THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

From August 15th to August 31st at Evanston, Illinois on the campus of Northwestern University, there will take place what is called the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The participants will differ in faith, in language, in nationality; yet each will feel he has a contribution to make in the way of the reunion of Christendom.

What, precisely, does this group represent and where do they come from? In the group, you will find people coming from 48 different countries representing 161 communions which embrace some 100,000,000 members. Six hundred will be official delegates; but besides these, there will be 150 consultants appointed by the general committee, 120 youth consultants, and 600 accredited visitors. The remainder of the crowd will be limited to 1,000 general visitors who are admitted to plenary sessions only. As for the business of the meeting, there will be discussion of the main theme—Christ, the hope of the world. This will be followed by six sections treating of questions of Faith and Order, social questions and missions. In each section there will be discussion, and a committee will synthesize the findings. There will also be reports such as you will find at any convention. The object of the Assembly is, in a general way, we would say, "that all may be one". The assembly is a kind of ecclesiastical U. N.

This Assembly is an important development in what has become designated as the Ecumenical Movement. This movement offers a challenge to Catholic theologians almost equal to the so-called Reformation itself. By reason of the great numbers involved and the evident seriousness with which they are approaching their problems, it deserves our close attention. The Holy Office has not hesitated to ascribe the general aspirations for unity to the work of Divine Providence and the prayers of the faithful.

What constitute monumental problems to them are commonplace to ourselves. We alone have the divinely sanctioned answers which

they seek. We are confronted with an opportunity of reconciling many millions to the one Church of Christ. If this thirst for unity has been divinely elicited, the means for quenching it will be divinely bestowed. It is up to us to assemble the materials that will point the way to true unity according to the mind of Christ; in due time we hope that it will filter into parochial activities.

In the preparation of this paper, we have decided to group our material as follows:

I. The antecedents of the Ecumenical Movement

II. The movement itself, which takes in:
    A. The lines of activities
    B. The lines of ideas (in certain pertinent questions)
    C. The denominational approaches

III. The question of Catholic participation
    A. In the line of action
    B. In the line of ideas

While we hope to give a general comprehensive survey, it must not be considered in any way exhaustive and definitive. We have simply regarded it as our task to lay before you something of a *status questionis* to be amplified by further research and study on the part of the members of the Catholic Theological Society. (In this matter we would refer you to the quasi-official *History of the Ecumenical Movement; 1517-1948*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954, which has been announced but not published at the time of this writing.)

I

ANTECEDENTS TO THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

As we know, the Reformation produced a multiplication of sects; once the principle was granted that every man is his own priest, teacher and prophet, there was no limit to the fragmentation created. Moreover, as a result of separation from the one Church of Christ, there took place a progressive evaporation of the notion of the

Church, as a visible historical society retaining its identity down the centuries from the time of Christ and the Apostles.[1]

The major tributaries of the Reformation reflected the social and political characteristics of their places of origin, and were in a great degree occasioned or produced by causes that were not strictly religious.[2] The Saxon, Swiss and English phases received their orientation from local cultural and national patterns. The backgrounds were ducal, democratic and royal, respectively. Of course, likewise, there intermingled the projection of the dominating personalities involved. The minor tributaries were the "ecstatic" or "enthusiastic" bands, typified on the Continent by the Anabaptists, and in England by the Independents.

The attitude of the Reformers to each other at certain stages was something considerably less than complimentary.[3] Luther was pressed in 1529 to meet with Zwingli at Marburg with a view to linking the Swiss and Saxons together. The meeting failed because of doctrinal differences on the Eucharist and divergent political aims: Zwingli sought to enlist Austria to join with his Protestant cantons against the Catholic cantons, while Luther hoped to move the Emperor to convoke a General Council.[4]

An English attempt to ally with the Lutherans in 1525 did not succeed. When Pope Paul III ascended the Papal throne, he invited

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[1] As an Anglican, Newman made this observation: "Bold outlines, which cannot be disregarded, rise out of the records of the past, when we look to see what it will give up to us: they may be dim, they may be incomplete, but they are definite; — there is that which they are not, and which they cannot be. Whatever be historical Christianity, it is not Protestantism. If there ever was a safe truth, it is this. And Protestanism has ever felt it. . . . This is shown in the determination already referred to, of dispensing with historical Christianity altogether, and forming a Christianity from the Bible alone . . ." John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (New York: Appleton, 1845) p. 12 (first edition).

[2] Leighton Pullan, *Religion since the Reformation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924) p. 68; see also, Gilbert W. Child, *Church and State under the Tudors*, (London: Longmans, 1890), p. 47.

[3] See the collection of citations given in: M. J. Spalding, *The History of the Protestant Reformation* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1875) I, 463-476.

[4] *Cf.* Charles Clayton Morrison, *The Unfinished Reformation*, (New York: Harpers, 1953) pp. 18-19.

the Princes of the Augsburg confession to take part in a General Council. Henry VIII sent ambassadors to the Germans to prevent this move. Melancthon drew up "Thirteen Articles" which were duly signed.[5] The English succeeded in securing refusal to have anything to do with the Pope, but achieved no religious intercommunion.

There was also correspondence between the English and the Swiss. Since most of the ideas of the new religion was imported from the Continent, there was frequent consultation going on. At one time Cranmer was hoping for a general meeting, and in one of his letters to him, Calvin declared:[6]

> I wish it could be brought about that men of learning and dignity from the principal Churches might have a meeting; and, after careful discussion of the several points of faith, might hand down to posterity the doctrine of Scripture settled by their common judgment. But amongst the greatest evils of our age there is also to be reckoned that our Churches are so distracted one from another, that human society scarcely flourishes among us, much less that holy communion between the members of Christ, which all profess in words, and a few sincerely cultivate in faith. Thus it happens that, by the dissipation of its members, the body of the Church lies prostrate and mangled. As to myself, could I be of any service, I should not hesitate, were it necessary, to cross ten seas for such a purpose. . . .

The accession of Mary Tudor to the throne frustrated Cranmer's designs, but, under Elizabeth I, Calvinism had much to do with the formation of Anglicanism.

It will also be interesting to record an interlude which involved the Greeks. Cyril Lucar, who was to occupy the Patriarchate of Constantinople, studied and traveled in many places on the Continent and in England toward the end of the sixteenth century. He came into contact with many important personages of the Reformation and opened correspondence with them and imbibed many of their

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[5] *Cf.* Henry Eyster Jacobs, *The Lutheran Movement in England,* (Philadelphia: G. W. Frederick, 1894) pp. 55-73. This work also shows the Lutheran influence in the Anglican religious structure.

[6] Jules Bonnet, ed., *Letters of John Calvin,* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1857) II, 332-333.

ideas. In 1629 he penned a *"Confession of the Christian Faith"* into which he worked many Calvinistic and Lutheran tenets, along with the matter of the first seven Councils. He was four times deposed and exiled, and the last exile was terminated by a violent death imposed by the sultan, on an alleged charge of high treason.[7] Of course nothing came of this effort to link the Greeks with the Protestants.

So much for the immediate period of the Reformation. There were many other ventures of lesser note, but the instances we have given will serve to illustrate the situation.

But before leaving this stage of the subject, it would be well to point out what should be obvious to Catholics at least, namely, that the so-called symbolical documents, such as the *Augsburg Confession* were drawn up by apostate Catholics. This will account for the fact that a superficial reading of some of them would turn up little which is expressly and diametrically opposed to traditional teaching on some points. The vague phrasing was intended to convey the impression that there was little or no difference between the Catholic and, say, the Lutheran position, but this phrasing concealed a multitude of unexpressed divergencies.[8] For example, the idea of the Church as the society in which the Word is preached and Sacraments are administered (found in most of the "confessions") would superficially suggest that there is no opposition between what was customarily understood to be the Church and the new politico-religious societies which had been formed. But it had this effect on subsequent generations: to be a Christian was something like being a Platonist, that is to say, one followed certain views expressed in a book and associated with others who agreed with him, in a society which was voluntarily formed or politically established, but which had no reference to any visible historical continuity.[9]

Just a few words on the notion of the "invisible Church". This was a convenient device for avoiding the necessity for relationship

[7] *Cf.* Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom;* (New York: Harpers, 1877) I, 54-61 and Gaius Jackson Slosser, *Christian Unity,* (New York: Dutton, 1929) p. 44-45.

[8] *Cf.* Hartmann Grisar, *Martin Luther; His Life and Work,* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1950) p. 375 ff.

[9] *Cf.* note 1. *Supra.*

with the Holy See; it was initially a practical consideration which eventually reached a doctrinal level. William Palmer declared:

> . . . In fact, the Reformed seem generally to have taught the doctrine of the visibility of the Church, until some of them deemed it necessary, in consequence of their controversy with the Romanists, who asked them where their church existed before Luther, to maintain that the Church might sometimes be invisible.[9a]

Calvin's approach is thus described:

> The tests of a genuine Christian made it obvious that many within the visible Church . . . could not by any stretch of charity be regarded as amongst the elect who were called to be saints . . . Who exactly belong to this admixture of the reprobate was known, however, only to God. The remainder, along with the elect outside an organized body of Christians, constituted the invisible Church, which was therefore made up the truly chosen, called sanctified. Invisible it was in the sense that its precise boundaries were indistinguishable to human eyes.[9b]

Luther's position is thus explained:

> Real Lutheranism teaches that the Church is invisible, it is the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. This Church operates with spiritual means, and cannot operate with other means. . . . As an organization, the visible Church is an indirect auxiliary to the kingdom, as English is to the proclamation of the gospel in England. But neither the visible organization as such, nor the audible English as such, is part of the kingdom.[9c]

[9a] William Palmer, *A Treatise on the Church of Christ,* (New York: Appleton, 1841) I, 26.

[9b] A. Mitchell Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin,* (Glasgow: MacElhose Jackson, 1920) p. 150-151.

[9c] Henry F. Offerman in: Vergilius Ferm ed., *What is Lutheranism?* (New York: MacMillan, 1930). Another expression of this notion: "This one Church is in one regard *invisible* comprising all true believers in all churches of Christendom, which are known to God alone, who judges after the hearts of men. . . . But, then, this "invisible" Church comes to visibility through certain marks: the teaching of the Gospel and the ministration of the Sacraments." J. L. Neve, *Churches and Sects of Christendom,* (Blair, Neb.: Lutheran Publishing House, 1948) p. 154.

Cranmer explains himself:

> . . . there are two manner of Churches, one true, perfect and holy in the sight of God, and another false, imperfect and ungodly. . . . If we allow them for the true Church of God, that appear to be the visible and outward Church, consisting of the ordinary succession of bishops, then shall we make Christ . . . to be the head of ungodly and disobedient members. . . . But here they will ask me, how shall a man know whether he be in the right faith, but by this Church? To this Christ shall make answer himself, saying in the gospel of John "My sheep hear my voice, and shall not hear a stranger" . . . Where he biddeth you not search unwritten verities, such as outward seen, . . . but the written verities contained in the holy scriptures . . .[9d]

Hooker states a pluralist conception which is a classical Anglican view:

> As the main body of the sea, being one, yet within diverse precincts hath diverse names; so the Catholic Church is in like sort divided into a number of distinct societies, every one of which is termed a Church within itself.[9e]

In the development of Protestantism the idea of the visibility of the Church played a large part. In this matter, a right-wing and a left-wing group emerged: the right-wing had a certain institutional fixation in relation to those bodies which were established by law and professed adherence to "confessional" propositions. On the other hand, the left-wing group carried the principle of individual interpretation and invisibility of the Church to its logical extreme, by stressing the inner experience to the point of excluding institutional forms and credal formulas.[9f] Paradoxically enough, it is to the latter type that the remote ancestry of the present Ecumenical Movement is attributed, at least in its initial stages.

It would take us too far afield to go into detail in regard to the

[9d] Thomas Cranmer, "A Confutation of Unwritten Verities" in: *Miscellaneous writings and letters of Thomas Cranmer;* (Cambridge; University press, 1846) p. 11, 13.

[9e] Richard Hooker, *Works* (Keble ed.) (Oxford: Parker, 1839) I, 351.

[9f] *Cf.* William W. Sweet, *The American Churches,* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1947) p. 12-14.

various ventures that took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[10] They were for the most part individual ventures and political settlements. We shall simply list a few of the more noteworthy, anyone of which could consume a book of itself.[11] For example:

Gallican-Lutheran: Philip the Fourth of Spain appointed Christopher Rojas de Spinola, a Franciscan, to deal with German princes on the subject of reunion (1661). Spinola brought Bossuet's *Exposition of the Catholic Faith* along with him. He wrote to Bossuet asking him to interest Louis XIV in the project, and a considerable correspondence involving the philosopher Leibnitz was opened. Nothing came of it; one factor terminating the discussion was the accession of the House of Hanover to the British throne.[12]

Gallican-Anglican: There was also correspondence between Dr. Dupin of Paris and William Wake of Canterbury about the year 1717.[13] It came to an end when Dupin was removed from his position as professor by reason of his resistance to the Bull *Unigenitus.*

Certain events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have a great bearing on the Ecumenical movement of today. It was the age of the so-called Enlightenment, and of extensive colonization in new territories and of maritime exploration. Captain Cook, who penned descriptions of his travels and enkindled imaginations, little realized some of the secondary effects of his work; there was a new surge of Protestantism in the way of missions. Colonial powers, such as England and Denmark, often sent chaplains to take care of their nationals in the colonies; a missionary impulse turned them to the native populations. Conjoined to this was an emotional religious upsurge among the Methodists of England and the Pietists in Saxony. In 1699 the *Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge* (S.P.C.K.) was formed primarily as a literary agency, and in 1701

10 Consult the Gallican work: M. M. Tabaraud, *Histoire critique des projets formes depuis trois cents ans pour la reunion des communions Chretiénnes,* (Paris: Gauthier, 1824). A very rare work, but there is a copy in Catholic University library.

11 A very serviceable bibliography is: Henry R. T. Brandreth, *Unity and Reunion; a Bibliography;* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948).

12 *Cf.* Slosser, *op. cit.,* 68-72.

13 *Cf.* Slosser, *op. cit.,* 74-80.

the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel* (S.P.G.) was formed to provide personnel and material aid. In 1792, William Carey started the venture called the Baptist Missionary Society and set forth himself for India. These and other groups engaged in many activities of an interdenominational character. For example, the London Missionary Society in 1793 resolved "not to send Presbyterian, Independency, Episcopacy or any form of Church Order or Government . . . but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the heathen." [14]

During the nineteenth century we can discern several different lines of development; however, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive in all respects.

The Rationalist philosophy current in the earlier century also continued into the nineteenth century; in addition, German higher criticism was dissecting the Bible. In England, this had the effect of creating what is called the "Broad Church" school, generally associated with the names of Arthur P. Stanley, Thomas Arnold,[15] Benjamin Jowett and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The general aim of this latitudinarian line was to play down doctrine and the notion of the Church as a teaching or priestly society, but to emphasize character and social order. In Germany, a scheme was carried through in 1817 by the action of the Prussian government which fused the Calvinists and Lutherans into one organization, taking no account of doctrinal tenets.[16]

The High Church Line is associated with the names of John Henry Newman, John Keble, E. B. Pusey and their followers in what has been called the "Oxford Movement." Initially, it was a reaction against liberalism which took the form of a defense of the "dogmatic principle" that is, of the existence of an objective deposit of doctrine entrusted by Christ to the Church. This was followed by

14 William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical Foundations: A History of the International Missionary Council and Its Nineteenth-Century Background,* (New York: Harpers. 1952) p. 1-10.

15 See for example: Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, *The Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold,* 2 vols., (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864) I, 200; II, 24, 68, 126, 212, 216.

16 *Cf.* Ignatz von Dollinger, *The Church and the Churches;* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1862) p. 276 ff.

a recognition of the transmission of this deposit through the teaching Church. Later, it was realized that the Church was also a channel of divine life through the liturgy and the Sacraments.[17] This notion resurrected the idea of the "Church." The thought was fascinating, and, in the Anglican Establishment, there were certain relics of the past related to matters of organization, prescribed forms of worship, etc. The Oxford Movement sought to restore what its promoters considered to be the Catholic heritage. Certain orientations developed— one in the way of Rome, a second in the way of the Eastern dissidents, still another in the affirmation of identification with the Church of the past with its doctrinal and liturgical manifestations. Under the influence of this school, the "Association for the Promotion of the Union of Christendom" was formed. By reason of the association of Catholics with this group, the Holy Office condemned it in 1864.[18]

We have already mentioned that, in the eighteenth century, certain ventures in mission territories took on interdenominational characteristics. In the nineteenth century we see a continued development of the evangelical-missionary line; first by way of tangential convergence in domestic relations; second by way of co-operation in missionary endeavors.

The affirmation of the "Church principle" by the Oxford Movement produced profound reactions among low-church Anglicans and others. This gave rise to the "Evangelical Alliance." There was great emphasis on those positions identified with fundamentalism. This movement began in London in 1846; an American offspring was born in 1876.[19] This provided a meeting ground for various Protestants of different sects who adhered to the Evangelical wing of Protestantism. Another point we might mention in this connection is the formation of the various Bible societies. For example, in 1804, the *British and Foreign Bible Society* was established; it was a

[17] *Cf.* Edward F. Hanahoe, *Catholic Ecumenism,* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1953) p. 129-130.

[18] Edward F. Hanahoe, "Two Early Documents on Reunion" in: *Unitas* (English language edition) v. VI, n. 1 (Spring 1954) p. 38-50 full documents included.

[19] Slosser, *Christian Unity, op. cit.,* p. 174 ff.

joint venture embracing several denominations, organized with the view of issuing Bibles without note or comment in various languages.

As early as 1810, William Carey in India recommended a decennial conference of all the denominations in the world; it took 100 years before a tangible realization of this was brought about.

Various sects of Protestantism were operating in mission territories. It would be expected that their lines would cross and recross over the same areas and that competition would produce much confusion among the native populations. Some attempt to remedy this was made by regional gatherings of denominations, which took place in Africa, Asia, Latin America and India at various times and places.[20] These, in some way, laid the foundations for such agreements as that which produced the "Church of South India."

Certain administrative functions involved the setting up of departments in the different denominational headquarters, with a view to providing personnel and material support for their missionary ventures. Gradually, certain co-operative ventures began to arise here also among various sects. For example, in 1854 a "Union Missionary Convention" took place in New York, and at the same place in 1900 a much larger "Ecumenical Missionary Conference" took place; in England, and on the continent there were similar ventures.[21] Intimately associated with these were the various interdenominational youth associations that were established, such as, the *YMCA, The Student Christian Movement* and like enterprises.[22] The general pattern that emerged was the playing down of denominational differences in view of world evangelism.

II

THE MOVEMENT ITSELF

A. In the Line of Activities

As we know, every historical event is the result of antecedents that have led up to it. So it is with the Ecumenical Movement. For the sake of convenience, authors are wont to date its formal begin-

[20] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 15-35.
[21] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 35-81.
[22] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 81-97.

nings with 1910, but it is organically linked with much that went before, as regards personnel, ideas and activities. We find that the major lines of the movement correspond with the earlier lines of development, but that there is an ever increasing momentum and intermingling of ideas. The three basic lines are: the missionary, the faith and order, the life and work.

1. *The Missionary Conferences*

The initiative for this phase came from an American, William Henry Grant, secretary of the *Foreign Missions Conference of North America*. He conceived the idea of a "Third" *Ecumenical Missionary Conference* (the others having taken place in 1854, 1900). Little did he realize that a new venture was to be launched. After much discussion, the "World Missionary Conference" was held at Edinburgh 1910.

The topics discussed at the conference were the following: (1) carrying the Gospel to all the world; (2) the native Church and its workers; (3) education in relation to the Christianization of national life; (4) the missionary message in relation to non-Christian religions; (5) the preparation of missionaries; (6) the base of missions; (7) the relation of missions to governments; (8) co-operation and the promotion of unity. The reports on these topics filled nine volumes.[23]

The members (there were some 1,200 in all) represented all mission fields except South America, and votes were allotted on the basis of the annual budget: one delegate for the first $10,000 and an additional delegate for each further unit of $20,000.[24] The rules confined discussion to practical matters and excluded all question of doctrine or polity; this latter stipulation was due to the insistence of the high-church Anglicans, especially Charles Gore.[25] Another important feature was the formation of the "Continuation Committee" which was to carry out the resolutions of the Conference. In

[23] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 102-109.
[24] *Cf.* Slosser, *op. cit.*, p. 254.
[25] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

1921, the organization's name was changed to "International Missionary Council."

Edinburgh in 1910 was the seed bed for the growth of other phases of the Ecumenical Movement, as we shall see. But its main significance lies in the way in which it intensified the sense of world mission, the desire for co-operation across denominational lines and a certain impatience with sectarianism, especially in mission territories. Though predominantly evangelical in orientation, groups such as the high Anglicans did participate.

Many meetings, both local and international followed Edinburgh, but it would take us too far afield to go into them. The next large assembly was held at Jerusalem in 1928. The membership was housed in an old hospital and in tents; the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem permitted the use of his summer palace and the Galilea Church. Other dissident groups of the Eastern rites were also present.[26] An important development in this conference was that the groups met, not as an association to promote the mission from Christian to non-Christian lands but rather as an association of "older" and "younger" churches on the basis of complete equality.[27]

The world-wide depression intervened and this evoked many other plans and local meetings. The next large meeting took place at Tambaram, Madras, South India, in 1938. The important development of this meeting was the bringing into sharper focus of the notion of the Universal Church. One Chinese delegate remarked that he used to think that to be a Christian was to follow the ethics of Christ, but now he saw himself as a part of a world-Church and not a sectarian denomination.[28]

Shortly after World War II, a meeting was held at Whitby, a small town thirty miles east of Toronto in 1947. We find here simply a reaffirmation of previous ideas and an effort for closer consolidation in co-operative endeavors.[29] *The International Missionary Council* has retained its identity, but does have relations with the *World*

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[26] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 244 ff.
[27] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 247.
[28] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
[29] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.*, p. 334 ff.

Council of Churches.[30] Its place in the Ecumenical Movement lies in the development of the notions of world mission and of parity of denominations, and in the encouragement of a certain sense of a Universal Church operating in and through the various sects; its main goal is co-operation in certain areas of work common to its member sects, exclusive of doctrinal or constitutional conceptions.

2. *The Faith and Order Conferences*

As we have noted, the Edinburgh, 1910, meeting and the movement which issued from it excluded doctrinal and constitutional questions from its agenda. This did not satisfy all who were present. Among the dissidents was Charles H. Brent, an American Episcopalian bishop. In the Fall of 1910, the American Episcopalians held their General Convention at Cincinnati. Through his influence a resolution was adopted that there be formed:

> . . . a Conference following the general method of the World Missionary Conference, to be participated in by representatives of all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, for the consideration of questions pertaining to the Faith and Order of the Church of Christ.[31]

A commission to draw plans and issue invitations was appointed. World War I intervened and occasioned delays; the work was resumed at its close. In connection with the preparations, a delegation called, in 1919, on Pope Benedict XV to invite Catholic participation in the movement. In the summary of the Pope's address to the delegation, which appeared in the London *Tablet* for May 31, 1919, we read:

> The Holy Father, after having thanked them for their visit, stated that, as successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ, he has no greater desire than that there should be one fold and one shepherd. His Holiness added that the teaching and practice of the

[30] *Cf.* Hogg, *op. cit.,* p. 342 ff.

[31] Leonard Hodgson, *The Ecumenical Movement,* (Sewanee, Tenn.: University press, 1951) p. 16.

Catholic Church regarding the visible Church of Christ were well known to everybody, and therefore it would not be possible for the Catholic Church to take part in such a Congress as the one proposed. His Holiness, however, by no means wishes to disapprove of the Congress in question for those who are not in union with the Chair of Peter. On the contrary, he earnestly desires and prays that if the Congress is practicable, those who take part in it may, by the grace of God, see the light and become reunited to the visible head of the Church, by whom they will be received with open arms.[32]

In 1920, a preliminary conference was held at Geneva; the participants were from some 70 bodies of forty nations.

The first large assembly of the *Faith and Order Movement* took place in 1927 at Lausanne in Switzerland. The subjects were as follows: (1) the call to unity; (2) the Church's message to the world—the Gospel; (3) the nature of the Church; (4) the Church's common confession of faith; (5) the Church's ministry; (6) the Sacraments; (7) the unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing churches.[33] The object was to determine the status of agreement or disagreement among the participants with respect to these questions. Each topic as discussed was digested by a commission in lines of agreement, followed by divergencies.

As with the *Missionary Conference,* the *Faith and Order Movement* also had a continuation committee. In connection with one meeting in 1935 an interesting question arose. The Czechoslovakian National body, originating at the close of World War I, had espoused a non-credal unitarianism. It wanted to take part in the movement, but scrupled about the designation of "Jesus Christ as God and Saviour," the acceptance of which was a basis of membership. It was decided that the participation of any body in the movement was the responsibility of the body itself and that the movement would accept the Czechoslovakians.[34] This action has an important bearing on the understanding of some features of the movement, and, later,

[32] *Cf.* E. C. Messenger, ed., *Rome and Reunion; A Collection of Papal Pronouncements,* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1934) p. 107.

[33] *Cf.* Edmund Davison Soper, *Lausanne: The Will to Understand;* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1928) p. 65.

[34] *Cf.* Hodgson; *op. cit., p.* 17-18.

contributed to ease the consciences of many in accepting the constitution of the World Council.

The *Faith and Order Movement* met at St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh in 1937. The topics were: (1) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; (2) the Church of Christ and the Word of God; (3) the ministry and the Sacraments; (4) the Church's unity in life and worship.[35] The reports followed in the same fashion as at the previous meeting.

It would be difficult to summarize the impressions of the *Faith and Order Movement*. It took in every type of sect and denomination ranging from the Eastern Orthodox to Quakers; the influence of the Anglicans was very strong, as would be expected, for the movement originated with them. But we note the growth of what is styled "Comprehensiveness," though this would be rejected by many participants. Without the divinely established magisterium, each denomination would feel that it was in a position to make a contribution, and feel also that it had the right to a voice in the formation of a united body, should that eventuate. The Liberal school would view the crisis as irresolvable, except through a syncretism of all elements in a vague formula.

3. *The Life and Work Conferences*

We go back to Edinburgh, 1910, once again. One of the participants in that meeting was Nathan Soderblom, Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden. He was impressed with the achievement of cooperation in the matter of missions. The shadows of war loomed and several meetings took place in various places with a view to averting it through religious means. The *World Alliance for International Friendship Through the Churches* was formed in 1914 at Constance, Switzerland. It did not succeed in its immediate aims, but survived the war itself. At a meeting of this group at Oud Wassenaer, Holland, in 1919, Soderblom offered a resolution that a *Universal Christian Council of Life and Work* should be established

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[35] Leonard Hodgson, *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order,* (New York: MacMillan, 1938) p. 35-36.

on the lines of the missionary meeting of Edinburgh, 1910.[36] A preliminary meeting was held at Geneva and the project was launched.

The first large meeting of this movement was held at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1925. From the start, it excluded all doctrinal and constitutional questions from its agenda. It aimed at practical questions of a political and economic order, the idea being to Christianize the social activities of the world. We note here an echo of the nineteenth century "broad church" school. Thirty-three countries and ninety-one bodies were represented. The topics discussed were: (1) the Church's obligation in view of God's purpose for the world; (2) the Church and economic industrial problems; (3) the Church and social and moral problems; (4) the Church and international relations; (5) the Church and Christian education; (6) methods of co-operation and federative efforts by the Christian communions.[37]

The second large meeting of this group was held at Oxford in 1937. The topics discussed were: (1) Church and community; (2) Church and state; (3) the Church and the economic order; (4) the Church and education; (5) the universal Church and the world of nations.[38]

While all sorts of denominations were involved in the *Life and Work Movement*, it is clear that the liberal school held sway. The motto of the movement was "doctrines divide, but service unites." In its desire for action, Stockholm had a "horror of theory in general and theology in particular." [39] At Oxford, however, questions related to theology were involved, even though obliquely faced.

4. *The World Council of Churches*

For some time it was felt that there was a duplication of effort between the *Faith and Order Movement* and the *Life and Work Movement*; there was much consultation between the officials of the

[36] *Cf.* William Adams Brown, *Toward a United Church: Three Decades of Ecumenical Christianity;* (New York: Scribners, 1946) p. 61-94.

[37] *Cf.* Brown, *op. cit.,* p. 72.

[38] *Cf.* Brown, *op. cit.,* p 92.

[39] Walter Marshall Horton, *Toward a Reborn Church,* (New York: Harpers, 1949) p 35-53.

continuation committees with regard to their fusion. It was fore-
seen that an opportunity would present itself in 1937 when one
group was meeting at Oxford and the other at Edinburgh. A com-
mittee from each group met at Westfield College, London, and agreed
on the project of a *World Council of Churches.* A provisional consti-
tution was adopted at Utrecht, Holland, in 1938.[40]

World War II intervened and it was not until the Fall of 1948
that a large meeting was possible, and this was held at Amsterdam,
Holland. The topics covered were: (1) the universal Church in
God's design; (2) the Church's witness to God's design; (3) the
Church and the disorder of society; (4) the Church and the inter-
national disorder.[41]

All three phases of the Ecumenical Movement converged into
the *World Council.* Formally and historically it represents a fusion
of two, namely, *Faith and Order* and *Life and Work,* but the third,
namely, the missionary phase, while it retains its separate identity,
has its influence on the program.

The subsequent history of the *World Council* is as follows. The
Faith and Order Commission of the Council held a meeting in
the Cathedral of St. Lawrence at Lund, Sweden, in the Fall of 1952.
The major topics for discussion were: (1) intercommunion; (2) the
nature of the Church; (3) the ways of worship.[42] Previous to the
gathering, three volumes of material were prepared containing
essays on these topics by representatives of the major denomina-
tions.[43]

Finally, there is the projected meeting of the General Assembly
which is to take place at Evanston, Illinois, this coming Fall. The
topics to be covered will be: (1) faith and order—our oneness in
Christ and our disunity as Churches; (2) evangelism—the mission

[40] *Cf.* Hodgson, *op. cit.,* p. 23-28.

[41] *Cf.* W. A. Visser't Hooft, *The First Assembly of the World Council of
Churches,* (New York, 1948) p. 47.

[42] *Cf.* Oliver S. Tomkins ed., *The Third World Conference on Faith and
Order.* (London; SCM, 1953).

[43] *Cf.* Donald Baille and John Marsh, ed., *Intercommunion,* (London:
SCM, 1952); R. Newton Flew ed., *The Nature of the Church,* (London SCM,
1952); Pehr Edwall, Eric Hayman, William D. Maxwell, ed. *Ways of Worship,*
(London: SCM, 1952).

of the Church to those outside her life; (3) social problems—the responsible society in a world perspective; (4) international affairs —Christians in the struggle for world community; (5) inter-group relations—the church amid racial and ethnic tensions; (6) the laity—the Christian in his vocation.[44] The general theme will be: "Christ, the Hope of the World."

How would we characterize the *World Council of Churches?* It may be said that it is a river bed in which many divergent currents flow in close contact. Each of these currents must be examined on its own merits. The Council itself, as such, sponsors none nor is it committed to any specific ecclesiology. It has no magisterial authority or jurisdiction over its members. However, to be a member of the *World Council* implies the recognition of the existence of one Church of Christ and the admission that the other bodies constituting the Council have some features of a true Church; [45] it sounds contradictory but is understandable in terms of the idea of the invisible Church.

We might mention also the tensions that have been created. In their separate existence as denominations, one body might teach in a similar vein to another, and many might regard their quasi-symbolical "confessions," in practice, as little more than historical documents. But, when meeting together, they are more conscious of their denominational status and, feeling that they are in a position to make a positive contribution, they treat their "confessions" on a level with the creeds. The impression is one of ideological Babel, but the friendly feelings which pervade remove asperity.

Is the *World Council* anti-Catholic? It might well be that some of its participants are very definitely so; especially noteworthy in the American wing, for example, are G. Bromley Oxnam, John A. Mackay, Charles Clayton Morrison and others. But, officially, it does not seem to be; many overtures looking to Catholic participation have been made. But we must keep in mind that sincere respect

[44] *Cf. Together to be His Witnesses: A Study Guide to Evanston,* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1953) p. 7.

[45] *Cf.* W. A. Visser't Hooft, "The Significance of the World Council of Churches" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* (New York: Harper, 1948) p. 177; "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches" in: *Ecumenical Review* Vol. 3, n. 1 (October, 1950) p. 47-53.

is not the same thing as the recognition of the position of the Catholic Church as something acceptable.

To complete the picture, we might also state that, while the *World Council* itself is not an agency for uniting denominations, many of its member groups have merged and many tentatives have been mooted.[46] Further, it would not be right to create the impression that all denominations are associated with the *World Council*, or are sympathetic with its aims. There is also an "International Council of Christian Churches" which was formed in direct opposition, and met at Amsterdam at the same time as the *World Council* in 1948; the opposition is ultra-fundamentalist in character.[47]

B. In the Line of Ideas

It would be useful to discuss some of the ideas that have been circulating among non-Catholics on subjects related to the Ecumenical Movement. But we must be on our guard lest we attribute to them the type of thinking that we are accustomed to. The cardinal operative principle of the "right and duty of private judgment" [48] permits a multitude of conceptions within the same framework of words. The terminology is multivalent and clarity of definition is hard to find. For example, "catholic" to one is the same as broadmindedness; to another it means episcopal form of polity; in another context it refers to those in communion with the Holy See. Another example: the Lambeth Conference of 1930 reiterated the policy of Anglicanism as regards the "historic episcopate" as a necessary basis for reunion, but adds that it does not require of others "any

46 *Cf.* for example: H. Paul Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity*, (New York: Harper, 1937); J. J. Willis and others, *Towards a United Church*, (London: Edinburgh House, 1947); S. C. Neill *Towards Church Union*, (London: SCM, 1952) and the last brought up to date: "Survey of Church Union Negotiations" in: *Ecumenical Revied*, v. 6, n. 3 (April, 1954) p. 300-315.

47 *Cf.* Carl McIntire, *Modern Tower of Babel.* (Collingswood, N. J.: Christian Beacon press, 1949).

48 William T. Manning, "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States and Its Relation to the Movement for the Reunion of Christendom" in: James Marchant ed., *The Reunion of Christendom*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1929) p. 220.

one particular theory or interpretation of the episcopate as a condition of union." [49] Now we shall proceed with the discussion of some lines of thinking.

The term "Ecumenism" has assumed a great importance in modern day speech among those working for the reunion of Christendom. Philologically it goes back to the Greek Empire which was called the *Oikoumene,* which literally meant "the inhabited earth." Its civil use also appears in the New Testament where St. Luke wrote of the Decree of Caesar Augustus that the "whole world" should be enrolled. As applied to the Church, it suggests its world-embracing character. Its use to designate the general councils is also sufficiently known.[50] Relative to the movement bearing the name, it was only gradually introduced. The Edinburgh meeting of 1910 explicitly refrained from the use of the term because it was feared that the authoritative suggestion in the term might be misunderstood. The *Faith and Order Movement* first described itself as "pan-Christian" and also shied away from the term. Nathan Soderblom, founder of the *Life and Work Movement,* is credited with the first use of the term in the present day context.[51]

Among non-Catholics, the term "Ecumenical" is used in a variety of contexts. For our purpose, we have chosen three interpretations which will suffice to cover the topics. In the first place, it is used to describe an increasing mutual recognition:

> In essence, "ecumenism" is to take full seriously a fellow Christian of a separated Church; to accept him "in Christ," and so in Christ's body; to accept him, not in spite of, but *because* of his membership in another tradition.[52]

In the second place, it is used to express a *terminus ad quem,* i. e , some unspecified goal which does not presently exist: "In plain English, the Ecumenical Movement is a *movement toward one universal*

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[49] *The Lambeth Conferences 1867-1930* (London: SPCK, 1948) p. 222.

[50] *Cf.* Edward F. Hanahoe, *Catholic Ecumenism,* p. 45.

[51] *Cf.* W. A. Visser't Hooft, *The Meaning of Ecumenical,* (London: SCM, 1953) p. 22-26.

[52] Oliver S. Tomkins, "The Anglican Communion and the Oecumenical Movement" in: E. R. Morgan and Roger Lloyd ed. *The Mission of the Anglican Communion,* (London: SPCK & SPG, 1948) p. 108.

Church, 'throughout the whole inhabited world.' " [53] In the third
place it is used to express a *terminus a quo,* i.e., the gradual manifes-
tation of an existing, though invisible unity: "Ecumenical is the key
word in the drama of an unfolding consciousness of world com-
munity constituted by common unities embracing all the many dif-
ferent kinds of Christians." [54]

We have given elsewhere the Catholic interpretation of the
term.[55] For the sake of convenience, we shall briefly reproduce it
here. We would say that Ecumenism, in its general sense, is the
divinely established work of reconciliation of all men with God,
through their incorporation into the unity of the Mystical Body of
Christ, proceeding from the effective direction of the center, which
is the Chair of Peter, to the limits of the world. In its special sense,
Ecumenism is also a work of reconciliation on a universal scale but
looking toward baptized dissidents seeking their return to com-
munion with the Holy See.

The question of the nature of the Church produces the deepest
cleavage among the participantsof the *World Council.*[56] To date the
impasse is irreconcilable; it is agreed that there *is* a Church, but
what is it? There are two main lines of thought that stand in direct
opposition to each other, namely, the notion of the Church as "given"
and the notion of the Church as "gathered."

Some consider the Church as something essentially "given." By
that expression is meant a visible society, which, by nature and dig-
nity, is prior to and above the individual member. "Our membership
in our Church comes first, our individuality and its claims come sec-
ond." [57] The Church is regarded as functioning with some degree
of divine authority and is equipped with the divinely established
means of salvation. It is placed in the world "to speak with author-
ity concerning revealed truth which it possesses by age-long inherit-

[53] Walter Marshall Horton, *Toward a Reborn Church;* (New York:
Harper, 1949) p. 9.

[54] H. G. G. Herklots and Henry Smith Leiper, *Pilgrimage to Amsterdam,*
(New York: Morehouse-Gorham, 1947) p. 14.

[55] *Cf.* Hanahoe, *op. cit.,* p. 46-52.

[56] *Cf.* W. A. Visser't Hooft, ed. *The First Assembly of the World Council of
Churches,* (New York: Harper, 1948) p. 51-52.

[57] Arthur Chandler, *The English Church and Reunion,* (New York: Gor-
ham, 1916) p. 96.

ance." [58] This authority *"ultimately is that of God,* not of man, *even* though it is mediated through men." [59] There are various degrees in which this notion is adhered to, ranging from low-church Anglicanism to Greek Orthodoxy. (In the Council, this conception is styled "Catholic" and "authoritarian" but I have not used the term, for the Orthodox and the Anglicans claim it as their own.) The notion envisions creeds, sacraments, discipline in a hierarchical framework, with some suggestion of historical succession. In matters of reunion, the Orthodox would not consider tampering with the faith nor will the Anglicans repudiate the office of bishops (not necessarily conjoined to a sacramental character, but primarily as an administrative form rooted in tradition). This notion also includes some degree of respect for ancient traditions.

Directly opposed to the above notion is what is styled the "gathered" Church conception. There are actually two notions under this heading. The second actually meets the definition in its fullest sense, though the first meets it in essentials. This conception somewhat prescinds from historical considerations, at least as regards ministerial succession and teaching authority. Those who hold it would say that the deposit of revelation is already contained exclusively in the sacred books which are available for all to read, and that there exists no mediatorial office between man and God in the high-church sense.

The classical Protestant view, is that the Church was called into being by the written word of God and will consist of the community of those who shape their lives and thought according to the Word:

> The New Testament Church was pre-eminently *a witnessing community,* for its members were under obligation to proclaim the Word of God and live in obedience to Him. . . . The nature of the Church is not determined by any form of organization. It is determined by the relation of the community to Christ. He alone is the Head of the Church and He alone has the right to rule.[60]

[58] J. A. F. Gregg, "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 62.

[59] A. G. Hebert as quoted in: K. L. Carrick Smith, *The Church and the Churches,* (London: SCM, 1948) p. 12.

[60] Clarence T. Craig, "The Church of the New Testament" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 36.

The Bible holds the primacy over the Church.[61] The "church-sense" is subordinated to the primacy of the Word as received by fiduciary faith. This notion is characteristic of the Lutheran and Reformed bodies. We should note, however, that the high church movement in Lutheranism is reviving some relics of the "given" church notion. One "high church" Lutheran writes: "The Church would be in a sad plight if it merely came from God mediately, on a roundabout path by way of the revelation of the Word. The original community itself knew well enough that it was established directly by God." [62]

A further dilution of the "church" notion considers it to be a fortuitous association of converted persons who are guided by the "spirit." Here, personal experience holds the primacy and the church is consequent to the individuals who compose it. "The three cardinal principles of a gathered Church are voluntary association, a covenant relationship, and what the Puritans used to call the 'crown rights of the Redeemer.'" [63] "Those who sponsor this notion suspect any standardized outward form in the way of faith, ministry, worship or organization; they are all regarded as accessory or instrumental to the fellowship." [64] Bodies following congregational polity generally operate under this conception. Karl Barth espoused this notion when he wrote:

> The congregation is the result of a process by which certain people are differentiated from others, and are drawn into fellowship with one another by Jesus Christ, through a common experience of the Divine mercy, which is also judgment, and of gratitude toward God, and a common desire to serve their neighbors, which leads them to discover that *together* they have a mission to the world outside.[65]

[61] *Cf.* Angus Dun, *Prospecting for a United Church,* (New York: Harper, 1948) p. 47.

[62] Hans Enrenberg as quoted in: Nicholas Arseniev, *We Beheld His Glory,* (New York: Morehouse, 1936) p. 88.

[63] Carrick Smith, *op. cit.,* p. 26.

[64] *Cf.* Angus Dun, *op. cit.,* p. 47.

[65] Karl Barth, "The Church—the Living Congregation of the Living Lord Jesus Christ" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 68.

While we are here only concerned with presenting a *status quaestionis* by giving an objective report on non-Catholic positions, it would not be out of place to make an observation. The resources of our theology are adequate to give the solutions to such questions as are raised here and in what follows; the crisis is resolvable in terms of the identity of the Church as customarily presented in the tracts. While we do not need a new ecclesiology, it would be well to take account of the contemporary issues; the questions raised by the Ecumenical Movement reveal newer depths in what is already implicity in our theology, and what is explicit has contemporary applications.

In examining the question of unity it is important to keep in mind, that, for the sake of convenience, a certain classication of ideas has been attempted, but these are not to be regarded as all mutually exclusive in the minds of the authors. There is much overlapping, inclusion, and bridging to be found. We might view certain notions as incompatible, by their very nature, but the philosophical premises of their sponsors may allow them. It might be inconceivable to us that the same denomination would include those who consider unity in terms of oneness of faith, and those who consider it a coalescence of sentiment, but it happens just the same. So, when we label a notion that seems clearly stated, it should be understood only as a tendency or chief point of emphasis in the mind of a certain author. Further, there is no hope of exhaustive classification, as every new book on the subject includes additional variations. What is here given should suffice to give a general picture. It would take too long to give a theological evaluation of each notion as it comes up; we leave that to you and content ourselves with the function of providing a *status questionis*.

In the Catholic context of the statement of the problem of disunity, the lines are clearly drawn: the present situation is one created not by a division *of* the Church, but separation *from* the Church, and the inference is that reunion is achieved by a return to the one and only Church of Christ, which is historically and theologically identical with the visible society in communion with the Holy See. But those who are one with the problem itself are painfully aware of division and see in the situation a sort of division of the Church

itself. Within this frame of reference, we can perceive several lines of approach.

There are those who operate from a premise that, even from the beginning, there was no one organized society of the Church, and that "unity" was little more than a negative emphasis to prevent development of mutual hostilities. Van Dusen declares:

> A first prerequisite is the abandonment, once and for all, of the widely held myth of an original "undivided Church." History recognizes no such reality. . . . In other words, from the outset, the objective was not to preserve an "undivided Church" but to prevent further and more drastic divisions among groups too too loosely knit by purely spiritual bonds. The only "unity of the Church" was a "unity of the spirit" and this was very imperfect and often humiliatingly unspiritual. When this fact is grasped, the whole enterprise of Christian unity is set in a new and correct perspective. And this is fundamental.[66]

Akin to this is a *fieristic* approach, envisioning unity within a context of evolutionary modernism:

> . . . It must be further recognized that true and complete Christian unity, while implicit from the beginning, can only be attained as a result of spiritual maturity. . . . Unity, therefore, in the full sense of it, is the goal rather than the starting point.[67]

This approach may be said to stem from liberalism.

On the other hand, there is an approach which recognizes the historical fact of unity in the Church, but declares that it is presently divided. For example:

> Now, as a matter of history, this purpose was fulfilled in the Church of the first days; and this accounts for the term Reunion; the unity of the Church being something that has once been experienced and afterwards lost, not something that we never experienced at all. At present, men cannot see the Church because it is not one, and we must never rest until they can see it, because it has become one.[68]

[66] Henry D. Van Dusen, *World Christianity,* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1947) p. 69.

[67] J. Scott Lidgett, "The Wesleyan Methodist Church" in: James Marchant, ed., *The Reunion of Christendom,* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929) p. 177-178.

[68] Spencer Jones, *England and the Holy See,* (London: Longmans, 1902) p. 54-83.

This view is especially characteristic of high church Anglicans, though others share it; in the nineteenth century it took the form of the "branch theory." It was a view sponsored by Newman as an Anglican; in 1841 he declared:

> The unity of the Church Catholic is very near my heart, only I do not see any prospect of it in our time. . . . It is our theory that each diocese is an integral church, intercommunion being a duty (and the breach of it a sin), but not essential to Catholicity.[69]

According to this theory, reunion would be the reopening of intercommunion between *de facto* bodies.

Finally, there is a view that operates from a premise of an existing, though invisible, unity. There are many varieties of this conception, but we shall take them up under the heading of the factors involved in the manifestation of unity. This view primarily stems from the evangelical school, though it is expressed also in some degree by those of the liberal persuasion, not even excluding Anglicans. A liberal Anglican expressed it in this fashion:

> First of all, Church unity should be distinguished from Christian unity or the oneness of believers in Christ. . . . This one invisible Church, as it is often called, persists in and through all visible churches and denominations, survives their mutations and destructions, and remains intact even amid their conflicts and schisms. . . . That we are all one in Christ is an admitted fact from which we proceed, and the common ground upon which we stand.[70]

An interesting angle on this question of the views concerning unity is the determination of the precise area in which unity is sought and the predominant factors that are considered. Some of these notions are concretely embodied in some mergers or tentatives that have taken place, and we shall note them when we take up the question of union as such. But at this point we consider what

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[69] John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, (London: Oxford University press, 1931) p. 280.

[70] C. W. Shields, *The United Church of the United States*, (New York: Scribners, 1895) p. 67.

is regarded as the constituent factor and what are the ways in which unity is manifested.

We here consider the underlying motivation through which it is thought that unity is constituted.

There is the eschatological concept. According to this view Christ never founded a Church nor had He any intention of continuing His work through the medium of a permanent society. His followers were united after His death by the *common expectation* of the imminent end of the world. This view originated with the German rationalists of the nineteenth century. It is given a "pious" orientation by John Oman, when he wrote:

> Precisely this conception created the Church and determined its ideal. It rests on the conviction that the true Divine order is ever ready to break into the world, if men will only suffer it to break into their hearts. It is the society of those who already realize the blessings of the kingdom of God in their hearts— pardon, grace, joy—and are so sure that it will come in fullness that they can live as if it actually were come and so can disregard the whole question of visible power, organize themselves on the basis of love and leave all issues with God.[71]

A further notion is a modernistic concept. Originating in the view just expressed, this notion would fasten attention on the *datum* of religious experience. The Church is regarded as one in virtue of a *common sentiment* considered apart from creed or polity. Charles S. MacFarland writes: ". . . Schleiermacher gave us a new order of thought in declaring the religion of the heart to be the irreducible fact of experience, anterior to any religious theory or form of doctrine which can only imperfectly express it. . . ."[72] In substance, the modernist conception would view unity in terms of a coalescence of the religious experience of the human race.

A third notion—that of *common life*—attributes unity to the presence of the Divine life in the Church. The generic expression of this view is that the Church is one "because she is one spiritual body,

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[71] Article "Church" in James Hastings ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,* III, 619.

[72] Charles S. MacFarland, *Christian Unity in Practise and Prophecy* (New York: Macmillan, 1933) p. 28.

has one Head, and is animated by the spirit of God." [73] There are many varieties of ways in which this is expressed and they differ in connotation and emphasis according as it is given a Christological [74] or a Pneumatological [75] orientation; the latter are not necessarily in opposition, however. This view is especially characteristic of the Orthodox bodies. But, in addition to this notion of a perpetual and abiding Divine life, there is also the notion of a *transient* presence. This would assign unity to a "call" to fellowship and for the duration of the "gathering." Karl Barth wrote:

> The explanation of the idea of the "Church" by means of the idea of the "congregation" is significant and useful only if "congregation" is explicitly understood as "living congregation"; that is, as a congregation . . . which consists in the *event* by which it is *gathered* together. . . . Her unity stands and falls with the "event" which is the "gathering" of the congregation by the Word and the Spirit of her living Lord, Jesus Christ. [76]

According to a final notion, the unity of the Church is constituted by a *common loyalty* to Christ. John A. F. Gregg wrote:

> The one Christ has made His Church one. In spite of the obscuring of that unity in the empirical "churches," the common belief in the Person of the one Christ is forcing believers in Him to seek to actualize the unity which belongs to the Church by virtue of the one Head, in Whom it is God's purpose to gather all things into one. [77]

The Evangelical school may be said to sponsor this view in a general way.

[73] "Longer Catechism of Philaret" in: R. W. Blackmore, ed., *The Doctrine of the Russian Church,* (London: Aberdeen, Brown, 1845) p. 77.

[74] *Cf.* George Florovsky, "The Church: Her Nature and Task" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 53.

[75] *Cf.* Serge Bolshakoff, *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Church in the Works of Khomyakov and Moehler,* (London: SPCK, 1946) p. 144, 146.

[76] Karl Barth, "The Church—the Living Congregation of the Living Lord Jesus Christ" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 69, 72.

[77] John A. F. Gregg, "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design, p.* 61.

Having considered the constituent factors of unity, we now turn to theories regarding the manifestation of unity. Much of what follows actually is derived from attempts to account for disunity rather than from positive notions.

This unity at times is manifested by way of personal factors, i.e., those elements involving the commitment of the persons uniting in one society.

These views are occasionally considered as exclusive determinants and at other times considered in combination, but with a point of emphasis predominating.

(a) Intellect

This would place the unity of the Church in the common adherence to an objective content of doctrine, abstracting from unity of government. An Orthodox writer declares:

> By this phrase [the one Church] the Church meant that that which constitutes an indispensable characteristic of this unity is a common faith. . . . Since, therefore, the ancient Church bases its unity upon a common faith, it cannot in any way recognize the idea of an "external" unity of the Church—that is, of a unity under one person or one visible head.[78]

In a more attenuated form, something like this would be attributable to the fundamentalist evangelicals (differing, of course, considerably with respect to content and quality).

(b) Will

This theory approaches the problem of unity through the will. It could be stated in this fashion: the Church is indeed one, but is at present deficient in the consonance of wills that is necessary for its perfection. A high church Anglican declared:

> Now unity may be divided into objective and subjective. Objective unity is that inwrought by our Head, Jesus Himself, through union with Himself. It is wrought on His side by the

[78] Archbishop Germanos, "The Eastern Orthodox Church" in James Marchant, ed., *The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 31.

communication of the "one Spirit" and by the sacraments, making us all one body in Him. It requires on our part, continuity of the commission which He gave to His Apostles, and perseverance in the faith which He committed to His Church. Subjective unity is unity of will and intercommunion with one another. Subjective unity may be suspended, while objective unity is maintained.[79]

In the light of this view reunion would be a moral conversion whereby estranged members of the Church restore the link of mutual charity.

(c) Emotions

This approach is rather an hypothesis to account for disunity than a positive program for unity as such. But it throws light on the problem insofar as it points to a problem, the solution of which, it is hoped, will achieve something. According to this approach, the formation of religious sects has its origin in emotional needs. Some value has not been stressed; some thirst for experience has not been met; some outward obstacle prevents the realization of these experiences—hence there are sects. As one writer expresses it:

> At their origin, each of them had some high mission to fulfill, some great problem to solve, some special doctrine or principle to uphold. The Lutheran and the Huguenot protested against the Papacy. The Covenanter made a solemn league against prelacy. The Puritan fled away from a false ecclesiasticism into the wilderness. The Methodists broke the bonds of formalism with a pentecostal revival. . . .[80]

On the other hand, sectarianism is also attributed to more positive elements. In some respects this view is akin to the sociological view which we shall treat of immediately after this, but we are now concerned with the psychological hypothesis. We may summarize

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[79] A. P. Forbes, *A Short Explanation of the Nicene Creed,* as quoted in: Anselm Bolton, *A Catholic Memorial to Lord Halifax and Cardinal Mercier,* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1935) p. 19.

[80] C. W. Shields, *op. cit.,* p. 75.

this approach as follows: A poor person is unable to go to the theater or wear fine clothes; hence the abstention from these activities becomes a return to primitive gospel simplicity. The harsh realities of life will impel another to seek wild rapturous experience which he will attribute to a divine agency.[81] The wide diversities of human condition and temperament will seek divergent expressions in creed and worship which meet variant psychological "needs." Clashes as regards methodology or emphasis will create further breaches. Thus, the "River Brethren" split into two denominations, "one mode" or "two mode" respectively, according as, in their foot washing service, one brother would wash and dry or that each action should be performed by a different individual.[82]

According to the psychological interpretation, the hypothesis is regarded as operative only in the beginnings of these sects. There is a leveling off as they attain to respectability and conventionality. Elmer T. Clark notes:

> . . . Originally the Methodists, were a pure experiential or emotional type and few or none entered the fold save through a definite conversion experience or feeling reaction: today, however, training and social pressure fill the Methodist Church with sons and daughters of Methodists, few of whom have undergone a definite experience and many of whom are no doubt temperamentally incapable of the radical emotional upheaval.[83]

Now, we come to views that account for disunity in terms of social factors and those which pose a social framework in the manifestation of unity.

(a) Extrinsic—Sociological Emphasis

An important phase of the Ecumenical Movement is the consideration of social questions; this is proper to the Life and Work tradition. But we are not going to discuss their approach to political and social questions as such. We are concerned here with the theory that

[81] *Cf.* Elmer T. Clark, *The Small Sects in America,* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937) p. 19.

[82] *Cf. ibid.,* p. 16.

[83] *Cf. ibid.,* p. 26.

asserts that the initial distinction of denominations as well as their
perseverance has been conditioned, to some extent, by reverbera-
tions of the social situation in the religious field. This, again, is little
more than an hypothesis to account for divisions rather than a
direct theory of unity itself. H. Richard Niebuhr declares that:

> "Denominations represent the accommodation of religion to
> the caste system." [84]

However, all the denominations are regarded as functioning organs
of one body, though, at present, in a state of disorder due to the dis-
harmony of social and political thinking on the part of the members.

> The Church is the community and body of Christ . . . is the
> mediator of grace and not sin, of order and not disorder. Disorder
> resides in ourselves and not in it. Yet disorder is in ourselves,
> not as individuals only, but as organized parts of the Church, as
> vocational, national, ethnic and historical organs of its body. . . .
> Having gone into the world of nations to make them disciples,
> we have often accepted the order of nationalism. . . . Again, the
> secular order and disorder of economic society have been ac-
> cepted by the Church and been mirrored in its own order. . . .[85]

In keeping with this view it would seem that reunion of Christendom
would be approached by a sociological path seeking consonance in
political and social thinking, especially in accordance with a Chris-
tian pattern.

(b) Intrinsic

Under this heading we move into an orbit of theories related to
unity insofar as it manifests itself in worship and organization.

(1) *In the Matter of Cult*

There are those who would pivot the reunion of Christendom
on the corporate expression of worship in external forms. This is the
liturgical orientation. It need not, in the minds of some authors, be

[84] H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, (New
York: Henry Holt, 1929) p. 6.

[85] H. Richard Niebuhr, "The Disorder of Man in the Church of God" in:
The Universal Church in God's Design, p. 79, 85. See also the frequent
articles appearing in the *Ecumenical Review* on "NON-Theological factors."

associated with doctrines as such; with others it is associated with a doctrinal frame of reference. The development of the Anglican high church orientation in matters of corporate worship is sufficiently well known, but in continental Lutheran and Reformed bodies something similar is taking place.[86] For example, Freidrich Heiler writes:

> . . . what the High Church Movement seeks is no mere outward and capricious blending of Catholic and Protestant usages and traditions, but an inner synthesis between Catholic dogma and worship and the Protestant faith in Justification and Grace, as these were preached by the Reformers, and above all by Martin Luther.[87]

By reason of some external resemblances contacts have been established with other bodies following similar procedure.

It is not surprising, then, that some have moved for a liturgical syncretism as a means toward a comprehensive union having but remote reference to dogma. For example:

> It would seem that the first step toward true church unity must be liturgical rather than doctrinal or strictly ecclesiastical. Christians who differ cannot begin to agree until they come together in the region of devout feeling and are thus predisposed to brotherly concord. . . . It is such a liturgical fusion that has long been going on amongst us, hidden and unnoticed. . . . Catholic creeds are recited in Protestant assemblies, Anglican rites are couched in Lutheran forms, Presbyterian prayers are intoned by Episcopalian priests, Wesleyan hymns are sung after Calvinistic sermons, portions of High Mass are chanted by Covenanter choirs, and Puritan meeting houses are decked with Christmas evergreens and Easter flowers. It is in fact no longer possible to ignore a deep and widespread liturgical movement pervading the leading denominations like a ground swell and threatening some day to upheave and bury out of sight the sectarian differences in which the popular mind has ceased to take interest. The general demand . . . is for more of Christian life and worship and less of a mere metaphysical theology.[88]

[86] *Cf.* Olive Wyon, "Evidence of New Life in the Church Universal" in: *The Universal Church in God's Design,* p. 115-116.

[87] Friederich Heiler, "The Catholic Movement in German Lutheranism" in: N. P. Williams and Charles Harris, *Northern Catholicism: centenary studies in the Oxford and parallel movements,* (New York: Macmillan, 1933) p. 484.

[88] C. W. Shields, *op. cit.,* p. 15.

On the other hand, there are those who give a parallel emphasis
to internal religion as the focal point of unity. A resurgent Pietism,
greatly suggestive of the early Methodists, now clamors for attention.

> "The fact that today we have reached an extremity of secu-
> larism suggests that we have reached a new point of departure
> for religion. Christianity itself is eternally true, but Christianity
> will have to be positively re-created within the lives of indi-
> viduals, in terms of personal experience." These words may be
> regarded as a summary of the aims and hopes of the many small
> and hidden groups within the Church in many lands today. What
> is the inward urge which creates such groups? In nearly every
> case it is a desire to have closer and more sustained contact with
> God. Closely allied to this is a deep desire to have closer contact
> with one's fellows; to enter into a more living experience of
> human community.[89]

(2) *In the Matter of Organization*

It would not be out of place to include here the various basic
conceptions of ecclesiastical polity. They represent, more or less,
implicitly, the views on religious authority, thus coloring approaches
to religious unity.

The *congregational form* operates on the "gathered church" idea;
hence it recognizes no authority except that issuing from the con-
stituent membership. The essential principle of such a polity is the
independence of the local community and the voluntary association
of such communities.[90] All prelacy and presbyteral authority are
explicitly excluded. Karl Barth observes:

> The objection to the *papal* church order, and, in lesser degree,
> also the episcopal, consistorial and presbyterian-synodal church
> order, is that these systems obstruct the free access of God's word
> to the actual congregation, and they come between the congrega-
> tion and the Word.[91]

The *synodical form* is characteristic of the Lutheran, Reformed
(Calvinist), the Methodists, with numerous variations. (In Scandi-

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[89] Olive Wyon, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[90] *Cf.* Rulon S. Howells, *His Many Mansions*, (New York: Greystone Press,
1940) p. 97.

[91] Karl Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

navian countries, the Lutheran bodies have the episcopal form, while in Germany the presiding official is called the Superintendent.) The Reformed reject all episcopacy or prelacy and adhere to the Presbyterian form of government.

In general, the synodical polity consists of a graded series of courts or conferences whose personnel is derived from elective representation. Among the Lutherans of the United States, the unit of government is the local congregation and the pastor. All ministers are equal and they are distinct from the laity only by reason of their function in preaching and ritual administration; their power is delegated by the congregation which can terminate the minister's tenure of office. Next, is the local council made up of pastor and lay officers. Following upon this with variations among the different groups, several parishes form a "conference"; above this, several conferences form a "circuit"; then, there is a district convention and finally a national convention or synod which has a president and board of directors. In all this, the local congregation holds the primacy and the graded functions derive their authority by delegation, and thus authority has only a co-operative and advisory nature.[92]

Among Presbyterian bodies in the United States, a similar form prevails. The congregation will choose a certain number of elders or "presbyters" who are all equal, but divided by reason of function into ministers and ruling elders; there are also deacons who administer the property and charitable activities. Then there is a series of courts in graded succession: first, the "session" constituted by the minister and ruling elders; then several congregations form a "presbytery" which alone has jurisdiction over the ministers; next, several presbyteries form a "synod"; finally, representatives form the "general assembly"; this latter assembly is given real authority to pass final decisions in doctrine and discipline and is headed by a "moderator" who is chosen for a one year term.[93]

The *Episcopal Form* is characteristic of those bodies which have officials called bishops; the term itself is susceptible of many associations to many people. The Orthodox bodies see in it a divinely-

[92] *Cf.* Rulon S. Howells, *op. cit.*, p. 162-169.
[93] *Cf. ibid,* p. 197-202.

established hierarchy, endowed with sacramental powers, teaching authority and effective jurisdiction, all of which is transmitted by apostolic succession. As Florovsky puts it:

> But there is another and higher office: to secure the universal and catholic unity of the whole Church in space and time. This is the episcopal office and function. . . . The Apostolic Succession is not so much the canonical as the mystical foundation of Church unity.[94]

These bodies recognize no head over the whole Church, but only a nominal primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople over auto-cephalous bodies.

The Anglican communion, as such, is officially committed to the Episcopate as a form of polity derived from antiquity, yet there is no consonance within it as to what the episcopate is. Accordingly, in proposals for reunion with other bodies, it does not insist on any particular interpretation as to the nature of the episcopate as a condition of union. Many Anglicans subscribe to the traditional concept of its sacramental nature, but others are content to ascribe to it only a functional efficiency in administration of affairs. One writer says:

> The only working center of union is that which is afforded by a common government. Only thus can free play be given to our temperamental differences. We cannot unite on ritual; if we could such union would avail little. We cannot unite on doctrine —not, at least upon a body of doctrine like the confessions of the fathers of the Reformation. We must be free to think. But we can unite in allegiance to a company of officers of our own choosing. . . . The doctrine of transmitted grace does not enter in.[95] . . .

C. Denominational Approaches To Unity

Various conferences are being and have been held among denominations looking toward union and some of them have achieved mergers.[96] It will be of use to record some of them here for refer-

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[94] George Florovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[95] George Hodges, "The Reunion of Christendom As It Appears to an Episcopalian" in: Amory H. Bradford ed., *Christ and the Church*, (New York: Revell, 1895) p. 229-230.

[96] See note 46. *Cf.* also H. Paul Douglass, *Church Unity Movements in the*

ence purposes; to list and classify all, even if it were possible to track them down, would fill a moderate sized telephone directory. Most of them, we think, would be variations of what is included here, for all the principal phases are covered.

Apart from strictly theological considerations there are many *extrinsic factors,* which, from the Protestant point of view, would make union desirable. Such problems might be overlapping activities, denominational competition, functional inefficiency and many others.

In keeping with an Erastian view, the political head of the state may fuse bodies in view of social peace. In Germany in 1804 Friederich Schleiermacher urged the union of denominations by state action eliminating sectarian strife by modification of doctrine and liturgy.[97] In 1817, the Lutheran and Calvinist bodies in Prussia were united on just such a concept. It was not without tension, so the State again relieved the situation in 1834 by decreeing that the same organization would remain, but each group could hold to its own doctrines and worship and permit the other to partake of communion.[98]

Again, apart from governmental intervention, competition, especially in rural areas, might be regarded as unfeasible economically; hence, it might be arranged that one community denomination in each area would provide for a division of labor and distribution of resources. Charles S. MacFarland writes:

. . . Competition among Protestant churches had become so serious that a good many communities had literally closed their doors. Large sums of home mission money had been expended in competitive situations. . . . A community Church may be described as one which seeks to unite peoples of several denominational backgrounds in one Christian fellowship. Community churches are of three distinct types, the denominational, the independent or unaffiliated and the federated. . . .[99]

United States, (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934) and Oliver S. Tomkins, *The Church in the Purpose of God,* (New York: World Council of Churches, 1952) p. 67-78.

[97] *Cf.* Gaius J. Slosser, *Christian Unity,* (New York: Dutton, 1929) p. 170.

[98] *Cf.* Otto Dibelius, "The Protestant Churches in Germany" in James Marchant, *op. cit.,* p. 74-75

[99] MacFarland, *op. cit.,* p. 82.

While the elimination of denominational competition largely motivates this type of union, other considerations may enter in, such as consolidation against what may be regarded as a common enemy. For example:

> *The true task of Protestantism is to win the very America which Catholicism is out to win* . . . Catholicism is not an ally of Protestantism in winning America to the Christian faith. No sentimental tolerance should blind Protestant eyes to this fact. . . . Protestantism, with only twice the Catholic membership, supports 17½ as many local churches . . . Nearly all the churches exist side by side with other Protestant churches in small and large communities. . . . They are there because each one . . . imagines its peculiar brand of Protestantism ought to be propagated.[100]

Unions prompted by motives extrinsic to strictly religious considerations take the form either of co-operative or Corporative Union.

The former is simply external and transient and has to do with practical concerns which the respective bodies regard as their common task. In the report of the Edinburgh 1937 meeting we find this expressed:

> In all areas where common purposes and tasks exist, such action is already widely possible without violation of conscience. Church "federations" are the most common expressions of such a unity, and one of the most hopeful paths to understanding and brotherly relations. . . . We recognize that federations for co-operative action should not be construed as examples of "federal union" . . .[101]

Practical considerations may be regarded as calling for a merger of bodies into the framework of a single *Corporative Union;* this is styled "pragmatic corporate union." An instance of this can be found in the United Church of Canada; here, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians became one denomination. "The Canadian union was chiefly motivated by the practical needs of the

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100 Charles Clayton Morrison, *Can Protestanism Win America?* (New York: Harpers, 1948) p. 120.

101 G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity, Third series,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949) no. 218.

Church in Canada. The advantages of such union as over against the weakness of separation was the outstanding argument." [102]

Within the framework of religious considerations also, there are many types of union envisioned by non-Catholic bodies. Broad lines of classification might be conveniently drawn between those that bear upon content and those that deal with organizational manifestation. Of course, there are all manner of combinations and variations to be found.

(1) In Reference to Content

The constituents of a union could come from disparate groups of historical denominations or cut through all denominational distinctions.

Certain groups bearing the same denominational title, or having similar teaching or polity might form a "family union" as, for example, the American Lutheran Church arose in 1930 as a fusion of three diverse synods. viz., of Buffalo, Iowa and Ohio.[103]

Also several distinct denominations, unrelated in name or antecedents may come together to form a corporate or functioning union: the one being an institutional identity and the other a united front. The general principles that have been used are as follows:

> The practical methods in use are based on four different principles, as follows: First, Option. Theological beliefs and the form of baptism, especially the latter, were frequently left to the individual. Secondly, vagueness. The statement of faith was purposely expressed in language so vague or so comprehensive that it could be interpreted according to the convictions of the individual. Thirdly, elimination. The creed was occasionally limited to those points about which the local people were in practical agreement. Finally, essentiality. Some united churches endeavored to ignore what the members regarded as superficial differences, and to have regard only to what seemed to them essential verities held in common by all Christians.[104]

[102] Douglass, *Church Unity Movements in the United States,* p. 240.
[103] *Cf.* H. Paul Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity,* p. 98.
[104] Elizabeth R. Hooker, *United Churches,* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1928) p. 154-155.

The immediate context of the citation refers to the "community church" question, but it can also be considered on a large scale, as indeed it is. For example, in 1934 the Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States established a complete merger under the name of Evangelical and Reformed Church.[105]

In the matters of *religious teaching,* religious bodies may fuse on the basis of a common faith or a common sentiment. It would be impossible to classify them all. Fundamentalism, liberalism and modernism cross and recross the lines of denominations and all tendencies have their influence. The basic lines, for our purposes, can be drawn between dogmatic and non-dogmatic.

The former will be relatively conservative, seeking a basis in a common faith as the respective bodies conceive it; this, again, can be on the basis of a total expression of faith or of a certain minimum proposed as a basis.

Total expression is not to be taken as coextensive with the full Catholic faith, but a certain maximum as conceived by the uniting body. For example, the Eastern Orthodox conceive as the total faith only what was held explicitly in the first eight centuries, but unequivocal adherence to this is insisted upon.[106]

The uniting bodies, on the other hand, might declare a certain *minimum* teaching as a basis of union, not requiring of each other the full acceptance of the other doctrines in which they differ. Thus, the proposed basis of union between the Episcopal and the Presbyterian bodies in the United States contained an agreement of this sort.[107]

Some, however, would have the bodies unite on the basis of a common sentiment rather than upon a clearly defined *corpus* of doctrinal formularies. The philosophical premises are derived from liberalism and modernism. For example: "These essentials of unity must exist in liberty of form and expression, whether intellectually in creed, whether in ceremonies to express worship or in theories as to how

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[105] *Cf.* H. Paul Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity,* p. 98.

[106] *Cf.* Archbishop Germanos, *op. cit.,* p. 33-44.

[107] *Cf.* G. K. A. Bell, Documents of Christian Unity, no. 197.

divine grace is transmitted in ministry and sacraments." [108] Or another expression: "What, in a united Church, shall we do with our differences? There can be only one answer. They must be welcomed and embraced as essential to the fulfillment of the Christian life."[109]

(2) In Reference to Manifestation

Another important phase in the matter of union is the constitutional form which the newly constituted body is to take. Here, again, we find little consonance of ideas and an intermingling of diverse conceptions within the same framework of terminology. However, two broad general lines are discernible, namely, the federal and the organic. The first is associated with the ideas that gave birth to the Life and Work movement; the second is associated with the Faith and Order movement.[110]

Federal Union would consist of the convergence of common interests on the part of diverse denominations into a council made up of delegates from the respective bodies. There are variations, insofar as the grouping is made on geographical lines, (e.g. National Council of Churches) or the ideological lines (e.g. the Evangelical Alliance). It may have full or limited authority to act for the bodies in determined areas of activity. However, denominational autonomy and revocability of membership always remains:

> By federal union we have understood any form of official union between denominations as a whole, which leaves the original organization unimpaired and reserves for each of the units thus united a large field of independent power, authority and initiative.[111]

Organic Union looks to the formation of one religious society out of many. It admits of many shades and degrees of conjunction—at

[108] MacFarland, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

[109] Charles Clayton Morrison, *The Unfinished Reformation*, (New York: Harper, 1953) p. 82

[110] *Cf.* William Adams Brown, "The Churches of the United States" in: James Marchant, *op. cit*, p. 233-234.

[111] William Adams Brown, "Present Problems in the Movement towards Union" in: *Christian Unity Its Principles and Possibilities*. (New York: Association Press, 1921) p. 194.

the one end, it is but verbally distinct from federal union and, at the other end, from complete consolidation. The basic feature is the transfer of the center of allegiance from the older bodies to the new.[112]

The Anglican communion is an instance of *loose organic union*.

> You might perhaps sum this up by saying that the Anglican Communion is a group of national churches which trace their Catholic heritage through the Christianity of the British Isles and their form of worship through the Book of Common Prayer, and are in communion with the See of Canterbury. . . . In this, as in other respects, it is very like the British Commonwealth of Nations . . . there is no central machinery to hold it together. There is no one head of the Anglican Communion.[113]

Somewhat looser is a union by "mutual recognition" or "intercommunion." A relation of this sort took place in 1932 between the Old Catholics of Utrecht and the Anglicans:

> 1. Each Communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other and maintains its own. 2. Each Communion agrees to admit members of the other Communion to participate in the Sacraments. 3. Intercommunion does not require from either Communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith.[114]

Close Organic Union involves the mutual surrender of uniting bodies so as to integrate their membership, thus forming one body. ". . . It is just this surrender that the Faith and Order Movement seeks to achieve. For the many independent denominations, each sovereign in its own right, it would substitute a single corporate body, authorized to speak and act for all." [115]

112 *Ibid.*, p. 198.

113 J. W. C. Wand, *The Anglican Communion: a Survey*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948) p. vii-viii.

114 G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity*, no. 169.

115 William Adams Brown, *Toward a United Church*, (New York: Scribners, 1946) p. 51-52.

Union on a *Non-Episcopal Basis* excludes a hierarchic function, at least in the forms in which it has been known. For instance, if the plan were congregational, the local community gathering would be "free to retain and develop its own form of expression" but the association would be regarded as "Organic" nonetheless; such is the case with the Congregational and Christian bodies.[116]

The Anglicans however, insist on the "historic episcopate" as one of the bases of reunion between disparate bodies. For example, in the Lambeth encyclical of 1920, we read:

> . . . A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ and the authority of the whole body . . . May we not claim that the Episcopate is the means of providing such ministry?[117]

This, of course, is abstracted in their minds from any special doctrine concerning the nature of the Episcopate.

On the other hand, all existing forms of polity might be incorporated on a *Syncretist Basis*. So, at Edinburgh 1937, the report reads:

> With reference to corporate union, most of us endorse the following statement from section V of the Lausanne report: "In view of (1) the place which the episcopate, the council of presbyters, and the congregation of the faithful, respectively, had in the constitution of the early Church, and (2) the fact that the episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each today, and have been for centuries, accepted by communions in Christendom, and (3) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognize that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order and life of a reunited Church.[118]

[116] *Cf.* H. Paul Douglass, *Church Unity Movements in the United States,* p. 239.

[117] *Lambeth Conferences 1867-1930,* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948) p. 120.

[118] G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity,* no. 216.

One instance of this took place in the case of the "Church of South India" which began a distinctive existence in 1947.[119]

Now, we raise the problem of the manner in which discussion for union is made and achieved. The problem is how to achieve unity while preserving the cause of disunity, viz., private judgment, how to retain Babel while seeking Pentecost. There are two basic lines of approach which intermingle amid the tentatives; we add a third which is also strongly affirmed by some.

(1) The Way of Similarities

The proper word for this is "compromise" though it is seldom used because of its unpleasant savor. This way looks to likenesses in polity or doctrine which afford a middle ground of operation. It is seen a great deal in "family reunions" between denominations of like character where certain "fundamentals" are stressed and the other differences glossed over. It is also seen in some proposals between disparate bodies like the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians which we spoke of above. Part of the proposed Basis of Union reads as follows:

> Both Churches accept the Scriptures . . . the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. . . . The confessions of faith and the book of common prayer. . . . The Basis of Union permits any teaching in the formularies authorized in either of the united Churches before the union, provided such teaching is consistent with the basis of union . . . whenever definite conflicts are disclosed between the formularies . . . such conflicting teachings shall not be taught as necessary for salvation or so as to break fellowship in the united Church.[120]

(2) The Way of Differences

The word for this is "comprehension" and it is frequently used. It envisions the incorporation of differences of every kind. We have

[119] *Cf.* Leslie Newbign, *The Reunion of the Church: A Defense of the South India Scheme,* (New York: Harpers, 1948) and S. C. Neill, "Church Union in South India" in: J. J. Willis and others, *Towards a United Church 1913-1947,* p. 77-148.

[120] G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity, op. cit.,* no. 197.

seen instances of this notion in most of the schemes we have considered; it proceeds from liberalism and modernism primarily. It accounts for the vagueness of expression that we often find.

I will give a case in point, which, in this instance, refers to Christ. The opening words of the constitution of the World Council of Churches reads as follows: "The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which accept Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour." [121] This certainly seems to us to be clear and decisive, but, in the minds of the committee which drew it up, it is not necessarily so, for they state:

> As its brevity shows, the basis is an affirmation of the Christian faith of the participating churches, and not a credal test to judge churches or persons. It is an affirmation of the Incarnation and the Atonement. The council desires to be a fellowship of these churches which accept those truths. But it does not concern itself with the manner in which the churches interpret them. It will therefore be the responsibility of each particular church to decide whether it can collaborate on this basis.[122]

This, undoubtedly refers to the case which we discussed earlier of the Czecho-Slovakian body which was admitted to the Faith and Order conference despite the fact that it espoused unitarianism. It is affirmed that "the contemporary religious mind has been beset by a Christological agnosticism." [123] So, where are we?

Comprehension has been described by one writer thus:

> Now this idea of comprehension is the modern contribution to ecclesiology or the doctrine of the Church. The old method was to search for similarities; the new method is to recognize diversities. The Church's true policy here is not rejection, but adjustment, not insistence but assistance. . . .[124]

[121] *The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches,* (New York: Harpers, 1949) p. 197.

[122] *The World Council of Churches: Its Process of Formation,* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1946) p. 182.

[123] Carl F. H. Henry, *The Protestant Dilemma,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) p. 164.

[124] G. D. Boardman, "The Doctrine of the Church" in Amory H. Bradford, *Christ and the Church,* p. 157.

(3) The Way of Conversion

This method would seek to bring others over to one's own position. I am not speaking in this context of the supernatural gift of faith in the Catholic sense. Nearly every delegate coming to an ecumenical meeting is more acutely conscious of his special point of emphasis, and he would not take it too badly if others came to share it too. Congregationalists, Anglicans and others understandably desire that the others be as themselves; if they cannot get a full commitment, they may be content with part. But, what is called "prosyletism" is officially frowned on, though, in practice, this does not apply where Catholics are the objects of recruitment, and Greek members of the Council have protested against the presence of Evangelical missionaries in their midst.

We have considered, in the course of our treatment of some factors of the Movement, some approaches of various denominations to certain aspects of the problem of union. There is no need to repeat them here. We simply propose here to indicate the distinctive approach of two that are more noteworthy.

1. *The Orthodox*

Not all of the Eastern dissidents are connected with the Council, but those who do come have basically the same standpoint, namely, that they alone constitute *the Church* and that every other body is separated from them. At the present time, however, there are variations in the manner in which this is conceived. The more rigid view sees with the eyes of St. Cyprian's earlier approach, namely, that all others are in the outward darkness and wanting even in the validity of sacraments, not excluding baptism.[125] The less rigid view, distinguishes between bodies which are *purely true* and those which are not *purely true*.[126] One Orthodox writer shows some influence of

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[125] *Cf.* George Florovsky, "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem" in: *Ecumenical Review,* v. 2, no. 2 (Winter 1950) p. 157-160 *cf.* Frank Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought,* (Milwaukee: Morehouse, 1923) p. 263.

[126] *Cf.* George Florovsky, *ibid.* p. 161.

"comprehension"; Leo A. Zander urges a "unity without union" citing as a figure the incident of Transfiguration when Peter suggested the setting up of three tents; he urges that the important thing is to be on the Mount contemplating the same Christ and provision be made for three tents: one for Orthodox, one for Catholics and one for Protestants.[127]

2. *The Anglicans*

It is difficult to discern a homogeneous approach in this group to the question and the reason is the fact of the comprehensive character of the communion. Some see this as an advantage, in that they can serve as a functioning mediator among all disparate bodies. Under one aspect they are "catholic" in that they have officials called bishops; under another aspect, they are Protestant in that they profess adherence to the Bible as the sole rule of faith; under still another aspect, they are liberal in seeing little teaching, however contradictory, as incompatible with membership. There is the official approach of the whole body as such and there are specific approaches of the various schools, such as the Papalist orientation school and the Graeco-Russian orientation school. Various organizations were formed to promote a specific approach either within Anglicanism or toward the outside, for example: the Modern Churchman's League is modernist; the High Church group includes the English Church Union, the Anglican and Eastern Church Association, the Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius, the Society for Promoting Catholic Unity (papalist) and others; the low church group has the Church Association and extreme evangelicals such as the Kensitites.

Officially, the Anglican Communion as such is committed to the "quadrilateral" platform. This originated in the Convention of the Episcopalians held at Chicago in 1886, which was subsequently adopted by the Lambeth Conference of 1888 and which has been an integral part of its position ever since. The four elements are:

[127] *Cf.* John Vodopivec, "Some Aspects of Genuine Christian Unity" in: *Unitas* (English Language Edition) v. 5 n. 4 (October-December 1953) p. 227-230.

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the revealed Word of God. 2. The Nicene creed, as the sufficient statement of the Faith. 3. The two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—administered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and the elements ordained by Him. 4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called by God into the Unity of His Church.[128]

This is their basis for reunion, but it may be understood comprehensively, especially No. 4 as to the nature of the Episcopate.[128]

In a general way, a certain middle stage is also considered as admissable, namely, "mutual recognition" or "intercommunion," as we have discussed it above. This is a comity arrangement, like a treaty between sovereign states; in practice, it amounts to giving each other "faculties" to take care of the needs of the communicants of either body without the bodies themselves sharing organization, doctrines or liturgical forms.[130]

IV

CATHOLIC PARTICIPATION

A. The Question of Direct Participation

There is no want of official statements on the part of the Holy See as to the attitude that the Catholic Church has with respect to a direct participation in the Ecumenical Movement.[131]

1. *The Facts*

The first instance in modern times where official pronouncements were made with respect to non-Catholic unity movements took place

128 Gaius Slosser, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
129 *Cf. Lambeth Conference 1867-1930*, p. 222.
130 *Cf.* G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity, op. cit.*, no. 169.
131 *Cf.* Hanahoe, *Catholic Ecumenism*, p. 37-39, 52-55; many are gathered in: E. C. Messenger ed., *Rome and Reunion*, (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1934).

in 1864.[132] The Association for the Promotion of the Union of Christendom had been established in 1857, as the result of a discussion held at the residence of a high Anglican clergyman, the Rev. Frederick George Lee. It envisioned the corporate union of the Roman, Anglican and Greek bodies. As Catholics were involved, the Holy Office took notice of it and addressed a letter to the English hierarchy, *Apostolici sedi* in which it prohibited Catholic participation.[133]

In connection with the Columbian Exposition, held at Chicago in 1893, The World's Parliament of Religions took place. Several distinguished members of the American hierarchy took part. Learning of it afterwards, Pope Leo XIII expressed his disapproval.[134]

We have already mentioned the visit in 1919 of a delegation of the formation committee preparing for the Faith and Order Movement to Pope Benedict XV and of how they were kindly received but calmly informed that the Catholic Church could not be represented. In July of the same year, a *dubium* was proposed to the Holy Office as to whether the letter of 1864 was still in force; and the reply was in the affirmative.[135] Again in 1927, one month before the Lausanne meeting, the question was posed:

> Is it lawful for Catholics to be present at or to favor Conferences, Assemblies of non-Catholics, Discourses or Societies which aim at associating together in one religious bond all those who in any way claim the name of Christian? . . . In the negative.
> . . .[136]

In January of 1928, Pius XI issued the encyclical, *Mortalium animos,* reiterating this reply.[137]

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[132] *Cf.* Hanahoe, "Two Early Documents on Reunion" in *Unitas* (English Language Edition) v. 6, n. 1 (Spring 1954) p. 38-50.

[133] *Acta Sanctae Sedis,* II, 657-662; reproduced in *Acta Apostolici Sedis* XI, 310-316.

[134] *Cf.* "Coetus in Foederatis Americae" in: *Leonis Papae XIII Allocutiones, Epistolae, Constitutiones,* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1900) v. 6, p. 97; Francis J. Connell, "Pope Leo XIII's Message to America" in: *American Ecclesiastical Review,* v. 109, no. 4 (October, 1943) p. 249-256.

[135] *AAS,* XI, 309.

[136] *AAS,* XIX, 278.

[137] *Cf. AAS,* XX, 5-16.

In June of 1948, the Holy Office issued a *Monitum,* prohibiting participation in the World Council of Churches.[138] This was followed in the next year by an *Instruction* to Ordinaries [139] relative to taking part in local conferences; we shall see shortly its content. At the meeting which took place at Lund, Sweden, in 1952 there were several unofficial "observers" permitted to be present, but they took no part whatsoever.

2. *The Reasons*

We can summarize the reasons behind the legislation as follows:

There is no question here of personal character. It is beyond all doubt that the Ecumenical Movement includes in its membership a great number of highly intelligent, utterly sincere and noble characters. The legislation in no way reflects on their virtue or learning. At the same time, it must be recognized that they are not in possession of the Divine Catholic Faith. They are one with the problem itself and are not in a position to polarize the movement in the only direction possible; moreover, it is certain that, as of the present moment, the unity intended by Christ and historically realized in His one Church, does not form a part of their program. We do not necessarily blame them for this, but we feel that the best service to render them is the ever-present witness to the divinely given unity of the Catholic Church.

We have already set forth many of the notions that are operative in the Movement. Seen in the context of their authors, such notions are incompatible with those set forth by the Catholic Church in her teaching on the nature of the Church and its unity. We mentioned that *per se* the Movement is not anti-Catholic, but the general attitude does not warrant the hope of finding our position acceptable. One writer sums up their views as follows:

First, the World Council is in debt to Rome. It is a debt which some of us gladly acknowledge, others are unconscious of and some would deny. But Rome stands today as a perpetual commentary upon our work which we cannot ignore. For some she is

[138] *Cf. AAS,* XL, 257.
[139] *Cf. AAS,* XLII, 142-147.

only a warning against what they must not become; for others she is a perpetual temptation to escape from our intolerable tensions into unity at least of a kind; every emotion from deep revulsion and even hatred to almost unbearable longing and love is to be found amongst us. But for us all, in all the contradictions in which we see her, she is a perpetual reminder to the Council that to speak of unity in Christ is not to speak of an abstract ideal but of something which must be expressed in history and in flesh and blood. Whether as warning or encouragement, whether as an offense or as a model (and in many of us, always something of both), Rome stands over against all our tentative efforts, as unity embodied and impossible to ignore. Yet, diverse as our attitude to Rome may be, we are clearly united in not accepting the form of unity which she offers—though some are near to doing so and others very far.[140]

The World Council, as such, sponsors no specific ecclesiology or body of doctrine; it has only its basis of membership, which is acceptance of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and even this is not laid down as a criterion, but as a statement left to the judgment of the denominations for interpretation and decision. On the other hand, the Catholic Church asserts that the one Church of Christ is co-terminous with her visible membership, that she has the whole teaching of Christ, that she is wanting in no perfection of means or constitution as intended by Christ, and that, moreover, some relation to her is necessary for salvation.

In the critique of the A.P.U.C. the Holy Office declared:

The principle upon which it rests is of a kind that turns upside down the Divine constitution of the Church. For it is pervaded by the idea that the true Church of Jesus Christ consists partly of the Roman Church spread abroad and propagated throughout the world, partly of the Photian schism and the Anglican heresy, and that the latter two have equally with the Roman Church, one Lord, *one faith,* and one baptism. To take away the dissensions which distract these three Christian communions, not without grievous scandal and at the expense of truth and charity, it appoints prayers and sacrifices to obtain from God the grace of unity. Nothing indeed should be dearer to a Catholic than the

[140] Oliver S. Tomkins, "The Church, the Churches and the Council" in: *Ecumenical Review,* v. 4, n. 3 (April 1953) p. 267.

eradicating of schisms and dissensions among Christians. . . . But that the faithful in Christ, and that ecclesiastics, should pray for Christian unity under the direction of heretics, and, worse still, according to an intention stained and infected by heresy to a high degree, can in no way be tolerated.[141]

In his critique of the Faith and Order movement, Pius XI declared:

> . . . it is clear that the Apostolic See can by no means take part in these assemblies, nor is it in any way lawful for Catholics to give such enterprises their encouragement and support. If they did so, they would be giving countenance to a false Christianity quite alien to the one Church of Christ. . . .[142]

The whole of the *Mortalium animos* gives the Catholic attitude to the errors current in the World Council.

One element which is not sufficiently considered is the effect of Catholic participation. Of course, there is the danger to the faith of an incompetent Catholic participant, but we are not concerned with this at the present time. It is the effect on the non-Catholic and his eventual return to true unity. Referring to the A.P.U.C., the Holy Office in 1864 declared:

> Hence no proof is needed that Catholics who join this Society are giving both to Catholics and non-Catholics an occasion of spiritual ruin: more especially because the Society, by holding out a vain expectation of these three communions, each in its integrity, and keeping each to his own persuasions, coalescing in one, leads the minds of non-Catholics away from conversion to the faith, and, by the journals it publishes, endeavors to prevent it. The most anxious care, then, is to be exercised, that no Catholics may be deluded either by appearance of piety or by unsound opinions, to join or in any way favor the Society in question or any similar one; that they may not be carried away by a delusive yearning for such new-fangled Christian unity, and thus fall from the perfect unity which by a wonderful gift of Divine grace stands on the firm foundation of Peter.[143]

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[141] *AAS*, XI, 310-311.
[142] *AAS*, XX, 11.
[143] *AAS*, XI, 312.

One of the greatest perils of the Ecumenical Movement is doctrinal indifference. Were a Catholic to participate directly, his action would place the Church on the level with the denominations separated from it, he would in one sense, appear to cast the Church into the struggle of seeking for a unity which does not presently exist; he may not say this and may even specifically protest against this reaction, but, in the mind of the other conferees, the effect would be the same. The only way to reunion is conversion to the faith, and there does exist an objective obligation for all to enter the Church. To take direct part is to deflect the minds of the non-Catholics from conversion to something else.

All this might sound purely conjectural and hypothetical. But a real case in point is the status of the Anglican Papalists.[144] There are several thousand Anglicans who, professedly, hold the *de jure* primacy and infallibility of the Holy See, but are deluded by a phantom hope of a formal corporate reunion with the Holy See, on the part of the entire Anglican communion. They are formal schismatics (that is, if they truly have the faith) in one sense, postponing their reconciliation while knowing the real state of affairs, until it can be done without any trouble to themselves. They are, we hope, victims of an erroneous conscience. In defending their position, they point to the actions of some Catholics who thought that their position was tenable. This was the bad effect of the Malines Conversations, which served to keep out of the Church many who were on the point of entering it,[145] because their delusions seemed to be enforced by the acts of Catholic authorities. That is why it is so important to take into account the effects of our actions as well as the principles; we may say nothing erroneous theologically and yet encourage a fatal delusion.

Cardinal Wiseman made this shrewd observation relative to his method in dealing with the Oxford Tractarians:

[144] For full discussion of this position consult: Hanahoe, *Catholic Ecumenism*, p. 128-157.

[145] *Cf.* William Francis Brown, *Through Windows of Memory*, (London: Sands, 1946) p. 79-85; also: Ernest Oldmeadow, *Francis Cardinal Bourne*, 2 vols. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne) II, 353-414.

. . . At the same time, a serious danger had to be avoided. No concessions could be made to error, beyond the acknowledgment of sincere belief that it was unconscious. To have allowed it (the Anglican Establishment) to possess a single mark or element of Catholicity . . . would have been both false in theology and pernicious in practice. It would have encouraged a fatal delusion, which, undisturbed, might have laid many asleep in a fatal contentment, who now repose in peaceful security in the bosom of their Mother, the Church. No real love for those involved in this state could be shown, except by energetic endeavors to snatch them from it. Whoever, therefore, wished to be truly their best friend, had to make up his mind to appear their most unrelenting opponent.[146]

B. The Question of Indirect Participation

1. *In the Line of Action*

The question arises, that since direct participation is prohibited, what of indirect?—that is, contact with the personnel of the movement, though not in the actual general international meetings. Certain distinctions and qualifications must be made.

There is no question, but that an official contact made in the name of the Church is a matter of a formal canonical mission given on the initiative of the Holy See. For this affects the public relations of the Church itself. Certain instances relating to diocesan affairs would seem to come under Canon 1350 which declares that Ordinaries and Pastors should regard non-Catholics who dwell in their territories as their wards in Jesus Christ.

As to unofficial participation, a distinction must be made as to whether the contact is public or private.

According to canon 1325, No. 3 Catholics are prohibited from taking part in *public* conferences or disputations (*collationes, disputationes*) with non-Catholics without the permission of the Holy See, or, in urgent cases, the local Ordinary.[147] This applies in the

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146 Nicholas Wiseman, *Essays on Various Subjects,* (London: Dolman, 1853).

147 *Cf.* Stephen J. Kelleher, *Discussions with Non-Catholics,* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1943) p. 31-43, 60-70.

present instance relative to public colloquy in theological matters with the personnel of the Movement. In December 1949, the Holy Office instruction delegated some interpretations of this canon to the judgment of local Ordinaries for a period of three years, with directives and restrictions.[148] The disciplinary phase of this instruction lapsed in the Spring of 1953 and has not been renewed.

It may happen that some member of the Movement may *privately* desire information on Catholic teaching with regard to a certain point. For example, in 1939, William Temple, Anglican Archbishop of York at that time, wrote a letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, part of which reads:

> . . . We understand from previous communications which have passed in connection with World Conferences held under the auspices of the Movements that the Church of Rome would not desire to be formally associated with the Council. But it seems to us required by courtesy that we should inform the Holy See of what is being done. We hope that it may be permissable to exchange information with agencies of the Church of Rome on matters of common interest and that we should have the help from time to time of unofficial consultation with Roman Catholic theologians and scholars. . . .[149]

The reply came in July from Cardinal Maglione by way of the English Apostolic Delegate, and reads in part:

[148] *Cf. AAS*, XLII, 146. The *Instruction* points out, however: ". . . Not subject to the *Monitum* just mentioned [i.e. *Cum compertum,* June 6, 1948; *AAS*, XL, 257] are catechetical instructions, even when imparted to several persons simultanously; nor conferences in which Catholic doctrine is explained to prospective converts. This holds good even if, on such occasions, the listeners also expound the teaching of their church for the purpose of ascertaining clearly and accurately in what it agrees and disagrees with Catholic truth. Nor does the same *Monitum* refer to mixed assemblies of Catholics and non-Catholics in which nothing touching faith and morals is under consideration, but discussions are held to take counsel as to the advisable ways and means of defending, by concerted action, the fundamental principles of the natural law and the Christian religion against the enemies leagued together against God; or of re-establishing the social order, or of dealing with and settling questions of a similar nature. . . ." *AAS*, XLII, 142.

[149] G. K. A. Bell, *Documents of Christian Unity, op. cit.,* no. 219.

. . . I will ask Your Excellency in my name to explain to the writer that there is no obstacle in the way of consultation with the Bishops and the Apostolic Delegate. Likewise there is nothing in the way of an exchange of confidential information with Catholic theologians, who will, naturally, make reply in their own name. . . .[150]

The Holy Office instruction of 1949 contains some instructions regarding private personal contact among which is the following: "Likewise they will diligently provide what may be serviceable for non-Catholics who are seeking to know the Catholic faith. They will appoint persons and set up offices that non-Catholics may visit and consult. . . ." [151] This is not contained within the three year restriction that referred to general meetings. It may be regarded as the mind of the Holy See to give every opportunity to these non-Catholics of finding the truth.

2. *In the Line of Ideas*

It would extend this paper beyond all bounds were we to go into all the features of the Catholic approach to the problem of the reunion of Christendom. We have, already, attempted to synthesize the official documents on the subject in *Catholic Ecumenism*. These documents should afford the working basis and the norm for Catholic theologians interested in this field. The material should be incorporated in our treatment of the tract *De Ecclesia* in our courses. In the first part of this paper, one can see the magnitude of the work to be done in evaluating theologically the various theories and approaches to unity among non-Catholics. We have the answers to the problems they raise, but what remains is to prepare those answers in a way that meets the inquirer's difficulty. We shall now trace briefly the general lineaments of a Catholic theology of reunion. For full documentation I would refer to the dissertation referred to above.

Negative Phase

(a) Apart from the Catholic Church, it will be impossible to attain to true unity according to the mind of Christ, and the main

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150 *Ibid.*, no. 220.
151 *AAS*, XLII, 143.

reason for this is that true supernatural unity is already numerically one and exists already in the Catholic Church.

(b) The Lord gave a divine mission to His one Church which will last until the end of time and there is no evidence to show that He has changed His mind. Any society which came into being at a point of time subsequent to the founding of the Church and which was established by former members in opposition to that body does not share in that mission. The epistles frequently warn against false teachers. The situation remains, whether the separate groups stand in isolation or in combination; they can never become what they are not.

(c) Christ bestowed upon His Church an objective deposit of doctrine and gave to it the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit with respect to its preservation and the unfolding of its implications. All these truths are equally revealed, and require the same complete assent to the whole and each of its parts. Moreover, through the *Magisterium*, these truths are transmitted to mankind. Through the procedures presently in force in the Movement, it will be impossible to determine the content of revelation; the most that can be achieved is the convergence of many private opinions completely wanting in the Divine sanction. They must listen to the Society of whom it was said, "Who hears you, hears me."

(d) Christ also gave His Church a visible constitution and its most noteworthy feature is the primacy of Peter. This is not simply a matter of convenience, but integral with the faith itself. Moreover, it is not sufficient to have the same kind of organization as that of the Apostles, but it is also necessary to be conjoined to that one historical Society to which the Apostles belonged. The members of the Movement can never achieve a divinely sanctioned form of organization except by a return to the historical Society from which their ancestors separated. It alone has the power of binding and loosing in the name of Christ.

(e) The only authorized public worship of God is that of the Mystical Body which is coterminous with the body in communion with the Holy See. The function of the reconciliation of men with God is proper to this one Church alone. Separated bodies do have valid sacraments such as Baptism and Matrimony, and, in some cases,

Holy Orders and the powers attached to them, but their fruitfulness depends in part on their subjective sincerity and invincible ignorance. If they have sanctifying grace, we say that they have an implicit intention of entering the Church. So, it is in virtue of their relation to the Church and not in their sectarian separation that they enjoy the fruits of the Redemption. Experience shows that, as they grow closer to God, they approach the Church and many are ultimately converted.

Positive Phase

There are three elements in every movement. We can briefly state the movement for reunion as follows:

(a) The proper and only goal of the reunion of Christendom is to return to the one and only historical Church of Christ. This goal is inferred from three facts. The first fact is that there is only one Church of Christ; this, no one denies even though they may understand it differently. The second fact is that its Divine Founder willed that it be a visible society enjoying unity of faith and government; while understood differently, this, too, is not denied, for otherwise there would be no Ecumenical Movement. The third fact is that this one Church of Christ has, from the beginning, been identified with the Society in communion with the See of Peter and has ever enjoyed the unity which Christ intended for His Church. To participate in the unity that Christ intended will involve the return to communion with the Holy See.

(b) The starting point of the reunion of Christendom is from a state of separation from and non-membership in the one Church of Christ. It is not a question of "uniting the Church" by removing certain imperfections from its outward aspect, since, in virtue of Divine power, it already enjoys unity. But it is a question of the restoration of baptized persons to the divinely-given unity which they do not possess, and, not to partake of the unity of an existing visible Society is the same as not to be members of it. The token of non-membership, which is most noteworthy, is separation from communion with the Holy See and, indeed, historically, this was the most noteworthy feature of the initial breach. This state of separation entails disadvantages, the consideration of which should prompt their return.

The first is lack of the living authority committed to the Church by Christ; they lack the power of teaching in His name. The second is the difficulty of eternal salvation, for, to be saved, it is necessary to be a member of the Church or at least to have implicit intention of becoming a member.

(c) Reunion is the effect of an act of reconciliation with the Holy See and the *terminus* is membership in the Church. The reconciliation will involve the acceptance of the entire faith as taught by the Catholic Church and the acknowledgment of the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical authority within its own sphere and the participation in the means of justification and sanctification as provided by the Church. There is no problem with regard to the individual convert. When the question of corporate reconciliation comes up, other elements come in. It would take too long to go into these here, so, for these details consult *Catholic Ecumenism* to which we have referred.

3. *In the Line of Prayer*

The work of the reunion of Christendom is a supernatural enterprise. It is a part of the great missionary operation of the Church. As all such efforts call for the essential factor of prayer, this must also be considered. The Holy Office instruction of 1949 attributed the general desire for unity on the part of non-Catholics to the prayers of the faithful throughout the world.[152] In the instruction of 1864 we find the same emphasis:

> . . . the Catholic Church offers prayers to Almighty God, and urges the faithful in Christ to pray, that all who have left the Holy Roman Church, out of which there is no salvation, may abjure their errors and be brought to the true faith, and the peace of that Church; nay, that all men may, by God's merciful aid, attain to the knowledge of the truth.[153]

In 1908, a prayer movement was initiated which aims to carry out that exhortation of the Holy Office and that movement is the *Chair of Unity Octave* [154] (January 18th to 25th). It has spread all

[152] *Cf. AAS,* XLII, 142.
[153] *AAS,* XI, 311.
[154] *Cf.* David Gannon, *Father Paul of Graymoor,* (New York: MacMillan, 1951) p. 136-149, 255-283.

over the world and enjoys the sponsorship of the Holy See. For the further spread of this movement we look especially to the seminaries where youthful zeal is enkindled, conjoined with clear knowledge of the elements involved. Those of you who are faculty members should take the occasion of this period to initiate special activities which will enlighten the seminarians as to this great question and enlist their participation in the work through their prayers.

V

CONCLUSION

We have attempted in these pages to set forth basically a *status questionis* of the Ecumenical Movement; the rest was merely accessory to our main objective. While we do not pretend to have exhausted all the angles of the question, we hope that at least a beginning has been made in the way of a serious approach by this Society. Much remains to be done and I would suggest that some feature of Ecumenism be part of the program each time we meet; in this way a deeper grasp will be obtained and practical measures produced. In so doing, we will carry out the instruction of the Holy Office when it declared,

> This excellent work of "reunion" of all Christians in the one true Faith and Church should daily become more integrated as a distinguished portion in the universal pastoral charge and be made the object of concern that the whole Catholic people take

to heart and recommend to God in fervent supplications. . . .[155]
In this way we will hasten the day when there will be *one flock and one shepherd*.

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[155] *AAS*, XLII, 146-147.