THE SEPARATED CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES IN THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION

The ecclesiological development supporting, surrounding and resulting from the Second Vatican Council is enormous. Simply to analyze and assimilate the Church's self-awareness expressed in *Lumen Gentium* and the fifteen satellite documents is a consuming task for the Catholic theologian—a task whose utter urgency has challenged the ecclesiologist-teacher to the maximum of his capacities in the past few years. Yet, simply "to analyze and assimilate," then to teach, is not enough. For, the Church's self-awareness expressed in Vatican II marks the end of an ecclesiological era and the inauguration of a new one. *Salva reverentia* we recognize that the documents of Vatican II were "dated" on the first day after solemn promulgation, and that the mandate given to Catholic theologians by the Council far exceeds that of conciliar exegesis. It reaches out into a future, on-going development, over and beyond the categories Vatican II itself was capable of.

This open-endedness is particularly characteristic of the *ecumenical* dimension of our ecclesiological endeavours. Preoccupation with the problems of Christian unity has recently sharpened our focus on numerous issues which were not even mentioned in standard treatises and are no more than signalled in contemporary monographs and articles. For this afternoon's seminar, we have selected some aspects of one such issue: the vexed question of the "ecclesial reality" or "churchliness" of the Christian communities separated from us.

After a brief recall of the state of the question prior to Vatican II (section I) and the contribution made by Vatican II itself (section II), we will offer some observations and suggestions from a postconciliar standpoint (section III). The matter, of course, is not ripe at present for a definitive entry to be made. But it is hoped that this manner of presentation will serve at least to evoke a fruitful exchange of ideas in the open discussion scheduled for the remaining time allowed to this seminar.

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I. The State of Theology Prior to Vatican II[1]

Prior to Vatican II the *sententia longe communior* denied all
ecclesial reality to separated Christian groups *as such*, and acknowl-
edged solely individual Christians outside the visible precincts of that
Roman Catholic Church, that is, individuals *as individuals*. This
extreme position was due partly to negligence (the failure of most
manualists to devote careful attention to the question), partly to the
negative and polemic spirit which survived in Catholic ecclesiology
from earlier days and only partly to mature theological conviction.
Even the great Orientalist, Jugie, writing in 1926 denied all ec-
clesial reality to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, notwithstanding the
fact that the papal magisterium had long viewed the Eastern Ortho-
dox communities as "churches" and did not hesitate to apply that
title to them over and over again. Another instance of this extreme
position ("extreme" because it embraces the Orthodox) is the late
Karl Adam writing in 1949 that the Catholic Church is compelled
to condemn all other Christian bodies as "extra-Christian, non-
Christian, and anti-Christian creations"!

The encyclical of Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis,* did not effect a
change in this more common Catholic view that separated Christian
communities *as such* have no positive theological identity whatever.
In fact, *Mystici Corporis* seemed firmly to reinforce the Catholic
mind of this bent. This was due to two factors at least: the strict
identity between the Body of Christ and the Church of Rome; and
the denial of *true* membership in Christ's Body to anyone not a
visibly-ordered adherent of the Roman Catholic Church.

Thus in a large portion of our theological literature leading into
the sessions of Vatican II, it was customary explicitly to say or
otherwise to imply that Protestants at least (and for many Orthodox
as well) were Christians not *because of* or through the communities
to which they belonged, but *in spite of* them, that is, not *per se* but
quite *per accidens*.

We labeled this approach *sententia longe communior* and not simply *communis* because all along in the two decades prior to Vatican II, a small but articulate group of Catholic specialists (differing among themselves in approach and detail) insisted that some positive "ecclesial" reality could and should be predicated of separated Christian communities. These men, in a writhing quest for fresh perspectives, refused to view existing groups as merely political/human/sociological organizations.[2] Rather, they perceived in them a *corporate theological* character. Going into the Council, there was no way to judge how diffusely these positive views had penetrated (evidently much more than most realized at the time), and no suspicion at all that they would find some recognition at least in the solemn magisterium.

All this, of course, is an over-view of what was usually termed the "vestigia ecclesiae" approaches. The word "vestigia" (omitting comment on its pejorative implication verbally—something left by the bottom of one's foot) was quite ambiguous, depending on precisely how it was understood. Thus for some it meant little more than what was recognized of the *separati* already in the Donatist controversy; for most, it meant an honest recognition of common heritage and elements existing within the various Christian groups; for others, it bespoke a corporate possibility leading to the affirmation of some truly "ecclesial" reality in the vestigial communities.

One final point on the pre-Vatican II question. The Toronto declaration of the World Council of Churches central committee in 1950 employed the term and a concept of *vestigia* to articulate the mutual ecclesiological recognitions between member Churches of the World Council, and did not hesitate to state that "the ecumenical movement is based upon the conviction that these *traces* are to be followed." [3] Thus, quite independent of the *status quaestionis* to Roman Catholic circles, and in a manner different from the Roman Catholic ecclesiological viewpoint, the question of ecclesial reality gained a new prominence and urgency in broader christian ecumeni-

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[2] Men such a Congar, Journet, Gribomont, C. J. Dumont, and Thils. See Lamirande, *art. cit.* 27-39.

[3] See L. Vischer (ed.) *A Documentary History of the Faith and Order Movement 1927-1963,* (St. Louis 1963) 174.

cal theologies. The Toronto declaration evoked a growing quantity of comment and appraisal from theologians of the World Council member groups, and from that small band of Catholic ecumenists during the fifties.

II. THE CONTRIBUTION OF VATICAN II

A. *"Ecclesial Reality" in Vatican II*

The original draft of *De Ecclesia* circumvented the question of ecclesial reality entirely. During the 1963 session, the question of ecclesial reality was the subject of interventions on the council floor, both in regard to the draft-schema on the Church and that on ecumenism. These interventions had some effect, since the final promulgated versions of both documents imply "ecclesial reality" in all Christian communities not in communion with the Roman Church.

The *Constitution on the Church* was amended (n.15) to include a passing reference to "other Churches or ecclesiastical communities," while the very title of chapter three of the *Decree on Ecumenism* is "Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman See." These phrases are very significant in the light of the process which had led to their inclusion, and are amply supported by the ecclesiological elements contained in the same documents.

Thus the official acts of Vatican II take a position on a crucial ecumenical-ecclesiological question which up to Vatican II had gained *no* common consensus among theologians. The *Decree on Ecumenism* states:

> The separated Churches and communities as such, though we believe they suffer from defects already mentioned, have been by no means deprived of significance and importance in the mystery of salvation. For, the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as means of salvation which derive their efficiency from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church (n.3).

Vatican II contributes a clear recognition that "separated brethren" means not only individuals but *corporate* identities—and this, not only sociologically/politically/humanly, but in a true *theological* sense. The Holy Spirit works *through* them and not just in spite of them.

This act of Vatican II is a major acquisition of our ecumenical ecclesiology.

But the Council refrained from *specifying in detail* the ecclesial reality of particular separated communities. The Orthodox, of course, are called Churches, a long tradition already in the locution of the Roman See; their churchly status is described at some greater length in chapter three of the *Decree on Ecumenism,* in such wise that the only "defect" we would see in them as Churches is not in their intrinsic componency but in their relationship with the See of Rome and the other Roman sees throughout the world.

The West, however, is globalized by the term "Churches and ecclesial communities" without further designation as to which bodies are Churches and which are ecclesial communities (by implication, something less than Church). The only exception is the Old-Catholic Church which is explicitly identified as Church in the official report of the *Modi.* (The reason is obvious: Old-Catholics are equivalent in status to Orthodox Churches in their possession of bishops and the episcopal Eucharist according to our understanding of them). Aside from the Old-Catholics, the work of further determination rests with post-conciliar theology. It was not within the scope of *De Oecumenismo* to write a systematic appraisal of every known Protestant body!

B. *Ecclesiology of "Ecclesial Reality" in Vatican II*[4]

The ecclesiology of Vatican II in the *Decree on Ecumenism,* consistent with that of *Lumen Gentium,* is distinctly an ecclesiology of *communion.* By this I mean that the Church is defined as an organic whole consisting of spiritual bonds (faiths, hope and charity) and structural bonds (profession of faith, sacramental economy and pastoral ministry) which culminate in the Eucharistic mystery which is the source and expression of the unity of the Church or, better, of the *one* Church. This ecclesiology embraces all the "constitutive elements" of Church, but each element is considered

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[4] See G. Thils, *Le décret sur l'oecuménisme du deuxieme Concile du Vatican,* (Paris 1966) 45-59; *Idem.,* "Le décret conciliare sur l'oecuménisme," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 87 (1965) 239-242.

insofar as it conditions, favors realizes and accomplishes that com-
munion (*koinonia*) which is the Church.

It is according to this perspective that the *Decree on Ecumenism*
seems to evaluate the separated Christian bodies (that is, on a sliding
scale of elements which they share with the Roman Catholic Church).
The degree of ecclesial reality, it is implied, is to be gauged accord-
ing to the verification of elements in a particular Christian com-
munity. And this, on a *quantitative* or *institutional* basis, not on a
qualitative-pneumatic basis! The Roman Church's self-awareness
stated in *De Oecumenismo* ("it is through Christ's Catholic Church
alone, which is the all embracing means of salvation, that the fullness
of means of salvation can be found" n.3) does not imply any neces-
sary superiority in the order of internal communion with Christ and
with each other. The Roman Church regards itself as the measure
of ecclesiastical fidelity on the basis of what it has been given by
Christ as the means of salvation and not on the basis of the interior
fidelity of faith and charity in the fellowship of its members.
Vatican II does not exclude that a particular community of Chris-
tians would have a greater degree of ecclesial reality from a "pneu-
matic" standpoint but a lesser degree on the institutional level.
And the converse is likewise not to be excluded.

Summarily, then, the second Vatican Council makes a signifi-
cant ecumenical advance (1) by affirming the ecclesial reality of
separated Christian bodies and (2) by supplying a paradigm accord-
ing to which subsequent theological efforts may pursue the work of
further specification as the need arises.

III CRITIQUE FROM A POST-CONCILIAR STANDPOINT

A. *The Measuring of Ecclesial Reality*[5]

Surely there is much value to the ecclesiology of "elements" and
"communion" when employed as a measure of ecclesial reality out-
side the visible precincts of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a very
simple slide-rule, and has served well in the past to develop our
recognition of ecclesial reality wherever it is found. But is also has
its shortcomings; perhaps it is too simple.

[5] *Ibid.*

First, if not properly wielded, the elements-theory can obscure our sense of the organic coherency of other groups. For, these elements are not found in isolation or suspended amidst a haphazard assemblage: they are the *unifying* elements in the totality; they are not disparate or disconnected in their actual existence, but only in our theological extraction of them from their proper function in the separated body.

Secondly, the "elements" are not *static things* which *are* and *abide;* they are dynamic and living "means of salvation" which by their very nature are aggressively *ecumenical*, i.e., they always tend by their intrinsic dynamism to realization of "that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires" (*De Oecumenismo*, n.24). Whence the elements, properly understood, are the earnest of *"redintegratio unitatis"* and *"recompositio in unum"* (Paul VI), as distinguished from "loss of identity," "surrender" or "repudiation." To locate and declare the ecclesial reality of separated communions insures that any eventual "re-integration" will mean the achievement of the proximate finality of authentic churchliness already salvifically in act!

The most important point to note, however, is that unilateral emphasis on visibly perceptible "elements" must carefully be balanced against the due recognition of the pneumatic-qualitative character of separated communities by not giving more than lip-service to the faith and charity (which, after all, are the *only* measure of worth in the eyes of God) which animates their *corporate* lives. Ecclesial reality, therefore, depends on "living" as well as "having"!

In fact, by now it is the commonplace *desideratum* of theologians that the post-conciliar development of the potential contained in the Vatican documents should follow a distinctly "pneumatico-centric" direction. This would be congenial not only to the Eastern Churches but to Western Protestant communities as well. The principle *Ubi Spiritus, ibi ecclesia* is not inoperative in Catholic ecclesiology, neither is it at variance with the established advantages of the acquired "elements-approach." Also, contemporary Catholic ecclesiology is basically christological (i.e., a sacramentology of Christ -the -Personal -Protosacrament of the Saving God.) But Christology is also pneumatological: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Ecclesiology is equally Christo-and pneumatico-centric. Thus the con-

stitutive *elements* of the church (the very Body of Christ) are, in their dynamic reality, relations with the Spirit: a condition of his presence, fruit of his activity, multiform expression of his gifts and charisms. This approach, as many have already noted, is the direction of the future.

B. *Ecclesial Reality and the "Equality" Required for Dialogue*

Bernard Leeming seems to think that to discuss the question of ecclesial reality is "condescending" and wishes that the whole matter could have been omitted from the decree on ecumenism.[6] Robert McAfee Brown asks, "Can the Roman Church consistently grant 'ecclesial reality' to non-Roman groups to anything like the degree that most of the latter will consider necessary if a dialogue of true *equality* is to proceed?"[7] Both of these eminent ecumenists, though for quite different reasons, are implying that a Catholic articulation of the "ecclesial reality" of separated groups is an ecumenical embarrassment or even obstacle.

To Fr. Leeming I would suggest that "ecclesial reality" in Vatican II is a distinct ecumenical advance, supplying basis for the minimal theological consensus required among Catholics that otherwise might have taken years to acquire. Seen against the theology of the time and the inadequacy of the formulation of *Mystici Corporis* in this regard, the contribution of Vatican II was precious indeed.

To Dr. Brown, I would submit that "equality" in dialogue is *not* at issue here. Since ecumenism is *one single movement* in which each communion (including the Roman Catholic) participates in perfectly equal partnership and reciprocity, qualified solely by the commitment proper to each, to say that other communions will "consider it necessary" for the Roman Catholic Church to grant any more "ecclesial reality" to non-Roman groups than it possibly can (remaining faithful to its own commitment), is to confuse two separate issues and ultimately the whole nature of ecumenism! For, the principle of reciprocity and equality (which *is* required for dialogue if it is to

[6] B. Leeming, SJ, *The Vatican Council and Christian Unity*, (New York 1966) 97-98.

[7] R. M. Brown, "Comment on the Decree on Ecumenism," *The Ecumenical Review* 17 (1965) 97.

proceed!) does *not* mean that each participant must have the *same* ecclesiological self-awareness. "Same-ness" in ecclesiological positions and "equality" in dialogue are two totally distinct matters. For the Roman church candidly to express its own self-awareness (at any given stage of perception) and to speak of it to the other Christian communities from this standpoint is *of the essence* of dialogue, not an obstacle to it. (I raise this point and make this correction, since a number of Protestant and Orthodox readers of the document on ecumenism have expressed the same reservation. Unless clarified, it could project an unwarranted complication into what is in reality an honest statement of commitment).

C. *Who Are the Churches, Who Are the Ecclesial Communities?*

Clearly the Orthodox communities are viewed as "churches" by Vatican II, and are designated as such, (This, as we noted before, follows a long-term papal usage). What about the so-called "Western" groups? The documents leave this matter unspecified.

It seems obvious that the distinction in terms (and, by implication, in the degree of "ecclesial reality") is founded in the "Episcopal Eucharist" (i.e., "true" bishops and "valid" Eucharist, as *we* understand them.)

But has our facile distinction between "valid" and "invalid" orders and Eucharist been an oversimplification? The opposite of "valid" is "unrecognized" or "unguaranteed"—concepts devoid of *positive* content, i.e., incapable of precisely defining or describing what *positively* the "invalid" reality is (for, as has been long recognized, it is "not nothing"!). We are faced with the re-appraisal of the reality of *Eucharist and ministry* outside the Catholic-Orthodox-Old Catholic confines. The cleavage between ourselves and Western Protestants seems too great, too sharp. The inevitable development in this area will result in an increased capacity on the part of the Roman self-awareness to attribute "ecclesial reality" to other groups, although according to a *pluriformity* of diverse "church orders" and no longer according to a univocal and 'domestic' understanding of 'valid' and 'invalid'. An auxiliary point here: The question of Anglican orders is on the verge of being re-appraised, not from an historical standpoint but from the standpoint of new dimensions in

sacramentology (ones transcending the limits of 'valid' form and 'defect' of intention). This will influence, of course, the ecclesial reality question in regard to Anglicans who are said by *De Oecumenismo* to "hold a special place" among those communions "in which Catholic tradition and institutions in part continue to exist" (n.13).[8]

Thus the answer to the question "who are the churches and who are the ecclesial communities" cannot be given now and, when given in a particular case, must be recognized as expressing a given theologian's viewpoint at a given time and as subject to revision at any time!

D. *Terminology and Reality*

As we know, some Protestant communities do not consider themselves "churches" and do not wish to be so-called. We should, of course, use the designation preferred by the particular communion. But this terminological point is *per se* distinct from the question here at hand, namely the Roman Catholic ecclesiological view of the separated communion's "churchliness." It is perfectly possible theologically to consider a particular community a "church" without *calling* that community a "church" if it does not desire the title because of its special ecclesiological self-awareness. The converse ought also to be true: we may *call* a community a "church" without theologically *considering* it a "church" (according to Vatican II's avoidance of the question in regard to Western groups).

E. *An Analogical Usage of "Church"*

Finally, there seems to be no insurmountable difficulty in applying an analogical concept of church to all ecclesial communities of baptized Christians. The terms of the analogy are set by the present-day ecclesiological awareness of the Roman Catholic Church, implied by Vatican II.

Of course, the Church of Christ is not an abstraction or a "concept," it exists historically in the world. Further, to say "Christianity is divided" is *not* to say "The Church of Christ exists only as

[8] See F. J. Van Beeck, SJ, "Toward an Ecumenical Understanding of the Sacraments," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 3 (1966) 57-112.

divided into parts" (no "branch-theory" here). Rather, the Church of Christ *subsists* historically and actually in the Roman Catholic Church. "To subsist" means to be independent, self-sufficient, to have identity of itself. It is in this sense, we believe, that the Church of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church.

We must qualify our use of the term "subsist." Normally it implies incommunicability; but as used ecclesiologically here, it cannot exclude that the Church of Christ *exists* also, according to some measure, outside the structure of the Roman Catholic Church.

When we predicate "church" of the separated bodies, we do not intend that each of them is *a* church, but that the Church of Christ *exists in them,* but not subsistently. When we predicate "church" of the Roman Catholic body, we do intend *a* church, i.e., *the* Church of Christ which both *exists* and *subsists* therein. We believe, therefore, that the only Christian body today which has "churchliness" *of itself* or "subsistently" is the Roman Catholic Church.

Thus we may speak analogically (an analogy is predication somewhat different and somewhat the same in each instance). In this entirely unique instance, the primary analogate is the Church of Christ as it exists historically and subsistently. Church of Christ is thus predicated of the Roman Catholic community and of the other Christian communities not *univocally* (at present this would be to deny the essential "oneness" of the Church of Christ), not *equivocally* (this would be to deny true ecclesial reality or churchliness to the other communities), but analogically.

The Church of Christ is visibly and actively expressed in the world, in a plurality of presently separated christian communities. Our faith-commitment, however, sees it as actualized in its fullness and subsistently solely in the Roman Catholic community. (It is well to recall here what we said earlier about the "quantitative-institutional"-"qualitative-pneumatic" distinction). So it is that, by comparison to its expression in the Roman Catholic Church and according to a graduated analogy, we predicate "Church of Christ" of the other Christian communities. (For our present purpose baptism serves to circumscribe the scope of our analogical usage, for it provides a decisive *sacramental* point of reference. Obviously, it is of the very nature of analogical usage that the terms could be set more

broadly to include those few Christian communities which do not practice baptism of water).

This manner of speaking has some clear advantages. For one thing, it enables Catholics to escape the simplistic (and quite domestic) "one true church" locution. It also forces an ecumenical dimension upon the very starting point of our ecclesiology. No longer can we treat the Church of Christ adequately without constant reference to its expressions outside the Roman communion. For the analogical usage bespeaks the reality of divided Christianity today and at the same time enables us to remain faithful to our Roman Catholic commitment in faith.

However, since such a manner of speaking attempts to articulate the *abnormal* situation of the Church of Christ today, it must of necessity be awkward and "abnormal" itself. There is no way graciously to express an ecclesiology of division. The ecumenical movement seeks that day when the present "analogy" will achieve the term of its intrinsic dynamism: re-integration of unity. Only then will all Christians be able to say "Church of Christ" univocally!

Such, then, are a few aspects of the complex question of "ecclesial reality." I hope this brief sketch has served to recall the problem to your mind; it was not intended, of course, to solve them.

ROBERT E. HUNT
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C.

Digest of the Discussion:

Fr. Kensington: You spoke about the ecclesial reality of the separated churches. Does this imply a Eucharistic reality?
Fr. Hunt: There is no question here of the Orthodox and some other groups (e.g., Nestorian, Monophysite and Old-Catholic churches). Certainly we acknowledge the full reality of their Eucharist. The question refers to the separated churches of the West. I would answer with a qualified "yes," at least in those ritual communities which celebrate a Eucharist in one form or another; per-

haps also in a "subliminal" sense (insofar as baptism already has an intrinsic ordering to the Eucharist) in those communities which do not. For whenever Christians celebrate the Eucharist, it is "not nothing," even though it might not reach the full reality we perceive in our church and the churches which possess "valid" priesthood as we understand it. Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* expresses this in chapter 3 when treating of the separated churches and communities of the West (n.22): it acknowledges a eucharistic reality, but not "in its fullness."

Part of the problem here results from our facile distinction between "valid" and "invalid," which, as you know, is undergoing great refinement in contemporary sacramentology. It seems that this classic distinction is useful only in domestic Roman Catholic circles. "Valid" means that we can *guarantee* a particular sacramental act as authentic and efficacious, because it meets all the requirements of our understanding of the sacraments. Anything which does not meet these requirements is "invalid," that is, cannot be guaranteed. But exactly what its positive content is, we are not in a position to say. Hence, "invalid" means that we know what it is not, but cannot positively say what it *is!* This seems to apply to our evaluation of the ministry and eucharist in those churches which do not have a ministry according to the sacramental succession, as we understand it.

Fr. Chirico: If we posit an ecclesial reality of the separated churches on the basis of the Holy Spirit's activity, then it seems hard to eliminate those people who are not baptized. Do you not think so?

Fr. Hunt: Yes. The term "ecclesial reality" admits a wide scope. It may be extended to embrace all groups or individuals where the Spirit is operating unto justification and salvation—and, of course, this extends to all men, since "apart from the church" the Holy Spirit does not work! And we know that nowadays Christian theologians are trying to appreciate the *positive* role of even non-Christian religious bodies in the mystery of salvation. Even patristically the word "ecclesia" was extended into universal usages, as we know even the term "Mystical Body of Christ" was at one time.

But the question raised by the *Decree on Ecumenism* and by our separated Christian brethren in our ecumenical dialogue is limited to *visible*, professed, Christian groups. As we noted in our seminar

paper, analogies know only the limit we ourselves set to them. And in this instance, we are limiting it to those about whom the *Decree on Ecumenism* says "all who have been justified by faith in baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians . . . etc." (n.3).

Fr. Topmueller: It seems that we have a number of distinctions here: "subsists" and "exists"; "fullness" and "vestigia"; "in body" and "as a body."

Fr. Hunt: It is true that all these distinctions encumber any attempt to describe the Church of Christ in the present state of Christian divisions. But this seems to be an inherent difficulty, which can only be eliminated when Christian separations are eliminated. Perhaps acceptance of the analogical usage of "church" by Catholics would help. The fact that Catholics would understand it as an analogical usage is nothing other than fidelity to our own understanding of the Church of Christ, and I do not feel this is necessarily "offensive" or "condescending" to our separated brethren.

Fr. Amico: If we make a clear-cut distinction between "subsists" and "exists," does this bring us to a conclusion of two churches, one visible and one invisible?

Fr. Hunt: Not at all. The one and only one Church of Christ is inseparably visible and invisible. Our point is simply that it is expressed historically at the present time in a plurality of ecclesial or "churchly" communities. In our Roman Catholic faith-commitment, the full (institutionally speaking) and subsistent expression of the Church is the Roman Catholic Church, but this does not preclude that it be expressed historically in less-than-full and non-subsistent way outside the visible borders of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus we can say that the Church of Christ does truly exist in Protestant churches, without numerically multiplying "churches of Christ." Of course, this is and must necessarily be a peculiarly Roman Catholic view of the matter.

Fr. Bowman: Can we come to an agreement with our separated Christian brethren on the word "church"?

Fr. Hunt: In dialogue, of course, we must be alert to the exact sense in which a particular speaker uses the term. One's supposition of the term indicates one's ecclesiological viewpoint. But there is a built-in

difficulty in achieving a common terminology of "church." Perhaps, prolonged effort will remove misunderstandings and at least we could come to understand what others mean, and do not mean, when they use the term. But, it seems to me, that a perfectly common terminology and supposition of terms must await that day that we share a common ecclesiology, i.e., full Christian unity.

Fr. Leonard: Because of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis,* it was not possible to use the terms "body and soul" of the Church, as if one were wider than the other. Is it possible to do so now?

Fr. Hunt: Not in the sense proscribed by Pius XII. But we must remember that the terms "body and soul" and "body of Christ" as used to characterize the church are metaphorical usages. One may use any metaphor he wishes as long as it accurately represents the reality in question. I do not think "body and soul" is adequate to describe the Church of Christ as *subsisting* in the Roman Catholic Church and *existing* in other Christian communities.

Recorded by: ROGER MATZERATH, S.A.
Atonement Seminary
Washington, D.C.