

CENTRO  
PRO  
UNIONE

N. 7 - 1975



Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30  
00186 Rome, Italy

## CONTENTS

Program for 1975 . . . . .	2
Tensions Within the Church: Parties and Polarizations	
– by Rex Davis . . . . .	3
– par Giovanni B. Franzoni . . . . .	6
The Eucharist as an Ecumenical Sacrament of Reconciliation and Renewal	
– by Geoffrey Wainwright . . . . .	10
Summary Report on <i>Colloquium Internationale Oecumenicum</i>	
– by William Dillon, S.A. and James F. Puglisi, S.A. . . . .	19
Second Edition of the ecumenical directory:	
<i>Ecumenism around the World</i> . . . . .	28
Centro Pro Unione . . . . .	29

*Conference Program for 1975*  
Theme: "Reconciliation and Renewal"

*Programme de Conférences pour le 1975*  
Sujet: "Réconciliation et Renouveau"

October 16

"Toward an Understanding of Christian Unity: What Prospectives for Christian Unity are Realistic?" – Rev. Robert Faricy, S.J.

"The Church: People of God, not Perfect Society but Koinonia in Christ" – Prof. Sante Di Giorgi

16 octobre

"Vers une compréhension de l'unité chrétienne: quelles sont les perspectives réalistes?" – P. Robert Faricy, S.J.

"L'église: peuple de Dieu: non société parfaite mais Koinonia en Christ" – Prof. Sante Di Giorgi

October 30

"Why is there a Third World when there Should be only One World? The Problem of Exploitation." – Diogo de Gaspar

"The Christian Community as Reconciler: Development of World Peace and Social Justice" – Dr. Anthony Chullikal

30 octobre

"Pourquoi exist-il un troisième monde lorsqu'il en devrait exister un seul? Le problème de l'exploitation" – Diogo de Gaspar

"La communauté chrétienne réconciatrice: développement de la justice sociale et de la paix dans le monde" – Dr. Anthony Chullikal

December 11

"Send Forth Your Spirit and Renew the Face of the Earth: Ecumenism and the Working of the Spirit" – Fra. Carlo Carretto

"The Notion of Unity in Prayer and the Life of the Community"

11 décembre

"Donne ton Esprit et renouvelle la face de la terre: oecuménisme travail de l'Esprit" – frère Carlo Carretto

"La notion de l'unité dans la vie et dans la prière de la communauté"

## TENSIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH: PARTIES AND POLARIZATIONS

Rex Davis\*

One thing strikes me very much about this question of parties and polarizations and tension in the Church, and that is a remark made by a Samoan when we were discussing the historic problem of what missions and what missionaries have accomplished and the problems they have lived in the Pacific Islands. We were talking a little about the importance of the culture of the people of the Pacific. The culture of the Polynesian people as over against the style of Western missionary influence and the possibility of culture being a way of liberation for the people of the Pacific. The Samoan pastor made a remark which has come to my mind just while entering this room. He said we are not so much facing a problem of how culture will liberate us, but that we have in fact been colonized by our culture. It seems to me, just coming back to Europe, and coming back to talk about some of these problems that we face in renewal of the churches here in the Northern rich world, that in many ways we are victims, victims of the colonization, perhaps the colonization we are not very aware of, and that we have been colonized by our cultures, by our European culture, by our western culture, and this is so deeply embodied in us that it is difficult for us to really escape from it, and therefore to see more clearly what questions renewal and what questions about the tensions that exist in our churches really mean. In fact I feel at a loss where to begin in talking about tensions when we face the European and Western churches today. Questions about Black theology, about the theology of liberation, questions about women's liberation and theology of women in the church and what we might call now Brown theology. All these things tempt me into a quite fascinating discussion about many problems and it is difficult to be disciplined in looking at some fairly specific issues. But I will try to do so, by perhaps beginning with a common place, and to point out that today in the Western world anyway that all boundaries which so fascinated and so captivated us not so long-ago are no longer valid for the churches. I mean to talk of Protestantism and Catholicism as in any sense major factors in churchly tensions today would be a grave mistake. Today fresh tensions exist, fresh problems exist which cross everyone of those not so ancient frontiers and affect all of us both Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, Roman Catholic alike. We are faced with equal problems and problems which present both a threat and a promise. In general in looking at these problems, I am struck by two things: first it becomes more and more clear that we cannot understand many of the tensions and tendencies to polarization in the

churches today, without equally appreciating the sociological and political origins and aspirations of the groups involved. It is naïve; it is in fact blatantly wrong to think that religious and churchly discussions take place on a neutral platform. None of us can divorce ourselves from our political and social thinking and aspirations and the atmosphere in which we talk is continually charged with the often hidden and sometimes very open, and more rarely brilliantly exposed political and social issues with which we are involved, which have built into us, which in fact have colonized us. No where is it clearer in my mind than in the United States today, where the convergence between conservative politics and conservative religion is a pathetic commonplace. Secondly, it becomes more and more urgent that we seek today to find a better sense of tolerance and understanding amongst ourselves. Not in order that these tensions, that exist, may be replaced by weak compromise, but that we may be better able to surface for ourselves the often hidden and unconscious commitments we have, and thus be ready and able to deal with the realities of conflict more honestly.

It is unbelievably hurtful to the Church if we continue to behave as if some of our tensions were solely and purely religious ones and fail to see the far more complex nature of their origin and, therefore, of their substance. Upon this background I want now to look at four signal tensions which I see today. Some of these find traditional parties and others form parties and, all of which, have some elements of confusion as well as profound importance for us.

I would distinguish first of all the tension which exist between those who belong to a party generally called evangelical, the evangelicalism of the Protestant churches, and those who are committed to action and social concern. One cannot but end up in some kind of characterization here which is always inadequate. But I think we need to be aware of this tension indeed this polarization, which particularly affects the Protestant churches. Ever since the World Council of Churches initiated the program to combat racism in 1970, with the initial allocation of small grants to some 19 movements and organizations overtly engaged in a struggle for political liberation in different parts of the world, but in particular in Southern Africa, the issue between those of evangelical party and the more liberal churchmen was precipitated in a sharp and controversial way. It is to me somewhat ironical that the successors to parties which emerged in the 19th. century and which emerged with the mark of evangelicalism, and which did so much in that century to stand for social improvement in working conditions, to fight slavery and so on, should now seem to be in such a different camp. Likewise those we call liberal theologians who had been so long in theory and had written

so much and had argued so much in an intellectual way about what should happen and what should not happen, should now be embarrassed by action. However that was the case. This split in the churches finished subsequently on questions of violence and non-violence, of social justice, political commitment and the nature of religious salvation, and the individual spiritual life. At times it has seemed to me, especially when I have been subject to inquisition on these issues, that the debates have taken the shape of parody; people have stepped into caricatures of themselves in trying to elaborate one or other points of view. I think this has happened partly because the social and political commitment of people were often submerged or hidden or put aside, as they tried to engage in what they called neutral aseptic, clean, theological and religious rhetoric. Clearly parties did begin to emerge, have emerged, and are now in fact in collision; and these have inherited the structure of shibboleths belonging to earlier parts of this century which fight on issues which seem to be barren, but nevertheless hide fairly fundamental differences which have a political and social origin. Clearly what has been lacking in this tension in this polarization in the churches, has been a deeper analysis of the nature of contemporary spirituality, and how far our Christian fellowship is sustained; how far we can remain in Christian dialogue, when others in the Body of Christ suffer unbelievable and totally unacceptable indignities. By that I mean that there are those of us who want to keep the debate clean, who want to see this as a theological discussion at an abstract level, when others are facing imprisonment and torture and indignity of a very grave nature. How it is possible to divorce these things is to me one of the great problems of our times! In fact the reduction of this debate into a kind of "either or" seems to me blasphemous, and it is clearly a case now for a better search for ways of tolerance between those who want to see this as some kind of theological polarization that can help us accommodate quite different ways of acting politically as fully human people within the complexity of our religious understanding. Or else, it is time for us to have much sharper, much clearer polarization where we say much more bluntly that if you stand there, I cannot be beside you, and if I stand here perhaps you cannot be beside me. And there is in this, for me, a very clear Eucharistic corollary. I am being perfectly frank when I say here, that there are times when I feel it is far easier to break bread with Roman Catholics, with people of other churches and denominations, and Protestant brothers and sisters who share the same analysis of society, the same awareness of what life seems to be about, the same sense of solidarity with those who are oppressed, than I do to break bread in my own Anglican church, in a church

which will be part of my whole heritage as a Christian, but with people from whom I feel almost completely and fully alienated in terms of an understanding of what life is about and what society is doing to people. Now if that is so as an experience of something one feels as a human being, what then is our worship about? Far too often we seem to want to conduct our worship and our theological questions in this way which is to me too abstract and then to leave these other questions of where we feel our commitment and where we feel our human solidarity to be apart from that experience. Perhaps our worship must become much more a symbol of a greater hope for a better unity and understanding in life. And if we say that, then I believe it is time we reached far different answers about the present unsatisfactory impasse about Eucharistic fellowship, that is based simply on what seem to me somewhat barren, ecclesiological lines. These lines to me look like a desert today when there is so much more passion and so much more human experience to be discovered amongst ourselves.

Now a second tension which I want to touch on is somewhat parallel to the first and pertains to more recent developments which have two characteristic styles: the first I would refer to is the charismatic movement in the Historic Churches with its antecedences in the classical Pentecostal and Holiness movements from the nineteenth century. I am struck here by three things.

First: that while the classical Pentecostal and Neopentecostal *tends* today to identify on the issues of social and political questions with a conservative model, nevertheless their own history has sufficient evidence of social iconoclasm to make one pause and raise a question. Until 1916 for instance, the Pentecostal Revival, in the United States of America was an interracial movement. In Africa, the independent church movement with their pentecostal flavour seem to have clearly some charge, some feeling of anti-colonial and anti-white domination in them. More of the pentecostal churches have origins with the 'have-not' people of Society, who have a real grievance with the church of the 'haves'.

Secondly: the newly developing charismatic movement crosses the ecclesiastical borders with a kind of innocence, and this I find extremely attractive. But it raises again a similar problem to the one I have just touched on. How can those who claim to share something in this spirit, to share a gift in the Holy Spirit, to be one in the Spirit, not equally be able to share as one in the bread? And I find these kinds of questions become, for me, more and more painful ones.

Thirdly there is nevertheless, a clearly manifest tendency amongst the Charismatic and Pentecostal people to align with fairly conservative political models, or a conservative understanding of certain manifesta-

tions of the tradition of the Church. Perhaps the traditions of capitalism in the Church die hard, especially for those newly entering into the realm of the 'haves'. But I mention these as three observations about something which, for me, at the moment is a very fascinating and attractive phenomenon in the Church's life.

Now secondly, in the same context, there are the characteristics of the Jesus movements in society today, spreading out of the United States of America, but now having a very world-wide characteristic. I say this having spent some days in Tahiti with a group of the 'Children of God', having discovered them also in Hong Kong. Here we have movements which tend to establish themselves in commune-like, community-like styles of life, express a resistance, in fact a hostility to traditional church structures, have a clearly trans-denominational flavour about them, and equally involve many from the Catholic Church as well as people out of traditional Pentecostal and other Protestant churches. Yes here are parties being formed over against the conventional church polity. And it seems to me one of the clear things that we have to do today is to continually build bridges of tolerance and understanding between these groups so as not to alienate nor isolate them from what we might call the conventional church situation.

Thirdly, I am more and more alarmed by the tendency today, to divide, again I think on party lines, and it is real tension, into people who see themselves as ecumenical people, who have a sensitivity to a whole range of issues, somewhat along the lines that I have just been mentioning, sensitivity to sharing in communion together, having a sensitivity about social and political issues together, and those who are much sharply denominational. And it is interesting, in these last few years, to see how clearly fresh denominational lines are beginning to emerge. Even over against some of the church union schemes, we have much more sharply delineated groups of denominational people, clearly trying to recover something of their isolation in a sense, perhaps to preserve themselves in a world which is becoming more and more confused.

But for the ecumenical kind of person, there is a challenge in their spiritual and religious life. There is a kind of schizophrenia which enters in, and this is a very painful one, because the more one becomes committed to a wider ecumenical sense of what the Church should be about, the more one feels the pain and becomes sensitive to the difficulty of one's allegiance as an Anglican, as a Methodist, as a Roman Catholic, as a Presbyterian. And how do we in the churches build the kind of possibilities anyway for people to live with these deal loyalties, to live in this kind of tension, or do we reduce it to a kind of simple party division in which the coherence and the loyalty of one's life be-

comes more and more an alienating factor from one's church origin, or from one's original religious community? The best example of this probably are the group of people associated with the Ecumenical Institute in Chicago who have established an ecumenical order, now having something like one hundred houses, or religious houses, scattered around the world, who bring together people out of different church backgrounds, but who have established more and more a kind of cultic life together, with their house communion, with their house Church life, even while keeping tenuous relationships with the historic churches.

Now the fourth and last tension that I want to speak about here is something that I have discovered very clearly and very urgently in the Pacific. I want to use now the word catholic in a very old sense, as being world-wide, the sense of the Church as being something which transcends so many of these tensions and barriers that the catholic church has a wholeness about it which is thoroughly international, and that the Church in the creedal formulation that we have is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. This sense of catholic as a "wholeness" as against the clear manifestation in some of the newly independent Pacific countries of a need to have a "national" church. Now this presents a very big problem for the denominational manifestation in church life: Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc. Papua, New Guinea for example will perhaps, in the next four months, be an independent country. Papuan and New Guinean christians — now I don't mean missionaries there, but the Papuan and New Guinean Christians — Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, United Church, are a young kind of community and their administrators are particularly a young people, and they ask this question: Why, when we are struggling for national coherence and national unity in our newly emerging country, should we be bothered, should we be hampered by these European divisions? What on earth does Henry VIII and the Anglican settlement mean to us? What on earth indeed, does the Roman Catholic Church mean in its emergence in the European scene after the Reformation? Why cannot we have a thoroughly Christian Church of Papua, New Guinea? And it is very likely in my mind, that within the next ten years we will be confronted with more and more of these national churches emerging, which will throw out of gear all together the traditional, theological, ecumenical discussions.

In the Cook Islands, to take another example, the Christian Church of the Cook Islands, stemming out of the London Missionary Society missions of the early part of the nineteenth century, now accounts for something like 70% of the relatively small population of the Cook Islands. The Roman Catholic Church accounts for about 25% and the remaining 5% are di-

vided between the two American missionary groups that have come recently, the Mormons and the 'Seventh Day Adventists'. Now the people of the Cook Islands, particularly the political leaders are saying, first of all that we won't have any more churches, so-called, coming in to invade us. They have passed legislation saying that no further missions will be tolerated in the Cook Islands, and the people will not be allowed to set up separate congregations under white missionaries. Secondly there is an implicitly clear intention that before long they will further say that there will be no room for white missionaries, white pastors in the Cook Islands. If the Cook Island Christian Church today can have 60 Cook Island pastors, can be fairly run by Cook Islanders, can have its President and General Secretary Cook Islanders, why can't the other Churches?

This led to a somewhat unholy alliance between the Roman Catholic Bishop and the President of the Mormon Group there who, seeing the writing on the wall, were opposing this legislation very strongly. But it is again predictable that there will be an announcement very shortly giving from three to five years for those two Churches in particular to have a local clergy. The Roman Catholic Church, for example has no Cook Island man even in training to be a priest. The Bishop is a New Zealander, the thirteen other priests there, are Dutch Missionaries, most of them sixty years old, or over. The predicament of the Roman Catholic Church in the Cook Islands is a typical predicament of the Roman Catholic Church in the Pacific, and it largely rests, I must say quite frankly, with the question of marriage, because for Pacific culture, for Polynesian and Melanesian peoples marriage is a necessary qualification for entering into the fulness of the cultural life of the community. It isn't any other question. And it is very difficult to find Melanesian and Polynesian men willing to accept the Western concept, the cultural concept of celibacy. Now these are issues which will result, I believe, in the pressure of national churches where the Roman Catholics and others in the Cook Islands will eventually emerge into a much clearer Cook Island Christian Church. There are signs of this in other parts of the Pacific. There are signs of this in Africa, and it means we have to think much more clearly about a new style of Church emerging which has echoes, perhaps of what happened in Europe several hundred years ago with national churches. Now I have mentioned four things; they are somewhat divergent, but to me they represent some of the tensions I see for the churches today, tensions which lead perhaps, to parties being formed, to polarization, but which transcend, for me, the somewhat European and Western sharpness of division which the usual discussion has. The first one

between the people of social action, social involvement, social concern, and those of a more evangelistic, personal-religious, spiritual kind. That it seems to me as more typical of the polarization in the Western world. I don't think it is as significant as we in the West seem to feel. The second one is a derivative somewhat, that between Charismatic Pentecostal movement in the churches and conventional church life. The third is this problem, this tendency for a party of ecumenical people, and for the denominational people to become clearer and sharper in our own time. And the fourth one, pertains much more to the "Third World", and that is the tension between a "national" church and a "local" concept of what the Church is, and the more wide spread, the more "catholic" sense that the Western culture has taken for granted for so long.

Now these four tensions that I have listed, as I said earlier, leave out many specifics that I am equally interested in. And the question of the tension between men and women as a very fundamental theological problem. These are the four tensions, the four movements into parties that I feel, and I am probably affected, as I said, by more recent events in my own experience in life, that I would like to put before you.

\* REX DAVIS has worked in the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches since 1968 where he edits the ecumenical youth quarterly RISK. In addition to this task he is presently the head of the Renewal desk in Geneva.



## TENSIONS ET POLARISATIONS DANS L'EGLISE

Giovanni B. Franzoni\*

J'ai suivi avec grand intérêt le rapport, malheureusement trop bref à cause des limites de temps, du Prof. Davis. Après une courte introduction déjà prévue à l'avance, je modifierai un peu mon schéma initial pour essayer de contribuer avec une expérience personnelle et communautaire et pour vérifier certains points soulignés par le Prof. Davis au cours de son analyse. Vous noterez toutefois une différence de fond. En effet, bien que nous, les Catholiques Romains, nous ayons tendance à nous considérer un peu en position centrale, en écoutant parler le Prof. Davis je me suis rendu compte que mon discours présentera les caractéristiques d'un discours provincial. Dans un pays comme l'Italie un discours si vaste n'est pas possible. Ici les luttes se dé-

roulent dans les méandres des situations locales; elles sont historiquement inévitables et inéluctables et doivent être affrontées à tout prix. L'expérience de l'Eglise Catholique, et par Eglise Catholique j'entends l'Eglise Catholique Romaine, est incontestablement très vaste et valable pour toutes les églises chrétiennes; pensez à toutes les églises du Concile, il est impossible de faire ici une analyse de la situation. Je voulais dire que l'attente et l'analyse des résultats du Concile ont présenté tout au début une certaine simplicité, naïveté presque, et non seulement par ceux qui avaient pris une position conservatrice vis à vis du Concile.

Les premières années qui ont suivi le Concile, en Europe et en Italie surtout, ont été caractérisées par un excès de confiance, qui ne tenait pas dans la juste considération la réalité hétérogène de l'Eglise et de ses composantes sociologiques. Trop de confiance avait été attribuée au pouvoir d'unification des points consolidés au cours du Concile. Des vastes sections de l'Eglise Catholique étaient en réalité prêtes à accueillir ce Concile. Elles s'étaient présentées riches en élans, en expériences, en exigences, même si elles ne s'y attendaient pas car la convocation de ce Concile a surpris un peu tous; mais dès le début elles comprirent la richesse des contenus, la possibilité de rendre plus authentique, plus homogène la foi chrétienne, l'expérience de l'Evangile, la parole de Dieu dans les situations concrètes où la personne ou le groupe se trouvaient.

Selon leur expérience de vie, ces personnes ont apporté au Concile des conseils et des attentes parfois même très pressantes en les faisant pour ainsi dire enregistrer.

Certains ont apporté un nouvel élan oecuménique, d'autres qui avaient vécu la question ouvrière de l'intérieur et en partageaient déjà certaines luttes, certains choix, ont apporté leur expérience, d'autres encore le problème des jeunes, de la culture, de l'autonomie de la science. Tous ont contribué à aider l'Eglise Catholique dans son long chemin hérissé d'obstacles. Cependant, n'oublions pas qu'une large composante du monde catholique, italien surtout, n'attendait pas le Concile. Elle en fut surprise, contrariée même, et dès le début le vécut avec anxiété, vivant chaque nouveauté, chaque suggestion comme une provocation presque, comme une atteinte au monolithisme, à l'uniformité, à l'unité de l'Eglise, à ces caractères qui semblaient acquis pour toujours. L'unité est capitale, mais ce n'est pas un bien de consommation. L'unité doit être produite, doit être créée. Toute nouvelle situation sociologique, culturelle, politique de l'histoire déclenche un processus comparatif qui vise à parvenir à une vraie unité, c'est à dire à l'unité de la comparaison entre la parole de Dieu et ces nouvelles situations historiques. Penser de pouvoir jouir pour toujours de cette unité réalisée sur le plan institutionnel, structural, linguistique,

théologique du moins était un témoignage de conservatisme et de quietisme. Ce furent ceux qui avaient réalisé certains succès au cours du Concile, ceux qui avaient fait enregistrer dans la culture officielle catholique, dans la théologie, dans la perspective pastorale, dans l'Eglise enfin, certaines instances, certaines exigences qui jusqu'alors demeuraient dans la clandestinité, aux marges de l'Eglise, ce furent ceux-là qui témoignèrent cette confiance excessive. Tous se mirent à travailler avec entrain et bonne foi à l'intérieur des paroisses, des communautés, des maisons religieuses et des ordres.

Je crois que au cours de ces années d'entrain et d'aspirations qui visaient à maintenir le consensus existant à l'intérieur de l'Eglise Catholique, la comparaison avec la réalité concrète a bientôt entraîné des divergences selon un processus que j'appellerais "en ciseaux": plus on avance, plus les pointes s'écartent. Ceux qui avaient obtenu grâce à des pressions au sein du Concile la légitimation de certains éléments essentiels de leur discours, une fois réalisée une certaine unité pro bono pacis, en d'autres termes dire le minimum mais tout à la fois, ne voulaient pas revenir en arrière sur leurs propres expériences mais les faire progresser en les comparant avec celles d'autres communautés, d'autres zones du monde catholique qui sans vouloir exprimer un jugement de réprobation ou de supériorité s'acheminaient vers leur tâche, conscientes que les situations évoluent sur les épaules des gens, du peuple et qu'elles ne peuvent pas se développer dans les temples théologiques, dans les temples des autorités, dans les temples des savants. Mais la réalité, les expériences de foi évoluent avec lenteur, au pas avec les gens. Alors qu'il n'aurait pas dû y avoir de critiques le dissentiment est bientôt apparu. Dès le début la lutte a été dure; en 68 on a parlé de contestation, de ruptures internes, de dialogue inexistant, des critiques négatives ont été apportées par ceux qui faisaient une expérience différente et ainsi de suite.

Je voudrais reprendre ici mon discours. En réalité les divisions à l'intérieur de l'Eglise n'avaient pas un caractère pastoral ou théologique. Il s'agissait de divisions de classe, de divisions de nature sociale et de nature politique. Je n'aime pas l'expression mais je dois dire que chez nous aussi s'était déclenchée une action colonisatrice. En d'autres termes le message chrétien avait été colonisé par la culture des classes dominantes qui l'avaient adopté et en avaient fait leur instrument.

Je voudrais ouvrir une parenthèse pour parler de l'annonce évangélique au temps du Seigneur. Nous ne pouvons pas croire que toutes les paroles prononcées par Jésus, ou au moins celles qui nous ont été transmises, celles que nous connaissons, l'une à côté de l'autre constituent le message du Christ. C'est impensable.

L'une à côté de l'autre les paroles du Christ composent un message ambigu que l'on peut interpréter de cent façons différentes selon les intérêts les plus divers. En effet jamais aucune théologie n'a dit que l'Évangile est constitué par les paroles du Christ comme elles nous ont été transmises. Nous savons que le Christ lui-même était la parole de Dieu. Nous n'annonçons pas les paroles du Christ, la verbalisation de ce qu'il a dit, de ce que les évangélistes ont voulu transmettre. Ce que l'Église annonce concrètement dans l'histoire c'est l'événement historique Christ, c'est Jésus le sauveur, parole de Dieu, qui s'est fait homme, qui a parlé d'une certaine manière, a dit certaines choses, s'est introduit parmi son peuple, a déterminé certaines réactions, a payé avec la vie, est ressuscité comme expression de la victoire de la vie sur la mort et vit maintenant parmi nous. Voilà l'événement. Les paroles de Jésus sont à l'intérieur, elles témoignent un certain contenu, mais prises individuellement elles n'ont aucun sens, chacune d'entre elles peut être utilisée par n'importe qui pour ses propres intérêts.

N'oublions pas que Jésus était conscient de parler à un peuple divisé et qu'il ne s'adressa pas de façon générique aux gens. Mais avant d'annoncer la paix, la réconciliation, la volonté du Père, la fraternité universelle il prit une place bien précise dans la société. Et son message n'en fut pas limité car Jésus parla au peuple tout entier, aux riches, aux pharisiens, aux scribes; et il parla dans un certain sens et demanda le rassemblement du peuple divisé autour de ceux qui occupaient la dernière place dans la société. "Les publicains et les mérétrices vous précéderont dans le royaume des cieux" a dit Jésus. Je vous conseille de lire "Jérusalem au temps de Jésus" du prof. Jeremias; c'est un livre très utile pour mieux comprendre la stratification de la population. La structure religieuse du peuple en était la cause principale. Le temple et la loi mirent au ban certaines classes sociales et créèrent une stratification dans le peuple, stratification établie selon le degré d'homogénéité et de conformité avec les modèles de pureté proposés par la loi. Nous trouvons donc ceux qui étaient possédés par le démon, les lépreux, les prostituées, ceux qui faisaient des travaux impurs, les publicains, les smaritains jusqu'aux classes dominantes de la société.

Or la caractéristique d'une société divisée en classes réside dans le fait que la stratégie des classes dominantes ne ramène pas cette division à un principe contrôlable, rationnel, c'est à dire à une injustice, car les classes subalternes ne l'accepteraient pas. Il faut donc donner un sens, créer une raison d'être. Pour la religion, pour la façon dont elle était conçue, ce fait d'imposer une loi morale au peuple, de faire sentir impurs ceux qui l'étaient pour des raisons contingentes

ou ceux qui pour n'importe quelle raison occupaient une position subalterne, donnait la possibilité de fournir une interprétation morale aux différences entre les classes sociales. Quand le lépreux à la périphérie du village devait annoncer sa condition d'homme puni par Dieu, quand il devait s'écrire "impur" il répondait à une double fonction: d'une part une fonction hygiénique car effectivement il était une personne contagieuse, dangereuse pour les autres, mais en même temps il répondait à une fonction sociale, il rendait rationnelle sa condition de mendiant, de subalterne. La personne qui le rencontrait savait que cet homme se trouvait dans une condition inférieure car c'était un pécheur, une personne impure, punie par Dieu; ou lui ou ses parents, quelqu'un sans doute avait péché. Tout ceci exerce une fonction persuasive dans l'ensemble des mécanismes des classes sociales; la personne saine est rassurée, gratifiée, satisfaite par sa condition. Il en est ainsi pour l'aveugle, le paralytique, la prostituée: jamais n'apparaît une tentative de faire une analyse, de ramener cette situation de souffrance, de mendicité à des causes naturelles. Au contraire, on repousse la condition première de cette situation de désagrégation du peuple au delà de l'horizon contrôlable par la raison humaine. On fait remonter la cause de cette situation à des raisons occultes, à des péchés qui peuvent concerner la personne en question, ses parents ou sa famille. Vous voyez alors en quoi consiste la révolution accomplie par le Christ. Il s'agit de porter une atteinte à ce mécanisme de mise au ban qui réside dans la loi, dans le temple, dans la notion de pureté, en le soustrayant des mains des classes dominantes qui l'administraient et par conséquent sanctionnaient la division du peuple en attribuant la définition de pécheur aux mis au ban ou aux mendiants, aux subalternes en tout cas, car les publicains tout en n'étant pas des mendiants mais des personnes aisées restaient toutefois une classe inférieure. Donc ce mécanisme est caractérisé en premier lieu par le principe de ramener l'origine de la division de la population à un principe moral et non pas à un principe structural. Et ceci présente un grand avantage: le mis au ban, le lépreux, mais en général n'importe quelle personne mise aux marges de la société, devient la sentinelle de sa propre mise au ban, le gardien de cette situation car il sera capable de vivre à l'intérieur de cette société divisée seulement à condition qu'il accepte de se considérer coupable de sa situation d'infériorité. La prostituée, par exemple, dans la société de l'époque, comme dans la nôtre d'autre part, si d'un côté elle exerce une fonction sociale nécessaire dans une société refoulée où elle est le témoignage d'une injustice, d'autre part il est nécessaire qu'elle se sente une femme coupable et qu'elle ne mette pas en question sa situation; elle ne doit pas se demander si c'est nécessaire ou si

c'est juste. Il est important qu'elle se considère une femme impure, une femme coupable et seulement à ces conditions elle répondra aux règles du jeu et sera acceptée par la société. Ce qui scandalisa les classes dominantes, le peuple, ceux qui décidaient des lois et de la culture ce fut le fait que Jésus se mit en rapport avec ces mis au ban et en refusa la culpabilisation. Les pauvres, les misérables n'existent pas en vertu de leur péché ou de celui de leurs parents mais ils existent pour la gloire de Dieu. C'est à ceux qu'est confié l'Évangile, et ce sont eux qui à travers leur rédemption seront les artisans de leur salut et de celui de leurs oppresseurs. Car les oppresseurs, les riches, les personnes aisées, ceux qui dominent la culture et manoeuvrent la loi ont été les artisans de ces divisions sociales et ils ne pourront jamais les combler. Ils sont malades, l'origine de la maladie du peuple réside en eux. C'est donc seulement des derniers que peut partir le processus de reconstruction du monde. Voilà pourquoi le Christ a dit "bénis soient les pauvres". Leur situation est bénie non pas parce qu'elle est volue par Dieu, mais parce qu'elle est la condition première pour une union nouvelle, pour un royaume où le péché ne sera plus une question de classes sociales mais un problème commun à tous. Je voudrais attirer votre attention sur la parabole de l'adultère dans laquelle Jésus devant une personne prise en flagrant délit soulève le problème du péché commun à tous. Le vrai bouleversement réside dans le fait qu'il n'existe pas de classes de pécheurs établies en raison du travail que ces personnes exercent ou qu'elles sont obligées à exercer et que le problème du péché concerne tous même ceux qui occupent les plus hautes sphères de la société.

Nous avons essayé de porter cette expérience au sein de l'Église Catholique. L'annonce évangélique ne doit pas être vécue de façon abstraite en se limitant à répéter les paroles de Jésus, en les commentant dans l'optique de la culture des classes dominantes comme on l'a pratiquement fait dans nos liturgies. Il fallait plutôt suivre le Christ, se rendre compte qu'on ne pouvait pas prononcer des mots comme "paix", "réconciliation", "fraternité" à l'intérieur d'un peuple divisé sans se placer d'abord au point de rencontre du peuple, c'est à dire parmi les derniers.

Voilà quelle a été la tentative, l'expérience en cours aujourd'hui même. La tentative donc de proposer le message évangélique non plus par l'intermédiaire des classes dominantes qui s'en étaient à nouveau emparées, mais de le placer à l'intérieur de la culture produite par les classes inférieures de la société en les considérant le point de rassemblement politique; suivre donc la méthode du Seigneur, en partant du principe que si les classes ouvrières, les classes humbles étaient le point de rassemblement politique du peuple, elles

devaient par conséquent être aussi le point de rassemblement ecclésiastique. Elles devaient représenter le lieu où, sans mystifications et sans intermédiaires, on pouvait relire l'Évangile autour de ceux qui avaient été dépouillés, privés de tout et pour lesquels le message évangélique était un message de salut dans le vrai sens du terme: être sauvés du point de vue humain et du point de vue du péché.

L'illusion de trouver une application graduelle du Concile dans notre expérience a donc échoué. L'expression graduelle s'est révélée ambiguë. Elle appelle à l'esprit un escalier avec des marches et signifie que les étapes ne peuvent pas être sautées et qu'il faut avancer pas à pas. Son ambiguïté résidait dans le fait qu'il n'y a pas une seule façon de graver l'escalier et que l'on peut très bien stationner pour des siècles sur une seule marche.

Si d'une part la notion d'escalier était objective, d'autre part l'idée de progression était ambiguë. La notion la plus conforme me paraît être une idée de croissance, car la croissance ne s'accomplit pas par bonds mais à la suite d'une pression interne de l'organisme. C'est une poussée organique. La croissance doit être aidée autrement elle pourrait se bloquer ou s'accomplir avec une excessive rapidité.

Pensons à un enfant et au rôle du groupe des adultes. Ils peuvent diriger sa croissance et en fixer les étapes de façon graduelle ou bien l'aider en prêtant attention aux processus de développement intérieur de l'enfant, en lui venant en aide de l'extérieur. Vous voyez que le rôle de l'autorité est différent selon la façon de concevoir et de situer l'autorité: en haut de l'escalier à régler la cadence, ou à l'intérieur d'un organisme, celui d'un enfant qui grandit ou d'un peuple qui se réunit par exemple, prête à intervenir, à le libérer d'éventuelles timidités ou difficultés qui en bloqueraient la croissance, ou prête à veiller pour une croissance harmonieuse où tous avanceraient au même pas. En appliquant ce discours à la hiérarchie ecclésiastique je crois pouvoir dire que nous sommes arrivés à ce rendez-vous pour vérifier de l'intérieur les processus de croissance, de réunion, de "réappropriation" du peuple. Nous y sommes tous engagés: les ministères, les évêques, tous ceux qui ont eu un mandat au dedans et non pas au dessus de l'Église et les fidèles naturellement. Cette nouvelle expression "réappropriation" qui a été récemment forgée dans nos communautés suppose un phénomène d'expropriation. Les derniers, les pauvres, les mis au ban, les lépreux, les prostituées ont été privés de ce message que le Seigneur leur avait confié quand il demanda aux évangélistes d'aller pieds nus, sans instruments de pouvoir, sans besace et avec une seule tunique.

Cet Évangile qui leur avait été confié, leur a été à nouveau soustrait et administré dans l'acceptation passive d'une société, d'un peuple divisé, comme au

temps du Christ. Mais à côté de l'expropriation nous vivons un phénomène de "réappropriation" auquel tous doivent participer et aucun ne doit être exclu. Les premiers doivent être ceux qui ont un ministère qualifié au sein de l'Eglise, les évêques et les diacres par exemple. Il y a quelques années, dans les communautés de base on considérait l'institution comme un ennemi à combattre, à détruire, mais à la suite d'une révision plus théologique, plus réaliste, plus historique ce discours a été abandonné.

Aujourd'hui personne ne parle d'une Eglise prête à abattre les institutions, mais plutôt d'une Eglise dans laquelle les noeuds institutionnels reviennent au peuple de Dieu. Par peuple de Dieu on n'entend pas une masse amorphe de personnes baptisées, mais des chrétiens conscients, à la recherche de la foi, d'une expérience directe du divin, de la grâce du Seigneur. Là où cette conscience émerge, se réunit, se propose et se révèle, nous trouvons les pointes où se manifeste le peuple de Dieu. Ce peuple de Dieu est entrain de reprendre possession de ces noeuds institutionnels tombés aux mains des pouvoirs politiques; et je vous prie d'excuser cette image militaire et stratégique. Je ne le dis pas pour faire une analyse moraliste ou pour attribuer des étiquettes morales. Au cours des siècles de l'histoire de l'Eglise certains ministères, certains noeuds institutionnels ont été administrés par des pouvoirs féodaux et personne n'ignore qu'au Moyen Age les grandes familles patriciennes romaines se disputaient la chaire de Saint Pierre. L'histoire n'exclut donc pas que le peuple de Dieu ait été exproprié sur le plan historique et structural. C'est pourquoi aujourd'hui on ne peut plus éluder ce fait et penser de pouvoir créer une Eglise charismatique ou spontanéiste et par conséquent un peuple sans institutions. Jésus a donné des institutions à son peuple, il lui a donné les Evangiles; le peuple a droit aux institutions.

Les Evangiles ne sont pas simplement la parole mais la parole comme elle a été transmise, les gestes sacramentels, le fait de rompre le pain, l'imposition des mains, l'eau du baptême; ce sont des gestes transmis et donc des noeuds institutionnels qui appartiennent au peuple de Dieu. Le ministère du diacre, de l'évêque sont des indications données par Jésus. Elles appartiennent donc au peuple de Dieu qui ne peut plus les laisser en d'autres mains et doit; en reprendre possession. Il ne peut pas permettre qu'à travers la parole de Dieu soient transmises des idéologies oppressives ou hypocrites comme celle de la suprématie de l'homme sur la femme par exemple. Bien au contraire, il doit veiller à ce que au fur et à mesure que les phénomènes historiques et culturels évoluent, cette parole de Dieu soit toujours un message de libération, de vérité, de pureté. Libérer la parole de Dieu signifie donc l'arracher au truchement des classes dominantes et la

relire telle qu'elle était quand Jésus l'a confiée aux pauvres, aux dernières classes de la société. Que signifie reprendre possession de l'Eucharistie? Cela signifie ne plus permettre qu'elle soit célébrée de façon féodale selon une stratification et en accord avec certains principes que nous n'avons pas oubliés car nous les avons même appliqués. Le vraie Eucharistie doit être le geste de rompre le pain comme l'a fait Jésus quand, pour répondre aux questions des Apôtres, il a expliqué que pour eux la logique terrestre n'aurait eu aucune valeur, que les derniers seraient devenus les véritables premiers, et que ceux qui voulaient exercer une activité, un ministère auraient du être prêts à servir les autres. L'Eucharistie doit donc être soustraite à un certain type d'exploitation et elle doit être vécue comme un geste constructif, comme un geste de participation au corps et à la présence du Christ. On assiste aujourd'hui au processus de "réappropriation" des ministères, à des luttes, en Amérique du Sud par exemple, entre les évêques des diocèses ou en d'autres localités à des luttes dans les paroisses pour les curés. Il est absurde de concevoir l'évêque comme un fonctionnaire nommé du haut, un préfet de police qui doit accomplir une fonction bien précise au risque de la destitution. L'évêque doit être l'expression d'une communion, d'un rassemblement ecclésial autour du peuple. C'est seulement avec modération, clarté et esprit évangélique que peut se produire un changement. Il n'est pas question de le provoquer pour des raisons politiques ou dans l'intérêt d'un certain gouvernement. Voyez à ce propos l'expulsion de Mussureiva Pinto du Mozambique. Porter atteinte au rapport existant entre l'évêque et le peuple signifie écarter l'action du ministère des buts de l'Eglise. Les civils déclenchent ce processus de "réappropriation" parcequ'ils se considèrent atteints dans la nature théologique de leur participation ecclésiale; ils ne le font pas pour une simple question d'attachement à leur curé ou à leur évêque, mais parcequ'ils sont conscients de l'aide que ceux-ci peuvent leur apporter dans ce type de lecture de l'Evangile.

\* GIOVANNI B. FRANZONI est le co-rédacteur du journal hebdomadaire *COM-NUOVI TEMPI*.



## THE EUCHARIST AS AN ECUMENICAL SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL

Geoffrey Wainwright\*

Reconciliation and renewal are themes of Holy Year. Reconciliation is a "space" word. Renewal is a "time" word. Reconciliation has to do with bringing together, coming together; it is the reunion of the se-

parated. Renewal has to do with a fresh start, the old and the beginning of the new; it is remaking, rebirth, resurrection. The purpose of God's redemptive work for mankind in Jesus Christ may be characterized as the reconciliation of man and his world to God Himself (Rom. 5:10f.; 2 Cor. 5: 18-20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1: 20), as the renewal of man according to God's own image (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16, 5:17; Eph. 4:23f.; Col. 3:10; Titus 3:5). Our redemption, because it is *God's* redemption of us, transcends space and time; but our redemption, because it is God's redemption of *us*, is operative in space and time. As a sacrament of our redemption, the eucharist is a sacrament of reconciliation and renewal. Let us look at the sacrament in its spatial and temporal structures. In the spatial circumstances of its celebrations and in the use of space in its own ritual and verbal symbolism, the eucharist expresses the reconciliation between God and man and the reconciliation among men which is its corollary. In the temporal circumstances of its celebration and in the incidence of time in its own linguistic usage and images the eucharist shows the past it plays in the renewal of man by his Maker.

## I.— THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

It is the vertical reconciliation of man to God which is theologically primary; this reconciliation carries, however, as its horizontal corollary the reconciliation of men among themselves. It is *together* that men have been reconciled by Christ to God; Christ is "our peace", therefore, not only as between man and God but also as among men. My language has already started to echo the second half of Ephesians 2, and the repercussions will continue as we consider the eucharist, first, as a sacrament of reconciliation between man and God and, second, as a sacrament of reconciliation among men (1). I shall go on to speak, third, of the universal scope of reconciliation; and, fourth, of its local beginnings.

### a) Reconciliation between man and God

In the words of Eph. 2:18: "Through Christ we both (= Jew and Gentile) have access in one Spirit to the Father". Here we have in a nutshell the scriptural basis of Origen's principle that the prayer of the Church is normally addressed *to* the Father, *through* Jesus Christ, *in* the Holy Spirit (2). This is the "type" or pattern of the classical eucharistic anaphora, which managed to establish and maintain itself even at a period when progress in trinitarian doctrine and the need to meet resistance to such progress combined to encourage the Church to see in the Son and the Holy Spirit also

due recipients of worship with the Father (3). The eucharist is the place where Christians "together, with one voice, glorify God" (Rom. 15:6): with angels and archangels and all: the company of heaven we cry "Holy, holy, holy", and we render Him praise and thanks above all for His redemptive work, accomplished in Christ Jesus, of reconciling the world to Himself. It is in the eucharist also that "with confidence we draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16): the eucharist has always contained, usually within the canon but also in the prayers of the faithful and at other points, an element of supplication made through Jesus Christ our great high priest. Because it is both a thankful commemoration of the reconciling work of Christ whose focus was the Cross and also a prayer of supplication through our great high priest who has passed through the heavens, it is natural that sacrificial language should be used at the eucharist. A Protestant insists that the "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice" of Christ on the Cross (the phrase is from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer) can only be *thanked for* and *pleaded* at the eucharist: it is not, he would say, offered again, even "bloodlessly" or "in a sacramental mode". Modern work in biblical theology has restored a more "real" and "dynamic" sense to the notion of *memorial*, and this has enabled Protestant and Catholic theologians of the eucharist to come closer together in their understanding of the sacramental *anamnesis*. But it is difficult to see how anyone still in the Protestant tradition could acquiesce in the words of the new Eucharistic Prayer IV of the Roman rite: "Offerimus tibi eius corpus et sanguinem". Here is an area of theology where ecumenical work still needs to be done (4).

But to return to our uncontroverted theme. In the eucharist we experience the reconciliation accomplished in Christ, and we express that experience in the language of space: we "have access" to the Father, we "draw near" the throne of grace. This restoration of man to God's fellowship is also expressed in terms of ascent and descent.

The principal expression of ascent is the dialogue which introduces and governs the great prayer of thanksgiving: the eucharistic president summons us "Lift up your hearts", and our reply is "We lift them up to the Lord"; as St Cyril of Jerusalem explains, we are bidden to "have our hearts in heaven with the God who loves mankind" (5); in directly biblical terms, we are setting our mind on things that are above, where our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-4). Within the great prayer of thanksgiving, some liturgies, doubtless borrowing from the story of the feeding of the 5000 (6), insert in the institution narrative a reference to Christ's "looking up to heaven", and a rubric in the Roman canon says that the eucharistic president corre-

spondingly “*elevat oculos ad caelum*” (7). Using sacrificial phraseology, several liturgies pray, at various points, that the oblations of the earthly Church may be accepted by God upon His heavenly altar, and the Roman canon, in the *Supplices*, asks that they may be carried there by angelic hands (8). In the area of ritual action, the elevations of the eucharistic elements which may take place at various points bear multiple significance, but they may, at least under one aspect, be an expression, in symbolic upward movement, of the reconciliation between man and God once wrought through Jesus Christ and still operative in him. Even the rising cloud of incense may, in smoke and smell, signify man’s access to God (9).

There is also the language of descent. The upward *Sursum corda* finds its principal counterpart in the downward epiclesis of the Holy Spirit during the great praies of thanksgiving. God is called on to send the Holy Spirit down upon the people and the bread and wine: *κατάπεμψον τὸ Πνεῦμά σου τὸ Ἅγιον ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ προκείμενα δῶρε ταῦτα* (Byzantine Liturgy of St Chrysostom). The pneumatological epiclesis is characteristic of all the classical anaphoras of the East; and in the course of the recent widespread revision of eucharistic liturgies it is now, in various forms, finding its way back into the West (10). It is a further expression of the meeting between God and man in the eucharistic celebration.

Still in terms of spatial imagery and of movement “from” God, Christ may be invoked to “come” into the assembly of those gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20). Thus it is now widely agreed that the primitive *Maranatha* carries a eucharistic as well as a parousiac reference (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20; Didaché 10:6) (11). Then there is the characteristic Mozarabic invocation addressed to Christ: “*Adesto...*” (12). This has been taken up again by the liturgy of the Church of South India: “Be present, be present, O Jesus, thou good High Priest, as thou wast in the midst of thy disciples, and make thyself known to us in the breaking of the bread”. In the Byzantine tradition, the bringing of the bread and wine from the table of preparation to the altar is decked out as the processional entry of the divine king.

All these are expressions, in the verbal and ritual imagery of space, of the meeting between God and man which may now take place through the reconciling work of Christ. But the reconciling work of Christ has, as we saw, the horizontal corollary of reconciliation among men, and to that we now turn.

#### b) Reconciliation among men

From the first, the eucharist is an occasion of gathering, of spatial assembly. From near and far they come. Justins Martyr records that there was a eucharis-

tic: “coming together in one place (*ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις*)” of all Christians who dwelt in either the towns or the country (Apol. I, 67). In early use, the phrase “come together in one place” appears to be almost a technical term for liturgical assembling; see also 1 Cor. 11:20; 14:23; Ignatius, *ad Eph.* 13:1. The Didaché (14:1) employs the verb *συνάγειν* for the eucharistic gathering, and the noun *synaxis* was long used for the eucharistic service (13). The significant relation between gathering and horizontal reconciliation is pointed by Didaché 14:2: “No one who has a dispute with his fellow should come together with you until he has made it up (*διαλλαγῶσθ*), in order that your sacrifice be not polluted”. This appears to depend directly on the Lord’s word in Matt. 5:23f.: “If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled (*διαλλάγηθι*) to your brother, and then come and offer your gift”. Within the eucharistic symbolism, the special sign of good fraternal relations is the kiss of peace, which dates from New Testament times (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14). In the Eastern liturgies, the peace is usually exchanged before the eucharistic anaphora, wherein those who live in harmony with one another will be praising God with one heart and one voice (*ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι*, Rom. 15:6); and it is at the beginning of the properly eucharistic part of the liturgy that most modern Protestant revisions have reintroduced the Peace into the service.(14). The new Missal of Paul VI retains the *pax* in its traditional Roman position before communion: fraternal harmony is thereby expressed just before all partake of the one Bread at the one Table of the Lord. Let us dwell for a moment on the symbolism of the one Bread. This is based in Scripture, and several modern liturgies in fact quote the words of Paul, at the Fraction as the one Bread is being broken for distribution to the many: “The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf” (1 Cor. 10:16f.) (15). The one bread is first a sign of existing unity. Thus Augustine sees the eucharistic bread, which is made from many grains, and the eucharistic wine, which is made from many grapes, as the *mysterium* of the “one body” which the communicants have already been made by their baptism: unless they behave peaceably towards one another, they are giving the lie to the “Amen” which they say in response to the words *Corpus Christi* as they receive communion (16). But those whose unity is expressed and maintained through participation in the one Bread, which is spiritually the same wherever the eucharist is celebrated, find themselves in daily life physically dispersed throughout the world: the anaphora of Serapion

uses the theme of the one bread in a prayer for the gathering of the geographically scattered Church in catholic unity: "As this bread was once scattered on the mountains and then, gathered together, became one, so also gather thy holy Church out of every nation and every land and every city and village and house and make one living catholic Church". In the *Didaché* (9:4), where the eschatological perspective is even clearer, the one bread serves as a prayer-sign for that future and final gathering, when many shall come from east and west, from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:29): "As this bread which we have broken was once scattered on the mountains and then, gathered together, became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom" (17).

### c) *The universal scope of reconciliation*

On God's side, the work of reconciliation is in principle complete. But He intends the reconciliation to be universal in effect: Christ's blood was shed "for the many" (18). And not all have yet, for their part, accepted to be reconciled to God. The broad sweep of the reconciling work of Christ is symbolized for the Byzantines by the arrangement of the pieces of bread at the *proskomidé*: round "the Lamb" are placed pieces commemorating the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, the prophets, apostles, saints, the faithful departed, and the Church on earth. In a Syrian tradition of colour symbolism, the red, the green and the white of the altar-cloths on which the eucharistic vessels are placed represent respectively the fiery universe, the verdant earth and the holy Church: the Qurbana, as the sacrament of Christ's reconciling work: is at the very centre of God's total economy of creation and redemption. The periphery and the fulness will be reached when God's effective reign becomes universal and all enjoy that perfect submission to God the Father which the Son has enjoyed from all eternity, so that God will be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

In the achievement of God's reign, the mission of the Church has a part to play. Not only do the members of the Church gather to celebrate a eucharist that expresses achieved reconciliation: the communicants are also sent out (*Itē...*), in order to serve as agents of reconciliation in a world which still needs to hear the message "Be reconciled to God". The role of the eucharist as a sacramental focus of the reconciliation for which thanks have already to be given but which still needs extension throughout human society was perhaps expressed in the practice of the ancient Church whereby the Sunday communicant took bread home with him for communion during the week (19): the sacramental sign of reconciliation was thus set up in the heart of daily life. Whatever the merits and demerits

of that particular practice, the daily life of the Christian, who himself enjoys reconciliation sacramentally in the eucharist, ought to be a living summons and aid to the spread of vertical and horizontal reconciliation among those who have not yet found in Christ their peace with God and with their fellow men.

The eucharist is a sign of that justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit which characterize the kingdom of God (Rom. 14:17): a rightly ordered eucharist exemplifies justice, because believing men are all equally welcomed there by the merciful God into His table-fellowship and all together share in the fruits of redemption and in the foretaste of the new heavens and the new earth in which right will prevail (cf. 2 Pet. 3:13); it exemplifies peace, because reconciled men are there at peace with God and with one another; it exemplifies joy in the Holy Ghost, because the cup of blessing conveys to all who partake of it a taste of that "sober intoxication" which the Spirit gives (cf. Eph. 5:18). Having learnt and experienced this in the paradigm of the eucharistic meal, the Church is committed to an everyday witness in word and deed which will give the opportunity for all the material resources of creation and all occasion of human contact to become the medium of that communion with God among men which is marked by justice, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and in which the kingdom of God consists. In a rhythmic movement of *συστολή* and *διαστολή*, the eucharistic and missionary Church celebrates and proclaims *reconciliation*.

### d) *The local beginnings of ecumenical reconciliation*

My remarks in the previous paragraph could be endorsed by Christians of all denominations; and each would be thinking of "the Church" as his own ecclesial community, and of "the eucharist" as celebrated by his own ecclesial community. But much of the value of my remarks is in fact lost as soon as one recalls the existence of separated ecclesial communities, each of which celebrates its own eucharist from which the others are more or less excluded. Each community may know reconciliation *with God*, but as long as the communities are not reconciled *with one another*, they can hardly bear convincing witness before the world to Christ's reconciling work: for if the horizontal corollary is not in evidence, even the vertical achievement may be called into question. Is it possible that the eucharist, as a sacrament of reconciliation, may have a constructive part to play in the attainment of reconciliation among Christian communities whose separation stands in contradiction to their own message? For this to happen, the stronger stress will have to fall on the eucharist's value as *promoting* unity rather than on its value as *expressive of existing unity* (to borrow the

distinction made by the well-known tag: *eucharistia significat et efficit unitatem ecclesiam*).

Consider for a moment the admirable description of dynamic unity proposed by the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches at New Delhi in 1961:

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.

It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.

In the long run, the "place" of the Church's unity must if the universal scope of God's reconciling work be borne in mind, have no smaller limits than the whole world. But, as an interim measure, we may begin by understanding "place" in a more restricted sense. A "place" may be understood as the area from which Christians come together, at some convenient point within it, for the regular celebration of the eucharist. This is "the local Church" gathering regularly in eucharistic assembly and repeatedly returning to its sphere of everyday witness. The Orthodox theologian N. Afanassiëff has insisted strongly on the eucharistic celebration as the "sacrament of assembly" in which the whole Church of God is present in the local Church (20). Vatican II spoke of the liturgical assembly as *praecipua manifestatio Ecclesiae* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 41). This kind of ecclesiology makes it possible to say that the level of the local Church — is a proper level at which reconciliation among separated Christians may start. Just as denominational rivalry among Christians in everyday witness must cease, so also must rival eucharistic assemblies stop. A drastic solution would be that *all* eucharists should cease until the brethren had been reconciled among themselves: are we sure that God does not "despise our solemn assemblies" as long as we live in such disunity that we are unable to "glorify him with one heart and one voice"? To the penitent, however, God is gracious: and the common gathering of separated but peace-seeking brethren round a single table of the Lord does, I am persuaded, promote horizontal reconciliation. Our increased sharing together in the one eucharist will allow the Lord to bring peace among us: for such a eucharist will be the occasion for him to cast out from us whatever is amiss in us, to unite us more closely to himself and therefore to one another, and to join us together in common enjoyment of his presence and gift. I am

well aware of the view that "the one bread" may not be shared together at all until there is agreement in "the one apostolic faith" and until "ministry and members" are already mutually acceptable among hitherto separated communities. Far be it from me to belittle problems of faith and order. But I would argue, as I have done in detail elsewhere (21), that, where doctrinal truth and brotherly love are in apparent conflict, love should prevail over truth as it is imperfectly apprehended; and that, in view of the urgent task of proclaiming the gospel, missionary witness to the reconciling work of Christ should take priority over questions of the internal ordering of the Church. Let the eucharist, as the *effective* sacrament of reconciliation, bring closer together those who are still in some degree held together by their common Lord and who already display a will to reconciliation with their temporary adversaries.

## II.— THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRAMENT OF RENEWAL

We now move from reconciliation to renewal, from spatial imagery and structures to temporal imagery and structures. In this second half, our thinking will again fall under four heads, roughly corresponding to the four heads of the first half. Where we talked first of the reconciliation between man and *God*, we shall now talk of the *divine agents* of renewal. Where we talked before of reconciliation among *men*, we shall this time talk of renewed *humanity*. To the section on the *universal* scope of reconciliation will correspond a section on the *permanent and ultimate* quality of the renewal. The paragraph on the *local* beginnings of ecumenical reconciliation will find its counterpart in a paragraph on the *present* call for ecumenical renewal.

### a) *The divine agents of renewal*

We have already referred to the ways in which the entry of Christ into the midst of the eucharistic assembly is expected and enacted. Now the Bible presents Christ as the creative Word (John 1:3; Heb. 1:2; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1: 16f.): "Your Word through whom you made the universe" is the phrase used by *The Apostolic Tradition* and by the new Eucharistic Prayer II of the Roman rite. He is appropriately the agent also of re-creation, re-making, renewal. Regarding Christ as the agent of creation and recreation, of making and remaking, the eucharistic liturgies have associated this aspect of his work particularly with a change wrought in the eucharistic elements of bread and wine. One thinks of the Roman Catholic doctrine, ritually represented in genuflexions and elevations, of the consecratory power and effect of Christ's words in the

institution narrative as it is rehearsed by the priest acting *in persona Christi*. In the Armenian Liturgy, the institution narrative begins thus: "Then taking the bread in his holy, divine, immortal, immaculate and creative hands, he blessed..."; and in an ancient Persian anaphora, thus: "He took bread and wine which *his own will had made*, and he sanctified it..." (22). We may also think of the so-called Logos-epiclesis in Serapion's anaphora; and the Word is invoked as consecratory agent in some Gallican and Mozarabic prayers. Many Protestants would resist this pattern of understanding in so far as any change in the eucharistic elements beyond that of an enhancement of meaning and purpose (transignification and transfinalization) may fall into "objectivism" (transubstantiation); they also fight shy of "biological" imagery which suggests a special physical effect on the communicant through the physical reception of the elements. But they would be happy with the kind of "personalist" view which stretches from Theodore of Mopsuestia to Michael Schmaus, and which sees the eucharistic communion as an encounter with the risen and glorious Lord who already begins his work of receiving persons in anticipation of the Parousia: by drawing them into closer communion with himself, Christ is gradually transforming the faithful communicants into his personal likeness and giving them an earnest of the life of the final kingdom (23). "Blessed is he who came and who is to come in the name of the Lord" is the form of the acclamation of Christ in the Syrian and Armenian anaphoras; the Byzantine and Western anaphoras use a form which focuses on his present coming: "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord". In any case, the eucharist is an occasion and means of encounter with Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever. As creator and recreator, he is performing his work of renewal in all who receive him in faith, hope and love.

We have mentioned also the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the elements and the people engaged in the eucharistic action. The Byzantine anaphoras of *St Chrysostom* and *St Basil* both include "the communion of the Holy Spirit" among the benefits entreated in the epiclesis for those who participate in the sacrament. Now the Bible presents the Holy Spirit also as a divine agent of renewal: when Yahweh sends forth his Spirit, he creates and renews (Ps. 104: 30; Ezek. 37); the Spirit operates in the rebirth of men (Jn 3:5-7; Tit. 3:5); he makes alive (Jn. 6:63; 7: 38f.; 2 Cor. 3:6), and through him we shall be raised in our spiritual bodies (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:44). There is of course no competition between the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit: we may say that the Holy Spirit "applies" Christ to the Christian and to the Church, or that it is "in the Holy

Spirit" that Christ comes to the Christian and to the Church.

The renewing activity of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist is expressed in the words of a *post-secretum* in the *Missale Gothicum*: "... beseeching that thou wouldst deign to pour thy Holy Spirit into us who eat and drink the things that will confer eternal life and the everlasting kingdom" (24). The East Syrian liturgy of *Addai and Mari* prays thus: "And may there come, O my Lord, thine Holy Spirit upon this offering of thy servants and bless it and hallow it that it be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of offences and the remission of sins and for the great hope of resurrection from the dead and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been wellpleasing in thy sight" (25). Some Protestants would consider that these prayers attached too great an instrumental value to the eucharistic elements. But none would doubt the operation of the Spirit in the eucharistic celebration as a whole. Calvin, in particular, laid stress on the Holy Spirit as the "link" between Christ and the Church in the eucharistic action. And the Holy Spirit himself is for the Christian the firstfruits (*ἀπαρχή*, Rom. 8:23) and earnest (*ἀρραβών*, 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13f.) of life.

#### b) Renewed humanity

In talking of the eucharistic encounter with the risen and glorious Lord which takes place in the Holy Spirit, we have so far stressed the divine agency in the work of renewal. Let us now look at the process from the viewpoint of the beneficiaries of that work of renewal: the people who are being renewed. We may do so in terms of "glory", which provides a way of talking about the progressive realization of God's purpose for men and men's attainment of the destiny God intends for them.

As they behold or reflect his glory, Christians are being progressively changed into the likeness of the Lord, from glory into glory (2 Cor. 3:18). Now some patristic writers gave a eucharistic interpretation to the saying of the Johannine Jesus at the Last Supper: "The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them" (Jn. 17:22) (26). And a few liturgies pursue the theme of glory on similar lines. Thus the eucharistic prayer of the Dêr-Balizeh papyrus takes up the phrase "full of thy glory" from the Sanctus and continues in this way: "Fill us also with the glory that is from thee..." The final blessing in the liturgy of *Addai and Mari* includes these words: "May the Lord make our people glorious, which have come and had delight in the power of his glorious and holy and life-giving and divine mysteries". The hymn of dismissal in the Greek liturgy of *St James* begins: "From glory to glory advancing, we hymn thee..." The divine gift of glory

to man is in fact returned by man to God in praise, in "doxology". The second epiclesis in the Alexandrian liturgy of *St Mark* makes the closest relation between "renewal of body, soul and spirit", "participation in the bliss of eternal life" and our "glorifying of the all-holy name" of God. In the epiclesis of the anaphora in *The Apostolic Tradition*, the final purpose of the Spirit's descent is "that we may praise and glorify thee through thy Son Jesus Christ". In almost all eucharistic prayers, the Sanctus and the concluding doxology highlight the fact that the eucharist is the liturgical expression of man's rendering to God the glory He himself bestows.

To some, particularly Protestants perhaps, this talk of glory will seem altogether too "substantialist" and "cultic". But it may be possible to translate into more "existential" and "ethical" terms the truth of which the eucharist is the sacramental expression. Taking our clues from Romans 5-8 and 12:1-2, we may say that man's "glory" is his God-given "liberty", the proper exercise of which consists in the "filial service" of God such as that displayed by Jesus and God himself is thereby "glorified".

Prominent examples of the renewal of humanity are to be found in the saints who have adorned the Church down the centuries of its history. At the eucharist, the saints are commemorated especially in the canon, but also in the litanies and (prominently in the West) in the propers of their feast days. The Greek liturgy of *St James* makes it explicit that the heavenly assembly in whose worship of God the earthly Church joins at the Sanctus includes "the spirits of just men and prophets, the souls of martyrs and apostles". According to the Mozarabic Easter mass it is "all the angels and *saints*" who do not cease from shouting "Holy".

### c) *The permanent and final quality of the renewal*

According to Paul's account of the institution of the eucharist, Jesus said "This cup is the *new* covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). At Mark 14:24 also, manuscripts A fl f13 700 and the Latin and Syriac traditions read "This is my blood of the *new* covenant". The newness of the new covenant inaugurated by Christ's blood-shedding is a newness that will never grow old; like the eagle's (Ps. 103:5; cf. Isa. 40:31), its youth is constantly renewed. The Roman liturgical tradition is not substantially wrong in the addition it makes to the words of institution: "Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei, novi *et aeterni* testamenti". The new covenant, inaugurated through Christ, is permanent and definitive. There is therefore a sense in which the eucharist, as the covenant meal, already realizes the promise which Jesus made to his men, that they will drink wine "new" together in the kingdom (Mk. 14:25; Matt.

26:29; Lk. 22:18, 29f.). Yet it is equally clear that the fulness of the kingdom still tarries: sin is not yet fully extirpated, not even from Christ's followers, let alone from the whole world of men; the Parousia has not yet taken place. The eucharist bears the marks of this incompleteness: we do not yet see Christ face to face, but only the "sacramental veil"; our celebration is periodic, not yet perpetual; the service we offer is imperfect, not yet total; it is not yet the whole of "the many" for whom Christ's blood was shed, but only a part, which gathers at the Messiah's table.

The permanent and definitive quality of the new covenant inaugurated through Jesus Christ is reflected in the fact that the same New Testament continues to be read as Scripture at the eucharist. In present thanksgiving, the Church then rehearses the redemptive events of the past to which those Scriptures bear witness. In present expectation, the Church looks forward to the full realization of the promises which the past events contain and to which the Scriptures also bear verbal testimony (*praestolantes alterum eius adventum / expectantes ipsius adventum in gloria* (27)...). In the eucharist the Church prays that the effects of the redemptive events of the past may be made present and understands its participation in the meal as an anticipation of the full realization of the promises that still belongs to the future.

The relation between the present and the future, the "already" and the "not yet" of our renewal, has in fact been expressed in the liturgies and the eucharistic theologians by a variety of figures. The eucharist is a "pledge", an "earnest", a "sign", an "image", a "prefiguration", a "promise". All these terms express both a link and a distinction between present and future. But best of all (because we are talking of a *meal*), the eucharist is a "taste" of the age to come. To taste is to try the relish: and to say that the eucharist provides a taste of the kingdom therefore allows us to express both the provisional and yet the genuine quality of the kingdom as it flavours the present. As a Methodist, I may perhaps be allowed to quote from the *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* of John and Charles Wesley (hymn no. 108):

For all that joy which now we *taste* our happy hallow'd  
souls prepare; o let us hold the *earnest* fast,  
This *pledge* that we Thy heaven shall share,  
Shall drink it new with Thee above,  
The wine of Thy eternal love.

The Methodist brothers were singing in the eighteenth century what Peter Chrysologus had said in the fifth, in his exposition of the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer: Christ gave us the eucharist "in order that we may by it attain unto endless day and the very table of Christ, and there receive in fulness and unto all satiety that of which we have here been given the

taste" (28). A link between taste and renewal is made in a prayer from the Gregorian Sacramentary: "Having been filled by the gift of thy salvation, O Lord, we humbly beg that the thing whose taste gladdens us may be its effect renew us" (29).

*d) The present call for ecumenical renewal*

In terms of the symbolism of time, Sunday is the eucharistic day *par excellence*. It is the day on which the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, "the head of another race which he himself regenerated" (as Justin Martyr calls him (30)). As "the Lord's day", Sunday prefigures the "Day of the Lord". The fathers called Sunday "the eighth day", seeing it as the beginning of the age to come. The eucharist is the meal belonging to the interval between the first, and specially privileged, meals which the disciples shared with the risen Lord (31) and the final messianic feasting (32) which will take place when the form of this world will have passed away and all things will have been made new (33).

In this time of tension between the Church's original institution and her attainment of her final destiny, what is the role of the eucharist? We have already referred to the permanent and definitive quality of the renewal begun by Christ. But it is a beginning, and not yet an end. Enough of the old world remains for the Church's holiness to be disfigured by the sin of her members, and for her catholicity to be diminished through the absence from her of the still unconverted. This shortfall in holiness and catholicity prevents the Church from yet being considered to embody a universal unity of love. Sin, which may also be called lack of love, has resulted in schism; mission has not yet reached all "the many". As a sacrament of renewal, the eucharist has a part to play in the healing of old divisions and in the carrying of the Christian witness into fresh fields. The gathering, when it is allowed to happen, of the separated but penitent brethren round the one table of the one Lord exemplifies before the world the holiness which consists in the overcoming of sin and in the growth of love; from the one table, which is itself a sign to the nations of the feast which the Lord is preparing for all mankind (Isa. 25:6-9), the brethren are dispatched on a common mission throughout the world — a "catholic" mission — to invite all men to share with them in the new life of love offered in Christ.

**CONCLUSION**

In all that I have said so far about reconciliation and renewal, I have concentrated almost exclusively on the way in which they affect *mankind*, neglecting what may be called their "cosmic" dimension. This is

because the redemption of creation must somehow pass through the redemption of *man* (Rom. 8:19-23), and the question of man is therefore prior. In conclusion, however, I wish simply to hint at the way in which cosmic reconciliation and renewal are signified in the eucharist. In its temporal *déroulement*, the properly eucharistic celebration passes through three main "moments": the *taking* of bread and wine, the *giving of thanks* over them, the *eating and drinking* of them. By this process, the material creation is being renewed -- in the sense that it is now being put (the *taking*) to its proper use as the occasion (the *thanks-giving*) and medium (the *eating and drinking*) of man's fellowship with God. In their spatial frame of reference, the bread and wine of the eucharist are representative parts of creation which are already exhibiting in an exemplary way that total reconciliation which will finally be achieved when the whole of creation will find its peace in fulfilling the divine purpose and "God will be all in all" (34).

As a final word, let me quote two eucharistic hymns from my own Methodist tradition, both from the Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. The first (no. 116) sees the eucharist as a sacrament of reconciliation: the restoration of man to fellowship with God. The second (no. 40) sees the eucharist as a sacrament of renewal: the progress of man in the transforming fellowship to which he has been restored.

- 1 Victim divine, Thy grace we claim  
While thus Thy precious death we show;  
Once offered up, a spotless Lamb,  
In Thy great temple here below,  
Thou didst for all mankind atone,  
And standest now before the throne.
- 2 Thou standest in the holiest place,  
As now for guilty sinners slain;  
Thy blood of sprinkling speaks, and prays,  
All-prevalent for helpless man;  
Thy blood is still our ransom found,  
And spreads salvation all around.
- 3 The smoke of Thy atonement here  
Darkened the sun and rent the veil,  
Made the new way to heaven appear,  
And showed the great Invisible;  
Well pleased in Thee our God looked down,  
And called His rebels to a crown.
- 4 He still respects Thy sacrifice,  
Its savour sweet doth always please;  
The offering smokes through earth and  
skies,  
Diffusing life, and joy, and peace;  
To these Thy lower courts it comes,  
And fills them with divine perfumes.
- 5 We need not now go up to heaven,  
To bring the long-sought Saviour down;  
Thou art to all already given,

Thou dost even now Thy banquet crown;  
To every faithful soul appear,  
And show Thy real presence here!

\*\*\*\*\*

- 1 Author of life divine  
Who hast a table spread,  
Furnished with mystic wine  
And everlasting bread,  
Preserve the life Thyself hast given,  
And feed and train us up for heaven.
- 2 Our needy souls sustain  
With fresh supplies of love,  
Till all Thy life we gain,  
And all Thy fulness prove,  
And, strengthened by Thy perfect  
grace,  
Behold without a veil Thy face (35).

## NOTES

(1) Some recent scholars have detected a hymn at the basis of Eph. 2:11-22: so G. Schille, *Frühchristliche Hymnen*, 1962, pp. 24-31; J.T. Sanders, "Hymnic elements in Ephesians 1-3" in *ZNW* 56 (1965), pp. 214-32; J. Gnllka, "Christus unser Friede – ein Friedens-Erlöserlied in Eph. 2, 14-17" in *Die Zeit Jesu* (Schlier Festschrift), 1970, pp. 190-207; but not R. Deichgräber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit*, 1967, pp. 165-67. Certainly the passage corresponds to an early and recurrent pattern of experience and expression in Christian worship.

(2) Origen, *de oratione*. This is not to say that the precise way in which Origen worked out this principle is identical with later orthodoxy. See the discussion in J. Lebreton, "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Eglise chrétienne du III<sup>e</sup> siècle" in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 19 (1923), pp. 481-506, and 20 (1924), pp. 5-37, in particular pp. 19ff.

(3) See J.A. Jungmann, *Die Stellung Christi im liturgischen Gebet*, 1925, 1962<sup>2</sup>.

(4) Some see the solution in a rich understanding of the verb "to re(-)present", with or without the hyphen; this is exploited in the Les Dombes agreement on the eucharist between French Catholics and Protestants (1972). Others see in the term "re(-)presentation" an ambiguity which masks the real problem; the Anglican – Roman Catholic Agreed Statement on the eucharist of 1971 manages to avoid the term and speaks rather of the "effective proclamation" of Christ's atoning work. If it be said that Calvary and the eucharist are the same sacrifice, the latter being identical with the former but in sacramental mode, then there is this difficulty: both Calvary and the eucharist belong, in their *essence* or deepest reality, not only to the transcendent realm but also to *history*, and it is therefore hard to escape some notion of *repetition*; and a second occurrence threatens the sufficiency of the first.

(5) *Myst. Car. V, 4: ἔχει ἐν οὐρανῷ τὴν καρδίαν πρὸς τὸν φιλάθρωπον θεόν.*

(6) Matt. 14:19; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 9:16; see also Jn. 11:41; 17:1.

(7) See also *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, 12, 36, Greek *St James*, Alexandrian *St Mark*, Coptic *St Cyril*, Ethiopian *Anaphora of the Apostles*. The texts are in Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, pp. 20, 51, 132, 176, 232, and in Hänggi-Pahl, *Prex Eucharistica*, pp. 92, 246, 112, 136, 148. Ambrose, *de sacramentis*, IV, 5, 21f., gives the text: *respexit ad caelum ad te*.

(8) See, e.g., in the litany at the Inclination in *Apostolic Constitutions* VIII, 13, 3: "We pray on behalf of the gift offered to the Lord God that the good God may receive it through the mediation of his Christ on his heavenly altar for a sweet-smelling savour" (Brightman, p. 23); and in the intercessions within the canon of the liturgy of *St Mark*: "Accept, O God, the sacrifices, oblations and thank-offerings of the offerers upon thy holy and heavenly and rational altar in the highest heaven through the ministry of thy archangels" (Brightman, p. 129; Hänggi-Pahl, p. 108).

(9) See H. Lietzmann on the "Weihrauchgebete" in *Messe und Herrenmahl*, 1955<sup>3</sup>, pp. 86-93.

(10) Some Gallican and Mozarabic eucharistic prayers contained a pneumatological epiclesis (see E.G.C.F. Atchley, *On the Epiclesis of the Eucharistic Liturgy*..., 1935, pp. 145-70); the English Prayer Book of 1549 invoked "thy holy spirite and worde". It does not matter for our present purpose whether it is in connection with the elements, the people, the fruits of communion, or any combination of these, that the Holy Spirit is invoked in the various ancient and modern rites.

(11) M. Black has recently linked *maranatha* with ἤλθεν Κύριος of Jude 14 and suggested that both represent a prophetic: *perfectum futuri* ("The Maranatha invocation and Jude 14, 15 (1 Enoch 1:9)" in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament* (Moule Festschrift), 1973, pp. 189-96). Philologically, it remains possible to analyse *maranatha* as an imperative: "Our Lord, come!"

(12) "Adesto quaesumus, Domine Jesu Christe, medius inter servulos huius cenae convivii editor...." (M. Férotin, ed., *Liber Sacramentorum*, col. 239); "Adesto, adesto, Jesu, bone pontifex, in medio nostri, sicut fuisti in medio discipulorum tuorum...."

(13) See J.M. Hanssens, *Institutiones liturgicae de ritibus orientalibus* II, 1930, pp. 24-34.

(14) So, for example, the Church of South India; the Church of England Series 2 and Series 3; the British Methodist 1968/74; the American Methodist 1972; the United Reformed Church in England and Wales, 1974.

(15) The Pauline text is quoted at the Fraction in the eucharistic rite of the Taizé community and in the Church of England's Series 2 and Series 3 eucharists.

(16) Augustine, *serm.* 57, 7, PL 38, 389; *serm.* 227, PL 38, 1099-1101; *serm.* 272, PL 38, 1247f. Cf. already Cyprian, *ep.* 69, 5 (CSEL, pp. 753f.); *ep.* 63, 13 (CSEL, p. 712).

(17) Modern liturgical scholars have sometimes reintroduced this motif from the *Didaché* and Serapion when themselves composing eucharistic rites: W.E. Orchard, in *Divine Service*, 1919, p. 128 (cf. *A Free Church Book of Common Prayer*, 1929, p. 114); A. van der Mensbrugghe, *La liturgie orthodoxe de rite occidental: essai de restauration*, 1948, p. 40f.; M. Thurian, in *Eucharistie à Taizé*, 1963, p. 45.

(18) On the inclusive meaning of (οἱ) πολλοί, see J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahls Worte Jesu*, 1960<sup>3</sup>, pp. 171-74, 218-23.

(19) For evidence of this practice, see the references given in J.H. Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy*, 1947<sup>2</sup>, p. 234 (cf. pp. 124, 155).

(20) N. Afanassieff, "Le sacrement de l'assemblée" in *Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift* 46 (1956), pp. 200-13. For the eucharist as a sign particularly of local unity, see M.F. Wiles, "Sacramental unity in the early Church", in J. Kent and R. Murray (edd.), *Church Membership and Intercommunion*, 1973, pp. 35-49.

(21) G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 1971, pp. 135-46, and "L'intercommunion, signe et issue de l'impassibilité oecuménique" in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 92 (1970), pp. 1037-54.

(22) Brightman, pp. 436f., 515; Hänggi-Pahl, pp. 321-402.

(23) Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Homélie catéchétiques* (edd. R. Tonneau and R. Devreesse), XVI, 17-20, 25-26. M. Schmaus, "Die Eucharistie als Bürgin der Auferstehung" in *Pro Mundi Vita: Festschrift zum eucharistischen Weltkongress 1960*, pp. 256-79; Schmaus safeguards the "objective" value of the elements by saying that as in ordinary human relations bodily proximity has value as "Ausdrucksgestalt und Intensivierungsmedium der Begegnung", similarly in the eucharist the reception of the sacramentally present body and blood of Christ offers "besondere Chancen für die Christusbegegnung" (p. 274).

(24) .... *obsecrantes ut infundere digneris spiritum tuum sanctum edentibus nobis vitam aeternam regnumque perpetuum conlatura potantibus* (*Missale Gothicum*, prayer no. 527, ed. L.C. Mohlberg, 1961, p. 120).

(25) Brightman, p. 287, Hänggi-Pahl, p. 380.

(26) See Hilary, *de trinitate*, VIII, 12-17, PL 10, 244-49; Cyril of Alexandria, *In Jn. ev.*, XI, 12, PG 74, 561-65.

(27) These phrases come respectively from the new Roman Eucharistic Prayers III and IV.

(28) .... *ut per hoc ad perpetuum diem et ipsam Christi perveniamus ad mensam, ut unde hic gustum sumpsimus, inde ibi plenitudinem totasque satietates capiamus* (*serm.* 68, PL 52, 395).

(29) .... *ut cujus laetamur gustu, renovemur effectu* (no. 39,3; H. Lietzmann, *Das Sacramentum Gregorianum nach dem Aachener Urexemplar*, 1921).

(30) Justin, *dial.*, 138, PG 6, 793.

(31) Luke 24: 28-35; 24:36-43; John 21:13; Acts 10:41.

(32) Matt. 5:6 = Lk 6:21; Matt. 8:11 = Lk. 13:29; Lk. 12:37; Matt. 22:1-10; Matt. 22:11-13; Matt. 25:1-13; Matt. 25:21,23; Mk. 14:25 = Matt. 26:29 = Lk. 22:15-18, 29-30; Rev. 19:7-9. For the interpretation of these and related texts, see G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 1971, pp. 18-42.

(33) 1 Cor. 7:31b; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1,5.

(34) On the "cosmic" dimension of the eucharist, see A. Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 1963 (= *Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, 1965).

☆

\* GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT is professor of biblical theology at the Queen's College, Birmingham, England.



## COLLOQUIUM INTERNATIONALE OECUMENICUM:

### "The Decree on Ecumenism-Ten Years After"

The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, was solemnly proclaimed by Pope Paul VI and the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council on November 21, 1964 at the conclusion of the third session. Ten years later, during the anniversary week of this historic event, theologians came to Rome from all over the world in order to review the ecumenical scene which has developed as a result of that Decree. Some of the theologians present had actually assisted in the drafting of the document; others had participated in the sessions of the Council as official observers and guests, but all have worked during the last decade to ensure the implementation of the spirit which shaped that document. The four day Colloquium provided a special opportunity for these theologians to evaluate the past and make projections for the future.

Towards the end of this decade, the ecumenical movement entered a period of uncertainty. This uncertainty arose partly because of the new challenges which humanity confronted us with. We must ask ourselves if the ecumenical movement has any impact on the salvation of the world today. This is how Professor Vilmos Vajta saw the ecumenical movement ten years after the proclamation of the Decree on Ecumenism. In the opening presentation of the Colloquium, he attempted to trace motifs found within the Decree and the ecumenical movement in general.

Professor Vajta in his survey of the past decade saw three basic motifs: the development of bi-lateral relations among the churches; the surfacing of tensions between mission and the social/political aspect of the church; and the growth of community life.

Bi-lateral relations, noted Professor Vajta, came about in various ways and on various levels. Mutual visits of church leaders turned the itinerant church into the travelling church. A new type of 'personal détente' developed which aided in eliminating misunderstanding. The Council decrees offered an unexpected challenge to the New Dehli formula of "unity in one place".

Bi-material relations grew up in many places: on the local and regional level and on the international level. The main initiative, as Vajta noted, came from the Roman Catholic Church and not from the World Council of Churches. Furthermore, the enlarged notion of unity coming from the Uppsala meeting stressed the concept of a real universal community. Resulting from the combination of the Uppsala notion and bi-lateral conversations several motifs were produced. Vajta cited as examples of this universal community, the growth of transconfessional groups, an evangelical trend (e.g., Evangelical Alliance), and the charismatic movement which is a spiritual movement transcending traditional confessionalism.

Secondly, Professor Vajta noted that ecumenism was helped to develop because of the tension between mission and the social/political aspect of church life. The work of the Lausanne Conference is evidence of both of these aspects being introduced into the ecumenical movement; the WCC tried to ease the tension that already existed but the tension would not be subdued. As a result of the persistence of this tension, we saw the growth, in 1966, of a "theology of revolution". In an attempt, to resolve this tension, the Bangkok theme of "salvation" was taken up. It should be noted that the notion of "peace among peoples" belonged to the beginnings of the ecumenical movement. Professor Vajta remarked that 'Life and Work' began with this idea. Therefore, we see today the development of the Prague peace conference bringing this issue of "peace among peoples" more closely in touch with the ecumenical movement. Moreover, the tensions which have existed in this area of church life have helped to produce a shift in our thinking today; for the contemporary ecumenical idea is to renounce political and economical alliances so that the church can remain free to carry out her mission.

The third point of Vajta's analysis of the past ten years is the development of the aspect of community life. This aspect is exemplified most dramatically by the Taizé community (by no means the only form of community life). In all probability, Vajta says, Taizé would not exist today without the impetus of Vatican II. The Taizé community, as Professor Vajta described it, is contemplative — a life of retirement and openness to the world and to those

who are estranged. The recent example of the Council of Youth is evidence of the appeal that this type of life offers, especially to the young. The underlying premise seems to be that the living of the "provisional" life style of the Gospel challenges the "institutional" church to new life. The Council of Youth is not set up as a protest to the established churches but is an expression of faith and faithfulness because every person speaks freely as an essential part of the Council.

In the second part of his presentation, Professor Vajta looked at the motivation of the ecumenical movement today. Three elements emerged from this second part of the paper: dialogue as essential; ecumenical spirituality; and conversion as crucial.

Professor Vajta pointed out that dialogue is only fruitful when a faith in something common exists. The task of true dialogue is to reflect on this faith and then begin to concretize these reflections in the life of the churches. When dialogue is carried forward, it is not done as a colloquium among partners but as a confrontation with a common Lord and the truth he reveals. We receive our experience from Him, expressed in multiple graces and diverse charisms, and these spiritual gifts go beyond confessional boundaries. Vajta remarked that authentic dialogue has begun when a Lutheran, for example, within himself, feels like an anonymous Roman Catholic and when a Roman Catholic, within himself, feels like an anonymous Lutheran. Bi-laterals, noted Vajta, have produced some results but some of the churches who are looking from the outside of the dialogue often do not understand or accept the agreement achieved by the dialoguing churches because they themselves have not entered into the process of dialogue. Permanent dialogue, remarked Vajta, is an ecclesial necessity because it is not something that we can reject because it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Vajta pointed out what must be the motivation to enter into a dialogue with another and is at the same time a fruit that derives from the dialoguing process, namely an ecumenical spirituality. The spirituality which is motivating the ecumenical movement is one of prayer. The Week of Prayer, for example, after the Council became common to the whole of the ecumenical movement. In this model we see how the common prayer of Christians once a year opens the possibility of a permanent dialogue of spirituality; it expresses what should happen during the whole year. Professor Vajta said that it is one of the main aspects of Christian spirituality. However, we must be careful to permit ecumenical spirituality to break out of its narrow mode. Vajta cited as an example the Holy Year — using the theme of renewal and reconciliation. If intercommunion is to become a reality and if we are to be prepared for this reality when it comes, the church-

es must start to do together those things which they can already do. The churches must start to witness in common!

Finally, Vajta moved into the third aspect of the motivation of the ecumenical movement with a quote from *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 7:

There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from newness of attitudes, from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity take their rise and grow toward maturity. We should therefore pray to the divine Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, and gentle in the services of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity toward them".

Conversion is the basis, he said, of the ecumenical movement. The ninety-five theses began and ended with a call to penance. Vajta noted that all the reforms of the Vatican Council had a deep influence on the Roman Catholic Church. There were deep structural changes which occurred and conversion of heart is not possible without restructuring. Romans 12:2 sees conversion as a reformation in spirit and this is the motivation of the whole ecumenical movement.

Vajta concluded with a brief summary of some observations. The most important of these, being the practical suggestions offered for realizing what he had said earlier. One example was the possibility of ecumenical spirituality actualized in the form of spiritual retreats of an ecumenical nature where pastors and theologians get together to meditate and share the realities of the local level. By doing this, the fruits of theological investigations and dialogue can be integrated into the pastoral level and the pastoral aspect of church life into the theological.

Immediately following Professor Vilmos Vajta's paper, Professor Nissiotis offered what he called a balance sheet on the Ecumenical Movement over the last ten years. His paper, entitled "Hopes and Realizations" had to be summarized in several theses because of time limitations. Ten years ago, he explained, the acts of the Vatican Council had raised the hopes of all the churches to expect a new openness on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. This was especially the case when the Council promulgated the Decree on Ecumenism, remarked Professor Nissiotis. For there in that document several aspects which seemed to foreshadow a new relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the separated churches. The Decree itself, which Professor Nissiotis considered the most Christocentric of all the documents to come from the Council, abandoned a wholly juridical-canonical approach to Christian unity. It described unity in terms of the biblical themes to be found in Ephesians (Chapter 4), and Galatians (Chapter 3). Further, the Decree acknowledged in a remarkable way for those times, continued

Professor Nissiotis, that the Ecumenical movement had begun outside the visible boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church, that it was accomplished by the grace of God, and the action of the Holy Spirit. These admissions had important implications, he noted. And lastly, concluded Professor Nissiotis, the Decree stated that there was a hierarchy of truth in Roman Catholic belief, because the truths of Faith "... vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian Faith". In this way, the Council encouraged true dialogue, remarked Professor Nissiotis, "...by which through 'fraternal rivalry' (in the Council's own words) all will be stirred to a deeper understanding and a clearer presentation of the unfathomable riches of Christ". (N. 11). This new attitude toward dialogue provided a true basis for the Roman Catholic Church and the separated churches to engage in a real theological discussion, noted Professor Nissiotis, which had not been possible since the Reformation. These were very significant positive aspects of the Decree, concluded Professor Nissiotis, which marked a new era for the Roman Catholic Church.

On the other hand, he continued, the Decree also had certain negative aspects which exercised a retarding control on later developments in Ecumenism. First, he said, the Decree spoke of "ecumenism in general", and this was done by a Church which showed itself to be very self-centered, or even mono-centric. Secondly, while it is true, he noted, that the Decree was intended chiefly for Roman Catholics, it spoke at length of the ministry of Peter. Professor Nissiotis wondered if this aspect of the document was necessary in view of its ecumenical nature. Finally, the document itself, said Professor Nissiotis, did not acknowledge a community of ecumenism, that is ecumenism as an organized movement, but only in general. Thus concluded Professor Nissiotis, while the Decree was a good pioneer document, the text showed a tendency towards ambivalence, and suggested that the Roman Catholic Church possessed a "sui generis" ecumenism of its own.

In part two of his paper, Professor Nissiotis turned his attention to the hopes and realizations which were expected after the Council. The hope was of course, that the spirit of cooperation would continue and increase, through useful implementations. Professor Nissiotis remarked that the Roman Catholic Church had opened itself to all aspects of the World Council of Churches and found there its own ecumenical principles. Chief among these openings was the establishment of the Joint Working Group, which he remarked had been functioning very well. However, between 1970 and 1971 a stagnation of this cooperation set in. This followed upon the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to accept the detailed plan which programmed its orderly incorporation as a member of the World Council of Churches. This was a source of profound disappointment, and created the impression, he noted, that

the Roman Catholic Church has within itself structures which are proper only to itself. The lack of similar structures in the World Council of Churches appeared to hinder further united collaboration. This limitation upon collaboration leads, he said, to a general weakening of the strength to be obtained among Christians in a united witness. But more seriously on the ecclesiological level, the Roman Catholic Church seems unable to accept either movements outside herself, or a community of churches beyond her frontiers which is founded upon the mutual recognition of a common ecclesiology.

Professor Nissiotis suggested that the Roman Catholic Church since the Council has created the hope of further collaboration, yet did not fulfill it. The same is true, he remarked, with regard to the Orthodox Churches of the East: despite the "attack of charity" evidenced in the Pope's meeting with the Orthodox Church leaders, and despite the mutual withdrawal of the anathemas, again the Roman Catholic Church still reserved to herself alone the ecclesiological title and recognition of "catholic", and remained unable to give that same title and recognition to the churches of the East. The progress of dialogue in the West, between the Roman Catholic Church and the separated churches has reached remarkable accord and agreement over the last ten years, he commented, but this progress has often been slowed down by "Vatican surprises" which came in the form of contradictory statements and activity. Yet, despite these momentary setbacks, he remarked that fundamental changes in Roman Catholic attitudes and Church structures afforded much hope for the future. Among these he noticed the new valorization of the principle of Collegiality as embodied in the Synod of Bishops, and the rediscovery of the theological importance of the local church.

The third speaker of the day was Bishop Alan Clark. Because Bishop Clark did not have the discussion papers for the conference ahead of time, and therefore could not react to them, he gave a report and methodological explanation of the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue leading to the 1971 Windsor agreement on the Holy Eucharist and to the 1973 Canterbury agreement on the Sacred Ministry. This agreement was achieved, Bishop Clark noted, not so much through a reconsideration of Roman Catholic or Protestant confessional statements, but by a dynamic process which focused its attention upon the living experience of faith today. In this process, he said, the participants came to deny the contemporary validity of the Reformation polemic, and to affirm the newness of Faith and the hierarchy of revealed truth. In this examination, the theologians recognized that in the one mystery of Faith, there is to be found great complexity, Bishop Clark stated. Every doctrine touches a mystery. The mystery itself revolves around a pivot or axis. In the case of the mys-

tery of the Holy Eucharist, said Bishop Clark, the theologians considered the mystery to revolve around two central doctrines, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, and the Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Anamnesis became for them the reconciling formula which gave healing to the notion of sacrifice. When this same method was pursued in the theological examination of the Sacred Ministry, it was revealed that the central axis or pivot was the *episcopē*, and not the eucharistic-sacrificial power. Under such a theological examination therefore, the central category of the mystery of coordination and organization made it possible to reconsider the whole question of the Ministry, noted Bishop Clark. (Bishop Clark gave special thanks to the work of Fr. Beaupère, especially his learned address to the Salamanca Consultation on Concepts of Unity and Models of Union in September 1973).

For the future development of the dialogue, Bishop Clark recommended the need for the re-establishment of Roman Catholic identity, and the need to remain faithful to that identity. True unity diversifies in the different expressions of the same faith, he remarked. His profound hope was for an increased communion between Christians, but insofar as the center of the unity and communion of the Church is Christ, he warned of the danger of an institutionalization of the degree of agreement. For the communion to which the Church looks forward is more than a communion of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, he said, but a full sharing in the whole faith and life experience of the churches.

On the second day of the Colloquium Father Yves Congar presented the major paper on: "The development in the appraisal of the theological character of the non-Catholic churches". Father Congar considered this question under the rubric of "vestigia ecclesiae". This category was used by Saint Augustine, noted Father Congar, in order to explain the derivative nature (from the *ecclesia unio*) of those "spiritual goods" which were present in the separated churches of his day. However, the later application of this notion to the organic structuralization of these elements as found in the churches of the West which were the result of the Reformation was not found in Augustine, but represents the development of Roman Catholic theology, he remarked. The collaboration between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians in preparation for the Toronto statement of the World Council of Churches led to the later successful usage and assimilation of notions derived from this term in the writings of Paul VI and the documents of the Second Vatican Council. In *Ecclesiam Suam* of August, 1964, it was from this perspective that the Pope recommended a sharing of prayer and other "spiritual goods in the Holy Spirit", since it was, noted the Pontiff, the same Spirit who works not only in the Roman Catholic Church, but in the separated churches as well.

Especially noteworthy however, is the very appropriate usage of “*vestigia Ecclesiae*” in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, according to Father Congar. For there, he remarked, the special necessity of the Council to address those separated from the Roman Catholic Church not merely as individuals but as communities with ecclesial characters as such, recommended the category.

The first usage derived for this notion, continued Fr. Congar, is to be found in *Lumen Gentium* (N. 15), and here the usage is not very precise. The word “*conjunctio*” is used, as the Council notes that “The Church recognizes that in many ways she is *linked* with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian...” The language of the Decree on Ecumenism, however, according to Father Congar, is more precise. Here the Council, while insisting that the Roman Catholic Church is the locus of the “*subsistence*” of the Church of Jesus Christ, taught that it also “*exists*” in other churches and ecclesial communities. Thus, the Council refused to identify totally the mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. Further, the Council spoke of a “*communion*” with the Catholic Church, since, in the Council’s own words “... men who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are brought into a certain though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church”. (N. 3) According to the Council this communion included not only “*spiritual goods*”, but also a mixture of institutional elements. Nor did the Decree on Ecumenism in which the Council spoke about its relationship with the separated churches, clearly specify what elements must be included from an ecclesiological perspective within the notions of “*perfecta*” and “*imperfecta communio*”. These juridical definitions seemed not to be fully contained under this rubric. Nonetheless, concluded Father Congar, by the constant tradition, “*church*” seems to be reserved for the Orthodox Churches of the East.

Then Father Congar turned his attention toward answering various criticisms of “*vestigia ecclesiae*” as proposed by theologians. He denied first of all that there is any intrinsically juridical sense in which the concept must be interpreted. Nor, he added, does the “*vestigia ecclesiae*” imply that these “*spiritual goods*” and institutional elements remain in the separated churches as ‘ruins after a catastrophe’. Neither does the concept focus undue attention upon the Roman Catholic Church, he continued, as the primary analogue of ecclesiology. In this respect he called attention to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, in the Decree on Ecumenism (N. 4) recognized her own imperfect state. Hence it is clear, he thought, that the Roman Catholic Church does not offer itself as a model in any other sense than as a self-transcending norm. This means he stated, that while the Roman

Catholic Church judges itself to have been faithful to Christ in essentials, it still believes itself to be imperfect, and waiting for the perfection which Christ will give to it. Finally, the notion of the “*vestigia ecclesiae*”, concluded Father Congar, avoids a “*false actualism*” which refuses to acknowledge that Christ, besides working in His Spirit upon individuals, can also act upon an institution as his instrument. Thus, “*vestigia ecclesiae*” rejects the collapse of ecclesiology into eschatology or pneumenology.

Father Congar concluded his paper on two notes of caution. First, he recalled that while in everyday language it is possible to call Protestant churches and ecclesial communities “*churches*”, Roman Catholic theologians do not regard such a usage as theologically precise. He reminded his listeners that the Council documents use the word in two senses. The primary sense, which the Council only applies to the Roman Catholic Church and the separated Orthodox Churches of the East, is the “*sacramental notion*” of Church. This notion, he stated, refers to those special elements which Christ gave to his Church, and which the Roman Catholic Church believes belong to herself without any qualification, and to the Orthodox Churches of the East, even though they are lacking in full communion with herself. A secondary sense of “*church*” which Father Congar characterized as the “*protestant*” notion, refers to the People of God gathered together by His Spirit, or any group of disciples of Jesus without respect to ministry or other ecclesiological elements. Father Congar admitted that this latter notion has great merits, inasmuch as it is founded in the New Testament witness, and bears a very strong resonance or coincidence to the global context of these times. For men today, noted Father Congar, who distrust establishments of whatever kind, and prefer that which is personally and sincerely lived. For them, “*belonging to the Church*” includes neither the sacramental notion nor surely the juridical one as well. For men today, continued Father Congar, the first reference of Faith is not the Sacraments, but the liberation of men, and the communion of peoples. If this is the fact of the time, he concluded, then what must we think theologically.

Finally, Father Congar’s second caution concerned the usage of the term “*sister churches*”, which seemed to raise questions about the validity of “*vestigia ecclesiae*” as applied to the Orthodox Churches. The problem here is that the Orthodox Churches do not come from the Roman Catholic Church but claim “*apostolicity*” in their own right. They therefore regard the Roman Catholic Church as the first among sisters of the same dignity, the first in honor, but not the teacher and head. The issue here noted Father Congar must be restudied. In regard to the Anglican

Communion, the use of the word "sister" is different once again he noted. (Cf. the Pope's talk on the October 25, 1970, regarding the English Martyrs). For the Anglican Communion does derive from the Latin Churches of the West, and somewhat even from the Roman Catholic Church; upon union the two will act as sisters, he said, each with its own personality. Thus the term "sister churches" is not used in the same sense of the Anglican Communion as it is used of the Orthodox Churches of the East, and should not be so interpreted.

In the next paper of the day, Dr. George Lindbeck took up a question which he felt was central to the problem of ecclesial dialogue, doctrinal or magisterial infallibility. He felt that the churches have to deal with this question in one way or another. The problem for the church is how can she present to the world authentic witness if she is not sure that what she speaks is in fact authentic teaching of Jesus. Lindbeck reported that questions asked about the Roman Catholic understanding of infallibility deal mainly with the comprehensibility of the term, i.e., it is accepted not as an absolute theme but more as indefectibility. Lutherans do not accept the doctrine of infallibility but, Lindbeck asks, what do they have as its substitute? The reply comes that Lutherans offer Sacred Scripture as the substitute but then, remarked Lindbeck, we find that the authority of Scripture is not clear either.

In dealing with this heated issue of infallibility several books have been published, the most famous probably being H. Küng's. In response to his book, the document *Mysterium Ecclesiae* which is considered by most to be simply a repeating of the dogma on Papal infallibility but in fact, Lindbeck noted, can lead to an opening in the understanding of infallibility (Cf. N. 5; also article by Congar in 1973 *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*). The second document which Lindbeck mentioned in regard to this issue is the recent one published by the theological commission on "Apostolicity and Apostolic Succession" (1974) which he saw as an attempt to give a new definition to an old position. From this first section of his paper, Lindbeck sees two positions on the issue: the Roman Catholic position considers an attempt to reinterpret infallibility as dangerous; in contrast, the Protestants suspect anyone who sees some value in infallibility and considers this view as endangering ecumenism.

From this point, Lindbeck moved into the presentation of his own particular version of the issue called 'moderate infallibilism'. Four points are established concerning this "middle way". The first which he brings out is the character of Christian doctrine or dogma. Doctrine, he noted, is an historically conditioned norm or rule for the interpretation of revelation in particular situations and is not seen as a permanent form of abiding truth. In the second place, to affirm the infallibility

of a doctrine is not to say that it is a true presupposition for all time. Lindbeck then noted that infallible magisterium never prescribes unchristian usages, i.e., as irretrievable and erroneous. Therefore to say the Church is infallible preserves the Church from separation from Christ. Thirdly he said that for the Church to act infallibly, it should act in a way that is ecumenical, at least in intent. Finally, the pronouncement should be received by the Church as a whole. Lindbeck felt that such a theory would be acceptable to non-Roman Catholics.

Points one and two are proposed because doctrine should be seen as rules rather than propositions. He doesn't deny that they may be used propositionally, for example, in the profession of faith. In addition, points three and four were proposed because he felt that authoritarianism must be abandoned but not authority. Authority can be listened to but still can be disagreed with. The possibility of disagreement makes a community free. In every case, criticism must remain 'loyal' and discord must not mean a 'breaking off'. What is still mandatory, he said, is an intense loyalty to the People of God. A Christian is never authorized by Christ to break the unity of the Church (to form other church orders) because one believes and hopes that no matter how seriously the magisterium might err, it will never lead the community to depart from the Gospel.

In summation, Lindbeck presented the following for consideration; first, doctrinal condition for reunion is mutual acceptance of the theological legitimacy, but not necessary acceptance, of the dogma; second, each party must reinterpret their doctrines in such a way as to enable the other party to recognize them as not necessarily true but not as opposed to the Good News of Jesus; thirdly, magisterial infallibility is fulfilled if on the part of the Roman Catholics no dogmatic magisterium is interpreted as contrary to Christ's will and on the part of the Protestants, they would hope that this is true.

Canon Arthur Allchin responded to Fr. Congar's paper. The Anglican Communion, noted Canon Allchin, has always thought of itself as part of the Catholic Church, and within a Catholic home. It is a Sacramental-Structural reality, continuous with the Apostles, hovering "in via media", while attempting to take seriously an ecclesiological doctrine of "simul justus et peccator". Over the last ten years, noted Canon Allchin, there have been many advances both between the personal relationship of leaders of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, and in the dialogue especially those which led to the important Canterbury Statement on the ministry.

Certain aspects of the Decree on Ecumenism and some of the current practices are considered

as deficient by Anglicans however. First, is the way the document is centered upon the Roman Catholic Church in an unacceptable way, and the manner in which in recent years since the Council there has taken place an equally unacceptable reaffirmation of the Roman Primacy. There is such an emphasis on the episcopacy as if the Roman Church alone maintained the reality when in fact there is division within the unity and discontinuity within the tradition. However since the dialogue of 1968, the Anglican Communion has been perfectly willing to re-examine the historical reality of the Papacy, but the Anglican Communion has always viewed the primacy of Rome to be among and not over the Churches. Thus, noted Canon Allchin, the Anglican Communion admits that the Church of Christ subsists not in one, but in a number of churches however they are separated from one another. The Anglican regards it to be a great tragedy, he noted, that the two great ecclesial bodies of the East and the West, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, both with long traditions and a profound historical consciousness of their own proper ecclesial character, exclude each other. It is the hope of the Anglican Communion that the Roman Catholic Church will recognize the great Churches of the East, and that the concept of "sister churches" will be extended in the West.

In the last ten years, noted Canon Allchin, events have outrun theology and the Christian people themselves have gone far beyond the pace of theology and magisterium. The recovery in thought and practice of the notion of the Church as the vehicle of Christian life, and not simply as a structure or institution has required a reconsideration of ecclesiology and the Holy Spirit. Spiritual gifts have not observed canonical boundaries, and the emergence of new problems from the changing cultural and political situation especially from the third world, has given rise to a second ecumenical movement for the whole inhabited earth. And this movement, continued Canon Allchin, has required a whole new net work of agreements rooted in this new consciousness of the Christian people. Consequently, the whole ecumenical question is placed in a new context where the dialogue among Christians and men of other faiths will give a new impetus to the movement and where the renewal of the churches is inseparable from a renewal in holiness and in truth. The third day of the Colloquium:

Dom Emmanuel Lanne offered the major paper of the day which examined the theological notion of "Communion". He began by stressing the novelty of the Conciliar effort to discover a positive evaluation of those links which, despite divisions, bind Christians together as ecclesial communities. This theological admission, noted Dom Lanne, worked a "copernican

revolution" upon Roman Catholic ecumenical thinking and acting. The development of this theological evaluation depended in great measure, Dom Lanne said, upon the attempt of the Council to address the Orthodox Churches of the East in an appropriate manner. In the course of the maturation of the Decree on Ecumenism, it was gradually recognized that the Orthodox could not be called upon to "return" to the Catholic Church as if they had ever left it. Rather the problem in their case, as the theologians agreed, was to find a way to break down the walls which separated them from a full spiritual and canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, continued Dom Lanne, through various revisions of the text, the term "plena communio" began to find its place, in the recognition that there already existed the bonds of communion with which they were linked to the Roman Catholic Church and to each other. Therefore, they could not be considered to possess simple vestigial forms without ecclesial substance.

In the finally approved Decree on Ecumenism, continued Dom Lanne, they are said to share with the Roman Catholic Church a common patrimony of liturgical practice, spiritual tradition, and canonical discipline, besides the sources of a common theology and by the apostolic succession, the Sacred Ministry, the Eucharist, and the other Sacraments. (Cf. N. 14, 15). This same numeration with regard to the commonly shared patrimony of "spiritual goods" which the Roman Catholic Church enjoys with respect to the Protestant churches of the West (Cf. N. 4), implies a similar "communion" with them. Quoting the Decree in support of this statement, Dom Lanne read: "... let all, according to the gifts they have received enjoy a proper freedom, in their various forms of spiritual life, and discipline, in their different liturgical rites, and even in their theological elaboration of revealed truth". This threefold recognition Dom Lanne called the "global character or vision of Christian 'communio'". This "communio" he noted, begins with Christ Jesus who gives order and hierarchy to the truth of revelation in the "communio" which He gives (N. 11), and who organizes an ecclesial life (N. 3) in a "communio" of salvation through a living tradition of witnesses who renew, in space and time, the human face of the Church.

In the last decade, noted Dom Lanne, considerable ecumenical progress has been made. A significant recovery of the ecclesiology of the Holy Eucharist, and a genuine theology of the local church. At the same time however, he continued, this progress has been seriously endangered by the analytical method. For while this method was necessary as an initial step toward clearing away misunderstandings, it has often led to a minimalistic interpretation of the hierarchy of

truth, and the disintegration of the global christian vision. It is this method, noted Dom Lanne, which has led to the "temptation of intercommunion". In this respect, the entire global participation in the spiritual communion, spiritual treasures, and theological tradition of the Church in which the Sacrament is received has been seriously neglected. Dom Lanne also feared what he called the rise of a "universalistic ideology", which he stated could hinder the true progress of "communio". Such ideologies, while they might offer some assistance to the understanding of the "universal communio", would have to be seriously criticized before they are so employed. Nonetheless, Dom Lanne noted with approval the rise in the last ten years of a more universal expression of the communion of all Christians first in the World Council of Churches, and most recently in the rediscovery and the continuing development of the Collegial character of the apostolic ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.

For the future success of the ecumenical movement, Dom Lanne suggested the urgent necessity of an investigation of three areas: First, he recommended that the Ecumenical movement reconsider the total global christian vision, and give primacy of place to the spiritual in all ecumenical research. By way of example, he noted the need to ponder the intrinsic link in the Eucharistic Celebration of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Saints, and the eucharistic offering of spiritual sacrifices for those who have died in the Faith. This global vision, he insisted, was a necessary part of Western Roman Catholic suppositions, and Eastern Orthodox ones as well. Secondly, he recommended that ecumenical research would do well to expend more time in the examination of the salvation offered in Judaism and Islam, since such research would oblige us to go deeper into Christian sources than a dialogue in general with the men of today. This would be particularly true, said Dom Lanne, with respect to asceticism, mysticism, worship and prayer. Thirdly, Dom Lanne recommended a serious study of what he called "constantianism", that is, the doctrine of the two swords, whereby in the thirteenth century the spiritual leaders could lay claim to rule in the temporal sphere. Is such a theory rejected in its roots, or only in its consequences, remarked Dom Lanne, or does there still remain an ideological theory of the papacy which derives from that theory. Thus, concluded Dom Lanne, a real "communio" has deepened over the last ten years in many ways. There now remains the task of explaining the "communio sanctorum", the essentially spiritual nature of the "communio".

Professor Lukas Vischer responded to Dom Lanne's paper. He reminded the members of the Colloquium that the text of the Decree on Ecumenism had for its

purpose, the service of the Ecumenical movement. Ten years ago it was a vehicle whereby the Roman Catholic Church was brought into the Ecumenical movement. It answered the question — how can the Roman Catholic Church participate in the movement. Now however, he continued, the question has changed to — how can the unity of the Church become more a reality. Christian people, he noted, have grown impatient with the retarding effects upon the progress of the ecumenical dialogue and agreements that the lack of concrete implementation has had upon them. Without decisive steps by the Church, therefore, the dialogues could become a hinderance he remarked inasmuch as they give expression to the unity already achieved and yet seem in the concrete order of the Church's life to make no visible change in the official church position. Professor Vischer suggested that there must be more visible commitments to the irreversibility of the ecumenical progress already achieved so that it becomes more clearly understood by Christian peoples that a "way back" is impossible.

Using the model of Acts 15, Professor Vischer noted that the two contesting parties — the Jewish-Christian, and the Gentile-Christian did not go their separate ways in their argument, but formed together one community in the faith and trust that Christ would himself hold it together. They believed, he continued, that what was not clear would be clarified by him in the future. In respect of this biblical model, noted Professor Vischer, it seems imperative that the Christian Churches reconsider once again what is absolutely necessary for the unity of the church. He warned that the churches of Africa and Asia were not greatly concerned with these ecumenical problems that derived from the past history which was proper to Europe alone. In this wider cultural context, and according to the new models of Asia and Africa, the present ecumenical and ecclesiastical problems of Eastern and Western Europe, said Professor Vischer, must be seen in a very different perspective. Thus, he concluded, for the sake of the well being of the whole Church, the present fears of the Eastern and Western Churches must be overcome by decisive action for the future.

Finally, Professor Vischer considered in several points, what might be understood as necessary for communion. First he noted, each church especially the Roman Catholic Church, seems at the present time, to have its own special concept or "model type" of that unity to which the Churches are called. The notion that "types within the Christian tradition" could be linked in some sort of self-transcending unity was rejected by Professor Vischer on the grounds that such "types" or "models" seemed to consider the models in the course of dialogue are in remarkable

transformation. New and more varied types emerge, he said, and a great inter-penetration of Church traditions and types is in evidence. Secondly, at the present stage of disunity, said Professor Vischer, the common witness of the Church becomes impossible because of the lack of agreement in magisterium and in ethical moral questions. By way of example, he cited the disgraceful lack of any common Christian representation at the World Nutrition Conference recently held in Rome. If the churches had been united, he remarked, perhaps a common document with a diversity of stresses representing emphasizes within the Christian churches might have been presented as a united Christian effort aimed at a frightful human problem. Thus, he concluded, it becomes ever more imperative for Christians today to see what they have in common and express it in the multiplicity of the gospel. Thirdly, Professor Vischer suggested that especially in the interdependent world of today, the Christian churches must be a universal community in a new way. There must be greater efforts among Christians to respond to this new interdependency in terms of common expression of the universality of the Church. He recommended that local churches at the regional level might discover ways and means of expressing this universality by acting towards each other like "sister churches". Finally, Professor Vischer concluded that the continuity of the church with her past was essential to the visible re-establishment of full communion among the churches. For only in that way could a Christian more readily determine who he is, and the riches of the Christian gifts which he has to offer. This visible continuity is necessary, he concluded, if the churches, until their promised and hoped for reunion, are to remain visible as such in today's world.

*William Dillon, S.A.  
Strasbourg, France*

*James F. Puglisi, S.A.  
Centro Pro Unione, Italy*



### Some observations:

The majority of the members of the conference were the leaders of ten years ago, those theologians and church authorities, who prepared for the Council, wrote the documents, and who even after the Council ended, worked at very intense levels of dialogue and theological reflection to carry along, deepen and advance what had begun. They saw advances in a very real way, for they remembered what "had been", and they knew at a concrete level, even in the present how difficult and slow progress within the ecumenical movement is made. Collectively they represented the wealth of thought and experience which has assisted the churches to reach the present state of agreement, accord, and working

relationship. To them, thanks must be given for their perseverance, their insights, and their collective reflection which have made so much in so little a period of time possible.

However, the future is before us, and the present time, with all types of new cultural and political assumptions is the context out of which we observe the discussion. For a new generation of aspiring theologians, who remember the past in perhaps about as concrete and emotional a way as they would remember Chalcedon or Nicea, the discussions lacked the sense of progress and movement. The topics, with few exceptions and these were all the more noticeable for their uniqueness lingered on the past, sought to re-define and re-clarify what was lacking to the proper understanding of the Conciliar decrees or to re-interpret Confessional standards which have developed over the last ten years. And while there was much talk about the new "assumptions" and the significance of the "third world", the movement of talk and thought seemed not to follow through on the idea that the ecumenical movement might be eclipsed, indeed it might well be already, by the widening political, cultural and social issues which promise to emerge. Thus, the progress achieved was always thought of in terms of what was, but not really in terms of what is, or indeed what will be.

Some examples perhaps are in order: after ten years it seems, the Roman Catholic Church still can not theologially call the Protestant churches of the West "churches" in the full theological sense of that word, nor can she as yet speak of them by means of the extension of the term "sister Churches". (Congar). After ten years, the communions of the West, particularly the Anglican Communion, and the Orthodox Churches of the East, still find their ecclesiological developments to be such that they cannot consider the Roman Catholic Church's statements about herself as other than self-centered, and the idea of the Roman Primacy as other than unacceptable if it means "over", and not "with". There is still an echo of a demand of rights, demand of the preservation of traditions, and identity in terms of a past vision. (Allchin). On the question of "global identity", we heard echoes of a demand for the Protestant acceptance of "mariology", the offering of the Mass for the "redemption of the dead faithful", and the acceptance of the "sancti" as absolutely essential, along with the Roman Primacy, Apostolic Succession, and the Validity of the Roman Catholic Ministry, as a necessary requirement for Eucharistic participation in the Sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church. (Lanne). At a time when the institutionalization of organizations seems to us not a very acceptable notion, which would be taken any more seriously than any single institution alone, we heard what seemed to be an orchestration (Nissiotis and Vischer), of a demand for the membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the World Council of Churches, as the sole decisive action which will convince all of the fidelity of the Roman Catholic Church to the Ecumenical movement. "Justification by World Council of Churches alone" seems to have replaced "Justification by Faith". To us, each of these issues, for all the protestations of the members of the colloquium about the new "cultural and political assumptions", they were not taken too seriously. To us therefore, the arguments seemed slightly out of "touch" with the lived issues of the world today as it is, and surely at a great distance from the world as it seems it might be in the future. It seems to us that it is imperative that the "life issues" of mankind from which and out of which the ecumenical movement began and grew during and after the World Wars, must be recovered if the movement will continue to have significance for the new conditions of man today, and the new conditions of the Churches.

Several observations about the Roman Catholic partici-

pation especially towards the end of the conference seems especially important to mention, in as much as it well exemplifies the present state of Roman Catholic thinking regarding the identity of Roman Catholicism vis à vis the separated Churches. It seemed to us that the overwhelming negative reaction of the Roman Catholic speakers at the conference end was initiated by what must have seemed a threat to their identity as Roman Catholics. The unwillingness to speak seriously to the issue of Eucharistic Sharing was invariably controlled by their appreciation of the relationship, in terms of validity, so it seemed to us, the ministry which is verified in the hierarchical ministry founded upon apostolic succession, communicated by the laying on of hands by a bishop validly consecrated and in hierarchical communion with the successor of Saint Peter. It was always at this point that all agreements and seeming accords broke down, and it was on this issue alone that the desire for "eucharistic sharing" was not well received, as it was on these grounds that the possibility of calling the separated churches "churches" at all became impossible. For Roman Catholic theologians therefore, it appeared that this issue was intrinsically related to the self identity of the Roman Catholic Church, in such wise, that it hardly seemed possible to grant other churches or ecclesial communities any rights to existence. This was also true in the confusion by the speaker over "sancti" and "communio Sanctorum" which appeared to us not in the least to take any notice of the change in Roman Catholic thinking on that issue, and even in Roman Catholic practice, especially in the Sacred Liturgy of the Eucharist and the changed liturgical calendar of the "sancti" which indicate a less than accurate presentation of Roman Catholic thinking. Yet here too, the question of identity of the Roman Catholic Church seemed at issue, and the presentation broke down. This topic therefore seems one of special merit for Roman Catholic theologians,

especially if the accords reached to date, and the future of the ecumenical movement among us is to be taken seriously.

There was also a serious question, always in terms of the World Council of Churches and Roman Catholic membership in it, of the straightforward purposes of the magisterium, and of course of the Pope himself and his immediate and official representatives. It was an often expressed opinion, that the magisterium seems to do a "two step" which hinders the straight forward progress of the Ecumenical movement, weakens the credibility of our fidelity to keep the promises we have made, and give, sometimes even at a local level that direction and leadership which is required and available to us. We believe that to localize these criticisms in terms of "decisive action" with regard to the World Council of Churches would too much limit their universal applicability to very many areas of the Church's life which are related to the Ecumenical movement.

Finally, we must record what we feel to be the very profound and useful interventions throughout the conference of Professor Vilmos Vajta of the Strasbourg Institute, Professor Kristen Skydsgaard of Denmark, and Professor Bernard Haering of the Alfonsianum of Rome. These three men seemed more than the others to sense the "life" issues to which Ecumenism is related especially for a new generation of theologians, and to relate the institution and the Holy Spirit in such wise that both are all the more real and credible. Their voices were however lost in the general "din" and their most lightsome statements seemed all too readily forgotten by the members of the Colloquium. We believe that it is their direction which offers the most hope for the future of Ecumenism for our generation.

*William Dillon, S.A.  
Strasbourg, France*

*James F. Puglisi, S.A.  
Centro Pro Unione, Italy*

★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★ ☆ ★

**ECUMENISM AROUND THE WORLD: An Ecumenical Directory, Second edition.**

This new edition updates and corrects the first edition which we published in 1971. It contains information on ecumenical institutes, centers, and organizations throughout the world. This edition also includes a descriptive list of addresses of currently published ecumenical periodic literature.

Copies of the Second edition may be purchased from:

GRAYMOOR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE  
Garrison, New York, 10524  
U.S.A.

CENTRO PRO UNIONE  
Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30  
00186 Rome  
ITALY

Price: U.S. \$ 3.00 – L. Italian 2.000

**L'OECUMENISME A TRAVERS LE MONDE: Directoire oecuménique, Deuxième édition.**

Cette nouvelle édition met à jour et corrige le directoire que nous avons publié en 1971. Il comprend toutes les informations des instituts, des centres et des organisations oecuméniques existant dans le monde. Cette édition comprend aussi une liste descriptive d'adresses concernant la littérature oecuménique couramment publiée. Ce directoire n'est publié qu'en anglais.

Les exemplaires de la deuxième édition peuvent être achetés chez:

GRAYMOOR ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE  
Garrison, New York, 10524  
U.S.A.

CENTRO PRO UNIONE  
Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30  
00186 Rome  
ITALIE

Prix: U.S. \$ 3.00 – L. Italiennes 2.000

## CENTRO PRO UNIONE

The *Centro Pro Unione* is a center for ecumenical formation: for study and research, for the exchange of information, and for encounter. To achieve these ends, the Centro runs a series of conferences each year studying various aspects of the ecumenical movement from the pastoral, theological, social and practical points of view. Its facilities are available to any group with an ecumenical concern. The staff organizes programs for individuals as well as groups who visit Rome with an ecumenical purpose. It provides an ecumenical library for students in Rome and is available to supply information on ecumenical activities throughout the world. The Library has 7,000 titles of an ecumenical nature in 5 languages (e.g. theological subjects studied ecumenically, dialogues, documentation, Church History etc.) as well as 1,200 bound periodicals (specialized in ecumenics) and more than 100 current reviews.

The *Centro Pro Unione* is staffed by the Atonement Friars who are a religious community in the Franciscan tradition, existing specifically to help fulfill the Church's mission of Christian Unity, to witness to the Gospel among Christians and non-Christians and to bring all men to the fullness of unity with the People of God.

## CENTRO PRO UNIONE

*Centro Pro Unione* est un centre de formation oecuménique: pour l'étude et la recherche, pour l'échange d'informations, et pour les rencontres? Pour réaliser ces buts, le centre organise chaque année des séries de conférences qui étudient les divers aspects du mouvement oecuménique: pastoral, théologique, social, et les points de vue pratiques. Il met ses locaux et autres facilités à la disposition de tout groupe ayant un but oecuménique. L'équipe organise un programme pour les particuliers ou les groupes qui visitent Rome dans un dessein oecuménique. Il possède une bibliothèque oecuménique ouverte aux étudiants, et il est à même d'informer sur les activités oecuméniques à travers le monde. La bibliothèque a 7,000 titres de caractère oecuménique, en 5 langues (sujets théologiques, dialogues, documentation, histoire de l'Eglise, etc.), 1.200 périodiques reliés et plus de 100 revues courantes.

Les Frères de l'Atonement (l'équipe du centre) sont une congrégation religieuse de tradition franciscaine. Leur vocation spécifique est d'aider l'Eglise en sa mission de rétablir l'unité chrétienne, de témoigner de l'Evangile parmi les chrétiens et les non-chrétiens, de conduire tous les hommes à la plénitude d'unité avec le peuple de Dieu.

