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**The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit**  
**Second Corinthians 13:13 in the Liturgy and for the Church**

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**in**  
**The Department**  
**of**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit Second Corinthians 13:13 in the Liturgy and for the Church**

**Allan Marjerison**

This paper discusses the Pauline Blessing (Second Corinthians 13:13) now commonly referred to as "the Grace," with specific reference to the third component, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Part I explores the various interpretations of *koinonia* in New Testament writings; references to the Pauline Blessing are examined in the writings of the Church Fathers, and incorporation of the formula into early church liturgy, and its continuance to modern times, are discussed.

Part II considers contemporary understandings of *koinonia*, especially in connection with the ecumenical movement beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century.

## SIX KEY WORDS

Koinonia

Fellowship

Communion

Ecumenism

Liturgy

Eucharist

**Dedication:**

**A.M.D.G**

**and to the memory of my parents**

**George and Essie Marjerison**

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## Introduction

At the conclusion of a traditional Anglican prayer book service, someone was heard to say "I love this service. The words are so familiar, I can just put my mind in neutral." This rang an alarm bell in my mind. Was I myself merely hearing familiar words without paying attention to the richness of the meaning inherent in them - or even wondering what the meaning really was? From that question, my mind focussed on the three-fold statement with which much of our liturgy either opens or closes,

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.*

I asked myself, "What do I understand about this, and in particular *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit?*"

Ritual, of course, serves a purpose of its own; the hearing or reciting of words induces in the mind of the worshipper a sense of the mystery of God; but sometimes a deeper and more meaningful experience comes from reflecting on the words and their relationship to the whole of the Christian gospel.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ** encapsulates the whole story of his earthly life, his ethical, moral and theological teachings, and his sacrificial death. It thus includes the promise of forgiveness, and of communion with God, and of more than bodily death and disappearance. This is the unearned gift of Christ to humanity, freely given, awaiting only

to be received. This is the gift which, received, changes lives from meaningless to meaningful, from despair to hope and assurance, from weakness to strength.

**The love of God** reminds us of the Evangelist's proclamation (John 3:16) that God's love for his creation was so encompassing that he did not hesitate to send his only son to demonstrate, by life, and death, the extent of that love. It also reminds us of "our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life."<sup>1</sup>

**The fellowship of the Holy Spirit** opens up for us the whole field of oneness with God and with our fellows. This fellowship has both a vertical and a horizontal component; it can be considered as analogous to the Christian symbol, the cross itself, formed by the union of these two components. The wide-spreading horizontal arms indicate the breadth of the fellowship of those whose faith also points upward to God.

To answer my own question, and in the hope of contributing something of value to others who may have similar questions, I will attempt to investigate the origin, the historical development, and the modern significance of that *fellowship*.

In short, what is *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit* in these closing days of the second millennium, in the lives of individuals, churches, and society?

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<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer of the Anglican Church of Canada*. Toronto: The Anglican Book Centre, 1959, p. 14 f.

The first part of this study starts with a word study of *koinonia* in the New Testament writings, and then follows through four centuries of its usage in the patristic period, and next moves on to the specific use of the Pauline Blessing

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all evermore*

in a broad sweep of liturgical practice over twenty centuries in the Christian churches of East and West.

The second part of the study explores the term *fellowship of the Holy Spirit* in the church today.

The study, therefore, incorporates many aspects of theology -- exegesis, historical theology, and systematic theology. The interaction of these three disciplinary fields illustrates the complexity of the question. Obviously the research is not intended to be exhaustive. It is an initial foray into an existing field of theology. However, it is far from a speculative exercise; it is directed at pastoral questions central to the day-to-day life of the Church

**PART I -- SCRIPTURE AND LITURGY**

## CHAPTER ONE -- *Koinonia* in Second Corinthians

### i. The Pauline Blessing

What has come to be known as "the Grace" or "the Pauline Blessing" is unique in the writings of Saint Paul, and indeed in the whole of the New Testament, linking together as it does the names and attributes of Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit. While much study has been devoted to it, and with particular reference to its grammatical construction in the Greek, perhaps the most controversial aspect of this threefold blessing concerns "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (Second Corinthians 13: 13). All authorities that I have read to date agree that the first two items, that is, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the love of God" are in the *subjective genitive* in that there is no doubt that the love of God comes from God, and that the grace of Christ comes from Christ. There is disagreement, however, as to whether "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" is in the *subjective* or *objective genitive*. Some authorities maintain that the grammatical construction requires that it follow the form of the first two, while others place a different interpretation on *koinonia*, giving emphasis to the human action of sharing in fellowship. Best summarizes the question thus:

Christ and God are active in creating grace and love. Is then the Holy Spirit active in creating fellowship (*koinonia*)?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians, Interpretation*, p. 136, 137.

He asks whether Paul is praying (a) that the members of the divided church in Corinth may join in greater fellowship with one another, in the fellowship created for them by the Holy Spirit or (b) that they have a deepening experience with the power of the Holy Spirit. If we translate *koinonia* as "sharing," with the connotation of partnership, we incline towards (a). But if we translate *koinonia* as "participation," we tend towards (b) with its more individualistic demonstrations of the charismatic phenomena.

Best continues:

In the end the two meanings are not very different since to participate in the Spirit is always to participate with other people - a corporate experience.<sup>3</sup>

I do not altogether agree with him on this point. My disagreement is with the word "always" and is based on the possibility that those in the (b) group may become so detached from the community in their religious fervour that in effect they withdraw from the world around them, and thus lose the sharing aspect.

P. T. O'Brien concludes that the Pauline Blessing is best interpreted as the participation in the Holy Spirit, rather than that which is created by the Holy Spirit. Participation in the

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

Holy Spirit he classifies as *objective genitive*, and the fellowship which is created by the Holy Spirit he classifies as *subjective genitive*.<sup>4</sup>

Pittenger writes in a similar vein:

The first point to stress is that this primitive Christian experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was no purely individualistic matter, but a social and corporate reality. A great enthusiasm bound the believers together into community . . . The Eucharist is celebrated in the Spirit-filled community by those who are strengthened in the Spirit and obedient to His will. Christian life, both in the interior sense of communion with God and in the external sense of behaviour among people, is life in the Spirit . . . We have repeatedly stressed the unity of Christians through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

Thrall comments.

The prayer for fellowship in the Holy Spirit is a petition that Corinthians may share in the divine power of the Spirit and also that they may

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<sup>4</sup> P. T. O'Brien, "Fellowship, Communion, Sharing" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, p. 294a

<sup>5</sup> Norman Pittenger, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 78, 84, 85.



experience among themselves the mutual love which the Spirit creates with the Christian community.<sup>6</sup>

John Paul II writes:

The gift of the Spirit means a call to friendship, in which the transcendent depths of God become in some way opened to participation on the part of man. The human life becomes permeated, through participation (in the Holy Spirit) by the divine life, and itself acquires divine, supernatural dimensions.<sup>7</sup>

The New Bible Commentary defines fellowship of the Holy Spirit as participation in the Holy Spirit through being his temple, and participation in the fellowship of believers created by him.<sup>8</sup>

C. F. D. Moule points out that *koinonia* is not a concrete noun, meaning fellowship, but an abstract noun, meaning joint participation. He says that fellowship is not created by joint participation, but that the joint participation in the Holy Spirit, as cause, creates fellowship, the result. In support of his interpretation, he cites First Corinthians 12:13

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret E. Thrall. *I and II Corinthians, The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians*. p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> John Paul II. "On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World." p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> C. J. Wenham. *et al.*, eds., *New Bible Commentary 21st Century Edition*. p. 1205.

**"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one Body" and Ephesians 4:4-6 "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope."<sup>9</sup>**

**John A.T. Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich, says that the New Testament knows nothing of generating a feeling of friendship as a way to God, but that we are built up into the Body of Christ by feeding upon his supernatural life and in no other way.<sup>10</sup>**

**As to the interpretation that the fellowship is a spontaneously, humanly-created fellowship, the following arguments and comments are adduced:**

*a* **As pointed out by John Paul II, the community of the faithful was already existing when the Holy Spirit came to be a guide and strengthener.<sup>11</sup>**

*b* **Lonergan adds: Although we now live in a "global village" yet the ideal base for society is the community. A community may form around a moral principle, a religious principle, or the Christian principle; in this latter case, the fellowship is of those sharing in God's love by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> C. F. D. Moule. *The Holy Spirit*, p. 75.

<sup>10</sup> John A. T. Robinson. *Liturgy coming to Life*, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> John Paul II. p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Lonergan. *Method in Theology*, p. 360.

c. Pittenger points out that this primitive Christian experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was no purely individualistic matter, but a social and corporate reality. A great enthusiasm bound the believers together into community.<sup>13</sup>

Among those who would characterize *fellowship of the holy Spirit* as a purely individual experience are Luther and Calvin.

Lindsay Dewar, in *The Holy Spirit and Modern Thought*, says that Luther, despite his strong points, was essentially "a man of one idea; that idea was Justification by Faith."<sup>14</sup> He gives Luther an unsympathetic treatment, to the point of wishing that the Reformation had been touched off by some other hand. In part he writes:

Not only is Luther's way of regarding the work of the Holy Spirit irrational, but it is completely individualistic. He appears to have no understanding of the *koinonia* or fellowship of the Spirit and, so far as I am aware, in his various Whitsuntide sermons in which he constantly refers to the account of the Coming of the Holy Spirit in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, there is no reference at all to the creation of the *koinonia*.

How completely individualistic is Luther's treatment of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the following passage will suffice to show:

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<sup>13</sup> Pittenger, p. 78.

<sup>14</sup> Lindsay Dewar, *The Holy Spirit in Modern Thought*, p. 130-131.

'We ought not, therefore, to doubt whether the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us or not; but to be assuredly persuaded that we "are the temples of the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor.3.16). For if any man feel in himself a love toward the Word of God, and willingly heareth, talketh, writeth, and thinketh of Christ, let that man know, that this is not the work of man's will or reason, but the gift of the Holy Ghost; for it is impossible that these things should be done without the Holy Ghost . . . ' <sup>15</sup>

Although it is true that justification only by faith is an intensely personal experience, Dewar's argument in the second of the foregoing quotations is weak insofar as his thesis that Luther does not recognize *koinonia* is concerned. Luther stresses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but does not deny, merely does not discuss, the possibility of fellowship with others who also are the recipients of the indwelling.

John Calvin, described as "by far the greatest of all the Reformation theologians"<sup>16</sup> makes only two references in his writings to the Pauline Blessing. In his first reference (2.17.2) he is concerned only with "grace" and in the second reference (3.1.2) he gives a subjective interpretation to the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit as that "without which no man shall even taste the paternal favour of God, or the benefits of Christ." In his commentary on the use of *koinonia* in Acts 2:42 he [Calvin] takes fellowship to mean "mutual society and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 131

fellowship, unto alms, and unto other duties of brotherly fellowship" without relating it to any joint participation in the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup> Like Luther, he understands "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" as one-to-one between God and man.

What has been described as "the dreadful tragedy of the Reformation"<sup>18</sup> was that the intensely personal concern with the operation of the Holy Spirit, its indwelling, Calvin's doctrine of *inspiration*,<sup>19</sup> and the unconcern for corporate fellowship -- these all combined to lay the foundation for individualism, sectarianism, and the fragmentation of Christendom which we see today.

This is indeed a tragedy, as will be discussed later; for if we take seriously Paul's words about sharing in the body of Christ,<sup>20</sup> it is clear that, regardless of scholarly theses and disputations, the church is one community. Its corporate identity is clearly established, its members sharing together in the fellowship made possible by the gift of the holy Spirit.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* p. 137.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p.151.

<sup>19</sup> Defined by Calvin as the means by which every believer is taught individually by the Holy Spirit. as cited by Dewar. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> The cup of blessing that we bless. is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break. is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread. we who are many are one body. for we all partake of the one bread. 2 Corinthians 13:13.

## **ii. *Koinonia* in the New Testament**

In a study of the quoted biblical passage, the key word, of great significance both as to an understanding of "the fellowship of the holy Spirit" and its implication in modern thought, is *koinonia*.

*Koinonia* is variously translated as fellowship, sharing, partnership, participation, communion. As used in the New Testament, its meaning can range from the mundane to the sacred, from a business partnership in a fishing enterprise, to being at one with the mind of God. Some examples of such usage are given here where, following each quotation, I have recorded in italics the actual interlinear translation of the Greek word *koinonia* or its derivative or cognate.<sup>21</sup>

Within the main divisions of meaning ascribed to *koinonia* and its cognates of fellowship, sharing, participation or communion, and partnership, there are subdivisions. For example

### **1. fellowship**

#### **1.1 fellowship with God**

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<sup>21</sup> *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament, United Bible Societies' Fourth, Corrected Edition*, translators Robert K Brown and Philip W. Comfort. Editor J. D. Douglas. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1990.

1 John 1:6 "If we say that we have fellowship (*koinonian* - *we have fellowship*) with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true."

### **1.2 fellowship with Christ**

1 Cor 1:9 "God is faithful, by him you were called into the fellowship (*koinonian* - *[the] fellowship*) of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

### **1.3 fellowship in a community**

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship (*koinonia* - *fellowship*), to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

2 Cor 6:14 "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship (*koinonia* - *fellowship*) is there between light and darkness?"

Phil 2:1 "If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing (*koinonia* - *fellowship*) in the Spirit . . ."

1 John 1:3 ". . . so that you also may have fellowship (*koinonian* - *we have fellowship*) with us; and truly our fellowship (*koinonia* - *fellowship*) is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship (*koinonian* - *we have fellowship*) with one another. . . ."

## **2. sharing**

### **2.1 sharing material things**

2 Cor 8:4 "begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing (*koinonian* - [to participate in] the contribution) in this ministry to the saints . . ."

Rom 15:26 "For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share (*koinonian* - contribution) their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem."

Heb 13:16 "Do not neglect to do good and to share (*koinonias* - sharing) what you have . . ."

2 Cor 9:13 "Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing (*koinonias* - contribution) with them and with all others."

### **2.2 sharing the good news of the gospel**

Phil 1:5 " . . . because of your sharing (*koinonia* - participation) in the gospel, from the first day until now."

Philemon 6. "and I pray that the sharing (*koinonia* - sharing) of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

### **2.3 receiving spiritual blessings**

Rom 15:27 ". . . for if the Gentiles have come to share (*ekoinonesan* - shared) in their spiritual blessings. . ."



1 Cor 9:23 "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share (*sugkoinonos - fellow-partaker*) in its blessings."

2 Cor 1:7 ". . .for we know that as you share (*koinonoi - sharers*) in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

Phil 3:10 "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the sharing (*koinonian - fellowship*) of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death."

1 Peter 4:13 "But rejoice insofar as you are sharing (*koinoneite - you share*) Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed."

Rev 1:9 "I John, your brother, who share (*sugkoinonos - partner*) with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance."

### **3. participation**

#### **3.1 participation in the Eucharist**

1 Cor 10:16 "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing (*koinonia - a sharing*) in the blood of Christ. The bread that we break, is it not a sharing (*koinonia - a sharing*) in the body of Christ?"

#### **3.2 participation in the Holy Spirit**

2 Cor 13:13 ". . .and the communion (*koinonia - fellowship*) of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."

#### **4. partnership**

##### **4.1 partnership in secular activities**

Luke 5:10 "and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners (*koinonoi* - *partners*) with Simon."

##### **4.2 partnership in religious activities**

2 Cor 8:23 "As for Titus, he is my partner (*koinonos* - *partner*) and co-worker in your service;"

1 Cor 10:18 "Consider the people of Israel, are not those who eat the sacrifices partners (*koinonoi* - *partakers*) in the altar?"

Eph 5:11 "Take no part in (*sugkoinoneite* - *do not participate*) the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."

Philemon 1:17 "So if you consider me your partner (*koinonon* - [*as*] a *partner*), welcome him as you would welcome me."

##### **4.3 partnership in evangelism**

Gal. 2:9 "...gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship (*koinonias* - *of fellowship*), agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised."

Paul was a prolific user of *koinonia*<sup>22</sup> and, despite the many variations of its use, his writing shows a consistency throughout, and his message is always one of sharing.

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<sup>22</sup> 19 times in all. of which 10 were in his letters to the Corinthians

Whether Paul is writing about the collection for the saints in Jerusalem,<sup>23</sup> about his sufferings,<sup>24</sup> about the blessings inherent in proclaiming and accepting the gospel,<sup>25</sup> or in the eucharist,<sup>26</sup> there is always the message of a corporate participation.

To come, then, to the question as to why he added this word *koinonia* in his closing benediction to the Corinthians, it is clear that his concern for the church there was for corporate unity, and especially for a mutual sharing of the gifts of salvation and love.

The church at Corinth was divided by factions, some following Paul, and some Apollos.<sup>27</sup> It was also the scene of unacceptable behaviour.<sup>28</sup> It was an undisciplined church, unwilling to accept Paul's authority. Paul was concerned about the interpersonal relationships there. It was to the church at Corinth that he wrote his beautiful tribute to love,<sup>29</sup> and it was to that church that he urged an outward symbol of affection.<sup>30</sup> This was a church that needed a common vision, a willingness to listen, and to communicate. This was a church that needed *koinonia*.

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<sup>23</sup> Romans 15:26. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 9:1-12.

<sup>24</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:10.

<sup>25</sup> Romans 15:27; 1 Corinthians 9:23 .

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:16 .

<sup>27</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. 1 Corinthians 3:4.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Corinthians 5. 1 Corinthians 6.

<sup>29</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

<sup>30</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:12.

*Koinonia*, to Paul, encompassed many shades of meaning. It meant sharing material possessions,<sup>31</sup> sharing emotions,<sup>32</sup> sharing experiences,<sup>33</sup> and sharing values.<sup>34</sup>

This is evidenced by his desire for an overriding unity of faith, whether the messenger be Apollos, Peter, or himself. He illustrates this interdependence as that of the members of the human body: "so that there may be no discord, but that the members have the same care for one another."<sup>35</sup> He includes a magnificent tribute to love, and his farewell words: "Finally, brethren. . . heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."<sup>36</sup>

Thus it is clear that, by adding to his usual greetings and benedictions these words "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit," Paul was unconcerned about any scholarly discussion as to subjective or objective genitive, but was imploring his beloved church to join in communion with each other, sharing the gift of salvation from Christ, the unconditional love coming from God, and enjoying the manifold gifts of the Spirit.

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<sup>31</sup> 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8; 2 Corinthians 9.

<sup>32</sup> Philippians 2:1.

<sup>33</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.

<sup>34</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:25.

<sup>36</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:11.

Although it is acknowledged that Paul was not attempting to enunciate the doctrine of the Trinity (albeit he set in motion a train of thinking which eventually made it necessary to go through that procedure with all its controversies) it is clear, as Dewar says, that:

Paul thought of the Holy Spirit as a person distinct both from the Father and the Son . . . Paul is fundamentally trinitarian in all his epistles and thinks of the Holy Spirit in full personal terms . . . In some mysterious way the believer shares in a mystic fellowship which is the creative work of the Holy Spirit, and by sharing in this fellowship he is brought into union with the Risen Christ.<sup>37</sup>

Dewar continues, in discussing the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit:

. . . there was from the first in the Christian Church a clear and definite belief in the personal Holy Spirit who descended upon the disciples of our Lord at Pentecost, and thereby fashioned a new creation -- or, to speak more accurately (sic), completely refashioned and re-created the old Israel and turned it into the Catholic Church. The earliest name by which this creation seems to have been known was the *koinonia* or fellowship of the holy Spirit; sometimes just 'the fellowship' (Acts 2.42). In this fellowship there was an experience of 'togetherness' which was unique . . . this 'togetherness' is still the most distinctively Christian 'thing' in the world. It

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<sup>37</sup> Dewar, p. 74.

was, and is, symbolized by the one loaf in the breaking of the bread . . . To be a Christian was to share an intensely corporate experience.<sup>38</sup>

After exploring the text-in-context, that is, after taking into account the exegetical questions, the study now moves to the reception of this Pauline text in the life of the early Church.

### iii. *Koinonia* in the Patristic Period

The phenomenon of the survival of the Pauline Blessing, the Grace, from the time of Paul's writing it to the church at Corinth, to present day Christian liturgy, begs investigation. Why has it survived, how has it been used and interpreted, what meaning has it for the new millennium?

As a first step in this phase of the study, attention was directed to the writers of the Ante and Post-Nicene patristic period, by reference to *Biblia Patristica*.<sup>39</sup> The *Biblia Patristica* is in five volumes, the Table of Contents of these being:

Volume I	Origene a Clement d'Alexandria et Tertullian,
Volume II	Le troisieme siecle (Origene excepte).
Volume III	Origene

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74-75.

<sup>39</sup> *Index des citations et allusions biblique dans la litterature patristique.* Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. This publication "cherchait a realiser un fichier des citations et allusions biblique des Peres en inventorant, reportant et classant tous les passages de toute la litterature chretienne ancienne ou il est fait reference explicite ou allusive a la Bible.

All references to Second Corinthians Chapter 13, verse 13 (or verses 14 or 15 in some instances) were noted.

There were a few citations from the earliest centuries, for example in *The Gospel of Nicodemus* which cites a verse 15 of Second Corinthians Chapter 13, as a closing benediction, saying:

and the love of God, even the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.<sup>40</sup>

The most extensive quotations were found in the fourth century.

Basil of Caesarea writes against Sabellius, who maintained that nowhere in scripture is the Spirit described as glorified together "with" the Father and the Son, instead ascribing glory "in Him." Specifically, in Chapter XXV of "On the Spirit" headed:

Wherein it is proved that scripture uses the words "in" or "by" in place of "with;" Wherein also it is proved that the word "and" has the same force as the word "with."

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<sup>40</sup> Alexander Roberts, et al., eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. [ANF]. Volume 8. p. 438.

This whole chapter is based on grammatical argument as to the relative meanings of "in", "by", "with" and "and." Basil cites the Pauline Blessing text as evidence that "and" is a valid connector, and goes on to maintain that "with" would be equally valid.<sup>41</sup> Other texts used in his argument are:

Rom 8:32: He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?

1 Cor 2:12: Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

Gal 4:6: And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!"

Ps 66:13: I will come into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows,

Ps 105:37: Then he led forth Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among his tribes who stumbled.

Ps 44:9: Yet thou hast cast us off and abased us, and hast not gone out with our armies

Eph. 2:18: for through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Matt 28:10: Then Jesus said to them "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.

Rom 15:30: I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf.

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<sup>41</sup> Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, [NPNF 2], Volume 8, p. 36-37.



Gregory of Nyssa, in Chapter 16 of Book 1 "Against Eunomius," writes against the Eunomian teaching that the nature of the Holy Spirit is subject to that of the Father and the Son. Citing the Pauline Blessing, he points out that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" preceding "the love of God" does not imply that God is inferior to Jesus, and, by extension, that "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" being in the third position does not imply an inferiority.<sup>42</sup> He buttresses his argument by referring also to John 10:30, "I and the Father are one," along with other scriptural texts, namely:

1 Cor 2 4: and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

2 Tim 2:14: Remind them of this, and charge them before the Lord to avoid disputing about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.

2 Cor 1:22: he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Rom 8:11: If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you.

2 Tim 4:1: I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

Eph 2:5: even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Heb 3:7: Therefore, when the Holy Spirit says "Today when you hear his voice. . .

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<sup>42</sup> Schaff. *NPNF.2*. Volume 5. p. 54.

Heb 10:15: **And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us. . .**

Eph 6:17-19: **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all time in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.**

Cyril of Jerusalem, in *Catechetical Lecture XVII*, cites the **Pauline Blessing** as evidence "that the Holy Spirit subsists, and lives, and speaks, and foretells." In a footnote, he also cites *Second Corinthians 1:22* "**But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee**"<sup>43</sup>

Extensive use was also made of the set of other volumes of selected writings of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers, in which additional references to the subject text were located

Chryostom, in *Homilies on First Corinthians*, cites the **Pauline Blessing** in evidence of the equal honor of all members of the Trinity regardless of the sequence in which they are named.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Schaff. *NPNF.2.* volume 7. p. 132.

<sup>44</sup> Philip Schaff. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Father. First Series.* [NPNF.1]. Volume 12. p. 114.

In the dubious or spurious writings of Gregory Thaumaturgus, page 45, paragraph XX, we read:

and that the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped without either separation or alienation, is taught us by Paul who says in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."<sup>45</sup>

Theodoret, in Letter CXLVI to John Oeconomus, combatting a blasphemy that says "Christ" should be omitted from the liturgy, cites the Pauline Blessing as evidence of the divinity of Jesus as the Christ and as the Son.<sup>46</sup>

Didymus the Blind writes:

Whoever communicates with the Holy Ghost communicates immediately with the Father and the Son. And whoever shares in the glory of the Father has this glory from the Son, contributed through the Holy Spirit. So it is proved that in everything there is one same operation for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

At the end of the Second Epistle which Paul wrote to the Corinthians he says, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the charity of God, and the communication of the Holy Ghost be with you all." From

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<sup>45</sup> Roberts. *ANF*. Volume 6. p. 45..

<sup>46</sup> Schaff. *NPNF.2*. Volume 3. p. 317.

these words is shown one assumption of the Trinity; since whoever receives the grace of Christ has it as much through the administration of the Father as through the distribution of the Holy Spirit.<sup>47</sup>

Ambrose writes:

The peace and grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one, so also is their charity one, which showed itself chiefly in the redemption of man. Their communion with man is also one.

For as the love of the Father and the Son is one, so, too, we have shown that this love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, and is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and that there is communion between the Father and the Son is plain (John 1:3) and also "The communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."<sup>48</sup>

and

Nor do we read only of the peace and grace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but also, faithful Emperor, of the love and communion.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Johannes Quasten, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature, in Patrology*, Volume 3, p.94.

<sup>48</sup> Schaff, *NPNF*, 2, Volume 10, p. 110, citing Ambrose, "Of the Holy Spirit," Book 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148, "On the Holy Spirit", Book I, Chapter XII.

This is from Book I of *Three Books of St Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, on the Holy Spirit, to the Emperor Gratian*. Ambrose also cites the Pauline Blessing<sup>50</sup> to show that Father, Spirit and Son abide in one and the same.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch, in writing to the Magnesians enjoining unity in the church says:

Be eager, then, to be confirmed in the precepts of the Lord and the apostles that "in everything you may prosper," as to flesh and spirit, as to faith and love, in the Son and the Father [and in the Spirit], in the beginning and in the end . . . .<sup>51</sup>

Three facts of interest emerged from this study:

- 1 There were, in all, only seventeen references found.
2. In the subject writings, no patristic writer appeared to see any need to elaborate on the meaning of *fellowship*. The closest that anyone approached this was Cyril of Jerusalem in Catechetical Lecture XVII, where he wrote:

The fellowship of this Holy Spirit he bestowed on the Apostles; for it is written 'And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.'

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* Book III.

<sup>51</sup> William R. Schoedel. *Ignatius of Antioch, a Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. p. 130-131. Magnesians 13. Note, however, that he suggests that the words "and in the Spirit" are a later interpolation to support a triadic formula.

3 The writers who cited the verse used it as a proof text, for one of two reasons, either to counter arguments against the divinity of the Holy Spirit, or against the subservient position of the Son.

This confirms the findings of patristic scholars, that the study of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church did not receive much attention until the fourth century. Then, it was mainly developed in relation to the Arian disputes, and was more focussed on the "holiness" and the "divinity" of the Holy Spirit, rather than the *koinonia* of Second Corinthians.

## CHAPTER TWO -- THE PAULINE BLESSING IN THE LITURGY

### Introduction

Of all the writings of Saint Paul, probably the verse most often heard and said in our churches today is the one which is the subject of this study. Its survival as part of the Christian liturgy, both in the Eastern and Western churches, is a remarkable phenomenon and must indicate that, even though we may not define it, we have a sense of a treasure-house of meaning in it.

#### i. The Early Liturgies

Nicholeus Liesel<sup>52</sup> points out that our knowledge of the early Christian liturgy is meagre as far as the first two centuries are concerned, in the absence of documents that spell out the details of the worship services. There are, however marked traces of synagogue influence in the early prayers of the Christian church. For example, the hours of prayer mentioned in Acts<sup>53</sup> - the third, the sixth, and the ninth - were the daily hours of prayer in the synagogue. This is not surprising given that the early Christians, being Jews, continued to worship in the synagogue until forced out by tensions. In the Jewish service, the Eighteen Benedictions were included, all or in part, in each of the three times of

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<sup>52</sup> Nicholeus Liesel. *The Eucharistic Liturgies of the Eastern Churches*. p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> Acts 2:15. 10:9. 3:1

prayer, and we find that in the *Didache* there is the instruction to say the Lord's Prayer three times daily. Later, as mentioned by Origen, Cyprian and Tertullian, two other prayer times were mentioned, cock-crow and before retiring. These rules of prayer later became the Services of the Hours.<sup>54</sup>

The primitive church celebrated the Eucharist in a manner similar to the ritual of a Jewish meal - the greeting and response "The Lord be with you, and with thy spirit", the prayer of thanksgiving over the cup "Let us give thanks unto our Lord God. It is meet and right so to do," and the action of the celebrant in taking the cup into his hands.

Two liturgical texts survive from the end of the fourth century, one from Egypt and one from Syria.

One is the *Euchologion of Serapion of Thmuis*, the prayer book of the Bishop of Thmuis in Lower Egypt, AD 339-362. It contains the bishop's own collection of private prayers. There is a long address to God before the Preface, then the Sanctus, the Words of Institution, and an Epiclesis invoking the presence of the Logos rather than the Spirit.

From the Syrian tradition we find *The Apostolic Constitution*, written in the name of Clement, Bishop of Rome at the end of the first century, but in reality coming from the late fourth century. Book VIII is a revision of *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, but

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<sup>54</sup> T. S. Garrett *Christian Worship, An Introductory Outline*, p. 18.



the "Clementine Liturgy" contained therein shows little influence from Hippolytus.

Elements of the Eucharistic service are:

- Lections from the Old and New Testament
- Dismissal of the various non-communicants<sup>55</sup>
- The prayers of the people
- A prayer by the bishop
- The kiss of peace
- The washing of hands
- The "fencing of the table" by the deacon
- Presentation of the gifts by the deacon to the bishop
- Sursum corda
- A preface giving thanks to God
- The Sanctus
- The Narrative of the Institution
- An anamnesis and the offering of the bread and cup
- The epiclesis invoking the Holy Spirit
- Intercessions, Doxology, and Amen
- Administration of the bread and cup by the bishop and deacon
- A call to thanksgiving
- Prayers by the bishop
- Dismissal by the deacon "Depart in peace."

## ii. The Pauline Blessing in the Early Liturgies

The early church was not long in incorporating the Pauline Blessing into its literature and its liturgy. Part of that is undoubtedly due to its suggestion of the idea of the Trinity, one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It appears twice in the eucharistic liturgy of *The Apostolic Constitution*. The first time it is used, it follows the same order as

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<sup>55</sup> These were catechumens, energuments, the illuminated, the penitents. Each group comes forward in turn as called by the deacon, who says a litany of intercession, with the people responding "Lord have mercy." This was followed by a blessing by the bishop, and the deacon's bidding "Go forth in peace "

in Saint Paul's text, i.e. Christ, Father, Holy Spirit. In its second use, the succession of persons follows the classic trinitarian formula; Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The Anaphora commences:

**Acclamation**

The bishop then begins the prayer, standing in front of the altar: he is surrounded by the priests and splendidly adorned.<sup>56</sup> With his hand he signs his forehead with the triumphant sign of the cross and says "The grace of Almighty God, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

It is to be noted that although the sequence of persons is changed from Paul's, the sequence of the blessings, or gifts, remains unchanged: grace, love, communion.

Also, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari (3rd or 5th century), commences with:

**Acclamation**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and always and for ever and ever.  
Amen.

The *Euchologion of Serapion of Thmuis*, prayer 14, "Prayer at the breaking of the bread," commences with:

Make us worthy too to participate in thee. . .

explained as:

"To participate in thee," literally, "of thy participation." The word participation, *koinonia*, is the technical term for participation in God (1

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<sup>56</sup> This is a far cry from the garb of simple fishermen or that of an itinerant prophet.

Cor. 1,9: "You have been called to participation in his Son"); it also means "communion" which is participation in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10,16: "Participation in the blood. . . in the body").

### **iii. The Eastern Liturgies**

In the third century can be seen the emergence of specific forms of worship, in such centres of culture and learning as Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome. By the fourth century, further development took place throughout the Christian world, resulting in worship protocols which became accepted in various parts of the empire. Nicholeus Liesel says:

In the Western part of the Roman empire, the Roman rite flourished with hardly a rival. Not so in the Eastern provinces and beyond the limits of the empire. In those areas five major forms arose and developed into mature Rites, namely the Rites originally proper to:

1. **ANTIOCH**, which influenced and eventually dominated that at Jerusalem,
2. **ALEXANDRIA**, now called Coptic or Egyptian,
3. **CAPPADOCIA**, with its strongest sphere of influence at Byzantium, where it attained its highest perfection
4. **EAST SYRIA**, extending into Mesopotamia and Persia
5. **ARMENIA**<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Liesel. p. 69 ff.

In the descendants of these -- Syrian, Malankarese, Maronite, Greek, Melkite, Russian, Ukrainian, Chaldean, Malabarese, Armenian -- the Pauline Blessing forms part of the liturgy of our time, specifically:

**in the Syrian Rite**, introducing the preface, "The love of the Father, the grace of the Son, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"

**in the Malankarese Rite**, "The love of God the Father, the grace of his only-begotten Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"

**in the Maronite Rite**, "The love of God the Father, the grace of his only-begotten Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you, my brethren, forever!"

**in the Greek Rite**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"

**in the Melkite Rite**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"

**in the Russian Rite**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"

**in the Ukrainian Rite**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you."

**in the Chaldean Eucharistic Liturgy**, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of us, now and forever and for all eternity!"

**in the Malagarese Rite, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of us.!"**

**in the Armenian Rite, "The grace, love, and divine sanctifying power of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit be with all of you!"<sup>58</sup>**

#### **iv. Contemporary "Western" Liturgies**

Churches of the West - Roman, Lutheran, Anglican and protestant - also reflect the long tradition of incorporating the Pauline Blessing in prominent moments of the liturgy. In the current Canadian Roman Catholic missal, it forms an optional greeting at the gathering of the community. The Pauline Blessing first entered into the **Anglican liturgy** with the prayer book of 1559 when it was added to the Litany. It was added to Morning and Evening Prayer in the **Book of Common Prayer** of 1662. It now appears as the closing benediction of those two Services, the Litany, the Services for Baptism of Children and for Those of Riper Years, at the close of the Service for Young People, in Prayers to be used at Sea, and forms of Prayer to be used in Families.

In a more recent Anglican prayer Book, the **Book of Alternative Services**,<sup>59</sup> it is an optional form of dismissal at Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Home Prayers. But, as

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<sup>58</sup> This variation may reflect the monophysite heritage of the area. See further F. J. Foakes Jackson. *The History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Times to A.D. 461*. p. 476-8, 552-5.

<sup>59</sup> *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre. 1985.

in the Roman rite, it is the greeting at the Gathering of the Community for the Holy Eucharist, for Confirmation, for the Ordination of a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, and for Thanksgiving on the Anniversary of a Parish.

Lutheran usage is similar to the Anglican, with an interesting sidelight: The Liturgy of the Federation of Lutheran Churches in India has borrowed some elements from Eastern anaphoras, and the *sursum corda* is preceded by the Pauline grace, as in the Eastern liturgies.<sup>60</sup>

As pointed out elsewhere in this study, we consider that Saint Paul's motivation in the use of the formula was to impress upon the church at Corinth the concept of participation, with each other, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the blessings of Christ and of God. It is therefore probably more appropriate now to use the formula as the greeting at the gathering of the community, to set the stage for a feeling of *koinonia* as the service proceeds.

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<sup>60</sup> T. S. Garrett. *Christian Worship*. p. 126.

**PART II --HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

## **CHAPTER THREE -- THE QUEST FOR ECCLESIAL FELLOWSHIP**

### **i. Introduction**

"The fellowship of the Holy Spirit" opens up for us the whole field of oneness with God and with our fellows. This fellowship has both a vertical and a horizontal component. It can be considered as analogous to the Christian symbol, the cross itself, formed by the union of these two components. The vertical component points upward from earth to God, the wide-spreading horizontal arms indicate the breadth of the fellowship of those whose faith also points upward to God.

This fellowship encompasses Saint Paul's teaching of the unity of believers as the body of Christ. If the one next to me in the pew and I share in the same fellowship, then we are one in faith. By extension, if those in the neighbouring church also share in this fellowship, we again are one in faith. As an example of inductive reasoning, if this is so, then there are no bounds to the further extension of this unity in faith -- as indeed is the enunciated goal of Christianity's founder -- "that all may be one."<sup>61</sup>

In this connection John Paul II writes:

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<sup>61</sup> John 17:21.



The gift of the Spirit ultimately means a call to friendship, in which the transcendent depths of God become in some way opened to participation on the part of man. The Second Vatican Council teaches: The invisible God out of the abundance of his love speaks to men as friends and lives among them, so that he may invite and take them into fellowship with himself.<sup>62</sup> . . . (the Spirit) becomes the head of humanity: of the people of every nation, every race, every country and culture, every language and continent, all called to salvation.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the reflection on *koinonia* implies a need for reflection on ecumenism.

## ii. The Twentieth Century Quest

The ideal of ecumenism is as old as Christianity, evidenced by the great High Priestly prayer, "that they may all be one,"<sup>64</sup> and the Great Commission, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>65</sup> In the intervening centuries the ideal has suffered grievously, not only due to heresies and schisms, but also due to the misguided enthusiasm of zealots of the

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<sup>62</sup> Austin Flannery, ed., "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*" in *The Basic Sixteen Documents, Vatican Council II.*, p. 98.

<sup>63</sup> John Paul II. *On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World.* para 52. p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> John 17:21.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 28:19.

church and state who have used "cruel and unusual" methods of persuasion to enforce conformity or punish what was considered as apostasy.<sup>66</sup>

The word *Ecumenism* is of Greek origin, and originally referred to the whole of the inhabited world, or to the whole of the Roman Empire, as in Luke's Christmas story, when Caesar Augustus called for the registration of the whole Roman world, the *oikoumene*. The term soon lost its political aspect, and became a word applying to the whole Christian church, implying the validity of its teaching, as in the ecumenical councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, which spoke for the whole church, and as embodied in the Nicene Creed.

Ecumenicity seeks to restore a real and visible unity of faith among all who call themselves Christian. It does not seek to establish a union, nor uniformity of praxis, nor a monolithic bureaucracy. But it does seek to achieve common acceptance of the essentials of the Christian faith, a rapprochement in friendship and mutual recognition, and respect for the separated fragments of Christianity.

This search is not a new one, for there is a nagging feeling of guilt among Christians at the divisions of Christendom. Even though we are comfortable, encouraged, inspired, and refreshed, within the walls of our own denominations, and feel that others are missing the

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<sup>66</sup> It can be added, too, that these methods have not in the past been restricted to Christianity, but have been seen in Judaism and Islam.

richness of our heritage, yet when (and if) we ponder upon our Lord's prayer "that they may all be one" we come face to face with our failure to live up to his ideal.

The result in our time is the scandal of divided Christendom, and a scandal which, by and large, does not scandalize. Thomas Ryan writes:

The abnormality, the deformity, of a divided church has become normal, and we are not necessarily unhappy with or disturbed by it."

He writes that his friends' reaction to his dedication to the search for unity was "Ecumenism? Christian unity? It's not even an issue in our experience of Church life!"<sup>67</sup>

He says that we focus on Belfast or Beirut because of the violence arising from disunity, but that "a similarly intolerable situation" exists in our own cities, where Christian unity mostly takes the form of peaceful coexistence.<sup>68</sup>

Now, after the East-West schism, the Reformation, and the emergence of many denominational churches, modern ecumenism represents the twentieth century effort to regain the unity of Christianity lost during the past thousand years. As already pointed out, the problems are daunting. There is a legacy of centuries of distrust and hatred. There are memories of great cruelty done in the name of Christ. There are vested interests, both personal and corporate. There is suspicion. There is misunderstanding.

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<sup>67</sup> Thomas Ryan. *Tales of Christian Unity, the Adventures of an Ecumenical Pilgrim*, p. 275.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*

There is inertia. It is so much easier to divide and separate than it is to come together and rebuild. Someone has said "We are better at building walls than bridges." One is reminded of a story about an accomplished surgeon who was a dinner guest. The host took great pride in carefully and expertly carving the turkey, and when finished said "Now doctor, what do you think of that job?" The surgeon replied "Let's see you put it together again."

It must be stressed that *unity* in this sense is not synonymous with *union*. The thrust towards organic *union* has at times failed even when achieving apparent success. In 1925 in Canada the Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians entered into a compact to create the United Church of Canada. One result was that one-third of the Presbyterian constituency refused to accept the union and, weakened by the schism, continues to exist (albeit with confidence and vigour) as the Presbyterian Church in Canada. A later effort to achieve union between the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, after much study, came to naught, partly at least on matters of ecclesiology.

Alternatively, the search for unity, that is, unity of belief, has had a happier existence, and continues to move forward with energy and good will. The hope is in the ecumenical movement of ever-increasing momentum. Jurgen Moltmann comments:

The path of the ecumenical movement is, relatively speaking, clear enough; it is already leading from anathema to dialogue. In practical matters it has led further, from dialogue to cooperation. It will lead from cooperation

between divided churches to toleration and the arguing-out of differences within the one church. The way leads from cooperation to council.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, if Christians do more than pay lip service to the words of their Founder, and to the liturgy in which they participate week by week, this search must press on. There are no bounds -- except those which from the earliest times have been set by human action through doctrinal differences, credal controversies, excommunications, schisms, persecutions, killing, political manoeuvring, and war.

Although, as stated elsewhere in this paper, the "modern" ecumenical movement is dated from the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, there were serious efforts made in the nineteenth century when there was "a growing urge for spiritual unity. Theocratic utopianism was just in the air."<sup>70</sup> In an attempt to restore the unity of Christendom, the Holy Alliance of three monarchs, a Roman Catholic Austrian, a Lutheran Prussian, and an Eastern Orthodox Russian, Alexander I, was formed to create a federation of all Christians, across boundaries, regardless of confessional allegiances. Although as a political venture it was abortive, yet it indicated the spirit of the times. Even if successful, it would not have resulted in unity in the desired sense, since it did not address the basic requirement of an agreed truth.

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<sup>69</sup> Jurgen Moltmann. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit, a Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology*. p. 11.

<sup>70</sup> George Florovsky. *Aspects of Church History: Orthodox Ecumenism in the Nineteenth Century*. p. 215.

Because of Alexander's interest, the Russian Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and National Instruction was created, as was the Russian Bible Society, with ties to the British and Foreign Bible Society. The objective of the Russian society was to publish and distribute the Bible in all languages spoken in the Russian Empire. Within ten years, in forty-three languages or dialects, more than seven hundred thousand copies were distributed, along with a mystical ideology, an "ecumenism of the heart."<sup>71</sup> This ecumenism also fell short of the aim of unity in doctrine, since it encouraged people to disregard doctrinal matters and seek communion in mystical exercises. Florovsky comments "there was an awakening of the heart, but no awakening of the mind."<sup>72</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century serious efforts were made by Anglicans in England, and Episcopalians in the United States to establish close relations with the Eastern church in Russia. In the end these came to naught because of the firmly-held Orthodox conviction that the Eastern Church was the only true church, all others being in schism, not the least because of the inclusion of the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed.

Parenthetically, it may be noted that the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church in 1978 stated:

The Conference . . . requests that all member Churches of the Anglican Communion should consider omitting the *filioque* from the Nicene Creed

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

and that the **Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission** through the **Anglican Consultative Council** should assist them in presenting the theological issues to their appropriate synodical bodies and should be responsible for any necessary consultation with other Churches of the Western tradition.

Although the **Anglican Book of Common Prayer of Canada** in its present form retains the phrase "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," the newer **Book of Alternative Services** omits "and the Son" in accordance with the **Lambeth statement**.<sup>73</sup> This must qualify as an ecumenical gesture.

In addition to the realization that we do injury to the **Body of Christ** by divisions, motivation for the ecumenical effort has arisen from other sources.

The first of these came from the mission field where Christian workers, themselves a small minority in non-Christian countries, found their efforts hampered because of competing missionary activity. This was a situation not easily understood by the native population, which was unaware of denominationalism in the home countries. **Henry P. Hamann** highlights this:

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<sup>73</sup> The exception to this statement is that the **Book of Alternative Services** contains for the Eucharist "A form in the Language of the **Book of Common Prayer 1962**" as an alternative service within the **Alternative Services**!

The scandal and offense of mutually antagonistic churches became really a burden in the mission fields of Asia and Africa . . . The work of Christian missions, in spite of comity arrangements, was rendered immeasurably more difficult through disunion among Christian missionaries themselves.<sup>74</sup>

A series of interdenominational missionary conferences to address the problem culminated in the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910. This conference has somewhat arbitrarily, but with good reason, been considered as the beginning of the twentieth century ecumenical effort. It gave rise to a journal, *The International Review of Missions* (1912), and, in 1921, to the formation of The International Missionary Council. After meetings of that Council in 1928 at Jerusalem, 1938 at Tambaram near Madras, 1947 at Whitby, Ontario, 1952 at Willingen, Germany, 1957 in Ghana, and then in 1961 at New Delhi, it was integrated with the World Council of Churches (WCC), and its work carried on by the division of World Missions and Evangelism.

Another outcome of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference was the realization that questions of faith and order were essential matters to be addressed for the unity of the church. Under the leadership of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a conference on Faith and Order was held at Lausanne in 1927, and a second such conference, the World Conference on Faith and Order, at Edinburgh in 1937. As with the International Missionary Council, the Faith

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<sup>74</sup> Henry P. Hamann. *Unity and Fellowship and Ecumenicity. Contemporary Theology Series.* p. 12



and Order organization became part of the World Council of Churches when that body was formed at Amsterdam in 1948, and is now the Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC. In addition to representation from the churches of the WCC, it may include theologians from non-member churches. These have come from, among others, the Roman Catholic Church.

Faith and Order has been called the conscience of the ecumenical movement<sup>75</sup> and stresses, as does the statement of the WCC itself, that unity at the expense of truth would not be unity

Still another influential ecumenical organization which is continued in the WCC is Life and Work, and a somewhat parallel entity, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. Its credo, in the words of Swedish Archbishop Nathan Soderblom, is expressed thus:

We say deliberately that in the region of moral or social questions we desire all Christians to begin at once to act together as if they were one body, in one visible fellowship. This could be done by all alike without any injury to theological principles. And to bring all Christians together to act in this one department of life as one visible body would involve no loss and

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

manifold gain. We should get to know and trust one another; we should learn to act together; we should thus prepare the way for fuller unity.<sup>76</sup>

While earlier conferences on the various aspects of ecumenicity were attended by interested individuals, at the Stockholm conference of Life and Work most of the delegates were representative of their respective denominations. This highlighted the desire and involvement of those denominations themselves to advance the cause of unity.

An extremely important contribution to the cause of unity among Christians has come from the Roman Catholic Church, following and as a result of, The Second Vatican Council. While retreating not a whit from its foundational belief in the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome as the legitimate successor of Saint Peter, the Council speaks many words of respect, understanding, love, and gratitude to the "separated brethren," and expresses the same concerns for Christian unity that motivate the activities of the WCC and its members.

In the Decree on Ecumenism there are words which bear a remarkable resemblance to those of Soderblom quoted above:

Before the whole world let all Christians confess their faith in God, one and three, in the incarnate Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord. United in their

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<sup>76</sup> Nils Ehrenstrom. *Movements for International Friendship and Life and Work 1925-1948* in *Rouse and Neil* p. 572. citing Nathan Soderblom.

efforts, and with mutual respect, let them bear witness to our common hope which does not play us false. Since cooperation in social matters is so wide-spread today, all people without exception are called to work together; with much greater reason is this true of all who believe in God; but most of all, it is specially true of all Christians, since they bear the seal of Christ's name. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses that bond which already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. Such cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where social and technological evolution is taking place. It should contribute to a just appreciation of the dignity of the human person, to the promotion of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, and the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit. It should use every possible means to relieve the afflictions of our times, such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, lack of housing, and the unequal distribution of wealth. Through such cooperation, all believers in Christ are able to learn easily how they can understand each other better and esteem each other more, and how the road to the unity of Christians may be made smooth.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Flannery. *Decree on Ecumenism, Chapter II, section 12 in Vatican II*, p. 511-2.

The Council notes that, increasingly, divided Christians long for unity, and take part in the ecumenical movement, not only as individuals but also as members of their own churches, and:

almost everyone, though in different ways, longs for the one visible church of God, a church truly universal and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God.<sup>78</sup>

Ecumenism has two foundational beliefs, so generally accepted as to be beyond debate. The first of these is a theological belief, and the second is a practical belief of necessity.

The theological belief is that since Christ is one, so the church, the Body of Christ, must be one, and recognizable as one. If the Body of Christ is divided, Christ is divided, which, in the words of a logician, constitutes *reductio ad absurdum*. Thus division is a sin against the unity of God, and the existence of separate churches is a sign of that sin. Furthermore, the unity called for is not for the sake of the church, but for the sake of the world and its salvation.<sup>79</sup>

The second foundational belief is that for the church to be able to operate without disunion in the mission field, to be able to speak with one voice in the preaching of the

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p 500.

<sup>79</sup> See John 17: 20-23.

gospel, and to be able to defend the faith, and to have any appreciable influence in society, it must have an actual and a visible unity.

Sociologists will feel that this defensive posture is the real motivation for the ecumenical thrust; theologians will maintain that the movement is one seeking for a return to roots, to the truth which has ever been a part of Christianity. Hamann quotes Visser 't Hooft:

It would seem that there is more truth in the sociological interpretation than most theologians are willing to admit, and more truth in the theological understanding than the sociologist accept.<sup>80</sup>

He goes on to say that there is little doubt but that the theological concerns are primary, and the other secondary, and were it not for the theological concerns the movement would not exist.

The division resides mainly in the cognitive meaning of the Christian message; the constitutive and effective meaning have large areas of agreement. While awaiting common cognitive meaning, there is work to do in the redemptive and constructive roles of the Christian church in human society.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Hamann. p. 18-19.

<sup>81</sup> Lonergan. p. 368.

The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission has produced its *Final Proposal: Joint Declaration On The Doctrine Of Justification*, dated 1999. It was built upon a dialogue that has taken place over the preceding twenty-five or more years. This is a joint declaration between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, and its significance and scope is enunciated therein:

The understanding of the doctrine of justification set forth in this Declaration shows that a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and Catholics. In the light of this consensus the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification . . . are acceptable.<sup>82</sup>

The Declaration continues:

Our consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification must come to influence the life and teachings of our churches. Here it must prove itself. In this respect, there are still questions of varying importance which need further clarification. These include, among other topics, the relationship between the Word of God and church doctrine, as well as ecclesiology, authority in the church, ministry, the sacraments, and the relation between justification and social ethics. We are convinced that the consensus we have reached offers a solid base for this clarification.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> *Joint Declaration On The Doctrine Of Justification*, Section 5, paragraph 40, 1999.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, paragraph 43.

**We give thanks to the Lord for this decisive step forward on the way to overcoming the division of the church. We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us further toward that visible unity which is Christ's will.<sup>84</sup>**

This declaration was signed by the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic churches on October 31, 1999. Most significantly, this was the anniversary of the posting of Martin Luther's *Theses* on the church door at Wittenberg.

From the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue table has come another example of rapprochement, with the publication in the spring of 1999, of *The Gift of Authority* by The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Promoting, as it does, the suggestion that the Pope should be the head of both churches, it has aroused considerable reaction within the Anglican fold, especially among evangelicals. It has also had an unfavourable response from liberal Roman Catholics in the designation of papal authority as "a gift to be shared." Anglicans - and Roman Catholics - have been urged to avoid an emotional response but rather to look at the "quite significant" nuances in the text.

It has been said that the Anglican Church, straddling as it does both the Protestant and the Catholic fields, is in a unique position to advance the cause of Christian unity. Its strength lies also in its own well-established diversity, encompassing High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church - a microcosm of ecumenism. Nor has it been lagging in such a quest.

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* paragraph 44.

There have been, and continue to be, conversations with the Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, in addition to those with the United Church of Canada referred to previously. Full communion has already been achieved between Anglican and Old Catholics. Significant developments are emanating from the conversations with Rome.

Far reaching developments have also occurred in relationships between Anglicans and Lutherans, both in Canada and in the United States. John Simons has pointed out:

Dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans is not new. In 1548, as the unity of western Christendom was fracturing along a number of fault lines, the great Lutheran theologian, Philip Melanchthon, suggested to Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury and architect of the English reformation, that a summary of "necessary doctrine" ought to be published in response to the deliberations of the Council of Trent. . . "in order that an illustrious testimony of doctrine, delivered with grave authority, may be extant among all nations, and that posterity may have a rule to follow." Melanchthon's suggestion, which corresponded to Cranmer's own wish for a General Council, was never acted on; but this early instance of proposed Anglican-Lutheran collaboration . . . reveals a perceived consensus of the two traditions as well as a common ecumenical aspiration.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> John Simons. "Towards Full Communion: Anglicans and Lutherans in Agreement" in *Ecumenism*. No. 135. September 1999, p. 3.



In Canada, full communion between the two churches has been accepted, and will become formal in the year 2001. In the United States, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has voted in a church-wide assembly to establish full communion with the Episcopal Church in the United States, and, in a separate vote, with the Moravian Church. The agreement with the Episcopal Church will come before its general convention next year.

"Full communion" is defined as

... a relationship between two distinct churches of communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of each church would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and there would be freedom of ordained ministers to officiate sacramentally in either church. . . .<sup>86</sup>

For fifty years the World Council of Churches has been the vehicle for multilateral conversations for the promotion of Christian unity. The Council is composed of member churches, associate member churches, and associate councils. As of 1998 the Council had 411 members from all parts of the world: 103 from Africa, 83 from Asia, 14 from the Caribbean, 116 from Europe, 28 from Latin America, 13 from the Middle East, 34 from

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<sup>86</sup> *Called to Full Communion: A Study Resource for Lutheran-Anglican Relations*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre. 1998. p. 9.

North America, and 20 from the Pacific.<sup>87</sup> A serious short-coming is the absence of the Roman Catholic Church from its membership, although this is somewhat ameliorated by the active participation of Roman Catholic theologians in the Faith and Order Commission of the Council, and in the Joint Working Group of the Council and the Roman Catholic Church.

### **iii. Responses and Perspectives**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting in Canberra, in 1991, adopted the draft statement titled *The Unity of the Church as Koinonia* prepared by the Faith and Order Standing Commission. The Joint Working Group (JWG) between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) agreed that a small group would prepare a study document with ecumenical reflections and a short historical summary. This summary follows.

The progressive development of the idea of unity is illustrated by the concepts emerging from successive meetings of the Faith and Order Standing Commission and the WCC.

#### **Edinburgh, 1937**

At the Second World Conference of the Faith and Order movement, at Edinburgh in 1937, the model of organic union envisaged the coming together of different churches on an

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<sup>87</sup> Diane Kessler, ed., *Together on the Way*, p. 352-362.

agreed basis of faith and order in a "united church," and the subsequent formation of the Church of South India in 1947 was hailed as the example of this unity. There is concern, however, that important elements of doctrine and liturgy previously held by the uniting churches have been lost.

### **New Delhi, 1961**

Continuing to stress the concept of organic union, the Faith and Order Commission, meeting at St. Andrews in 1960, prepared a text on unity, and in 1961 the Assembly of the WCC meeting at New Delhi quoted from it as to "the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his church. . . being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship . . . [and should be] united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages."<sup>88</sup>

Here also the criteria for visible unity were defined: common adherence to one apostolic faith, common baptism and shared eucharist, mutual recognition of members and ministry, common prayer, witness, and service.

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<sup>88</sup> Quoted in *the Unity of the Church As Koinonia: Ecumenical Perspectives on the 1991 Canberra Statement of Unity, a Study Document requested by the Joint Working Group*, p. 31.

### **Uppsala, 1968**

The WCC Assembly looked toward “a truly universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life and witness . . . when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians and lead the way into the future.”

### **Salamanca, 1973**

The reception of the “conciliar” idea into the theological discussions was highlighted in the Faith and Order document “The Unity of the Church - Next Steps.”

### **Nairobi, 1975.**

The WCC Assembly, working from the Salamanca report, adopted its own report “What Unity Requires” melding the New Delhi organic union concept with the universal concept of conciliarity in the words:

“The one Church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united . . . each Church aims at maintaining sustained and sustaining relationships with her sister churches, expressed in conciliar gatherings whenever required for the fulfilment of their common calling.”

### **Vancouver, 1983**

The WCC Assembly identified three essential marks of visible unity:

the common understanding and confession of the apostolic faith,

**the mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry, and common ways of decision-making and teaching authoritatively.**

The third of these remains on the agenda, but the first two have also been the basis for bilateral dialogues between Christian world communions, and encouragingly, with the strong participation of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, and with remarkable agreements and convergences. This has paved the way for another attempt to describe the goal of all ecumenical efforts.

#### **Etchmiadzin and Dunblane, 1990**

From these two meetings of the Faith and Order group emerged a study document for reference to the WCC Assembly to follow.

#### **Canberra, 1991**

Under the title "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling" the statement previously referred to as the "Canberra Declaration" was adopted. It "stands in obvious continuity with the earlier statements, especially with regard to the fundamental constituents of unity. But it reflects also the ongoing ecumenical discussion (including its refusal to propagate one particular model for implementing unity); it situates its formulations in a broader theological and historical framework and it adds a number of new elements."

These can be summarized as follows:

1. The field in which salvation is to be worked out is the whole of humanity and creation, all are to be brought into communion with God; the Church is the foretaste of this communion; its purpose is "to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the Kingdom.."
  
2. The "scandalous divisions" within the Church are obstacles in its way towards its mission of overcoming divisions based on age, gender, race, culture, and colour, and damage its credibility.
  
3. Nevertheless, the churches, through their involvement, experience, and study, can now recognize "a certain degree of communion already existing between them."
  
4. Unity as *Koinonia* will be evident as
  - a* the common confession of the apostolic faith
  - b* a common sacramental life in one baptism and one eucharistic fellowship
  - c* common recognition of members and ministry
  - d* a common witnessing to the gospel

*e* and the goal is for all churches to recognize in each other the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church in all its fullness.

5. Unity will be a unity in diversity -- diversity rooted in theological tradition, or historical cultural or ethnic contexts; but, a caveat, diversity has its limits when it hinders the common aims outlined above.

6. Seven challenges are issued to the churches as steps to take towards visible unity:

*a* to recognize each others' baptism on the basis of the *BEM* document.

*b* to recognize the apostolic faith as expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in the life and witness of one another.

*c* to consider, where appropriate, forms of eucharistic hospitality.

*d* to move towards mutual recognition of ministries.

*e* to endeavour, in word and deed, to give a common witness of the whole gospel.

*f* to recommit themselves to work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, linked with the search for sacramental communion of the Church.

g to help parishes and communities express locally the degree of communion that already exists.

Responses to the Declaration and to the study document were invited from ecumenical partners, and were received from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and United-Reform representatives. These are summarized herewith.

### **An Anglican Perspective**

Gillian R. Evans<sup>89</sup> refers to the Anglican Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888, which was intended to be an ecumenical document describing the minimum conditions for unity which she now sees restated in terms of an ecclesial *koinonia* - a term which came into ecumenical prominence in the introduction to ARCIC. Referring to "a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship," she points out that almost total agreement has been reached as to baptism, but that the one eucharistic fellowship, much to be desired, is still a goal to be reached. Calling for the extension of "hospitality" highlights the fact that a common family does not yet exist. Although acknowledging the significant convergence that has been achieved, Evans comments, ". . . it is a pity to speak of 'full' communion. The communion we seek should have no adjectives to qualify it."

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<sup>89</sup> Dr. Gillian R. Evans is Lecturer in the Department of History in the University of Cambridge, England



## **A Catholic Perspective**

Emmanuel Lanne<sup>90</sup> gives a Catholic perspective on the Canberra Declaration. He characterizes *koinonia* as a happy choice, relating this to Vatican II and the Decree on Ecumenism. He refers to ARCIC-I and ARCIC-II, with the Eucharist as the final sign of *koinonia*, episcopacy as service to it, and primacy as a visible link. He defines *koinonia* as a sacrament, a sign that God's purpose is being worked out, and the instrument by which this is happening.

Referring to conversations and joint studies with the Lutherans, he points out that these have focussed on a practical plan for regaining full communion; community is given through grace, first by the word, then the sacraments, and finally the ministry.

He comments that conversations between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches did not discuss *koinonia*, although they affirmed "the ministerial and instrumental role of the church in the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments." This calls for further reflection on the nature of ecclesial *koinonia*.

*Koinonia* entered into conversations with the World Methodist Council, and also is the basic theme in Pentecostal-RCC talks - see "Perspectives in Koinonia" (1989) re *koinonia*

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<sup>90</sup> Dom Emmanuel Lanne. OSB is a monk at the Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne, Belgium; he is editor of *Irenicon* and a member of the Commission on Faith and Order.

and the word of God, the Holy Spirit, the New Testament visions of *koinonia*, *koinonia* and baptism, *koinonia* in the life of the church.

Lanne says that where *koinonia* has had the most essential role is in Roman Catholic - Orthodox conversations, "where it encompasses the whole mystery of the church."<sup>91</sup>

He agrees with the Canberra Declaration as to the need for the common confession of the apostolic faith, a common sacramental life entered into by the one baptism and celebrated in one eucharistic fellowship, and a common life with members and ministries mutually recognized. He points out the significance of the words, "in its fullness," relating to the holy, catholic, and apostolic faith, because the Roman church recognizes elements, but not fullness in other churches.

Lanne feels that clarification of "conciliar forms" is needed. These may be important, but are not the only way to communion. The celebration of the one Eucharist is the keystone to full communion.

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<sup>91</sup> This refers to statements produced by the Joint Commission: *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982), *Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church* (1987), and *The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church* (1988).

### **An Orthodox Perspective.**

Gregorias Larentzakis<sup>92</sup> writes that the concept of *koinonia* is completely in accord with Orthodox ecclesiology, which sees many local churches "in the polycentric structure of autocephalous or autonomous churches." Each local church is catholic, "in a qualitative, not quantitative sense," and is in communion with its sister Orthodox churches through the Eucharist. These are not partial churches; each has the full attributes of the universal church

*Koinonia*, and the principle of unity in diversity, is exemplified by the Trinity, whose three persons, separate but equal in divinity, are bound together by love. This is the model of unity in diversity, collegiality, and autocephality which characterizes the Orthodox church.

The divine persons are real persons, and the local churches are real churches. The universal church is not the arithmetic sum of the local churches, but is the *koinonia* which binds them together.

Larentzakis continues with a warning against imposing strictures of canon law, doctrine, or "historically evolved truth" on the quest for *koinonia*. He says we must be ready to seek with our eyes of love for the "inner breadth of the True."

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<sup>92</sup> Prof. Dr. Gregorias Larentzakis is Director of the Department for Eastern Orthodox Theology in the Faculty of Theology, University of Graz, Austria.

He commends to all the seven challenges in paragraph 3.2 of the Canberra Declaration as important steps to help the advance towards full communion.

### **A Lutheran Perspective**

William G. Rush,<sup>93</sup> while acknowledging that the Canberra Declaration reflects a growing maturity within the ecumenical movement and its context, proceeds to discuss it, largely in relation to a Lutheran statement "The Unity We Seek" issued in 1984 by the seventh assembly of the Lutheran World Federation at Budapest.

He feels that the title is significant, *koinonia* both as a gift from God and a calling to the church. This, he says, is a conviction commonly held by Anglicans, Lutherans, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches.

Rush sees parallel thinking with the Lutheran document as to the Lordship of Christ, the purpose of the church, the unhappy divisions, the "certain degree of ecumenism" already existing. He faults the churches for remaining in division, coexisting, substituting cooperation for unity.

The goal for full communion, where each church recognizes in each other the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church in its fullness, is in conformity with the Lutheran Budapest

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<sup>93</sup> Rev. Dr. William G. Rush is Director of the Department of Ecumenical Affairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a member of the Joint Working Group and of the Commission on Faith and Order.

document, as is the idea of the richness in diversity and the caveat against illegitimate diversities.

As do other commentators, Rush commends the challenges to action. (The Lutheran statement had in addition called for the lifting of condemnations.) He feels that Canberra builds on an emerging ecumenical convergence of several decades, recognizing this convergence and urging towards the next step. It and the Lutheran statement are witnesses to this ecumenical convergence about the nature of Christian unity.

### **A United-Reformed Perspective**

David M. Thompson<sup>94</sup> has commented on the Canberra Declaration from the viewpoint of united and uniting churches -- in Bangladesh, North and South India, Pakistan, Jamaica and Grand Cayman, Australia, and the U.S.A.

He points out that the degree of diversity in united churches is as great as that in other churches. What unites them is the degree to which they have broken through barriers.

He feels that the most notable feature of the Canberra Declaration is that it seems to ignore the experiences of these united churches, in the statement that churches have remained satisfied to co-exist in division. This is not so in his constituency.

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<sup>94</sup> Dr. David M. Thompson is Lecturer in Modern Church History in the University of Cambridge, England, and a member of the Disciples of Christ - Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue.

Furthermore, the existing united churches are reaching out to others in what may be small, but nevertheless significant ways.

In connection with the definition of "full communion," when all the churches are able to recognize in each other the one holy catholic and apostolic church in all its fullness, Thompson asks whether this can be recognized in any church now, or whether it is something to be achieved. Although both the Roman and Orthodox churches have claimed that fullness, one writer, Fr. Emmanuel Lanne, has said "the reconciled church lies beyond all existing ecclesial realities, including, of course, the ecclesial reality represented by the Catholic church."

Thompson concludes that further progress in ecumenical dialogue would demand not only humility but a definite *metanoia*.

United churches gladly accept the seven challenges of the Canberra Declaration. They see in their own lives the kinds of bilateral and multilateral dialogues, and they enjoy eucharistic fellowship and mutual recognition of ministries, as present realities, not simply as goals on the ecumenical agenda.

In addition, though, they recognize the desire for full communion with their partners in the quest, and they "humbly seek recognition" of the progress they have made.

**None of the respondents expresses basic disagreement with the study document.**

**Significant convergence is noted, but there is disappointment that full Eucharistic fellowship remains an unfulfilled, but essential, goal.**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ***KOINONIA*: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES – UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

#### **i. Introduction**

The Greek word *koinonia*, so rich in its Pauline framing to describe sharing, participation, partnership, fellowship, and communion, has blossomed in the ecumenical environment. It is attaining widespread use as descriptive of the type of relationship between and among Christian churches that could heal the divisions of the past and bring forth the sought-after unity of Christendom.

#### **ii. Fellowship as a Call to Church Unity**

In what follows, we listen to the lively contributions of a number of contemporary theologians as they explain the implication of "fellowship" in the modern Church. They speak from many different perspectives, but there is a growing consensus that "fellowship" does not demand a monolithic church; rather, it calls for unity in diversity.

J. C. Hoekendijk writes, in "The Call to Evangelism," in a trinity of terms: *kerygma* (proclamation), *diakonia* (service), and *koinonia* (fellowship), and couples these with *shalom* (at once peace, integrity, community, harmony, and justice), the fulfilment of the Messianic age. He says that



the *shalom* is proclaimed in the here and now, lived in the *koinonia*, and demonstrated in humble service in the *diakonia*. With the *kerygma* alone, in isolation the evangelist soon becomes a more or less interesting orator. He needs the manifestation of the *koinonia* of which he is a part, and he has to justify himself as a witness of the Messiah-Servant in his *diakonia*. The *koinonia* manifests the *shalom*, but we need the continuous reminder of the *kerygma* . . . and the *diakonia* should prevent this *shalom* being used in a self-sufficient way. The *diakonia* translates the *shalom* into the language of humble service, but if we isolate [it] or give it an undue emphasis, the evangelist soon becomes a sentimental philanthropist. He must never forget that he cannot render real service if he deprives man of the *kerygma* and leaves him outside the *koinonia*. The main and all-decisive function of the *koinonia* is, however, that it is the primary *kerygmatic* and *diakonic* unit; *kerygmatic* as the place where the *shalom* is really made present; *diakonic* because it has no other relation to the outside world than that of humble service.<sup>95</sup>

The Report of the Section on Unity at the Third Assembly of the WCC at Delhi in 1961, under the heading "fellowship" says:

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<sup>95</sup> Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope, eds. *The Ecumenical Movement, an Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*. p. 332.

The word "fellowship" (*koinonia*) has been **chosen** because it describes what the church truly is . . . not merely an institution or an organization [but] a fellowship of those who are called together by the Holy Spirit and in baptism confess Christ as Lord and Saviour.<sup>96</sup>

References to *koinonia* appear in ARCIC, 1976. The introduction to "Authority in the Church I" says:

The confession of Christ as Lord is the heart of the Christian faith. To him God has given all authority in heaven and earth. As Lord of the Church he bestows the Holy Spirit to create a communion of men with God and with one another. To bring this *koinonia* to perfection is God's eternal purpose.

By sharing in the life of the Spirit all find within the *koinonia* the means to be faithful to the revelation of their Lord.

. . . pastoral authority belongs primarily to the bishop, who is responsible for preserving and promoting the integrity of the *koinonia* . . .

The perception of God's will for his Church . . . is shared by all its members. All who live faithfully with the *koinonia* may become sensitive to the leading of the Spirit . . .

The *koinonia* is realized not only in the local Christian communities, but also in the communion of these communities with one another.

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* p. 89.

Ever since the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) the churches have realized the need to express and strengthen the *koinonia* by coming together to discuss matters of mutual concern and to meet the contemporary challenges.

The purpose of *koinonia* is the realization of the will of Christ (John 17:11, 21).<sup>97</sup>

Geoffrey Preston, writing in *Faces of the Church, Meditations on a Mystery and Its Images*, treats of *koinonia* in Chapter 29, starting with the words of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins." Dealing with the Latin *communio sanctorum*, he asks whether *sanctorum* is a masculine or a neuter plural. In the first case, the meaning would be a communion/fellowship of holy people, and in the second case a communion with holy things. He quotes Stephen Benko<sup>98</sup> that originally the second meaning applied, but that around the start of the fifth century the phrase more and more came to be interpreted as communion of the members of the church with one another. Even St. Thomas in his Commentary on the Creed, although referring to the communion of good things which we receive through Christ, says, "Through this communion we obtain two things: first that the merit of Christ is communicated to

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 158.

<sup>98</sup> Geoffrey Preston. *Faces of the Church*, p. 261. cites S. Benko. *The meaning of sanctorum communio* (London, 1964) p. 141.

everyone (i.e. in the sacraments) and second, that the good of each one is communicated to the other."<sup>99</sup>

Benko feels we should return to the original form, wherein a common confession of common participation in the sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist) would draw denominations together and be a declaration of oneness through sharing in the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection. Lack of unanimity concerning these is a major stumbling block.<sup>100</sup>

In the development of his thesis, Preston refers to the writings of J. N. D. Kelly, Nicetas and Faustus of Reiz. Kelly concludes the original meaning was personal, but this could be either a restricted fellowship of holy people - the saints and martyrs - or a full fellowship of all believers; or that the phrase points back to the preceding one, the Holy Catholic Church.<sup>101</sup>

Nicetas writes: What is the Church other than the congregation of all the saints? From the beginning of the world, patriarchs, prophets, martyrs and all other righteous men who have lived or are now alive or shall live in time to come make up the Church, since they

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<sup>99</sup> Preston. p. 262. cites Saint Thomas. "Exposition of the Creed." in *Opuscula Omnia II* (Paris. 1927). p. 381-383.

<sup>100</sup> Preston. p. 261.

<sup>101</sup> Preston. p. 263. cites J. N. D. Kelly. *Early Christian Creeds* (London. 1950: 1952). p. 395.

have been sanctified by one faith and one way of life, and sealed by the Spirit, and so made one body . . . <sup>102</sup>

Faustus of Reiz, ca 450, favoured the same interpretation, but identified saints as those whose moral goodness was outstanding.<sup>103</sup>

Preston continues:

But whatever may be the correct understanding of the original meaning of this article in the Roman baptismal creed, there can be no doubt it carries an appeal to a fundamental element of the Christian experience in the Church, that of communion, fellowship, in the Greek *koinonia*. The First Letter of John (1 John 1:3-7) invites believers to have fellowship with the Johannine Community, whose fellowship is with the Father and his son Jesus Christ.<sup>104</sup>

Preston points out that the focal point of communion of Christians with Christ comes in the Eucharist, which from New Testament times has been described as a *koinonia*, a fellowship, of the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16-18.)

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<sup>102</sup> Preston. p. 263. cites Nicetas. *Explanation of the Creed*.

<sup>103</sup> Preston. p. 264. cites Faustus. *Homily II on the Creed*.

<sup>104</sup> Preston. p. 264

He goes on to say that from the early fourth century it was usual to talk about sharing in the eucharistic gifts simply as communion, as *koinonia*, without having to add the words "in the body and blood of Christ." Thus the word came to mean the consecrated elements themselves, as one "receives communion." This approaches the Thomist teaching that the reality of the Eucharist, the whole point and purpose of the elements, is the unity of the mystical body, the *koinonia* between all members of the Church, in the *koinonia* of the Trinity.

Since the Church, then, is a fellowship, a communion, any individual Christian should be able experience his life within the Church, sharing the sacraments with other people, sustained by the faith and hope of these others and his ability to sustain them by his. Herein lies the goal for that world-wide, real and visible *koinonia* which will bring together the fragmented divisions of Christianity.

Ion Bria, writing in 1978, refers to the "ecclesial *koinonia* constituted by the participation of the baptized in the eucharistic communion." The "liturgy after the liturgy" means public and collective action . . . the Christian has to be a continual builder of a true *koinonia* of love and peace even if he is politically marginal and lives in a hostile surrounding. At the ideological and political level that *koinonia* may appear almost impossible. However, there is an "open gate", namely the readiness of the human heart to hear the voice of the beloved (John 3:29) and to receive the power of God's Word (Mt 8:8).<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Kinnamon. p. 367.

Pauline Webb, in her opening sermon at the sixth assembly of WCC, Vancouver, 1983, said.

So as our letter writer says, "What we have heard and seen we declare to you, so that you and we together may share a common life, a *koinonia* . . ."

The word literally means sharing with someone in something. In the New Testament we are called into a *koinonia* in the life of Christ, an identifying of our life with his, a sharing symbolized most deeply when we communicate with him in holy communion . . . St. Paul calls us, too, to a *koinonia* of suffering when any suffering of ours should be seen as a part of our sharing in the suffering borne by Christ . . . It is to communicate with each other in such *koinonia* that we come together in this Assembly . . .

Many of us are renewing friendships . . . so out have come the photographs and the souvenirs, all part of our living experience of *koinonia*.<sup>106</sup>

Tavard has dealt with *koinonia* in historical perspective, arguing that the transmission of the gospel from generation to generation, and the growth and evolution of tradition, are exercises in participation, and thus create *koinonia*.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>107</sup> George H. Tavard. A.A.. "Tradition as Koinonia in Historical Perspective." in *One in Christ*. Vol XXIV. 1988. No. 2. p. 97.

In his topic "Concern for Peace" Ellis writes of *shalom*, which he quotes as "the harmony of a caring community informed at every point by its awareness of God." and which, in Old Testament times, was linked with the expectation of the Messiah's coming. He writes:

the ordering of the community of Israel, through the law, and the quality of life of the people of God, was seen as part of God's purposes for all people. When the future peace is anticipated in the vision of the gathering of the nations at Mount Zion (Isaiah 2:2-4 and Micah 4:1-4) we again see the link between the vocation of the people of God and the divine plan for creation. . . [and] we can see a parallel between these concerns and the idea of fellowship (*koinonia*) in the New Testament. . .<sup>108</sup>

Ellis refers to the translation of *koinonia* as "fellowship" in the context of "partnership" or "having things in common" and illustrates this by reference to the eucharist, as a communion shared with others. He also quotes the Pauline blessing as pointing to the experience of oneness through the activity of God.

Ellis continues with his thesis that *shalom*, or peace, or fellowship, denotes the purpose of God, and thus points to unity. It suggests

wholeness of relationships, based on mutual trust and support. It is between individuals and groups, so it presupposes the kind of community

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<sup>108</sup> Christopher J Ellis. *Together on the Way*. p. 31.



where there will be responsible freedom and variety, expressed in harmony . . . Here is more than co-existence. Here is peace wrought by the sacrifice of Christ. Here is fellowship which has a material expression and a peace which has communal concerns . . . Here is wholeness for the people of God . . .<sup>109</sup>

In the Introduction to a section of *The Ecumenical Movement* titled, "The Unity of the Church: Toward a Common Definition," we find:

The favoured term in current discussions of the meaning of unity is *koinonia*, a Greek word usually translated as "fellowship" or "communion." *Koinonia*, as used in the New Testament, focuses more on the quality of relationships among Christians than on institutional structures. Perhaps more importantly, *koinonia* is not a static image, but one that enables Christians to think of unity as a deepening and expanding of life together. The selections from the WCC Canberra assembly (1991) and the fifth world conference on Faith and Order (1993) both use *koinonia* as their organizing concept.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31ff.

<sup>110</sup> Kinnamon, p. 80.

The Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, Santiago de Compostelo, Spain, in 1993, focused on *koinonia*, the central concept of the Canberra declaration.

Mary Tanner, then moderator of the conference, wrote:

... *Koinonia* draws our attention away from our divisions directing us to the giving and receiving life and love which flow between the persons of the Holy Trinity. This mysterious life of divine communion is one in which the personal and relational are prior; in which multiplicity is perfectly held **together** so that there is no separation while at the same time the unity is enriched by the multiplicity, so that it never degenerates into arid uniformity. It is a communion at the heart of which is a cross and it is a communion which is dynamic, always sending and being sent, stretching out to embrace and enfold within its own life.<sup>111</sup>

Dorothy Lee discussed three aspects of *koinonia*.

First, *koinonia* begins in God's gift of life, binding us together in a community of love as we receive it in gratitude from the Lord. Secondly, the cross lies at the centre of *koinonia*, bringing the fragrance of life where there was once the smell of death. Thirdly, *koinonia* involves us in a mutual and reciprocal love that shares itself in a costly way and opens us to

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* p. 126.

the other, through the divine Spirit. All three dimensions of *koinonia* are essential for our self-understanding as the church and they are all, as we would expect from John's gospel, profoundly sacramental. Through the symbolic action of Mary of Bethany at the celebratory meal, we gain a vision of that *koinonia* which lies at the heart of the Trinity . . . <sup>112</sup>

Further discussions of *koinonia* appeared in the "Message" section of the proceedings of this Conference:

*Koinonia* has been the focus of our discussions. This word from the Greek New Testament describes the richness of our life together in Christ: community, communion, sharing, fellowship, participation, solidarity. The *koinonia* we seek and which we have experienced is more than words. It springs from the word of life, "what we have seen with our eyes, what we have touched with our hands (1 John 1:1), especially when *koinonia* is being realized daily in such forms as local ecumenical projects and basic communities. The *koinonia* which we share is nothing less than the reconciling presence of the love of God . . . God is a *koinonia* of love, the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This *koinonia* comes to us as a gift . . . The *koinonia* we experience drives us to seek that visible unity which can adequately embody our *koinonia* with God and one another.

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126 - 127.

The deeper *koinonia* which is our goal is for the glory of God and for the sake of the world. A deeper *koinonia* will be a sign of hope for all, or it will not be a true *koinonia* in the love of God.<sup>113</sup>

Susan Wood has sounded a warning in the increasingly common usage of *koinonia*. She asks, "Is it becoming an umbrella term in ecclesiology generally, and in ecumenical dialogues in particular, with the result that in coming to reflect everything, in the end it will refer to nothing?"<sup>114</sup>

She has based her study on an impressive array of bi-lateral conversations involving the Roman Catholic church. Cited are: Orthodox-Roman Catholic International Dialogue, Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations, Pentecostal-Catholic Dialogue, Roman Catholic Church and World Methodist Council, Roman Catholic Methodist International Commission.

Wood points out that in all these conversations, there is marked convergence as to the understanding of the invisible element of *koinonia*. The problems arise when one asks how this *koinonia* is to be effected in its visible form. Although, she says, there is a

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<sup>113</sup> Message section of the Proceedings of the Conference, p. 3-4.

<sup>114</sup> Susan Wood, S.C.L., "Ecclesial Koinonia in Ecumenical Dialogues," in *One In Christ*, Vol. XXX, 1994, No. 2, p. 124.

striking consensus as to what constitutes the visible elements, it is here that the greatest divergence between ecclesial traditions exists. She discusses this under three topics.

1. A basic level of *koinonia* is a common profession of the apostolic faith, but this may be mediated by credal statements, Scripture, or preaching and proclamation of the Word. Anglicans value the Scriptures and the Creeds; the Orthodox value the canons received from the seven ancient councils. Baptists do not regard the creeds as binding on individual believers; for them, the Scriptures alone are normative. Pentecostals evaluate creeds and tradition in the light of Scripture, and feel that each Christian can interpret Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of a discerning Christian community. Roman Catholics in addition to creeds and Scripture, emphasize the inerrancy of the church's teaching.
2. *Koinonia* is both effected and mediated through the sacraments. Communion with Christ and the Christian community is entered through baptism, and nourished in the Eucharist. This is especially held by Anglicans and the Orthodox, who have a strong sacramental life. Churches of the Reformation tradition hold that the church as a human community is based solely on communion in faith with Christ. The act of baptism, for example, is not regarded in such a sacramental way by Pentecostals and Baptists as by Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Orthodox.<sup>115</sup> To the former, it may represent a public confession of their conversion. As an

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<sup>115</sup> Baptists may refer to the **ordinance** of baptism.

interesting aside, it is noted that Roman Catholics believe that they share a real, although imperfect, *koinonia* with Pentecostals because of agreement on the trinitarian basis of baptism. Pentecostals too feel this *koinonia*, not on the basis of baptism, but rather as sharing in a common faith.

Wood asks what kind of real *koinonia* there can be without Eucharistic fellowship. She feels that, given the present lack of this sharing, as between the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Orthodox, the term "imperfect communion" is "qualitatively different" from the true meaning of *koinonia*. When it is described as *koinonia*, the meaning of the term shifts.

3. *Koinonia* resides in mutually recognized ministry, of which the responsibility is to maintain and to express unity in the church. She sees the greatest convergence in the maintenance aspect, with ministry preserving the church in the unity of the faith. Difficulties arise when we consider the function of ministry to express unity, because we now run up against the various ecclesial functions assigned to ministry as to ordination, councils, synods, apostolic succession, and primacy. *Koinonia* in, for example, the Roman Catholic church will certainly not mean the same as *koinonia* in a Baptist or Pentecostal church. Here, then, is another example of the various shades of meaning which accrue to *koinonia*.

John S. Went has discussed *koinonia* and its relationship to diversity.<sup>116</sup>

1. He considers *koinonia* as an all-embracing concept. He quotes Dr. Mary Tanner's vision of *koinonia* as having the potential to draw together different strands of thought on faith, sacraments, ministry, service, and mission. He also sees *koinonia* as a vertical relationship with the triune God, and a horizontal relationship with other believers. He points out Biblical references to apparent diversity in New Testament churches (Galatians 2:9, the right hand of fellowship) and a concern for independent churches to be in communion (Romans 16:16 and Colossians 4:15-16).
2. Went also sees *koinonia* as a unifying concept in bilateral and multilateral conversations. This is of particular significance to the Orthodox, who see the universal church as the fellowship of all the local churches, each having the fullness of the faith. From the Roman Catholic point of view, Vatican II expresses the concept of an ecclesiology of communion. The Anglican church sees in itself a *koinonia*, encompassing both unity and diversity. Dr. Mary Tanner describes *koinonia* as "the theme most likely to breathe new life into the search for visible unity."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> John S. Went. "Koinonia: A Significant Milestone on the Road to Unity." in *One In Christ*. Vol XXXII. 1996. No. 1. p. 22.

<sup>117</sup> *BEM 1982-1990. Report on the Process and Responses*. WCC. Geneva. 1990. p. 151.

3. *Koinonia*, he says, focusses on people rather than on doctrines and institutions. "When we focus on doctrine we easily move into disagreement and consequent division; when we focus on structures we too readily question the authenticity of other traditions; when we concentrate on personal relationships we encounter Christ in each other."<sup>118</sup>
4. His next point is that *koinonia* has clear priorities: God, the world, and the Church. The *koinonia* of the Trinity flows into creation, and enables redemption, in a world of homeless and hungry people, rife with savagery and discrimination against women and children.
5. *Koinonia* is able to hold in tension unity and diversity; diversity which has existed even since New Testament times as pointed out elsewhere in this paper. The challenge remains; diversity brings the richness of many traditions and cultures for the enjoyment of all, but diversity must have its limit when it detracts from, rather than enhancing, *koinonia*.
6. Went concludes that *koinonia* makes possible a real, though impaired, communion now. This view is in conflict with Susan Wood's "qualitative difference in meaning" discussed earlier, but is in conformity with most other characterizations of the present situation. One must say that the real

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<sup>118</sup> Went, p. 27.



barrier to full Eucharistic communion must lie at the entrances to the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. Other churches, including the Anglican, offer an "open table" and invite all believers to the Lord's feast. Went refers to the Report on the Process and Responses to *BEM* and its identification of the key issue: whether we agree in truth and then unite, or unite and discover truth on the way.<sup>119</sup> He strongly favours the latter course: "We must begin by living together the essence of one faith, without wanting to put ourselves in total agreement about how its contents should be expressed."<sup>120</sup>

In the context of ecumenical social thought, and with particular reference to the Church's involvement in, or its neutrality from, the community of the poor in their struggle for liberation, we read:

The Church in the beginning of its missionary work in the colonial period did not associate the poor with Christ . . . but when it began to see more clearly a new life-style of love, *koinonia*, or community sharing, participation, involvement, and *diakonia*, a community characterized by love and service, all existing among the poor, it began to feel the impact of the challenge.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *BEM 1982-1990*. p. 37.

<sup>120</sup> Went, p. 29.

<sup>121</sup> Julio de Santa Ana, ed., *Towards a Church of the Poor*. pp. 98. 102.

## CHAPTER FIVE – SIGNS OF HOPE

Yet, Thomas Ryan says, forces are at work:

After the initial post-Vatican II euphoria we are like a tree in winter . . . it appears there is no life in the tree, and that nothing is happening. Inside it, however, the vital forces are being gathered for a new bursting forth in yet another springtime."<sup>122</sup>

He cites, in support of that statement, the 1982 text on "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry" unanimously accepted by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, after half a century of maturation, and described by one member of the Commission as "nothing short of a miracle."

He cites, also, the March 1982 "Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission" received by Pope John Paul II and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Robert Runcie. This was the culmination of a dialogue commencing in 1968 to deal with the persisting theological differences between the two churches. At the time of the visit of Pope John Paul II to England in May of 1982, he and the Archbishop issued a common declaration, publicly committing each communion to effective follow-up on:

"the outstanding doctrinal differences which still separate us, with a view toward their eventual resolution . . . Once more, then, we call upon the

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<sup>122</sup> Ryan, p. 276.

bishops, clergy, and faithful people of both our communions in every country, diocese and parish . . . We urge them to pray for this work and to adopt every possible means of furthering it through their collaboration in deepening their allegiance to Christ and in witnessing to him before the world."<sup>123</sup>

Significantly, also, the common declaration says:

"Our aim is not limited to the union of our two communions alone, to the exclusion of other Christians, but rather extends to the fulfilment of God's will for the visible unity of all people." <sup>124</sup>

Ryan comments:

Besides anything that is said in such encounters, the very sight of two Church leaders kneeling in prayer together provides people with a vision of unity which until that moment seemed out of the question. An intangible of inestimable value is released in peoples' hearts and imaginations; hope springs up. The way through the door to unity is on our knees. Conversion of hearts is at the very centre of the journey.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*

## The Christian Pavilion at Expo '67

One of the New Testament uses of *koinonia* was to refer to partnership in religious activities<sup>126</sup> and a twentieth century illustration of that type of partnership is recorded by Irenee Beaubien<sup>127</sup> in the saga of the Christian Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal. He recalls that, as early as 1958, "with the approval of Cardinal Leger, a monthly dialogue began to take place between a few French-speaking Protestant ministers and a few carefully chosen Catholic priests. All of us sincerely wished to understand what divided us as well as what united us, since we all believed in the same Christ who asked for unity among His disciples. Within our small dialogue group we gradually developed a climate of friendship and mutual confidence. That discreet pioneering venture, undertaken in a spirit of faith, served as a launching pad to the various ecumenical initiatives that would take shape in Montreal later."<sup>128</sup>

One of these was the inspiration to propose to the seven major Christian churches in Canada (Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Orthodox) the idea of building an ecumenical pavilion. The Vatican agreed to relinquish its right to erect its own pavilion, and project was approved at a budget of \$1,300,000. This was

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<sup>126</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:23 "As for Titus, he is my partner (*koinonos*) and co-worker in your service."

<sup>127</sup> Fr. Irenee Beaubien, S.J., founder of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, and President of the Board of Directors of the Christian Pavilion.

<sup>128</sup> Irenee Beaubien. "The Christian Pavilion at Expo '67". in *Ecumenism*. No. 136. December 1999. p. 4

shared by the participating churches in proportion to the size of their membership, and the pavilion became an integral part of *Man and His World*. Fr. Beaubien writes: "It aroused a great deal of interest. It was a tremendous ecumenical experience that played a significant role establishing lines of communication and in diminishing prejudice. Thanks to international media, the Christian Pavilion of Montreal provided an example and encouragement for committed Christians working in various contexts to heal the anomaly and scandal of divisions. This was our humble contribution in service of *Man and His World* to seek meaning and search for Unity in Truth and Love."<sup>129</sup>

A recent issue of the quarterly publication *Ecumenism* was titled "A Fruitful Century in Ecumenism."<sup>130</sup> It mentions, in addition to the history of the Christian pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal, significant happenings in the international, national and local scene, commented on hereunder.

#### **INTERNATIONAL:**

◆ The first ever ecumenical women's synod in Britain was held in July at Liverpool Hope University, the main theme being "Challenge 2000: women's spirituality for action." Workshops dealt with healing, violence against women and children, working with the marginalized, gender and justice in the Christian Church, racism, contextual theology, and music. At the end of the synod, a letter was addressed to all churches expressing some of

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>130</sup> This issue was edited by Emmanuel Lapierre.

the major concerns for women in the twenty-first century. This an example of both Soderblom's and John Paul II's calling for fellowship in matters relating to social problems and in relation to sacred things.<sup>131</sup>

◆ A donation of \$25,000 from U.S. Roman Catholic bishops will go towards the rebuilding of three synagogues in Sacramento, California, damaged by fire-bombs, accompanied by a statement of solidarity "with our Jewish brothers and sisters who have been the victims of senseless violence."<sup>132</sup>

◆ Construction began on a synagogue in Dresden, Germany, with donations from the region's Catholic and Protestant churches, to help in memory of the Jewish community wiped out in 1938 during the years of the Nazi regime.

◆ Protestant and Orthodox scholars participated in a September symposium in the Vatican, on "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." In a cordial atmosphere, a broad exchange of opinions was encouraged. Themes addressed were the inspiration and truth of Sacred Scripture, the problem of the canon, the relationship between Old and New Testament, and the criteria for the Christian interpretation of the Bible.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

◆ In Chile, representatives from the Catholic, Orthodox, and nine Protestant and Evangelical Churches agreed to the mutual recognition of the sacrament of baptism carried out in each others' churches. It is proposed to create a common format for these baptismal certificates certifying that the Baptism was "celebrated validly with water" and in the "name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."<sup>134</sup>

◆ World-scale talks will begin early in 2000 between the Anglican Consultative Council and the Baptist World Alliance. It is expected that two to five years would be spent in recounting Anglican-Baptist experiences worldwide, followed by conversations on practice and theology. This promises to be an interesting project, due to the differences between those who have authority to speak for each of the communions. As against the hierarchical structure of the Anglican Church, the Baptists have a congregational policy, and are often reluctant to develop or accept a prescribed creed. They lay great stress on the autonomy of the local church.<sup>135</sup>

◆ The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission held a week-long meeting in Mississauga, Ontario, to review some of the responses to its recent publication "The Gift of Authority." There was some preliminary discussion of the ecumenical problems regarding the Marian dogmas (which might be the topic for a future ARCIC report). A further, high-level meeting will be held in Mississauga in May, with Anglican primates

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

from thirteen countries and their Catholic counterparts. The Archbishop of Canterbury will attend, as will Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.<sup>136</sup>

◆ To mark the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, a Thanksgiving service was held October 31, 1999, at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, with Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris, and Pastor Michel Viot of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of France.<sup>137</sup>

◆ The special commission for dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches was scheduled to meet in December. This commission will be composed of thirty delegates from Orthodox churches, and thirty representatives of other member churches of the World Council. The Orthodox are uncomfortable with some of the more liberal stands taken by the WCC. They are also concerned that with more and more non-Orthodox churches joining the WCC, their own share (25%) may become increasingly diminished in proportion. The commission is to report to the WCC Central Committee after three years' work.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.



◆ An international symposium on the place of the Eucharist in the quest for church unity was held August 31 to September 2, 1999, at the Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium. It was attended by forty theologians, priests and lay persons (Anglican, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) from Belgium, Russia, France, Italy, England, Switzerland and Germany. It helped to situate the sense of the Eucharist in the quest for visible unity. Anglicans and Protestants view the Eucharist as an aid to the end; Catholics and Orthodox view it as the goal. Fr. Herve Legrand of the Paris Catholic faculty said, "We cannot communicate together if we are not in real communion. We must start by doing things together that we can do together and which we have not done enough until now: making decisions together, teaching together, witnessing to the Gospel together."<sup>139</sup>

#### **NATIONAL:**

◆ At the initiative of the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, every church in Canada was asked to ring its bells at noon on January 1 2000, as part of the project "Together 2000: Christians in Canada honouring Jesus."<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.* page 39.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

## **REGIONAL:**

◆ In Calgary, Anglicans organized an ecumenical conference October 1 and 2 to give churches of every denomination guidance on how to start their own Alpha<sup>141</sup> courses. The aim was to provide practical, effective, and proven ways for a local church to do evangelism.<sup>142</sup>

◆ In Saskatoon, the Inner City Council of Churches organized an ecumenical service, Celebration of Seniors, as part of the 1999 International Year of Older Persons. A pot-luck dinner, with guest speaker Flora MacDonald followed.<sup>143</sup>

◆ In the rural community of Birch Hills, Saskatchewan, the jointly built Church of St. Anne (Catholic) and St. Mary (Anglican) was consecrated October 10. This was the culmination of fund raising efforts started in December 1992, supported by "penny collections in small church-shaped containers to business contributions, donations from religious communities, and a loan (forgiven earlier in 1999) from the Catholic Church Extension Society."<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> The Alpha program is a video-based series on basic Christianity for newcomers, to date attended by over a million people in 62 countries world-wide.

<sup>142</sup> *Ecumenism*, December 1999, p. 39.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

◆ Lutherans and Catholics in Guelph, Ontario celebrated, October 31, the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification of Faith. Worshippers were given the opportunity of signing their affirmation of the Declaration, with copies being sent both to the Vatican and to Geneva.<sup>145</sup>

◆ In Montreal, an ecumenical tour of various churches is taking place one Sunday a month, from October 1999 to May 2000. The aim is give participants the opportunity of sharing in the richness of a liturgy different from their own. Churches to be visited include the Kimbangist, United, Mennonite, Anglican, Russian Orthodox, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the inspired words of Saint Paul to the Corinthians have been of timeless and all pervading significance to the Christian Church. We have also seen that the fellowship of and in the Holy Spirit is a continuing, vibrant, energizing factor in the world today.

The words of the Pauline Blessing have been incorporated into our liturgies with little or no change from the original wording. Whether or not we always appreciate the richness of meaning inherent in them, they are a part of a ritual which is itself a soul satisfying experience.

The phenomenal twentieth century growth of fellowship in many branches of Christendom has been astounding. Centuries of mistrust, conflict and anathema have been washed away. The prophetic words of Jurgen Moltmann are evident in bilateral and multilateral conversations between and among some of the most unlikely participants. Divided churches have united, and others have entered into full intercommunion. Hamann's degrees of fellowship - in external things, in matters related to sacred things, and in sacred things<sup>147</sup> - are seen in what has already happened.

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<sup>147</sup> Hamann. p. 32-33.

Yet there are peaks and valleys on the ecumenical path. Three "Mount Everests" tower over all -- the Lima Declaration on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic concordat signed October 31 1999, and the ongoing Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission ARCIC.

Some of the valleys are still in shadow. Even when recognizing that unity is not the same as union or uniformity, substantial difficulty exists in the probable attainment of it. For example:

**The Roman Catholic Church**, the largest of all Christian churches, with more members than all the others combined, maintains that it alone has the fullness of faith, and the authority of doctrine. Even while acknowledging with great charity the positions of "the separated brethren," it considers that they lack full communion.

**The Orthodox Church**, on the other hand, maintains that it has never departed from the pure faith, and invites all to return to it.

**The Anglican Church**, from the time of Henry VIII, has denied the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, but at the same time defines episcopacy and the Apostolic Succession as essentials of the true faith.

Churches of the **Presbyterian and Congregationalist** form of church government reject the episcopacy.

**Baptists** are not comfortable with the idea of an imposed creed such as the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds.

In addition there are actual or potential "horizontal" schisms cutting across denominational lines; differences of opinion as to the ordination of women, the acceptance and ordination of homosexuals, the interpretation of scripture, and the form of liturgy.

The shadows are somewhat lightened by the beginning or continuing bilateral conversations, and the degree of convergence which has already emerged. Lesser peaks and rises on the path give a vision ahead. No one has yet said that the goal of unity is unreachable. If all seek and understand the true meaning of the fellowship (vertical and horizontal) of the Holy Spirit, we may see the answer to our prayer "for the good estate of the Catholic Church, that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer (Canada)*, p. 14.

Father Thomas Ryan expresses this beautifully:

My dream is of a great house of but one level. All the rooms are situated around a common dining room with but one great table. Each room is decorated differently, but there is a common motif that runs through all of them, essentially uniting them. The doors to all the rooms are open, and people go back and forth between them freely, although everyone has a preference for a particular room in which he or she is most comfortable and which best expresses his or her style or taste. And as for meals, there is a common table, open to all inhabitants of the house.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Ryan, p. 66. Unnecessarily, in my opinion. Ryan explains that the rooms of individual style and decor represent all the churches of East and West with their liturgy, traditions and discipline; that the unifying motif is a common creed and the Lord's presence through word and sacrament; and that the common table is of course the Eucharist.

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