

TOWARD FULL COMMUNION: FAITH AND ORDER AND CATHOLIC ECUMENISM

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[The author provides a summary history and theological survey of the contribution of the Faith and Order movement to the goal of full communion, with special emphasis on the participation of Catholic theologians. He addresses methodological issues and ecclesiological developments. Studies on the sacraments, the apostolic faith, Scripture and Tradition, and a variety of contextual issues have contributed to new irreversible relationships among the churches. Research by theologians of Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and historic Protestant churches have created a unique body of ecumenical literature.]

AT THE TIME OF THE Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church launched on a renewed self-understanding of itself as Church and its relationship to other churches and ecclesial communities. The precise interpretations of terms such as “subsists in” and “churches and ecclesial communities” remain under discussion in Catholic teaching. However, the Catholic Church has moved irreversibly into the path of dialogue with other Christians with the goal of the restoration of full, visible unity.¹

In pursuing this goal, the Catholic Church encourages collaboration, spiritual solidarity, common witness and mission as well as careful dialogue to resolve those elements that still divide the churches.² The most widely known results of these dialogues are the bilateral agreements that have

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¹ John Paul II, “*Ut Unum Sint*: On Commitment to Ecumenism,” *Origins* 25 (June 8, 1995) 49–72, esp. nos. 7, 11. “The ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is to re-establish full visible unity among all the baptized” (no. 77).

² “Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism,” *Origins* 23 (July 29, 1993) 129–60.

involved the Catholic, Orthodox, and Reformation churches on key issues such as justification, Christology, the Eucharist, and ministry. These dialogues and proposals between two church bodies provide careful and measured steps toward that visible unity to which the churches are committed together.

A forum for multilateral dialogue in the Faith and Order movement also exists that encompasses the full range of Pentecostal, Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Catholic, and Evangelical churches. Here in this article I review the contribution of this latter dimension of the Catholic ecumenical program. In so doing, I sketch a brief history, make some methodological observations, summarize the contribution of Faith and Order, and outline some future challenges.

The goal of the Faith and Order movement was articulated in the first purpose of the World Council of Churches: "To call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and common life in Christ, and to advance toward that unity that the world may believe."³ Since 1911, it was the intention of those in leadership to involve Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican churches in the discussion process with this goal of visible unity. The Roman Catholic Church was not to formally join the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches until 1968.⁴

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The movements that encouraged the return to the Christian sources (*resourcement*) and a reevaluation of the divisions in Christianity are rooted in the 19th century. Before that, Catholic scholars had been drawn from time to time—since the divisions of East and West and the Reformation—to a reconsideration of other churches.⁵

In 1919, Pope Benedict XV met with a Faith and Order delegation, but declined to permit Catholic participation in the organization. This was the first face-to-face encounter of a pope and representatives of the Reformation churches since the 16th century. Although not official participants,

³ *Signs of the Spirit: Official Report, Seventh Assembly*, ed. Michael Kinnamon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 358.

⁴ Paul Crow, "The Roman Catholic Presence in the Faith and Order Movement," *Bulletin Centro Pro Unione* no. 62 (2002) 3–15. This publication (from the Centro Pro Unione, Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30, I-00186 Rome [web http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/e_dialogues.html]) regularly provides a complete bibliography of primary and secondary literature on the dialogues and studies of the Faith and Order Commission.

⁵ See Paul M. Minus, *The Catholic Rediscovery of Protestantism: A History of Roman Catholic Ecumenical Pioneering* (New York: Paulist, 1976).

some Catholic theologians did follow the theological developments of these dialogues closely.⁶ The 1928 encyclical of Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, set a negative tone to Catholic approaches to Faith and Order and ecumenical work in general, until practically the eve of Vatican II.

Even though the Catholic Church was officially absent from the early deliberations of Faith and Order, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Edinburgh allowed five unofficial observers at the Second World Conference in 1936. Yves Congar's *Chrétiens désunis* was on sale in the bookstore where the meeting was being held. The threat of indifferentism and relativism plagued Catholic leadership. The Holy Office, by 1950, acknowledged that the ecumenical movement "derives from the aspiration of the Holy Spirit,"⁷ while reasserting Catholic exclusivist claims. By 1952 the Roman Catholic bishop of Stockholm sent four observers to the Third World Conference on Faith and Order in Lund. During that same decade, a circle of Catholic theologians, the Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions, was deeply involved in studying the working of Faith and Order.⁸

On the eve of the council, Catholics were present at the 1957 North American Conference on Faith and Order as well as the 1960 World Council of Churches meeting in St. Andrews. Many of the observers sent to represent their churches at Vatican II were from the Faith and Order movement, Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox scholars attuned to the theological stream entering into the Catholic debates and able to interpret these debates and their results for their respective communities.

By the time of the Fifth World Conference, held in Montreal 1963, five official observers were appointed, including Johannes Willebrands. Raymond E. Brown delivered an important paper on the Church in the New Testament, as did his Lutheran counterpart Ernst Käsemann. These presentations became a classic exchange in ecumenical discussion.⁹

In 1968 the Holy See joined the Commission on Faith and Order and appointed official representatives.¹⁰ A few years later the Catholic Church decided it was inopportune to join the World Council of Churches, though it continued a Joint Working Group and continues full membership in

⁶ O. S. Tomkins, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Movement, 1910–1948," in *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, ed. Ruth Rouse, Stephen Neill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 675–93, at 686.

⁷ Crow, "The Roman Catholic Presence in the Faith and Order Movement" 7.

⁸ Thomas Stransky, "Catholic Conference on Ecumenical Questions," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Nicholas Lossky et al., 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 151.

⁹ The Catholic theologians were Gregory Baum, Godfrey Diekmann, Jan C. Groot, Bernard Lambert, and George Tavard. See P. C. Rodger and L. Vischer, *The Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order* (London: SCM, 1964).

¹⁰ The Catholic scholars were Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Umberto Betti, O.F.M., Walter Burghardt, S.J., Bernard Dupuy, O.P., Emmanuel Lanne, O.S.B., Jorge

Faith and Order. The Catholic relationship with the World Council of Churches is strong if often critical. Some observers have claimed that Catholic collaboration reflects a firmer commitment than that of many full member churches of the World Council.¹¹

From 1969 on the story of Faith and Order and Catholic ecumenism is part of a common narrative.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Various elements of internal renewal laid the ground work for the entry of the Catholic Church into the Faith and Order discussions. The recognition of the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities,¹² the acceptance of religious liberty,¹³ the recapturing of a unitive understanding of God's revelation, enhanced collegiality and the role of the laity, as well as the biblical and liturgical renewal, created the condition of possibility for Catholic ecumenical participation.

Vatican II opened the way for dialogue and encouraged it as the method to move toward that unity for which Christ prayed and to which the Catholic Church is committed. The commitments of the council and subsequent reaffirmations by Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical and by Pope John Paul II throughout his papacy have not allayed all fears of the "return" motif in Catholic ecclesiology.¹⁴ In fact, not all of the pronouncements of the Holy See have been so transparent to this new dialogical approach to fellow Christians.¹⁵

However, after Vatican II, the Pontifical Secretariat (later Council) for

Medina, Samuel Rayan, S.J., Joseph Ratzinger, Tharcisse Tshibangu (Crow, "The Roman Catholic Presence in the Faith and Order Movement" 11).

¹¹ Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.P., "A Basis Beyond the Basis: Roman Catholic/World Council of Churches Collaboration," *The Ecumenical Review* 37 (1985) 213–22; Lukas Vischer, "Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches," *The Ecumenical Review* 24 (1972) 487–90.

¹² *Lumen gentium* no. 8.

¹³ See Jeffrey Gros, "Dignitatis Humanae and Ecumenism: A Foundation and a Promise," in *Religious Liberty: Paul VI and Dignitatis Humanae*, ed. John Ford (Brescia: Istituto Paolo VI; Washington: Catholic University of America, 1995) 117–48.

¹⁴ Aram Keshishian, *Conciliar Fellowship* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1992).

¹⁵ Thomas Rausch, "Has the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Exceeded Its Authority?" *Theological Studies* 62 (2001) 802–10; Walter Kasper, "Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement," *Information Service* no. 109 (2002) 11–20, at 17.

Promoting Christian Unity very quickly laid out principles of dialogue.¹⁶ These principles follow closely the experience gained in the Faith and Order Movement. In this section I consider the historic methodological shift in Faith and Order, the distinction between convergence and consensus, and the question of reception.

When the first conference on Faith and Order convened at Lausanne in 1927 there was a notable sense of rediscovery and fascination among the participating Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglican scholars. The approach of these early interchanges consisted in comparing and contrasting positions on the sacraments, formulations of the faith, and ecclesiology. This ecclesiocentric methodology characterized the movement up to the Faith and Order meeting held in Lund during 1952. At Lund, a shift occurred from the earlier comparative ecclesiology approach to a Christocentric methodology with a strong emphasis on the common sources of Scripture and Tradition. This methodology, allowing the formulations and practice of all the churches to be evaluated again in light of the sources, a genuine *resourcement*, marked a historic turning point. This methodology has been highly productive in providing agreed texts in Faith and Order, and texts in bilateral conversations.

This common methodology that stresses *resourcement* has remained the constant core of the scholars' research together to the present work on *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, a project now in progress.¹⁷ This text is currently under revision and it is hoped that a next version will be available after the July 2004 plenary of Faith and Order in Kuala Lumpur. The Catholic Theological Society of America is in the midst of a three-year evaluation of the first and successive drafts.¹⁸

Likewise, with the growing recognition of contextual approaches to theology and the importance of popular religion and inculturation, these factors are also taken into account. Lukas Vischer, former director of the Faith and Order Commission, attributes to the experience of Vatican II the insight that both the practice and the texts of the Church have to be taken

¹⁶ "Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue" [dated August 15, 1970], in *Doing the Truth in Charity*, ed. Thomas F. Stransky and John B. Sheerin, Ecumenical Documents I (New York: Paulist, 1982) 75–88.

¹⁷ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper No. 181 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998). (<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/nature1.html>)

¹⁸ Michael A. Fahey, "A Catholic Response to Faith and Order's *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*," in *The Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings* 58 (2003) 161–63; Catherine Clifford, "Reflections on *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*," *Ecumenical Trends* 32 (2003) 130–37; Francis A. Sullivan, "The *Nature and Purpose of the Church*: Comments on the 'Material Inside the Boxes'," *ibid.* 145–53.

into account.¹⁹ For example, the racism that has led to the formation of the African American Methodist, Pentecostal, and Baptist churches is no less pertinent than the Reformation debates over the Eucharist and soteriology. New issues such as those arising from economically developing countries and from feminist concerns compliment the *resourcement* methodology.

The second methodological consideration that needs to be clarified is the distinction between convergence and consensus. For authentic unity there must be agreement in the fundamental truths necessary as a basis for a common faith. Such a consensus does not require uniformity of formulation or emphasis, but the church-dividing issues must be resolved. The recent *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is an exemplary case in point. The text provides a common affirmation of Lutheran and Catholic faith that resolves the issue of the 16th century. The text also goes on to give seven affirmations of issues in which Catholics and Lutherans continue their different emphases. Within this internally differentiated consensus there is both unity and diversity.²⁰

Consensus means that sufficient agreement has been reached so that a doctrinal issue, such as justification, is no longer church dividing. Consensus needs to be distinguished from convergence. Convergence provides a framework of agreement within which more work is necessary for full unity to be achieved. In the course of Faith and Order research in the 1970s, when agreement on the sacraments was maturing and texts were being presented to the churches, it became necessary to determine how to characterize the level of agreement achieved. Lukas Vischer explained that the Faith and Order texts “represent, so to speak, a consensus in the making. This, however, inevitably raises the question of how much agreement is actually required for the unity of the church.”²¹

This distinction provided considerable confusion. It necessitated clarification when a text such as the Anglican-Roman Catholic *Final Report* included claims of consensus, for example on the Eucharist, and only convergence on the question of authority.²² This distinction has also required care in the way reports were presented to the churches. For example, the 1982 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* text was presented to the churches with the question about “the extent to which your church can recognize in

¹⁹ Lukas Vischer, “The Convergence Texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” *The Ecumenical Review* 54 (2002) 434.

²⁰ Text in *Growth in Agreement II*, ed. William Rusch, Harding Meyer, Jeffrey Gros (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 566–82.

²¹ Vischer, “The Convergence Texts on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” 441.

²² Christopher Hill and Edward Yarnold, S.J., *Anglicans and Roman Catholics: The Search for Unity: The ARCIC Documents and Their Reception* (London: SPCK/CTS, 1994).

this text the faith of the church through the ages?"²³ Thus both the *re-sourcement* methodology and the level of agreement claimed by the authors of the texts must be kept in mind in their evaluation.

The third methodological consideration that emerges is that of "reception." Indeed, many Catholic scholars could not have foreseen the quantity and quality of ecumenical agreement that was to emerge in the 30 years after the council. Neither the theological community, nor the institutional Church was prepared to deal with these developments. Even within the ecumenical movement serious analysis was needed both on the classical history of reception, for example of the Council of Chalcedon²⁴ and contemporary reflection.²⁵

The churches have moved through levels of relationships toward unity, though at different paces in different places and with different partners. The early ecumenical movement was a period of mutual exploration and understanding. Many of the newer, evangelical partners are still characterized by this stage of exploration. As trust builds and common programs of dialogue become possible, the "dialogue of love" passes to the "dialogue of truth." That is, when there is a sufficiently secure relationship, then a formal dialogue is possible, often with the goal of full communion. With the Catholic and Orthodox churches it took a span of time from 1964 to 1980 in order to build sufficient basis for beginning the dialogue of truth.²⁶ Entering into a dialogue itself represents a stage in mutual ecclesial recognition.

The third phase occurs when churches move from dialogue to evaluation

²³ Text in *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, ed. Lukas Vischer and Harding Meyer, Ecumenical Documents II (New York: Paulist, 1984) 465–503, at 469. See Anton W. J. Houtepen, "The Faith of the Church through the Ages: Ecumenism and Hermeneutics," *Bulletin Centro Pro Unione* no. 44 (1993) 3–15.

²⁴ Aloys Grillmeier, "The Council of Chalcedon: An Analysis of a Conflict: The Reception of Chalcedon in the Roman Catholic Church," *Wort und Wahrheit*, Supplementary Issue no. 1 (1972) 23–40.

²⁵ Yves Congar, "Reception as an Ecclesiological Reality," in *Election and Consensus in the Church*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Anton Weiler, *Concilium* 77 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 43–68; William G. Rusch, *Reception: An Ecumenical Challenge* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Johannes Willebrands, "Address to the Lutheran Church in America [July 3, 1984]," in *Ecumenical Documents of the Lutheran Church in America: 1982–1987*, ed. William R. Rusch (New York: Lutheran Church in America, 1987); Thomas P. Rausch, S.J., "Reception Past and Present," *Theological Studies* 47 (1986) 497–508; Antonio García y García, Hervé Legrand, and Julio Manzanares, "Reception and Communion among Churches," *The Jurist* 57 (1997).

²⁶ *Towards the Healing of Schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople*, ed. E. J. Stormon, S.J., Ecumenical Documents III (New York: Paulist, 1987); *The Quest for Unity*, ed. John Borelli and John Erickson (Washington: USCC, 1996).

and action, the reception stage. Many churches have moved from dialogue into full communion in recent decades. The Catholic Church, for the first time since the Council of Florence (A.D. 1438–1445), has begun to evaluate and act on ecumenically produced statements of the faith.²⁷

The Faith and Order Commission has had to undertake a study on hermeneutics, in part, to assist the churches in the task of interpreting ecumenical texts.²⁸ Reception becomes a major ecclesiological theme not just in the ecumenical field, but in the whole scope of the development of doctrine, as the Holy See's response to the section on reception in the Anglican Roman Catholic *Final Report* makes clear.²⁹

Pope John Paul II has emphasized the importance of ecumenical reception.³⁰ However, as an ecclesiological concept it must take into account not only the process of understanding of new texts and formulations.³¹ It also entails the appreciation of communities, their history, spirituality, and cultural traditions.³²

VISION OF FULL COMMUNION

Now that I have presented some of the historical background and some of the methodological issues, it is time to ask what are the theological contributions of the Faith and Order movement on the pilgrimage toward visible unity? In this section I focus on (1) *koinonia* ecclesiology, including the elements of (2) apostolic faith and the hierarchy of truths, (3) sacramental convergences, and (4) authority.

The Church as Communion

Full communion is an expression used in common religious discourse as well as in technical canonical and theological senses. For this discussion it is important to distinguish two meanings. First, when speaking of membership in one's own church, "full communion" can designate the process of

²⁷ John Hotchkin, "The Ecumenical Movement's Third Stage," *Origins* 25 (Nov. 9, 1995) 353–61.

²⁸ Faith and Order Commission, *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998).

²⁹ Hill, *Anglicans and Roman Catholics* 160.

³⁰ *Ut unum sint* no. 80.

³¹ Joseph Komonchak, "The Epistemology of Reception," *The Jurist* 57 (1997) 180–203; J. M. R. Tillard, "'Reception': A Time to Beware of False Steps," *Ecumenical Trends* 14 (1985) 145; Jeffrey Gros, "Reception and Roman Catholicism for the 1990's," *One in Christ* 31 (1995) 295–328.

³² Jeffrey Gros, "Towards a Hermeneutics of Piety for the Ecumenical Movement," *Ecumenical Trends* 22 (1993) 1–12.

receiving a Christian coming from another Christian community. Thus one speaks of a baptized candidate coming into “full communion” with the Catholic Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.

However, we also speak of “full communion” as the new relationship of two ecclesial bodies when they live in one Church, or when they resolve historic differences and become one. For example, the Roman Catholic and Melkite Catholic Churches are in full communion, even though their liturgical and canonical structures are different. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Episcopal Church came into full communion in 2001, when they recognized one another as churches and began the process of joint episcopal installations.

In the ecumenical sense, then, full communion is an analogous term applied differently according to the two or more ecclesial bodies in communion. There are different “models” or proposals for visible unity that come before different sets of churches. Because of the ease with which communion ecclesiology can be used in a variety of ways, it is important to be clear about its ecumenical usage. As Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, notes:

The common concept of *communio* has different meanings and thus calls forth different expectations and projected goals. This necessarily leads to misunderstandings on one’s own part and that of the partners. Convergence about one and the same concept, however, is also—apart from other factors—the cause for confusion. The differences in understanding reflect different ecclesiologies of the various churches and ecclesial communities. But often the theological understanding of *communio* is also replaced or overlaid by an anthropological or sociological understanding. The secularized use of the word *communio* leads to a secular understanding of an ecumenism which is characterized by non-theological, general social criteria and plausibilities.³³

For the Catholic Church full visible unity entails unity in (1) the apostolic faith, (2) sacramental life, and (3) bonds of authority, that is, hierarchical communion.³⁴ The goal of Catholic ecumenism is to move from the “real, but imperfect” communion we now confess with other churches and ecclesial communities, to full communion.

The theology of communion has come to be central to ecclesiological thinking as Christianity moves farther into the 21st century. Many images of the Church emerged in the documents of Vatican II, preceded by a rich diversity of theological reflection and return to the biblical, liturgical, and

³³ Kasper, “Present Situation” 15. See William Henn, “The Roman Catholic Vision of Unity Which is Emerging under the Impact of Ecumenical Dialogue,” in *Emerging Visions of Visible Unity in the Canberra Statement and the Bilateral Dialogues: Seventh Forum on Bilateral Dialogues*, ed. Alan Falconer (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997) 9–14.

³⁴ *Directory* nos. 13–17. See n. 2 above.

patristic sources.³⁵ By the 1985 Roman Synod of Bishops, the biblical theme of communion had been singled out as a unifying theme in Vatican II.

Communion is among the many images used for the Church in the New Testament. It is not used directly as a definition of Church, but rather as a more general description of community or of the relationships among Christians and between Christians and God.³⁶ However, in debates within the World Council of Churches about the historic church emphasizes on mystery, prophetic sign, and kingdom images, and in the Roman Synod debates about emphases on people of God and mystery, the theology of communion has shown itself to be a comprehensive and helpful theological understanding.³⁷ The trinitarian basis, the relational character of communion ecclesiology and its admission of stages and levels of communion, all lend themselves to clarifying our understanding of the relationship of the Christian with God, with fellow church members, and with Christians in other communities.

Pope John Paul II has made it clear that the developments of communion ecclesiology in the World Council of Churches provide a common theological basis: "In the ecumenical movement, it is not only the Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches which hold this demanding concept of the unity willed by God. The orientation toward such unity is also expressed by others."³⁸ He cites here the 1991 Canberra text, "The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: Gift and Calling," which was also the basis for the 1993 World Conference on Faith and Order.

In this text produced at the general assembly of the World Council of Churches at Canberra, a brief theological statement on the nature of the Church as communion is given, following Ephesians 1. However, it also lays out the elements of full communion, both as a common theological affirmation of the nature of the Church, and as an agenda before the churches in their work toward visible unity:

The unity of the church to which we are called is a *koinonia* given and expressed in the common confession of the apostolic faith; a common sacramental life entered by the one baptism and celebrated together in one eucharistic fellowship; a common life in which members and ministries are mutually recognized and reconciled;

³⁵ Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2000); Walter Kasper, "The Church as Communion," *New Blackfriars* 74 (1993) 232–44; Avery Dulles, "Communion," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* 229–32.

³⁶ John Reumann, "Koinonia in Scripture: Survey of Biblical Texts," in *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia*, ed. Thomas Best, Günther Gassmann (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993) 37–69.

³⁷ Jeffrey Gros, "Theological Debates: Synodical and Conciliar," *Ecumenical Trends* 15 (1986) 18–20.

³⁸ *Ut unum sint* no. 78.

and a common mission witnessing to the gospel of God's grace to all people and serving the whole of creation. The goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness. This full communion will be expressed on the local level and the universal levels through conciliar forms of life and action. In such communion churches are bound in all aspects of life together at all levels in confessing the one faith and engaging in worship and witness, deliberation and action.³⁹

It is within this sparse ecclesiological framework that the rich detail of the studies undertaken in bilateral and Faith and Order dialogues can be assessed.

Previous general assemblies of the World Council of Churches also articulated levels of unity that the churches could agree upon. The "Conciliar Fellowship" vision articulated in Nairobi in 1975⁴⁰ and the "All in Each Place" text of New Delhi in 1961⁴¹ are foundations on which this more detailed vision of unity has been built. The Canberra text and the World Conference of Faith and Order held in Santiago de Compostela in 1993 can be seen as giving more precision and articulating a new level of convergence in ecclesiology, building on earlier Faith and Order work.

Communion ecclesiology has also been used in contextual theologies.⁴² That is, it is applied to relationships that take different forms and provide different challenges in the variety of cultures in which the Church is incarnated. It has served to give attention to the link between communion and ethics, especially in circles of the World Council of Churches with the wide variety of priorities for these diverse churches working together on many areas of mission in addition to the theological pilgrimage toward visible unity.⁴³

John Paul II has also reinforced this ecclesiological agenda, when he laid

³⁹ Gassmann, *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia* no. 2.1, 269–71.

⁴⁰ *Breaking Barriers: Nairobi 1975*, ed. David Paton (London: SPCK, 1976) 60; "Ecumenical Chronicle," *The Ecumenical Review* 26 (1974) 291–98; "Conciliar Fellowship," in *Building Unity*, ed. Joseph A. Burgess and Jeffrey Gros, Ecumenical Documents IV (New York: Paulist, 1989) 458–84.

⁴¹ Harding Meyer, *That All May Be One* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁴² Jamie Phelps, "Communion Ecclesiology and Black Liberation," *Theological Studies* 61 (2000) 672–99; Jeffrey Gros, "The Synod for America, 1997: A Contribution to Koinonia Ecclesiology," *One in Christ* 36 (2000) 167–75; Francis Hadisumarta, "The Church as Communion," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter Phan (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002) 119–21; Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology* 119–50.

⁴³ *Costly Unity: Koinonia and Justice, Peace and Creation*, ed. Thomas Best, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993); *Church, Kingdom, World*, ed. Gennadios Limouris (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986); *Church and World: The Unity and the Church and the Renewal of Human Community* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991).

out his own agenda in his 1995 encyclical *Ut unum sint*: (1) “the relationship between sacred Scripture, as the highest authority in matters of faith, and sacred Tradition as indispensable to the interpretation of the word of God,” (2) the Eucharist, (3) ordination and the threefold ministry, (4) the magisterium, and (5) the Virgin Mary.⁴⁴ Faith and Order and the bilateral dialogues have already made substantial contributions to these areas of study.

The ability to share these elements of full communion is grounded in the 1952 methodological shifts I have noted earlier and the convergences on Scripture, Tradition and the traditions developed in the Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order at Montreal, 1963. This conference took place during the period of the Vatican II, and many of the observers at the council were among the drafters, and *periti* of the council were among Catholic participants in Faith and Order. The formulation of Montreal includes: “Our starting point is that we are all living in a tradition that goes back to our Lord and has its roots in the Old Testament, and are all indebted to that tradition inasmuch as we have received the revealed truth, the Gospel, through its being transmitted from one generation to another. Thus we can say that we exist as Christians by the Tradition of the Gospel (the paradox of the kerygma) testified in Scripture, transmitted in and by the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁵ This formulation mirrors the unitive approach to the doctrine of revelation articulated in the Vatican II’s Decree on Divine Revelation. It also provides a methodological basis for common approaches to Scripture and the “Great Tradition” in ecumenical research. As Avery Dulles noted: “[t]hat terminology of the Montreal Faith and Order statement has thus been helpful to the Catholic Church in refining the terminology.”⁴⁶

Toward the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today

From the beginning of the Faith and Order movement questions of elements of the faith and its formulations were under exploration. However, with the positive results of the bilateral dialogues, the presence of the Orthodox churches at the center of theological discussion, and continued questions about the orthodoxy of the ecumenical movement, the focus of Faith and Order’s work in the 1980s turned to the core of the Christian

⁴⁴ *Ut unum sint* no. 79.

⁴⁵ “Scripture, Tradition and the traditions,” in *Documentary History of Faith and Order: 1963–1993*, ed. Günther Gassmann (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993) no. 45, 10–18.

⁴⁶ Avery Dulles, “Revelation, Scripture and Tradition,” in *Your Word is Truth*, ed. Charles Colson, Richard Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 35–58, at 56.

faith. For the U.S. Faith and Order work, this study has enabled Holiness, Pentecostal, and Evangelical churches, with a high interest in the content of Christian orthodoxy, to have an important role in the discussions.⁴⁷ It has given the U.S. churches an opportunity to contribute to the international research.⁴⁸ Furthermore, it has allowed consultations to take place with those U.S. churches that are generally marginalized in the international discussions.⁴⁹

After 26 international consultations and 14 in the United States on a variety of elements of the faith, a commentary was produced on the Nicene Creed under the sponsorship of Faith and Order.⁵⁰ The Nicene Creed was selected as the most ancient and common confessional statement shared by a large number of churches. The theologians of Faith and Order are not, however, intending it as a creed to be imposed on the churches. Many of the Free Churches and Pentecostals, while affirming the trinitarian and incarnational faith contained in the creed, have not used it because of failures they have seen in the dominant churches that have in the past imposed confessional uniformity by the sword or whose formal worship they deem to be devoid of spiritual vitality.

In these discussions the framework of the creed has been the means of ordering the hierarchy of Christian truths that have traditionally divided the churches. For example, in the second Christological article such issues as the formulations of Chalcedon⁵¹ and agreements on justification are articulated. In the third article, the differences regarding the *Filioque* and Pentecostal emphases are approached.⁵²

In understanding the hierarchy of truths and the necessity of unity in the essentials of the faith, what is at issue is the integrity of the faith. The

⁴⁷ Jeffrey Gros, "The Vision of Christian Unity: Some Aspects of Faith and Order in the Context of United States Culture," *Midstream* 30 (1991) 1–19.

⁴⁸ *Faith to Creed*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

⁴⁹ *Black Witness to the Apostolic Faith*, ed. David T. Shannon and Gayraud Wilmore (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); *Apostolic Faith in America*, ed. Thaddeus Horgan (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); *The Church's Peace Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); *The Fragmentation of the Church and its Unity in Peace Making*, ed. John Rempel, Jeff Gros (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

⁵⁰ *Confessing the One Faith* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991).

⁵¹ *Does Chalcedon Divide or Unite? Towards Convergence in Orthodox Christology*, ed. Paulos Gregorios, William Lazareth, and Nikos Nissiotis (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981); Paul Fries and Tiran Nersoyan, *Christ in East and West* (Macon: Mercer University, 1987).

⁵² *Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ*, ed. Lukas Vischer, Faith and Order Paper No. 103 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981); *Spirit of Truth: Ecumenical Perspectives on the Holy Spirit*, ed. Theodore Stylianopoulos and Mark Heim (Brookline: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox, 1986); Jerry Sandidge, Thaddeus Horgan, recorders, "Confessing the Apostolic Faith from the Perspective of the Pentecostal Churches," in *Building Unity* 484–90.

elements of the faith are not ranked according to importance, nor are those elements of lesser importance relativized. Rather, the various elements of the faith are seen in their relationship to one another, so that the logic of certain developments becomes clear.⁵³ Alan Falconer, the present director of Faith and Order, notes the promise of this study in commenting on the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. He writes that: “by considering this multilateral study . . . the churches might be able to affirm a basic consensus in the fundamentals of the faith, by approaching the issue on the basis of the correlation and interdependence of doctrine and life, thereby providing a basis for moving forward toward manifesting more visibly the unity of the church.”⁵⁴

The Faith and Order Commission has contributed toward the full communion in faith by theological proposals on the Tradition and its articulation in a common expression of the Apostolic Faith. The theological work of this Commission is in dialogue with the churches and with the theological community. Responses from the churches to ecumenical texts indicate what further work remains unfinished. Likewise, further theological reflection by individual theologians enables a deepening of convergences. Bilateral dialogues can build on these convergences producing sufficient consensus for specific churches to act toward full communion.

For example, as the churches responded to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), it became clear that more work would need to be done in three areas: (1) Scripture and Tradition; (2) sacraments and sacramentality; and (3) ecclesiology.⁵⁵ The *Report* on this process itself included both a summary of agreements and disagreements, and clarifications of areas in which those responding from the churches did not understand the text or were not familiar with the Faith and Order background on which it was based. This dialogue that involves the churches, the Commission, and the theological community at large, is an important contribution to the renewal of the churches and the theological enterprise, on the pilgrimage toward unity in faith.

Sacramental Communion

The most widely known work of the modern ecumenical movement, as has been noted, is the contribution to convergence in the churches' understanding of baptism, Eucharist, and ordained ministry. The *Baptism, Eu-*

⁵³ William Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths according to Yves Congar, O.P.* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1987).

⁵⁴ Alan Falconer, “The Joint Declaration: A Faith and Order Perspective,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 35 (2001) 5–16.

⁵⁵ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: Report 1982–1990*, Faith and Order Paper No. 149 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1990).

charist and Ministry text, the so-called Lima Document, has engaged a much wider range of churches in these conversations than those who have produced such dramatic bilateral results in the 1970s.

The 1987 response of the Holy See to the Lima Document suggested that it was: “perhaps the most significant result of the [ecumenical] movement so far.”⁵⁶ From a Catholic theological perspective, advances with Anglicans and Lutherans demonstrated the promise of bilateral dialogue on Eucharist and ministry.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the more comprehensive contribution of Faith and Order convergence on the sacraments is an important complement to the more specific consensus of the bilateral dialogues.

Likewise, thoroughgoing liturgical reform and revision of liturgical formularies, especially in the United States, had provided a renewed appreciation of the common sacramental tradition.⁵⁸ However, this document brought together a much more comprehensive group of churches to evaluate and respond to the sacramental convergence. All of these factors contributed to its reception and usefulness.

The theological content of these texts, and also the processes of the churches’ responses, have been important for ecumenical theological reflection. The careful theological program that gave rise to convergences, the way they were presented to the churches, and evaluation of their responses have taught us a great deal about the ecclesiological and ecumenical presuppositions of the churches.⁵⁹ “Thus began a phase in the ecumenical movement which signals deeper involvement on the part of the Christians in all communities in the task of working for unity.”⁶⁰

The Catholic response shows particular care, with a theological tone that allowed it to have a strong influence on the ongoing work of Faith and Order. Rather than providing raw criticism on issues where disagreements continued, the Catholic text is careful to point out places where further work can be done and even suggests language that could strengthen and deepen the convergence. These suggestions have contributed to the research on ecclesiology now central to the Faith and Order program. The theological follow up of Faith and Order especially on baptism and ordination have been important further steps.⁶¹

⁵⁶ “Roman Catholic Church,” *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” Text*, ed. Max Thurian, vol. VI (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1988) 1–40, at 2.

⁵⁷ Vischer, *Growth in Agreement I*; Rusch, *Growth in Agreement II*.

⁵⁸ Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997); *Eucharistic Prayers: An Ecumenical Study of Their Development and Structure*, ed. Frank Senn (New York: Paulist, 1987).

⁵⁹ Vischer, “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.”

⁶⁰ Thurian, *Churches Respond 3*.

⁶¹ *So We Believe, So We Pray*, ed. Thomas Best, Dagmar Heller (Geneva: World

In many places the Catholic Church has encouraged work on the formal mutual recognition of baptism.⁶² This formal recognition has been especially important where the Catholic Church is a majority and the Catholic people have a difficulty distinguishing between non-Christian, Christian-origin, and orthodox Christian groups. For example, the differentiation between “Oneness” Pentecostals, who baptize in the name of “Jesus only,” and Trinitarian Pentecostals becomes essential in a country such as Colombia where the former is a large community, or in Chile where the formal mutual recognition of baptism includes five Pentecostal churches with more sacramental and ecumenical backgrounds than is characteristic in other parts of the world. The Vatican has recently provided a ruling making clear that the Catholic Church does not recognize baptism by the Latter Day Saints.

Among the most dramatic results from the convergence text in the life of the churches is the stimulus it has given to resolve historic differences and enable some Reformation churches to move into full communion. For example, the eucharistic divisions between Calvinist and Lutheran traditions have been resolved in the Evangelical Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, and United churches agreement of 1997.⁶³ Recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministry in the apostolic succession, as Anglicans understand it, has been possible with the Episcopal and Evangelical Lutheran churches. These and other decisions taken around the world indicate the positive and concrete contribution of theological convergence to consensus and to the lives of the churches.

Conciliar Bonds of Communion

The question of authority may be the most challenging doctrinal issue in the ecumenical movement. Discussions of the Eucharist have made it clear that, for the Reformation churches, ordained ministry issues including episcopacy and the ordination of women must be resolved as Catholics move toward full communion with them. So also the relationship of the sources

Council of Churches, 1995); Thomas F. Best, Dagmar Heller, *Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts: The Lima Liturgy and Beyond* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998); *Becoming a Christian*, ed. Thomas Best, Dagmar Heller (Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1999); *Baptism and the Unity of the Church*, ed. Michael Root, Risto Saarinen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *Episkopé and Episcopacy within the Quest for Visible Unity* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1999).

⁶² “Mutual Recognition of Baptism: Synthesis of Responses from Episcopal Conferences,” *Information Service* no. 109 (2002) 20–25.

⁶³ *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today*, ed. Keith Nickle, Timothy Lull (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993).

of authority (Scripture and Tradition and their interpretation in the Church) and authoritative means of decision-making, including the role of the Bishop of Rome, are matters in need of resolution.⁶⁴

The theological work on the source of Christian authority rests fundamentally on the shift to a methodology of *resourcement*, away from the ecclesiocentric approach prior to 1952. The responses to ecumenical texts show that this methodology has not been fully received in all of the churches. Sometimes the churches, including some Catholic responses, seem to be expecting linguistic correspondence between their own formulations and those of the new, ecumenically produced texts. These texts have been developed from research on Scripture and the Great Tradition, taking account of the contextual and historical issues of today and of the time of division. The responses on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* showed the importance of returning to the question of Scripture and Tradition and to the hermeneutical problems associated with them.⁶⁵

In ecumenical discussion it is possible to distinguish, but not totally separate, the question of sources (the authority *of* the Church), from the questions of order and governance (the authority *in* the Church). In the latter approach what are examined are questions of polity, canonical structure, and the elements of decision making that are deemed to be essential for full visible unity are examined.⁶⁶ The World Council of Churches discussions have contributed a considerable amount of literature to the latter discussion. Its vision of the Church as a conciliar fellowship (communion), incorporating all of the elements articulated in the Canberra Statement has enabled much progress to be made in ecclesiology.⁶⁷

Authority is an important discussion for Catholics in the ecumenical

⁶⁴ In response to the ministry section of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the Vatican noted: "The reference to the will of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (M no. 6) rightly indicates the awareness that church order, at least in its fundamental constitution, is not the result of historical developments and human-made organization. But the question cannot be answered conclusively as long as the question of who will decide, who will discern God's will in various developments and with what authority are left open. We believe in fact that certain people are commissioned in the church with a God-given authority to exercise such ministry of decision. Therefore, the question of authority in the church must be studied in relationship to ministry" (Thurian, *Churches Respond* 28, see 8–9).

⁶⁵ *Treasure in Earthen Vessels*. For U.S. Faith and Order discussions see Susan Davies, Jeffrey Gros, Frank Macchia, "Authority of the Church in the World: Preview," *Ecumenical Trends* 31 (2002) 113–26.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Gros, "Bonds of Communion," *Ecumenical Trends* 28 (1999) 1–8.

⁶⁷ "What Unity Requires" [1975], "The Importance of the Conciliar Process in the Ancient Church for the Ecumenical Movement" [1967], "Conciliarity and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement" [1971], "How Does the Church Teach Authoritatively Today?" [1977], "The Ecumenical Movement and Church Law" [1974], in Gassmann, *Documentary History* 3, 209–17, 236–55, 269–88.

movement since there has been significant dialogue among Catholic theologians about how hierarchical communion is to be interpreted and incarnated.⁶⁸ Both the “faith of the Church through the ages,” and the signs of the times are to be taken into account. This conversation is particularly difficult in the English-speaking world where “hierarchy” has sometimes taken on a pejorative tone. While most Christian churches affirm some form of “sacred order” the classical language is usually avoided.⁶⁹

As Kasper reminds the Church: “The church therefore is neither a democracy nor a monarchy, not even a constitutional monarchy. She is hierarchical in the original sense of the word, meaning ‘holy origin;’ that is, she has to be understood on the basis of what is holy, by the gifts of salvation, by Word and Sacrament as signs and means of the Holy Spirit’s effectiveness. This brings us to the original and authentic theological understanding of communion as the Catholic vision of unity.”⁷⁰

Within this theology of communion the papacy has been able to be introduced into the Faith and Order discussions.⁷¹ Catholic scholars have also seen the possibilities of conceptualizing the role of the See of Rome within a communion of churches, and the papacy as a universal ministry of service within a conciliar fellowship.⁷² In his encyclical on ecumenism, John Paul II notes the introduction of this discussion⁷³ and goes on to invite advice on the reform of the Petrine office, even before resolving the church dividing difficulties.⁷⁴ Among the responses to this “patient and fraternal dialogue” are offers from Faith and Order in both the World Council of Churches⁷⁵ and the U.S. National Council of Churches.⁷⁶ U.S. Faith and

⁶⁸ Kasper, “Present Situation” 16; Terence L. Nichols, *That All May be One: Hierarchy and Participation in the Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997).

⁶⁹ Jeffrey Gros, “Can We Call God’s Order Sacred?” *Ecumenical Trends* 17 (1988) 161–64.

⁷⁰ Walter Kasper, “Present Situation” 16.

⁷¹ Metropolitan John of Pergamon (John Zizioulas), “The Church as Communion: A Presentation on the World Conference Theme,” in Gassmann, *On the Way* 103–11. See also Mary Tanner, “Continuity and Newness: From Budapest to Moshi,” in *Faith and Order in Moshi*, ed. Alan Falconer (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998) 34–35.

⁷² Pierre Duprey, “The Unity We Seek,” in *Growing Together into Unity: Texts of the Faith and Order Commission on Conciliar Fellowship*, ed. Choan-Seng Song (Geneva: The Christian Literature Society/Faith and Order Commission, 1978) 127–38; Jean Marie Tillard, “The Ministry of Unity,” *One in Christ* 33 (1997) 97–111; Jean-Marie Tillard, *The Bishop of Rome* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983).

⁷³ *Ut unum sint* no. 89.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* nos. 94–96.

⁷⁵ Faith and Order, World Council of Churches, “*Ut Unum Sint*: A Response from Faith and Order,” *The Ecumenical Review* 50 (1998) 250–51.

⁷⁶ <http://www.nccusa.org/news/petrineresponse.html>, Pontifical Council for

Order continues this study as part of its “Authority in the Church” research in response to the invitation of Cardinal Kasper.

THE FUTURE

The work of the Faith and Order Commission on a global scale is complicated by the myriad of new theological voices and the unity concerns emerging from new contexts. Since the 1950s and 1960s many new Protestant churches from the postcolonial world have become members of the World Council of Churches and of the Faith and Order Commission. They bring new church-dividing issues and a certain impatience with the historic rifts of East and West or among the European churches. At the same time, the diversity of theological formation makes a comfortable focus on *re-sourcement* more challenging.

Within even the older member churches of the Faith and Order movement, leadership is not always drawn from the most ecumenically formed membership. Theological clarity carries different weight in different churches and ecclesial communities. The very success of the ecumenical movement has produced a certain competitiveness between bilateral theological work which is capable of more precision and offers consensus; and multilateral Faith and Order theological formulations with their diversity of voices and the prospect of only convergence. In order to avoid this competitiveness and coordinate the emerging theological vision of church, a series of forums on the bilaterals has been facilitated by Faith and Order.⁷⁷

In addition to the new voices from countries that are economically challenged within the historic Protestant churches, there are also new ecumeni-

Promoting Christian Unity, “Petrine Ministry,” *Information Service* no. 109 (2002) 29–42.

⁷⁷ *The Three Reports of the [1st to 3rd] Forum on Bilateral Conversations* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981); *Fourth Forum on Bilateral Conversations*, ed. Günther Gassmann (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1985); *International Bilateral Dialogues: 1965–1991, Fifth Forum*, ed. Günther Gassmann, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1991); Alan Falconer, “Towards Unity through Diversity: Bilateral and Multilateral Dialogues,” *One in Christ* 29 (1993) 279–85; Alan Falconer, *Seventh Forum on Bilateral Dialogue* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997); Faith and Order, *Eighth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues: Implications of Regional Agreements for the International Dialogues of Christian World Communions* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2002). For the United States see: “The Quest for Christian Consensus: A Study of Bilateral Theological Dialogue in the Ecumenical Movement,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23 (1987); John Ford, ed., “A Report of the Bilaterals Study Group of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches,” in *Growing Consensus*, ed. Jeffrey Gros and Joseph Burgess, Ecumenical Documents V (New York: Paulist, 1996) 629–48.

cal partners in the African indigenous churches, the Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Holiness churches. Among some of the latter there is still an allergy to the language of “ecumenism” and “dialogue.” However, among the theologians in these communities there is considerable energy for theological conversation, deepening spiritual unity and resourcement.⁷⁸

All of these developments present opportunities as well as challenges. In North America the Canadian and U.S. churches have endorsed a proposal for a North American Conference on Faith and Order, in 2005, under the theme “The Church: its Faith and its Unity.”⁷⁹ This will follow the 2004 Plenary of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission in Kuala Lumpur.⁸⁰ It is expected that there will be a new draft text of *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* as a resource for the North American Conference.⁸¹

The studies of Faith and Order in the United States on the issue of authority and on full communion should provide resources to the churches in preparation for the 2004 Plenary and the 2005 Conference, fleshing out the theology of communion and deepening convergences on authority, the relationship between sacramentality and the theology of mission, and proposing the next steps for our discussion of the Church, its faith and unity. This research clearly responds to the Vatican’s suggestion: “Perhaps the best reflection on BEM will only come after ecclesiology is given more serious attention in the ecumenical dialogue. At the same time, the study of BEM is already a way of dealing with essential realities of the church.”⁸²

The Catholic relationship is firmly established. It is a hopeful sign that amid the World Council of Churches downsizing of 2002, Faith and Order was not diminished in its staff. Nevertheless, there are some critical concerns from a Catholic point of view, as Kasper articulates them: “Within the WCC we can see a diminishing interest in classical theological discussions and often a paradigmatic shift towards a so-called secular ecumenism with the emphasis on common witness in questions of justice and peace, sometimes also with pressure groups in favor of gender questions, etc. On

⁷⁸ Jeffrey Gros, “A Pilgrimage in the Spirit: Pentecostal Testimony in the Faith and Order Movement,” *Pneuma* 25 (2003) 29–53.

⁷⁹ Cardinal Avery Dulles and Cardinal William Keeler were among the drafters of the proposal; Keeler serves on the board of the Foundation for the Conference.

⁸⁰ The Catholic members of Faith and Order 1998–2005: John Onaiyekan, Mary O’Driscoll, O.P., Jean Marie Tillard, O.P., Frans Bouwen, Donna Geernaert, S.C., William Henn, O.F.M. Cap., Humberto Jimenez Gomez, Aloys Klein, Maria Koh, Angelo Maffei, Michel van Parys, O.S.B., Jorge Scampini, O.P.; see also the post-humous work of Jean Marie Tillard, *I Believe, Despite Everything: Reflections of an Ecumenist* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2003).

⁸¹ Alan Falconer, “The Church: God’s Gift to the World: on *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*,” *Bulletin Centro Pro Unione* no. 59 (2001) 23–29.

⁸² Thurian, *Churches Respond* 5.

the basis of our past relationship, the Pontifical Council is determined to continue in its loyal and friendly albeit sometimes critically constructive cooperation that is appreciated by our partners as well.”⁸³

Vatican II’s promise of ecclesiological renewal by return to the sources, openness to ecumenical dialogue and attentive listening to the signs of the times has been productive for the renewal of all Christians, Catholics included. The work of Faith and Order has been a key component of this expansive program. Scholarly work on both sources and new contexts will surely serve the unity of the Church in its task of renewing the human community.

⁸³ Walter Kasper, “Present Situation and Future of the Ecumenical Movement” 14. See n. 15 above.