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A Center conducted by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement

Director's Desk

The text of the Fr. Paul Wattson/Mother Lurana White lecture: "In Defense of the Body: Writings on 'Being Church' in Ecumenical Conversation" given by Dr. Anna Marie Aagaard, professor emeritus of systematic theology at the University of Aarhus, Denmark appears in this issue. We are pleased to announce that Prof. Robert Taft, SJ will give this year's lecture to be given on December 12, 2002. His theme will deal with the implications of the recent document concerning the validity of the ancient Eucharistic anaphora of Addai and Mari. As is our custom, we continue our celebration on the following evening, with a concert offered by our good friend, Maestro Serguej Diatchenko and the Orchestra of the Academy "ART MUSIC".

In addition to the text of Dr. Aagaard, this Bulletin offers our readers the text of Prof. Jared Wicks, SJ given during the annual celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. This year's celebration was co-sponsored by the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas, the Vincent Pallotti Institute and the **Centro Pro Unione**. An ecumenical celebration of the Word, presided over by the recently installed Pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Rev. William McCulloch with a homily preached by Bishop Richard Garrard, the new director of the Anglican Centre in Rome followed the excellent lecture of Fr. Wicks.

The **Centro Pro Unione** began a series of lectures entitled: "Liturgical Renewal: A Way to Christian Unity". Speakers in this series included Drs. David Holeyton, Geoffrey Wainwright, Horace Allen, Teresa Berger and Canon Donald Gray. A second round will follow in the Autumn and it is our hope to publish these as part of our series "Corso Breve di Ecumenismo".

The British Ambassador to the Holy See, Mark Pellew gave an interesting presentation on the history of the relationship between the Holy See and Great Britain from Henry VIII to the present day. This lecture was co-sponsored by the "Circolo di Roma-Approdo Romano" and the **Centro Pro Unione**.

Together with the ecumenical institutes of San Nicola di Bari and San Bernardino of Venice, the **Centro Pro Unione** organized a two day course for professors of ecumenism entitled "Toward Full Communion". The animator of the course was Walter Cardinal Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. The course studied two themes: the necessary structural elements for full communion and the question of intercommunion. Over 40 professors from all over Italy participated. Two study groups led by Prof. William Henn, OFM Cap and Prof. Vladimir Zelinsky took up the two themes. An invited guest, Prof. Jörg Lauster offered observations from a Lutheran perspective on the two themes.

I wish to end this issue by expressing my deepest gratitude to two members of our staff who have retired. Giovanna Maria Berardelli who has led many groups through the ancient sites of early Christian Rome has been an energizing spirit to all with whom she has come in contact. Likewise our receptionist, Olga Beal who has greeted so many students over these years with her pleasant smile and willingness to help has retired. My deepest thanks to both who have collaborated so generously in our ecumenical ministry.

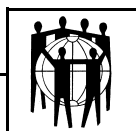
Lastly, we welcome on staff Barbara Giambartolomei who takes Olga's place. Barbara is also a trained librarian and therefore looks after our periodical section as well as helping our librarian.

A Pleasant Spring and Summer to all of our readers. Peace and all good!

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James F. Puglisi, sa
Director





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Centro Conferences

In Defense of the Body Writings on “Being Church” in Ecumenical Conversation

Anna Marie Aagaard

Professor emeritus of systematic theology, University of Aarhus, Denmark

Fourth Annual Conference in Honor of Father Paul Wattson and Mother Lurana White

(Conference held at the **Centro Pro Unione**, Thursday, 13 December 2001)

Introduction

It is a particular honor for me to address you this evening in the house where so much of the thinking of Vatican II was tested in extensive discussions with Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox observers. Only after the Council, in 1968, did I become familiar with this hall, and the groups which in the early years after the Council occupied the Pamphilj palace—the Ladies of Bethany and IDOC, the International Documentation Center. It was on this floor and on the floor above that IDOC struggled to keep the then new periodical “*Concilium*” afloat and to interpret the Council to Christians around the world. At an IDOC board meeting I first heard it said, “*De jure* you are broke. *De facto* you will make it.” Subsequent ecumenical history has often reminded me of the sentence. Finances have been tight more than once in the ecumenical institutions with which I am familiar, but “*de jure* you are broke; *de facto* you will, make it” also makes an adequate summary of years of experiences in the ecumenical movement. *De jure*, the movement seems broke in the complacency with which most Christians remain divided. Christian unity has a hard time, and at the beginning of the new millennium most churches are preoccupied not with ecumenism, but with refining their own identity-sustaining traditions. *De facto*, however, the ecumenical movement will make it, but the churches’ part of making it will mean more hard work, than waiting for a miracle.

The title of my presentation, “In Defense of the Body,” may seem more than a little contrived, but I found no better way of indicating both an ecclesiological topic and my assessment of the scope and the direction of the hard work currently needed. I shall first apply the phrase to the current discussions about the church and the churches within the World Council of Churches (WCC). I shall concentrate on the Council’s self-understanding and the Orthodox-Protestant divide. Then I shall use the title as a key to some current interpretations of “being church” in the Oikoumene, and, finally, I shall stick my neck out and indicate the ecumenical strategy mostly needed “in defense of the body.”

The WCC and the churches

A fellowship of churches

The WCC is unique in bringing divided churches together from all over the globe, and the Council is unprecedented in nudging churches of both the Christian East and West towards common worship and witness. If the WCC was nothing more than a functional agency of service and socio-political advocacy, it would suffice to describe the organization in sociological terms, but the features of the Council as a living reality point to a bonding that goes beyond the nature of secular agencies.

The accumulated tradition of the WCC names this bonding a “fellowship of churches”. It is further described as “a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures and therefore seeks to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit”¹. A Trinitarian faith, a confession of Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, and, in most member churches, the rite of baptism in the name of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit: it is difficult to overlook the significance, indeed, *ecclesial* significance of a bonding that in terms of faith and the gifts of Spirit is “not nothing.” But experience with the WCC in the fifty years of its existence demonstrates that the “not nothing” of the bonding may be so elusive that it amounts to nothing more than a void far too easily labeled *koinonia*, the New Testament word for fellowship or communion (2 Cor 13:13).

Who is the “we”?

The Basis of the WCC speaks of “a fellowship of churches which confess...”. The churches, in plural, confess; not the fellowship. The “body” disappears behind the bodies; the fellowship empties into the divided churches. The formulation cannot but raise questions. Is there at all a “we” that confesses; a

¹For the “Basis” of the WCC, cf. M. KINNAMON and B.E. COPE, eds., *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva/Grand Rapids: WCC Publications/William B. Eerdmans, 1997) 468.

for-real fellowship, however frail and nigh impossible to describe? or must the WCC be described as a co-existence of churches which recognize the sin of their dividedness but cannot (or will not?) find the spiritual resources to overcome a logic of division which shapes their liturgical worship and their understanding of “being church”? Who is the “we” praying and worshipping God at the WCC’s services? Christians of both Eastern and Western traditions find the subject of the ecumenical worship nebulous — to say the least. More than Orthodox member churches assume that the WCC’s worshipping “we” in reality is a conglomeration of pious individuals, but few have voiced it so clearly as the Eastern Orthodox churches, when they, a few months before the 50th anniversary of the WCC, decided to downgrade their involvement in the Harare Assembly (December 1998): “Orthodox delegates will not participate in ecumenical services, common prayers, worship and other religious ceremonies at the Assembly”².

The internal contradictions of conciliar ecumenism, revealed by a Basis speaking of “a fellowship of churches which confess,” have repeatedly been addressed. In line with the Toronto Statement of 1950³, early attempts at defining the nature and vision of the Council have focused on articulating what the *Council* is not, but might become. They have denied an exclusive alternative between the Council as already “*being church*” and the Council as an *organization* with no significance beyond the pragmatic value of furthering an exchange of goods and ideas. There is something in between secularizing the Council and regarding it a manifestation of the *una sancta* of the creeds. Defining this “in between” has, however, proven to be difficult⁴.

Ecclesiological significance?

The most recent defense of the WCC as a body with an “ecclesiological significance comes from metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon. At a 1995 inter-Orthodox consultation he described the Council as “an event of communion” and substantiated his claim by reflecting on three marks that identify

²The Thessaloniki Statement, in T. FITZGERALD and P. BOUTENEFF, eds. *Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope. Orthodox Reflections on the Way to Harare* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998) 138.

³The negative formulations of the Toronto Statement of 1950 (what the Council is not) have stood the test of time, while the positive formulations have been either superseded or benignly neglected, cf. “The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches”, in M. KINNAMON and B.E. COPE, eds., *The Ecumenical Movement*, ... *op. cit.*, 463-468.

⁴Already the mothers and fathers of the Toronto Statement struggled with the “ecclesiological significance of the Council, cf. V. BOROVOY, “The Ecclesiastical Significance of the WCC: The Legacy and Promise of Toronto”, *The Ecumenical Review* 40, 3-4 (1988), reprinted in G. LIMOURIS, ed., *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism. Statements, Messages and Reports on the Ecumenical Movement 1902-1992* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994) 199-212. A defense of the ecclesial character of the WCC is in U. DUCHROW, *Konflikt um die Ökumene: Christusbekennnis in welcher Gestalt der ökumenischen Bewegung?* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1980) 255-300.

the Council as such “an event of communion”. It something to do with it stemming from faith in the Triune God and from Baptism; there is some progress towards acceptance of the Nicene Creed as the creedal basis of ecclesial unity, and there are common social and ecological activities that may indicate the adumbrations of a common vision⁵. To the esteemed ecumenist it follows that

we cannot go on for ever and ever holding different or contradictory views of the Church. It was wise to begin with the ecclesiological. “laissez-faire” of Toronto but it would be catastrophic to end with it... In the process of ecumenical reception the “fellowship” of member Churches will have to grow into a common vision and recognition of what the true Church is... The Toronto statement will have to be stripped of its ecclesiological pluralism. I do not agree with the view that the WCC should not develop an ecclesiology. On the contrary I believe this to be a priority for it.

Metropolitan John revives the old question about the relation between the WCC’s “*fellowship*” and the member *churches*. Who is the primary agent, the “we,” developing a common ecclesiology and thus growing into common recognition of the one, true church? Is the “we” the institutionalized fellowship with an evanescent “ecclesial” identity alongside or apart from the churches, or is the “we” particular churches striving to adopt a common ecclesiology and thereby manifest the unity of the body of Christ?

Churches in fellowship

Prolonged and often cumbersome processes resulted, in 1997, in a policy statement “Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches”⁶. The document affirms the nature of the WCC as a “fellowship of churches” but distinguishes between the fellowship and the organization:

The essence of the Council is the relationship of the churches to one another. The Council is the fellowship of churches on the way towards full *koinonia*. It has a structure and organization in order to serve as an instrument for the churches as they work towards *koinonia* in faith, life and witness (§3.5.2)

The Policy Statement makes the member churches themselves, not the Council, the primary agent of seeking the unity of the body of Christ. An Interim Report from the “Special Commission,” established by the Harare Assembly to deal with the Orthodox criticisms of the Council, repeats (rather bluntly)

⁵Metropolitan JOHN OF PERGAMON, “The Self-understanding of the Orthodox and Their Participation in the Ecumenical Movement” in G. LEMOPOULOS, ed., *The Ecumenical Movement, the Churches and the World Council of Churches. An Orthodox Contribution to the Reflection Process on “The Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC”* (Geneva: WCC Publications 1996) 42.

⁶WCC, September 1997.

The *member churches* are the subject of the quest for visible unity, not the Council.

The *member churches* teach and make doctrinal and ethical decisions, not the Council...

The report continues by speaking about a Council

that will hold churches together in an ecumenical space
— where trust can be built,
— where churches can test and develop their readings of the world, their own social practices, and their liturgical and doctrinal traditions while facing each other and deepening their encounter with each other” (§ 8)⁷.

These more recent reflections on the Council and the churches have laid to rest the older debates about the ecclesiological significance of the Council itself. The emphasis now lies on the churches and their responsibility for making the WCC a safe ecumenical space where churches will “give account to each other of being church” (Interim Report 6.1) and participate in developing both “the sensitivities and the language that will allow them to sustain a dialogue with each other” (Interim Report 8.3). These changes in ecumenical thinking did not come as a surprise. They were shaped concomitantly with the disappearance of modernity’s old certainties about a single system of truth based on universal reason and about history as single story with a single, coherent plot. Whatever the theological responses may be to post-modernity’s lurking nihilism also ecumenical theology has shred the illusion that there is some universal viewpoint, situated in no particular tradition and inhabited by an abstract “we,” from which the questions of Christian unity can be addressed. On the contrary: “Before there can be an articulable Oikoumene there is the resonance in which diverse local communities of faith recognize and share the forming, energizing power of the Holy Spirit”⁸. Before there is “fellowship” with some features of the Pauline *koinonia*, there are traditioned churches in which Christians learn (if they learn it) *thus* to worship God and identify what they have to do in the world so that the story they tell of the great things God has done (*cf.* Acts 2:11) becomes the story they inhabit. A “fellowship” which confesses can only gain substance by churches acting bilaterally or multilaterally in their local contexts. Rather than the perpetuation of a concept of the WCC as a global, nebulous something apart from the churches, a fellowship of churches presupposes particular churches practicing “being church” by breaking down the barriers that hinder their mutual recognition as churches sharing one faith, one Eucharistic body and one baptism for the remission of sins (Interim Report 8.6). Current ecclesiology within both the Orthodox and the Reformation traditions understands “being church” as at once a

⁷Special Commission, Interim Report. The documentation is available at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/special-01-e.html>.

⁸L.S. MUDGE, *The Church as Moral Community. Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate* (NY/Geneva: Continuum/WCC Publications, 1998) 129.

community and a history—a community embodying and passing along a story that shapes the language as well as the practices of self-giving love and forgiveness through which people gain and sustain their identity as Christian believers. Christian faith is ecclesial. The biblical narratives are not self-referential, but received in faith they shape a community capable of being the continuation of God’s story with human beings. In short: the generating events and the community generated cannot be separated.

The prophetic voice?

The emphasis on the churches themselves as the subject of any ecumenical movement on the move has exposed deep-seated differences within the Council’s Protestant membership⁹. The following lines capture the problem,

...there is... a danger for the ecumenical movement to be deserted because of its absence of relevance to the issues of our time... There are many, among the laity particularly, who would wish the ecumenical movement to deal with the whole inhabited world more than with the world of the churches¹⁰.

What is going on here? I think the lines speak to fears of silencing “the prophetic voice” of a Council able to go against the churches and speak to both the world and the churches¹¹. The quote sets the world of the churches over against the whole inhabited world with its issues relevant to human persons, and it puts an emphasis on the churches equal ecclesiastical navel-gazing. Assuming such fundamental polarity between world and church presupposes secular modernity’s belief in a wider and deeper and broader human community than the community in the body of Christ and a more unified world than the world that holds together in and because of Christ. “Social groups and movements” are consequently better positioned than the churches to witness to

⁹Naming WCC’s member churches is a daunting task. No member church can legitimately be referred to just as “non-Orthodox,” and neither the Anglican churches nor the Old Catholic church can legitimately be labeled “Protestants.” Here I use “Protestant” as a reference to mainline churches with an acknowledged Reformation heritage.

¹⁰*Cf.* Background Material, Special Commission (Jean Fischer).

¹¹*Cf.* More recently in WCC Central Committee Minutes, Potsdam March 2001.

a human community with no other limits than the human race¹², and most proponents of this view understand the optimal church-world relation as a grafting of Christian faith into the endeavors of social NGOs trying to mend the fabric of life. The consequences for “being church” are summed up by a Swedish theologian: “I think it is misleading to perceive the church as being able to create communities outside the general conditions of the world and of humanity”¹³. More is at work —and at stake— in this sentence than a reference to the changes of history.

The World Council’s Protestant member churches might share the knowledge that it takes distinctive social environments to shape distinctive identity, but there is no agreement on which communities help create what desired form of Christian identity. Confidence in faith-generating churches with an ecumenical commitment to develop their social practices while facing each other (Interim Report 8.4) is conspicuously absent in much protestant opposition to the Council’s emerging emphasis on facilitating community in and between the churches.

We have all it takes

Visions of an Oikoumene with churches as the primary agents of building community run, however, into more than one set of difficulties. For all the successes of the ecumenical movement the main divisions of the Christian church remain. Ecumenical parlance refers to families of churches (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, and Pentecostal/Evangelical), but the vocabulary only hides that churches continue to be divided¹⁴. Much happens ecumenically, but nothing changes, and most Christians are ecumenically indifferent. They couldn’t care less. Each attempt at doctrinal agreements and common witness, not to

speak of proposals of shared liturgical calendars, activates conflicts in the churches threatening to create new splits between the churches. The *de facto* preference for staying divided has not been reduced by a century of ecumenical endeavors and it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise because each of the divided churches maintains that, in principle, if not always in lived fact, it has all it takes to be truly the body of Christ in history.

In a review article American theologian Bruce Marshall comments on the state we’re in ecumenically: Churches take the integrity of their own particular ecclesial tradition for granted, as to both the absence of qualitative defects and the sufficiency for Christ-formed communal living. Bruce Marshall continues,

(Each church) is convinced that it has all it needs, doctrinally and otherwise, to be Christ’s faithful people. It has no defects which cuts to the heart, and certainly none which might be made good by coming to share a common Eucharistic life with another church. Convinced of our own self-sufficiency, we sense as divided churches no use for any goods we might receive from each other, and so in the end no need for each other¹⁵.

Churches may not agree on what is sufficient, doctrinally, liturgically or ethically, for “being church” with an ecclesial Christ-formed life, but each church perceives what it has as being self-supporting of the one holy church. Changes in ecclesial practice can consequently only be thought of as “our” corporate growth in holiness, and not as “our” corporate repentance and extension of mutual forgiveness.

Konrad Raiser, the General Secretary of the WCC, formulates the ensuing problem for the WCC by asking: “In what sense can we continue to speak of a “fellowship of churches” as long as the ecclesial quality of the separated communities is uncertain?” The affirmation of the fellowship remains weak, Konrad Raiser claims, as long as it is not sustained by member churches’ commitment to one another in the center of their ecclesial identity, and, he continues, precisely at this point we encounter the greatest challenges to the WCC and other conciliar bodies¹⁶. If “being church” in conciliar fellowship means commitment to one another in the center of ecclesial identity, how can “a fellowship of churches” come into existence, when some member churches regard other member churches as *essentially* incomplete?

Being church in a fellowship of churches

An exchange between two Danish bishops points to the theological center of the problem. Responding to a Danish Lutheran bishop’s argument with *Dominus Iesus*, the Roman Catholic bishop of Copenhagen suggested that the dialogue be continued in respect for each other’s ecclesiological self-

¹²I am convinced (but I cannot verify the claim) that “independent groups under the roof of the church” during the last decade of the Communist regime in the former DDR helped, decisively, to shape the thinking on “groups and movements” within the WCC. On the situation in the former DDR, cf. D. STEELE, “At the Front Lines of the Revolution: East Germany’s Churches Give Sanctuary and Succor to the Purveyors of Change”, in D. JOHNSTON and C. SAMPSON, eds., *Religion, The Missing Link of Statecraft* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1994) 119-152, esp. 141: “In the case of the independent groups under the roof of the church,... the themes of “peace,” “justice,” and “integrity of creation” taken directly from the church’s conciliar process) became sacred, transcendent ideas... these groups had a very definite religious function that was largely informed by the Lutheran tradition, despite the fact that many of the participants did not attend church. The power of the vision of the “alternate culture that is, the one which had grown up under the safe haven and influence of the church, would have been enough to mobilize the crowd and incline it to conform with the behavior implied in the themes of peace, justice, and integrity of creation”.

¹³E. GERLE, “Contemporary Globalization and Its Ethical Challenges” *The Ecumenical Review* 52, 2 (2000) 163.

¹⁴Cf. U. KÖRTNER, *Herder Korrespondenz* 54, 11 (2000) 562: “...die ökumenische Lage hat sich seit den achtziger Jahren stark gewandelt. Nicht erst seit *Dominus Iesus* liegt offen zutage, dass sich die ökumenische Bewegung in der Krise findet. *Von Aufbruchstimmung ist kaum etwas zu bemerken*” (my italics).

¹⁵B. MARSHALL, “Review Essay: The Divided Church and Its Theology” *Modern Theology* 16, 3 (2000) 163.

¹⁶Cf. Report of the General Secretary, WCC, Central Committee 2001, available on <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/who/cc2001/g2-e.html>

understanding. To which the Lutheran bishop replied, “Does it mean that we must respect that the Roman Catholic Church does not respect us as a church?... I will accept that the attitude exists in the Roman Catholic Church... but nothing can shake (the Lutheran bishops’) understanding that our Lutheran church is a church”¹⁷.

I have no intention of re-opening the discussion on *Dominus Iesus* but I do wish to question the wisdom of having a conciliar fellowship of churches entertain ecclesiological neutrality to the extent that some members of a Council of Churches regard other member churches as not being church. Let me begin to sketch an argument by suggesting an answer to the question: Why does the de-churchifying of what Vatican II names ecclesial communities make these churches react so vehemently to *Dominus Iesus*? What’s new? Ever since Vatican II and the entry of the Orthodox churches into the WCC (1961) the ecumenical movement has confronted Anglican and Protestant churches with a vocabulary that makes “church” a word carrying analogical meanings. It may mean one thing when applied to own church and own family of churches and an incomplete or deficient ecclesial entity when applied to other churches. The more unexamined the own ecclesiology has been, the less attention have churches within the Reformation traditions paid to the many meanings of “church.” That picture has, however, changed dramatically, because the last decade has seen most mainline churches with Reformation heritage concentrate on ecclesiology and “being church” in a radically changing world. Having gained a sense of the story of faith as an ecclesial story and the concrete, traditioned church as a peculiar community nurturing a peculiar people, it becomes a serious matter to be de-churchified. As long as the fellowship of the WCC was some nebulous universal supposed to be in the process of becoming a concrete, embodied *koinonia*, it didn’t matter what member churches thought about each other, provided all churches put in some efforts to sustain the Council itself. The meaning of a conciliar fellowship of churches struggling to become together the *eucharistia* they celebrate evaporates however, if the Council’s member churches de-churchify each other.

If “joining a council of churches means accepting the challenge to give account to each other of being church and to articulate what is meant by the visible unity of the church” (Interim Report 6.1) the churches in the Orthodox families cannot avoid the sharp question now being asked by the Special Commission: “Is there a space for other “churches” in Orthodox ecclesiology? How would this space and its limits be described?” (Interim Report 6.2).

The Jubilee Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church addresses the question in a declaration on “Basic Principles of the Attitude of the Russian Orthodox Church toward the other Christian Confessions” (August 2000)¹⁸. The declaration begins,

¹⁷Cf. *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Dec. 21, 2000 (in Danish).

¹⁸Available at <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org/ru/s2000e13.htm>

The Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ established by our Lord and Savior Himself, the Church confirmed and sustained by the Holy Spirit, the Church about which the Savior Himself has said: “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt 16:18). She is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the keeper and provider of the Holy Sacraments throughout the world, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim 3:15).

The Jubilee Council does not make any new or exceptional ecclesiological claims. It repeats the Orthodox position that the communion of Orthodox churches is the One, true Church of Christ in history:

The Orthodox Church is the true Church in which the Holy Tradition and the fullness of God’s saving grace are preserved intact. She has preserved the heritage of the apostles and holy fathers in its integrity and purity. She is aware that her teaching, liturgical structures and spiritual practice are the same as those of the apostolic proclamation and the Tradition of the Early Church (1,18).

It is an integral part of this Orthodox position that “communities which have fallen away from Orthodoxy have never been viewed as fully deprived of the grace of God... (In) spite of the rupture of unity, there remains a certain incomplete fellowship which serves as a pledge of a return to unity in the Church, to catholic fullness and oneness” (1,15). Various rites of reception (through baptism, through chrismation, through repentance) reveal the Orthodox Church’s graduated relations to the “non-Orthodox confessions” (1,17). There is, indeed, a space for the WCC’s non-Orthodox churches in Orthodox ecclesiology. It is a space of separation from the one, true Church. It is a space of “division or schism” which always “implies a certain measure of falling away from the plenitude of the Church” (1,14).

It is possible to argue that any ecumenical movement *with* the Orthodox churches ends at this point. By explicitly asking the Orthodox member churches to situate other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology the WCC’s Old Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches can only expect to hear about schism. The WCC’s emphasis on “being church in fellowship” may precipitate an ending—a “point of no return” in more than one sense of the phrase.

The WCC’s current ecclesiological debate cuts both ways, however. Orthodox refusal to acquiesce in the ever growing number of Protestant member churches makes it imperative for Protestants to answer the question: how does your affirmation of the one, catholic church affect your “being church in fellowship”? (Interim Report 6.3).

The first answer to the question must admit that the faith affirmation has limited impact on the understanding of the fellowship of churches. None of the recent doctrinal agreements between churches of the Reformation tradition has prompted these churches to question their denominational autonomy and

confessional self-sufficiency. The unity of the body of Christ disappeared long ago into the defense of the theological systems with convenient assumptions of a disembodied, invisible church. The one, catholic church of the baptismal Creeds disappeared into the abstracts of philosophical traditions where universals live a life of their own.

Drawing upon recent studies with emphasis on an ecclesial mediation of Christian faith, Michael Kinnamon focuses his attempt at an answer on the catholicity of the church¹⁹. Kinnamon asks the Reformation and Free churches, now in dialogue with the Orthodox, how they can think of themselves as “catholic,” when most lack concrete forms of communion with other churches and a good many have no connection to the Body of Christ across time through an apostolic succession in ministry”?

The WCC’s Uppsala Assembly (1968) understands catholicity to be “the quality by which the church expresses the fullness, the integrity, and the totality of its life in Christ”. Most Protestant members of the WCC will link catholicity with an emphasis on each gathered community of baptized believers as the catholic church in which the whole Christ is present, through faith, in human time and history. This combination of fullness and local community means that only in the eschatological consummation will the church of Christ be realized fully and completely as catholic. Meanwhile, the church must exist as the ever reforming church—a church that avoids to identify divine character with specific historic expressions of the church. Ministries, offices, structures are contingent on Christ, the Word, and connective structures are supposed to help keeping the legitimate diversity within the bonds of biblical faith and the acknowledged authority of the ecumenical creeds.

The second half of Kinnamon’s essay deals with “a council of churches (*conseil*)—locally, nationally, regionally, and globally” that will challenge “the temptation toward confessional or denominational autonomy” and add “a crucial dimension to the understanding and expression of catholicity...”

If councils have ecclesiological significance (*cf.* John of Pergamon), because, through them, the church can be built up and its catholicity more fully expressed, we are back at the question: why the lack of concrete forms of communion with other churches?

A textbook reply would be: a conciliar existence may be a desideratum, but a conciliar existence does not belong to the *esse* of the church. There is no “divine character” (no necessity) linked with conciliarity or with other provisional representation of the Kingdom. The “extra-calvinisticum” (God’s freedom *vis-à-vis* the mediation of grace) still applies.

But Kinnamon’s paper opens up for a more constructive reply to the questions about Protestant preference for autonomy and denominationalism. Kinnamon writes: “The church in history always fails to express the full character of Christ...this means that catholicity involves repentance...”

¹⁹Prof. Michael Kinnamon is a former Executive Secretary of the WCC’s Faith and Order Commission. His paper was discussed at the Special Commission meeting in Berekfürdör, Hungary, Nov 15-20, 2001.

The politics of pardon

It is premature to prophesy about the future of the Orthodox-Protestant encounter within the WCC. Unless one harbors the illusion that the present crisis will evaporate quietly and leave the Council unscathed, there is, however, no way around beginning the practice of “being church together” in a fellowship of churches. The question is: what would it take that the divided churches have not already tried with so little effect?

In the current Orthodox-Protestant debate metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima has suggested,

Christians have to begin to know the truth, the “*aletheia*” of the Good News, to believe and to love the *Ecclesia*, the Church of Christ, to embrace it even in difficult circumstances and painful moments of its history, to suffer, witness and confess it, to defend it even if martyrdom be the cost. This is the Christian way of worshipping...²⁰.

I understand metropolitan Gennadios to say: What about beginning to *love* the church? not just some abstract idea of one, holy church behind or beyond the concrete assemblies of the faithful, but the living and suffering church of living and suffering believers who cannot but in a confession of sins give up every idea of successful performance of a Christ-formed living. What about putting a stop to separating the holiness of the church from holiness in the church? what about learning from Dietrich Bonhoeffer that “the only profitable relationship to others... is one of love, that is the will to hold fellowship with them?”²¹

The pastoral and ecumenical consequences of beginning to be churches together by practicing ecclesial love are far-reaching. It would imply—with Bonhoeffer—to give priority to the love of the other in God and situating the knowledge of another within the bonding of love. Beginning with the will to hold fellowship with “the other” will, in turn, situate the problem of divisions not in conceptual divergences, but in the lack of ecclesial love.

In his erudite, difficult, and deeply disturbing book *The End of the Church* Anglican theologian Ephraim Radner argues that from the will to divide and the practice of living apart emerged that “separative logic” which buttressed the divisions in the Western Church. The theological divides were not the cause of the splits, but the results of the cooling of love. Reflecting on medieval theology’s decoupling of the Eucharist from the church’s corporality Radner writes

particularly of late, there has grown an increased appreciation of the subordination of such conceptual divergences to social realities, which themselves embody theological commitments far more pointedly than does their

²⁰Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches, Documents from the Meeting of Subcommittee II, WCC 2000.

²¹D. BONHOEFFER, “Ten Years After” in *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: Fontana Press, 1959. English original SCM Press, 1953) 141.

verbal articulation. And these are the realities that ecclesial division contradicts in a basic fashion, acting as a ground to theological development, and not merely as its response. In other words, it is possible that the contradiction of ecclesial love in the sixteenth century in and of itself altered the significance of a theological terminology that before that time... was bounded by a realm of meaning wholly divergent from its postdivisional articulation²².

But what would it look like, if divided churches began approaching “being churches together in fellowship” by practicing ecclesial love? Some would say that it is a moot question, because any living and lived communal confession of the one, holy church cannot be divorced from the inherited theological systems. The “we versus them exclusions” have been built into the oppositional systems of habits and institutions in which every ecclesial community is deeply convinced that it has all it takes for successfully performing the body of Christ. Ecclesial love between divided churches does not make sense. Exactly because the unity of the church must begin with the concrete historical realities it seems futile to assume that Christians should be capable of unlearning the logic and the practices or division.

And yet? And yet there is a way to act in the “always already destructive structures of ecclesial unrelatedness” which assumes that they can be broken. This way is called “forgiveness.”

Shortly after World War II Hannah Arendt, the Jewish philosopher, turned to the predicament of human action. In *The Human Condition* (1951) she argues that there is a redemption, as she names it, from the irreversibility of all human action, namely forgiveness. If women and men could not forgive and receive forgiveness for the consequences of what was done, we would be confined to one single deed, from which we would never recover. We would remain forever its victims. Forgiveness is, according to Hannah Arendt, a human faculty. But nobody can forgive himself or herself. Forgiveness thus belongs to the social conditions of being human, and it can never be predicted:

(Forgiveness) is the only reaction that acts in an unexpected way and thus retains, though being a reaction, something of the original character of action. Forgiving, in other words, is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven (241).

Hannah Arendt’s seminal analyses moved “forgiveness” from the religious/Christian context into the political context. Forgiveness became a secular possibility — in international law; in criminal law and in psychology. All-pervasive evils like the Holocaust, the apartheid regime and ethnic cleansings demanded new politics,

²²E. RADNER, *The End of the Church. A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1998) 230. Bruce Marshall’s review article (note 15) refers to Radner’s book.

and new politics can only emerge from a change of practices. It is in this context that the efforts to devise a politics of pardon are situated.

I am convinced that the current theological interest in forgiveness has been prompted by political philosophy and new social practices. Nothing indicates that churches practicing forgiveness of each other have provided secular societies with tested practices able to break the irreversibility of past actions.

Neither a particular church nor an existing ecumenical community appears in recent literature as the “we” of Jesus’s prayer: Forgive us the wrong we have done, as we have forgiven those who wronged us. Prayers for God’s forgiveness abound in current theological reflection and liturgical material, even prayers of God’s forgiveness of sins committed in the past by individual believers in one church against sisters and brothers in another church. But an ecclesial public does not appear as the “we” extending and receiving forgiveness in relation to another ecclesial public. Sins, also social sins, remain the sins of an individual. That churches begin to forgive each other for wounding the body and keeping it divided may not be an impossible, but in the state we’re in, a very improbable scenario. It has not yet dawned upon the divided churches that forgiveness may be the only action that can break the irreversibilities of our sinful divisions. The secular states are beginning to learn it²³.

But there is in more recent ecumenical history evidence of at least one occasion, where divided churches turned to an act of forgiveness. Walter Kasper is aware of its ecumenical significance. In an 1987 article Kasper revisits the lifting of the mutual excommunication of 1054 between Rome and Constantinople²⁴. Kasper quotes Orthodox metropolitan Meliton who at the time (at the very end of Vatican II) insisted that the act did not imply any changes in “dogmatic thinking, canonical order, divine worship, and Church life generally.” What happened in St. Peter’s on Dec. 7, 1965 was an encounter “conducive to the restoration of charity, to obliterate the grievous acts of the past which then banished charity between the two churches, helped to break their links, and in time became symbolic of their divisions”²⁵. The act of lifting the mutual excommunication was an act of ecclesial love allowing for the purification of memories, The “Common Declaration” of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras identifies this act of love as “expressive of justice and mutual forgiveness” opening up “in a spirit of trust, esteem,

²³Cf. R.G. HELMICK and R.L. PETERSEN eds., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation* (London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001).

²⁴W. KASPER, “Lehrverurteilungen kirchentrennen? Überlegungen zu der Studie des Ökumenischen Arbeitskreises” in K. ALAND and S. MEURER, eds., *Wissenschaft und Kirche. Festschrift für Eduard Lohse, Texte und Arbeiten zur Bibel*, 4 (Bielefeld: Luther Verlag, 1989) esp. 200-201.

²⁵Cf. E.J. STORMON, ed. and transl., *Towards the Healing of Schism. The Sees of Rome and Constantinople. Public Statements and Correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, 1958-1984*, Ecumenical Documents, 3 (NY: Paulist Press, 1987) 118-119.

and mutual charity” a dialogue aiming at restoration of communion in faith and sacramental life²⁶.

I know of no other reference to *churches* forgiving each other in an act of trust and love and thus, by leaving illusions about their own successful performance of Christ-formed community, begin

to deal constructively with a past of divisions.

I know of no other references to *churches* beginning exactly right: beginning with love and forgiveness, the only Christian practice through which the occurrence of community, in pursuit of the things that make for peace (Rom 15), may be mediated.

²⁶*Ibid.* 128.



Lights and Shadows over Catholic Ecumenism

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We are now one year and 22 days into a new century, which gives us some perspective on the century just past. The distance is surely not enough for marking the truly defining moments of the past century and seeing them in meaningful connection. But still, a simple chronicle of church-related events suggests that, among all else, the Twentieth was *the* ecumenical century.

The Ecumenical Century

One starts with the founding in 1910, at Edinburgh, of the International Missionary Council. Moving along the time-line, one has to mark 1948, for the founding at Amsterdam of the World Council of Churches. These are churches which, as the *Basis* of their fellowship and collaboration, “confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” — A remarkable way to come together, later acknowledged by a clear echo of this World Council text in Vatican II’s *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 20.

In the chronicle, Vatican II looms large, where the delegated observers gave an ecumenical dimension to each day’s assembly in St. Peter’s¹. The Council’s Decree on Ecumenism remains a major conciliar text of assessment, of methodology, and above all of commitment for Catholic ecumenism, as made clear by its updated re-presentation in Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Ut unum sint* of 1995.

A month ago, from this lectern, Anna Marie Aagaard reminded us of the singular action taken on penultimate day of the Council, December 7, 1965, when the churches of Rome and Constantinople, heretofore estranged, lifted their mutual excommunications². This act intended to consign to oblivion a sizeable residue of suspicion and hostility, so that the dialogue of love

might begin, leading to a theological dialogue of truth between the Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church.

Late in the century, one topic of dialogue matured, after twenty years of work, to the point that on Oct. 31, 1999, at Augsburg, Lutherans and Catholics could sign their Joint Declaration of consensus on the doctrine of justification, solemnly confessing together that “by grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work, and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works”³.

These are bright lights in the ecumenical century (and others could be easily mentioned). But at the end, during the one-hundredth and final year of the century, in 2000, some clouds moved from the horizon to cast shadows over areas of ecumenical life and action.

In the World Council of Churches, during 2000, the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation, a group 60 experienced representatives, held five tension-filled meetings. By the end of 2000, the process had brought to light, with all desirable clarity, major discomforts of the 21 Eastern Orthodox and Ancient Oriental member-Churches of the WCC. These touch on the ways of prayer and worship at WCC assemblies, which include forms in which Orthodox Christians cannot in conscience participate. The Orthodox would have World Council make decisions on issues touching doctrine and ethics not by “parliamentary” majorities but by a genuinely “conciliar” consensus. The Orthodox are concerned that member-churches really ground their lives in the faith set forth in the World Council *Basis*, with its profession of the Trinity and of Jesus as God and Savior⁴. At any rate, this “shadow over Geneva” is bringing home that conclusions reached in one church—about Scripture, the Creeds, and forms of Christian life—can in fact weaken or even impair

¹ T.F. STRANSKY, “Paul VI and the Delegated Observers/Guests to Vatican II,” in *Paolo VI e l’ecumenismo. Colloquio internazionale di studio, Brescia 25-26-27 settembre 1998*, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto Paolo VI (Brescia/Rome: Istituto Paolo VI/Studium, 2001) 118-158.

² A.M. AAGAARD, “In Defense of the Body,” Conference at the Centro Pro Unione in Honor of Father Paul Watson and Mother Lurana White, 13 December 2001, *Bulletin-Centro Pro Unione*, 61 (2002) 3-10.

³ Joint Declaration, no. 15, cited the handsome Eerdmans edition, The Lutheran World Federation and The Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge UK, 2000) 15.

⁴ A generous offering of documentation from the first year’s labors of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation is give at the internet site www.wcc-coe.org, under the rubric “Who are we?” in the box “WCC Self-Understanding and Policy”, giving the section “Special Commission”.

fellowship with other communities also making the ecumenical journey.

The WCC Special Commission is a wrenching experience for those committed to seeing it through to the conclusion planned for this year. Anna Marie Aagaard gave testimony in December to the impact of the Orthodox challenge, raising questions about the ecclesial identity and ecumenical goals of the Anglican and Protestant majority, about repenting for wounding the ecclesial body, and about the consequences entailed in truly loving the Church of Christ in this world.

Other shadows over the ecumenical landscape appeared during 2000. In July, at Emmitsburg Maryland, the 8th plenary session of the Orthodox-Catholic commission for theological dialogue ended in an impasse over questions about the Catholic Oriental Churches. The dialogue-session left such a negative impression that one *peritus* of the commission, Dimitri Salachas, had to clarify in *Il Regno*, that the dialogue *has not been broken off*, whatever may be the reports of discord and recriminations voiced at Emmitsburg⁵. But the Commission does face a challenge of “re-starting its engine”, so it can deal with the important issue, already prepared for discussion, of how the sacramental structure of the church comes to expression in synodal forms of authority.

Then in September 2000, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, in which Ch. IV, treated “The Unicity and Unity of the Church,” and most readers will know that this one chapter brought on countless expressions of aggravation, offense, and dissent by spokespersons of churches with which the Catholic Church is conducting bilateral dialogues. But more about this below.

So the Twentieth Century ended with the ecumenical landscape being well-lighted but also shadowed in certain sectors. To now probe this situation more in detail, passing into our new century, I want to focus selectively on just two areas, out of many, of Catholic ecumenical engagement, first to identify in each the bright lights of progress, then to name some darker shadows, but also to point to promising efforts underway to dissipate the shadows.

Broadening the Consensus on Justification

I mentioned already the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification. Today, a new chapter is unfolding in the history of that declaration of 1999. What was signed in Augsburg has become something of a pole-star in the ecumenical firmament. It is attracting others. In November 2001, a four-sided world-level Consultation was held in Columbus, Ohio, at which Lutheran and Catholic representatives took up, with representative of two other confessional communions, the possibility of the other two, by way of procedures now taking shape, coming to adhere to the consensus on justification. The two communions are the World Methodist Council (77 member-churches) and the World Alliance of Reformed (or Presbyterian) Churches (with 215 member-

⁵ Information on and reactions to the Emmitsburg meeting are listed in the Fall 2001 issue (No. 60) of this *Bulletin*, “Bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues,” Sixteenth Supplement, 37f.

churches). Processes are now beginning by which they may become, along with the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, signatories of the declared consensus on God’s justifying work in human lives⁶.

From one perspective this is not too surprising. Both the Methodist Council and the Reformed Alliance have carried on bilateral theological dialogues with the Lutheran Federation and the Catholic Church, dialogues which have already expressed a large measure of consensus on justification, with characteristic theological differences around this center. The differences come from special emphases of one partner, which however the other partner can appreciate, without adopting them. The Lutheran-Methodist document of 1984, *The Church: Community of Grace*, features four paragraphs of central consensus combined with different emphases on “Salvation by grace through faith”⁷. Also, the Reformed-Roman Catholic bilateral dialogue issued in 1990 the report, *Toward a Common Understanding of the Church*, containing a “common confession of faith”, both in Jesus Christ as sole Mediator and Reconciler of humankind with God and, most remarkably, on “Justification by Grace, through Faith”⁸.

These bilaterals are similar to the process that led to the Joint Declaration itself, namely, earlier Lutheran-Catholic dialogues on justification by theologians, who—it turned out—prepared the way for an affirmation at the highest level of their churches. In the Joint Declaration the churches received the dialogue-results, so that the consensus may be widely know and enter into the lived religiosity of neighboring Catholic and Lutheran parishes and affect members of the two communions.

Now the question is whether Methodists and Reformed-Presbyterians can move from the preparations in the bilaterals through a similar process leading to official “reception” in their churches of a consensus with Lutherans and Catholics on justification.

Representatives at Columbus of the Methodist Council and the Reformed Alliance recognized the signing of the Joint Declaration as a watershed in Church history. To be sure, the Declaration of consensus on justification does not create full communion between the member-churches of the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, but it remains a momentous step, because these two bodies had issued condemnations with a

⁶ The Anglican Communion was represented at the Columbus consultation by a single observer. An Anglican-Catholic consensus on justification is worked out in “Salvation and the Church”, completed by ARCIC II in 1986, and given in J. GROS, H. MEYER, and W.G. RUSCH, eds., *Growth in Agreement II. Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations at the World Level, 1982-1998*, Faith & Order Paper, 187 (Geneva/Grand Rapids: WCC/Eerdmans, 2000), 315-325.

⁷ “The Church: Community of Grace,” Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue 1979-1984, in *Growth in Agreement II*, 200-218, esp. nos. 23-27.

⁸ “Towards a Common Understanding of the Church,” Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Second Phase, 1984-1990, in *Growth in Agreement II*, 780-818, esp. nos. 64-79.

church-dividing effect. Lutherans and Catholics had kept these 16th Century “anathemas” on the books for over 400 years. The simplified but antagonistic formulae on “faith alone” and “merit of salvation by good works” had long had a divisive effect in theological education and catechetical instruction of Lutherans and Catholics.

But the Joint Declaration of Augsburg, based on minute examination of official Lutheran and Catholic teaching, is an act by which the two bodies—formally, publicly, and in an act of shared confession before God—express agreement without reservation on the core-truths of God’s forgiving and renewing grace. Then the Declaration shows that when Catholics and Lutherans articulate different theologies of God’s word and faith, of sin and grace, of assurance and good works, what they teach are not mutually exclusive doctrines, but in fact compatible differences.

Truly a watershed, as a consensus in the substance of faith based on God’s revelation, while admitting differences in the manner of further explication, based on the different “cultures” of the two communions. It is a prime example of discovering unity on a truth of faith, while retaining diversity in the way this faith is elaborated theologically, but this diversity is reconciled while remaining diverse. In a short-hand designation, it is “a differentiated consensus”.

At Columbus, Methodist leaders were very clear on wanting to be associated with the graced good work of Augsburg and wanting to take part in the movement forward from it. They can subscribe to the Declaration, but they also bring an enrichment. Their doctrinal heritage adds emphases on holiness, on “fruits of the Spirit” in human lives (Gal 5:22), and on our rejoicing before God in his gift of reconciliation. One Methodist at Columbus, Geoffrey Wainwright, found the Lutheran-Catholic agreement at Augsburg notably lacking “joy in the Lord” over His gifts.

The idea is not to change the Joint Declaration, which stands as signed at Augsburg, but to bring to it an official Methodist statement of adherence to the consensus, perhaps along with a Methodist “Annex”, similar to the explanatory Annex already appended to the Declaration⁹.

The Reformed delegation at Columbus was a diverse group: from Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil, Germany, and the United States. They brought a span of different opinions, leading to a lively exchange. Considerable clarity came from the Catholic side, in George Tavard’s careful survey of justification in Calvin, in the Reformed Confessions, and in the “concordats” of altar and pulpit fellowship between bodies like the Presbyterian Church USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Clearly a Reformed “annex” to the Joint Declaration would speak of God’s call of justified persons to obedience in good works unto His glory. But the most serious issue, especially urgent for Reformed churches in the Southern hemisphere, is the connection between God’s justification of humans and the promotion of justice in this world. It must come out that God’s grace is highly relevant for people whose lives are enveloped by a web of evil and exploitation. Justification has ethical, especially

social ethical, consequences

The Lutheran-Catholic Declaration confesses *a truth* about God’s saving work, and announces our agreement on how this unfolds. This is right to do, something good in itself, not good *for what* it promotes in the world. Further, it is hard indeed to move from our saving faith in Christ to draw out mandates of social action.

But against this, one Reformed intervention underscored the bond between the truth of faith, the vitality of hope, and the costly outpouring of self in love. Christian existence in this world is by faith in God who is merciful beyond all human deserving, but faith is linked essentially with hope and love. The world as populated by many despairing people. The message of gratuitous justification is what the whole Bible proclaims, namely, God’s fidelity to his human creatures, who therefore can keep their hopes alive, even in their broken and needy condition.

From this perspective, the Joint Declaration leaves significant traits of the God of revelation hidden among its presuppositions, and does not go on to underscore that persons made righteous by God are taken up as witnesses and agents into God’s project of healing a whole human race and promoting his reign of justice and peace.

So there is a shadow over our Joint Declaration. The Consultation made it clear that the Methodists and Reformed, as they move toward association with the consensus, have significant insights to bring. Catholics and Lutherans have to admit that their Joint Declaration is not complete in its witness to God’s saving work. But how to dissipate the shadow and incorporate new lights while respecting the integrity of the Augsburg Declaration?

One way to promote harmony is for Catholics to explicate the vision of human life set forth in Vatican II’s *Gaudium et spes*, where the term “justification” does not appear, but its reality is present. The Pastoral Constitution speaks of persons restored to dignity in Christ, loved personally by the Father and anointed by the Spirit, and so empowered to struggle daily against evil. Christ gives new depth to human solidarity, uniting believers in the Paschal Mystery of his movement through death to resurrection. Essential to God’s plan is our activity in preserving and developing creation, but, in *Gaudium et spes*, it is God’s grace and Spirit, given in justification, that “quickens, purifies, and strengthens the generous aspirations of humankind to make life more humane”. For “the Spirit makes human beings free, ready to put aside love of self and integrate earthly resources into human life” (GS 38).

Our shared confession on justification by grace, with empowerment for good works, rests in fact on faith in Jesus Christ crucified and risen as the definitive word about human life and the key to tackling the main problems of the world today (GS 10, 45). — At Columbus, such a vision opened up a “lighted corridor” of a fresh approach to the consensus on justification for the new participants.

At the end, the participants saw the Consultation as a good beginning, but the way ahead is complicated, if only because each of the four partner-communions has its own method of decision-making. The questions raised, especially about ethics, justice, and hope, require further work, beginning with time for “process-

⁹ *Joint Declaration*, 43-47.

ing” the new perspectives opened up in the exchanges.

As the consultation closed, all had a heightened sense of the importance for the credibility of Christian witness in the world that it be made in the harmony of many voices. And for this witness, doctrinal agreements have a role in publicly reconciling bodies of Christians whose relations have been scarred by past condemnations of each other as being unfaithful to God’s word of revelation.

Shadows do not come only from our Protestant partners. One challenge comes from Rome itself, in a recent article in which Franciscan Fr. Adriano Garuti takes a stand against “differentiated consensus” as a viable ecumenical method, since it does not, in his judgment, lead to a common profession of faith in its integrity¹⁰. This intervention places a large question-mark beside the Joint Declaration, which is precisely a work of differentiated consensus.

But this article touches on just one issue of doctrinal difference, that of the Petrine-Papal primacy, without examining other precedents. After all, differentiated consensus was not invented in treating justification with the Lutheran World Federation, but appeared earlier in Pope John Paul II’s common declarations of faith with the Patriarchs of Ancient Oriental Churches (Syrian, Assyrian), which have long held themselves back from subscribing to the formulations of the Council of Chalcedon. But in visits of 1984 and 1994, the Pope and the Oriental Patriarchs affirm themselves to be one in faith, notwithstanding theological differences regarding the Incarnation of the Word of God¹¹. This seems to be a precedent at the highest level for the labored reconciliation of Lutheran-Catholic differences over justification.

Communio-ecclesiology

Today, numerous dialogues are underway *on the church itself*. Illumination comes to many of them from the emergence of a single leitmotif to guide the approach. This has been a natural evolution, without a pre-conceived plan developed by theologians. The development began from the many images of the church and the different motifs featured in the confessional documents of the churches and then moves toward coherence. The widely-accepted leitmotif is *communio-ecclesiology*.

There is today broad agreement that the church is (1) a communion—a sharing, participation of many—in professing the apostolic faith, in one baptism and further sacramental life, served by those designated for ministry; (2) a communion realized locally, regionally, and universally in the world; (3) a communion of present-day churches with those of the past because the Apostolic Gospel and Tradition have been handed on and received; and (4) a communion as well, as expressed in every Eucharist, between the church today and the saints and martyrs

¹⁰ A. GARUTI, “Né ritorno né ‘consenso differenziato’,” *Antonianum* 76, 4 (2001) 551-560. A longer study from the same author is *Primato del Vescovo di Roma e dialogo ecumenico*, Spicilegium Pontificii Athenaei Antoniani, 35 (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 2000). Fr. Garuti is *Capo Ufficio* of the doctrinal section of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

¹¹ The texts are in *Growth in Agreement II*, 691f., 711f.

who are one with God and the Risen Christ, and so in full communion with each other, in life, glory, and praise¹². — Our ecumenical movement is from the *true or real, but sadly incomplete*, communion between our earthly churches—in faith, sacraments, ministry—toward *full* communion.

The penetration of this thinking into recent dialogues is notable, even breath-taking. It dominated the first documents of the Orthodox-Catholic theological commission: *The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Holy Trinity* (Munich, 1982) and then *The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church* (Valamo, 1988). The Third Pentecostal-Catholic dialogue reported in 1989 on *Perspectives on Koinonia*. The Disciples of Christ - Roman Catholic dialogue issued *The Church as Communion in Christ* (St. Louis, 1992), while the Anglican-Methodist dialogue produced *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion* in 1996, the same year that ARCIC II gave us *Church as Communion* (Dublin, 1996)¹³. Other dialogues could be added, such as the recent Lutheran-Catholic study in Germany, *Communio Sanctorum* (2000).

The 1991 Canberra Assembly of the World Council affirmed basic principles in “The Church as *koinonia*: Gift and Calling”, which then oriented the Santiago de Compostela World Conference of Faith and Order in 1993, on *koinonia* in faith, life, and witness. The Faith and Order study of *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, now developing, states that, “The notion of *koinonia* (communion) has become fundamental for revitalizing a common understanding of the nature of the Church and its visible unity”¹⁴.

To be sure, *communio* thinking is not present with the same intensity in all dialogues, being weaker where non-episcopal communities are involved. Conversations with Evangelicals place less emphasis on sacramental communion and more on communion in mission, and even lead to expressions from the evangelical side that, yes, evangelical Christians *are in communion* with members of other churches, that is, those who are truly converted to Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

This development has the advantage of highlighting a cluster of New Testament texts. Scripture shows that a “*communio ecclesiology*” is not just one “image” or “model” among others, but is instead the original form of life together that Jesus Christ, by

¹² The fourth dimension of “eschatological” ecclesial communion entered the bilateral dialogues with brief references in the Orthodox-Catholic Munich document of 1982 (I, 4c; III,1; *Growth in Agreement II*, 653, 657, it appeared in no. 48 of ARCIC II-II’s *Church as Communion* (1990; *Growth in Agreement II*, 340), and then received emphatic treatment in the encyclical *Ut unum sint*, no. 84. Most recently, it has been developed in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue in Germany, and expressed in Ch. VII (“Gemeinschaft der Heiligen — über den Tod hinaus,” no. 220) of *Communio Sanctorum. Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft der Heiligen* (Paderborn/Frankfurt am Main: Bonifatius/Lembeck, 2000) 107.

¹³ All of the documents are given in *Growth in Agreement II*.

¹⁴ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church. A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper, 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998) 24.

his Spirit, gave to his followers.

First, the opening of the *First Letter of John* gives apostolic witness to the word of life made manifest in Jesus, “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have communion (*koinonia*) with us; and our *koinonia* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3). Here the Apostles’ Gospel calls believers together, to assemble them in common adherence to the word of life, and this life is “with the Father and the Son”—clearly *in* the Spirit.

Second, this ecumenical ecclesiology draws much from the eucharistic text of 1 Cor 10: “The bread which we break, is it not a participation (*koinonia*) in the body of Christ. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16f). The Church’s unity is not “worked up” by our intent and effort of voluntary association. Instead, it is consolidated sacramentally by Christ’s gift of himself to be shared by many, requiring then life in harmony, which was Paul’s overriding concern all through *First Corinthians*.

Third, the ecclesiological dialogues find the church described primordially in *Acts*, in the 3000 who responded to Peter’s Pentecost Kerygma: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42) Here the elements of communion fuse into a unity of prayer and sacramental celebration, of a teaching being transmitted and the Apostles’ ministry serving unity. And what a remarkable unity it was! Naturally it included local residents of Jerusalem, but also Parthians and Medes, Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, even “visitors from Rome, both Jews and [gentile] proselytes” who, at Peter’s behest, received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and found themselves made anew by the Holy Spirit. Here is the exemplar of all ecclesial communities, a catholic exemplar, sacramentally united in one place, served by apostolic ministry, but oriented to a mission to the whole world, as *Acts* will narrate. It began, though, in the *communio* of Jerusalem from the outpoured Spirit and Peter’s witness to the Risen Lord Jesus.

Surveying the families of churches, one sees that communion in Christ is not uniform, for it is shaped by particular paradigmatic charisms and lived experiences, in short by different spiritualities that penetrate the churches today from the example of key figures, some from past history, who remain in an uncanny way ever present (Francis, Luther, Xavier, Bonhoeffer), and the martyrs and spiritual witnesses present to us and impacting our communions. Life together in Christian faith can bear the deep impress of the icons in Orthodoxy, of Wesley’s hymns in Methodism, or of the force and beauty of language for Anglicans in Tyndale’s Bible and Cranmer’s *Prayer Book*. These charismatic realities create an ethos logically prior to any institutional form. It penetrates the living of communion and gives a particular tone to the ecclesial fusion of the fundamental elements of faith, worship, and ministry in a particular communion.

A *communio*-ecclesiology, that is, based on the Gospel and apostolic tradition, on the Eucharist, and on a public ministry amid the variety of charisms, is a vision which exorcizes from our dialogues secular socio-political models. The vision shows that an

ideal of intimate familial dealings and friendship falls short of what New Testament requires the church to be. While eucharistic celebration is central, this approach calls for awareness in our worship that our own community is linked with all others who share in the movement toward glorifying the Father, through Christ, in the same Spirit, and who partake of the one bread of Christ’s body. *Communio* as a leitmotiv protects us from introjecting alien or insufficient notions into our dialogues about the church.

But while ecclesiological dialogues are enlightened by the leitmotiv of *communio*, shadows are not lacking.

Even good friends had difficulties with Ch. IV of *Dominus Iesus*. Bishop John Baycroft wrote in the Anglican Centre’s newsletter that the text struck a “sour note” in our ecumenical concerto. The Winter 2001 issue of *Pro Ecclesia* offered a ecumenical symposium on *Dominus Iesus*, with appreciative readings of its main chapters on Christ’s unique saving work, but with grumbling over Chapter IV, for instance, that it in effect “unchurched” other Christian bodies. In the symposium, the Lutheran Eugene Brand found quite inadequate *Dominus Iesus*’s view of the bodies issuing from the Reformation, since it takes no account of how in them the “elements of truth and sanctification” have a corporate cohesion for an ecclesial mediation of the Gospel and grace of salvation¹⁵.

Clearly, *Dominus Iesus* leaves Christians of the Reformation traditions suspecting that the Catholic Church, after all these dialogues, does not esteem their communities. It seems imperious to claim that “the Church of Christ continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church” by a unique subsistence, while the ecclesial communities lacking the Eucharist in its integral reality “are not Churches in the proper sense” (*Dominus Iesus*, nos. 16, 17). When others find this off-putting, they could well turn inward toward working out confessional *communio* ecclesiologies, undercutting the coherence gained by the wide penetration of the theme of ecclesial *koinonia*.

Catholics must be aware of the impact of their language and declarations. It does not help to claim that *Dominus Iesus* was an internal text recalling Catholics to fundamental principles of their own church’s doctrine¹⁶. The “ecumenical century” has in effect erased the line between what is “internal” to the Catholic Church and what will be examined intensely by Christians of other communions. If W. A. Visser ‘t Hooft, the General Secretary of the World Council, could say of the calling of Vatican II, “*Nostra res agitur*” (“It concerns us!”), how much more is Ch. IV of *Dominus Iesus*, on the churches in their unity and sad divisions, a concern of all Christians.

But something can be done. Cardinal Kasper has said that,

¹⁵ *Pro Ecclesia. A Journal of Catholic and Evangelical Theology* 10, 1 (2001) 5-16. The problematical “unchurching” of non-Roman Catholic Christians, is spoken of by the Episcopalian theologian, Ephraim Radner (p. 9), while E. Brand’s critical remarks are on pp. 7-9.

¹⁶ A. GARUTI, “Né ritorno né ‘consenso differenziato’”, *op. cit.*, 551.

however unfortunate the tone of *Dominus Iesus*, its ecclesial chapter does remind us that none of the dialogues, even though illuminated by *communio* ecclesiology, have manifested consensus on the concrete embodiment of ecclesial *koinonia* in history and today.

Furthermore, the question of being or not being “churches in the proper sense” can send one to the *Acta* of Vatican II, to find out what was and is still meant by calling the Reformation churches “ecclesial communities”¹⁷. This was an innovation and came as the fruit of debate. The official explanation was that the terms “communities” or “separated brethren”, used in the initial draft, are not adequate regarding bodies stemming from the Reformation, because they do not express how the saving “elements” (Gospel, Scripture, Baptism, biblical prayer, ideal of discipleship) confer on these communities “a truly ecclesial character”¹⁸. There is, therefore, for Catholic teaching, a true *ecclesiality* in the bodies in which, according to *Ut unum sint*, the one Church of Christ is effectively present, being operative to unite and sanctify their members, equipping them for their Christian vocation (no. 11). — This may not dissipate the shadow cast by *Dominus Iesus*, but it does help Catholics approach Reformation Christians with more respect, and with a real if reserved acknowledgment of their community life as a *koinonia* given by the Lord and his Spirit.

Like Elijah’s servant, I see another cloud, now no larger than a human hand, rising on the horizon (1 Kings 18:4). It is the new book of Fr. Frank Sullivan on the early development of the episcopate¹⁹. I suspect it will make life difficult in dialogues of Catholics with the Reformation ecclesial communities even when the dialogue is illumined by a *communio* ecclesiology. For such dialogues inevitably raise the issue of the structured ministry given by God to serve believers’ shared faith, worship, and witness in the world. Fr. Sullivan’s work makes it hard to take the episcopate, and ministry in episcopal succession, as having only a sign-value, or even less, in constituting the Church of Christ. It makes a remarkable case for episcopacy having developed so smoothly, so organically, in the Second Century that it appears as a Spirit-guided development to meet needs inherent in the life of the early communities and in a universal mission. The episcopal college thus “moves up” in the hierarchy of truths held by Catholics, Orthodox, and Anglicans. The specific ministry of bishops who by ordination become members of a universal *collegium* succeeding the Apostles takes on new significance as constitutive in serving *communio* in faith and sacramental life. It

¹⁷ There are five such references in *Unitatis redintegratio*: in the title of Ch. III, in the further title and twice in the text of no. 19, and in no. 22.

¹⁸ *Acta Synodalia*, vol. III, part 2, 335. On the conciliar debate and its ramifications, see J. WICKS, “The Significance of the ‘Ecclesial Communities’ of the Reformation,” *Ecumenical Trends* 30, 11 (2001) 10-13.

¹⁹ F. A. SULLIVAN, *From Apostles to Bishops. The Development of the Episcopate in the Early Church* (NY/Mahwah: The Newman Press, 2001).

is going to be harder to work ahead from a shared faith, as on justification, and from the new life of baptism toward fuller Catholic recognition of apostolicity in churches and communities outside episcopal apostolic succession.

But no one thought that when we appropriated the ecumenical commitment, we were entering a rose garden. The goal remains the same, well illuminated by *communio*-ecclesiology. For Catholics, the goal is full communion in faith, sacraments, and ministry, with others who now really and corporately share common gifts of the Lord, but at present our sharing is *incomplete*.

Movement toward full communion involves the gradual discovery and recognition of the Church of Christ present in other communities as they now exist and are developing. This goal of communion rules out notions of fusion or amalgamation into some new reality to be created anew. But we do have to grow, and growth can spring from the dynamism of the gifts in our own ecclesial patrimony.

We Catholics have the Pope’s reminder, “It is not that beyond the boundaries of the Catholic community there is an ecclesial vacuum,” but that by God’s gifts which others cherish and actualize, “the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them” (*Ut unum sint*, 13, 11). I hope that others can think the same way even now about the Catholic Church. And even more, I hope that our Catholic Church will grow and develop in ways to make the discovery and recognition in it of the Church of Christ a more natural perception by other Christians. The special claim that we make, namely of the Church of Christ *subsisting* in the Catholic Church, brings a special obligation, an imperative, to make what we claim transparently visible to others.

Conclusion

We are all developing, for to live is to change, but if our changing is to be ecumenically constructive it has to also promote moments of recognition of God’s work in other communions.

Ecumenically we are an interim stage, between the times, with no prepared formulae for dissipating the shadows. For such a time, the challenge is to promote growth all across the ecumenical landscape of a “spirituality of communion” about which the Pope has spoken²⁰. This is an ethos of growing love and mutual forgiveness, of more sensitivity to what offends other Christians—so as to avoid what bruises and hurts, and of a deeper desire—passionate desire penetrating our prayer—for a future life in more complete, even full, communion of faith, sacraments, and ministry.

If this sounds abstract and theoretical, we can learn much from certain present-day ecclesial movements, the Focolari, Sant’Egidio, and Chemin neuf, which concretize, live, and spread

²⁰ *Novo millennio ineunte*, nos. 43-45; in *L’Osservatore Romano*, English Edition of 10 January 2001, Special Insert, VIII-IX, repeated in the Pope’s message of 10 November 2001 to Cardinal Kasper and the participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians.

this spirituality of communion in striking ways²¹.

Along this path, which the Pope in November said may well be long and arduous, the transformations already given us suggest expelling from our ecumenical vocabulary terms like “crisis”, “immobilism”, and “compromise”. Fully aware of the difficulties, John Paul II invites us to adopt the key words, “confidence”,

“patience”, “constancy”, “hope”, and also “fervor for a great and good cause” with “courage to change”.²²

But such an attitude is a grace of God, an increment of his wisdom and a brighter light of his loving-kindness shining on us in the face of his Son Jesus (2 Cor 4:6). Rightly, we turn to listening to the word of life and begging in prayer the new light we need. A brighter ecumenical landscape will not be produced simply by our theological and ethical efforts, but by Spirit of light and truth acting in and on our communities.

²¹ Chiara Lubich radiated the spirituality of communion at the Ecumenical Assembly at Graz (1997) and again at Trent, spreading the message of *Novo millennio ineunte*, in June 2001. See her texts in *La dottrina spirituale*, a cura di M. Vandeleen (Milan: Mondadori, 2001) 362-376.

²² Message of 10 November 2001 to Cardinal Kasper and the Plenary of the Pontifical Council.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INTERCHURCH AND INTERCONFESSIONAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUES

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR CONFESSIONAL FAMILIES CHURCHES AND COUNCILS

A Anglican	M Methodist
AC Assyrian Church of the East	MECC Middle East Council of Churches
AIC African Instituted Churches	Mn Mennonite
B Baptist	Mo Moravian
CC Chaldean Catholic Church	O Eastern Orthodox (<i>Byzantine</i>)
CEC Conference of European Churches	OC Old Catholic (<i>includes Polish National</i>)
CCEE Council of European Episcopal Conferences	OO Oriental Orthodox (<i>Non-Chalcedonian</i>)
CP Constantinople Patriarchate	Pe Pentecostal
D Disciples of Christ	R Reformed
DOMBES Groupe des Dombes	RC Roman Catholic
E Evangelicals	SDA Seventh-Day Adventist
FO Faith and Order	U United Churches
H Hussite (Czech)	W Waldensian
L Lutheran (<i>includes German 'Evangelische'</i>)	WCC World Council of Churches

LIST OF DIALOGUES

- A-D / aus:** Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations
- A-L:** Anglican-Lutheran International Commission
- A-L / africa:** All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission
- A-L / aus:** Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia
- A-L / can:** Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue
- A-L / eng-g:** Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England
- A-L / eng-nordic regions:** Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England
- A-L / eur:** Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission
- A-L / usa:** Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- A-L-R / eng-f:** Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France
- A-M:** Anglican-Methodist International Commission
- A-M / eng:** Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain
- A-Mo:** Anglican-Moravian Conversations
- A-Mo / usa:** Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA
- A-O:** Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission
- A-O / usa:** Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA
- A-OC:** Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations
- A-OC / na:** Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group
- A-OO:** Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue
- A-OO / copt:** Anglican-Coptic Relations
- A-R:** Anglican-Reformed International Commission
- A-RC:** Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
- A-RC / aus:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia
- A-RC / b:** Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
- A-RC / br:** Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission
- A-RC / can:** Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission
- A-RC / eng:** English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
- A-RC / eur:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe
- A-RC / f:** Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France
- A-RC / usa:** Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
- A-U / aus:** Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- AC-CC:** Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church
- AC-OO / copt:** Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- AC-OO / syr:** Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church
- AC-RC:** Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
- AIC-R:** Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- B-L:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue
- B-L / g:** Baptistisch-lutherische Gespräche
- B-L / n:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway
- B-L / sf:** Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland
- B-L / usa:** Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
- B-M-W / italy:** Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy
- B-Mn:** Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations
- B-O:** Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue
- B-R:** Baptist-Reformed Dialogue
- B-RC:** Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations
- B-RC / f:** Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France

B-RC / usa (ab): American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
B-RC / usa (sb): Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
C-L / sf: Dialogues between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Evangelical Free Church of Finland
CEC-CCEE: Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences
D-O / rus: Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue
D-R: Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue
D-RC: Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue
D-U / aus: Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
D-U / usa: Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA
DOMBES: Dialogues des Dombes
E-RC: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
E-SDA: Evangelical-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Dialogue
FO: Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies
L-M: International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission
L-M / n: Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway
L-M / s: Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden
L-M / usa: US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue
L-Mn / f: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France
L-Mn / g: Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)
L-Mn / usa: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA
L-Mo / usa: Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA
L-O: Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission
L-O / g-cp: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate
L-O / g-rom: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church
L-O / g-rus: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church
L-O / sf: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church
L-O / sf-rus: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church
L-O / usa: Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA
L-O-R / f: Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France
L-O-R / na: Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America
L-OC / g: Gespräch zwischen der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands und dem Gemeindeverband der Altkatholischen Kirche Deutschlands
L-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
L-OO / copt-s: Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden
L-OO / g: Begegnungen zwischen Theologen der EKD und der Orientalisch-Orthodoxen Kirchen
L-OO / india: Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India
L-Pe / sf: Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland
L-Pe-R / f: Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France
L-R: Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission
L-R / arg: Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina
L-R / aus: Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia
L-R / can: Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations
L-R / f: Fédération Protestante de France
L-R / usa: Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA
L-R-RC: Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue
L-R-RC / f: Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France
L-R-SDA / f: Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France
L-R-U / eur: Leuenberg Church Fellowship
L-RC: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity
L-RC / arg: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina
L-RC / aus: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia
L-RC / br: National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil
L-RC / can: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada
L-RC / g: Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)
L-RC / india: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India
L-RC / jap: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan
L-RC / n: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway
L-RC / s: Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm
L-RC / sf: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland
L-RC / usa: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
L-SDA: Lutheran-Seventh-Day Adventist Consultations
L-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
M-O: Methodist-Orthodox Commission
M-R: Methodist-Reformed Dialogue
M-RC: Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council
M-RC / eng: English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee
M-RC / usa: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA
Mn-R: Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Mn-RC: Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
O-O-RC: Inter-Orthodox Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches
O-OC: Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
O-OO: Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-OO / rus: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-OO / rus-armenia: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church
O-R: Official Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue
O-R / ch: Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
O-R / na: Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
O-R / rus: Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
O-RC: Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
O-RC / ch: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
O-RC / f: Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
O-RC / g: Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
O-RC / rom: Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
O-RC / rus: Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
O-RC / rus-g: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
O-RC / usa: North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
O-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

OC-R-RC / ch: Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
OC-RC: Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations
OC-RC / ch: Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
OC-RC / g: Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany
OC-RC / na: Joint Commission of the Polish National Catholic Church and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops
OO-R: Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue
OO-RC: Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Relations
OO-RC / armenia: Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission
OO-RC / copt: International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
OO-RC / eritrea: Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / ethiop: Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
OO-RC / india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
OO-RC / syr: Official Dialogue between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Syrian Catholic Church
OO-RC / syr-india: Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church

OO-RC / usa: Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation
Pe-R: Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue
Pe-RC: Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
R-RC: Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission
R-RC / a: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria
R-RC / b: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium
R-RC / ch: Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
R-RC / nl: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands
R-RC / scot: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland
R-RC / usa: Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA
R-SDA: International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
RC-U / aus: Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia
RC-U / can: Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada
RC-W / italy: Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy
RC-WCC: Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
WCC: World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

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Una Sancta; Unitas; Unité chrétienne; Unité des Chrétiens; Unity Digest; V Edinosti; La Vita in Cristo e nella Chiesa; WARC Up-Date; The Window; Worship; Zeitzeichen.

Key to sub-headings:

INFORMATION: facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports
REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers
TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

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