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# FAITH AND ORDER

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# FAITH AND ORDER

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STUDY REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

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## PREFACE

This volume gives a survey of the work which the Faith and Order Commission has accomplished in the last four years. It consists of two parts. The first part brings together the reports of the studies which have been undertaken since the Bristol (1967) meeting of the Faith and Order Commission; the second contains a number of documents from the meeting of the Commission which took place in Louvain, Belgium in August, 1971.

Reports on ecumenical studies are a unique literary type. They are not the work of an individual, but are rather the result of a long and complicated process. Ecumenical studies are an attempt to express and set in relation to one another a wide range of convictions, often contradictory. The majority of the themes dealt with in this book were determined by the Commission at its Bristol meeting. They have been discussed in numerous groups on the international level as well as in various regions.<sup>1</sup> The summarizing reports were put before the Commission in Louvain for its reaction.<sup>2</sup> The reader should keep this process in mind as he peruses the material, for only by so doing will he be able rightly to assess the significance of the reports. Each report indicates the present state of discussion concerning a problem which still divides the Churches and suggests how efforts at its solution can be furthered. The reports will be easier to understand if the publications which emerged in connection with the separate studies are considered at the same time.<sup>3</sup> By doing this the reader will experience something of the workshop as he reads, and not simply be confronted with a finished product.

At its Louvain meeting the Faith and Order Commission did not limit itself to reacting to the reports laid before it. Primary attention was given to the comprehensive theme "The Unity of the Church — the Unity of Mankind". Problems connected with this theme have for some time already occupied the centre of the stage, and the Commission will continue to be occupied with them in the future. But the discussion in Louvain has already served to provide essential clarification; one member of the Commission has drawn together the most important aspects of this discussion in a personal report.<sup>4</sup>

The Louvain meeting may well be seen as a decisive turning point in the history of the Faith and Order movement. This is so not only because Roman Catholic theologians took part in the work as full members for the first time. To be sure, their participation gave the meeting a special flavour and all who participated will remember the hospitality of our Jesuit hosts

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<sup>1</sup> See App. I, pp. 243 ff for a list of participants in Faith and Order studies.

<sup>2</sup> See the reports by Committees I — V, pp. 212 ff

<sup>3</sup> Cf. App. II, pp. 254 ff for a bibliography of Faith and Order publications.

<sup>4</sup> See Analysis of the discussion by John Deschner, pp. 184 ff.

at Heverlee College. But Roman Catholic participation was not felt to be a basic, ground-breaking innovation; rather, it was taken for granted. The problems which confront the Churches today are so similar in nature that they must be tackled in common. In this respect the meeting of the Commission only put into practice what is the rule in the ecumenical movement, or at least what soon must become the rule.

Yet more important was the fact that here the Commission discussed the question of unity for the first time in new contexts. It was clear that the unity of the Church is no longer called into question by confessional differences alone. The Churches must bring to fruition the fellowship given them in Christ amidst the debates of the present. How can they be signs of the presence of Christ today? This question can only be answered if the Churches deal decisively with the theological questions that arise from the present situation in the world. Above all, it can only be answered if they seek once more to give account of their *raison d'être*, of that which makes them to be the Church. The theme selected for the Louvain meeting gave the Commission a preliminary opportunity to search in this direction, and it was decided to put more emphasis on the tasks implied in this question in the future. In so doing the Commission will find itself confronting new theological problems, but it may also, in this way, more effectively contribute toward bringing about a time when fellowship among the Churches will no longer be only a hope, but will have begun to attain tangible form.

LUKAS VISCHER.

PART I

STUDY REPORTS PRESENTED  
TO THE COMMISSION



# INTERPRETING THE SOURCES OF OUR FAITH

(Studies on Hermeneutics)

## I. THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

### I. The Problem

The question which the study organized by the Faith and Order Commission set out to investigate may be formulated as follows: How far is the Bible authoritative for Christian thought and action? One obvious answer would be that the Bible is authoritative because through it we can hear God's Word and learn His will. But this answer prompts the further question: How are we to approach the Bible so that, through the biblical text, God may speak to us authoritatively today?

To feel the full force of this question we must first realize that the Bible is the common point of reference for all Christians and all Churches. It is the basis of their faith and the rule of their conduct. The fact that all Churches ultimately test and verify their preaching and teaching by Scripture gives them a common orientation. An intensive study of the Bible has also been typical of the ecumenical movement so far. The study of the Scriptures led Christians of different traditions together. In the ecumenical movement they learned to read the Bible with new vision. Their horizon was expanded. It consequently proved possible, without much difficulty, to include a reference to the Bible in the Basis of the World Council of Churches.

But the automatic acceptance of the Bible as basis and standard has in many places been severely shaken of late. Many Christians find the Bible alien to them and to their daily life; they find it increasingly difficult to hear God addressing them directly in the words of the Bible. This difficulty is even felt by many Churches. It is only with considerable difficulty that they are able to find in the Bible and its authority a clear basis for their witness and action in the contemporary world. But even in the ecumenical movement a certain perplexity has arisen over the Bible. It turns out that the Bible is read in different ways in the different Churches. The Bible is used to justify divergent positions and thus even an appeal to Scripture can itself lead to fresh differences. Above all, difficulties have cropped up as Churches have tried to speak and act together on the basis of the Bible. Occasional attempts to call the Christian answer to a specific problem more or less directly from the Bible have proved unsatisfactory. As a result the tendency has been more and more to abandon the appeal to biblical grounds altogether. Thus the problem simply is avoided, which is not a satisfactory course either.

Why do the Churches today find it so difficult to speak together authoritatively on the basis of Scripture? What factors compel us to investigate the

problem of the authority of the Bible? Three considerations are mentioned here to clarify the situation which is the starting point of this Study :

### 1. *Confessional Differences*

We must first consider the confessional factors. The various confessions have different views of the significance of the Bible. Certainly the old controversy over Scripture and Tradition has to a large extent been settled in recent years. The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal was able to record the following consensus : "Thus we can say that we exist as Christians by the Tradition of the Gospel (the *paradosis* of the *kerygma*) testified in Scripture, transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit" (para. 45).<sup>1</sup> Important as this agreement undoubtedly is, it still leaves room for different emphases. We can, for example, emphasize the Bible as the authoritative witness of the Tradition. But equally we can emphasize the importance of the process of tradition in and by the Church. Our treatment of Scripture will depend on which of these emphases we choose. If we choose the first, we shall tend to treat the Scriptures as the standard in all questions ; if we choose the second, we shall tend to attach more weight to the traditional teaching of the Church. But confessional factors come even more to the forefront when we try to interpret Scripture in contemporary terms. To a far greater extent than we care to admit, the hermeneutical methods employed in the interpretation of Scripture are influenced by the tradition of the individual confessions. The Montreal Conference gave examples of this (para. 53).<sup>2</sup> Consider, for example, the important role of the tradition of the Ancient Church in the Orthodox Churches, the role of the *magisterium* in the Roman Catholic Church, or the place of the confessional documents in the Protestant Churches, and so on. These confessional peculiarities may seem irrelevant to many, but the fact remains that they influence the thought of the Churches in question and predispose them to a certain attitude towards Scripture. Another important factor in this connection is the actual use made of the Bible in the individual Churches. It makes a difference if preaching is normally based on the Bible or if it is mainly in the Scripture lessons in the liturgy that the Bible is heard.

### 2. *The Influence of Historical Criticism*

It is generally agreed that the Bible must be studied and interpreted as a collection of human documents dating from a specific historical period and in accordance with the procedures adopted for any other literary document of the past. On the basis of historical and critical study, biblical scholarship

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order*. The Report from Montreal 1963, ed. by P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, Association Press, New York 1964, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

has in recent decades cleared up many obscurities. While there may still be differences on many matters of detail, the method of enquiry is almost universally accepted and biblical scholars of different confessional traditions often arrive at astonishingly similar exegetical findings. Does historical criticism and its methods therefore represent a unifying factor? Many have entertained this hope. It was expressly affirmed by the Montreal Conference: "Modern scholarship has already done much to bring the different churches together by conducting them towards the Tradition" (para. 55).<sup>3</sup> This statement is undoubtedly true but its limits must also be recognized. Application of the methods of historical criticism has also brought out more clearly than ever the diversity of the biblical witness. The individual passages and traditions of the Bible are all aligned to specific historical situations and the Bible is the collection of these diverse testimonies. But which of these witnesses is authoritative? For many Christians this question is inevitably associated with fear lest the methods of historical criticism should destroy the authority of the Bible and with it the Christian faith itself. This fear is ultimately baseless. But clearly historical and critical scholarship has resulted in a new encounter with the biblical records and therefore makes a fresh account of biblical authority necessary.

### 3. *Historical Remoteness*

Closely bound up with this is the further consideration that critical scholarship has made us keenly aware of the historical character of the biblical witness and consequently of its temporal remoteness from the reader of the Bible today. The message of the Bible is expressed in terms we no longer use. As a document of past history it requires transposition into the present time. For it to become really relevant to us it needs to be expressed in categories appropriate to today. Man's present situation must be taken into account. But clearly men live in very diverse situations. Cultural factors differ from one society to another. People's thinking is influenced by different philosophical traditions. Inevitably the process of transposition takes place in very varied conditions, therefore, and the results cannot be fully in accord.

The question arises: How, in view of this historical gulf, can any relevance be claimed for the Bible at all? This question does not present itself everywhere with the same urgency, of course. Even today, many Churches and Christians assume almost unquestioningly an attitude of contemporaneity with the Bible and feel no need to attach any great importance to its historical character. It is also possible to adopt a quite sophisticated version of this synchronized view of the Bible and the present-day reader and to insist on it as an alternative to critical scholarship. This happens, for example, where

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<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

the discoveries and the methods of structuralism are being applied to the exegesis of biblical texts.

But a variety of answers can be given to the question just mentioned even by those who are aware of the problem of historical remoteness. Some hold that, as God's Word, the Bible has a timeless claim on every generation and that its message can speak directly to the men of all times provided it is set free from the historically conditioned forms in which it is clothed. Man with his questions remains fundamentally the same and, since the Bible answers his deepest questions, it is still relevant for today. But others believe that God's action in history to which the Bible bears witness continues further and that the present situation is primarily to be understood not as analogous to that earlier time but as its fruit. Which of these general conceptions we adopt will determine our reading of the Bible and our interpretation of its message.

\* \* \*

We conclude this section with a brief sketch of the course taken by this study on the authority of the Bible. The present study originated in the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal (1963). Earlier discussions resulted in the statement that the criterion of the genuine Tradition was to be sought in the "Holy Scriptures rightly interpreted"<sup>4</sup>. The obvious next step, therefore, was to reach agreement about the process of interpretation. We concentrated first of all on exegesis (1964-1967). In the course of these studies it became clear that there was broad agreement on the basic questions of exegesis. In fact, generally speaking, biblical scholars of different confessions approach the study of biblical passages in much the same way and employ the same hermeneutical rules. It proved possible to describe the main features of this process of interpretation in the report of the study on "The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem for the Ecumenical Movement"<sup>5</sup>. But this still left untouched the problem of authority, even though the hermeneutical process is vitally affected by the view which the individual interpreter takes of authority. It was therefore necessary to take our study further by investigating the question of authority. On the recommendation of the Faith and Order Commission, a group of twenty-five theologians met at Boldern near Zürich in the autumn of 1968 to plan future study of this set of problems. A new departure at this conference was the inclusion of several Roman Catholic theologians. The conference decided to tackle the question not from the standpoint of systematic theology but to begin rather with the exegesis of specific themes and to ask what authority these could claim to have for us today and how this authority finds expression in the development

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<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 53 (para. 51).

<sup>5</sup> See *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Bristol 1967. WCC, Geneva 1968, pp. 32 ff.

of these themes. Only after this was done was the general question of biblical authority to be raised. The findings of this preliminary consultation were summarized in the report "The Authority of the Bible — a Study Outline".<sup>6</sup>

In the light of the recommendations of this report, the subject was then studied by a number of groups in various countries<sup>7</sup>. Most of the groups produced a report of their findings. Representatives of the groups met at Cartigny near Geneva from March 28 to April 3, 1971, to discuss the results of their studies. The present report is an attempt to summarize some of the conclusions of this cooperative study.

## II. The Concept of Authority

What do we mean when we speak of the "authority" of Scripture? The term can be used in a number of ways and we must be clear about these various meanings from the outset.

1. In the first place, the Bible has a certain weight as a literary document. When people — Christians and non-Christians alike — read this document and seek to understand it, in a certain sense they "submit" themselves to this authority. This applies to the reading and interpretation of every part of the Bible. The Bible is the given "authority" which the would-be interpreter must respect. The Bible as a literary document occupies an important place in the history of mankind. The questions and the thought of many generations have been dominated and fashioned by the Bible and for this reason it deserves respect. As men try to understand the Bible as an influential factor in history and culture, they expose themselves to its influence. But we have to ask whether it is not perhaps misleading to speak of this influence as "authority".

2. When the Church seeks to give an account of itself it has to refer to the Bible. The "authority" of the Bible may be seen as consisting in its character as an indispensable source of knowledge for the Church. Historically the Christian Church grew out of the witness of the apostles and the first Christian congregations. In all periods, the Church has allowed its teaching to be defined by this Tradition. The Bible is unique as the book in which the witness on which the Church is founded is preserved and accessible in its most trustworthy form. For this reason, the Church has acknowledged this collection of writings as an historical document with which it knows itself to be inescapably related.

3. When we speak of the "authority" of the Bible in the strict sense, we mean that it makes the Word of God audible and is therefore able to lead men to faith. We are not thinking of its authority as a literary document nor

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<sup>6</sup> The report is printed in *The Ecumenical Review*, XXI/2, April 1969, pp. 135 ff.

<sup>7</sup> For a list of study-groups, their members and themes, s. Appendix to this volume p. 243.

of its literary value, nor even of its authority as the oldest documentation of the apostolic message, but of the fact that men are arrested by the message of the Bible, the fact that they hear God speaking to them from the Bible. Ultimately, of course, this authority is the authority of God Himself and not that of the Bible as a book. Authority in this sense can only be claimed for the Bible because by its witness it makes possible the knowledge of God and of His authority. Therefore it only has derived authority. Nevertheless, anyone who has once encountered the living God in Christ in the Bible will again and again return to this source.

But is the term "authority" an appropriate one to apply to the Bible at all? Certain Groups expressed doubts on this score. The term "authority" is open to many misunderstandings today. It is all too easily associated with authorities demanding blind obedience and therefore suppressing freedom rather than creating it. Authority and *status quo* are mentioned in the same breath, so that to apply the term authority to the Bible may obscure rather than illuminate the nature and influence of the Scriptures. It is, of course, possible to distinguish between "authoritative" and "authoritarian" and to interpret the authority of the Bible in the former sense. But this is a fine distinction and difficult to sustain in ordinary usage. But even more important is a further reservation; certain Groups asked whether the Bible can ever be experienced as authority in the sense of a mastering power compelling assent and in this way leading to freedom. Certainly God Himself is experienced in this way but can the same be said of the Bible as a "derived authority"? Is it not more appropriate to speak of the "role", the "influence", or the "function" of Scripture (British Group)? Reservations about the term "authority" and all its Western misinterpretations were expressed from the Orthodox side especially<sup>8</sup>.

While giving due weight to these reservations, most groups retained the term "authority". In their view, the problems arising today could best be clarified if we started from this concept. But they all stressed that authority must be understood as a "relational concept", not as aggressive power but as a testimony which is to be accepted in freedom, not as overwhelming force but as a gateway to freedom. Authority is therefore a present reality only when men experience it as authority; at the same time, it transcends human experience. Special and explicit emphasis must be placed on this supra-individual character of authority (see Section IV). We cannot restrict the term "the authority of the Bible" simply to the last of the three levels of meaning. We must equally do justice to the understanding of the authority of the Bible in the sense of the "document of the faith of the Church" (see the next Section). The various dimensions of the authority of the Bible are not to be divorced from one another.

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<sup>8</sup> See *The Ecumenical Review*, XXI/2, April 1969, pp. 160 ff.

### III. Revelation and the Diversity of Interpretations

1. The Bible speaks of certain events in history in which God's revealing, judging and saving work has been achieved. Here, however, a difficulty appears which left its mark in the reports of all the groups. If our faith rests on historical events in which God was revealed, then a great deal seems to depend on whether the Bible transmits to us a reliable witness of these historical events. But biblical scholarship has shown us above all that the events which the Bible claims to be decisively important have already in every case been subject to interpretation. Altogether apart from the question of the credibility of such reported events in modern eyes, to get behind the interpretation to the event itself as such proves to be a hazardous and often an impossible business. Every reconstruction of "what really happened" is never anything other than a more or less reasonable hypothesis. This applies as much to biblical research as to the field of secular history. The events reported are therefore never the "bare facts", but are always accessible to us only in the clothing of their interpretation by the biblical authors.

2. This might easily suggest that the authority of the Bible really rests not on the events which it reports but on the interpretation of these events by the biblical writers. Would the authority of the Bible be seriously impaired if the events which it proclaims to be decisively important proved never to have happened at all? The various groups were agreed that there is an indissoluble connection between event and interpretation which is not to be broken on either side. On the one hand, it has to be maintained that there are no uninterpreted events in the Bible. Indeed we must go further and say that the events as such have no revelatory significance at all but are, so to speak, dumb and in need of interpretation if God's voice is to be heard in them. In a sense, therefore, the interpretation *is* the event. On the other hand, the historical character of the revelation is of central importance. The relevance of the interpretations rests ultimately on the events to which they refer and by which they are determined. Some were of the opinion that revelation was not bound to what actually happened in history but could even have taken place in the telling of the story (a minority in the British Group). But the great majority held that the historicity of the event is of decisive importance.

3. What has so far been said applies equally to the Old and the New Testaments. We look first at the New Testament. Its centre is the "event of Christ". But this one central event has several historical aspects, such as the appearance and ministry of Jesus, his words and teaching, his cross and resurrection. The whole of the New Testament is related to this central sequence of events in Christ. Many passages, however, give direct testimony concerning it, whereas other passages are less directly related to it. To the second group of passages belong, for example, those in which the New Testament writers reflect in various ways upon the redemptive significance of

the cross and resurrection, or again, the paranetic passages. The question of historicity arises directly in many of the miracle stories and it also affects central reports such as that of the virgin birth, the empty tomb or the ascension. It is not our concern here to assert or deny historicity. For even apart from the findings of biblical scholarship, we are dealing here with reports which can clarify and interpret the central content of the Gospel, namely, God's action in Jesus Christ.

4. If therefore, in accordance with all we have said so far, it is not the event alone but only the event in association with its appropriate interpretation which reveals God, then the temporal proximity and firsthand character of the Bible cannot be decisive for its authority. It is in principle possible for a later interpretation to be closer in substance to the Gospel. None of the groups was able, of course, to accept an exclusive choice between temporal and substantial proximity. The Dutch-German group in particular raised this question in detail but arrived at no agreed finding. Many held that the eyewitness character of the Bible was of the greatest importance for its authority. It makes clear the indissoluble unity between event and interpretation. Others, while allowing that the New Testament witnesses enjoyed a *de facto* priority by virtue of their temporal proximity, nevertheless maintained that this temporal proximity did not necessarily mean a priority in substance. All agreed that certain New Testament interpretations could be more apt than certain others. The authority of the Bible is based at one and the same time on the temporal and substantial proximity. But if this twofold proximity is claimed for the New Testament witness, one is almost inevitably led to assume something in the nature of inspiration for the text of the New Testament.

5. The New Testament contains various interpretations. All the groups faced this fact. In the interpretations which they worked on, they did not come up against any contradictions which could not somehow be reconciled. This fact may of course have been in part the result of the choice of themes and does not therefore permit any general conclusion. The Groups all started out from the assumption that every interpretation was tied to a particular historically conditioned situation and must be understood in terms of that situation. If the interpretations are viewed in this way, they can all be understood as consistent with each other in their different lines of vision to the extent that they all point beyond themselves to the God who revealed Himself in Christ; they then show how this truth has been experienced as authority in different situations. But can every interpretation claim to be a legitimate exegesis of a central event? The group which dealt with the virgin birth explicitly raised this question. Did this interpretation have binding authority? Ultimately their answer was yes. For in the group's opinion the meagre testimony to this affirmation (of the virgin birth) was no decisive argument against its legitimacy. Nor was it able to accept the argument that this interpretation weakened the humanity of Christ. But what was not contested was that a critical distinction between various interpretations is in principle

possible. The criterion is to what extent an interpretation interprets a central saving event attested in the Scriptures and is rooted in that saving event.

6. The Bible presents us with a great variety of material. Different interpretations keyed to different situations stand side by side. How does the voice of God become audible for our present time in this material? Is a centre discernible on the basis of which the whole of the material can become intelligible and fall into place? This is possible to some extent. Clearly the various interpretations do not all enjoy the same weight. The New Testament itself presses certain distinctions upon us. The message of the resurrection is undoubtedly of greater importance than that of the virgin birth. Nevertheless, all the groups were extremely cautious in their conclusions. Though readily accepting that certain interpretations are only of secondary importance they were against excluding any material at all from the Scriptures. That a certain passage failed to speak authoritatively to us and that we could not conceive its ever doing so was no basis for any final judgement about its value. The reason why it fails to speak to our situation may be simply that it is so essentially part of a different situation. But in a new and altered situation it could certainly once more speak to our condition. While, therefore, a discriminating judgement is not only permissible but actually mandatory, yet the body of the Scriptures is not necessarily touched by this.

7. Several groups expressly rejected any talk of a "canon within the canon" or of a "material centre" (*Sachmitte*) either in the New Testament or in the Bible as a whole. True as it is that the interpretations contained in the Bible are not all on the same level, terms like these suggest the possibility of establishing permanent distinctions. It is too easy to interpret terms like "canon within the canon" and "material centre" in a static sense. We cannot, therefore, attribute permanent authority to an inner circle of biblical writings or biblical statements and interpret the rest in terms of this inner circle. But the biblical statements do have certain internal connections and many of these connections are directly related to central saving facts whereas others are derived from these primary statements, as conclusions from them or as fuller explanations of them. Different sets of statements, different writings and groups of writings each have different centres. The Dutch-German group gave special attention to this internal connection of biblical statements. To denote these decisive centres it coined the term *Beziehungsmittle* (relational centre). The love of God or the resurrection of Christ were regarded as relational centres from which the statements about eternal life follow logically. This group spoke of Jesus the Christ, the kingdom of God, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as relational centres for the entire New Testament, but regarded none of these formulas as exclusive.

8. It is often impossible to adopt the biblical interpretations today without qualification. This does not mean that they are without meaning. The truth is rather that the present generation enters into the process of interpretation in which the witnesses of that past time were also engaged. On the basis of

the interpretations they have bequeathed to us we must try to catch a glimpse of the facts which they were interpreting and to do in our situation what they did in theirs. We must act in spiritual agreement with them. As their interpretation was related to God's revelatory action, so our interpretation must be oriented analogously.

9. If the process of contemporary interpretation is seen as the prolongation of the interpretative process which is recognizable in the Bible, then considerable importance must be attached to the situation at any given time in our interpretation of the Scriptures. Just as the biblical writers responded to a particular situation, so contemporary interpretation is also determined by our own situation. The questions which are put to the text play a large part in the interpretation. Of course the text has its own weight. It poses its own questions and certain questions which spring from our own situation will find no echo in the Bible. The scope is limited in principle by the reality attested in it. But the situation with its given elements and open problems determines the perspective within which the biblical witness must be read and interpreted. The reports of the groups make it quite clear that such situation-conditioned hermeneutic perspectives are inescapable. They should not be branded as bias but understood rather as a method of relating to contemporary situations. The American group, for example, decided on the basis of its situation that its hermeneutic perspective was God the Liberator and that it was from this standpoint that the biblical witness had to be read and interpreted. The report on "The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem for the Ecumenical Movement" had already pointed out this interplay between questions posed by the text and questions put to the text<sup>9</sup>. The Bible can only demonstrate its authority when this interplay is accepted.

10. What is the significance of the Canon? It is hardly possible to overestimate its practical significance. The books which have been collected together to form the Bible have become a literary unity which has exercised a profound influence throughout the course of history. The fact that certain writings were included and others excluded has had a decisive influence on the history of the Church. The Canon has assembled a variety of witnesses and it is precisely this variety which has determined the history of exegesis. One group, for example, pointed out that the Christological debate of the first centuries would have taken a different course had the Canon not included the Fourth Gospel (British Group). This variety certainly limits the theological significance of the Canon. All the more so if the various interpretations contained in the Bible are understood as an interpretative process into which we ourselves must also enter today in our own way. The dividing line between canonical and non-canonical writings is not a hard and fast one. It is much more a matter of a fluid boundary. As we have already said, even the witnesses

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<sup>9</sup> See *New Directions in Faith and Order*, p. 37.

included in the Canon do not have the same significance. But even though canonicity permits no ultimate judgement about the authority of a writing, nevertheless the drawing of a boundary-line is by no means unimportant. The fact that the Church has acknowledged these writing as the authorized material concerning God's action in Christ, makes the Canon of Scripture the testimony which is prescribed for us. It only remains to add that the extra-canonical writings, and particularly the inter-testamental literature, are extremely important for the study of the presuppositions and conditions of the biblical period.

11. Are the considerations mentioned so far also valid for the Old Testament? Most of the groups did not deal at length with this question, especially where the selected themes did not compel them to do so. There are different central events in the Old Testament, such as the Exodus, the events at Sinai, the occupation of Canaan, the Davidic monarchy, the return from Exile, all of which are viewed as revealing God's activity and are related in different ways to the divine covenant with Israel for the sake of mankind as a whole. What was said above about the unity of event and interpretation applies also to the Old Testament, and we are confronted in the Old Testament with a plurality of interpretations which do not all have the same weight. But whereas the New Testament is related to one central historical event, the person and life of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament covers a history of many centuries. In the Old Testament, moreover, we find a much greater variety of types of testimony and, to a much greater degree than the New Testament, the Old Testament contains material whose connection with historical events is not apparent to us (the Wisdom literature in particular).

A considerable difference in the assessment of the Old Testament emerges in the group reports. The difference was most clearly formulated by the Dutch-German group: "Some of us hold that, as far as its relational centre is concerned, the Old Testament has an authority equal to that of the New Testament; they therefore speak of two foci of authority which interpret and supplement one another. Others hold that the Old Testament receives its authority for us only through the relational centre of the New Testament; therefore the reciprocal interpretation of the Old Testament and the New Testament is accessible only by way of the New Testament witness." Clearly our reading of the Old Testament will differ in accordance with whichever of these views is adopted. This is the reason for important differences in interpretation.

#### IV. Holy Spirit, Church and Inspiration

Ultimately, the authority of the Bible only becomes evident as the Bible proves itself to be authoritative. Its authority cannot be derived from any external criteria. Certainly the Bible has authority as a literary document which deserves to be read. It is, moreover, of inescapable significance as the authorized testimony prescribed to the Church. But when we speak of the authority

of the Bible we do not mean authority merely in this sense. What we mean is rather that through the Bible God proves Himself to be the Lord and the Redeemer.

Various considerations have been suggested to try to show the inherent authority of the Bible.

1. The Bible contains a message which is non-derivative and archetypal (*unableitbar*). It is unique in character and has therefore to be accepted. One group, for example, pointed out that the understanding of God in the Old Testament is distinctive and cannot possibly be derived from the oriental religions. Jahweh stands over against all idols and this opposition is a characteristic of the whole Bible. It is precisely in this respect that it proves its authority (Roman Catholic Group in Germany).

2. In the history of the Church the Bible has again and again proved to be the source of faith. For this reason it is entitled to insist today that we submit ourselves to its affirmations.

3. In the traditional view, dominant in many Churches, the Bible is regarded as an inspired book and its authority is seen as resting on this fact of inspiration. This doctrine of inspiration can take different forms in matters of detail but in any case the Bible is distinguished fundamentally from other books, since in it God has used human words and formulations to reveal Himself.

But ultimately none of these considerations provides an adequate basis for the authority of the Bible. The first remains too general and formal. The other two really offer no argument; they either contain a mere assertion or a dogma whose validity is presupposed. The group reports, on the contrary, agree that the content of the Bible must prove itself authoritative and they abandon any attempt to provide an external basis for the authority of the Bible. Indeed they even point out that the authority of the Bible would be diminished if it required legitimation from other sources. It must be capable of proving itself.

But the very fact that it is the impact of its message which demonstrates the authority of the Bible led several groups back once more — much to their surprise — to the question of the inspiration of Scripture. If God's claim is experienced in the compelling way it undoubtedly is in the Bible, does this not mean that behind the Bible is the activity of God Himself, i.e. of His Spirit? Is not the witness of the Bible in a special way God's own witness to us? If we speak here of inspiration, it is important to observe the fundamental difference between this use and the traditional doctrine of inspiration. What in the latter is a dogmatic assumption is here the outcome of the experience in which the message of the Bible proves itself authoritative. The assertion that this biblical testimony is inspired remains an utterance of faith. To assume inspiration in advance would lead to a legalistic view of Scripture.

Adoption of the notion of inspiration raises a number of further questions which the groups referred to but did not answer. If the assertion that the

Bible is inspired is a conclusion drawn from actual encounter with God through the Bible, the question arises as to why this should only be true of the Bible. Why should not Basil, Augustine, Thomas, Luther or some modern author be inspired too? Surely it was their work of interpretation that led to the Bible's speaking once again with fresh authority. Indeed, why should we not also speak of inspiration in the case of today's preaching which can also lead to an encounter with God and thus prove itself inspired in the same way as happens with the Bible? Obviously a clearer explanation is required as to whether and in what sense God has bound Himself through the Spirit to the Bible in its entirety.

The question about the authority of the Bible is inseparable from the interpretative process in the Church. To speak of inspiration, therefore, means reopening the question of the work of the Spirit in the community of the Church. Whenever contemporary interpretation leads men to know the Bible as the work of the Spirit, we have to remember the long line of inspired witnesses which has influenced this interpretation. The first witnesses were called and inspired by the Spirit, but their testimony once it has been given its final form does not become independent of that same Spirit. To be handed on it has to be read in the Spirit. Just as the Spirit once called His witnesses, so today will He also awaken faith, obedience and witness as He opens up to us these indispensable witnesses. The Spirit works in the Church. How is His work in the historical community of the Church related to His work in the individual Christian? Do we not have to affirm that it is only within the community of the Church that Scripture can be read and really heard as God's Word created by the Spirit?

## V. The Use of the Bible

The complexity of the question of the authority of the Bible became clear to us in the course of our enquiry. This complexity is due to the special character of the biblical material as well as to the variety and variability of the situations in which Christians and Churches find themselves in the modern world. Nevertheless, we were able to clarify the concept of authority as applied to the Bible (Sect. II), to point out the various historical and contemporary aspects of the problem (Sect. III) and finally, to indicate certain conclusions concerning, in particular, the relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology.

On the basis of these provisional findings, is it possible to say anything about the question of the right use of the Bible, which we referred to at the very beginning of the report? In what follows our main concern will be to consider the ecumenical implications.

1. We are not to regard the Bible primarily as a standard to which we must conform in all the questions arising in our life. The Bible is witness to the God who gives us freedom in Christ. The calling of the Church is to live

in communion with Christ. Therefore we are not to turn this Scripture witness to this God into a law. The Bible's contents need constantly to be unfolded afresh. Its inner unity must become clear. But it is not to be turned into a norm for every problem and every situation. To do so would be to press it too far. This applies not only to fundamentalism but also to the attempt to formulate the biblical view of every problem which happens to come under discussion. The Bible is not a norm imposed on us from outside. On the contrary it is meant to be read and heard within the witnessing community, in the Church. Interpretation is also partly determined by the elements of any given situation. The varied and often widely divergent interpretations which the Bible contains make it an invitation to us to attest in our own words the message which it contains.

2. At the same time, of course, the Bible must be read with the expectation that it can disclose the truth to us. The indispensable confrontation with contemporary thought and the elements of our present situation must not betray us into surrendering the priority of the Bible for the Church's thought and action. The Bible is not a patrimony from which we are free to select at will, nor is it just one source of inspiration among many. To understand it in such a way would be to misunderstand it. The decisive importance of its message for all times is only rightly acknowledged when its testimony is read in anticipation of its disclosure to us of the ultimate sense of our world and of our own lives.

3. The Bible is a critical book. It is impossible to fit it into the generally prevailing thought of the day. Nor is it identical with the doctrine and thought of the Church. It is a critical court of appeal to which the Church must constantly defer and from whose judgement not even the developments taking place in our world are exempted. It is not surprising, therefore, that the question of the right approach to the Bible and of the precise application of its message should lead to vigorous controversies in the Church. It is obvious that the dividing lines in these controversies no longer coincide with the traditional confessional boundaries. Whenever the Church is asked, from inside or from outside, in whose name and by what authority she speaks and acts, the problem of biblical authority also assumes form.

4. The forms in which the biblical message is expressed are inseparably bound up with the historical situation of the people of Israel and of the primitive Church. The biblical writers sought to speak and act in response to the challenges of their own times. The supreme challenge was the message itself but besides this there was also the confrontation with contemporary movements, such as syncretism, the emperor cult, gnosticism and so on. The message had to prove itself in the midst of constant controversy. The Bible begins to speak most effectively when it is read in the context of the corresponding controversies of our own times. It has, therefore, to be exposed to the challenge of the situation existing at any given time. This also means that the Bible is not a religious book in the usual sense, meant only for use in

the liturgy. It has, on the contrary, to be brought into a two-way relationship with the questions of the time.

5. If the contemporary situation is incorporated in this way into the interpretative process, it is clear that agreed methods of exegesis in no sense inevitably produce agreed findings. The universally acknowledged authority of the Bible is no guarantee of the Church's unity. But the contemporary interpretative process is in fact simply the continuation of the interpretative process which begins in the Bible itself. Only by constantly renewed interpretation does the one message remain a living Spirit and not a dead letter. This sheds new light on the problem of the right relationship between unity and diversity, and between norm and change. How can the Bible prove its authority in face of the changes of our time which lead to so radical a criticism of traditional claims to authority? How can we interpret the message of the Bible in such a way that, at one and the same time, its authority is respected and it sets us free to understand the demands and opportunities of our present time?

And, above all, how is the Bible to be so interpreted that there may be a genuine unity in Christ? Perhaps our present experience in dealing with the Bible may also lead us to a new understanding of unity. Certainly the ecumenical movement in which Christians of different traditions face together the challenges of their times provides the setting where these questions can be raised afresh. And as we in this movement learn to use the Bible aright, the Bible will also demonstrate its power afresh.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee I, see below pp. 212 ff.*

## 2. THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

### Introduction

The work done in the past by the two study groups, one of which worked on St. Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto* and another on the Councils of the Early Church<sup>1</sup>, has shown that such a common study of the patristic period could now be continued in a form that would combine the work of these two groups. This combination could be achieved by concentrating on the study of one particular Council of the Early Church and on its implications and significance for the present day ecumenical situation.

The Commission on Faith and Order at its meeting in Bristol decided that the Council of Chalcedon should be the subject of such a combined study.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the reports in *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Bristol 1967. WCC, Geneva 1968; pp. 41 ff, 49 ff.

Such a study is not of mere historical interest. The importance of Chalcedon for the ecumenical movement is manifold and has to do with many issues which occupy us today. The following are some points which may serve as an illustration of this.

1. Chalcedon represents a crucial point in Church History. Whether one accepts this Council or not, one is compelled to place oneself in relation to it in one way or another.

2. Chalcedon has entered deeply into the tradition of various Churches which claim to have received it. At the same time this Council gave rise to strong objections by other Churches and therefore, to divisions which have survived up to now. Its study becomes inevitable for an understanding among these two groups of Churches.

3. The doctrine of Chalcedon raises a number of issues on which the East and the West are not in full agreement. These issues need further clarification through ecumenical conversations. They come up as soon as each tradition examines its reception of this doctrine in the course of history. For example, the Reformation Churches found themselves in a tradition which had accepted Chalcedon and did not formally repudiate it, but this acceptance may have been essentially affected through the adoption of certain creeds, etc.

4. Dealing with the Council of Chalcedon raises the general question of the Churches' attitude towards the authority of the Councils in general. Chalcedon, being itself a controversial Council puts to us the question of what it means to accept or reject a particular Council or Councils in general.

5. The reception of the Council of Chalcedon appears to be particularly difficult today. It is of special importance for the Churches today to examine in what way the doctrine of Chalcedon can be integrated into the modern discussions on the "humanum" and the "secular" etc.

For the purpose of studying the Council of Chalcedon in its bearing upon the ecumenical movement a consultation was convened in Geneva by the Faith and Order Secretariat from August 31 to September 6, 1969.<sup>2</sup> During the consultation a number of papers were read, covering the historical ground of the proceedings of the Council itself, the reception of the Council by the various traditions and the bearing of the doctrine of Chalcedon upon the anthropological discussions of our time.<sup>3</sup> The discussions which took place on the basis of these papers proved to be very useful for understanding the importance of Chalcedon for the ecumenical movement. In the following lines an attempt will be made to summarize and present the main issues which have emerged from these discussions for the ecumenical movement.

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<sup>2</sup> For a list of participants s. Appendix p. 246 f.

<sup>3</sup> The papers are published in *The Ecumenical Review*, XXII/4 (1970), pp. 30ff.

## I. Problems arising from the historical evidence available concerning Chalcedon and their bearing on ecumenical discussions

In dealing with historical material concerning the Council of Chalcedon one is confronted with many differences of view which are due to our various presuppositions. We immediately find ourselves inclined towards certain choices of interpretation stemming from our particular background. It is, therefore, always necessary not only with regard to theology, but also with regard to history, that the various traditions examine themselves in the light of common ecumenical discussion. In connection with our study of Chalcedon the following points have come up more clearly :

1. There is a considerable limitation in the historical evidence at our disposal. It is, of course, true that in comparison with other ecumenical councils Chalcedon offers us a great amount of source material. Yet this material is not enough to adequately and fully understand all the historical aspects of an event in which a complex of factors have been interwoven, especially concerning discussions in smaller groups or behind the scenes.

This remark refers to the fact that the interpretation of the existing source material is of great importance for a common understanding of Chalcedon by the Churches today. This is illustrated, for example, by the questions raised immediately below concerning the influence of the Emperor on Chalcedon, the role played by the various ecclesiastical sees at that time, etc.

2. The role of the Emperor or his commissioners in the proceedings of Chalcedon present us with the following questions :

a) To what extent did this role influence the content of the decision of the Council? Was this role restricted to a simple direction of the agenda (e.g. pressure towards the production of a doctrinal definition) or did it reach the substance of the definition itself? To what extent was the concern for the unity of the Empire determinative for the Council? Was it important only for the formulation of certain canons or was it also a motivation in formulating the doctrine itself?

This question is very much behind the discussions between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians today. These discussions have shown that to many non-Chalcedonian scholars the essence of Chalcedonian faith appears acceptable. Although this ought to be accepted with the caution that scholars might be ahead of the bulk of membership, it points to the fact that it is essential to establish a distinction between the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon and the faith which it proclaimed. Thus, although either side in these discussions today may make different use of the views of the historians on the role of the Emperor in the Council, the question remains whether or not these sides agree on the significance of the content of the Chalcedon definition.

b) What was the primary imperial concern (motive) in this Council? Was it only or mainly the concern for maintaining one faith in one Empire? Or should we see other political aims behind it?

The reason for raising this question lies again in the fact that in ecumenical discussions the accent is often one-sidedly placed on either the political motivation of the Byzantine Emperors in their concern for the convocation of a Council or on their strictly religious concern for maintaining the orthodox faith in their Empire. It is probably true that in order to find the right motive historically one must take into account the role orthodox faith played for the unity of the Empire in the minds of the people of that time. In any case, the way this question is answered depends to a great extent, and for many Christians today, on the authority a conciliar decision bears.

c) Was Chalcedon influenced by imperial intervention more than previous Councils?

In the conversations between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians the latter insist on the authority of Nicaea (325) which they consider as final in its proclamation of faith. Constantinople I and Ephesus are accepted by them as commentators on I Nicaea and not as a "new faith" which for them Chalcedon appears to be. In denying the authority of Chalcedon, Non-Chalcedonians point out what they see as imperial intervention and influence on this Council. This raises the question for historical research whether this imperial influence applies more to Chalcedon than to the previous ecumenical Councils.

d) What was the importance of the fact that the faith of Chalcedon had, as in other cases, to be promulgated by special imperial decrees?

This question is connected again with the entire issue of imperial influence on the Council of Chalcedon and the degree to which this issue affects the authority which Chalcedon bears in our ecumenical discussions. The promulgation of the decision of a Council by imperial decree was applied also to Chalcedon. This meant that the faith declared by the Council had to be the one faith of the one Empire. Those dissatisfied with this "faith" or those who did not like the Empire or its capital were thus put automatically in the same position towards the Council of Chalcedon. Now that the Empire no longer exists, how has the situation changed with regard to the "faith" of Chalcedon?

3. The differences of interpretation of history appear especially with regard to the role played by the rivalry of the great ecclesiastical sees in the background of the Council. What was the importance for Chalcedon of the particular interest of such sees as Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, the emerging Patriarchate of Jerusalem or of the bishops of Illyricum with their peculiar attitude towards the Tome of Leo? What was the role played by the Roman delegates in the Council?

These questions are implicitly present in our ecumenical discussions. For example, many non-Chalcedonian historians would attach to the Roman delegates in the Council of Chalcedon a role of promoting a certain policy of the Roman see in connection with a similar policy by Constantinople who, according to this view, aimed at becoming the first see of the East at the expense of Alexandria or Antioch. Besides this, there is also the question of the influence Pope Leo's Tome has had on the definition of Chalcedon. Did Chalcedon receive a decisive "Roman" influence on its teaching or was it more "ecumenical" in its dogmatic perspective?

4. To what extent did ethnic and cultural factors play a role in the history of Chalcedon? It is true that in post-Chalcedonian times the cultural frontiers between Byzantines and non-Byzantines were of special significance. But is it right to apply such differences to the time of Chalcedon itself?

The influence of cultural or ethnic factors in the confession of faith is a matter of constant relevance for the ecumenical movement. This is true in a special way for the split between Chalcedonians and Non-Chalcedonians. The overcoming of this split depends very much on the recognition of whether such factors which might have played a role in the past should not be distinguished and placed aside from what constitutes the real issue.

5. What were the theological concerns (motives) behind Chalcedon? Here one may mention various possibilities :

a) The soteriological motive, namely the concern that man is saved only by God (the Logos), and yet that he is saved as a complete human being (perfect man). Both these elements (that salvation can only come from God and that it must refer to the entire man) were alive in the soteriology of the Early Church. Chalcedon's doctrine of two perfect natures, divine and human, in Christ stemmed from this soteriological motive as it was feared that in the theological trends to which the Council reacted this soteriological principle was endangered by an excessive and onesided stress on either the divine or the human factors in man's salvation. This soteriological concern becomes a criterion even for the Church today in its attitude towards the teaching of Chalcedon.

b) The worship motive, namely the question whether the worship of Christ would not in fact mean worshipping a man. This "pious" motive characterized both sides, i.e. both those of "Nestorian" and of "Monophysitic" tendencies, in the controversies which led to Chalcedon. Chalcedon aimed at safeguarding the divinity of the subject to whom worship is rendered (the Logos) but in absolute inseparability from the human nature assumed by him.

c) The concern for establishing the identity of Christ, namely the question who the historical Christ (who walked and suffered in Palestine) in fact

was, God or man, and how his historical existence related to his being the Son of God (*communicatio idiomatum*).

d) An implicit attempt to criticize the neo-platonic image of man in his relation to God, an image which threatened the "otherness" of God and man (hence the insistence on ἀσυγχύτως etc.).

In mentioning these possibilities one should not exclude a combination of some or all of these together, perhaps, with other factors making up for the theological concerns behind Chalcedon. It seems, however, that any understanding of this issue in terms of more philosophical speculation should be excluded.

6. With regard to the content of the Chalcedonian definition itself the following questions arise in connection with the nature as well as the theology of this definition: (a) Concerning the nature of the definition the question is whether this decision represents simply a setting of "borders" within which one is free to understand whatever he wishes, or is it intended to state something positively. This raises the more general question of what is right or wrong about liberty of interpretation and comprehension in Christian doctrine. (b) Concerning the theology the Chalcedonian definition represents, the question is whether this theology should be seen as expressing an "anti-Monophysitic front" or an "anti-Nestorian" attitude as well. (c) It is also to be seen to what extent this theology depends on particular theologians, like Leo I, Cyril of Alexandria, etc., or represents a synthesis of many trends, including perhaps that of the Antiochene school.

7. This is closely connected with the question of the relation of Chalcedon to the previous ecumenical Councils. Here two kinds of questions arise. One has to do with the position of Chalcedon in Christian tradition compared with that of the previous ecumenical Councils. Does Chalcedon hold the same authority as the ecumenical Councils which preceded it or should we view the latter and especially the first ecumenical Council as the authority *par excellence* to which Chalcedon appears as addition, perhaps "unacceptable", as it may be seen to constitute a threat to the purity of the original faith? The other kind of question refers to the essential or dogmatic relationship between Chalcedon and the ecumenical Council after it; does Chalcedon constitute a point in a certain continued evolution of Christological thinking or should it be seen rather as a response to an entirely new problem?

## II. Problems arising from a study of the reception of Chalcedon by the various traditions

A study organized by Faith and Order some years ago on the Councils of the Early Church and their significance for the ecumenical movement showed the importance which reception bears in the understanding of a

Council.<sup>4</sup> Reception represents the process by which the local churches accept the decision of a Council and thereby recognize its authority. This process is a multiplex one and may last for centuries. Even after the formal conclusion of such a process and the canonical reception of a Council's doctrinal formula usually through a new Council, the process of reception continues in some way or other as long as the Churches are involved in a self-examination on the basis of the question whether a particular Council has been received and appropriated properly and with justification. In this sense we can say that in the ecumenical movement the Churches find themselves in a process of continuing reception or re-reception of the Councils.

In examining the reception or rejection of Chalcedon in their respective traditions the Churches are faced with questions which bear particular significance for their understanding of reception itself and of the place the Councils have in their consciousness. As the Churches live together in the ecumenical movement in which they experience a re-reception of their traditions the question becomes relevant when they study their attitude towards the Councils: Are the Churches ready to contribute to this emerging of re-reception of Christian tradition today by placing their reception of the Councils in the context of this re-reception? Here the following questions are included:

1. Is it possible to establish a distinction between the content of a Council, especially of its dogmatic decision, and the actual proceedings of the Council? To what extent does the recognition of the doctrine of a Council depend upon the manner of conciliar procedure practised in the Council? Would it be perhaps possible to speak of a reception of the content of a Council without a reception of the Council itself?

2. The fact that reception forms an indispensable part of a Council is accepted by all. But what does it mean that a Council is in the *process of reception*? Is there something irrevocably *given* which has to be gradually understood and appropriated? Or is it an event in the history of the Church which is to be used at a given moment as an *analogy* to the intentions of the Church at a certain point in its history? These questions are closely related with the following:

3. What is the relation of a conciliar definition and its reception to the Apostolic witness? Does a Council (*a*) develop, (*b*) interpret, (*c*) simply point to the Apostolic witness in a certain historical moment? An understanding of the meaning of reception is, perhaps, possible only in the context of the problem of the relation between Scripture and Tradition.

4. To what extent does the process of reception leave unchanged what was once decided by a Council? Here the question is whether reception in fact transforms the original meaning of a conciliar decision. If we look, for

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Councils and the Ecumenical Movement*, World Council Studies No. 5. WCC, Geneva 1968, esp. pp. 15 ff.

example, at the history of the Chalcedonian formula in the West we are perhaps allowed to say that in many cases Western theology went beyond the original intention of Chalcedon, especially when the terms of this formula acquired a certain independence and initiated some new theological idea (cf. the theological ideas which developed on the basis of the proprieties of each nature in Christ, etc.). Thus, it is not only a matter of hermeneutics that we face in the process of reception but also the question of the role history plays in the transmission of a conciliar doctrine from generation to generation.

5. Chalcedon constitutes an example of a Council which was followed both by divisions and by differences of interpretations in the process of its reception. In view of this and of the previous four questions what should the Churches do today? The discussions at the consultation indicated the following trends which might assist the Churches to go forward and, in a positive manner, find a way beyond those differences in the reception of Chalcedon which have hitherto separated or tended to separate some of them. The trends are relevant also to the whole question of Councils within and in relation to the tradition of faith.

*a)* It is obvious that the way in which we understand the reception of a Council or Councils directly involves our various conceptions of tradition. All Churches are having to re-examine their understanding of tradition in relation to the challenges both of other Churches and of the world. It is to be hoped therefore that this mutual re-examination will contribute to overcoming problems about the reception of a particular Council.

*b)* In this connection, it seems reasonable to expect that the Churches will be obliged to reconsider the status of any specific process whereby a Church received or rejected a particular Council in the past. For example, both the historical act of receiving Chalcedon and that of rejecting Chalcedon may not be as final for a Church's dogmatic stand and definition as has hitherto been thought. A new understanding of the whole process puts particular incidents in the process into a new light.

*c)* Similarly, it is necessary to re-examine the relationship of any juridical act of accepting a Council to the restoration of Church unity. It no longer seems sufficient to hold in a simplistic way that in order to restore church unity there must, simply or of necessity, be juridical assent to a list of Councils. Or, alternatively, this point should perhaps be stated in the form of claiming that we are all obliged to take seriously the past and in so doing to reconsider what juridical acceptance of a Council or Councils should mean and what form it should properly take.

*d)* A particular point to be considered in relation to the more general considerations touched on in (*a*) — (*c*) above is the question of how "anathemas" pronounced by Councils are to be received. It would seem necessary both to re-evaluate the total significance of such anathemas and to consider the possibility of distinguishing between "anathemas" referring to particular

persons (whose doctrinal stances, incidentally, historical research may lead one to evaluate differently from the judgement of their contemporaries) and “anathemas” referring to particular beliefs.

### III. Interpreting Chalcedon Today

As the Churches are faced with the present day situation the question of their relation to Chalcedon takes the form : What is it that we are committed to today with regard to the Council of Chalcedon? This question may open new possibilities of convergence for our Churches in their re-reception of Chalcedon today. Raising such a question implies going back to Chalcedon in an attempt to find its relevance for today.

This attempt would include in the first place the question of the meaning which interpretation has in this case. Does interpretation imply here a mere translation of terminology? Or does it require changes in the concepts themselves? And how can one today use concepts that are no longer relevant?

Another question which would be involved in the attempt to find Chalcedon's relevance for today is that of the motives which lie behind the Chalcedonian definition. Should we approach Chalcedon having in mind the question of “how” or of “why” it speaks of Christ in such a way? It has been mentioned earlier in this report that the soteriological motive in all conciliar decisions and in that of Chalcedon in particular should be taken seriously. If this is applied to the reception and interpretation of Chalcedon today it is clear that we should go beyond the “how” of the Chalcedonian definition to the “why” of it, thus basing our re-reception and interpretation of Chalcedon on the intention of the Council.

This approach to Chalcedon leads to the following concrete problems :

1. Can we interpret Chalcedon outside the context of God's relation to the world and history? Does Chalcedon allow us to speak of divine nature in an independent and positive way or only in the context of God's personal existence in relation to the world and history? And how would our classical theology be affected should we place the doctrine of Chalcedon in such an existential relationship of God to our historical life?

2. Is the intention of Chalcedon to unveil something about God and the Incarnation or rather to protect the mystery of God? Does Chalcedon by the ambiguity of its formula bind theology or does it open new theological questions?

3. Can Chalcedon be properly understood and received without an understanding of what followed it both in the form of theological debates and of new conciliar decisions in the centuries that follow immediately after Chalcedon (e.g. 5th and 6th ecumenical Councils)? And what does it mean that a conciliar decision can be received through another Council?

4. What is the importance we should attach to a reception of Chalcedon or of any Council in the form of liturgical life or piety (spirituality)? Is spirituality and liturgical life derived from a Council or is it the conciliar decisions that derive from a certain spirituality? Can we say that Chalcedon has been received by liturgical and spiritual life in East and West in the same way? And could we not find the vision and teaching of Chalcedon in the spiritual and liturgical life of Churches who have not accepted this Council?

#### IV. The bearing of Chalcedon on the "understanding of man" and the "secular"

A special but central area to which "interpreting Chalcedon" today applies is that of the current discussion on anthropology and secularism. Here the following issues arise :

1. What are the grounds on which the Chalcedonian definition can be brought to bear on our modern discussions on the "humanum"? Here the first question to be asked is whether it is possible to use the method of extracting *data* concerning the humanity of Christ from the discussion about Jesus at Chalcedon, and then relating these data to what in our times is understood as constituting the "human". Does this approach take account of history? Can we discern any "facts" or "data" about Jesus from the reflections of the Church and — in the case of Chalcedon — from the Church of that particular time? Furthermore what sort of anthropology is to be found in Chalcedon? Is it one that Chalcedon finds and utilises or is it one resulting from the Chalcedonian doctrine itself? These questions underline the particular character which any attempt of extracting anthropological *data* from Chalcedon bears in this case. The same questions apply also to data concerning not only Jesus but existence and faith in general, issues involved in our present day assertions about the humanum and the secular.

2. In what way can the Chalcedonian *model* criticize our modern views about man and the "secular"? Although it should be admitted from the beginning that all "models" are limited in their application to other times, nevertheless the basic model offered by Chalcedon (not in its terms which may change, but in its structure) implies some elements which may be relevant to our contemporary anthropological discussions.

a) It points to a fundamental ontological distinction between uncreated and created, yet not in a sense of contradiction or opposition between the two, but of "personal" unity. This leads to an affirmation of created nature and away from any reductionism of reality to either "materialism" or "spiritualism".

b) It involves an idea of *consubstantiality* which offers in the person of Christ a rescuing of anthropology from individualism. Christ's humanity cannot

be conceived in isolation from his community life — even from the “impersonal” aspects of his environment (e.g. cultural or economic life) or from the natural elements (e.g. food, sea, etc.).

c) It throws light on the relation between the “personal” and “impersonal” by bringing the two together. The “impersonal” with which modern science and technology are concerned finds its fulfilment on the level of the “personal” while the latter becomes sensitive and responsible towards matter. What concrete possibilities are there in such an understanding of the “personal” and the “impersonal” for defining our attitude towards the affirmation of the “secular” today?

## V. Questions which appear to underlie the foregoing and which therefore need consideration for any subsequent agenda

The detailed study of Chalcedon, its antecedents, its subsequent history and its possible implications, which the consultation has encouraged, permitted and carried forward has constantly been raising, explicitly or implicitly, a series of underlying questions which may themselves be seen as questions relevant to one basic theme. That theme is how we are to understand the place of the Councils within the whole process of Tradition and how *that* understanding relates together Tradition, Unity and Truth. Detailed study of a specific Council by men from very varying ecclesiastical traditions tends to show that many, if not all, of the views implied by the various traditions on the relation between church tradition, ecclesiastical unity and the claims made for the truth of doctrine will not stand up in their commonly received form to historical and critical evaluation.

For example, it is difficult to see how allegations of undue imperial influence at Chalcedon (even if they were provable) could legitimately affect judgments about the rightness of rejecting Chalcedon and of being content with the first Council of Nicaea. Historical evidence is at least as clear about imperial dominance at Nicaea as at Chalcedon. Conversely, many devout Christians and many committed theologians cannot easily see how the resultant of imperial pressures, episcopal discussion and theological debate at a distance of 1500 years can be held to be in any way normative for the Church at the present time. Conversely again, there is the question of how the past experience of the Church, particularly that part which the Church in the past has held to be particularly significant can now be understood as relevant to, and at least partially formative of, the Church's present understanding of the Faith.

Thus the study of the Councils or of a particular Council must clearly be pursued in relation to the questions of how the Councils now contribute to the understanding of Faith (the question of Truth) and of how acceptance of Councils is related to common membership of one Church (the question of Unity). In this context the discussions of the consultation may be seen to

have reflected three broad questions which need to be related further both to actual available evidence and to further reflection.

Firstly there is the question of the relation between the proceedings of the Council and the significance of the faith which it proclaims. This question should really be extended to cover not only the proceedings leading up to a conciliar formulation but also to subsequent proceedings whereby Churches received or rejected this conciliar formulation. In what way are we to judge that there is "treasure" in conciliar "vessels" no matter how "earthen" they turn out to be and how far is the "treasure" defined as treasure by subsequent recognition, use and interpretation?

The second question which is very closely connected with the first is the question of *motivation*. Can we perceive what the proponents of a particular conciliar solution believed themselves to be protecting and promoting? Did opponents believe they were protecting and promoting different things? And is subsequent reception/rejection of a Council a judgement about the council's *aim* or the success of the Council's *method*? And how would present judgements about any of these questions affect the present standing and use of Councils and present attitudes and judgements taken up towards them?

It should always be remembered with regard to the Council of Chalcedon in particular that at least *three* groups of Churches and Christians have to be taken into account. There are those Churches and Christians who positively affirm Chalcedon, there are those who positively deny Chalcedon and there are those who are indifferent to Chalcedon (whatever the formal doctrinal position).

Thus the third main question is to see whether agreement could emerge as to what sort of point or stage Chalcedon is in what sort of process. How does the Church receive, formulate and pass on her experience and what is the value of that past experience and the formulation of it for the Church at present as she is called to face the future? Unless ways can be found of studying and answering questions such as these then studies of the reception and interpretation of the Council of Chalcedon are simply matters of ancient history for a decreasing band of specialists rather than matters concerning vital resources for the way in which the Church today confronts her task.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee IV, see below p. 224.*

# ON THE WAY TO COMMUNION IN THE SACRAMENTS

(Studies on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry)

## 3. BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST

### Introduction

Baptism and eucharist have always been topics of theological discussion in the ecumenical movement. The present document reports on a study which was initiated in 1967. The Faith and Order Commission had already dealt with the theme of baptism in the period between the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund (1952) and the Fourth in Montreal (1963). The results of that discussion were presented in the report *One Lord, One Baptism*<sup>1</sup> and favourably received by the Fourth World Conference in Montreal<sup>2</sup>. A few years later the Faith and Order Commission decided that the subject should be studied afresh. The report *One Lord, One Baptism* had been concerned primarily with establishing a common understanding of baptism without as yet drawing concrete conclusions for the churches' liturgy and practice. The new study on "Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist" was to include these aspects and to explore whether agreement could be reached on them.

Various meetings were held. A first consultation was organized in spring 1968. It produced a brief analysis of the theme<sup>3</sup> which was subsequently discussed and commented on by a large number of regional groups. A second international consultation was held two years later (September 1970 in Revnice, Czechoslovakia) to discuss some problems in more detail. The findings of the whole study were summarized, reconsidered and revised by a working group which met in Geneva in December 1970.

The Churches are agreed that the central meaning of baptism is participation in Christ. Through his baptism in the Jordan Jesus accepted solidarity with sinners; he continued this solidarity as he followed the path of the Suffering Servant through passion, death and resurrection. The Spirit which came upon Jesus when he was baptized comes also on the Church and unites Christ's people with him in death and resurrection, in and through the baptismal action. Baptism is a gift of God's redeeming love to the Church. Those

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<sup>1</sup> *One Lord, One Baptism*, SCM Press, London 1960.

<sup>2</sup> *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order*. The Report from Montreal 1963, edited by P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, Association Press, New York 1964.

<sup>3</sup> See *Study Encounter*, IV/4, 1968, pp. 194 ff.

who receive baptism are baptized by the one Spirit into one body; baptism is the sign and seal of their discipleship in obedience to the Lord<sup>4</sup>.

Since there is wide agreement on the meaning of baptism one might expect that the Churches would be able to recognize one another's baptism without restrictions. This is, however, not the case. Baptism has certainly been seen as a unifying bond. But the Churches have not yet succeeded in achieving full mutual recognition. A number of issues have remained unsolved, and as the Churches face the contemporary situation new ones have emerged which require attention. Can the old controversy on believers' and infant baptism be overcome? What is the relation between baptism and chrismation or confirmation? Does one not have to take into account all the stages of Christian initiation if the mutual recognition is to be fully real? Does mutual recognition of baptism not call for the mutual recognition of the eucharist? Above all, can the Churches maintain their inherited practices without modification? For instance, can they any longer defend, in a secularized society, the practice of indiscriminate baptism?

The present paper makes an attempt to carry the discussion further in the direction of answering these questions. It starts from the assumption that the process of Christian initiation must be looked at as a whole. Baptism, confirmation and the eucharist are inseparable. The paper gives first a brief review of present baptismal practices in the Churches (I). After a few methodological considerations (II) it examines the interdependence of ecclesiology and baptismal practice (III) and then lists a number of ethical implications (IV) which are of particular importance for any reform of baptism and confirmation. The following section deals with liturgical aspects (V) and the final chapter deals with the question of mutual recognition of baptism as it presents itself in the life of the Churches today (VI).

## I. The Present Practice of the Churches

A brief survey of the practice of the different Churches shows at once the variation in the forms of initiation into the body of Christ. It is impossible to mention all the differences here; only the most important are given. Clearly too, each tradition leaves certain questions unanswered and must therefore submit to questioning in the light of the practice of the other traditions.

1. In the Eastern tradition baptism and confirmation (chrismation) are administered in immediate succession even when the recipient is an infant. The initiation is then complete. The person baptized is at once admitted to the eucharist without further ceremony. Here the question must be asked whether children are given sufficient opportunity of making for themselves the confession of faith made on their behalf at baptism.

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<sup>4</sup> All these phrases occur in reports of earlier Faith and Order Conferences. A fuller summary of statements agreed upon at Faith and Order Conferences is attached to this paper (Appendix I).

2. In the Western tradition, baptism and the laying on of hands (confirmation) were separated at quite an early date. Whereas baptism could be performed by the priest, the laying on of hands was reserved to the bishop. This meant that usually some time elapsed between baptism and confirmation. Where the person baptized was an infant, the time interval could be of some years. Confirmation thus gradually became independent of baptism although the close connection between the two was never completely forgotten. Confirmation came to mean strengthening by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Admission to eucharistic fellowship could take place either before or after confirmation. All Western Churches face the problem of refusing to admit children to the eucharist even though they have been baptized.

The Western practice of initiation is to be found particularly in the Roman Catholic Church. Recently this Church has been more willing to admit confirmation by a priest in certain special cases, and to emphasize, especially in the case of adults, the unity of the process of initiation.

Western practice prompts the question whether the division of initiation into two related yet distinct sacramental acts does not prejudice the unique once-for-all character of baptism. The Churches of the Reformation sought to reassert the sufficiency of baptism. Since they found no basis in Scripture for confirmation as a sacramental act, it was abandoned. Other reasons, however, led the Churches of the Reformation to adopt an act similar to the sacramental act of confirmation. Baptized children are not admitted to the eucharist until they are able to make for themselves the profession of faith made for them at baptism. Confirmation furnishes the occasion for this act: a service of worship is held in which baptism is recalled and the persons previously baptized make a public profession of faith and are consecrated for their service. From then on they are admitted to the eucharist. This tradition shares the difficulty common to all the Western traditions. But the practice of this kind of confirmation presents a special problem. Confirmation normally takes place when children reach a given age. This frequently makes confirmation into a social formality in practice. Many Protestant Churches have consequently begun to change their practice in this matter, some even going so far as to drop insistence on confirmation as an essential condition for admission to the eucharist.

In Anglicanism the practice of episcopal confirmation was retained. It has always involved both the personal ratification by the candidate of the promises made on his behalf at baptism, and the laying on of hands with prayer for his strengthening by the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is regarded as the way of entrance into communicant status.

The Churches of the Baptist tradition administer baptism only to those who make profession of faith. They have no rite of chrismation or confirmation, but in some Churches there is a laying on of hands upon those who have been baptized. In all cases those who have been baptized are admitted at once to the eucharist. Often the children of baptized parents are dedicated at a special service of worship.

In the 17th century the Society of Friends so stressed the inward life that they were led to reject the outward sacramental signs of both baptism and eucharist. Emphasis on the inward spiritual event has led other Churches to attach no real importance to the external sign of baptism. What really matters is that the Gospel is heard, conversion takes place and a new life begins. Churches born from 18th and 19th century revival movements, therefore, show relatively little interest in the external sign of baptism (e.g. Salvation Army<sup>5</sup>). The question is how rejection of the outward signs can be consistent with the New Testament witness.

3. In almost all Churches baptism is normally performed by the *ordained minister*. On the other hand, almost all the Churches agree that baptism does not have to be administered exclusively by an ordained minister. Thus in certain circumstances it may be performed by lay people<sup>6</sup>. In the episcopal Churches, however, confirmation may only be administered by the bishop or by an ordained minister nominated by him. But since confirmation is usually performed in the presence of the worshipping congregation, even in other Churches it is *de facto* the ordained minister who administers confirmation.

Historical factors have played a large part in determining the role of ordained ministers in baptism and confirmation. For instance, the fact that lay people administer baptism is partly explained by the high infant mortality rate of earlier centuries ; it was felt essential to administer baptism immediately after birth ; at first the lay people involved were usually the midwives.

4. The different practices of the Churches cannot be described without at the same time drawing attention to the fact that many Churches today are seriously concerned about their practice and liturgy of baptism and confirmation. In recent years, a number of Churches including in particular the Roman Catholic Church have introduced far-reaching reforms and revised their liturgical texts. Other Churches are still engaged in such revision and it is probable that this process will continue in the years ahead. Union negotiations provided occasions to review baptismal practices and to relate different approaches to one another. The need for reforms arises, however, also in other contexts. In traditionally Christian countries the question is increasingly being asked : Can the inherited practice continue unchanged? Does the present practice take baptism seriously enough, judged by the light of the

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<sup>5</sup> Not all Churches which do not practise water baptism give this as their reason. In certain cases the decision has been determined by historical factors (Kimbanguist Churches, for example).

<sup>6</sup> There are exceptions to this rule. The older Reformed tradition, which is tending to disappear, constitutes one of them. The Reformed attitude has two primary reasons ; first that the ministry of the sacraments is closely connected with the ministry of the word in the Reformed tradition ; and second that baptism is understood primarily as incorporation into the Body of Christ rather than in terms of individual salvation. Most Churches of the Reformation do not regard water baptism as a condition for salvation, either of infants or adults. Hence the need for lay-administered baptism in case where death seems imminent is lessened.

New Testament witness? Has not baptism often become more a badge of membership in Christian society than a sign of God's gracious gift in Christ and of the call to serve him? At a time when the Church's relationship to society is clearly undergoing considerable changes, it is not surprising that the question of the nature of baptism should arise simultaneously with fresh urgency in so many Churches. Many Churches have been led to question the indiscriminate baptism of infants and, quite independently of church union negotiations, the view that believers' baptism and infant baptism should be practised side by side in the same Church has been gaining ground.

## II. Questions of Approach

How are the Churches to reach agreement in this situation? How are they to advance beyond their differences in doctrine and practice to a common mind? The following methodological reflections may be important for determining the right approach.

1. Clearly the New Testament assumes the practice of baptism though it does not anywhere speak of it systematically nor does it provide us with incontestable historical evidence as to its origin and practice. What is said about baptism occurs in many different contexts and throws light therefore only on certain aspects of baptism in widely varied first century settings. Many questions we should like to have answered today receive no direct answer from the witness of the New Testament. No Church can therefore base its practice on the New Testament evidence alone; tradition and history play a significant role in shaping the Churches' practice and provide the way in which the New Testament is interpreted and understood. The recognition of this fact is important. Churches must exercise caution in their judgements of each other's practice and expose their own practice to the critical questions of others: How far is this practice really governed by the revelation in Christ? The recognition of this fact is also important since it makes it clear that the Church today, like the Church in earlier times, can exercise a certain freedom in determining its practice.

2. The variety of practice in the Ancient Church is also evident. For example, in the Syrian Church chrismation seems to have preceded baptism by water. This variety is significant. Clearly the evidence of the New Testament and of the early centuries does not require a uniform baptismal practice throughout the whole Church. One and the same baptism may be administered in different ways within certain limits in one and the same Church. This point is important not only for the ecumenical movement but also for new expressions appropriate to baptism in Churches living in other cultural settings (e.g. Africa).

3. Historical events and controversies have greatly influenced the practice of the various Churches. For instance, the christianisation of the Roman Empire and the disappearance of the catechumenate and adult baptism had

a profound effect on East and West alike. The Donatist controversy deeply affected the Western tradition. The 16th century controversies between the Reformers and the Anabaptists have influenced and continue to influence the practice of Protestant Churches. The missionary experience outside Europe, which has involved multitudes of adults, has given new insights into the meaning of baptism. It is important to bear such historical factors in mind if we are to arrive at a mature judgement. This is especially important because each Christian has personally undergone one particular form of initiation and instruction and his spiritual life has been influenced by this particular form. He will therefore be inclined to judge all baptismal practices from this standpoint.

4. The history of baptism makes it clear that the rite existed in a developed form from the very earliest times. Particular aspects of baptism had been expressed and stressed by particular actions and gestures. Such adaptations are not merely still possible in principle today, but are actually required. Baptism needs translation and explanation not merely in words but also at the level of signs.

### III. Ecclesiology and the Reform of Baptismal and Confirmation Practice

Obviously, there is a close connection between christology, ecclesiology and the understanding and the practice of baptism. Since baptism is the sign of incorporation into the Body of Christ which is the Church, any shift in the understanding of the nature of the Church almost inevitably affects the approach to baptism. In the ecclesiological debate of recent years there is a noticeable convergence on a number of new emphases. It may be useful to list some of them which are particularly relevant for a fresh approach to baptism.

1. *The Church as a Eucharistic Community.* In many Churches there has been a rediscovery of the meaning and the practice of the eucharist. Faith in Christ can be alive only within the fellowship of the Church. Faith requires corporate life. The eucharist is the visible sign giving expression to this communion of Christians with Christ and with one another. This emphasis on the communal aspect of Christian life also has consequences for the understanding of baptism. Baptism is the sign and seal of salvation but it is equally incorporation into the messianic people. It leads into the eucharistic community. This dimension has often been neglected in baptismal and confirmation practice.

2. *The Church as a Genuine Fellowship in the Holy Spirit.* The Church is to be a genuine fellowship in the Spirit. Such fellowship can exist only on the basis of the spontaneous adherence of its members. It cannot be secured by external structures and rules which have to be taken for granted and accepted without too many questions. The Church must be a charismatic fellowship

leaving room for new and unexpected charismata. There is an increasing emphasis in contemporary ecclesiological discussions on the work of the Holy Spirit who both gives gifts to each one and at the same time unites all into one, thus reconciling freedom and fellowship. The development of Pentecostal movements reminds the historic Churches how much they have neglected the life in the Spirit. This has consequences for baptism and confirmation. Baptism is the anointing with the Spirit. Through the Messiah, the Anointed One, the baptized participates in the royal and priestly dignity for which man was created by God. How far does this understanding inform the present practice of baptism and confirmation? How far is it designed to facilitate and promote genuine spontaneous fellowship? Today, baptism and confirmation are felt by many to be no more than external rites which are imposed on people but not really appropriated by them. Should the presence and the demands of Christ not be given fuller expression? Questions like these provide a strong impetus for the reform of both baptism and confirmation.

3. *The Church as a Missionary Fellowship.* The Church is the people which is called to declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called it out of darkness into His marvellous light. It praises its Lord in adoration and gratitude and stands before Him in intercession for the whole world. It can praise him only if it is a real sign to men of God's presence and love. In each generation this missionary task has to be perceived afresh and it is quite clear today that the Churches are in a new situation. Societies once considered "Christian" can no longer be considered so. Whatever may have been the advantages or disadvantages of the "Christian" society of previous generations, today the Churches have to learn again to be a minority missionary fellowship. More than ever before, such a fellowship calls for Christians who are aware of their fellowship with Christ and recognize the commission this implies. Does this not also mean a shift in the understanding and practice of baptism? Does it not call for a greater emphasis on the note of commission? It is significant that in the Churches which especially associate confirmation with the gift of the Spirit this rite is being given an increasingly missionary perspective.

4. *The Church as a Universal Fellowship.* By its very nature the Church is a fellowship which is intended to include all men. As such it transcends all national, racial, class and other barriers. Almost no ecclesiology has neglected to express this truth, but the course of history has created a new situation. The Church must demonstrate its essential catholicity in a new way. It needs to be freed from the restrictions placed on its catholicity. The principle of catholicity needs to become a reality which is lived and experienced. Baptismal practice must make it clear that Christians, while belonging to a local fellowship, are at the same time members of a fellowship which is universal.

5. *The Church as an Open Fellowship.* For various reasons, ecclesiological discussion today is concerned with the problem of the Church's boundaries.

For one thing, the problem arises in connection with the ecumenical movement. Even more urgently it arises in connection with the relationship between Church and world. How can the Church at one and the same time preserve its identity and also be a sign to men of Christ's presence? The Church should not cut itself off from the world. It must identify with the world in ministering to the world's needs but not with the world's estrangement and alienation from God. At present, however, is not its identity too often determined by identification with certain sociological entities, a nation, a particular section of the people, etc.? Are not the present boundaries between Church and world therefore unreal and inadequate? It is not that there will no longer be any boundaries. The problem is rather how to express the real identity of the Church in a convincing way. This raises important questions about baptism and confirmation. The sign of baptism establishes and confirms a boundary. Baptized persons are distinguished from non-baptized persons. But is this really the distinguishing line of the Gospel? Many feel that baptism creates an identification with a particular sociological community and for this reason hides rather than expresses its real meaning. How can baptism place the boundary in the right place?

Some even go as far as to ask whether an external sign is not bound to be unreal. A sign which once meant something in a particular situation does not necessarily continue to be meaningful in all situations. It requires at least translation or perhaps transformation. Some even advocate that it should be abandoned altogether. There are not only certain historical groups (e.g. Society of Friends, Salvation Army) which reject the outward sign but there are some in the present generation who, for different reasons, find it difficult to recognize that the sign of baptism is really required. Does it not provide the basis for a dangerous institutionalisation? Are there any decisive reasons why it should be retained under all circumstances? This report assumes that Christ's presence and the promise of freedom and resurrection are expressed and conveyed by the external sign. God became man in Christ. God's revelation took place in history in a particular yet universally relevant event. The outward sign reflects this particularly, and the Church would betray the peculiar character of God's action in Christ if it were to renounce the external sign of baptism. In addition, it is evident that baptism was generally practised from the very beginning. Obviously, the Church regarded itself as bound by the Lord's command to baptize in his name. Christians therefore start simply from baptism as a given sign in the expectation that the promise which goes with it will be fulfilled. The question of the relationship between the external sign and the actual experience, however, remains one which needs to be constantly raised.

#### IV. Baptismal Life

Baptism has always been understood as the entrance upon a new life. This means that one has died to a previous life and been raised to life with

Christ. It means too that he has received the Spirit and been made a sharer in the mystery of Pentecost. This has happened once-and-for-all, but since sin persists, this death and resurrection with Christ is in constant need of renewal. Life under the Lordship of Christ calls us again and again for new acts of repentance and obedience. Life created by baptism can best be described as living in communion with Christ in anticipation of the coming of God's kingdom. The reform of baptism and confirmation requires in the first place a spiritual renewal. It cannot be achieved simply by changing the order or the liturgy. Baptismal life needs to be renewed. In this respect, the following emphases are of particular importance today :

1. When a person is baptized, his whole life is placed under the sign of God's invitation and gift. All that he is now and will be and do in the future is placed at the service of Christ. The future, however, is less predictable today than ever. An awareness that the conditions in which we live are subject to constant change is a feature of our times. Problems need to be faced which could not have been anticipated even a short while before. Ideas, assumptions and aims which even a short while ago seemed assured are being called in question. Faith has to prove itself in constantly changing situations. The commitment which baptism implies cannot, therefore, be defined once and for all by specific ethical claims. The Christian has been given an identity which in communion with Christ he needs to rediscover again and again. Baptism is to be seen, rather, as the beginning — *initium* — of a new way to be travelled with Christ.

2. When a person is baptized, he becomes a member of the body of Christ. In other words, he is accepted into a fellowship of baptized persons. Baptism normally takes place in the presence of the local congregation which receives the newly baptized and accepts a certain responsibility for him. Baptism, however, is at the same time incorporation into the universal Church. The baptized person is not only a member of the local congregation which has received him, but at the same time of the universal fellowship which transcends all boundaries and barriers and is characterized by a wide variety. This latter aspect needs to be given particular stress today because it must be realized that the life of the baptized person will be lived in many different contexts and constantly new forms of Christian fellowship. Baptism must direct him towards the whole people of God.

3. When today a person is baptized, he normally becomes a member of a particular Church belonging to a particular confessional tradition. Generally speaking, there is no other way for him to become a member either of a particular fellowship or of the universal fellowship. But the Churches today live in hope of the ending of their divisions. They live today between division and unity. In fact, baptism is one of the grounds for this hope. Baptism may not, therefore, be administered in a way which implies that confessional divisions will continue to the end of time. On the contrary, baptism must be

the occasion of giving expression to the hope and the expectation that unity can be achieved.

## V. Liturgical Aspects

Baptism should be a congregational act, included in worship, in which God's invitation and gift in Christ are proclaimed and accepted. When the candidate has confessed his faith, he is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Adult baptism has to be regarded as the primary form of baptism. The liturgy for infant baptism has therefore been an adaptation of that primary form. It includes the same elements even if in a modified form. The two liturgies should not differ fundamentally. Otherwise they give the impression that adult and infant baptism are two different baptisms.

The liturgy of baptism should provide for the following elements though they need not appear in the order given here :

1. An acknowledgement of God's initiative in salvation, of His continuing faithfulness, and of our total dependence upon His grace.

2. An explanation of the meaning of baptism as it appears from Scripture (reference to participation in the dying and rising of Christ, to the new birth of water and of the Spirit, to the incorporation into his body, to the forgiveness of sins in and through Christ . . .).

3. An invocation of the Holy Spirit.

4. A renunciation of evil (possibly accompanied by exorcism).

5. A profession of faith in Christ and the affirmation of allegiance to God : Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

6. A declaration that the person baptized has become a child of God, and a witness to the Gospel.

Through baptism the gift of the Spirit is imparted to the baptized. Therefore, it seems appropriate that the baptism in water should be followed by the laying on of hands or a chrismation. For some Churches the strengthening by the gift of the Spirit is the central meaning of confirmation which is conceived of as a separate act, usually not performed at the same time as baptism by water. When confirmation is separated from baptism by an interval of time, should not the imparting of the Spirit be expressed also in the liturgy of baptism itself in order to avoid the impression that the only meaning of baptism is the remission of sins? This is even more important in traditions where confirmation has simply the meaning of recalling baptism and providing the opportunity of making an act of personal commitment. The liturgical action should always enable the candidate and the congregation to participate fully in it. Frequent opportunities should be provided for Christians to recall the meaning of their baptism. It might be helpful to celebrate baptism at

Easter or Pentecost, thereby stressing the connection between baptism and Christ's death and resurrection or the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Other occasions, such as confirmations and eucharists, can be appropriate for administering baptism. In the early centuries baptism was frequently performed by immersion. A recovery of this early form by those who have abandoned it would enhance the symbolism of the liturgy.

Baptismal practice and liturgies should avoid the impression that one can be baptized only as an infant or only as an adult. Older children too may be brought for baptism, in which case the confession of faith should be made both by the parents and the child<sup>7</sup>.

Where baptism is deferred until adulthood, children of Christian parents may be brought for a service of dedication. Of course, this is not a substitute for baptism but an act in preparation of it. It might then be appropriate for the children to be enrolled as catechumens with a view to baptism.

## VI. The Unity of Baptismal Initiation

Both the New Testament and the Creeds speak of "one baptism". Baptism is meant to be a sign which in Christ unites people into one fellowship with each other. It is a sign of unity.

Is it really recognized as such? It is often stated that all Churches recognize baptism as God's gift and invitation no matter which Church has administered it. Baptism is therefore regarded by many as the clearest expression of unity which already exists or rather still exists between the Churches. But is this assumption really true? Do all churches really recognize all other Churches' baptisms?

It can be said that all Churches are convinced that the "one baptism" referred to in the Creeds is a unique and non-repeatable act.<sup>8</sup> If they "repeat" baptism they do so because they believe that the ceremony performed by the other Church has not really been baptism as willed by the Lord. Such difference in interpretation seriously reduces the full mutual recognition of baptism. The difficulty arises particularly between Churches which exclusively practise believers' baptism and those which practise infant baptism as well.

There are, however, other restrictions on the mutual recognition of baptism which need to be taken into account. Recognition of baptism does not usually include recognition of chrismation and confirmation. Many Churches which recognize the baptism administered by other Churches are in the habit of "repeating" confirmation. But baptism and confirmation are inseparably inter-related and baptism is not yet fully recognized if confirmation is not.

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<sup>7</sup> The Roman Catholic Church is engaged in preparing such a liturgy.

<sup>8</sup> Some African Independent Churches practise repeated baptism of their own members.

This study has been led increasingly to the conviction that this unsatisfactory situation is largely due to the fact that baptismal initiation is not sufficiently recognized as one single coherent process which must always be looked upon as a whole. Baptism is a unique event, and even where the various elements of the rite have been separated in time the basic unity of the baptismal initiation must be retained. Most of the difficulties which today complicate the question of mutual recognition arise from undue separation in this respect. For instance, when the close connection between baptism and confirmation is lost sight of, it is much more difficult to recognize believers' and infant baptism as one and the same baptism. Furthermore, the different concepts of confirmation arising from the separation of the baptismal initiation into two rites constitute a hindrance to full mutual recognition. One may argue that this separation made possible the Western practice of recognizing baptism administered by another Church or outside the Church. Since confirmation was to be performed later by the bishop, baptism could be recognized without compromising the role of the Church and the ministry in administering the sacraments. The fact remains that, in this case, recognition is not complete and that the different concepts of confirmation make it difficult to extend this recognition. Also the uncertainty of the Churches as to the conditions and the time of admission to the eucharist finds its explanation here.

Therefore, the confession of the Church that there is and can be only "one baptism" must be developed afresh in the baptismal practices of the Churches. Their practice must be examined as to whether they obscure this basic affirmation. A new insistence on the unity of the baptismal initiation might open the way to an agreed approach in both the understanding and the practice of baptism. It might also make possible the drastic changes in practice which many call for today.

### *The General Problem of Mutual Recognition*

Conditions for recognizing that baptism administered by another Church has been true baptism are not the same in all Churches. If mutual recognition is to become a full reality it is essential to agree upon certain common criteria.

The following statement is offered here for consideration : Baptism is to be recognized by all Churches when Jesus Christ has been confessed as Lord by the candidate, or, in the case of infant baptism, by the Church on his behalf and when baptism has been performed with water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Of course, this statement is not to be misunderstood as an attempt to reduce the baptismal liturgies to the bare minimum. It simply lists the elements which are of primary importance for the mutual recognition of baptism. The Churches could greatly facilitate mutual recognition if they were to take them into account in their baptismal practice. Generally speaking, the principle of the non-repeatability of baptism needs to be respected even more consis-

tently than it is today if the unique character of baptism is to become manifest among the Churches. Any "repetition" of baptism, even if it is done for valid doctrinal reasons, creates the impression of relativizing the unity of baptismal initiation.

Obviously the above statement leaves many questions open. In particular, it does not yet take the problem of believers' and infant baptism fully into account, nor does it deal with the problem of mutual recognition of confirmation. These questions require special attention (see also note 6).

### *Believers' and Infant Baptism*

Some Churches only baptize adults who are able personally to confess Christ. Other Churches also baptize infants and children. The significance of baptism is often presented so differently in each case that it is difficult to tell whether it is really one and the same baptism. The same often applies to Churches which baptize both adults and infants. The significance given to the act and the liturgies used for it differ so widely that its identity is by no means obvious. In the case of believing adults the baptized person can make his own personal confession of faith and commitment. The baptism of infants looks forward to this personal confession of faith and commitment. Thus the identity of adult believers' baptism and infant baptism can only be evident if the Churches insist on the necessity of the vicarious faith of the congregation as well as of the parents and sponsors. The act of faith also involves the belief that participation in the corporate life of the Body of Christ is an essential element in the salvation of each member and that the baptized infant is initiated into this corporate life. Indiscriminate infant baptism is irresponsible and turns infant baptism into an act which can hardly be understood to be essentially the same as adult believers' baptism.

The problem of the relationship between adult baptism and infant baptism has come into sharper focus through church union negotiations. It is a hopeful sign that in some cases agreement has been possible between Churches which practice only believers' baptism and Churches which have mainly practised infant baptism. United Churches of this kind have been inaugurated in North India and Pakistan. In Ceylon, Ghana, New Zealand and the United States union proposals in which this question figures prominently are before the Churches. In all these schemes it is recognized that in order to hold together the two traditions in one Church there is a need for mutual charity, patience, and respect for differing convictions, but in all cases it is confidently expected that this will be possible. Although in these situations the great majority of Christians concerned come from traditions practising infant baptism, most schemes explicitly recognize that the baptism of adults reveals most clearly the nature of the baptismal act. Great stress is laid on the seriousness of the faith of those bringing children for baptism and on the necessity of ensuring that the child shall grow into the maturity of responsible faith.

On the other hand, Churches of the Baptist tradition have found it possible to accept the co-existence of the two practices in view of the fact that the process of Christian initiation — baptism/confirmation/first communion — is understood as one whole.

The importance of the solution favoured in these cases is not confined to the sphere of church union. Even Churches which have not been facing the problem of church union have arrived independently at similar conclusions.

### *Baptism, Confirmation and Admission to the Eucharist*

The different understandings of chrismation and confirmation constitute a particular problem for the mutual recognition of both baptism and confirmation. Here again, much could be gained by stressing the unity of the baptismal initiation. Though initiation may be effected in two stages, the once-for-all character of baptism should not be diminished nor destroyed. Confirmation, whether given sacramental significance or not, tends to give the impression of qualifying the uniqueness of baptism or even of repeating it. But the once-for-all character of baptism must be preserved. Confirmation must not be allowed to take over certain elements which belong properly to baptism alone. For example, though in all traditions in which confirmation (chrismation) is thought of as a sacrament it is associated with the gift of the Spirit, it would be wrong to understand baptism exclusively as the sign of the forgiveness of sins, while the gift of the Spirit is exclusively connected with confirmation. As long as baptism and confirmation are administered simultaneously, there is little danger of such separation. But once baptism and confirmation are separated in time, the once-for-all character of baptism may be lost. Confirmation cannot do more than underline or for some traditions complete what has already been achieved in baptism. If this once-for-all character of baptism is fully recognized the mutual recognition of baptism becomes much more meaningful. The fact that certain Churches confirm baptized persons coming from other Churches is less significant if this confirmation is not to be understood as an essential part of baptism but simply as its recalling or completion.

The baptismal event needs to be recalled, and provision needs to be made so that baptism can be an ever present reality. This is especially important for those who have been baptized as infants. The opportunity must be given for appropriating baptism by personal confession and engagement. In many churches confirmation provides this opportunity. But can this recalling and re-affirmation of baptismal vows take place on one given occasion? Is there not need for several occasions? Does not this "once-for-all" confirmation again rather blur than underline the once-for-all character of baptism? In any case, confirmation should not take place exclusively at a fixed age, but should rather be performed when the candidate is ready for it on his own initiative.

The once-for-all character of baptism calls for immediate admission to the eucharist. If the admission is deferred the impression is created that the incorporation into the Body of Christ has not yet fully taken place. Should baptism not be the gateway to eucharistic fellowship? Several Churches have been led to admit children to the eucharist at a much earlier age than they used to do in the past. They do not regard confirmation or the personal confession as the condition for admission to the eucharist but dissociate admission from confirmation and let it take place at an earlier age. Though this is in the logic of emphasizing the unity of the baptismal initiation, it is recognized that this reform may lead to a greater polarization of the Churches practising infant baptism and those practising believers' baptism. In any case, the insistence on the provision for opportunities of genuine personal commitment (confirmation, confession, etc.) becomes all the more important.

#### *Appendix :*

### Ecumenical agreement on baptism

As we have already undertaken for the eucharist, we should now like to propose an ecumenical agreement on baptism, composed of texts accepted by the delegates to the Assemblies of the World Council of Churches and to the Faith and Order Conferences. We shall use the text and numbering of the volume "A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963", Ed. Lukas Vischer, The Bethany Press, St. Louis, Missouri 1963, and the official reports of the Montreal Conference on Faith and Order and of the Fourth Assembly at Uppsala. We shall adopt the following abbreviations for the quotations :

La	Lausanne Conference 1927
Ed	Edinburgh Conference 1937
Am	Amsterdam Assembly 1948
Lu	Lund Conference 1952
Ev	Evanston Assembly 1954
ND	New Delhi Assembly 1961
Mo	Montreal Conference 1963
Up	Uppsala Assembly 1968

For example, La 53 signifies : Paragraph 53 of the final report of the Lausanne Conference held in 1927.

#### 1. *Baptism, a Sacrament Instituted by Christ*

"All the Churches have based their sacramental doctrine and order upon their belief that, according to the evidence of the New Testament, the sacraments which they accept were instituted by Christ Himself. We are agreed that Baptism and the Lord's Supper occupied from the beginning a central

position in the Church's common life, and take their origin from what was said and done by Jesus during His life on earth. Sacramental teaching and practice, therefore, are rightly founded upon the record of the New Testament" <sup>1</sup>. "The Sacraments are Christ's gifts to His Church" <sup>2</sup>.

## 2. *Baptism, Participation in the Death and Resurrection of Christ*

"The book 'One Lord, One Baptism' has clearly shown how wide is the agreement amongst the churches with regard to baptism <sup>3</sup>. There, attention is focused upon the baptism with which Jesus himself was baptized (Mark 10 : 38). This began with his acceptance of solidarity with sinners in his baptism in the Jordan and continued as he followed the path of the Suffering Servant through passion, death and resurrection. The Spirit that came upon Jesus comes also on the Church and unites his people with him in death and resurrection, in and through the baptismal action. Participation in Christ is the central meaning of baptism" <sup>4</sup>. "The Church gladly confesses the Holy Spirit as the Lord and giver of life. . . In giving this life the Holy Spirit brings sinful men through repentance and baptism into the universal fellowship of the forgiven" <sup>5</sup>.

## 3. *Baptism, Gift of the Spirit and Incorporation into the Church*

"We believe that in Baptism administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, we are baptized by one Spirit into one body <sup>6</sup>. Baptism is a gift of God's redeeming love to the Church ; and, administered with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is a sign and seal of Christian discipleship in obedience to our Lord's command <sup>7</sup>. All Members of the visible Church are admitted by Baptism <sup>8</sup>. This sacrament, which binds men to Christ in community, brings to an end all human estrangements in both Church and world based on differences of race or class." <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ed 64.

<sup>2</sup> Ed 65.

<sup>3</sup> *One Lord, One Baptism*, SCM Press, London 1960.

<sup>4</sup> Mo 111.

<sup>5</sup> Up I, 8.

<sup>6</sup> La 53.

<sup>7</sup> In Edinburgh, 1937, Baptist delegates desired to add as follows : "As regards the above statement which has been passed by their brethren who practise infant baptism the Baptists could accept it as applying to the baptism of believers, i.e. of those who are capable of making a personal confession of faith. They believe that children belong to God and that no rite is needed to assure His grace for them." This statement of the Baptists was accepted also by a representative of the Disciples of Christ on behalf of that body.

<sup>8</sup> Ed 87.

<sup>9</sup> Mo 115.

#### 4. *Faith and Baptism*

"Faith is . . . necessary . . . for the effectual reception of Grace."<sup>10</sup> "We all receive His gift of Baptism whereby, in faith, we are engrafted in Him even while we have not yet allowed it fully to unite us with each other."<sup>11</sup>

"When the element of faith expressed in an individual's explicit decision for and commitment to Christ is stressed (as in believers' baptism), baptism is seen as the crowning moment and goal of the faith which turns to the Lord. From such a point of view, the presence of personal faith in the recipient of baptism is considered essential. It must be held in mind, nonetheless, that this explicit decision is rooted in and declares Christ's faithfulness unto death, the decision of the Triune God for man. The personal decision of the individual has its setting within the life and faith of the Church, and through the life and witness of the whole Church declares the faithfulness of God, the ground of all decisions of faith.

The practice of infant baptism occurs in a context in which stress is laid upon corporate faith, upon an environment of, rather than upon the explicit decision of the recipient of baptism. Here the whole community affirms its faith in God and pledges itself to provide such an environment of faith, in the home, and in the worship, instruction and witness of the Church.

The necessity of the baptized himself to believe is in no way diminished, far less removed. The claim and promise of the gospel are laid on the child in baptism to which a response of obedience must be owned and which must be received by faith if the fruits of baptism are to be known and to flourish in his life. Thus in the baptism of infants, the rite does not take the place of faith, but demands it."<sup>12</sup>

"Though disagreement remains between those who practise infant baptism and those who practise believer-baptism, all would insist that personal commitment is necessary for responsible membership in the body of Christ. For all, moreover, baptism is related not only to the individual but also to the Church, not only to momentary experience but to life-long growth of participation in Christ. Those who have been raised by the Holy Spirit to new life in Christ are led from baptism to confirmation (or its equivalent) and to Holy Communion. The life is necessarily one of continuing struggle but also of continuing experience of grace. In faith and obedience the baptized live for the sake of Christ, of his Church, and of the world which he loves."<sup>13</sup> "We urge . . . that because many are baptized as a social custom only, the churches should reconsider the practice of administering baptism indiscriminately."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ed 69.

<sup>11</sup> Ev 12.

<sup>12</sup> *One Lord, One Baptism*, pp. 63 f., ND 36.

<sup>13</sup> Mo 111; Am 15.

<sup>14</sup> Up V, 30.

## 5. *Minister, Form and Place of Baptism*

The churches are in agreement that if the usual minister of baptism is an ordained minister (bishop, presbyter or deacon), there are cases where a believer can baptize<sup>15</sup>.

“We have found general agreement that the following elements should find a place within any comprehensive order of baptism :

- a) an acknowledgement of God’s initiative in salvation, of his continuing faithfulness, and of our total dependence on his grace,
- b) a declaration of the forgiveness of sins in and through Christ,
- c) an invocation of the Holy Spirit,
- d) a renunciation of evil,
- e) a profession of faith in Christ,
- f) an affirmation that the person baptized is a child of God and is incorporated into the body of Christ, whereby he becomes a witness to the Gospel.

These will precede or follow baptism with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We make some practical recommendations to the churches :

- a) Baptism is not solely a matter of individual concern, but is intimately connected with the corporate worship of the Church. It should normally be administered during a public service of worship so that the members of the local congregation may be reminded of their own baptism, and may welcome into their fellowship those who are baptized and whom they are to nurture in the Christian faith.
- b) In order to make baptism more prominent in the life of the congregation, the sacrament might well be administered in public on great festival occasions, as was the practice of the Early Church. The use of Easter as one such occasion would emphasize the link between baptism and dying and rising with Christ”<sup>16</sup>.

## 6. *The Uniqueness and Universality of Baptism*

“Through baptism and faith, Christians are brought into the life of the Church Universal as well as into the visible community of the local church. Our common baptism is thus a basic bond of unity by which we are called as one people to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world”<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> See the implications of Ed 83 ; cf. Up V, 30 b and c.

<sup>16</sup> Mo 112-3.

<sup>17</sup> Mo 154.

## 7. *Baptism as Commitment and Witness to Christ*

“Mutual recognition of baptism (although it goes far) is not in itself a direct means of unity forthwith. This means that we must place our conceptions of baptism in a dynamic, forward-looking perspective and ask ourselves: Where does our baptism lead us? We all agree that baptism is both God’s gift and human commitment, and that it supposes a growth into the ‘measure of stature of the fulness of Christ’ (Eph. 4 : 13). By this growth the baptized believers can even now visibly manifest to the world the new race of a redeemed mankind. Common witness to our churches, to the world, to those who have not yet heard the Gospel and to those who refuse it, is our common responsibility here and now. Fellowship in witness and service may help us to discover the meaning of God’s gift to all the members of his people”<sup>18</sup>.

## 8. *Baptism and the Eucharist*

“All Churches should give attention to the relationship of their theology and practice of Baptism to their theology and practice of the Lord’s Supper”<sup>19</sup>. “We must learn afresh the implications of the one Baptism for our sharing in the one Eucharist”<sup>20</sup>.

“Our ecumenical fellowship is essentially based upon the fact that we all want to be obedient to God’s commandment in being baptized ‘into the body’ (I Cor. 12 : 13). Our failure to share in the one Table of the Lord, to live and act as one visible and united body is an obvious contradiction of the baptismal gift that we all claim to possess. This contradiction has been explained in some cases by unjustified rationalisations and must therefore be overcome. In other cases, it reflects an obvious lack of agreement as to the true nature of the fellowship into which baptism introduces us”<sup>21</sup>.

“The first step is the serious recognition that through baptism we are one people serving the one Lord in each place. Baptism, once performed and never repeated, leads us into the continuous worshipping life of the ‘royal priesthood’ (I Peter 2 : 9), the people of God.” “In the Holy Eucharist or Lord’s Supper, constantly repeated and always including both word and sacrament, we proclaim and celebrate a memorial of the saving acts of God”<sup>22</sup>.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee III, see below p. 221.*

<sup>18</sup> ND 35, 2, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Lu 163.

<sup>20</sup> Ev 27.

<sup>21</sup> ND 34.

<sup>22</sup> Mo 183, 116.

## 4. BEYOND INTERCOMMUNION

### On the Way to Communion in the Eucharist

#### Preamble

Since its very beginnings the ecumenical movement has been concerned with the question of common eucharistic worship. As Christians from hitherto separated Churches come together in common fellowship they are inevitably confronted with the question whether they can celebrate the Lord's supper together and if so, under what conditions. Precisely because of the fellowship they have begun to experience, the pain of not being able to share in the Lord's table is all the more intense.

Many have worked on the solution of what is usually, if misleadingly, known as the question of intercommunion. Of the ecumenical bodies Faith and Order has known itself commissioned to explore the question's deep roots in the Church's faith and practice. The World Conferences at Edinburgh in 1937<sup>1</sup> and at Lund in 1952<sup>2</sup> went into it at length. The most recent World Conference, at Montreal in 1963<sup>3</sup>, took further the work of a consultation convened jointly with the WCC Youth Department in 1961<sup>4</sup>, on the narrower but crucial question of Communion services at ecumenical gatherings. Since then the problem has not been directly discussed by the Faith and Order Commission. The Commission chose rather to deal with the nature and practice of the eucharist in general in the hope that new insights and agreements there would enable advance in turn on this question also<sup>5</sup>.

Meanwhile, however, much has been happening. Experimental and unprecedented ventures of many sorts have been taking place in all parts of Christendom. Previous analyses of the problem are no longer entirely adequate; the terminology suggested for example by the Lund Conference now needs to be revised (cf. Appendix II). The Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches asked the Faith and Order Commission to take up the question again<sup>6</sup>, and this paper is the first-fruits of the new effort. It is the product of a consultation which was held in Geneva (Switzerland) in March 1969.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Intercommunion, *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*, Edinburgh 1937, ed. Leonard Hodgson, pp. 251 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Intercommunion, *The Third World Conference on Faith and Order*, Lund 1952, ed. Oliver S. Tomkins, pp. 49 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Intercommunion, *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Montreal 1963, ed. P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, pp. 72 ff., 76 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Report of Consultation on Services of Holy Communion at Ecumenical Gatherings at Bossey (1961), *The Ecumenical Review*, XIII/3, April 1961, pp. 353-364.

<sup>5</sup> For the results of this study see *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Bristol 1967, Faith and Order Paper No. 50, pp. 60 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Uppsala Report*, see Report of the Assembly Committee on Faith and Order, pp. 222 ff.

## I. The present stage on the way

Since it has to do with the very centre of Christian faith and of the life of the Church, the eucharist lies inescapably at the heart of the ecumenical movement. All forms of ecumenical activity are constantly throwing up questions about the sacrament, its practice and its discipline. There is a vast mass of evidence of all sorts, which no one can be sure of adequately grasping. This section does no more than point to some of the most salient features. All of them witness to the urgency of the question ; many of them deserve a great deal more study.

The discussions of the question of intercommunion run into the existence of two contrasting positions. There are those who, because of their understanding of the nature of the Church and sacraments and because of their concern for the maintenance of the integrity of the Church as essential for the manifestation of its true unity, hold that the eucharist is the sign and reality of the Church's unity. Therefore, the eucharistic observance will gather together those who have found their common life in the *Una Sancta* as both the reality of their oneness in Christ and a witness to it. There are many who, in the present situation, believe that faithful adherence to this position is vital to the ultimate achievement of the true ecumenical goal. There are also those who, believing that the eucharist is not only a sign of unity but also a God-given means by which the grace of unity is imparted, hold that, for those who are committed to the quest of unity in one body, common participation in the eucharist is the proper and grateful use of the means which God has provided. This study starts from the recognition that both of these are largely right, paradoxical as that may sound, and seek to discover how this can be understood and practised.

In recent years the participation in the ecumenical movement has grown. The movement has been enlarged especially by the more general entry of the Roman Catholic Church. While in the past it involved only a certain number of traditions, now the whole spectrum of Christian churches is represented in the discussion, and this means that the question can at last be seen and tackled in its fulness. This transformation of the ecumenical movement is not merely a quantitative change. It has also opened up new perspectives in theological thinking. The theological discussions between the Churches about ecclesiology have forged ahead and led to new possibilities of discussing points long taken to be immovable stumbling blocks (Appendix III). On many sides there is emerging a new awareness of the corporate nature of Christian existence, a sense that communion in the eucharist involves a relationship not only with God but also with fellow Christians. On the basis of these developments some Churches have found it possible to reconsider their policies (cf. the decree *De Oecumenismo* of the Vatican Council, recommendations of the Lambeth Conference, etc.). Especially where Churches are firmly committing themselves to each other on the road to union they find themselves able to adopt new attitudes (the recent recommendations for implementing in Germany the Arnoldshain

Theses of 1957, union negotiations in West Africa, etc.). But the growth of the ecumenical movement can be seen especially in the fact that local ecumenical activity and the local ecumenical contacts are increasing, both inside and outside established church structures. Therefore, the question of the common celebration of the eucharist is not confined anymore to academic discussions or to the problem of worship at ecumenical gatherings<sup>7</sup>. It is being raised more and more at the local level where many Christians have found that their most significant experiences of fellowship cut across the lines of ecclesiastical separations and are pressing towards the one eucharist as the adequate expression. This inner pressure of the growth of Christians towards one another has led to many acts of common eucharistic celebrations not in accordance with the eucharistic discipline of the churches.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity offers an excellent example of this pressure. The Week was started as a vital means of furthering the unity of the Church without suggesting any disloyalty to existing church disciplines. Over the years it has involved more and more Christians from all sorts of churches and has led to marked ecumenical developments in the Roman Catholic Church in particular. The observance of the Week has increasingly taken the form of common corporate worship, in services of the word and of prayers drawn up for the occasion, and by now many are suggesting that it would be appropriate for it to move one stage further, i.e. into eucharistic worship.

But this is far from the whole story. The pang of separation at the Lord's table is felt no less intensely where Christians are involved in common service and witness in the world. Both the Second Vatican Council and the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches have forcibly pointed Christians toward a new commitment to corporate action in the world, against hunger, ignorance and oppression and in support of justice, development and peace. Such concerns are today intrinsic, not optional, to Christian obedience. They are crucial in the dynamism of ecumenical advance, nourishing as well as feeding on the new confidence that Christians have in each other, even those separated by centuries of mistrust. Moreover such concerns give new meaning to intentions long expressed in celebrations of the eucharist and are full of eucharistic symbolism and significance.

Many groups of Christians therefore, anticipating the official moves of their Churches along the ecumenical way, have begun to celebrate the sacrament together in ways that transcend existing church disciplines. The bewildering variety of these ventures allows no general judgement. Some represent an implicit protest against forms of authority and established custom felt to be insensitive to the actual contexts in which Christians today live. Others are more clearly fresh restatements of tradition. None however are intended to repudiate the wider fellowship of the Church. On the contrary, at a time

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<sup>7</sup> On this see Appendix I for a possible new approach.

when concern for the life of the world is leading many, not least among the responsible and informed, to ignore the Churches or leave them altogether, it is significant that these experimental forms of eucharistic worship make their point by affirming "what the Church is and does".

At the same time the fact must not be overlooked that an increasing number of Christians wrestling with the issues of their contemporary world are no longer content with standard confessional teachings about the meaning and integrity of worship and about the community in which worship takes place. Christ's work of reconciliation in the world requires of his followers not only conciliatory gestures but prophetic words and acts. The complexity and ambiguity of factors involved in a situation may overshadow the central reconciling thrust of the eucharist and make it apparently as much a factor of unrest and division as of peace and unity. Theologians wrestle with the ways in which new understandings of the corporate and missionary character of the sacrament belong with new commitments to effective action in the world, but their findings have not yet been translated into terms that most Christians can grasp and work out in practice.

The fundamental question about the eucharist is thus increasingly seen to be that of the true nature of the human community it both expresses and makes possible. This *ecclesia* is at the same time a historical, social reality and a participation in the life of God. Where is this reality truly to be found? What are its authentic boundaries? What disciplines are most appropriate to it? These are the questions that challenge the Churches to discern more exactly the nature of the communion we seek.

## II. Theology on the way

The Churches engaged in the ecumenical movement do not yet have a common understanding of the nature of the communion they seek. Committed to the search for the unity Christ wills for his Church, they are obliged to question their concepts of unity again and to grow in their obedience to Christ. Many attempts have been made to arrive at an agreed description of the goal of the ecumenical movement. The most notable example is the New Delhi statement on "The Unity We Seek". This section attempts a further contribution to this discussion stating briefly, in terms of the intrinsic character of the eucharist, the goal the Churches are committed to reach (1). It then enumerates, arising out of the increasing consensus between the Churches concerning the eucharist, several theological perspectives which offer hope for advance (2).

### 1. *Communion*

Man is created in and for communion with God. In losing this his whole relationship with his fellow-men and with his natural environment is disturbed. In Jesus Christ God renews the communion in both dimensions.

The eucharist is the sacramental event in which this renewed communion is both celebrated and enacted, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our sharing at the Lord's table thus inseparably involves communion both with God and with our fellow-men, in Jesus Christ. It is the eschatological sign of universal salvation.

The celebration of the Lord's supper will take on its full meaning and truth only if the Church which there receives God's gift is itself a single body. The eucharistic services in which our divisions are made manifest thus raise a question of our faithfulness to God's will. How can our disunity be congruous with a gift given that it might make us all one?

In the past this disunity in the eucharist was an exact and appropriate sign of the Church's decision to excommunicate. Today however the fact that we cannot communicate with one another appears rather as a breach of trust in the gift of communion. Between our Churches we already exchange tokens of reconciliation that are implicitly eucharistic (e.g. the kiss of peace, the saying together of the Lord's prayer). Here we must see a dynamic movement of renewal, the renewed experience of our basic and original unity.

This is why we have today become all the more clearly aware that the Church and the eucharist are signs and tokens of the same mystery of communion (the *koinonia* of the New Testament). Both comprise, in one organic whole, the same essential elements. Today these confront us as questions with which the Spirit is facing the Churches.

Communion is *eschatological*; it is the new day of the Kingdom which already comes amidst our days that are evil (Ephesians 5 : 16). It inspires *conversion* and conspires to *reconciliation*.

Communion is *kerygmatic*; its first coming was the advent of the Word (John 1 : 14) which realizes among us our basic communion of *faith*, the first and basic gift of the Kingdom.

Communion, for us who live in these last days, is *sacramental*; Christ gave his Church his communion expressed by the instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads abroad throughout the world the purposes of God.

Communion is *ministerial*; among these signs are some which give order to the community (baptism — chrismation and ordination). The eucharist implies the sacrament of the royal priesthood as well as that of the apostolic ministry since it is the sacrament both of the whole Christ offered up and of Christ's handing on (*traditio*) communion to his Church. "This is my body *given* for you . . . this is the new *covenant* in my blood." Yet it is the Holy Spirit who shows forth, makes present and communicates the body and blood of Christ (anaphora of St. Basil). The ministry which witnesses to the incarnation of the Word and makes memorial of Easter is enlivened by the *epiclesis*, that sacramental Pentecost by which the Holy Spirit nurtures the baptized community — each member according to the gifts bestowed on him for the service of all, and each Church in communion with all others<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See *New Directions in Faith and Order*, The Holy Eucharist, pp. 61 ff.

Communion is *missionary*; by it is granted to each in his measure and to each Church in her calling the "grace to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the peoples in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the peoples may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15 : 16).

Communion is *cosmic*; in the body of his Church, Christ the new man acts as priest for all creation, offering up the entire creation as eucharist. The eucharist is thus concerned with the transfiguration and sanctification of all things.

## 2. *Theological issues for further study and exploration*

The document "*The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought*" (Appendix III) records a degree of agreement in eucharistic doctrine and faith among the Churches' theologians which for many would seem to open the way towards a common celebration of the sacrament. At least for three long-standing controversies, on the epiclesis, on the real presence of Christ and on eucharistic sacrifice there are promising signs of progress. This convergence in doctrine is matched by a no less remarkable convergence in the Churches' practices, particularly notable in several recent revisions of eucharistic liturgies, and which is of course rooted in a new appreciation of the Bible. The growing unity at this level strikes many who are quite unaware of theological developments and leads them to question continuing divisions. A major task is therefore already assigned to the Churches to pursue and enact this double convergence, in ever wider circles of their own membership quite as much as in discussions with other Churches.

Those engaged in the teaching processes of the Churches, from Sunday schools to the training of the clergy, will want to look over their materials and ensure that these teach no longer one partial view against another but the fulness of truth that is now available. Traditional practices too will often need revision: How can some continue to accept the fact that most of the faithful present at the eucharist do not receive the bread and wine? How can others continue to celebrate the eucharist infrequently?

In many traditions a new awareness of the eschatological nature of the eucharist is suggesting a new openness to each other and a new ordering of priorities. In the eucharist the Church not only remembers Christ's saving death under Pontius Pilate but looks forward to the final fulfillment of the Kingdom, and knows in each new time and place as it did in Jesus' lifetime a foretaste of that reality. The Last Supper is not the only part of the gospels that refers to the later eucharist: The feeding of the five thousand, the parables of the marriage feast and the accounts of Jesus' meals with his disciples in the resurrection are no less suggestive. Here is the source of the joy of the eucharist, that true festival which can be received in time but which time itself cannot give. This foretaste of the Kingdom calls mankind to reconciliation and new life. By its thrust of creative anticipation it overcomes human fears about the future and sets men free to act resolutely within constant change to build a truer human community.

At the same time it recalls that ultimate judgement is in the hands of God and that that judgement will call in question all our lesser acts of judgement and division. In this century, as in the early centuries of the Church's history, the reality of martyrdom, of costly witness to Christ, has been given to Christians of many traditions in many places. In the joy of eucharistic anticipation men have found strength to witness to God's kingship despite all appearances and against all expectations. At such moments the barriers fall away.

What does this mean for the balance of our loyalties between that which comes to us from the past and that which we are called to envisage in the future? It is often suggested that the normal situation of Christians is that of their separated fellowships, while only the emergency of the exceptional can justify stepping beyond them. But what is the norm? Persecution, prison and danger of death would seem in New Testament perspective to be promised to the faithful apostle, while divisions such as those in Corinth were exceptional.

*In many traditions there is also a renewed sense of the inner dynamism of the eucharist, of the sacrament as means of constituting the fellowship that is the Church.* Where we together listen to the proclaimed Word and share the broken bread, there we become one body in Christ. The distinction has often been drawn between those Churches which see the eucharist as the sign of the unity once given and those who see it as a means of restoring that unity. Now it is increasingly known to be both; rather than holding out for their particular and polemic standpoint the faithful Christians are those who try to hold both in balance, taking from each what is true and appropriate for the particular moment on the ecumenical way. As each Church seeks regularly, faithfully and realistically to obey Christ's command in the eucharistic celebration, so the inherent dynamism of the sacrament, the reconciling and healing power of Christ, will be made manifest across our present divisions. Not least does this imply that in our confession of sin before communion we should expressly remember and repent our continued acquiescence in disunity and that in our intercessions we should expressly remember the leaders and members of other Churches than our own.

*The prayer of the eucharist always has both a universal and a local character since in the sacrament we participate in the universal acts of Christ made present here and now.* The relation between loyalty to the immediate needs of the local community gathered around the table and loyalty to the universal Church with its wider discipline and order has long been one of the most difficult questions of Christian history and needs much further study. But there is hope in recent stress on the biblical teaching that the one, universal eucharist is precisely that which is incarnate in a huge diversity of local celebrations and that each of these is not just a partial and transitory reality but indeed the one and whole Christ praying in his members. This is leading those Churches that have most stressed the visible unity and continuity in time and space to show a new awareness of the proper place of local diversity, and similarly those Churches

which have stressed the inner quality of catholicity, the fulness, truth and autonomy of each local community to find a need of structures that assure wider cooperation and unity.

It is easy to say that a proper balance must be achieved. In practice it is extraordinarily difficult. Emphasis on the local, given the bewildering diversity of opinions and situations, can appear dangerously anarchic and liable to lead only to new schism. It may be more positive to study how each local celebration, precisely in and because of its peculiarity, can make a healing contribution to the wholeness of the one Church. On the other hand those who have emphasized a universal discipline are aware how rigid and repressive this can seem. For expressing the unity of the Church a universal discipline of eucharistic practice is neither necessary nor desirable. At a time when most forms of authority are suspect co-responsibility and participation are the order of the day. Such terms usefully suggest the context of diverse commitments within which some form of authority alone appears authentic. How in practice can wider leadership, whether of synods, of bishops or of popes, act less as the final juridical arbiter than as the reconciling enabler of local initiatives?

*Divisions in communion have often centred around the question of the ministry. Here, while there is as yet no perfect agreement, there are new and most hopeful approaches towards it.* In all Christian traditions the ordained ministry is understood as a service within the body of the faithful. It is a ministry given by God but not over or apart from the people. In the eucharist the whole people together celebrates and offers, in union with the ministry which presides in the action. The thanksgiving is that of a priestly people who participate in the sacrificial offering of Christ. This is the context in which the ministry must be seen as a sign of the action of Christ, the High Priest. The way seems open here to a new agreement on long disputed questions about sacrifice and ministry.

In terms of practice this would suggest that Churches who have insisted on the special status of the ministry should enquire to what extent their lay members are forced to be but passive spectators in a eucharistic action basically conditioned for them by the ministry. How can the ministry truly serve the celebration of the laity? All Churches can usefully ask themselves how much true service of Christ's people they can see in the ministry of other Churches and under what conditions they would be prepared to accept other Churches' ministers as the ministers of their own eucharistic worship.

Similarly in the differences over the Apostolic Succession in the ministry, new light can be found when the ministry is understood as existing in and for the life of the whole body of the faithful, and when the act of ordination is conceived as an act of the Holy Spirit in response to the prayer of the whole congregation. Within this total waiting upon God (epiclesis) there is in all confessions a place for the laying on of hands by those who have already received the ministerial office. Though a sign of continuity with the historical origins of revelation this handing on (*traditio*) of office must never be understood in a mechanical or purely historical sense. The tradition must always

be vivified by the ever new action of the Spirit. At this point there is still some difference of understanding and divergence of practice among the Churches. But these differences exist within an area of agreement which should allow Churches which maintain and value historic continuity to recognize in other bodies at least a tradition of ministering and a continuity of invocation, and should allow those who lay less stress on the historic succession to recognize in bodies which preserve it an intention to act as the servants of the Word and the Spirit and thus to reconsider giving expression to the continuity of ministry in their own midst. The very desire to share in sacraments across the barriers which for centuries have kept Christians totally separated from one another witnesses to an implicit acknowledgement of some truth and reality in ministries which have formerly been regarded as null and void.

In terms of practice this would suggest that all Churches do well to examine the relation, in practice and discipline, between the discovery in certain persons of gifts of ministry given by the Spirit and the official recognition and commissioning of persons as life-long ministers of the Church. What openness to ministers outside their own direct fellowship does this suggest?

*The eucharist is a celebration of God's reconciling work in the life of the world.* While it is an action of the Church it is an action in discipleship to the God who sent his Son because he so loved the world. Moreover the rediscovery of the community-forming power of the eucharist has gone together with a new sense of the necessity of genuine fellowship of life within the local Christian community and of real concern for the life of the world. "The sharing of this bread is the symbol of the sharing of all bread, the unconditional character of this community the pledge of all society restored in Christ."<sup>9</sup> While we do not yet see clearly all the implications of this, practical steps which many are taking in response to this insight are raising new and potentially most important questions, affecting not least the unity and disunity of Christ's people.

For instance: In what ways does our eucharistic worship commit us to certain social (political, economic, etc.) actions, policies and attitudes comparable to the recognition that racial segregation at the Lord's table is a denial of Christ? Conversely, in what ways does the eucharist intrinsically free men from enslaving habits and ideologies?

Or again: In missionary obedience in the world all Christians are prepared to cooperate with Christians from other Churches. Yet how can we restrict the fellowship of worship to a circle narrower than that appropriate for mission? That question frequently arises among Christians, all of whom have been baptized. But at the same time the problem of the Church's borderlines is being raised in an even wider sense. For in missionary obedience Christians will frequently be sharing a common purpose with men of other traditions of religious faith or who believe themselves of none. How can their occasional demand to be admitted to the eucharistic fellowship of the believers be met

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<sup>9</sup> *Intercommunion Today*, London 1968, p. 65.

in a pastoral way so that they are drawn into the fellowship with Christ instead of being estranged from it? Though the eucharist is clearly the worshipping act of the Christian community the questions they may raise about their presence and participation need to be faced.

### III. Practice on the way

Now that virtually all Churches are at least aware of questions concerning the eucharist, what can be said from one to another about the various practices which are being followed? The first step is clearly to understand what we are talking about. The whole area of question has generally been referred to in the past as the question of "intercommunion", but that one word cannot cover the whole range and has become seriously ambiguous. It will be better to find terms which can exactly describe the different practices and their ecclesiological significance, among which the term "intercommunion" may find its precise and particular place<sup>10</sup>.

The first and most important of the terms proposed is *communion* (cf. previous section). It indicates the goal to be achieved by the ecumenical movement. While this term describes the fellowship willed by Christ the terms which follow refer to the anomalous situations of separation.

1. *Admission*. The term "admission" refers to those cases where a Church in celebrating the eucharist admits to the table members of other Churches. Such admission may be (a) *limited*, (b) *general* or (c) *reciprocal*.

a) *Limited admission*. This term can mean either (i) exceptional admission for pastoral reasons which is the ground of all exceptional cases in Orthodox and Roman Catholic practice, or (ii) limited admission in a wider sense, based on the awareness that every baptized Christian belongs fundamentally to the one communion of the Church and is directed towards his sanctification in the body of Christ.

The recommendations of the recent Church of England commission provide a clear example of the way in which provisions for limited admission themselves create pressure for a wider admission and at length for fully reciprocal admission. They recommend that individual baptized and communicant members of Churches not in full communion with the Church of England who desire to receive the sacrament and whose informed conscience allows it should be made welcome: (a) where particular pastoral conditions warrant it (being cut off from their own Church, when serious considerations of family or other personal relationships are involved, for the sick and in exceptional or emergency situations); (b) where the eucharist is regularly celebrated according to the rites of the Church of England in communities where Christians of differing traditions are regularly sharing

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<sup>10</sup> See table of terms printed as Appendix II.

common life and activity ; (c) where local congregations or other groups of Christians are meeting together in sustained efforts or on special occasions to promote the unity, ministry or mission of the Church<sup>11</sup>.

Another example is provided by the Lutheran Churches which, though on different grounds than the Anglican Church, started from the practice of limited admission. In many Lutheran Churches this practice has been changed in the course of events. Today it varies from Church to Church. While the attitude of some Churches is still best described as limited admission, others practice general admission, some even reciprocal admission and intercelebration. The change of the earlier practice was usually caused by either special situations (diaspora, etc.) or it was adopted in view of Churches whose doctrine on the eucharist was particularly close to the Lutheran understanding of Christ's real presence in the sacrament<sup>12</sup>.

*Questions.* All Churches set certain conditions for the admission to communion of their own members. All also set conditions for the admission of others to their communion. What is the relation between these two (groups of) conditions ; are they different, and if so, why? This in turn raises the wider question of preparation for communion in general : How seriously do we now take this? What kind of spiritual discipline is appropriate?

Why should admission of members from other Churches ever be limited to exceptional and emergency situations? It is hard enough to define these, but as soon as there are some definitions mutually understood, then decisions about admission can no longer be based on purely individual and fleeting decisions by celebrating ministers and the requesting laity. They will be based on a more or less explicit agreement between the authorities of the Churches — and what does the fact of such agreement suggest for the relations between them?

Some Churches have traditionally laid their chief stress on the fellowship already given and are thus reluctant to welcome others. Yet as this is God's gift and not in man's control, must they not expect in a *de facto* divided Christianity to meet anomalous cases which transcend any regulations? In what sorts of cases have they in fact been prepared to admit outsiders to communion? What are the theological judgements underlying particular pastoral evaluations? If the criterion is purely pastoral, what other situations might be envisaged in which admission might be allowed on the basis of that criterion? If something is possible once, why not always? Can the Church by economy create a sacramental reality *ex nihilo*? If it is not *ex nihilo*, then what is it?

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. also The Lambeth Conference, 1968 ; Resolutions and Reports, London 1968, pp. 126 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Church in Fellowship*, Lutheran Inter Church Agreements and Practices, ed. V. Vajta (Minneapolis : Augsburg 1963), p. 259.

Some Churches have traditionally laid their chief stress on the need for common belief. How can they now maintain and express this at a time when all Churches find among their own members a considerable diversity of views and teaching, a diversity which to many an outsider excluded for lack of the particular belief seems to include views indistinguishable from his own?

Some Churches are prepared to admit others to their communion but much less to permit their own members to share communion with others. This one-sidedness is only comprehensible as a transition stage, marking a step beyond a simple denial of the others' faith but needing to be completed by the further step of full acceptance and communion. If it becomes a permanent policy it is all too liable to be misunderstood — and in some cases misused — as an attempt to absorb the other Church or to win a false prestige over her. How can the provisional character of such a policy be built in to the practice?

Should Churches faced by others with a policy of one-sided admission readily accept to share on those terms? Despite all the psychological barriers they should, since any anticipation of the goal of communion will lead to greater understanding and acceptance.

*b) General admission.* This is the regular practice of a great number of Protestant Churches. There are, however, different forms. On the one hand, there is the practice of a number of Protestant Churches by which they invite to the Holy Communion baptized and communicant members of other Churches. On the other hand, there is the practice of a number of other Protestant Churches (and of groups within the former) by which the invitation is given to "all who love the Lord Jesus". There are, moreover, times when the growth of ecumenical relationships leads the clergy to remind members of other Churches of the policies of their own communities and thus out of loyalty restrain their general invitation.

*Questions.* Does a policy of general admission take sufficiently seriously the Christian's decision to belong to one of the separate Churches rather than another? Can it also become a form of confessional triumphalism? If it too is seen as a transition stage on the way to communion, what signs or results of the growing unity it enables should the other Churches expect to be able to see?

Churches practising general admission might well ask: Are there any Christians they would find particularly hard to accept at their table? If so, why particularly they?

Churches practising a general invitation to all who love the Lord Jesus might well ask: What does this mean for the practice of baptism? Does the eucharist itself generate in the non-baptized the appropriate faith and commitment? If so, what signs or results of this are to be expected?

*c) Reciprocal admission.* This term may be used for two types of situation: (i) the establishment of intercommunion by agreement between

two Churches, usually in geographically different regions, and without any question of organic union being raised ; (ii) when two Churches are committed to work for organic union, sometimes within a specified period and enter into this relationship on the ground that the causes of division between them have been, in principle, removed.

An illustration of the former is to be found in the agreement between the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) and the Church of Sweden (Evangelical-Lutheran) who are prepared to admit each other's members without hesitation and without the question of each other's ministry having been raised. The latter can be seen in the agreement among the Churches negotiating for union in Ceylon that after a service of covenanting for union, by which each Church would commit itself irrevocably to inaugurating the union within a specified period, reciprocal admission would be practised in certain circumstances that bring together members of the different Churches.

*Questions.* To (i) : Is it not an abnormal and anomalous situation that two churches in the same area should practise reciprocal admission without seeking organic unity? What are the questions of Faith and Order that should be settled between two Churches in different areas before entering upon an agreement for reciprocal admission? How can this be justified? To (ii) : Where, however, reciprocal admission is seen as a transition stage on the way to communion how can the Churches ensure that it does actively lead along that way and not merely remove the factor of psychological discomfort from separation?

2. *Common celebration.* By this term we designate a form of concelebration by ministers of different confessions on behalf of occasional gatherings of their people, each of the participants being aware of his bringing to the celebration whatever he has received of faith and of ministry, together with his repentance for disunity, his commitment to the overcoming of this and his hope in the unity and fulness that is Christ's will. This kind of celebration is a natural accompaniment of the reciprocal admission just discussed.

One group of Roman Catholics and Protestant theologians has drawn up a set of conditions for it which may be mentioned here :

- a) it should involve only groups which are already in existence and which have sought the prior agreement of the Churches.
- b) all the participants, clergy and laity, should have had some considerable ecumenical experience and thus be theologically and spiritually prepared.
- c) the celebration should not be seen as in any way habitual but take place in the context of a conference or meeting with a precise aim, in study or in action, and including serious doctrinal teaching.
- d) there should be no confusion or doubt left about the parts played by the celebrating clergy. Each should perform the actions required for the authenticity of the sacrament in his own Church. There should be no

hiding or calling in question the differences in understanding of the ministry that still exist.

- e) care should be taken to see that the liturgy used respects the various rules of the Churches, so that all participants may be able to live the sacramental action in full communion with their own Churches and so that they all can receive everything that they receive in their separate communions.
- f) the celebration should make vividly clear the penitential character of the action (i.e. its deep relationship with the repentance for which communion in the blood shed for the remission of sins cannot but call) and be performed in close connection with prayer for unity, that prayer not yet fully realized but whose answer is expected with suffering and hope from the grace of the Lord.

*Questions.* What is the true need and basis for a common celebration as opposed to celebration by a commonly agreed minister? Does it falsely accentuate the part of the clergy vis-à-vis the part of the laity? How can it be prevented from becoming "a cloaking of scruples about the status of the ministries involved"<sup>13</sup>? Is such a form of joint celebration between yet separated Churches at all analogous to the exchange of hospitality practised in the early Church?

3. *Intercelebration.* This term is suggested for those cases where two or more separated Churches are prepared reciprocally to allow their ministers to preside at their eucharistic worship.

*Questions.* In what respects is this less than a state of communion? How, if it be non-theological factors which hinder unity, can such intercelebration actively contribute to their yielding?

### *Conclusion*

The Uppsala Assembly has suggested that the members of the World Council of Churches should work for the time when a genuinely universal Council may once more speak for all Christians<sup>14</sup>. In our small share in the work of the World Council of Churches we too have been led to see that the natural outcome of the involvement of almost all sectors of Christendom in the modern ecumenical movement, the recent lifting of certain long-standing anathemata and the growing extent of theological agreement must be the restoration of communion in a single ecclesial fellowship. We cannot be satisfied with less if we are to move along the ecumenical way at the speed Christ demands and are effectively to set ourselves to following up his other and no less urgent work in our contemporary world.

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<sup>13</sup> *Intercommunion Today*, para 200.

<sup>14</sup> *Uppsala Speaks*, p. 17. Section I, para 19.

## Eucharistic worship in ecumenical contexts

The question which this study paper has considered arises, as has been mentioned, not only within the regular, ordered life of the various Churches in their relationships, but also within the life of the ecumenical movement itself, in a narrow sense, i.e. at times and in communities where Christians of two or more separated Churches come together not in the context of any particular Church but in a specifically ecumenical setting. This poses with particular intensity the question of the appropriate practice and discipline, and for over fifty years ecumenical bodies have been struggling with it.

The present recommendations of the World Council of Churches on this question are those of the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, approved by the Central Committee at Rochester in 1963, and those of the first report of the Joint Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches in 1966. These are largely the same. With one or two general provisos about e.g. the possibility for participants to celebrate the sacrament outside conference programmes and the need to consider carefully the building to be used, these rule that no conference can itself take responsibility for this matter, only the churches, and that there should in general be two services of communion within the programme of the conference, as well as a common service of preparation: one in which a church or a group of churches can invite members of other churches to participate and partake, and one according to the liturgy of a church which cannot conscientiously offer an invitation to members of all other churches to partake of the elements.

These recommendations, as drawn up in 1963, referred specifically to meetings of the WCC Assembly, of the Central Committee and other such ecumenical gatherings, i.e. to world conferences to which most of the Churches of Christendom send delegates and which consider publicly a wide range of issues which face the Churches. These recommendations are still an appropriate policy for such meetings. But not all ecumenical meetings are of that type. They occur in every conceivable shape and form. To mention only three other types, they include: (a) smaller occasional conferences, e.g. consultations of a local or national council of churches, to which representatives are sent by several Churches but which may or may not involve a wide spectrum of Christians, which may meet in private and consider quite limited aspects of Christian obedience; (b) fellowship of Christians, e.g. the YMCA, a Student Christian Movement, the staff of an ecumenical body, who come from different background and traditions but not explicitly as representatives of their Churches, and who pursue together over a longer span of time and with some order in their community a purpose which they hold to be of Christ; (c) gatherings of Christians, e.g. on the march to Selma, who come

from different Churches and meet at a particular place and time, often in the context of some worldly situation or activity. They may never meet again in this way and yet find it appropriate to give eucharistic expression to their common worship.

In face of this variety one tendency has been simply to avoid raising the question of the eucharist. Yet in the words of the Joint Working Group "It should not become the rule that the problem of the eucharist is bypassed at ecumenical meetings ; and when eucharistic services are held one should not be content with solutions which make visible only one aspect of the problem" (*Ecumenical Review*, 1966, 2, p. 254). We suggest therefore that the eucharist ought to be more frequently incorporated, in one way or another, into the life and programme of ecumenical conferences and communities. Yet in face of the variety of situations it would be completely illusory to suggest that there be one common policy and practice followed in them all. Rather we suggest that the attention of those responsible be directed not in the first instance to what is actually done or not done in eucharistic worship but to the way in which this should be approached and prepared.

We are clear that there can be no full and final solution to this question until our Churches are fully united. It is up to the Churches to walk along the way to unity. On that way, it is essential that Christians be able both to hold on to the inevitable tensions and anomalies of the existing situation of division and to take those steps towards unity to which Jesus Christ is calling us and which he makes available.

Therefore we envisage not rules but a pastoral approach, in which the decision reached in any particular situation will be based upon a pastoral assessment, by the planners of the meeting and the appropriate authorities in the Churches of the readiness and maturity in Christ of the particular people involved in that situation. Whatever the practice adopted it will be seen as belonging to that situation and no other, as a partial and temporary experiment.

The primary consideration in this is that each particular group, within their Christian obedience, be able to worship with integrity. That has immediate connotations :

- (i) that the sacrament be not used as an educational device, to instruct some people how others worship. Such a device, if appropriate, belongs at another point in the meeting ;
- (ii) that the worship be deliberately planned in true relationship with the rest of the meeting and not as a pious extra ;
- (iii) that considerable personal, theological and church-diplomatic sensitivity be brought to the planning and preparation of worship in all its aspects ;
- (iv) that the practice contribute to the upbuilding of the total community in Christ and not to its further division, i.e. to the total ecumenical movement of Christ's people ;

- (v) that this (these) act(s) of worship be deliberately envisaged within the context, not only of the meeting but of the more permanent, "normal" Christian life of those involved ;
- (vi) that this act of worship be deliberately considered in relation to the continuing yet ever new purposes and action of the risen Lord.

Ecumenical committees and other leaders should therefore, we suggest, seek :

- a) with free and sensitive imagination to lay hold of the creative possibilities, in terms of worship as of everything else, in each new meeting (conference, committee, study tour, youth group, etc.). Defensively to do what was done last time or timidly to adopt a practice known to be relatively convenient and undemanding is to fall short of our calling ;
- b) to be aware that worship is as important a feature as any of the meeting ahead, and therefore to make available as much manpower and money for its preparation as they do for any other ;
- c) in each case to inform participants in the meeting as fully as is possible about the plans and the reasons for them so that as much confusion and uncertainty as possible is overcome before the act(s) of worship take place. This may include pointing out to participants the implications for their own Churches of the commitment(s) implicit in the worship planned and advising them to consult with the appropriate authorities of their own Churches, both before and after the meeting itself ;
- d) similarly themselves to consult the Church authorities likely to be most closely involved in the meeting (e.g. of the local churches in the place of the meeting, the Church(es) from which the celebrating minister(s) comes, the Church(es) who are sponsoring or financing the meeting, etc.).

## *Appendix II*

### Terminology : a reference table

<i>Proposed in this Report</i>	<i>Third World Conference on Faith and Order Lund 1952 (pp. 51-52)</i>	<i>Lambeth Conference 1968 (Report pp. 125-126)</i>
Communion	Full Communion	Full Communion
Limited Admission	Limited Open Communion	Controlled Admission to Communion
General Admission	Open Communion	Open Communion and Free Communion
Reciprocal Admission (= intercommunion)	Mutual Open Communion Intercommunion	Reciprocal Intercommunion
Intercelebration	Intercelebration and Intercommunion	
Common celebr.	(Con-celebration)	(Joint celebration)

## The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought

The Faith and Order Commission meeting at Bristol, England, in August 1967, adopted the report of the section on "The Holy Eucharist", and accepted the following recommendation :

That there be drawn up a *résumé* of the emerging ecumenical consensus on the Eucharist, drawing on the work of Lund, Montreal, Aarhus and Bristol, and on the work of regional groups and of individual scholars related to the ecumenical discussions of the Eucharist. On the basis of this *résumé* the draft of a popular booklet, perhaps with illustrations, should be prepared under the direction of the Secretariat. Booklets could then be printed separately in the language and idiom of the various countries, in consultation with representatives of National Councils of Churches and with experts in communication. In this way a wider public could be informed about ecumenical liturgical developments.

The "Résumé of the Emerging Ecumenical Consensus on the Eucharist" which follows is based on paragraphs produced by the Third and Fourth World Conferences on Faith and Order, at Lund in 1952 and Montreal in 1963, and by the Faith and Order Commission itself at Bristol in 1967, being drawn from the official records of these meetings.

The two World Conferences, and the Commission itself, were composed of scholars and churchmen, both lay and clerical, appointed or approved by the Churches as their official representatives for Faith and Order work. The substance of the paragraphs was produced by sections of these conferences, or of the Commission, which were broadly representative of the major confessional families. In every case the section, in turn, had drawn upon the work of a theological or study commission that had labored over several years, and upon the work of specialists in the field.

While the representatives of the Churches, and the methods employed in each section or group, differed because of personalities and circumstances, the results of their labors have an official character which cannot be attributed to the writings of individuals or of other less representative groups, due to the fact that the section reports were in each case submitted for criticism and amendment to a plenary assembly widely representative of the Churches. It should be recognized that this *résumé* represents a stage in a process and will probably be superseded by further ecumenical consensus arrived at by a similar process. It will be continually subject to clarification, improvement and extension in the on-going work for Christian unity.

While we cannot be fully content with the consensus represented in this statement we believe that it reflects a degree of agreement that could not have been foreseen even five years ago, and that our future is bright with hope.

## Preamble

“Baptism, once performed and never repeated, leads us into the continuous worshipping life of the royal priesthood, the people of God. In the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper constantly repeated and always including both word and sacrament we proclaim and celebrate a memorial of the saving acts of God. What God did in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, he does not do again ; the events are unique ; they cannot be repeated or extended . . .”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, “Christ himself, with all he has accomplished for us and for all creation . . . is present” in the Eucharist <sup>2</sup>.

The Eucharist is essentially a single whole, consisting usually of the following elements in varying sequence :

proclamation of the Word of God, in different ways ;  
intercession for the whole Church and the world ;  
thanksgiving for creation and redemption ;  
the words of Christ’s institution of the sacrament ;  
prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit ;  
prayer for the Lord’s coming and for the manifestation of his Kingdom ;  
the Lord’s prayer ;  
the breaking of the bread ;  
the eating and drinking in communion with Christ and each member of the Church <sup>3</sup>.

This list of liturgical items is not meant to exclude reference to others, such as “the expression of contrition, the declaration of forgiveness of sins, the affirmation of faith in credal form, the celebration of the communion of saints . . . and the self-dedication of the faithful to God. We assume that the person who presides will be someone recognized by his church as authorized to do so.” <sup>4</sup>

The Eucharist contains a great richness and variety of meaning. Individuals as well as ecclesiastical traditions hold (widely) varying views. No document

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal, No. 116.

<sup>2</sup> Bristol, II 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Montreal, No. 118.

<sup>4</sup> Montreal, No. 118.

could be a complete exposition of every aspect of eucharistic thought. Moreover any attempt to expound the Eucharist is bound to deal separately with different aspects, whereas the Eucharist is essentially a single whole. But this paper reflects the extent to which there is now a wide and growing agreement on many of the aspects of eucharistic thought.

## 1. The Eucharist, the Lord's Supper

The Eucharist is the sacramental meal, the new paschal meal of the people of God, which Christ, having loved his disciples until the end, gave to them before his death, shared with them after his resurrection and commanded them to hold until his return.

This meal of bread and wine is the sacrament, the effective sign and assurance of the presence of Christ himself, who sacrificed his life for all men and who gives himself to them as the bread of life; because of this, the eucharistic meal is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of his real presence<sup>5</sup>.

In the Eucharist the promise of the presence of the crucified and risen Christ is fulfilled in a unique way for the faithful, who are sanctified and unified in him, reconciled in love to be his servants of reconciliation in the world.

## 2. The Eucharist, thanksgiving to the Father

The Eucharist is the great thanksgiving to the Father for everything which he accomplished in creation and redemption, for everything which he accomplishes now in the Church and in the world in spite of the sins of men, for everything that he will accomplish in bringing his kingdom to fulfilment. Thus the Eucharist is the benediction (*berakab*) by which the Church expresses its thankfulness to God for all his benefits<sup>6</sup>.

The Eucharist is the great sacrifice of praise by which the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation. "For the world which God has reconciled to himself is present at every Eucharist: in the bread and wine, in the persons of the faithful, and in the prayers they offer for themselves and for all men. As the faithful and their prayers are united in the Person of our Lord and to his intercession they are transfigured and accepted. Thus the Eucharist reveals to the world what it must become."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Lund, p. 54, b.

<sup>6</sup> Montreal, No. 118, b II.

<sup>7</sup> Bristol, III 2.

### 3. The Eucharist, memorial (anamnesis) of Christ

“Christ instituted the Eucharist, sacrament of his body and blood with its focus upon the cross and resurrection, as the anamnesis of the whole of God’s reconciling action in him. Christ himself with all he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servanthood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost) is present in this anamnesis as is also the foretaste of his Parousia and the fulfilment of the Kingdom. The anamnesis in which Christ acts through the joyful celebration of his Church thus includes this representation and anticipation. It is not only a calling to mind of what is past, or of its significance. It is the Church’s effective proclamation of God’s mighty acts. By this communion with Christ the Church participates in that reality.

Anamnetic representation and anticipation are realized in thanksgiving and intercession. The Church, proclaiming before God the mighty acts of redemption in thanksgiving, beseeches him to give the benefits of these acts to every man. In thanksgiving and intercession, the Church is united with the Son, its great High Priest and Intercessor.

The anamnesis of Christ is the basis and source of all Christian prayer. So our prayer relies upon and is united with the continual intercession of the risen Lord. In the Eucharist, Christ empowers us to live with and to pray with him as justified sinners joyfully and freely fulfilling his will.”<sup>8</sup>

“With contrite hearts we offer ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice, a sacrifice which must be expressed in the whole of our daily lives. Thus united to our Lord, and to the Church triumphant, and in fellowship with the whole Church on earth, we are renewed in the covenant sealed by the blood of Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

“Since the anamnesis of Christ is the very essence of the preached Word as it is of the Eucharist, each reinforces the other. Eucharist should not be celebrated without the ministry of the Word, and the ministry of the Word points to, and is consummated in the Eucharist.”<sup>10</sup>

### 4. The Eucharist, gift of the Spirit

“The anamnesis leads to epiklesis, for Christ in his heavenly intercession prays the Father to send the Spirit upon his children. For this reason, the Church, being under the New Covenant, confidently prays for the Spirit, in order that it may be sanctified and renewed, led into all truth and empowered to fulfil its mission in the world. Anamnesis and epiklesis... cannot be

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<sup>8</sup> Bristol, II 1-3 ; see Lund, p. 54, a-c, and Montreal, No. 117.

<sup>9</sup> Montreal, No. 117.

<sup>10</sup> Bristol, II 5 a.

conceived apart from communion. Moreover it is the Spirit who, in our Eucharist, makes Christ really present and given to us in the bread and wine, according to the words of institution.<sup>11</sup>

The gift of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist is a foretaste of the Kingdom of God : the Church receives the life of the new creation and the assurance of the Lord's return (maranatha).

"We agree that the whole action of the Eucharist has an epikletic character, i.e. that it depends upon the work of the Holy Spirit ; we agree also that this aspect of the Eucharist should find expression in the words of the liturgy. Some desire an invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God and upon the whole eucharistic action, including the elements : some hold that the reference to the Spirit may be made in other ways."<sup>12</sup>

"The consecration cannot be limited to a particular moment in the liturgy. Nor is the location of the epiklesis in relation to the words of institution of decisive importance. In the early liturgies the 'prayer action' was thought of as bringing about the reality promised by Christ. A recovery of such an understanding may help to overcome our differences concerning a special moment of consecration."<sup>13</sup>

## 5. The Eucharist, communion of the body of Christ

The eucharistic communion with Christ present, who nourishes the life of the Church, is at the same time communion with the body of Christ which is the Church. "The sharing of the common loaf and the common cup in a given place demonstrates the oneness of the sharers with the whole Christ and with their fellow sharers in all times and places. By sharing the common loaf they show their unity with the Church catholic, the mystery of redemption is set forth, and the whole body grows in grace."<sup>14</sup>

Because of its catholicity the Eucharist is a radical challenge to the tendencies toward estrangement, separation and fragmentation. Lack of local unity in church or society constitutes a challenge to the Christians in that place. A mockery is made of the Eucharist when the walls of separation destroyed by Christ on his cross are allowed to reappear in Church life—those between races, nationalities, tongues and classes<sup>15</sup>.

According to the promise of Christ, each faithful member of the Body of Christ receives in the Eucharist remission of sins and everlasting life, and is nourished in faith, hope and love.

Solidarity in the eucharistic communion of the body of Christ (agape) and responsible concern of Christians for one another and the world should be

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<sup>11</sup> Bristol, II 4.

<sup>13</sup> Bristol, Appendix 4.

<sup>13</sup> Bristol, II 5 c.

<sup>14</sup> Bristol, III 1.

<sup>15</sup> See Bristol, III 4.

given specific expression in the liturgies, for example, "in the mutual forgiveness of sins ; the kiss of peace ; the bringing of gifts for the communal meal and for distribution to the poor brethren ; the specific prayer for the needy and suffering ; the taking of the Eucharist to the sick and those in prison. In this agapeic realization of eucharistic fulness, the ministry of deacons and deaconesses was (in the early Church) especially responsible. The place of such a ministry between the table and the needy properly testifies to the redeeming presence of Christ in the world. All these agapeic features of the Eucharist are directly related to Christ's own testimony as a Servant, in whose servanthood Christians themselves participate by virtue of their union with him. As God in Christ has entered into the human situation, so should eucharistic liturgy be near to the concrete and particular situations of men."<sup>16</sup>

## 6. The Eucharist, mission to the world

Mission is not simply a consequence of the Eucharist. Whenever the Church is the Church, mission must be part of its life. At the Eucharist the Church is supremely itself and is united with Christ in His mission.

The world is already present in the thanksgiving to the Father, where the Church speaks on behalf of the whole creation ; in the memorial of Christ, where the Church united with its great High Priest and Intercessor prays for the world, in the prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit, where the Church asks for sanctification and new creation.

Reconciled in the Eucharist, the members of the body of Christ are servants of reconciliation amongst men and witnesses of the joy of resurrection. Their very presence in the world implies full solidarity with the sufferings and hopes of all men, to whom they can be signs of the love of Christ who sacrificed himself on the cross and gives himself in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is also the feast of the continuing apostolic harvest, where the Church rejoices for the gifts received in the world and welcomes every man of good will.

## 7. The Eucharist, end of divisions

"When local churches, no matter how humble, share in the Eucharist they experience the wholeness of the Church and reveal it in its fulness—its members, its faith, its history, and its special gifts. Eucharistic celebrations, therefore, are always concerned with the whole Church and the Church is concerned with every eucharistic celebration. Since the earliest days baptism has been understood as the sacrament by which believers are incorporated into the body of Christ and are endowed by the Holy Spirit. When, therefore, the right of baptized believers and their ministers to participate in and preside over eucharistic celebrations in one Church is called in question by those who

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<sup>16</sup> Bristol, IV 4.

preside over and are members of other eucharistic congregations, the catholicity of the eucharist is obscured. On the other hand, insofar as a Church claims to be a manifestation of the whole Church, it should recognize that the whole Church is involved in its pastoral and administrative regulations.”<sup>17</sup>

“The question of intercommunion demands above all an inquiry about the nature, as well as the necessity, of the Ministry in general, and of Episcopacy in particular. The Churches should be urged to undertake a positive re-assessment of the Ministry, both as it is manifested in their own Order and in that of other Churches. In particular, they should address themselves to the following questions :

“a) The ‘Catholic’ Churches should ask whether the ministries of non-episcopal Churches — quite apart from their possession of apostolic succession or their lack of it — do not in fact contain elements of value (such as charismatic or extraordinary ministries), and if so of what value such elements may be.

“b) The ‘Protestant’ Churches, on the other hand, should reconsider, in the light of the ecumenical movement, the value of the commonly accepted ministry of the early Church and of pre-Reformation times.

“c) ‘Protestant’ as well as ‘Catholic’ Churches should further ask themselves whether, in spite of the widely divergent appearance of pre-Reformation and Reformation ministries, a measure of hidden identity may not in fact have been preserved. Does the fact that the Reformers rejected the name or title of a given ecclesiastical order necessarily prove that the reality behind the name was also rejected? Or again, does the fact that a name or title has been preserved, by itself, constitute a proof that the intended reality has been retained? In what cases is the rejection of episcopacy or of priesthood absolute and final? In what cases does the apparent rejection of the old ecclesiastical orders mean only the rejection of certain sociological forms and modalities? How far are they susceptible to the principle of ‘economy’?”<sup>18</sup>

The best way towards unity in eucharistic celebration and communion is the renewal itself of the eucharist in the different Churches, in regard to teaching and liturgy. As the eucharist is the new liturgical service Christ has given to the Church, it seems normal that it should be celebrated not less frequently than every Sunday, or once a week. As the eucharist is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, it seems also normal that every faithful should receive communion at every celebration.

“As the Churches in their eucharistic experience move toward the fulness which is in Christ, the problem of intercommunion will move toward its solution.”<sup>19</sup>

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee III, see below pp. 222f.*

<sup>17</sup> Bristol, III 3.    <sup>18</sup> Bristol, V 2.    <sup>19</sup> Bristol, V.

## 5. THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

### Preface

Many Christians would contend that continued study and discussion regarding Christian ministry in general and ordination in particular is an unfruitful investment of time and effort. They say that the very affirmation of the faith of the Church (which has immediate implications in changing understandings of race, justice and peace, environmental concerns and development) must occupy first place in study today.

But the subject of ordination touches the very heart of the Christian message and action. It is the faith of the Christian that the Church exists to serve the function of reconciliation, which is inseparably bound up with the problems just mentioned. Christ came to serve and not to be served, to heal and unify. As he called and sent apostles to embody his ministry in the world, so he continues to call, and send servants to continue to serve the world. Accordingly, whatever keeps the Church from being both an effective sign and instrument of Christ's reconciling presence in the world must be a source of deep and continuing concern to the Christian.

The question of the nature of the ordained ministry is such an element. The table of the Lord is the appointed place for Christians to nourish and express their oneness in Christ Jesus. Yet at just this point of ultimate sharing, many of them are commanded, as part of the sincere belief of their Churches, to part from one another — this because of differing official views on the ordained ministry. Anyone who has experienced the pain of this separation at the celebration of the eucharist will be naturally led to take this problem seriously, because the most basic issues are involved: the nature of the Christian community; the relation of its members to one another and to the world in which the community exists; most fundamentally, the way in which God is at work in the universe and in the hearts of each of his children.

Beside the pressing existential concern there are other reasons for taking up this question again. Perhaps most promising is the fact that the ministry discussion itself is undergoing an evolution in many Churches which makes a more comprehensive and balanced study possible. All Churches are being forced to ask, "How is the whole ministry of Christ being carried out in our tradition, in our ministry to the world?" All are being challenged to look at their total ministry afresh in the light of the Gospel. As a result of such reappraisal the last two decades have witnessed a new sensitivity to the ministry of the whole People of God, and of the place of the ordained ministry within this People. As the Churches have opened themselves to the questions men are asking, as they are taking more seriously the problem of their task

in the world, they are beginning to see the place and ministry of the ordained person in a new light also.

These questions are forcing *all* Churches to reconsider the relevance, adequacy, and pragmatic usefulness of their present understanding and employment of ministry, especially in light of the amazing fact that, even though they differ in their understanding of ordination, in considering what forms of ministry best fill the need of the present, they are reaching similar conclusions and initiating similar patterns!<sup>1</sup>

Also to be mentioned in any list of new factors is the great significance of the Second Vatican Council. Although the full import of this Council will not be known for some time, new doors and avenues were opened there, which will directly stimulate and dramatically broaden the ecumenical conversation about ministry. At several points the Council issued statements concerning ministry. Theological study has devoted close attention to this issue since the Council. This is a new factor in the ecumenical discussion, and is widening it dramatically.

It is in the context of this world and these issues that this study is undertaken. It differs somewhat from such studies in the past, both in the note of urgency imposed upon the Churches and in the realization that the contemporary context is pushing us towards answers that seem to carry the authentic spirit of Jesus Christ within new and sometimes surprising forms. Nevertheless, we take cognizance of the labours of the past and the progress made in earlier studies on the ministry. We make our contribution, as they did, in the context of our times.

Earlier studies on this question laid a necessary foundation for dealing with it today. Discussion on the ministry played an important part in the early Faith and Order Conferences at Lausanne (1927) and Edinburgh (1937). Much time was spent at these meetings in establishing deeper understanding of the varying views held by the Churches on this neuralgic issue. But the end result at that time was an impasse. So deep was the gulf between the Churches on this question that it was simply dropped from the ecumenical agenda.

With the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, new possibilities began to present themselves. The impact in Faith and Order studies was felt four years later at the Lund Conference, whence a significant change in methodology emerged. The need was now seen, after an era of "comparative ecclesiology" for the Churches to go together to the sources of their common Christian faith in the future, seeking a consensus on the interpretation of these sources, as well as greater understanding as to how and why the Churches had eventually come to such differing views of their commitment to Christ. Such a change of emphasis was possible because of growing agreement attained by biblical theologians after the Second World War, as exemplified for example, by the Wadham College Report, 1951.

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<sup>1</sup> For particular instances see, for example, S. Mackie, *Patterns of Ministry*, Collins, London 1969.

Ministry as a formal subject of consideration was to return to the Faith and Order agenda only with the Fourth World Conference in 1963 at Montreal. But disappointingly for many, discussion at Montreal still centred almost completely on the ordained ministry, despite the promise of a larger context held forth by the title of the theme assigned to Section III: "The Redemptive Work of Christ and the Ministry of the Church". Largely because of the dissatisfaction with the Montreal discussion, the Faith and Order staff was mandated to study the topic in the broader context of the general ministry of the Church. This decision was partly motivated by the important work done on the laity (*Laity Bulletin No. 15*) in preparation for Montreal, in which the awareness of the *general* priesthood of the laity as members of the People of God, who through their *baptism* have received their unique ministry in the Church and the world, had been made once again forcefully clear.

The immediate result was the decision by the Faith and Order Commission, at its 1964 meeting in Aarhus, Denmark, to commission a three-year study on "Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Ministry". But the scope of this study proved too broad. Thus at the 1967 meeting of the Commission the theme was delimited to ordination. A 1968 consultation in Geneva produced a working paper which was forwarded by the Geneva Secretariat to study groups around the world for consideration and revision. The present report of the 1970 consultation at Cartigny has benefited from the results of the labours of 36 such study groups, as well as from the work of the study by S. Mackie (*ibid.*) conducted by the Department of Studies in Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

At the outset a very brief mention of the order of subjects discussed in this report would be helpful. Thus, the question of the rationale for the continuing of an ordained ministry is raised immediately; the foci of reconciliation, through the kerygmatic word and action, and that of communion are emphasized. Since new dimensions and developments are referred to, a second section looks at the subjects of tradition and change as they relate to ordination. In section 3, one example of such a change (the authentication of ministry) is examined.

Inasmuch as the question of the Christian community is continually occupying a more important place in the study of ministry, the relation between and among the community, the ordained person, and new *forms* of community are scrutinized in section 4. Implicit in this discussion is that of the recipient of ordination, which follows directly.

The question of the relation of "professionalism" to the ordained ministry has been given attention in this study; new possibilities offering wider varieties of practice are indicated. And finally, in view of common questions put to the ministries of *all* the Churches, and the results of study and ecumenical discussion in many of them, the report concludes by inquiring how a wider "mutually accepted ministry" might come to be.

## I. The Source, Focus and Function of Ordained Ministry

All Churches agree that their ministry has its roots in Christ. He is the true, and strictly speaking, the only minister of his Church. However, Jesus wished his ministry to be continually present and exercised in the world through a community, his Body, which is the Church. It is because the

Church is his Body that, right from the Last Supper, it was called to his ministry, and that the apostles, on the day of Pentecost, jointly inaugurated a communal ministry in the power of the Spirit.

The Spirit is always the Enabler, witnessing within the Christian community, within each Christian, to the incarnate and risen Lord. That is, he witnesses always to the ways in which God's redemptive will for the world are to be made effective in terms of flesh and blood, in the form of human (and therefore mortal) institutions, and within the ambiguities of human society. The Spirit distributes particular gifts to particular persons by which the community is built up into the Body of Christ, and made relevant to particular historical situations.

### *The Priesthood of All*

It is essentially through baptism and confirmation that Christians are made members of the Body of Christ and participants in his priesthood. Therefore, any service performed in the Church by a Christian, by virtue of his baptism and confirmation, supposes an offering of his whole person "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Rom. 12 : 1), and consequently, has a priestly character. Thus the royal priesthood of necessity belongs to the people of God, and all forms of ministry within the Church assist, and in a sense must point to that corporate service. The call to be a part of, and to serve in Christ's Body is in no way based upon merit, but is simply an undeserved gift of God's grace. *Every* service is by χάρις, empowered by it, carried out *in* it. And since the Holy Spirit is gracious to every member, there is a *variety* of gifts ; each baptized person undertakes an appropriate ministry within the many services.

But it does not appear that all the initiatives, all the charismata, or all the gifts from God should be subsumed under the name of ministry or claim ordination. The reasons for this will appear shortly. It is only necessary that the individual charismata of the non-ordained servants be in no sense regarded as inferior to those of people who are specially commissioned ; in the Church there are no second-class citizens. This is simply to say that there is need for *diversified* ministry and service in the Church. For example, it is not necessary that all members of a team ministry be ordained ; what is vital is that the whole People of God be built up and equipped for ministry. One of the new incentives of the present time then is brought about by the renewed understanding of this general and essential priesthood of the *whole* People of God.

### *The Ordained Ministry*

But having made this crucial point, it must also be recalled that certain called and set-apart individuals have had a decisive role in the building up of the Church. The New Testament does report a setting apart to special ministry, distinctions of service *were* made. Throughout the Bible the concept of

God's selectivity clearly emerges. There *is* a "scandal" of particularity — God called particular people for particular tasks and set them apart to serve the fellowship in distinct ways. Israel's history, its ever-deepening awareness of having been selected by God for particular service, the selection of prophets, priests and kings by God, the Incarnation itself, witness to selectivity and election. God had commonly called and employed individuals and groups to serve him in unique fashion — the selection of apostles continued this tradition, and opened the door to the conception of a called and set-apart ministry. That is to say, the existence of a set-apart ministry is fully consistent with God's *modus operandi* in calling, sending, and empowering individuals for special responsibilities.

Apparently the new relationship with God which Jesus had embodied was most meaningfully communicable and demonstrable by subsequent ministry through *persons*. The apostles were to become visible and personal representatives of Christ, instruments through whom, by life and word, the resurrection would be witnessed, the Church built up, and the ministry of reconciliation continued. Their ministry, though unique and necessarily not repeatable, definitively began and demonstrated the *personal* nature of the Christian gospel and ministry; the good news came to earth in the form of a person, and its communication to others would depend upon the Holy Spirit working through other called persons.

In choosing and sending men to act and speak on his behalf, Christ continued this personal ministry, setting a precedent for the Church. It was the preaching and teaching of the apostles, their understanding of Jesus' life and ministry, which were the basis for kerygma and didache, of the New Testament canon, and the later creeds. The witness and ministry of the apostles, unique as it was, is in a real sense normative in the Church for all time, it is foundational. Thus ministry in the Church in subsequent ages is only truly ministry insofar as it is faithful to and empowered by the apostolic message, insofar as it is congruent with the message and ministry of the apostles. The apostolic ministry continues as a bond of unity for the Church in all times and places.

That is to say, through the commissioning of apostles Jesus bound the Church to the revelation of himself which occurred during his ministry. It may be said that the Church, in ordaining new persons to ministry in Christ's name, is attempting to follow the mission of the apostles and remain faithful to their teaching; ordination as an act attests the binding of the Church to the historical Jesus and the historical Revelation, at the same time recalling that it is the Risen Lord who is the true Ordainer, who bestows the gift. In ordaining the Church attempts to provide for the faithful proclamation of the Gospel and humble service in Christ's name. The laying on of hands in ordination can be seen as the sign witnessing to the connection of the Church and its ministry with Christ, binding the ministry to a conscious awareness of its anchorage and roots in the revelation accomplished in Him, reminding it to look to Him as the source of its commission.

There has been, and still is such a ministry of reconciliation to which certain persons are especially appointed for the service of all; ministers fulfilling such a particular ministry are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through them (II Cor. 5 : 20). The purpose of this ministry is that the world "may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15 : 16). Therefore it would seem that the Churches should be able to agree that this particular ministry constitutes a sacramental reality.

In giving up his own freedom Christ has enabled men to know God in a new way. The living word of reconciliation witnessing to this event makes men capable of true community, and in this community freedom is found. Beside his responsibility in the ministry of reconciliation, the ordained person has a special place in and contribution to make to this community.

Ordination confers an authority (*exousia*) which is not that of the minister himself, but which demonstrates the authority of God received by the community; it also ratifies and manifests the fact that the minister is called and sent by God. But ordination is not the giving of a "thing" or a "possession" or even an "office" *tout simple*; it arises from and results in a personal, existential relationship with the Holy Spirit, and it inseparably binds the ordained person with the aforementioned community; it is the sign and instrument of Christ in this community.

As an individual assumes his full humanity in relationship with other people, so the gifts given an individual are developed in the Christian community. Ordination is not given or received in a vacuum; it takes place within the Church, the Body of Christ, not in just any gatherings of persons. And by it, the charismata for ministry which the Holy Spirit has given an individual are related to the community in which he has been nurtured, and in which he will exercise his ministry, the community of which Christ is the Head.

Ordination then, in this context, necessarily means commitment to a community — not only to certain ideals or a vague "human unity" but to concrete human beings in whose particular circumstances the ordained person is to be unreservedly involved. Thus the ordinand contributes especially to the communion between Christ and His people, and the relation of these people to one another. The ordinand's role is to minister to this community, to mediate its interior divisions and conflicts through his awareness of, and concern for, the oneness of all. Thus ordination also points to the safeguarding of the unity of the Church which is bound up with the responsibility of the one who presides at the eucharist.

Therefore ordination is at one and the same time :

- an invocation to God that he bestow the power of the Holy Spirit upon the new minister;
- a sign of the granting of this prayer by the Lord who gives the gift of ministry;

- an offering by the Church to God, of the minister consecrated to his service (cf. I Tim. 4 : 14 and II Tim. 1 : 6).

The ordained minister fulfils a threefold function :

- gather together, “build up”, and oversee the believers, and insure that the community be present in the world ; that it be answerable for the yearnings, joys and sufferings of men, and that it may grow in the holiness of the Spirit, in order that it might be the promise of unity for the whole of humanity ;
- unceasingly announce and show forth by his life, the good news of the reconciliation — the foundation of man’s liberation by God and of the unity of believers in the faith of the apostolic Church ;
- preside over baptism and the eucharist — an action of grace on the part of the community and intercession for humanity in its entirety <sup>2</sup>.

## II. Tradition and Change

Today all Churches, whatever the inherited pattern of their ministry may be, are having to face the question as to the extent to which the ministry can be changed or adapted. Must it be maintained in its present form? What are the changes or adaptations which are required? There is a growing recognition that changes in both the understanding and practice of the ministry are possible and that they are called for if the needs of the present situation are to be met. The following factors contribute to this recognition :

1. There is today a greater awareness of the historical character of the patterns of ministry within the New Testament. Biblical scholarship has come to the conclusion that it is not possible to ground *one* conception of church order in the New Testament to the exclusion of others. It appears that in New Testament times differing forms co-existed and differing forms developed simultaneously in various geographical areas. Furthermore, it is increasingly realized that the forms of ministry in the apostolic period were historically, socially, and culturally conditioned and that it is, therefore, justifiable and even necessary in the present time to seek to adapt the patterns of the ministry to the needs of the current situation.

2. Study concerning the various Councils of the Church is leading to a growing recognition of and sophistication about the historical nature of the Councils of the Church. It is recognized that sociological and psychological factors influenced conciliar decisions ; there is greater sensitivity to the probability that the intentions of those who framed conciliar statements may have been more modest than subsequent generations believed. For example, development in biblical theology has necessitated a calling into question of Trent’s basing its treatment of holy orders on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Eucharist in Ecumenical Thought*, above p. 69.

The historical self-understanding of the Church as a pilgrim people, *in via*, allows the decisions of the Councils to be seen in more dynamic, historical terms. Such sensitivity seems to make possible and necessary the acceptance, by each, of a variety of church orders.

3. In many respects the ministry in its present form does not seem to be fully adequate to its purpose anymore. In Western society, traditional and sacred in character, religious ministry conferred its holder a central position in the community with almost unequalled status, prestige and power. The minister was in the midst of everything because everyone in the community expected from him either a blessing or moral guidance for human activity.

But modern society tends more to split into innumerable associations and organizations which function according to more rationalistic principles, both scientific and technical. This development has shifted the place of religion to a limited sector of human activity. Thus the professional minister whose duties and activities are dedicated exclusively to this limited religious sector finds himself removed from many functions he was fulfilling in a more "sacred" society. Such deprivation can lead to a serious crisis in the "identity" of the ordained minister.

It should be emphasized that this evolution taking place also has a positive aspect, in that it is freeing and even compelling the Churches to restudy their understanding and deployment of ministry; this study can, in turn, bring about a more biblically faithful and culturally relevant employment of the minister.

4. The experience of different cultural settings and their needs as well as ecumenical contacts have helped relativise claims of permanence which once were attached to certain patterns of ministry. There is also the experience that imaginative changes have contributed to the overcoming of impasse in mission and in the carrying out of pastoral responsibility in the Churches. This experience calls for openness which permits constantly renewed creativity.

Thus all Churches are being confronted with new, and to some extent, similar problems. And it may be said that more and more of them are becoming aware of the need, and the freedom with which they are able to develop their traditional patterns of ministry. But they still differ to a large extent in their ways of realising adaptations. This is due to their difference in understanding the place of the ministry in the tradition and continuous life of the Church. They are all of the conviction that the Church is apostolic, i.e. that at all times it is and has to be in communion with the apostolic community and ministry. Though it changes in the course of history it must not lose the identity which it has been given by Christ. But in what way does the ministry assure this identity? Is it enough to assure the continuity of content and functions? Or can identity be assured only through certain obligatory patterns?

The Churches also agree that the basic continuity with the apostolic community is provided by the whole People of God. As the Twelve were

the image of the new Israel in Christ, so their successors are to be seen in the Church as a whole. The continuity of the ministry is not a continuity independent of, but within, the People of God.

There are, however, different emphases in understanding how the identity given to the Church by Christ is to be faithfully maintained and the relationship of the ministry to this maintenance. To name three :

a) The threefold pattern of ministry, though it developed historically, is to be regarded as divinely given and is, therefore, indispensable for the existence of the Church. It is required for the building up of the communion, or at least as a sign that the People of God are one and the same People in all places and ages. The laying on of hands gives visible expression to this continuity.

b) There are certain functions of ministry which are given and which must be maintained in some way by the Church in every generation; as long as the functions, e.g. episcopé, faithful preaching, administration of sacraments, and service to humanity are identifiable, the concrete patterns may change.

c) The succession is provided exclusively by the content of the Gospel. The Church is apostolic insofar as it proclaims and serves again and again the same Christ and his liberating and reconciling message. As long as this message is proclaimed and lived ministries and means may change.

These differing views on the place of the ministry in the tradition of the Church influence the attitude of the churches to many of the questions which must be faced today, such as the ordination of women, the possibility of a non-professional ministry, and so forth. But there is evidence now that these three viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. For the third, in practice (for example) has developed a system of comprehensive and orderly oversight and administration of the sacraments intentionally faithful to the apostles (which the first sees as the basis of its position). On the other hand, the first is flexible in the actual practice of its ministries and sees the kerygma involved in the functions it maintains.

There is then, the continual need of relating the concept of ministry to the experience of it, getting at the mystery of it by employing a multiplicity of images and eventually, models. The New Testament used many structural images — body, vine, building — but in almost every case growth and flexibility were assumed; *oikodome* was the principle for building up the body. An ever-growing openness to change, and a growing willingness to imitate this New Testament pattern can be discerned; it can be said that the vitality of the Church will be reflected by its openness to experiment with new forms and employ its ordained ministry in ever-new avenues of service.

### III. The Authentication of Ministry

The changes affect not only external structures, but the very understanding and exercise of the ministry. Many examples could be given; one will suffice

to illustrate the phenomenon — the radically different approaches in past and present to the authentication of the ministry.

### *An Evolution in Authentication*

Generally speaking, in society at large, the criteria enabling a person to acquire and exercise authority (or legitimate power) have changed, and continue to change, considerably. To be sure, there is undoubtedly an unchanging element in the acquisition and use of authority. It can only exist within a relationship of trust built up between a group of people and the holder of a function; it is a result of an acknowledged recognition that one possesses *capabilities* which enable him to fulfill this function, and by definition it excludes authoritarianism. What is subject to variety and change, however, is the kind of capabilities the group considers appropriate and meaningful and the manner in which the authority is exercised. In ever-widening sections of the world, genuine authority is acquired by a leader only within the dynamics of a group in which there is freedom for give and take, exchange and *mutual* reflection and even instruction. And, as mentioned above, such leadership is emerging in the Church and bringing about new experiences of Christian unity.

In traditional society, birth conferred an acknowledged title for ruling a given territory. In the twentieth century however, citizens are more likely to defer to the demonstration of political, economic or social competence on the part of a leader, as over against the fact of his being born into a certain family. A similar change can be seen in the acceptance of almost all social leadership, including business, educational, scientific, and even familial.

### *Relevant Questions*

Such changes in patterns of the authentication of authority would lead a sociologist to raise such questions as the following regarding valid ministry:

1. Acknowledgement of the legitimate authority of ministers was based, in the past, not on the right of birth, but on "anointing". Was not such an anointing usually considered by the faithful as a quasi-physical alteration of the recipient, enabling him to perform certain rituals first legitimately, and later validly, but only in secondary fashion, to rule or guide a community? In such a conception of ordination was not the minister regarded as being related to the individual believer through the administration of the sacraments rather than as being related to the faithful as a *community* in which sacraments and salvation were found in *koinonia*?

2. Was the conception and employment of authority referred to above compatible with the self-authenticating understanding and exercise of authority of Jesus? Does not the emerging understanding seem more in agreement with his practice?

3. This latter view does seem to be gaining wider currency. Does it not imply a modification or supplementation of ordination rites, so that it is made clear that the act of ordination is an expression of the Church's "spiritual" consensus on the aptitudes of a candidate to guide the Church in the name of Christ? Cannot ordination rite(s) and those who participate in it (them) change as long as they express both the relationship to Christ and the proper relationship between the minister, the basic Christian community, and the reachable wider Church?

#### IV. The Ordained Person and the Community

Every ordination is *within* the Church and *for* the Church, intended to help the Church fulfil its mission in the world. The ordained minister is commissioned to serve some part of the Church, to act in its name, to dramatize and personify its being *sent* and *present*. As is evident in the previous paragraphs, the place and significance of the Christian *community* in regard to ordination are being more clearly recognized. At this point some of the questions raised in this context need to be discussed.

##### *The Ordination Service — in the Community*

In order to experience and demonstrate the truth that setting apart is not to some superior level of discipleship, but rather to service *within* the Church, it is important that the entire process of ordination involve the whole body of the people. There needs to be continual emphasis on the fact that ordination is neither "over-against" nor *vis-à-vis* the congregation, but rather, that a person is addressed in the midst of the people. It is also important that the congregation have a part in the calling, choosing, and training of an ordinand, thus preserving the basic significance of the *rite vocatus*. This means more than the inclusion of a sentence or two in the liturgy and ordaining in the *presence* of the laity, important as that may be.

A long and early Christian tradition placed ordination in the context of worship and especially of the eucharist. Such a place for the service of ordination preserves the understanding of ordination as an *act* of the *whole* community, and not of a certain order within it or of the individual ordained. Even if one believes that the act of ordaining belongs to a special order within the Church, it is always important to remember that the entire community is involved in the act. Ordination in association with the eucharist keeps before the Church the truth that it is an act which initiates a person to a *service of the "koinonia"*, a service both to God and to fellow man. It is this "*koinonia*" that the eucharist expresses *par excellence* and by continuing to relate ordination to the eucharist this dimension of ministry is called to mind. Ordination within the service of the eucharist also reminds the Church that the ordained ministry is set apart to point to Christ's own ministry and not to

some other. By placing ordination in the context of worship and especially the eucharist, this act is referred to God Himself and the ordained person is dedicated to the service of "His Servant" who offers Himself for the salvation of the world.

### *Changing Manifestations of Community*

But what meaning can be given today to "ordination into a particular community"? There is obviously no place for "detached ministers" (e.g. *episcopi vagantes*). It can no longer be said without qualification, however, that ordination attaches a person to a certain *local* church. For in the twentieth century the meaning of *local* is undergoing extensive modification. Geographical areas no longer delineate certain social entities generally as they once did. Urbanization and the modern organization of society continue to develop; owing to the characteristic mobility, dispersal, and specialization of this society, persons tend to belong to several communities simultaneously, no one of which is primarily geographically defined. This development is tending more to be true of continuing "rural" societies as well.

The neighbourhood community of Christians will continue to be an important and living expression of the Church, and traditional groupings of people and pastor in a relatively homogeneous neighbourhood, where such exist and are meaningful, will continue to be needed and valid. But the new forms of Christian community referred to above are also assuming importance, and are in need of an ordained ministry linked with the wider Church. Is it not necessary for such communities to have the possibility of gathering around the eucharist as well? Are not such communities equally valid congregations of the Church even if they may be of limited duration?

This question is put precisely with the claims of mission in mind, which is the proper orientation of every Christian community and every Christian ministry towards the human community at large. It is not that the minister of the Church should necessarily leave the place where he received the call of God, or the community in which he carries out his service, but he should, as a minister of the Church, take the needs, the worries, and the hopes of his neighbour unto himself, in order that the community may become the place where men can meet God. Such an attitude toward the human community may require the ordained servant to change the locale of his ministry, even though ordained for a particular community.

The emergence of authentic charismatic leadership in new communities needs to be carefully considered. Such leadership is often the channel through which new and deep experiences of Christian unity flow, as for example, when an individual prophetically challenges racism or injustice and a temporary or enduring worshipping community arises out of, and around, this concern. Has not the Holy Spirit brought forth such leaders since biblical times, leaders whose role was not, in the first place, defined by the eucharist? And is it

not vital now, as it was then, that such gifted persons be recognized, tested, and authorized by the Church, both for the sake of good order and also that their gifts may be put to the fullest possible use? If such persons are ordained, possibly to new types of ministry, one of the special roles of the bishop could be to keep such a variety of ministries in unity, thus keeping in visible, creative tension the prophetic and priestly ministry of the Church. That is to say, scholars have often theologized from Christ to the ministry, and then to the sacraments and the Church, whereas the more appropriate order might be from Christ to Christian community, and then to ministry and sacraments.

There is then, a growing need to provide specialized and perhaps limited-term ordained ministers for new forms and types of communities. But a danger at this point must be noted — that emerging communities may themselves tend to become uniform exclusive enclaves. Since the eucharist is the sacrament transcending divisions, the tendency toward homogeneity in this sense must be resisted. It should be borne in mind that unique Christian community cannot be restricted to people of the same sex, occupation, race, age, economic or social level. Thus there is a continuing need for ministers ordained to serve particular communities to provide a bond to the Universal Church.

### *The Larger Community*

Although human degradation is a fact of human history, and people have been, and still are prejudged to have or lack certain qualities, abilities or potentialities on simple grounds of colour, caste, or sex, the Church is that renewed society where there is “neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus”. So long as history lasts, the accomplishment of this vision of full humanity and unity may not be fully realized, but the Church must continually attempt to obediently *live* this new reality, this dimension of the Kingdom of God. The Church is always for the world, and it must obstinately witness to the purposes of God for that world, in the face of all the world’s resistance. The Church must always try to claim for God the social environment of which it is a part.

The gift of ministry is therefore essentially related to what God has prepared for his world and which, through the movement of His Spirit, He is realizing in history through the community of His Church; this ministry too does not exist in itself and for itself, but rather *for the world*. There is thus an existential character of the ministry deeply related to the destiny of creation and man’s position in this creation. Ordination in this light means an act leading to *existential involvement* in the world and as such, brings the Church into a deep relationship with the world, its needs, its anxieties and possibilities, actually *relating the world to God*. Through ordination the Church is looking out of itself, not by leaving itself behind, but by *involving* itself. This is the

*ek-stasis* of communion, which is not only a sending out, but also a being present in the world with its hunger, injustice, pain and sorrow, as well as its joy, thanksgiving and its hope.

## V. Who is to be Ordained?

The New Testament suggests two criteria for determining who in particular should be ordained: *a*) an inward and personal call of God to the individual (cf. Gal. 1 : 15), *b*) a ratification and authentication of that call by the Church, which discerns the individual to have the gifts and potentialities for the ministry in question (cf. I Tim. 3). These two criteria have usually appeared in that order in the tradition of most of our Churches. The reverse order should also be considered; that is *a*) that a person should be sought out, selected and called by the Church to fulfil the ministry in question, and *b*) that he himself should inwardly assent to this call as a call from God.

So in Acts 6 : 3 the Church was commanded to find men with gifts appropriate to a particular ministry, upon whom hands could then be laid (and the searching out of such men is one meaning of *episkopein*). The call of God to ordination comes through the Church.

### *Appointment and Discipline*

When a person is to be ordained the determining factor is the discernment by the Church that the person in question has the capacity to fulfil the responsibility which is to be put upon him. What the Church looks for in a person to be ordained is evident spiritual and personal maturity of Christian character, together with a particular aptitude or competence for the performance of the ministry itself, whatever it may be. The Church attempts to identify those to whom the necessary gifts have been given. To those with these gifts, who assent to the call of God through the Church, a further gift is spoken of in I Tim. 4 : 14 and II Tim. 1 : 6, as bestowed through the laying on of hands.

The process of selecting and ordaining particular persons can be seen *both* as the Church's "natural" activity as a social organism, which must supply to itself the leadership and other roles which it needs for its purposes, *and* (more deeply) as the initiative of God at every point for the fulfilment of his plan for the salvation of the world. Seen in this theological perspective, the selecting of the right person for ordination is a matter of grace at every point.

As appointment by the Church, ordination is preceded by preparation, probation and examination. After these responsibilities have been cared for, the Church formally recognizes the gifts and commitments of each ordinand and affirms its belief that he has been chosen and sent by God for ministry in his name and in that of the Church. Because ordination concerns the discernment of spiritual gifts, a risk is involved; thus this discernment must be under constant review. For the ordinand may be mistaken as to his suitability,

or on the other hand the Church may not recognize or accept a gift offered to it. This means that ordination is also a testing of the Church, a test of its responsiveness and present openness to new forms of ministry.

Every office of ministry is, therefore, subject to the Church's discipline. The person "in orders" is also "under orders". The Church's responsibility as guardian of the Christian gospel, although vested particularly in those ministerial offices specifically charged with oversight (episkope), is in the last analysis a corporate stewardship. By its very act of granting ordination the Church as a body acknowledges the responsibility of the whole company of the faithful for the continuing guardianship of the apostolic testimony.

### *The Social Milieu*

The particular pattern and orientation of ordained ministry, and the particular demands the Church must make upon the ordained ministry, will be prescribed by the needs of the Church in a particular environment and at a particular point of history. The Church never ceases to be part of the world, to be set in this or that socio-cultural matrix, to be in a sense the prisoner of history. Because the Incarnation dictates the radical historicity of the Church, it must always seek to be *contemporary* in its understanding of its task, and therefore of its ministry. When the circumstances of the Church change, its inherited patterns of ministry will need reformulation and reshaping; there is the continual need for the ministry to incarnate itself in the culture in which it finds itself.

Such obedient adaptation is made more difficult when the previous historical experience of the Church is "absolutized" and regarded as normative for all time, or even given an "ontological" rationale. For example, when Christianity was first brought to the Philippine Islands it was not socially possible for Filipinos to be ordained. But there was no justification for perpetuating this tradition for 400 years. Or again, Jesus did not in fact include any women or Gentiles among the Twelve, and there were understandable reasons for this. But it is quite another matter to assert, on this ground, that women, for example, are by nature physically, personally and ontologically incapable of receiving the grace and responsibility given in ordination.

The question of the renewal of each tradition of ministry is seen to be the more urgent when one remembers that it is the Church's task under God, not meekly to accept and follow a society's custom of devaluing certain people by categorizing them and treating them all in a certain manner. Although the Church will inherit the values and attitudes of the society and era of which it is a part, it will nevertheless seek to criticize and transcend these attitudes according to the mind of Christ. It is certain that every culture and every society will have its own difficulties in attaining the full humanization of its inhabitants. Both racism and unjustified prejudice regarding the place and

capabilities of women, for example, abound in the Church as well as the world. The Church has to take the limited vision of its people seriously. But it is also bound to bring the judgement of the Gospel to bear upon its cultural predicament. It is also bound to stand as best it can for the principle that it is the gifts and calling of God which should determine the possibility of ordination, not a classification by race, colour, social level, or sex.

### *The Ordination of Women*

Strong emotions are aroused when this subject is discussed. On the one hand, even in societies that no longer generally debar women from any office on grounds of sex alone, there are many men who find it deeply disturbing to be under the authority of a woman. On the other hand, more and more Christian women are expressing frustration in regard to the inability or unwillingness of Churches to consider them as fit candidates for ordination to presbyteral ministry. They feel depersonalized and deprived of the dignity of their adulthood in the Church, and this exclusion is leading in many cases toward feelings of bitterness and militancy.

Since those who advocate the ordination of women do so out of their understanding of the meaning of the Gospel and ordination, and since the experience of the Churches in which women are ordained has been positive and none has found reason to reconsider its decision, the question must be asked as to whether it is not time for all the Churches to confront this matter forthrightly. Churches which ordain women have found that women's gifts and graces are as wide and varied as men's, and that their ministry is fully as blessed by the Holy Spirit as the ministry of men. But even Churches which already ordain women must guard against discriminatory tendencies, since a real ambiguity can be observed in these Churches — the women ordained have usually been given positions of juridical and pastoral inferiority. The force of nineteen centuries of tradition against the ordination of women cannot be lightly ignored. But traditions have been changed in the Church. This question must be faced, and the time to face it is now.

## VI. Ordination, Ministry and Profession

Another problem which the Churches confront in their employment of ordained ministers is the increasing uneasiness and uncertainty attached to salaried professionalism.

In a world of rapid change and widely varying conditions, the Church must simultaneously maintain faithfulness through good order and flexibility in the shaping and deploying of its ministry for effectiveness in mission. During recent generations the Churches of the West have developed a presbyteral ministry analogous to the learned professions of law, medicine and teaching; they have set up academic requirements involving extended courses of study in theological (professional) faculties for admission to ordination

and they have assumed as normal, or at least as ideal practice, the full-time employment of such ministers in church work. These tendencies have brought important strengths to the ministry "as a profession". In the future many ministers will doubtless require even more extended education than in the past, particularly for various kinds of specialized service. But in some situations it can be said that this kind of professionalizing has led to a kind of clericalism. It must be asked, for example, to what extent the contemporary mood of many theological students to dispense with ordination is due to the association of ordination with a false, but widespread conception of professionalism — i.e. not with the minister as professional in the sense of guaranteeing special training and competence, but as professional in the sense of his being *paid* for his services.

In order that it may more adequately fulfil its pastoral responsibility to Christian people, and its mission of service in the world, the Church needs to avoid a monolithic pattern of professionalism in its ministry. Indeed practice has varied more than many realize, in that large numbers of ministers teach in theological faculties or even in public education, or follow (at least part time), other vocations commonly considered similar or congruous to the ministerial profession. At the same time, in assuming that ministers do not work in factories, for example, or in other positions not characterized by academic attainment, the Churches have lost contact with, and ceased to minister to, important elements of the population.

It is probable that a renewed ordained diaconate offers great hope of meaningfully relating Christian ministry to the service of the world. But in these paragraphs the concern is primarily for ordination as it relates to the presbyter.

A person need not have a degree in theology or a salary from the Church in order to administer the eucharist; what he does need is the request of the Christian community and the Church's recognition of him as a minister. Such a person, who qualifies for ordination, even though a "non-professional", may also prove effective in occasional preaching. If theology is indeed the "attempt to relate the truths of God to the torments of the world", then an attorney, an economist, a youth sensitive to injustice, a housewife, a school teacher, a junior executive, or a scientist, none of whom have ever had formal theological education, may bring the word of God with particular power in certain situations. By a careful drafting of its standards for stated posts or types of appointment, and by more varied and imaginative approaches to education for such persons in the meaning of faith, the Church may use their services without compromising its commitment to learning or to theological responsibility.

Thus at least three sets of educational-economic arrangements respecting ordained ministers can be discerned: (a) employment by the Church of some who have formal theological education, (b) secular employment for some who have such professional education (i.e. worker-priests or other "tent-making ministers"), (c) secular employment for some with other kinds of education

or preparation in whom the Church discerns gifts for ordained ministry ("non-professional presbyters").

So long as the Church maintains appropriate discipline or regulations regarding the various forms of ministry, it need not require that all ordained ministers remain dependent upon it financially or give full time to its affairs. Rather, by ordaining to its ministry persons who earn their living in various professions, it may witness more effectively in numerous areas of society and may profit from the insights which these ministers bring to it from their particular disciplines and engagements.

The procedure being discussed seems to hold promise of providing ministry for areas of contemporary life now inadequately served by the Church. As examples, the villages of Asia and Africa, where Western standards for ordination have proved unrealistic, can be cited.

There are also many kinds of "extraordinary situations". In parts of the world the church lives "in diaspora", unable to maintain the institutions of more comfortable times and places and needing all the more a faithful ministry. In some places the Christian community is a tiny minority confronted by a hostile society. Feeling themselves isolated from their neighbours and their fellow believers, the faithful long for a clear witness to the apostolic gospel and regular celebration of the eucharist. Before multiplying the number of denominational ministers in competition with one another, Churches should explore opportunities for ecumenical co-operation and even local union of small congregations. Even so, a part-time or non-professional minister will provide the best answer to many a small community of Christians. Again, certain social classes in many societies have not been reached by "professional" ministers coming from the outside, but have responded to the ministries of persons of their own communities. It would seem to be a mistake to insist that such emergent leaders, accepted by their communities, must be taken out of their socio-cultural *milieu*, to be formally educated at a school of theology outside of that context.

Along this same line, in growing secular cities, groups of younger people often find themselves alienated from the established Church, desiring a ministry which can speak to them in their own idiom in such a way that they can recognize the word of God addressing their own deepest longings. Many naval ships on long tours of lonely and dangerous duty are too small to rate a chaplain. Such worship as is provided must be conducted by lay readers not authorized to minister the eucharist.

Out of such groups as those mentioned here, a person chosen by the community as trust-worthy might well receive ordination from the Church as a non-professional minister, perhaps even for a limited period of time. It is only necessary that such a community hold fast its intention to maintain the unity of the body of Christ and that the larger Church fulfil its pastoral responsibility in authorizing a minister whom the group recognizes as suited to its particular situation.

Further, the life of many large congregations would conceivably be strengthened by the appointment to their staff of ministers, carefully selected and well qualified persons from various professions to supplement, by their particular gifts and contacts in the world, the skills of the full-time ministers.

A particular problem for any part-time minister will be his sense of identity in society. Will he see himself primarily as a minister or as, for example, a worker in a factory? If he has reasonable "success" in the small community with which he begins his work, he may aspire to "advancement" to ministerial situations for which he lacks adequate education. Such difficulties should not be minimized; nor are there easy answers to all of them. But in its responsibility for exercising *episkope*, the Church must find ways of offering more effective guidance to all its ministers and especially to those who face this kind of problem. At the same time, order and profession (in the sense with which these terms have been employed) are not to be identified.

## VII. Mutual Acceptance of Ministry

The New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in looking to the future unity of the Church, visualized a concrete vision of Christian unity that would be visible as well as spiritual. It expressed the conviction that the unity which is both God's will and his gift included a ministry accepted by all<sup>3</sup>.

From the perspective of the present study on ordination, it is evident "that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church" will be seriously deficient and even impossible to attain unless all those baptized into Jesus Christ are united with one another in such a way that they are served by a ministry "accepted by all". To come closer to a common understanding of ordained ministry has been a purpose of this study. Therefore in this concluding section it is in order to sketch briefly elements of the convergence of thinking on this subject to illustrate the sources of the growing agreement among many of the Churches. And, since enlarging agreement on the meaning of ordination has implications for and is bound up with the future unity of the Church, a concluding question will be posed: How might this growing agreement on the place and meaning of ordained ministry be influential in the eventual coming into being of a ministry "accepted by all"?

To be sure, there are still differences in understanding ordination among the Churches. The Orthodox Churches stress the threefold pattern of ministry as divinely given. Relation to and ordination by a bishop in the apostolic succession preserves an identity of faith with apostolic teaching within the community; in one form or another it is required for the building up of the communion. It is important that ordination is undertaken within the service of eucharist. Through the community each bishop is linked to the other bishops, to the apostles and the entire Church. Thus agreement on the

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<sup>3</sup> *New Delhi Report* (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 116.

meaning of ordination is inseparable from an understanding and agreement regarding the Church.

Further, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the priesthood of all and the ministerial priesthood are essentially different, although each participates in the priesthood of Christ. But the fullness of priesthood is conferred by episcopal ordination, which confers the *munera* of consecrating the eucharist, teaching, and governing; these *munera* must be exercised in communion with the episcopal college and its head. Those not ordained according to this understanding do not have the power to consecrate the eucharist.

But the Second Vatican Council has made new thinking on the ministry both possible and necessary in the Roman Catholic Church. Today, on the basis of biblical, historical and systematic theological studies, a growing number of Roman Catholic theologians are becoming convinced that there are serious defects in the traditional arguments and approaches used to determine the "validity" of ministry. The following are some of the more important insights leading to this new conviction:

1. There is growing agreement that it is impossible to demonstrate from the New Testament that the only minister of the Lord's Supper was an ordained person. There is no clear biblical evidence that the Twelve were the exclusive ministers of the eucharist in New Testament times or that they appointed the only persons who presided at the eucharist. On the other hand, it may be noted that neither is there evidence that *all* Christians were eligible ministers of the eucharist. While in the local churches, founded by apostles like Paul, there were leaders or persons in authority, very little is said about how such men were appointed and nothing about their presiding at the eucharist.

2. Furthermore, there is ever-greater agreement that the New Testament presents diverse types and even several principles of organization of the Christian communities, according to the difference of authors, places and times. On this basis, there have been developed, in the course of history, multiple forms of church order, each with its own advantages and disadvantages: papal, patriarchal, conciliar, among others. Such diversity suggests the need and freedom to respect and pursue diversity and complementarity in church structures.

3. Growing consensus can likewise be found that, at the beginning of the second century (but perhaps even earlier), as attested by Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop had emerged as the highest authority in the local church and either he or his appointee presided at the eucharist. However, no certainty exists as to how the Ignatian bishop was appointed or whether he stood in a chain of historical succession to the apostles by means of ordination or even that the pattern described by Ignatius was universal in the Church — the fact that he pressed the point so vigorously can well lead to the conclusion that he was attempting to implement greater uniformity on a situation more fluid up till then. Some find in the *Didache* too, evidence that wandering charismatic prophets could preside at the eucharist.

4. There is further agreement among scholars that although ordination of ministers of the eucharist by bishops was the almost universal practice in the Church very early, it is impossible to show that such a church order existed everywhere in the Church from the earliest times. In fact, there is evidence that even this practice did not become uniform until after several centuries. Further, there have been well-documented cases later in the Church's history in which priests — not bishops — have ordained other priests to serve at the altar. The Church itself could and did make decisions regarding such cases.

5. Historical investigation has shown that the distinction between "valid" and "licit" ordination as it has been widely used in the past several centuries cannot be found in the primitive Church. There was indeed, in the New Testament itself, as well as in the Early Church councils, a constant concern for maintaining "order" in the Church. There was also the highest regard for lawful and orderly eucharistic celebration. But it is impossible to find in the ancient Church any universal or authoritative judgement about the sacramental reality of sacraments administered in a "disorderly" or "illicit" manner, as for example, when they were administered by an unauthorized person. There is need for order (*taxis*) in the Church and in the administration of the sacraments of the Church, but such a concern should not militate against Christian Liberty.

6. The concept of "power" that has been attributed to the ordained minister even in the ancient Church was likewise subject to several interpretations. In any case, it is impossible to demonstrate from the Christian literature of the first millenium that the "power" conferred on the ordained minister was absolute in the sense that if no one in a church had received this power, the assembly had to be deprived of the sacrament.

7. A study of church pronouncements during the Middle Ages and at the Council of Trent suggests strongly that even though there is a constant insistence that only ordained priests can consecrate the eucharist, there is no explicit dogma about what happens — or does not happen — when, for evangelical reasons, a baptized but unordained Christian leads the eucharist. Even at Trent the only reservation made about the Protestant ministry was that it was not "legitimate", that is, not established according to canonical norms. At Trent, however, nothing whatever was said about the presence, or absence, of the sacramental body and blood of the Lord in the communion services of the Reformation Churches. Even after Trent Roman Catholics could hold St. Jerome's position that the bishops are superior to priests because of custom rather than because of an ordinance of the Lord. Episcopal church order, therefore, should not be a reason for the division of the Churches.

8. Revealing increased awareness of and sensitivity to such recent historical and theological research into the doctrine of the ministry, the Second Vatican Council held that there is a defect or deficiency in — not a total absence of — ordination in the Protestant Churches. Accordingly, the

Council regarded the eucharistic celebrations of Protestant Churches as lacking "the genuine and integral substance of the eucharistic mystery". But it resolutely and explicitly rejected a proposal to the effect that because of the deficiency in Protestant ordinations the Protestant Churches simply have not preserved the eucharist.

Furthermore, the recognition at Vatican II that separated Christian communities have "ecclesial reality" implies, according to many Roman Catholic theologians, that those communities have a competent eucharistic ministry, whatever deficiency that ministry might have from a Roman Catholic perspective. One cannot simply assume, from New Testament evidence at least, that the ultimate ministerial moment is the consecration of the eucharist.

9. Implied in all the above data is the increasing awareness that there is more than one way to validate or legitimize the ministries of the various Churches. Ordination by a bishop, which has been called ritual validation, is just one way. Therefore episcopal as over against presbyteral church order cannot be regarded as an adequate justification of division. There can also be what has been termed an ecclesiological validation (which argues from a true manifestation of the Church which Christ founded to true ministry). There is also a charismatic validation, which argues from charismatic church order in Corinth to the possibility of having such a non-episcopal charismatic church order today. Neither of the latter two requires the laying-on of hands by bishops, but both are grounded in the Church's authentic tradition. Thus the question is posed: If the charismatic ministries were laid aside for pastoral and historical reasons, could not these ministries be resumed for similar reasons?

10. The importance of the historic episcopate has not been diminished by the above findings. The only thing that is incompatible with contemporary historical and theological research is the notion that the *episcopal succession* is identical with and embraces the *apostolic succession* of the whole Church. Indeed, more and more Churches are expressing willingness to see episcopacy as a pre-eminent sign of the apostolic succession of the whole Church in faith, life and doctrine, and as such, something that ought to be striven for if absent.

11. Finally, bi-lateral conversations, Faith and Order studies and statements, and most Plans of Church Union have come close to unanimity in stating that: (a) ordination is regarded as divinely instituted, and (b) that the prayer of the Church connected with ordination is an efficacious invocation of the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of the one ordained<sup>4</sup>.

Although recognition of ordained ministries is only one element in the bringing about of full communion among Churches, it is clear that mutual acceptance of eucharistic ministries will be a vital step toward all Christians "breaking the one bread" together.

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, statements drawn up as a result of Roman Catholic/Reformed and Roman Catholic/Lutheran bi-lateral conversations.

From the findings and discussions of two international consultations convened to work with the subject of ordination, plus the reports of thirty-five study groups from around the world, which lie behind this report, certain elements of a possible slowly-emerging conception of ordained ministry can be discerned. Making no attempt to assess priority or give logical order, such elements as these can be included in an enumeration—a ministry called to focus on the apostolic mission of speaking the kerygma, administering the sacraments, building up and overseeing the community, accepted, confirmed, and prayed for by the Church; a ministry related to the world, instituted to serve it in all its joy and torment; a ministry able to change its form according to the mind of Christ as history evolves, in the interest of reconciliation and liberation of men; not necessarily bound to full-time occupation, salary, particular education, or life tenure; a ministry rooted in and related to Christ, but open to the future, free to emerge in different ways in the creation of and nourishment of Christian community in new kinds of situations, and potentially recognizable and confirmed in different ways by the Church in different times and places.

Before concluding this statement, it would seem valuable to look into the future and envisage possible factors in the bringing about of mutually-accepted ordained ministry. Granting that new insights into Church history exist, and that growing agreement as to the meaning and practice of ordained ministry can be cited (both as sketched above), how can the canonical and juridical structures in which the ordained ministry has been moulded (and by which it has been partly determined) be helped to evolve in consonance with the theological agreement which is emerging?

It must be said at the outset that throughout Church history exceptions and irregularities to perfect order abound, that the Church itself has exercised freedom in recognizing ministries and changing tasks — that exceptional circumstances have called forth fresh approaches and actions on many occasions.

Second, it should be noted that church unions already accomplished reveal that ministries of Churches uniting can be brought together, renewed and enlarged in scope as the Churches themselves come before God in repentance, love and acceptance. Some unions have gained “mutually acceptable ministries” by a mutual laying on of hands of bishops and ministers elected to be bishops, others by mutual acceptance of existing ministry, with all new ordinations to be made by bishops, while others plan a mutual laying on of hands of each, by all. In all union plans, both accomplished and proposed, it is recognized that re-ordination is not being undertaken, but rather, a unique service, attempting to reconcile and unify ministries of previously divided Churches.

Perhaps a mutual recognition of ministries, in the form of an extension of authority or commissioning to a certain work in a united Church, offers a key

to further ecumenical discussion and action. Recently such mutual recognition has generally taken place at the time of the union of two or more Churches, when ministries were brought together into the same frame-work to form a new entity.

But this is not to prejudice what form mutual acceptance of ministry might take in the future — it *need* not occur in the context of Churches organically uniting with one another. It could, for example, be declared and implemented when and if two or more world confessional families come into full communion with one another, or when they unite, as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the International Congregational Council have recently done ; it could take place at the assembly of a genuinely universal Council. In view of the already mentioned ambivalent New Testament witness, the many irregularities of Church history, the intention of faithful ministry in the various traditions, and a desire to be one in the universal Church, could not an initial ministerial unification be accomplished by a *per saltum* acceptance of all existing ministries by the others ? Such acceptance could be followed by a sort of re-institution of the process of regularization of those ministries involved. The Church has taken decisions such as this regarding its ministry in the past, albeit on a smaller scale. As some have inquired, might not *Ecclesia supplet* or “economy” be a final hope, even if the principle would have to be extended to situations where it has, as yet, never been applied ?

Perhaps until the present, discussions regarding ordination have tended to look too much to the past, that is to concentrate upon bringing together traditional concepts and offices held in the various Churches, not taking seriously enough the challenge of new forms of ministry and the world they reflect. But the fate of Lot’s wife should be kept in mind !

Of course it is important that no Christian be required to disavow his own history. Could the introduction of the epiclesis in a eucharistic celebration accompanying some such renewal of ministry be decisive for all ? It is the Holy Spirit leading the Churches together ; all alike have sin to repent of and treasure to bring. This being the case, the Churches can only be more visibly one through His action, and the introduction of the epiclesis could make this mutual poverty and mutual enrichment unmistakably clear.

The question of the meaning and use of ordination is Church-wide. And the admission that it *is* a problem is becoming Church-wide. The almost unlimited needs of the world for ministry, and the possibilities of ministry for every Christian are also being recognized. It is also clear that an enlarged, deepened and broadened concept of ordination combining an intentional binding to, and empowerment by, the apostolic ministry with new forms of service in the world, offers itself as an element in the deeper understanding of, and participation in, God’s mission in the world.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee III, see below pp. 223f.*

# WHERE IS THE SPIRIT LEADING ?

(Studies on Renewal and Order)

## 6. WORSHIP TODAY

### Introduction

How are Christians to pray and worship? This question is being asked today with growing urgency. In their traditional form at least, prayer and worship have become a problem in many Churches. What form are we to give them so that they should be acts in which the present generation can participate with conviction and not something imposed from the past whose meaning is forgotten? Reforms are being proposed and introduced. All kinds of experiments are being made in the hope of providing opportunities for new forms to emerge. Some begin to doubt the future. They cannot see how the gulf between the world of faith and worship and modern life can ever be bridged. Many, on the other hand, see this disquiet about worship as really a promise of new and important possibilities. Have not the traditional forms of worship been challenged in other periods as well? Did not new answers come from such upheavals? Even though each crisis is *sui generis* and even though we should not play down the present crisis, we may expect to be led by it to new answers.

The present problem of prayer and worship cannot be clarified without first asking what in fact we mean by worship. Otherwise our inquiry runs the risk of being caught up in too narrow an approach to the problem. It is not enough to begin with the symptoms and to propose certain remedies for these. The problem lies deeper: What is worship and what are its basic principles?

The Fourth Assembly in Uppsala (1968) made a first attempt in this direction. The draft document for discussion in Section V was entitled: "The Worship of God in a Secular Age". Its discussion, however, could not be expected to achieve conclusive results. Considering the lack of adequate preparation in the Churches, it was in any case a difficult undertaking. The Churches differ in their traditions of worship, and ecumenical discussion of these differences is far from being concluded. They have still to come to know and understand each other thoroughly. The different spiritual backgrounds have only just begun to influence each other. It was not to be expected, therefore, that the Assembly should in bypassing this unfinished task, as it were, reach a common mind on the problems of worship today. But certainly the Assembly did help to introduce new aspects of the theme of worship into ecumenical discussion. One not unimportant contributory factor here was the experience of the clash of old and new forms of worship at the Assembly itself. The now customary practice of ecumenical conferences in the matter

of worship was challenged from different angles. A certain impatience was evident; new experiments were tried on the fringe of the Assembly and in isolated cases even in the programme of the Assembly itself.

The discussion at Uppsala made it abundantly clear that the problem of worship does not arise everywhere in the same way. An analysis of the situation may seem to some to be quite accurate whereas by others coming from a different geographical and cultural background it is felt to be inadequate. The different confessional presuppositions also play a role here. Even more important, however, are the various anthropological, cultural and social factors. There is no single analysis of the situation applicable to all places anymore than there is one "modern man". The factual variety resists arbitrary simplification. One consequence of this may be that it becomes increasingly impossible for the Church to speak in generalizations about a theme such as "worship". It will have to face up consciously to the coexistence of a variety of assumptions, factors and interpretations.

The Assembly made this particularly clear in its discussion of the suitability of the term "secular". The choice of title had been an attempt to describe the "today" in which Christian worship has to be celebrated. It soon became clear, however, that such a universally applicable description was in fact excluded. The analyses of the situation as well as the conclusions drawn from them with respect to worship diverged widely. Whereas many spoke of a breach with the past, others challenged the view that the secular age was something completely new. Nor was this just a matter of differing opinions but clearly a matter of different experiences of reality.

The Uppsala Assembly assigned to the Commission on Faith and Order the task of pursuing further the inquiry into worship. To carry out this assignment the Commission arranged a consultation in Geneva from 8th to 13th September, 1969. Its purpose was to examine further the questions touched upon by the Assembly, and to define the *status quaestionis* more comprehensively and in greater detail. It was then to consider which questions would in future have to be dealt with first by the Commission on Faith and Order. The present report is an attempt to summarize the results of the consultation<sup>1</sup>. The 40 participants were representative of different traditions, trends and tendencies. The conference was deliberately planned in such a way as to bring differences into the open and to prevent them being smoothed away on either side. Consequently, a rich and sometimes bewildering variety of views emerged in discussion. But difficult as the discussion often proved, there was nevertheless an underlying unanimity of motivation hard to express in words. Despite the extent to which the participants differed, they were one in their deep concern that, both today and in the future, worship should be an authentic act.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The papers presented to the consultation are published in *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 7, 1970, No. 2/3 (Bussim, Nederland) under the title "Worship and Secularization", ed. Wiebe Voss.

<sup>2</sup> For a list of participants see Appendix, p. 250.

## I. "Worship" in a "secular" age

The consultation began by asking whether this title was really the right starting point for discussion. It had been chosen for the Assembly to make it clear from the outset that we live in a changed world and that, because of this, worship in its traditional form is called into question. Discussion was not to disappear into general considerations but to face up to this fact. No doubt the title served this purpose, but its attendant difficulties soon came to the fore. There are in the first place terminological difficulties. The term "worship" and still more the term "secular" together with its various derivatives (secularized, secularization, secularism, secularity) lend themselves to so many different interpretations that discussion is constantly exposed to the danger of misunderstandings. The words used in other languages for worship (e.g. *Gottesdienst*, *culte*) do not have the same meaning. They have such different roots that inevitably they carry very different associations. In the case of the word "secular", the difficulties are even greater. Quite apart from the fact that in some languages the verb "to secularize" primarily implies expropriation of church property, the debate in the Churches in recent years about modern man's sense and experience of life has produced a confusing variety of arguments. Whereas "secularization" and "secularity" usually refer to the process consequent on the loss of the view of a world and history ruled by God, "secularism" signifies the conversion of this process into an ideology. But it is also possible to draw different distinctions and however this may be done, the point of reference in the distinction has always been that of the Church. "Secular", with its derivatives, is essentially a Church concept. Outweighing all these considerations, however, is the fact that the terms used in the title as formulated tend to narrow discussion to one particular aspect, namely the apparent loss of the dimension of transcendence. If discussion should really embrace the full scope of the problem, however, it must be broadened. Some participants in the consultation summed up their misgivings about linking "worship" and "secular" as follows: (a) it is impossible to use the term "secular" in the ecumenical movement in an agreed connotation; (b) the term is ambiguous and therefore open to misunderstanding; (c) it is a relative concept in so far as it is always used as an antithesis to a presumed earlier, non-secular age; (d) it raises additional problems and (e) fails to focus on the real problem.

## II. How can we describe "Today" in relation to Worship?

The consultation was, of course, agreed that we should begin with an analysis of our present situation. Worship does not take place in a vacuum isolated from the circumstances of the day. While it may be true that Christians taking part in worship are not of this world, they do nevertheless belong to this world, no less than other men. However the nature of worship may

ultimately be defined in detail, it is essential therefore to agree about the situation in which it takes place.

The consultation was also agreed that there had been an exceptional change of conditions. Admittedly opinions differed as to whether the breach was really as complete as many today were inclined to assume. It was felt that the very rapidity of the change experienced today might possibly have led some to exaggerate the extent of change in comparison with previous breaches in history. But this difference did not affect the need for a careful analysis. At all events every attempt to draw a parallel between the present crisis in worship and previous crises (e.g. the cessation of worship in the Temple after the capture of Jerusalem, or the 16th century upheaval) was treated with scepticism.

Some discovered in the changed position of the Church in and over against the world the key change for the celebration of worship. Whereas the dominant trend had long been to subordinate the reality of the world to church categories and to interpret it accordingly, the world's autonomy and coming of age is now acknowledged. Others thought reference only to this factor insufficient. There had been a radical change of values. The modern consciousness could perhaps be described in terms of the following shifts of emphasis: (a) the stressing of change rather than of the permanent and continuing; and (b) of the particular rather than of the universal; (c) the priority given to plurality rather than to unity; (d) the stress on the relativity of all judgements and statements over against the absolute; (e) the view of conditions of the world not as givens but as modifiable and, therefore, (f) of man primarily not as one who is at the mercy of these conditions but rather as one who may be held responsible for actively shaping them. All these shifts of emphasis, it was held, are universal in character. Just as previous values had been shared by all, so today these shifts cut right across all systems and ideologies however different these might be in other respects.

It was generally agreed that the main difficulty was the lack of any reference to the divine in contemporary culture and its consequent inability to provide worship with an environment to support it as a matter of course. Reference to the transcendent Other, a reference which seems absolutely essential to worship, is felt to be something alien. Within this environment worship seems, at least at first sight, outmoded and antiquated. The cultural forms used in worship stem from a past age.

The question at once arises, however, as to the extent to which this evaluation can claim universal validity. The variety of situations has already been mentioned. Clearly we must reckon with different presuppositions depending on confessional and cultural factors. Even in the technological world of the West these presuppositions are not everywhere the same. The problem does not, for example, present itself in the same way in the United States as it does in the Soviet Union, and still less in Asia and Africa. It is also important not to regard the shifts, which we think we can discern, as being already completed. The altered dimensions do not abolish the past. Most people continue to

carry the past within themselves even when they overtly advocate new dimensions and the question regarding what reality must still be attributed to the abandoned dimensions cannot at all be regarded as already settled. In general, it is an open question how far these changes represent a movement which sooner or later will equally embrace all parts of the world. Are peoples for whom there seems to be no breach with cultural forms to be regarded merely as ghettos which will sooner or later be assimilated? Or do they not perhaps bear the seeds of a future which is *sui generis* and therefore does not accord with the situation in the civilisations which are for the moment historically the most powerful? It is clearly not a question here of an alternative. The majority of the participants were inclined to regard the present process as in principle irreversible and all-embracing, while admitting that little could be said concerning the strength of retarding factors and the speed of the process. On the other hand, of course, the importance of constant respect for the openness of history was repeatedly stressed. Absolute judgements may be the fruit not so much of genuine insight as of the messianic pretensions of some specific experience of the present situation.

### III. Is it possible in the present situation to worship meaningfully?

How we answer this question will depend largely on how we assess the change which has come about. Many do not put the question in this form at all. They do not believe that there has been any fundamental change. As in the past so in future, worship must be celebrated, they say, essentially in the traditional form it has acquired in history. Forms and formulas may, of course, be changed. No tradition is a static and unchangeable entity. Worship itself, however, is not called in question. Although this attitude may represent accurately the position of large sections of many Churches, the dominant view among the participants in the consultation was that the question as to the essential meaning of worship could not be avoided. The answers given in the course of discussion may be grouped as follows:

1. Although worship in its traditional form is called in question, worship itself is not. In facing up to the modern world, the Church is compelled to re-open the question of the real nature of worship. In doing so it discovers that many apparently essential elements in worship are in fact the results of distortions in the course of historical development. Forms of worship which were possible and even necessary responses to the Gospel in a particular situation have been absolutized and declared to be the only proper response for all times. It is generally recognized today that the forms of worship are historically conditioned. From this standpoint, the crisis of worship can be regarded as indicator of a process of purification making it possible to reaffirm the true nature of worship. So, for example, by its very nature, worship far

from being a "stepping out of the world" can be understood as a recognition and contemplation of the world in its creaturely and historical givenness. Therefore those elements of worship which promote an authentic relation to reality, such as intercession, offertory, experience of active fellowship and so on, are to be emphasized. "Worship is a function of life. There is no way to God which leaves out our fellowmen. Worship is faith, action, suffering."

2. Others regard the tension as being much more serious. The changes taking place put a question mark against prayer and worship as such. If worship is to have any meaning at all, there must be a radical reorientation. Mere adjustment is not enough. "The doors dividing a museum of antiquities from the secular world can either be closed or passed through. But no one can stay for long on the threshold". Thoughts of the kind expressed by Harvey Cox in *The Secular City*, while they may be popular for a time, are ultimately unsatisfactory. We cannot simply modify worship; it must be completely reconstructed on different principles. This is a demand which certainly cannot be met for the present, so long as orientation in the new world is still incomplete. What then is required? The present is a time of seeking and waiting and can only be lived authentically and with integrity if uncertainty is accepted. One way of describing the dilemma was as follows: In the last resort the Christian can only choose between "the ghetto and the desert". He can retreat into an artificially preserved "subculture", within which worship remains meaningful. Or he is compelled to recognize that there are no real bridges to the present world and its culture; he then finds himself in the "desert" with his knowledge, and perhaps even his doubts, of the ultimate relevance of God. The desert is the place of wandering among tormenting ambiguities, in which the Christian searches for new ways of relating to the transcendent, supported only by his hope in something yet to be revealed. There he may perhaps celebrate worship with individuals or with groups, always with the hope of new insights, as yet still unfulfilled.

3. Others begin with the question whether we have not magnified the changes which have taken place as given factors to be reckoned with in a positive sense. That changes have taken place and that worship must take them into account — this is not denied. But, they say, faith can never reckon on being confirmed by its environment; it is always action "when hope seems hopeless". It is therefore not surprising that worship find itself in conflict with the cultural forms of the present time. Tolerant agreement would be even greater cause for alarm. This applies especially to prayer. Prayer has at no time been a matter of course, except when understood simply as a religious exercise which satisfies man's "religious instinct" and not as prayer in Christ. Prayer is the cry of faith to God through Christ against the forces of unbelief. Attempts to reorientate worship radically fail to take seriously enough the reality of God. The full force of the possibility of unbelief and disobedience is not seen. Worship, in one of its intentions, is to be celebrated as a sign of rebellion against the fact that modern society seems to have lost its openness

towards God. At this point the Church should not lose its nerve. Above all it must not be afraid of ostracism and suffering.

4. Others, finally, believe that worship is challenged from two sides. A far-reaching change has taken place. A reorientation is needed. Worship must find its appropriate position between two opposing views of the world. On the one side, there is the view that the divine spiritual world is superior to this world, as the upper sphere, its task is to control the lower sphere. On the other side, as a reaction against this view which has prevailed for so long — there is the view that the independence and autonomy of the world and of history must be respected. Time and space are seen as primary and not as secondary reality. The Christian faith is not at home with this alternative. Indeed its basis is that in Christ God entered into the world and history. Worship celebrates this event and with it, therefore, the removal or indeed the irrelevance of this apparently insoluble contradiction. It sets its face against both “sacral heteronomy” and “profane autonomy”. Its basis is “theandric autonomy”.

#### IV. Where is the starting point for renewal of worship?

The participants in the consultation gave no agreed answer to this question. Some suggested that the biblical witness must provide the starting point for our reflection. Renewal would be achieved by a fresh questioning of the Church's tradition and, within this tradition, of the Old and New Testament. One of the groups adopted this method; it discussed certain aspects of worship, such as authority, fellowship, eucharist, on biblical principles and tried from this basis to illuminate what worship today is or might be. But there were many objections raised against this method. Even though the relevance of Scripture was not questioned and the ultimate importance of the scriptural witness was acknowledged, the objectors expressed fear lest over-hasty deductions from Scripture hinder us from facing up to the present reality with sufficient clarity. The existing situation cannot be postulated on the authority of biblical or even church-historical considerations, but should be grasped as it presents itself. To start from the biblical witness and church tradition, in particular, from liturgical tradition, could lead to “dogmatism, loss of touch with the present world” and, above all, to an “antiquarian” and ultimately, fruitless refurbishing of supposedly original forms. Although most participants favoured the renewal of sacramental practice, individual voices urged that even baptism and eucharist need not be regarded *automatically* as settled forms of Christian worship. The first and most important consideration should be the experience of the present generation. Where in our modern world do acts of worship take place? Only when this has been considered can it be profitable to study Holy Scripture afresh.

Of the three groups the one which adopted this method listed moments in human life which approximate to acts of worship insofar as they are

expressive of mutual human dedication : common involvement in the struggle for social justice ; eating and drinking together ; discussion in genuine search of truth ; shared silence, and so on. On the basis of these observations, they concluded that genuine worship has the following characteristics : mutual openness and candour, silence, festivity, the spirit of common sharing, freedom for spontaneous expression, restoration of human integrity, commitment, atmosphere of astonishment, physical activity, etc. Obviously these characteristics are not all equally important nor need they find a place in every act of worship. The purpose of the list is rather to show that worship has a basis in the life of modern man and must be fashioned accordingly. The "cultural bridges" can be found if we examine carefully where *de facto* acts of worship take place in modern life.

The ensuing discussion made it clear that the two methods of putting the question are not mutually exclusive. Good reasons can be put forth for both methods. Since faith is related to a definite historical event, we can only understand the nature of specifically Christian worship by considering the biblical witness. To divorce our thinking about worship from the specifically Christian historical roots is bound to result in vague generalizations. The tradition is in fact operative even when we imagine ourselves to be free from it. The selection and listing of contemporary acts to which the description worship can be applied will always be more or less determined by our traditional categories. How for example did the special significance of eating and drinking come to be included, if not in fact because it was suggested by the tradition of the eucharistic meal? The biblical and historical facts therefore remain necessary matter for discussion. But can worship really be connected to what is existentially meaningful for modern man if we do not consistently take actual experience as the point of departure? Is worship not otherwise in danger of becoming a form imposed on men rather than something in which they feel the meaning of their life expressed? This question is by itself enough to indicate the validity of the second method of inquiry. Most participants stressed the need for the broadest possible scope of inquiry.

Even though the two methods of approach can be thought of as complementary, they must not be harmonized. Depending on which side is stressed, a completely different view of worship can be present. Is the Church's worship based on God's revelation in history, supremely in Christ? Or are we to think of worship primarily as a universal human phenomenon? Is it a matter of investigating the way in which men participate in this historical reality and in doing so celebrate worship? Or do we have to start from a religious capacity for adoration inherent in man, which is subsequently to be filled out with the substance of the Gospel? Again and again in the conference this antithesis emerged. While one group maintained that Christ is the constitutive centre of worship and that the problem of worship is simply that of finding the appropriate expression of this fact today, both in form and in content, the other group began by attempting to define worship in general terms. For example, we might define worship as that which gives expression and reality

to fellowship and makes visible a relation to that which is of ultimate concern for men. It is characteristic of this view that it adds the following qualification to this definition: "For Christians, that which is of ultimate concern has its centre in Christ". Obviously considerable differences are bound to arise in the attempt to define this universal human capacity for adoration more precisely.

In the course of discussion it was constantly pointed out that worship cannot simply be equated with what takes place in the Churches. Both, among Christians and avowed non-Christians, genuine worship has always taken place in all kinds of situations. Worship must be looked at in this wider sense. The present crisis clearly enhances the importance of this assertion. To many, worship in its traditional form has become something alien. But even if they are no longer churchgoers, this does not mean that they are indifferent to worship as such. Those who stand at the fringe of formal worship may be of special importance for the future.

## V. Reforms are needed

However the individual participants in the consultation may have interpreted the present age, they were unanimous about the need for reforms in worship. They differed in the expectations they attached to reform. Whereas some saw it as the sole possibility of solving the crisis, others were unable to pitch their expectations so high. All they could expect from reforms was provisional solutions which certainly ought not be discarded but whose importance was not to be exaggerated either. No one denied the need for reform, not even those who expressed anxiety that reforms might cover up the deepest questions facing theology and the Church.

The following were the most important suggestions made regarding the renewal of worship:

1. Worship must not be divorced from the world. It must include an expression of responsibility for the world. Worship can only fulfil its function when it consciously takes place in the world. If worship is confined to adoration of God, then in fact the world is not proclaimed as God's creation but tends to become an autonomous sphere closed to God. But worship must make it possible to see God as Lord of history. It is important, therefore, that those elements in worship which express solidarity with the world around us should be given full weight. Worship is service for the world and prayer must, so to speak, be engaged in "with our eyes open". The resistance to mentioning mundane things in worship must be overcome. For example, it was suggested that the offertory and collection should be given a more prominent place in the service. The central importance of the intercessions was emphasized. But above all, the need was emphasized to bring out the connection between explicit acts of worship and worship in daily tasks.

2. Worship must make *koinonia* possible to a far greater degree than hitherto. The participants in worship should not come together in order to

pray as individuals ; they must "come into contact with each other, and get to know one another. In the name of Jesus they must also be together, bodily and materially, as brothers with a definite goal". Worship must be ordered in such a way as to make fellowship a matter of experience. This is not to say that worship be a "warm togetherness created by bonhomie and easy informality". Fellowship in the sense of *koinonia* makes exacting claims and it is in many ways easier to "worship" if one can remain an individual and not be exposed to these demands of fellowship. But if worship today is to be authentic, fellowship must be made a reality.

Real fellowship can only come about if people stand together in the presence of a third party. *Koinonia* is at once fellowship with God and fellowship with men. Ultimately men do not encounter each other by their own seeking. They stand together before a third party and worship must therefore make this presence evident. A form of worship in which one was only aware of other men would not in fact create fellowship.

3. The question about the third party in worship at once raises the question of authority. The consultation was agreed that authoritarian forms of worship must be abandoned. "Man is accustomed to act for himself." But he cannot do so in worship. He feels that he is being manipulated in a certain way. He takes part in pre-arranged forms he has done nothing to create and to which he cannot contribute anything. What confronts him is an institution ; he is subjected to a claim which he views sceptically because he is accustomed to recognize as authoritative only what is capable of convincing him. His thinking is not hierarchical, from above downwards, but from below upwards. This changed attitude lends weight also to the insistence on the need to make fellowship a reality. The presence of the third party should not, therefore, find expression only in static traditional forms, regarded today as authoritarian. It must take a new form, it must become unmistakably visible as confronting *all* and acknowledged by *all*. In this connection it was stressed, for example, that responsibility must not rest with an individual vested with authority in the matter but increasingly with the congregation itself. Active participation by all must be the aim. More attention must be given to the element of dialogue, not just in the sermon but in every part of worship. Meeting together must allow the possibility of interchange of ideas.

4. One of the major functions of worship has always been to provide man with a sense of security, to enable him to come to terms with the uncertainties of the world in which he finds himself. In the past man's sense of security has focused upon what he assumed was stable and unchanging. He found a continuity between the past, the present and the future. God himself was unchangeable. Now that man begins to see God as the God of change, as a dynamic presence in the midst of a continually evolving cosmos, he must ask himself seriously whether his security does not lie in change rather

than in some imagined unchangeable past which can simply be projected into the future. Man must learn to live with relativity. He must find his security in the midst of change rather than apart from it. This requires a new way of thinking about God and a major reorientation of worship.

5. Worship must become more spontaneous, or, as one group put it, more creative. This means, in the first place, that the participants in worship should be able to feel that they are not just carrying out a set piece, but within certain limits, sharing in its creation. But spontaneity means more than this. Worship must use symbols which are rooted in the experience of modern man and which give immediate expression to what is to be expressed. This is not to say that all symbolic actions no longer rooted in daily life have to be abandoned. Spontaneity means, rather, that fresh links are constantly being forged between worship in its more or less fixed forms and human experience. One of the participants in the conference spoke in this context of the new importance of liturgical "rubrics". Hitherto these "rubrics" were provided to indicate how the main text (the "nigrics", so to speak) was to be performed. But the relation between "nigrics" and "rubrics" must now be changed. What is said must be verified by convincing actions. The new rubrics must be marked by spontaneity, intellectual and ethical integrity, by a drive towards concrete expression and so on. Orthopraxis is not the mere repetition of an action but creativity.

6. Worship is not a self-contained act. It is aimed at the non-believer and is missionary in character. The consultation did not go thoroughly into what this orientation implied for the ordering of worship in detail. It was, however, repeatedly suggested that there should be a clear separation between the celebration of worship by the committed and the service intended explicitly as a missionary activity. The traditional worship service tries to a large extent to fulfil both functions simultaneously. It assumes a congregation of committed Christians but has constantly to be adapted to a wider circle. But the forms are not designed for this and collapse under the strain. In a period when in many places the entire population could be considered as belonging to the Church, this tension was not so apparent but today the Church is increasingly a diaspora almost everywhere and has to learn to live as a little flock without however turning into a ghetto. Worship must, therefore, take a different pattern according to the function it has at any given time. Whereas at one time there is need to give full expression to the claims of the Gospel and common devotion to common tasks, at another time worship must be propaedeutic in character; again and again the way to the Gospel must be cleared. We can perhaps illustrate the problem here by reference to the eucharist. In theology and in liturgical practice the insight has in recent years increasingly gained ground that insufficient emphasis has been placed on the Lord's Supper as a sign of real brotherly fellowship.

But if a congregation of some established Church concludes from this that the Lord's Supper must be celebrated more often and in the form of a common

meal, a false situation arises. The newly recognized purpose of the sacramental sign cannot in fact come to full fruition in this way. Its true context can only be that of genuine commitment. The Church can learn much, *mutatis mutandis*, from the distinction made in the ancient Church between the liturgy of the catechumens and the eucharist. Precisely because it took seriously the obligation arising from baptism and restricted participation in the eucharist to the baptized, the ancient Church was able to be in a special way effectively missionary and open towards the world.

The emphasis on the missionary character of worship raises even larger questions. Does this emphasis not touch on the very nature of worship? Has worship not too often been understood as the adoration of an unchanging God? Does not the very nature of worship change therefore if God is seen as carrying out his own mission in the world? Worship must then be understood as participation in God's activity. It was felt that this aspect needed to be further pursued.

7. Worship services broadcast by radio and television present a special problem. What opportunities do the mass media offer in this respect? Are they capable of communicating the reality of worship or of creating fellowship in worship? Or can they fulfil a different function for worship? How are these services — if they can be called services at all — related to ordinary services of worship? The consultation could only deal cursorily with these problems. But they are of the greatest importance for the ordering of worship, especially if we remember that, in those countries where the Churches are able to use the mass media, more people participate in these services than in any others. The problems raised by the mass media are far from solution. It is at least clear that services on the mass media are services of a special kind. Services which take place in one place and then are transmitted elsewhere change their character. Account has to be taken both of the medium employed and of the situation of the receiver. If the mass media are used for worship, therefore, attention must be paid to their special possibilities. The service must be created with the listener or viewer in mind. The mass media can exercise a far-reaching influence and are, precisely for this reason, indirectly means of establishing fellowship. But they have nothing to do with concrete fellowship and can therefore be said to fulfil only a preparatory function. The connection with concrete Christian fellowship urgently needs clarification.

## VI. The Crisis of Worship cannot be solved by Reforms

Although the consultation agreed that reforms were urgently needed, there were constant warnings not to expect too much merely from changed forms of worship. In the first place there were many sharp criticisms of efforts merely to make traditional elements of worship more accessible to modern man. These efforts did not have the desired success. They may make it possible for Christians who were wavering in their allegiance to continue

participating in worship. Liturgical reform has often amounted merely to rehabilitating the older and the most ancient forms of worship. Although this has sometimes demonstrated the surprising relevance of certain old forms — we think, for example, of the *agape* — the method of repristination as a rule does not produce forms which are suitable for today. One group distinguished, therefore, between liturgical reform and liturgical creativity. Creativity is really open for what is new. It too has its dangers, of course. Creativity can lead to arbitrariness. It can endanger the really necessary continuity of the Church as well as its unity. It can lose sight of the content of the Gospel and become the slave of aesthetic impressions and other passing fashions. Creative ordering of worship must start from Christ as the really New and continue to be rooted in Him (new in the sense not of *neos*, but of *kainos*). On this assumption worship can only be renewed by creativity.

Many, however, went beyond considerations such as these. They asked whether there really was so radical a difference between traditional worship and modernizing worship. Are not both of these in the same state of unbridgeable tension vis-à-vis the modern world? Indeed, is it not actually easier to celebrate an admittedly traditional service which lays no claim to modernity? To attempt to worship in forms suited to the modern world only serves to sharpen the problem. The participant can no longer use his historical awareness as a basis for taking part in what is happening. He is expressly addressed as a man of today and is thereby exposed to all kinds of difficulties in understanding. It may well be, therefore, that the traditional service despite its strangeness, can more effectively communicate what is meant, even though of course it cannot continue to be effective indefinitely. Many mentioned here with a certain irony those helpless reforms which are content to pass mechanically from “Latin to the vernacular, from the impressive to the simple, from the pulpit to the table, from Gregorian to jazz, from the sacred to the profane, from the clergy to the laity, from sanctuaries to houses and so on.” The result is often that what previously was in its way consistent becomes incoherent.

Whatever the arguments for and against, there was complete agreement that it was no longer possible to conceal the deepest problems raised by the crisis of worship. The Church must address itself to these problems. Some of them were mentioned in the course of the discussions :

1. It is inevitable that reflections upon worship ultimately lead to the question of God. What does it mean today to say “God” in the setting of the Christian tradition? The differences which emerged in the course of the consultation were in part connected with the fact that different answers are given to this question. But it is perhaps still more important that in relation to worship this question is hardly ever raised theologically, but is nevertheless present existentially. Until we seek to clear up this point, our discussion of worship has no sound basis. One aspect of this clarification is investigation into the relationship between the reality pointed to by the term “God” and

man's worship. What is the content of worship? Is the experience of God the experience which is or which must be made in worship? Or is the experience of worship nourished from still other sources?

2. Discussion of worship again and again comes up against the question of the relationship between "this" world and the world "to come", between this-worldliness and transcendence. Worship ultimately only makes sense if it is related to a third party of some kind and the worshipper is delivered from self-sufficiency. How are we to understand this relationship today? How are we to speak about the kingdom of God, the world to come, and in connection with these, about death? The question cannot be solved simply by taking the fullest possible account of "existential this-worldliness" in worship. Otherwise the question will only reappear unanswered in other places.

3. Closely connected with the questions already mentioned, the problem arises as to how we can once again acquire valid symbols. The collapse of symbolic language was frequently mentioned. There is a crisis of symbols, not symbols in the sense of signs but in the sense of natural and encompassing expressions of reality. The proof of this is that most symbols now need explanations. This crisis is not only the consequence of changed cosmological views but of an anthropological mutation. Are there genuine symbols then? What role have psychology and psychoanalysis in this context? And above all, can we expect to find universally valid symbols? The fact that men are increasingly included in one and the same history points to the need. But do such symbols accord with the particular historical origin of the Christian faith? In this respect, how are the particular and the universal related?

## VII. Conclusions for the Ecumenical Movement

The differences which emerged in the consultation were not primarily confessional in character. The dividing lines in the discussion were not identical with the lines dividing the confessional traditions. On the contrary, discussion centered on questions arising from the situation today and presenting themselves to the members of the conference irrespective of confessional loyalties. This does not mean that confessional traditions have ceased to be important. They are particularly important for ordering the newly-arising problems. Undoubtedly support for this or that approach mentioned in this report will have been influenced by confessional presuppositions. But the consultation makes clear above all that the question of worship today is drawing Christians of different traditions together into a questioning and questing fellowship.

Hitherto the ecumenical discussion has been concerned primarily with the ways of worship in the different traditions. It was assumed — consciously or unconsciously — that the act of prayer is the same in all traditions. This assumption made it possible for Christians to join in common prayer despite their differences. This is largely the basis of the Week of Prayer for Unity. The ecumenical discussion was sustained by the hope that this basic agreement

would make it possible to overcome differences or so to relate them to each other that they would no longer have to be regarded as divisive. But the consultation showed that the ecumenical discussion has to reach back beyond this assumption. Not to question common prayer; on the contrary, but certainly to face up to the questions which surround prayer and worship today. The different options open here must explicitly become topics in ecumenical discussion. Even if the saying, *lex orandi lex credendi*, may be open to question, it nevertheless surely contains an element of truth, and it is vital that the ecumenical discussion should press on to where decisions pregnant for the future are beginning to emerge.

This new approach to the question is both a fresh opportunity and a fresh task for the ecumenical movement. Christians of different traditions will find themselves on the one hand in closer fellowship, but on the other hand in new conflicts. They are discovering that the problem of unity suddenly presents itself in a new way. One member of the consultation spoke of three groups appearing in the discussion on worship: those who presuppose God, the Gospel, the Church as given certainties and live their faith on this basis; those who set their faces against every security in order to be able to be really open and questioning; and those who consider uncertainty as the genuine expression of faith and are determined to experience this uncertainty to the full. Another member of the consultation declared his allegiance to this third group in these words: "We are they who are one with modern man in his loss of the sense of God in the traditional sense; we are they who are one with modern man in his confusion of doubt; we are they who dare to believe that we are therefore one with the Christ who had not yet passed the gate of death when he said, My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me? We are they whose existence is a living death, whose intellectual activity is itself a form of crucifixion..."

The lines could also be drawn differently. In any event, new groupings are appearing and the conflicts which potentially divide them from one another are so great that they can only be held together by the passionate expectation of the New which God wills to do and will indeed do. But it was this passion which was a feature of the whole consultation.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee II, see below pp. 217ff.*

## 7. SPIRIT, ORDER AND ORGANIZATION

### Introduction

One of the projects of the Commission on Faith and Order in the period from 1964-1967 was the planning of a study under the title "Spirit, Order and Organization". The work done during these years was considered to be preparatory for the study itself, which was envisaged for another period of about four years. The supervisory committee of the study had decided that

the project should not be undertaken unless sufficient funds could be secured. As a matter of fact, no funds could be made available. Rather than altering the programme and scope of the study it was therefore decided to summarize its results, giving the circumstances of its origin and pointing out some of its implications for present discussions and similar ecumenical study efforts.

In the formulation of its theme the study anticipated problems which only today are beginning to receive attention. Their solution would have been easier perhaps if the study on "Spirit, Order and Organization" could have been carried through. To place this report in the right perspective some of these problem areas may be mentioned :

1. We witness today a profound crisis of human institutions. The values which served as ordering principles for human life in society in the past have lost much of their validity. More and more the Churches are drawn into this upheaval and efforts toward Christian unity appear in a new light. Far from being settled the old questions of continuity and change, of unity and diversity or plurality are forced upon us with new urgency.

2. The sudden proliferation of ecumenical activities on the local level, the emergence of numerous action-groups and of underground-church movements turns the former theoretical problem of "order" into a very real one : What are the elements which make the Church the Church? What is the centre of the identity of the Christian community?

3. The emergence and growth of Independent Churches in Africa, of Pentecostal Churches and of Pentecostalism within the established Churches could point to some deficiency of traditional Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Theology and practice of these Churches has to a large extent neglected the Holy Spirit, except for some standard affirmations about his continuing presence. This negligence which has deep roots in the tradition of the Western Churches becomes apparent today as a consequence of the growing participation of the Orthodox Churches in the ecumenical movement and in confrontation with Pentecostalism. More than ever before it is necessary today that we give serious attention to the question of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church and its mission. The Report of Section I of Uppsala has served to open new lines which have to be followed up.

4. In its methodological approach the study makes it quite clear that theological reflection in this area cannot any longer be pursued in the manner of "doctrinal deduction". But even though it is stated again and again that the traditional deductive method has to be complemented by an inductive and interdisciplinary approach, not much progress has been made as yet towards clarifying the methodological steps which this new approach could follow. The Zagorsk Consultation on "Theological Issues in Church and Society" (March 1968) has formulated the problem and the needs quite clearly, but we are still far from a satisfactory solution <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Study Encounter* IV, 2, 1968.

The following report will keep these present questions in mind and will return to them in a concluding section. At many places the report will refer to documents which were written in connection with the study <sup>2</sup>.

## I. Background and starting point

The study arose out of a specific situation in the work of the Faith and Order Commission.

1. The earliest roots of this study go back to a preparatory document for the Second World Conference on Faith and Order, Edinburgh 1937, with the title : The Non-Theological Factors in the Making and Unmaking of Church Union <sup>3</sup>. The questions of union and division of the Churches were the dominating themes of that early approach. From a later perspective one may question the way in which the problem was defined and especially the justification of the term "non-theological" factors. But this document introduced a question into the work of Faith and Order which today has become of central concern. It took some time until this first impulse came to fruition. After several preliminary discussions a document was prepared for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, Lund 1952, with the title : Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions <sup>4</sup>. It was the Lund Conference which included these concerns in the Constitution of the Commission (see paragraph 4 *b*). The document mentioned above was widely circulated. It finally led in 1955 to the establishment of a joint commission of theologians, sociologists and historians which was asked to study institutionalism as one of these factors <sup>5</sup>. The commission concluded its work in 1961 by publishing a report on "Institutionalism and Unity" <sup>6</sup> which was then submitted to the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order in Montreal 1963. In addition a symposium-volume was prepared containing some theoretical papers and case-studies which had developed in connection with the work of the commission <sup>7</sup>.

2. A further significant aspect in the background of the study on "Spirit, Order and Organization" was the fact that the North American Conference on Faith and Order (Oberlin 1957) paid considerable attention to the institutional

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<sup>2</sup> For papers up to Fall 1965 see *Concept X*, Nov. 1965, WCC, Geneva.

<sup>3</sup> Faith and Order Papers, Old Series No. 84.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Faith and Order Papers, New Series No. 10 ; see also Lund Report, pp. 174-203.

<sup>5</sup> Faith and Order Papers, New Series No. 22, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *The Old and the New in the Church*, SCM Press, London 1961, pp. 52 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Institutionalism and Church Unity*, Association Press, New York, 1963.

dimension of the Church<sup>8</sup>. It is in this connection that the polarity between order and organization was first introduced into the discussion. One of the sixteen study-groups which had prepared the conference (the Toronto group) had formulated a report on the theme of "order and organization" which then was incorporated into the conference-report. The conference recommended that theological study in the area of order and organizations should be continued<sup>9</sup>. This recommendation led in 1962 to the formation of a study-commission under the auspices of the National Council of Churches which worked on these questions until 1967. The commission struggled with the conceptual problems posed by the title of the study in much the same way as the WCC study did later. No official report was issued but some of the papers and research documents which emerged from the study were published separately<sup>10</sup>.

3. Mention should be made in this connection of the Unity statement of the New Delhi Assembly and its importance for the perspective and approach of this study, especially the passage that the unity "is being made visible as all... are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship"<sup>11</sup>. The New Delhi Assembly is also important in another respect: It was here that the most influential and controversial study on the "Missionary Structure of the Congregation" was inaugurated; this study was connected with a renewed emphasis on mission as a fundamental dimension of the Church. The study on the Missionary Structure and the one on Spirit, Order and Organization covered similar problems, though from different perspectives, and they employed similar methodological approaches<sup>12</sup>.

4. These different roots merged and finally led to the proposal at the Aarhus meeting of the Faith and Order Commission (1964) to start a study under the title "Spirit, Order and Organization"<sup>13</sup>. The proposal takes its clue from the unity statement of New Delhi as quoted above and it says that "this understanding of the action of the Holy Spirit in guiding Christians towards unity is important and needs to be fully explored in the light of the biblical and historical doctrine of the Spirit" (p. 58). The Spirit, on the one hand, is recognized as "the source of continuity in the life of the Church";

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. the official report *The Nature of the Unity We Seek*, Division II, pp. 206 ff., esp. section 8, pp. 229-236; see also the address by Dean Muelder on "Institutionalism in Relation to Unity and Disunity", *ibid.*, pp. 90-102.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. report, p. 211.

<sup>10</sup> See Gibson Winter, *Religious Identity*, Macmillan, New York 1968; Paul M. van Buren, What do we mean by an "Empirical Investigation of the Church?" in: Paul M. van Buren, *Theological Explorations*, London, SCM Press 1968, p. 431 f. See also the minutes of the Faith and Order committee meetings in June 1965 and January 1967.

<sup>11</sup> New Delhi Report, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> See H. J. Margull, *Mission als Strukturprinzip*, WCC, Geneva, 1965; *The Church for Others*, WCC, Geneva, 1967.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Aarhus Minutes*, Faith and Order Papers No. 44, pp. 58 ff.

on the other hand "the Spirit as judging and transforming power is to be discerned... in changes...". Some understand the workings of the Spirit as establishing and maintaining the order of the Church, others connect them more with personal, spontaneous experiences. These differences call for investigation. The Commission further recommended that a start be made in this study from an empirical analysis of actual situations in the world and in the Churches, rather than with a deduction from doctrinal principles. Following the New Delhi emphasis on the local Church the Commission proposed to study the status and function of the local Church in terms of "church order". Further the ecclesiastical status of new groups, movements and forms of church life should be investigated and the study finally should also consider the larger structures of the life of the Church as denominations, councils, etc.

5. The proposal is mainly concerned with a new understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. But, as mentioned above, the renewed emphasis on mission was an implicit second focus for the study. "Mission, renewal, new structures of church life, and the relation between the Holy Spirit and the Church have come to the forefront in recent ecumenical discussions. A growing conviction is evident that engagement in mission in the contemporary world can and should lead to unity in faith and order. Such engagement leads to attempts to restructure ecclesiastical organizations, to develop new organizational structures, and to renew and revitalize traditional organizations. These attempts involve grappling with the sociological reality of given ecclesiastical structures in order to make them more appropriate for mission in the contemporary world"<sup>14</sup>.

## II. Reflections about purpose and method

1. The study intended to set an example for a new approach to the whole problem area. Former endeavours in the area of "non-theological factors" were mainly concerned with problems of continuity and change<sup>15</sup> trying to isolate the factors which were preventing or supporting church union. The study on "Spirit, Order and Organization" from the very beginning shared, as has been pointed out, the impulse towards missionary renewal of the Churches. "The basic conviction underlying the proposal for this study is that in allowing ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in the contemporary world we shall discover that our forms of church life change. It is the conviction that responsible and obedient engagement in mission may not only lead to change but to deeper unity. It is based on the hope that in obedience in one area we may find fruit growing in others ; that mission can and should lead to unity"<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Report of the first consultation, August 1965, cf. *Concept X*, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Institutionalism and Church Unity*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30, 38 *et al.*

<sup>16</sup> *Concept X*, p. 11.

The emphasis on mission had implications for the understanding of "order". Both in the North American and in the WCC study-group on Order and Organization it was strongly felt that any conception of an essential order in the Church could no longer be interpreted in "static" or "a-historical" terms, but that order had to be understood as functionally related to the particular historical situation. Contrary to the view that some timeless order provides the criterion for the ever changing expressions of the life of the Church, the hypothesis underlying this approach was that "order" itself is an expression of the Church's response to the calling of God through his Spirit. In order to learn how "order" actually functions in church life it seemed best to investigate how Churches respond to the demand for change in face of situations where the mission is felt to be at stake.

The purpose of the study comes to clearer expression in the fact that "organization" replaced "institution" as the leading concept<sup>17</sup>. In the former study the basic reference of institution had been to continuity, whereas organization is a thoroughly dynamic concept presupposing change as necessary. In addition, the concept of organization avoids the conceptual difficulties which arise when the attempt is made to define institution in empirical terms. The advantage of the change from "institutionalism" to "organization" may be summed up in this way (following Mady A. Thung).

- a) Organization allows for the distinction between consciously planned and unconscious processes of institutionalization ;
- b) Organization, seen as a process of goal-oriented action, introduces the element of "orientation to a common purpose" ;
- c) Organization takes account of the "informal and unorganized processes" that accompany all formal order. It thus avoids the identification between church life and church order.
- d) Organization leads to a functional understanding of formal order as being subservient to purpose. It brings to awareness the frustrating potential in all formal order.

By connecting the question of organizational renewal of the Church with the other one about the working of the Holy Spirit the study introduced a further new dimension into the reflections. "Ultimately our aim is a broader and deeper understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the Church"<sup>18</sup>. But in what terms could one speak at all about the working of the Holy Spirit? The Aarhus recommendation had listed some of the antagonisms in the understanding of the Holy Spirit<sup>19</sup> but at the same time had underlined the necessity to start from empirical investigation instead of

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<sup>17</sup> See the mimeographed paper by Mady A. Thung, "From Institutionalism to Organization" (1966) for a full evaluation of this transition.

<sup>18</sup> *Concept X*, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Aarhus Minutes*, p. 58, para. 4.

deduction from doctrinal principles. And if the Holy Spirit indeed signifies in an inclusive way God's present action in the Church and in the world, did not then the very doctrine of the Holy Spirit demand that a study of the working of the Holy Spirit start from the empirical end? During the first consultation in connection with this study someone put it this way: The Holy Spirit is God at his most empirical<sup>20</sup>. This conviction served as a central point of reference for the further deliberations and it led to some important methodological consequences.

2. The demand for empirical study, mentioned already in the Aarhus statement, implied that work should be carried out on an interdisciplinary basis and the discipline of sociology was selected as the specific counterpart of theology in this endeavour. This is an evident choice where the problems of organization and structure of the Church are at stake. The study did not, however, restrict itself to sociological analysis exclusively. Empirical findings resulting from historical investigation were given full attention. It was the stated intention of the study to develop ways of cooperation and dialogue in which the partners could fully express themselves. Until then, it was the impression of the participants, empirical sciences had more or less been dominated by theology in interdisciplinary exchange and it seemed necessary, therefore, to give full attention to their insights.

The study reflects the feeling that this empirical interdisciplinary approach represents a "new way of doing theology". The idea certainly was not new; the study on Institutionalism was planned on an interdisciplinary and to some extent empirical basis and also the study on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation had adopted this approach in a very pronounced way. Nevertheless, the conviction of the participants in the "Spirit, Order and Organization" study seems justified — they had embarked on a new way of doing theology. For together with the related study in the USA it was the first ecumenical study in this area which seriously tried to reflect upon its methodological procedure. Meanwhile the approach has become widely accepted, but it may be questioned whether much progress has been made in the clarification of basic methodological presuppositions.

If the study was to proceed with a consciously reflected method it had to take some stand in the long debate concerning the relationship between theology and sociology as sciences. The preceding discussions under the auspices of Faith and Order had largely been determined by the distinction between theological and non-theological factors. This distinction originally was a reflection of the experience that achievement of union between Churches depended not only on the overcoming of doctrinal differences. More and more one had to realize that social, psychological, political and organizational factors had a strong influence of these processes. But this distinction became increasingly questionable the more the insight was accepted that

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<sup>20</sup> See *Concept X*, p. 7.

Churches as a whole are social bodies and that even doctrine is to a certain extent a reflection of specific social and political conditions in which a Church finds itself. One could not any longer proceed on the assumption that while investigating the Church as a social phenomenon some aspects are impenetrable for empirical study and exclusively reserved for the theological analysis and reflection.

In the study it was made clear from the very beginning that the distinction between theological and non-theological factors or areas of investigation had to be abandoned<sup>21</sup>. The difference between sociology and theology was interpreted as a difference of perspective, orientation or interest, rather than as a distinction between different objects of research. Sociologists and theologians do in fact talk about the same empirical phenomenon, the Church as a "body" in society, but they proceed on different presuppositions and ask different questions. This fundamental assumption was not understood as being destructive of the independence of theology. "The entire basis of independent theological examination is rather the realization that all statements of theology are insights derived from the reality of Christ"<sup>22</sup>. The mode of cooperation between sociology and theology was interpreted as interaction : Sociology was to formulate on its own terms and as clearly as possible those questions and problems which are put to the Church from the present situation in society. But one was equally aware of the fact that independent and thorough theological reflection was needed in order to secure that the interpretation of empirical data would lead to meaningful theological questions. For not everything that lends itself to sociological analysis by the same fact already has theological significance. But on the basic assumption that God through his Spirit is already at work in the events in Church and world, that the Holy Spirit is God at his most empirical, one could hope that by sociological, empirical study one would eventually arrive at points where the theologian believes that action of the Spirit is encountered. Here, then, a theological interpretation of phenomena and a theological answer to questions arising from the situation would seem appropriate.

It is evident that in this delicate field of interaction between sociology and theology certain precautions are necessary in order to make sure that both partners of the dialogue do in fact continue to speak about the same phenomenon. First of all this is a question of language, of terminology. Secondly, it involves the selection of areas of investigation that are meaningful to both. In the following remarks these two points will be elaborated a little further.

One of the paramount difficulties of any interdisciplinary work is the difference of language between the disciplines. Language defines a certain field of experience. Each language represents a certain interpretation of the

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<sup>21</sup> See papers by H. ten Doornkaat Koolman, *Concept X*, p. 52 and by Mady A. Thung, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> H. ten Doornkaat Koolman in : *Concept X*, p. 52.

world. This is also true for the special languages of scientific disciplines. But there are various overlappings between these special languages since any one of them must, ideally at least, be retranslatable into the common language of the everyday world. The difference in language between sociology and theology is apparent. Where this difference (which only reflects the difference in perspective) is neglected there follows a misleading usurpation of concepts which necessarily take on a new meaning in the new context. Even though the concept has remained the same the whole system of reference has changed. Interdisciplinary work, therefore, has to face up to the necessity of continuously translating and interpreting the concepts used. The present study, being aware of this demand, tried to develop a number of working definitions of the main concepts like order, organization, institution, institutionalization. The purpose of these working-definitions was to formulate in a preliminary way the common understanding of these concepts; they were to serve as principal keys to translation and thus they should secure that both partners would indeed speak of the same empirical phenomena. This certainly represents an improvement compared to a certain terminological confusion in earlier studies. It was, however, understood that these working definitions were of a preliminary nature and that they would have to be changed in the course of the work to retain their communicative and translating function.

This whole approach reveals some of the theoretical assumptions about the relationship between theology and sociology which stood behind the study. The major theoretical clue came from an essay by Prof. H. Schelsky where he suggested that theology and sociology should mainly try to arrive at "statements of parallel meaning" (*sinnparallele Aussagen*) and that careful analysis was necessary to discover those areas where such statements are possible<sup>23</sup>.

The second demand upon any interdisciplinary work is the selection of meaningful and relevant areas of investigation, i.e. in our case the selection of such phenomena connected with the social reality of the Church which lend themselves to empirical sociological analysis and which at the same time justify the expectation that in the course of empirical analysis questions can be formulated which can be interpreted in theological terms and thus be transformed into meaningful theological questions. Since theological interest in this study centered around the action of the Holy Spirit and a better understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and the Church it was necessary to select such areas for investigation in which on theological grounds the action of the Spirit was to be expected most. Such a selection which narrows down the range of the investigation certainly has far-reaching consequences. It has, however, to be noted that this decision is unavoidable in any scientific

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. his article "Religionssoziologie und Theologie" in: ZEE 1959, 3, pp. 129-145, esp. pp. 131-132; see also his earlier essay "Ist die Dauerreflexion institutionalisierbar? Zum Thema einer modernen Religionssoziologie" in: ZEE 1957, 4, pp. 153-174 and the reactions to it: see also Mady A. Thung, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

work. One has to arrive at a definition of what will be regarded and recorded as relevant data. It is equally clear that this decision is based on certain presuppositions regarding the way in which the Holy Spirit presumably works. Any empirical study is biased to a certain extent but it is important to state explicitly as many of these presuppositions as is possible.

The two areas selected for investigation in this study were "protest" and "unity". To quote from the report of the first consultation: "'Protest' is understood in a very wide sense to cover any group or movement which arises within or in relation to a Church or Churches or a particular element in the life of a Church 'in protest' against features of its life or deficiencies that are believed to exist in that life. This general subject of protest has been chosen as being eventually particularly relevant to the question of the work of the Holy Spirit as protest groups in church life presumably believe that in making their protests they are being obedient to the Holy Spirit. . . . The choice of the topic of 'unity' is sufficiently explained by the concerns and presuppositions of the ecumenical movement. . . . We propose to make a start in this topic by concentrating on the organizational aspects of re-union, that is by studying examples of the coming-together or attempted coming together of churchly bodies." <sup>24</sup>

3. The participants agreed that after an initial period of clarifying concepts and terms and of defining the problem sociology should take the lead. In order to arrive at a true dialogue between theology and sociology it was necessary first of all to provide and analyse the relevant material. It was planned to work on the basis of case-studies which should include contemporary as well as historical examples. Possible case-studies were listed for the two major areas: protest and re-union. In order to make these case studies comparable and to be able eventually to code the important data for thorough analysis the group developed a research-design or "theoretical framework for investigation". This scheme was intended to provide the individual investigators, both sociologists and historians, with some guide-lines and to pinpoint the major questions to be asked. The case-studies were to be developed along these lines. Furthermore, thought had been given to the appropriate distribution of case-studies in order to ensure that the most important or the not yet sufficiently investigated areas were covered by them.

After a preliminary analysis of the case-studies was available the study was to proceed to its second phase. Theology and its empirical counterparts should now be brought into genuine interaction, i.e. into a process of mutual questioning and answering. It was the expectation that certain questions would arise from the case-studies which would inspire theology to enter upon some complementary biblical, theological and doctrinal studies in a new and original way. Questions like the following were anticipated <sup>25</sup>:

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<sup>24</sup> See *Concept X*, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Concept X*, pp. 15-16.

- a) How can the action of the Spirit be recognized and by which criteria?
- b) What is the nature of "order" and to which empirical phenomena does this concept correspond?
- c) How is the tension between order and organization to be interpreted and how can it be solved?
- d) What is the proper relationship between the "given" presence of the Spirit in Church and world and the eschatological hope?

### III. The development of the study

It is not the purpose of this section to give a detailed chronicle of the development of the study, but rather to use this study as a paradigm to show how interdisciplinary work between sociologists and theologians could be pursued, what the major problems and difficulties are that can arise on the way and where the procedure of this study could have been improved.

1. The study developed in three stages or phases which correspond closely to the three years during which the work was done. Starting from the Aarhus recommendation the *first phase* was mainly devoted to the task of agreeing upon a preliminary definition of the purpose of the study and of the method to be followed. A first consultation in 1965 mainly served this function<sup>26</sup>. After three theologians from different church traditions had presented a doctrinal statement about the relationship between Spirit, Order and Organization the difficulties which had led to the recommendation of this study became vividly alive. It was apparent that these differences could not be bridged on the basis of doctrinal discussion alone. Being committed to start from the empirical end the consultation took as its primary task to come to some terminological agreement in order to define the problem in such terms that empirical investigation was possible. For this purpose the consultation developed four working definitions the function of which has already been referred to in the preceding section. They are quoted here from the consultation report<sup>27</sup>.

- a) By the term "organization" we understand a historically given, empirically explorable social system or social group which is characterized :
  - i) by a certain set of goals and values
  - ii) by a certain set of means destined to realize the goals and values
  - iii) by a more or less consciously planned arrangement of i) and ii) which is called structure.
- b) The theological term "order" as used in the Faith and Order discussions is not a normal or natural term in sociology. However, an attempt has

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<sup>26</sup> For the papers and a report of this consultation see *Concept X*.

<sup>27</sup> See *Concept X*, pp. 12-13.

been made to relate the observed theological use of this term in such discussions to normal sociological terms. It is suggested that "order" may be considered as the equivalent of those elements in the set of means which are acknowledged by the members of the organization (or by groups of members) as indispensable parts of the set of goals and values.

- c) By the term "institution" we understand a pattern of collective behaviour. (This broad and simple working definition is adopted in deliberate opposition to the unreflective current use of the term in the sense of an organization, an institute, or a social structure and also against the presupposition that the term must automatically have a pejorative sense.)
- d) By the term "institutionalization" we understand all those processes by which patterns of collective behaviour are established. These may range from spontaneous action at the one end to highly formalized action such as bureaucratization at the other. Any of these processes may lead to rigidity at any stage but need not necessarily do so.

2. The *second phase* again was marked by a consultation (in 1966) but not even one third of its participants had been present at the first meeting. It is not astonishing, therefore, that much of the discussion was given to a critical evaluation of the work done so far. The initial impulse came from the paper by Mady A. Thung which has already been mentioned above and a report by Walter Hollenweger about further progress in the study on the Missionary Structure of the Congregation. It became clear in the following debate that the working definitions had not yet sufficiently solved the problem of the difference in language between sociology and theology and among theologians and sociologists themselves. The difficulties centered mainly around the interpretation of the concept of "order". Some theological participants thought that the working definition which was adopted previously was too narrow but no satisfactory agreement could be reached.

This terminological problem is reflected in subsequent difficulties about the definition of the problem. What precisely is the problem? Is it the discrepancy between claim and reality of the Church, or is it rather the tension between the calling or the task of the Church and its present state? Can the concept and the notion of "order" simply be replaced by "calling" or "task"? How are these in turn to be defined and what are the criteria for the discernment of the task of the Church in a specific situation? Can the demand for radical renewal of the Church simply ignore the traditional *notae ecclesiae* and what is their relationship to the concept of "order"? These were some of the questions which arose in the course of this discussion.

There was agreement that a static and timeless interpretation of "order" had to be overcome but the consultation did not produce any positive consensus. The major achievement of the consultation was a significant refinement of the research-design, i.e. towards a better inter-relation between protest-movements and processes of change in organized bodies. Some examples of pertinent theological questions were given but it is quite clear that the socio-

logists in the group, lacking sufficient support or criticism from the side of the theologians eventually found themselves defining the problem in their own terms. To remain fair to both partners it should, however, be added that the reluctance of the theological participants to enter the debate at this stage was intentional. They had not only been assigned the function of "listeners" but they deliberately assumed this role in order to learn more about the ways of reasoning among their sociological partners. In addition, nobody expected this to be the last meeting of the study group and if it was to be the time of the sociologists at this consultation so the time for theological reflection would come.

3. After the second consultation had defined the problem as described above the necessary next step in the *third phase* was to design a *strategy* for the clarification of this problem. Several lines and ways of investigation were proposed: case-studies, a review and consequent coding of relevant literature, comparative studies, and finally a thorough comparative analysis of all the material and data collected. These reflections about strategy resulted in a new proposal for the study as it was adopted by the Commission on Faith and Order at its meeting in Bristol, August 1967. If one compares this last statement on the study with the first proposal of the Aarhus Commission meeting, a certain change of emphasis is apparent. The suggested study about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the relationship between the Spirit and the Church has turned into a study which "would serve to provide a contribution to the understanding of the sociology of organizations". Only in the third instance its possible theological value is described as providing "one way of gaining insight into the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church". The study was now divided into two parts, the main purpose of the second part being to find out how the empirical findings in the first part could best "be reflected upon theologically". Theological reflection thus had been postponed to a later stage.

An interdisciplinary study has to define its problem in terms that are meaningful not only theologically but which open up possible lines for empirical research. But the question arises at this point whether the study as proposed in this final statement was indeed an interdisciplinary study any longer. It was one among the sociological participants who questioned the approach on just these grounds. This self-criticism could even take the form of the query whether the group had not defined away to some extent what at this stage really was the principal problem, i.e. getting the problem defined. However this may be, there was a strong feeling that some theological work should go on parallel to empirical analysis in order to keep the study an interdisciplinary one. As one possibility in this direction it was suggested that the findings on ecclesiology and pneumatology in previous Faith and Order studies be reviewed and summarized so that they could be used for the present study.

A similar self-limitation of the study can be discerned in the treatment of the concept of "order". Lacking a commonly agreed statement what the

theological meaning of the term was, one decided in favour of a "pragmatic" definition of meaning. The study thus limited its purpose to the investigation of the empirically observable consequences that follow from the theological use of the concept. Since the notion of order in all of its different interpretations was connected with the preservation of identity and continuity of the Church in situations of change one expected to learn something about the actual functioning of this notion by investigating the reactions of organized church bodies which are challenged by protest-groups. Many protest-groups at least claim that in their protest they are obedient to the Holy Spirit. Thus one could hope to learn something about the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church.

#### IV. Results and critical evaluation

The immediate results of the study have already been discussed. They are limited and perhaps would not even warrant such a detailed report. But in science even such experiments which have failed to produce the expected results or which have produced no results at all are regarded as potentially significant. This study, to be sure, did not even enter the experimental phase because the necessary funds were lacking. But one could, nevertheless, make a "thought-experiment" and try thereby to assess the expected value of the study. Three main areas could be considered in this context; they correspond closely to the reasons for an undiminished significance of the study suggested in the introduction:

- The function of empirical research for theological reflection, especially in the field of ecclesiology.
- The usefulness of an analysis of the Church as a social unit in terms of organizational sociology and the consequences which follow from this perspective for the problem of order.
- The relationship between ecclesiology and pneumatology.

1. In its *methodological reflection* the study certainly has contributed valuable insights for similar ecumenical study projects. Its import is seen mainly in three elements:

- a) The study has made evident that it is necessary for any interdisciplinary investigation to arrive at some common working definition of the principal concepts to be employed. The failure of this attempt with regard to the concept of "order" in the present study can only serve to underline this point.
- b) After this study it should be impossible in ecumenical discussions to fall back into the language of "non-theological" factors. The study has at least succeeded in stating a convincing case for an interdisciplinary investigation of the Church as a social phenomenon attributing the distinction between the disciplines to a difference in perspective and interest. No

part of actual church life, not even the doctrine of the Church, is closed to analysis from either perspective.

- c) The study, by taking up the suggestion to work for "statements of parallel meaning", has described a possible line of co-operation and inter-action between sociology and theology. After this study it should be difficult to repeat the simple scheme of thought which assigns to sociology the task of asking the questions whereas it is the privilege of theology to provide the answers.

After this has been said, a number of critical questions could be asked and the study group itself was aware of most of them :

A certain widespread enthusiasm for empirical studies among theologians is a phenomenon that is worth some empirical study itself. Even where agreement is reached that the traditional "deductive" method in theology has to be complemented by a more "inductive" and empirical approach it is not yet clear how empirical methods can be used most fruitfully for theological reflection. Theology, it seems, would be meaningless, if it had no points of reference among empirically observable phenomena or simply no basis in experience. But what does the sentence : "The Holy Spirit is God at his most empirical" really imply for the relationship between empirical observation and theological judgement? Further, empirical data do not speak for themselves. Any empirical research is based on certain theoretical presuppositions. It operates with some theory which functions to provide critical control of the research process and which gives the principal clue for the interpretation of data. What, then, is the status of a theological interpretation of data in relation to their interpretation in the sociological context? It does not yet constitute interdisciplinary research when theologians incorporate the findings of empirical studies into their own reflections without taking account of the theoretical framework in which these findings are located.

The study group tried to arrive at "statements of parallel meaning". However, the group was unable to agree upon some statement about what in fact they were looking for when they attempted to study the action of the Holy Spirit empirically. Theological doctrine or the different doctrinal traditions of the Holy Spirit provide no clue for empirical research, unless they are interpreted and transformed into empirically meaningful hypotheses. As long as theology only operates with the vague affirmation that the Holy Spirit is God at his most empirical without further specifying his relationship to empirically observable phenomena sociology will be of no help at all. Sociological research will trace the action of the Holy Spirit just as little as it will help to solve problems of church order. The most it can do is to observe what difference it makes whether certain events are claimed as being actions of the Holy Spirit or not. Interdisciplinary work between theologians and sociologists will not be fruitful unless theologians try to interpret traditional and present doctrine in the direction of its empirical reference. Thus one would have to ask : What are the theological reasons to look for action of the

Spirit in the area of protest and change rather than in the area of continuity and order? Should one look for the action of the Spirit in individual experience rather than in collective phenomena, and what are the theological reasons for either option?

2. The study has given some clues regarding the usefulness of *the concept of organization* for an analysis of the Church. To some extent it has proved the advantages of this conceptualization over against the former one which thought in terms of "institution". Meanwhile organizational sociology has been further developed and a number of studies on political, economic and bureaucratic organizations have been published. Perhaps a further differentiation between different models of organization would be required today if research along the lines suggested in this study should be pursued. But in spite of several interesting applications of concepts from organizational sociology for the analysis of the Church<sup>28</sup>, the ecclesiological implications of this way of conceptualization have still to be spelled out.

In the title of the study "order" and "organization" are put alongside each other. They seem to form a new "dualism" similar to the more familiar ones between *koinonia* and institution, event and institution, invisible and visible Church. What is the significance of this new distinction in comparison with the older ones and what is the theological reason for these distinctions? With respect to the polarity between order and organization one would have to ask whether it is understood in terms of "primary order" and "secondary organization"<sup>29</sup> and whether this interpretation is acceptable in the light of the sociological understanding of the concept of organization. Can Churches be exhaustively analysed in terms of organization or is there something left which transcends organization? Is it only the fact that order traditionally has been interpreted unhistorically and statically which makes this category sociologically opaque? Further, what would be the theological consequence if order were interpreted functionally rather than as normative?

These are some of the questions which might have been asked if the study had been continued. Things standing as they do, it can, however, be doubted whether case-studies of protest groups and of the reactions of organized Churches to them would have arrived at any theologically meaningful results unless theological reflection at the point indicated above had been carried much further.

3. The study in its preliminary state is least satisfactory with regard to the central question which originally gave the initial impulse: i.e. *the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Church*. Perhaps the principal reason for this failure is the fact that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and even more the sensitivity to his active presence in the Church and the world were and still

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<sup>28</sup> See e.g. J. Klein, "Structural Aspects of Church Organisation", in: *International Yearbook in the Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 4, 1968, pp. 101 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *The Nature of the Unity We Seek*, p. 210.

are underdeveloped in the western tradition of Christianity. The unity statement of New Delhi with its reference to the Holy Spirit anticipated a consensus which still had to be worked out. Meanwhile the report about "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church" of Section I of the Uppsala Assembly has opened new dimensions of understanding the working of the Holy Spirit. Not only catholicity, "the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, the integrity and the totality of her life in Christ"<sup>30</sup> is seen as the Spirit's gift. He is equally asserted to be the origin of a constitutive diversity in the life of the Church. For, by such diversity, which serves the calling of the Church, "the Spirit leads us forward on the way to a fully catholic mission and ministry"<sup>31</sup>.

The question should, however, be asked — and it has been asked by some participants — whether the study did not in fact proceed on the basis of a silent and implicit assumption about the Holy Spirit and his action. In associating the Holy Spirit mainly with protest and change it has again come close to the dualism of event and institution and has to some extent foreclosed the possibility of interpreting order in terms of the action of the Spirit. This procedure, which evidently is very close to the radical protestant approach to the problem, could be interpreted as betraying a certain theological bias that has not been sufficiently examined.

Moreover, any serious attempt to relate in this study the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with the doctrine of the Church would evidently have to interpret the action of the Spirit in terms of "organization". No serious attempts were undertaken in this direction which is all the more regrettable since the whole set-up of the study called for a revision of the antagonism between Protest/Spirit and Order/Spirit. Perhaps this could have been accomplished if the doctrine of the Spirit would have been explicitly related to organization.

These critical reflections, however, show that the whole approach still is extremely important and valid and it can only be hoped that the Faith and Order Commission will not lose sight again of the questions which have been formulated in this study.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Uppsala Report*, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

# CATHOLICITY AND COMMON WITNESS

(Studies on behalf of the Joint Working Group between  
the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches)

## 8. CATHOLICITY AND APOSTOLICITY

*The following study document, prepared by a Joint Theological Commission on the initiative of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches was received by the latter at its meeting in May 1970. The status of this document is expressed in paragraph 2: "This study document is not a joint statement, neither is it a doctrinal consensus nor a status quaestionis; it is essentially a tool in the service of joint research."*

*While noting the limited status which the document enjoys, the Joint Working Group considers it to be a real step forward in ecumenical discussion. It therefore recommends to its parent bodies that it be offered to the Churches for attentive consideration by competent theologians.*

### Preface

1. In 1966, the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches decided that a Joint Theological Commission be formed "to study the fundamental issues that continually arise between the Roman Catholic Church and the other Churches" (first Report of the Joint Working Group, 7). It suggested that the Commission should examine the general theme "Catholicity and Apostolicity". The Commission was appointed in the following year. Its work has been organized by the Secretariat of the Commission on Faith and Order and by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome<sup>1</sup>.

The Commission has held three meetings (at Nemi, Rome, May 19-24, 1967; at Oud-Poelgeest, Holland, December 16-20, 1967; and in Rome, May 31-June 5, 1968)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a list of the members of the Commission see Appendix of this volume, p. 251

<sup>2</sup> The following papers were prepared and discussed: Apostolicity — Present State of Studies (R. Schnackenburg); The Catholicity of the Church (J. Bosc); Historical Relativism and the Authority of Christian Dogma (J. Meyendorff); Pluralism and Unity — Possibility of Different 'Typologies' within the Same Ecclesial Allegiance (E. Lanne); Ministry, Episcopacy, Primacy (A. Ganoczy); Some Theses on the Sacramentality of the Church (in connection with Catholicity and Apostolicity) (J. L. Witte); Local Church: Catholicity and Apostolicity (E. Lanne); The Role of Eschatology in Understanding the Apostolicity and Catholicity of the Church (W. Pannenberg); "Catholic" and "Apostolic" in the First Centuries (J. N. D. Kelly). Most of these papers have appeared in *One in Christ*: 1970/3.

2. During its third meeting the Commission decided to suspend its work and to prepare a study document for publication with a view to promoting continuation of the theological dialogue on these points. At the request of the Joint Working Group the draft document offered by the Commission was later revised in the light of comments received from a large number of theologians.

This study document is not a joint statement, neither is it a doctrinal *consensus* nor a *status quaestionis*; it is essentially a tool in the service of joint research. This compilation deals with a series of important themes which it is proposed that theologians should study in depth and examine critically. It has been put together by the above-named interconfessional team. No member of the team will identify himself with the entire document presented here in which widely divergent views stand side by side, but all are fully agreed in commending it to the attention of competent theologians.

The compilation is in two parts. Part One gives a new description of the two concepts of Catholicity and Apostolicity. Part Two consists of a number of appendices dealing with certain special aspects of the general problem.

Part One seeks to focus attention on elements frequently neglected in theological discussion. While the old differences remain, it is possible today to see them in a new light permitting us to discern possibilities of progress.

With a necessarily limited time available for its work, the Commission devoted more time to Part One than to Part Two. Thus each of the appendices was entrusted to a single member. Its text was carefully discussed by the group but each author was responsible for embodying the result of this discussion in his own version. Thus, although anonymous, each of the appendices is "personal". In theological approach and in style, this Part Two, far more than Part One, bears the imprint of the authors who drafted the various fragments.

3. It should also be noted that this compilation was made before the Uppsala Assembly, Section I of which produced a report on "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church". Some have pointed out that the two texts cannot be read independently and that it would be useful to compare them and at some time to integrate them. Quite clearly, however, they differ appreciably in character: One is the report of a full Assembly of the World Council of Churches, approved in substance by the Assembly and commended to the Churches for study and appropriate action; the other is a study document which the Joint Theological Commission on "Catholicity and Apostolicity" was asked to produce by the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church "to study the fundamental issues that continually arise between the Roman Catholic Churches and the other Churches". It is still true that in studying the present compilation the Uppsala Section I report cannot be ignored.

## Part one

### New Description of the Concepts of "Catholicity" and "Apostolicity"

Each of the two concepts which have been the subject of our study, constitutes a sensitive point in the ecumenical dialogue. The term "catholic" has been used, especially in recent centuries, to contrast certain Christian Churches<sup>3</sup> with certain others, while the term "apostolicity" has fathered different interpretations which are deeply imprinted in the ecclesiologies of the various confessions.

Today it seems we must and can resume the study of these two concepts within the context of ecumenical research. The purpose of this study should be to rethink the problem of the interpretation of all four of the characteristics traditionally attributed to the Church in the Creed and to consider the unity of the holy Church in a new light by making reflection on catholicity and apostolicity a new *way of approaching* the problem.

Catholicity and apostolicity can be looked at from fresh standpoints. The results of enquiries into the mission of the Holy Spirit and the catholicity of the Church as well as into the apostolic origin of the Church, the emphasis on christology and pneumatology, reflection on the sending of the apostles by the risen Lord and on the missionary vocation of the people of God, and finally the Churches' search for common witness and common service — all these are so many spurs to discover new approaches to the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.

On the other hand, while some regard catholicity and apostolicity exclusively as dimensions of the Church which are already given in *principle*, others understand them rather as a *demand* for universality and fulness, for service and sanctification, which Christ the Saviour of the world addresses in the Holy Spirit to His Church for the sake of the salvation of mankind.

But in order to find a fresh approach to the problem of ecclesial unity, it seems today that, beyond a catholicity and an apostolicity assumed by some as a principle and felt by others as a demand, we have to ask ourselves, in accord with the standpoint of the New Testament itself, in what way do catholicity and apostolicity express the presence in Christ of the future Kingdom of God and of eschatological salvation and the mystery of the *communio* (koinonia) *given* by Christ to His Church? And in what way today does this gift continually renewed by the presence of the Spirit, call all the Churches to *renewal* and to *mission*? A new description of the concepts of catholicity and

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<sup>3</sup> In the present section of our report we have been able to make certain common statements about the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church. We have, however, left aside the problem of defining the relation which exists in this context between 'the Church' and the different ecclesiastical bodies to which we belong. This relationship remains to be determined. Although we have not studied this matter in detail, we expect difficulties to arise which it will not be easy to resolve.

apostolicity should derive its inspiration from the strictly theological mystery of communion — the gift of God and the conversion of men.

### *Catholicity*

1. The Church is catholic in its *being*, because it is constituted by the gift of the trinitarian communion which the incarnate Word makes to mankind; this communion is fulness of the Word (cf. Jn. 1 : 16) and because of this the Church is “His body, the fulness of him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1 : 23)<sup>4</sup>. The Church henceforth proves itself catholic in its action insofar as it is in communion with Jesus Christ present and active in its midst by the power of His Holy Spirit. Jesus the Christ is the Saviour of each man in his personal totality, of all men and of the whole creation. Sent into the world by the one God, He announced the kingdom, gave His life for all on the Cross and calls all to participate in His resurrection. By Him all things are to be reconciled to God for He has made peace by the blood of his Cross (cf. Col. 1 : 20). He is the Lord because He has been given ‘the name which is above every name’ (Phil. 2 : 9). It is He in whom the Father is revealed, He who is ‘full of grace and truth’ (Jn. 1 : 14), He in whom dwells ‘the whole fulness of deity’ (Col. 2 : 9). He is the Head who gathers all humanity into His body by the action of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 1 : 1-4).

The Church lives and achieves its catholicity insofar as it exists through and ‘in’ Christ as His body and expresses at every moment in every Christian and in every step the whole truth of Jesus Christ to which the Holy Spirit ceaselessly leads (Jn. 16 : 13). It is the community of those men and women who respond in faith to the calling of God the Father, are one in love and are constantly open towards all their brother men.

This is the standpoint from which we see catholicity : trinitarian, christo-centric, pneumatic, missionary and demanding a concrete engagement in the service of mankind.

2. The Gospel promises the full achievement of the unity of all in Christ only for the time of His return in glory. Then the universal communion of men will be realized, the final gathering of Israel and the nations (cf. Rom. 11). For Christ prayed the Father for the unity of all those who should believe in Him (Jn. 17 : 20 ff.) ; this unity remains a goal which is never reached on earth, but one towards which we must always be moving, in order that the world might believe that God sent Him. The full unity which would unite all men with God in Christ will only be attained at the end. While waiting for this future gift, the Churches must become aware of all which is provisional in themselves, they must have the courage to acknowledge what is lacking in their catholicity, and make their life and action more and more “catholic”.

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<sup>4</sup> *Translator's Note* : The French original cites this New Testament text of Eph. 1 : 23 from the Jerusalem Bible. The English version used here is that of the Revised Standard Version.

Thus catholicity is still not fully achieved nor fully manifested, yet in eschatological fullness in some sense is already present.

3. The Church, in fact, is founded on the Lord Jesus Christ. Living by the real presence of its Lord and quickened by the Holy Spirit, it announces and carries to fruition the coming kingdom and is itself the first fruits of that kingdom. It is thus, at the heart of mankind and for mankind, by faith in the gift of God and by the action of the Holy Spirit, the sign which manifests the presence of Christ, the promise and hope of the fulness which dwells in Him (cf. Col. 1 : 19 ; Eph. 3 : 1-11). Bearing, in human imperfection but nonetheless really, the mystery of Christ in whom all things are being recapitulated, she is even now catholic.

4. Established on what it has received and receives, pressing on towards the full achievement of the salvation for which it hopes, the Church is called to realize its catholicity day by day. Not only must it be 'open' in proclaiming that it is without respect of persons, races, classes or culture, but also 'habitable' by all, the 'home' of all because it realizes in its structures and in its existence the whole variety of the gifts of the Spirit, the whole diversity of mankind purchased (redeemed) by Christ. It is sent to all the nations, to the very ends of the earth ; it is called to be present to all the situations of man at each hour of history and to make itself all things to all men in the name of the Lord. It has received, insofar as it is catholic, power to express all the elements of the Gospel message and ceaselessly seeks to grasp in faith and to proclaim in its message and make fruitful in its life the infinite richness of the mystery of Christ.

5. Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church (cf. Ign. Smyrn. 8 : 2). Thus the Lord makes himself present there where in one place a community of believers, marked as His and committed to Him by baptism and gathered in His name, hears His Word and receives it freely following the action of His Spirit, celebrates the eucharistic meal, perseveres in the confession of faith, in worship, in prayer and brotherly communion (cf. Acts 2 : 42). Thanks to the Lord who rules in it, the local community, assembled around Christ's ministers, in the communion of saints from Abel, the just, down to the very latest of the elect and, therefore, in union with the Church of all times and places, is a real expression of the Catholic Church. Forming a universal 'koinonia' the local communities are called to support one another and to act together for the glory of the Lord.

6. To the extent that the Church is mindful of the gift of Christ, it will be attentive to everything which can betray this gift. The gift of Christ can be betrayed in many ways. The most usual form of betrayal is that which adulterates the Gospel with false teaching. This is why the Church is catholic when it is orthodox. But since the truth of the Gospel is not merely speculative or something to be taught there are many ways in which it can also be betrayed in the life of Christians. We mention here four such ways.

The first lies in succumbing to the arrogance of the false finality which the possession of power suggests, whether it be by adopting the ways which belong properly to political power, whether it be by conforming or submitting to the powers of this world in such a way that the Church keeps the poor at a distance and Christian brotherhood is restricted to members of the same race, nation, culture or class. The second would wish to justify the formation of sects or parties within the Church. The third makes people become proud of their own confession and despise others. The fourth, on the other hand, allowing itself to be seduced by temporal ideologies which assail it, consists in misusing the term 'catholic' and boasting of a tolerance which results finally in the disappearance of Christian identity. The catholicity of the Church cannot disown the Church's bond with Jesus Christ, in whom alone is there salvation for all men (Acts 4 : 12) and the forms of betrayal which we have mentioned cannot be avoided except by an obedience which is constantly renewed by the Lord, whose love makes His people capable of being open to all human conditions and whose truth enables it to realize its identity and its continuity throughout time, places and circumstances.

### *Apostolicity*

1. The Church is apostolic, according to the unanimous tradition of the Churches, because it is built upon the foundation of the Apostles (Apoc. 21 : 13 and Eph. 2 : 20). Its very existence is continuously and necessarily related to the person of the Apostles and to the work which they accomplished once and for all and its action is identical with theirs. Nothing in the being and action of the Church permits it to disregard the mission given once and for all to the Apostles by Christ in the Holy Spirit, nor the work which they accomplished in planting and building up the Church in the world.

2. But in calling the Church 'apostolic', Christians affirm their dependence on 'the glorious company of the apostles' as well as their solidarity with it, thanks to the continuing reality of the action of the Holy Spirit which the Apostles received. The Apostles were the witnesses of the resurrection. They were commanded by the Lord to announce the kingdom which dawns, with its judgement and its pardon. They served it as fishermen and harvesters, sowers and builders, fathers and teachers teaching the faithful. In many ways, by word and by action, they witnessed to the presence of the crucified and victorious Lord and they called, gathered and founded the Churches to witness and prepare for His coming. Their preaching is fixed in the New Testament writings which for this reason are called apostolic. The continuity of their witness and their action in the Church from the beginning is the work of the Holy Spirit and makes the Church apostolic.

3. Both in Scripture and in tradition many different senses of the word 'apostle' can be found. We must willingly accept this diversity which imposes new perspectives on the theological consensus. It prevents theologians from

putting too much reliance on ready made notions and attributing to verbal formulae an exclusive and definitive character. Much more than by asking the letter of Scripture to give us a stereotype portrait of the apostle, it is by faithfully assuming the tasks entrusted by the Lord to His apostles that apostolicity of the Church is made worthy of credence.

4. The Church is apostolic because it is 'sent', constituted by the *gift of the mission* which the Father entrusted to His Son, which Jesus Christ accomplished once for all and which the Holy Spirit completes in the last times (cf. Jn. 20 : 21 f.). Sent by the Father, Jesus Christ gave to men the mystery of the Kingdom (Mk. 4 : 11), He called them to conversion, He pardoned sinners, He healed the sick and the possessed, He preached the Gospel to the poor, He participated in the death of men by His passion in order to make them participate in His life in His resurrection. He called men to His Church and charged them to continue His mission. To His Church He gave authority (exousia) in the Holy Spirit to accomplish this mission and entrusted to certain men the exercise of this authority within the community. It is therefore in virtue of its *participation in the mission* of Christ in the mission of disciples that the Church is apostolic. For the Holy Spirit manifests this mission, realizes it and communicates it in a community 'consecrated and sent' like Christ (cf. Jn. 17 : 18 f.).

5. Apostolicity includes an intimate and essential link with the final accomplishment of God's saving plan. By the announcement which the apostles made of the Kingdom of God and by the role which they played in the advent of these new times (Mt. 10 : 1-15 ; 19 : 28 ; Lk. 22 : 30 ; Rev. 21 : 14) each generation is linked to the gathering of nations and races in the Holy City. By transmitting to men the promise of this accomplishment, even more by giving them the first fruits of the blessings of the Kingdom, the Apostles, by the power of the Spirit shed at Pentecost, awakened a lively hope of the approach of the renewal of all things. This time of waiting for the return of the Lord is also for the Church the time of mission, for the dynamic presence of the Spirit, pledge of this living hope, makes the Church apostolic.

6. Apostolicity also binds the Church of the present with all the previous generations of the People of God. The New Testament presents the Apostles as having part in the accomplishment of promises made by God to Abraham (cf. Heb. 12 : 1) and to the twelve tribes (cf. Mt. 19 : 28). The truly apostolic Church will also be catholic, necessarily, in time as in space. Its memory embraces all the past which is constantly actualized in the Word and Sacraments ; and its hope already embraces all the future of which it carries in frail vessels the incorruptible pledge (cf. 2 Cor. 4 : 7).

7. When Christians profess apostolicity, they also draw attention to the permanent responsibility of the Church to transmit the living testimony of the apostles. This is the role of ministries in the various forms they have taken since the beginnings of the Church. Like the ministry of the Apostles, the ministries of the Church are given and maintained by the power of the

Holy Spirit. There has been a great diversity of forms in the ministries accomplished in the Spirit and made effective by His power, and Christians are far from being agreed in the way they evaluate them. But they believe that the Church is apostolic because it continues faithfully, by the grace of God, the mission, the preaching and the ministry which it has received from the Apostles. For many Churches, this is the fundamental significance of the apostolic succession. Thus, from this fidelity there results a much broader view of the apostolic succession than that which confines itself to legal categories. New possibilities here take shape in the direction of a consensus between the Churches.

8. It is in fact in respect of various conceptions of the ministry that the contemporary Churches discover some of their most serious divisions. However, even in this domain, significant agreements can be found. Three examples of this are :

*a)* The conviction that, in the life of the Church, the apostolic preaching transmitted by Scripture and Tradition, the apostolic ministry, and life in accordance with the Gospel are inseparable. All three are essential to its apostolicity.

*b)* The conviction that in spite of many changes in the course of history in the conceptions and functions of ministry, these changes are not all necessarily prejudicial to the continuity of the Church with its apostolic origins. It must constantly affirm its responsibility in the continuation of the original mission of the apostles, within the unfolding design of God and in changing situations. It is by a greater fidelity to this mission that it will eventually be able to renew in a spirit of penitence its conception of its ministry.

*c)* The conviction that one of the principal objects of the ministry is the accomplishment of the missionary vocation of the Church in submission to the Holy Spirit and in the expectation of the Lord.

9. From very earliest times the various conceptions of apostolicity have often expressed differences which were not only legitimate but also fruitful ; sometimes, on the other hand, they were sources of division in the Church. Ecumenical discussions in the ordinary way uncover these variations. It will suffice to mention here the discussion on the relative importance of unbroken succession in the episcopal office, fidelity to the teaching of Scripture, the safeguarding of the Church's doctrine, the exercise of a charismatic power, the continuity of the apostolic faith. While mentioning these controversies (always more subtle and complex than their mere listing suggests) it should be remembered that from the beginning an important aspect of the apostolic vocation was the effort made to maintain unity (even between the Apostles themselves) by overcoming these differences. The ecumenical labour of today is a sign that the Churches are pledged to go thoroughly into this aspect of apostolicity.

## Part two

### Appendices : Areas of Further Research

#### Appendix I : 'Apostle' in the New Testament

The concept of 'apostolicity' is integrally related to the role of the Apostle in New Testament times. The various Christian Churches have always appealed, in different ways, to the description given of the Apostles by the New Testament. Such appeals are bound to feel the impact of recent exegetical studies of the 'Apostle' in New Testament times, studies to which scholars from all Christian groups have contributed and which compel all Churches to examine their positions more thoroughly.

##### 1. *Results of Critical Study of the New Testament Description of the Apostles*

There is no consistent portrait of the Apostle in the New Testament. Historians have discerned several aspects of the vocation of the Apostles but have not settled the degree of importance to be attached to each aspect : the work of the Apostles in handing on and preserving the teaching of Jesus ; their function as bearers of an authority to preach the Gospel, exorcize evil spirits, forgive sins, celebrate the sacraments, settle disputes, discipline ministers and members ; their presence in the Church as messengers of judgement and final salvation, as heralds and forerunners of the Kingdom of God and, therefore, as mediators of the Holy Spirit of the last days.

This diversity of function and conception is to some extent the result of historical development. There is, moreover, striking unanimity on the point that the Apostle is someone who has been *sent* as witness of the Risen Jesus. Every New Testament view of the Apostle and his function reflects some version of this idea of 'envoy', depending on the situation in which the New Testament writer lived and on his view of the question of the Church's continuity. Confining ourselves to two of the New Testament views, those known respectively as the Lukan and the Pauline views, we find that for Luke the Apostles are the Twelve (exclusively or *par excellence*?) and therefore those who were witnesses of Jesus' earthly ministry. Consequently the picture constructed by Luke stresses the role of the Apostle as guarantor of the tradition about Jesus. Paul's view makes room for many other Apostles apart from the twelve and does not include the idea of witness to the earthly ministry of Jesus. The Pauline view stresses more the missionary aspect of the Apostle. (Scholars are not altogether in agreement how far these views are contradictory or complementary. Nor do they agree as to whether Luke's view is

wholly a product of the second Christian generation or reflects an earlier, Jerusalem view of the Apostle.)

The authority of the Apostles is also the subject of discussion. Obviously they exercised authority over the communities but was this authority itself centralized in Jerusalem? In what way did the exercise of apostolic authority depend on the community's consent? The New Testament offers no clear answer to the question whether the Apostles appointed other ministers or successors and if so, how. Nor are we certain that the same procedure was followed in all the Churches at the same time.

## 2. *Problems Arising for the Churches from these Critical Studies*

a) Given this diversity in presentation of the role of the Apostles, how can a Church insist on one particular role as normative? Cannot more or less divergent views of apostolicity find support in the differences between the descriptions of the Apostle given in the New Testament? By stressing one particular aspect have not Churches failed in their duty to respect the fulness of the many-faceted apostolic ministry?

b) Sent out to bear witness to the world — witness of the Risen Jesus — the Apostle is oriented both to a present and future situation and to the past. This same tension is evident in the Lukan and Pauline views. In order to claim apostolicity a Church should, in the same way, have both an anamnestic or conservative element looking back to the heritage received by the Apostles from Jesus, and an eschatological element prepared to meet new situations with new responses. Which of these elements takes priority? By what rules should a Church combine loyalty to the tradition with the obligation to be flexible in its missionary role?

c) If the Apostles had authority to govern, how is this authority to govern exercised in the structure of the Churches today? Churches which hold that the Apostles received their authority independently of the consent of the community must ask themselves whether the visible expression which this authority must have had is also of divine institution and how such authority can be exercised *in the service* of the communities thus governed. Churches which hold that the authority of the Apostles to govern depended on the consent of the community must ask themselves how then in practice Christianity can avoid becoming a mere matter of majority opinion.

d) How are we to understand the normative character of the apostolic teaching or doctrine? On the one hand, the Apostles were men of their time, with a view of the world which is not ours. There is, therefore, in their teaching an element which is relative in value. On the other hand, one function of the Apostles was, by the power of the Spirit, to unmask and oppose false apostles and, even today, fidelity to their teaching should still be a criterion for unmasking error. Have some Churches made the apostolic teaching so rigid a norm as to stifle new points of view which are vital to a living Christianity? Have other Churches been so precipitate in accepting

such deviation from the apostolic teaching that they have become incapable of recognizing false apostles?

e) If it is impossible to be sure that offices such as the episcopate were directly established by the Apostles or that those holding this office were appointed by the Apostles, what implications does this have, in questions about the union of Churches, for relations between, and perhaps for the union of Churches some of which have the 'apostolic succession' and others do not, or else hold only a minimizing view of it? The existence in the New Testament of other ministries besides that of the Apostles should face modern Churches which have an episcopal structure with the question of how the episcopal function is related to the other ministries. Churches which do not have an episcopal structure, on the other hand, should ask themselves how far the apostolic authority is in practice safeguarded in their structures.

## Appendix II : Identity, Change and Norm

How can any Church today, of any kind, be identical, particularly in structure and doctrine, with the Christianity of the early centuries and above all, with primitive Christianity? For a Church today to claim to be in some sense or other the same as that of primitive Christianity, it must surely conform to that Church, not in every respect of course but certainly in essential characteristics.

To minds specially aware of what history and historicity means, such material identity has become extremely problematical.

This is not a confessional problem in the sense of being peculiarly Protestant or Catholic; it is a problem facing all confessions. It would seem that no Church has frankly faced this problem, indeed, the very reverse; it is often evaded in the manner in which appeal is made to Scripture or Tradition.

From the second century at the latest, the identity of the later Church with the Church of the Apostles whom Jesus Christ Himself called was tested by the criterion of the apostolicity of its institutions and forms of life, in particular its ministry and doctrine. The Church of the Apostles as well as the apostolic teaching and institutions served as the norm for all subsequent periods in the history of the Church.

This was what the Scripture principle or the notion of Tradition was intended to express. This at once raises two questions: (1) Within the framework of such a perspective can the inevitability and the importance of the modifications undergone by the Church in the course of its history be evaluated precisely? (2) Can the view of Christian identity as conformity with the Church of the Apostles provide adequate criteria for evaluating the inevitable process of change in the Church?

Modern research into the history of the Church has shown clearly how, from the 3rd and 4th centuries and still more in the middle ages and the

modern period, the form and life of the Church and the manner of presenting its doctrine have differed from those of primitive Christianity. How far can these changes be regarded as an organic development of primitive Christian elements? Some modern accounts of the Church's history have made considerable use of the key idea of organic growth; others, on the contrary, have either rejected this as quite unacceptable or else greatly restricted its use. But, if we have to abandon the view that major changes are an organic development of primitive elements, can we nevertheless continue to speak of their Christian legitimacy? Do not these changes simply amount in fact to a departure from apostolic times and therefore from the Christian norm? This seems to be the inescapable conclusion unless we distinguish between what is apostolic, regarded as a norm, and features peculiar to the apostolic age, including even some features of its ecclesiastical institutions and credal formulas. Is there any room for a normative notion of what is apostolic, one which would not interpret the Church's history in terms of the ideal of its origins? That which would fill this function is the sending of the Apostles by the risen Lord. But from this sending the idea of a transformation of both the world and the Church appears to necessarily emanate, a transformation which is progressive and from the Christian standpoint inevitable. For the mission of the Apostles develops in the Church beyond what the Apostles themselves did and is directed to a fulfilment which the Church and all mankind is still travelling towards. It would be necessary to verify the extent to which the idea of mission does justice to the actual changes which have taken place in the course of history and, at the same time, ask whether it provides us with a criterion by which to distinguish between changes in line with the valedictory of the Risen Lord and those which deviate from this Christian mission and so obscure this mandate and the nature of the Church.

The identity of the Church in spite of and through all changes is to be found, basically, in the faith of its members, a faith which in all ages conforms to the unique and comprehensive truth of God in Jesus Christ. If God revealed Himself in Christ, then the knowledge Christians have of their faith can never depart from the truth either completely or in all the Church's members, however far these may be from its fulness and however many the deviations resulting from this. It can sometimes happen, however, that the majority of Christians may be mistaken in their understanding of the faith. Here again, therefore, the problem arises of a criterion by which to determine the true understanding of the Church's living unity and identity, as presupposed by the content of the faith.

The traditional norms for understanding the faith — Scripture, Creed, the magisterium of bishops in the apostolic succession — have themselves undergone changes in the course of history; in the evolution of Biblical exegesis, in the history of dogmas, in the origin and development of the episcopal function and its exercise. Can these norms be regarded as unchangeable and set then over against historical development? If not, can the norm itself and the knowledge one has of it be thought of as subject to historical change?

If we are to avoid an absolute relativism, where are we to find a norm for this evolutionary process itself?

The universal saving truth of Jesus Christ, accessible to us in the apostolic writings, is able to govern the course of the Church's history because it is itself the starting point for the apostolic mission and for the transformation which this mission accomplishes and will accomplish in the world and in the People of God. In fact this basic Christian norm seems to include an element of historical change. Christ not only came once; He is to come again in even greater majesty. This surely points to a change which, far from disintegrating the reality of Christ, is directed on the contrary to its fulfilment. How far does this permit the changes which have taken place in the history of the Church to be integrated within the tension between Christ's first coming and His return (a tension which underlies the dynamic of the Church's mission)?

The one and the same Christ Jesus is present to the circle of believers by the gift of the Holy Spirit Who gives life to the tradition of the Church in the communion of faith and the sacraments and, at the same time, in the community which these believers together constitute. It is He who is the unity of His body through the centuries and in every place in the world; through the presence of His Spirit there exists a 'communion of saints'. It is He too who is the norm of the understanding of faith; His Spirit, the Spirit of truth, leads into all truth (Jn. 16 : 13). It is Jesus Christ who, in this two-fold way, is the guarantor of the Church's identity. But can the one Christ be designated the norm of the understanding of faith in a uniform and definitive manner? However essential the effort to arrive at a common knowledge and confession of the saving faith may be to ensure the only salvation of mankind in the one Christ, it might well be that the definitive knowledge of how Jesus Christ is the only norm of the Church cannot be achieved by the Church during the time of its pilgrimage because, even for the Church which has received the first fruits, the glory of Christ in His second coming and, therefore, His final revelation still belong to the future. Does this approach merely make possible an openness to historical changes and to ecumenical diversity or does it also permit us to understand the unity of the Church as something which is expressed in this historical process in a catholicity opposed to all unilateral uniformity, open to diversity and precisely in this way comprehensive? Do we not have to understand historical changes and plurality of forms of Christian faith and life as essential marks of Christ's presence as the one Saviour of the multitude in the time between His first coming and His *parousia*?

### Appendix III : Ministry and Episcopate

1. The Church of God is not simply the eschatological assembly of believers in Christ but is also sent by Christ to gather all those whom God

calls to salvation. This Church is catholic and apostolic in essence. It has therefore to act in a catholic and apostolic way. The Holy Spirit has been given to the Church in order that it may serve the sole Mediator and His work of salvation achieved once and for all, for all men of all times (catholicity). The Church is totally ministerial. The way in which it fulfils its diakonia must be determined in accordance with the original mission and ministry of the Apostles (apostolicity).

2. Considerable differences emerge at once in the view taken by the various Churches and their theologians of the essential elements in the ministry of the Apostles. It is above all in the New Testament that the Churches engaged in the ecumenical dialogue seek the light they need to interpret or surmount these divergences. But what is striking in the New Testament is that it presents at the heart of the first Christian communities a great variety of ministries which were formed around and following the Apostles. Whether these ministries were spontaneously charismatic or institutionally established as 'authorities', they all appeared in close conjunction with a gift of the unique Spirit, the Holy Spirit, which makes them different but *complementary*. It is together that they serve to 'build up' the body of Christ.

3. In the course of its historical development, the episcopate seems to have been understood first of all as a function of pastoral 'supervision' within certain communities. Many historians think that this function was then exercised by several ministers together, doubtless by colleges of presbyters. It is at the beginning of the second century, in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, that the episcopate appears clearly as a well defined office entrusted to a single minister who in presiding at the eucharist embodies the ecclesial unity. This universal structure which comprises the three ranks of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, gradually consolidated itself and soon became general. Primarily pastoral and liturgical at the beginning, it increasingly assumed juridical powers. The question arises as to the extent to which (particularly in the Churches of the West) categories borrowed from civil Roman law influenced a certain conception of the episcopate and of the hierarchical structure of the Church.

At present agreement between the Churches on the question of the episcopate is proving difficult. The first thing which seems to be needed is for the Churches to know precisely what the positions taken by each other are in this matter of ministerial structure.

4. In the *Orthodox Church* the idea of 'apostolic succession' is regarded as fundamental. Yet all ministry, including the episcopate's ministry, is inseparably bound up with the People of God assembled and united in each community. Great importance is also attached to ordinations being performed only within the setting of the eucharistic assembly. The episcopate itself owes its central position to the fact that each bishop is the head of his community and it is he who presides at the eucharistic celebration. Episcopal ordinations — although they are business of the entire Church in virtue of the

participation of at least three bishops at these ordinations — do not create an *ordo in absoluto* but an *ordo* within and related to a particular local church. It is only through the medium of this community that each bishop is linked inseparably to the other bishops, to the entire Church and to the line of the Apostles. It is in this way that their ministry is catholic and apostolic.

5. The *Roman Catholic Church* teaches that the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood are essentially different (*essentia*) and not simply in degree. But they are reciprocally directed the one to the other, and — the one and the other, each in his way, participate in the unique priesthood of Christ. On the subject of the ministerial priesthood the Councils of Trent, Vatican I and Vatican II defined the following points :

The hierarchy has been instituted in the Church by a divine disposition. Order is a true sacrament and properly so called. The bishops who succeed to the apostles, belong to the supreme degree of hierarchical order. They are superior to presbyters and to deacons and possess a power of jurisdiction which is ordinary and immediate : a gift given them by the Holy Spirit in ordination.

The Second Vatican Council teaches in particular that the fulness of priesthood is conferred by episcopal consecration, that this consecration with the *munus* of sanctifying also confers that of teaching and of governing. But these *munera* by their very nature cannot be exercised except in hierarchic communion with the head of the (episcopal) college and with its members. This episcopal college, of which the Pope is the head, is charged with a universal ministry and enjoys for its exercise a full and supreme authority. Each bishop is equally the principle and the foundation of unity at the heart of the local church where he exercises the ministry of the Word, of sanctification and of government, assisted by his presbytery and by his ministers. Finally, the bishops as members of the episcopal college, should provide together the concern of the universal Church, in particular that of missions.

6. The *Churches of the Reformation* were led to interpret the ministry from the standpoint of the preaching of the Gospel : Ministers should serve in preaching the Gospel and in administering the sacraments. According to the 16th century Reformers, the hierarchy of the Roman Church, in its entirety, was not proclaiming authentically the Word. The uninterrupted succession of its bishops since the time of the Apostles, which it asserted, had therefore proved ineffective and even debatable. In the notion of succession, the theologians of the Reformation had emphasized rather continuity in the proclamation of the Word and in the teaching of sound doctrine. Many of them also underlined the pastoral function of the bishop and hoped to reestablish this function by reforming it. If then a large number of Protestant Churches seem no longer to have an episcopal ministry, this is still no reason why they should not be able to have one. Some of them are showing today that they are in fact ready to reintroduce such a ministry for the pastoral organization of a particular district. Others consider it as a structure which has definitely had

its day, incompatible with a conception of the Church in which pride of place belongs to the believing people. In any case, the uninterrupted succession as an essential element of the ministry is felt to be called in question by the very experience of the Reformation. So too with the sacramental character of ordination and the inherent difference between the function of ministers and that of simple believers.

7. The *Anglican Communion* affirms as a fact of history that the threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons has always existed in the Church from apostolic times. At the time of the Reformation, the Church of England took great care to maintain the principle of the apostolic succession of bishops. A certain number of theologians maintain that the episcopate belongs to the *esse* of the Church; others, doubtless the majority, are content to affirm that it belongs simply to the *bene esse* of the Church. The present trend emphasizes the pastoral aspect of the episcopal office.

8. All the views outlined here contain a more or less explicit reference to the fundamental *mission* of the Apostles by Christ and the authority which they received from Him. It is therefore by starting from this *mission* and considering the way in which the Church should fulfil it in order to meet the needs of each period and of each place that an ecumenical study of the ministry seems to become possible. It would also seem that an episcopate regarded as a pastoral function of *unity* and of ecclesial coordination should be studied, in particular from the standpoint of the Church's *catholic action*.

9. It would be useful in any case for the Churches engaged together in the ecumenical dialogue to try to answer together the following questions:

a) How can an institutional pastoral ministry be justified and coordinated taking into account the royal priesthood of believers and charismatic vocations?

b) What is the criterion which allows us to discern in the ministry of the Apostles that which is absolutely inalienable and specific from that which is transmissible to ministers who continue certain of their functions?

c) In what way does the tying of the minister to a particular community, as it is conceived in the Orthodox Church, correspond to the universalistic demands of the modern world? Does not the local character of the ministry conceived in this way impede the missionary task which falls to the Church?

d) To what extent can the episcopate as it has been defined in the Roman Catholic Church be justified by the New Testament message and by an historical evolution (hierarchical nature, sacramentality, priesthood, jurisdiction, etc.)?

e) How do the Churches of the Reformation manage to manifest their ecclesial continuity throughout the ages?

f) How do they avoid the extremes of spiritualism or of individualism?

g) How do they reconcile the authority of preaching and the fundamental equality of all members of the community?

b) By what means do they wish to preserve the episcopate which they would be prepared to reintroduce from the risk of being absorbed in administration and thus losing its spiritual character?

## Appendix IV : The Sacramental Aspect of Apostolicity

The foundation of the Church's apostolicity is the mission given to Jesus Christ, namely, to accomplish the eternal design of God for the salvation of mankind, "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn. 11 : 52).

1. Christ Jesus is the sign of the Father's love ; He is both the proclamation and the implementing sign of salvation (cf. Tit. 2 : 11 ; Phil. 2 : 8-9). As the one who implements the saving design of God, He is called by Paul : the '*mysterion tou Theou*' (Col. 2 : 2 ; 4 : 3). The mystery of God's salvation is not a system of truths, but Christ Himself, accomplishing the eternal design of God in the history of mankind. The most important events in this accomplishment of God's design — the death and resurrection of Christ — should be proclaimed by the Apostles to every creature.

2. With reference to the '*mysterion tou Theou*' sacramentality means the presence in the Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit, of the eschatological salvation of Christ. It is by this presence that the Church proclaims the death and resurrection of Christ so that this proclamation always has a sacramental aspect.

This proclamation at each moment of history does not simply point back to these past events in the life of Jesus, it is communion in the Mysterion and it also announces the future '*parousia*' when the Risen Christ, by the Holy Spirit, will have completed His mission (cf. I Cor. 15 : 24-28) : to gather all mankind — so far as men receive Him in faith — and the whole cosmos, into Himself and therefore both into the Father. But there is more. In His death and resurrection, Christ is the sign which accomplishes this eschatological completion (cf. I Cor. 1 : 4-9). He fulfils this role of implementing sign of the '*parousia*' in the entire history of salvation although in a variety of ways each of which expresses His personal presence among us. Where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ (cf. Mt. 18 : 20) there is already a personal presence of the Risen Christ. Where the Holy Scriptures are read in the Church, there is His personal presence since it is He Himself who speaks to us in His word. He is equally present in the sacraments.

3. The sacraments demonstrate visibly to believers how the essence of the universal apostolic task is precisely the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul explains baptism by using the image (Rom. 6 : 4-5) of our union with the death and resurrection of Christ. And Christ on the eve of His passion instituted the eucharist as a sign which, by representing (actualizing) His death, also proclaims the fulfilment in the '*basileia tou Theou*' (Mk. 14 : 25 and I Cor. 11 : 26). In other words the eschatological situation

has *already* entered into the history of mankind, although under the limiting sign of death, but a death overcome in the victory of the resurrection of Christ.

But the sacraments were instituted by Christ as a provisional and veiled realization, in the earthly 'aeon', of the eschatological salvation ; in this sense the eschatological state has *not yet* been realized.

4. The sacraments thus at the same time symbolize and effect a union with the death and resurrection of Christ. It is by this union that, where the Gospel is 'purely' preached and the sacraments 'rightly' administered, the communion of believers is constituted as *the holy Church*.

It thus becomes clear that the fact of proclaiming the death and resurrection of Christ points back to these past events and announces the *parousia*, but furthermore represents (actualizes) the personal presence of the Risen Lord. It is precisely this task which Christ has entrusted to His Apostles and through them to His Church.

#### *Conclusions and Questions :*

We are all agreed that the apostolicity of the Church consists in fidelity to the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ, in the faithful continuation of the universal mission given first of all to the Apostles.

1. We are thus agreed that the apostolicity of the Church includes not only the faithful preaching of the Gospel but also the communication of the 'pneumatic' presence of Christ in other ways, in particular through the sacraments. But we must not forget that the preaching of the Gospel, the response of faith and the sacraments are inseparably united : All the sacraments are sacraments of faith, born of the Word and nourished by the Word. All the Churches should ask themselves whether, in the light of the '*mysterion tou Theou*' they have respected the true balance between Word and Sacrament. And this not only in their doctrine but also in their worship : prayers, hymns, litanies, and in the central act, namely the eucharist. The Churches should also ask themselves whether the sacramental aspect of their apostolicity necessarily implies that the apostolic succession in the ministry can only be assured by a sacrament of ordination.

2. Does not the personal presence of Christ sanctify the communion of believers in their totality by the union of this communion with Christ in His body? The Churches should ask themselves if their essential sanctity does not then imply that they should show themselves distinct from the world even while professing their solidarity with the world? On the other hand are the Churches really aware of the fact that their sanctity (like their unity, their catholicity, and their apostolicity) will never be perfectly realized in this 'aeon'? That in them sanctity coexists with sin, cause for 'skandalon' and hindrance to the Gospel? Are they aware of needing to beg incessantly, as Churches, God's pardon, of always needing constantly to be converted to Him?

## Appendix V : Conciliarity and Primacy

The Church is a community, a communion. It has to achieve and express this unity both at the universal and local levels. It expresses its catholicity first of all by constantly founding in all places in the hearing of the Word and in the celebration of the eucharist new particular communities. But it expresses it equally in knowing itself to be in all places one and the same people which as such grasps and announces the truth of the Gospel and which constantly overcomes the conflicts which threaten to divide it.

The New Testament shows us clearly that the communities consulted one another and took responsibility for one another. We need only recall the activity of the Apostles, of the prophets (cf. Agabus), the exchange of messengers etc. The epistles which have come down to us in the New Testament are themselves evidence of this sense of universality. This accord between the communities covers not only major declarations having credal status but even rules of behaviour. "We recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God" (I Cor. 11 : 16).

The Church imperatively needs conciliar forms if it wishes to maintain and constantly renew this universal communion. The word 'conciliarity' is used here to denote the communion in which the different local churches are joined. It is an essential feature of the Church ; this term has always been kept for representative assemblies which examine problems and deal with them with the claim to be heard by the Church. The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) is an example. Examples of conciliarity are found in various forms throughout the entire history of the Church.

In what structures should the universal community be expressed ? Answers vary. Whereas on the one hand primary emphasis is placed on the constant freedom of the Church to provide itself with structures in accordance with a just appreciation of the existing situation and of missionary needs, on the other hand, it is argued that the foundations of a fixed structure are given in the New Testament, that they were developed in the ancient Church and that they remain obligatory for the Church in every age : The Church can only demonstrate her catholicity if it adheres to the structures established by Christ. Neither of these points of view is held in an exclusive manner. Even the Churches which are in principle in favour of freedom to develop new structures regard it as important to conform to the basic affirmations of the New Testament on the essence of the Church. And where stress is laid on fidelity to established structures room still remains for adaptations and recognition even of their necessity.

The structure established by Christ in the apostolate is variously interpreted. What role has the group called the Twelve ? In what sense did they form a college ? What was Peter's place within the Twelve ? Whereas on one side it is held that Peter must have presided over the college and that in this role he must have had a line of successors, namely bishops of Rome, on the other hand it is thought that it was in all bishops that Peter had successor or

again that the promises made to Peter hold good for the whole college and that the totality of bishops or even the entire people must be regarded as the successors. These differences and others lead to different conceptions of the way in which the community which the Churches form between themselves should be expressed.

Although these divergences have far from been surmounted, there is nevertheless agreement that they appear in a new light when discussed within the framework of recent redefinition of catholicity and apostolicity. The decisive question must be this: How is the conciliarity of the Church to be expressed *today*? The historical development has broadened the horizon to include mankind as a whole; the totality of men begins to become a quantity which can be grasped as a whole. How can the Church in this situation not only ensure conformity with its origins but, more than that, as a whole continue the mission of the Apostles?

At the Second Vatican Council the Roman Catholic Church tried to answer this question by setting in the forefront of ecclesiology the communion of the people of God and by completing the traditional doctrine of the primacy by the notion of collegiality. Collegiality, a more restricted notion than conciliarity, means the common responsibility, falling on those who preside over the local churches, to represent the people of God and to take the necessary decisions. It is common knowledge that many other Churches are beginning to adopt conciliar forms of a more universal kind. This twofold movement prompts the following questions:

1. The notion of conciliarity shows that representative assemblies are necessary in order to tackle problems arising in the life of the Church. The important thing is that the whole people of God should be represented by these assemblies.

a) To what extent is it necessary for there to be a function restricted to one person alone in order that the people should be represented as constituting a whole? The Second Vatican Council speaks unequivocally of the dependence of the college in relation to the primacy but not, vice versa of the dependence of the primate in relation to the college. Does not the notion of collegiality presuppose a reciprocal dependence?

b) How are conciliarity and collegiality related?

c) How can the voice of the whole people be made effective over and above the representation assured by the bishops?

d) What is the role of prophetism in the universal community?

e) What importance attaches to the reception by the people of God of conciliar decisions?

2. What role is attributed to Peter in the New Testament?

a) What constitutes Peter's special and unique role? To what extent is he set above the other Apostles?

b) To what extent can one speak of a successor of Peter?

3. "The Spirit will lead you into all truth." How is this promise fulfilled?

a) What precisely does it mean to say that Christ does not abandon his people to error?

b) Can the Church live as one and the same people in the truth of the Gospel without a central authority? Without such an authority can it ever arrive at a conciliar practice?

c) Can conciliar assemblies such as synods speak with the same authority when they are not derived from an authority given in the apostolic structures?

4. Does the Church need a geographical centre?

a) What relation is there between Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem?

b) Importance and meaning of fixed places in the life of the Church?

c) Why Rome? And why not Rome?

5. When the Church manifests its universality today, what is the relation between this universality and the efforts made by men to manifest the universality of mankind? How can the service rendered by the Church in the demonstration of its inherent universality be made to be felt?

## Appendix VI: Unity and Plurality

If in the design of God the Church should be one in Christ through the action of the Holy Spirit, this unity can be understood in a variety of ways all of which affect the idea of catholicity and that of apostolicity. Too often the tendency has been to identify catholicity with uniformity in geographical expansion and to reduce apostolicity to the simple common denominator of a ministry deriving from the Apostles; or else to regard the plurality and variety of ecclesial forms as the very essence of catholicity and the diversity of New Testament charisms transmitted through the centuries by the Holy Spirit as the only basis of the Church's apostolicity.

The following points on unity and plurality in God's design can be found in the Bible:

In the Old Testament, by a series of covenants, particularly that made with Abraham and that of Sinai, God chose for Himself a people. But in Abraham *all* the peoples of the earth are to be blessed. And it is the *twelve* tribes which are the object of the unique Sinaitic covenant, several of these tribes having a special destiny in the one design of God. The pluralism found throughout the Old Testament can only be understood in terms of the gathering into unity, both for the people of Israel and for mankind as a whole. The Old Covenant already has an eschatological catholic dimension and presupposes that communion which means primarily obedience in a multiplicity of ways to the one saving design of God.

In the New Testament even greater stress is placed on the unity of God's design; unity through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator; a unity which is the work of the Spirit who gathers all the nations into a single people. Clearly

this does not exclude real diversity. On the contrary, the working of the Spirit is shown in the freedom of all in Jesus Christ and in the variety of callings and charisms. Such diversity already emerged *a*) In the choice of the Twelve and in the special apostolic mission of some ; there are Apostles who are the special ministers of this gathering into unity — Peter ; Peter and the Eleven ; Peter, James and John ; Peter and John ; Peter and Paul. *b*) At the theological level : Jewish-Christians and Gentile Christians ; plurality of gospel traditions ; Paul, the synoptics, and John do not have identical stand-points. *c*) At the sociological and ecclesiological level, the multiplicity of local communities : Jerusalem, Antioch, the Churches founded by Paul. This multiplicity is also symbolized by the seven Churches of the Apocalypse, sign of completeness and of unity in diversity. The difficulty for each community is to discern what really comes from the Spirit of God and all the possible forms of false prophecy. For this reason, the apostolic witness has constantly to take its bearings from the design of God revealed in the Risen Lord. It is the one Gospel kerygma which is the theme of the multiform announcement of Jesus as Lord ; it is the Holy Spirit who, in the multiform announcement and in freedom, gathers a single people in different places and in different ways. The communion of one and all with Jesus in the Holy Spirit is expressed in concrete forms of which baptism, the eucharist, the ministries, hospitality, the collection are the most obvious examples.

Mission commits the Church to show its apostolicity and its catholicity in various forms appropriate to the places and times in which it embodies the Gospel message. But its goal is the unity of all in Christ, as Christ is one with the Father, and ultimately it is the Spirit who is the agent and guarantor of this unity.

This plurality of forms of ecclesial life finds expression at the very threshold of the Church's history. No longer is Jerusalem the centre of the communion, as in the time of Paul. A multiplicity of local churches clustered around other larger local churches (whether because of their true or supposed apostolic origin, or because of the political importance of the cities in which they were located, or for both these reasons). All these local churches took pains to maintain among themselves communion of faith and sacramental life and to attest their agreement : agreed canon of Scriptures, mutual aid, hospitality, and, as far as possible, unanimous decisions about doctrine and discipline ; local councils and, later, ecumenical councils. But at the same time, we find a certain variety of ecclesiastical organization (liturgical and disciplinary) and above all of theological outlook between the Churches. In practice the principal Churches served as centre of reference and tended to impose their views. Among them Rome occupied a special place, but there was no uniform interpretation of its role neither in Rome itself nor in the West or the East. Rome was not alone in seeking to impose some sort of uniformity in every sphere of ecclesial life.

On the other hand, very early in the history of the Church, there were those who claimed a freedom to manifest charisms which could collide with

institutional forms. From the 2nd century the Montanist crisis broke out; later on certain monastic and spiritual movements showed the same tendency (cf. Messalianism) which reappeared at a much more recent period, opposing freedom of the Spirit to institutional norms.

Moreover, although almost all accepted more or less consciously a certain liturgical, spiritual and disciplinary plurality, a similar pluralism was not accepted in the doctrinal formulation of the mystery of faith. It was found difficult to distinguish between the substance of the mystery of faith, identical everywhere and always, and the possible diversity of verbal formulation or of theological approaches (cf. the classic instance of the Antiochene and Alexandrian christologies). This difficulty, which also involves the question of liturgical rites and formulas and the question of different spiritualities, is felt in all periods (East and West; problems of grace; relation of faith and works; problems of ministries; epiclesis; criteria of dogmatic orthodoxy). The various possible approaches to the mystery of the faith have often been confessionalized by an exclusivist attitude and this has frequently resulted in atrophied views of unity. Sometimes the desire to eliminate differences of approach has led to artificial simplifications and forced syntheses.

If we are to respect the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church which proclaims one sole Gospel in a plurality of forms and in the freedom of the Spirit, then all Churches today must consider the following problems:

1. Is it possible, in respect of the mystery of faith, to distinguish between the formulas and their content?

2. In respect of the unique communion in Jesus Christ, what significance has a hierarchy of truths of faith, all of which have to be held in reference to Jesus Christ and are therefore incapable of being reduced to a least common denominator?

3. Is it possible to distinguish between a common theological utterance and a variety of spiritual, liturgical and canonical traditions? Is the whole life of a Church expressed in its theology? Are the various Traditions in some sense complementary?

4. What relation is there between the real life of Churches in worship, preaching and spirituality and the common formulations they must hold in order to bear united witness in the world?

5. What are the essential ecclesial structures (ministries) which correspond to what Christ willed so that, by the work of the Spirit, that community of salvation might be manifested which is intended to incorporate all men into Christ as one single people?

6. Are there instances where rebellion against institutional structures can be an authentic expression of the freedom of the Spirit?

7. Are there instances when the unity of the mission to the world requires us to rethink and reformulate dogmatic statements of the common faith? How can such instances be recognized?

8. Have our Churches kept the complete freedom which can be found in the Scriptures as one of the essential features of ecclesial life in Jesus Christ?

## Appendix VII : The Local Church and the Universal Church

According to Scripture there is only one people called by God, only one Church, Christ's Body, Christ's Bride. By the work of the Holy Spirit given by Christ, this people is destined to embrace all mankind, all creation, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Deriving from the proclamation of the Good News at Jerusalem, it is founded on the Apostles and Prophets, but it has also to carry this Gospel *to the whole universe*.

Each local community gathers together those whom God calls, in a particular place, and for this reason is also called Church. Wherever the Word is proclaimed and received in faith, wherever the Lord's eucharist is celebrated, wherever the ministers serve the flock of God, there too the one Church of God is present.

By their very nature, the local Churches are open to the fulness of the mystery of Christ and to all men, irrespective of the differences of race and social class. Each local Church thereby shares already in the growth of all mankind to fulness in Christ. The universality of the Church is manifested in the communion of the local Church with all other Churches by the same faith, the same sacraments, the action of the same Spirit. This communion is also expressed by the concord between ministers of the different Churches who govern them in the name of the Lord and are mutually recognized by the different Churches as ministers of the word and sacraments for the one people of God. This communion finds expression, for example, in hospitality, in the collection for the 'saints' in Judea and Jerusalem.

The history of the ancient Church is somewhat reticent about the origins of the episcopate but it is fairly certain that it was early established almost everywhere, so that from the middle of the 2nd century one finds an identical conception of the pastoral ministry in the community and of the role of the bishop in the maintenance of communion with other Churches.

In the course of the 2nd century we encounter two complementary affirmations of this kind: Where the bishop is, there is the catholic Church (cf. Ignatius); "Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God and where the Spirit of God is there is the Church and all grace" (Irenaeus, AH III, 24). The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church was thus present and manifested in the local Church united to the person of its bishop; it was at the same time present and active wherever the Spirit of God was. Today, in contrast, the different confessions discuss to what extent the union of the local Church with the person of the bishop or of the legitimate ministry is a manifestation of the one Church in a particular local Church.

Nevertheless, the local Church is the visible 'place' where the people of God is gathered together by the word and sacrament, guided by the Spirit

of Christ present invisibly in the service of His ministers and led to attest to the world the salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ.

Each local Church, on the other hand, by its very nature, is both linked historically with the Apostles and set within a sociological context in which the Gospel is 'incarnate' in a culture, at a particular time and place. It therefore has its own lineaments : liturgical, spiritual, and theological, but also sociological. In the context of modern civilization, however, it is more and more the case that the traditional structure of the local Church no longer corresponds to the given sociological facts of today. Thus the local Church, in practice, finds itself centred more on the celebration itself than on its own geographical character.

In the life of the local Church, the celebration of the liturgy, and in particular the eucharist, holds an important place as constituting it the Body of Christ and demonstrating it to be the Church of God. Through the eucharist, all members of the people of God are in communion with each other, since they partake of one loaf, the Body of Christ (I Cor. 10 : 27) and all the local Churches are only one and the same Church of God.

This is why excommunication and the breaking off of communion (which are firstly sacramental acts and only then have canonical implications) express the extremely serious position in which an individual or a community finds itself. Deprivation of eucharistic communion is intended to lead the member concerned, or the community subjected to it by other local communities, to repentance and to conduct worthy of their calling, to action becoming a child of God and a Church of God.

On the other hand, to bear clear witness to men, the local Church needs to give concrete form to its solidarity with the other local Churches ; whence the need for regional organizations, councils, or a world organization which manifests this common mind in communion. But these sporadic forms (councils) or permanent forms (organizations) should not obscure the eschatological significance of catholicity : The fulness of catholicity will only be fully expressed in the eschatological future. The universality of a council and the catholic significance of a regional or world organization ought also to be related to the eschatological anticipation of the fulness of catholicity expressed by them in various degrees of completeness.

In practice there are many factors which reopen the question of the meaning of the local Church and open the way to find new dimensions for it.

1. There seems to have been on the part of Churches which have become strongly centralized in the course of history a rediscovery of the significance of the local Church as the highest expression of the Church of God (for the Roman Catholic Church cf. the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II, No. 41). On the other hand, Churches which have undergone a kind of confessional fragmentation seem to be rediscovering the need for a certain expression of catholicity at the world level. Are these two movements, apparently in opposite directions, complementary and making for the same

goal, namely, the expression of catholicity as anticipation of the eschatological fulness?

2. If the local Church in its celebration of the eucharist (word and sacrament) is the highest expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, what is the meaning of a universalist conception of the Church which regards local Churches merely as parts of the whole?

3. What is the relation between the local Church, on the one hand, and the diocese and the parish, on the other? If in fact we define the local Church in terms of the place where the word is preached and heard in faith and the sacrament celebrated in a given community, what possible ecclesiological significance can the modern diocese and the modern parish have? To what extent are they bound up with the old conception of the '*polis*' and of the village? What in future gives the local Church stability and continuity as an expression of the catholicity and apostolicity of the Church?

4. Have the liturgical communities which are bound up with sociological stratifications different from those of the past a new importance in this expression of catholicity and apostolicity — cultural and professional groups, etc.? In that case would the stability and continuity of the local Church in these new forms be even more dependent on large ecclesiastical organizations for expressing the Church's catholicity and apostolicity?

5. Who has authority to pronounce excommunication as defined above? Those with pastoral charge of the local Churches? Or is the consensus of the whole community needed for the sentence of excommunication? Does an excommunicated individual or community have a right of appeal to a higher court? What is the role of the collegiality of pastors in pastoral charge of the Churches? Possible role of a primate? Of an ecumenical council as representing the consensus of the whole people of God?

6. Can two local Churches exist in one and the same place without schism in the ecclesiological sense? Here the problem of personal dioceses and various jurisdictions and 'rites' in one place within one communion arises. It is right to distinguish this problem, without detaching it, however, from the problem of the presence of two or more 'Churches' of different communions in one and the same place.

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee II, see below pp. 216f.*

## 9. COMMON WITNESS AND PROSELYTISM

*The following document, prepared by a Joint Theological Commission, was received by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches at its meeting in May, 1970, which recommended it for publication.*

*The document was elaborated by the commission on the initiative of the Joint Working Group. The commission held two full meetings (in Arnoldsbain, Germany, in 1968, and in Zagorsk|USSR, in 1969). Various subsequent drafts were submitted to a wide group of consultants. The text being presented now has been formulated in the light of comments received.*

*The Joint Working Group, having examined it, recommends it to its parent bodies that it be offered to the Churches as a study document for their consideration. Although there may not be complete agreement on everything contained in the document it represents a wide area of consensus on common witness and proselytism.*

*It is, therefore, suggested that the Churches in the same area study it together. The further examination of the theme of common witness will inevitably demand a fuller development of, and agreement on, the content of the witness Christians are bound to give to Christ and his Gospel.*

## Introduction

1. Unity in witness and witness in unity. This is the will of Christ for his people. The Lord has called all his disciples to be witnesses to him and his Gospel, to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1 : 8), and he has promised to be with them always, to the close of the age (Mt. 28 : 20). But for centuries, in their efforts to fulfil this mission, Christian Communion have borne the burden of divisions, even differing about the meaning of the one Gospel. They have not been a clear sign of the one and holy people, so it has been hard for the world to believe (cf. John 13 : 35 ; 17 : 21).
2. Today, moved by the Holy Spirit, the various Christian Communion are seeking to restore the unity they have lost, in the hope that one day, when they are fully renewed and united in faith and charity, they may be better able to glorify God by bringing home to the whole world the hope of the coming kingdom. They are striving to overcome whatever indifference, isolation and rivalry has marked their relations to each other and thus has distorted Christian witness even to that unity with which God has already blessed them.
3. This document is an attempt to state the implications of the obligation — to bear common Christian witness, even while the Churches are divided ;  
— to avoid in their mutual relations and in their evangelising activities whatever is not in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel ;  
— to provide one another, as far as possible, with mutual support for a more effective witness of the Gospel through preaching and selfless service to the neighbour.
4. This document is offered to the Churches. Its reflections and suggestions may serve as a basis of discussion among Christians in varied circumstances, in order to arrive at a line of conduct where they live and witness.

*Meaning of the terms* : Christian Witness, Common Witness, Religious Freedom, Proselytism.

5. *Christian Witness*<sup>1</sup>. Witness is taken here to mean the continuous act by which a Christian or a Christian Community proclaims God's acts in history and seeks to reveal Christ as the true light which shines for every man. This includes the whole life : worship, responsible service, proclamation of the Good News — all is done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order than men may be saved and be gathered into Christ's one and only Body (Col. 1 : 18 ; Eph. 1 : 22-23), and attain life everlasting — to know the true God and Him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ (cf. John 17 : 3).
6. *Common Witness*. Here is meant the witness which the Churches, even while separated, bear together, especially by joint efforts, by manifesting before men whatever divine gifts of truth and life they already share in common.
7. *Religious Freedom*. Religious freedom is not used here in the wider biblical sense (e.g. Rom. 8 : 21). It is pointing to the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in religious matters. Each person or community has the right to be free from any coercion on the part of individuals, social groups, or human power of any kind ; so that no individual or community may be forced to act against conscience or be prevented from expressing belief in teaching, worship or social action<sup>2</sup>.
8. *Proselytism*. Here is meant improper attitudes and behaviour in the practice of Christian witness. Proselytism embraces whatever violates the right of the human person, Christian or non-Christian, to be free from external coercion in religious matters, or whatever, in the proclamation of the Gospel, does not conform to the ways God draws free men to himself in response to his calls to serve in spirit and in truth<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Modern languages use several biblically derived terms which denote particular aspects of the announcements of the Gospel in word and deed : Witness, Apostolate, Mission, Confession, Evangelism, Kerygma, Message, etc. We have preferred here to adopt "witness", because it expresses more comprehensively the realities we are treating.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the Setting of the WCC*, of the Third WCC Assembly (1961) ; *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, of the Second Vatican Council (1965) ; *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, of the United Nations (1948), esp. N. 18. Since the right to religious freedom operates in society, these documents also mention rules which modify the use of it.

<sup>3</sup> In certain linguistic, cultural and confessional context, the term "proselytism", used without qualification, has acquired this pejorative sense. In those other languages and contexts in which the term still retains its more original meaning of "zeal in spreading the faith", it will be necessary always to use "proselytism in the pejorative sense" or some phrase which denotes defective attitudes and conduct.

## I. Common witness

9. There is a growing recognition among the Churches that they must overcome their isolation from each other and seek ways to cooperate in witness to the world<sup>4</sup>. In face, however, of difficulties and obstacles, a clear basis and source of power and hope is needed if the Churches are to embark on this common witness.
10. This basis and source is given in Christ. He is sent into the world by the Father for the salvation of mankind. There is no other Name in which men may find salvation and life (Acts 4 : 12). Christian Churches confess Christ as God and only Saviour according to the Scriptures, and most adhere to the ancient Creeds which testify to this central truth of faith.
11. Moreover, the Churches believe that they live only by the divine gifts of truth and life bestowed by Christ. Most Churches acknowledge that gifts of divine grace are a reality in other Churches which also provide access to salvation in Christ. Thus all Christian Communion, in spite of their divisions, can have a positive role to play in God's plan of salvation.
12. The Churches have the privilege and the obligation of giving witness to the truth and new life which is theirs in Christ. Indeed both privilege and obligation are entrusted to the whole community of Christians to whom God gives a vital role in his plan for the salvation of the world.
13. Therefore Christians cannot remain divided in their witness. Any situations where contact and cooperation between Churches are refused must be regarded as abnormal.
14. The gifts which the Churches have received and share in Christ have demanded and made urgent a common witness to the world. The needs of men and the challenges of a broken and unbelieving world have also compelled the Churches to cooperate with God in deploying his gifts for the reconciliation of all men and all things in Christ. This common witness takes place in many areas of social concern, such as
  - the development of the whole man and of all men ;
  - the defence of human rights and the promotion of religious freedom ;
  - the struggle for the eradication of economic, social and racial injustice ;
  - the promotion of international understanding, the limitation of armaments and the restoration and maintenance of peace ;
  - the campaign against illiteracy, hunger, alcoholism, prostitution, the traffic in drugs ;

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council Decree, *Ad Gentes*, 6 and 15, and the proposals for "Joint Action for Mission" formulated by the 1961 New Delhi Assembly of the WCC and affirmed by the Report of Section II of the 1968 Uppsala Assembly.

- medical and health and other social services ;
  - relief and aid to victims of natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc.).
15. Cooperation has also extended to include the production, publication and distribution of joint translations of the Scriptures. Moreover, an exploration is being made of the possibility of common texts to be used for an initial catechesis on the central message of the Christian faith. In this connection, cooperation in the field of education and in the use of communications media is already going on in some places.
  16. The cooperation of the Churches in these varied fields is increasingly being accompanied by common prayer and common acts of worship for each other and for the world. Of particular significance is the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" which is now celebrated in many places around the world. This practice of common prayer and of acts of worship has greatly helped to create and develop a climate of mutual knowledge, understanding, respect and trust. The World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church have contributed to this improved climate by their studies and guides to common prayer. This fellowship in prayer, nevertheless, sharpens the pain of the Churches' division at the point of eucharistic fellowship which should be the most manifest witness to the one sacrifice of Christ for the whole world.
  17. The central task of the Churches is simply to proclaim the saving deeds of God. This then should be the burden of their common witness ; and what unites them is enough to enable them in large measure to speak as one. Indeed all forms of common witness are signs of the Churches' commitment to proclaim the Gospel to all men ; they all find in the one Gospel their motivation, their purpose and their content.
  18. Whether in witness or service, the Churches are together confronted by the fundamental issues of the nature and destinies of men and nations ; and while they face these questions they encounter men of other religions, or men who are indifferent or unbelievers who hold to a variety of ideologies.
  19. But at this vital point of mutual engagement, the Churches become aware not only of their shared understanding of the Gospel but also of their differences. They all believe that Jesus Christ has founded one Church, and one alone ; to this Church the Gospel has been given ; to this Church every man has been called to belong. Yet today many Christian Communions present themselves to men as the true heritage of Jesus Christ, and this division among the Churches greatly reduces the possibilities of common witness.
  20. In the context of religious freedom and the ecumenical dialogue, respect is due to the right of Churches to act according to convictions, which they believe should be held in fidelity to Jesus Christ :

a) While it is indeed aware of its pilgrim condition, a Church can be convinced that in it subsists the one Church founded by Christ, that also in it one can have access to all the means of salvation which the Lord offers, that its witness has always remained substantially faithful to the Gospel.

b) A Church can regard itself as bound in conscience to proclaim its witness to its own belief, which is distinct from that of the other Churches.

c) While the major affirmations of faith, such as those which are formulated in Scripture and professed in the ancient Creeds, are common to almost all the Christian confessions, different interpretations can sometimes call for reservations on this common character.

d) The teaching of certain Churches can place limits on cooperation in social concerns, for example, different positions on family ethics (divorce, abortion, responsible parenthood).

Nevertheless, it is not enough to know the limits which the division of Christians places on common witness. The more the need of common witness is grasped, the more apparent does it become that there is a need to find complete agreement on faith — one of the essential purposes of the ecumenical movement.

21. Differences about the content of witness, because of varied ecclesiologies, are by no means the only obstacle to cooperation between the Churches. The rivalries and enmities of the past, the continued resentments due to the memory of ancient or recent wrongs, the conflicts generated by political, cultural and other factors — all these have prevented the Churches from seeking to bear a common witness to the world. Only the willingness to extend mutual forgiveness of past offences and wrongs and to receive correction from each other will enable the Churches to fulfil their obligation to show forth a common witness to each other and to the world.
22. There is, however, an understandable hesitation of a Church to cooperate in witness where this may trouble and confuse its members. Among other reasons, it may be due also to lack of contact and mutual understanding between the clergy and the laity of Churches. In all such cases, a patient and determined effort should be made to create conditions which favour cooperation.
23. A further obstacle to joint action in witness derives from receiving and interpreting the Gospel in forms so exclusive as to lead to a refusal of all discussion and an unwillingness to recognize that the Spirit can operate in groups other than one's own. This attitude is generally labelled "sectarianism" and such exclusive and excluding groups are often called "sects". When faced with this situation, Churches should first of all recognize the challenge which these groups present to them and examine themselves as to their inadequacy in meeting the profound spiritual needs

of their members and of those around them. They must also guard against the very spirit of sectarianism which they so rightly deplore in others. Rather should they strive to hear God's call to renewal and to greater faithfulness to his message of salvation.

24. Moreover, the Churches should pay particular attention to groups which seem open to receive those aspects of the Christian message which those Communities have hitherto neglected. The Churches must thus always stand ready for dialogue and to seize every opportunity to extend a fraternal hand and to grasp the hand held out to them.

## II. Proselytism and relations between Churches

25. Christian witness, to those who have not yet received or responded to the announcement of the Gospel or to those who are already Christians, should have certain qualities, in order to avoid being corrupted in its exercise and thus becoming proselytising. Furthermore, the ecumenical movement itself had made Christians more sensitive to the conditions proper to witness borne among themselves. This means that witness should be completely
- conformed to the spirit of the Gospel, especially by respecting the other's right to religious freedom, and
  - concerned to do nothing which could compromise the progress of ecumenical dialogue and action.

### 26. *Required Qualities for Christian Witness*

#### A

In order that witness be conformed to the spirit of the Gospel :

- a) The deep and true source of witness should be the commandment : "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . You must love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt. 22 : 37 and 39, cf. Lev. 19 : 18 ; Deut. 6 : 5).
- b) Witness should be inspired by the true end of the Church ; the glory of God through the salvation of men. Witness does not seek the prestige of one own's community and of those who belong to, represent or lead it.
- c) Witness should be nourished by the conviction that it is the Holy Spirit who, by his grace and light, brings about the response of faith to witness.
- d) Witness respects the free will and dignity of those to whom it is given, whether they wish to accept or to refuse the faith.

- e) Witness respects the right of every man and community to be free from any coercion which impedes them from witness to their own convictions, including religious convictions.

## B

27. Witness should avoid behaviour such as :

- a) Every type of physical coercion, moral constraint or psychological pressure which would tend to deprive man of his personal judgement, of his freedom of choice, of full autonomy in the exercise of his responsibility. A certain abuse of mass communications can have this effect.
- b) Every open or disguised offer of temporal or material benefits in return for change in religious adherence.
- c) Every exploitation of the need or weakness or of lack of education of those to whom witness is offered, in view of inducing their adherence to a Church.
- d) Everything raising suspicion about the "good faith" of others — "bad faith" can never be presumed ; it should always be proved.
- e) The use of a motive which has no relation to the faith itself but is presented as an appeal to change religious adherence : for example, the appeal to political motives to win over those who are eager to secure for themselves the protection or favours of civil authority, or those who are opposed to the established regime. Churches which form a large majority in a state should not use legal methods, social, economic or political pressure, in the attempt to prevent members of minority communities from the exercise of their right to religious freedom.
- f) Every unjust or uncharitable reference to the beliefs or practices of other religious communities in the hope of winning adherents. This includes malevolent criticism which offends the sensibilities of members of other communities. In general, one should compare the good qualities and ideals or the weaknesses and practices of one community with those of the others, not one's ideals with the other's practice.

28. *Christian Witness and Relations between the Churches*

The Lord has willed that his disciples be one in order that the world may believe. Thus it is not enough for Christians to conform to the above. They should also be concerned in fostering whatever can restore or strengthen between them the bonds of true brotherhood. Proposed suggestions :

- a) In each Church one is conscious that conversion of heart and the renewal of his own community are essential contributions to the ecumenical movement.

- b) Missionary action should be carried out in an ecumenical spirit which takes into consideration the priority of the announcement of the Gospel to non-Christians. The missionary effort of one Church in an area or milieu where another Church is already at work depends on an honest answer to the question: What is the quality of the Christian message proclaimed by the Church already at work, and in what spirit is it being proclaimed and lived? Here frank discussion between the Churches concerned would be highly desirable, in order to have a clear understanding of each other's missionary and ecumenical convictions, and with the hope that it would help to determine the possibilities of cooperation, of common witness, of fraternal assistance, or of complete withdrawal<sup>5</sup>. In the same manner and spirit the relations between minority and majority Churches should be considered.
- c) Particularly all competitive spirit should be avoided by which a Christian community might seek a position of power and privilege, and concern itself less with proclaiming the Gospel to those who have not yet received it than with profiting by chances to recruit new members among the other Christian communities.
- d) To avoid causes of tension between Churches because of the free exercise of the right of every man to choose his ecclesial allegiance and, if necessary, to change it in obedience to conscience, it is vital :
- i) that this free choice should be exercised in full knowledge of what is involved and, if possible, after counsel with the pastors of the two Churches concerned. Particular care is necessary in the case of children and young people ; in such cases, the greatest weight and respect should be given to the views and rights of the parents and tutors ;
  - ii) that the Church which admits a new member should be conscious of the ecumenical repercussions, and not draw vain glory from it ;
  - iii) that the Church which has lost a member should not become bitter or hostile, nor ostracise the person concerned, that it examine its conscience as to how it has done its duty of bringing the Gospel to that person. Has it made an effort to understand how his Christian convictions ought to affect his life, or rather was it content that he should remain a nominal and official member of that community?

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<sup>5</sup> In speaking of Joint Action for Mission, the World Council of Churches distinguishes presently three degrees of missionary collaboration : surveying the possibilities of missionary action ; joint planning ; and joint action. The meaning of common witness is wider than that of joint action for mission.

- iv) that any change of allegiance motivated mainly by the desire to secure some material advantage should be refused.
- e) Some points of tension between the Churches are difficult to overcome because what is done by one Church in view of its theological and ecclesiological convictions, is considered by the other as implicit proselytism. In this case, it is necessary that the two sides try to clarify what is really in question and to arrive at mutual understanding of different practices, and if possible, to agree to a common policy. This can be realized only if the carrying out of these theological and ecclesiological convictions clearly excludes every type of witness which would be tainted by proselytism, as described above. Some examples of such tensions :
- i) The fact that a Church which reserves baptism to adults (“believer’s baptism”) persuades the faithful of another Church who have already been baptized as infants, to receive baptism again, is often regarded as proselytising. A discussion on the nature of baptism and its relation to faith and to the Church could lead to new attitudes.
  - ii) The discipline of certain Churches concerning the marriage of their members with Christians of other communities is often considered as proselytic. In fact, these rules depend on theological positions. Conversations on the nature of marriage and the Church membership of the family could bring about progress and resolve in a joint way the pastoral question raised by such marriages.
  - iii) The Orthodox consider that the existence of the Eastern Catholic Churches is the fruit of proselytism. Catholics level the same criticism against the way in which certain of these Churches have been reunited to the Orthodox Church. Whatever has been the past, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church are determined to reject not only proselytism but also the intention even to draw the faithful of one Church to another. An example of this pledge is the common declaration of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I, on October 28, 1967. The resolution of these questions, evidently important for the ecumenical movement, should be sought in frank discussion between the Churches concerned.

## Conclusion

These reflections and suggestions on common witness and proselytism will, it is hoped, offer the Churches an opportunity of moving more

quickly along the way which leads to the restoration of complete communion among them.

As they travel that path to unity the Churches realize that Christian witness can never be perfect. They can never cease to strive for a deeper realization and clearer expression of the Good News of the unfathomable riches of Christ (cf. Eph. 3 : 8), and for a more faithful living in accord with His one message. By fidelity to this striving the Churches will grow together in witness to Christ, "the Faithful and True Witness" (Rev. 3 : 14) in expectation of that day when all things will be perfectly reestablished in him (cf. Eph. 1 : 10 ; Col. 1 : 20).

*The reaction by the Commission to this report is included in the report of Committee IV, see below p. 225.*

PART II

DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS  
ARISING FROM THE MEETING  
OF THE COMMISSION



# UNITY OF THE CHURCH - UNITY OF MANKIND

## I. ADDRESS BY L. J. CARDINAL SUENENS

It is with profound joy that I welcome you as members of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches to Louvain, and assure you of my prayers that "the grace and communion of the Holy Spirit" may be with you in your work.

The theme which brings you together was chosen in the light of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala and it has received long and careful preparation. This theme goes right to the very heart of the hopes of the Church and of the world. It is a vital theme and, at the same time, a theme of rare complexity.

### Unity of the Church

Unity of the Church and unity of mankind ; each of these unities involves and implies the other, yet they are not identical.

*Lumen Gentium* affirms that "by her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind" (I, §1). This necessarily means that the unity of the Church is not opposed to or outside the unity of the world. Between the action of the Spirit who animates the Church and the action of the Spirit who creates and guides the world, there is an intimate connection, though one which it is difficult to define. "Send Your Spirit", we frequently pray in the liturgy, "and You will renew the earth !" Illuminated and quickened by the Spirit, the Church is offered to the world as a hope made visible, as the icon of what mankind is called to become. "The Church", declares an Orthodox author, "gives meaning to the world, is its intelligibility or, as Origen put it, 'the cosmos of the cosmos'. The Church remains the heart of the world even when the world neglects its heart. All that the Church lives, it lives symbolically in the strong sense of the term. It is in its own unity, revealed to it by the Spirit, that it recognizes the unity of mankind, until the *parousia*, and the Church will be the one spouse of the Lord of glory."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Georges Khodre, "Technology and Social Justice. The Christian Orient." in *IDOC International*, North American edition, 30th Jan. 1971, p. 5.

But we have not yet arrived at the final *parousia*. Your study will be concentrated on God's *Today*, on the permanent tension between the Church and the world, on the Church as itself the tension of the world.

You are faced with the difficult problem of reconciling unity and plurality, whether in the case of the Church or in the case of mankind. This is the old problem of "the one and the many" with which philosophers and theologians have wrestled throughout history.

The Greek philosophers long ago, from Parmenides to Plotinus, made strenuous efforts to reconcile the one and the many. The metaphysicians throughout the centuries have striven to explain how the complete and infinite Being could coexist with finite, limited and partial beings. They tried to show how the infinite Being and finite beings coexist and constitute a plurality of beings without however constituting a singular being. Human thought has continued to confront this mystery of "plural unity", of unity at the heart of diversity yet not itself constituting a member of that diversity, of unity inherent in plurality and of plurality found in some sense at the very heart of the One.

An analogous problem at a different level is found in the field of the theology which discloses to us the God of Revelation, the God who is One and Triune, the One God in the undivided glory of the three Persons, the mystery of the *circumcessio* which cannot be contained within the narrow limits of our formulas, which rejects the rules of our mathematical adding games but brings us into the presence of the unsearchable riches of the living God.

And you are met together now to grapple more closely with the mystery of the Church of Christ, one and undivided, and to reconcile this with the plurality of the Churches.

Looked at from the outside, on the surface, the Church appears to be a universal society composed of individuals placed side by side, a group of cells each directly linked with the head. Looked at from within, however, in the light of the Word of God, it appears as a body composed of differently shaped organs ; it is a communion of local churches which together constitute the Catholic Church.

Plurality takes the form of local churches which are themselves laden with, which embody and reveal, the mystery of the one Church of Christ. They are the concrete, historical, spatial incarnation of that mystery. But if the plurality has its own rightful place from the very outset, so that it is never right to identify unity with uniformity, nevertheless we must equally insist that the unity of the one undivided Church of God also exists from the very beginning at the very heart of the diversity. So there cannot be any question of federalism or of juxtaposition of Churches ; the communion which is to unite all Christians transcends our defective human categories ; it is rooted in the communion of the Divine Trinity.

Ever since the sad divisions of the 11th and 16th centuries, the Church has lacked the visible unity which manifests the unity of all Christians. Although

we are baptized Christians, brothers in the Lord, we have tolerated the establishment of misunderstandings, barriers, "Berlin walls" between us, which fragment this city of God which is meant to provide the world with a picture of brotherly love, the supreme sign of its credibility.

Plurality — legitimate only while it remains loyal to the profound unity willed by Christ — has, alas, become multiplicity, fragmentation, and, at worst, a Tower of Babel.

The unity has been blurred. For many it assumes the character of a threatened loss, of an imposed uniformity, of a threatened "take-over" or absorption.

Yet it is impossible for us to abandon either the plurality or the unity.

Only the Holy Spirit can restore this authentic and visible plural unity. He alone can "move forward into deep waters", He who alone fathoms the deep things of God and searches the hearts of men. On the threshold of every ecumenical enterprise it is to Him that we must turn. It is He who must guide us from within, step by step, into the fulness of the truth, according to Christ's promise. His essentially active and effectual presence transfigures all our human activity. This action of the Holy Spirit is described with great felicity in *Dialogues avec le patriarche Athénagoras*, a book of extraordinary spiritual richness :

"Without the Holy Spirit", says the author, "God is far off,

Christ remains in the past,  
the Gospel is a dead letter,  
the Church merely an organization,  
authority domination,  
evangelism propaganda,  
worship superstition,  
the Christian ethic a slave morality.

"But in the Holy Spirit, the cosmos is lifted up and groans with  
the birth-pangs of the Kingdom,  
the risen Christ is present,  
the Gospel is power for living,  
the Church a sign of the communion of the Holy Trinity,  
authority a liberating service,  
evangelism a Pentecost,  
the liturgy a memorial and anticipation,  
human action divine." <sup>2</sup>

It is to this action of the Holy Spirit that we must open our lives, with complete responsiveness but also with courage, concreteness, and creative imagination.

The Spirit wants us to open ourselves to Him so that He can liberate us from our incapacities, from our pride, from our sins, but He also wants us to

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<sup>2</sup> Olivier Clément, *Dialogues avec le patriarche Athénagoras*, Fayard, Paris 1969, p. 496.

move forward and to love this unity more than ourselves, so as to be ready to suffer for it.

We have to forge a path for this visible unity, at all levels, at the level of faith and charity and at the level of joint action. Your work here in Louvain is at the level of the search for communion in the faith.

If I am not mistaken, the special charisma of Faith and Order has always been its insistence on the primacy of the Word and of Revelation. The truth alone shall make you free, Christ said; certainly the truth which has to be practised and lived — orthodoxy without orthopraxy ceases to be orthodox — but nevertheless the truth of God which is to be received as the supreme guide, as the pillar of fire by night which guided the children of Israel on their way. We need light even more than we need bread. "What do we need most to be able to bake bread?" asked a wise man once. "Flour, water, fire", he was told. "No", he replied, "the first thing we need is the sun, to make the corn grow and to ripen the harvest."

We Christians have first of all to receive the Word of God, illuminated by the living and lived Tradition. We must love God with all our heart but also with all our mind. This is the splendid task which falls to you as theologians, to offer your minds in obedience to Christ. Christianity is not an ideology but a Face, a meeting with One who comes to us as the light of life, as He who alone has the words of eternal life.

In one of your working documents, which listed the problems raised by the proclamation of "one Gospel in the plurality of forms and in the freedom of the Spirit", this task of doctrinal discernment is described very accurately. The document points out the importance — also stressed by the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council — of clarifying the question: "In respect of the unique communion in Jesus Christ, what significance has a hierarchy of truths of faith, all of which have to be held in reference to Jesus Christ and are therefore incapable of being reduced to a least common denominator?"<sup>3</sup> These words fully accord with the concerns of the Council. If we are to clarify our essential and fundamental communion in the faith, we must, it seems to me, above all clearly define what it is which would enable us once again, in full truth and charity, to live our eucharistic communion. This point is emphasized also by Konrad Raiser in a paper written for the second meeting of the Joint Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Lutheran World Federation at the beginning of 1971. Speaking of a possible future ecumenical council he wrote: "The eucharist is at the very centre of the unity of the Church. If we thus ask how much unity is required for the Churches to be able to hold a council together the answer is clear: The Churches must be able to celebrate the eucharist together. The question of

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Appendix VI of the study document on Catholicity and Apostolicity, prepared by a Joint Theological Commission, in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII/1, January 1971, pp. 66-67; see also above pp. 133-158.

the conditions to be fulfilled in order that a universal Council may be held is, thus, basically the question of the condition necessary to open communion in the eucharist for all Christians and Churches.”<sup>4</sup>

We all know how vital this question of intercommunion appears to the rising generation. We know too, how complex the problem is. Neither oversimplification nor unilateral undiscipline will solve it. It seems to me, however, that we should pay particular attention to the impatience of youth in this matter. We are told repeatedly that God is patient, and this is true, of course. But the world is full of people only too ready to use this divine patience as an excuse for marking time and waiting for better times. We have also to realize that while God is patient — be it noted in passing, patient because we force Him to be patient — He is also impatient just because He is love and love is always eager to share. “The love of Christ constrains us”, said St. Paul, *urget nos*. Ecumenism is challenged by this urgency, by this call. We have no right whatever to accept an ecclesial *status quo*, which is the fruit of our collective sin and a scandal to the world. It is our business to prepare the ground for concrete practical advance along the painful pathway towards unity, and to do so with tenacity and courage.

## Unity of mankind

In the light of faith, we must look together at the world, with the eyes of Christ and with his heart also.

The Church is called to live its own mysterious unity, in accordance with the mind and will of her Lord. Yet the Church, as we know, is not coextensive with the whole vast range of God’s saving purpose. Long ago, St. Augustine said: “There are many whom God recognizes as His but whom the Church does not; so too, there are many whom the Church recognizes but whom God does not”. The Church is not an end in itself nor does it exist for itself; it is not the centre of reality; it is instrumental to the Kingdom of God. All men are called to that Kingdom, but not all men will in fact acknowledge the Church. The task of the Church is to announce to the world that the Kingdom of God is among us and that it is to grow. The Church must display the first-fruits of the Kingdom in the way it lives its own life as a community. It must be a foretaste, a rough sketch of the new brotherhood which surpasses men’s expectations.

The Church’s mission is to provide the world with access to the Kingdom of God, to help man to fulfil the profound resources of his humanity. The world and the Church are involved, in different ways but not independently of

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Reformed World*, Vol. 31, No. 5, March 1971, p. 208.

each other, in the human construction of the earthly city and should both strive to make man's home on earth a more habitable dwelling.

The ultimate goal of civilization is defined "not solely in terms of improved standards of life at all levels of society but in terms of a better, more human quality of life" says Lebret.<sup>5</sup>

What the Church normally offers to men is not primarily means of life but reasons for living, and this independently of its numerical size in the world. If as the result simply of the population explosion the Church were to become tomorrow the "little flock" (*pusillus grex*) of the Gospels, its mission would still be the same, namely, to be the leaven in the lump, the salt of the earth. Its calling to become the effective conscience of the world would remain unchanged; it would still be its calling to be the breath which quickens the world in its advance towards greater truth, greater justice, greater brotherhood. The Church as the Christian community which is its essential character, provides the world with a model for brotherly communion, which is far more than simple human solidarity, however noble the latter may be. From this standpoint, eucharistic communion assumes the character of a supreme call to "be one".

At its Bristol meeting in 1967, the Faith and Order Commission formulated the following question: "What is the function of the Church in relation to the unifying purpose of God for the world?...What is the relation of the Churches' quest for unity among themselves to the hope for the unity of mankind?"<sup>6</sup>

This is a question of fundamental importance and your working document very helpfully multiplies the possible approaches to it by suggesting biblical, historical, systematic and ecclesiological angles, showing the extent to which this question is itself the meeting point of a whole variety of questions.

I was extremely glad, too, to notice in the Working Committee's comments appended to the study document on "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" two especially valuable reflections:

The first was this: "While a study of the concept of human unity is a legitimate starting point for the discussion, it has to be made clear that one cannot proceed from this to a doctrine of the unity of the Church except by way of Christology and Pneumatology".<sup>7</sup>

In other words, the Church can never be reduced to a purely social service of men, to a kind of spiritual Red Cross. It means that while the Church must contribute to human advancement with all the strength it has — and heaven knows that the scope here is vast enough — but at the same time it must remember that men need to be nourished both with earthly food and with the Word of God, that men need to discover the cost and the meaning of work and also the unique importance of prayer and surrender to God, to preach all the social

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<sup>5</sup> Louis Lebret, *Dynamique concrète du développement*, Paris, 1963, p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Geneva 1968, pp. 131 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Study Encounter*, Vol. V/4, 1969, p. 178.

reforms which appear most urgent and at the same time teach men the meaning of the world to come and of true messianism.

The Second Vatican Council also tried to formulate briefly the relationship between the Church and the World in §39 of *Gaudium et Spes*, where we read : "We do not know the time for the consummation of the earth and of humanity. Nor do we know how all things will be transformed. As deformed by sin, the shape of this world will pass away. But we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth where justice will abide, and whose blessedness will answer and surpass all the longings for peace which spring up in the human heart."

We know too, certainly, that it will profit man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, but the hope of the new earth, far from weakening our concern for cultivating this old earth, should on the contrary awaken such concern. Here the body of the new human family is already growing and already gives us an inkling of the age to come. This is why we must carefully distinguish earthly progress from the growth of the kingdom of Christ, and yet at the same time realize that this progress is of vital importance for the Kingdom of God to the extent that such progress can help towards a better organization of human society. "For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured. This will be so when Christ hands over to the Father a kingdom eternal and universal : 'a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace'. On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns, it will be brought to full flower" (*Gaudium et Spes*, §39).

Quoting this passage in his splendid book, *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology*, George A. Lindbeck writes : "Not since the early days of the Church, perhaps since Irenaeus, has the mainstream of the Catholic tradition spoken in such realistically eschatological terms of a universe which is heading not towards total destruction, not towards annihilation, but towards cosmic redemption."<sup>8</sup>

A group of scientists recently presented a report to the French government entitled *Réflexions pour 1985* in which they stressed the values vital for man in 1985. Among values for the future which called for special cultivation since they are under such threat today are mentioned the following :

- human individuality,
- respect for life,
- quality of life (the value of silence, of the rhythm of life),
- the dignity of man and woman,
- solidarity of individual men and solidarity with the coming generation.

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<sup>8</sup> George A. Lindbeck, *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1970, p. 25.

These are certain essential requirements on the promotion of universal human community. It is surely clear how profoundly and at what new levels the Church is able to offer men supreme grounds for mutual human respect — *homo res sacra homini*. “The greatest gift Christians give to their fellow men”, writes Marcel Légaut, “is to give sense and direction to the world and to give the world this *in Jesus*”.

In a recent book entitled *Do We Need The Church?*, Richard P. McBrien, an American theologian, answers his question by saying: “Indeed, the whole world ‘needs’ the Church, for the human community cannot long survive without fidelity to what is essentially human and criticism of what is fundamentally inhuman or anti-human. . . . The Church must offer itself as one of the principal agents whereby the human community is made to stand under the judgement of the enduring values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: freedom, justice, peace, charity, compassion, reconciliation. The Church must be a place where all these forces, personal and political, which challenge and undermine these values are themselves effectively exposed, prophetically denounced, and, through the instrumentality of moral rather than material force, initially disarmed and dismantled.

“The human community needs a Church which proclaims without compromise the dignity and worth of every person, lest he be swallowed up in society’s technological jaws. It needs a Church which reminds us all of the fragile character of our existence and of our history, which bridles our arrogance, strips us of our pretentious self-images, and summons us to place everything under the judgement of God’s Kingdom. The world needs a Church which offers itself and all its moral resources as the embodiment of charity and as one of charity’s principal instruments. The world, in the final accounting, needs a Church which, as a revolutionary community, never rests until the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are everywhere realized and extended.”<sup>9</sup>

A *second comment* of the Working Committee seems to me equally apt, namely, when it says: “Mankind is one human family; yet each man is also a member of a particular people, and only as such can he have and express his common humanity. As the London Consultation said: ‘Our Lord became incarnate as a member of a particular people and *as such* became the New Man and the brother of all men. His Jewishness is inseparable from his representative and universal humanity’. Surely the unity of a mankind grounded in Him is not intended to be monotonous or monochromatic!”<sup>10</sup>

This clearly indicates the degree to which the unity we seek is a plural unity. Particularism itself is opened up from within and calls for mankind as a whole. Like Christian unity, the unity of the world is essentially also an appeal to complementary diversity, to multiform and convergent richness.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard P. McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* Harper and Row, New York 1969, pp. 228-229.

<sup>10</sup> *Study Encounter*, Vol. V/4, 1969, p. 180.

From the same standpoint, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged the diversity of rites and traditions to be an enrichment not only for the local church but for the whole Church and recognized that these traditions formed an essential part of its own heritage (*Lumen gentium*, §23.4).

Here too, the Holy Spirit appears as the very heart of ecumenism. He is the author of the Christian's identity; He is the author of the multiplicity of gifts. He makes the diversity an enrichment of the unity: in Him the reconciliation of the One and the Many is achieved.

## 2. ADDRESS BY MAX KOHNSTAMM

Dear Friends,

Cardinal Suenens, as a citizen of this country, has welcomed us to Belgium and to Louvain. Permit me to add my welcome to this, though I do so in a different capacity. I am not a citizen of this country but have now lived here for more than twelve years. We Dutch are strangely different from our Belgian neighbours: in a way, whether we are Protestants, Catholics or Atheists, we are all Calvinists. Belgians are not! And so it takes us some time to begin to know and to love this country. I now consider it a great privilege to live here and to benefit from Belgian hospitality. In very many ways this country has become so much part of my being that, although formally a stranger myself, I do not think I am being presumptuous in adding my welcome to Belgium to that of Cardinal Suenens.

Nearly all your time and attention during the next few days will be devoted to the work you have come here to do. I do hope, however, that you will have the opportunity of giving some time and attention to the country that is your host during this conference — and in doing so to discover, as I was able to do over the years, how great the benefits of its hospitality are!

Cardinal Suenens, however, has not only spoken words of welcome; he has begun to think with us about the theme this conference is going to study: Unity of the Church — Unity of Mankind. He has done so as a man of the Church for whom thinking of and longing for the unity of mankind springs from thinking of and longing for the unity of the Church. And so his words were a real introduction to the theme of this conference.

Here again, I fear my own position is much more ambiguous, because when reading the preparatory papers and thinking about what I could contribute to your work, I became evermore clearly aware that my thinking starts from the other end — from the need of mankind for community. It is from that point of departure that I ask what the Church could do to make the unity of mankind a reality. I want to warn you of the ambiguity of this position. For I belong sufficiently to the Church to know that the Church is not simply answerable to the needs of the world — and too much to the world to be able

or willing to think in other terms. Perhaps, therefore, I should not be speaking here at all. I can only hope that you will find it not altogether useless for your work to listen for a moment to someone whose "Sitz im Leben" is in the market square rather than inside the church — a representative of those who, absorbed in their daily affairs, tend to find themselves strangers when they enter the church and yet would find themselves strangers in the market square if, when looking up from their work at their stalls, they did not see the silhouette of the church dominating the square.

I should like to stress one more point before making a few brief remarks on the theme of this conference. I am deeply convinced that man is capable of transcending the limits and presuppositions that stem from the context into which he is born and in which he lives. But I am also deeply convinced that our views on the need of the "polis" — our political views — are inseparably tied to that context, to our own place, to our own interests. I am white, bourgeois and from the West. I hope to be able to transcend that context — but I do not believe that I or anyone else can ever possess the objective and completely true answer to any major political question. If I had no political convictions I could not speak. But I beg you to be aware — as I myself try to be — of the limitations of my political views; that awareness is a condition indispensable to you and to me ever transcending in our thinking and in our choice of action the limitations of the context to which we belong.

The awareness of the unity of mankind as, in Reinhold Niebuhr's words<sup>1</sup>, "a universal and unlimited moral obligation" is at least as old as the Old Testament. What is new in our situation is that the unity, the interdependence, of mankind has now also become a political reality. In a political context, I do not find the word "unity" very clear or very helpful, because the word does not distinguish clearly enough between interdependence and community. "Unity", in a political context, can be something imposed from above, destroying human freedom and therewith humanity itself. "Community" denotes the acceptance of diversity, albeit by organizing manifold diversities, including the diversity of interest and of power, in such a way that a relative harmony, a situation of live-and-let-live, becomes possible. "Unity" can be achieved by simply destroying diversity; "community" implies the organization of diversity in such a way that diversity does not become destructive to any member of the community. Since no one thinks of uniting the various Churches by force, the distinction between unity and community may be less necessary in speaking about the unity of the Church. In politics, however, force and power are primordial; therefore "unity" is in a political sense a less useful term than community.

Technology — the application of science to production — has created in the world of today an interdependence that is unprecedented in history. There is no need to stress the point or to explain this situation. Our economy has

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<sup>1</sup> This and subsequent quotations are from Reinhold Niebuhr's: *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*. New York, Scribner, 1947.

become a world economy, our monetary system part of a world-wide system, war between major powers a threat to the whole world, and wars between minor powers hardly less so, because no one knows whether they will remain limited or not. Television brings the plight of one part of the world as quickly into the drawing-rooms of another part as it does the style of living of those drawing-rooms into the shacks of the disinherited. Passengers of "space ship Earth", we are locked up together for better or for worse.

Interdependence, however, does not of itself create community. It creates thousands of new links — but these links may seem like the fetters of a prison, the shackles of bondage and injustice. Interdependence can intensify to an unbearable degree our feeling of loneliness, alienation and meaninglessness.

Technology never set out to create interdependence; interdependence simply resulted from it as an unthought-of by-product, a kind of unintended pollution. But by-products — whether pollution or interdependence — must be dealt with, otherwise they will deal with us. Pollution and interdependence have one more thing in common: There is no way of escaping from them through a return to the past. Nothing at all is going to be solved by applying less technology or less organization, by a return to the "dreaming innocence" of some lost paradise. There is no escape in turning backwards, we can only go forward. Forward either to unlimited pollution and unorganized, destructive interdependence and so finally to catastrophe, or to a technology serving the needs of the environment and to interdependence changed from a destructive into a constructive situation through the establishment of a real structured community. In both cases our options are strictly limited. Environmental control or perish, community or perish.

But at this point the analogy between pollution and interdependence breaks down completely. Pollution can be overcome by applying technology, interdependence cannot. The effects of interdependence, leading to ever-increasing feelings of bondage, frustration and alienation, can be overcome only through the slow and difficult process of establishing community. The process of community-building, however, is incomparably more complicated than putting technology at work to well-defined technical ends. Technology can be made to serve and to help community-building. But it certainly will not build community by itself. Because community, in the sense of true unity and as opposed to unity imposed by superior force, is a matter of love, justice and power. No community can come into existence or will last without justice; but justice turns into oppression and ideology without love, or into sheer good intention without power, just as power turns into oppression without love and justice, and love into pure sentimentality without justice and power.

So here we are at this point in history: all aware of each other — often terribly aware of each other — but not neighbours; dependent on each other, but some much more dependent than others, and without any common law before which we appear as equals; locked up together in this small and vulnerable spacecraft. And, mind you, the spacecraft is at the same time the symbol of man's enormous technological capacity and of the total absence of any

further open spaces to which man can withdraw. There are no Wild Westes or Siberias in the Cosmos to which man can go in order to become independent again and to live happily ever after in rugged individualism. So we shall have to live together, or atomic arms and their inevitable spread will see to it that we die together.

For someone like myself, who has had the privilege of watching the snail-like pace with which a community is developing in this part of the world — a community of states already bound together ethnically, historically, economically and geographically — it is tempting to try to elaborate a theory of the process of community-building. Firstly, however, this is not the place to do so. Secondly, it would be utterly immodest. Hitherto, European nations have been specialists in war and destruction. Whether we have lived through enough tragedies to become specialists in community-building remains to be seen. Thirdly, let us be aware of general theories in fields where the situations differ so widely as between community-building among some ten Western European states and community-building in the world at large.

One thing, perhaps, could be said, because it was known long before this particular community-building activity in Western Europe started. Those who think that it can be done by a simply constitutional process totally fail to understand — to quote Reinhold Niebuhr once more — “the vital social processes which underlie constitutional forms and of which these forms are only instruments and symbols”. And further: “Governments develop to express and to perfect the unity thus achieved, but they do not create what they must presuppose”. Those, however, who, claiming to be realists, simply say that it cannot be done “fail to recognize the novel and unique elements in a revolutionary world situation”.

As Niebuhr warned us thirty years ago, “Ages of tragic history will be required to achieve what is so impossible and yet so necessary”.

What now does someone who happens to be white, bourgeois and from the West hope that the Church will do to help the world find its way through the tragedies of history before us so that we may move towards community instead of towards final catastrophe?

That community-building and relations between nations are a matter of structures, involving therefore love, justice *and* power — and not merely love isolated from justice and power — is by now a commonplace and does not need restating. Looking at the Church from afar, I am sometimes astonished at the great desire of theologians to be fashionable. For once, at least, the young have stood up against the fashion-makers and stuck to the miniskirt (I admit to being grateful for it). It seems difficult to find theologians who do as much. And so we hurry from the theology of development to the theology of revolution and to the theology of 1972. It may be — in fact I am sure it is — partly because of my background, my privilege, my preconceptions, but it seems to me that what is going to be most needed over the next decades is a Church committed to justice and love, to conciliation, a Church constantly calling people to reopen dialogue, helping them to see a situation through the

other's eyes — in short, to *meet* each other. Because the movement from interdependence to community needs endless dialogue, endless revision of one's own point of view. Community-building needs people and institutions which are fully and ultimately trustworthy to no one, because they are committed to no existing structure but only to the community that has not yet come into being. As Tillich pointed out, only he who dares to cross borders and is willing to go constantly back and forth across them can help to overcome patiently that which is destructive in those borders.

From my place in the market square I should like to see the Church united, as Pontifex Maximus, as the great builder of bridges. A bridge belongs to neither side of the river, it simply serves those who need to meet.

The unity of mankind? Yes, for decades ahead it will be a unity of hatred, convulsion, injustice and violence. Community will be perceptible only in faith. It can only be built and re-built — because part of what will seem to have been built will be destroyed again — by those who are attempting to meet over what seem insurmountable rivers of separation. May the Church be Pontifex, building bridges so that man may meet across rivers that seem to make meeting impossible, convinced that without order existence will be engulfed in chaos, restoring bridges that have been bombed from above by the powers of this world trying to maintain order, or mined from below by the guerillas of this world trying to establish justice — guerillas to whom interdependence is simply an unbearable form of exploitation.

One more wish from the market place. Interdependence makes the coming into existence of community the political life-and-death question of our times. Man, however, is not only *homo economicus* or *homo politicus* — he is something much simpler and at the same time much more complicated : man.

More than ever before in history interdependent man is threatened by an abyss of meaninglessness. Around him the old structures that gave meaning to his life are crumbling. In the materially affluent part of the world the simple necessities which at least gave tension and direction to his life have lost their seemingly eternal force. Rapid change, leading to a feeling of not belonging to any given time or place ; the growing absence of material constraints in the North ; the explosion of expectations, the awareness of potentialities that seem to be willfully withheld in the South, everywhere secularization and the deafening silence now that the gods do speak no more ; solitude in a universe that may be rational but is nevertheless so full of suffering as to become totally unintelligible ; a demystified universe that makes man responsible for his fate but leaves him at the same time totally devoid of the means to participate in any real way in the shaping of it, ruled, as he seems to be, by an unanswering, overwhelmingly powerful, impersonal organization — all these forces are pushing man into a world-wide crisis of identity. The abyss of despair and meaninglessness is never far away for anyone endangered by the loss of identity, the loss of self.

For man absorbed by all that is going on in the market square — utterly incomprehensible, utterly fascinating, utterly threatening — maybe the catas-

trophe of the polis is not the catastrophe that looms largest. What he faces is personal catastrophe. May the Church therefore be Pontifex — not only to build bridges in order that *homo politicus* may meet *homo politicus* and be allowed to take part in the madly slow process of community-building, but above all, in order that man may meet his neighbour and thus become aware that life receives meaning through meeting the other. Forgive me if I remain silent about what, to those inside the Church, is *the* vital, *the* essential meeting — the meeting with the Totally Other. Permit me to speak only from outside the Church, from the market place. May the Church be Pontifex — a builder of bridges in order to allow man to reach his neighbour, the other ; building the bridge that can only lead man across the abyss of meaninglessness that is constantly opening up under his feet. Because only man saved from the abyss of meaninglessness through hope and faith found in meeting his neighbour is capable to patiently endeavour the creation of enough community to make the constraints of world-wide interdependence bearable for himself and his neighbours.

### 3. A REPORT ON THE DISCUSSIONS (JOHN DESCHNER)

Louvain answered two questions about its main theme. The first, answered affirmatively, I think, concerned a kind of exercise in vision : Is it possible and productive to view our historic theme of church unity in a new context, specifically in the context of human, not simply denominational, divisions ? The second question was answered more tentatively and partially : What new insight can be obtained concerning the task of church unity by thinking about it in these new contexts ?

As both questions show, however, it was not a new theme but a new aspect or viewpoint from which to examine Faith and Order's historic theme : church unity. In a sense, it was an attempt to bring Faith and Order work more explicitly into the centre of World Council thinking, which has been dominated in recent years by items from the life and work side of the agenda.

What follows is a summary report of the discussion which culminated, provisionally, at Louvain.

#### The Preparatory Discussion

The previous Commission meeting (Bristol, 1967) gave the initial impulse when it asked : "What is the function of the Church in relation to the unifying purpose of God for the world ? What . . . is the relation of the Churches' quest for unity among themselves to the hope for unity of mankind ?" <sup>1</sup> Uppsala, a

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<sup>1</sup> *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Bristol 1968, pp. 131 f.

year later, spoke to that question in words often quoted since : "The Church is bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of mankind".<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after Uppsala the Working Committee decided to take up this question and answer for special study. A study document was prepared on the theme "The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind" which posed biblical, historical, systematic and ecclesiological questions, and attempted to focus the new issues concerning the unity of the Church. This document, after discussion and comment by the Working Committee at Canterbury 1969 was published<sup>3</sup> and widely used in regional study groups. Reports and comments were returned from groups and individuals in the DDR, the Bundesrepublik, the USSR, Norway, Holland, India, Cameroon, Czechoslovakia, USA, Denmark and other countries.<sup>4</sup> In general, four kinds of questions appeared to be raised by these regional studies : (1) concerning the definition of the concept of unity itself, especially its relation to diversity ; (2) concerning the ambiguity of the notion of "the unity of mankind" ; (3) concerning the relevance of "church unity" in concrete secular contexts ; and (4) concerning the implied relation between Church and mankind.

After appraising this material the Working Committee (Crêt-Bérard, 1970) decided to enlarge the study and make it the theme of the Louvain Commission meeting. A working group (Bossey, Spring 1971) spent a week defining and preparing the discussion, and portions of its document deserve summary here as an indication of the profile of the discussion just before Louvain :

The document asserts, to begin with, that the thematic term "unity of mankind" refers simply to the growing "interdependence" of mankind, technologically inspired, which creates not only new forms of fellowship, but new oppressions, tensions and conflicts as well. In fact, mankind faces for the first time the danger of universal destruction. The *one* interdependent world in which we live is not simply, therefore, a world of new freedoms and communal forms, but of new cries for justice and freedom. Alongside the unifying forces are quite understandable new stresses upon particularity. The "unity of mankind" is therefore an ambivalent concept, whose ambivalence is well illumined by the biblical vision of "Adam" in whom both the creation and fall of mankind are discerned. To this unity in Adam corresponds the other "man Jesus Christ" in whom men are liberated for a life of witness in the midst of mankind's ambiguity. "The people of God are called to live among men as the sign of this promise."

Uppsala had spoken, with some care, of the "coming" unity of mankind, and the document pauses to ask whether this refers to an immanent historical process of development or to the perfection of the Kingdom of God. Is mankind's unity a task or a promise for the Church? The theme study was chosen

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<sup>2</sup> *The Uppsala 68 Report*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Study Encounter*. Vol. V, No. 4, 1969.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. a selection of regional reports in *Study Encounter* Vol. VII, No. 2, 1971. and Vol. VIII, No. 1. 1972.

in part just because the Church, facing the growing interdependence of mankind, must have a clear view of its task in this situation. "The question could, therefore, be phrased thus : What does it imply for the Church in the present situation of growing interdependence to see itself as a sign of that unity which God brings to perfection in His Kingdom?"

The "unity of the Church", as the preparatory document sees it, ought to be a sign "already . . . here and now" that God in Christ has laid the foundations for this promised unity in Christ's humiliation and cross, resurrection and presence, and has made possible a "true communion" which "can be experienced and passed on". An important passage attempts to note points of agreement about this : "Although there is no one agreed understanding or interpretation of this oneness, there is general agreement that it is the same as true Communion with the Father in Jesus Christ, that it is grounded in God's reconciliation of sinners with Himself and each other in Christ, that it is both present, yet, in a decisive way, points to the promise and judgment which await us in the future, that it is essentially a spiritual reality, but is also to be expressed through visible structures, that it is both universal and local, and, far from being uniformity, it allows for wide variety. Christian unity has been called reconciled diversity. In its deepest essence, the oneness of the Church is the love of God shared with His children."

As "sign" (cf. "*sacramentum et signum efficace*", Vatican II), not mere "symbolical image", the Church has always understood herself as the visible representation in this world of God's all-embracing love, accomplishing that representation because the living Christ is present in her. Although God's mysterious love is not exhausted by this "sign", it is nevertheless really in it and justifies speaking of the Church's oneness as a "sign" as well.

And yet, this "sign" of oneness is in fact "broken". The Churches are divided among themselves. How can they testify convincingly to mankind's promised freedom, reconciliation, communion? Here care must be taken, for efforts at restoring inter-church unity in themselves do not necessarily restore the power of the "sign". It is more nearly the case that the Churches will discover, test, and proclaim their oneness only as they acknowledge their placement as Churches in the conflicts of the time.

And this opens the question of radical honesty about the Church. Have the Churches always been factors of reconciliation? Have they not themselves divided men? Has their divisiveness simply reflected the word of Jesus : "I have not come to bring peace but a sword"? That mysterious word *is* true of the coming of Christ and must be kept in mind in explaining the theme. Yet the Churches are not thereby exempt from listening to modern men and learning with them what this word of peace signifies for both Churches and mankind.

The document then made a methodological suggestion. Whereas Uppsala dynamically connected the two unities, seeing one as the "sign" of the other, Louvain should at least begin with a more neutral "and". "The possibility should not be foreclosed that either might fruitfully be considered the context

for examining the other. Perhaps the implied method might be called "inter-contextual."

The Bossey document then proposed that Louvain should study this theme in plenary addresses and discussions, and in five sections each related to some particular aspect of the World Council's work, certainly not to "solve" the concrete problems as such, but rather to "examine the question of unity in the light of these situations". The five sections dealt with The Unity of the Church and . . . (respectively) the Struggle for Justice in Society, the Encounter with Living Faiths, the Struggle against Racism, the Handicapped in Society, and Differences in Culture. Along the way it was also hoped, a little idealistically perhaps, that the sections could clarify some of the habitual terminology we use in such discussions, such as the distinctions between "unity and mission", "Church and world", "unity and diversity", "doctrine and ethics", "local and universal church", and the notion of the "boundaries of the Church".

## The Initial Plenary Debate

After valuable addresses by Cardinal Suenens, Dr. Max Kohnstamm<sup>5</sup> and Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, all touching on the main theme, Father John Meyendorff, Orthodox theologian and newly-elected Commission chairman, initiated Louvain's plenary debate with an address on the main theme.<sup>6</sup> Far too rich for summary, only the principal points can be noted here.

He began with the contemporary ecumenical problem. The theological work which produced the New Delhi "unity statement" and trinitarian "basis" was hailed by the more "catholic" side in the World Council, but criticized by others as a futile academic exercise, only aggravating the Church's alienation from the concrete world. Montreal 1963 then saw the beginnings of "a clear shift of emphasis" from "theology" to "anthropology", aiming "to discover the meaning of 'churchly' unity . . . for all of creation . . . for man as such". This was a valid move, deeply supported on the more "catholic" side by theological doctrines of the image of God in man.

But as the 1960's proceeded the question grew increasingly insistent: *which* anthropology, "secular" or "theological"? Dominated by various "secular theologies", the shift to anthropology has as yet not contributed much to the ecumenical movement, although it has created a conservative backlash which today threatens the World Council as a serious movement for ecclesial unity. And meanwhile, the young themselves appear to be losing their social utopianism in favour of a new quest for mystical religious experience which, unless deepened, could mean an escape from the actual Christian responsibilities of our time.

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<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 171 ff. and 179 ff.

<sup>6</sup> For the full text of this address see *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIV/1, January 1972.

Our "anthropocentric" theme thus "gives us, as Faith and Order, a new opportunity, which comes just at the right time, to salvage the ecumenical movement in a period of acute crisis" by "showing that what is at stake is *man himself*, his life and salvation". In Bishop Newbigin's words we face two Faith and Order questions of deep importance. "What is the form of church order which will effectively offer to all the *human beings* in this place the invitation of Jesus Christ to be reconciled to God through him? and What is the form of church order which will effectively offer to mankind as a whole this same invitation?"<sup>7</sup>

Father Meyendorff addressed these questions from three angles. First, he spoke of "Man and the Unity of the Church". Taking his bearings in Eastern patristic thought, he developed the notion of a "theocentric anthropology" wherein man is understood to be essentially constituted by his *koinonia* with God and, as this *koinonia* is restored in Christ and the Spirit, liberated into fully personal co-existence with God and neighbour. Two inferences were drawn from such an anthropological approach to *koinonia*: First, that so understood, communion with God cannot be "divided" but can only be humanly deficient. Second, that this indivisible *koinonia* exists only in Christ and is *given* in the eucharist, whose celebration grounds the catholicity and mission of each local congregation.

His second angle took up "Man and the Unity of Mankind". Again, a theocentric anthropology and its resultant ecclesiology are made keys to understanding that the Christ-event has a universal and cosmic significance. Two warnings are posted, however, about our ecumenical enthusiasm for "universalist Christologies, as well as the understanding of the Church which is based on them". First, do they take seriously the reality of freedom: freedom from the world, freedom in and under oppression, even freedom to reject Christ, or is this freedom excluded by a subsequent triumphalist interpretation of "secularity"? Second, do not our modern universalist Christologies, once they have described the evil *phenomena* of human life, overlook the theological reality of evil, its personalized, plotting existence, the necessity for exorcism if unity is to come (baptism!), and therefore the appropriateness of the Preacher's wisdom about social reform: "What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?" Other ages — Constantinian, Medieval — also sought in the name of cosmic theologies to build, not only to receive, the Kingdom. Have we sufficiently studied their *theological* mistakes: (1) identifying the authority of Christ with political *power*, and (2) defining the *universality* of the Gospel in political terms? It is not enough for the Church simply to change camps in the social struggle: She must become herself again, and to help the Churches in this task is the *raison d'être* of Faith and Order.

Fr. Meyendorff concluded with a brief discussion of eschatology. "The unity of the Church and the unity of mankind will ultimately and fully coincide

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *What Unity Implies*, World Council Studies No.7, ed. by Reinhard Groscurth, WCC, Geneva 1969, p. 118

only in the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God and not before. Only in this perspective can one legitimately say that the unity of the Church is an anticipation of the unity of mankind. In the eucharist, however, it is possible to taste the very reality of future unity . . ." Therefore, this worship is rightly understood as liberation, especially by Christians who are oppressed. And as that same eschatological event, the eucharist is the "place" of unity, through which one discovers what, in church structure, is truly eschatological and therefore necessary for the Church to be the Church. In other words, it is with a eucharist-centred eschatology that we must struggle against the utopianism of our time, ecclesiastical as well as secular.

Debate on Fr. Meyendorff's address was initiated by Prof. José Miguez-Bonino, Methodist, of Buenos Aires and the Rev. John Gatu, Presbyterian, of Kenya.<sup>8</sup>

Prof. *Miguez-Bonino* appreciated the theological depth and richness of the address and especially the stress on the local as the centre, the eucharistic centre of unity, with its consequence: the notion of "fellowship" (*koinonia*) as "the defining category in the consideration of unity".

But he confessed to a growing uneasiness about the "perspective" from which the address was written. "Where is the theologian who can think and write this theology? What is the location which makes his perspective possible?" Is it not a place outside conflict and tension, hovering above history, concretely, an "eschatological eucharist" which precisely as "unthreatened standpoint becomes then the centre of unity"? But can one *theologize* in that place? Is it not rather "a place for which one can hope and pray, a judgment and a promise on all our theological thinking" — a thinking which is done in historical existence, "unavoidably entangled with ideologies and determinisms, secular categories and conscious or unconscious involvement"? "The paper . . . invites us to move from the eschatological centre (!) to the world and its tensions. But is this possible?" Do not theologians always look at unity from below, at the eschatological promise from the cross?

And this question of perspective is "of extreme importance". Isn't it this ambiguity which clouds the discussion of the problem of evil, which allows "transcendence" to seem to issue in conservatism, to lead dangerously near to reconciliation with "things as they are"?

If Prof. Miguez' response arose out of a sharply politicized Latin American situation, Rev. *Gatu's* remarks deliberately evoked his African, indeed tribal, background, and aimed to show the Commission how Faith and Order thinking — in which Fr. Meyendorff's tradition speaks a decisive word — needs to take account of new constituencies, new reflexes. These were his main points:

— Montreal was not so much a "shift" to anthropological thinking as a "recognition of a new horizontal dimension in our quest for churchly unity".

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<sup>8</sup> Both statements are included in *The Ecumenical Review*, *loc. cit.*

— Uppsala was not “very bourgeois indeed”: “it spoke for the Third World more than any other of the previous Assemblies”. The Orthodox dissatisfaction certainly had theological roots, but could it not perhaps also have expressed a certain political “conditioning” quite as much as the Protestant positions? “Noisy talk about various social issues”, about which Fr. Meyendorff complains, also provides “a means of understanding and learning from each other. My tribe says: ‘To talk is to love.’ It is also true that ‘to love is to talk’”.

— It is true that the basic *koinonia* of the Church cannot be divided, but within that fellowship Jesus is “the way”, and “we tend to imply in what we do and say: ‘Come my way.’”

— We must, as Fr. Meyendorff says, make confession for our misuse of church structures, but it must be “sacrificial confession”, “not only . . . hurting, but . . . a new commitment”. Otherwise “the tons of literature we produce *is and will be mere talk*”. In the eucharist we must “first” die in order to rise with Christ, to share the foretaste of the Kingdom, to be able to celebrate, seriously to undertake our ministry for others.

— Fr. Meyendorff’s words about the reality of evil are very important in the African context. It is not enough to tell a man who fears death or death’s defilement: “You must believe.” His problem asks for *exorcism*.

— Fr. Meyendorff was right to point to Christian freedom as the joy and dignity of slaves. The Negro spirituals of American blacks were not mere “escapism”; they expressed “a transcendence where the Master/Servant relationship was turned into a *Discipleship*. . . . They now had another Master whose demands . . . they were trying to imitate. It restored their exploited dignity”. Similar examples could be cited from African independence and protest movements.

— Are political ideologies “passé”? Not in Africa, where word-of-mouth communication, proverbs, idioms still play a strong role. May not ideologies also convey a truth? May they not help Christians bear witness that “the Gospel of Christ is human”?

## Section Discussions

It is quite impossible to report the richness of the section discussions adequately. Each had six extended meetings. Each kept a record. Each produced some documentation, although they were not formally asked to do so. And a hapless trio, the “theme panel”, was charged with absorbing, digesting, distilling and transforming the collected essence for final plenary discussion! But that gets ahead of the story.

What follows is only an impressionistic indication of some of the things discussed in the sections.

*Section I* (The Unity of the Church and the Struggle for Justice in Society — French-speaking section) appeared to revolve around the theological problem

of eschatology and history : the two "unities", the question of two (or more) kinds of justice, the twofold relation of Church to historical reality. Although some held that social engagement is the task of Christian individuals, there was also a strong assertion that the struggle for social justice is related to the essence of the Church : the Christ of the eucharist is the Christ of the poor. If social justice is not proclaimed the sacraments lose significance, although their "sign" character remains. Is the Church's right attitude then one of proclamation or engagement ? The issue : How is the Church to *use* the powers of this world ? There was much cautioning against exaggerated claims and calls for exaggerated actions. The signs of the times are negative as well as positive.

Is there something new here ? For the discussion of social justice, probably not, as yet. But for the discussion of the sacraments in Faith and Order ? Have we seriously examined the implicit claim here that the uniting power of the sacraments is inseparable from the principle of social justice ? Even more important : Have we understood the significance of the implied assertion, namely, that the political and social *location* of the Church must be explicitly acknowledged and related to its manifestations of unity if we are to talk seriously of the visibility of the Church. <sup>9</sup>

In a crucial shift of accent, *Section II* (The Unity of the Church and the Encounter with Living Faiths — English-speaking section) took "dialogue", not "encounter", as its focal concept. Contexts and motives for dialogue were appraised : to christianize, to find common ground, to express Christian love (here a discussion of the distinction between a crusading and a crucified mind). Theological issues were raised : Is encounter with other faiths an encounter "in Christ" ? Does God reveal himself outside the specific stream of Christian history ? Must Christians believe other faiths contain authentic revelation before true dialogue can begin (sharp division here) ? Can there be a positive and creative Christian meaning for "syncretism", or does that word indicate the decisive threat in dialogue ? How can the particularity of Christian faith be claimed as the basis for mankind's unity amidst other religious and ideological claims of a similar kind ?

But there was also a strong feeling that dialogue contributes to our understanding of the Gospel and of Christian unity. It breaks down our "tribalisms" and enlarges the horizons within which we think of the Church's catholicity. It makes us more aware, and in new ways, of the "concentricity" of Jesus Christ. It helps us think more clearly about the relation between unity and diversity.

The striking thing about this section's work was its readiness to let new ground be broken for Faith and Order thinking. As a discussion of the problem of Christianity and other religions it may offer little that is original. But in its insistence that Faith and Order thinking about *Christian* unity must

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<sup>9</sup> A summary of the discussion in this section by Fr. B.-D. Dupuy, O.P. is available in *Vers l'unité chrétienne*, 24/9, November 1971.

embrace *this* problematic; in its acknowledgment that the problem is not merely man's disunities and the unity of the Church, but church unity amidst a number of religious claims to unity; in its openness to the question whether "dialogue" is not a different but important and valid aspect of Christian witness and "proclamation", with the obvious implications for how we understand mission — in these ways, at least, this section contributed to the enrichment of our study of church unity.

*Section III's* topic (The Unity of the Church and the Struggle against Racism — English-speaking section) had very early proved to be a kind of test case for the Louvain experiment, and it is probably true that this section got deeper into traditional "faith and order issues" than the others. Four themes dominated the discussions: First, racial identity — specifically, "black theology" — and the problem of the legitimate diversity in Christian identity (some discussion of baptism here); second, the use of power in the struggle for liberation and the need for a "conflict-permitting" understanding of church order which allows multiple structures, possibility of contest and tension *within* the Church; third, the need for a new understanding of church discipline embracing church teaching (the need to *define* "the heresy of racism" so as to "expound the doctrine of atonement without turning it into a tool of appeasement"), eucharistic practice and ecumenical fellowship (racist Churches in the WCC?); fourth, the strongly felt need for inter-disciplinary dialogue on this question and for a concentration "on specifics rather than generalizations".

Here also, the essential thrust was toward a new formulation of traditional Faith and Order concerns — baptism, eucharist, order, discipline — in such a way as to make them speak to an urgent concrete human problem.

*Section IV* (The Unity of the Church and the Handicapped on Society — English-speaking section) seems to have experienced a quite fresh discussion of a new theme which grew in interest and ecclesiological relevance as they worked. The marginalization of the handicapped by the more healthy, the more successful — in both society and the Church — is a growing problem, especially in cultures "developed" by science and technology. The Church has been too "bourgeois" in making active membership difficult for the handicapped and poor, and in its lack of imagination in supporting their integration into community life.

But the strong and the weak mutually need each other. The handicapped call the strong to help, but they also "remind the strong of the limitations which beset all human life". In that, they are an essential part of the Church's sign to others of the nature of the Kingdom. They remind the Church that Jesus Christ was rejected and broken, yet "is for us the model of wholeness of life". The unity of strong and weak in Christian community "exemplifies the mystery of the Church and testifies to the power of grace".

Although other parts of the World Council are turning to this theme (the Christian Medical Commission, the Humanum study, among others), this section more than others, I think, faced a new issue. It threw light on how we

understand the Christian congregation, to be sure, and thus was decidedly relevant to ecclesiological reflection in Faith and Order. But more than that it contributed theological insight to a new problem elsewhere in the World Council of Churches.<sup>10</sup>

Section V's theme (The Unity of the Church and Differences in Culture — German-speaking section) was massive and perhaps familiar. The result, curiously, was the most integrated specific problem-analysis of any section, but at the same time the least explicit (although by no means absent) illumination of the Faith and Order discussion. The theme was understood to be the Church's dialectical relation to its cultural situation. Beginning with different cultural environments, the discussion quickly focused upon the Church's relation to the new "unified, interdependent, technological" culture, and opinions varied as to the viability of traditional Christian cultural forms, the need of new syntheses, and the project of overcoming "civil religion".

Eight summary points, which emerged as a framework for discussion, indicate the principal points touched: (1) cultural differences and contradictions; (2) the Gospel calls men out of their cultural ties; (3) the Gospel sends believers into their culture; (4) various degrees of Christian transformation and penetration of culture; (5) the endangering of the Church by Christian culture; (6) the endangering of the unity of the Church by the Christian penetration of different cultures; (7) the unity of the Church in recognizing the fundamental breakthrough of the apostolic witness to Christ into Jewish and Hellenistic culture; and (8) the necessary visible manifestation of the unity of the Church before the world.<sup>11</sup>

Though general, it is possible that this agenda contains methodological guidance as well as material insight for the Faith and Order discussion.

## Concluding Plenary Discussion

Three panelists, who had circulated freely among the sections, opened the concluding plenary theme debate with brief statements of questions about the theme in the light of the section discussions.

Fr. Joseph Ratzinger (Roman Catholic, Germany) spoke mainly from the perspective of Section V: religion and culture. The Church exists today on two cultural fronts, and each challenges her in a different way. In the "younger churches", especially, she faces the necessity to translate her faith without loss of essentials into the forms of the historically developed cultures. Here the questions can become very concrete: Are Christological titles irreplaceable? What is changeable in the liturgical year? And the implications for Church

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<sup>10</sup> The concluding statement of this section together with reactions to it and further materials from the discussion is published in *Study Encounter*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (1971), SE 17.

<sup>11</sup> Materials and reports from this section are available in *Una Sancta*, 26. Jg. Nr. 4 (October 1971).

unity are evident : How avoid new bondages and divisions in seeking new cultural forms of faith? How rightly combine firm rootage and openness? How protect new cultural indigenizations from developing into archaisms that threaten the faith's contemporaneity with the technical world?

The second cultural front is technological civilization, and here a remarkable contradiction appears : on the one hand a universalizing of the means of technological communication ; on the other hand a fragmentation of philosophical language and a break-off of communication concerning questions of meaning. In this situation the Church is threatened with a loss of language, or being confined to a special language understood only within Christianity. "Is the Church in the technological world really condemned to be speechless?" This is a question of life or death not only for the Church but for human life itself, because technical development without humane standards will destroy mankind. Here a political ethic is an urgent task "in which the search for the unity of the Church and for the unity of mankind pass immediately over into one another" .

Prof. John *Deschner* (Methodist, USA) chose two questions arising from sectional debates to illustrate the fruitfulness of Louvain's "inter-contextual approach to the discussion of church unity". (1) "Can the Church be adequately disciplined against racism, and at the same time adequately open to controversy and struggle about racial identity and liberation within her own membership?" Racism compels us to deepen our understandings of the personal and corporate identity given in baptism, the eucharistic fellowship, and the church discipline implied in both. On the other hand, Church unity ought to provide the strong context within which reconciliation and liberation of the races do not contradict each other.

(2) "What is the role of human weakness in exemplifying the mystery of the Church's being and witness?" If God's power is made perfect in weakness, then "the handicapped have an irreplaceable role in the Christian fellowship as witnesses to the holiness of the Church's unity". "If unity lies fundamentally in God's love present among us, then human suffering is fully as important as human activity in manifesting the mystery of the Church's unity." And a theology of poverty is needed alongside every theology of development. Here, too, the "inter-contextual method" stimulated us to discover a richer ecclesiology, while showing us at the same time "new possibilities for creating an atmosphere of non-condescension in which genuine help, healing and development are possible". But sound use of this method will demand much more extensive and rigorous inter-disciplinary collaboration in our studies than was the case here.

Fr. Paul *Verghese* (Syrian Orthodox, India) began with a perspectival affirmation : "Both in the Church and in humanity, unity is the interplay of three elements — (1) identity, (2) openness or relation and (3) structure — at all levels. The three elements are in tension with each other and each appears to be threatened by the other two." We need a structure for unity which relates these elements, and at the same time an eschatological understanding of how

unity grows as “this eschatological goal appears in time as a source of identity and an orientation towards a direction on the horizon (thus as ‘authority’ or the capacity to direct power)”.

In this perspective Fr. Vergheze posed seven questions : (1) In what ways can conflict and disunity serve an interim purpose for affirming suppressed identities and transforming structures? (2) How does sin (as personal, group or institutional egoism) function to protect false and closed identities and structures? (3) To what extent is the power now located in Church and mankind used to impede or assist the development of dynamic structure for promoting both identity and openness, as well as common good? (4) In church unity, the traditional structure has been the eucharistic community led by a presbyterial college presided over by a bishop. If the eucharist and episcopate as foci of unity are radically questioned today, what alternative structure can be proposed which achieves the same purpose without losing richness of content? (5) Mankind today demands unity in the form of a world-wide network for just and effective use of power, creation of good in freedom, and fulfilment of man in open community. What are the obstacles and how can the Churches facilitate this development? (6) How does the Church simultaneously integrate, criticize and even pioneer the development of positive cultural values? (7) What, in this age of dependence on “the whole”, is the role of voluntary, creative groups, and how can the Church bear the creative tensions of such groups? <sup>12</sup>

From the plenary debate in the three following sessions only a sampling of points can be given here :

— We are speaking of church unity too much in anthropological terms. Church unity surpasses all other unities.

— But we have slighted the human side of church unity.

— I know what church unity is. But I don't know what the “unity of mankind” is. Where is it between the times? There is a certain technological interdependence, but this is an impoverishing unity.

— I'm grateful for the new problematic in Faith and Order, but we must discipline ourselves much more rigorously in our use of inter-disciplinary methods of work.

— Church unity is our first task, mankind's unity our second. We have lost the vision of the mystical work of the Holy Spirit.

— Inter-disciplinary work means most especially dialogue with philosophers !

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<sup>12</sup> The full text of the introductory statements by the three panelists is to be found in the volume with *Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission and Working Committee, 1971 Louvain, WCC, Geneva 1971.*

— Our topics here are gargantuan and impossible if we intend to engage our colleagues in serious inter-disciplinary work.

— Don't romanticize the "irreplaceable role of the handicapped in the Church": must there be thalidomide babies?

— A better theme: "Christian Community within Human Community."

— The method has thrown light on the main theme.

— The main theme is ambiguous: a false parity of "unities".

— Interreligious dialogue can teach Christians new humility, openness, love — i.e., the virtues of unity.

— There is no equilibrium between the two thematic unities: their real relation is tension.

— The dilemma of power and powerlessness can be solved only from the cross, which is a twofold cross: the cross of protest against injustice, and the cross of suffering God's saving will. This has concrete implications for the Church's service. The Church that does not protest injustice is unbelievable. But: the Church that does not suffer in weakness is also unbelievable. Can the Church serve if it stands on the side of the powerful?

— The Church contributes to the disunity of mankind. Theologians are the troublemakers!

— We need a new hermeneutic for theological statements, a new relating of thought and action. In every praxis is a piece of theory about anthropology.

— The two unities are related on the purpose of Christ.

— Christians are a marginal community, and the cross is the ultimate marginalization. The handicapped are indeed important for ecclesiology. At the cross we learn to protest what does not belong to peace, but we also learn "blessed are the poor".

— Have we taken eschatology seriously in our theme and in our sections?

— Black theology is the only discipline which combines the two elements in our theme.

— We speak so much of descending grace: The ascent of grace is as important. Rightly understood, the eucharist — lifting up human existence now — is our only social programme. God's creation contains evil, sin and death: his judgment, his division, must come before unity. Holiness and truth are the kernel of unity. Salvation, not unity, is God's goal for mankind.

— The main theme is rightly stated.

— Better main theme: "The Unity of the Church and its Saving Task in the World."

— Racism in the churches shows how churches have been able to use right doctrine for a wrong ethics. We need a methodology which will put a stop to such abstractions!

— The main theme is formulated too abstractly, too much in parallel. Better to use Uppsala's notion of "sign".

— The two parts of the theme must not be severed but related.

— Could not member Churches be asked to articulate and study together in Faith and Order their disciplinary procedures for eliminating racism?

— Could we not study how an essential mark of the unity of the Church is her recognition of three God-given distinctions in mankind : race, man-woman, generations.

— A better formulation of the theme would be "The Unity of the Church and the Tensions among Mankind". We need a specific study of "Discipline amid Tensions on the Way to Unity".

We must study the positive as well as the demonic aspects of technological culture.

— Could we not pay more explicit attention to the theology of non-violence and the problem of war and peace?

— Our theme broadens Faith and Order's way of work, shifting the emphasis from a confessional to a missionary context.

— We could usefully study the charismatic movement which is common to the Church and mankind. It is also linked with the community as a centre of healing.

— The theme is ambiguous and problematic. "Unity of mankind" is meaningless. As soon as we translate it into practical terms we have formulated something undesirable : the unifying of evil, or at least creating a united instrument for evil to use. As a secular goal "unity" is utopian. The Church must work for more limited objectives : i.e., take up the negative fight against manifest injustice. Mankind needs a quite different kind of unity : unity in Christ, which will produce the spirit of love and sacrifice in which the struggle against injustice can go on. In this second aspect "the unity of mankind" turns out to be the same thing as "the salvation of the world".

— There are theological foundations for inter-disciplinary dialogue: In it we listen for the *fuller* meaning of the truth *in Christ*.

— Legitimate dogmatic statements arise only in the critical relation between the Gospel and the anthropological statements already consciously or unconsciously contained in praxis. We need to study the meaning of this for the relation of theology to Christian action, and for theological method in relation to other disciplines.

— For inter-disciplinary work to function well, it is necessary that Faith and Order first do well its proper work, better than it has done it here. For we have not said what the unity of the Church consists in. We have not said what degree of truth Christian theology is able to recognize in other religions. We have not said whether the "unity of mankind" is solely an eschatological reality. Unless we do our own work better, we will only repeat, badly, what has been said with greater strength by Church and Society.

## The Concluding Statement

Out of the thematic study and entire discussion emerged a brief statement about questions for further study.<sup>13</sup> The main points only are summarized here :

“As a means of relating traditional Life and Work concerns directly to traditional Faith and Order issues, the Commission found the main theme extremely helpful and productive.”

Three questions were raised about the *formulation of the theme* : whether its parallelism was excessive, whether it should be studied by Faith and Order alone, and whether it does not neglect some of the traditional Faith and Order questions.

Two comments are made about our *method of study* : that it must also involve participants who are not theologians, and that its methodology needs to relate theology and other disciplines (philosophy, social science, ideological analysis, for example). “Inter-contextual method implies inter-disciplinary studies.”

Six *issues* are proposed for further exploration : (1) Norms of Thought and Action, (2) The Meaning of Unity in Church and World, (3) Conflict and Community, (4) Racism and Unity, (5) Power and Powerlessness, and (6) The Church and Other Religions. The Working Committee was asked to integrate and regroup these studies.

## A Postscript

May the reporter be allowed a few words ?

This study's results are inconclusive. This study is unfinished. This study is of decisive importance for the future of the World Council and of its task. It expresses as no other study or theme the theological life of the Council since its beginnings : the eschatological theme of the fifties, the unity theme of the early sixties, and the secular theme of the last decade. And it discerns that the right differentiation and relation of “the two unities” is the crucial vocation of the Council in the decade ahead.

The four years of work embrace an easily-overlooked shift in approach which partly accounts for the tentativeness with which this report ends. The preparatory stages and opening statements sighted most of the underlying issues and stated them with greater clarity than the subsequent Louvain discussions. But Louvain contributed a wealth of material enrichment and insight and, in its frequent warnings, an important dialectical control upon any theological triumphalism about this theme. Zagorsk (1968) counselled the

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<sup>13</sup> This statement was incorporated into the revised *Conspectus of studies*, see below pp. 239ff. the full text is included in the Minutes of the meeting, *loc. cit.*

importance of correlating deductive and inductive approaches: The shift in our study confirms the wisdom of that counsel.

The study cannot develop beyond its present stage without much more serious attention to method. We have harvested what can be gleaned from theological "advisers" and from earnest conversation in the Commission. Future work requires both more discipline and more deliberate inter-disciplinary approaches.

Finally, and most important: In one form or another, in Faith and Order or in a larger context, the study must go on. That was the ground-tone in the Commission's reaction. This report describes exploratory soundings. And their promise is worth pursuing.

# REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT TO THE COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER (LUKAS VISCHER)

What has been attempted and what has been achieved since the Bristol meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order (1967)? It is difficult to summarize in a brief survey the great variety of tasks which have been dealt with in recent years. Much will need to be omitted altogether; other things can only be mentioned. It may, however, help our work in this conference if I try to indicate at least the main activities during the last four years and point out some of the questions we have met in our work on which we hope the conference will be able to shed some light.

## I. The Last Four Years (1967-1971)

1. *The Task Set by the Commission (Bristol 1967)*. At its Bristol meeting the Commission proposed a whole series of studies, most of which have been set up and have produced at least provisional findings<sup>1</sup>. You are already familiar with the themes of these studies. The principal studies suggested by the Commission can be divided into two main groups. The first dealt with the sources regarded as authoritative by the Church; the study on the authority of the Bible and the study on the significance of the Council of Chalcedon for the Church today may be mentioned in this context. The second dealt with the sacraments and the ministry of the Church; this included detailed studies of baptism and confirmation, ordination and inter-communion. The task set by the Bristol meeting proved too onerous at two points: The study on "Spirit, Order and Organization" had to be suspended before it had produced the fruits hoped for, and lack of time and resources made it impossible even to begin the study on authority and freedom. Part of the problem was the assignment of tasks to the Faith and Order Commission from other quarters. In one of its sections, the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches discussed the problem of "worship in a secular age" but the problems raised in discussion proved so intractable that it was not possible in the time available to reach conclusive results. The Assembly therefore asked the Commission to pursue this theme further. We have taken the initial steps and it will be for you at this conference to decide whether or not these investigations should be

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<sup>1</sup> *New Directions in Faith and Order*, Geneva 1968, pp. 155 ff.

continued. Another additional task arose from the request of the Central Committee that we should examine the possibility of a common date for the Churches' celebration of Easter. The study of this problem has been completed and the report sent to the Churches for their consideration and action.<sup>2</sup>

Many people have cooperated in carrying through these studies. Some themes have been investigated by either a commission or a single consultation but most of the studies have been much more broadly based. The usual procedure was to set out the problem in a preliminary document which was then sent to a number of groups in various countries for study and report. The findings of these individual groups were then compared at an international conference which tried to formulate an agreed report. The documents now before you are the fruit of this process. Many theologians and lay people have shared in the work and it has been a constant source of encouragement to us to find so many people prepared to devote considerable time and effort to this work. They are the real authors of these reports. It will be for the Commission to decide what to do with them. Are they to be buried and left to gather dust in ecumenical archives, save for occasional use by the increasing number of students writing theses on Faith and Order themes? Or is it possible to draw from them some directives for the life of our Churches? Do they contain possibilities which *you* can help to discover and to realize?

2. *The Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind*. The study on this theme deserves special mention. In recent years it has been given primary importance among the various studies. One of the documents presented at the Bristol meeting was entitled "God in Nature and History". This document met with a large measure of agreement but at the same time raised a host of further questions. The Commission proposed that the study should continue under the title "Man in Nature and History"<sup>3</sup>. It suggested certain specific questions which might help to open up the theme. A year later the Uppsala Assembly decided to make the question of man and the Christian understanding of man a study project for the World Council of Churches as a whole. Canon David Jenkins, a member of this Commission for a short period, was assigned this task. This made it possible for the Commission itself to concentrate on one particular aspect of the theme and obviously an aspect was chosen which was directly related to the question of the unity of the Church. At the Bristol meeting the Commission had already formulated this aspect: "What is the relation of the Churches' quest for unity among themselves to the hope of unity for mankind?"<sup>4</sup> The Uppsala Assembly had, moreover, given this issue such emphasis that it was clearly the one to concentrate on. The World Council of Churches suddenly found itself confronted with this

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<sup>2</sup> Published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII/2, April 1971, pp. 176 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *New Directions in Faith and Order*, pp. 7 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132 ff.

religions and ideologies, in connection with questions of development, political and social revolution, racism and education. In recent years several groups have been studying the theme intensively on the basis of a document prepared by the Secretariat. The Working Committee has devoted much of its available time to the question. The study has, of course, produced no conclusive findings and it remains unfinished. It has raised the questions rather than answered them and perhaps this is one of those great themes which can never altogether be finally resolved. It is not so much a matter of formulating agreed findings as of bringing the real questions home to people in appropriate ways. It was with this hope in view that the theme was made the main theme of this present conference.

3. *New Relationships — New Conditions.* One of the tasks of the Faith and Order Commission is to cultivate relations with Churches which are not, or not yet, members of the World Council of Churches. Some steps have been taken in this direction. The annual meetings with Adventist theologians have continued and an agreed descriptive statement has been produced<sup>5</sup>. In a small publication the Secretariat has tried to describe a number of non-member Churches in terms they themselves can accept. This could only be done on the basis of close contacts with representatives of these Churches and it is our hope that these contacts can be maintained in the future<sup>6</sup>. Undoubtedly the most important event in this area of new relationships, however, was the appointment of the new Faith and Order Commission. The Commission today is representative of more confessional traditions than it was four years ago. Above all, it now includes Roman Catholics as full members. One task of our conference will be to explore the significance of this greater breadth of representation. To what extent does it alter the underlying assumptions of our work? What new possibilities exist, now that representatives of the Roman Catholic tradition are actively involved in the Commission's work? Conversely, to what extent does this broader representativeness re-open discussion on agreements already reached? Do we now have to reconsider old themes and problems in a new framework? To some extent the consideration of these problems has been anticipated in two studies which the Commission conducted jointly with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. These studies had been initiated by the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, even before Roman Catholics were appointed as full members of the Commission. The first of these two studies dealt with the notions *catholicity and apostolicity*<sup>7</sup>. The second

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<sup>5</sup> Published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII/2, April 1970, pp. 163 ff.

<sup>6</sup> An Ecumenical Exercise II, in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII/3, July 1971, pp. 267 ff.

<sup>7</sup> First published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII/1, January 1971, pp. 51 ff. See also *One in Christ*, 1970/3, and above, pp. 133 ff.

issue in one form or another in almost every aspect of its work, in connection with problems of mission and of the encounter with the great contemporary tried to formulate agreed principles about *common witness and proselytism*<sup>8</sup>. The reports of these studies were presented to the Central Committee at the beginning of this year and were recommended to the member Churches. They have also been published in various languages on the Roman Catholic side. The main question is how this work is to be continued. Should the theological problems raised by the Roman Catholic Church be dealt with in future, too, by special commissions? Or can the Commission's programme be so arranged as to take in all these problems? In other words, is the Roman Catholic Church to continue to be regarded as a special partner in the ecumenical movement, or has the discussion already shown that the problems arising in the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church are basically the same as those which arise in the ecumenical movement as a whole? The answer to this question is not obvious. Personally, I hope that special commissions will no longer be necessary and that all problems can be formulated and tackled as common problems. I realize that this would represent a large step forward and would also make heavy demands on all concerned. It would require a re-examination not only of the themes but also the methods of the Commission. Perhaps the new composition of the Commission will give us a chance to discover afresh the role of theology with regard to the unity of the Church.

4. *Union Negotiations and Discussions between Confessional Families.* We have continued to pay special attention to union negotiations in the various countries. The Secretariat in Geneva has tried to serve as a centre for information. One member of the staff has devoted a good deal of his time to this work. The conference organized in Limuru, Kenya, last year deserves special attention<sup>9</sup>. This brought together representatives of union committees and united churches and gave them an opportunity to discuss problems involved in church unions. They discovered how many things they had in common and how greatly they could assist each other. It is clear that union between different Churches has to take into account the different circumstances prevailing in the country concerned. Church union cannot be contrived at an international level. But the individual union negotiations in the different countries must also be seen and understood in connection with negotiations elsewhere as a coherent whole. While it is important that a union scheme should achieve unity in one particular place, it is also important that it should further the unity of the whole Church. It is therefore essential to encourage contacts and communication between the various union negotiations. The Commission can fulfil a useful role here. The Conference in Limuru strongly urged the Com-

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<sup>8</sup> First published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII/1, January 1971, pp. 9 ff., and above, pp. 158 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Midstream*, Council on Christian Unity, Indianapolis, Vol. IX, No. 2-3.

mission to increase its services and the Commission will have to decide on that recommendation. Is it possible for the Commission in future to go beyond the rather reserved attitude it has adopted in the past? Can it offer more than the rather modest services it has offered so far? A similar question arises in connection with the bilateral conversations between the confessional traditions. For some years now the Commission has shared responsibility with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches for the Lutheran-Reformed conversations in Europe. But in recent years the number of such bilateral conversations has greatly increased, especially since the Second Vatican Council. The themes discussed are generally the same as those discussed in this Commission. The question arises therefore, how can these bilateral conversations become fruitful for the Commission's work and vice versa. Above all, how do the individual conversations fit into the ecumenical movement as a whole? Do they remain bilateral in an exclusive sense? Or do they seek to contribute to the ecumenical movement as a whole by a thorough clarification of the relationships between the two confessions concerned? What is the most effective way of inter-relating these conversations? The confessional families themselves have felt the urgency of these questions and have made funds available for the Commission to make a study of bilateral conversations. By a careful analysis of the findings and methods of these conversations they hope to discover some guidelines for the future. This analytical survey is being conducted by Dr. Günther Gassmann and Professor Nils Ehrenström. A first preliminary report is in your hands. Since many of you are directly involved in bilateral conversations it is most important that you comment on this report. Important as these conversations are for deepening unity, they will ultimately serve the cause of unity only if they are explicitly related to each other. Perhaps the Commission can be of some service in this respect. Certainly the ecumenical movement can no longer accept that sterile opposition between local unity and confessional universality which has been such a hindrance in the past. Unity must be promoted at all levels simultaneously.

5. *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.* In close cooperation with the Vatican Secretariat for Unity, the Faith and Order Secretariat has continued to prepare the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The importance of this Week of Prayer is obvious. Its preparation is perhaps more important than most of the other activities of the Commission, since it is the only one which establishes a direct link with local congregations. The Commission has an opportunity here of contributing something to the spiritual development of the ecumenical movement. Precisely for this reason the Week of Prayer has presented us with difficult problems in recent years. How is the Week to be organized so as to exert a real influence on the life of congregations? Can we continue to pray for unity as if it were still as distant a prospect as it was some decades ago? If we simply go on repeating ourselves, will the Week not become a routine affair leading inevitably to frustration? Must we not make

it a joint celebration and expression of the fellowship already given to us? To re-establish this fellowship where it is endangered by the strains and tensions of our day? The aim of the Week is no longer exclusively the prayer that God should make the impenetrable walls of our confessional divisions transparent. It must be seen as an opportunity for self-examination on the part of the congregations for a common *révision de vie*. This view of the Week of Prayer has been the basis of the preparatory material in recent years. It has in particular found expression in the open letter sent to all who have some responsibility for organizing the Week of Prayer.

Finally, I mention that the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches entrusted the Commission with the task of preparing a new edition of the ecumenical hymnbook *Cantate Domino*. Work on this project is in progress. A provisional draft is now available and at this conference you will have an opportunity of singing some of the hymns in it. We should be extremely grateful for your musical and liturgical assistance in the final choice of the contents of the new hymn book.

## II. "Account for the hope that is in us..."

After that brief and rather external survey, I should like to add some more general thoughts on the Commission's work. Four years is both a short period and a long period. It is a short period because it is hardly long enough to deal adequately with any major theological theme — a long period because the conditions of theological work are changing rapidly all the time. How much has changed even in these four years! Questions and problems only hinted at four years ago have now come to the forefront and call for solution. One thing certainly has become clearer than ever in recent years, namely, that unity cannot be established by patiently dealing with the confessional differences between the churches until these have eventually been cleared up and overcome. Theological dialogue of this kind cannot be the only method we employ and perhaps not even the main method. The Churches have been driven together by the need to come to grips with the changes of our times. All at once they have been confronted by new questions. They have in fact found themselves in the same boat on a stormy sea, as the emblem of the ecumenical movement suggests, except that the waves in the emblem are far too gentle and considerate! The Churches have to stand the test in a storm. This situation of course in itself does not eliminate the confessional character of the individual Churches. The confessional identity persists and there is still need for careful discussion of the confessional differences. But the confessional identity has been profoundly shaken. Above all it has been set in the wider context of the whole ecumenical movement. This process has become far more rapid in recent years than was ever expected; and I believe this fact has certain implications, of which I should like to mention three:

1. The first implication concerns confessional differences. These have in many respects become much more tractable in recent years. Theological discussion now leads more frequently to concrete proposals being made to the Churches. The partners in the dialogue increasingly realize that the problems at stake need no longer be considered as grounds for separation. This applies in the first place to the general discussion, as will have been evident to you from the reports of the various studies. Themes like baptism, eucharist and ministry can now be dealt with in a much more concrete way than previously. Understanding has progressed to the point that, for some of the Churches at least, certain logical next steps become almost inescapable. But this applies above all to conversations between individual Churches. Here we must mention the Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches in Europe. These Churches are working on a declaration which would form the basis of full communion between them. Of course, it is not certain whether they will succeed in this effort but even the attempt would have been almost unthinkable a few years ago<sup>10</sup>. Other bilateral talks have proposed mutual recognition of sacraments or ministry. On the national level, a number of Churches have achieved organic unity. The achievement of confessional unity has clearly been brought far closer than ever before, and I am convinced that in this respect we are faced with a *kairos*. The fruits which have slowly ripened must be harvested at the right time if they are not to rot on the branches.

The fact that dialogue has become more concrete and demands decisions leads, however, to strangely opposite reactions. Some hold back. So long as discussions did not advance beyond generalities, confessional identity remained unchallenged. But now, decisions have to be made. *Can* these decisions be made, *should* they be made? Have the differences been adequately dealt with? Will the essentials be retained or is something vital being unintentionally abandoned? Others shrug their shoulders. Are concrete steps towards confessional unity any longer needed at all? If the differences have been shown to be surmountable, can we not, must we not turn immediately, on the basis of the existing fellowship, to the missionary tasks so urgently requiring our attention? Does not the stress on visible unity hide and impede the really vital tasks and their fulfilment? Indeed, does not this preoccupation with visible structures of unity really cloak an unacknowledged concern to maintain the *status quo*? How can this sterile conflict be resolved? It cannot be allowed to persist since this would mean that the Churches might actually forfeit the fellowship which is held out to them today, some by failure to accept the offer, others by ignoring it. The will to fellowship is essential. The Commission therefore faces the problem of how in fact this step, from theological agreement to the life of the Church, from the vision of the possibility of unity to the realization of this vision, can be accomplished. The area between the vision and its achievement is occupied by unclean spirits of every kind. It is a

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<sup>10</sup> *Auf dem Weg II*, Gemeinschaft der reformatorischen Kirchen, Zürich 1971.

wilderness in which the way is hard to find. The Commission's task does not leave off precisely where this wilderness begins. What we need is something like a spiritual strategy for the exorcism of the spirits.

Conflicting attitudes are particularly in evidence today in the controversies over common celebration of the eucharist. In some countries tensions in this area have become so intense that decisions can hardly be postponed much longer. The report "Beyond Intercommunion" is in your hands. Perhaps this report will provide us with an opportunity to say something constructive on this issue. Clearly, no statement can apply to all the Churches in exactly the same way. Account must be taken of their varied theological, ecclesiological and spiritual assumptions. But it would be fatal for the Commission to simply rest content with its previous statements on this question.

2. With the shift of emphases in the discussion of confessional differences, all the greater urgency attaches to the question of what we really mean by the unity of the Church. What have we gained by the fact that the Churches are learning to look beyond their confessional differences? Does it mean that the sign which the Church is intended by God to be, the sign of the reconciliation and fellowship which God wills all men to share, is already a reality? Or is not a much more radical renewal required if this sign is to be a reality? This question has constantly cropped up in our work in recent years. It has challenged us almost every day. What form must this fellowship take today? How can the Churches today demonstrate their growing fellowship — a fellowship which is still so vulnerable — amidst the tensions and conflicts which threaten to tear them asunder once more? How can they already be, here and now, the sign of Christ's presence over against the destructive forces of Antichrist? Their over-anxious concern for their own unity could directly lead them to succumb to Antichrist and thereby to lose it. Our conference theme was chosen with questions such as this very much in mind. The discussion should enable us to give a much fuller and more precise description of the unity with which the ecumenical movement must be concerned.

In principle this task was already before the Commission at its meeting in Bristol. An attempt was made there to produce an agreed description of the "catholicity" of the Church. This document, in whose elaboration so much effort and energy was invested, was undoubtedly the Commission's most important contribution to the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The Assembly's report on "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church" would have been impossible without that draft.

If I am not mistaken, the Uppsala report went beyond earlier statements (in particular the famous declaration by the Assembly in New Delhi), at two points in particular. It pointed out that the Church is *one* universal people, one and the same people in all places. The emphasis in the New Delhi declaration had been on the unity in one place, the unity of the baptized who live in the same locality or in the same situation and who are called by God to bear witness together. The report of the Uppsala Assembly showed more clearly that this

fellowship is at the same time universal in character. Christ is indeed present wherever people share their life in His name. But the individual congregations constitute together a coherent whole in which each part bears responsibility for the others. The Church does not fulfil its nature if it fails to embody this fellowship, if it lets itself be restricted by any boundaries and if the individual congregations lose sight of their universal mission. It maintains its catholicity by constantly breaking out afresh from the boundaries in which it again and again unconsciously becomes contained.

The second point at which the Uppsala report went beyond earlier statements is even more important. It showed much more clearly what fellowship in Christ really means in life situations. The New Delhi declaration has already spoken of "one fully committed fellowship". Reflection on the "catholicity" of the Church brings out more clearly the meaning of this phrase. This fellowship is based on liberation in Christ. It is a fellowship of the free who live for the liberation of their fellow men. It is a fellowship which takes the side of those who are oppressed, discriminated against, placed at a disadvantage, and which is ready to stand up for them. It is a fellowship which supports, above all, those who on any human reckoning cannot look forward to any liberation from their particular bondage: the handicapped, the marginal people, those who must all their lives depend largely on other people. It is also a fellowship of liberated men to the extent that it not merely tolerates but actually insists on diversity. For it is so held together by the power of Christ that it is delivered from the need for uniformity and repression.

This brings us to the theme of our conference. My question is this: Ought it not be possible in this conference to describe afresh the nature of the unity, to draft together a statement on the nature of unity which, like the declaration of the New Delhi Assembly, would attempt to visualize the goal of the ecumenical movement, a statement which would invite the Churches to examine themselves and thus contribute to lead them into the more deeply committed fellowship which they are meant to attain? This would not mean setting aside the declaration of the New Delhi Assembly. On the contrary, it would mean supplementing it, in the light of the report of the Fourth Assembly and the discussion we shall have here, by a consideration which had at that time only been hinted at.

3. But our work in the recent years raises a further question. How should the Commission continue its work in future? Has the time not come for the Commission to turn more resolutely to the task of clarifying the fundamental affirmations of the Christian faith, to ask the question: How do we together fulfil our calling today "to account for the hope that is in us"? To try to formulate together the faith in Christ which binds us together? Many of the studies which we have conducted in recent years have brought us to the very threshold of this task. Again and again it has become clear that we had no choice now but to press on to the question of the *content* of the Gospel. The study on the authority of the Bible dealt with the problem of our approach

to the Bible. Is it not time to ask what is the *message* which we gather from the Bible? The study of worship led to the conclusion that the renewal of worship cannot be achieved simply by changing the outward forms of worship but only by reflection on the *content* of worship. Does this not indicate the direction which our further endeavours must take? The study on joint witness and proselytism indicates the conditions of common witness by divided Christians. Must we not now speak about the *content* of this common witness? Our studies have again and again brought us to this transition from the question of the How to the question of the What. Is not the Commission's future task, therefore, to be sought primarily in this area? Must we not try to achieve a common formulation of that hope which is the very essence of the Church's identity in this world?

To be concerned more or less exclusively with the nature and structures of the Church is in the long run inadequate and unsatisfactory. The Churches today are passing through a time of challenging experiences and in the years to come they are likely to experience very great changes. Such a time brings with it the danger of self-preoccupation, not so much the self-preoccupation of Narcissus who fell in love with himself, but more the self-preoccupation of a sick man who is concerned with the changes taking place in his own body and determines his expectations accordingly. In recent years the Churches have been perhaps too much concerned with themselves, with the problem of the significance of the Church, the problem of how to strengthen and renew themselves, the problem of how to speak and act. Again and again, everything seems to begin and end with the Church. The Commission on Faith and Order faces the same temptation. Its necessary and inevitable concern with the theme of unity leads it too easily to an unhealthy concentration on ecclesiology. Is it not essential for the Commission, therefore, to try to show how we can together express the hope of the Gospel? Must we not try to formulate together the centre from which we begin, the source by which we live? The Church's identity is inseparable from this hope and is only recognizable when it knows how to speak of this hope. It cannot live and be listened to if all it ever does is constantly to offer to itself and the world accounts of its structural problems. Indeed it will not even be able to deal successfully with these structural problems, but will rather lapse into an ecclesiological legalism which crushes hope and freedom alike. "The Church should do this, the Church should do that. . . ."

Such an effort to work on a coherent account of the hope that is in us, is essential also for the ecumenical movement itself in the narrower sense of the term. It will only be possible to establish unity when we succeed in grasping and understanding together the truth which constitutes the Church. At the very point where the ecumenical movement is advancing and the confessional differences are seen to be surmountable, we find ourselves confronted all the more massively with the identity of the Church as a sociological entity, the product of historical developments. Suddenly this entity confronts us larger than life. How important then that we should grasp and understand the iden-

tity of that broader fellowship which already embraces the individual Churches ! Only from this centre can the Church take visible form today as the messianic people it is intended to be.

A coherent account of the hope that is in us ! A common statement of our faith ! The enormous problems involved in such an undertaking will be obvious to anyone. Indeed we at once face the question whether such a task can even be proposed, let alone fulfilled. Are we not living in a period when the one thing which it is impossible to do is to make agreed statements of faith ? Indeed in a period when we have to stress the diversity of possible forms of belief ? It is obviously impossible to produce a text with pretensions to universal validity, a creed which could take its place alongside the great creeds of the past. This impossibility, however, does not invalidate the proposal ; it simply shows how urgent the task is. For whatever the difficulties may be, the question of how the truth of the Gospel is to be expressed today must be faced. How is the one hope related to the diverse forms in which it is expressed ? How is it maintained throughout all the changes of time ? How far, therefore, are statements unalterable, and how far can and must the truth be expressed in changed and even in quite new forms ? In short, the question of truth in the Church needs clarification. There is no need for initiating this discussion, for the issue is already under discussion in almost all the Churches, and even if it is not raised everywhere in the same way, the issue ultimately remains everywhere the same. It would be a mistake, for example, to think that the discussion of infallibility which has been reopened in the Roman Catholic Church is simply a Roman Catholic theme. On the contrary, it is a question for the whole Church. The attempt to produce a common account of the hope that is in us would probably not result in any conclusive findings. It might never be more than an attempt. It will probably show that statements can only be made along the way, with repeated fresh attempts, always proving inadequate. This does not make the attempt worthless. The very worst thing that could befall the Church would be for it to lose the passion for formulating and speaking of its hope.

The World Council of Churches can perhaps provide the setting for this attempt. Within this provisional and imperfect fellowship, the still-divided Churches can keep on asking the question of the truth, can keep on giving their common account, can keep on making the necessary new decisions. The ecumenical movement has sometimes been described as a process of "re-reception". What the individual Churches have recognized as the truth is now "received" and appropriated by them all. The attempt to give a common account of the Gospel would be even more than this process of appropriation. It would also make possible the growth of a common tradition, and this perhaps is the surest way to reach the unity we all seek. This unity is today still hidden and obscured by our sin. It can become visible only by conversion, but perhaps we should not be too quick in locating the sin which blocks the way to unity with those who cling to their confessional heritage. Of course, blindness of this kind exists.

But I would repeat that the sin which really obscures our unity in Christ is the loss of the passion to express our hope, that indifferent shrug of the shoulders, that boredom which always calls for the stimulus of a counter-balancing excitement, that somewhat cynical criticism of others for their lack of renewal without paying the price of renewal oneself. The monks of the early centuries were right in saying that *acedia*, listlessness, was the deadliest enemy of faith. It is also the deadliest enemy of fellowship. The Gospel has been given to us as a treasure, a hidden treasure which we repeatedly have to unearth but one which is so precious that joy in its discovery makes us forget the dirt and toil which cannot be separated from the task of unearthing it. It is this joy and this passion that we need.

# REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

## Committee I

### I. AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

#### 1. General Evaluation

The Committee which dealt with the Report on the Authority of the Bible considers this to be a very useful and careful study which can find agreement cutting across confessional differences. In view of the uncertainty that is presently found among many Christians with regard to the value and relevance of the Bible, it is clear that the Report addresses itself to a very important topic. In our committee discussion it became evident that even though the Report does not resolve nor deal exhaustively with the complex problem of biblical authority, it has in any event brought the main questions under review.

The study does not merely deal with the question of the authority of the Bible, but also discloses several new perspectives for its contemporary exposition. In this respect it leads us beyond the report on "The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem for the Ecumenical Movement" accepted in 1967 at Bristol; it also proposes answers for a number of questions which at that time were left open.

#### 2. Particular Evaluation

##### a) *Positive Comments*

The deliberate reflection of the *nexus between event and interpretation* we regard as important, marking an advance. For in this way we abandon the restricted form of inquiry both as to the historicity of biblically attested events as well as to the meaning of the biblical witness divorced from the events. Especially welcome is the concept of "interpretation" which points to the living process of exposition and appropriation that took place in the Church from the outset.

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<sup>1</sup> For a better understanding of the Report the Committee recommends taking into consideration the reports of the regional study groups to be obtained in mimeographed form from the Secretariat on Faith and Order, Geneva.

We also commend as a positive step the fact that the Report abandons a static concept of *authority*. Scripture demonstrates its authority in the encounter with the living God. The Committee emphasizes that this understanding in no way minimizes the authority of the Scripture, since it requires no validation through extra-biblical proofs. Rather, its inherent legitimization is grounded in the authority of God Himself, who once revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and attested Himself through the witness of the primitive Church, and who is active *today* in the exposition and proclamation of that witness.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the Committee welcomes the indirect reference which the Report makes (under the term "inspiration") to the activity of the Holy Spirit, without which the Christ-event cannot be properly interpreted. The Holy Spirit was active in the development of the New Testament witness. But the Holy Spirit was and is also active in the post-New Testament process of interpretation and in present-day proclamation. Nevertheless, the activity of the Holy Spirit both then and now, or stated differently, the authority of Scripture and the authority of the Word preached and heard today, need to be further clarified as to their relationship to one another.

In this connection the Committee underscores the fact that the Report rejects a mechanistic understanding of inspiration. A number of the committee members suggested that for this reason the term "inspiration" should rather be avoided. But the reality to which this term points, namely, the special activity of the Holy Spirit in the formation of the New Testament witness, requires further study. For neither event and interpretation, nor temporal proximity and substantial proximity can, of themselves, adequately account for the authority of Scripture.

#### b) *Open Questions*

The process of interpretation as seen in the writings of the New Testament is rightly emphasized in the Report. But this process was no doubt more complicated than the Report seems to indicate. Form-critical analysis of the Gospels enables us to distinguish various modes of interpretation that were at work in the process of Gospel tradition and redaction, while in the Acts and the Epistles there is found a variety of ways in which the saving events and the message of salvation are understood. All of this took place on different levels of reflective consciousness. It is probably in the credal formulae contained in the New Testament that we may find articulations of very deliberate and hence in this connection especially significant reflections.

In addition, some committee members feel that the concept of "event" as used in the Report requires further clarification.

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<sup>2</sup> When Scripture or the Bible is referred to here and in what follows, it should be borne in mind that the Report primarily has the New Testament in view, while the relationship of Old Testament and New Testament still remains unclarified.

Special consideration should also be given to the historical connection between the interpretation that is laid down in the New Testament and that which is the product of the later Church and is contained in its writings, as well as to the basic differences in evaluating these interpretations. In this connection, there is need to clarify the basic significance of apostolicity for the New Testament Scripture.

The Committee welcomes the fact that present-day biblical exposition is seen in its connection with the interpretation already at hand in the New Testament. But the term "prolongation" as used in the Report we regard as subject to misunderstanding.

We feel that the question regarding a "material centre" (Sachmitte), respectively "relational centre" (Beziehungsmittle), of the New Testament witnesses is a crucial one. The concept requires further clarification, however, as does its relation to the problem of the one Gospel in the various situations and witnesses on the one hand, and to the idea of "inspiration" as well as to the question of "eye-witness" on the other. Moreover, some committee members feel that in this connection the distinction between "noetic origin" (Erkenntnisursprung), namely resurrection, and the "material centres" (Sachmitten), such as incarnation, cross, resurrection, etc. could be helpful.

The Report frequently sees the authority of Scripture in relation to the contemporary crisis of all received authorities. This relationship requires further clarification. To what extent does the authority of Scripture maintain itself in the face of this crisis? To what extent are the methods of historical criticism demanded as an instrument of biblical interpretation? Are there also other methods that ought to be used?

### 3. Recommendations

The Committee is convinced that a further study of the question concerning the unity in the diversity of interpretations *within* the New Testament would be very helpful for the interpretation demanded of us today. Such a study could also furnish better premises for the drafting of statements of common faith in our time. The Committee would therefore welcome it if Faith and Order would encourage scholarly investigation which would lead in the direction that has been indicated.

The Committee is of the opinion that the relationship of Old and New Testaments and particularly the contemporary significance of the Old Testament should be given careful study. We strongly recommend that such a study be carried out by Faith and Order. In this connection attention must also be given to the question, to what extent the authority of the Bible is to be understood christologically.

The Report makes clear that differing historical situations not only permit various interpretations of the biblical witnesses, but in fact demand them. But

then the question arises how the continuing identity of the Gospel is still maintained in the various interpretations. The Committee therefore recommends a study of the problem of change and identity.

## II. "GIVING ACCOUNT OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN US"

1. The Committee is convinced that it is imperative for the future work of Faith and Order that members of the Churches attempt to give account of that which they as Christians have received together and are charged to offer. The following factors underline the urgency of this task :

a) In the ecumenical movement, with its great openness to dialogue, there is the danger of perpetuating the dialogue without pressing on to the point at which we give account of what we have in common in our faith.

b) Many individual studies of the Commission on Faith and Order have reached the stage where it has become necessary not only to bring out the fundamental coherence among the partial results achieved in each of these studies, but also further to endeavour to express the Gospel we have to offer.

c) The situation of our contemporary world demands our taking up the task of expressing together the good news as this has been disclosed to us, even though we recognize the great difficulties of such an undertaking.

2. The question of the addressees of such a common "account" does not seem to be central to the task. When members of the Church seek to give expression to the faith they have in common, they should do so only by taking into consideration the questions of their contemporaries, outside the Church as well as within it.

3. What we have in mind is not to take the form of a Creed, a Catechism, a statement of Confession or a kind of theological handbook. These forms often presume a considerable degree of unanimity in doctrinal formulation. What we have in common in our life together, prayer and preaching is in advance of what we are able to define together in matters of doctrine. Therefore we should endeavour to express what is the content and meaning of our life and prayer and proclamation. Thus we envisage a process moving towards some kind of statement which the Churches can make together. At this preliminary stage our suggestion is that individual groups reflect on and bring to expression what they understand as the salvation of God, for which they give thanks in worship, and which they are commissioned to proclaim. The task should be approached by groups in various situations, consisting both of members of different Churches, and of members of the same confessional families. The preparation for this task would be in the hands of the Working Committee.

4. Furthermore, these or other groups could undertake the attempt of working out how certain specific themes of the Gospel which are particularly subject to discussion could be understood and communicated today.

5. In evaluating the results obtained from the discussions in groups as suggested in 3, there will emerge what the Gospel has come to mean in the different situations. The comparison of the doubtlessly diverse findings of the groups suggested in 4 will make it necessary to enter into the question of hermeneutical criteria. In this whole process the following questions will inevitably come up: the main emphases in the understanding of truth ("Hierarchy of truths"); relationships between unity and diversity; between identity and change; truth and communion; between the Church's confession and the individual's task of confession; and between doctrine and proclamation, prayer and action.

## Committee II

The Committee dealt with the study documents on *Catholicity and Apostolicity* and *Worship Today*; it also considered questions concerning participation in and methods of Faith and Order studies, as well as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The report is as follows:

### I. CATHOLICITY AND APOSTOLICITY

#### 1. The Document and its Origin

The document, upon which we were asked to comment, was prepared by a Joint Theological Commission upon the initiative of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. It was received by the Joint Working Group in May 1970 which recommended it to its parent bodies with the suggestion that it should be offered to the churches for consideration by competent theologians. It is recognized to be a study document and a tool in the service of joint research.

We have heard with interest that the document has already been found useful by groups in the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, Spain and elsewhere. We are particularly glad that the study has already achieved a positive objective in helping the Joint Working Group to continue its work. The Committee hopes therefore, that the dialogue with Roman Catholics will develop in a still wider and more penetrating study of the issues which the document and its appendices open up and which are of deep concern to both the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

#### 2. The Document and Faith and Order

While we see the document as an important step forward in the relationship between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church,

because of its origin its usefulness for wider Faith and Order studies is limited. Bearing in mind, however, the importance of the subjects raised in the present document and the fact that the Uppsala Report points in the same direction, we feel that the concern of Catholicity and Apostolicity should be included within the total programme of the Faith and Order Commission and reflected as a main concern of this meeting.

### 3. Subjects for further study

During our inevitably brief discussion on the document, certain issues which it raises, either explicitly or implicitly, stood out as urgently requiring further study. This is most evident in the appendices and in the relevant parts of the Uppsala Report. In drawing attention to these issues we support the recommendations of the Consultation on Catholicity and Apostolicity which was held in Cartigny (Geneva) in August 1970.<sup>1</sup> Its report lists a number of issues which should be recognized as those speaking to the concrete situation of the Church of today.

Among the issues raised we should draw particular attention to the following which are, in one way or another, related to each other.

#### a) *The Church : Universal and Local*

- (i) The Local Church and the Universal Church (Appendix VII, Uppsala I, 17-19, 22).
- (ii) The Contribution of (disunity and) diversity to Catholicity (Appendix VI, Uppsala I, 12-13, 15).
- (iii) Conciliarity and Primacy (Appendix V, Uppsala I, 17).

#### b) *The Identity of the Church*

- (i) The relation of Catholicity and Apostolicity to the mission of the Church.  
Identity, Norm and Change (Appendix II, Uppsala I, 6-7, 14-16).
- (ii) Catholicity and modern Charismatic Developments (Uppsala I, 2, 13).
- (iii) A consideration of what in fact *are* the marks of the Church (Appendices I and IV, Uppsala I, 5).
- (iv) Ministry and Episcopate (Appendix III, Uppsala I, 16).

## II. WORSHIP TODAY

1. We took as our basic document the 1969 Report "Worship Today", noting that, like Uppsala, it addressed itself to the question of what kind of

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<sup>1</sup> The consultation, which included the members of the Joint Theological Commission and in addition several members of the Commission on Faith and Order, was called by the Secretariat on Faith and Order to evaluate the results of the report.

genuine worship is possible in the world of today. We recognized that the 'crisis of worship' varies greatly both in degree and in nature in different situations. In our discussions we re-lived, as it were, the 1969 Consultation and found that its Report, though by no means commanding agreement on all points, does reflect the complexity of the present situation.

2. In our discussions emphasis was placed on the importance of setting worship free to be related creatively to political and social issues, to the indigenous culture, and to the identity of each Church. Equally, we see these aspects of worship as involved in the primary purpose of worship which is to express and maintain the Church's relation to God. Worship must also retain continuity with the past and responsibility towards the present as well as be a sign of God's Kingdom which is already among us and yet is to come.

3. We do not think it would be profitable to attempt to simplify the problem; it is too complex for that. Nor do we think that Faith and Order can usefully carry further a study of worship unrelated to other studies, for in our discussions we became aware of the crucial importance of worship not only for Faith and Order studies but equally for all the work of the World Council, and also for the life of every part of the Church. Worship tests the reality of our professions of faith and of community. In some ways, too, truth is better expressed in worship than in propositional statements, for worship involves (or should involve), not only the intellect but also the imagination, the emotions, and the will, not only the spiritual but also the material.

4. We welcome the suggestion of the Joint Working Group that an inquiry should be conducted into the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in different areas of the world. The Week of Prayer shows up in a very sensitive way the extent both of our unity and of our diversity and disunity. Among other things it should challenge and inspire the creation of new ways of meaningful ecumenical worship in each local situation. This is of great importance because our ability to find new ways of common prayer, meditation, and celebration will be the ultimate test of our common affirmations in the field of doctrine and faith.

5. In the light of the foregoing we make the following specific recommendations :

*a)* In all Faith and Order studies the importance of considering the subject in close relation to its expression in worship should continually be remembered. Indeed sometimes such expression may form basic material without which the study cannot yield fruitful results. We have in mind in particular any future studies on catholicity, on the preparation of a common declaration of faith, on the unity of mankind in relation to social questions, and to the diversity of races and cultures.

*b)* In particular, we recommend that future studies both of the meaning of the eucharist and of the problem of intercommunion should take full account of the social significance of the eucharist.

c) The Faith and Order Secretariat should collect from many Churches and areas examples of forms and styles of worship which are proving especially creative and enriching in relation to the life and activity of the Church in the contemporary world. This collection should include acts of worship taking place in ecumenical gatherings, both under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and in local situations.

d) The Faith and Order Commission should appoint a small group to consider the material thus collected and to report to the next meeting of the Commission what conclusions can be learned from it that would be profitable for the work of the Faith and Order Commission and for the life of the Churches. It should be part of this group's function to advise whether in the light of subsequent developments the recommendations of the Lund Conference on worship at ecumenical gatherings need revision.

e) As conscious as we are of the continuing care of the Faith and Order Commission for the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we urge the Joint Preparatory Group to bear in mind the variety of local situations throughout the world, including the fact that in some areas other means of expression than traditional prayer may now be found more meaningful; we also request the Group to help the Churches to understand and keep in mind what is the ultimate goal of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

### III. PARTICIPATION IN AND METHODS OF FAITH AND ORDER

We believe that the present situation calls for a review of both participation in the Faith and Order programme and the methods by which it is developed and carried forward. We recommend that such a review be undertaken by the Working Committee and that a report be made at the next Commission meeting. In such a review the following points need consideration :

1. While Faith and Order has made significant advances in broadening its membership it is recognized that it has relied too heavily on the academic tradition of the West for its membership and study programme. It is RECOMMENDED that a review be made of the membership of the Commission to discover imbalances and make recommendations for their correction *and*, further, if there are imbalances in representation that for the next meeting of the Commission, consultants be sought to fill in the gaps. Sufficient opportunity for participation should be given to :

- a) Theological traditions developing in the Third World, *and*
- b) New kinds of theological insight coming from outside the academic community.

2. An evaluation of the process of decentralization of Faith and Order studies should be made to discover how effective this method has been *and* to

seek new ways whereby this process might be further developed and be made more effective.

3. The Working Committee should investigate the possibility of further delegating Faith and Order studies to various Ecumenical Institutes and other centres of research, and find ways in which such studies can then be fed into the mainstream of Faith and Order work.

4. Wider participation in Faith and Order studies should be sought :

- a) By encouraging non-member Churches of the World Council to participate, and
- b) By seeking more active participation of the present constituency.

5. In order to improve the communication of the results of Faith and Order studies to the Churches, the Committee urges more active participation by Commission members. The Committee suggests that a 'job specification' should be prepared for Commission members, emphasizing, for example, that membership involves not only the attendance at Commission meetings, but also the responsibility of being a channel of communication of Faith and Order issues and results to the members' own constituency as well as others, and active participation in Faith and Order studies, both in preparation and response. The Committee urges greater use of regional and national councils of churches as channels for Faith and Order communication.

6. Faith and Order studies need to be limited and adequately focused in order to avoid the programme between two meetings of the Commission becoming too diverse.

## Committee III

### I. GENERAL REMARKS

1. Concerning agreements already registered by previous ecumenical gatherings: We ask the Churches to take careful note of the statement of consensus on baptism (Appendix I of "Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist") and that on the eucharist (Appendix III of "Beyond Intercommunion"); to make a response to these statements, if they have not already done so; and to consider using them in their teaching and applying them in practice.

2. We commend to the Churches for study and response the reports "Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist" and "Beyond Intercommunion" and we suggest the following methods of bringing them to the attention of a wide public:

- a) The publication of the two reports in a single document, giving special prominence to the statements of consensus mentioned in 1. above.
- b) Their translation and adaptation for local ecumenical purposes by the relevant regional or national bodies.

3. We should welcome the publication of the Report on "The Ordained Ministry" together with the comments of our Committee. We commend the subject to the Faith and Order staff and Working Committee for further development.

## II. NOTE ON "BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST"

1. We are glad that there is widespread and increasing mutual recognition of baptism. But mutual recognition is not yet complete. Both Scripture and Creed affirm that there is "one baptism", and this admonishes us, in face of our continuing divisions, to strive for its realization.

2. We are glad to find an ecumenical point of consensus in the idea of Christian initiation viewed as a single process over a variable period of time. There is general recognition among us that baptism leads properly to participation in the eucharistic fellowship and should be seen in that perspective. We acknowledge that the place and status of confirmation within the initiating process vary from Church to Church and are therefore still matters for discussion in the ecumenical context.

3. We also wish to lay emphasis upon repentance, renewal of baptismal vows and personal profession of faith, whether on a single or on repeated occasions. We believe that, for many people, appropriation of their experience of Christ needs to be given open expression of this kind. We are also aware that ecumenical flexibility on the part of those who practice only believers' baptism is accompanied by an insistence upon such profession of faith, at whatever stage of Christian initiation it is made.

4. Baptism properly takes place in the context of a believing community. The secularism and atheism in our time raise the question of who may be baptized. The study of the question should involve not only theologians but also educators and sociologists from different cultures who can help the Churches reach mutually understandable and acceptable pastoral practices.

5. Further study should be made of the question whether insistence on the baptism of converts, especially in lands which have other traditional faiths, has a divisive and exclusive effect.

6. We support the study of the proper forms of post-baptismal catechesis as a continuing process, for adults as well as children, in the conditions of the modern world.

### III. NOTE ON "BEYOND INTERCOMMUNION"

1. While commending the report as a whole for study with the Churches, we have noted certain criticisms :

- a) In paragraph 45 these words occur : "Some Churches are prepared to admit others to their communion but much less to permit their own members to share communion with others. This one-sidedness is only comprehensible as a transition stage, marking a step beyond a simple denial of the others' faith but needing to be completed by a further step of full acceptance and communion"<sup>1</sup>. This statement seems to ignore the possibility that the policy described may be dictated by theological conviction and that consequently doctrinal evolution may have to take place on one or both sides before a solution is reached.
  - b) In paragraph 55<sup>2</sup>, we suggest that one of the following alternatives should be adopted :
    - (i) The introductory sentence might be amended to exclude the reference to a particular group of theologians ;
    - (ii) The entire paragraph might be omitted.
2. Among the subjects which require further study are the following :
- a) The relation between the baptismal community and the eucharistic community ;
  - b) The eschatological significance of the eucharist.

3. We have of course been aware in our discussions of innumerable, urgent calls for the Churches to move ahead in respect to this question. In our own eucharistic experience here at this conference, we have once again ourselves felt this urgency. We rejoice in any genuine advances that can be made through the ecumenical movement of our time, a reality in which many Christians, not only theologians, participate. It inevitably leads to pressure on the established disciplines of the Churches.

Our task in Faith and Order is a limited one, that of clarifying the theological questions implicit in our divisions. We do this work, however, fully conscious of the wider situation. Taken in that context, we feel that the agreements mentioned above on baptism and eucharist, while not yet perfect, mark real advance and ought to be able to allow some Churches to draw pastoral, disciplinary conclusions. Further, in "Beyond Intercommunion" we agree that the two positions traditionally held regarding the problems of eucharistic communion are to be accepted and held together (see in Appendix I an example of how this may be done under particular circumstances). This report has tried to put questions to all positions that will enable further work to be done.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. above p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 66.

In the light of this theological work, we urge church authorities, each in their own way and in line with their own ecumenical commitments, to work towards full eucharistic communion and meanwhile to consider adapting their eucharistic disciplines, so as to allow the appropriate ecumenical advance at this time — e.g. by extending admission to communion under certain circumstances.

#### IV. NOTE ON “THE ORDAINED MINISTRY”

1. There is reflected in the report an emerging measure of common understanding. This demonstrates that nearly all Churches give some recognition to ministries other than their own. A promising basis is also provided for progress towards mutual recognition of ministry.

2. The common understanding so far achieved can be summarized as follows :

From the beginning the Church has never been without ministries. The ordained ministry must always be seen in relation to the whole people of God. The authority (*exousia*) of the ordained minister is not his own, but is the sign and instrument of the authority of Christ received within the whole community.

Ordination is at one and the same time :

- a) an invocation to God that he bestow the gifts of the Holy Spirit for ministry ;
- b) a sign of the granting of this prayer by the Lord ;
- c) a reception by the Church of the minister who is consecrated to the service of God ;
- d) a commitment by the minister to the ministry entrusted to him.

Thus the ordained minister :

- a) gathers together and builds up the community for its mission in the world ;
- b) proclaims in word and deed the good news of God’s reconciliation in Christ ;
- c) presides over the liturgical and sacramental life of the eucharistic community.

It is noted that there is a widespread search for more flexible patterns of ministry. Should not the Churches consider whether present restrictive patterns are depriving them of many valuable possibilities of ministry ?

3. Some areas in the document which need further consideration are :

- a) the connection between the ministry of the whole people of God and the ministry of the ordained (Chapter I);
- b) the degree to which the different Churches accept the ministries of others (Chapter VII);

- c) the sacramental reality involved in ordination (Chapter I,5);
- d) the 'personal, existential relationship' of the minister with the Holy Spirit (Chapter I,7);
- e) the interior, personal, and spiritual life of the minister, including marriage and celibacy;
- f) the ministry of women in the Church, in particular with reference to ordination;
- g) the implications of possible ordination for a limited term;
- h) the relationship between bishop, presbyter and deacon (e.g. the WCC Report on the Diaconate);
- i) the question of the nature and embodiment of apostolic succession within the Church.

## Committee IV

### I. STUDY ON THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

This stimulating report has suggested a number of fruitful lines of further study. We recommend somewhat different handling of various parts, as follows :

1. *Part II*
  - a) The detailed study of the history and interpretation of Chalcedon should be continued by representatives of Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches.
  - b) A small book should be prepared by scholars of various points of view giving their answers to the questions posed in this Part II for the information and instruction of the Churches, thus making the various standpoints more clearly known.
  - c) Chevetogne might be invited to organize a further study project on Chalcedon as part of its particular interest ; this would have the encouragement of the Faith and Order Commission, but it would not hold responsibility for it.
2. *Parts III and VI.* The study of *conciliarity* should be continued by Faith and Order, for it is important for the future of the ecumenical movement and for providing further illumination concerning the possibility of a future universal ecumenical Council.
3. *Parts IV and V.* These parts of the report regarding the actual importance of Chalcedon for the understanding of the *humanum* and related problems should be referred to those responsible for the *humanum* studies, leaving it to them to seek cooperation from the Faith and Order Commission where it would seem helpful.

## II. COMMON WITNESS AND PROSELYTISM

We recommend that the Faith and Order Commission receive with appreciation the report on "Common Witness and Proselytism" and commend it to the Churches as a valuable instrument for further dialogue and appropriate action. It is particularly recommended that the document be used as a basis for dialogue and action at local, national and regional levels, between member Churches of the WCC and between member and non-member Churches, and in seminaries and theological institutions.

Concerning Paragraph 28,e,iii, we would prefer that it might read in some such way as follows: "Tensions exist between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches in relation to 'Eastern Catholic' (or 'uniate') groups, but it is clear that, in the context of present relations between the two Churches, proselytism is out of place. An example of the new situation is the common declaration of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras on October 28, 1967. We are aware that tensions exist not only in the case mentioned above, but also in other instances among Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox. The resolution of the tensions should further be sought in frank discussion between the Churches concerned."

## III. CONCILIARITY AND THE FUTURE OF THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The Uppsala Assembly spoke of the World Council as a "transitional opportunity for eventually actualizing a truly universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life", and suggested that the member Churches should "work for the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians and lead the way into the future". This suggestion has provoked considerable discussion. The recent world meetings of the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Old Catholic Congress and the Anglican Bishops at Lambeth have all shown interest in the proposal. The Central Committee at its meeting in Addis Ababa (January 1971) has expressed the hope that the Faith and Order Commission would contribute to the clarification of the idea. The present paper is an attempt to respond to this request.

2. Meeting at Louvain we have considered the twofold suggestion of the Uppsala Assembly in the context of the main theme of our meeting — the Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind — and also in the context of the present widespread questioning and debate concerning the nature and goals of the ecumenical movement. No discussion of the future of this movement can take place except in the context of a concern for the whole of mankind. The ecumenical movement is concerned with the purpose of God for all mankind as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, and with the Church as instrument and first-fruit of that purpose. Therefore any discussion of its future must be

concerned with the needs of all mankind for true community, and with the forms of church life which are relevant to these needs. It is in this context that we have to consider the suggestion of the Uppsala Assembly.

3. Conciliarity has been, in some form or degree, characteristic of the life of the Christian Church in all ages and at various levels. By conciliarity we mean the coming together of Christians — locally, regionally or globally — for common prayer, counsel and decision, in the belief that the Holy Spirit can use such meetings for his own purpose of reconciling, renewing and reforming the Church by guiding it towards the fulness of truth and love. Conciliarity can find different expressions at different times and places. The ecumenical movement has both challenged and helped us to seek appropriate conciliar forms for our own time. Facing the questions of the contemporary world, and drawn together by a common desire to serve the Lord together in the whole life and mission of the Church, the Churches have been led in our own time to develop new forms of conciliarity — both within each Church, and in councils of Churches at the local, national, regional and world levels. It is important that we should reflect upon this fact, should endeavour to relate it to the conciliar experience of the Church in the past, and should seek more adequate forms of conciliarity for our day. In this connection we draw attention to the studies undertaken by the Faith and Order Commission on “Councils and the Ecumenical Movement” and on the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>1</sup>

4. The report of the Uppsala Assembly first calls for “eventually actualizing a truly universal ecumenical conciliar form of life” and then asks the Churches to “work towards the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians and lead the way into the future”. Though related these two suggestions need to be distinguished. The first points to a permanent feature of the Church’s life, while the second refers to an event which may once take place. To accept the first suggestion of the Uppsala Assembly will mean that we seek to deepen the element of conciliarity in the life of the Churches at all levels, local, regional and universal. The New Delhi statement on the nature of the unity we seek spoke of a “fully committed fellowship” both “in each place” and also universally embracing the Church in all ages and places. To accept conciliarity as the direction in which we must move means deepening our mutual commitment at all levels. This does not mean movement in the direction of uniformity. On the contrary, our discussions here at Louvain have emphasized the fact, that, if the unity of the Church is to serve the unity of mankind, it must provide room both for wide variety of forms, and for differences and even conflicts. The conciliarity of the Church requires the involvement of the entire lay membership, including as it should every segment of mankind. There must be opportunity within the life of the Church for each community of mankind to develop and express

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. WCC Studies No. 5 (1968, Geneva) and *Ecumenical Review* (Vol. XXII/4, October 1970).

its own authentic selfhood ; for the oppressed and exploited to fight for justice ; and for the “marginal” people in society — the handicapped in mind and body — to make their own distinctive contribution. This becomes all the more necessary because modern technology has forced all mankind into a tight inter-dependence which constantly threatens freedom and individuality. The Church’s unity must be of such a kind that there is ample space for diversity and for the open mutual confrontation of differing interests and convictions.

5. True conciliarity, moreover, has a temporal dimension ; it links the past, the present and the future in a single life. This is part of the meaning of what New Delhi said about the unity of one committed fellowship “in all ages and all places”. Through the work of the Spirit in the life of the Church we are enabled to discern his teaching through the words of the Councils of the past. Within the living fellowship of the one Church we are enabled to enter into a conversation with the past, to put questions and to receive illumination on our own problems. We are not called upon simply to reproduce the words of the ancient Councils, which spoke to different situations and in languages other than ours. But it is an essential part of our growth into full conciliarity that we should be continually engaged in a process of “re-reception” of the Councils of the past, through whose witness — received in living dialogue — the same Holy Spirit who spoke to the Fathers in the past can lead us into His future.

6. The councils which have been created as expressions of the ecumenical movement in our time do not possess the fulness of conciliarity as it is to be seen in the great Councils of the early Church. The reason of this deficiency is not in the first place their lack of universality. The central fact in true conciliarity is the active presence and work of the Holy Spirit. A Council is a true Council if the Holy Spirit directs and inspires it, even if it is not universal ; and a universally representative body of Christians would not become a true Council if the Spirit did not guide it. But the acceptance of a Council as a true Council in the full sense of the word implies that its decisions are accepted by the Church as fully authoritative, and that it has been marked by or has led to full eucharistic fellowship. However, the full acceptance of a Council as authoritative has often taken a long period of time. It has not necessarily been the case that the complete binding authority of a Council has been accepted in advance. We must therefore ask such questions as the following : What are the *pre*-conditions for a true Council? Could there be a “reunion Council” which did not presuppose eucharistic fellowship and full consensus, but met seeking and expecting these as gifts of the Holy Spirit? These — as well as many other questions providing the nature of representation, the role of bishops in a Council, and other matters — require study. It is clear that the World Council of Churches and other similar regional and local councils are not in this full sense Councils of the Church. They are meeting places for Churches which are not yet in full communion and do not yet accept a common authority. They do nevertheless provide a framework within which true conciliarity can develop. In so far as they are guided and inspired by the Holy

Spirit they have — if only in an anticipatory form — the character of conciliarity.

7. It follows from what has been said so far that all conciliar bodies — whether local, national and regional councils, or world confessional families, or the World Council itself — should be urged to test their own life and work against this concept of true conciliarity. They should be asked to consider both the question how far a true conciliarity marks their existing life, and also the question whether their life and work are helping to prepare the way for a “genuinely ecumenical Council”.

8. We have begun by looking again at the Toronto Statement of 1950 on “The Ecclesiological Significance of the World Council of Churches”. This statement marked, as it were, the starting point of our journey. It assured the member Churches of the World Council of Churches that membership did not imply the relativizing of their several ecclesiologies, nor the initial acceptance of any particular doctrine of the nature of the unity which God wills for the Church. It committed the Churches to a serious conversation with a view to “unity based on the full truth”, and to solidarity and mutual help. It makes clear that the Council does not claim to be itself the form of unity which God wills; it is not the end but a means — a place within which the Churches can together seek for God’s will concerning their unity. This remains true.

9. In the light of the experience of the past 21 years we can now say that the existence of the World Council of Churches has changed the situation in significant ways. For example:

a) While the Council has no binding authority over its member Churches, its only authority being “the weight which it carries with the Churches by its own wisdom” (Temple), nevertheless the decisions of the Council have had a significant effect in the life of member Churches. An outstanding recent example is the effect of the various actions of the Council, from the Second Assembly, on the race question.

b) The World Council, through its own conciliar processes, has promoted the more vigorous development of conciliarity in the life of the member Churches. The effect of its work has been to move the Churches to take counsel together and within their own membership on matters which concern the common witness and service of the Church in the world today.

c) The World Council of Churches has provided a common life in which the area of eucharistic fellowship has been extended among many Churches which previously did not have such fellowship with one another.

d) The World Council of Churches has provided many opportunities for Christians to work and think together in ways which are urgently needed for the total witness of the Church in the modern world, but for which existing structures provided no opportunity.

In other words, certain of the elements of true conciliarity have begun to appear, even if only in a very preliminary way, in the life of the Council. The

life of the member Churches, and their relation to one another, have been significantly changed during the past two decades through their membership in the World Council of Churches. The ecumenical movement does move, even if the movement seems slow.

10. We suggest that it will be by strengthening these elements of true conciliarity in the life of the World Council of Churches and its member Churches that we shall move towards that "fully committed fellowship" of which the New Delhi statement speaks. To accept this would mean at least the following :

a) that all the member Churches seek more earnestly to ensure that the ecumenical movement penetrates more and more fully into the life of local congregations, synods and assemblies of the Churches ;

b) that member Churches be encouraged to widen the area of organic unity and of eucharistic fellowship among them, wherever their fundamental ecclesiological principles permit ;

c) that the World Council of Churches explore still further the ways in which it can provide fellowship, support and guidance for those individuals and groups which are seeking new forms of Christian obedience for which existing ecclesiastical structures provide no opportunity ;

d) that the World Council be recognized as a place where the great issues on which Christians are divided may be faced — even at the risk of severe conflict, so that it may in a measure fulfill the ancient function of a Council as a place where Christians can be reconciled together in the truth ;

e) that member Churches be encouraged to re-examine and (when appropriate and possible) interpret anew their polemical statements against each other ;

f) that the member Churches together endeavour more seriously to achieve unity in faith and to confess together our hope for the world.

11. In the preceding paragraphs we have considered the application of the idea of conciliarity to the World Council of Churches. However, this concept has much wider relevance. The Second Vatican Council was not only a conciliar event of epoch-making importance, but has also led to a ferment of discussion throughout the Roman Catholic Church on conciliarity, and to new experiments in conciliar practice at various levels of the Church's life. It is our earnest prayer that the preparations for the Pan-Orthodox Synod may be so guided and blessed by the Holy Spirit as to bring about a creative renewal of conciliar life for the enrichment of the whole of Christendom. We note also recent developments in conciliarity among the oriental Orthodox Churches and other significant conciliar movements among Churches not in membership of the World Council of Churches. It is our prayer that through the development of fellowship among the WCC member Churches and through co-operation between the World Council of Churches, the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and other bodies outside the membership of the World Council of Churches, the growth of true conciliarity may be fostered and the way prepared for a genuinely ecumenical Council.

## Committee V

# CHURCH UNION NEGOTIATIONS AND BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS

### Introduction

The search for visible Christian unity is not limited to one avenue. In recent times the way forward has usually been through negotiations for Church union in a particular region. Councils of Churches have also helped to create the conditions for the furtherance of unity. And most recently communions and confessional families which have seen no immediate prospect of organic union have begun to converse (sometimes on a regional scale, sometimes international) attempting to find ways towards greater unity in the future.

It is clear that these modes of advancing towards unity do not exhaust the possibilities. New concepts of unity are emerging as the Church rethinks its mission in terms of our changing society ; the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions already possess their own forms of unity. Later in this report the Commission recommends the setting on foot of a new study of the unity we seek and of the various shapes the quest for unity may take.

The Commission, in commenting upon two particular forms of this quest (union negotiations and bilateral conversations) sees them not as mutually exclusive but as complementary <sup>1</sup>.

### I. Church Union Negotiations

1. The Faith and Order Commission receives with lively interest the Report and Notes of the Limuru Conference of 1970 on Church Union Negotiations (published in *Mid-Stream*, Council on Christian Unity, Indianapolis, Vol. IX, Nos. 2-3). Because these documents reflect situations in which Churches are directly wrestling with the implications of union, they are inva-

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<sup>1</sup> The following terms are used in the sense given :

*Church Union Negotiations* : an attempt by two or more Churches, through their officially appointed representatives, to draw up a plan for organic union.

*Bilateral Conversations* : theological conversations undertaken by officially appointed representatives of two Churches, two traditions, or two confessional families, with purposes ranging from promoting mutual understanding to achieving full fellowship.

*Multilateral Conversations* : similar talks involving more than two participating bodies.

luable for the exploration of the theme of the Unity of the Church and the Unity of Mankind.

2. The Commission is heartened by the consummation of union in North India and in Pakistan, and by the knowledge that there are many other areas where, after long negotiation, the Churches are reaching the point of decision. These are not merely human efforts to create ecclesiastical unity, but the response of Christians who seek to organize their lives and their mutual relations in a way worthy of the gift of unity already given. The Commission commends the Limuru documents for study and appropriate action.

3. In doing so, the Commission is aware of the fact that there is today widespread uncertainty about the value of this kind of negotiation :

- a) Many are wearied and discouraged by the continual frustrations over so long a period ;
- b) Others question the relevance of this work to the real and urgent needs of man — the overcoming of social and economic injustice and the resolution of racial tensions and ideological conflicts ;
- c) A large number, especially of young people, have found ways, quite outside normal church structures, of expressing their unity in Christ and cutting through the problems with which negotiators have been wrestling ;
- d) There is also a widespread questioning of the models of organic union generally assumed in negotiations.

4. The Commission recognizes the sincerity and weight of these doubts and misgivings, but affirms the importance of continuing the resolute and devoted work which negotiations entail.

5. The obligation to unity arises from the nature of the Gospel itself. That Gospel concerns one Lord, one Faith and one baptism, and Christians have no right to remain content in a condition which openly denies or obscures before men this decisive truth, expressed in our one baptism.

6. Among the reasons for persisting in the particular form of the search for unity embodied in union negotiations are these :

- a) Church structure itself is not an anachronism. The Church is body and spirit ; it needs a visible form through which men may see what God has done in Christ. Any given model of a large, centralized organization is open to question, but the need remains for a “fully committed fellowship” of witness, mutual responsibility and sacramental action, such as is adumbrated in the New Delhi statement on the nature of unity we seek.
- b) The impatience of youth drives home to the Churches the urgency of the matter and the intolerable offence of continued division. Nevertheless, this imaginative boldness does not excuse the Churches from the exacting task of making their unity visible and of using their physical resources more efficiently in mission and service.

- c) Union negotiations, so far from permitting an evasion of the issues which threaten humanity, in practice compel the Churches to face them more honestly. The overcoming of its own divisions is part of the Church's inescapable obligation to work, as the forgiven and forgiving community, for the healing of the nations and the unity of mankind.
- d) It is the profound conviction of many that this is a moment of supreme urgency, of an opportunity that may not long remain. The Commission calls upon those involved in negotiations and the Churches who have appointed them not to grow weary in well doing but with firm resolution and responsible speed to carry to a successful conclusion the work of opening the way for a more effective fulfilment of God's mission in his world.

7. There is an imperative here which cannot be evaded by any Church. Even when there seems at present no practical possibility of involvement in union negotiations, the Churches are not exempt from the obligation to recognize their own inadequacy and inner divisions and their need for each other. They are required to ponder the implications for their own ecclesiology and commitment of what is being done elsewhere, and to contribute their wisdom and experience in constructive suggestion when invited to do so.

8. The Commission makes the following comments on particular issues :

#### *Church Union and Mission*

The response to the call for organic union, internal and external, came earliest on the Indian sub-continent where three united Churches have emerged. But these Churches are neither identical in structure nor static in organization. Insofar as Churches are involved in the mission of God in a particular time and at specific places, the witness to the Gospel and expressions of the Church will be diverse and changing. It is, however, as Christians join together in mission that union becomes imperative. We need to seek new models for unity in mission and to search for a unity of the Church which will include diverse expressions of one Faith. All this makes the new links in the WCC between the Faith and Order Commission and the Division of World Mission and Evangelism of major significance.

#### *Church Union as a Process*

Static organizational union is not a goal sufficient to claim our loyalty. The living adventure of negotiation draws Christians into a new and unfolding experience of what fellowship may mean, of the implications of their own faith and of the part they must play in reshaping society more nearly according to the mind of Christ. When Christ's people come together obediently in his name, they are offered a gift far richer than the mere adding together of separated bodies could possibly achieve :

The negotiations themselves can be immensely enriching and all the members of the Churches should be invited and enabled to share in this exhilarating experience ;

The act of union is an event which throws open doors to receive a gift from God which can be known in no other way — it is an act of humble and joyful expectancy ;

Finally the united Churches set out on a further stage of discovery as they grow together in the face of new challenges and opportunities of service. Such Churches deserve special prayer and support in their formative years but they also have a distinctive contribution to offer, for which the ecumenical movement must be ready.

### *An Inclusive Process*

a) To speak of Church Union as a process implies that it must involve every member of the Church. The importance of this has become sadly evident in places where the agreement reached by those who negotiate has been voted against by Church members themselves. Readiness to follow Christ into a wider fellowship and eagerness to be led together by Him into new commitments should be experienced by all. This is not only a matter of education but also, and mainly, of inspiration, of setting forth on pilgrimage together, of sharing information about progress being made and of encouraging one another along the road. Christ Himself walks with his people for the sake of the world.

b) The obstacles to union are not only or mainly theological or religious. They lie deep in the minds and emotions of men and women who cannot accept the desirability of change and cling desperately to the safety of the institutions and ideas with which they are familiar. The process towards union should be presented to them in such a way as to arouse their imagination and allay their fears.

c) All modern means of communication (and not only printed matter) should be used to get available information across to the people. Further, a means should be devised of securing their participation and assent at every stage to decisions which fundamentally affect them. To wait until the final stages of negotiations before seeking the concurrence of Church members is to invite disappointment. The Commission seriously advises Churches engaged in negotiation to give at least as much time and effort to this aspect as to the process of drawing up the actual plan of union.

d) Finally, the Commission judges that, although negotiations may not involve all the Churches which are members of a particular national or regional Council of Churches, the good offices of such a Council should be sought. The proposals should also be discussed within the Councils themselves, where the comment of non-participating Churches is often very helpful. The Commission notes with appreciation the contribution already made by Roman Catholic comment on negotiations and united Churches.

The Church is dedicated to serve the healing, the liberation and the reconciliation of all men in Christ. Its commitment to the service of humanity has to be as clearly inscribed in its documents as its confession of faith and its proclamation of the Gospel. Its members, like the Church itself, are committed by their faith to the pursuit of social justice and the combating of hatred and oppression. In this time of crisis for humanity, any constitution which restricts a Church racially, or perpetuates discrimination based on race, sex or social class is to be repudiated.

## II. Bilateral Conversations

1. The recent growth of bilateral conversations certainly deserves study and evaluation. The Commission therefore appreciates the decision of the Conference of Secretaries of World Confessional Families to undertake a comparative and evaluative study, with the Faith and Order Secretariat carrying administrative responsibility. This study is limited to those bilateral conversations, whether world-wide, regional, or national, which are officially sponsored by world confessional families.

2. The Commission had before it a Preliminary Report of the study, and was requested to evaluate the significance of these bilateral conversations in the context of the whole ecumenical movement, and especially to consider their inter-relation with the task of Faith and Order. Because of the preliminary nature of the report, its comments have only a fragmentary and tentative character.

3. It is too soon to make a definite judgement on the success or failure of bilateral conversations. This judgement must come primarily from the partners to the dialogue themselves.

4. The ecumenical movement is a dynamic process in history. There is no uniform or static pattern of its evolution. It takes different forms and pursues different goals in different places and historical contexts. Each Church and confessional family must have the freedom to engage in the type of dialogue it considers most appropriate.

5. In a similar way bilateral conversations present very different characteristics, depending on a number of factors such as (a) the particular Churches involved and their past and present relationships ; (b) the different aims envisaged, from better mutual understanding to full communion, and (c) the different geographical areas.

6. In noting some of the advantages and disadvantages of bilateral conversations, the Commission is aware that these may not be of equal validity in all situations.

7. Bilateral conversations may have a special value :

- a) when they introduce the world-wide dimension into the ecumenical dialogue ;
- b) when they are sharply focused on specific and concrete issues dividing two traditions ;
- c) when their international character enables Churches to transcend local difficulties in countries where a minority Church is unable to enter into a fruitful dialogue with a majority Church ;
- d) when they represent a more sharply defined stage than the generalized discussions that take place in bodies such as the Commission itself.

8. Bilateral conversations are subject to certain limitations and risks :

- a) when they confine themselves to issues of the past and avoid the issues pressing on the Churches today ;
- b) when they lose sight of the catholicity of Christ's Church, by concentrating on their own traditions ;
- c) when the delegates are exclusively drawn from those who already have a special sympathy with the other traditions ;
- d) when they serve as an excuse for evading a more committed participation in the search for unity ;
- e) when the two confessional families refuse to widen their conversations on a multilateral basis after the conditions have become appropriate.

9. Bilateral conversations serve union negotiations :

- a) when they create an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding conducive to further progress ;
- b) when they remove particular obstacles which are standing between two Churches within the context of multilateral union negotiations.

10. In order to strengthen the relationship between bilateral conversations and union negotiations, the Commission recommends :

- a) the effective exchange of information and materials ;
- b) the inclusion of participants in union negotiations in commissions conducting bilateral conversations.

11. The general relationship between world confessional families and church union negotiations is also of great importance. The attitudes of the world confessional families have a marked effect upon the progress of union negotiations and the life of united Churches in particular regions. And the presence of representatives of united Churches is of great value in bilateral conversations.

### *Conclusion*

It is the conviction of the Commission that both Church union negotiations and bilateral conversations are playing an essential role in hastening the convergence of the Churches; they both will deepen in new ways the commitment of Christian people to the unity of mankind.

### III. Recommendations

1. The Commission asks the Working Committee to devise an appropriate means for the continuation of the study of the purpose and nature of the unity we seek and the means of manifesting it. Such a study should include :

- a clarification and theological evaluation of actual concepts of unity and models of union, and a delineation of emerging new concepts and models, in the light of the New Delhi statement and with a view to a fresh, critical evaluation of that statement.
- theological consideration of the relation between unity, renewal, the mission of the Church and the overcoming of racial and other hatreds ;
- an analysis of the processes of negotiation and consultation undertaken by Churches and world confessional families.

#### *Explanation*

a) A number of different models for the unity of the Church are cited as examples for study. Organic union, which is accepted by those taking part in union negotiations as the act of obedience required of them, takes different actual forms. Mutual recognition of affirmations of faith, sacraments and ministries is held by others to be the end in view. Others again propose pulpit and altar fellowship as the aim. There are various forms of diversity in unity within the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and in other Churches and groups of Churches as well. Moreover, new forms of Christian unity, official and unofficial, are emerging in widely differing situations. All these need to be assessed in practice as well as in theory.

b) Unity may be achieved in varying degrees at different levels. For instance, some Christians have strong links with their fellows across the world, but weak ones with those within their own region and neighbourhood ; others have strong links with their immediate neighbours but weak ones with those elsewhere.

c) When there is no common commitment in mission, renewal and the elimination of racial discrimination, the claim to unity and greater mutual understanding is hypocrisy.

d) The concept of a pluriformity of theologies, their interrelationships and their compatibility with full Christian unity need investigation.

A fresh approach to the question of unity would involve renewed investigation of the 'non-theological', or better, the social and administrative aspects of Church union. Not unconnected with these are the real, but elusive, issues of spirituality and worship. The actual processes by which decisions are taken within the Churches require analysis and evaluation. In conversations and negotiations between Churches other processes come into play and these also need to be scrutinised. Such investigations could draw on the study of

past processes of negotiation, on the study of institutional factors, and on social-scientific knowledge of negotiation in its informal and formal, its non-institutional and institutional phases.

2. The Commission endorses the following suggestions of the Committee on Church Union Negotiations and Bilateral Conversations :

a) The Secretariat of the Faith and Order Commission should continue the practice of holding regular international conferences of union negotiators to keep pace with changing needs, and seek ways of persuading the Churches involved to assist in the necessary financial provision.

b) The Secretariat of the Commission should find ways of bringing together in conference representatives of united Churches, and others, for mutual help in dealing with the problems which arise after union, and the exploration of what is common to them all.

c) The Secretariat of the Commission should :

- Maintain contact with the secretaries of Church union negotiations, and, where appropriate, secretaries of national councils of churches, and share with them all pertinent information.
- Supply, on request, the available theological literature on matters of Faith and Order, and arrange studies and give help on particular practical issues (for instance, legal questions, property matters, and the relation of mission boards to union negotiations and united Churches).
- Arrange, where requested, for the presence at Church union negotiations from time to time both of staff members and others who have experience and expertise from their own negotiations.
- Encourage the exchange of views between those taking part in union negotiations and those taking part in bilateral and multilateral conversations, and suggest in suitable situations the exchange of participants and observers.
- Continue the practice of issuing a biennial survey of Church union negotiations.
- Prepare a bibliography of Church union literature and an analytical survey of the ways in which negotiating committees deal with particular subjects.
- Provide a clearing house for the exchange of information and materials concerning bilateral and multilateral conversations, establish a repository of such materials, and prepare periodical surveys of the developing trends of such conversations.
- Make available to participants in bilateral conversations and union negotiations the final report of the project sponsored by the Conference of Secretaries of World Confessional Families on bilateral conversations.

3. In view of the many extra tasks suggested here for the Secretariat, and the recommendation of the Limuru Conference on Church Union Negotiations, approved by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches<sup>2</sup>, an additional member of staff should be appointed, or adequate staff provided, to enable full attention to be given to Church union negotiations, bilateral conversations, Joint Action for Mission, and the relations between all of them. In such an appointment the need for racial variety in the staffing of the Secretariat should be borne in mind.

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<sup>2</sup> MRCC, 1971, p. 48.

# CONSPECTUS OF STUDIES TO BE CARRIED OUT

(revised in the light of the discussion in plenary)

The Faith and Order Commission at its meeting in Louvain reviewed carefully the reports on the studies that have been carried out under its mandate since the last meeting in Bristol in 1967. Several studies have reached completion, at least for the time being. In other cases the committees which evaluated the reports have suggested a continuation of study on the theme or of certain related questions. A number of detailed recommendations have been formulated.<sup>1</sup> The Commission made a first attempt to establish priorities among the many plans which were suggested. Discussion led to the conclusion that study efforts in the coming years should concentrate on the following four areas :

1. Common Expression of Faith
2. Unity of the Church and Unity of Mankind
3. Concepts of Church Unity and Models of Church Union
4. Ministry and Sacraments in the Church Local and Universal

## 1. Common Expression of Faith

(giving account of the hope that is in us ; cf. 1. Peter 3 : 15)

Several lines from earlier studies merge in this proposal. It obviously stands in close relation with the complex of hermeneutical studies as well as with the work done in the area of "Authority of the Bible". At the same time this suggested project could be a response to the demand for common witness included in the joint study on "Common Witness and Proselytism", as well as a return to the questions which were left open at the end of the discussion on "Worship Today". The proposal has been discussed extensively in Committee I of the meeting in Louvain which led to the formulation of an outline.<sup>2</sup>

The leading questions in such an effort can be summarized in this way : To what extent and in what way can we express together what has been entrusted to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ ? The study will not aim at the formulation of a creed of confession ; it will rather be an effort to give account of our faith today. This will include reflection about the nature of symbols and

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<sup>1</sup> See above the reports of Committees I-V, pp. 212-238

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 215f.

about the relationship between expressing one's faith in life and worship and in propositional statements.

The study will have to consider in particular the following basic theological issues : the understanding of truth and the possibility of discerning a "hierarchy" of truths ; the relationship between unity and diversity ; between identity and change ; between truth and communion ; the respective place of individual confession and confession by the community ; of doctrine, proclamation and prayer.

## 2. Unity of the Church and Unity of Mankind

This theme and the study it engendered present a special case. The study-process was not yet concluded at the time of the meeting in Louvain. The theme had given rise to a wide-spread discussion. A considerable number of regional groups prepared careful comments on the initial study-document, published in 1969<sup>3</sup>. Many questions have been raised about the presuppositions of the study. The formulation of the theme, in particular, received critical attention. Discussion in Louvain has shown again the relevance of this theme and of the questions it raises. Further efforts are necessary in this area.

The discussions might concentrate on some of the following questions :

- What is the understanding of mankind underlying this study and how can the unity of mankind be conceived in theological terms ?
- What is the identity of the Church amid the community of man ? How are the marks of the Church lived out today, and how do we discern the boundaries of the Church ?
- How does this new frame of reference change and influence our thinking on the unity of the Church ? What can be said, on the basis of this study, about the Church as "sign" of the coming unity of mankind ?

Several areas need further exploration : the place of conflict in the community ; the significance of the struggle against racism for the search for unity ; the meaning of weakness and the exercise of power in community.

## 3. Concepts of Church Unity and Models of Church Union

The careful review Committee V gave to recent developments in the areas of bilateral conversations and church union negotiations made clear the need to consider in depth the concepts and models of unity underlying and guiding

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<sup>3</sup> "Unity of the Church — Unity of Mankind", in *Study Encounter*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1969, pp. 163 ff. Extracts from five regional reports are published in *Study Encounter*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1971, SE/06 and Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1972.

these efforts. What are the appropriate means for studying the nature of the unity we seek and how can we today meaningfully manifest the unity we already share? What is the continuing significance of agreement regarding the unity we seek already attained at New Delhi?

In particular, the following three issues require consideration :

- A clarification and theological evaluation of concepts and models actually employed and a delineation of new concepts and models.
- A reassessment of the relation between unity, renewal and the mission of the Church on one hand and racial and other barriers separating human community on the other.
- An analysis of the processes of negotiation and consultation undertaken by Churches and world confessional families in view of more inclusive union.

#### 4. Ministry and Sacraments in the Church Local and Universal

The studies on baptism and the eucharist have led to preliminary consensus statements which, it is hoped, will be officially communicated to the Churches. Inextricably connected to these two concerns is the question of the ordained ministry and its possible wider recognition. In discussing the report on "The Ordained Ministry" Committee III felt that agreement already reached allowed the hope, that a common understanding of the ministry could be attained by the Churches, and that a promising basis had already been provided for progress toward mutual recognition of ministry<sup>4</sup>. In its report the Committee listed a number of questions which need further consideration and will have to be taken into account by further study-efforts in this area.

The joint study on "Catholicity and Apostolicity" has raised as well a number of pertinent questions regarding ministry (s. esp. App. III, IV and VII)<sup>5</sup>. The problem of ministry is placed there in the context of the relationship between local and universal Church. Further it is asked : How does the eschatological aspect of the eucharist celebrated in the local church affect our understanding of ministry?

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All these studies just outlined will inevitably raise questions concerning methods and participation. Issues of this kind have been discussed in the context of Faith and Order more than once since Lund, 1952.<sup>6</sup> They have

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<sup>4</sup> See above p. 223.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. above pp. 145 ff; 149 ff; 156 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the report on "Spirit, Order, and Organization", above pp. 116.

come up with new urgency in recent years and Committee II gave particular attention to them at the Louvain meeting. Equally, these questions were present throughout the debate on the main theme. It is felt that an attempt should be made to summarize this discussion and to evaluate the suggestions made concerning a redefinition of the methods of Faith and Order work.

Some of the questions concerning *methodology* are :

- What are the sources we draw on for our studies ; how are they related to each other and how do we proceed from the sources to the definition of issues ?
- What use do we make in our studies of philosophy, of the social sciences and of an ideological analysis in terms of “class struggle” ?
- In what way does biblical, or eucharistic theology provide criteria for the evaluation and appropriation of insights from these disciplines ?

Some of the questions concerning *participation* are :

- How could new theological traditions outside the West and theological insights from outside the academic community be fruitfully included in Faith and Order studies ?
- In what way do the patterns of study have to change to secure this participation ? How can studies be conceived to do justice to regional settings ?
- How could interdisciplinary methods be introduced in studies and what are the preconditions and limitations of interdisciplinary work ?

Besides the studies outlined above the Commission on Faith and Order will continue the responsibility it has assumed for the preparation of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, for Lutheran-Reformed Conversations in Europe, for conversations with non-member Churches and similar tasks.

*Appendix I :*

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN FAITH  
AND ORDER STUDIES

(The full list of members of the Faith and Order Commission can be found in the Minutes of the Louvain meeting, Faith and Order Paper No. 60, Geneva 1971.)

i. The Authority of the Bible

a) *Initiating Meeting in October 1968*

Prof. Samuel Amsler	Lausanne, Switzerland
Prof. James Barr	Manchester, England
Rev. P. Barthel	Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Prof. Hendrikus Berkhof	Oegstgeest, Netherlands
Dr. Josef Blank	Rentrisch (Saar), Germany
Prof. Erich Dinkler	Heidelberg, Germany
Dr. Ellen Flesseman-van Leer	Amstelveen, Netherlands
Mrs. Françoise Florentin-Smyth	Paris, France
Prof. Erich Grässer	Herbede, Germany
Fr. Jérôme Hamer, O.P.	Rome, Italy
Prof. Walter Harrelson	Nashville, Tenn., USA
Dr. August Hasler	Rome, Italy
Prof. L. Johnston	Nottingham, England
Prof. E. Jüngel	Tübingen, Germany
Mr. R. Kassühlke	Bernhausen, Germany
Prof. Gerhard Krodel	Philadelphia, Pa., USA
Prof. Edvin Larsson	Oslo, Norway
Prof. René Marlé, S.J.	Paris, France
Prof. Felice Montagnini	Brescia, Italy
Prof. Dennis Nineham	Oxford, England
Prof. D. G. Perez-Rodriguez	Salamanca, Spain
Prof. D. Moody Smith, Jr.	Durham, N.C., USA

b) *Regional Groups on the Authority of the Bible*

*United States of America I*

Convener : Prof. D. Moody Smith, Jr.	Durham, N.C.,
Rev. Philip Cousin	Durham, N.C.
Prof. Frederick Herzog	Durham, N.C.
Prof. Veselin Kesich	Tuckahoe, N.Y.

Prof. Fr. Roland Murphy  
Prof. Derek W. Shows  
Prof. Franklin W. Young

Washington, D.C.  
Durham, N.C.  
Durham, N.C.

*United States of America II*

Convener : Prof. James A. Robinson  
Prof. Dieter Betz  
Prof. John Cobb  
Prof. David L. Doss (Feb.1970)  
Prof. Fred O. Francis  
Prof. Robert W. Funk (1969-70 only)  
Dr. Dieter Georgi (1968-69 only)  
Prof. Neill Q. Hamilton  
Prof. James D. Hester  
Prof. E. C. Hobbs  
Prof. Robert Hamerton-Kelly  
Prof. Ralph Martin (1969-70 only)  
Prof. Jack Sanders (1969-70 only)  
Prof. Richard Soulen (1969-70 only)  
Prof. Herman Waetjen  
Dr. D. H. Wallace

Claremont, Calif.  
Claremont, Calif.  
Claremont, Calif.  
Claremont, Calif.  
Orange, Calif.  
Missoula, Montana  
San Anselmo, Calif.  
San Anselmo, Calif.  
Redlands, Calif.  
Berkeley, Calif.  
Claremont, Calif.  
Pasadena, Calif.  
Eugene, Calif.  
Claremont, Calif.  
San Anselmo, Calif.  
Covina, Calif.

*Holland|Germany*

Convener : Prof. Hendrikus Berkhof  
Dr. Josef Blank  
Dr. Christoph Demke  
Dr. Ellen Flesseman-van Leer  
Prof. Erich Grässer  
Prof. Eberhard Jüngel  
Prof. Peter Lengsfeld  
Prof. R. Smend

Oegstgeest, Netherlands  
Rentrish (Saar), Germany  
Potsdam, DDR  
Amstelveen, Netherlands  
Herbede, Germany  
Tübingen, Germany  
Münster, Germany  
Münster, Germany

*Spain*

Convener : Prof. Gabriel Perez-Rodriguez  
Prof. Felipe Fernandez Ramos  
Prof. Antonio Gonzalez Lamidrid  
Prof. Juan Francisco Hernandez Martin  
Prof. Manuel Gesteira

Salamanca  
Léon  
Palencia  
Cordoba  
Madrid

*England*

Convener : Prof. M. F. Wiles  
Prof. James Barr  
Dr. G. B. Caird  
Dr. Ellen Flesseman-van Leer

Oxford  
Manchester  
Oxford  
Amstelveen, Netherlands

Prof. Kenneth Grayston	Bristol
Rev. J. McHugh	Durham
Prof. B. Mitchell	Oxford
Prof. D. E. Nineham	Oxford
Rev. P. de Rosa	London

*Scandinavia*

Convener : Prof. Dr. Edvin Larsson	Oslo, Norway
Dr. P. Borgen	Bergen, Norway
Lektor H. Flottorp	Kristiansand, Norway
Dean Dr. S. Ingebrand	Linköpping, Sweden
Docent Dr. A. Jeffner	Uppsala, Sweden
Docent Dr. P. Nepper-Christensen	Aabyhøj, Denmark
Pater A. Raulin	Trondheim, Norway
Docent Dr. H. Räisänen	Helsingfors, Finland
Secretary : cand. theol. B. T. Oftestad	Oslo, Norway

*Ethiopia*

Convener : Prof. V. C. Samuel	Addis Ababa
Holy Trinity Theological College :	
Fr. Mikre Selassie Gebre Ammanuel	
Fr. P. K. Mathew	
Mr. M. I. Kuriakos	
Ato Aberra Bekele	
Ato Wolde Selassie Gebre Yesus	
St. Kaleb Major Seminary :	
Fr. J. Swarthoed	
Fr. H. Bomers	
Lazarist Seminary, Ambo :	
Fr. Jan Ermers	
Fr. Fons van Bavel	
Fr. Herman Teuben	
Fr. John De Potter	
Catholic Seminary, Mangesha, Addis Ababa :	
Fr. Joseph Hartmann	
Fr. Anton Voss	
Pater Norbert Lörsch	
Fr. Friedolin Helbig	
Fr. Bernard Pawlak	
Abba Gebre Mikael Makonnen	
Mekene Yesus Seminary :	
Rev. Wolfram Glüer	
Rev. Knud Tage Anderson	



Prof. E. R. Hardy	New Haven, Conn., USA
Canon David Jenkins	Geneva, Switzerland
(Prof. Istvan Juhasz	Cluj, Rumania)
Dr. K. N. Khella	Hamburg, Germany
Prof. Georg Kretschmar	München, Germany
Prof. J. L. Leuba	Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Prof. Charles Nielsen	Rochester, N.Y., USA
Brother M. J. van Parys	Chevetogne, Belgium
Prof. Herbert Richardson	Toronto, Canada
Prof. V. C. Samuel	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Prof. Reinhard Slenczka	Heidelberg, Germany

( ) Was not present at the meeting, but contributed in writing.

### 3. Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist

(1968 and 1970)

Fr. Pavel Ales	Rimice, Czechoslovakia
Rev. A. M. Allchin	Oxford, England
Prof. J.-J. von Allmen *	Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Miss Christine Baron	Düsseldorf, Germany
Dr. Lewis Briner	Chicago, Ill., USA
Rev. Fr. Pierre-Marie Gy	Paris, France
Bishop Herman	Vienna, Austria
Canon P. B. Hinchliff *	London, England
Mr. Hans Hubert	Regensburg, Germany
Prof. Norbert Hagedé *	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. Scott McCormick *	Hastings, Nebraska, USA
Bishop A. van der Mensbrugge	Chester, Pa., USA
Rev. Mihaly Molnar	Haidu-Bihar m., Hungary
Archimandrite Panteleimon Rodopoulos	Salonica, Greece
Prof. Josef Smolik	Prague, Czechoslovakia
Prof. Hermann Schmidt	Rome, Italy
Dr. H. Chr. Schmidt-Lauber *	Kiel, Germany
Prof. Alois Stenzel	Frankfurt/Main, Germany
Rev. Dr. T. M. Taylor *	New York, N.Y., USA
Frère Max Thurian	Taizé, France
Dr. Erwin Valyi-Nagy	Budapest, Hungary
Rev. Victor de Waal	Nottingham, England
Dr. Günther Wagner *	Rüschlikon (ZH), Switzerland
Rev. G. E. Wanjau	Nairobi, Kenya
Dr. James F. White	Dallas, Texas, USA

\* Participated in both meetings

#### 4. Intercommunion

Rev. A. M. Allchin	Oxford, England
Dr. Josef Blank	Rentrisch (Saar), Germany
Mr. Martin Conway	Geneva, Switzerland
Rev. Fr. Jean Corbon	Beirut, Lebanon
Rev. Fr. B.-D. Dupuy, O.P.	Paris, France
Dr. Harding Meyer	Strasbourg, France
Prof. Lewis Mudge	Amherst, Mass., USA
Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreou	Geneva, Switzerland
Frère Max Thurian	Taizé, France
Rev. Fr. J. M. R. Tillard	Ottawa, Canada
Dr. Vilmos Vajta	Strasbourg, France

#### 5. Ordination

##### a) *Initiating Meeting, 1968*

Rev. Ernst Lange	Weiterstadt, Germany
Bishop Pierre L'Huillier	Paris, France
Fr. C. O'Neill	Ireland/Switzerland
Dr. Paul Crow	Princeton, N.J., USA
Bishop K. Woollcombe	Oxford, England
Mrs. Rena Karefa-Smart	Freetown, Sierra Leone
Rev. Ian Fraser	Scotland/Switzerland
Mr. E. Hassler	Bochum, Germany
Rev. Steven Mackie	Geneva, Switzerland
Dr. Gerald F. Møede	Geneva, Switzerland

##### b) *Regional Groups*

Convener or Reactor :	
Rev. Fr. C. J. Armbruster	North Aurora, Ill., USA
Prof. G. Bavaud	Fribourg, Switzerland
Prediger H. Bickel	Biel, Switzerland
Prof. W. J. Boney	Richmond, Va., USA
Prof. W. R. Bouman	River Forest, Ill., USA
Dr. A. Boyens	Frankfurt, Germany
Dr. L. A. Briner	Chicago, Ill., USA
Prof. C. S. Calian	Dubuque, Iowa, USA
Rev. Dr. J. R. Chandran	Bangalore, South India
Pastor H. Chavannes	Vaud, Switzerland
Rev. Dr. B. Citroen	Kircaldy, Scotland
Rev. M. H. Cressey	Birmingham, England

Prof. D. Demson  
Archdeacon J. R. Deppen  
Dr. H. Dombois  
Sister A. Dunn  
Prof. V. Eller  
Dr. I. M. Fraser  
Rev. Fr. D. J. Hassel  
Rev. R. M. C. Jeffery  
Pastor K. Kyrø-Rasmussen  
Rev. Dr. H. Lieberg  
Rev. Fr. P. McDonald  
Prof. J. L. Moreau  
Canon B. S. Moss  
Rev. Dr. C. J. Peter  
Pastor H. Rave  
Mr. P. Roche  
Prof. J. E. Skoglund  
Prof. J. Smolik  
Rev. D. M. Taylor  
Dr. F. Viering  
Prof. P. Watson  
Canon A. B. Webster  
Mr. W. van Zanten

Toronto, Ont., Canada  
Chicago, Ill., USA  
Heidelberg, Germany  
Los Angeles, Cal., USA  
La Verne, Cal., USA  
Dunblane, Scotland  
Chicago, Ill., USA  
London, England  
Copenhagen, Denmark  
Braunschweig, Germany  
Collegetown, Minn., USA  
Evanston, Ill., USA  
London, England  
Washington, D.C., USA  
Baden-Baden, Germany  
Hopkins, Minn., USA  
Rochester, N.Y., USA  
Prague, Czechoslovakia  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
Berlin, Germany  
Evanston, Ill., USA  
Lincoln, England  
Philadelphia, Pa., USA

c) *Final Meeting, 1970*

Miss Brigalia Bam  
Fr. D. Clifford, S.J.  
Rev. Fr. B.-D. Dupuy, O.P.  
Mrs. T. Govaart-Halkes  
Rev. Dr. Phyllis Guthardt  
Pastor H. Hauzenberger  
Bishop Pierre L'Huilier  
Dr. Okgill Kim  
Rev. Fr. K. McDonnell, O.S.B.  
Prof. H. J. McSorley  
Canon B. Moss  
Prof. R. E. Osborn  
Prof. R. S. Paul  
Rev. Fr. E. Pin, S.J.  
Frère Max Thurian  
Rev. P. E. S. Thompson  
Miss I. Vence  
Miss Mary Wright  
Dr. J. D. Zizioulas

Geneva, Switzerland  
Philadelphia, Pa., USA  
Paris, France  
Breda, Netherlands  
Hamilton, New Zealand  
Geneva, Switzerland  
Paris, France  
Seoul, Korea  
Collegetown, Minn., USA  
Toronto, Canada  
London, England  
Indianapolis, Ind., USA  
Pittsburg, Pa., USA  
Rome, Italy  
Taizé, France  
Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Montevideo, Uruguay  
London, England  
Edinburgh, Scotland

## 6. Worship in a Secular Age

Rev. Will Adam	Oberhausen, Germany
Fr. Pavel Ales	Rimice, Czechoslovakia
Prof. J.-J. von Allmen	Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Metr. Anthony Bloom	London, England
Prof. Paul van Buren	Philadelphia, Pa., USA
Rev. Dr. Shoki Coe	London, England
Prof. Charles Davis	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Rev. Rex Davis	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. John G. Davies	Birmingham, England
Canon P. B. Hinchliff	London, England
Rev. Eric James	London, England
Dom Emmanuel Lanne, O.S.B.	Rome, Italy
Prof. Scott McCormick	Hastings, Nebraska, USA
Dr. Karl Ferdinand Müller	Hannover, Germany
Mr. Foster Murphy	London, England
Fr. Placid Murray	Limerick, Ireland
Prof. Raymond Panikkar	Varanasi UP, India
Miss Constance F. Parvey	Cambridge, Mass., USA
Mr. A. Ronald Sequeira	München, Germany
Prof. John E. Skoglund	Rochester, N.Y., USA
Prof. Hermann Schmidt	Rome, Italy
Dr. H. Chr. Schmidt-Lauber	Kiel, Germany
Rev. Dr. T. M. Taylor	New York, N.Y., USA
Frère Max Thurian	Taizé, France
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Dr. Vilmos Vajta	Strasbourg, France
Abbé Paul Vanbergen	Seraing (Liège), Belgium
Rev. Wiebe Vos	Rotterdam, Holland
Bishop Lance Webb	Springfield, Ill., USA
Archimandrite Anastasios Yannoulatos	Geneva, Switzerland

## 7. Spirit, Order and Organization

(1965 and 1966)

Pastor A. Bittlinger	Wetzhausen, Germany
Rev. Edmund Chavaz	Geneva, Switzerland
Rev. A. H. Dammers	Coventry, England
Dr. G. Dekker	Amsterdam, Holland
Dr. H. ten Doornkaat Koolman *	Zollikon (ZH), Switzerland
Archimandrite Pierre L'Huillier	Paris, France

Canon David Jenkins	Geneva, Switzerland
Rev. Vivian Jones	Pontardawe, Wales
Dr. L. Laeyendecker	Amsterdam, Holland
Prof. G. W. Locher *	Wabern (BE), Switzerland
Prof. Dr. Joachim Matthes	Münster, Germany
Prof. John Meyendorff	New York, N.Y., USA
Rev. W. A. Norgren	New York, N.Y., USA
Rev. Kurt Oeser	Mörfelden, Germany
Mr. Leslie Paul	Birmingham, England
Prof. J. W. V. Smith	Anderson, Ind., USA
Mr. William S. Starr	Colorado Springs, Col., USA
Rev. P. H. Stirnimann, O.P.	Fribourg, Switzerland
Rev. William Sullivan, C.S.P.*	United States
Drs. Mady A. Thung *	Amsterdam, Holland
Dr. Stanley Udy	New Haven, Conn., USA
Dr. Thomas Wieser	Geneva, Switzerland
Dr. Colin Williams *	New Haven, Conn., USA
Prof. H. F. Woodhouse	Dublin, Ireland

\* Present at both consultations.

## 8. Joint Theological Commission on Catholicity and Apostolicity

Prof. Savas Agourides *	Athens, Greece
Prof. Giuseppe Alberigo *	Bologna, Italy
Prof. Jean Bosc * †	Paris, France
Prof. E. R. Brown, S.S.*	Baltimore, Md., USA
Prof. N. Chitescu	Bucarest, Rumania
Fr. Yves Congar, O.P.	Soisy-sur-Seine, France
Prof. John Deschner	Dallas, Texas, USA
Fr. François Dreyfus, O.P.	Jerusalem, Israel
Fr. Pierre Duprey	Rome, Italy
Prof. Alexandre Ganoczy *	Paris, France
Fr. Jérôme Hamer, O.P.*	Rome, Italy
Canon David Jenkins	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. J. N. D. Kelly *	Oxford, England
Dom Emmanuel Lanne, O.S.B.*	Rome, Italy
Prof. J. D. McCaughey	Parkville, Australia
Prof. John Meyendorff *	New York, N.Y., USA
Prof. Jorge Medina	Santiago, Chile

\* Members of the Commission. The others participated in a meeting which was convened in August 1970 to evaluate the study document.

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Prof. P. S. Minear *	New Haven, Conn., USA
Prof. J. Robert Nelson	Boston, Mass., USA
Prof. Wolfhart Pannenberg *	Munich, Germany
Metr. Damaskinos Papandreou	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. N. A. Sabolotsky	Leningrad, USSR
Prof. V. C. Samuel	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Prof. R. Schnackenburg *	Würzburg, Germany
Dr. Lukas Vischer *	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. L. Voronov	Leningrad, USSR
Prof. Claude Welch *	Philadelphia, Pa., USA
Prof. Jan Witte *	Rome, Italy
Dr. J. D. Zizioulas *	Edinburgh, Scotland

\* Members of the Commission. The others participated in a meeting which was convened in August 1970 to evaluate the study document.

## 9. Joint Study on Common Witness and Proselytism

Dr. A. F. Carrillo de Albornoz	Paris, France
Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy	Geneva, Switzerland
Fr. Christophe Dumont, O.P.	Rome, Italy
Fr. Pierre Duprey, P.B.	Rome, Italy
Prof. Johannes Feiner	Zürich, Switzerland
Fr. Jérôme Hamer, O.P.	Rome, Italy
Fr. Leonhard Kaufmann	Rome, Italy
Prof. J. M. van der Linde	Zeist, Netherlands
Dr. Paul Löffler	Beirut, Lebanon
Fr. Jorge Mejia	Buenos Aires, Argentina
Prof. Niels-Peter Moritzen	Erlangen, Germany
Rev. Philip Potter	Geneva, Switzerland
Fr. Thomas Stransky, C.S.P.	Rome, Italy
Dr. Lukas Vischer	Geneva, Switzerland
Prof. Mons. Giovanni Vodopivec	Rome, Italy
Canon Douglas Webster	London, England
Fr. Dr. Ludwig Wiedemann	Bonn, Germany
Dr. John D. Zizioulas	Edinburgh, Scotland

## 10. Church Union Negotiations

Archdeacon J. F. Akinrele	Lagos, Nigeria
The Rev. F. Bahnan	Beirut, Lebanon
Rev. Dr. G. G. Beazley, Jr.	Indianapolis, Ind., USA

Rev. Dr. W. A. Benfield, Jr.  
 The Rev. N. Berton  
 The Rev. H. R. Boudin  
 Rev. Dr. R. B. Craig  
 Mr. L. A. Creedy  
 The Rev. M. H. Cressey  
 Rev. Dr. P. A. Crow, Jr.  
 The Rt. Rev. C. H. W. de Soysa †  
 Bishop A. G. Dunston, Jr.  
 Rev. Fr. P. Duprey, P.B.  
 The Rev. J. G. Gatu  
 Pastor A. Greiner  
 The Rev. H. W. Griffith  
 The Rev. R. Groscurth  
 The Rev. J. de Gruchy  
 Pastor H. Heisler  
 The Rt. Rev. J. W. A. Howe  
 Bishop F. D. Jordan  
 The Rev. S. P. Kamanga  
 Mr. J. C. Kamau  
 The Rev. M. E. Kilevo  
 Pastor J. Kiwovele  
 Dr. Y. Kumazawa  
 The Rev. R. G. P. Lamburn  
 Canon R. R. Latimer  
 The Rev. G. O. Lloyd  
 The Rev. I. Masembo  
 Rev. Prof. D. M. Mathers  
 Mr. P.-D. M'benga  
 The Rev. J. M. Mmbogori  
 Rev. Fr. B. Meeking  
 Dr. H. Meyer  
 The Rev. D. M. Musunsa  
 Bishop J. Nag  
 The Rev. D. Peter  
 Pastor D. Ralibera  
 Rev. Prof. J. K. S. Reid  
 The Rev. H. Sherlock  
 The Rev. M. R. Sojwal  
 The Most Rev. P. Solomon  
 The Rev. J. Tjega  
 Prof. G. Wagner  
 The Rev. W. C. Williams  
 Mr. A. S. Worrall  
 Charleston, W.Va., USA  
 Tarariras, Uruguay  
 Brussels, Belgium  
 Toronto, Ont., Canada  
 Accra, Ghana  
 Birmingham, England  
 Princeton, N.J., USA  
 Colombo, Ceylon  
 Philadelphia, Pa., USA  
 Rome, Italy  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
 Paris, France  
 Aberystwyth, Wales  
 Berlin, Germany  
 Braamfontein, South Africa  
 Karlsruhe, Germany  
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 Hollywood, Cal., USA  
 Mzuzu, Malawi  
 Nairobi, Kenya  
 Moshi, Tanzania  
 Njombe, Tanzania  
 Tokyo, Japan  
 Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania  
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 Kinshasa, Congo  
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 Rome, Italy  
 Strasbourg, France  
 Lusaka, Zambia  
 Jeypore, North India  
 Nillikuppam, South India  
 Tananarive, Madagascar  
 Aberdeen, Scotland  
 Antigua, West Indies  
 Poona, North India  
 Dornakal, South India  
 Lolodorf, East Cameroon  
 Rüschnikon (ZH), Switzerland  
 Princeton, N.J., USA  
 Belfast, Northern Ireland

## 11. Unity of the Church — Unity of Mankind

### Regional Groups

Cameroon

Convener : Prof. B. Bürki

Czechoslovakia

Convener : Prof. J. Smolik

Germany (Democratic Republic)

Convener : Dr. Ch. Demke

Germany (Federal Republic)

Conveners : Profs. P. Bläser and H. H. Wolf

India

Convener : Drs. J. A. G. van Leeuwen

Netherlands

Convener : Prof. A. J. Bronkhorst

Norway

Convener : Prof. P. W. Bockman

South Africa

Convener : Rev. J. de Gruchy

Soviet Union

Convener : Prof. L. Voronov

Switzerland

Convener : Prof. K. Stalder

### *Appendix II*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Most of the study reports of the Commission on Faith and Order are included in this volume. These reports, however, represent only a certain part of the work done in the period since 1967 under the auspices of the Commission. This bibliography is meant to provide a survey of printed material directly related to the work of the Commission. Full details of the editions in other languages may be had on request from the Faith and Order secretariat.

### 1. *Unity of the Church — Unity of Mankind*

The theme emerged from the report of Section I of the Uppsala Assembly. Several essays related to this new perspective are collected in *What Unity Implies*, World Council Studies No. 7, Geneva 1969 (in four languages). The

study document which initiated the study can be found in *Study Encounter*, Vol. V, No. 4, 1969, pp. 163ff. A first series of extracts from reports by regional groups is also printed in *Study Encounter*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1971, SE/06. Finally, a volume has been published under the title *No Man is Alien*, Essays on the Unity of Mankind, ed. by J. Robert Nelson, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1971.

## 2. *Interpreting the Sources of our Faith*

The study document which initiated the discussion on the "Authority of the Bible" together with the papers delivered at the first consultation in 1968 has been published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXI No. 2, April 1969, pp. 135ff. The final report with a number of comments can be found in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, October 1971, pp. 419 ff.

The report on the "Council of Chalcedon" is based on the discussion of a number of papers published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, October 1970, pp. 301ff. The study was the continuation of two earlier studies on the Councils of the Ancient Church and on St. Basil's *De Spirito Sancto*. The papers which had been produced in connection with these studies were published only after 1967 in the two volumes: *Councils and the Ecumenical Movement*, World Council Studies No. 5, Geneva 1968 (also in German); *Études patristiques : Le traité sur le Saint-Esprit de Saint Basile*, in *Verbum Caro* Vol. XXII, No. 88-90.

## 3. *On the Way to Communion in the Sacraments*

Both the study on baptism and the one on ordination were initiated by working documents which have been printed in *Study Encounter*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1968, pp. 166ff. and 194ff.

## 4. *Worship*

The papers which were prepared for the consultation on "Worship in a Secular Age" are available in a special issue of *Studia Liturgica : Worship and Secularization*, ed. by W. Vos, Bussum/Holland 1971 (also in German).

In the wider area of worship reference should be made to the publication, under the auspices of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, of a small collection of ecumenical prayers: *La prière œcuménique*, ed. by E. Lanne and B. Bürki, Les Presses de Taizé 1970 (also in German).

A booklet with eight Bible studies was issued in connection with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1971 under the title: *The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit*, Geneva 1970 (also in French, German and Spanish).

## 5. *Activities of the Joint Working Group*

The papers prepared for the Joint Theological Commission on "Catholicity and Apostolicity" have been published in *One in Christ*, Vol. VI, No. 3, 1970, pp. 243ff. (also in French and German).

Several comments on the report on "Common Witness and Proselytism" can be found in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1971, pp. 21ff.

The two reports included in this volume form an appendix to the third official report of the Joint Working Group which is itself published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1971, pp. 44ff. (also in German and French).

A survey of the activities of the Joint Working Group in the period from 1965 to 1969 by L. Vischer can be found in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, January 1970, pp. 36ff. (also in German).

## 6. *Church Union Negotiations and Bilateral Conversations*

Regularly, at intervals of two years, the Faith and Order Secretariat prepares a "Survey of Church Union Negotiations". The last two surveys can be found in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XX, No. 3, July 1968, pp. 263ff. and Vol. XXII, No. 3, July 1970, pp. 251ff. (Faith and Order Papers Nos. 52 and 56 respectively).

In April 1970 a second international consultation on Church Union Negotiations was held in Limuru, Kenya. The report of this conference and the papers prepared for the discussion are printed in *Midstream*, Vol. IX, No. 2-3, 1971 (also in German).

The results of the Lutheran-Reformed Conversations on the European level, for which the Commission on Faith and Order together with the Lutheran World Federation and the Reformed Alliance has assumed the sponsorship, are available in German in two small booklets: *Auf dem Weg*. Polis-Reihe Bd. 33, Zürich 1967 and *Gemeinschaft reformatorischer Kirchen*. Auf dem Weg II, Polis-Reihe Bd. 41, Zürich 1971.

## 7. *Relations to Non-member Churches*

In continuation of an earlier initiative a second series of studies of Churches which are not members of the World Council has been issued under the title: *Ecumenical Exercise II* (Faith and Order Paper No. 58) ed. by G. F. Moede in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, July 1971, pp. 267ff.

Regular conversations between the World Council of Churches and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church have taken place since 1965. A summary and evaluation of the conversations until 1969 has been published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXII, No. 2, April 1970, pp. 163ff., also available in an off-print as Faith and Order Paper No. 55 (also in German).

## 8. *Further publications*

The report of a consultation on a fixed date for Easter organized by the Commission on Faith and Order in March 1970 is published in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, April 1971, pp. 176ff.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Working Committee on Faith and Order in Uppsala and Sigtuna, 1968; Canterbury, 1969 and in Crêt-Bérard, 1970 are printed in Geneva as Faith and Order Papers No. 53 in 1968, No. 54 in 1969 and No. 57 in 1970 respectively.

A brochure including the Minutes of the meetings of the Commission and the Working Committee in Louvain will be published soon together with further materials and documents issuing from the conference. Some material from the sections and some of the addresses will be printed in forthcoming issues of *The Ecumenical Review* and *Study Encounter*.



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