

INTERCOMMUNION: PROTESTANT ATTITUDES AND POLICIES

I. THE DIVIDED CHURCH

The very term intercommunion gives expression, on the one hand, to the tragic fact of a divided Christendom and, on the other hand, symbolizes the increasingly shared yearning for mutual recognition and ecumenical fellowship among those segments of Christendom which we call denominations, communions or churches. The very fact that we have to speak of Churches instead of the Church is part of the tragedy, and part of our sinful involvement. Only in more recent times have Protestant people begun to recognize and take seriously the tragic consequences of the Reformation in the rise of denominationalism. Altars have been set up against altars, ecclesiastical "iron curtains" have divided Christendom into hostile camps and led to many unchristian consequences which we today, both Catholics and Protestants, are being led by the Holy Spirit to confess with shame and sorrow.

The subject of intercommunion is very complex due to so many different theological traditions and ecclesiastical usages in Christendom. The attitudes of the churches vary all the way from a denial of the very idea of intercommunion to an entirely open communion. Between these extremes we find various degrees of intercommunion such as the recognition of an occasional practice of intercommunion between different denominations under special circumstances, or a regular intercommunion based on mutual agreement between two distinct denominations. In the latter case, when a full mutual recognition of the ministries is included, intercommunion may also include the right of intercelebration. Generally speaking intercommunion is regarded by the Churches which have authorized it as a step toward or an anticipation of an organic union of the Churches. Some churches use other terminology, e.g., pulpit and altar fellowship to describe full intercommunion which falls short of organic union.¹

As we look back over the centuries to the first decades of the 16th Century Reformation movement, it is important to keep in mind that the intention of the leading Reformers—Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican—was not to break up the unity of the western Church, but to attempt to bring about a renewal of the spiritual and sacral life in the Church. Ten years after the excommunication of Martin Luther, the *Augsburg Confes-*

¹ Donald Baillie and John Marsh, editors *Intercommunion. The Report of the Theological Commission.* (Harper & Brothers, New York 1952) pp. 17 ff.

sion of 1530 stated, in a conciliatory manner, that the reforms which were being introduced in the German churches had no other intention than to restore the true Catholic faith and life, purified from various later additions, which neither the Scriptures nor the ancient undivided Church had sanctioned.² Among the Reformers none labored more tirelessly and more earnestly for the reunion of Christendom than Philip Melancthon and Martin Bucer. Years after the Augsburg Confession had been rejected, their efforts included several conferences and consultations with the Roman Catholic theologians and churchmen. Luther along with Melancthon and those who embraced their teachings were profoundly convinced that their labors were done for the welfare of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. This was also the basic attitude of the Anglican Reformers together with that of Calvin.

Nevertheless, in fact the visible Church had become tragically divided. After the Council of Trent the rapid hardening of attitudes almost completely sealed off any kind of official intercourse between Papacy and the Protestants for the next four centuries. Almost equally bitter were the controversies which raged between the Lutherans and the Reformed. Only too often wholesale condemnations of others led to an excessive over-estimation of the purity of one's own Church and theological system. The divines of the seventeenth century, Lutherans and Calvinists alike, at times wrote in a manner which makes us wonder whether they expected their teachings to be received as nothing short of infallible. Since one of the cardinal points of controversy between the Lutherans and the Reformed from the Colloquy of Marburg in 1529 has been the eucharistic doctrine, it does not surprise us that the usual policy followed was a total separation between the two communions.

Only one actual agreement on the nature of the eucharist was drawn in the life time of Luther which aimed at bridging the gap between the Lutherans and the Reformed. This was the so called *Wittenberg Concord* of 1536 which for a brief period led to reconciliation between Lutherans and some of the Reformed. The *Wittenberg Concord* has been characterized as a diplomatic rather than a theological achievement. But Melancthon who had composed this document continued to maintain that it expressed the true doctrine of the Catholic Church of Christ. It states in part:

They confess in accordance with the words of Irenaeus that there are two things in this sacrament, one heavenly and the other earthly. Therefore they maintain and teach that with the bread and wine

² See articles XX, XXII, XXIV in the *Augsburg Confession*. For the best English edition see *The Book of Concord* edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1959).

the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, distributed and received.³

Not only did the relations between the Lutherans and the Reformed resemble an open warfare, but even within the Reformed as well as within the Lutheran camps there developed a tension which led to the denial of sacramental fellowship. Besides the dogmatic controversies the political factors, particularly the division of Germany to numerous independent principalities, further aggravated the situation. In Switzerland the Reformed city of Berne rejected intercommunion with Calvin and Geneva. In the important Reformed Synod of Dortrecht (1618) in Holland which brought together representatives of various Reformed traditions from many countries no joint Communion was celebrated although the deliberations of the Synod lasted for months. In Britain Congregationalists (Independent) and Presbyterians—both belonging to Reformed tradition—might share the same Church building, and even have joint worship, but usually a separate observance of the Lord's supper was held for each denomination.⁴

In the Lutheran part of Germany immediately after the death of Luther the more accommodating eucharistic theology and the ecumenical projects of Melancthon and his pupils ("the Philippinists") began to meet increasing opposition from those who regarded themselves as true heirs to Luther's legacy (the Gnesio-Lutherans). Thirty years later the eucharistic theology which the Augsburg Confession and its Apology represented was not regarded as sufficient. A more sophisticated theological statement written in scholastic style was incorporated into the *Formula of Concord* (1577) which a large part of the Lutheran world accepted as a binding confessional document. While stating the eucharistic doctrine in greater detail and in a more scholastic manner the F. C. represents also a hardening of attitude towards others. Deviations from the doctrine of the F. C., whether they be those represented by Trent or Geneva and Zurich, are rejected in no uncertain terms.⁵ Lutherans who refused to go beyond the Augsburg Confession, and particularly those who used the so called *Variata* Text (1540) of this Confession, were reviewed with suspicion by the Gnesio-Lutherans and at least in some instances no Communion fellowship was practiced.⁶

The main criticism of the F. C. in its review of existing errors in

³ Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, editors, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948* (S.P.C.K., London 1954) pp. 45f; *The Book of Concord*, p. 571.

⁴ *Intercommunion*, pp. 59, 89, 91.

⁵ *Book of Concord*, pp. 588-591.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 568; *Intercommunion*, p. 86.

Christendom about the eucharistic teaching was not directed against the Roman Catholic teaching (though this is also reviewed) but rather against the views of "sacramentarians" i.e. various Reformed views. A lengthy list of 16 errors are outlined and discussed in some detail. This exercise in sacramental polemic ends with the following note of self-assurance:

Whatever additional condemnable opinions or erroneous views there may be can easily be discovered and identified by name from the foregoing exposition, for we reject and condemn everything that is inconsistent with, contrary to, or opposed to the doctrine set forth above, well founded as it is in God's word.⁷

It is no wonder that the Lutherans who have represented or continue to represent the sacramental teaching of the F. C. in its purity have found it impossible to establish any official relations with the non-Lutheran Churches. In fact time and again they have refused intercommunion with other Lutherans whose sacramental theory has not been closely identical with theirs. This history of refusal of fellowship has nowhere continued with such tenacity as in the United States.

In 1872 the conservative Lutheran Synods in this country organized themselves into a Synodical Conference for the safeguarding of pure Lutheran orthodoxy. The largest and most influential member of the Conference has been the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. A long preparatory statement (1871) reads very much like the above mentioned article in the F. C. A few extracts will suffice as an illustration:

Our Synods and congregations live here in the midst . . . of almost innumerable sects and groups. These gladly brag of their "evangelical protestantism" and . . . about their "vital piety" but . . . disgracefully falsify the dear Word of God . . . They taunt the orthodox church because of its faithful witness, and they try to lure its children into . . . their heretical congregations by . . . false teachings and deception. We see the anti-christian papacy impudently raise its proud head . . . and use all conceivable means to found here a mighty kingdom.⁸

One by one the already existing three Lutheran Synods—the General Synod, the Southern General Synod and the General Council—are rejected. The last had come into being only in 1866 as a conservative reaction to the vague and questionable confessional loyalty of the General Synod. But the degree of Lutheran confessionalism in the constitution of the General Council did not suffice for the Synodical Conference. The Synodical statement grants that there are genuine elements of true Lutheranism

⁷ *The Book of Concord*, p. 591.

⁸ Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1966), p. 189.

in the teachings and practice of the General Council but organic union is only possible on the basis of "complete agreement in doctrine and in the correct understanding of our confessions."⁹ One of the most serious charges against the General Council was that it allowed pulpit and Communion fellowship with Calvinists and other unorthodox groups. Examples of such heretical denominations were Episcopalians, German and Dutch Reformed, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. Therefore, no church fellowship was possible with the General Council.¹⁰

Among the major communions, the Anglican Church seems to have shown a greater degree of friendly recognition of both Reformed and Lutheran as true Christian churches. In the official eucharistic teaching as set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles (Art. 28) the position of the Church of England is clearly that of the Reformed Churches, whereas the actual liturgical tradition and practice was more closely related to Lutheran tradition. Archbishop Cranmer seems to have planned even some kind of pan-Protestant alliance in the days of the Council of Trent, as a counter measure. Though nothing came of it and though no formal intercommunion agreements were negotiated, a general usage was followed that the Reformed and Lutheran communicants were welcome to receive the sacrament in the Anglican Churches while visiting in England. Likewise, Anglicans—and even some bishops—while in Reformed or Lutheran countries received the communion in these churches unless they were refused this privilege.¹¹

In colonial America intercommunion was practiced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the Anglicans and the Swedish Lutheran Churches. The clergy of each communion rendered ministerial service on numerous occasions to the other's congregations. These fraternal relations were encouraged by Church authorities both in England and Sweden. But even non-episcopally ordained German Lutheran clergy were employed by the Anglican Church in this period. This continued well into the nineteenth century, particularly in the mission fields in India.¹²

There were even some overtures concerning intercommunion in some form between the Roman and Anglican Churches in the early eighteenth century. The idea was promoted particularly by William Wade, the Arch-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹¹ G. K. A. Bell, *Christian Unity: the Anglican Position* (Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. London 1948), pp. 37, 43. Article XXVIII reads in part: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith." (B. J. Kidd, *The Thirty-nine Articles* (Edwin S. Gorham, New York 1902, vol. I, p. 226).

¹² Nils Jacobsson, *Svenska öden vid Delaware 1638-1831* (Stockholm 1938) pp. 226 ff; Hans Cnattingius, *Bishops and Societies* (SPCK, London 1952) pp. 41 ff., 122 ff.

bishop of Canterbury.¹³ No comparable approaches were made by the Anglicans in this period toward the various nonconformist bodies in England.

Two later movements in the Protestant world had a considerable influence in softening the hitherto widely-maintained, rigidly orthodox and harsh spirit of controversy. These movements were Pietism in its several forms and Rationalism in the era of Enlightenment. Dogmatic intellectualism and objectivity gave way to subjective feeling and personal conversion as the nature of a living faith. True believers were recognized and welcomed beyond confessional barriers. Rationalism and theological liberalism completed what Pietism had begun. Particularly in sacramental theology a radical departure from traditional beliefs and practices made itself felt in large areas of Protestantism. Morality replaced mystery in religion with sometimes unfortunate results. The eucharist was only very rarely celebrated. How completely it was emptied of its meaning may be illustrated with one example from Germany. In distributing the bread and wine, instead of saying "the body of Christ given for you," "the blood of Christ shed for you" some rationalist pastors or more extreme type said: "Enjoy this bread. The spirit of devotion rest upon you with its blessing. Enjoy a little wine. Virtue does not lie in this wine but in you, in the teachings about God, in God."¹⁴

Where such "new theology" took over, even in less radical form, it should not surprise us to learn that it often led to the practice of open communion between various denominations also. Usually no official ecclesiastical agreements were negotiated. A mere common courtesy and Christian charity was enough to provide motivation. All who were present at the communion service were invited to participate. Most Protestants did, however, require baptism as a necessary prerequisite. Influences such as these were very much at work also in American Protestantism, including some of the Lutheran Synods, particularly in the eastern part of the United States.

The best known of the leaders who championed a doctrinally more flexible and rather Reformed type of symbolistic sacramental teaching and practice among the Lutherans was S. S. Schmucker in Pennsylvania. He also called for a revision of Augsburg Confession toward a more distinctly Protestant direction. Schmucker's fond but unrealized hope was to establish, in America, an Apostolic Protestant Church on the basis of the fundamental doctrines accepted by most leading Protestant Churches.¹⁵

¹³ Bell, *op. cit.* pp. 60 ff.

¹⁴ Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1937-1939), vol. II, p. 156.

¹⁵ Reginald Deitz, "The Lord's Supper in American Lutheranism," *Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia 1961), pp. 144 ff; D. H. Yoder in *History of Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 243 ff.

Among the "americanized" Lutherans open communion was quite common in the nineteenth century. In a Lutheran liturgy which appeared in 1814 the invitation to the Lord's Table reads as follows:

In the name of Christ, our common and only Master, I say to all who own Him as their Savior, and resolve to be His faithful subjects; ye are welcome to this feast of love.¹⁶

It is no wonder that the solidly orthodox Lutherans of the Synodical Conference rejected in strong language this kind of unionistic Lutheranism. Schumucker was obviously influenced in his own ecumenical efforts by the important and officially established Prussian Union Church which came into being by the royal proclamation in 1817. The union between the Lutherans and the Reformed was sealed by a joint communion service in Berlin. King Frederick William III regarded this act of union as a worthy way of honoring the heritage of the Reformers and bringing their true intentions to fulfillment. Frederick Schleiermacher, "the father of modern Protestant theology", gave his weight, and wholehearted support to these plans. Several other regions of Germany followed the example in the next few years. Many factors contributed to this movement, such as the heritage of the earlier Enlightenment, both the national and religious revival and the Romantic movement. But the Prussian Union was not based on a doctrinal consensus. A large element in this Church was not prepared to accept union beyond a common administration. Particularly in Prussia, but also elsewhere in Germany, there arose a strong confessional movement, predominantly among the Lutherans. Thousands of the rigidly orthodox Lutherans now left for America, while others either remained in their territorial Churches or founded Lutheran free churches which were completely separated from State control. But the movement toward unitive Protestantism also did continue to make strides both in Germany and everywhere in the Protestant world during the rest of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

In the light of these developments in Germany we can review the sharp doctrinal division between the Lutheran forces in the nineteenth century America in the proper context. Here too, a gradual growth of greater confessional loyalty made itself felt outside the Synodical Conference. The majority of Lutherans in this country rallied behind the so called Galesburg rule "which accords with the word of God and with the confessions of our Church: Lutheran Pulpits for Lutheran ministers only—Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only."¹⁸

¹⁶ J. F. Ohl, "The Liturgical Deterioration of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Associations* (Pittsburg, Pa. 1902) vol. IV, p. 71.

¹⁷ Johannes Meister, "Church and Altar Fellowship in the Churches of Germany," *Church in Fellowship*, Edited by Vilmos Vajta (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 1963) pp. 76 ff.

¹⁸ Wolf, *op. cit.* p. 171.

The Oxford movement in the Anglican Church awakened a strong awareness of her Catholic heritage. The historic episcopate acquired a great importance as one of the essential marks of a true church. It resulted in a growing reluctance to recognize the validity of the ministry and the sacraments of any non-episcopally governed church. Anglicans were discouraged to commune at the services of such denominations. Later in the century a movement towards closer ties with the Old Catholics, and Orthodox Churches with a view of establishing official intercommunion, was well under way. Through Lambeth Conference, since 1868, the Anglican Communion grew closer together on a world-wide scale and discovered its ecumenical mission. The Episcopal Church in this country was the first to raise the question about closer ties with the Church of Sweden on the basis of the historical episcopate in that Church.¹⁹ Finally in 1920 the Lambeth Conference stated:

. . . it should be regarded as a general rule of the Church that Anglican communicants should receive Holy Communion only at the hands of ministers of their own Church, or of Churches in communion therewith.²⁰

It is well known that many Anglo-Catholics labored earnestly in trying to bring about in some form an officially recognized relationship between Canterbury and Rome. The refusal of the Pope to recognize the validity of the Anglican orders (1896) was a bitter blow to Anglo-Catholics and many others. It is much less known that also in Germany there were various small circles and movements which brought together Lutherans and Catholics who promoted the reunion between the two churches. Periodicals such as *Ut Omnes unum* (1879-1901)²¹ promoted these ideas. There had been others before them on both sides who nobly though vainly had worked for the same cause, Cassander, Calixtus, Bossuet, Leibniz and others. At the present time similar groups exist in various countries. In Germany among the better known of these are the *Bund für evangelisch-Katholische Wiedervereinigung*, and the *Una Sancta* movement.

II. INTERCOMMUNION AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The topic of intercommunion has, of course, been closely related to the life of the modern ecumenical movement and the World Council of

¹⁹ Bell, *op. cit.* p. 51; Carl Henrik Lyttkens, "Altar Fellowship in the Scandinavian Churches," *Church in Fellowship*, p. 160. For the ecumenical influence of Oxford movement, see Henry R. T. Brandreth, *The Ecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement* (SPCK, London 1947).

²⁰ *Intercommunion To-Day being the Report of the Archbishop's Commission on Intercommunion* (Church Information Office, London 1968), p. 35.

²¹ Manfred Fleischer, "Lutheran and Catholic Reunionists in the Age of Bismark," *Church History* (Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1, 1969), p. 59. See also the same author's book *Katholische und Lutherische Treniker* (Göttingen 1969).

Churches. The subject has received considerable attention in the theological deliberations of the Faith and Order Movement. The actual practice of intercommunion at the various ecumenical conferences has presented a difficult and thorny problem for which no generally satisfactory solution has yet been found. Let us review these problems and the theological discussion about our topic in the ecumenical context.

It is generally agreed that the International Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, held in 1910, marks the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. This Conference dealt with practical problems of the foreign missions of the Protestant and Anglican churches. By common agreement no doctrinal questions had been included in the program of the Conference, nor were there any joint celebration of the Lord's Supper. However many delegates of several different denominations responded to the "open communion" invitation by the Church of Scotland.²²

Next came the Ecumenical Conference of Life and Work held in 1925 in Stockholm. The prime mover for this conference for practical Christianity and its inspiring leader was Nathan Söderblom, the Archbishop of Sweden. The delegates in Edinburgh represented their respective missionary societies rather than their churches. The Stockholm Conference was the first great ecumenical assembly of non-Roman Christendom at which the Orthodox Churches were also present as delegates. It should be added however, that an official invitation had been sent to the Vatican but regrettably it did not lead to the results hoped for.²³

As in Edinburgh, there was no joint celebration of the eucharist under the auspices of the Conference. But the host Church provided various opportunities for both "open communion" and separate celebrations according to different ecclesiastical traditions. Dogmatic discussions could not be entirely avoided even though the immediate practical problems of post-World War I were the special concerns of this Conference. Intercommunion as a theological problem came up two years later when the first Conference on Faith and Order met in Lausanne. The Stockholm Conference had met exactly 1600 years after the first great Council of Nicaea. The high point of the Conference was the concluding service in the Cathedral of Uppsala where the aged Patriarch Photios of Alexandria recited the Nicene Creed in the original Greek language. Many, including Söderblom himself, saw in this symbolic act a real step toward

²² *Intercommunion*, p. 116.

²³ Archbishop Söderblom has given a lengthy account of the various attempts that were made to secure the participation of the Roman Catholic Church in this Conference. He also tried *sine ira et studio* to discuss the *non possumus*-attitude of the Papacy to the Stockholm Conference. See Nathan Soderholm, *Kristenhetens möte i Stockholm* (Uppsala 1926). esp. pp. 784-824. An important Catholic contribution to the early history of the Ecumenical movement is the book by Max Pribilla, *S. J. Um Kirchliche Einheit*. Stockholm-Lausanne-Rom (Freidburg im Breisgau, 1929).

the reunion of the divided Christendom.²⁴ However, the concluding service was not a Eucharist. Söderblom explained later why it could not be: "it was a demand of both necessity and of love that the Eucharist be omitted from the closing service. . . ."²⁵

It was Charles Brent, Bishop of the Episcopal Church in this country, who already in 1910, after his return from the Edinburg Conference, began to promote the concept of an ecumenical Conference which would discuss matters of faith and order in the hope that some basic unity might eventually emerge without which no organic reunion would be possible. Seventeen years elapsed before the first Conference on Faith and Order was held in 1927 in Lausanne. Bishop Brent functioned as the president of the conference. Archbishop Söderblom and the Orthodox Archbishop Germanos, the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the West, were among the Vice-presidents of the Conference. Although intercommunion was not as such on the agenda it came up on several occasions in the discussions which dealt with such topics as "The Call to Unity, the nature of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments, the unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing Churches."²⁶ As would be expected the expressed opinions differed from each other often quite sharply and tension-filled moments were unavoidable. It would appear to most of us today that, for instance, the statement of the well known Russian theologian Sergius Bulgakof was worded unnecessarily bluntly:

Societies of laymen, devoid of clergy—such as are those Protestant Confessions which have lost the Episcopate—possess only one ecclesiastical degree, the order of laymen.²⁷

In the several section reports the Orthodox representatives at the Conference were able to join with the other delegates in only one. They therefore presented a special report of their own, which also touched briefly upon the reasons why they could not join in practicing of intercommunion with others, which was advocated by several theologians, most of them belonging to the Reformed tradition. The Orthodox Declaration pointed out the many fundamental differences on the subject of the faith and the nature of the ministry which the Conference had made apparent.

This being so, we cannot entertain the idea of a reunion which is confined to a few common points of verbal statement; for ac-

²⁴ Söderblom, *op. cit.* p. 212f, G. K. A. Bell, *The Stockholm Conference 1925* (Oxford University Press, London 1926) pp. 751 f.

²⁵ Quoted in *Intercommunion*, p. 119.

²⁶ The official detailed report is edited by H. N. Bate, *Faith and Order Proceedings of the World Conference Lausanne, August 3-21, 1927* (George H. Doran Co. New York 1927).

²⁷ Bate, *op. cit.* p. 259.

ording to the Orthodox Church, where the totality of the faith is absent there can be no *communio in sacris*.²⁸

Bishop Headlam of Gloucester, a recognized Anglican theologian of *via media*—the Jesuit Pribilla describes him as a liberal²⁹—in a lengthy address made various statements which merit our attention. The future union of the Church must be sacramental in character, baptism the way, eucharist the great corporate act of worship, *without imposing upon the Church any particular theory about them.*" But the Orthodox as well as some of the Lutherans, together with a few others had doubts about the propriety of this statement. The bishop had also this to say:

. . . I do not think that it is possible for any one Church to go to any other and say: "Our Orders are valid, yours are not." It is not possible for them to say, "We have succession, you have not." The only full and complete Orders would be those given in a united Church, and because the Church is divided therefore all Orders are irregular and no succession is perfect . . .³⁰

Among those who advocated joint communion at the Conference was Dr. Hughes, a Principal of an English Methodist College. The Christian world—he said—expects to see in some concrete way a demonstration of that true unity which already exists. What would be more appropriate than a joint Holy Communion at the Conference, preparing the way for intercommunion between all members of the Body of Christ.

Confronted by the secularizing and paganising tendencies of the age, are we not bound in loyalty to one Lord to achieve a visible expression of the unity which none of us denies? After all we are not considering a Table or Feast of our own, but the Table and Feast of the Living Lord. He is the Host who invites us to be His guests, and have we any right to refuse fellowship with any whom we have every reason to believe He would not repel?³¹

The Conference of Lausanne already revealed clearly that two fundamentally opposed views about intercommunion prevailed among the different churches. To some the practice of intercommunion appears a means to reunion whereas others would regard it as the final crowning and sealing of the already accomplished corporate union.³²

The Lausanne Conference did not include a common celebration of the Eucharist. In this respect the same policy was followed as in 1910 and

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 385.

²⁹ Pribilla, *op. cit.* p. 182.

³⁰ Bate, *op. cit.* pp. 332 f.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 318.

³² Pribilla, *op. cit.* p. 183.

1925. Some local Protestant Churches offered an open invitation to the members of the Conference which many accepted. However, the Conference did officially arrange a special Service of Penitence and Intercession which all attended. Penitence was expressed for the Churches' shortcomings in thwarting God's purpose for unity through our lack of humility and love. Thanks were offered to God for the new hopes arising out of the Conference.³³

On one important subject, "The unity of Christendom and the relation thereto of existing churches" the Conference was unable to agree upon an acceptable report, but authorized the Continuation Committee to prepare one. A few months later such a report was sent to the Churches. On the subject of intercommunion it said in part:

Complete fellowship in the Church will be realized only when the way is opened for all God's children to join in communion at the Lord's table. Through prayer and thoughtful deliberation the steps must be found which will most effectively lead to this goal. . . . Some of us believe that full communion can be reached only at the end of the process of unification, others that it may be used by God as the means to that end. Whatever the way to the goal, complete unity will require that the Churches be so transformed that there may be full recognition of one another by members of all communions.³⁴

Many of the 110 churches which were represented at Lausanne later sent a written evaluation of the Conference and its reports to the Continuation Committee. Several of these responses were published in the volume called *Convictions* a few years later. The same kind of division concerning intercommunion appears in these responses as was manifested at Lausanne. At this stage Protestant churches stressed the need to practice intercommunion now. Among the churches represented at Lausanne, there were some Lutheran Churches, e.g. the Norwegian and the Swedish, which supported this view. The Wesleyan Methodist Conference in England (1929) stated:

The Conference believes that as the failure to overcome the differences which prevent fellowship at the Lord's Table is now a grave hindrance to progress, no practice of intercommunion would work effectually for the accomplishment of the aim of the World Conference.³⁵

³³ Bate, *op. cit.* p. 320.

³⁴ The Report is published in *Convictions. A Selection from the Responses of the Churches to the Report of the World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lausanne in 1927*, edited by Leonard Hodgson (Student Christian Movement Press, London 1934), p. 241.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 45.

The report of the Church of England did not favor intercommunion as a means to reunion, although a minority opinion was recorded which favored it even in the present situation on special occasions. Experience has shown that such services "tend to promote a deep and lasting desire for Reunion."³⁶ The Bishop's Conference of the Old Catholic Churches desired to see the widest possible intercommunion as the first step toward external reunion and proposed that it be prepared by a more careful discussion on basic doctrines and order.³⁷

The Continuation Committee took up this suggestion as preparations for the Second Faith and Order Conference got under way. The Conference met in August 1937 in Edinburgh (almost immediately after the Life and Work Conference in Oxford). The Committee had chosen "The ministry and the Sacraments" as the theme of the Conference. A competent commission (international and interconfessional in scope) had prepared an extensive volume of essays on the subject.³⁸ Since however, neither the Committee's report nor the individual essays dealt specifically with our subject, a passing reference to this important volume must suffice.³⁹

The picture that emerges from the 1937 Faith and Order Conference with regard to the question of intercommunion is in all essential respects what we have already seen in the story of the Lausanne Conference. As in Lausanne the Orthodox delegates felt compelled to present their own minority report. For them the only alternatives are either a full communion, based on the full agreement in all essentials of faith and the historical three-fold ministry, between various administratively independent (autocephalous) Churches, or a state of schism. There is no official third alternative such as intercommunion as an interim stage toward corporate union.

The Conference Report took notice of the ever-increasing role of intercommunion and exchange of pulpits in all parts of the world. It suggested that even where actual intercommunion cannot be practiced because of personal scruples or existing ecclesiastical regulations, people should be encouraged to be present at the communion services of other traditions. Such an attendance would amount to a degree of common

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 198.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 211.

³⁸ Roderic Dunkerley, editor, *The Ministry and the Sacraments. Report of the Theological Commission*. . . (Student Christian Movement Press, London 1937). More on the policy of intercommunion in various Churches will be found in a two-volume work of essays *Union of Christendom*, edited by Kenneth MacKenzie. (The Religious Book Club, London 1938).

³⁹ Leonard Hodgson, editor, *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*. . . (Student Christian Movement Press, London) p. 156; Olivers-Tomkins, *The Church in the Purpose of God* (SCM Press, London 1950) p. 57.

worship already existing between the different churches. Mutual respect for each other's differing views on this subject is the only charitable Christian attitude.⁴⁰

Another important decision made both in Oxford and Edinburgh was the founding of the World Council of Churches. A full decade elapsed due to World War II before this decision could be actualized. But finally on August 23rd, 1948 occurred the historic moment when the World Council of Churches was founded. The charter members constituted 147 churches. The WCC had no legal authority to bind its member churches—it was not a “super-church.” Its task was to be the agent of promoting the ideas of the ecumenical movements of Life and Work and of Faith and Order, after the latter movement became incorporated in the WCC at the Evanston Assembly in 1954. At New Delhi 1961 the International Missionary Council also became an integral part of the WCC. The Council was set up primarily “to promote the growth of ecumenical consciousness in the members of all churches.” The WCC is a common agency of the churches, not “a first preliminary edition of the *Una Sancta*”, (W. A. Visser't Hooft). It is an interim organization and organ of the Churches, which “must decrease in order that the *Una Sancta* may increase.”⁴¹ The Constituting Assembly of the WCC did hold a joint service of preparation for Holy Communion a practice followed also at Evanston. Various traditions had their own services, and some—as in earlier conferences—issued open invitations to all delegates. As the WCC is not a church it does not have a liturgy of its own, it cannot directly authorize the celebration of the Eucharist, nor can it negotiate any intercommunion agreements. But the WCC can promote discussion and studies that may give added impetus to the member churches to engage in such negotiations.

It was at Lund, Sweden, at the Third Conference on Faith and Order 1952, that intercommunion was one of the major themes of deliberations. The topic had already been chosen before World War II as a result of the discussions at Edinburgh Conference in 1937. As a preparation for the discussion a special commission issued a large volume called *Intercommunion* which appeared in 1952.⁴² Outstanding scholars of most of the major denominations had contributed valuable essays, reviewing the sub-

⁴⁰ Hodgson, *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*, p. 366.

⁴¹ W. A. Visser't Hooft, Editor, *The Evanston Report. The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1954*. (Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York 1955) p. 337 ff. (The revised Constitution of the WCC); *Ibid.*, in *Man's Disorder and God's Design. The Amsterdam Assembly Series* (Harper & Brothers New York n. d.) vol. I, p. 183; *Ibid* in *History of the World Council of Churches*, p. 722.

⁴² See footnote No. 1. For the other major themes of this conference “The Nature of the Church” and “Worship,” corresponding volumes of high quality were made available by special committees.

ject historically and theologically. An essay is even included by the well known Roman Catholic scholar Yves Congar. Another valuable feature is the review of existing canons and customs of the member Churches concerning the practice of intercommunion. Even the briefest attempt to summarize this most important single volume written on our subject within the context of divided Christendom, would make this review far too long. It is indispensable for any serious theological study of the subject. The great degree of theological disagreement which exists within the WCC on the Eucharist and admission to the Lord's table is made abundantly clear. But one can also sense something of the real pain caused by the continued division of those who claim to belong to the Body of Christ.

Professor Florovsky speaks of his loyalty to the *Una Sancta* and sees it manifested only in the Orthodox Church. But he also speaks convincingly of his deep commitment to the purpose of the World Council of Churches. He has something vital to say to us all, it seems to me. But I find that likewise do the voices which come from the "non-sacramental" side, say something which should be heard. I am particularly referring to the two contributions by Baptist theologians in this volume. I hope that also the Orthodox and Catholic Christians read these. It is this *complexio oppositorum* which confronts us in the WCC that should by no means be regarded only as a problem and obstacle for ultimate reunion. It teaches us to listen to one another. We learn to discern behind the living human voices people—however different from our own ecclesiastical tradition—who bear the stamp of the genuine, the seal of the Holy Spirit. When we learn to be attentive to one another, I believe we also become more sensitive in discerning what the Holy Spirit has to say to our sin-tainted churches in this age. All of us who have committed ourselves in one form or another to ecumenism have to our own enrichment experienced that this is a give and take relationship, all around. None of us represents a Church which is there exclusively as a giver.

Now a quote or two from Florovsky's essay: "Unity of brotherly feeling is not yet unity of faith. Are we permitted in the Church to be satisfied with anything less than this unity of faith? . . . There can be no communion, because there is no common belief." The importance of Ecumenical Movement for Florovsky is its nature as a fellowship which confesses the one Lord and Master, and is in search for the goal not yet in sight. We are on the way. We have not arrived yet. An open communion would give a false impression, as if the reunion of Christendom were an already accomplished fact.⁴³

By no means have Baptists been alone in the Faith and Order conferences in expressing certain doubts about the use of the terms intercommunion and communion; they are given a too narrow and one-sidedly

⁴³ *Intercommunion*, pp. 200-202.

sacramental interpretation. Unity is certainly a prominent New Testament theme, but not sacramental unity. The fourth Gospel is quoted as an example of deep concern for unity without explicit reference to the Lord's Supper. Another question raised by a Baptist theologian that deserves hearing relates to the equation of a particular Order with Faith. Is there any clear evidence in the New Testament that any one form of Church organization is an indispensable guarantee for a valid Eucharist?⁴⁴

I shall now take up briefly the Faith and Order Conference at Lund. Before doing so I should like to point out two features which had not been presented in earlier Faith and Order Conferences. The Lund Conference was historic in that for the first time officially appointed Roman Catholic observers were present.⁴⁵ In the years since 1952 marked progress has been made in these new relations between the Vatican and the WCC, as was seen last year at Uppsala and above all most recently in the historic visit of Pope Paul VI to the headquarters of the World Council of Churches on June 10th, 1969.

Another new factor at Lund was the influence of a Report which had been prepared at the Ecumenical Institute for the Lund Conference. This Report is entitled *Social and Cultural Factors in Church Divisions*. For the first time in an ecumenical Conference serious attention was paid to other than purely ecclesiastical and doctrinal factors which have led to the estrangement between the Churches.⁴⁶

The chairman of the Section on Intercommunion was Dr. E. A. Payne, a British Baptist. The final report of the Conference shows that some slight progress had been made in this thorny issue. The delegates of the Churches sensed more deeply and acutely the tragedy and shame of division. Many expressed strong feelings of impatience at the pace of progress and advocated intercommunion immediately. But the Conference Report wisely admonished a certain caution:

It is the utmost importance that all unions find their basis in the teaching of Scripture and be tested by conformity to the Word of God. There should be no move toward intercommunion which

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 190, 194.

⁴⁵ In welcoming the representatives of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Brilioth the Primate of the host Church and the President of the Conference said: "That for the first time Roman Catholic observers have been appointed, by due authority, is an important sign that the great Church of Rome is not indifferent to what is being done in order to further a better understanding between Christians of different traditions, and that amity of goals can exist in spite of ecclesiastical barriers that appear insurmountable." Oliver S. Tomkins, editor, *The Third World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lund August 15th to 28th 1952* (SCM Press London 1953), p. 106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

would treat our differences superficially or would use intercommunion as a means of by-passing difficulties.⁴⁷

All agreed the Table is the Lord's and that He is the host as well as the gift in the Holy Communion. But it was also agreed that He had committed to the Church the responsibility for the ordering of this Table. This involves various requirements in the communing members, such as baptism, instruction and profession of faith and Christian moral standards. In the present divided state of the Church the requirements vary in different churches, but it is agreed that in all of them the Holy Communion is, when guarded by the words of institution, a real means of grace for all who receive the appointed elements of bread and wine in faith. There has been progress in the theological understanding of the Sacrament. The Report expresses the belief that the great majority of the Churches would accept the following statement:

This dominical sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, controlled by the words of institution, with the use of the appointed elements of bread and wine is: (a) a memorial of Christ's incarnation and earthly ministry, of His death and resurrection; (b) a sacrament in which He is truly present to give Himself to us, uniting us to Himself, to His eternal Sacrifice, and to one another; and (c) eschatologically, an anticipation of our fellowship with Christ in His eternal Kingdom.⁴⁸

The majority of the members of the Conference felt that on the basis of the already existing fundamental unity, joint Communion is justified or even required. Such an extension of intercommunion was seen as a valuable preparation for the fuller unity, when accepted by the Churches without surrendering any of their essential principals. A substantial minority consisting of some Lutherans and many Anglicans and a few other delegates, including the Orthodox, was not prepared for such a step. The Report refers to the essay of Professor Torrance in which he speaks in solemn words of grave danger of sin in refusing the Eucharist to those who have been baptized into Jesus Christ and incorporated into His resurrection body, the Church.⁴⁹

However, the Conference not being a Church, cannot have a eucharistic service of its own. It would be invalidated also by the continued inability of all members of the Conference to celebrate Eucharist and receive the Sacrament together. As a partial solution of this perplexing problem in ecumenical conferences and gatherings the Lund Report

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid* pp. 53-54.

⁴⁹ *Ibid* p. 56, *Intercommunion*, p. 339.

recommended as a regular practice a joint service of preparation for Holy Communion. Eucharist should be made available according to various traditions to enable all members of the conference to receive the sacrament. Hence there should be an "open communion" by the invitation of local host churches (as was done at Lund) and enough additional services.⁵⁰ Though criticized by many this plan was perhaps the only realistic solution. This policy was followed at the WCC Assembly at Evanston 1954. Then two important events occurred which in a very prominent way took up the subject of intercommunion, directly aiming at the forthcoming New Delhi Assembly. The first was the Ecumenical Youth Assembly in Lausanne, June 1960. The findings give expression to the anguish which the youth experienced at a divided Table of the Lord. They proclaim:

We shall not cease to demand of our denominations, of the neighboring denominations, and of the World Council of Churches to work seriously towards the establishment of an increasingly inclusive intercommunion, not to come to a standstill on this most urgent task. . . . We know that there are no easy solutions here. There is no unity at the expense of truth. But there is also no obedience to the truth which does not compel us to recover unity.⁵¹

The second meeting, convened by the World Council's Youth Department and Faith and Order, was held in March 1961 at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland. This was a consultation on Services of Holy Communion at Ecumenical gatherings. The findings take us a step beyond the position outlined at Lund. It is proposed that an open communion service, by the invitation of the "host church" (or churches) should be regarded as being held "within the context of the Conference" and invitation by the "host" to be sent, if possible, to all churches; even though some would not be able to receive the Sacrament, their attendance should be encouraged. Church authorities should encourage the respective delegates of the Conference to attend and commune at such a service. On other days additional communion services should be arranged for the benefit of those whom such services are a necessity. But they should be as few in number as possible. The Bossey Consultation also recommended the form of concelebration in the case when several churches together issue the invitation.⁵²

⁵⁰ *The Lund Report*, p. 139. Some of the Lund proposals, such as attendance at the various celebrations of the Holy Communion even when the reception of the Sacrament might not be possible had been proposed already in 1935 as a policy for the ecumenical meetings of the World's Student Christian Federation. See *The Student World* (vol. XLIII, No. 1, Geneva 1950) p. 8; O. S. Tomkins in *Intercommunion*, pp. 106 ff.

⁵¹ *The Ecumenical Review* (Vol. XIII, No. 1, Geneva 1960) p. 95 f.

⁵² *Ibid* (Vol. XIII, No. 3), pp. 355-356.

At this meeting Frere Max Thurian presented a paper in which he raised a number of very important questions. Some were addressed to the "Catholic" side of the WCC membership, others to "Protestant" and a few to both groups. To "Catholics" Thurian addressed such questions as these:

What does the Eucharist mean apart from the apostolic succession? Is it a sacrament of the presence and work of Christ? Is to refuse to communicate at a "protestant" Eucharist a refusal to recognize the sacrament, or is it an avoidance of doctrinal or ecclesiastical confusion?

"Protestants" are asked:

Do we have a doctrine of the real presence which is clear enough to make others take our sacraments seriously? Is our doctrine of the ministry strong enough to encourage our "catholic" brethren to make progress in the direction of intercommunion?

To everyone are addressed these questions:

If we can hear the Word of God together, why can we not communicate together? Is unity in Baptism separable from unity in the Eucharist? Should we re-think visible unity in terms of living communion between local autocephalous churches?⁵³

Preceding the opening of the Third Assembly of the WCC at New Delhi in November 1961, the youth delegates had held a Pre-Assembly Conference at New Delhi calling urgently for the Churches to readjust their policies on intercommunion and hoping that WCC could move forward in this vital question.⁵⁴ But the Assembly was a disappointing experience for those—and they were by no means all young people—who had hoped for some creative and dynamic new moves in the area of Eucharistic theology and practice at the Assembly. The worship at New Delhi followed closely the guide-lines which had been set at Lund in 1952. The Assembly recognized the need for some new creative thinking and change in practice, and rather vaguely added that at the next Faith and Order Conference "We hope that further consideration of this question will be undertaken."⁵⁵

Although the New Delhi Assembly did not have anything to offer which would have effected a forward move in the policy of WCC concerning intercommunion, the Assembly's Section Report on Unity encouraged the churches to move toward intercommunion where existing convictions

⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 357-358.

⁵⁴ W. A. Visser't Hooft, editor. *The New Delhi Report The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961* (Association Press, New York 1962), p. 133.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 331-333.

allow it. They were encouraged not to wait for the consensus of the rest of the churches. A wider break-through might also result from a new examination of the eucharistic doctrines and liturgies by different confessions. They are urged to undertake such a study.⁵⁶ I think theologically the most significant accomplishment of the Assembly was its statement on the unity of the Church. I shall return to it in the last part of this study.

The Youth Department of the WCC published in 1962 a collection of essays entitled *Many Churches, One Table, One Church*.⁵⁷ It gives expression, often in forceful words to the keen sense of disappointment with the inaction of the Assembly in the question of intercommunion. One of the essays is written by my colleague, and former secretary of the Faith and Order Commission, Keith Bridston. He points out the discrepancy which the present deadlock has created between the pious statements often made regarding our oneness in Christ and the continued denial of this by the actual refusal of sacramental table fellowship. He asks: "Just how much time do we really have? Just how urgent is the cause of church unity? Just how important is the sacramental manifestation of our essential oneness in Christ?" Dr. Bridston sums up his critique with a phrase: Chalice in Wonderland!⁵⁸

New Delhi had "passed the chalice" to the Faith and Order Conference which met in Montreal, August 1963. Our subject was discussed in two sections dealing with "Worship and the Oneness of Christ's Church" and "The process in growing together." Particularly the first of these sections in its report shows that real progress has been made since Lausanne 1927, in the common understanding of the theological nature of the Eucharist.⁵⁹ But when the Conference took up the task assigned to it, of formulating new rules for the celebration of the Eucharist in ecumenical meetings, the statement which was issued, amounted only to a very small degree of advancement beyond the position taken at Lund. The recommendation included two Communion Services to be held "within the programme of the Conference," one of the open communion type with an invitation, if possible, to the whole Conference to participate and partake; the other to be a Service according to a tradition which does not represent an open communion but at which Service all are invited to be present. Local Churches, as far as possible, were to be in charge of these services.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 128.

⁵⁷ *Youth Bulletin No. 6*, Editor Rod French (World Council of Churches, Geneva 1962).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 54-62. For a more comprehensive critique of the ecumenical movement and the W. C. C. see *Unity in Mid-Career*, edited by Keith R. Bridston and Walter D. Wagoner (Macmillan, New York 1963).

⁵⁹ P. C. Rodger and Lukas Vischer, editors *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963* (Association Press, New York 1964) e.g. pp. 73-74.

What additional services were necessary in order that all members could commune according to their desires, were to be arranged "outside the Conference programme." The conference should also hold a United Service of Preparation for Holy Communion. The several themes to be stressed at this Service included: "our need for Christ and his forgiveness; sorrow for the divisions of Christendom and for their continuance; our responsibility to pray and work for a fuller manifestation of this unity."⁶⁰

The impatience and irritation of many people for this slow advance and great caution is understandable. But WCC is faced with a situation which does not seem to leave any other alternative, unless a miraculous intervention of the Spirit would "make all things new." WCC is composed of the Churches which maintain fundamentally opposed views on the question. Since New Delhi the Orthodox position has been greatly strengthened by the inclusion of the Russian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, and Polish Churches in the World Council. And there is no desire to make of WCC a mere Protestant Council. The report states: "Any substantial change from the intention behind the Lund recommendation would, we believe, be widely regarded as an ecumenical disaster with widespread and unfortunate consequences." But the report does also ask whether, with regard to intercommunion, ecumenical gatherings do not constitute a special situation where communion at the same Holy Table would not deeply commit those who desire but are not yet united, to make manifest their total, visible and organic unity in a decisive way.⁶¹

At the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala, July 1968, "Worship of God in a Secular Age" was one of the Section topics. Although intercommunion was discussed to some degree at Uppsala, nothing essentially new was brought forward. The communion practice at the Assembly followed the principles which were formulated at Montreal. The Uppsala Assembly did, however, show that increasing numbers of people, particularly the young, are no longer prepared to wait for the still quite uncertain time when intercommunion over the Protestant-Catholic dividing line would receive proper ecclesiastical approval. Several people, including some Roman Catholic priests, took this "leap of faith" and communed at the non-Roman eucharistic services, including Swedish services. Present also at Uppsala was the "avant garde underground Church" of the young people for whom the practice of Sacramental fellowship as a meaningful symbol of their strongly experienced unity in common commitment and brotherly love seemed as something self-evident.⁶²

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* pp. 77-78.

⁶² *Drafts for Sections prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Uppsala, Sweden 1968.* (W. C. C. Geneva) pp. 96-111). On worship and intercommunion at Uppsala, see also Kilian McDonnell, "Rome and Worship at Uppsala," *Worship*, Vol. 42 (1968) No. 7.

The ecumenical movement is not far from its "60th birthday." But the fondest hope still remains an unfulfilled, distant dream. Let us not lose hope, but pray for the outpouring of the Spirit. We have witnessed miracles in the Roman Catholic Church. If it can happen in the Vatican it can happen also in Geneva, by the Grace of God. Perhaps our real need now is for more prayer and less Robert's Rules of Order, for more true humility and less stress on polity. Perhaps our deepest concern—for a while at least—should be for genuine mutual charity and less for Orders and validity.

III. INTERCOMMUNION AND REUNION AGREEMENTS

The purpose of the ecumenical movement and of the World Council of Churches is to try to awaken a desire among the Christian Churches for reunion of divided Christendom and to offer encouragement and advice in various ways to the Churches which are engaged in mutual negotiation. The past four decades since the first Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne have been marked by an ever-increasing activity in this respect, embracing literally the whole world. It would require more than space allows simply to list the various churches which, at the present time, are involved in establishing wider official relationships or organic unions. For the recent years, the most comprehensive account of these activities can be found in the various issues of the *Ecumenical Review*. For the period from 1927-1952 H. Paul Douglass and Stephen Neill have published comprehensive reviews of these developments on a global scale. Various confessional bodies have published more detailed accounts of their own.⁶³

There is no doubt that the ecumenical Conferences and WCC have given added impetus to these activities.

But the churches themselves have contributed perhaps even more to WCC in this respect. Church leaders who in their home Churches have been involved in such discussions which often have required years of time-consuming efforts before a new larger unity has become a concrete reality, have been and continue to be the very backbone of the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches.

⁶³ H. Paul Douglass, *A Decade of Objective Progress in Church Unity 1927-1936*. (Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York and London 1937); Stephen Neill, *Towards Church Union 1937-1952* (SCM Press, London 1952). For the period 1910-1952, see the statistics in *History of Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 496-505. The various Lambeth Conference Reports are of basic importance as well as the volume *Intercommunion today* which the Archbishop's Commission in England published in time for the 1968 Lambeth Conference. The best recent work for the Lutheran developments is *Church in Fellowship, Pulpit and Altar Fellowship Among Lutherans*, edited by Vilmos Vojta (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 1963).

These negotiations do not always aim at an organic union between the participating churches. Some are carried on with the purpose of creating official intercommunion relationships between the negotiating churches. These may belong either to the same or to different confessional families. Doctrinal, political, racial and language differences have in the past exercised a divisive and disruptive influence within several Protestant denominations in many parts of the world. Thus in our time a substantial part of reunion activity has aimed at the healing of such divisions within one's own ecclesiastical family through complete reunion or by declaration of full intercommunion where organic union is not feasible. Thus in Europe, due to political history and the concept of national Churches, the solution can only be at most a full intercommunion between Churches of the same confessional family or even between different confessions, as for instance between Lutherans and Reformed, or Anglicans and Old Catholics.

Some Protestant Churches—for instance, all Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia—take it for granted that full intercommunion between all Lutheran Churches (at least within the Lutheran World Federation) is self-evident. In their opinion no formal negotiations and agreements are necessary. But elsewhere, and particularly in America, this is not the case. Lutherans have been divided and are still far from the often-expressed goal: one Lutheran Church. There have been large organic unions within the last decade, however. Today nearly 95 per cent of all Lutherans belong to three separate Lutheran Churches. Two of these—The American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America belong to both the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. But they do not have an official Pulpit and Altar fellowship (full intercommunion short of organic union) with each other. It is, however, widely observed in practice. The third “force,” the conservative Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the ALC have carried on lengthy negotiations for Pulpit and Altar Fellowship. This year both Committees have declared themselves (though not unanimously) to be ready to recommend that such action be taken by their respective general conventions.⁶⁴ If the proposal should be adopted it no doubt would constitute an intermediate stage toward the later organic reunion.

A rather common feature in different parts of the world has been the many reunion negotiations and some completed reunions between various churches which belong to the Reformed tradition, such as Congregationalists, Methodists, and Presbyterians, and occasionally, also Baptists. Usually the tradition of “open table” has been recognized even before the consummation of union. In our hemisphere the earliest and most

⁶⁴ *Lutheran Forum*, May 1969, p. 20. For the earlier phase of these conversations, see Neill, *op. cit.*, pp. 91 f.

important large-scale corporate union was the formation of the United Church of Canada. It was "an almost unprecedented event in the history of the Church," to quote a recent account of this union.⁶⁵ In this Church the three denominational streams, Methodism, Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, became united with the purpose of not denying their several heritages but sharing and fulfilling them in unity.⁶⁶ The inauguration of the new Church took place after more than twenty years of planning on June 10, 1925, thus before the modern Protestant and Orthodox ecumenical movement had assembled for the first great Conference in Stockholm. The original Canadian plan had included the Baptist and Anglicans, though both dropped out in the early stage of conversations. While the new Church was "in process of formation," some of the Presbyterians also pulled out.

Plans are now well under way, in Canada, for the next stage in corporate union, this time between the United Church and the Anglican Church; the latter having taken the initiative. Serious disagreements on doctrines and polity, (surprisingly, least of all on the Eucharist) had not characterized the pre-1925 negotiations in Canada. But in the present negotiations between the United Church and the Anglican Church, intercommunion and particularly the issues of polity and valid ministry have created considerable tensions at times. But there has more recently been solid progress. The two official negotiating committees have reached a full and unanimous agreement in the faith and order of the Church and the principles that should govern the union of the two churches. The discussions are now continuing on the basis of the document which the joint committee published in 1965.⁶⁷

As we should expect, doctrinal discussions would occupy a prominent place in any Lutheran and non-Lutheran official intercommunion or reunion negotiations. In the United States there have been mutual conversations between Lutherans and Presbyterians in recent years. These have been sponsored by the American Committees of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding Presbyterian Order. The Eucharist has been one of the major themes in these conversations. The two partners in their report to their sponsoring organizations made this concluding and very significant statement:

As a result of our studies and discussions we see no insuperable obstacles to pulpit and altar fellowship and therefore, we recommend to our parent bodies that they encourage their constituent churches to enter into discussions looking forward to

⁶⁵ John Webster Grant, *The Canadian Experience of Church Union* (John Knox Press Richmond, Virginia 1967) p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 85-92. The document is entitled *The Principles of Union between the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada.*

intercommunion and the fuller recognition of one another's ministries.⁶⁸

In the light of the past history of American Lutheranism no hasty optimism should be encouraged as to the practical realization of such a plan between the two confessions in this country. In the meantime the Presbyterian Church is a prominent participant in the numerically greatest reunion plan yet witnessed in Christendom, the so-called COCU plan (Consultation on Church Union) between most leading Anglican-Protestant Churches in this country.⁶⁹

Both in Europe and Asia, however, Lutherans have moved in some instances beyond the conversation stage and have concluded intercommunion agreements: the Scandinavian Churches with the Church of England and the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian). In Holland intercommunion has for long been a generally accepted custom among most Reformed and Lutheran congregations. The theological commission of the Dutch Reformed Church and the Lutheran Church in Holland, after two years' discussion together, published a Consensus on the Holy Communion, which the two Churches adopted in 1956, thus regularizing the existing practice. The document, however, makes clear that differing views on certain aspects of the eucharistic teaching still continue. This document is perhaps more a manifesto of theological tolerance than of an actual doctrinal consensus.⁷⁰

About the same time that the Dutch agreement was reached, the Lutherans in South India concluded their discussions on the Lord's Supper with the Church of South India to the mutual satisfaction of both.⁷¹ Consequently, since 1955 an intercommunion relationship exists between the two Churches. This step may very well be a prelude to organic union

⁶⁸ Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord, editors, *Marburg Revisited. A Reexamination of Lutheran and Reformed Traditions* (Augsburg Publ. House, Minneapolis, 1966), p. 191.

⁶⁹ As this remarkable plan is still very far from completion, I do not discuss it in this paper. There is a statement about the Lord's Supper and intercommunion in the COCU document *Principles of Church Union* (Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati 1966) pp. 40-43. It was, as may be remembered, a Presbyterian, the Present General Secretary of WCC, Dr. E. Carson Blake, who in 1960 was the prime mover of what has developed into the COCU plan.

⁷⁰ For the text, and comments on it, see Eugene M. Skibbe, *Protestant Agreements on the Lord's Supper* (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 1968) pp. 47 ff. Also in France there exists an intercommunion (including intercelebration) relationship between the Reformed and Lutheran Churches. see *Koinonia. Arbeiten . . . zur Frage der Kirchen—und Abendmahls-gemeinschaft* (Lutherische Verlagshaus, Berlin 1957) p. 191 (article by Erwin L. Wilkins).

⁷¹ For details see Skibbe, *op. cit.* pp. 31 f.

of the two Churches in the not too distant future. No organic voluntary union, based on doctrinal consensus between a Lutheran and non-Lutheran Church has as yet been completed.

In the Protestant part of Germany the situation concerning the practice of intercommunion varies a great deal from Church to Church depending on the confessional character and traditional usage of an individual territorial Church (Landeskirche). Confessionally, the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) which in its present form was organized in 1945, is comprised of three kinds of Churches: Lutheran, Union, and Reformed. Three years later, 1948, several Lutheran territorial Churches formed the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD). In the former Church, intercommunion practice between the Lutherans and Reformed congregations had been widely followed and some of the territorial member Churches of the EKD have formalized this practice by official statements. The traditional differences concerning the Eucharist, however, have continued within EKD in the post-war period, though in a less acute form. Between the various Confessional groups which compose the EKD there have been several officially authorized conferences on this subject since 1947. Ten years later an important document on the nature of the Lord's Supper was issued by the Committee and signed by all participants in the discussion (except one man), namely: Lutheran, Reformed, and Union Church. This document is known as the *Arnoldshain Theses*. The Council of EKD recommended the document to the Church for careful study and these *Theses* have been widely circulated and discussed.⁷²

The document has taken modern Biblical scholarship into account. In fact, the Committee that wrote them included several famous New Testament Scholars, such as Oscar Cullmann, Joachim Jeremias, Ernst Käsemann, Edward Schweizer and Ethelbert Stauffer.⁷³ When we keep in mind the deep cleavage and the endless controversies which arose and have continued since 1529 between the Lutherans and the Reformed we can better evaluate the significance of the eight *Arnoldshain Theses*. As an illustration I quote the fourth Thesis, leaving the commentary to the reader:

The words which our Lord Jesus Christ speaks when he offers the bread and the cup tell us what he himself gives to all who come to this Supper: he, the crucified and risen Lord, permits himself to be taken in his body and blood given and shed for all, through his word of promise, with the bread and wine, and grants us participation, by virtue of the Holy Spirit in the victory of his

⁷² *Church in Fellowship*, pp. 96-107 (essay by Johannes Meister).

⁷³ Skibbe, *op. cit.* 79. The text of the *Theses* is available in Skibbe, *op. cit.* pp. 90-93, and in *Churches in Fellowship*, pp. 122-124.

Lordship, so that we, believing in his promise, may receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

In 1963 a new EKD committee was appointed particularly to explore the significance of the theses for altar and pulpit fellowship within the EKD, which is rather a federation of autonomous Churches than a single Church. The new committee went on record in favor of intercommunion, stating that sacramental fellowship does not require doctrinal agreement in all details. In 1965 the committee proposed to the Council of the EKD this amendment to the Constitution of the Church:

In all member churches in the Evangelical Church in Germany access to the Holy Supper, which they celebrate according to the regulations of their own confessions, is also open to the members of other confessions which are recognized within the EKD . . .

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) does not have this kind of problem among its member Churches since all are Lutheran and in full pulpit and altar fellowship with one another. But the question of intercommunion is an unavoidable issue for this Church as well, in its relationship to EKD and other Churches within the wider fellowship of the WCC. Another, and even more immediate practical problem is whether to admit individual non-Lutheran communicants to the Lord's Table in the churches of the VELKD. On the whole a more conservative Lutheran tone is characteristic of this Church. The concept "Lutheran altars for Lutherans only," finds wide, though not nearly unanimous, support as a principle. Following the Lund Assembly in 1952, the VELKD authorized its ecumenical commission to conduct a study on Church fellowship and intercommunion in order to clarify the position of the VELKD in these matters. The results of this investigation (including several excellent essays) are available in the volume *Koinonia* (1957). The more traditional Lutheran attitude which is expressed in this volume derives from a strong sense of confessional loyalty and responsibility. And behind this is the deep conviction that the problem of intercommunion is inseparable from ecclesiology. *Koinonia* in the New Testament and in the early Church means both Church fellowship and sacramental fellowship. The former includes a *consensus de doctrina*. The latter, the celebration of the eucharist takes place within the former.⁷⁴ In support of this view, the well known Lutheran theologian, Vilmos Vajta writes:

The Lutheran church shares the ecclesiological view of *Koinonia* with early church and primitive church, and with the whole 'Catholic' Church on earth. This often makes conversations about altar fellowship difficult with other Protestant churches. But

⁷⁴ *Koinonia*, pp. 15 ff, 24 ff.

it has the great advantage that the use of the word "fellowship" does not convey the impression of something less than the fullness of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵

In the VELKD some have desired to stress so strict a confessional position that the sacrament should be administered to non-Lutherans only *in periculo mortis*. However, in practice non-Lutherans (Reformed and members of the Union Church) do not find overwhelming obstacles in receiving the sacrament in this Church. Many nontheological reasons and particularly the spirit of pastoral concern make this possible under the principle, *in casu necessitatis*, which is interpreted broadly and given "a charitable construction."

In the United States the policy "Lutheran altars and pulpits for Lutherans only" is still the official policy, although it is not practiced by all Lutherans with the same rigidity. But no Lutheran Church in America has yet seriously considered intercommunion with another non-Lutheran body. One reason (among various others) is the awareness that intercommunion and Church fellowship must not be separated from one another.⁷⁶ Therefore a doctrinal consensus becomes a necessary prerequisite. This is why the Lutherans use the term "pulpit and altar fellowship" rather than intercommunion. It must appear strange to Catholics particularly (as well as to many Lutherans!) that this all-round Lutheran fellowship has not yet been accomplished in this country. In my own opinion one of the important hampering factors has been the excessively one-sided intellectualistic emphasis on a vast amount of doctrinal agreement which is insisted upon as the "price" of fellowship. Dogma has lost its living relationship with "doxa." Eucharistic celebration and eucharistic teaching have become divorced, and both suffer as the consequence. The Lord does not require from his followers learned theories about Real Presence but obedience to do in faith what he did "in the night when he was betrayed." The Lord himself used only brief words to explain the union between the eucharistic actions and the words

⁷⁵ *Church in Fellowship*, p. 230.

⁷⁶ In 1960 the United Lutheran Church in America (the largest of the parent bodies of the Lutheran Church in America, est. 1962) did say that "time is ripe for Lutherans to initiate theological discussions with other Christian bodies regarding intercommunion." The statement also contains a cautious approval for the celebration of the sacrament in interdenominational assemblies provided this does not involve any compromise in the proclamation of the Church. Indiscriminate "open communion" is not allowed. Today invitation for other baptized non-Lutherans is often included by LCA pastors, but usually this is accompanied by a brief statement about faith in the sacramental Real Presence as a prerequisite in the communicant. *Church in Fellowship*, pp. 19, 39-40 (essay by Fred W. Meuser).

in this holy mystery. "What God has joined together let not man put asunder."⁷⁷

Scandinavian Churches are the first in the Lutheran family to have official intercommunion agreements with the Anglican Church, and later also with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. In each case the initiative has belonged to the British Churches. A very brief account on the Anglican approach to intercommunion must be included.

The central, strategic position of the Anglican Communion in the Faith and Order movement is well known. Anglicans often manifest a strong sense of mission and commitment for the healing of divided Christendom. Theirs is a "bridge Church"—an often heard phrase which they are justified in using. Let us also remember that it was a bishop of the American Episcopal Church, Charles Brent, who first saw the need for the Faith and Order movement, and who was the President of the Lausanne Conference in 1927. The intercommunion procedures of the Anglican Communion have been governed since 1920 by the so called *Lambeth Quadrilateral* which was incorporated into the "Appeal to all Christian People" published by Lambeth Conference in July 1920. It called for the reunion of Christendom as an imperative necessity and extended the hand of Christian fellowship:

We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body. We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.

The Appeal then stated the four principles upon which visible reunion should be based. 1) The Holy Scriptures as the rule and ultimate standard of faith; 2) the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith, and either it or the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal confession of belief; 3) the divinely instituted sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion as a corporate expression of the life of fellowship in Christ; 4) a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church. The Appeal, after stating these four aspects went on to say: "May we not reasonably claim that the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry?"⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Toivo Harjunpaa, "Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1967) pp. 63 ff.

⁷⁸ Printed in *Lambeth Conferences (1867-1930)* (SPCK, London 1948) pp. 38 f. I have shortened slightly the full text of the four points in the Appeal.

This Quadrilateral however was first proposed essentially in the same form by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, meeting in Chicago 1886.⁷⁹ The third Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which met two years later approved it. Already at that early date, hope was expressed that on this basis "Home Reunion" might be accomplished with the various English Free Churches. Subsequently, and particularly after 1920, many conferences have been held, but to this day none have yet led to corporate reunion in England.

Since the formation of the Old Catholic Church—after the First Vatican Council—the Anglo-Catholic portion of the Church of England began to advocate close relations with this Church. The subject actually came up already at the Lambeth Conference in 1878, and ten years later definite intercommunion proposals were formulated. Finally in 1931 a full intercommunion agreement was signed at Bonn between the Church of England and the Old Catholic Churches of Europe. The terms of this relationship are markedly closer than those that guide the Anglican relations with Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia and the Baltic countries. The relationship with Old Catholics is based on a substantial, mutually recognized faith and order. In 1946 the Episcopal Church and the Polish National Catholic Church in this country established similar relationship.⁸⁰

The Catholic revival in Anglicanism led also to a keen interest in the Eastern Orthodox Churches and a desire to have formal intercommunion relationship with these Churches. The Encyclical Letter of Lambeth Conference in 1888 "expressed its earnest desire to confirm and to improve the friendly relations which now exist between the Churches of the East and the Anglican Communion."⁸¹ Since that time there have been numerous official conversations between the Anglicans and various autocephalous Eastern Churches but so far they have not led to formal relationships comparable to Anglican relations with Old Catholics or some of their relationships with the Lutheran Churches.

The 1888 Lambeth Conference also expressed a desire to develop friendly Church relations generally in the hope that they might later lead to a closer alliance "without any sacrifice of principles which we hold to be essential."⁸² Although the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 did not state it specifically, with the acceptable form of ministry a historic

⁷⁹ *History of Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 264-265 (essay by Brandreth).

⁸⁰ See Brandreth, *The Ecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement*, pp. 65-68; Draylass, *op. cit.* pp. 104-105; Neill, *Towards Church Union*, pp. 36 f. A full intercommunion, along the lines of the Bonn agreement, was also established in 1941 with the Philippine Independent Church. *Intercommunion Today*, p. 17.

⁸¹ *The Five Lambeth Conferences* (SPCK, London 1920), p. 115.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

Episcopate (e.g. apostolic succession) is meant. This, for the Anglican Communion, has been and remains the *conditio sine qua non* for any fuller intercommunion relationship with any other Christian Church. This was the reason why Anglican official approaches to Scandinavian Churches until 1930 were entirely limited to Sweden, as the Anglicans were convinced that the Swedish Church (and apparently no other Scandinavian Church) possessed an unbroken Episcopal succession.⁸³

The first Anglo-Swedish official discussions were held in 1909 at Uppsala. In 1920 the Lambeth Conference recommended that Swedish communicants be given the right to commune in the Anglican Church, and that the Swedish clergy be allowed to preach in Anglican Churches. The Swedish reply to these proposals came in 1932. Similar privileges were granted to members of the Anglican Communion. These included the right for the Anglican clergy "to perform religious functions" in Sweden. It is not quite clear whether inter-celebration is meant by this phrase. There has been considerable official intercourse between the Swedish and Anglican Churches, including reciprocal participation of bishops in episcopal consecrations for more than half-a-century, although the final ratification of the intercommunion relationship by the Church of England only came in 1954. It should be added that in their reply in 1922 the Swedish bishops did point out the Lutheran confessional character of their Church, stressing the primacy of the faith and the lesser importance of the holy orders. But they welcomed the relationship with the Anglican Church, being convinced, that in spite of various differences, the two branches of the Universal Church of Christ are in agreement in fundamental doctrines of faith. The letter also points out that Swedish Church law allows members of foreign Churches occasionally, *in casu necessitatis* to receive the Sacrament in Swedish Churches.⁸⁴

Next in order was Finland. Discussions were carried on during the 1930's. The Finnish response and the theological emphases during the discussions were fairly similar to those expressed by the Swedes. The Finnish Church had lost its succession in 1883. But there was now willingness to have Anglican participation (and Swedish) on a reciprocal basis in episcopal consecrations. Thus the Church of England was able to establish a fairly similar intercommunion relationship with Finland, as

⁸³ A recent Swedish scholar has raised doubts concerning the Swedish succession at the time of Reformation. Sven Kjällström, *Kräkla och Mitra* (Gleerups Förlag, Lund 1965). See the Summary in German pp. 117ff. But the arguments used have not been accepted by other scholars. See art. by Prof. Parvio in *Kirchenpräsident oder Bischof*, Ivar Asheim and Victor R. Gold, Editors (Göttingen 1968) p. 118.

⁸⁴ *Church in Fellowship* (essay by Lyttkens) pp. 160 ff. The full text of the Swedish bishop's answer, see pp. 181-188; *Intercommunion Today*, pp. 131 f.

it had with Sweden. The Finnish agreement was ratified in 1935. Three years later very similar intercommunion agreements were ratified by the Church of England with the Lutheran Churches of Estonia and Latvia.⁸⁵

Since the War the Anglican relations with the Lutheran Churches in Denmark, Iceland and Norway have been discussed by joint Committees. A more limited intercommunion was established in 1954. According to a reciprocal arrangement communicants of these Churches have the right to commune at Anglican Services. Since these three Lutheran Churches lost the historic episcopate at the time of the Reformation and so far have not desired to restore it (though each has an episcopal polity), the Anglican agreement could not go beyond admission to communion. In the recent Report on Intercommunion a recommendation was made to review the terms of Anglican agreements with the Churches of Sweden, Finland, Latvia and Estonia with the expressed purpose of encouraging closer fellowship with them. It was also recommended that conversations should be opened with the other three Scandinavian Churches in the hope that satisfactory agreement might become possible to clear the way for full communion.⁸⁶ The Scandinavian and Baltic Churches are the only Lutheran Churches which have official intercommunion relations with the Anglican Communion.⁸⁷

After the war the national Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) has approached all Scandinavian Churches, and some Churches in Germany, with the desire to have formal intercommunion relations. In the case of Scandinavian Churches all have responded positively without any formal theological conversations being regarded as necessary. The general Scandinavian custom of admitting communicants of foreign Churches to receive the sacrament made such a response seem natural. The Church of Norway did not even want to sign any formal agreement, but simply confirmed the existing practice. Only in the case of Sweden a theological conference with the Scottish churchmen was held. But the Swedish churchmen also underlined the fact that *virtual* altar-fellowship already existed in practice between the two Churches and this included the mutual recognition of the ministry and sacraments of each Church. The

⁸⁵ Lyttkens, *op. cit.* pp. 162, 197-206; *Intercommunion Today*, pp. 132 ff. The Proceedings at the conferences concerning intercommunion between the Church of England and the Church of Finland have been published in *Lambeth Occasional Reports 1931-8* (SPCK, London 1948), pp. 115-187. Report on Conferences with the Latvian and Estonian Lutheran Churches are included in volume, pp. 207-260.

⁸⁶ Lyttkens, *op. cit.* pp. 162 ff. *Intercommunion Today*, p. 125.

⁸⁷ I have had ample opportunity to test out in practice the true value of these relations between the church of Finland and the Church of England during the difficult war years as an appointed liaison. My deeply felt concern and hope is that these relations would be more actively cultivated for the mutual welfare of these Churches.

discussions and the subsequent official confirmation of the Swedish relations with a Reformed Church aroused some criticism in Sweden.⁸⁸

All these intercommunion relationships which I have now discussed do not have corporate reunion in mind. There has only been, in our time, one case of a completed corporate union between Anglican and non-Anglican Churches. This historic event took place in 1947 when the Church of South India came into being. The final merger had a long and, at times, difficult pre-history.

The last century in the Protestant world has witnessed many splits and schisms. This was particularly true of Anglo-American Protestantism. Home quarrels were transferred to mission fields, and a divided witness became a weakened witness. Perhaps nowhere was the tragedy of Christian sectarianism felt more keenly than in India where the largest number of Anglo-American missions were at work. As this century began, the tide of disruption had been stemmed and the healing movement toward Christian reunion was under way. In South India the first stage toward Church of South India was reached in 1901 when one American and two Scottish Presbyterian denominations formed the South India United Church. The new Church was relatively small with only 12,000 members. But this union did act as a strong incentive to a much larger congregational missionary enterprise which had been carried on separately by the London Missionary Society and by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The two missions formed an organic union in 1905. As might be expected of Congregationalists, doctrinal discussions did not require much time. Imposing any binding creed on the people (even if some use of creeds is made) has been alien to modern Congregationalism. Unity will come when people are ready to forego the differences in their theological formulations through their common unity in the Son of God.⁸⁹

The next step on the road to reunion was taken in 1908, when these two unions, the Presbyterian and the Congregational, formed the South India United Church. For the sake of greater gain for the common witness for Christ in South India, the Presbyterians gave up their relationship with the Pan-Indian Presbyterian Union. Though they were in numbers only about 1/20th of the strength of the new SIUC, they brought valuable assets to the new Church giving it much needed solidity both in faith and polity. It was generally accepted by the SIUC that a still

⁸⁸ Lyttkens, *op. cit.* pp. 164 ff.

⁸⁹ Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union 1900-1947* (Lutterworth Press, London 1954) pp. 36-41. For the genesis and character of the Church of South India, see also Michael Hollis, *The Significance of South India* (John Knox Press, Richmond, Va. 1966). The author of the second book was a former Anglican Bishop of Madras who in 1947 became Bishop and the first Moderator of the Church of South India.

wider union must be attained. But it was also regarded as imperative that specific denominational characteristics must be sacrificed by all Churches who would desire to become an integral part of the SIUC. This requirement should not of course be interpreted as involving a giving up of any essential elements of Christian or Catholic truth. But it did mean readiness to give up denominational identities and willingness to adjust the inherited confessional formulations to meet the challenges and needs of the situation in South India. These were among the major factors which slowed down the reunion movement for several years. Three of the denominations in South India had these inherited loyalties which appeared irreconcilable with the new reality of the proposed corporate union. For Anglicans this was the question of historic episcopate, for Baptists the adult baptism, for Lutherans loyalty to the confessions of the sixteenth century.

After a small, chiefly Reformed Basel mission was added to SIUC during World War I, the Methodists seemed to be the only denomination who conceivably did not have such denominational "impediments." Yet, not until 1925 were the Methodists ready for a serious commitment to this venture of faith. Of the three first mentioned, only Anglicans took this leap of faith and were prepared to readjust their Orders to the situation which awaited them. But they were able to do so only by parting company with a substantial minority of Anglicans who stayed outside. The Baptists and Lutherans are still outside, but as I have already pointed out, the Lutherans have recently taken the first important step. Actually Anglican discussions with the South India United Church began even some years earlier than the Methodist participation in these conversations. This important stage in the genesis of the Church of South India was a Conference held at Tranquebar in 1919.⁹⁰ The influential and inspiring native Indian and Anglican Bishop, Azariah, was the leader of this conference. His influence in committing the Anglicans in South India to the cause of reunion was of decisive importance. This Conference published an important Manifesto which outlined the hoped for nature and form of the planned reunion. The Manifesto incorporated the 1888 Lambeth Quadrilateral. Thus both parties were agreed already at this early stage that the polity of the contemplated union would include "Historic Episcopate, locally adapted."⁹¹

The first scheme of Union by the three partners was published in 1929. But six revisions were still needed before all obstacles were cleared. There were difficulties of many kinds, often causing serious tensions and even withdrawals by some groups. One of the subjects that threatened to endanger the reunion plans was the desire of non-Anglicans to have mutual celebrations of the Holy Communion at the meetings of

⁹⁰ Studkler, *op. cit.* pp. 96 ff.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 101-103.

the Joint Committee. This, of course, presented a problem only for the Anglicans. Their reluctance was quite offensive to others. Finally in 1932 joint intercommunions were arranged. There were protests from some Anglicans in India, but more from distant England. However, one of the Anglican bishops, C. K. Jacob, who joined in these celebrations later said: "The year 1932 was the great turning point in union negotiations. Then it was that we came closer to one another by way of intercommunion."⁹²

During the years 1943-1946 the three negotiating Churches made their final commitment and approved the Scheme of Union; the Methodists first, then the Anglicans of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, and last the South India United Church. The historic day of inauguration was September 27, 1947, the place Madras.

Now a word about the "readjustment" of the ministry in the new Church. Something decisive was already done on the day of inauguration. Three of the five ex-Anglican bishops of the now formed Church of South India proceeded to consecrate nine new bishops for the Church and thus for each of the fourteen dioceses there was a bishop from the first day, hopefully accepted by the Anglican Communion as having the apostolic succession.⁹³ Yet, there were widespread negative repercussions throughout the Anglican Communion and particularly in England. No invitation was issued to the new Church to be represented at the Lambeth Conference in the following year. And particularly in the first few years after 1947 relations between the Anglican Church and the Church of South India were strained, causing bitterness in India.⁹⁴ The chief stumbling block for the Anglicans has been that part of the union plan which recognized all presbyters of the uniting churches as equals, while all ordinations in the new Church for the traditional threefold ministry are carried out by the bishops. Thus, for an interim period there continues to be presbyters of two kinds side by side, those episcopally ordained and those in "Presbyteral succession," as we might say.

Recently, however, the Anglican relations with the Church of South India have shown marked improvement. The Archbishops' Commission on Intercommunion adopted a more favorable attitude toward the C.S.I. Some of the commissioners recommended the policy of full intercommunion, "since the Church of South India is an episcopally ordered church and all its ministers are in communion with the bishop."⁹⁵ This recommendation found favor with the large majority of Anglican

⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 228 ff, 241.

⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 339 ff; Neill, *Towards Church Union*, p. 28.

⁹⁴ Hollis, *op. cit.* pp. 8 ff, 76 ff. For the regulations, which have governed the policy of the Church of England toward the CSI since 1955, see *Intercommunion Today*, pp. 135 f.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 124.

bishops; for in the 1968 Lambeth Conference they passed a resolution (no. 48) which reads in part: "That the Churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion reexamine their relation to the Church of South India with a view to entering into full communion with that church."⁹⁶ This time an invitation to the Lambeth Conference had been sent also to the Church of South India which was represented among the guest observers. Perhaps the experience in South India—and elsewhere—had taught an important lesson to the Anglican bishops. At any rate, they passed a resolution which favors reciprocal intercommunion in cases when Anglican and non-Anglican churches are engaged in serious church union negotiations on the basis of mutually accepted apostolic faith and order.⁹⁷

Few developments in the ecumenical scene have stirred me more than the South India story. I cannot in good conscience join those who turn a cold shoulder to what these fellow Christians have done—after much prayer and with a deep sense of mission. The twenty years since 1947 show that the Holy Spirit has not denied to that Church His continued life-giving presence. In extraordinary situations such as in South India, and perhaps elsewhere, we may have to ask ourselves: which has the priority of allegiance, the apostolic message or the messenger? Real ecumenism is serious business. It calls for more commitment than willingness to attend world-wide Church conferences in the mere interest of maintaining the denominational status quo. I cannot but hope that my fellow-Lutherans in South India will soon, by the Grace of God, take the next decisive step. What will it involve? Let me quote Bishop Hollis who has taken the step himself:

Ten years of Conversations with the representatives of the Lutheran Churches have made possible that initiation of actual negotiations for a United Church into which both the present Church of South India and the Lutheran Churches will die in order that God may bring something nearer His will than are any of them in their present separation.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Lambeth Conference 1968* (SPCK and Seabury Press 1968), pp. 42-43. The Conference adopted also the proposal originally made in 1963 by the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Helsinki, that Anglican-Lutheran conversations be initiated as soon as possible on a worldwide basis. *Ibid*; pp. 44, 143. Rules concerning the communion of individual non-Anglican Christians in Anglican Churches and Anglicans communing in Protestant churches were also recommended to be made more liberal. *Ibid*; p. 42. This would simply bring the theory to a closer harmony with the widely prevailing Anglican practice.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*; pp. 42, 128.

⁹⁸ Hollis, *op. cit.* p. 16.

IV. AFTER VATICAN II—WHAT?

One more dimension must be added to this review about Protestant attitudes and policies in the question of intercommunion. Even a decade ago such a dimension simply did not exist. But today, ecumenism in all seriousness has become a common concern for us Christians, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. For behind us stands now that stupendous and miraculous event, the Second Vatican Council. Though the Council as an historical event is over, its after-effects will be mightily felt for a long time to come. The legacy it has left behind does not only influence the developments in the Roman Catholic Church but in various ways all of Christendom. Some of the Council decrees and constitutions, above all the *Decree on Ecumenism* have opened a new era of good will and fruitful cooperation between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

It should not be forgotten, however, that officially approved and encouraged ecumenical activities from the Roman Catholic side had become possible in 1949 when the Holy Office issued a special *Instruction* encouraging particularly frequent prayer for Christian Unity, and explicitly suggesting the opening of ecumenical dialogues under the proper episcopal supervision.⁹⁹ The results of these pre-Vatican II ecumenical accomplishments appear to us at best rather modest in comparison with what has happened in the last five years since the promulgation of the *Decree on Ecumenism* in 1964. The unanimity which the bishops showed when the final voting on the decree came, did surprise many people both inside and outside the Catholic Church. There was no pressure, the balloting was secret. Yet only 11 votes were cast against the Decree, and 2137 for it.¹⁰⁰ One of the Protestant observers at the Council, Professor Oscar Cullmann, gave this evaluation of the *Decree on Ecumenism*: "This is more than the opening of a door; new ground has been broken. No Catholic document has ever spoken of non-Catholic Christians in this way."¹⁰¹

In recent years we have witnessed a great deal of the marvellous works of the Holy Spirit. Though once blinded, our sight is being restored and our spiritual horizons have become wider. Our vision is beginning to reach beyond the borders of our canonically fixed boundaries. We begin to recognize the greater family of God's children. The Holy Spirit is teaching us in a new and liberating way to "discern the Body,"

⁹⁹ Augustin Cardinal Bea, *Unity in Freedom* (Harper and Row, Publishers, New York and Evanston 1964), p. 187.

¹⁰⁰ Cardinal Bea, *Commentaries* (Greymoor Press, Peekskill, New York), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Quoted by Abbott in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbott, S.J., general editor (Guide Press, New York 1966), p. 338.

His Body, that holy mystery which we together constitute in Him—we who have been baptized into His death and resurrection. As we belong to Him we also belong to one another. This is the *Kerygma* and the legacy of Vatican II for all of us. Behind us is the bitter heritage of centuries of alienation and often violent denial of each other. Together in the spirit of mutual forgiveness we have accepted the Spirit's summons to a new pilgrimage of faith together. Where mutual respect replaces old jealousies and where one-sided arrogant controversies give way to a dialogue between partners on a common pilgrimage, who desire to speak truth in love, there great things surely can be expected to happen.

New and fruitful relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the various Churches of the Reformation become possible on the basis of the *Decree on Ecumenism* (section 37) which recognizes the ecclesial character of these Churches. At this stage among the most vital factors in the growth of these relationships are the officially authorized (as well as the many less official) mutual dialogues between Roman Catholics and the various Confessional families. At least Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians and the Reformed Churches are already well on the way in their respective direct conversations with the Roman Catholics. These dialogues have already proven their great usefulness. All participants have made the gratifying discovery that more common unity in basic doctrines and practices actually exists than had been expected. Such discoveries will greatly strengthen the mutual bonds and the mutual trust between the partners in dialogue, and enable us in full openness and brotherly charity to discuss also those more difficult issues which remain as hurdles between us, preventing a more comprehensive *consensus* in faith and order between us. It is also of the greatest importance for the cause of Christian unity that all of us do our best so that the progress already made, and its true significance will be communicated to the faithful "in all the Churches of God." For there are still vast numbers of Christians in all Communions who prefer the past for the present, and bigoted sectarianism for that true catholicity which is in accordance with our Lord's will.

A very crucial aspect of these new developments is the ongoing dialogue and growth of official relationships between the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. Hopefully the time is not far distant when the membership of the WCC includes the Roman Catholic Church. Needless to say there is no simple solution for so important an event. But is it not true that where there is the will there is also a way? First steps have been already taken by the Vatican in response to the invitation from the WCC in 1963.¹⁰² A joint committee has been established and much mutual consultation has taken place. Since the Uppsala As-

¹⁰² Bea, *Unity in Freedom*, pp. 149 ff.

sembly, Roman Catholic Church will be involved in Faith and Order Conferences of the WCC as fully recognized, official participant—a decision which undoubtedly will prove of the greatest importance for future developments. At the same Assembly, Father Robert Tucci, S.J., member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, in a formal address made some very important statements which have been noted with particular satisfaction among many non-Roman Christians. One quotation must suffice:

The "centre" of the ecumenical movement can only be Christ Himself who, through the action of his spirit, is drawing us all by the Way of repentance towards the fullness of unity. For us, Roman Catholics also, the union of all Christians in the one Church of Christ cannot be the victory of one Church over another, but the victory of Christ over our Divisions, our conversion to Christ in which we are loyal to the promptings of the Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of Unity and which can lead us along ways that we cannot foresee; this we have already learnt from the experience of the last few years.¹⁰³

The question is no longer about the return of the separated brethren to the Church of Rome but the restoration of unity among all Christians through reconciliation in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ.¹⁰⁴ This kind of new ecclesiology may, under the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit lead us to see the still greater events of "the wonder-working Providence." The World Council, too, at the New Delhi Assembly formulated a very important ecclesiological statement concerning the nature of Christian unity, which hopefully will bear fruit also in our joint quest for ultimate unity with Roman Catholics. The major portion of the New Delhi statement reads as follows:

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages, in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.

It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Quoted from *Unity Trends*, vol. 2 (Nov. 15, 1968) No. 1, p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ *The New Delhi Report*, p. 116.

In Acts 2:42 we have a very important, even if brief, statement about the nature of the "mother Church" of Christendom. Are we not justified in regarding this as the prototype of the true nature and form of the Church of Christ for every age? This Church of the first-born was a community of baptized believers who were held together by the teaching of the Apostles, by common prayers and breaking of bread. Thus the constituent features of the true Church would be: 1) Apostolic Message; 2) Apostolic ministry; 3) Common worship; 4) Sacramental fellowship. Thus the important areas of *consensus* relate to the content of Apostolic *doctrina*, the nature of the ministry, the nature of the eucharist and of the liturgy. But these are the very issues which are now objects of very intensive study and discussion in the post-conciliar conversations between Protestants and Catholics. The Council documents raise these basic issues partly in a new, hitherto unknown perspective. The Council's strong and repeated emphasis on the sacrament of Baptism as the bond of union between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians; and the recognition of Protestant communities as ecclesial bodies, has created a new situation which compels us mutually to reconsider these fundamental questions of faith and order (which in past history have caused so much deep division and alienation between us).

The Council fathers did in fact draw the conclusion, even if they did so with a certain caution and hesitation, that sacramental reality of some kind, including the Eucharist, and public ministry for the ordering of spiritual life in these churches does exist as a positive reality (Decree on Ecumenism Sec. 3). These are the questions which have already received a good deal of attention and which have led to some surprising discoveries. This is particularly true of the questions concerning the ministry and the eucharist. We have already seen in the third Section of this study evidence that contemporary Protestantism manifests growing interest in the restoration of the historic episcopate. But the most recent post-conciliar dialogues have also shown that Roman Catholic theologians in several instances are approaching the issue of the validity (or invalidity) of ministries of the separated Churches in a new, fresh and more evangelical manner. As examples of such new, and for the Protestants more rewarding approaches one could mention many names, such as the always "fresh" Hans Küng, F. J. van Beeck, Edgar Bruns, Gregory Baum, Daniel O'Hanlon, and George Tavard.¹⁰⁶ Roman Catholic theologians begin to draw a distinction between invalidity and what might be termed irregularity. Are we not taking upon ourselves rights that go beyond mortal man's ability when a flat condemnation is made

¹⁰⁶ The views of these men about Protestant ministries are not nearly identical, but all have this in common: they present fresh and more positive approaches. See, e.g. Daniel O'Hanlon, "A New Approach to the Validity of Church Orders," *Worship*, Vol. 41 (1967) no. 7.

that certain churches' whole ministry is invalid? Does not this judgement belong to God? Should we rather keep in mind another "guide line," recommended by our Lord himself: "By their fruits you shall know them?" In what way a mutually satisfactory unification and acceptance of ministries can be accomplished is at the present time "hidden from our eyes."¹⁰⁷

Among the recent developments has been a surprisingly lively interest among Catholic and other theologians in the question of *intercommunion* between Catholics and Protestants. This discussion, too, finds its starting point and justification in the Decree on Ecumenism. Many people, both Catholics and Protestants, are asking questions such as these: As we already recognize each other's Baptism, and through it are common members in the mystical Body of Christ, why cannot the Eucharist also be given to baptized Christians who have been instructed in the basic Christian truths? We call the Eucharist the Sacrament of unity, but in practice it remains the symbol of our disunity. Why this strange discrepancy between theory and practice?

There is another, still more direct reason for the recent, growing persistence in the question of intercommunion. Traditionally the Catholic position appears to have been very similar to the attitude of the Orthodox Churches.¹⁰⁸ But once again, the *Decree on Ecumenism* (Ch. II, Section 7) has opened the door for new possibilities, for it allows and under certain circumstances even encourages, common worship (*communicatio in sacris*) with the "separated brethren." To the Eastern Churches the Council has extended the hand of fellowship in the form of sacramental intercommunion in a more unreserved and explicit manner (Ch. III, section 15), "for these Churches, though separated from us have true sacraments. . . ." It does come as a surprise to many of us that the Decree apparently does open the way in some measure for intercommunion with the Protestants, and not merely in some extreme individual needs, such as *in periculo mortis*. Chapter II, Section 8, states:

There are two main principles governing the practice of such common worship (*communicatio in sacris*), first, the bearing witness to the unity of the Church, and second, the sharing in the means of grace.

¹⁰⁷ There can be no doubt that the question of Anglican Orders will be reopened between Canterbury and the Vatican. This desire has been stated already from the Anglican side, for instance at the recent Lambeth Conference. See *Lambeth Conference 1968*, p. 136. I, for one, sincerely hope that in the climate of mutual forgiveness and respect, and with the help of new theological approaches to the nature of the ministry a mutually satisfactory solution will be discovered.

¹⁰⁸ See essay by Fr. Congar in *Intercommunion*, pp. 141 ff.

It is this passage, above all, which Catholic theologians are quoting in those instances when they favor intercommunion with the Protestants under some specific circumstances, e.g., during the Christian Unity octave and in ecumenical conferences.¹⁰⁹ In my opinion the second principle, the eucharist as a means of grace, would particularly seem to allow such an interpretation. Christians who are already experiencing a large measure of unity of faith, and who are deeply committed to the cause of Christian reunion, should be entitled to receive the Divine grace bestowed by the sacrament. For unless we are not assisted in all our doings by the grace of God in Christ, our labors are to no avail. I should like to quote the well known Scottish Presbyterian theologian, Professor Torrance:

If we are really ready to seek reconciliation in Christ we cannot but enter upon Intercommunion as soon as possible. . . . For it is here, at the Lord's Supper that the Church ever becomes what it is, the Body of Christ and rejoices in the great mystery between Christ and His Church.¹¹⁰

The fact is that theological justification and actual practice of intercommunion between Catholics and Protestants *now*, is an essential aspect of the "growing edge" of post-consiliar ecumenicity. The progress in this sector appears, it seems to me, to be more rapid than authorities in Rome would wish. This is also how Gregory Baum interprets the 1967 *Directory* on the practice of ecumenism which was issued by the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity. Article 55 in the *Directory* seems to allow access to the sacraments of the Catholic Church by a separated brother only in situations of "urgent necessity" (such as danger of death). The diocesan bishop or episcopal Conference must be a judge if and when such a situation of urgent necessity exists. This article adds two important *caveats*: a Catholic in urgent necessity is allowed to receive the sacraments only from such non-Catholic clergy who are "validly ordained," and Catholics must not receive the sacrament

¹⁰⁹ Such proposals have been made for instance by the Liturgical Conference and supported by the Benedictine periodical *Worship* in this country. Catholic scholars, e.g. Fr. Bianchi (*America*, August 1968) and Fr. F. Buckley (1969 Convention of Catholic Theological Society), Fr. McSorley, and others are supported in their positive views on intercommunion by non-Roman theologians. See, e.g. two Lutheran contributions Richard John Neuhaus, "Intercommunion Dialog: Celebration Imperfect and Imperative," *Liturgy*, vol. 12 (1967) No. 9; Philip Hefner, "Theological Reflections on Intercommunion with Special Reference to Lutherans and Roman Catholics," *Dialog* Vol. 8 (1969) No. 2.

¹¹⁰ T. F. Torrance, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church*, 2 Vols. (Lutterworth Press, London 1959-60), I, pp. 10, 42.

when they may occasionally attend liturgical services of other brethren. Such an experience for Catholics should lead them "to esteem the spiritual riches we have in common and at the same time make them more aware of the gravity of our separation."¹¹¹

The Directory is touching upon an important and delicate point by allowing—with some reluctance—the *communicatio in sacris* as a one way movement. Experience has shown (and we saw this in the early stages of negotiations in South India) that one-sided intercommunion can endanger the degree of unity already attained. Intercommunion is no longer intercommunion in a true sense, if it cannot be practiced on the basis of reciprocity. Without reciprocity, at least a tacit suggestion is being made that the sacramental reality in the celebration of one partner is not acceptable without some doubts. Reciprocal celebration on the other hand, involves not only a basic *consensus doctrinae*, concerning the nature of the sacrament, but it also involves the united acceptance of the ministries by the participating Churches. Granted these premises, it is immediately apparent that serious obstacles continue to block the way for any formal intercommunion agreements between the Catholic and Protestant Churches. But the official conversations and other already existing relations must be continued and strengthened.

In the meantime, the fact remains that increasing numbers of Catholic theologians are beginning to discern in the eucharistic celebrations of their Protestant brethren the true sacramental reality. They also recognize these Protestant ministers as true bearers of the Apostolic faith through whose ministerial office, the Holy Spirit continues to carry on his sanctifying work among the people of God. In the light of the past Catholic tradition these seem to be rather novel notions. But we must all remain open and sensitive to the continued promptings of the Holy Spirit, who may yet reveal to us vital truths which now are only dimly seen.

The only place, where in the present stage of the relationship between Catholics and Protestants a commonly shared Eucharist would seem to fit, would be groups and fellowships which share together a strong desire for the unity of Christ's Church. There the sacrament would truly serve as a means of Grace and anticipation of that more complete future unity to which the group around the Table of the Lord is committed.

Before concluding, I should like to cite the officially authorized dialogue that has been going on since 1966 between Roman Catholics and Lutherans in this country. A very substantial measure of agreement was discovered in the first two topics "The Status of the Nicene Creed as Dogma" and "One Baptism for the Remission of Sins." After this

¹¹¹ I am quoting the English text from the article of Fr. Baum in *The Ecumenist* vol. 5 (1967) No. 5, pp. 78-79. See also Gregory Baum, "Liturgy and Unity," *The Ecumenist*, vol. 6 (1967) No. 1, pp. 97-100.

encouraging beginning the dialogue has taken up the delicate and traditionally controversial subject of "The Eucharist as Sacrifice." An important 200 page document has appeared as Volume III in the series *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue* which contains the various papers, discussions and findings on the Eucharist as Sacrifice. There was more progress than anyone had anticipated. Let me quote a portion of the Conclusion:

Despite all remaining differences in the ways we speak and think of the eucharistic sacrifice and our Lord's presence in his supper, we are no longer able to regard ourselves as divided in the one holy catholic and apostolic faith on these two points. We therefore prayerfully ask our fellow Lutherans and Catholics to examine their consciences and root out many ways of thinking, speaking and acting, both individually and as churches, which have obscured their unity in Christ on these as on many other matters.¹¹²

Discoveries such as these reassure us that our labors are not in vain in faith and obedience to Him who "will draw all men unto Himself." Let our joint efforts be guided by the old maxim:

IN NECESSARIIS UNITAS,
IN NON-NECESSARIIS LIBERTAS
IN OMNIBUS CARITAS

TOIVO HARJUNPAA
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
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¹¹² *Lutheran and Catholics in Dialogue III, The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C. 1967) p. 198.