

# ECUMENICAL CONSENSUS ON THE CHURCH, THE SACRAMENTS, THE MINISTRY AND REUNION\*

BY  
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## CHAPTER III THE MINISTRY

It was a matter of general agreement at Lausanne that whatever room there might be for difference of opinion as to the measure of administrative union, which in the present condition of the world might be practicable or desirable, a common ministry recognized throughout the whole Church, with no barrier against common participation in the Sacraments, must be the touchstone of any union, which is worth seeking<sup>1</sup>,

The Report upon this matter sets forth five propositions with reference to the holy ministry as a gift of God to His Church essential to its being and well-being, and the commission to the ministry of men called by the Spirit and accepted by the Church through an act of ordination by the laying on of hands<sup>2</sup>.

The Report then goes on to explain that there are differences concerning such questions as whether there be one or more orders of the ministry, the nature of ordination and the grace conferred, the episcopal and Apostolical succession. In this connection reference is made to an appendix in which the nature and the range of these differences as affecting different communions is briefly explained. In this appendix the Orthodox position is thus stated: «The Orthodox Church, regarding the ministry as instituted in the Church by Christ Himself, and as the body which by a special *charisma* is the organ through which the Church spreads its means of grace such as the Sacraments, and believ-

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\* Συνέχεια ἐκ τοῦ Δ' τεύχους τοῦ ΑΘ' τόμου, σελ. 585.

1. L. H o d g s o n, m. w., p. 233.

2. Ibid., pp. 231-32.

ing that the ministry in its threefold form of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons can only be based on the unbroken Apostolic succession, regrets that it is unable to come in regard to the ministry into some measure of agreement with many of the Churches represented at this Conference; but prays God that He, through His Holy Spirit, will guide to union even in regard to this difficult point of disagreement»<sup>3</sup>.

The Report then refers to the difficulties of *I n t e r c o m m u n i o n*, to the distress and wounding of faithful souls, and the obstacles encountered in the mission field, all traceable to the want of the provision of a ministry acknowledged in every part of the Church as possessing the sanction of the whole Church. Toward the solution of this problem the Conference found itself unable in the meantime to make more than a tentative and general suggestion. The paragraph is as follows:

«In view of (1) the place which the Episcopate, the Councils of Presbyters and the Congregation of the Faithful respectively had in the constitution of the early Church, and (2) the fact that episcopal, presbyteral and congregational systems of government are each to-day, and have been for centuries, accepted by great communions in Christendom, and (3) the fact that episcopal presbyteral and congregational systems are each believed by many to be essential to the good order of the Church, we therefore recognize that these several elements must all, under conditions which require further study, have an appropriate place in the order of life of a reunited Church, and that each separate communion, recalling the abundant blessing of God vouchsafed to its ministry in the past, should gladly bring to the common life of the United Church its own spiritual treasures»<sup>4</sup>.

To some important branches of the Western Church in other than Anglo-Saxon Lands the question of an episcopate has hitherto presented itself simply as a question of administrative expediency not associated with any theories of valid succession in the ministry.

The *L a m b e t h Q u a d r i l a t e r a l* maintains that the basis of reunion should be the acceptance of the Scriptures, the Creeds, the two Sacraments and Episcopacy. There is a remarkable agreement between the Lausanne Reports and the Lambeth Appeal. That agreement seems to the Church of England a significant fact, and should make its attitude toward the Lausanne Reports sympathetic. The Church of England is convinced about the fact that the episcopate is necessary for

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3. *Convictions*, p. 234.

4. *L. Hodgson*, m. w., p. 233.

the esse as well as for the bene esse of the Church, and maintains that in the reunited Church neither of these theories must be officially either affirmed or denied<sup>5</sup>.

The Lausanne Report makes no allusion to suggestions involving reordination.

At the Edinburgh Conference while all would agree that the ministry owes its origin to Jesus Christ and is God's gift to the Church, there are differences of judgment regarding the sense in which they may say that the ministry was «instituted » by our Lord. Again, those who agree in accepting the laying-on of hands as the form of ordination differ on the meaning to be attached to the rite, or on the question by whom it should be administered.

Further fundamental differences of interpretation arise in connection with the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. In Episcopal Churches it has been thought of both as the succession of bishops in the principal sees of Christendom, handing down and preserving the Apostles' doctrine, and as a succession by laying-on of hands. From early times this double succession has been associated with the stewardship of the sacraments, and is regarded by certain Churches as constituting the true and only guarantee of sacramental grace and right doctrine. This view is represented by the statement formulated by the delegates of the Orthodox Church at Lausanne<sup>6</sup>.

In its brief consideration of the form, which the ministry might take in the united Church of the future, the Edinburgh Conference started from the formula in the Report of the Lausanne Conference<sup>7</sup>.

### **The Orthodox Point of View:**

«Hierarchy is of Sacramental origin, and is born of the Eucharist. Other Sacraments arose from the same source, having their centre in the liturgy or taking place in the course of it (Ordination, Confirmation, Baptism, Marriage, Penitence, Extreme Unction). It must be borne in mind that all these Sacraments are, like the Eucharist, performed by the priest together with the people; the Church acts in them through the hierarchy, or rather with its necessary participation... Sacramentalism is, then, the true basis of hierarchy, and it was in this connection that the necessity for it was felt in the first

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5. *Convictions*, p. 185.

6. *These Notes*, pp. 24-25.

7. *These Notes*, p. 25.

instance; but, having once arisen, hierarchy affected the whole life of the Church. This is an organic interpretation of hierarchy... Unfortunately in the sixteenth century both the conflicting sides, the biblical conception of universal priesthood opposed by the Reformers to the clericalism of the Roman Catholics, knew only the Western formulation of the problem and were unacquainted with Orthodoxy, which alone could reconcile them through its organic conception of the Church (sobornost). The principle of universal royal priesthood, familiar to the Old Testament and proclaimed by St. Peter (I Peter, 2,9), is fully recognized in Orthodoxy. All Christians are priests in the temple of their own soul, which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, and at the same time laity taking part together with the celebrants in the divine liturgy and other Sacraments... The Sacrament, which in the case of laymen corresponds to Ordination is Confirmation, after which a Christian is admitted to all other Sacraments<sup>8</sup>.

«Hierarchy may and must be understood as the organization of universal priesthood. The principle of universal priesthood establishes a vital connection between the hierarchy and the body of the Church, but it does not mean that all members of the Church are practically called upon to realize that priesthood. A body has different members and they are not all hands, mouth, etc.... The sacramental Ordination is a Sacrament of the whole Church, the realization of universal priesthood... Organized ecclesiastical life is far more consistent with the idea of universal priesthood than an elected ministry deprived of sacramental significance. Such ministry is an extreme form of ecclesiastical legalism from which the Western Church has suffered in the past. In their reaction against this legalism the Reformed Churches went even further than their adversary. A ministry based on the majority of votes, an anti-hierarchical ecclesiastical democracy, means secularization within the Church, and necessarily leads to ecclesiastical provincialism. The principle of election by vote can ensure only an external unity of the Church... There are two extremes in this practical rejection of hierarchical organization: Quakerism and Papalism»<sup>9</sup>.

«The clergy is not above the people, but in them and with them: it is not a judicial absolutism, but a divinely-given authority...The sac-

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8. From the Orthodox Statement at Edinburgh, by Prof. Sergius Boulgakoff in *The Ministry and the Sacraments*, 1937, pp. 108-109.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-112.

rament of priesthood is a divine, not a human activity: not an idea, a doctrine, an institution, but an immediate divine Fact... Only one ministry is withheld entirely from the laity, that of the mysteries - the celebration of the holy Eucharist and the other sacraments<sup>10</sup>. «... As the Church cannot live nor have salvation without a mystical union with Him by the communion of His body and blood, so the charismatic priesthood is a vitally necessary organ of the body of the Church... The union of Christians cannot be brought about otherwise than by a sharing of the same Cup at the Holy Table and by the ministry of a priesthood which is an integral unity and indubitably charismatic... The Orthodox priesthood of the Eastern Church has preserved all its vigour and charismatic purity, and that Church embraces in love all who seek it, expecting from them no juridical submission but rather brotherly love<sup>11</sup>».

A similar voice comes from Fr. Florovsky: «Just because the Body is one only in its Head, it is brought together and into unity by Him and in Him; the Ministry in the Church is primarily the Ministry of unity. In the Ministry the organic unity of the Body is not only represented or exhibited, but rather rooted, without any prejudice to the 'equality' of the believers, just as the 'equality' of the cells of an organism is not destroyed by their structural differentiation... The Apostolic Succession is an ultimate means to keep the mystical identity of the Body through the ages<sup>12</sup>. Concerning the true and real meaning of Apostolic Succession Fr. Schmemmann writes: «Episcopate is not a 'collective gift' which any 'two or three' Bishops can convey to another man, but a ministry in the Church, a gift given to the Church; therefore the 'cheirotonia' of a Bishop bears testimony that the Church has received it. The unbroken Episcopal succession, which was the decisive argument in the polemics against gnosticism, was understood primarily as the succession of bishops within every Church and not in terms of 'consecrators'<sup>13</sup>. Today, however, the emphasis in the doctrine of Apostolic Succession has shifted to the question of consecrators. But such was not the meaning given this doctrine by St. Irenaeus<sup>14</sup>; for

10. Prof. Bulgakoff in *Faith and Order*, Lausanne, 1927, pp. 260-61.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 262-63.

12. *Man's Disorder in God's Design*, pp. 51-52.

13. Cf. J. Meyendorff, in *Maison-Dieu*, 26, 1954.

14. Cf. Iren. of Lyons, *Adv. Haer.* IV, III, 3, and G. Bardy, *La Théologie de l'Église de St. Clement de Rome à St. Irenée*, p. 183ff. On diadoche in Irenaeus cf. E. Caspar, *Die älteste Römische Bischofliste*, Berlin, 1936, p. 444.

in spite of the fact that no bishop could be consecrated by his predecessor in the same chair, it is precisely this succession in the chair which is all important to St. Irenaeus and is to him the proof of the 'identity' of the Church in time and space with the Church of God, with the fulness of Christ's gift-for 'the Church is in the Bishop and the Bishop is in the Church'. The consecration of a bishop by other bishops is thus the acknowledgement of the will of God as being fulfilled in this particular Church. This fulfillment includes, to be sure, the bestowing of the charism of the Holy Spirit upon the candidate, and from this point of view the consecrators are the ministers of the sacrament of Order. But this they are because of their function and ministry in the Church and not in virtue of a power over grace, inherent to their 'rank'<sup>15</sup>.

Concluding this chapter, we should note that the time has come to reconsider, in the light of the principle of universal priesthood, the Protestant conception of an elected ministry and to return, in the name of that very principle, to the unity of the Church, preserved unbroken in its apostolic hierarchical succession.

#### CHAPTER IV ECUMENICAL POSSIBILITIES AND VIEWS ON REUNION

Dr. Visser't Hooft lists some «outstanding points» which the representative organs of the World Council have made when speaking about unity and which they admit to need further study and closer examination:<sup>16</sup>

a) That the unity of the Church is a given unity, in that it has its essential reality in Jesus Christ Himself<sup>17</sup>.

b) That this unity must be made manifest to the world<sup>18</sup>.

c) That full Church unity must be based on a large measure of agreement in doctrine<sup>19</sup>.

15. Primacy and Primacies in the Orthodox Church, ed. by St. Vladimir's Seminary, New York, 1960, p. 58.

16. The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches, London, no date, p. 4.

17. Amsterdam Report, p. 51; Evanston Speaks, S. C. M. Press, p. 18. Lund Report, p. 10, etc.

18. Evanston Speaks, p. 19; Toronto Statement, IV, 2, etc.

19. Amsterdam, Assembly Report, p. 55, «Christ-the Hope of the World», p. 20; Edinburgh Report, p. 253.

d) That sacramental communion is a necessary part of full Church unity<sup>20</sup>.

e) That a ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church (Lund Report, p. 20) and some permanent organ of conference and counsel (Edinburgh Report, p. 253) are required, but, that a rigid uniformity of governmental structure (Lund Report p. 34) or a structure dominated by a centralized administrative authority (Amsterdam Report, p. 127) are to be avoided.

f) That the unity of the Church depends on the renewal of the Church<sup>21</sup>.

g) That this unity is not to be sought for its own sake only, but for the sake of the world in which the Church performs its mission of evangelism<sup>22</sup>.

This list of affirmations of course, is not complete, but it seems that these are the recurrent emphases in World Council statements about unity.

Furthermore, the general tendency among the Church members of the Ecumenical Movement and their conception of the Reunion is a federative union in which unity and diversity would find their legitimate place, and which would allow the Churches to work for the reconstitution of Christianity without requiring from any Church a sacrifice incompatible with its tradition, its principles and its peculiar mission. It is determined as a unity based on community of spiritual experience.

It appears that the Lausanne Report V, on the Ministry of the Church, dwells rather much on the idea that the Church's unity must be built on a certain uniformity in Church Order<sup>23</sup>.

Real progress toward the general union of the Churches will not be made until some conclusion is reached as to what constitutes the Catholic Church and the particular Churches into which it is divided.

These are crucial questions which the Lausanne Report III on the Nature of the Church raises.

Further, there are differences as to the ultimate form which it is God's will His Church should take. Some hold that this form «was de-

20. Lund Report, p. 49.

21. Lund Report, p. 21; Evanston Speaks, p. 23.

22. Evanston Speaks, p. 20; «Christ-the Hope of the World», p. 20; The Calling of the Church to Mission and to Unity, Central Committee Minutes, 1951, p. 66.

23. Convictions, pp. 231-34.

terminated by Christ Himself and is therefore unchangeable; others that the one Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit may express itself in varying forms» (Lausanne Report III), and therefore make place in their view of the Church of the future for diversity of doctrine, worship and order. Still others admit diversity of worship and order, but not of doctrine; but there is widespread agreement that there must be some unity of faith and practice and some liberty of interpretation as to the nature of sacramental grace and of ministerial order and authority.

It must be noted that representatives of the Orthodox Church would guard their acceptance of any diversity in matters of Faith and Order<sup>24</sup> by the following limitations:

a) The types of expression so far as these types have been established by Ecumenical Synods must be maintained.

b) Liberty of interpretation comes within the sphere of the Church as a whole and not of different sections or individuals.

c) They cannot agree that there must be some liberty of interpretation as to the nature, of sacramental grace, and of ministerial order and authority.

d) They admit differences in worship so long as they do not diverge from the common doctrinal basis, on which the Holy Worship is based as handed down from the times of the Apostles.

There is general agreement in Lausanne that ultimately life, work, faith and order are expressions of an existing spiritual unity, and that each requires the other for its complete fruition. «We therefore commend to our Churches the consideration of the steps which may be immediately practicable to bring our existing unity in service to more effective expression»<sup>25</sup>.

Moreover, there are some who believe that co-operation should take the form of federation, either local, national or international: others oppose federation, fearing that it may become a substitute for complete organic union. In the interest of clarity of thought it is important to remember that the word «federation» is used in at least three different senses. It may denote either 1. A substitute for organic union; 2. A step on the road to organic union; 3. A form of organic union. In discussing federation it is important to make clear in which of these different senses the word is used.

24. Section II in L. Hodgson, *Convictions*, pp. 241-42.

25. Report V. See also the appended «Notes to Section IV», A, B in L. Hodgson, *Convictions*, p. 231f, 242.



The mind of the Orthodox Church is that reunion can take place only on the basis of the common faith and confession of the ancient, undivided Church of the seven Ecumenical Councils and of the first eight centuries<sup>26</sup>.

The Orthodox Church recognizes and accepts as an Ecumenical Symbol only the Creed of Nicea-Constantinople.

The Orthodox delegates at Lausanne express their convictions and views on the Reunion as follows: «...We cannot conceive how agreement can be made possible between two conceptions which agree that the existence of the ministry of the Church is by the will of Christ, but differ as to whether that ministry was instituted by Christ Himself in its three degrees of bishop, priest and deacon. In the same way we judge there to be no practical value in an agreed formula as to the necessity of sacraments in the Church when there is a fundamental difference between the Churches not only in regard to their number but also as to their general significance, as to their particular essential nature and as to their particular effects.

This being so, we cannot entertain the idea of a reunion which is confined to a few common points of verbal statement; for according to the Orthodox Church, where the totality of the faith is absent there can be no *communio in sacris*»<sup>27</sup>.

Then, they declare their readiness and desire for a co-operation with other Churches in the social and moral sphere on a basis of Christian love<sup>28</sup>.

The Orthodox Church, regarding as it does the unity of the Church as being the will of its Founder (John 17,21), recognizes at the same time that through absence of unity the work of the Church both external and internal throughout the world is greatly hampered.

«The Orthodox Church considers unity in faith a primary condition of reunion of the Churches, yet it rejects that exclusive theory according to which one Church, regarding itself as the one true Church, insists that those who seek reunion with it shall enter its own realm. Such a conception of reunion, amounting to the absorption of the other Churches, is in every way opposed to the spirit existing in the Orthodox Church, which has always distinguished between unity on the one hand and uniformity on the other - The Orthodox

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26. Archbishop Germanos, *Faith and Order*, Lausanne, 1927, p. 384.

27. *Faith and Order*, Lausanne, 1927, p. 385.

28. *Ibid.*

Church follows the advice of Augustine, in *dubiis libertas* and in *necessariis unitas*... The teaching of the ancient individed Church of the first eight centuries, free from every question which did not have a direct relation to these things which were to be believed, must to-day also constitute the basis of the reunion of the Churches»<sup>29</sup>.

The Executive Committee of Lausanne calls attention to the importance of keeping in mind in all deliberations for closer relation of the Churches the distinction between Christian unity and Church union. The two are not equivalent. Christian unity is inward and invisible - unity in spirit and truth which does not express itself necessarily in uniformity of doctrine, government and worship.

On the other side, Church union involves, according to the conception of Lausanne Conference, nothing more nor less than the formation of some kind of faith and order that will make room for full and free expression of the Christian unity that is now in the Churches and that will be in accord with the convictions of their officers and members.

A critic of the Lausanne Conference: The Reports show no evidence of recognition of progress beyond the original faith and order of the several Churches. Indeed these differences, as they appear in the Reports, might have been stated in the same way at Trent, Augsburg, Geneva, Oxford, four hundred or two hundred years ago. The advance, beyond the earlier stages of the history of the Churches, that was in evidence in the Conference is to be found rather in the spirit of mutual tolerance, the desire to find a way to overcome the differences, and the readiness to enter into new relations than in changes of view on faith and order.

There are mentioned, in the Report of the Edinburgh Conference<sup>30</sup>: particularly, several conceptions of Church unity: This unity may be conceived as a confederation or alliance of Churches for co-operative action. The participants, generally, recognize that federations for co-operative action should not be construed as examples of «federal union». Certain of them wish to be recorded as believing that «federal union» is not merely the most they can achieve, but also the most that they should desire.

A second aspect of Church unity is commonly indicated by the

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29. From the address of Archbishop Germanos at the opening of Lausanne Conference, Faith and Order, 1927, pp. 20-21.

30. Faith and Order, Edinburgh, 1937, p. 250ff.

term «intercommunion». This is the fullest expression of a mutual recognition between two or more Churches. Such recognition is also manifested in the exchange of membership and ministrations. Of this type is the concordat between the Mar Thoma Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar and the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. *Sacramental intercommunion* is regarded as a necessary part of any satisfactory Church unity.

The Report of the Lund Commission<sup>31</sup> showed appreciation of the gravity of the question of intercommunion.

Professor L. Zander, Orthodox Oecumenical Patriarchate, puts the dilemma: «The problem of intercommunion is one of the most 'pessimistic' of ecumenical problems, apparently there can be no positive solution of it, for if Churches of different denominations enter into communion it means either that they renounce their own faith and accept the faith of the Church whose Communion Service it happens to be, or that they do not take the problems of faith seriously and substitute for the tragedy of Christian dividedness an emotional idyll of fine feelings and of psychological unity»<sup>32</sup>.

In the minds of some who advocate «open» Communion, or occasional «intercommunion», the view is that the invisible union between Christians who accept Christ transcends all formulations of belief and all arrangements of Church administration; and that this union of hearts is rightly expressed, as it is fostered, by common reception of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is thus conceived as a sign of the future, not of the present<sup>33</sup>.

According to Bernard Leeming<sup>34</sup> «intercommunion without doctrinal agreement is practically acting a lie. It is a declaration that there is agreement when in fact there is not».

It has been generally assumed in the Orthodox and Episcopal Churches<sup>35</sup> that, *intercommunion* (in the Sacrament of Eucha-

31. Lund Report, p. 40.

32. *Intercommunion*, the Report of the Theological Commission appointed by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order together with a selection from the Material presented to the Commission, ed. by Donald Baillie and John Marsh, London, 1952, p. 350.

33. This is the view expressed by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr in a conversation with Archbishop Temple in 1943. Cf. Iremonger's *William Temple*, pp. 463-94.

34. *The Churches and the Church*, London, 1960, p. 104.

35. Resolution 42 of the Lambeth Conference of 1930.

rist) should be the expression of the consummation of union rather than a means for the achievement of unity.

The third form in which the final goal of the Ecumenical movement may be expressed presents, from the standpoint of definition, the greatest difficulties. It is commonly indicated by such terms as «corporate union» or «organic unity».

These terms are forbidding to many, as suggesting the ideal of a compact governmental union involving rigid uniformity. The representatives of the Edinburgh Conference did not so understand them, and none of them desires such uniformity. On the contrary, what they desire is the unity of a living organism, with the diversity characteristic of the members of a healthy body. Its members would move freely from one part to another and find every privilege of membership open to them. The sacraments would be the sacraments of the whole body. The ministry would be accepted by all as a ministry of the whole body. Such a unity will take up and preserve, in one beloved community, all the varied spiritual gifts which He has given us in our separations.

All accept some measure of organizational union, whatever might be its authority and powers.

According to the Edinburgh Conference: 1) «likeness in faith or confession is not necessary for co-operative action, but it finds that essential unity in faith or confession is a necessary basis for a) full intercommunion and for b) corporate union. 2) Likeness in non-sacramental worship (all are united in the use of the Holy Scriptures, common prayer expressed in the spoken word, through silence or art and music) is not necessary for co-operative action. 3) Co-operative activities do not require likeness in doctrine and administration of the sacraments. 4) Lack of likeness of orders is no obstacle to co-operative action. For a) full intercommunion and b) corporate union it will be necessary to reconcile the differences between Churches which hold (i) that a ministry in the threefold form of bishops, priests and deacons was instituted in the Church by Christ; (ii) that the historic episcopate is essential for corporate union; (iii) that a ministry was instituted by Christ in which bishops as distinct from presbyters are not essential; (iv) that no specially ordained ministry whatsoever is required by the conception of the Church<sup>31</sup>.

Besides the theological or ecclesiastical obstacles to Church Unity

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36. Faith and Order, Edinburgh, 1937, pp. 253-56.

there are, in equal part, 1) the sociological or political ones; 2) obstacles which are due mainly to historical factors; 3) obstacles which are of «cultural» origin (nationality, race, class, general culture, and, more particularly, slothful self-content and self-sufficiency).

**S u m m a r i z i n g** all these conceptions of Church Unity we may say that the unity the Ecumenical movement seeks is not simple but complex. It has two aspects: a) the inner spiritual unity known in its completeness to God alone; and b) the outward unity which expresses itself in mutual recognition, co-operative action and corporate or institutional unity.

In spite of this complexity and these obstacles, however, the representatives at the Edinburgh Conference express their deep faith and convictions as follows: «...We are thankful that during recent years we have been drawn together; prejudices have been overcome, misunderstandings removed, and real, if limited, progress has been made towards our goal of a common mind... We recognize in one another, across the barriers of our separation, a common Christian outlook and a common standard of values. We are therefore assured of a unity deeper than our divisions»<sup>37</sup>.

According to Stephen Neill<sup>38</sup> «far and wide throughout the earth, Christians who too long have acquiesced in the existence of divisions have come to realize afresh or for the first time that visible unity is part of the will of Christ for His Church on earth, and have set themselves, partially and imperfectly, yet humbly and sincerely, to seek to bring that visible unity into effect».

The above statements, I think, speak very strongly by themselves. Of course, it is true that the doctrine of the Church and the nature and authority of Christian Ministry constitute, today, the basic problems and questions of Church Union.

However, seen from within, as matter of fact, if we ignore the more extreme forms of sectarianism, the Churches of Christendom present far more resemblances of structure than differences. Each maintains the dominical Sacraments. Each has liturgical forms of worship, the so-called free churches maintaining their ascetic worship rubrics with little less strictness than do those of the catholic tradition. Even the ministry is maintained in each church in similar fashion. Each is a little catholicism, succession and continuity carefully preserved. The differ-

37. «Affirmation» in Faith and Order, Edinburgh, 1937, pp. 275-76.

38. Towards Church Union, 1937-1952, pp. 2-3.

ences lie in the answers to «succeeding whom?» and «continuing what?» This matter of succession and continuity is a crucial issue in contemporary ecumenical debate.

A further fact should be noted. The chief symbol of disunity in the Body of Christ has been a break in a ministerial succession.

The Reformers defined the Church primarily by reference to grace and faith, not (as «catholicism» did) by reference to institutional continuity. «The Church in its deepest sense is the community of the elect or of those who have saving faith in Christ... The necessary marks of the true visible Church are the means of grace, the ministry of word and sacraments»<sup>39</sup>. It is a personal relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, in the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. A substitution of a sacramental system or hierarchically ruled institution for this personal relationship the Reformers called idolatry.

The emphasis placed in Protestant apologetic upon the doctrine of «the priesthood of all believers» contributed to a deep-going misconception. The fundamental priesthood of the Church is, in the New Testament, clearly the priesthood of the whole Body, or of Christ Himself in the Body. The doctrine of the priesthood of the laity «does not mean that laymen are individually priests, but that the laity are, as such, members of that Body which is in its entirety priestly»<sup>40</sup>. «As representative of the Body, the individual layman like the individual priest, each in his special vocation, exercises of course, a priestly ministry»<sup>41</sup>.

According to the Episcopal Church a common view of the ministry can be achieved, if at all, only by a common experience within the one community<sup>42</sup>.

«It is not liberty which is the way to truth, but truth which is the way to liberty.» And we might also note that discipleship, life within the covenanted community, precedes the knowing of the truth.

The norm or ultimate standard is found by appeal to Scripture and tradition. This is not an appeal to Scripture and an appeal to tradition since the two are one, because Scripture, both the Old

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39. The Fulness of Christ - A Report presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury. London: S.P.C.K., 1950, pp. 30-32.

40. Doctrine in the Church of England, New York, 1938, p. 157.

41. Approaches Toward Unity, p. 137.

42. Ibid., p. 29.

Testament and the writings which became known as the New Testament, were part of the tradition of the early Church. The Fathers are expositors of Scripture and not originators or maintainers of some tradition apart from Scripture they have accepted.

«The Scriptures and the Creed cannot be regarded as a manual of public worship, ecclesiastical discipline, and other necessary elements in the life of the Church; these things belong to the sphere of tradition»<sup>43</sup>.

«As life and thought cannot be separated except by an arbitrary and artificial act of the intellect, so, too, community of life and unity of belief»<sup>44</sup>.

Concluding this paper, and particularly, these Ecumenical views on Church reunion, I do agree with Dr. Van Dusen that «Christian unity consists in a personal fellowship in Christ, organic union is secondary. First comes the mutual recognition and equality in prayer and common council. But not only in common council, in common action too. (Conciliar Ecumenicity).

The view of the New Testament is not in accordance with the Roman Catholic conception of an organic, structural or institutional union. The idea of Christian unity is 'unity in the spirit with the bond of peace'. This unity of fellowship and mutual recognition or common action goes back to early Church life and centuries. The Bishops of all Churches were spiritually equal. The Bishop of Rome was «primus inter pares» (Irenaeus).

The Orthodox Church never agrees with the Roman Catholic conception of structural union. In Orthodoxy the unity is manifest in the Ecumenical Council, when autonomous or autocephalous Churches come together in Council with mutual recognition. From this point of view the Panorthodox Synod in Rhodes (1961) was an anticipation of Union» (Dr. Van Dusen).

Totally, the members of the World Council of Churches reject the idea of structural, institutional and organic union of the Church. The Protestants (= Lutherans, Calvinists and Anglicans) follow Roman Catholics, in this point. In the Evanston Assembly, 46% rejected the idea of the structural Union. In New Delhi, the Orthodox also rejected the idea of the organic or structural Union.

Christian unity, now so earnestly sought, can be restored only by the return of all Christian communions to the principles of

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43. Approaches Toward Unity, p. 30.

44. Episcopalian view, Ibid., p. 32.

unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of her existence.

Moreover, unity must begin and be worked out on «the level» of local churches; it will not be achieved by discussion on «the top policy-making level» but by «the common Christian experience in worship, not in a single Church. This union is the only way to overcome all modern crises and papal hierarchy». (Dr. Van Dusen).