

# CHURCH, EVANGELIZATION, AND THE BONDS OF KOINONIA

*A Report of the International Consultation between the  
Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance\*  
(1993 - 2002)*

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## PREAMBLE

We, the representatives of two Christian traditions deeply divided from each other historically, have been involved in a substantive consultation that we hope will lead to improved relations in the future. This experience for us has been momentous. We come from strong and vital Christian communities. The Catholic Church is the largest Christian communion in the world, with now over one billion members. The Evangelical movement, with its roots in the Reformation, is one of the most dynamic expressions of Christianity today, showing rapid growth in many parts of the world. The World Evangelical Alliance represents some 150 million from among more than 200 million Evangelical Christians. Yet in spite of exceptions over the centuries, from Zinzendorf and Wesley to Schaff and Congar, both traditions have long lived in isolation from one another. Our communities have been separated by different histories and theologies as well as by unhelpful stereotypes and mutual misunderstandings. This estrangement and misapprehension has occasioned hostility and conflicts that continue to divide the Body of Christ in our own time.

In recent decades, however, a considerable number of Catholics and Evangelicals have been getting to know each other, and have discovered in the process how much they have in common. This change is due in part to situational factors: cultural and political changes in the second half of the twentieth century, the growth of democracy in countries which formerly had repressive, authoritarian governments, the mixing of peoples and confessions in our increasingly diverse cultures, the discovery of common concerns in the area of ethics and in the struggle against secularism. In part, the changing relations between Evangelical and Catholic communities are due to internal developments, for example, in Catholicism, as a result of the

*Second Vatican Council* and, among Evangelicals, the impact of the *Lausanne Covenant*. Finally, new attitudes were fostered by far-sighted individuals in both traditions, together with a significant number of initiatives designed to promote greater appreciation and understanding of each other. Billy Graham's ministry stands out here. Most importantly, there is a growing recognition in both our traditions that the spread of the Gospel is hindered by our continuing divisions.

As a result of these changes in our world and in our churches, many Catholics and Evangelicals have begun talking to and co-operating with each other, including praying together. In the process, they have not only

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\* Catholic Church and World Evangelical Alliance are the official names of the two co-sponsoring bodies. In using their official names, the co-sponsors of this Consultation are not, in any way, claiming these characteristics, respectively, of "Catholic" or "Evangelical" exclusively for themselves.

become friends; they have begun to discover each other as brothers and sisters in the Lord. It might be helpful to note some of these formal initiatives, which are described extensively in the appendix.

The first international dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals began with participants from both sides exploring the subject of mission from 1978 to 1984. This resulted in a 1985 report on their discussions. This international dialogue was sponsored, on the Catholic side, by the *Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity*. Evangelical participants, like John Stott, while drawn from a number of churches and Christian organizations, were not official representatives of any international body.

The present consultations represent an important development in our relationship. For the first time these meetings were sponsored by international bodies on both sides: the *World Evangelical Alliance* and the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*. This initiative eventually resulted in formal consultations beginning in Venice in 1993, and continuing at Tantur, Jerusalem in 1997, Williams Bay, Wisconsin in 1999, Mundelein, Illinois in 2001, and Swanwick, England in 2002.

Initial meetings led us eventually to focus on two general areas: the church and her mission. As the discussion continued, it became clear that a common reflection on the biblical notion of *koinonia* would help us to clarify

some convergences and differences between us on the church (Part I). The focus on mission evolved into reflection on evangelization and the related issues of religious freedom, proselytism and common witness in light of *koinonia* (Part II).

The purpose of these consultations has been to overcome misunderstandings, to seek better mutual understanding of each other's Christian life and heritage, and to promote better relations between Evangelicals and Catholics. This paper is a result of the first series of discussions and deals with a limited number of issues.

In these conversations, which were conducted in a very cordial and open atmosphere, each side has expressed clearly and candidly its own theological convictions and tradition, and listened as the other side did the same. Together they sought to discern whether there were convergences or even some agreements on theological issues over which Evangelicals and Catholics have long been divided, and also on what issues divisions clearly persist.

This consultation presents here the product of its work to the sponsoring bodies, with gratitude for the support they have given to this project.

We hope this study will be fruitful and serve the cause of the Gospel and the glory of our Lord.

## THE STATUS OF THIS REPORT

The Report published here is the work of an International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance. It is a study document produced by participants in this Consultation. The authorities who appointed the participants have allowed the Report to be published so that it may be widely discussed. It is not an authoritative declaration of either the Catholic Church or of the World Evangelical Alliance, who will both also evaluate the document.

## PART I

### CATHOLICS, EVANGELICALS, AND *KOINONIA*

#### A. THE CHURCH AS *KOINONIA* (FELLOWSHIP, COMMUNION)

(1) The use of *koinonia* brings an important biblical term to bear on ecclesiology, as it suggests those things that bind Christians together. *Koinonia* is undoubtedly “an early and important aspect of the church and its unity.”<sup>1</sup> The biblical word *koinonia* can be translated in various ways: “fellowship,” “belonging,” “communion,” “participation,” “partnership,” or “sharing in.” Evangelicals often use the term “fellowship,” while Catholics frequently use the term “communion.”

##### 1. New Testament “Fellowship”

(2) In the Pauline writings, the term *koinonia* often refers to the relationship of Christians to one another, grounded in their relationship to the divine

persons. Paul tells the Corinthian Christians: “You were called into the fellowship of his [God's] Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Co 1:9). He speaks of “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Co 13:14). Elsewhere he tells his readers that he received “the right hand of fellowship” from James, Cephas, and John (Gal 2:9). On another occasion he warns the Corinthians against having fellowship with unbelievers, asking the rhetorical question: “What fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Co 6:14). Partnership appears to be the meaning in Phil 1: 5-7.

(3) The term *koinonia* occurs also in Acts 2:42, where it again has the meaning of fellowship: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” It is debatable exactly what type of fellowship Luke here has in mind, but it is evidently some kind of association among believers, received from Christ through solidarity with the apostles. It

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<sup>1</sup> John Reumann, “Koinonia in Scripture: Survey of Biblical Texts”, *On The Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order*, Faith and Order Paper no. 166 (Geneva, 1994) p. 62

means the sharing of material goods in 2 Co 8:4, 9:13.

(4) The Johannine writings reinforce this sense of *koinonia* as fellowship. The author of the first epistle speaks of proclaiming what he has seen “that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3). Again in verses 7-8 he refers to fellowship with the Son and among Christians themselves. The fellowship with God in Christ is evidently the basis for the fellowship with other believers, all members in the Body of Christ. They are to be one as the Father and Son in the trinity are one (Jn 17:11,21).

## 2. Various Emphases in New Testament Interpretation

(5) For both Evangelicals and Roman Catholics communion with Christ involves a transformative union whereby believers are “*koinonoi* of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world by lust” (2 Pt 1:4). Catholics tend to interpret *koinonia* in this passage to mean a participation in the divine life and “nature,” while Evangelicals tend to interpret *koinonia* as covenant companionship, as it entails escaping moral corruption and the way of the world. According to many eastern Fathers of the church, the believer’s participation in the life of Christ and the church leads to the process of the believer’s divinization (*theosis*, *deificatio*). Evangelicals have reservations about the notion of *theosis*: the word is not found in the Bible and it suffers, they feel, from too much ambiguity. It appears to suggest that believers shall possess the essence of deity—a meaning which Catholic doctrine too denies. Evangelicals agree that the redemptive grace on the one

hand restores the original godlikeness that was marred and defaced by human sin (Col 3:10), and on the other hand that the Spirit transforms believers into the likeness of the Second Adam, “from glory to glory,” (1 Co 15: 48, 49; 2 Co 3:18), a process that will reach completion only when Christ, the Lord and Saviour, comes from heaven (Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thes 5: 23-24).

(6) Catholics believe that sacraments are Christ’s instruments to effect the transformative union with the divine nature (1 Co 12:12-13, where they see water-baptism, and 10:16-17, Eucharist). In passages such as these they hear other (Catholics would say deeper), more sacramental and participatory connotations in the word “*koinonoi*” than are expressed by the word “fellowship.” Many Evangelicals consider the sacraments to be dominical means of grace or “ordinances” which are “visible words” that proclaim (*kataggellete*, 1 Co 11:26) or are signs and seals of the grace of union with Christ—grace to be received and enjoyed on the sole condition of personal faith.

## 3. Perspectives on “*communio sanctorum*”

(7) While the earliest rendering of the term *communio sanctorum* in the Apostles' Creed has been translated as “communion of holy persons” (saints), this language has been translated as a reference to “holy things” (sacraments).<sup>2</sup> However, the doctrinal

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<sup>2</sup> On the phrase “*communio sanctorum*” in the Apostles' Creed see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1972) pp. 389-90. This sacramental interpretation is favored by Stephen Benko, *The Meaning of Communion of Saints* (Naperville, Ill, 1964) and Werner Elert,

significance of *communio sanctorum* (*koinonia ton hagion*) was not relegated to one interpretation only. Later western appropriation of the concept of divinization emphasized it as a participation in the Eucharist. Evangelicals prefer to translate *communio sanctorum* as “the fellowship of holy persons” or “of saints,” the “saints” being all those who truly belong to Jesus Christ by faith; they understand “communion” as the bond that binds all Christians in all generations.

(8) Evangelicals, historically, have not given the same place to the sacraments nor connected sanctification so directly with them as Catholics have. They maintain the “forensic” (referring to the courts of law) meaning of justification, and tend to prefer the vocabulary of drama and law. The Bible, as they read it, is more favorable to categories such as covenant-breaking and covenant-renewal, condemnation and acquittal, enmity and reconciliation, than to the category of participation in being. But they do affirm with the apostle Paul that anyone who is in Christ is a “new creation” (2 Co 5:17; Gal 6:15). The Holy Spirit effects a radical change, a new birth from above.

(9) Catholics and Evangelicals anticipate perfect communion in the Kingdom to be ushered in with the final coming of Jesus. In the light of this expectation, Catholics and Evangelicals should look to a deeper communion in this world, even if they disagree, between and among themselves, on the means by which this might be achieved, and on the extent to which it can be

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*Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis, 1966), chapter 1 and excursuses 1, 2, and 3.

realized prior to the return of Christ. Since the biblical texts are authoritative for both Catholics and Evangelicals, they provide a solid foundation for our conversations. The growing familiarity with biblical categories on both sides, combined with recent reinterpretations of sacramental theology, suggests that *koinonia* continues to be a promising topic for further explorations in our conversations.

## **B. OUR RESPECTIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CHURCH AND OF OTHER CHRISTIANS**

### **1. Recent Developments**

(10) In the Second Vatican Council, Catholics elaborated their distinctive understanding of the nature of the Church and also their relationships to other Christians. Evangelicals also have explored this area in major conferences in recent decades on the topic of missions. It will be useful to describe the views in the two communities, before pointing out the implications for mutual understanding.

(11) The Second Vatican Council marked a development in the ecclesiological self-understanding of the Catholic Church. Rather than positing a simple identity between the Church of Christ and itself, *Lumen Gentium* teaches that “the Church of Christ ...subsists in the Catholic Church”(LG 8).<sup>3</sup> The Evangelical movement on the other hand, received its characteristic modern shape from the influence of the eighteenth and nineteenth century

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<sup>3</sup> List of Abbreviations is found at the end of the Report.

revivals (preceded by pietism and Puritanism): these revivals crossed denominational boundaries and relativized their importance. From the Roman Catholic side the recognition of the “others” as belonging to Christ, takes the form of an emphasis on truly Christian elements and endowments in their communities; and from the Evangelical side, on the acknowledged presence of true believers indwelt by Christ’s Spirit among Catholics.

## 2. Catholic Views

(12) Vatican II in its Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) speaks of the bonds between Catholics and other Christians in these terms:

The unique Church of Christ...constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside her visible structure (LG 8).

The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not possess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve the unity of communion with the successor of Peter. For there are many who honor sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and of action, and who show a true religious zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, Son of God and Savior...

Likewise, we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them also He gives His gifts and graces, and is thereby operative among them with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood (LG 15).

(13) In its *Decree on Ecumenism* (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), Vatican II brings the concept of ecclesial elements into correlation with that of *koinonia*. The decree illustrates the Catholic perspective on full communion. The Holy Spirit, it affirms, “brings about a marvelous communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the church's unity” (UR 2). The Decree goes on to say that the Spirit brings about and perfects this wonderful union by means of the faithful preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and the loving exercise of pastoral authority (cf. UR 2).

(14) In the following paragraph the *Decree on Ecumenism* clarifies relationships with other communities and broaches the notion of “imperfect communion,” which is so vital for contemporary interchurch relations. The Decree states that some Christians have become separated from full communion with the Catholic Church but remain in a real, though imperfect, communion with it because “some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church herself can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace, faith, hope, and charity, along with other gifts

of the Holy Spirit and visible elements” (UR 3).

(15) In a later section of the *Decree on Ecumenism* the same notion of imperfect communion is applied specifically to Protestant communities. The Council here speaks of belief in the Holy Trinity, and of confession of Jesus Christ as God and Lord, and as sole Mediator between God and man (UR 20). It then goes on to mention love and veneration for Holy Scripture, affirming that “the sacred utterances are precious instruments in the mighty hand of God for attaining the unity which the Savior holds out to all men” (UR 21). Baptism properly conferred “constitutes a sacramental bond of unity linking all who have been reborn by means of it...Baptism itself is only a beginning because it is wholly directed toward the acquiring of the fullness of life in Christ” (UR 22). Pope John Paul II reaffirms the teaching of Vatican II on the “many elements of sanctification and truth” in other Christian communities and on “the communion, albeit imperfect, which exists between them and the Catholic Church” (UUS 11).

(16) All of these factors give concreteness to the use of the concept of *koinonia* by Roman Catholics. They make it clear that the ecclesial elements in question find expression in acts of faith, hope, and charity. The degree of communion can not be measured by outward and visible means alone because communion depends on the reality of life in the Spirit.

### 3. Evangelical Views

(17) Evangelicals similarly emphasize that the most important bond is the life of the Spirit which flows from union

with Christ. This bond is created when the Gospel is received in faith and is foundational for the visible expression of the oneness or *koinonia* of all Christians. For Evangelicals the visibility of the church is subordinate to this primary truth. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration* confesses:

All Christians are called to unity in love and unity in truth. As Evangelicals who derive our very name from the Gospel, we celebrate this great good news of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ as the true bond of Christian unity, whether among organized churches and denominations or in the many transdenominational cooperative enterprises of Christians together.

The Bible declares that all who truly trust in Christ and his Gospel are sons and daughters of God through grace, and hence are our brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

As the *Lausanne Covenant* of 1974 notes:

World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world. The church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the Gospel. But a church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a

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<sup>4</sup> “A Call to Evangelical Unity: ‘The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration’ ”, *Christianity Today* 43:7 (June 14, 1999) pp. 49-56

stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the Gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology (Jn 17:18; 20:21; Mt 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; 20:27; Eph 1:9, 10; 3:9-11; Gal. 6:14, 17; 2 Co 6:3,4; 2 Tim 2:19-2J; Phil 1:27) (*Lausanne 6*).

Evangelicals adhere to the Reformation doctrine of the “invisible church” (though with varying degrees of emphasis), without diminishing the importance of the visible church, as it is implied in the *Amsterdam Declaration*:

The one, universal church is a transnational, transcultural, trans-denominational and multi-ethnic family of the household of faith. In the widest sense, the church includes all the redeemed of all the ages, being the one body of Christ extended throughout time as well as space. Here in the world, the church becomes visible in all local congregations that meet to do together the things that according to Scripture the church does (*Amsterdam 9*).

(18) Evangelicals insist (as do Roman Catholics) that disciplinary and doctrinal criteria should be used for expressions in ecclesial life of the unity we have in Christ. “Church discipline, biblically based and under the direction of the Holy Spirit is essential to the well

being and ministry of God’s people.”<sup>5</sup> In a world and in churches marred by human failure, church discipline may demand the curtailing of concrete forms of fellowship even in cases where offenders against the apostolic teaching are acknowledged as brothers or sisters (cf. 2 Thes 3:14-15). This applies to deviations in all spheres of life, both in the confession of faith as well as in behavior, which cannot be ultimately separated. Some Evangelicals hold that the concrete possibilities of fellowship depend on the degrees of agreement on the apostolic testimony as handed down in the New Testament.

(19) The Manila Affirmations depict the resulting attitudes among Evangelicals today:

Our reference to “the whole church” is not a presumptuous claim that the universal church and the evangelical community are synonymous. For we recognize that there are many churches which are not part of the evangelical movement. Evangelical attitudes to the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches differ widely. Some Evangelicals are praying, talking, studying Scripture and working with these churches. Others are strongly opposed to any form of dialogue or cooperation with them. All are aware that serious theological differences between us remain. Where appropriate, and so long as biblical truth is not compromised, cooperation may

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<sup>5</sup> “The Chicago Call: An Appeal to Evangelicals” (1977), *Growing Consensus: Church Dialogues in the United States, 1962-1991*, Joseph Burgess and Jeffrey Gros eds. (New York 1995), p. 579

be possible in such areas as Bible translation, the study of contemporary theological and ethical issues, social work and political action. We wish to make it clear, however, that common evangelism demands a common commitment to the biblical Gospel (*Manila 9*).

#### **4. What of the Church Do We Recognize in One Another?**

(20) We as Catholics and Evangelicals share Sacred Scripture<sup>6</sup> and belief in its inspiration by the Holy Spirit. We affirm the unique mediatorial role of Christ, his incarnation, his death and resurrection for our salvation. We affirm together our faith in the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are both able to pray the Lord's Prayer and confess the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.<sup>7</sup> We affirm the Gospel call to conversion, to a disciplined life in the grace of Jesus Christ, and the ultimate promise of eternal reward. We recognize a Christian responsibility for service and the promotion of justice in the world. We share a common hope of Christ's return, as judge and redeemer, to consummate our salvation. We can commemorate together those who have witnessed by their blood to this common faith and now celebrate full communion before the face of our divine Savior.

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<sup>6</sup> We share the majority of biblical books, but the Catholic canon includes also the books Protestants call "The Apocrypha" and Catholics the "Deutero-canonical" books.

<sup>7</sup> "Confessing the One Faith: An Evangelical Response by World Evangelical Fellowship Task Force on Ecumenical Issues", *Evangelical Review of Theology* 18 (1994) pp. 35-46

(21) One of the results of interchurch cooperation and dialogue has been a greater appreciation by separated Christians of one another. (A gradual move towards a greater recognition of the ecclesial status of other Christian communities marks modern and contemporary developments). For centuries, in ways heavily influenced by polemics and religious wars, the identification of and the incorporation into the true church were simplistically considered to be an all-or-nothing affair. One was either in the true church or in a false institution or a sect. Either one was a member in the full sense of the word, or one was outside of the church and deprived of all hope of salvation. Yet the awareness of spiritual complexity was not entirely repressed. The Roman Catholic Church maintained the validity of the baptism performed by heretics and also acknowledged a "baptism of desire." The sixteenth century reformers did not deny the presence of elements of the true church in Roman Catholicism. Though at times Luther spoke of the pope as anti-Christ, he recognized remnants of the church in the Roman Communion. Calvin could write of his Roman Catholic opponents, "these muddlers will labor to no avail as they deck out their synagogue with the title church," yet he acknowledges traces (*vestigia*), remnants (*reliquias*), marks (*symbola*), and signs (*signa*) of the church under the papacy; churches in the Roman Communion may be called churches "to the extent that the Lord wonderfully preserves in them a remnant of his people however woefully dispersed and scattered." And early proponents of religious toleration were found among the extremely diverse groups often referred to as the "Radical Reformation." Though Anabaptists were painfully persecuted on all sides,

Calvin exercised a nuanced judgment on their doctrine; later they benefited from the protection of such a prelate as the Prince-Bishop of Basel.

## 5. A Common Challenge

(22) In this section, we have come to recognize, with the help of God's Spirit, the *koinonia* with the life of the Trinity that both of our communities enjoy. We see it, therefore, as incumbent upon both of us to move from this singular condition of unity with the life of the Trinity into an experienced unity with one another. To that end we need to take the actions which will move us from this rediscovery to forge the ecclesial bonds that will express this already bestowed unity. If God has not been dealing with us as if we were apart from Him, why should we continue to live as if we were apart from one another?

## C. SOME DIMENSIONS OF THE CHURCH

### 1. Origins of the Church

(23) Evangelicals and Catholics both see in the Pentecost event the emergence of the church of the new covenant (Acts 2). The presence of persons from every nation at Pentecost represents the universal mission of the Church. They agree that this church is built on the foundation of the prophet and apostles, with Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:20). They recognize in the evangelizing mission of the apostles the founding of local churches. The communion of local churches in the New Testament was served by the ministry of the apostles and by the meeting of the Council of Jerusalem

(Acts 15). Support of one another, letters of recommendation, the collections for other churches, and mutual hospitality characterize this communion among churches. Evangelicals and Roman Catholics recognize the importance of subsequent developments in the life of the church, but give different weight and appreciation to these developments.

## 2. The Church Local and Universal

### a. Evangelical and Catholic Perspectives

(24) For Evangelicals today the "local church" designates the congregation in a particular place. For Catholics a "local" or "particular" church refers to a diocese, composed of a number of parishes, with a bishop at the center, assisted by his presbyters and other ministers of pastoral service to the faithful for the sake of the Gospel.

(25) Catholics see the work of the Holy Spirit in a number of significant developments in the early Church. These include the understanding of bishops as successors to the apostles; the emergence of the three-fold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon; the clarification of the apostolic faith especially by ecumenical councils and the universal creeds; and the gradual acknowledgement of the effective leadership of the bishop of Rome within the whole Church. Even from early times, the Bishop of Rome had a prominent role in fostering the communion of local churches over which bishops presided, the initial expressions of a primacy that developed over the centuries. Since Vatican II there has been greater stress on the mutual relationship between the local churches and the church of Rome.

(26) For their part, Evangelicals are overwhelmingly found in Protestant and Pentecostal churches, which have generally placed primary emphasis on local congregations: the place in which the word of God is proclaimed, the sacraments are administered, and God's people are gathered. Evangelicals live in a variety of church structures. Churches whose origin lies in the "magisterial" Reformation (e.g., Lutheran, and Reformed) as well as Anglicans and Methodists, have a strong sense of the universality of the church in time and space, but the way they function stresses the regional or national body and, for example, gives significance to regional or national synods. Nearly all other churches have espoused congregationalism which concentrates responsibility in the local community. This community is the concrete embodiment of the *koinonia* of the Spirit. It is the locus of spiritual life, mutual upbuilding through the diversity of gifts, and training for service in the world. The free churches express solidarity through international agencies or alliances, denominational or interdenominational. Anabaptists in particular have had a strong tradition of community life; a vigilant discipline makes the assembly into a closely knit family of faith. Throughout history all these churches have had to fight divisive tendencies and, in the context of secularization, the destructive influences of individualism. The *Lausanne Covenant* candidly acknowledges: "We confess that our testimony has sometimes been marred by sinful individualism and needless duplication. We pledge ourselves to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission" (*Lausanne 7*).

(27) Whereas Catholic ecclesiology reserves certain sacramental functions to bishops who are understood to have received the fullness of the sacrament of orders, most Evangelical churches concentrate leadership more specifically in the ministry of the "pastor," whose role is considered to be that of the *episkopos/presbyteros* of New Testament times. (The pastor may be the "teaching elder" in association with the "ruling elders" of the church or parish, 1 Tim 5:17). Other Evangelicals, even among a few free churches, have distinct ministries of oversight, but the difference is slight: the bishop or superintendent is charged with administrative tasks, but is not considered to have particular sacramental roles, a concept foreign to the Evangelical interpretation of ministry.

(28) Global fellowship among Evangelicals is typically expressed by means of loose networks of world-wide associations (among which the W.E.A. may lay claim to best-grounded representative legitimacy) and parachurch organizations (such as the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students). These entities provide valuable channels of communication and tools for cooperation.

(29) On the Catholic side, Vatican II reemphasizes the key importance of the local church (diocese) as the place where the word is preached and the sacraments are administered. The church reveals herself most clearly when the people are gathered about the altar under the presidency of the bishop, with the assistance of the other clergy (*SC 41*; cf. *LG 26*). At every Eucharist the unity of the whole church is indicated by the presider's expression of the union with the local bishop, other

bishops, and especially the bishop of Rome as the center of the whole communion.<sup>8</sup> This ecclesiology points to a vision of the universal church as a network of local churches in communion. The bishops in national and regional conferences are called upon to represent their particular churches. Catholics speak of the universal church, like the regional church, as a communion of particular churches under their respective bishops and in communion with the bishop of Rome. They recognize, however, that the Church of Christ is not exclusively identified with the Catholic Church (cf. *LG* 8).

#### **b. Convergences and Differences Between Catholics and Evangelicals**

(30) While certainly not eliminating the differences with evangelical Protestantism, these recent developments in Catholic ecclesiology facilitate mutual understanding. On the national and regional levels, Catholic *Episcopal Conferences* and *Synods of Oriental Catholic Churches* are able to enter into conversations with national and regional Evangelical churches, alliances and organizations. Also, diocesan bishops are able to relate to the

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<sup>8</sup> This style of ecclesiology points to a vision of the universal church as a network of local churches in communion. According to the *Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 1985*, “The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental idea of the Council’s documents. *Koinonia/communio*, founded on the Sacred Scripture, has been held in great honour in the early Church and in the Oriental Churches to this day. Thus, much was done by the Second Vatican Council so that the Church as communion might be more clearly understood and concretely incorporated into life.” [*Relatio Finalis*, II, C), 1]

regional evangelical officials as their counterparts, even if they are not bishops. There is a certain convergence with the renewed emphasis of Catholics on local church and of Evangelicals on worldwide fellowship.

(31) Catholics speak of a reciprocity between the universal and the particular church, but they do not view the universal church as a federation of local churches. There is a sense in which Catholics can admit the priority of the local church since, in the words of Vatican II: “In and from such individual churches there comes into being the one and only Catholic Church” (*LG* 23). But to avoid misunderstanding, the Council also affirms that each particular church is “fashioned after the model of the universal church” (*ibid.*). The biblical evidence, as interpreted in Catholic theology, indicates that the church originated as a single community, into which people are incorporated by faith and baptism.<sup>9</sup>

(32) Evangelicals understand the church

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<sup>9</sup> The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in its letter to bishops on *Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* emphasizes the priority of the universal over the particular church (Cf. *Origins* 22 [June 25, 1992] pp. 108-112). In his presentation on *Lumen Gentium* at the International Meeting on the reception of Vatican II, February 27, 2000, Cardinal Ratzinger explained that the community of the 120 on whom the Holy Spirit descended (*Acts* 2:1-4) was a renewal of the community of the Twelve, who had been commissioned to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This community was the New Israel. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, “L’ecclesiologia della Costituzione *Lumen Gentium*”, *Il Concilio Vaticano II, Recezione e attualità alla luce del Giubileo*, Rino Fisichella (ed.), (Milano, 2000) pp. 66-81

to be called into being by the Word (*creatura verbi*). The Word is revealed in Christ, written in Scripture, and received through hearing. The Word calls forth faith and a community of faith in time and space, a visible church. But final judgment belongs to God as to believers and unbelievers within the visible church. God knows his own. “Here in the world, the church becomes visible in all local congregations that meet to do together the things that according to Scripture the church does. Christ is the head of the church. Everyone who is personally united to Christ by faith belongs to his body and by the Spirit is united with every other true believer in Jesus” (*Amsterdam 9*).

(33) Evangelicals, like Catholics, recognize the value of worldwide fellowship, but because of different theological presuppositions and different interpretations of certain biblical passages, they have a different view of the relationship between the universal church and local churches. Evangelicals understand by “universal church” all those everywhere and in all ages who believe and trust in Christ for salvation. “All” includes believing Roman Catholics. Evangelicals have made use of Luther’s distinction between the church invisible and the church visible. They affirm the universal church whose bond of unity, the Spirit of Christ, is invisible (Eph 4:3-4); they stress incorporation by “faith alone,” a faith by which all share in the gift of the Spirit (Gal 3:2). Christ, however, also willed the founding of visible churches into which people are incorporated by (water) baptism. While primarily local, these congregations may seek federations and alliances as means to express the universal character of the church’s nature and mission.

(34) The visible structural and organizational manifestations of the church are shaped by particular historical situations, and can change. In the eyes of most Evangelicals the Bible provides no rigid pattern for organizing the church in every time and place. They find in the New Testament a considerable degree of variety in models of ministry and church order. In distinction from Catholic ecclesiology, Evangelicals thus affirm a variety of forms of church order, but these differences do not impede fellowship or membership in the invisible church.

(35) Most Evangelicals agree that the universal church, not being a visible institution, is concretely expressed in the visible churches in particular times and places, and the translocal bonds they cultivate. They acknowledge that the correspondence between visible and invisible is not perfect. For example, “false brethren” may be found (Gal 2:4) who do not really belong (1 Jn 2:19). While the relationship between membership in the visible and invisible church, and baptism varies among Evangelicals, these differences do not hamper fellowship and collaboration. Visible communities have been endowed by Christ with institutions so that they may build themselves up and fulfill their mission in the world.

### **3. The Combination of the Personal and Institutional in *Koinonia***

#### **a. An Ordered Community of Persons**

(36) In the New Testament witness, Evangelicals and Catholics recognize an ordered community of persons, sharing a common faith and mission, given leadership, under Christ, by the apostles

(1 Co 11-14; Rom 12; Eph 4). We recognize that there are differentiated ministries articulated in the epistles (1 Pt 5; 1 Tim 3; Titus), though we value them differently, and make different judgments as to their continuity in the contemporary church. However, we both affirm order and discipline as a framework of ecclesial communion (1 Co 14:33, 40).

(37) The idea of the church as communion has emerged from a return to a rich vein of biblical and patristic material. It has also been influenced by more personalist approaches in the modern world, against exaggerated forms of institutionalism and individualism. Sociologists have long distinguished between society and community. In early twentieth-century ecclesiology this gave rise to a dualism between a church of law and a church of love. Pius XII, in his encyclical on the Mystical Body, taught that this opposition does not obtain in the church, which is both a mystical union and an organized society.<sup>10</sup>

#### **b. Catholic Views**

(38) Vatican II in its Constitution on the Church, follows essentially the teaching of Pius XII on this matter. It describes the church as a single interlocking reality (“*unam realitatem complexam*” [LG 8]), that is both visible and invisible, mystical and hierarchical. But for the Council the visible dimension serves the invisible dimension of the Church. The church is divinely endowed with doctrines, sacraments, and ministries for the purpose of bringing about and signifying a supernatural communion of life, love,

and truth among the members (LG 14, 18, 20, 21). The Council presents the church itself as a sacrament (LG 1).

(39) Vatican II’s move toward a more collegial ecclesiology shows a greater emphasis on the personal. Whereas Vatican I spoke of the pope as exercising jurisdiction over the other bishops of the Catholic communion, Vatican II clarifies this earlier teaching by saying that bishops must be in “hierarchical communion” with the pope in order to exercise their powers of teaching and shepherding their flocks (LG 22; CD 5). The concept of “hierarchical communion” does not eliminate the juridical aspect but requires government through dialogue and consensus rather than command.

#### **c. Evangelical Views**

(40) In general, Evangelicals hold that the church is primarily a community of persons and only secondarily an institution. Abraham Kuyper, for instance, declares: The church “is not a salvific agency that would supply grace as medicine, not a mystical order that would magically act on lay people. She is nothing else than *believing, confessing, persons*.”<sup>11</sup> The *Lausanne Covenant* of 1974 asserts: “The church is the community of God’s people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system or human ideology” (*Lausanne* 6). However, most Evangelicals emphatically maintain the requirement of order and discipline and affirm the institutional dimension of church life.

#### **d. Some Mutual Observations**

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<sup>10</sup> Pius XII, Encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi* 79.

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<sup>11</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Het Calvinisme*, (Kampen, Kok [1899]) pp. 53-54

(41) Catholics and Evangelicals experience a convergence in the understanding of the way that order and discipline serve the *koinonia* of the church. Catholics have begun to reemphasize the importance of the personal in understanding the church. Evangelicals show an increasing appreciation of visible expressions of unity in the life of the church beyond the bounds of their own denomination. Such a convergence in our understanding of biblical *koinonia* offers promise for a continuation of the dialogue.

#### **D. PREPARING FOR A DIFFERENT FUTURE**

(42) There are, then, differences between the convictions of Catholics and Evangelicals. These differences, however, do not amount to simple opposition and have been fruitfully examined in our conversations. Our mutual understanding has opened avenues for further dialogue.

(43) As we complete these reflections we realize again the impact that our divisions has made on people that we serve. It is not possible to reverse history, but it is possible to prepare for a different future.

(44) We realize the need for a spirit of repentance before God because we have not made sufficient efforts to heal the divisions that are a scandal to the Gospel. We pray that God grant us a spirit of *metanoia*. We need to continue to study and face issues which have separated us. We need to examine also the practices that uncritically continue the biases of the past.

(45) Could we not ask ourselves whether we sufficiently understand the levels of unity that we already share? For example, during the Mass, when Catholics hear the words of the canon: “to strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth, your servant Pope..., our bishop ..., and all the bishops with the clergy and the entire people your Son has gained for you”, do they understand that among those whom the “Son has gained” for the Father, are the Christians from whom they are separated and with whom, since Christ also redeemed them, they share deep bonds of Christian life? And when Evangelicals intercede for the life, mission, and unity of “the Church”, do they genuinely understand this Church to include Catholics ?

(46) In a spirit of humility, we bring our concerns and our hopes to the Lord.

## PART II

# CATHOLICS, EVANGELICALS, AND EVANGELIZATION IN LIGHT OF *KOINONIA*

(47) We now turn to issues of evangelization, proselytism, and religious freedom to explore them in the context of a theology of *koinonia*. In doing this we have learned from some of the insights of other dialogues on these issues and have built on them.

(48) Evangelicals and Catholics agree that every Christian has the right and obligation to share and spread the faith. “It is contrary to the message of Christ, to the ways of God’s grace and to the personal character of faith that any means be used which would reduce or impede the freedom of a person to make a basic Christian commitment” (B 34). Since evangelization is a focus of this section, we can now indicate briefly how Catholics and Evangelicals understand this responsibility.

### A. OUR RESPECTIVE VIEWS ON EVANGELIZATION/EVANGELISM

#### 1. A Catholic View

(49) Catholics view Evangelization in the context of the one Mission of the Church. In this regard, “evangelization is a complex process involving many elements as, for example, a renewal of human nature, witness, public proclamation, wholehearted acceptance of, and entrance into, the community of the church, the adoption of the outward signs and of apostolic works” (EN 24).

(50) “Evangelization will always contain, as the foundation, the center and the apex of its whole dynamic power, this explicit declaration: In Jesus Christ ...salvation is offered to every human person as the gift of the grace and mercy of God Himself” (EN 27; cf. RM 44). It involves proclamation of this good news, aiming at Christian conversion of men and women (cf. RM

44-46). But it involves also efforts “to convert both the individual consciences of men and their collective consciences, all the attitudes in which they are engaged and, finally, their lives and the whole environment which surrounds them” (EN 18). Thus “evangelization is to be achieved...in depth, going to the very center and roots of life. The Gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole way of life of man...” (EN 20). Through inculturation the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures, “transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within” (RM 52; cf. EN 20).

(51) There is a diversity of activities in the *Church’s one mission* according to the different circumstances in which it is carried out. Looking at today’s world from the viewpoint of evangelization, we can distinguish three situations. (a) People, groups and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel

are not known. In such a context Catholics speak of mission *ad gentes*. (b) Christian communities with adequate and solid Ecclesial structures; they are fervent in their faith and in Christian living, in which participation in the sacraments is basic (cf. *EN* 47). In these communities the church carries out her activities and pastoral care. (c) The intermediate situation, for example, in countries with ancient Christian roots, where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith. In this case what is needed is a new evangelization or a “re-evangelization”. The boundaries between these three “are not clearly definable, and it is unthinkable to create barriers between them or to put them into water-tight compartments” (*RM* 34). There is a growing interdependence which exists between these various saving activities in the church.

## 2. An Evangelical View

(52) For Evangelicals, the heart and core of mission is proclamation. However, it is the core, not the totality of the Church mission within the divine Plan of redemption. The *Lausanne Covenant* refers to this comprehensive mission as “evangelization” (*Lausanne*, Introduction) and places it within a trinitarian framework: “We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator (Is 40:28) and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19), who governs all things according to the purpose of his will (Eph 1:1). He has been sending forth a people for himself (Acts 15:14), and sending his people back into the world (Jn 17:18) to be his servants and witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ’s body, and the glory of his name (Eph 4:12)” (*Lausanne* 1).

(53) The *Lausanne Covenant* describes mission in its most inclusive sense as “Christian presence in the world” (*Lausanne* 4), which consists of “sacrificial service” and entails a “deep and costly penetration of the world”, and a permeation of “non-Christian society” (*Lausanne* 6). Because followers of Christ are engaged in the mission of the triune God, who is “both the Creator and Judge of all”, Christians “should share his concern for justice” (Gen 18:25) and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression (Ps 45:7; Is 1:17). Because all human beings are created in the image of God, “every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age (Lev 19:18; Lk 6:27,35), has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited (Jas 3:9; *Lausanne* 5). When one is born again one is born into Christ’s kingdom “and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness (Mt 5:20; Mt 6:33) in the midst of an unrighteous world” (*ibid*).

(54) Although the mission of the triune God is as broad as “God’s cosmic purpose” (*Lausanne* 6) and therefore calls God’s people into this all-embracing mission, Evangelicals are particularly concerned to keep proclamation front and center. Accordingly, the *Lausanne Covenant* circumscribes “evangelism itself” as “the proclamation of the historical, Biblical Christ as Savior (1 Co 1:23; 2 Co 4:5) and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and to be reconciled to God” (2 Co 5:11, 20; *Lausanne* 4). Moreover, *Lausanne* forcefully asserts the primacy of evangelism as proclamation: “In the Church’s mission of sacrificial service

evangelism is primary”. A subsequent *World Evangelical Fellowship* statement again stresses the crucial role of evangelism. Yet, the document does not treat evangelism “as a separate theme, because we see it as an integral part of our total Christian response to human need” (Mt 28:18-21; *Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need*. Wheaton, 1983, Introduction). Clearly, the “Great Commission” is here seen as a call to holistic mission, with at its center calling all people to believe in Jesus Christ.

## B. OLD TENSIONS IN A NEW CONTEXT OF *KOINONIA*

(55) It is our common belief that God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to effect the reconciliation of the world to God. Those to whom the Spirit is sent participate in this mission of the Spirit. The heart of the mission of the Spirit is *koinonia*, a communion of persons in the communion of God, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

(56) The real *koinonia* we already share gives rise to our mutual concern to view conjointly the issues of religious freedom and proselytism that have divided us. We believe that the two issues of religious liberty and proselytism must not be treated as totally separable areas but must be firmly linked and considered jointly as related concerns, seen in the context of the meaning of evangelization and the possibility of common witness. Evangelical and Catholic Christians can now recognize that they share a real but imperfect communion with each other, and are able to take modest steps toward a more complete communion in Christ

through the Holy Spirit. The interrelated components necessary for increasing *koinonia* are repentance, conversion, and commitment, in which we commit ourselves to the convergence that has already begun in our life together.

(57) The first component is *repentance*, a radical turning away from the habits of mind and heart that fall short of God’s purposes and design. Those purposes are that there be a communion between persons and God, and between communities whose unity is authored by the Spirit. God intends that the Church be the main instrument for the *koinonia* of all peoples in God. Therefore, the reconciliation of our Christian communities is urgent.

(58) The second component for increasing *koinonia* is *conversion* in which by faith we turn to God in Christ and his saving message. Christian conversion itself is threefold: moral, intellectual, and religious. In moral conversion we are freed by grace to value what God values and obey what God demands. In intellectual conversion we learn and embrace the truth. In religious conversion we come to abide in the love of God.

(59) The third component that the Spirit enables is a turning to one another in our *commitment* to proclaim the Gospel. Catholics and Evangelicals are striving to learn how to love one another in our efforts at evangelization. There are signs of convergence on how we are to participate in the mission of the Spirit in our sharing of the good news. Our two traditions have insights into the contents of this inexhaustible source. These insights need to be retained in the work of evangelization that we undertake respectively, so as to complement and affirm one another’s efforts.

## 1. Repentance: From What Are We Turning?

(60) Catholics and Evangelicals are called to pray for grace as we come to a better understanding of the will of Christ, which our past relationships have not reflected (P 108). Our divisions in the past have led to conflicts in evangelization.

But, at Manila, 1989, Evangelicals exhorted one another:

“Evangelism and unity are closely related in the New Testament. Jesus prayed that his people's oneness might reflect his own oneness with the Father, in order that the world might believe in him, and Paul exhorted the Philippians to ‘contend as one person for the faith of the Gospel’. In contrast to this biblical vision, we are ashamed of the suspicions and rivalries, the dogmatism over non-essentials, the power-struggles and empire-building which spoil our evangelistic witness” (*Manila* 9).

And Pope John Paul II, on behalf of Catholics, asked God' forgiveness for sins against unity with the following prayer:

“Merciful Father,  
on the night before his Passion  
your Son prayed for the unity of  
those  
who believe in him:  
in disobedience to his will,  
however,  
believers have opposed one  
another, becoming divided,  
and have mutually condemned  
one another and  
fought against one another.  
We urgently implore your  
forgiveness

and beseech the gift of a  
repentant heart,  
so that all Christians, reconciled  
with you and with one another,  
will be able, in one body and in  
one spirit,  
to experience anew the joy of  
full communion.  
We ask this through Christ our  
Lord.”<sup>12</sup>

(61) Concerning “proselytism,” it should be pointed out that the understanding of the word has changed considerably in recent years in some circles. In the Bible the word proselyte was devoid of negative connotations. The term referred to someone apart from Israel who, by belief in Yahweh and acceptance of the law, became a member of the Jewish community. It carried the positive meaning of being a convert to Judaism (Ex 12:48-49). Christianity took over this positive and unobjectionable meaning to describe a person who converted from paganism. Until the twentieth century, mission work and proselytism were largely synonymous and without objectionable connotations (B 32, 33). It is only in the twentieth century that the term has come to be applied to winning members from each (B 33), as an illicit form of evangelism (P 90). At least, in some Evangelical circles proselytism is not a pejorative term; in Catholic and most ecumenical circles it is. The attempt to “win members from each other” (B 33)

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. John Paul II, “Universal Prayer for Forgiveness, III. Confession of the sins which have harmed the unity of the Body of Christ”, during the Liturgy of First Sunday of Lent, St. Peter's Basilica, (Vatican City, March 12, 2000). See: Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City, *Information Service* 103 (2000/I-II) p. 56

by unworthy means is negative and pejorative proselytism. Members of our communions have been guilty of proselytism in this negative sense. It should be avoided.

(62) We affirm therefore “that the following things should be avoided: offers to temporal or material advantages...improper use of situations of distress... using political, social and economic pressure as a means of obtaining conversion ... casting unjust and uncharitable suspicion on other denominations; comparing the strengths and ideals of one community with the weakness and practices of another community” (B 36). This issue of seeking to win members from other churches has ecclesiological and missiologically significant consequences, which require further exploration.

(63) Unethical methods of evangelization must be sharply distinguished from the legitimate act of persuasively presenting the Gospel. If a Christian, after hearing a responsible presentation of the Gospel, freely chooses to join a different Christian community, it should not automatically be concluded that such a transfer is the result of proselytism (P 93, 94).

(64) Catholic-Evangelical relations have been troubled by the practice of seeking to evangelize people who are already members of a church, which causes misunderstanding and resentment, especially when Evangelicals seek to ‘convert’ baptized Catholics away from the Roman Catholic Church. This is more than a verbal conflict about different uses of terms like conversion, Christian, and church. Evangelicals speak of ‘nominal Christianity,’ referring to those who are Christians in

name, but only marginally Christian in reality, even if they have been baptized. Nominal Christians are contrasted with converted believers, who can testify to a living union with Christ, whose confession is biblical and whose faith is active in love. This is a sharp distinction common among Evangelicals, who see nominal Christians as needing to be won to a personal relation with the Lord and Savior. Evangelicals seek to evangelize nominal members of their own churches, as well as of others; they see this activity as an authentic concern for the Gospel, and not as a reprehensible kind of ‘sheep-stealing’ (E sec. iii). Catholics also speak of ‘evangelizing’ such people, although they refer to them as ‘lapsed’ or ‘inactive’ rather than as ‘nominal,’ and still regard them as “Christian” since they are baptized believers. They are understandably offended whenever Evangelicals appear to regard all Roman Catholics as nominal Christians, or whenever they base their evangelism on a distorted view of Catholic teaching and practice.

(65) We agree that a distinction must be made between one’s estimate of the doctrines and practices of a church and the judgment that bears on an individual’s spiritual condition, e.g. his or her relationship to Christ and to the Church.

(66) As to an individual’s spiritual or religious condition, whether a person is nominal, lapsed, inactive, or fallen away, a negative judgment is suspect of being intrusive unless the person to be evangelized is the source of that information. The spiritual condition of a person is always a mystery. Listening should be first, together with a benevolent presumption of charity, and in all cases we may share our perception

and experience of the Good News only in a totally respectful attitude towards those we seek to evangelize. This attitude should also be the case apart from evangelization in all attempts at persuading brothers and sisters in what we believe to be true.

(67) Evangelicals and Catholics are challenged to repent of the practice of misrepresenting each other, either because of laziness in study, or unwillingness to listen, prejudice, or unethical judgments (E i). We repent of the culpable ignorance that neglects readily accessible knowledge of the other's tradition (P 93). We are keenly aware of the command: "Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Ex 20:16).

(68) We repent of those forms of evangelization prompted by competition and personal prestige, and of efforts to make unjust or uncharitable reference to the beliefs or practices of other religious communities in order to win adherents (E I, p. 91, J 19). We repent of the use of similar means for retaining adherents. We deplore competitive forms of evangelism that habitually pit ourselves against other Christians (P 93) (*DH* 4, 12; John Paul II, *Tertio millennio adveniente* 35). All forms of evangelization should witness to the glory of God.

(69) We repent of unworthy forms of evangelization which aim at pressuring people to change their church affiliation in ways that dishonor the Gospel, and by methods which compromise rather than enhance the freedom of the believer and the truth of the Gospel (B 31).

(70) Thus agreeing, we commit ourselves to seeking a "newness of

attitudes" in our understanding of each other's intentions (cf. Eph 4:23, *UR* 7).

## **2. Conversion: To What Are We Turning?**

### **a. Growing in *Koinonia***

(71) The bonds of *koinonia*, which separated Christians already share, imply further responsibilities toward one another. Each must be concerned about the welfare and the integrity of the other. The bonds of *koinonia* imply that Christians in established churches protect the civil rights of the other Christians to free speech, press and assembly. At the same time, the bonds of *koinonia* imply that the other Christians respect the rights, integrity and history of Christians in established churches. Tensions can be reduced if Christians engaged in mission communicate with one another and seek to witness together as far as possible, rather than compete with one another.

(72) Central to our understanding of religious conversion is our belief and experience that "the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child." (1 Jn 5:1). Our failures in loving one another are the scandal that calls into question whether we have allowed this love to come into our hearts without obstruction. Since Evangelicals believe their church to be catholic, and Catholics believe their church to be evangelical, it would seem that our future task is to recognize better the aspects that each of us emphasizes in the others' view as well.

(73) Evangelicals agree with Catholics, that the goal of evangelization is *koinonia* with the triune God and one another. One enters into this *koinonia* through conversion to Christ by the Spirit within the proclaiming, caring community of faith which witnesses to the Reign of God. Catholics agree with Evangelicals, that all Christians of whatever communion can have a living personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior. On the basis of our real but imperfect communion we ask God to give us the grace to recommit ourselves to having a living personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior and deepening our relationship to one another.

#### **b. Religious Liberty**

(74) We grow in *koinonia* when we support one another and acknowledge one another's freedom. Religious freedom is not only a civil right but one of the principles, together with that of mutual respect, that guide relationships among members of the Body of Christ and, indeed, with the entire human family (P 99). We have been called to work together to promote freedom of conscience for all persons, and to defend civil guarantees for freedom of assembly, speech and press. Recognizing that we have often failed to respect these liberties in the past, Catholics and Evangelicals affirm the right of all persons to pursue that truth and to witness to that truth (J 15, P 104). We affirm the right of persons freely to adopt or change their religious community without duress. We deplore every attempt to impose beliefs or to manipulate others in the name of religion (J 15, P 102). Evangelicals can concur with the position of the Second Vatican Council on religious freedom, namely that all "are to be immune from

coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits" (DH 2; cf. B 40).

(75) In the person of Pope John Paul II the Catholic Church has recognized and apologized for the violations of justice and charity for which its members have been responsible in the course of history.<sup>13</sup> Today it seeks to protect the religious liberty of all persons and their communities. At the same time, it is committed to spreading the message of the Gospel to all without proselytism or reliance on the state.

(76) While religious liberty has been a rallying point for Evangelicals from the earliest period, they have been called from their sectarianism to greater mutual respect and increased co-operation in mission by the catholic spirit of John Wesley, the revivals of the nineteenth century, and the challenges of world mission. Interdenominational, world-wide fellowship and co-operation in mission have been served by the Evangelical Alliance. The Alliance has always been concerned about religious liberty, indeed, as early as 1872 lobbying on behalf of oppressed Catholics in Japan.<sup>14</sup> According to the *Manila Manifesto* (1989):

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. John Paul II, "Universal Prayer for Forgiveness, e) Confession of sins committed in actions against love, peace, the rights of peoples and respect for cultures and religions", Vatican City, March 12, 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. I. Randall and D. Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of*

Christians earnestly desire freedom of religion for all people, not just freedom for Christianity. In predominantly Christian countries, Christians are at the forefront of those who demand freedom for religious minorities. In predominantly non-Christian countries, therefore, Christians are asking for themselves no more than they demand for others in similar circumstances. The freedom to 'profess, practice and propagate' religion, as defined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, could and should surely be a reciprocally granted right (*Manila 12.1*).

We greatly regret any unworthy witness of which followers of Jesus may have been guilty (*Manila 12.2*).

(77) Religious freedom is a right which flows from the very dignity of the person as known through the revealed Word of God: it is grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (P 98). Civil authorities have an obligation to respect and to protect this right (*DH 2*). For Catholics this view was formally adopted at Vatican II in the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. Evangelicals at *Lausanne 1974*, *Manila 1989* and *Amsterdam 2000* affirmed a similar position.

(78) Evangelicals and Roman Catholics differ somewhat in the theological and anthropological rationale for this position. Catholic social thought bases rights' theory on natural law. It sees human rights as legitimate moral claims

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*the Evangelical Alliance*, (Carlisle, 2001) p. 98

that are God-given; free moral agents have a corresponding responsibility to act in the light of those claims.

Revelation is seen to complement this understanding of rights. In evangelical teaching, primacy belongs to the divine right over conscience, the Lord's immediate claim on each individual; human rights, then, are viewed not only in creational light but also against the backdrop of the human fall into sin. The history of sin makes the mandate for rights all the more important. God continues to pursue fallen creatures in the unfolding history of grace. Catholics and Evangelicals agree that human rights should be interpreted and exercised within the framework of Scripture teaching and of rigorous moral reasoning. Due regard must be had for the needs of others, for duties towards other parties, and for the common good (P 102, *Decree on Religious Freedom 7*). Human rights language, also, must guard against being turned into narcissism, self-assertiveness and ideology.

### **3. Turning to One Another: The Challenge of Common Witness**

(79) What remains as a hope and a challenge is the prospect of our common witness. We see the communities of faith, to which we belong, as set apart and anointed for mission. We are concerned about the growing secularization of the world and efforts to marginalize Christian values. It is urgent that our evangelization be ever more effective. Is it not also urgent that Christians witness together? In this sense the Second Vatican Council called Catholics to cooperate with other Christians in this way:

“To the extent that their beliefs are common, they can make before the nations a common

profession of faith in God and in Jesus Christ. They can collaborate in social and in technical projects as well as in cultural and religious ones. Let them work together especially for the sake of Christ, their common Lord. Let his name be the bond that unites them”

(*Decree on Missions* 15).

The core of evangelization is the apostolic faith that is found in the word of God, the creeds, and is reflected in biblical interpretations and the doctrinal consensus of the patristic age. The possibility of Evangelicals and Catholics giving common witness lies in the fact that despite their disagreements, they share much of the Christian faith. We rejoice, for example, that we can confess together the Apostles’ Creed as a summary of biblical faith.

(80) While acknowledging the divergences, which remain between us, we are discerning a convergence between our two communions regarding the need and possibilities of common witness:

The *Amsterdam Declaration 2000* urged Evangelicals:

“to pray and work for unity in truth among all true believers in Jesus and to co-operate as fully as possible in evangelism with other brothers and sisters in Christ so that the whole church may take the whole Gospel to the whole world” (*Amsterdam* 14).

And Pope John Paul II asks,

“How indeed can we proclaim the Gospel of reconciliation without at the same time being committed to working for reconciliation between Christians?” (*UUS* 98).

Therefore, to the extent conscience and the clear recognition of agreement and

disagreement allows, we commit ourselves to common witness.

(81) We conclude this report by joining together in a spirit of humility, putting our work, with whatever strengths and limitations it may have, in the hands of God. Our hope is that these efforts will be for the praise and glory of Jesus Christ.

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Eph 3:20-21).

## ABBREVIATIONS

### CATHOLIC DOCUMENTS

- AG: Vatican II\*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes*  
CD: Vatican II, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*  
DH: Vatican II, Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*  
LG: Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*  
SC: Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*  
UR: Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*  
EN: Paul VI, Apostolic Letter "On the Evangelization in the Modern World" *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), *Vatican Council II, More Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, O.P., ed. (Dublin, 1982), pp. 711-761  
RM: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate, Redemptoris Missio* (1990), (Vatican City, 1990)  
UUS: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *On Commitment to Ecumenism* (1995), *Ut unum sint*, (Vatican City, 1995)

\* Cf. *The Documents of Vatican II*, Walter M. Abbot ed. (New York, 1966)

### EVANGELICAL DOCUMENTS

- Amsterdam: "The Amsterdam Declaration: A Charter for Evangelism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (2000), *The Mission of An Evangelist* (Minneapolis, 2001) pp. 449-459  
Lausanne: "Lausanne Covenant", 1974, *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974-1991*, James A. Scherer and Stephen Bevans, eds. (Maryknoll, 1992), pp. 253-259  
Manila: "Manila Manifesto", 1989, *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974-1991*, James A. Scherer and Stephen Bevans, eds. (Maryknoll, 1992), pp. 292-305

### DIALOGUE DOCUMENTS

- B: *Summons to Witness to Christ in Today's World: A Report on the Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations 1984-1988*, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Information Service [IS] 72* (1990/I) pp. 5-14  
E: *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission 1977-1984, A Report*, Basil Meeking and John Stott, eds. (Grand Rapids, 1986); see also *IS 60* (1986/I-II) pp. 71-97  
J: Joint Working Group Between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, "The Challenge of Proselytism and the Calling to Common Witness", *The Seventh Report*, Appendix C, (Geneva, 1998), pp. 43-52; see also *IS 91* (1996/I-II) pp. 77-83  
P: *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness, The Report from the Fourth Phase of the International Dialogue (1990-1997) Between the Roman Catholic Church and Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders, IS 97* (1998/I-II) pp. 38-56; see also *Pneuma 21:1*(1999) pp. 11-51

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**This is the end  
of the document CHURCH, EVANGELIZATION, AND THE BONDS OF KOINONIA**

## EXTRA

*added in Dutch, English and German*

*by Kees Slijkerman, webmaster of [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl)*

Over bovenstaand rapport een paar opmerkingen:

### 1. In het rapport zelf staat:

"The Report published here is the work of an International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance. It is a study document produced by participants in this Consultation. The authorities who appointed the participants have allowed the Report to be published so that it may be widely discussed. It is not an authoritative declaration of either the Catholic Church or of the World Evangelical Alliance, who will both also evaluate the document."

Dit rapport is inmiddels op veel plaatsen bekend en op te vragen.

2. Kardinaal W. Kasper, hoofd van de Pauselijke Raad voor de Eenheid van de Christenen, sprak er zeer positief over:

"IV. Der Dialog mit den westlichen Kirchengemeinschaften

1. Die Unterschiede nicht nur historischer und kultureller, sondern auch doktrineller Art sind mit den kirchlichen Gemeinschaften des Westens tiefer als mit den Kirchen des Ostens (UUS 64-68). Grundsätzlich gilt von diesen Dialogen, was bereits über Licht- und Schattenseiten des Ökumenismus gesagt wurde. Wir führen eine große Zahl von Dialogen; die katholische Kirche ist unter den Kirchen und Kirchlichen Gemeinschaften diejenige Kirche, welche mit Abstand am meisten ökumenische Dialoge unterhält. Nach der „Gemeinsamen Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre“ (1999) schreiten die Dialoge, wie anhand der vorliegenden Berichte deutlich wird, im Rahmen der eingespielten guten Beziehungen langsam aber seriös voran. In vielen Dialogen bemerkt man positive Entwicklungen, besonders mit der World Evangelical Alliance und dem Dokument Church, Evangelisation und Bonds of Koinonia und den Methodisten, die einen Prozeß begonnen haben um der Gemeinsamen

Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre beizutreten; mit den Menoniten und den Adventisten haben wir neue Dialoge oder vielmehr Gespräche begonnen. Belastungen sind etwa nach der Erklärung „[Dominus Jesus](#)“ (2000) und im Zusammenhang der Enzyklika „[Ecclesia de Eucharistia](#)“ (2003) und des Ökumenischen Kirchentags in Berlin (Juni 2003) aufgetreten. Im allgemeinen hat sich aber eine so gute Vertrauensbasis herausgebildet, welche immer wieder auftretende Schwierigkeiten oder Verstimmungen überbrücken und soweit möglich lösen hilft."

([http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/ecum-commit-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20031111\\_prolusio-plenary\\_ge.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/ecum-commit-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20031111_prolusio-plenary_ge.html))

### 3. Bij het rapport werden gepubliceerd deze **Pastoral Guidelines accompanying WEA-RCC Document**

Relations between Evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church vary immensely around the globe. In some regions such North America and parts of Europe and Africa, Evangelic increasingly make common cause with Catholics in confrontation with major ethical and religious challenges, such as abortion, sexual ethics, legislation regarding marriage, genetic engineering (including cloning), and secularism. In other regions, especially those in which the Roman Catholic Church has a dominant presence, such as Latin America, Southern Europe, and the Philippines, relations are often tense, if not hostile. Although even within these regions, we receive reports of significantly improving relationships.

The study document which we hereby submit to you for your consideration, evaluation, and critique is not meant to impose any kind of agenda on Evangelical

churches, agencies, or individuals. Rather, we proceed from a strange contradiction and a fundamental conviction. The obvious contradiction: in many places sizeable groups that claim the name of Christ as only Saviour, as supreme Reconciler, and as Lord of all; yet they find themselves in a situation of mutual hostility and alienation. The fundamental conviction: we owe it to ourselves, to one another, and indeed to the One we serve as Lord, to explore whatever barriers that hamper His work among us and in His world.

As you will notice in the background documents (Appendix 1), this Consultation began by exploring the basic issues that have divided Evangelicals and Roman Catholics since the time of the Reformation: Scripture and Tradition, and Justification by Faith (the papers on these issues have been published as indicated). Increasingly, it became evident that such issues come to practical expressions in the different ways in which we understand what it means to belong to Christ and how we experience Christian community or church. For that reason, the document before you now has as one of its foci, “communion,” or “fellowship.” The second focus is an area in which the relations with the Roman Catholic Church are often especially troubled, namely, mission and evangelization. Often Evangelical efforts in bringing the gospel to “nominal Catholics” are considered to be illegitimate proselytism, or “sheep stealing” by the Roman Catholic Church. This document makes an initial attempt to clarify this issue

and to suggest some practical guidelines for the practice of evangelization.

In evaluating this document, its limited scope and nature should be constantly kept in mind. We take the qualifications articulated in the boxed statement preceding Part I very seriously: this document is 1) a study document; 2) submitted for discussion and evaluation; 3) by representatives of the two sponsoring bodies (in the case of the WEA, by a Task Force of the Theological Commission). This document, therefore, is not an authoritative World Evangelical Alliance statement. To this end, this document is being submitted in the hope of fostering constructive discussion and critique.

The burden of this document is in the end not words on paper but the course of the Gospel of Christ on the highways and byways, the cities and barrios, the hills and plains of God’s planet. For that reason we covet, first of all your prayers for the mission of Christ, but also your engagement in the issues explored in this document. Moreover, whatever faith issues or practical problems are not adequately addressed in this document--we need to hear about these. You can be assured that all serious problems regarding relations with the Roman Catholic Church that you encounter at the ground level will be brought forcefully to the fore in this consultation (the same will no doubt be true from the Roman Catholic side).

2003

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Meer over dit onderwerp op [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl) in de rubrieken **Dialoog RKK - Evangelische Beweging / Reformatie** en **Dialoog Rooms-katholieken - Pinkstergelovigen** (met onder 0002uk de officiële Engelse tekst van het in 1998 verschenen dialoograpport over evangelisatie, proselitisme en gezamenlijk getuigenis; en onder 0003 een Nederlandse samenvatting (artikel door Kees Slijkerman) daarvan.

Een overzicht van alle dialoograpporten uit de internationale dialoog tussen pinkstergelovigen en de Pauselijke raad voor de eenheid van de christenen: 0010 op [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl).

This is document 0146uk at [www.stucom.nl](http://www.stucom.nl)