

Minutes

Winnipeg Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue, Meeting No. 32

Meeting held on 19 January 2011
at the Fort Garry Mennonite Church

Present: Paul Doerksen, Michelle Gallant, Helmut Harder, Richard Lebrun, John Long, Luis Melo, Ron Penner, Donna Peters-Small, Lynda Trenholm, and Nancy Wood.

1. Introduction – Helmut began by welcoming new participants to the dialogue and reporting that Adolf Ens, Henry Loewen, Janet Kozak, and Joe Langan have dropped out of the group since our last meeting, and noted that Dora Dueck, an ongoing member was away visiting family. He then gave a brief explanation of the history of the group.

Round of Introductions:

Helmut noted that he and Luis had “invented” the group ten years ago. He had been involved in the international Catholic-Mennonite dialogue, through which he had gotten to know James Puglisi, S.A. (who was involved with Luis’ doctoral thesis in Rome). Thinking that he should be doing something about Mennonite Catholic dialogue in Winnipeg, he contacted Luis. Helmut said that he was from southern Ontario, that he had taught at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), served as general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, and that his wife is a musician. They had one daughter who passed away, and two married sons.

Richard is a retired prof (history, University of Manitoba, St. Paul’s College), married more than 56 years, with six children, nine grandchildren (one deceased), and nine great-grandchildren. He has also been a member of this group since the beginning, and is active in St. Ignatius Parish.

Lynda is a pastoral associate at St. Bernadette parish, and worships at Christ the King (where she worked previously). Being a pastoral associate involves various activities – visiting people in hospitals, liaison for baptisms (preparation and documentation), RCIA, funerals, etc. She is married (Gordon), with two children, one married, one grandchild (Marcus), whose mother is a nurse at Concordia. She is working towards a master of divinity degree. She is a singer and song leader at Christ the King parish. They have two “granddogs” (dogs belonging to their children). She has been a participant in this dialogue since 2003.

Donna had participated in the southeast Winnipeg Mennonite-Catholic dialogue group. She worships at Fort Garry Mennonite (along with Henry Loewen and Adolf Ens), where she is involved in lay ministry. She had been a Ukrainian Catholic and then Roman Catholic until her university years. She has been married for twenty-seven years, and has two grown children.

Nancy Wood described her faith history, from being a Presbyterian, then a Mennonite, and finally a Catholic. She had been a member of an intentional Grain of Wheat community for seven years, where she met husband Ted. They eventually left that community (Ted had been the only Catholic in the group). She said she was attracted to liturgy and authority in the Roman Catholic Church. She worked for Holy Cross parish while Ted was working for the Archdiocese of St. Boniface). They are now members of the Chemin Neuf community, which is part of an ecclesial movement that began in France. Chemin Neuf is a mixed community – with some members living in a monastery, some living in homes, with jobs, but with a commitment to a way of life, ecumenically Catholic with an ecumenical vocation. Most recently they spent two years in England in a Chemin Neuf community (half Anglican). She said she has always treasured her connections with Mennonites. Nancy and Ted were invited to the Archdiocese of St. Boniface to start a Chemin Neuf community there.

John has also been a member of this group from beginning. He and Luis had been involved in Lutheran-Catholic dialogue (dealing with reception of the 1999 statement on justification by faith) when Luis invited him to join this group. He is currently retired from University of Manitoba, where he had worked in staff relations for a while, but had spent the last fifteen years teaching years in the Faculty of education. His research has focussed on Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (most recently he contributed a chapter on this topic to a new book). John has been married forty-one years, and has two children. He has long been interested in ecumenical questions. He was from Alberta originally. His wife is a retired teacher; they have a one-year old grandson (Edward).

Michelle said she was from Ontario and the Maritimes. She moved to Winnipeg to teach at the University of Manitoba. She said she had no ecumenical experience, but an interest in all things religious. She has a research interest in the relationship between faith and money, and reads a lot of history. Her husband is not a Catholic. She worships St. Paul's College and at St. Vital parish.

Ron described himself as the newest member of group (before today's newcomers), and has participated for a couple of years in the group. In retirement he and his wife Ruth are serving as pastors of a small Mennonite church in north Winnipeg (Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church), sharing a building with Trinity Lutheran. Here he referred to a *Winnipeg Free Press* article by Brenda Suderman, which describes an upcoming event at the church celebrating the rift between Lutherans and Mennonites that goes back 500 years. Ron indicated that being part of north end church is quite a challenge. He was ordained as a minister about 40 years ago, having grown up in a southern Manitoba Mennonite community, with lots of relatives, sheltered in terms of faith and family. In 1982 he and Ruth lost a ten-year old boy. He feels they still don't know how to respond to losing a child. In processing that event, made a switch in direction. They had been farmers (and still are), but then they spent some years to the eastern U.S. (at Eastern Mennonite seminar, served as pastors in Virginia, and then returned to Winnipeg. Their three remaining children are all married, and they have nine grandchildren (including two of African heritage).

Paul is a teacher at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, working a doctorate in political theology (which deals with how to live in the world, confessing Christ). His wife is a choral conductor and teacher; they have three daughters. He teaches history, English, and Christian studies (ethics). He looks in sorrow at splits in the Christian church over the years. In recent years he has found Eastern Orthodoxy extremely compelling.

Luis described his Portuguese background, his early years in Montreal, until his family moved to Toronto to escape the insecure climate created by the FLQ and separatist movement at the time. He did graduate work in social studies, and then joined the Marianists; 20,000 in the world (laity and religious). There are two other Marianists in Winnipeg, living in retirement. He said he is happy to be in Winnipeg. He taught at St. Boniface diocesan high school. He studied French in Quebec City (Laval) and did his seminary training and graduate studies in Rome (seven years). In 1994 he took up chaplaincy work at St. Paul's College [engaged by Richard when he was rector of the college, RAL], finished his Ph.D., came to back to teach at St. Paul's, and then was requested to set up an office of interchurch and interfaith relations for the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. So more recently his "academic" work involves research and writing for the various ecumenical bodies on which he sits, including the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches.

2. **Welcome and opening prayer (Helmut).**
3. **Dinner** (Chinese food arranged for by **Paul**)
4. **Personal sharing, ecumenical contacts.**

Richard indicated he had nothing to report.

Lynda said her only recent activity involved meeting mixed marriage couples planning weddings.

John reported attending a Coptic church memorial event on the invitation of a Coptic gentleman on an electoral board on which he serves. He found it an interesting religious and secular event, showing solidarity and local support for the Copts. The singing was done by members of the local Coptic community (with many young people). They were explicit about desire to love their enemies. John indicated he was glad to be there, and enjoyed the introduction to unfamiliar liturgical practices. He also went with an Anglican friend to St. Margaret's to hear a lecture by Fr De Sousa on charity as gift (vs. transaction).

Donna reported she had attended the same event at St. Margaret's with her daughter who worships there. She then spoke about two other experiences. In November, she attended a service at Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco, a multi-gendered, multi-ethnic parish in the core area of city. More recently she attended a nephew's baptism at the Southland non-denominational community church in Steinbach, with a 55-minute sermon on the end times.

She also told us that there are many non-Mennonite students at Westgate, where she teaches. They take part in chapel, prayer, etc., which leads to many discussions. These are young people finding their own way (which may be different from their parents' way).

Luis distributed a handout on his recent ecumenical and interreligious activities and spoke of some:

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (23-30 January). Luis provided a poster and highlighted the Opening Service at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, the "Churches in North East Winnipeg" (a grouping that grew out of the Mennonite-Catholic dialogue in that area of the city, with the later addition of St. Stephen's Anglican Church), and Vespers at the Ethiopian Orthodox church.

Jewish-Catholic Dialogue (rabbis and Catholic priests), most recently discussing a book entitled *Resurrection*.

Involvement in implementing *Anglicanorum coetibus*.

Paul reported that he had given a sermon at the Anglican church at Victoria Beach. The service was followed by 40 minutes of questions/answers for the speaker. He fielded questions on pacifism, and what it means to be political.

Michelle reported going to the "One Heart Winnipeg" event with friends from the Church of the Rock; she described this as an ecumenical event without Catholics, though with some Presbyterians. She found it something like TV stuff, especially with respect to the speakers. **Luis** characterized the meetings as an evangelical version of Christian unity.

Ron referred to the *Free Press* article on the joint Lutheran-Mennonite initiative in the North End..

Helmut reported reading and reviewing Gerald Schlabach, *Unlearning Protestantism: Sustaining Christian Community in an Unstable Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010). He noted Schlabach's background: Mennonite, with a doctoral degree from Notre Dame University, teaching at St. Thomas University, one of the founders of Bridgefolk (a Mennonite-Catholic dialogue movement), who converted to Catholicism. His wife is the pastor of Faith Mennonite Church in the Twin Cities. He critiques Protestantism for not sustaining community. Helmut also spoke about a new book, *Cloud of Witnesses*, which grew out of a conference at Bose monastery in Italy, and which contains one of his essays. Bose publishes a yearly devotional; the entry for January 23 notes Menno Simons' defection from the Roman Catholic priesthood, and extols him as someone who has something to teach us. Helmut spoke as well about Vesper services at CMU (chapel, North Campus, every third Sunday evening), with a semi-professional choir, in which he and Irma sing, and being very taken with Chopin's "One Song." He is working on a keynote presentation for a Prairie summer ecumenical session in Saskatoon. He is planning to speak on our mission in

common, and he would like to point to subtle opportunities, like the songs we sing, and would like to have One Song performed at this gathering. Helmut also spoke about a volume of essays being edited by John Radano from papers presented at a conference Radano organized at St. Thomas University. Radano recently contacted Helmut about the paper he had presented, and challenged what Helmut had written to the effect that Mennonites are cautious about Catholic understanding of the sacraments, which seems to emphasize the power in the receiving. Radano made his point by citing from “Called Together to be Peacemakers.” Helmut indicated he was revising his paragraph. At this point, **Luis** interjected a reflection on the power of music, referring to the composer of a Holocaust oratorio who had recently been given an interfaith award.

Helmut suggested that anyone who enjoyed male choirs might like to come to the Centennial Concert Hall this coming Sunday afternoon (23 January) at 3 pm to a hear a mass male choir program entitled “A Thousand Hallelujahs.” The event is sponsored by Mennonite Church Manitoba. **Luis** drew our attention to the recent issue of the CMU quarterly, which includes an article by Helmut on the history of CMU, and a back-cover ad on the Refreshing Winds biennial conference (February 3–4) on worship and music.

5. Study and Discussion of “Ecumenical Dialogue in the 21st Century: Some Steps Forward and Some Continuing Concerns: A Catholic Perspective,” by Mgr. John A. Radano.

a. Luis – the Catholic Church’s approach to ecumenical pursuits:

1. INTRODUCTION: EMERGING CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES SHAPING THE SEARCH FOR VISIBLE CHRISTIAN UNITY

1. Definition of oikoumene.

2. The Vision of Unity: Unity in Diversity

Prayer of Jesus: John 17: 21

Unity and Diversity in Scripture

Unity over Time (past-future) and Space (present)

Early Christian Unity: The Rise of Families of Churches (Pentarchy: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople)

Instruments of Unity: creed, letters of communion, Eucharist, *episkopé* (bishop) and *episkopoi* (oversight) primacy

3. Diversity that is Church-Dividing:

“*Incredulity* is the neglect of revealed truth or the wilful refusal to assent to it. *Heresy* is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same; apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; *schism* is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.” (CIC, canon #751, emphasis added in CCC)

(a) Christian East: Christological Controversies: Nestorians (431) and Oriental Orthodox/Non-Chalcedonians/Monophysite (451), and Eastern Orthodox-Catholic Schism (1054)

Attempts at Reconciliation: Unity as Return or Partial Return (“Uniatism”):

I Council of Lyons (1274) and Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence (1438–1445)

The Rise of the Catholic Communion of Churches (see Chart)

(b) Christian West: The Protestant Reformations

4. Spiritual Ecumenism: From Prayer of Return to Prayer for the Will of Christ

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18–25): Fr. Paul Wattson, S.A., l’abbé Irenée Couturier

5. Historical Development and Essential Structure of the World Council of Churches:

- World Missionary Conference (John Mott) (1910)
- Life and Works (Nathan Soderblom) (1925)
- Faith and Order (Charles Bent) (1927)

General Assemblies: Amsterdam (1948), Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983), Canberra (1991), Harare (1998), Porto Alegre (2006)

II. VATICAN II (1962–1965):

From Return to Restoration through Dialogue with Goal of “Unity in Faith, Sacramental Life and Apostolic Ministry”

Foundation of Ecclesiology: From “Heretics and Schematics” to “Separated Brothers and Sisters” (Non-Recognition to Commitment to Process of Recognition via Mutual Testimony and Revelation—Dialogue)

1. The Nature of the Council:

- Observers: non-Catholic and non-Christian
- 16 Documents : aggiornamento (updating), completion of Vatican I (the inner nature of the Church), pastoral (exhortation, consensus voting, juxtapositioning), and hierarchy (constitution-decree-declaration):

<p>1963:</p> <p>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (<i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i>) Decree on the Means of Social Communication (<i>Inter mirifica</i>)</p>
<p>1964:</p> <p>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (<i>Lumen gentium</i>) Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches (<i>Orientalium ecclesiarum</i>) Decree on Ecumenism (<i>Unitatis redintegratio</i>)</p>
<p>1965:</p> <p>Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops (<i>Christus Dominus</i>) Decree on the Up-to-Date Renewal of Religious Life (<i>Perfectae caritatis</i>) Decree on the Training of Priests (<i>Optatam totius</i>) Declaration on Christian Education (<i>Gravissimum educationis</i>) Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (<i>Nostra aetate</i>) Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (<i>Dei Verbum</i>) Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People (<i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i>) Declaration on Religious Liberty (<i>Dignitatis humanae</i>) Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (<i>Ad gentes</i>) Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (<i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i>) Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (<i>Gaudium et spes</i>)</p>

(a) *Lumen gentium*:

<p>“DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH,” <i>LUMEN GENTIUM, LG</i>, “LIGHT TO THE NATIONS,” NOVEMBER 21, 1964</p> <p>Chapter 1: The Mystery of the Church (#1–8) Chapter 2: The People of God (#9–17) Chapter 3: The Hierarchic Structure of the Church with Special Reference to the Episcopate (#18–29) Chapter 4: The Laity (#30–38) Chapter 5: The Call of the Whole Church to Holiness (#39–42) Chapter 6: The Religious (#43–47) Chapter 7: The Eschatological Nature of the Pilgrim Church and her Union with the Heavenly Church (#48–51) Chapter 8: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church (#52–69)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A. Introduction B. The Blessed Virgin and the Church C. The Cult of the Blessed Virgin in the Church D. Mary, Sign of the True Hope and Comfort for the Pilgrim People of God</p>
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“This Church, 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 truth can be found outside of her visible structure. These elements, however, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism toward Catholic unity.” (#8)

(b) Unitatis redintegratio:

“DECREE ON ECUMENISM,” *UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO, UR*, “THE RESTORATION OF UNITY,” NOVEMBER 21, 1964:

Introduction (#1)

- I. Catholic Principles of Ecumenism (#2–4)
- II. The Practise of Ecumenism (#5–12)
- III. Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman Apostolic See
 - 1. The Special Position of the Eastern Churches (#13–18)
 - 2. The Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the West (#19–24)

Key Principles:

“It remains true that all who have been justified by faith in baptism...have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers and sisters by the children of the Catholic Church...For those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.” (#3)

“Moreover, some, even very many, of the most significant elements and endowment which together go to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements. All of these, which come from Christ and lead back to him, belong by right to the one Church of Christ.” (#3)

“There have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in Church discipline, or even in the way that Church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself.” (#6)

“There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion.” (#7)

“...spiritual ecumenism” (#8)

“The manner and order in which Catholic belief is expressed should in no way become an obstacle to dialogue with our brothers and sisters...When comparing doctrines with one another, they should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists an order or ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.” (#11)

Observation: Contact involves presence that involves testimony and testimony that may lead to comparison, and comparison to convergence-consensus-agreed statements that will shape the Church in an exchange of gifts!

Discussion of the above material:

In response to a question about why Vatican documents reserve the term “church” to the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican Churches and uses the term “ecclesial communities” for the Protestant communities dating from the 16th century, **Luis** noted a number of reasons. In 1965, this seemed a positive term, some groups were not churches (and some didn’t want to

be called churches, e.g., the Salvation Army and the, Quakers). It was like speaking with pieces about service, doctrine, missionary work (bible societies), moving from isolation to walking together, and praying together. By 1930's – moving from “return to Rome” to let's pray for the will of God, when and how He wills. In all this a big question remains – place of bishop of Rome.

Helmut explained how on a visit to Rome, a group of Mennonites were led to ask: what is our ecclesiology? The result was a Mennonite document, “A Mennonite Ecclesiology in Outline” (see Appendix 3), which comes at all this from a different point of view, suggesting that every congregation carries catholicity in its heart. The obligation in local setting is to be the most we can be in Catholic spirit, at ground level. It is an interesting document to put alongside Luis' description of the Catholic approach. It leaves room for facing each other in integrity, prepares for the kind of dialogue in which we are engaged.

Luis suggested that the Catholic gift related to how to maintain unity, and the Mennonite gift to taking responsibility for discipleship (as opposed to leaving it to the bishops). But the question of the challenges and achievements of unity is modified when we consider (for example) that there are more than 600,000,000 Pentecostals worldwide who participate only minimally in mainline ecumenical endeavours.

c. Review of the highlights of the Radano document:

i. John: on the Introduction and Part I of the Radano article:

1910–2010 — 100 Years of Ecumenical Activity: What Difference Did it Make?

- Yielded a greater cooperation among Christians versus “the hostility and divisiveness of the past”
- Has promoted a new perspective: a stress on what denominational communities in dialogue have in common and what has been accomplished working together rather than on what divides them, especially since the Reformation and other earlier divisions/separations concerning the ancient churches of the East and West
- Encouraged churches to go further: Is it possible to seek and find a more visible unity, “a unity in diversity” in one apostolic faith, sacramental life, and common ministry? [Is this a widely shared goal?]
- Presents, especially in the bilateral and multilateral dialogue reports, “a literature of reconciliation” that articulates the theology that can foster the reconciliation of religious communities so involved. [Do the dialogues articulate this theology well; can we identify its salient features? The clarification of the elements of “A Healing of Memories” in the international Mennonite/Catholic dialogue perhaps exemplifies this best.]
- **However**, an energized Pentecostalism, parallel in time, has yielded a skepticism of ecumenism and a disparagement of dialogue as compromise, if not criticism of those churches so engaged. This outlook is a continuing challenge to ecumenical efforts in the 21st century.

1965–2009 — A Period of Intense International Ecumenical Activity: Who Were Involved, and What Were the Achievements?

Vatican II (1962–65) provided the strong mandate for Catholics to get involved in the ecumenical movement. Since 1965, the Catholic Church has engaged in dialogues—bilateral and multilateral—and other cooperative arrangements with “virtually all of those Christian families from which she has been separated sometimes for centuries.” All have sought reconciliation [reconcile—make friendly again after an estrangement; settle a conflict or quarrel; show the compatibility of by argument or practice], and sometimes specific goals differed—

- “full communion” with Anglicans and Orthodox Christians
- “visible unity” with Lutherans
- “to overcome prejudice and create new understandings” with Baptists, Mennonites, Pentecostals

Topics dealt with have included the idea of the church, authority in the church, Christology, salvation, spirituality, and, notably, through the aegis of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM, 1982)*, “one of the most important dialogue reports ever published,” in Radano’s view. Since the beginning, in the 1960s, the Catholic Church has conducted a considerable number of international dialogues and orchestrated several partnerships/working groups under the auspices of the Secretariat (since 1988, the Pontifical Council) for the Promotion of Christian Unity (PCPCU).

A. The Dialogues and Other Cooperative Endeavors, 1965–2000

1965	World Council of Churches (WCC)/ Catholic Church (CC) Joint Working Group (has met annually since May, 1965)
1966	WCC/PCPCU began and continue to prepare annually the material used for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
1967	Lutheran World Federation/CC World Methodist Council/CC
1968	from this date, Catholic theologians become voting members of the WCC Commission of Faith and Order, and participate in all its studies
1970	Anglican Communion/CC World Alliance of Reformed Churches/CC
1972	Classical Pentecostals/CC
1974	Coptic Orthodox Church/CC
Mid-1970s	WCC/PCPCU: a Catholic professor is appt. to the WCC’s Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland; Institute visits Rome annually
1977	Disciples of Christ/CC Evangelicals/CC
1980	Orthodox Church/CC

- 1982 WCC/CC The CC provided an official response to the convergence text of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, a major document by the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order
- 1984 Baptist World Alliance/CC
- 1984 WCC/PCPCU from this date Catholics are members of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
- 1988 to the present Lutheran World Federation/PCPCU
Joint Staff Meetings
- 1989 Malankara Orthodox Churches (India)/CC
- 1993 World Evangelical Fellowship (then Alliance)/CC
- 1996 Assyrian Church of the East/CC
- 1998 **Mennonite World Conference/CC**
(Report, 2003, *Called Together to be Peacemakers*)
- 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*
(Lutheran World Federation/CC)

B. Major Achievements of this Period

- Virtual resolution of long-standing Christological conflicts over the language used in the Council of Ephesus in 431 and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 by the Popes and Oriental Orthodox Patriarchs between 1973 and 1996: our faith in Jesus Christ is the same; He is true God and true man.
- Substantial degree of multilateral consensus/convergence by many Christian churches on the text of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*
- Following almost one thousand years of separation, mutual recognition of Orthodox and Catholic Churches as “sister churches,” a sisterhood based on a common understanding of the church, apostolic succession, the priesthood, sacraments, and the episcopate.
- *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ)* in 1999 by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church resolves the central issue which was the basis of Luther's disagreement with Rome in 1517. (In 2006, the World Methodist Council associated itself with the *Joint Declaration*.)
- Extensive and productive relationships between the WCC and the Catholic Church (though the CC is not a member of the WCC)
- Growing convergences on ecclesiology (theology of the nature of the church)
- Anglican-Catholic agreement on Eucharist and ministry; creation of the International Anglican and Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission to focus on reception of dialogue results at the local and regional level
- Development of important statements in several dialogues on the problem of proselytism in relation to evangelization, religious freedom and common witness.

ii. Richard on Part II

Highlights, Part 2: The Decade 2000–2010

Introductory: Papal ecumenical gestures during the year 2000:

a) Opening of the holy door of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls (the pope, with representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Archbishop of Canterbury, together “opened the Door to Christ together).

b) An ecumenical celebration of martyrs (witness to the faith in the 20th century) at the Coliseum in Rome.

c) At the suggestion of the Ecumenical Patriarch, the feast of the Transfiguration was celebrated in a special way as part of the Catholic Church’s program for the Holy Year.

Developments of the decade:

1. Many dialogues begun in the previous decades continued in the this decade.

2. New dialogues begun in the decade:

a) dialogue with the whole family of Oriental Orthodox Churches (Coptic, Syrian, Armenian Apostolic, Ethiopian, Malankara Orthodox, and Eritrean Orthodox churches).

b) dialogue with the Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches.

c) informal consultations with the Seventh Day Adventists, the Salvation Army, and Nondenominational churches.

3. Continuation of two dialogues begun in the 1990s:

a) dialogue with the World Evangelical Fellowship (now Alliance), begun in 1993, completed in 2002, with a report “Church, Evangelization, and the Bonds of *Koinonia*.” Report relates spirituality to theological discourse – with three main points: i) a commitment to one another; ii) a spirit of penance, iii) conversion of mind and heart.

b) dialogue with the Mennonite World Conference (1998–2003) with a report “Called Together to be Peacemakers” – with its four step model for the healing of memories: i) purification of historical memories; ii) a penitential spirit for offences committed against the other; iii) acknowledging aspects of faith we have continued to share; iv) creating new relationships between our communities today.

4. Examples in this decade of one bilateral dialogue significantly involving a third partner (a kind of unforeseen crossover). Example: the World Methodist Council’s formal association in 2006 with the Lutheran-Catholic *Joint-Dialogue on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999). Contribution of the report “Called Together to be Peacemakers” to the World Council of Churches International Peace Convocation for 2011.

5. Some dialogues have taken up some difficult issues for the first time. Example, the international Baptist-Catholic dialogue looking at the issue of Mary in the light of ongoing tradition. Second example: Pentecostal-Catholic international dialogue’s recent report “On Becoming Christian: Insights from Scripture and Patristic Writings, with some Contemporary Reflections” (2007) – explores issues of faith, conversion, discipleship, experience, and baptism in the Holy Spirit making use of an extensive reflection on patristic texts, as well as biblical materials.

6. Developments on what is perhaps the central ecumenical issue today, the nature and mission of the Church. Radano gives three examples of these developments:

a) An important result of the international Reformed-Catholic dialogue: study and comparison of the Reformed notion of the church as *creatura verbi* and a Catholic notion of the church as *sacramentum gratiae*, and its report “Toward a Common Understanding of the Church.” Conclusion – these notions do not conflict, but are compatible and complementary.

b) New statements of the WCC’s Faith and Order in response to its 1982 text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*: a 1998 volume, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, a revised 2005 volume of the same name, an hope for a third version in 2013.

c) Statement “Call to be the one Church” from the 9th WCC Assembly at Porto Alegre in 2006, including the statement: “we *confess* one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (391).”

7. A significant development within the WCC which, in response to Orthodox concerns, saw a change in voting methods in reaching decisions (to a consensus method) and in rules for accepting new churches (minimum of 50,000 members vs. earlier 25,000 members).

iii. Luis on Part 3:

III. “VERY RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS WE CROSS THE THRESHOLD OF THE SECOND CENTURY OF ECUMENISM” (RADANO)

1. Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: “The Ravenna Text”

(a) Background:

Two stages:

- ***The Dialogue of Charity (1965–1979):***

The Lifting of the Mutual Excommunications of 1054 Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI and the symbolism of “sister churches”.

- ***The Dialogue of Truth in Charity (1980+):***

Reports of the Joint International Commission:

The Mystery of the Church and of the Holy Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity (Munich, 1988); *Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church* (Bari, 1987); *The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to Importance of Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God* (Valaamo, 1988); *The Balamand Report* (Balamand,

(b) The “Ravenna Text” in Two Stages:

Establishing the foundation for dealing with the key issue of division: conciliarity and authority at the local, regional and universal levels

- **Unity in the First Millennium:** faithful with bishops; bishops among themselves in canonical order (patriarchs—*protoi* regionally and *protos* universally)

“Both sides agree...that Rome, as the Church that ‘presides in love’...occupied the first places in the *taxis*, and that therefore the *protos* among the patriarchs. They disagree...on the interpretation of the historical evidence from this era regarding the prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome as *protos*...At least until the ninth century, a series of prerogatives was recognized, always in the context of conciliarity...What is the specific function of the bishop of the “first see in an ecclesiology of *koinonia*...”

Observation: Unity is a particular problem associated with church growth. Local issues are meant to be dealt locally. When the local becomes a universal concern it is dealt universally in an ecumenical (universal) council.

- **Unity in the Second Millennium:** agenda for study

Observation: Will the category of “regional councils of the west” be helpful in tackling the binding nature of papal statements made in an era of division?!

2. The Global Christian Forum (GCF): 2007

(a) Nature:

An initiative of the WCC in the 1990s to broaden participation of non-member churches in the search for visible unity. It includes: Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, mainline churches that come to together as equal partners in a “forum” with...

- no structures (other than those created by participants)
- no control by the WCC or other “Christian Communion”
- no costly ecumenical organization
- no attempt to replace structures of the modern ecumenical movement

(b) Purpose:

A neutral and non-threatening place and space for contact (to speak together for the first time) or start again positively (to speak beyond negative contact via accusations of

proselytism).

(c) Means:

- Background: preliminary formal and informal dialogues, *Continuation Committee* (1999) and *Exploratory Meeting* (2000 at Fuller Theological Seminary), and *Regional Consultations* of 50-60 people (2002 in USA, 2002 in Asia, 2004 in Africa, 2005 in Europe, 2007 in Latin America)
- **Method:**
 - bringing together equal numbers of participants: Pentecostals/Evangelicals and “mainline” Christians (Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Catholics)
 - no formal theological dialogue
 - necessity to know one another: invited each person invited to give testimony of their Christian commitment and journey of faith
 - goal of seeing one another as Christians struggling with similar issues, building trust and seeing the other (perhaps for the first time) as a brother or sister in Christ
- **Culmination:** GCF met in Limuru, Nairobi (2007) with 240 participants from some 70 countries, and virtually every Christian tradition. The next international meeting is expected in 2011. Relatively successful in realization of identified goals in a context of prayer and conversation.

3. The Harvest Project:

Cardinal Walter Kasper, “Harvesting the Fruits: Aspects of Christian Faith In Ecumenical Dialogue.” London: Continuum, 2009.

(a) Limits and Scope of Study:

- **Western Bilateral Dialogues of Four World Communions**

Lutheran World Federation (1967+), World Methodist Council (1967+), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1967+), and Anglican Communion (1970+)

- **Systematic Study of 37 Reports and Official Reception**

Convergence-Divergences and Consensus: 37 reports produced, with no process of official reception (with the exception of Lutheran Catholic, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) and the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) documents on *Eucharist* and *ministry*)

- ***Four Areas for Consideration:***

- Fundamentals of our Common Faith: Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity
- Salvation, Justification, Sanctification
- The Church
- The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist

(b) Preliminary Conclusions

‘One can define Protestantism in the three classic formulas: *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola scriptura* (scripture alone)...some of the classic disputes, which were at the foot of our painful divisions, have today been basically resolved through a new consensus on fundamental points of doctrine. In other disputed questions there is at least a convergence, which has helped the dialogues to move beyond previous polemical stances, and has created a more relaxed ecumenical atmosphere in which an ‘exchange of gifts’ has been enriching both sides.’

Areas of Agreement:

Observation: We see more together!

(i) Our shared apostolic faith:

‘In common we share the Gospel as the Word of God and the Good News for all humanity, and we share the Creeds of the first centuries which summarize the Gospel message and gift an authentic interpretation of it. We confession together the Triune God and the divine and human natures of our common Lord and saviour Jesus Christ, the one and universal mediator between God and man.’

(ii) A fresh and renewed understanding of the relation between Scripture and Tradition:

‘[t]oday it is no longer possible to set Scripture and tradition at odds with each other and such a sharp contrast is no longer tenable. Scripture itself is a product of the earliest Tradition and the later Tradition (in its theological sense) is to be understood as the living presence of the same Gospel throughout the ages right up to the present. In the Church, Tradition makes present and interprets the message of the Bible in every age’’

Observation: We have learned to distinguish between the Tradition and the many traditions!

‘We agree upon the primacy of Scripture within this historical interpretative process.’

‘Scripture is the witness to the original and primeval normative apostolic Tradition, given once and for all time. Catholics and others Christians venerate the Scriptures as the inspired

Word of God.’

Observation: Faithful to Tradition, we are bound by Scripture!

(iii) *Basic agreement on the doctrine of justification:*

‘With the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* it was possible to see anew the affirmation that by *sola gratia* and *sola fide* does not contradict the affirmation that by grace we are made capable of bearing good fruits through works of justice, mercy and active live. It has become clear that through justification God’s saving grace calls, frees and capacitates us for holiness and personal sanctification, as the starting point for the penetration of all worldly realities with the spirit of the Gospel.’

Observation: We have learned to read the whole Gospel—affirmation (emphasis) does not allow for negation!

(iv) *Deepened understanding of the nature of the Church:*

‘God does not call and justify us only as individuals; he calls, gathers and sanctifies us as his chosen people and royal priesthood in order that we may give common witness to his marvellous deeds. So the nature and mission of the Church belong together...in the past, the understanding of this reality of the church was divided by the sharply contrasting visions of a visible institutional Church and a hidden, spiritual Church; a Church as *mater et magistra* and as *creatura verbi*...[but now]...many elements of convergence have been found in these and other controversies. The Trinitarian roots of the church have been re-emphasized, and there has been a focus on its nature as *koinonia/communio*.’

Observation: We have learned that the church is visible and invisible. The church’s nature is *mysterion* and *sacramentum* since it belongs to Christ (who is human and divine—one and undivided—visible and invisible) and lives and shares in his life and mission in the world through the Holy Spirit.

‘This has brought about a convergence in our understanding of ministries in the church, and has given...openness to reconsidering such a long a disputed and controversial issue as Petrine ministry. It is true that none of these issues has been resolved through a full or even only a partial consensus...[for example, concerning ministry]...while a convergence on the ministry of *episcopus* has been achieved, there is as yet no overall consensus on the question of the threefold ministry, particularly on the distinction between the ministry of the bishop and that of other ministers of word and sacrament...[but still]...it must be acknowledged that the convergence already achieved has confirmed and deepened our real (if still incomplete) communion...’

Observation: We are far from agreement on ministry (and especially the role of the pope) and can only speak of emerging convergence!

(v) *New approaches to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist:*

‘The rediscovery of our common baptism has helped Catholics and other Christians to recognize each other again as brothers and sisters in Christ, which in turn has led to official interchurch recognition of each other’s baptism.’

Observation: We have learned the importance of baptism for ecclesial conversion! Would formal mutual recognition of baptism be a step forward in Mennonite-Catholic relations? How could this come about?

‘Furthermore, we have rediscovered (together) the centrality of the liturgy, especially the liturgy of the Eucharist as source and summit of the Church. It was precisely the sacrificial character of the Eucharist and the real and true presence of Christ that occasioned the most forceful controversies of the Reformation era. Through the biblical idea of *anamnesis/memoria*, ecumenical dialogue...has made possible convergences (in some dialogues substantial, even if not yet full) on these matters, although they still require further progress towards a basic common understanding. The same is true in the rediscovery of the importance of *epiclesis* and thereby of the Holy Spirit as the main agent in the liturgy of the Eucharist and of all sacraments.’

Observation: We have learned that amnesia may be overcome with *anamnesis* and *epiclesis*! Could presence at one another’s worship services—especially the Eucharist—done in a respectful manner, mindful of the discipline of the other, help move forward Mennonite-Catholic relations?

Areas of Disagreement: An “Intermediate” Stage of “Unresolved Questions”

(i) *Fundamental hermeneutical questions remain with regards to the relationship between Scripture and Tradition:*

‘What does the primacy of Scripture within the Tradition actually mean? To what extent and in what sense are binding interpretations of Scripture contained in Tradition? Who ultimately decides about the binding interpretation of our common apostolic tradition?’

Observation: We have learned the need for an instrument at the service of unity!

(ii) *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine on Justification:*

‘...[t]here still exist different positions in respect to other truths intimately related to those basic truths [which need further clarification for they carry repercussions for consensus. Examples would be the questions of *simul iustus et peccator*, of human cooperation, and personal sanctification.]...At this point there must be faced crucial questions of theological anthropology, which is at the root of Western church divisions...’

(iii) The Church:

‘..the question of where the Church of Christ is to be concretely found...and in her full sense exists (that is, where she subsists) has today become a central question—often cast in strong and polemical terms... [There exists different ways of understanding the Church]...the fundamental and all-determining question...[is regards to]...the sacramental nature of church, and the relationship between God’s sovereign action and the human and ecclesial cooperation that is thereby made possible. To formulate it another way: in considering the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church, the fundamental question arises of the fundamental relation of *solus Christus* to the Augustinian *totus Christus, captu et membra* (Christ head of the Church in relation to the members of the Church as His Body” ...[These need further discussion]...’

Observation to both (ii) and (iii): We have learned that the incarnational principle extends to those in Christ and makes the Church sacramental! This high ecclesiology is a consequence of the Word taking flesh. How does one reconcile the sinfulness its members in this vision?

(iv) Concerning the Eucharist:

‘more clarification is required as to how, and in what sense, the Eucharist is the memorial representation of the one and unique sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.’

IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. *Beyond 2010: Implementation of Anglicanorum coetibus (Personal Ordinariate)*
2. *The Commitment to Visible Unity*
3. *Other...*

iv. Lynda, on Part 4

Highlights of Part 4: “Continuing Concerns” and “Conclusion.”

Radano concludes that “as we end of the first century of ecumenism and prepare for the second...the ecumenical movement is alive.” “Significant achievements” have been attained. Moreover, “recent promising developments suggest that there will be more” achievements in the future. Wonderful news to the ear, however, here comes the “but.” There are some concerns as well.

1. Radano admits that while there have been critical accomplishments in the ecumenical movement over the last century; there has also been ongoing divisiveness.

He provides some interesting statistics to back this up. He quotes the memoirs of American Episcopalian Charles Long re: the World Council of Churches 1983

Vancouver Assembly “sobering statistics were shared with the Assembly from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. There were about 1900 different denominations at the start of the century, now (1983) there more than 22,000. More recently in 2002, the same encyclopedia reported there were more than 30,000 denominations.

2. Radano expresses a need to protect the advances that have been made. For instance, “the growing ecumenical convergence on baptism has been one of the important achievements of the modern ecumenical movement. That being said, a recent study of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches compelled churches not to allow practices which threaten they now share in respect to the *ordo*, theology of baptism, e.g. changing the words of the Trinitarian baptismal formula (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) to an alternative formula, such as (Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier) or admission of persons to the Eucharist before baptism.

3 Once again Radano presents the yin and the yang; this time concerning doctrinal matters. Although he does not give specific examples, he notes that progress has been made in some areas that have caused division in the past i.e. the yin. However, new problems have arisen recently which may cause more divisiveness in new ways i.e. the yang. I would have liked to see some examples in this section – a bit convoluted perhaps.

4. I found this section extremely thought provoking. Certainly, reception is a challenge – no doubt there. He mentions “The Harvest Project” and the four dialogues that are ongoing with the hope of reception. Once again, good work is being done. However, what I found interesting were Radano’s next two questions. He is challenging his hearers and readers, the powers that be perhaps, to look more closely at other dialogue reports and their reception processes. In other words, I’m surmising that Radano feels there is much more to be done in this area by all concerned.

5. Here Radano admits that certain divergences are very difficult to deal with; for instance, conflicts over episcopacy. It was ever thus as my mother would have said. Although difficult, Radano does not want the insights gained regarding these issues to disappear into oblivion. I agree.

Conclusion:

Radano ends on a positive and hope-filled note. Yes, there have been many advances in ecumenism during the last century. Thanks be to God. There is still deep commitment to the search for unity. Thanks be to God. Radano encourages all Christians to continue to strive for unity because it is what Jesus commanded his followers to do since the beginning of his mission on earth.

General Discussion of the Radano article:

John suggested that Radano's list of unresolved questions may appear daunting, but perhaps not in terms of where we were in 1910, or in 1965, when none of the bilateral dialogues between Catholics and others had yet begun. Since then we have seen accelerated activity, and we learned more and seen more and more together. In particular, this is true with respect to the four questions Radano highlights on pp. 8 and 9 of his article.

Donna thought that if we hang to what has come together, we have significant reasons to be hopeful.

Luis stressed that we are in a new era of a "literature of reconciliation" and that we should be looking at ecumenical literature (not just our own literature). Much of this literature is creative, and real.

Ron recalled the 1960s and Pope John XXIII's activity as opening up the Roman Catholic Church to new things that were consistent with the way Mennonite thought and reading of the Bible. Was this a significant change? **Luis**, in replying in the affirmative, recalled John's background – his knowledge of Orthodoxy, Islam, etc., his work as an historian and, diplomat, and his experience in France (a secular society).

Helmut reflected on how we might assess progress. Some major groups are not involved, e.g. Pentecostals, Old Colony Mennonites. On the other hand, depending on which dialogue we are talking about, there has been much progress. In 1948, Mennonites were talking peace with WCC, then by the late 1990s talking with Catholics, by 2003, with them producing "Called Together to be Peacemakers." At the same time, he recalled a recent experience in BC, where he was cautioned not to mention Mennonite-Catholic dialogue – something not liked by the Mennonite Brethren there. He observed that only three Mennonite conferences are part of WCC, namely the Dutch Mennonites, a North German Mennonite group, and Indonesian Mennonites. (Mennonite Church Canada is a member of the Canadian Council of Churches, but not of the WCC).

Richard observed that there were similar divergences within Catholicism, and cited a recent call by Athanasius Schneider, auxiliary bishop of Karaganda (Sri Lanka) and described as one of Ratzinger's "best pupils," for a new 21st Syllabus of Errors "against the doctrinal errors in the interpretation of Vatican Council" (i.e., that it changed anything).

Luis noted divergence on ethical issues; for example, Catholic and Evangelical agreeing on morality, but not on peace-making. There has been movement; we are no longer in a culture of mutual condemnation; we moved from theocracy, to pluralist societies. So we are speaking in a new situation; about being faithful to what we are called to.

Wrap-up: Helmut asked if the new participants had developed notions about what the group ought to be doing. **John** asked that our 2007 report about our early years of dialogue be

distributed to our new participants. **Richard** agreed to distribute this document, as well a summary of the topic discussed since 2007 and minutes of our meetings since 2007.

Next meeting: Alternate dates, the 26th of May or 7th of June were chosen. There is need to consult with **Dora** on her availability etc. **Richard** offered to host the next meeting at St. Paul's College (which means checking on a meeting room, parking, and arranging a meal). **Lynda** offered to lead the Opening Prayer.

Closing prayer: Nancy offered a closing prayer.

Appendices:

1. The Catholic Communion of Churches
2. List of Church Councils
3. A Mennonite Ecclesiology in Outline

1. THE CATHOLIC COMMUNION OF CHURCHES
WORLD-WIDE MEMBERSHIP (revised 2010)

Twenty-Three Autonomous Churches in the Catholic Communion.

I. THE CHURCH OF THE WEST

1. Latin (Roman Rite): Germanic-Roman conflation (see Note)

II. EASTERN CHURCHES:

CANONICAL CHURCH NAME	MEMBERSHIP (2008) + UNION WITH ROME	
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Alexandrian Tradition

2. Patriarchal Coptic Catholic Church of Alexandria	162,000	1741
3. Ethiopian/Eritrean Catholic Church	223,000	1930

Antiochene Tradition (Western Syrian)

4. Syro-Malankara Catholic Church	413,000	1930
5. Maronite Catholic Patriarchal Church	3,106,000	never separated
6. Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Church	132,000	1774

Chaldean or Eastern Syrian Tradition

7. Patriarchal Church of Babylon for the Chaldeans	419,000	1553
8. Syro-Malabar Catholic Church	3,903,000	late 19 th C.

Armenian Tradition

9. Patriarchal Armenian Catholic Church of Cilicia	376,000	1740
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Byzantine or Constantinopolitan Tradition

10. Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church	4,224,000	1596 (Brest)
11. Slovak Greek Catholic Church	224,000	mid 19 th C.
12. Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church	11,000	1861
13. Greek Catholic Church in Greece & Turkey	2,325	2 nd half 19 th C.
14. Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchal Church	1,340,000	1722
15. Hungarian Greek Catholic Church	290,000	18 th C.
16. Italo-Albanian Greek Catholic Church	64,000	
17. Romanian Greek Catholic Church	764,000	1698

Ruthenian Catholic Churches:

18. Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church USA	595,000	
19. Ruthenian Apostolic Exarchate (Czech)*	100,000	1646 (Uzhorod)
	178,000	

20. Eparchy of Mukacevo*	320,000	
<i>Greek-Catholic Churches in Former Yugoslavia:</i>		
21. Apostolic Exarchate in FYROM (Macedonia)*	11,491	
22. Apostolic Exarchate for Serbia-Montenegro*	22,720	
23. Eparchy of Krizevci (Croatian)*	21,480	1613

NOTES:

1. Church of the West: Roman-Rite and Some Examples of Local Uses:

(a) Historical: Celtic; English Uses Sarum--Salisbury, York, Hereford, Bangor). Pope Pius V (1570) suppressed rites not older than 200 years in existence. Religious communities (Carmelite, Cistercian, Dominican, Premonstratesian/Norbertine) Carthusians, etc.) largely abandoned their rites at Second Vatican Council.

(b) Modern:

- Ambrosian (Milan); Mozarabic (Toledo)
- Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite (1962 Missal): *Summorum Pontificum* (2007)
- Anglican: Pastoral Provision (1980) and the Personal Ordinariate (*Anglicanorum Coetibus* 2009)
- Indian (1973); Zairian (1988)

+ Source: Roberson, Ronald. *The Eastern Christian Churches* (Rome: "Orientalia Christiana," 2008).
 * Eastern Catholic communities without hierarchies.

2. List of Church Councils

No.	Year(s)	Name of Council (issue(s) dealt with)
	50	Council of Jerusalem (Jewish laws & Christians)
1.	325	1 st Council of Nicea (contra Arianism, ¹ Creed)
2.	381	1 st Council of Constantinople (completed Creed)
3.	432	Council of Ephesus (contra Nestorianism ²)
4.	451	Council of Chalcedon (contra Monophysitism; ³ stated principle of hypostatic union ⁴)
5.	553	2 nd Council of Constantinople (contra Nestorianism)
6.	681	3 rd Council of Constantinople (contra Monothelitism ⁵)
7.	767	2 nd Council of Nicaea (veneration of images legal)
(The first seven are recognized as Ecumenical Councils by the Orthodox.)		
<hr/>		
8.	869	4 th Council of Constantinople (East-West peace)
(The first eight are recognized as Ecumenical Councils by Roman Catholics)		
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9.	1123	1 st Lateran Council (discipline; contra Waldensians & Albigenses)
10.	1139	2 nd Lateran Council (as previous)
11.	1179	3 rd Lateran Council (as previous)
12.	1215	4 th Lateran Council (as previous)
13.	1245	1 st Council of Lyons
14.	1274	2 nd Council of Lyons
15.	1311	Council of Vienne
16.	1414–18	Council of Constance (ended rival popes)

- | | | |
|-----|---------|---|
| 17. | 1431-43 | Council of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Lausanne (reform and union with Eastern Churches) |
| 18. | 1512-17 | 5 th Lateran Council |
| 19. | 1545-63 | Council of Trent (reform) |
| 20. | 1870 | 1 st Vatican Council (doctrine of papal infallibility) |
| 21. | 1962-65 | 2 nd Vatican Council (adaptation of the Church to modern needs) |
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Notes:

1. Denial of Christ's divinity
2. Heresy that Mary was mother of Christ's humanity, not his divinity, hence it rejected the title *Theotokos* (Mother of God).
3. Belief in only one nature in Christ.
4. The union of a human and divine nature in the one person of Christ.
5. Heresy of only one will in Christ.

3. A Mennonite Ecclesiology in Outline

*A Statement addressed to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the end of a
church-to-church visit of a Mennonite delegation to the Vatican
October 18 – 23, 2007*

1. **The triune God**, who is the community of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, calls the Church into being, sustains the Church throughout its history, and guides the Church to its promised glory. Three biblical images, related to the Trinity, characterize the Church's three-fold identity: "people of God" (*1 Pet 2:9*); "body of Christ" (*1 Cor 12:27*); and "community of the Holy Spirit" (*2 Cor 13:13*).¹
2. The foundation of our ecclesiology is well expressed in the words of the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth: "No other foundation can anyone lay than the one that has been laid; that foundation is **Jesus Christ**" (*1 Cor 3:11*). This text was the watchword of Menno Simons (1536–1561), an early Anabaptist leader who did much to contribute to the formation of Mennonite church communities, and from whom the Mennonites derive their name. The Church builds upon the foundation, Jesus Christ, when new believers receive Christ as Saviour and Lord, join the body of Christ through baptism, become rooted and established in Christian faith, follow the teachings and example of Christ, and live every day in the grace of God.
3. **The Holy Spirit** empowers the Church for life in community and for witness in the world. In his last days on earth, Jesus endowed his followers with the Holy Spirit, and gave them the responsibility to build up the community of faith in his name (*Jn 20:22–23; Matt 16:13–19*). He sent them forth in the power of the Holy Spirit to witness in the world. (*Acts 1:8*) As participants in the "community of the Holy Spirit" (*2 Cor 13:13*), the Mennonite churches claim their place among all the Christian churches.
4. **The Scriptures** are the basis of authority for the Church. The truth of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, is interpreted and discerned as church communities gather around the Word of God to hear, to speak, to decide, and to act under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. From time to time churches formulate and agree upon confessions of faith that provide guidance for beliefs, for regulating church order, and for the churches' ministry and mission.
5. **Baptism** is the public sign, in the midst of the Church, of repentance from sin, reception of the Holy Spirit, and commitment to a life of discipleship. Baptism is administered with water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to persons who freely request it. In undergoing baptism the person follows in the footsteps of Jesus whose baptism at the beginning of his public ministry provided the occasion for confirmation of his relationship with God and of his public ministry (*Mk 1:9–11; Lk 4:14–15*). In baptism the person identifies with the significance and experience of those persons who were baptized on the occasion of the first Pentecost and in all times and places since then. Baptism is a covenant ceremony of commitment to the Lord and responsible membership in the Christian community of faith.

¹ Cf. also C. Norman Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974).

6. **The Lord's Supper** is practiced in the context of the local church and larger church assemblies. Local Mennonite churches observe the Lord's Supper regularly and in accordance with Jesus' institution of the Supper (*cf. Lk 22:14–23; 1 Cor 11:23–28*). The Lord's Supper is a meal of remembrance whereby participants thankfully recall and proclaim that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed for the sins of all people; and that he was raised for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of new life. The Supper is a sign of the new covenant established through Christ (*cf. Jer 31:33–35; Mk 14:24*). The meal is a sign of the Church's corporate sharing in the body and blood of Christ whereby the Church recognizes that it is sustained by Christ, the bread of life. It is a time for self-examination of one's relationship with the Lord and with brothers and sisters. It is a joyous celebration of hope in his coming again, a foretaste of the heavenly banquet of the redeemed, and an occasion for hearing anew the call to serve the Lord in sacrificial living until his return (*Lk 22:28–30; 1 Cor 11:26*). The Supper is an encouragement for the Church to be one (*1 Cor 10:16–17*).

7. The Mennonite World Conference (MWC) community of churches stands within the **Believers Church** tradition.² Believers Churches emphasize baptism upon personal confession of faith rather than infant baptism, church membership as a covenant among voluntarily believers, non-conformity to the world, Scriptural authority free of state control, and discipleship. The Church is found wherever communities of persons, recognizing Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, gather as they did initially on the first day of Pentecost, to “devote themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (*Acts 2:42*). The Believers Church tradition is part of the Free Church movement.³

8. **Salvation and discipleship** are seen by Mennonite churches as inseparable aspects of the Christian experience.⁴ Teaching of salvation centres on personal faith in the atoning work of Christ while discipleship is understood as the commitment to follow Christ in life (*Nachfolge Christi*). Salvation and discipleship are inseparable in the believer's relationship to the Gospel. Both are aspects of the Christian's participation in the incarnation of God's love in Jesus Christ. The “Shared Convictions” statement of MWC expresses discipleship in this way: “We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.”⁵ Among Mennonites, discipleship is a primary expression of the life of holiness.

² Cf. Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* (London: Macmillan, 1968).

³ Cf. John Howard Yoder, “The Nature of the Unity We Seek: A Historic Free Church View,” in *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical*, *op. cit.*, 222-230. The Mennonite Church has favoured a congregational polity, while at the same time respecting the other two major types of polity: episcopal and synodal.

⁴ Hans Denck (d. 1527), an early Anabaptist teacher, emphasized that “no one may truly know Christ except one follows him in life.” He held that the claim to justification by faith is essentially incomplete without discipleship. (Cf. Walter Fellmann and Christian Neff, “Hans Denk,” in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia II* (Scottsdale PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1956), 33.

⁵ *Shared Convictions*, adopted by Mennonite World Conference General Council, Pasadena CA, March 15, 2006. *Courier*, Vol. 21, No. 1 & 2 (January-March, 2006), 9, no. 5.

9. The MWC community of churches stands within the **peace church** tradition, which, restoring the practice of the New Testament Church, dates back at least to the beginning of Anabaptism. The *Schleitheim Confession* (1527), standing at the beginning of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement, called upon members of the Church “not to use the sword against the wicked for the protection and defense of the good, or for the sake of love.”⁶ With only minor exception, the Mennonite churches have continuously confessed their ecclesiological identity as pacifist churches throughout their history. The “Shared Convictions” statement of the MWC churches says that “the Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so that we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.”⁷
10. **Leadership** in the Mennonite churches follows two basic principles: First, it is the privilege and responsibility of each member of the body of Christ to contribute to Christian ministry for the well-being of the Christian community and for witness in the larger society (*1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:7*). Second, church officers in ministries, such as elders, overseers, bishops, shepherds, and pastors, and deacons, both men and women, are called of God and affirmed by church communities (*Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 5*) to equip the members for the work of ministry.⁸
11. The Church is characterized by **mission and service**. In keeping with the Anabaptists, the Mennonite churches take seriously the risen Christ’s commission to “be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth” (*Acts 1:8*). The 19th century brought with it a renewal of the missionary spirit so vital in the identity of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement in the 16th century. Today the churches understand their very being as missional. That is, they are called to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed and to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Mission activity is carried out in a peaceful manner without coercion, and includes the ministries of evangelism, reconciliation, social service, and advocacy for peace and justice among all people.⁹
12. **The oneness of the Church** is a matter of importance for Mennonite churches’ self-understanding. The Apostle Paul’s appeal to the churches to “mak[e] every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (*Eph 4:3*) is understood by Mennonites to apply first and foremost to a spirit of unity within each local church. This entails the personal aspiration of peace with God as well as mutual love and care for one another in the community of faith. The universal calling – to affirm and confess “one body,” “one Spirit,” “one hope,” “one Lord,” “one faith,” “one baptism,” and to worship “one God” with singular devotion (*Eph 4:4–6*) – remains a challenge that Mennonite churches aspire to and desire to take seriously. While in Mennonite practice the unity of the Church centres initially on relationships within the local church, a spirit of oneness and mutual communion

⁶ John H. Yoder, editor and translator, *The Schleitheim Confession* (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1973, 1977), Article VI, 14. The Schleitheim Confession dates back to 1527, when this historically influential statement was formulated and agreed to by a group of Swiss Brethren led by Michael Sattler, a former Benedictine monk turned Anabaptist.

⁷ *Shared Convictions*, *op. cit.*, no. 5.

⁸ A recent Mennonite Confession characterizes the nature of leadership as follows: “We believe that ministry continues the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and offices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith as they serve the church” (*Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, *op. cit.*, Article 15, 59). Cf. relevant articles in “ministry,” “priesthood of all believers,” “bishops,” and “authority” in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1957), 4 vols.

⁹ This paragraph is drawn mainly from *Called Together to be Peacemakers*, the International Catholic-Mennonite Dialogue Report (1998-2003), paragraph 89.

is also fostered between congregational units and within the larger body of Christ (regional and national churches, conferences, assemblies, Mennonite World Conference). In many sectors of the MWC family of churches there is today a widening quest for oneness with other denominations and world communions.¹⁰

13. The Church is a **communion of saints** in the sense of the Biblical reference to “saints”, which includes all who believe in Jesus Christ and seek to follow him in holy living (*Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; Eph 1:1*). Sainthood is not based on ethical merit, but is accorded those “looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (*Heb 12:2*). The churches in their particular settings share the calling to sainthood “together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours” (*1 Cor. 1:2*). The communion of saints includes the “cloud of witnesses” (*Heb 12:1*), those who, having endured faithfully to the end (*Rev 14:12*), have passed through death to their heavenly reward.¹¹

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¹⁰ The vision of oneness is aptly expressed in the recent *Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches* (Winnipeg MB Canada & Hillsboro KS USA: Kindred Productions, 1999): “The church is one body of believers, male and female, from every nation, race and class. The head of this body is Christ. The church, united by the one Spirit, makes Christ visible in the world. The church exists as local bodies of believers and as a worldwide community of faith” (Article 6).

¹¹ This paragraph is drawn mainly from *Called Together to be Peacemakers, ibid.*, paragraph 92.