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In this issue:

**REPORT FROM THE
SECOND FORUM ON
BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS**

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From the Director: Study of the interchurch dialogues has been difficult in the past because it was difficult to find studies which provided thematic surveys. The report of the Forum on Bilateral Conversations which we are publishing in this issue is just such a needed guide, produced by scholars involved in the dialogues, and presented last Spring in the second of three such planned events. In the coming Spring issue of this *Bulletin* we will publish the second annual update of bibliographies for study in this field. For the convenience of librarians and those wishing to know of recent books published in ecumenics, we have included a partial list of books received by our library.

CHARLES ANGEL, S.A.

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 *Movimento Pro Unione* is a gathering together of Christians, clergy and lay people, who are in sympathy with the ecumenical outreach of the *Centro Pro Unione* of the Atonement Friars in Rome. The members of the Movimento are encouraged to work and pray individually and corporately for Christian Unity where this is possible. The Movimento seeks to be a vehicle to share ecumenical experiences and provides means for ecumenical formation on the local level in Italy.

The *Centro Pro Unione* is staffed by the Atonement Friars, a religious community in the Franciscan tradition, existing specifically to help fulfil 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.

This *Bulletin* is distributed, free of charge, to about two thousand ecumenical institutes, centers, publications and selected individuals in an effort to facilitate the study of the dialogues. Any contributions to the project would, of course, be appreciated, and will be acknowledged. Perhaps the most valuable participation consists in the many helpful suggestions and comments offered. Our library is also most grateful to those institutes and publications which have exchanged publications with us. Those requesting this *Bulletin* are asked to enclose postage and specify regular or airmail.

World Council of Churches
COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

REPORT FROM THE SECOND FORUM ON BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS
TO THE PARTICIPATING WORLD CONFSSIONAL FAMILIES AND
CHURCHES AND TO THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
(FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION)

Introduction to the Forum

The second session of the Forum on Bilateral Conversations met 5-9 June, 1979, at Le Cénacle, Geneva. The Forum was initiated by the Conference of Secretaries of the World Confessional Families and administered by the Secretariat of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. Twenty-six representatives of churches and confessional families were present for the second session of the Forum. They were joined by four consultants and two members of the Faith and Order Secretariat.

The first of three projected sessions of the Forum was held 2-7 April, 1978 at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. It dealt with the issue of the "Concepts of Unity" which guide ecumenical theological conversations. Copies of the report of the first session are available from the Faith and Order Secretariat.

The second session was projected to study "Statements of agreement or consensus". Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis opened the session with a paper on "Consensus in the Formulation of Doctrine". Father Pierre Duprey then spoke on the role of joint statements in the quest for agreement, and Dr Lukas Vischer described the relationships between bilateral conversa-

tions and multilateral efforts toward consensus.

A series of papers was presented to give an overview of the contents of the joint statements so far issued. Dr. E.C. John analysed the statements with regard to Mission; Dr. Rudolf Thaut followed with a paper on Baptism; Msgr Jozef Tomko on Theology of Marriage; Professor J.K.S. Reid on Ministry; Professor Georg Kretschmar on Eucharist; and Bishop Edward Knapp-Fisher on Authority. It was then decided to work in small groups focussing on four main ongoing themes: Consensus, Authority, Eucharist, and Ministry.

The reports of the small groups, which follow, were discussed and received in the plenary of the Forum. They are offered as a memorandum of the discussion for appropriate use by the churches and world confessional families. While it is the conviction of those who have shared in the Forum that it is a valuable instrument for common reflection, the participants fully realize that the Forum itself has no juridical authority.

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THE MEANING OF CONSENSUS

Preface

In the ecumenical movement, the churches have committed themselves to the task of restoring communion. There is growing agreement that in order to achieve this goal four fundamental requirements need to be met: a) ending prejudices and hostilities; b) sharing one faith which includes both overcoming the anathemas of the past and finding ways of confessing together the apostolic faith; c) accepting, on the basis of agreed understanding, each other's celebration of baptism and the eucharist and the ordained ministry; d) agreeing on ways of deciding and acting together (cf. first session of the Forum 1978).

The effort of both multilateral and bilateral conversations to articulate common convictions has an important place in the process of growing together into visible unity. In fact, none of the four requirements can be fulfilled without the explicit formulation of consensus. Obviously, visible unity will not be reached by the formulation of consensus alone. The growth into unity is a complex process involving all levels of the Church's life. Communion is built on Jesus Christ and the witness of the Apostles. It is a gift of the Spirit. Consensus (or *consentire*) has its roots in this reality. It is a spiritual experience before it can be articulated by common effort in words. But the articulation in words gives the churches the assurance that the communion can be maintained against the evidence of past divisions. Statements of consensus fulfil an irreplaceable function in the process of growing together.

There is a close connection and interaction between confession of faith and the life of the Church. The verbal expression of oneness in faith is not to be considered in isolation from the life of the Church. It does not stand on its own but has its roots in the confessing and worshipping community, in particular in the celebration of the eucharist.

The Church's confession of faith does not consist primarily in a number of articles which can be listed. It expresses the experience of the Church called into existence by the Spirit and living in the continuity with the Apostles and their teaching.

A similar connection and interaction exists between consensus and the life of the Church. Consensus both interprets and serves communion. As communion grows among divided churches, common verbal articulation becomes possible. In order to advance to full consensus it is essential to promote the growth of communion. It can be furthered in many ways. The churches need to engage in common witness and service, above all in common prayer. As they face together the challenges of today's world, they will discover possibilities of interpreting afresh old controversies and seeing them in new perspective. The formulation of even partial consensus will add strength to the bonds of communion already existing and facilitate new departures.

In this report we suggest a closer examination of the nature and function of consensus statements from both multilateral and bilateral conversations with a view to the visible unity of the Church.

I.— THE NATURE OF CONSENSUS

Consensus in the full sense may be defined as that articulation of faith which is necessary to enable the establishment of visible unity. From this follow certain considerations:

a) That such consense will come about by degrees and a tidy overall process should not be expected. *Convergence* may be recognized short of full consensus as a common perspective emerges when problems are faced together. Even if *consensus on particular issues* is reached, there may be other unresolved questions. In consequence of this, different stages of consensus building may well be noted — indeed this has been expressed in one bilateral precisely as “unity

by stages" (A-RC Malta 7, 17; cf. also L-RC Malta "The Gospel and the Church" 73). After the liberating discovery of convergence comes the painstaking achievement of reaching agreement on the fundamentally divisive issues. The decisive stage is the acceptance of such consensus for action by the churches concerned.

b) While agreement will be needed on essential questions requiring consensus before unity, other differences may well be discussed within a re-established fellowship. This will have its own significance in continuing the building up of consensus as there develops a new and common tradition. Because of the complementarity of its constituent parts, such a living and developing consensus will reflect more adequately the wholeness of the Christian mystery than was possible before. The experience of united churches such as the United Church of Canada or the Church of South India may profitably be studied in seeing how differences are resolved before and after union and in the progressive development of a common confession of faith.

c) Reception by the churches is not to be solely identified with the decision making stage after consensus is reached. Throughout the dialogue continuing interaction with the churches is essential. This will stimulate the consensus process, both among those directly involved and in the churches themselves. Interaction will be a protection against the introduction of merely transient theological novelty, for the churches will scrutinize the emerging consensus for its continuity with the apostolic tradition. Reciprocally, the insights of the dialogues will purify and deepen the churches' own understanding of the tradition.

d) Consensus is not to be identified with complete unanimity and uniformity of theological understanding. Such is not found within the existing unity of particular churches and should not be expected from

dialogue between churches. Yet there is a tendency to require a greater doctrinal precision of another church than exists within one's own. One reason for this may be the legitimate fear that a consensus document can have less significance in a different ecclesiological context from one's own. Thus the elucidation of a consensus document may properly be required, but a demand for an accumulative consensus betrays a lack of trust. There is a legitimate necessity for unity in fundamental faith; there is also an equally necessary freedom in the diversity of its spiritual, liturgical and theological expression. Rather than the demand for cumulative precisions, there should be a basic trust in the dialogue partner's *intentio fidei*.

e) Granted such trust in the *intentio fidei* of another church, it will be possible to accept the separated tradition of another church without the imposition of the particular formulations of faith of one's own. An example of this would be the Common Declaration between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III, in which there was a joint profession of faith on the mystery of the incarnate Word without the use of either the terms "person" or "nature".

f) Relating to the development of traditions in ecclesial isolation is the problem of what it is essential to have consensus on for unity. Some churches require more as of faith, others less. A lack of congruence in what churches require may divide even where there is theological agreement. While the early Church had comparatively brief confessions of faith, these became more developed as divisive issues troubled its faith, worship and life. Yet not every issue that has divided churches in the past needs to be re-examined today. The subject matter of multilateral and bilateral dialogues may give an indication of what the churches themselves now consider it to be necessary to achieve consensus upon.

g) It is also important to note the distinc-

tion between consensus on matters of doctrine and order as over against a consensus on common witness and service. Discussions on such questions, including political issues, can and sometimes do lead to division.

II.— CONSENSUS AND COMMON CONFESSION OF FAITH

The attempt to formulate consensus aims at enabling the churches to confess together the apostolic faith. This necessarily involves the continuous restatement of the apostolic faith in ways appropriate to changing historical and cultural situations, which themselves impose upon the Church such an obligation.

What is the relationship between statements of consensus and this continuing confession of faith of the one Church? Two considerations are important in this respect:

a) In its confession of faith, the Church points to the central content of the Gospel which it proclaims. The confession reminds the Church of the basis on which it stands: the creative and redeeming work of God — Father, Son and Spirit. The confession of faith will not include the whole teaching of the Church.

b) It is essential that the confession of faith really be an expression of unity: it must be offered with one mind. Major divergences of understanding must be overcome to be able really to speak with one voice.

The effort to formulate consensus on controversial issues on doctrine and order may pave the way for the common confession of faith, but statements of consensus will not themselves serve as confession of faith once communion has been established.

1) Unity in faith does not require the formulation of a new creed. It will rather be found by the common reception of the ancient creeds and a continuing ef-

fort to confess together the apostolic faith in contemporary terms.

2) The efforts in both multilateral and bilateral conversations to formulate consensus on controversial issues are to be understood as contributions to that common mind which is required for confessing the faith together in both credal and contemporary terms. They are the “scaffolding” within which the common doxology can grow.

3) Statements of consensus give the assurance that despite many differences the churches share the same intention of faith. They are the prerequisite for mutual trust.

4) Statements of consensus reached in multilateral and bilateral conversations will be incorporated in various ways in the one Church. Some parts may be reflected in the liturgy of the Church, e.g. a common understanding of baptism, the eucharist and ordination may find expression in the respective liturgies. Some parts may be taken up in the catechetical instruction of the Church. Some statements may be recorded as a reference whenever differences reappear. Other statements may serve as material for future theological debate in the one Church. Some statements may become irrelevant once unity has been realized.

III.— RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AGREED STATEMENTS

At the first Forum on Bilateral Conversations (1978) it was stated, “that the two types of inter-church conversations, the bilateral ... and the multilateral ... are complementary to one another within the ecumenical movement”.

This conviction is reaffirmed when one considers the reports and agreed statements resulting from bilateral dialogues. In

the process which led to these statements, the particular bilateral dialogues have, to an increasing degree, taken into account other bilateral as well as multilateral dialogues. There has also been an interaction between the international bilaterals and local, regional and national inter-church conversations. This is often reflected in the texts themselves by explicit reference to or quotations from other agreed statements (see e.g. the Roman Catholic – Lutheran document, “The Eucharist”), so that there are scarcely any “pure”, i.e. isolated bilateral conversations.

It is important that both bilateral and multilateral conversations continue this effort of consciously contributing to and receiving from the results of one another and making this clearly explicit in an appropriate way. This would strengthen the awareness that the ecumenical endeavour is, indeed, indivisible although, simultaneously, it may and sometimes should be pursued in particular bilateral and/or multilateral settings.

Since bilateral conversations will by nature deal with issues as they present themselves in the perspective of particular bilateral situations, there is always a danger that the findings of these conversations may lack coherence with each other, or are even in conflict with one another, and that the rapprochement between two partners entails a growing distance from other dialogue partners.

On the other hand, different bilateral dialogues in the very specificity of their approach and their findings can contribute to one another. Thus, e.g. the Reformed-Roman Catholic conversations (“The Presence of Christ in Church and World”) arrived at a valuable understanding of the eucharist which may, in the future, have positive repercussions on Lutheran-Reformed conversations and relationships. Similarly, the Anglican-Roman Catholic conversations, in the event of the problem of justification by faith being taken up, could draw upon the findings of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue.

In order to maintain the specific advantages of the bilateral approach and, at the same time, to avoid a lack of coherence between the individual conversations and agreements, bilateral dialogue ought to be carried through with constant attention both to the wider multilateral perspective and to the other bilaterals.

This vital interaction between bilateral and multilateral conversations and agreements could be furthered by:

- a) receiving and incorporating the findings of other bilateral and multilateral dialogues on the same subject as broadly as possible (cross-references; quotations)
- b) opening up, as far as suitable and depending on the subject matter, a bilateral dialogue by including further partners (e.g. the participation of the WARC in the dialogue on marriage and mixed marriages originally planned as a conversation between Roman Catholic and Lutherans only)
- c) by inviting consultants from other bilateral and multilateral dialogues to make a specific contribution (lecture, paper) where the subject matter or a particular stage in discussion makes this advisable (e.g. Anglican or Orthodox contributions could have been useful at a certain stage of the conversation on marriage and mixed marriages between Roman Catholics, Reformed and Lutherans)
- d) taking up the discussion of a particular subject which has obvious implications for many or all Christian churches in a multilateral dialogue (e.g. discussion on the *filioque* clause and the issue of marriage and mixed marriages)
- e) joining the efforts of multilateral and bilateral conversations in developing common confession of faith (compare the studies begun by the Faith and Order Commission)
- f) making provision for the exchange of information and common reflection after

the three projected sessions of the Forum have been completed.

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

Preface

Authority is a central issue in the search for visible unity. Attention has been given to some of its aspects in several bilateral dialogues, and in particular to the authority of the Scriptures, and the authority of the teaching of the Church has been discussed by the Roman Catholic/Reformed dialogue ("The Presence of Christ in Church and World", 1977). Nevertheless, *authority* does not appear yet to have been systematically considered or precisely defined in the dialogues. The A-RC Venice statement 1976, "Authority in the Church", like other documents relating to this subject, is concerned more with authority *in* the Church than with the authority *of* the Church; and it is noteworthy and apparent that this is a dialogue between two episcopal churches. It is a matter of urgency to promote a wider and more representative debate on authority. However, before this can be done effectively, a deeper study of ecclesiology than has yet been attempted in the dialogues may well have to be undertaken.

Since 1974, the Commission on Faith and Order has been engaged in a study entitled, "How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today?" The report of its recent consultation (Odessa, USSR, 1977) provides a useful summary of the multi-lateral debate on authority and suggests future stages in the discussion.

I.- AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH

All Christians agree that all authority derives from Jesus Christ, the Word of the Father made flesh, who is ever present through the Holy Spirit (A-RC Venice (i)). The Church has authority insofar as it

attends to and proclaims "The Word Christ speaks to it ever afresh" (R-RC, 24).

There are agencies and instruments possessing varying degrees of importance and authority through which the living Christ continues through the Holy Spirit to guide his people into all truth, i.e. there is a "hierarchy of authorities" (M-RC Denver, 102).

a) *Holy Scripture*: There is general agreement that second only to the authority of the Word made flesh is the Word of God *written* (A-RC Venice, 2). The distinction between Scripture and Tradition is still made but is no longer divisive (R-RC, 25; A-RC Venice, 3; L-RC Malta, 17).

b) *Creeds*: It is agreed that the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds bear faithful witness to the biblical message and are authoritative summaries and safeguards of the Christian faith (A-L, 23-4). "In the hierarchy of authorities the Creeds and conciliar definitions of the ancient Church are ascribed a special place of prominence because of their substantive congruity with Scripture". (*Confessions in Dialogue*, p. 158; cf. A-RC Venice, 19).

c) *Confessional Formularies*: These are accorded a subordinate place in the hierarchy of authorities. Many would agree with Anglicans and Lutherans that these "are not regarded as foundation documents but as means of safeguarding and witnessing to the faith of all times" (A-L, 27; cf. R-RC, 34-6).

d) *Oversight-episcopé*: There is agreement that some (in particular, ordained ministers) are called to special responsibility in the oversight of the Church and that special authority is vested in them. There is, however, disagreement as to whether ordination confers distinction of *kind* or specific *functions*. (A-RC Venice, 5). The manner in which episcopé is shared or distributed varies (A-L, 79). Some traditions place more emphasis on the episcopé which is shared by synodical representatives, while other traditions

focus upon the person of the bishop.

e) *Bishops – episcopoi*: In episcopal churches, special authority is accorded to bishops. This authority derives in part from the fact that a bishop is regarded as possessing particular responsibilities as a symbol and focus of the unity and continuity of the Church in faith and life. (A-RC Venice, 5, 8; F&O Ministry, 34; cf. Forum 1979 preparatory document on Ministry)

In most episcopal churches bishops no longer act alone, but in association with their fellow bishops *collegially* and/or with the whole people of God *synodically*. This development offers a possible way of convergence between episcopal and non-episcopal churches. (A-RC Venice, 20)

f) *Primacy*: Within this framework of collegiality and conciliarity, primatial authority is accorded to a bishop in a defined area or province as the acknowledged spokesman of his fellow bishops and their people. (A-RC Venice, 20)

Principles which support the recognition and authority of local primates are adduced by Roman Catholics in support of the universal primacy which they accord to the Bishop of Rome. Many of the objections raised by other churches to the papacy are due not to opposition to the principle of a universal primacy but to the basis and nature of the authority attributed to the Pope. Christians of many traditions are today more open to the possibility of envisaging and accepting a restructured papacy to serve the unity of the universal Church. (A-RC Venice, 23; L-RC Malta, 66; *Confessions in Dialogue*, p. 189)

General Councils, primates, bishops, assemblies, groups and individuals should never act in isolation from the Christian community at large nor ignore the *consensus fidelium*. In building up this consensus, theologians and scholars who seek the truth for its own sake and Christian

parents and friends who pass on to their children the faith they have inherited have a special part to play. So too other charismatic individuals – men and women of conspicuous sanctity – will be recognized as possessing a peculiar personal authority in virtue of the contribution which they make to the life, growth and witness of the Church. (A-RC Venice, 1, 5)

II.– THE FUTURE

Many of the documents relating to authority, at present available, have been produced by churches possessing episcopal ministries. It is a matter of urgency to engage the active participation in this dialogue of the Lutheran, Reformed and Free churches. It would be both undesirable and unproductive if further debate on this matter was to be confined to authority as it is exercised in churches which have bishops. Other important matters calling for further consideration are:

- the authority of the Church in relation to its members
- authority in local churches
- the different ways in which churches exercise their teaching authority in fidelity to their apostolicity which belongs not only to ordained ministers, but to the Church in all its members
- the authority and procedures by which the churches can formally accept the fact of consensus emerging from the dialogues, and its practical implications for their unity according to the will of Christ
- the fact that churches exercising authority are themselves under authority (L-RC Malta, 21)

In conclusion, we repeat our urgent need to study together the doctrine of the Church, the nature of its authority and the various ways in which that authority is in practice exercised. The dialogue has an obligation not

only to discern and sustain the authority of the Church, but also to promote its ability to exercise it, in the assurance that Christ, who is the ultimate source of the Church's authority, has power to assert it in face of any restraints which the forces of the world may try to impose upon it.

THE EUCHARIST IN THE JOINT STATEMENTS

I.— THE DIALOGUES

Most of the dialogues treat the theme of the Lord's Supper but with differing fullness. This diversity stems from a variety of causes: the varying interests of the partners, the differing beginning points, the various goals of the conversations and the results of previous dialogues between the partners. The fact that only the Anglican-Roman Catholic and the Roman Catholic-Lutheran international conversations have produced texts exclusively devoted to the Eucharist does not mean that the Eucharist is of less significance in other churches.

The variety of titles traditionally used in the different churches (Lord's Supper, Eucharist, mass, sacrament of the altar, holy communion, etc.) presents no problem. They are used in the discussions interchangeably. (A-RC Windsor, 1; L-RC Eucharist, 1, footnote)

II.— METHODS

When one examines the documents produced by the various dialogues, it becomes apparent that most dialogue partners have chosen to produce statements in the form of theological theses. They have expressed their consensus in technical, condensed form. These documents are directed primarily to church leaders and to the governing bodies of the world confessional families.

Statements dealing exclusively with

the Eucharist have been produced by the Lutheran-Reformed dialogues (Arnoldshain theses), the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues (Windsor statement) and the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue (The Eucharist). The other dialogues (Methodist-Roman Catholic, Reformed-Roman Catholic, Anglican-Lutheran, Anglican-Orthodox) have treated the Eucharist along with a number of other topics. Some of the dialogues have made use of the texts of other dialogues, especially of the Windsor and Faith and Order Commission statements.

The document "The Eucharist" (L-RC Eucharist) has a different aim and therefore uses a different method. It is addressed to all the faithful of both churches, and beyond. It avoids the language of the experts. It seeks in its main part to bear a common witness and to offer help for common tasks in doctrine, liturgy and life. To accomplish this it makes particular use of the liturgical rites and practices of both churches and not only of doctrinal explanations.

III.— AGREEMENTS AND DIVERGENCES

In all of the dialogues there is agreement with respect to a range of issues concerning the Eucharist. Many common convictions have never been questioned. With respect to a number of divergences substantial clarifications have been reached. In specific cases differences can be seen to have their roots in the differing theological language customary in particular traditions (theological formulas, fixed liturgical texts, etc.). When one considers the controversies which have separated the different dialogue partners for centuries one is astonished at the measure of agreement that has been reached. The following seven themes are of particular significance.

a) *The presence of Christ*: The presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a common conviction of all the dialogue partners. All confess this presence to be a mystery

which transcends human conceptualization (M-RC Dublin, 59-60; R-RC 76, 82; A-RC Windsor, 6; A-O 25; L-RC Eucharist, 7-9). In all the documents there is a tendency to see the sacramental presence of Christ in connection with the other modes of his presence in the sequence of the liturgical action (A-RC Windsor, 7; L-RC Eucharist, 15, 16).

The sacramental presence of Christ in which he gives his body and blood in bread and wine is described throughout the dialogues as an active and effective presence (R-RC 82; A-RC Windsor, 6; M-RC Dublin, 54; A-O, 23; L-RC Eucharist, 51). Churches which have long avoided the terminology of change with respect to the bread and wine have found it possible to use this terminology with far greater freedom than one would have expected (L-RC Eucharist, 51). In order to interpret the “change” traditional terminology was used and interpreted and also new formulations were presented. Frequently the biblical concept of memorial (anamnesis) was used in this connection (R-RC, 82; L-RC Eucharist, 36; M-RC Dublin, 63).

b) *The work of the Holy Spirit*: A remarkably broad consensus exists with respect to the epiclesis. “Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist builds up the life of the Church ...” (A-RC Windsor, 3; R-RC, 82; M-RC Dublin, 52; A-O, 23; L-RC Eucharist, 21-8; A-L, 6,1). “Everything which the Lord gives to us and all which enables us to receive it as our own is given to us through the Holy Spirit” (L-RC Eucharist, 51). “The Eucharist as the sacrament of the Gospel is the fullest presentation of God’s love in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit” (M-RC Dublin, 52a). “The operation of the Holy Spirit is essential to the Eucharist whether it is explicitly expressed or not” (A-O, 29). The Eucharist must be understood in terms of the work of the Holy Spirit quite independently of whether or not a particular liturgy explicitly contains a calling

upon the Holy Spirit (A-L, 68; A-O, 29).

c) *The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Christian*: One of the central questions needing clarification is this: in what sense may we speak of sacrifice with reference to the Eucharist? Some of the discussions touch upon this theme but do not develop it. Other dialogues explore the issues and come to remarkable common understanding and agreement (A-RC, and L-RC). On the whole an astonishing degree of common conviction has been reached.

A common starting point in the dialogues proved to be a broad consensus concerning the “once-for-all” character and “un-repeatable” quality of Christ’s sacrifice (A-RC Windsor, 6; M-RC Dublin, 63, 66; A-L, 69). “There can be no repetition or addition to what was then accomplished once for all by Christ. Any attempt to express a nexus between the sacrifice of Christ and the Eucharist must not obscure this fundamental fact of the Christian faith” (A-RC Windsor, 5).

It has also proved possible for dialogue partners to agree that the sacrifice of Christ is effectively present in the Eucharist (L-RC Eucharist, 34). In this context the biblical concept of “memorial” (anamnesis) has provided the illumination which has helped the dialogue partners to come to common understanding (A-RC Windsor, 5).

Some difficulties however may remain. In order to address objections raised in this connection the following has been written: “In the celebration of the memorial, Christ in the Holy Spirit unites His people with Himself in a sacramental way so that the Church enters into the movement of His self-offering. In consequence, even though the Church is active in this celebration this adds nothing to the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice upon the cross, because the action is itself the fruit of this sacrifice. The Church in celebrating the Eucharist gives thanks for the gift of Christ’s sacrifice and identifies itself with the will of Christ who has offered Himself to the Father on be-

half of all mankind". (A-RC Elucidations, 5)

Concerning the relationship between Christ's sacrifice and the offering of the Christian, several problems remain. Further discussion is called for. No objection has been raised about speaking of our thank offering: the offering of ourselves, of our gifts and of our lives in the context of the Eucharist. What remains unclear for some is whether and in what manner we can say that we in our thank offering "enter into the movement of His self-offering" (A-RC Elucidations, 5). Even more difficult for many is the question of whether there is a sense in which we can say that the offering of Christ is also an offering which the Church can make (M-RC Dublin, 65).

d) *Gifts and reception (koinonia)*: The gift of the Eucharist is Christ Himself (A-RC Elucidations, 7). Consecration and reception belong together. This is asserted with particular emphasis in "The Eucharist" (L-RC Eucharist, 63). Reception in both kinds corresponds to the fundamental structure of the Lord's Supper. At the same time it is emphasized that the full gift of the Lord's Supper is received even there where reception in one kind takes place (L-RC Eucharist, 64).

The issue of reservation was discussed but not settled (M-RC Dublin, 61; A-RC Elucidations, 8-9). A measure of positive agreement was found to exist with respect to reservation for the sake of the communication of the sick even where the practice does not exist in the dialogue partner's own church.

Baptism as a condition for reception of communion was briefly mentioned in a few places and was presupposed in the texts. Some documents emphasized that those receiving communion should be believing members of the Church (A-O, 24).

The question of the communication of children calls for further discussion in the dialogues (L-RC Eucharist, 66).

An appropriate preparation of the communicant is assumed but not extensively treated. The question of repentance requires further pastoral and theological consideration (R-RC, 87; A-O, 26; L-RC Eucharist, appendix 6).

In all the dialogues, it was expressly emphasized that the eucharistic presence of Christ is independent of the faith of the individual but at the same time it was asserted "when this offering is met by faith a life-giving encounter results" (A-RC Windsor, 8).

e) *Eucharist in the Church*: The Moscow Statement (A-O) declares, "The Eucharist actualizes the Church" (A-O, 24). "Without Eucharistic fellowship there is no full churchly fellowship, without churchly fellowship there is no true Eucharistic fellowship" (L-RC Eucharist, 26; R-RC, 82). These two statements give expression to a wide agreement. The consequences of this agreement especially with respect to inter-communion need further discussion.

Some dialogues raised the question of the frequency of the celebration of the Eucharist and reception (M-RC Dublin, 51; A-RC Malta, 61). A growing sense of the vital importance of the Eucharist can be observed in those churches which have traditionally celebrated it less frequently.

f) *Ministry and Eucharist*: Almost all of the dialogues discussed the relationship between ministry and Church. Above all emphasis was placed upon the full, intended and active participation of the whole people of God in the Eucharist.

The question of the particular role of the ordained ministry in the context of the Eucharist was not treated in all of the dialogues. Where it was taken up it was usually treated under the theme of ministry (M-RC Dublin, 92.107 and 97.101; A-RC Windsor, 7; A-O, 27; L-RC Eucharist, 65-8).

g) *Eucharist, mission and eschatology*: The connection between the celebration of the

Eucharist, the sending of the Church into the world and the expectation of the coming of the Lord was emphasized and asserted with a common mind (A-RC Windsor, 4, 11; M-RC Dublin, 52 d.e. 73; R-RC 86-8). "The Eucharist impels the believers to specific action in mission and service to the world" (A-O, 28). In the text "The Eucharist" we find the eschatological assertion that the Holy Spirit binds us with those who have gone on before in faith (L-RC Eucharist, 27). In the dialogue between the Anglicans and the Orthodox a "cosmic transfiguration" is spoken of (A-O, 28).

IV.— CONSENSUS AND CONVERGENCE

Precisely in the discussions concerning the Eucharist it has become clear that there are a number of convictions, practices and theological insights which cannot be brought together in a formulated consensus even where a convergence of the convictions of both partners can be observed.

One example of this is the Roman Catholic practice of the adoration of Christ in the blessed sacrament. The writers of the Elucidations believe it is possible that this practice can be done by some while others consider the practice unacceptable without breaking the unity of the Church (A-RC Elucidations, 8.9). In the document "The Eucharist" the same difference is considered as one of the conflicting convictions which needs to be overcome (L-RC Eucharist, 53-5).

An important task remains. One must discern when the growing consensus has reached such a quality that remaining differences and different theological concepts may be properly considered expressions of a common eucharistic faith. In such a consensus the differing concepts may be recognized to have a more or less equal value (M-RC Dublin, 60). This task points beyond the consideration of the Eucharist to the reception of joint state-

ments and also to the theme of authority in the Church.

V.— NEXT STEPS

a) *Continuation of the dialogues*

In all the joint statements the task of identifying and clarifying agreements and differences is affirmed and continuation called for. A good example of this continuation in reference to the Eucharist is found in the Elucidations of 1979 which carry forward the work begun in the Windsor Statements of 1971. Themes which also are worthy of such treatment are named in the Reformed-Roman Catholic document, "The Presence of Christ in Church and World";

- "the use of the Eucharist today which grows out of a faithful reflection on the tradition and on the vast changes which typify life today;
- "the rich connotations of memorial (anamnesis);
- "the question of the proper role of the ordained ministry in the celebration of the Eucharist" (R-RC, 92).

It would be helpful if when these questions are investigated in the future, the dialogue partners would take note of the results of other bilateral and multilateral dialogues. In particular a common agreement to the question regarding the constitutive elements of a eucharistic celebration would do well to take into consideration the description of the eucharistic structure found in the Accra document (F&O Eucharist, 28).

The task of seeking to understand more adequately God's gift to his Church will never be completed because we stand before a mystery of faith which will always transcend our knowledge.

b) *Intercommunion and full communion*

A serious point of divergence exists between those who regard "intercommunion"

as a necessary part of the process of growth towards full unity and those who believe it impossible for Christians to communicate together before full unity has been attained. This important question has been discussed primarily in the regional dialogues, but there are also some explicit references to this matter in the bilateral dialogues on the international level (A-RC Malta, 19; cf. M-RC Dublin 68-71; L-RC Eucharist, 72f.). It is a reality which needs to be frankly faced and seriously considered in future deliberations.

c) *Consensus with respect to the Eucharist and eucharistic fellowship*

Through these dialogues it has become clear that the effort to reach a consensus concerning our understanding of the Holy Communion has its proper setting within the larger task of a common understanding of, confession of and witness to the whole Christian faith. An isolated doctrinal consensus concerning the Eucharist would provide an insufficient basis for intercommunion.

d) In addition, theological insight and liturgical action must not be separated from one another. On the one hand, we are called to discern the one supper of the Lord in the various traditions and liturgical forms of our communions; on the other hand, it is equally important with the help of these dialogues to examine our contemporary liturgies and practices in the light of the deepened theological insights gained. "The best way toward unity in eucharistic celebrations and communion is the renewal of the teaching and liturgy" (F&O Eucharist, 31). It is appropriate therefore for joint statements to concern themselves not only with continued theological investigation but also to engage in mutual investigation of the liturgical practices of the participating churches (i.e. L-RC Eucharist, 55, 76). These investigations will lead to results all the more quickly when we also take our common findings into our congregations and there together witness openly.

MINISTRY IN THE JOINT STATEMENTS

Preface

There is general agreement about ministry in the joint statements, both striking and increasingly apparent. The Church is charged with a ministry antecedent to any diversification into particular ministries: the people of God has to proclaim the Gospel to everyone.

a) Christ "came not to be ministered unto but to minister", "as one that serves". This is the absolute paradigm. It is from this basic foundation that all ministry proceeds and is authorized, whether ministry of the individual members of the Church or ordained ministry authorized by the churches.

b) By dominical commission the ministry is conveyed to the Church as a whole through the apostles and to the ecclesiastical or ordained ministry: this is a gift of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Both the ministry of the whole community and the ordained ministry are always to be referred back to the primordial ministry of Christ for authentication.

Factors contributory to this agreement may be briefly listed:

- scriptural study
- the realization of the historicity of the Church, i.e. that the form it came to have was influenced by the circumstances in which it lived and to which it had to respond
- the recognition that identical realities can be conveyed in varying forms
- of supreme importance, the recognition of the need to communicate the Gospel in common and intelligibly to the world, which suggests the terms in which it is to be conveyed.

I.— THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST AND THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

The ministry of Christ, the Servant, is basic and paradigmatic for all Christian ministry: as the Father sent him, so he sends the Church to minister to the world. The Church is *charged with a ministry* to the world and, to enable it to discharge this obligation, it is *equipped with a special ministry*. Accordingly, we must talk of the Church's ministry to the world, and of a special (ordained, ecclesiastical) ministry.

Concerning the inner relation of this special ministry to the ministry of Christ, there is both agreement and disagreement. Different terms are used to describe it. All churches agree that this ministry has its commission and authorization from Christ. Beyond this, and to characterize it more closely, a variety of terms is used: sharing, representing, participating, reflecting, analogy, and continued presence. Further consideration should be given to whether something common lies behind such different terminology.

The reluctance of some churches to accept the concept of *priesthood* as appropriate for Christ's commissioned people of ministry indicates an issue needing further consideration. In some conversations between the churches, substantial agreement is reached about this issue; but it continues to be a divisive issue.

II.— THE ORDER OF MINISTRY

It is commonly understood that the *threefold order of ministry* centred on the episcopacy became the prevalent pattern in the primitive Church. There is agreement that episcopal, presbyteral and diaconal functions need to be discharged in the Church today. Difference of opinion is expressed whether this threefold order constitutes an inflexible rule to be observed in any united church and must be expressed in *individual office bearers*.

Bishops are present in the constitution of some churches and absent in others. When present, they may or may not claim succession. The difference is divisive. But two considerations show convergence.

a) Episcopé exists in one form or another in all churches; and there is increasing agreement that in most situations it is better discharged personally rather than synodically.

b) The concept of the episcopate as a sign requires further consideration. It must be asked: sign of what, to whom, and whether "effective"?

III.— APOSTOLICITY, SUCCESSION AND CONTINUITY

Visible convergence is detectable in what the conversations report on the subjects of apostolicity, succession and continuity. Churches accustomed to identifying these characteristics in one element, e.g. the episcopate, have come now to realize that continuity is more widely based. Churches traditionally antipathetic to continuity increasingly regard this element as important. With special reference to ordination, churches increasingly advance the claim that the ordination they exercise is ordination into the ministry of the catholic church and not only to a denominational ministry. Even though it has not been a topic of discussion, the issue of ordination of women has become a factor in the process of bilateral conversations.

IV.— EPISCOPAL AND NON-EPISCOPAL CHURCHES

Non-episcopal churches do not think that a negative assessment of their being, i. e. that they are simply *lacking* in something, is conducive to understanding. Non-episcopal churches do not regard themselves in merely negative terms, as *not* having

episcopacy. They believe themselves rather as making a positive contribution to the understanding of what a Christian Church is. "Fullness" and "lacking in fullness" (F&O Ministry) do not seem to be helpful here — they preempt a certain understanding which non-episcopal churches are reluctant to accept.

V.— PAPACY AND COLLEGIALITY

Considerable divergence of opinion on the subjects of papacy and collegiality exists and must be further discussed. Discussion is now possible in a dispassionate atmosphere. Confessions which until recently were unable to talk about the papacy with any kind of objectivity now take it into discussion. Collegiality is a concept that contributes to this further discussion.

* * *

THE FUTURE

The third and last of the projected sessions of the Forum will take up the issue of reception. Following a discussion of the elements which will be necessary to deal adequately with the issue, a small Geneva-based committee was named to be responsible for detailed planning. Dr. Dan Martensen of the Lutheran World Federation will serve as moderator and Mr. Stephen Cranford of the Faith and Order Secretariat will be secretary.

It was noted that a major part of the programme of the last session will necessarily be given to an evaluation of the Forum and to the formulation of a recommendation to the sponsoring bodies to provide for on-going common reflection on the bilateral and multilateral efforts towards consensus.

DOCUMENTATION *

Abbreviation	Text
A-L	Anglican-Lutheran: Pullach Report, 1972
A-O	Anglican-Orthodox: Moscow Agreed Statement, 1977
A-OC	Anglican-Old Catholic: The Bonn Agreement, 1931
A-RC Malta	Anglican-Roman Catholic: The Malta Report, 1968
A-RC Windsor	Anglican-Roman Catholic: The Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine, 1971
A-RC Canterbury	Anglican-Roman Catholic: The Statement on the Doctrine of Ministry, 1973
A-RC Venice	Anglican-Roman Catholic: Authority in the Church, 1976
A-RC Elucidations	Anglican-Roman Catholic: Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination: Elucidations, 1979
A-RC Marriage	Anglican-Roman Catholic: The Theology of Marriage and its Application to Mixed Marriages, 1975
B-R	Baptist-Reformed: Report of Theological Conversations, 1977
L-R-RC Marriage	Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic: The Theology of Marriage and the Problem of Mixed Marriages, 1976
L-RC Malta	Lutheran-Roman Catholic: The Gospel and the Church, 1971
L-RC Eucharist	Lutheran-Roman Catholic: The Eucharist, 1978
M-RC Denver	Methodist-Roman Catholic: The Denver Report, 1971
M-RC Dublin	Methodist-Roman Catholic: The Dublin Report, 1976
P-RC	Pentecostal-Roman Catholic: Final Report of the Dialogue, 1976
R-RC	Reformed-Roman Catholic: The Presence of Christ in Church and World, 1977
	* * *
F&O Baptism	Faith and Order Paper 73: "One Baptism, One Eucharist and a Mutually Recognized Ministry", 1974
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F&O Ministry	
	* * *
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* Including abbreviations used in the text of the report of the second session of the Forum on Bilateral Conversations.

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