



**FINAL REPORT**  
**Dialogue between the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity**  
**and Some Classical Pentecostals**  
**1977-1982**

**CONTENTS**

**INTRODUCTION**

*Speaking in Tongues*  
*Faith and Experience*  
*Scripture and Tradition*  
*Exegesis*  
*Biblical Interpretation*  
*Faith and Reason*  
*Healing in the Church*  
*Community, Worship and Communication*  
*Tradition and Traditions*  
*Perspectives on Mary*  
*The Motherhood of Mary*  
*The Veneration of Mary*  
*The Intercession of Mary*  
*Catholic Doctrine on the Graces Given to Mary*  
*The Virginity of Mary*  
*The Immaculate Conception of Mary*  
*The Assumption of Mary*  
*Ministry in the Church*  
*Ordination*  
*Apostolic Succession*  
*Recognition of Ministries*  
*Topics for Further Discussion*  
*Character of the Final Report*  
*Conclusion*

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The following is a report of conversations at the international level which represent a second five-year series that had its beginnings in informal talks in 1969 and 1970 between the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and some members of the classical Pentecostal churches. The co-chairmen of this quinquennium were the Rev. David du Plessis of Oakland, California, USA, and the Rev. Kilian McDonnell, osb, of Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. The conversations took place according to the indications agreed to by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pentecostal representatives in 1970.
2. This dialogue has its own specific quality. Growth in mutual understanding of classical Pentecostal and Roman Catholic theologies and spiritual practice rather than organic or structural unity is the special object of these bilateral conversations.
3. It is a concern of the dialogue to seek out those areas where classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics represent divergent theological views and spiritual experiences, and in this way to foster mutual

understanding in what distinguishes each partner, such as faith/experience and its role in the Christian life. Without minimizing these differences the dialogue also seeks common theological ground where “the truth of the Gospel” is shared (Gal 2:14).

4. The Roman Catholic participants were officially appointed by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. There were various kinds of representation on the classical Pentecostal side. Some were appointed by their individual churches; a few were church officials; others were members who came with the approbation of their churches; in still other cases they came as members in good standing with their churches.
5. Besides the classical Pentecostals there were in the first five year series 1972-1976, participants from the charismatic movement in various Protestant churches. These were members of Anglican or Protestant communions with whom the Roman Catholic Church was already in formal contact through bilateral dialogues. These Anglican and Protestant participants took part primarily because of their involvement in the charismatic renewal rather than as members of their own churches. The first five-year series of conversations extended from 1972 through 1976. In those meetings the following topics were discussed: “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” in the New Testament and its relation to repentance, sanctification, charism, rites of initiation; the historic background of the classical Pentecostal movement; the role of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit in the mystical tradition; the theology of the rites of initiation, the nature of sacramental activity; infant and adult baptism; public worship, with special attention given to eucharistic worship; discernment of spirits; and the human dimension in the exercise of the spiritual gifts; prayer and praise.
6. In 1977 a second five year series was initiated. This second series, 1977-1982 (no session was held in 1978 because of the death of the Pope), had a different character than the first series. In order to more clearly focus the conversations it was decided that this second series should be exclusively a conversation between the classical Pentecostals and the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, participants in the charismatic renewal who were members of the Anglican and Protestant churches were not included in the dialogue in a systematic way.
7. At the first meeting of the second series of talks, held in Rome, October 1977, the dialogue discussed speaking in tongues and the relation of experience to faith. The second meeting in Rome, October 1979, discussed the relation of Scripture and tradition, and the ministry of healing in the church. In Venice, October 1980, the meeting focused on church as a worshipping community and tradition and traditions. The meeting in Vienna in October, 1981, focused on the role of Mary. The last meeting of the series was held at Collegetown, Minnesota in October 1982, where Ministry was the area of concentration.

#### *Speaking in Tongues*

8. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ belongs to the definition of a Christian. Classical Pentecostals have never accepted the position or taught that this relationship must necessarily be expressed through speaking in tongues in the sense that one could not be a Christian without speaking in tongues.
9. The manifestation of tongues was never entirely absent in the history of the Church, and is found in a notable way among Roman Catholics and other Christians involved in charismatic renewal, as well as among classical Pentecostals.
10. It was agreed that every discussion about Christian glossolalia should be founded on Scripture. That some New Testament authors saw tongues as playing a role in the Christian life is indicated in various books of the Bible. (“and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6; Mark 16:17; 1 Cor 12:4; 10; 18; 14:2, 5, 22; Rom 8:26).
11. The teaching of the classical Pentecostals on the charisms seeks to be faithful to the picture of the New Testament church as reflected in 1 Cor 12–14. Classical Pentecostals have rendered a service by encouraging the various communions to be open and receptive to those spiritual manifestations to which they claim to have been faithful.

#### *Faith and Experience*

12. By experience the dialogue understands the process or event by which one comes to a personal awareness of God. The experience of God’s “presence” or “absence” can be matter of conscious awareness. At the same time, and at a deeper level, there remains the constant abiding faith-conviction that God’s loving presence is

revealed in the person of his Son, through the Holy Spirit.

13. A Christian is one who experiences not only Easter and Pentecost, but also the Cross. The experience of God's "absence" can lead a Christian to a sense of being abandoned, as Jesus himself experienced on the Cross. The death of Christ is to be found at the heart of our Christian experience, and therefore we too experience a death: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).
14. There was no unanimity whether non-Christians may receive the life of the Holy Spirit. According to contemporary Roman Catholic understanding, to which Vatican II gives an authoritative expression, "All must be converted to Jesus Christ as he is made known by the Church's preaching" (*Ad gentes*, § 7). "The Church... is necessary for salvation" (*Lumen gentium* §14). But Vatican II also says that all without exception are called by God to faith in Christ, and to salvation (*Lumen gentium*, §1,16; *Nostra aetate*, §1,2). This is brought about "in an unseen way... known only to God" (*Gaudium et spes*, §22; *Ad gentes*, §7). This theology is seen as a legitimate development of the total New Testament teaching on God's saving love in Christ. The classical Pentecostal participants do not accept this development, but retain their interpretation of the Scripture that non-Christians are excluded from the life of the Spirit: "Truly, truly I say unto you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).
15. In the Holy Spirit's manifestation in persons, he engages the natural faculties. In the exercise of the charisms, human faculties are not set aside, but used. The action of the Spirit is not identical with the forces inherent in nature.
16. Individual spiritual experience is seen as part of the communitarian dimension of the Gospel. Persons live in community, and the Church should be a lived-experience of community. There is rich history of community experience in the Church.
17. No matter how vivid or powerful the individual's spiritual experience may be, it needs to be discerned and judged by the community. Love, which is the normative bond of community life, is the biblical criterion of all spiritual experience (*cf.* 1 Cor 13).

#### *Scripture and Tradition*

18. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics hold that the books of the Old Testament were accepted by the early Church as inspired. The primitive Church existed for a period without its own Christian Scriptures. Of the early Christian writings, a certain number were accepted by the Church, in the light of the Holy Spirit, as inspired.
19. Roman Catholics believe that these Scriptures have been handed down through the centuries in a tradition of living faith, a tradition which has been experienced by the whole Church, guided by Church leaders, operative in all aspects of Christian life, and on occasion expressed in written form in creeds, councils, etc. This tradition is not a source of revelation separate from Scripture, but Scripture responded to and actualized in the living tradition of the Church (*cf.* n° 26 & n° 52).
20. Pentecostals maintain that there are not two authorities (i.e. Scripture plus Church tradition) but one authority, that of Scripture. However, Scripture must be read and understood with the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe that the interpretation of Scripture can only be discerned through the Holy Spirit. In Pentecostal movements there is a broad consensus of what elements are fundamental to the Christian faith. But there is a reluctance to give this consensus a status of tradition, because of a fear that religious tradition operates against the Gospel.
21. Pentecostals feel that further dialogue will be needed to discuss how the Roman Catholic Church can propose, as a matter of faith, doctrines such as the assumption of Mary which go beyond the letter of Scripture, and which Pentecostals believe to be unacceptable tradition.

#### *Exegesis*

22. In contemporary Roman Catholic scholarship the historical-critical method is the accepted framework within which exegesis is done. In this method emphasis is given to understanding an ancient author in his own idiom, cultural context, and religious background.

23. Pentecostals reject the philosophical and theological principles of form and redaction criticism as militating against the plenary inspiration of Scripture. They insist on the necessity of the light given by the Holy Spirit if the reader is to respond with faith and understanding to the Word of God. It was a consensus of the participants that this discussion was a valuable contribution to the dialogue.
24. Roman Catholics believe that the light of the Holy Spirit given in and through the Church is the ultimate principle of interpretation of Scripture. They reject any exegetical method that would deny this.  
  
However, they believe that critical methods are compatible with a Spirit-inspired exegesis, and consider them necessary for a proper understanding of the text.
25. The Pentecostal form of exegesis, while having its roots in evangelicalism, is not specifically defined. It is admittedly in a formative stage. Current exegesis would tend to be a pneumatic literal interpretation.

#### *Biblical Interpretation*

26. In the event of conflicting interpretation of Scripture texts, Roman Catholics accept the guidance of the Spirit as manifested in the living tradition.  
  
While the teaching of the Church stands under the Word of God, this same teaching serves the authoritative and authentic communication of the Word of God to the people. (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, par. 10). While Catholics believe both Scripture and Tradition cohere in each other and, thus, transmit the Word of God, they do accord a priority to Scripture.
27. In the event of conflicting interpretation of Scripture texts, Pentecostals rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance, without the developed dogmatic structure found in the Roman Catholic Church. While there may be some danger or subjectivism, God is trusted to provide the guidance of the Spirit within the local body of believers. (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 2 John 2:27).

#### *Faith and Reason*

28. In the determination of the limits and validation of religious knowledge, it was agreed that faith and reason cannot be polarized. However, Pentecostals place a greater emphasis upon pneumatic inspiration and supernatural manifestations, than on reason, for determining the limits and validity of religious knowledge.
29. In spite of the differences mentioned above, it is seen that classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics agree on the basic elements of the Christian faith, e.g. Trinity, incarnation, resurrection, inspiration of Scripture, the preaching of the Gospel as an integral part of the ministry of the Church, and the guidance of the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.
30. Still needing clarification in this dialogue is the relation between Scripture and tradition. In this relationship, Roman Catholics do grant a priority to Scripture. But according to Vatican Council II, Decree on Divine Revelation, *Dei verbum* (§10) "Sacred tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God. Hence both Scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence." Also in need of further discussion is whether the various methods of exegesis, for example the form-critical method which Catholic exegetes use, are compatible with classical Pentecostal principles.

#### *Healing in the Church*

31. The ministry of healing in the Church is practiced in both the Roman Catholic Church and the Pentecostal churches as part of their total ministry. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics agree that through prayerful petition they seek the healing of the whole person's physical, spiritual and emotional needs. Catholics consider the "anointing of the sick" a sacrament. Pentecostals accept anointing with oil as a part of the commission to minister healing with the preaching of the Gospel. (In the Roman Catholic Church the sacrament of anointing of the sick was formerly named "extreme unction").
32. In the life of the Roman Catholic Church there have been, and are, those who dedicate their lives to the care of and ministry to the sick. Pentecostals are becoming increasingly involved in this important aspect of ministry to the sick and suffering.

33. There are attitudinal differences with regard to healing. Roman Catholic practice regards healing of the body as one outcome of the ministry to the sick in the church. Pentecostals place more emphasis on the expectation of healing in the afflicted through preaching and praying. There is a basic difference in each approach to healing. Roman Catholics may seek healing in sacramental rites, in healing services, novenas and similar forms of devotion. They also go on pilgrimage to shrines where healing may take place. At these places many seek and experience a deepening of faith and a spiritual healing. Pentecostals teach people to expect healing anywhere at any time.
34. Both in their official teaching, recognize and accept that Jesus is the Healer and that faith looks to Jesus for this grace. Pentecostals as well as Roman Catholics exercise reserve in making judgments about miraculous manifestations and healings.
35. There is a difference in expectation – that of Catholics being more passive while that of Pentecostals being more aggressive. There is admittedly a new awareness of the reality of the healing in the Roman Catholic Church, both within and outside the sacramental order. On the other hand, the dialogue is aware of the existence of some popular religious expressions that may lack sufficient theological understanding.
36. The place of suffering in this life is looked upon by Roman Catholics and some Pentecostals as a means of grace, as a purifying of the soul, and as an instrument for opening one to God's spiritual strength which sustains one and causes one to rejoice in affliction. Both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals believe that suffering may lead one to understand and be conformed (Phil 3:10) to the redemptive suffering of Jesus. However, Pentecostals continue to expect healing unless there is a special revelation that God has some other purpose. Both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals accept that the will of God is preeminent in the whole matter of healing.
37. Although there appears to be some similarity in lay participation in the ministry of healing, the discussions revealed that there is still a wide gap between Catholics and Pentecostals. Catholics, singly and in community, pray for the sick and with the sick. However, only the priest may administer the "Anointing of the Sick" which is a sacrament. Pentecostals anoint with oil (James 5:14-15) but do not confine the anointing to the ordained ministry. The ministry to the sick, with the laying on of hands by all believers (Mark 16:17-18), is commonly practiced.
38. In contemporary Roman Catholic theology the necessity for healing is applied to a broader spectrum of social ills. In this application of healing to problems of social injustice Roman Catholics and classical Pentecostals have widely divergent views. Because of economic and cultural exploitation many people live in sub-human economic disease. Roman Catholics and Pentecostals have different approaches to the mandate to heal the social conditions which hinder good health.
39. Classical Pentecostals are reluctant to apply divine healing to such a broad range of social injustices. Though they believe exploitative conditions should be rectified they would emphasize the priority of direct evangelism, as the best means of effecting social change.
40. There are a number of areas where there is agreement between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals: the necessity of the Cross, healing as a sign of the Kingdom, healing of the total person, the involvement of the laity in prayer for healing, the expectation of healing through the Eucharist/Lord's Supper and, Christ as the Healer.

#### *Community, Worship and Communication*

41. Pentecostals insist on a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as the basis of Christian community, rather than on a sacramental and ecclesial approach to the mediating work of Christ. They hold that the believer experiences Christ in every aspect of the worshiping community: singing, praying, testimony, preaching, the ordinance of Baptism, the celebration of Holy Communion, and also in daily living.
42. Roman Catholics insist on conversion to the living God by personal encounter with the living Christ. This conversation often takes place gradually. For Roman Catholics, the Church, its ministry and sacraments, are the normal instruments and manifestations of Christ's action and presence, and of the gift of His Spirit. The sacraments are acts of Christ which make present and active the saving power of the Paschal Mystery.
43. For membership in a Pentecostal church individuals are expected to have experienced a personal confession of

faith in Jesus Christ; and then participate in the life, follow the leadership and be willing to accept responsibility in the church. In some Pentecostal churches, membership is concurrent with one's water baptism by immersion. Membership in the Roman Catholic Church requires baptism, profession of Roman Catholic faith, and active communion with the local community, the bishops and the successor of St. Peter.

44. Both among Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, members may lose their fellowship in the community for serious deviation in doctrine or practice. This penalty of severance from the church is intended to be remedial, a reminder of one's guilt before God and the need for repentance.
45. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics celebrate the Lord's Supper/Eucharist with notable difference in doctrine and practice. Roman Catholics regard the Eucharist as a sacramental memorial of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary in the Biblical sense of the word *anamnesis*. By God's power, in the Eucharistic celebration Jesus is present in His death and resurrection. This sacred rite is for Roman Catholics a privileged means of grace and the central act of worship. It is celebrated frequently, even daily.

Among Pentecostals, the Lord's Supper does not hold an equally predominant place in their life of worship. Most Pentecostals celebrate the Lord's Supper as an ordinance in obedience to the command of the Lord. Other Pentecostal churches believe this memorial to be more than a reminder of Jesus' death and resurrection, considering it a means of grace.

46. Generally Pentecostals practice "open communion," that is, anyone may participate in the Lord's Supper provided they acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and have examined their own dispositions (1 Cor 11:28). Except in certain cases of spiritual necessity determined by the Church, the Roman Church admits to communion only its own members provided they are free from serious sin. This is not meant to be a refusal of fellowship with other Christians, but rather expresses the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of the relationship between the Church and the Eucharist.
47. The justification for this practice by Catholics was contested by Pentecostals. This was found to be painful on both sides and the dialogue agrees that the subject with regard to admission to communion requires a great deal of further discussion.
48. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics agree that a common faith is the basis of communion in the body of Christ. For Roman Catholics, full communion means the collegial unity of the heads of the local Churches; namely, the bishops, with the Bishop of Rome who exercises the primacy. Pentecostals would not attach the same significance to structural bonds between churches. The Roman Catholic church recognizes the mediation of Christ at work in churches which are not in full communion with it, through the Word that is preached and believed, the sacraments that are celebrated and the ministry that is exercised. If it considers that these gifts are not found in their fullness in a particular church it does not thereby make any judgment on the actual holiness of the members of that church. The Roman Catholic church describes the relationship of other Christians with Catholics as that of brothers and sisters in an incomplete communion (*Unitatis redintegratio*).

#### *Tradition and Traditions*

49. Our views concerning the sacredness and importance of Holy Scripture allowed us to sense immediately that we had much more to affirm in one another than to question. Both sides of the dialogue agreed as to the inspired nature of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, thus giving Scripture a privileged place in both churches.
50. The canonicity of the New Testament is agreed upon in terms of selection and the process of its establishment by the church. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics recognize the role of the church in the composition of the books of the New Testament and in the formation of the canon and both acknowledge that the church preceded the written New Testament.
51. The Pentecostal representatives stress that the church itself was created by the calling (election) of Christ, and formed by the dominical sayings of Jesus, and the Messianic interpretation of the Scriptures of Jesus Himself (Luke 24:45ff). In this sense, according to Pentecostals, the church itself was formed by the Word of God. The Church's role in the formation of the New Testament is then essentially that of one who transmits, interprets and applies the salvific message of Jesus Christ. Roman Catholics emphasize more the role of the church as having an authority recognizing and enunciating the truth of the Gospel in doctrinal pronouncement.

52. Both sides recognize that Scripture is of necessity linked to interpretation. Both agree that scriptural content itself includes interpretation; that it requires interpretation; and thus an authoritative interpreter. There is significant divergence as to the degree of interpretation within Scripture and the kind of interpretation by the church necessary in order to understand Scripture accurately. Disagreement centers around what or who is an authoritative interpreter. To the Pentecostal it is the right interpretation under the illumination of the Holy Spirit leading to consensus. To the Roman Catholic, it is the church interpreting Scripture as understood by the people of God and discerned by the teaching office of the church. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics see interpretative authority as an expression of the activity of the Spirit in the Church.
53. Both Catholics and Pentecostals recognize the existence of a process of theological discernment in the on-going life of the church. The Roman Catholics affirm the ministry of discernment by the teaching office of the church and also recognize that a ministry of discernment may exist outside the Roman Catholic church. The sharpest disagreement arose concerning the irrefutable character of some of these discernments. Roman Catholics hold that the faithful will not be led into error when the authority of the church is fully engaged in enunciating the faith. Pentecostals make no such claim.
54. Pentecostals recognize the strength of the Roman Catholic understanding of corporate and collegial, interpretation of Scripture. However, Pentecostals would like to share with Roman Catholics their characteristic experience of direct dependence upon the Holy Spirit for illumination and interpretation of Scripture.
55. A major difference was encountered in the understanding of the role of tradition. Roman Catholics in the dialogue explain tradition in a twofold sense, each sense related to the other. Tradition, here spelled with a capital T, stands for everything that is being and has been handed down; the once for all revelation made by God in Jesus Christ, the Word of God proclaimed in written and oral form, and the whole of the Spirit-filled community response to the truth of the Gospel. As such, Tradition contains both an active element of handing down by the church, and a passive one of the material handed down. Within Tradition in this sense, the Word of God as Scripture has a kind of primacy. In this understanding Tradition is a continuous process.
56. Tradition in this sense is not to be confused with traditions. These are various ways of practice and teaching whereby Tradition is transmitted. These traditions become binding only when they are made the object of a special decision of Church authority.
57. Classical Pentecostals would not place the same value upon Tradition (or tradition) as Roman Catholics, unless grounded in the express witness of Scripture. The Pentecostals while acknowledging the accumulation of traditions in their own history would say that these traditions, apart from Scripture, have little authority in the Church.

#### *Perspectives on Mary*

58. Since Catholic doctrine concerning Mary was perceived as a point of divergence, it was important to classical Pentecostals to discuss this topic. Considerable time was needed to treat the various issues: the doctrine itself, the method by which the doctrine is justified, and the practical consequences at the popular level. The time devoted to the issues is reflected in the space given this topic in the report.
59. Both classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics agree that the various biblical texts which mention Mary witness to the importance of Mary in the New Testament. The point of divergence was the doctrinal development which took place on the basis of these texts. Classical Pentecostals insist that they cannot go beyond the clear meaning of the text which is normative for any and all later doctrinal development. But they further hold that the church, praying and preaching the Scriptures, can, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit who leads into all truth, find in the biblical texts and in complete fidelity to them a meaning which goes beyond the classical Pentecostals' interpretation.
60. Behind the differences between classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics in interpretation of specific Marian texts in the Scriptures lie doctrinal differences, often implicit and unexpressed. Possibly the most important of these are in the area of Mary's relationship to the church and her role in the communion of saints.
61. Both classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics were surprised that they had entertained unreal perceptions of the others' views on Mary. Classical Pentecostals were pleased to learn of the concern of authorities in the Roman Catholic church to be prudent in appraising Marian doctrinal development which claims a biblical

basis. Classical Pentecostals, while recognizing that doctrinal development that is clearly based on scriptural evidence is not entirely absent from Pentecostal history, admit no doctrinal development with regard to Mary.

#### *The Motherhood of Mary*

62. Both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals agree that Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ who is the Son of God and as such she occupies a unique place. Both Roman Catholics and classical Pentecostals recognize the historical origins of the title "Mother of God" (*theotokos*), arising from the christological disputes at the Council of Ephesus (431 A.D.). In order to preserve the unity of the one person, having two natures, to which the Virgin gave birth, the council approved the title "*theotokos*" ("God-bearer" or "Mother of God"). This was not a Marian definition, concerned to give Mary a new title, but a Christological definition concerned with the identity of Jesus Christ. It is only at the moment of the Incarnation that she becomes the Mother of God. She is not the Mother of God in his eternal triune existence, but the Mother of God the Son in his Incarnation.

#### *The Veneration of Mary*

63. Roman Catholics and classical Pentecostals concur in the special respect due to Mary as the mother of Jesus. Both view her as the outstanding example or model of faith, humility and virtue. Both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals share a concern for the necessity of a correct perspective on Mary. However, there are significant differences in the understanding of the veneration to be given to Mary.
64. Pentecostals expressed concern about what they consider to be excesses in contemporary veneration of Mary. For Pentecostals, certain Roman Catholic practices of Marian veneration appear to be superstitious and idolatrous. For Roman Catholics there is an apparent failure among Pentecostals to take account of the place of Mary in God's design as indicated in Holy Scripture.
65. Roman Catholics, while admitting the occurrence of certain excesses in the practice of veneration of Mary, were careful to point out that proper veneration of Mary is always christological. In addition, Roman Catholics gave evidence that practical steps are being taken to correct excesses where they occur, in line with the norms of the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, §8, and Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Marialis Cultus* (1974), §§24-36.

#### *The Intercession of Mary*

66. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics teach that Mary in no way substitutes for, or replaces, the one Savior and Mediator Jesus Christ. Both believe in direct, immediate contact between the believer and God. Both pray to God the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Catholics believe that intercessory prayers directed to Mary do not end in Mary but in God Himself. Pentecostals would not invoke the intercession of Mary or other saints in heaven because they do not consider it a valid biblical practice.

#### *Catholic Doctrine on the Graces Given to Mary*

67. Roman Catholics believe that Mary always remained a virgin, that she was conceived free from all stain of sin, and that at the end of her life she was assumed body and soul into heaven. Pentecostals reject these beliefs.
68. Roman Catholics claim that belief about these graces given to Mary belongs to the tradition of the church in which the Word of God is unfolded. Pentecostals can find no warrant for these beliefs in Scripture. As well as questioning the value of tradition as a basis for the doctrines of faith, Pentecostals would suggest that these traditions about perpetual virginity, immaculate conception, and assumption, are without Scriptural basis.
69. In the "hierarchy of truths" of faith held by the Roman Catholics, these three doctrines are placed among the truths that are integral to the Roman Catholic faith. Roman Catholics do not believe that those outside the Roman Catholic church who do not hold these truths are, on that account, excluded from salvation.

#### *The Virginity of Mary*

70. Both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics agree that Mary was a virgin in the conception of Jesus and see in the texts which state it an important affirmation of the divine Sonship of Christ. Roman Catholics believe that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus and did not have other offspring. Pentecostals commonly maintain that Scripture records she had other offspring and lived as the wife of Joseph in the full sense.
71. Roman Catholics take the evidence of Scripture as being open to the developments concerning the virginity of

Mary which they find expressed in the earliest Fathers of the church. They found in Tradition (understood in the total experience and response of the church as she prays and preaches the Word of God) evidence of Mary's virginity.

#### *The Immaculate Conception of Mary*

72. Roman Catholics hold the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to be founded on the church's reflection on the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. This doctrine is seen to follow upon texts which present her as the perfect fulfillment of Old Testament types, e.g., "the virgin daughter of Sion" (Luke 1:26-38; cf. Zeph 3:14-20; Zech 2:10; 9:9), the "woman" (John. 2:1-11; 19:25-27; cf. Gen 3:15). These texts from a biblical theology of Mary, which provides a basis for the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The explicit development of the doctrine in the life of the church led to its definition by Pope Pius IX in 1854.
73. Pentecostals acknowledge Catholic assurances that the special grace claimed for Mary is a redeeming grace that comes from Jesus. She stands among the redeemed and is a member of the church. However, Pentecostals cannot find any basis for the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception in Scripture. Furthermore, Pentecostals do not see any value for salvation in this doctrine. Roman Catholics see in the Pentecostal attitude a failure to appreciate fully the implications of the incarnation and the power of Christ's saving and sanctifying grace.
74. Further clarification of issues arising from this doctrine would entail a wider discussion by us of pneumatology, christology and ecclesiology. Roman Catholics believe a basic distortion takes place when this doctrine is considered in isolation.

#### *The Assumption of Mary*

75. Roman Catholics see the doctrine of the Assumption, which was explicitly affirmed in the Fathers of the church as early as the sixth century, to be in accordance with basic biblical doctrines. The Risen Christ is the beginning of the new creation, which is born from above in the death and resurrection of Christ. In Mary, because of her unique relationship with Christ, this new creation by the Spirit was achieved to the point that the life of the Spirit triumphed fully in her. Consequently she is already with her body in the glory of God, with her risen Son.
76. The Pentecostal difficulty rests in the absence of biblical evidence. There is a generally accepted view that Mary, as one of the faithful, awaits the day of resurrection when she, along with all Christians, will be united bodily with her Son in glory. Pentecostals see a parallel between Mary's "assumption" and the Pentecostal understanding of the "bodily resurrection" or the "rapture of the church" (1 Thess 4:13-18, cf. esp. v. 17), but differ as to when this will take place for Mary.

#### *Ministry in the Church*

77. While it is recognized that the word *ministry* in the New Testament covers many activities, the focus of the dialogue bears upon how ministry in the church continues the ministry of the Apostles.
78. Such ministry includes all that pertains to the preaching and proclamation of God's Word on which the churches are founded, and all that is required for the building up of the church in Christ.
79. For Roman Catholics, all ministries contribute to these ends, but particular importance is attached to the ministry of bishops, and to that of the presbyters and deacons who collaborate with them. Classical Pentecostals find an exercise of apostolic ministry wherever through the preaching of God's Word churches are founded, persons and communities are converted to Jesus Christ, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit are in evidence. Within the variety of polity found in Pentecostal circles, biblical terms such as elder, deacon, bishop and pastor are used to designate a variety of offices and ministries, and are not always given the same meaning.
80. It is agreed by both sides of the dialogue that order and structure are necessary to the exercise of ministry.
81. In the development and structuring of ministry, there is no single New Testament pattern. The spirit has many times led churches to adapt their ministries to the needs of place and time.
82. Roman Catholics see evidence of ministerial office in the New Testament and find in such office part of God's

design for the early church, but find in the gradual emergence of the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon the way in which God's design is fulfilled and structural and ministerial needs are met in the Church.

83. The position of Classical Pentecostals are more varied. Although there is reluctance in some Pentecostal circles to speak of the ministries of apostle and prophet because of the historical abuse sometimes associated with these ministries, they are recognized as existing and important to the life of the church. Even though there is no uniformity in the way that the New Testament depicts ministry, it is the desire of Pentecostals to seek guidelines for ministry and office in the New Testament.
84. Pentecostals appeal primarily to the priesthood of all believers, which connotes access to God and a participation in ministry on the part of all believers. Pentecostals point to a problem of over-institutionalization of ministry. They believe that they find evidence of this in the history and practice of the Roman Catholic church.
85. Roman Catholics place emphasis on the need for the institution of ecclesial offices as part of the divine plan for the church. They also see such institutions and ministries as related to and aiding the priesthood and ministry of all within the one body.

#### *Ordination*

86. Pentecostals see ordination as a recognition of spiritual gifts already imparted. For Pentecostals, ministry is always initiated by a divine call and attended by evidence of reception of necessary gifts and graces. Ordination of one who has received appropriate gifts provides denominational authority for his continuing function in the ministry to which he has been called.
87. For Roman Catholics, the ministry of ecclesial office is given by God who calls a candidate and pours out his Spirit upon him and gives him a special share in the priesthood of Christ. This gift must be discerned by the church, in the form laid down by church discipline. Ordination is considered a sacrament, which imparts grace, gifts and authority for the ministry of the word, sacrament and pastoral office.

#### *Apostolic Succession*

88. Both Roman Catholics and Pentecostals believe that the church lives in continuity with the New Testament apostles and their proclamation, and with the apostolic church. A primary manifestation of this is to be found in fidelity to the apostolic teaching.
89. For Roman Catholics, the succession of bishops in an orderly transmission of ministry through history is both guarantee and manifestation of this fidelity.
90. For Pentecostals, the current dynamic of the Spirit is regarded as a more valid endorsement of apostolic faith and ministry than an unbroken line of episcopal succession. They look to apostolic life and to the power of preaching which leads to conversions to Jesus Christ as an authentication of apostolic ministry. They question Roman Catholics as to whether in their insistence on episcopal succession they have at times ignored the requirements of apostolic life. Roman Catholics held the necessity of apostolic life for an effective ministry. However they maintain that the sovereignty of God's act in the transmission of the Word and the ministry of sacrament is not nullified by the personal infidelity of the minister.
91. Both partners to the dialogue strongly assert that holiness of life is essential to an effective ministry and recognize that the quality of apostolic life of the minister has an effect on the quality of his ministry. Both by their respective discipline and practice, seek to provide seriously for the holiness of ministers. Both recognize that at times, the power and sovereignty of God is operative in the ministry of a weak and sinful minister, although the discipline of both Classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics provides for the removal from office of anyone who is plainly unworthy.

#### *Recognition of Ministries*

92. Each partner to the dialogue recognizes that God is at work through the ministry of the other and recognizes that the body of Christ is being built up through it (*Unitatis redintegratio*, §§3 and 22). The issue of recognition depends on ecclesiological questions that still need elucidation. However, serious disagreements still remain.

### *Topics for Further Discussion*

93. During our conversations we touched on a number of topics which could not be discussed adequately and would have to be taken up at a later date. Among them were the following:
- a) the personal moment of faith,
  - b) the communion of saints in relation to mariology and the intercession of the saints,
  - c) the development of doctrine in its relation to Scripture and Tradition,
  - d) the inadequacy and limitation in doctrinal formulations marked with the stamp of a certain historical moment,
  - e) the binding force of the Marian Doctrines which have been defined as they relate to salvation, within the Roman Catholic church.

### *Character of the Final Report*

94. This international dialogue with representatives of classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics has been characterized by the seriousness of the exchange as participants seek to reflect in all fidelity the doctrine of their church and at the same time to learn from their opposite partners in dialogue what their true faith stance is. These responsibilities have been exercised with candor and earnestness and have resulted in this final report. Clearly, the report does not commit any church or tradition to any theological position but is offered to them for their reflection and evaluation.

### *Conclusion*

95. The members of the dialogue have experienced mutual respect and acceptance, hoping that the major points of difference will provide an occasion for continuing dialogue to our mutual enrichment.
96. It is the consensus of the participants that the dialogue should continue in this same spirit. Every effort will be made to encourage opportunities for similar bi-lateral theological conversation at the local level.
97. To that end, the dialogue enters into a period of assimilation to digest the results of the first two phases of exchange and to give broader exposure to mutual efforts undertaken to promote better understanding.
98. Finally, the participants wish to affirm the dialogue as an ongoing instrument of communication between the two traditions.

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