutual commitment and common life that is already ours.” His message also stressed the great importance of our joint courageous witness to the truth of God’s call in these troubled times.

In receiving the Commission in a private audience three days later, Pope John Paul observed that as an international group of bishops, they were

especially well qualified to consider the next practical steps which might be taken not only to consolidate the gains already made, but also to lead us to new depths of communion on the way to that fullness of unity which is the will of Christ.

Like Archbishop Carey, he too emphasized that today “the world needs more than ever the common witness of Christians in every area, from the defence of

human life and dignity to the promotion of justice and peace.”

IARCCUM will begin its work with subcommittees taking up the three following tasks: (1) exploring the possibility of preparing a joint declaration that would formally express the degree of agreement that exists between Anglicans and Catholics; (2) studying ways in which the Commission could guide and promote the study and reception of the agreed statements of ARCIC within the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church; and (3) searching for strategies to translate the degree of spiritual communion that has been achieved into visible and practical outcomes. Commission members are proceeding with the conviction that by allowing a spirit of dialogue and cooperation to pervade our relations, Anglicans and Catholics will be offering the world a powerful example of a Spirit-led way of overcoming differences. Our Christian history testifies that we have not always given this example in the past, but the opportunity to do so at all levels of our current relationship presents itself with urgency.

2. Meanwhile, the work of ARCIC continued this past year with ongoing dialogue about the role of Mary in the life and doctrine of the Church. Special attention was paid to the role of Mary in the New Testament and in the life of the early church, as well as in Reformation authors. This has prepared the foundations for the dialogue’s forthcoming work on the dogmatic definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The ARCIC Commission hopes in approximately two years’ time to be able to reach an agreed statement on Mary, which would then be submitted to Anglican and Catholic authorities for their consideration and evaluation. There are high hopes that the Commission’s work on this subject will make an ecumenical contribution of importance even beyond the parameters of Anglican-Catholic dialogue.

ARCIC members felt very profoundly the absence of Fr. Jean-Marie Tillard, OP, who had died since the Commission’s previous meeting. Fr. Tillard, of the Canadian Province of Dominicans, was the only present member of ARCIC who had served on the Commission since its inception in 1970. The mem-

bers recalled with deep appreciation and affection, by informal conversation and liturgical commemoration, the immense contribution of Fr. Tillard to the work and life of the Commission, and to Anglican-Catholic relations in general.

3. For the third successive year, Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Carey paid a visit to the Holy Father (June 2001). He has met with the pope on five occasions during his ten years as the president of the Anglican Communion, more than any of his predecessors. Archbishop Carey’s recent announcement that he will be retiring later this year will invite grateful reflection over the coming months on the many ways in which Anglican-Catholic relations have grown and deepened, despite obstacles, during his years of leadership as Archbishop of Canterbury.

Of related interest, Archbishop Carey recently appointed Bishop Garrard as the new director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. The Centre’s director is the representative to the Holy See of the Archbishop of Canterbury and all the Anglican Primates. As a place of study, hospitality, and prayer, the Anglican Centre exists to encourage and strengthen ecumenical relations, especially the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church.

4. We cannot do better to conclude this brief overview of Anglican-Catholic relations than to cite a powerful invitation to hope from Pope John Paul’s address to the new IARCCUM commission, carrying with it a message of encouragement to all who work for Christian unity:

I am certain that the new Working Group will feel sustained by “the hope that comes from being led by the Risen One and the inexhaustible power of his Spirit, always capable of new surprises” (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 12). We have seen many of these surprises in recent decades; and when discouragement threatens or new difficulties arise, we need to focus once more upon the Spirit’s power to do what seems to us impossible. At times of apparent pause we must wait for the Holy Spirit to do what we ourselves cannot do.

Relations of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with the Lutheran World Federation



MATTHIAS TÜRK

1. Progress in Theological Questions

1.1. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

The signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JD) on October 31, 1999, was the ripe fruit of over thirty years of theological and ecumenical work and the most significant ecumenical step forward—an ecumenical milestone—up to the present day. This agreement that concerns the center of the Gospel and the ground of the separation between Catholics and Lutherans for more than 450 years is a gift of the Holy Spirit for which one cannot be too thankful.

From the theological point of view, two matters are important. First, the JD does not represent a total but a differentiated consensus, which means a consensus about the basic questions of the doctrine of justification that is, however, accompanied by statements in which such full consensus has not been reached. These statements, however, are no longer understood as conflicting but rather as complementary opinions that therefore do not call the basic consensus into question.

Since then, a follow-up program of the JD was discussed by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Lutheran World Federation. They plan to organize a symposium with biblical scholars in order to deepen the theme of justification in a biblical sense. There also is the need to translate the message of justification and the arising ecclesiological questions into the language of today and to extend the differentiated consensus reached so far to other ecclesial communities issued from the

Reformation. On the international level, a consultation is being prepared on the question of “*simul iustus et peccator*,” in cooperation with the Johann Adam Möhler Institute in Paderborn and the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg.

In this context, one of the most important steps since the signing of the JD was the consultation on “Unity in Faith: The *Joint Declaration on Justification in a Wider Ecumenical Context*,” which took place in Columbus, Ohio, from November 26 to December 1, 2001. The aim of this consultation was to explore in what specific ways other Christian World Communions, who are so interested, could formally adhere to the agreements reached in the JD. Having ascertained an interest by the World Methodist Council (WMC) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) had invited those two bodies to participate in an ecumenical exploration on the theme. The consultation identified theological and procedural issues involved in the possible association of the Methodists and Reformed with the JD. The importance of doctrinal agreements for the development of official church relations was recognized especially for those churches and ecclesial communions that have been involved in church-dividing doctrinal condemnations. It was agreed to propose that the consultative process be continued. The participants shared the conviction that agreement in the doctrine of justification represents an important step forward towards the goal of church unity and is necessary for the credibility of our common witness in the world.

1.2. The International Lutheran/Roman Catholic Commission for Unity

The full, visible unity of the Church has been the goal of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue since its beginning. In its first phase (1967-1971) it concentrated on the theme of the Gospel and the Church. The second phase (1973-1984) dealt with the Eucharist and ministry in the Church. The third phase (1986-1993) worked on the theme of Church and justification. The present fourth phase is discussing on the theme of the apostolicity of the Church. At its recent annual meeting, which took place from September 4-10, 2001, in Smidstrup Strand, Denmark, the Commission discussed the newly written part on "church teaching which remains in the truth," with its main chapters on doctrine and apostolic faith in early and medieval church developments; Scripture (Canon) and Tradition from the Lutheran perspective; the concept and understanding of the magisterium in Catholic theology from the Council of Trent to the Second Vatican Council; and the ecclesial ministry of apostolic teaching from the Lutheran perspective. Furthermore, the Commission discussed the other main topics of the document: New Testament aspects of apostolicity, the apostolic Gospel and the apostolicity of the Church, and apostolic succession and the ordained ministry.

On the basis of this large amount of material, plans are in hand to produce a joint statement of the actual state of the question (*status quaestionis*) about apostolicity, ministry, and church teaching (What can we say together? In what questions are we still divided?), together with a collection of texts that contain a detailed study of the different topics. The conclusion of the work is not expected before 2004. The final report in the coming years will be a document that shows that, after clarifying the basic questions of the doctrine of justification, the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue has now reached the central themes of Church and ministry. We have to wait for the results of this dialogue before we can begin to deal with the question of the Eucharistic communion. In this area it is particularly important to do together what is already possible, and not to demand steps from the ecumenical partner that at present he is unable to take. The concentration on these questions is a central element of the new constellation

after the JD and an important theme on which the ongoing ecumenical dialogue will have to concentrate its discussions.

Furthermore, an important study document for the reception and further work on the JD has been prepared by the official Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue in Germany, entitled *Communio Sanctorum: The Church as the Communion of Saints* (Paderborn & Frankfurt am Main, 2000). The decision to be guided by the common confession in the words of the Apostolic Creed, "the Communion of Saints," meant that the dialogue in Germany took the chance of dealing with the outstanding questions in their appropriate biblical and ecclesiological context. For too long controversial questions concerning the Eucharist, for example, had usually been discussed in isolation. But a doctrine of justification treated in isolation from its necessary connection with the Kingdom of God and the mission of the Church could always lead to misunderstandings. The study, therefore, deals with the communion of saints according to the Church's confession and its biblical foundation, and with the communion of saints in the love of the triune God, and it follows up the connections between the communion in God and the communion of the Church, the relation between the Word of God and the ecclesial magisterium, and the witness of the whole People of God. On this basis it can define the interactive tasks of Holy Scripture, of Tradition, of the witness of all the faithful, and of the magisterium and theology. It emphasizes the common convictions concerning the institution and the administration of the sacraments between Lutherans and Catholics and then discusses the unsolved question of their number. In the study, the Second Vatican Council's statement of the Church as "sacrament, that means the sign and instrument for the most intimate union with God and for the unity of all humankind" (*Dei Verbum*, no. 1), is being shown as an example of a situation in which a differentiated consensus is possible that does not reckon the different positions to be divisive. Other themes are the papal ministry, the ordained ministry, the prayers for the dead, the veneration of the saints, and in particular the mother of the Lord. Further bilateral and multilateral dialogues, however, will show whether the different results can lead to a consensus.

2. The New Quality of Relations and Remaining Problems

The most sustainable and important consequence of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is that our relations with the Lutherans have gained a new quality and intensity that are rather different from the relations with other ecclesial communities that issued from the Reformation. This is proof of what has grown during the last decades. It demonstrates an essential historical shift and a new historical situation between Lutherans and Catholics. Nonetheless, there are also different expectations about the consequences of the differentiated agreement on justification that, afterwards, sometimes led to disappointment and frustration. Many Lutherans thought, even though the Catholic Church had denied it clearly from the very beginning, that Eucharistic sharing should be the direct consequence of the agreement. Moreover, it is the ecclesiological differences that both partners will have to discuss in their ongoing dialogue: the question of the ministries in the Church, especially the episcopate and the apostolic succession.

It is essential for the Catholic-Lutheran Dialogue to acknowledge that we live in an intermediate situation between the “already” and the “not yet.” Full communion in the complete sense still remains as a future goal to be reached. The ecumenical task therefore cannot be to abolish all tensions, but only to trans-

form contradictory affirmations into complementary affirmations and into constructive tensions; that is, to find a degree of a substantial consensus permitting us to lift church-dividing differences. We have to fill this transitional period, of a real but not yet complete church *communio*, with real life. “To the ‘ecumenism of love’ (improving relationships) and the ‘ecumenism of truth’ (theological progresses), which both naturally remain very important, must be added an ‘ecumenism of life,’” as has been stated recently by Walter Cardinal Kasper during the PCPCU Plenary Meeting. The churches and ecclesial communions diverged not only through discussion; they diverged through the way they lived, through alienation and estrangement. Therefore, they need to come closer to each other again in their lives and prayers, bearing the sting of the incompleteness of the *communio* and of the still impossible Eucharistic communion around the Lord’s table.

The journey remains long and difficult. The Lord, however, does not ask us to measure its difficulty in human terms. Our thanks are to God, who has helped us to arrive at this present point of convergence between Lutherans and Catholics. “May this inspire courage and induce us to banish from the ecumenical vocabulary words such as crisis, delay, slowness, immobility, compromise!”, as Pope John Paul II said in his greeting to the Plenary Meeting of the PCPCU last November.

Methodist-Catholic Relations



DONALD BOLEN

While Methodist-Catholic relations receive much less publicity than many bilateral dialogues, relations between the World Methodist Council and the Catholic Church have grown steadily stronger over the past thirty-five years. In many places Methodists and Catholics see themselves as ecumenical partners who feel an obligation to take their relationship further and to offer common witness. Relations are shaped by the fact that there is no history of formal separation between Catholics and Methodists, who grew out of the Anglican tradition.

Three significant events in Methodist-Catholic relations from the past year give an indicator of the present state of relations: the publication of a new joint report, the Catholic participation at last summer's World Methodist Conference, and a recent multi-lateral consultation on the doctrine of justification.

1. Speaking the Truth in Love

The Pauline phrase "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) was the motto of Cardinal Bea, the first president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. It was also a favorite text of Methodist theologian Rev. Albert Outler, an observer at the Second Vatican Council, who with Cardinal Bea played an important role in setting up the Methodist-Catholic dialogue in 1967. It is therefore fitting that *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority Among Catholics and Methodists* is the title of most recent report of the Joint Catholic/Methodist Commission.

Since its inception the Joint Commission has published a report every five years, and *Speaking the Truth in Love* (2001) is the fourth report to explore fundamental theology and foundational ecclesiological issues. Addressing the subject of the exercise of

teaching authority within and by the Church, it stands in direct continuity with previous reports on *The Apostolic Tradition* (1991) and on Divine Revelation (*The Word of Life*, 1996).

The new Commission report addresses the teaching ministry in the Church as a means whereby "the faith which comes from the apostles is transmitted from generation to generation in such a way that all the faithful continue to adhere to the revelation that has come in Christ Jesus" (preface). *Speaking the Truth in Love* is divided into two parts. Part One states in systematic form what the Commission believes it possible for Catholics and Methodists to agree on in the matter of authoritative teaching, noting also theological differences along the way. For instance, it affirms the "growing convergence between Methodists and Catholics" on the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, then proceeds to differentiate between Catholic and Methodist means of dealing with "divergent traditions and conflicting interpretations of the Gospel."

As with previous reports of this Commission, *Speaking the Truth in Love* has a strong focus on the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that maintains the Church in truth. While the entire Church, ordained and lay, is involved in discerning the truth and the divine will, Methodists and Catholics both appeal to "various organs of the continuing Church" as the means by which the Spirit preserves the Church in Christ. Differences remain both in terms of the defining of those organs and the extent to which they are gifted by God to accomplish this.

Part Two of the report maps out first Methodist then Catholic understanding and practice regarding teaching authority. This more concrete account of the exercising of teaching authority is especially helpful

in that it prevents the possibility of theological discussion's becoming disconnected from actual practices. Coupled with the incorporation into the report of questions that Catholics and Methodists would wish to pose to each other on key issues of the faith, this practice of linking theoretical and practical accounts of the exercise of teaching authority serves to clarify the precise areas of convergence and difference, and to bring forward key concerns for the next phase of the dialogue.

The preface of the recent report notes,

“Speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) is the title of the Commission’s report: it captures both the spirit in which the dialogue has proceeded and the result that is hoped for from it. . . . Because Christ incarnates the love and truth of God, love is integral to truth, and truth to love.

The joint “continuing pursuit of both in tandem” is the well-articulated method of ongoing Methodist-Catholic relations.

As with previous reports in this dialogue, the text’s careful theological plodding has produced results beyond expectations. While the initial aim of the dialogue was greater mutual understanding and the fostering of better local relationships, since the report of 1986 on the Church, the goal, while remaining a long way off, is now explicitly full communion in faith, mission, and sacramental life. The reports have not to this point been presented for any formal evaluation by either the World Methodist Council or the Catholic Church.

2. The World Methodist Conference, July 2001

Seventy-four ecclesial communities with roots in the Methodist tradition together make up the World Methodist Council. The Council usually meets every two or three years and has advisory and administrative authority for its “member churches.” The highest level of binding authority in Methodism, however, is the annual conference of each church. The Council convenes a World Methodist Conference every five

years, which draws together council members, lay and ordained delegates from the member churches, and other visitors. The conference is “educational, inspirational and fraternal in nature,” and is composed of a mixture of inspirational addresses, Bible studies, seminars, and information about the work of the World Methodist Council and its committees during the previous five years. The gatherings of both the Council and the conference are a principal means by which the various churches of the Methodist family are held together.

The Eighteenth World Methodist Conference met in Brighton, England, from July 26-31, 2001 and was attended by approximately four thousand people. Its overall theme, developed in talks and worship through the week, was “Jesus: God’s Way of Salvation.” A meeting of the World Methodist Council preceded the conference. Among the significant events of the Council was a change in the general secretary of the World Methodist Council. After twenty-five years, Dr. Joe Hale has concluded his service in this post; his successor will be the Rev. George Freeman.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) was invited to send a representative to both Council and conference, and Msgr. Timothy Galligan, who over the past eight years has been the Catholic co-secretary of the international dialogue, attended throughout. Cardinal Cassidy, emeritus president of the PCPCU, was invited to give a keynote address at the conference’s ecumenical seminar. In his address on “Ecumenism and Evangelism,” he drew on the affirmations in *Dominus Iesus* about the uniqueness of salvation in Jesus Christ as a foundation for what Christians should say and do together. Cardinal Cassidy also preached at the special ecumenical service held for the whole conference. The presence of official representation from the Catholic Church for the whole of the World Methodist Conference and the associated World Methodist Council meeting was widely appreciated.

The conference passed, almost unanimously, a resolution calling for the continuation of the official dialogue with the Catholic Church for another five years.

3. The Columbus Consultation on Justification

In 1999, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church signed the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Such an agreement was bound to have repercussions for all the dialogue partners of the Catholic Church and the LWF. At the time of the signing of the Joint Declaration, the World Methodist Council's Executive Committee had adopted a short statement of congratulations and appreciation, which was sent to the signing partners.

The World Methodist Council then took the initiative to propose a meeting with representatives of the Catholic Church and the LWF in order to discuss how the recent Joint Declaration could have favorable consequences for others. The idea developed into a consultation, hosted by the PCPCU and the LWF, which included representatives from the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of

Reformed Churches. The hope was that this multilateral consultation could build upon the considerable measure of agreement on the doctrine of justification that had already been demonstrated in earlier bilateral dialogues involving the participating partners.

The Consultation was held in Columbus, Ohio, from November 27-30, 2001, and focused on theological and procedural issues involved in the possible association of the Methodist and Reformed families of churches with the Joint Declaration. The Methodist representatives at the Columbus meeting, including Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright, their co-chair of the Methodist-Catholic dialogue, identified the signing of the Joint Declaration as a highly significant moment in church history, and indicated their desire to be a part of any movement forward based on what it has achieved. All agreed to propose that the consultative process be continued.

Reformed-Catholic Relations



JOHN A. RADANO

For relations with the Christians of the Reformed tradition, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) is in continuing contact with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), which has headquarters in Geneva. The Alliance includes more than 215 churches of various traditions—Reformed, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and some United, including 70 million Christians from every continent, the majority from the so-called “third-world” countries.

During the past year, the third phase of international dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Alliance continued, holding its fourth meeting, this time in Cape Town, South Africa, August 22-28, 2001. It continued its joint study of the notion of the Kingdom of God and ways in which this notion might assist Reformed and Catholics in finding further common ground in ecclesiology and further motivation for common witness. In previous sessions, the dialogue has heard papers addressing biblical and theological insights about the notion of the Kingdom of God. And one of the papers in Cape Town included a treatment of the Kingdom of God in ecumenical dialogues. A unique feature of this meeting was that—taking advantage of the South African situation—it emphasized a contextual aspect, by asking for papers from South African theology, one Catholic and one Reformed, on the following theme: What does it mean that the Church is the instrument of the Kingdom of God in the South African context?” relating to both the apartheid and the post-apartheid periods. This brought valuable perspectives into the exploration of the Kingdom of God. The meeting also took up again discussion of a theme describing the Kingdom of God as “principle of action on behalf of justice, peace and integrity of creation,” which had begun in a previous session. There will probably be

two more sessions of this phase, leading to a report on what this dialogue has accomplished.

But two other important meetings took place. One, concerning the question of indulgences, called to mind one issue that was a source of serious conflict at the Reformation and is still unsettled. The other reflected progress in the ecumenical movement. It concerned the challenge of building on the ecumenical breakthrough of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, by exploring the question of whether other Christian world communions could adhere to the consensus on justification achieved together in dialogue and officially accepted by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church.

Concerning indulgences, the PCPCU, the WARC, and the LWF, at the invitation of Walter Cardinal Kasper, then-secretary of the PCPCU, organized a two-day consultation on that theme, which took place in Rome February 9-10, 2001. Six persons from each of the three bodies took part. It was occasioned by events related to the celebration of the Great Jubilee 2000. The Jubilee included (as usual) for Catholics the traditional usage of indulgences under the proper conditions. But the jubilee celebrations in Rome also included important ecumenical events. A major ecumenical celebration was the opening of the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Paul’s Outside the Walls by the pope, together with the representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Archbishop of Canterbury, in an ecumenical service on January 18, 2000, to which leaders of all the Christian World Communions were invited. Since the Jubilee Year, as every Holy Year, included the practice of indulgences—which, from the perspective of ecumenism, is an unresolved ecumenical issue, very much related to serious conflicts at the Reformation—the WARC did not feel it possible to accept the invitation to the

event just mentioned. Some Lutherans also asked whether indulgences might not clash with the consensus achieved in the *Joint Declaration in the Doctrine of Justification*. It was therefore necessary to discuss this question.

The objective of the consultation was not to try to resolve, in a two-day meeting, the long-standing differences about indulgences. The consultation was seen as an initial step, to help to begin to put aside misunderstandings. It was especially important for Catholics to state clearly from a historical and a theological perspective the teaching of the Catholic Church on indulgences, including the limits of indulgences, and this was done in two presentations. Reformed and Lutheran scholars also presented papers indicating the way this issue was seen from their perspectives. The meeting, co-chaired by Cardinal Kasper and the general secretaries of the LWF and WARC, Dr. Ishamel Noko and Dr. Setri Nyomi, respectively, was conducted in a very cordial atmosphere.

No statement was published at the conclusion of the meeting except a communiqué giving a basic description of the meeting (see PCPCU *Information Service* 106 [2001/I]: 28-29). But the papers given at the meeting will be published with the hope that they will be discussed within the three Christian families. After this initial step, the three co-sponsors are willing to consider another meeting in the future if this would be useful. The issues involving indulgences still need to be clarified, and hopefully reconciled, among Christians.

The second meeting took place in Columbus, Ohio, from November 26 to December 1, 2001. The

PCPCU and LWF together invited the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the World Methodist Council to a consultation to discuss the question of whether the Reformed and Methodist communions could somehow adhere, if they wished, to the consensus on justification found in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* officially signed and accepted in 1999 in Augsburg by Lutherans and Catholics. The World Methodist Council had signaled its interest already when attending the Augsburg signing. Various Reformed voices raised the question of Reformed participation even before 1999 when the Joint Declaration project was in process. A consultation was therefore called to explore this question. This was a meeting of theologians to sort out the issues, not a meeting of the respective church authorities and decision makers. The result was the decision that a consultative process will be continued by Reformed, Catholics, Lutherans, and Methodists on this question. The matter, therefore, is still under study (*Communiqué Information Service* 107 [2001/IV]).

The implications for ecumenical progress here should be noted. Not so long ago, churches stemming from the Reformation, such as the Lutheran and the Reformed, would have simply been together on one side of the ecumenical dialogue and the Catholic Church on the other. In this instance Lutherans and Catholics, who after decades of dialogue achieved and declared in 1999 a basic consensus on the doctrine of justification—a central issue of conflict at the Reformation—have *together* invited Reformed and Methodists to explore whether they can agree in some way with the core of this consensus. It illustrates the effectiveness of dialogue and the somewhat changing ecumenical scene.

Baptist-Catholic Relations in 2001



JOHN A. RADANO

For international contacts with Baptists, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) is in touch with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). The Alliance's headquarters are located in Falls Church, Virginia, near Washington, D.C. The constituency it represents includes some 40 million baptized believers. Baptists give Baptism only to those who are able to consciously make an act of faith—not to infants. Thus, when one includes the children in families of the baptized believers, the number is closer to 100 million.

There has been one phase of international conversations between the Baptist World Alliance and the Catholic Church, which took place 1984-1988 and published a report entitled *Summons to Witness to Christ in Today's World* (1990). The PCPCU would like to continue with a second phase of international dialogue and is waiting for the BWA to approve a second phase.

In the meantime, cordial contacts continue. For example, the BWA invites a representative of the Catholic Church (along with representatives of various Christian world communions) to attend the Baptist World Congress, which is held every five years. The Catholic Church, through the PCPCU, invites the BWA to send a representative to various events, more recently, for example, to the ecumenical events of the Jubilee Year, and most recently to the Assisi Day of Prayer for Peace on January, 24, 2002.

Meeting in Rome, December 3-4, 2000

In December 2000, a BWA international delegation of about fifteen persons came to Rome for one and one-half days of discussion, at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, as an initial step to prepare the way for a second phase of dialogue. A part of that discussion included the presentation by the

Baptist Professor James Leo Garrett of issues that would need to be taken up in a second phase of dialogue. These included the Petrine ministry; Marian dogma and spirituality; sacraments as *ex opere operato*; and authority, Scripture, Tradition, magisterium. But since the BWA was not yet ready to begin a second phase of dialogue, in order to ensure continuing contacts, the BWA proposed that a next step could be a similar gathering in 2001 where the two sides could continue discussion, if not official conversations. Buenos Aires was suggested as the site.

Meeting in Buenos Aires, December 6-7, 2001

It was agreed to meet in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from December 6-7, 2001, at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, and to focus on relations between Catholics and Baptists in Latin America. Thirteen Baptist and nine Catholic leaders took part in the discussion. The Baptists included two leaders from the BWA headquarters in the USA and other participants from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela. The Catholic delegation included Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of PCPCU, and others from the PCPCU including Bishop Marc Ouellet, Secretary; Msgr. John A. Radano; and Fr. Juan Usma Gomez—as well as other participants from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, and Chile.

The meetings were co-chaired by Dr. Denton Lotz, general secretary of the BWA, and Cardinal Kasper. The first day, December 6, was dedicated to “theological issues between Baptists and Catholics in Latin America.” Presentations were made, on the Baptist side, by Dr. Tomás Mackey (Argentina), Dr. Fausto Vasconcelos (Brazil), Amparo de Medina (Colombia) and Josue Fonseca (Chile); and on the Catholic side by Bishop Julio Terán Dutari (Ecuador), Rev. Jorge Scampini, OP (Argentina), and Rev. Gabriele Cipriani

(Brazil). These presentations gave insights into the historical background to current relations between the two sides, especially the clashes between the two, as well as perspectives they have towards each other today. They also mentioned some of the issues surfaced by Professor Garrett as those that Baptists and Catholics need to discuss in dialogue. They surfaced other concerns as well. One concern expressed by the Catholic side is that Baptists in Latin America sometimes do not recognize the Christian identity of Catholics. One concern of Baptists is that Catholics sometimes call them a “sect.” While some changes for the better have taken place, there are still much misunderstanding, suspicion of one another, and the need for dialogue in order to inform one another accurately of the theological positions that each side holds.

The discussion on the second day focused on a paper given by Cardinal Kasper on the theme “the concept of *communio* as a framework within which to discuss issues of concern,” such as Petrine ministry, Marian dogma, etc. Cardinal Kasper explored the ecumenical significance of a theology of “communion.” In this framework he also made some initial points that might be taken into consideration in discussion of some of the issues on which Catholics and Baptists differ. But he did not claim to give a full treatment to these questions. That still remains for future dialogue. An initial response from the Baptist side to the cardinal’s paper was given by the Rev. Harold Segura Carmona of Colombia. An open discussion then took place.

On the evening of December 6, a celebration of prayer, a service of the Word, was organized in the chapel of the Baptist seminary and was open to the public. Persons from various Christian traditions attended including the Rev. Melidá Ritchie, a Methodist pastor in Argentina who is a former vice-moderator of the World Council of Churches, and Dr. Norberto Padilla, the Secretary for Cults of the government of Argentina.

Some Observations

In a certain sense this two-day meeting was unique. While organized by the BWA and the PCPCU, it brought together for the first time some Baptists and Catholics from different countries in Latin America.

Although there were persons present on both sides from some of the major countries of Latin America, this was not in the strict sense a regional Latin American meeting.

The atmosphere was cordial. One would hope that some of the Baptists and Catholics who came from the same countries would continue to stay in contact in their own countries and even find ways to meet on a regular basis. This remains to be seen.

At the end of the meeting one of the Baptists, Dr. Raúl Scialabba, proposed the idea of some sort of “forum” in Latin America that would foster these contacts. Some expressed interest in this. Whether something can come of this also remains to be seen.

There were some moving moments in the meeting. At one point one member from each side expressed personal regret for negative attitudes often expressed by members of each of these Christian communions toward the other side.

Finally, this was a useful meeting and important in many ways. But in another way it was an interim step taken to maintain contacts between the BWA and the PCPCU in this period while awaiting the possibility of a second phase of international dialogue. This meeting was able to bring Baptists and Catholics into contact with each other, and if those contacts continue it will be even more fruitful. But an international dialogue is able to produce a carefully and mutually worked out report (as resulted in 1990 from the first phase of dialogue) in which the sides can state together, in print, which aspects of Christian faith they share in common and where they differ. This sort of report, which usually takes the intense reflection afforded by an international phase of dialogue lasting some years, cannot be produced by a brief two-day meeting. The report of a dialogue would be a major resource in assisting the reconciliation of two communities of Christians who have been bitterly separated for four hundred years. It would provide the theological rationale they need for taking steps toward reconciliation.

Hopefully, the meeting in Buenos Aires will be a step creating the confidence necessary to move toward this kind of international dialogue.

Mennonite-Catholic Relations



JOHN A. RADANO

For relations with the Mennonites the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity is in contact with the Mennonite World Conference, which has its headquarters in Strasbourg, France. Mennonites are part of the anabaptist family stemming from the Reformation. They adopted views that were more radical than the magisterial reformers such as Zwingli and Luther at the time of the sixteenth century. For example, they called for complete separation of church and state; they were also against infant Baptism. Those Christians who followed their way would be re-baptized (thus the designation “anabaptist”). They were therefore in conflict not only with the Catholic Church but with the reformers as well, who explicitly condemned some of their views.

Today the communities in various countries who adhere to the Mennonite World Conference comprise about one million baptized members. Some of their larger communities are found in the United States, India, Indonesia, and various countries of Africa.

An international dialogue between the Mennonite World Conference and the Catholic Church began in 1998. Its fourth meeting recently took place in Assisi, from November 27 to December 3, 2001. The setting was important because Mennonites see some of their roots in the spiritual movements of the Middle Ages. One morning the dialogue group of fourteen persons visited sites in Assisi that are closely associated with the life of St. Francis, such as the *carcere* (prison) and the churches of San Damiano and of Santa Maria degli Angeli, and this was an important aspect of the meeting.

From its beginning the dialogue has followed two tracks. One is a contemporary track, in which the two

have explored together their respective views of the Church, seeking to find areas of agreement, or at least convergence, as well as understanding clearly those issues on which they disagree. A variety of questions have been explored. The Assisi meeting dealt with the notion of sacraments (Mennonites prefer to use the term “ordinances”), particularly Baptism, which was a major issue at the time of the Reformation, and the Eucharist. In the previous year, papers were given on the question “What is a peace church?” The importance of this latter point stems from the fact that Mennonites are among those known as the “historic peace churches” and have been characteristically pacifist in their approach to peace. This question of the contribution that the Church can make to peace may be one in which this dialogue can make a particular contribution. Given the strong witness today of the Catholic Church to peace, as reflected especially in the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et Spes* and in statements and encyclicals since then, especially those of Pope John Paul II, it will be interesting to see how close Mennonite and Catholic views might come towards a common position on their attitude towards peace, enabling them to give some common witness in this regard.

There has also been, secondly, a historical track. This aspect, together with the contemporary track, underscores the hope that the dialogue can contribute to a healing of memories between Mennonites and Catholics. The historical questions addressed in the various sessions of the dialogue up to now have been far-reaching. They have covered, for example, the implications for Christian life and witness of the “Constantinian shift” starting in the fourth and fifth centuries when Christianity moved from being a persecuted church to a church with a prominent place in the empire. They include also the tragic conflicts of the sixteenth century and the bitter memories that

have persisted since then. At the Assisi meeting, the historical papers focused on the relations between church and state in the Middle Ages. Each side brings to this discussion its own history, experience, and memory of these and other events; and because they have been set deeply in place by centuries of separation, they are frequently in sharp contrast to the views of the other. The dialogue, once again, can make a contribution towards reconciliation if it enables the two sides to offer together in their report some clarification on these and other episodes of history from today's ecumenical perspective, free of the polemics of the sixteenth century.

Before the Assisi meeting, Mennonite members of the dialogue visited Rome over a three-day period. They had discussions at the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity, for Interreligious Dialogue, and for Justice and Peace. They toured St. Peter's Basilica and the Scavi beneath it and visited the Sistine Chapel and the Redemptoris Mater Chapel, as well as the Centro Pro Unione and the Centro Uno. These personal contacts, too, are valuable and make their own contribution, above and beyond the dialogue, to fostering a deeper understanding of one another.

Catholics and Pentecostals: Challenges and Possibilities



JUAN USMA GÓMEZ

It would be difficult to find anyone these days who had never heard of the Pentecostals. Pentecostal communities, in fact, have enjoyed an exceptional growth in numbers since the time they appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century. In the course of the last ninety years, what started out as a small community of Christians with an experience of revival has turned into a real Christian force of roughly 450 million members.¹

One has to realize, first of all, that Pentecostalism did not result from some internal division or separation of a particular church or ecclesial community. It arose within the evangelical atmosphere of what is called the “Holiness Movement,” as a movement characterized by a spiritual experience whose distinguishing features reflected and/or recalled the biblical description of Pentecost (Acts 2), and that also underwent the charismatic manifestations mentioned specifically by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 12).

As a way of describing this “outpouring of the Spirit” in some Protestant Christian communities in the United States and England, the term “New Pentecost” originally came into use. This soon gave way to the term “Pentecostal” for the movement and for its followers as well. They saw themselves and presented what was happening as a renewal movement within Christianity, but the Christian communities looked on it with suspicion. Suspicion, ridicule, and rejection, as

well as disputes of a doctrinal nature within Pentecostal groups, “forced” these groups to break away and differentiate themselves from the others.

This distinction and separation had as their basis what is defined as “Baptism in the Spirit,” an experience that does not as yet have a precise theological definition accepted by everyone, but which we might describe as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the life of one converted to Christ, which gives strength to witness to the Lord Jesus before the world. This has not, however, produced a specific Pentecostal view of the Church. In fact, the primary and almost exclusive interest of Pentecostals is “to act so that everyone might be saved.” The strongly missionary character of Pentecostalism is influenced above all by a sense of urgency in the face of the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God. We have here a radical eschatology in which the spiritual strength that endows the believer “baptized in the Spirit” shines forth. The charismatic manifestations that accompany Baptism in the Spirit (*glossolalia*, healings, prophecy, etc.) are not seen as the achievements of an individual’s capacities but as new powers that the Holy Spirit gives in these times, since we are “at the end of time.”

Unfortunately, it seems that some Pentecostals consider this new “outpouring of the Spirit,” this “being filled with the Spirit,” this “personal Pentecost,” as an experience of the Spirit that goes beyond who or what Jesus is.

1 Cf. D. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2000,” in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (January 2000) 24: 24-26.

What was born from one small group's specific spiritual experience began in the 1950s to make inroads within Protestant and Anglican communities, and in 1967 it also appeared in the Catholic Church (with charismatics). Such an "interconfessional" or "transconfessional" note makes Pentecostalism one of the most important missionary and spiritual movements of the twentieth century. It is clear that Catholics who have undergone such an experience can remain in their own communities of origin and maintain full communion, but as lived out in a particular spiritual way. Numerous Catholics, however, have left and do continue to leave their church to join Pentecostal groups.

The experience of "Baptism in the Spirit" within the churches and ecclesial communities has opened the door to dialogue and to their drawing closer to each other. Up to now, however, it has not generated any visible unity among the many original Pentecostal groups, called "classic Pentecostals," nor has it slowed down the emergence of a third wave, known by the generic name "non-denominational Pentecostals" or "Neo-Pentecostals." These believers consider themselves different from classic Pentecostals, and they distinguish themselves from confessional Pentecostals inasmuch as they do not belong to any particular church or ecclesial community.

From this it should be clear that, from an ecclesial or theological point of view, Pentecostalism is an extremely heterogeneous movement. Nonetheless, it does sink its roots into Catholic spirituality, mediated by a Wesleyan current, and having a strong oral tradition centered on "spiritual experience," that is, faith.²

It is important to realize that throughout the course of the history of Pentecostals it is their eschatological approach that lies at the basis of tensions, even with fundamentalists, with clashes coming from inconsistencies and theological problems and with conse-

quences of these showing up on the pastoral level. Whereas at the beginning, controversies and estrangements mainly took place between Pentecostals and the historical churches, with the passing of time conflicts and alienations have also been recorded between Pentecostals and evangelicals and between Pentecostals and fundamentalists. Pentecostalism, with its insistence on the imminence of the Kingdom, as well as on the experience of the vitality of the primitive apostolic Church, speaks of a discontinuity between authentic Christian history and renewal on the one hand and a movement toward restoration on the other. Among Pentecostals there is the more or less widely held opinion that their specific case is a totally new experience, one based on biblical witness.

At the start of the International Catholic Pentecostal Dialogue in 1972, the group of Pentecostal participants did not have a theological formation, nor did they desire one. In fact, as a result of the emphasis placed on faith experience and witness as a community's source of faith life, there developed certain misgivings about theology, considered as a purely speculative exercise seen in some sense as a substitute for a professed and lived faith. For this reason, during the First Quinquennium of the dialogue (1972-1976),³ the Pentecostals had recourse to a group of charismatic Protestant and Anglican theologians to help them formulate some of their ideas.

It is important to underscore that before the formal conversations started up the decision was made that "the dialogue will not direct its attention to the problems of structural union, but to the issues of unity in prayer and common witness."⁴ Thus the intention was to explore the spiritual and theological dimensions of fullness of life in the Spirit, as well as to grow in mutual understanding and respect. This goal has remained basically unchanged in the course of all these past years.

2 Cf. W. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism, Origins and Worldwide Development* (Peabody, 1997).

3 *Final Report of the Dialogue (1972-1976)*, in Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Information Service* 32 (1976/III): 32-36. Also in William Rusch, Harding Meyer, Jeffrey Gros, eds., *Growth in Agreement II* (Geneva/Grand Rapids, Mich.: World Council of Churches/Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 713-720.

4 *Relations with Pentecostals, Press Release*, Rome, October 26, 1971, in *Information Service* 16 (1972/I): 23.

Another characteristic element of the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue results from the *status* of the Pentecostal members, who do not have their own international representative body. Hence, at times Pentecostals take part in the dialogue on behalf of the communities to which they belong, and at other times they participate as private individuals with the endorsement of their communities.

The First Quinquennium showed that a theological gathering touching on assorted aspects of Christian life and faith was possible, while at the same time identifying critical points of division. Before the first period ended, the decision was made to hold another round of discussions, also to last for a period of five years. In this Second Quinquennium (1977-1982),⁵ Pentecostals together with Catholics, without turning to charismatic Protestants and Anglicans for help, took up issues of vital importance, such as the relationship between Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterium, as well as the interpretation of Scripture, the role of Mary, and ministry. Various historical reverses, including the publication of news reports referring to the Pentecostals as having a Mariological dimension, which is an issue that continues to cause controversy, led to suspending the work of the dialogue commission as such.

In 1984 contacts were again established, and a Third Quinquennium (1985-1989) was envisioned to discuss the ecclesiological question concerning the biblical notion of *koinonia*. It should be pointed out that for this time period the Pentecostal group actually included some theologians, even though suspicion among Pentecostal communities persisted concerning study and theological formulations (which was not taken to mean being less faithful to doctrine). The results of this Third Quinquennium's discussions

were collected into a final report entitled *Perspectives on Koinonia*.⁶ This report highlights areas of increasing convergence, yet at the same time it clearly points to the existence of a substantial difference between Catholics and Pentecostals concerning what is held to be a common foundation. In fact, for Pentecostals, "the foundation of unity is a common faith and experience of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through the Holy Spirit."⁷ For their part, Catholics affirm that it would be possible to admit the existence of "a certain, though imperfect, *koinonia*" between Catholics and Pentecostals arising from Baptism and faith in Jesus Christ.⁸

While the main interest during the first two quinquennia focused on how each one of the two traditions involved in the dialogue recognizes its own confessional heritage, the Third Quinquennium took up the issue of ecclesial identity.

Based on the results of previous work, the fourth period (1990-1997) concentrated on the Church's mission, evangelization. This involved not only the study of the biblical and systematic basis for evangelization and its relationship with culture and social justice, but also called for an examination of the question of proselytism (a topic on the agenda since 1972) and of the possibility of a common witness. The final report, called *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness*,⁹ identified an area of common effort and formulated several propositions that the local churches would have to evaluate, always with a view to move beyond proselytism and to bear a common witness. The final report also underlined the fact that the missionary mandate cannot be achieved without taking into account the ecumenical imperative. It is undeniable that each one's ecclesial tradition is reflected in evangelization. But if missionaries do

5 *Final Report of the Dialogue (1977-1982)*, in *Information Service* 55 (1984/II-III): 72-80. Also in *Growth in Agreement II*, 721-734.

6 *Perspectives on Koinonia: Final Report of the Dialogue (1985-1989)*, in *Information Service* 75 (1990/IV): 179-191. Also in *Growth in Agreement II*, 735-752.

7 *Perspectives on Koinonia*, 55. *Growth in Agreement II*, 743.

8 *Perspectives on Koinonia*, 54. *Growth in Agreement II*, 743.

9 *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness: Final Report of the Dialogue (1990-1997)*, in *Information Service* 97 (1998/I-II): 38-56. Also in *Growth in Agreement II*, 753-779.

not recognize the Christian identity of other evangelizers and if they deny *a priori* the validity of a faith experience different from their own, then either their own proclamation could be regarded as proselytizing or it might actually be so. In this sense, “it is necessary to distinguish clearly between Christian communities [including Pentecostals], with which ecumenical relations can be established, and sects, cults and other pseudo-religious movements.”¹⁰

The fifth period got underway in 1998, pursuing the theme of “‘Baptism in the Spirit’ and Christian Initiation: Biblical and Patristic Perspectives.” This theme not only deals with the principal characteristic of the Pentecostal movement and Catholic sacramental structure, but it also focuses on the very sources of faith. As a result of this first joint study of the witnesses from the early centuries of Christianity,

there is a desire to come to new insights that could give a greater boost to relations between Catholics and Pentecostals.

Despite all this, I cannot conclude without first pointing to the fact that serious tensions and strong divisions still exist between Catholics and Pentecostals in various parts of the world that not only openly contradict the will of Christ, but also scandalize the world and damage that most holy cause, the spreading of the Gospel to every creature.¹¹ Conscious of the distance that still separates the two parties, the international commission declared, “In reality, what unites us is far greater than what divides us. Though the road to that future is not entirely clear to us we are firm in our conviction that the Spirit is calling us to move beyond our present divisions.”¹²

10 John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1999), no. 49.

11 Cf. Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio (Decree on Ecumenism)*, no. 1.

12 *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness*, 130. Also in *Growth in Agreement II*, 777.



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