

Chapter I

History of the Ecumenical Movement

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Ecumenical Names (Some Acronyms and Abbreviations)

ARC: Anglican-Roman Catholic

ARCIC: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission

BEM: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (1982), also known as the Lima text

COCU: Consultation on Church Unity (USA) —
(becomes CUIC, Churches Uniting in Christ, January of 2002)

EDEO: Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers

ELCA: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

ERCDOM: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission

JPIC: Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

JWG, Joint Working Group (of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches)

LARC: Lutheran-Anglican-Roman Catholic

LRC: Lutheran-Roman Catholic

LWF: Lutheran World Federation

MRC: Methodist-Roman Catholic

NADEO, National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (Catholic)

NAE: National Association of Evangelicals (USA)

NCCC: National Council of Churches of Christ

NCCB: National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) — (becomes USCCB,
summer of 2001)

NWCU: National Workshop on Christian Unity (USA)

PCPCU: Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Vatican)

PNCC: Polish National Catholic Church (USA and Canada)

RC: Roman Catholic

SBC: Southern Baptist Convention

SCOBA: Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America

SEIA: Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (National Conference
of Catholic Bishops (USA), becomes USCCB, summer of 2001)

SODEPAX: Society, Development, and Peace

SPCU: Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (currently PCPCU)

SPS: Society for Pentecostal Studies

UCC: United Church of Christ

WARC: World Alliance of Reformed Churches

WBA: World Baptist Alliance

WCC: World Council of Churches

WEF: World Evangelical Fellowship

WMC: World Methodist Council

WTS: Wesleyan Theological Society

WPCU: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

USCC: United States Catholic Conference — (becomes USCCB, summer of 2001)

YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association

Early History

Fragmentation within the company of those who consider themselves followers of Christ is not a modern phenomenon. It traces its beginnings to the formative years of Christianity. From its inception, the church faced questions and disputes concerning belief and discipline. As the church spread throughout the Roman Empire and finally (under the emperor Constantine in 313 CE) received official state recognition, petty arguments, bitter doctrinal disputes, and eventually permanent divisions appeared within the household of faith.

During the first Christian centuries, such factionalism exhibited itself primarily on the local or regional level. We have the biblical record, for instance, of St. Paul facing the divisions and competition in Corinth (1 Cor.1: 10-17) and of the apparently heated discussion about the need for exemption of early Christian Gentiles from certain Judaic laws, as recounted in Acts 15. There followed the great Christological and Trinitarian debates and divisions, primarily in the Eastern Roman Empire in the fifth and subsequent centuries. By the end of the first Christian millennium, the obvious physical and cultural differences between the church in the East and in the West provided the background for even more profound changes.

With the advent of the second millennium, factionalism within the church became more pronounced, initially in the confrontations between the Patriarch of Constantinople and representatives of the Papacy, resulting in the excommunication of Patriarch Michael Cerularius by the papal envoy in 1054. The plundering of Constantinople by western Christian soldiers during the Fourth Crusade (1204) further contributed to the weakening of the eastern Empire and reinforced the eastern Church's suspicion of western Christian leaders. A permanent division resulted.

Although the medieval church in the West had also experienced temporary divisions because of heresy and schisms, in the sixteenth century Christianity confronted major divisions between the churches of the Reformation (Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed, and Anabaptist) and the Church of Rome and among the churches of the Reformation themselves. By the completion of the reforming Council of Trent in 1563, lack of unity in the West among those who called themselves the followers of Christ appeared insurmountable and permanent. This division was confirmed by the blood of martyrs on all sides and was supported by national, economic, and social interests. Emerging confessional theologies solidified during the course of the Thirty Years' War in the early decades of the seventeenth century. In spite of a few encouraging signs to the contrary in the subsequent centuries, such divisions of competing confessions persist at the completion of the second Christian millennium.

Yet, because unity is at the heart of the Christ's message (John 17:21), the ideal of *oikoumene*, or one household of faith, would never completely disappear. There have been sporadic attempts to repair the divisions within the church prior to the modern era. During the first millennium, these included the council at Jerusalem (a. 49 CE) and the great ecumenical councils of Nicaea (325) and Ephesus (431). Second-millennium councils such as that of Lyons (1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438-39) attempted to heal the East-West schism, while the Colloquy of Marburg (1529) dealt with differences between Lutherans and the Reformed. Such initiatives

can be viewed as early ecumenical movements or attempts to foster Christian unity despite their lack of success.

Early Twentieth-Century Ecumenical Movements

To understand the current ecumenical movement dating from the late nineteenth century, it is helpful to view the movement in the context of the Christian churches facing modernity. Its origins are located in the close proximity of Christians from differing traditions who were active in the missionary fields of the late nineteenth century, usually in the European colonial empires. It also finds sources of inspiration in the modern patristic and scriptural scholarship then developing across a broad swath of Christian denominations. Many Christians began to reflect on common peace and justice issues in the early twentieth century. And the development of modern science and technology with its attendant moral questions and the threat of nuclear warfare also added impetus to a desire for greater Christian solidarity, especially during the last half of the century.

In addition, a divided church began to find itself in an increasingly pluralistic environment that was no longer Eurocentric in culture or Christian in belief. Modern means of transportation and communication were drawing people into a global community. As a result of nineteenth-century colonization, Christians confronted other religions and belief systems, in some cases religious traditions much older than their own. It became more obvious that the scandal of separation severely hampered the evangelization efforts of all churches in the mission fields. Even in “traditional” Christian areas, church attendance dropped and secularism appeared to have triumphed.

Modern ecumenism in an institutionalized form began within the Protestant community and circles. The YMCA and YWCA had been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, Christian students had formed the World Student Christian Federation. In 1910 the World Missionary Conference met at Edinburgh. This conference, aimed at promoting effective missionary methods and avoiding the scandal of competing Christian claims in the missions fields, marked the beginning of Protestant efforts to address some of the challenges outlined above. Modern ecumenism is generally dated from the Edinburgh meeting. In 1921, the International Missionary Conference emerged. In 1925 at Stockholm, the first Life and Work Conference considered international relations and social and economic life from a Christian perspective. There followed shortly the first world Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne (1927), which marked the beginning of a regular series of meetings devoted to consideration of matters of dogma, doctrine, and practice within the various church memberships. By the end of the decade, the churches could already point to a cooperative mission or evangelization thrust, which was articulated in Jerusalem in 1928.

Another conference on Faith and Order took place in 1937 in Edinburgh, where five unofficial but approved Catholic observers were in attendance. The report from the Life and Work Conference held in Oxford in 1937 remains the most comprehensive statement on church and society issues from an ecumenical perspective. Nevertheless, these early conferences exhibited

a certain ambiguity concerning their aims and objectives, reflecting a pervasive attitude that “doctrine divides and service unites.” The Life and Work movement, for instance, refused to touch the divisive issue of doctrine, focusing all its efforts on common service; the Faith and Order Conferences exhibited a tendency to consider issues of doctrinal unity as amenable to compromise. Both movements, however, helped to shape the agenda of the future World Council of Churches (WCC) into which they would eventually merge. The last World Conference on Faith and Order, which took place at the site of the historic Catholic shrine and pilgrimage destination, Santiago de Compostello, Spain in 1993, reflected the profound ecumenical changes that have occurred since its first meeting in 1927.

Early Twentieth-Century Catholic Ecumenical Efforts

Before the middle of the twentieth-century, however, any type of formal ecumenism that involved the Catholic Church was not possible. Pope Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) and the papal condemnation of modernism in 1907 signaled a certain reluctance on the part of papal leadership to deal with the opportunities and problems posed by modernism. In his encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (1928), Pope Pius XI condemned the ecumenical spirit then being exhibited within Protestant circles. He warned against modernist ideas such as “unbalanced ecumenism” and declared, as unacceptable, doctrinal compromise and the concept of a united church made up of independent bodies holding different beliefs. The encyclical called for a great return of all the churches to Rome, thus assuring that the Roman Catholic Church on an institutional level would remain wary of initial ecumenical overtures proffered by other Christians.

On a personal level, however, there were numerous instances of Roman Catholic cooperation and search for common ground with fellow Christians. Individual friendships such as that of the Anglican layman Charles L. Wood, Lord Halifax, and Abbé Etienne Ferdinand Portal, C.M., began in 1889 and continued for several decades of fruitful, if unofficial, talks and communications. The Malines Conversations (1921-25) included Lord Hatifax, Abbé Portal, and Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier, the Primate of Belgium. These meetings marked the beginning of modern Catholic and Anglican conversations which would explore the conditions of possible reunion. Although the conversations ended upon the death of the principal participants and never obtained the rank of an official discussion, they marked a turning point in Roman Catholic and Anglican relations.

Father Paul James Wattson and Mother Lurana Mary White founded the Anglican order of the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Society of the Atonement in 1898 with the explicit purpose of working for the cause of Christian unity. Although they eventually sought and gained recognition as religious orders in the Catholic Church in 1909, these early ecumenical pioneers did not reject their original mission. By 1908, the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity introduced by the Friars was already spreading in some Protestant circles.

In 1894 Pope Leo XIII had made a jubilee proposal to the Orthodox churches to consider reunion, but it was rejected by the Orthodox. The early twentieth century found the Orthodox

under the leadership of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Joachim III, who wrote an encyclical to his flock in 1902 urging them to strengthen ties within the Orthodox traditions and to be open to other churches in their lands. In a 1920 encyclical, the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople called upon the churches to consider themselves as “relatives” who were “part of the household of Christ” and suggested the development of a common calendar, dialogue, and a collegial approach. A “League of Churches” similar to the new League of Nations was proposed.

Meanwhile, Pope Pius XI fostered greater understanding of the Orthodox traditions by issuing over twenty documents about Orthodoxy between 1922 and 1939. He reorganized the Pontifical Oriental Institute, originally founded in 1917, and founded the Ethiopian, Ruthenian, and Russian colleges in Rome. Since 1925, a Belgian Benedictine foundation had pursued prayer and study aimed at overcoming historical divisions and devoted themselves especially to relationships with the Orthodox. By 1939, they had established their permanent home in Chevotogne where two groups of monks, one from the Latin rite and the other from the Byzantine, worship in churches side by side.

While biblical and patristic studies continued to experience a revival and the modern liturgical movement grew in the interwar period, the writings of Père Yves Congar, O.P., who published **Chrétiens Désunis** in 1937 (published in English with the title **Divided Christendom** in 1939), exhibited a shift in Catholic ecumenical thinking, a change that would be officially recognized in the Second Vatican Council documents. Congar found himself initially silenced by the Vatican, only to be rehabilitated during the preparations for this historic council. He advanced the idea of “spiritual ecumenism” which came to be supported widely as one practical and necessary way of attaining growth in unity.

Père Paul-Irénée Couturier introduced the concept of a three-day period of prayer for church unity in Lyons, France, in 1932; this occasion eventually evolved into the octave, which is observed throughout the world from 18 to 25 January, known as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Couturier also began the interdenominational conversations at the monastery of La Trappe des Dombes, now the Groupe des Dombes, which meets every year for discussion and prayer. Presently in its sixth decade, the Groupe des Dombes has an independent status, which allows it to be on the cutting edge of ecumenical thought and dialogue. Its creative output has provided the basis for many official dialogues and commissions.

The Beginnings of the WCC

Although a committee was at work making plans for a representative assembly of churches in 1938, the first general assembly proposed for August 1944 was postponed because of World War II. Continued planning and some international church cooperation during the war (such as cooperation among chaplains and work among Jews, refugees, and prisoners of war) increased the desire and heightened the sense of need for such a body. On 23 August 1948, the World Council of Churches came into being at its first general assembly held in Amsterdam. Some 147 churches, comprising all the major confessions in Christianity with the exception of the

Catholic Church, were present in one form or other. Official delegates numbered 351 and came from 44 different countries. By the Canberra Assembly in 1991, the number of member churches had grown to 317. The eighth assembly of the WCC met in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, with the theme “Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope.” Current membership in February of 2001 is 342 churches from more than 100 countries.

The Harare meeting also marked the golden jubilee of the WCC. Some 330 member-churches were present with 300 accredited representatives coming from the different Christian denominations in North America alone. Geographic diversity, which originally reflected Europe and North America, now finds increasing representation from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Also noticeable in recent assemblies is a greater percentage of lay delegates, especially women and youth. The Catholic Church sent delegated observers who had the right to speak but not to vote.

The nature of ecclesial relationships between the WCC member churches and the churches’ understanding of the authority and limits of the WCC were in need of clarification from its inception. In Toronto in 1950, an official statement declared that the WCC was not a superchurch, that it was not tied to one particular conception of church, and that member churches did not have to view other churches as necessarily full and true churches. The statement encouraged member churches, however, to find in one another “elements of the true church,” and to stand in a relationship of solidarity with one another while avoiding actions disruptive of fraternal relationships. Toronto clarified considerably the standing of the WCC and helped to smooth the path for future support of the ecumenical movement in general and specifically by the Catholic Church.

The WCC is an instrument of the ecumenical movement; its membership, according to the statement adopted at the third assembly in 1961 in New Delhi, India, consists of “a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” According to Father Thomas Stransky, the churches “understood the council to be an instrument whereby the churches bear witness together in their common allegiance to Christ, search for the unity which Jesus Christ wills for his one and only church, and cooperate in matters which require common statements and actions.” By the end of the 1960s, however, there emerged a growing tension between the two emerging ecumenical processes—conciliar (aimed primarily at common activity) and consensus (directed toward the discovery and articulation of common belief). The Canberra Assembly statement “The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling” reflects the continuing effort on the part of WCC members to delineate the nature of the unity sought and the relationship of individual churches to each other.

Since the founding of the WCC, the two older and very active movements—Life and Work and Faith and Order—have merged into the new international ecumenical body, and by 1961 the International Missionary Council became part of the WCC at its third Assembly in New Delhi. In 1971 the World Council of Christian Education and the World Sunday School Asso-

ciation entered the WCC. The last few decades have witnessed a growing concern among WCC members with issues of justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC). A Joint Committee on Society, Development, and Peace (SODEPAX) existed between 1968 and 1980 and acted as a bridge between the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace and the WCC Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development. (After 1970 this latter commission became the WCC unit on Justice and Service.) Although the SODEPAX collaboration ended in 1980, the Catholic Church and members of the WCC continue to work in the area of JPIC which is now seen as a basic expression of the church's mission. A World Convocation on the theme took place in Seoul in 1990.

The WCC, with its headquarters in Geneva, maintains relationships with national Christian Councils of Churches (the Catholic Church is a member of about forty such councils), newly-formed regional councils, and twelve world confessional structures. A few of its significant accomplishments include the production of the text on **Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry** (see page 18), the observance of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), and its strong advocacy for issues involving peace, justice, and integrity of creation throughout the world. Some of the fastest growing churches, however, such as the Evangelical churches and the Pentecostal churches, have not generally chosen to become members of the WCC.

The initial response of the Catholic Church to the formation of the WCC included an instruction on the ecumenical movement issued in 1949 by the Holy Office. This document and other related statements contained warnings about what was perceived as a Protestant undertaking with little value for Catholics. The Holy Office did provide a formal acknowledgment of the intent of the modern ecumenical movement and encouraged spiritual ecumenism; it also allowed Catholic experts to participate actively, where appropriate, in discussing faith and morals with other Christians.

In 1952, Professor Johannes Willebrands established the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions, which worked actively with the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. In addition, in the '50s and early '60s, official Catholic observers were present at a number of WCC-related conferences including the Faith and Order Conferences at Lund (1952) and Montreal (1963) (before becoming full participatory members of Faith and Order in 1968) and at the General Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi (1961). Membership of the Catholic Church in the full assembly of the WCC has been under discussion periodically since the 1960s. Major obstacles to the Catholic Church's inclusion in the WCC include its overwhelming size, its global organization, and its international nature and diplomatic status. At Harare in December 1998, the WCC membership considered how to include or, at least, better listen to those Christian perspectives, which remain outside the WCC. Such perspectives range from the large international Catholic Church to the very small independent African churches and from a majority of the Evangelicals and the Pentecostals to the Southern Baptists in the U.S.

Impact of the Second Vatican Council on Catholic Ecumenism

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) was both an institutional response to earlier organized Protestant initiatives and individual Catholic overtures in ecumenical relations as well as a major event in modern ecumenism, by virtue of some 186 ecumenical observers who eventually attended and sometimes commented on council documents, especially the ecumenical documents that emerged. Prior to the Council in 1960, Pope John XXIII had created an office which would later become the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) since 1989. Initially the SPCU helped to prepare for the Council by maintaining contacts with other Christian bodies and later by drafting working papers for the Council under the leadership of Cardinal Augustin Bea.

In his opening speech at the Council, Pope John XXII set an ecumenical tone and an inter-religious frame of reference, urging the church to work for “the full visible unity in truth” among Christians and to exercise the “fullness of charity” toward those of other religious traditions. He pointed to the unchangeableness of the deposit of faith and the historical conditioning of its expression. Vatican II produced two documents that specifically address ecumenical and inter-faith concerns, although many other statements, touching as they do upon the life of the church in the modern age, also are of interest to other Christians.

Ecumenical (and Related) Documents of the Second Vatican Council

The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, focusing on the principles and practice of ecumenism, was issued on 21 November 1964. The unity of Christ’s church, according to this document, consists in oneness of faith and sacraments, guaranteed by the apostolic succession. It stresses that current divisions over doctrine, discipline, and ecclesiology contradict Christ’s will for the unity of the church. It recognizes that all Christians share an “imperfect” communion with the Catholic Church by virtue of their baptism, thus Catholics have the obligation to view other Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ. While proclaiming that other churches can be “means of salvation which derive their efficacy from the very fullness of grace and truth entrusted to the Catholic Church,” the document also states that it is through the Catholic Church alone that “the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained.” The Catholic faithful are exhorted to “recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism.” Catholics are to be open to dialogue on the contentious issues of doctrine and discipline and to undertake prayer and renewal as an immediate preparation for ecumenical activity, for “there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion.”

The document encourages the faithful to enter into a study of other churches’ history, doctrines, and liturgical life in order to understand and even value their particular gifts, but also to avoid a “false irenicism.” Catholics, furthermore, must consider the “order” or “hierarchy” of truths which “vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.” The decree recognizes the principle of unity in essentials and diversity in forms of spirituality, liturgy, and even theological expression. While proclaiming that the fullness of the church “subsists” within the

Catholic Church (terminology that has elicited much analysis and discussion), it recognizes that there are many areas of peace and justice ministry in which all Christians profitably participate. In conclusion, it considers the two major Christian divisions—the one with the churches of the East, the other with the churches of the Reformation. Affirming the historical legacy that the Western church owes to the churches of the East, the decree recognizes the valid sacramental life of the Eastern churches as well as their distinct spirituality. It proclaims the complementarity of the respective doctrinal positions of the Western and Eastern churches which pose few insurmountable obstacles for future union; many more obstacles of substance separate the various confessions in the West that resulted from the Reformation.

Father Thomas Stransky, CSP, considers the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council as “the official charter of the Catholic Church’s active participation in the one ecumenical movement.” This decree, coupled with the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965) and the Decree on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 7 December 1965) has provided the basis for the church’s contemporary efforts in ecumenical and interreligious dialogues and cooperation. In *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic Church recognizes the ability of other religions to lead men and women to a consideration of a transcendent power and to act morally and spiritually as part of the larger community of humanity. Most importantly, it rejects any attempt on the part of Christians to blame the Jews as a people for Christ’s death or to repudiate the Jews’ covenantal relationship with God, and it elaborates in a positive fashion the relationship of the church to the people of the Old Covenant. Condemning all forms of discrimination and persecution, it calls for mutual understanding and dialogue among representatives of all the great religions of the world. In addition, the Decree on Religious Liberty affirms the right of every person to social and civil liberty in religion.

Catholic Ecumenical Participation since the Council

The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU) continued to function after the Second Vatican Council as the office of the Roman curia with oversight for the Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement. During the next couple of decades, it published guidelines for dialogue and ecumenical collaboration, eucharistic sharing and mixed marriages, and common witness. It is through the oversight of the SPCU that Roman Catholic observers have participated in confessional and interconfessional meetings and bilateral dialogues. Through the co-sponsorship of the SPCU, now the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), dialogues have taken place with such diverse groups as the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican communion, the World Methodist Council, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Mennonite World Conference, the Pentecostals, Evangelicals, and the Baptist World Alliance.

Since the Second Vatican Council, there have been official Catholic observers at all of the assemblies of the WCC. A full member of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC since 1968, the Catholic Church names consultants to the WCC program staff, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelization, and the Bossey Ecumenical Institute board. Under the aus-

pices of the SPCU, a Joint Working Group (JWG) composed of Catholic and WCC representatives has met annually since 1966 to recommend common study and activities and promote collaboration between respective offices and organs. The JWG is currently undertaking a study of the volatile issue of proselytism.

The Catholic Church is a member of over thirty-three national and regional councils of churches. Although it is not an official member of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) founded in 1950 in the USA, the Catholic Church has had full membership on the Faith and Order Commission of the NCCC since 1968 and participates in many of its other activities and agencies. Catholic dioceses and/or individual parishes often belong to local, state, or regional councils of churches and ministerial associations and increasingly enter into a covenantal relationship with a diocese, ecclesial unit, or individual church representing another denomination.

In the United States since 1964, ecumenical and interreligious activity is under the oversight of a standing committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), known as the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA), which coordinates relations with other Christian bodies, assists dioceses in their ecumenical endeavors, and oversees several national bilateral dialogues. Each diocese has (or should have) an ecumenical officer who oversees diocesan activities and sometimes an ecumenical commission. All Catholic ecumenical officers have the opportunity to meet at least annually in their professional organization, the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (NADEO), which publishes a quarterly newsletter and has also published a number of pamphlets and studies on ecumenical issues, some in conjunction with other denominations' professional organizations such as the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO). The annual Workshop on Christian Unity held in a major city in the United States during the Easter season, offers an opportunity for ecumenists from all the mainline churches to meet for a week of intensive prayer, study, and discussion, and also provides a venue for the annual meeting of NADEO.

Significant Catholic Ecumenical Documents

In 1967 the SPCU issued the **Directory Concerning Ecumenical Matters, Part 1**, to provide guidance on the establishment of diocesan and national ecumenical commissions, on the mutual recognition of baptism of other Christians, and on spiritual ecumenism. Part two of the **Directory** entitled **Ecumenism in Higher Education** appeared in 1970 and addressed ecumenism in universities and seminaries. Other documents such as **Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue** (1970) helped to address specific issues in a rapidly evolving ecumenical context. Within a quarter of a century, the need for a new directory became evident. This was followed by **Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National and Local Levels** in 1975.

In March 1993, the **Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism** appeared reflecting both the progress and growth of Catholic participation in the ecumenical movement and also changes in canon law. The new Directory, which is meant primarily for

pastors, begins with a review of the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism as enunciated in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. It details the individuals and structures involved in promoting ecumenism in the church and the norms that govern their action. Noting the need for ecumenical formation of various Catholic populations, it explains how and upon what basis they should be formed. It also considers the role of ecumenism in the life and spiritual activity of the faithful: common baptism leads to sharing of prayer and other spiritual activities, and in some cases even sacramental sharing, occasions which are spelled out in the document. An enumeration of the principles, norms and forms of Christian cooperation leading to dialogue and common witness conclude the directory.

A study document issued by the PCPCU in March 1998 entitled **The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of Pastoral Workers** explicitly addresses the formation of seminarians, members of religious orders, and others involved in pastoral work. It emphasizes that catechists' formation involves both cognitive and spiritual dimensions and spells out the key elements in the ecumenical aspects of various study areas or disciplines and their accompanying methodologies. Specific recommendations on the ecumenical content of coursework at various levels follows.

The recent Code of Canon Law for the Western Church (1983) and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (1990) also touch upon ecumenical relationships, as does the 1992 **Catechism of the Catholic Church**. The encyclical **On the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Tertio Millennio Adveniente, 1994)** refers to the many opportunities for ecumenical activities in anticipation of the jubilee year and new millennium.

Recent Papal Encyclicals on Ecumenism

In 1995, Pope John Paul II issued two letters on ecumenism, the first an apostolic letter entitled **The Light of the East (Orientale Lumen)** addressed to the Eastern Churches on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Apostolic Letter **Orientalium Dignitas** written by Pope Leo XIII in 1895 to highlight the importance of the Eastern tradition for the entire church. Pointing to the substantial amount of belief and practice that the Eastern and Western traditions already share, Pope John Paul II observes that the movement for Christian unity is irreversible. Common to both the East and the West are the great gifts of the early church councils, the contents of Tradition, and the institution of monasticism. Pointing out that recent events in Central and Eastern Europe call all Christians to greater efforts in overcoming the misunderstandings and church-dividing issues of the past, the pontiff writes that the existence of Eastern churches already in full communion with Rome should not impede but rather help to foster the continued efforts toward the full union of the churches.

John Paul II's Encyclical, **That All May Be One (Ut Unum Sint)**, issued 25 May 1995), builds upon the documents of Vatican Council II and previously published principles and norms for ecumenism and looks forward to the dawn of the third millennium. The call to conversion of hearts and ecumenical prayer (spiritual ecumenism), the necessity of re-examining the past together, a confession of the past wrongs of church members, and the need for the Bishop of

Rome to provide leadership in ecumenism are all points found in the opening chapter. By way of stressing the primary importance of prayer in ecumenical endeavors, the pontiff points to the numerous meetings he has had with other church and ecclesial leaders when they have joined together in public and private prayer. The Pope proclaims ecumenism to be an integral part of the church's mission, "not just some sort of 'appendix.'"

The third chapter of **Ut Unum Sint** considers the nature and structure of dialogue, the concept of a "hierarchy" of truths in Catholic teaching, and the changeable nature of the formulation of truths as compared with the unchanging deposit of faith. Also addressed in the third chapter are the fruits of dialogue which include a rediscovery of commonalities, solidarity in the service of humanity, cooperation in the proclamation of the Word of God and divine worship, and a growth in communion and dialogue, especially with the churches of the East as the Western church seeks to reestablish full unity in legitimate diversity with its sister churches. The Pope specifically treats relations with the ancient churches of the East that originally rejected the dogmatic proclamations of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, and he emphasizes the recent Christological declaration signed with the Assyrian Patriarch of the East in November 1994, a statement that reflects a modern approach to the overcoming of such historical differences (see page 23).

John Paul II affirms a close, but different relationship, of the Catholic Church with the Western churches and ecclesial communities that trace their origins to the Reformation, sharing as all these churches do a common scripture and baptism even while they differ on such important issues as the nature of the church, ordained ministry, and the sacraments. Bilateral theological dialogues with various churches and ecclesial communities have focused on such diverse issues as the sacraments, the authority of the church, and apostolic succession and "as a result, unexpected possibilities for resolving these questions have come to light, while at the same time there has been a realization that certain questions need to be studied more deeply," observes the pontiff.

Cooperation in peace, justice, and integrity of creation issues is also evident within ecumenical circles. The Pope singles out for special mention the Assisi meeting in 1986 during the World Day of Prayer for Peace when Christians from various churches met and prayed side by side. On the same day, Jews and representatives of other world religions also joined together in a prayer for peace in the world.

In the last chapter of **Ut Unum Sint**, John Paul II looks ahead to the future of ecumenism which demands "patient and courageous efforts" and warns that "one must not impose any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary" in the continuing journey toward full communion. He separates out five areas that need further study: 1) the relationship between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition; 2) the Eucharist; 3) ministerial ordination; 4) the Magisterium of the church; and 5) the position of the Virgin Mary.

Perhaps the most provocative statement in the encyclical comes toward its end when the role of the Bishop of Rome is discussed. John Paul II calls the Bishop of Rome "the first servant of

unity” and invites other Christian leaders and their theologians to “engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject” of papal primacy. While viewing primacy as essential, the pope leaves open to discussion the way it is to be exercised. There has been a variety of nuanced responses from other church and ecclesial leaders to this encyclical; within Catholic circles it has just begun to attract attention and response, indicating that the process of reception is in its infancy. Meanwhile, the specific question of the mission of the Bishop of Rome has generated considerable interest among scholars and leaders of different Christian traditions. In 1997, it was a topic considered at the annual conference of the North American Academy of Ecumenists and at a conference in Rome sponsored by the Friars of the Atonement.

Writing, Research, and Publishing on Ecumenism

The study of ecumenism in its diverse forms and meanings takes place in schools of theology, seminaries, workshops, and sabbatical programs. There are permanent ecumenical institutes such as that at Bossey, Switzerland, sponsored by the WCC, the Strasbourg Institute of Ecumenical Research, the Irish School of Ecumenics, and the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Collegeville, Minnesota. There are also more specialized courses of study such as those at Tantur in Jerusalem, which offers ecumenical and interreligious programs for sabbaticals and continuing education and spiritual formation. Summer courses offered for clergy and laity interested in ecumenism and interreligious relations are available through the Centro Pro Unione under the auspices of the Friars of the Atonement in Rome, the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism in Montreal, and the NADEO/BCEIA-sponsored Ecumenical Leadership Institutes held during the summer in the United States. A NADEO/BCEIA-sponsored Institute for Interreligious Leadership was inaugurated in 1997. A scholarly society, the North American Academy of Ecumenists, meets annually for several days of presentations on a particular topic. Other societies include the American Association of Interchurch Families, representing a growing segment of the Christian population, and the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin founded in 1967 in England to advance Marian studies in an ecumenical context and to promote corresponding devotion.

At Taizé, France, a monastic community of men under the direction of Brother Roger Shutz, lives and prays together for Christian unity. The community, which consists of Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians, produces music and models of worship adapted to ecumenical needs, and offers a pilgrimage site for youth of many different denominations who live and pray together in this setting.

A number of journals and periodicals in English focus exclusively on ecumenical and interreligious issues. They include *Ecumenical Trends* published by the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute; *The Ecumenical Review*, a WCC publication; *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies* published at Temple University; *Ecumenism /Océuménisme*, published by the Canadian Center for Ecumenism; *Mid-Stream*, published by the Council on Christian Unity of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), *One in Christ*, a British review produced by the Vita and Pax Foundation for Unity; NADEO’s newsletter; a newsletter published by PCPCU, Vatican Information Service; and the *Bulletin* published by Centro Pro Unione in Rome.

Overview of the Contemporary Dialogue Process

Dialogues that have emerged in the post-Vatican II period have varied in participants, format, methods, and content. The following description is not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, it will concentrate on significant statements and joint declarations that reflect a clearer understanding of convergences and divergences identified in the course of over three decades of dialogues involving the Catholic Church and other Christian faith traditions. Readers should consult the bibliography on pages 38-43 for references to texts containing more complete discussions of the various dialogues in which the Catholic Church has been or is presently involved.

It was only with the opening up of the church to the modern world as a result of the Second Vatican Council that the possibility of officially sanctioned dialogues became a reality. The first dialogues that U.S. Catholics and Christians from other denominations may remember are the so-called “living room dialogues” at the time of the Second Vatican Council, developed by the Faith and Order Commission of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. These were rather informal meetings in which Christian laity and clergy without much prior training or preparation met to discuss their commonalities.

The contemporary dialogue approach is much more complex. It may involve a basic look at comparative ecclesiology or an intensive search for Christian commonalities which attends to the historical and theological context of past misunderstandings and divisions and tries to develop a new language or a new conceptualization that addresses the same divine truths with emphasis on the present context. Or it may pay close attention to the intellectual methods and mindset of a particular culture or era. Whatever the method, there is an underlying assumption that human beings are never able to express adequately the divine truths. Both bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogues possess an official standing because of their authorization by participating ecclesial bodies; but their final results in the form of declarations or statements must be submitted to respective church authorities for approval, and then must be received by the faithful to have any lasting impact.

Bilateral dialogues, i.e., conversations between representatives of two ecclesial bodies, have been common since the 1960s. They take place on both the international and national level and with many of the major church traditions. These official dialogues concern themselves with issues of doctrine, morals, and religious practice. In some cases, such as the Catholic dialogues with the Orthodox churches and with the Anglican and Lutheran communions, the ultimate goal is full communion in faith, sacraments, decision-making, and mission. In other cases, such as Catholic dialogues with Pentecostals or the conversations” with Southern Baptists in the U.S., the goal is much more modest—a growth in mutual understanding. There are currently five international bilaterals with full communion as their goal.

A listing of the dialogues and their resulting statements, however, only begins to tell the very human story of the what happens in the dialogue process as papers are read and discussed, enduring personal friendships are formed, differences are wrestled with, convergences and/or divergences are discovered within one’s own ecclesial body as well as across denominational

lines, and perhaps most importantly, participants pray and study together. Key to all dialogues and their reports is the process known as reception. Ecumenical reception involves elements of the development of doctrine related to theological dialogue concerning church-dividing or church-uniting issues. This process encompasses not only the hierarchy, clergy, and theologians but the entire church body, which gives witness to the truths resulting from the dialogues. It is the Spirit that guides the process of reception. All churches in ecumenical dialogue are currently in the process of discerning how they should receive the results of dialogues, which sometimes have been in existence for almost four decades.

Principles basic to the process of ecumenical reception include: 1) recognition of legitimate diversity within church unity; 2) affirmation of the Lund principle (enunciated at the third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund, Sweden, 1952), when the question was posed whether the churches seeking Christian unity “*should not act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?*”; 3) the need for reform in the church in every era; 4) the development of doctrine; 5) the hierarchy of truths; and 6) the local nature of ecumenism. According to Father John Hotchkin, often the official church responses to specific reports emerging from dialogues do not reflect the reality of the greater change or “reception” taking place within the entire church body.

Another type of ecumenical conversation has been that of the multilateral dialogue, often the result of WCC and national council of churches’ initiatives or church union discussions such as that of Churches of Christ Uniting or COCU (see page 31). Under the WCC Faith and Order Commission, the most comprehensive and thorough treatment of doctrinal matters multilaterally has been the process leading to the publication in 1982 of **Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry** (often shortened to the acronym **BEM** and sometimes called the “Lima text”). The long history of the preparation of **BEM**, the advances in biblical scholarship, and the liturgical maturity of the many churches who had been engaged in part or all of the **BEM** process in the past 60-plus years undoubtedly helped to promote the movement toward the broad convergence found in the document.

BEM has garnered responses from some 200 churches, mostly members of WCC but also the Catholic Church. The various responses are found in a six-volume series **Churches Respond to BEM** and analyzed in **Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, 1982-1990**. A majority of churches have responded positively to the **BEM** document. The official response of the Roman Catholic Church (with feedback from the national bishops’ conferences) struck a positive note even while it pointed to areas which needed further study and issues warranting criticism. The Roman Catholic response stated that if **BEM** were accepted by the ecclesial bodies “it would bring the churches to an important step forward in the ecumenical movement.” The recent Encyclical **Ut Unum Sint** also refers to **BEM** at several points. The Faith and Order Commission has proposed some clarifications in reply to the churches’ responses to **BEM** and has suggested a follow-up study of three general themes that appeared often in the responses: the relationship between scripture and Tradition, sacrament and sacramentality, and common ideas on ecclesiology.

Multilateral dialogues help the churches to develop positions that will withstand the scrutiny of their own tradition as well as the rigorous discussions with one or many other partners. Such dialogues tend to focus on the most significant issues in the Christian faith, desiring as they do to have as many partners in the dialogue as possible. A more recent WCC Faith and Order study entitled “Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today” focuses on the Nicene Creed both as its “theological basis and methodological tool.” A volume entitled **The Nature and Purpose of the Church** outlines theological agreement on ecclesiology possible at this time.

Orthodox/Catholic International Dialogue

The presence of Orthodox observers at the Second Vatican Council and the fraternal attitude toward the Orthodox churches in the conciliar documents signaled the beginning of an improved relationship between the churches of the East and the West. The 1965 mutual lifting of the excommunications of 1054 and a series of exchange visits between the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople, especially on the occasion of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul or the feast of St. Andrew, have promoted a new attitude of openness on the part of the two communions in recent decades. The first theological dialogue on the international level included both an equal number of prelates and theologians from Catholics (including Eastern Catholics) and Orthodox. Within the Orthodox dialogue representation were members of 14 autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox churches. The ultimate goal of the dialogue was (and remains) the “re-establishment of full communion.” Begun in 1980, the first phase of the dialogue was to study the elements which united the participants. First considered were the sacraments. The resulting text bears the title “The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity” (1982). It provided a theological study of the Trinity, the Eucharist, and the episcopate upon which further discussion would be based.

A draft of a second document, entitled “Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church” (1984), considered essentials for complete communion and the traditional steps of Christian initiation in relation to the unity of the Church, but it also raised some concerns on the part of the Orthodox about Catholic practices. Because of this and other difficulties, it did not receive immediate approval by the dialogue partners. It finally gained approval in 1987, but only after a 1986 session was boycotted by several Orthodox churches because of what they saw as Catholic support for a schismatic Macedonian Orthodox Church and the threat of Catholic proselytism among the Orthodox faithful.

The third document resulting from the international dialogues, “The Sacraments of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to the Importance of Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God” gained approval in 1988 as did a decision to establish a subcommission to study the subject of the Eastern Catholic churches. The year 1990 saw the preparation of “Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Structure of the Church, Conciliarity and Authority in the Church,” which has yet to gain approval because of the new tensions within areas of traditional Orthodoxy.

Since 1990, formal discussions have encountered difficulties because of the revived freedom of the Eastern Catholic churches (the so-called “uniate” churches, now considered a derogatory term, some of whom can date their beginnings to the late sixteenth century) and their often strained relationships with Orthodox churches during the centuries of shifting political contexts. Following long periods of persecution and repression, especially during the Communist era, Eastern Catholic churches in places like the Ukraine and Romania now find their property and religious rights restored. In 1992 the Catholic Church found itself needing to issue guidelines for ecumenical and evangelizing activities for its churches in the rapidly changing eastern European religious climate.

In 1993 a Joint Statement by the International Commission (known as the **Balamand Statement**) entitled “Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion” considered the problem of the Eastern Catholic churches. The Balamand Statement disavowed uniatism as a form of proselytism and as a model of achieving unity between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches. It proclaimed that Eastern Catholic churches had a right to exist and serve their members and reaffirmed that the Orthodox and Catholic churches remained “sister” churches. Some Eastern Catholic and the Orthodox churches have been critical in their responses to the Balamand statement.

The major issue for the Eastern Catholic churches is how these churches in communion with Rome can continue to maintain their Eastern heritage and also become partners in these dialogues even while Rome and the Orthodox churches engage in future dialogue toward reunion. The Orthodox world continues to see the Eastern Catholic churches as a product of proselytism and latinization by the West. It tends to see them as only temporary structures until their full reintegration into Orthodoxy. Since the publication of the Balamand document further dialogue on an international level has been strained, especially as result of obstacles on the local level.

Still, there are signs that the impetus for reunion continues, even if not as visible or prominent as in the past. For instance, Pope John Paul II in his homily in St. Peter’s Basilica on 29 June 1995 in the presence of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I called for clarification of the traditional use of *filioque* as found in the Latin creed “in order to highlight its full harmony with what the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople confessed in its creed.” A clarification did appear in September 1995. A joint drafting committee of the Orthodox and Catholic churches in April 1997 produced a draft document entitled “The Ecclesiological and Canonical Implications of Uniatism,” and the Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, has praised the call of Pope John Paul II for an examination and joint study of papal primacy. Meanwhile, the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Lebanon (which came into communion with Rome in 1724) is currently seeking “reunification” with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and a continuation of its full communion with Rome.

In March 1997 a number of churches and Christian world communities came together in Aleppo, Syria, for a consultation supported by the WCC and the Middle East Council of Churches. The topic under discussion was the dating of Easter. Representatives agreed that the

churches should continue to adhere to the principles of the dating of Easter as adopted at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325, i.e., the Sunday after the first full vernal moon. While they would continue the current methods of calculating the date of Easter, at the same time they would encourage the employment of the most modern accurate astronomical calculations, which would help to overcome the traditional differences in dating. Variations in the date of Easter have followed from the churches' use of different methods to determine the equinox and the full moon. In the year 2001, the date of Easter happens to fall on the same date for all the churches, and the document proposes that the churches will then inaugurate a common dating of Easter for the subsequent years in the twenty-first century.

The Russian Orthodox Church, which historically has seen itself as successor to the Byzantine Church when its territories fell under Muslim influence, has been involved separately with Catholic partners in a series of theological discussions on the social principles of the respective churches. Six discussion sessions took place from 1967 to 1987. More recently, because of continued accusations by the Russian Orthodox Church of Catholic proselytism in traditionally Orthodox areas, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow Alexis II has refused to invite Pope John Paul II to make a long-awaited visit to Russia. In addition the recent appearance of non-canonical Orthodox churches within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union, churches such as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church formed in 1990, pose problems for the cohesiveness of Orthodoxy within the former U.S.S.R.

North American Orthodox/Catholic Theological Consultation

There have also been a series of national bilateral consultations since 1965 under the auspices of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) and the BCEIA. This resulted in the establishment of both a bishops' dialogue and a theologians' dialogue. Results of these dialogues have appeared in agreed statements on the Holy Eucharist (1969), mixed marriages (1970), respect for life (1974), the Church (1974), joint statements on the pastoral office (1976) and on the principle of ecclesiastical "economy" (1976). Agreed statements on the sanctity of marriage (1978) and on the spiritual formation of children of marriages between Orthodox and Catholics (1980) have followed. On the Catholic side, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has participated as a sponsor since 1997.

After 1980, many of the national discussions became responses to or reflections on international discussion themes. In 1983, for instance, the first reflection was on "The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity." The national consultation also issued an agreed statement on BEM in 1983. There followed an agreed statement on apostolicity as God's gift in the life of the Church (1986), a joint statement on ministry by the Catholic-Orthodox Bishops (1987-88), a response to the international consultation document entitled "Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church" (1988), an agreed statement on primacy and conciliarity in the church (1989), and a pastoral statement on marriage from the Joint Committee of Orthodox and Catholic bishops (1990). Most recently, the theological consultation has produced documents supporting the proposals of the Aleppo Document on the date of Easter (1998), on Baptism and "Sacramental Economy" (1999), and on the value of dialogue

and the ecumenical movement in a text called “The Ministry of Reconciliation” (2000). In contrast to the international discussions, which appear stymied by recent developments in Eastern Europe, the North American consultations continue to thrive in an atmosphere of pluralism and religious toleration.

International Roman Catholic/Oriental Orthodox Contacts

The Oriental Orthodox churches had their origin in their rejection of the Council of Chalcedon’s Christological definition of faith regarding the relation of Christ’s humanity to his divinity (451). The Chalcedon formulation was rejected by almost the entire Patriarchate of Alexandria, by about half of the Patriarchate of Antioch, and by the churches of Armenia and Ethiopia. These so-called “Monophysite” (now considered a derogatory term) churches, according to Father Ronald G. Roberson, CSP, once composed “a very significant portion of the Christian world.” Today these churches include the Armenian Apostolic Church, Syriac Orthodox (Jacobite) Church of Antioch in Syria and Lebanon, Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Eritrea (since that country’s independence in 1993), and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India. These churches are autocephalous, but they maintain full communion with one another. Since 451 they have not been in communion with either the Byzantine Orthodox churches or with the Roman church.

From the 1960s through the 1990s, personal meetings between the leadership of these churches and the Roman Pontiff in addition to common study sessions held under the auspices of the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna (in 1971, 1973, 1976, 1978, and 1988) for their respective theologians have increased communication and understanding between the Oriental Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Through a series of theological conversations, it has become clear that the dispute between the two traditions over Christology has been substantially resolved with a mutual recognition that past schisms and divisions have been the result not of different doctrine but of differing terminology and culture. (There have also been dialogues between the Oriental Orthodox and Orthodox churches that now have achieved a Christological agreement.) The churches have recognized that the diversity of doctrinal formulas in the past have proclaimed a common faith which can now be expressed in a new language agreeable to both sides, even though no one is forced to renounce the traditional language. They have also affirmed the ecclesial reality and authenticity of each others’ sacraments. Certain divergences remain on such issues as papal primacy and the role of local churches and ecumenical councils. The existence of Eastern Catholic churches, such as the Armenian, Syrian, and Coptic Catholic churches, composed of former Oriental Orthodox Christians or their descendants who live side by side with Oriental Orthodox Christians, remains a major problem.

Although there are still obstacles to the initiation of official theological dialogues between the Roman Catholic and all the Oriental Orthodox churches on an international level there was a call for such a dialogue in 1988. Meanwhile, some progress has occurred between individual churches. Meetings between the pope and Armenian Church leadership date from 1967 and in 1996 resulted in a common declaration resolving ancient Christological differences. Separate

official dialogues between Catholic and Coptic churches have been going on since 1973 when a common Christological confession of faith was proclaimed, but these were suspended in 1992 because of accusations of Catholic proselytism.

In 1984 Pope Paul II signed a common declaration regarding Christology with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Ignatius Zakka I, and recognized the right of their respective faithful to have access to the sacraments in each other's churches when availability of their own priests is "materially or morally impossible." Of the more than two million Malankara Syrian Orthodox in India, about half belong to the Syrian (Jacobite) Orthodox Church with its patriarchate in Antioch, currently under Ignatius Zakka I, and the other half to the autocephalous Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. A dialogue between the Catholic Church and the autocephalous Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India began in 1989, and in 1994 the dialogue was extended to include the Malankara Syrian Jacobite Orthodox in India. Consultations between the Catholic Syro-Malabar Church and the autocephalous Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India have occurred since 1989 and are presently considering the history of the two ecclesial traditions.

Dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East

The Assyrian Church of the East (the church of the ancient Persian Empire) gradually adopted Nestorian Christology and has not been in communion with other churches since the fifth century. In the sixteenth century, some of its members split off becoming the Chaldean Catholic Church, which consists of a small community in modern Iraq and immigrants elsewhere including in the U.S. In November 1994, the Pope John Paul II and the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Dinka IV signed a joint Christological declaration resolving earlier differences over Christology and calling each other sister churches as well as setting up a dialogue which has begun to study sacraments and sacramentality. The Chaldean Catholic Patriarch and the Assyrian Patriarch have also established a commission to study the reunification of their churches.

U.S. Catholic/Oriental Orthodox Dialogue

In the U.S., theological consultations since 1978 between Catholicism and all the Oriental Orthodox Churches have considered such issues as pastoral care for interchurch marriages and the Eucharist. In 1983, they issued an agreed statement on the Eucharist and also one on the church crises in Egypt and Lebanon. The consultation issued pastoral guidelines on Oriental Orthodox children in Catholic schools in 1999.

Roman Catholic/Polish National Catholic Dialogue

The Polish National Catholic Church (PNCC) separated from the U.S. Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century as a result of ethnic Polish churches in North America desiring more autonomy and ownership of parish property. It eventually became a member church of the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht based in the Netherlands. Steps leading to dialogue between the BCEIA and the PNCC began in 1984 and have resulted in a mutual recognition of sacraments.

Reports of early semiannual meetings are now summarized in **Journeying Together in Christ: The Report of the Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue** (1984-89) which surveys discussions of the sacraments, the Word of God, and the life to come. More recent discussions have focused on the canonical status of Catholics who leave their church to join the PNCC, the development of a clerical spirituality and married priesthood in the PNCC (which when it was first established in 1897 had compulsory clerical celibacy that was only abrogated in 1921), and concrete models of future unity. In 1996 the BCEIA issued guidelines concerning the circumstances under which PNCC faithful can receive communion in the Catholic Church, and plans are being made to issue an expanded version of those guidelines to include the circumstances under which the Catholic faithful can receive PNCC sacraments.

Meanwhile, beginning in 1996, several of the member churches of the Union of Utrecht (in Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Austria) began to ordain women, compelling the PNCC to break communion with them as they did so. There have been calls for a restructuring of the Union of Utrecht in view of this new situation. The PCPCU and Union of Utrecht issued guidelines for the transfer of clergy between the two communions in 1996, but these were later suspended.

Roman Catholic/Anglican International Dialogue

Catholic dialogues with the Anglican Communion have developed in a distinctly mature manner since their start. Not only have church-dividing issues such as eucharist, ministry, and church authority had a prolonged hearing, but also questions of morals, salvation, and the church as communion have been vigorously discussed. Since the period between 1962 and 1965 when there were official Anglican observers at the Second Vatican Council, the worldwide Anglican communion under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury has been in dialogue with Rome. Archbishop Michael Ramsey and Pope Paul VI established the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission in 1966 which issued The Malta Report in 1968 calling for, among other things, a permanent joint commission. Both the Holy See and the Lambeth Conference 1968 endorsed the recommendation thereby setting up of the first Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). ARCIC-I met annually between 1970 and 1981 and discussed historically divisive issues for the two churches including those issues which had influenced Pope Leo XIII's negative pronouncement on the validity of Anglican orders in his apostolic letter **Apostolicae Curae** in 1896.

Early **ARCIC** dialogue focused upon the Eucharist, the nature of ordained ministry, and authority in the church. **The Final Report** of ARCIC-I, published in 1982, found "substantial agreement," indeed unanimous agreement on those "matters where it considers that doctrine admits of no divergence," i.e., on Eucharist, ministry and ordination. A "degree of agreement" characterized the final report on the question of authority. In May 1982, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an initial response entitled **Observations on the Final Report** which expressed serious concern about several points in the final ARCIC-I report; the official Roman Catholic response did not appear until 1991.

Meanwhile, during the historic visit in Canterbury of Pope John Paul II with Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie in 1982, the two church leaders proposed a new stage in the dialogue, ARCIC-II, in order to study all that continued to separate the two churches, even before the official church bodies had submitted their final responses on the earlier dialogue. After the results of ARCIC-I were submitted to the 1988 Lambeth Conference, the bishops of the Anglican Communion recognized the achievements of ARCIC-I and judged those on eucharist and ministry satisfactory enough to proceed in the next step toward unity and, in the case of the authority issue, to further dialogue.

The PCPCU in consultation with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published **The Official Roman Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC-I** in 1991, reflecting some input also from the various national conferences of bishops. This report failed to affirm the large areas of agreement that ARCIC-I had discovered on such issues as ordination, sacraments, and ecclesiology. In 1993, ARCIC-II offered a reply to the official Catholic response by way of clarifications on the topics of Eucharist and ministry. Subsequently, Edward Cardinal Cassidy, president of the PCPCU, responded positively, proclaiming that “at this stage” there was no need for further clarifications.

ARCIC-II has met annually from 1983. In 1986 it issued an agreed statement on justification and the Church as communion entitled **Salvation and the Church**. It has also produced subsequent statements on the nature of the church and the ingredients for church unity entitled **Church as Communion: On the Life in Christ that We Seek to Share** (1990), and **Life in Christ: Morals, Communion, and Church** (1994) reflecting a shared moral vision as well as significant divergences on questions of remarriage after divorce, contraception, and by extension, homosexuality and abortion. After 1994, ARCIC-II studied Scripture, Tradition, and exercise of authority within the church, especially in relation to primacy and collegiality. In 1999, ARCIC-II issued **The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III**. The text was intended to be a continuation of the two authority in the church documents contained in **The Final Report**. ARCIC-II urged that it has deepened and extended agreement on all aspects of the exercise of authority in the church and identified a number of issues separately facing Anglicans and Catholics regarding developments that have taken place in the way authority is exercised. Finally, ARCIC-II proposed that until full communion can be reached Anglicans and Catholics should find ways of mutual accountability and cooperation in their exercise of authority. This might include a recovery and “re-reception” of the universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome.

With the third document of authority complete, the Anglican Communion and the PCPCU agreed to the formation of ARCIC-III under two new chairmen, both from the United States: Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, III, of the Episcopal Church and Archbishop Alexander J. Brunett of Seattle. ARCIC-III has met once and indicates that it will focus on the Marian doctrines.

The issue of ordination of women began to complicate the original agenda of church-dividing issues when individual provinces in the Anglican communion began to allow the ordination

of women in the 1970s, and in 1989 the Anglican (Episcopal) Church in the U.S. ordained its first woman bishop. In 1992, the Church of England officially voted to ordain women as priests. Critical responses and nonreception of women priests within some Anglican circles has also inaugurated a movement on the part of some Anglican/Episcopal married and unmarried priests to seek admission and ordination in the Catholic church, a process entitled pastoral provision. This new obstacle (or challenge) of women's ordination was officially recognized by Archbishop Runcie and Pope John Paul II first during a visit in 1989, but at the same time they held out hope for continued progress on other issues. Pope John Paul II and Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury made a common declaration in 1996 suggesting that "it may be opportune at this stage in our journey to consult further about how the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the Catholic Church is to progress." Following up on this suggestion, Archbishop Carey and Cardinal Cassidy convened a special consultation of Anglican and Catholic leaders at Mississauga, near Toronto, Canada, in May 2000. The leaders, nearly all bishops, issued an encouraging fourteen-point statement, **Communion in Mission**, and an action plan to implement the recommendations. One visible result of the meeting was the establishment of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in January 2001 with the task of reviewing the relationship between Catholics and Anglicans worldwide, consolidating the results of more than thirty years of ecumenical contact and dialogue, and charting a course for the future.

Anglican/Roman Catholic Consultation USA

In the United States, a national dialogue between the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Episcopal Church has been meeting somewhat regularly since 1965 under the title of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the U.S.A. (ARC-USA). The dialogue held its fiftieth meeting in September 2000. This dialogue has often paralleled, augmented or responded to ARCIC's agenda and agreed statements. During early sessions, the dialogue focused on the eucharist, the nature of doctrinal, and methodological considerations. ARC-USA produced a **Statement on the Eucharist** (1967), a **Statement on Progress and Practical Cooperation** (1969), **Doctrinal Agreement and Christian Unity: Methodological Considerations** (1972), an **Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church** (1975), and **Where We Are: A Challenge for the Future** (1977), which represents a twelve-year report of ARC-USA.

When the General Convention of the Episcopal Church was expected to consider the question of the ordination of women in 1976, ARC-USA responded to this development and related theological topics with a **Statement on the Ordination of Women** (1975) and **Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology** (1983). Also anticipating the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's apostolic letter on Anglican orders, *Apostolicae Curae* as well as recognizing the considerable progress of ARCIC on eucharist and ministry, ARC-USA produced **Anglican Orders: A Report on the Evolving Context for their Evaluation in the Roman Catholic Church**.

Faced with the need to reconsider certain aspects of the agreements already reached in dialogue, ARC-USA issued **A Recommitment to Full Communion** (1992), **How Can We Recognize "Substantial Agreement?"** (1993), and **Five Affirmations on the Eucharist as**

Sacrifice (1994). Then ARC-USA turned its attention to the continuing agenda of ARCIC-II by issuing **Christian Ethics in the Ecumenical Dialogue: Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission II and Recent Papal Teachings** (1995). Currently ARC-USA is engaged in an extensive project investigating the exercise of authority on all levels of church life. Its **Agreed Report on Local/Universal Church** (1999) is the first joint statement resulting from this work. This last report was published in *Origins*, CNS Documentary Service 30, 6 (June 22, 2000). All the other statements are contained in two volumes along with numerous other ARCIC and ARC documents: *Called to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 1966-1983*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1986. [Publication no. 937-8] and *Common Witness to the Gospel: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 1983-1995*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1997. [Publication no. 5-060].

From time to time a select number of bishops of the Episcopal Church and members of the NCCB have met to discuss topics of common interest and certain pastoral questions. The bishop chairman of the BCEIA has visited the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church on occasion to discuss an agreed-upon agenda. In 1981 an ARC leaders conference in the U.S.A. met and reviewed ARC-USA's progress and discussed possible steps to be taken for greater cooperation.

Meanwhile in a separate, but parallel development, an EDEO/NADEO standing committee to the two church bodies has produced five studies between 1978 and 1983, two on ARC covenants, two on ARC marriages, and a pastoral perspective on baptism in ARC Families. More recently three Catholics and three Anglicans representing the third NADEO/EDEO standing committee have published **Receiving the Vision: The Anglican-Roman Catholic Reality Today** (1995). Finally, EDEO/NADEO has produced two more reports, one on church unity and ethical issues (1996) and another on exercising authority (2000).

Although not directly related to Roman Catholic/Anglican relations, it is significant to note that the Anglican churches of the British Isles and Ireland together with Lutheran churches of Scandinavian and the Baltic countries have proposed in the "Porvoo Statement" of 1996 that ministers be mutually recognized and jointly ordained by bishops from both traditions. The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) ratified an agreement on full communion entitled **Called to Common Mission** and celebrated this new relationship on January 6, 2001.

Catholic/Lutheran International Dialogue

Catholic/Lutheran dialogues provide the earliest model for comprehensive ecumenical conversations in that they early on considered theology along with concrete steps toward ecumenism. In 1967 a Catholic/Lutheran study commission under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the SPCU met in its first official dialogue to discuss the topic of "The Gospel and the Church." Its report, known as the Malta Report (1972), addressed a wide range of subjects such as Scripture and Tradition, justification, the Gospel and the world, the ordained ministry and the papacy. A second dialogue produced three sets of documents. One set consid-

ered “The Eucharist” (1979) and “Ministry in the Church” (1981), and another set marked the anniversary of the Augsburg Confession with **All under One Christ** (1980) and celebrated Luther’s birth with **Martin Luther—Witness to Jesus Christ** (1983). A third set of documents envisioned the process leading to unity in **Ways to Community** (1980) and proposed a detailed model of unity in **Facing Unity: Models, Forms, and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship** (1985). Depending upon the topics, unofficial responses have varied greatly in both Catholic and Lutheran circles. With respect to the reports on Eucharist and the ministry there was extensive criticism within Catholic circles; no official responses from Catholic authorities to the last two sets of documents have appeared.

Between 1986 and 1994, another series of dialogues began on the issue of ecclesiology with special attention to justification. While the official dialogues were in process, a report entitled **The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide?** appeared in 1988 in Germany. Published by an ecumenical Lutheran/Catholic study group, it suggested that sixteenth-century mutual condemnations should no longer be considered church-dividing. In 1992 the PCPCU responded with a generally positive evaluation of this German study, calling it “research of outstanding scientific quality” while suggesting that certain points warranted further consideration. In 1993 the publication of **The Church and Justification: The Understanding of the Church in the Light of the Doctrine of Justification** was produced by the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Commission and heralded a high degree of fundamental consensus and sometimes convergence. It was “the most comprehensive and complex study” produced to date by an international bilateral dialogue.

The final version of the historically contentious issue of justification is the **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification** (1997). With formal reception of the Joint Declaration, both Lutherans and Catholics would be “able to confess together to the world, that we have the same understanding of the doctrine of Justification by Faith and therefore that the mutual condemnations we leveled at one another in the sixteenth century do not apply today,” according to Cardinal Cassidy, president of the PCPCU. The declaration does not deny differences in the explications of justification, but it does affirm the consensus discovered regarding the basic truths. Such consensus affirms that “it is solely by grace and faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit in us that we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit who renews our hearts and equips us for and calls us to good works.” Other areas of agreement with clarifications by each church include the fact that human beings cannot effect or merit justification, although they are receptive in the response of faith through the hearing of the Word; justification is through grace alone, a free gift of God, and all the good actions of human beings are also the result of grace; the process of justification is not just an apprehension or intellectual conviction but a trustful reception of the Gospel which issues in good works.

In the summer of 1997, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) officially accepted the Joint Declaration. On 16 June 1998, the LWF announced its approval of the lifting of the condemnation. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued its response on 25 June 1998. It affirmed that there was a “high degree of agreement” to be found in the Joint Declaration. In only three out of forty-four points were there still indications of differences on

fundamental doctrine that required further study. A formal signing of the Joint Declaration took place on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany. The process of reception will include Bible study programs (materials have already been developed jointly by the LWF and the PCPCU, other educational and formation programs, prayer and personal conversion, and such local programs such as entering into covenant agreements.

The present international Catholic/Lutheran dialogues are focusing on apostolicity in the current round.

Catholic/Lutheran USA Dialogue

Dialogues between these two bodies in the United States have included annual meetings of theologians and scholars as well as bishops. This U.S. dialogue has been “the longest continuous-running bilateral” and the most prolific in terms of publication of its findings. Early sessions focused on the Nicene Creed as dogma (1965), baptism (1966), the Eucharist as a sacrifice (1966-67), the ministry (1968-73), the role of papal primacy for the universal church (1970-73), and teaching authority and infallibility in the church (1974-78). In 1983 both groups affirmed a consensus on the theme of “Justification by Faith.” The eighth round of dialogues spanning the period from 1983 to 1990 produced the statement: **The One Mediator, the Saints, and Mary: A Common Statement** and **The Word of God: Scripture and Tradition** (1995).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) came together in 1988 from the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and has continued in dialogue with Catholics. Although the ELCA represents most Lutherans in the United States, it does not include The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Although the Missouri Synod has joined in all the rounds of dialogue, it has declared that it will not enter into the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Meanwhile, the ELCA has engaged itself in a wide sphere of ecumenical initiatives with other Protestant partners. In August 1997, the ELCA assembly voted affirmatively on a proposal for full communion with Reformed partners (including the Reformed Church in America, United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church, USA), known as the **Formula of Agreement**. In the year 2000, the ELCA and the Episcopal Church approved an agreement, **Called to Common Mission**, which brought them into full communion in 2001. This last agreement reflects similar ones that have taken place in northern Europe (Porvoo, 1996) where four Anglican churches and eight Lutheran churches representing different jurisdictions and countries entered into full communion. This Porvoo Agreement is an ambitious undertaking calling for interchangeability of ministers, mutual participation in ordinations and consecrations, and a joint coordinating committee among other things. By the end of 1996 all but two of the participating churches had accepted the Porvoo Statement which will bring most of the Christians in northern Europe into full communion. As such church unions increase, they also add to the multiplicity of relationships and agreements among Protestant churches that the Catholic Church must confront in its own ecumenical path. Many of these agreements have been made possible because of Catholic participation in the ecumenical discussions.

Catholic/Methodist International Dialogue

The relationship between Catholicism and Methodism is fundamentally different from relationships with the churches stemming directly from the sixteenth-century Reformation because these two ecclesial bodies never officially divided from one another, the Methodist church reflecting a separation from the Church of England in the late eighteenth century. In 1967 the first dialogue began under the auspices of the SPCU and the World Methodist Council (WMC).

There have been a series of seven rounds of five-year dialogues with reports presented to the quinquennial assemblies of the WMC. The first two sets of dialogues were broad explorations of such diverse themes as Christianity and the contemporary world, Christian home and family, mission, evangelism, witness, moral and ecclesiastical authority, spirituality, Eucharist, ministry, church union negotiations, and social issues. A special focus on spirituality characterizes these dialogues. They have also paralleled Catholic dialogues with Anglicans and Lutherans and discussions leading to **BEM** concerning Eucharist and ministry. While there was some agreement between Methodists and Catholics on the mode of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, there was still a wide difference over the Catholic explanation of the change of elements of bread and wine. They agreed on an apostolic ministry of the ordained but not on the nature of apostolic succession.

The third set of dialogues produced **Towards an Agreed Statement on the Holy Spirit** (1981). Here the question of authority, and especially papal authority, and its relationship to the Spirit was explored. It also considered authority, Christian experience, Christian moral decisions, and contained a reflection on the nature of Christian marriage and its sacramentality. In their 1986 document concluding the fourth series entitled **Toward a Statement on the Church** the dialogue partners looked at the fundamental concept of *koinonia* which calls Christians into communion and community. Again issues concerning ministry, the need for a threefold form of ministry, historical succession, and especially the “Petrine office” of primacy, jurisdiction, and teaching demanded another round of dialogue.

After a review by the SPCU, a new set of dialogues began, this time focusing on apostolic faith and ministry serving within an apostolic tradition. Its results appeared in the 1991 report entitled **The Apostolic Tradition**. The sixth round of dialogues has produced a statement entitled **The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith** (1996) which explored not only those topics but also mission, sacramental life, and *koinonia*. The report of the seventh round, **Speaking the Truth in Love**, will be presented to the World Methodist Conference in 2001.

U.S. Catholic/United Methodist Dialogue

These dialogues have been meeting since 1966 under the sponsorship of the Methodist General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns and the BCEIA with earlier dialogues focusing upon salvation, faith and good works, the Holy Spirit, authority, the holiness and spirituality of the ordained ministry, and the nature of Christian marriage. Recent

topics have considered eucharistic prayer texts and the development of ideas and resources for parish-level dialogues, including an emphasis on the spirituality of dialogue. 1970 saw the completion of a joint statement on **Shared Convictions about Education**. In 1976 **Holiness and the Spirituality of the Ordained Ministry** appeared, and in 1981 the dialogue issued a statement entitled **Eucharistic Celebration: Converging Theology—Divergent Practice**. The fourth round produced **Holy Living and Holy Dying** (1988) which focused upon timely and provocative ethical issues that demand further attention from the ecumenical and interfaith communities. It also made suggestions for joint pastoral care guidelines. Recent rounds have considered the papacy, church authority, baptism and confirmation. These national dialogues often parallel or feed into international dialogue themes. The present sixth round is considering **The Church in Each Place and in All Places**.

Although the Catholic Church in the U.S. is not an official participant in the Consultation on Church Union Consensus (1982) and Churches in Covenant Communion (1988), it has been an official and interested observer in this process whereby a large number of representative church bodies are engaged in developing a “communion of communions” leading to mutual recognition of ministry. COCU began as an exploration of models in the establishment of church union and eventually led to the principle of “covenanting” or “conciliar fellowship” being proposed. Member churches agree to live together in unity while retaining their historic differences. At the present time there are nine members of COCU (including several Methodist ecclesial bodies): Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), and the International Council of Community Christian Churches. The participating churches envision the year 2002 as the initiation of their communion as the Churches Uniting in Christ.

Catholic/Reformed International Dialogue

The first series of worldwide dialogues between the Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches took place under the sponsorship of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), consisting of some 172 churches with a total of 70 million members, and the SPCU. It focused on the place and role of the church in relation to God and the world (1970-77) and resulted in a listing of points of agreement and divergence. These points included the significance of hermeneutical problems encountered in the dialogues; the value of the world and its history as the object of God’s saving plan through the Holy Spirit and the church, the presence of Christ in the world and in the church the recognition of an “ecclesiology of service in the world;” and questions concerning ministry. The final reports reflect the various phases and themes treated: **Christ’s Relationship to the Church** (1970), **The Teaching Authority of the Church** (1971), **The Presence of Christ in the World** (1972), **The Eucharist** (1974), and **On the Ministry** (1975). A final statement summarizing this round of dialogues entitled **The Presence of Christ in the Church and World** appeared at its completion in 1977. At the same time these two partners joined with the Lutherans in conversations on **The Theology of Marriage**

and the Problem of Mixed Marriages (1971-77). These discussions focused on the sacramentality of marriage and its implications for pastoral work.

Between 1984 and 1990, the Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogues began a second round on the theme **Towards a Common Understanding of the Church**. The final document of 1990 derived from these discussions called for a “reconciliation of memories” and proclaimed a “common confession of faith” based upon what is already agreed Christologically, soteriologically, and ecclesiologically. The third chapter of the final report concentrated on the gospel and the church specifically from the perspective of ecclesiology. Discussion of two different conceptions of church showed that they might be potentially complementary, although there were issues that also cause divergence or tension. The final chapter looked toward a future where common witness and mutual action and challenge will encourage a strengthened fellowship. In 1993, a trilateral dialogue which included the Lutheran World Federation considered the topic of fundamentalism and published **Consultation on Fundamentalism** (1993). Future dialogue will focus upon the laity’s roles in the church and the church’s role in the world.

U.S. Catholic/Reformed Dialogue

Exploratory discussions began in 1965 between representatives of Catholicism, the Presbyterian Consultation Group, and the North American Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The first joint statements derived from such discussions included **Reconsiderations** (1966-67) and a report on ministry in the church (1968-71). In 1976, the dialogue partners published a report on the mission and nature of the church, with special attention to the unity sought in worship, structure, and shared faith (**The Unity We Seek**). Meanwhile, a U.S. Roman Catholic/Presbyterian document focused on **Ethics and the Search for Christian Unity** (1980). Another round of Catholic-Reformed dialogue began in 1982 and centered on **Church, Society, and the Kingdom of God** and the issue of nuclear arms; in 1985 it issued **Partners in Peace and Education**. The topic for the fifth round was the laity with respect to its role within the church and as church; the published results are found in **Laity in Church and World** (1998). Currently, the consultation is finishing a volume on interchurch marriage to be used on the congregational level. It will be published jointly by the United States Catholic Conference and Geneva Press.

Catholic/Baptist International Conversations

On the international level, the Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), a federation of national Baptist bodies, and the SPCU cosponsored a series of conversations from 1984-1988 on **Christian Witness in Today’s World**. These meetings focused upon certain issues reflecting either convergence or divergence and also proposed goals such as the communication of mutual self-understandings, the identification of ways to witness together, and the addressing of prejudices that exist between Catholics and Baptists. The first session studied evangelism and evangelization; the second session considered Christology and the process of conversion/discipleship as an aspect of Christian witness. Other sessions considered the church as *koinonia* or fellowship of the Spirit, witness to

the world, and the problem of proselytism, while a series of Bible studies concentrated on **Early Christian Witness in Rome**. The final report was entitled **Summons to Witness to Christ in Today's World: A Report on the Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations** (1984-88). Objections from Baptists in Latin America have obstructed the continuation of these conversations.

U.S. Catholic/Baptist Conversations

On the national level, the BCEIA and the American Baptist Convention (now the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.) cosponsored a dialogue from 1967 to 1972 to consider how each tradition perceived their faith. Position papers dealt with such issues as theological agreements, baptism and confirmation in each tradition, Christian freedom and ecclesiastical authority, the nature and communication of grace, the role of the church, the theology of local congregations, clergy-lay issues, and church-state relationships. In 1972 a pamphlet entitled **Growing in Understanding—A Progress Report on American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue** appeared for use by local congregations wishing to continue dialogue.

Informal conversations between representatives of the Catholic Church and of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S. with over 15 million members, took place between 1969 to 1970 under the cosponsorship of the Ecumenical Institute of Wake Forest University and the BCEIA. A series of regional conversations of respective church leaders followed between 1971 to 1977 cosponsored by the BCEIA and the Interfaith Witness of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Much more extensive and long-term conversations occurred in the National Scholars' Dialogue, comprising three series of discussions beginning in 1978 and completed in 1988. The first series ranged over issues such as **The Church: Its Nature and Function**, salvation, scripture, spirituality, ministry, evangelization, mission, and social order. A second series of conversations had as its central theme **The Life of Grace Within Us**, with the third series **Summons to Witness in Today's World** reflecting a very diverse program, including missions and the viewing of Christian history through the perspective of the arts. In 1988 a report entitled **How We Agree/How We Differ** summarized the last two years of this dialogue.

A summary of the entire dialogue from 1978 to 1988 appeared in a special edition of **The Theological Educator** which was entitled **To Understand Each Other: Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics** (1989). The first part of this publication contained two personal testimonies followed by a second section which provided seven articles about faith and life that summarized many of the points discussed in the course of the series. The third section focused on dialogue, both in terms of intellectual exchange and more profound change of heart, and the fourth part included a study guide on the issues, a bibliography, and a glossary of terms.

Since 1990 these dialogues have become "conversations." They have considered practical and timely themes of environmental issues, racism, poverty, sickness, disability and healing. *Our Sunday Visitor* Publications in conjunction with the SBC Home Mission Board has

produced six pamphlets that detail the results of these discussions and are suitable for use by local congregations. In 1999 a **Report on Scripture** was issued. These conversations will finish in 2002.

Pentecostal/Catholic Dialogue

The Pentecostal movement stems from revivals in the first decade of the twentieth century in the U.S. and has historical points of contact with the Holiness and Wesleyan movements. It subsequently spread to other areas including Northern Europe, India, China, Africa, and Latin America. Pentecostal manifestations include speaking in tongues (glossalalia), healing, and prophecy. Pentecostalism is part of a larger charismatic movement and is sometimes now seen as part of the evangelical thrust, although many Evangelicals denounced the early stages of Pentecostalism. Classical Pentecostals are the second largest Christian group in the world, and the Assembly of God Church is the largest Pentecostal group in the world. An African-American church—Church of God in Christ—is the largest U.S. Pentecostal Church. There is a Charismatic and Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, founded in 1994 with both black and white churches participating, and also an International Fellowship of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches and a Pentecostal World Conference. Some Pentecostal churches are part of the WCC.

In the earliest dialogues between Catholicism and Pentecostalism, although there were official Catholic participants appointed by the SPCU, the Pentecostal and other charismatic Protestant participants (from, for instance, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Orthodox churches) were personally recruited by Dr. David DuPlessis, Pentecostal co-chair of the dialogue, rather than named officially from their church bodies. The dialogues have met in a series of five years, each with the aim of fostering mutual understanding rather than organic unity. During the first set of dialogues from 1972 to 1976, topics included the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian initiation, the Spirit and the church, and the Spirit's role in worship and prayer.

For the second set of dialogues (1977, 1979-82) charismatics from other churches were excluded, yet official denominational support, especially from the large body of the American Assemblies of God, was not forthcoming. Some smaller Pentecostal groups did agree to participate. Topics extended to faith and experience, biblical hermeneutics, speaking in tongues, healing, the church as communion in worship, scripture and tradition, Mary, and ministry. The third quinquennium, which once again admitted charismatics, began in 1985 with its focus on *koinonia* and a special emphasis on baptism; the results are reported in **Perspectives on Koinonia** (1989). It also welcomed additional official Pentecostal participants, if only as observers, to form a more internationally representative group. In the fourth series from 1991 to 1995, the focus was the emotionally laden issue of evangelization in the view of mission for the third millennium. This topic is beset with difficulties because of the past and present practices of the churches involving both proselytism and persecution. In 1998, the resulting report appeared under the title **Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness**. The fifth phase of dialogue with its topic **Christian Initiation and the Baptism in the Spirit** began in June 1998.

U.S. Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue

The first formal Pentecostal/Catholic dialogue began in 1972; dialogues continue on a regional and local level. Some American Catholics, Protestants, and Pentecostal scholars have been part of Faith and Order study on the national level, although many Pentecostal groups remain suspicious of the aims and objectives of the ecumenical movement. The Society for Pentecostal Studies has included Catholic members since its founding over 30 years ago. In recent years, each meeting has been preceded by an academic Pentecostal-Catholic Dialogue.

International Catholic/Evangelical Dialogue

Evangelical churches have a foundation in the Protestant tradition and should be distinguished from Pentecostals, although the latter are now sometimes participants in evangelical organizations. Evangelicals exhibit three common characteristics, according to Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.: 1) personal faith in Christ as Lord; 2) understanding of the gospel as it is expressed in scripture where authority is found; and 3) spread of the gospel through evangelism and social reform. The term “evangelical” does not refer to a denomination; in essence, it is a reform or renewal movement found in many different denominations, or a network of “para-churches,” groups, denominations, and fellowships. Nor should one assume that the term “evangelical” necessarily connotes fundamentalism. One of the obstacles to discussions with the Evangelicals is the lack of a distinct ecclesial polity. The NAE (National Association of Evangelicals) and the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) are two representative organizations. The NAE includes among its members the Assemblies of God (Pentecostal), the Church of the Nazarene (Holiness), the Baptist General Conference (Free Church Tradition), and the Mennonite Brethren Churches, USA (Peace Church). Other high-profile evangelical organizations include the Billy Graham-led Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization and the national and international Campus Crusade for Christ.

Between 1977-1984 there was a dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals on the subject of mission (ERCDOM). Sponsored by SPCU and some non- Pentecostal Evangelicals, the dialogue issued a final report in 1986 which was not an official document but merely a reflection of some of the topics discussed. The partners in dialogue found both agreement and divergence on the subject of revelation, the nature of the Bible, the Bible and its relation to church authority, the nature of mission, evangelism, socio-political responsibility, divine authority, the unique and universal role of Jesus Christ, the gospel of salvation, Mary’s role, conversion, baptism and membership in the church, the nature of the church, opportunities for cooperation, and the avoidance of proselytism. This dialogue is continuing with the WEF and the PCPCU as cosponsors.

U.S. Catholic/Evangelical Discussions

In the U.S. there have been no formal discussion between these two groups, but recent unofficial discussions and their resulting publications reflect certain obvious mutual concerns; the sometimes strong responses to such documents also indicate the broad intraconfessional

differences that official dialogue would have to confront. In 1994 twenty American Catholic and twenty Evangelical scholars signed **Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium**, the result of an eighteen-month unofficial consultation organized by Richard John Neuhaus, a convert to Catholicism and organizer of Religion and Public Life, and Charles Colson, former Nixon White House aide. This document attempts to overcome past misunderstandings and identify common interests. It addresses the issues of mission, proselytism, and common moral problems, especially abortion. Although it quotes texts from both the Vatican and the Baptist World Alliance, it created controversy and dissent from some Catholics and Evangelicals. A recent comment of the Pope concerning Evangelical and Pentecostal expansion in Latin America prompted two of the original signers of this document to withdraw from support of the document under pressure of their denominations.

In 1997 another unofficial discussion entitled **The Church Steps Forward: A Christian Roundtable on Poverty and Welfare Reform** found conservative Evangelicals and Roman Catholics at “the start of a crucial conversation between diverse church constituencies.” Also in 1997, sixteen Catholic leaders and nineteen leading evangelicals signed **The Gift of Salvation** which recognized that after 450 years, “evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics have publicly agreed to a common understanding of salvation.” This document, the second to emerge from groups led by Neuhaus and Colson has garnered mixed reactions.

Catholic and Disciples of Christ/Christian Church Dialogue

The first set of Disciples of Christ/Catholic dialogues under the sponsorship of the Council of Christian Unity (Disciples of Christ) and the BCELCA, began, as is appropriate for a U.S.-born church, on the national level in 1967. Topics included Eucharist, marriage, ministry, and parish life respective traditions, baptism, healing, and reconciliation. The next five-year session beginning in 1977 became international in scope, under the sponsorship of the International Disciples Ecumenical Consultation Council. Focusing on the topic **Apostolicity and Catholicity in the Visible Unity of the Church**, a final report was published in June 1982. A more recent product of the international dialogue is **The Church as Communion in Christ** (1993). It is currently studying and discussing conciliar authority and *koinonia*.

Where Does the Catholic Church Go From Here?

Father Thomas Ryan, CSP, suggests that “There are some divine cravings in life—the liberation of the poor, the equality of women, the unity of the church—that are worth striving for, living for, dying for, finished or unfinished, for as long as it takes to achieve them.” In the last decades of the twentieth century, it has become obvious to those who are involved in ecumenism that the Catholic Church has committed itself fully to the movement. While the concept of “full communion” of Christians and the means to obtain it are still under scrutiny both within and outside Catholic institutional walls, it appears that there will be no turning back. Although internal and external obstacles, both real and imagined, may establish roadblocks that confound dialogue partners and irritate Catholic ecumenists, a thoughtful reading of the history of ecumenism in the past forty years indicates that the impetus among theologians and church leaders is real and growing.

It would be unwise at this point to predict the contours of this new vision of church that is emerging among committed Christians throughout the world, but it is instructive to consider how far the churches have come and the profound impact that the entrance of the Catholic Church into the modern ecumenical movement has had not only on the movement, but also on individual churches' understanding of themselves. One could reflect also upon the contemporary richness that the Catholic Church has rediscovered for its liturgy, its theology, and its life in the world as it has come to see the Christian message reflected in the gifts that other churches bring to the church reuniting. The increasing "globalization" of the Christian church, the high rate of interchurch marriages, and the need to bring an authentic and unified Christian message to the world of the twenty-first century demands an ongoing conversion to an ecumenical spirit on the part of individuals and institutions. Only with such a change of heart will the experience of Christian disunity yield to a "healing of memories," an avoidance of such divisions in the future, and the construction of the church for which Christ prayed on the night before he died: "That they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17: 21)

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