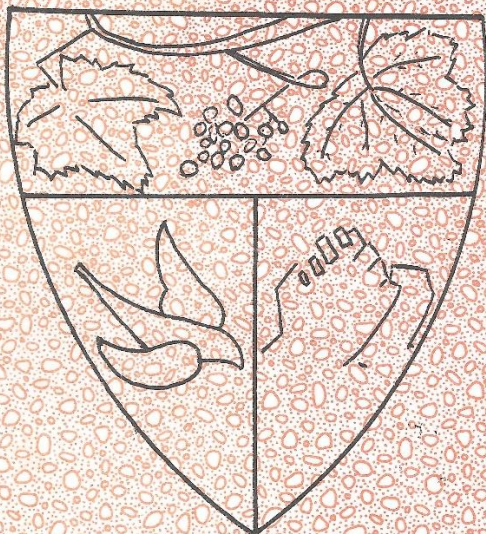


Together in Christ

50p



MAY THEY ALL BE ONE

Vol 7 No 25
Oct 1989

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Together in Christ is published by the Southwark Diocesan Christian Unity Commission.

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Price SOP per copy, 60p from February 1990.
Annual subscription £1.80. For postal subscribers postage and packing extra.

material for publication and all correspondence to be sent to the Editor at 42 Winchelsea Avenue, Bexleyheath, Kent DA 7 5HP.

The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor nor of the Commission.

Officers of the Area Commissions:

The Rt Rev C J Henderson Park House 6a Cresswell Park
Blackheath SE3 9RD 01 318 1094

SE Area:

Very Rev Canon W Clements (Chair) Secretary's post is currently vacant.

SW Area:

Miss Celia Blackden (Chair) Mrs Mary Hardy (Sec)

Kent Area:

Norman Lee (Chair) Mrs Dorothy Morris (Sec)

EDITORIAL

"I urge Malagasy Catholics to participate fully in the ecumenical movement, in union with their Bishops, showing imagination and daring."

Pope John Paul said those words during his visit to Madagascar. On Saturday, April 29th this year, in the Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Tananarive.

He participated in an ecumenical prayer service and addressed the representatives of other Christian Churches who were present. The Pope had said earlier in his address: "In virtue of the very ministry I am charged with

– the service of unity in charity and in truth
– I am called to serve in a unique way the sacred cause of the unity of Christians. I am convinced that the ecumenical movement has been brought about by the Holy Spirit; it is for this reason that I feel deeply responsible before him."

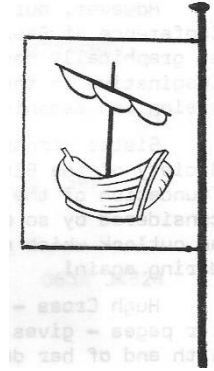
The Pope refers to the "frequent participation of the faithful in ecumenical prayer meetings" and that "tall over the world the fruits of the ecumenical movement can be affirmed." He reminds Catholics that the Catholic Church "committed herself irreversibly to this movement" and also of the obligation of Catholics to comply with the directives of the Church.

The Pope has reiterated the commitment to Christian Unity on numerous occasions, but the phrase in OUT opening paragraph, inviting imagination and daring", is striking. Perhaps our readers might like to discuss and share their views on the possible implementation of such ecumenical participation?

However, our bulletin this month surely gives some examples. The Conference at Basle on "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation", so graphically described for us by Marion Morgan, is highly imaginative in the variety of its programme, daring in its breadth of vision and astonishing in its outcome of such a consensus. Sister Margaret Mary's article on the pilgrimage of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary would take our minds back to the foundation of the Society itself, at a time when Our Lady was considered by so many as an obstacle rather than a bridge to unity -an outlook which may still prevail in some quarters. Imagination and daring again!

Hugh Cross - whom we warmly welcome on his first appearance in our pages - gives us imaginative insights into the mind and heart of Ruth and of her daring loyalty to Naomi and all that it entailed. His comparison with the Association of Interchurch Families' situation is compelling and moving.

The history of the endeavours of the pioneers for Unity in Prayer and the establishment of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, as well as modern initiatives, reinforces the message. These are all expressions of the ecumenical movement "brought about by the Holy Spirit": and we are most grateful to all contributors.



Let us pray for the Spirit to move powerfully in our hearts and in our lives, that we may dare to love one another more deeply and surrender fully to the Spirit's promptings. (The text of the Pope's speeches in Madagascar is published in the C T S pamphlet: The Pope Teaches, No 5 1989.)

The S E Area Christian Unity Commission would like to record very sincere and grateful thanks to Sister Elizabeth Vignale for her dedication and hard work as Secretary, a post from which she is now retiring. Sister will, however, keep in touch with the Commission as she has agreed to be the Unity Contact for her parish.

Towards a Civilisation of Love is the title of Cardinal Hume's book about "Being Church in Today's World". It has an excellent chapter on "The Experience of Ecumenism." Dc read it.

The book is published by Hcdder and Stoughton (C6.gs)

GOING UP

Everything is going up these days, postage rates increase on October 2nd, and regretfully, the price

of our bulletin, as from February 1990 will go up by 10p to 60p a copy. We are confident you will not desert us on this account, will you? (The extra 30p a year would only buy you $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of coffee!) So please assure us of your continued support – which we appreciate greatly – and enable us to keep our ecumenical flag flying.
Thank you.

Subscription due? Please Renew

*JUSTICE, PEACE & THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION -
A European Ecumenical Conference*

For the first time since the Reformation, all the churches from all the countries in Europe (except Albania) met at a conference in May in Basle in Switzerland. I was one of sixteen Roman Catholic delegates from England and Wales.

The Assembly was organised jointly by the Council of European Catholic Bishops' Conferences (whose President is Cardinal Martini of Milan) and the Conference of European Churches (whose President is Metropolitan Alexij of the Russian Orthodox Church).

The theme was "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation", and over 600 delegates from all parts of Europe met to discuss it. My own working group was chaired by a Russian and included people from Belgium, Rumania, Hungary, Holland, Finland, Italy, Italy. The official languages were English, French, German and Russian, and all the main speeches in the plenary session were interpreted over the headphones in these languages. For private conversation, we had to make out as best we could!

General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Emilio Castro, challenged European Christians to confess their sins, especially their sense of superiority. The Pope sent a message of greeting saying: "The time may well have come for a solemn witness by all Christians united together in favour of (God's) peace." And that is

what happened: the final statement at the end, comprising 30 pages, was accepted by a 95.4% majority. When it is considered that this included Catholics, Orthodox, and all the Protestant churches, it is a remarkable consensus of opinion. We pledged ourselves to work for justice, peace and the right use of the environment.

Subjects covered included peace issues, environment issues, and many issues of injustice, both within and outside Europe. We looked at the theology behind these issues and considered the proper relationship that mankind should have with God's creation. We considered hunger, refugees, sanctity of life, women's rights, the greenhouse effect, pollution and waste, international debt.

Although that is all very important, the experience of being one European among all these others was also striking. We do share a common history, particularly a common Christian history, and the idea of a Europe united in harmony, including a great variety of tradition and culture was appealing. The realities of division are still there, but this great gathering gave some vision of what could be.

Armenian Orthodox Bishop Karpakian moved the Assembly deeply when, on behalf of the people of Armenia, he thanked the people of Europe for their help for the victims of the recent earthquake.

On the Wednesday afternoon of the Assembly there was a "three nations walk". Basle is on the frontiers of France, Germany and Switzerland, and the delegates were joined by up to 5,000 other Christians in a six-mile walk which crossed all of them. Special arrangements had been made so that the border posts were thrown open to the vast procession of walkers. Passport and customs officials stood to one side. Delegates from behind the Iron Curtain and those with memories of World War II in this area were deeply moved by this dream of what things in Europe could be like.

There were also social events, including concerts. There was a fiesta along the banks of the Rhine, including tightrope walkers and thousands of little floating lights going down the river in the dark. All the churches in Basle itself and the surrounding area joined in

these events. The final lunch on the Sunday of departure took the form of a massive free buffet set out under the trees and prepared by the people of Basle: the large square was absolutely packed but there was enough for everyone.

Mass that morning was celebrated by Cardinal Martini joined by many Bishops and priests. I was glad to recognise the Latin used at my usual 11.0 Mass! many thousands of people joined in the main outdoor closing ceremony which was televised by Eurovision and relayed all over Europe, including BBC I. Throughout the week, the Press and the cameras were much in evidence.

It was certainly an experience I shall not forget. A final conclusion I brought away was that if everyone did just one thing about these issues, we would be beginning to tackle them. Nothing is too small to be important.

The official version of the Final Document is not yet available. No statement ever issued by the European Churches has resulted from such widespread and thorough consultation at every level of church life throughout the continent.

Marion Morgan.

(Miss Marion Morgan is the Executive Secretary to the Greater Bristol Ecumenical Council. Ed.)

PILGRIMS TOGETHER: ONE BODY IN CHRIST

A sermon preached by the Rev Hugh Cross, Baptist minister and Ecumenical Officer for England to the Association of Inter-Church Families, 4 Feb. 1989

The book of Ruth, ch.1:v16-17

One of the world's great stories is that of Ruth, the Moabite woman. It's the simple story of loyalty and devotion being rewarded. We are not told that Ruth was beautiful or even attractive. We are simply told about her quality of loyalty to her mother-in-law. And that is another thing about this story - mothers-in-law get a bad

press, but this is a story which underlines the good relationship between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. In fact, it's a story about good relationships.



Rev Hugh Cross

The story is of a man of Bethlehem who in a time of famine left home with his wife and two sons and went to settle in a land where there was food and he could make a living. In time his sons married women from that foreign land, and then both the man and his sons died. In the context of the story the men are unimportant – do I hear someone say: "They usually are! 't? It is the three women who take the centre of the stage, and we meet them at

the point when Naomi, the older woman, decides to return home, and suggests to her two daughters-in-law that they stay in their own country and remarry local men.

Relationships must have been good because both the younger women were reluctant to let Naomi go. However, one of them, Orpah, takes her advice and returns home, but Ruth, the other one, makes a speech which is one of the great speeches of history.

"Let me go with you," she says. "Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and that is where I shall be buried. may the Lord's worst punishment come upon me if I let anything but death separate me from you.

It seems to me that this story is symbolic of what you have in the Association of Inter-Church Families.

Let me suggest some reasons why I consider this an appropriate text for you.

INSECURITY

First, look at the cost to Ruth of making the choice of going with Naomi. She was leaving the security of the

known for the insecurity of the unknown. No doubt the family had frequently talked about Judah and what it was like to live there, and had mentioned people they knew in Bethlehem, and perhaps wondered what had happened to them, in the way folk do when they reminisce. But for Ruth these were all hearsay, and she had to try to visualise places and people, which isn't easy. In the land of Moab she was in familiar country – probably knew the area like the palm of her hand – and she was among people she knew and loved, some family, some friends, and a people whose customs she knew because they were her own people. Going with Naomi involved giving up all that familiarity and security for unfamiliar country, life among complete strangers, customs which were unfamiliar and by offending which she could put herself out of favour with the people round about her.

Sharing ecumenically with other people is like that. Our pilgrimage is to a goal we cannot yet see, to unfamiliar territory, to new ways of doing things, to embark on practices unfamiliar to us. It is all pretty daunting, really, just as it must have been for Ruth.

But it seems to me that Ruth was prepared to make the journey to the unfamiliarity and the insecurity for one very good reason. She knew Naomi. Not only did she know Naomi, but there was a bond of love between them that encouraged Ruth to believe that nothing could be so daunting that it warranted being separated from this woman who had come to mean so much to her.

I suggest to you that is one very good reason for continuing to press on our ecumenical course. We do not know where our pilgrimage is going to lead us, but we have each other, and we know each other, and I dare to hope that we love each other so much that we do not want to go on the pilgrimage without each other.

LOSS

There was something else for Ruth apart from the insecurity; it was loss. Going to Bethlehem with Naomi meant leaving behind her parents, her sisters and brothers and all that extended family which is so rich a part of the pattern of life in that country. It was not

just a matter of knowing the customs of the people, it was the people themselves who WOUld be precious to her. Going with Naomi meant that she would have to leave her own family forever. There would be no weekly letter from home, no regular chat on the phone to share news of each other.

If things went wrong she couldn't just climb onto the next train, coach or aircraft and dash home to Mum. This was to be the moment of dying to her family.

But there was Naomi. This woman from Bethlehem who had borne her husband and who had endeared herself to Ruth was sufficient compensation for Ruth for the loss of her entire family. The fact that she was prepared to take the plunge speaks volumes for the bond of affection and trust which had grown up between the older and the younger woman. What Ruth had discovered in Naomi led her to believe that whatever family she was going to would more than compensate for the dearly loved folk she was leaving behind. In fact, she was leaving behind one part of a very wide family to go to become a member of another part of the same family. Ruth was a descendant of Lot, who, you will remember was the nephew of Naomi's ancestor Abraham. They were members of the same family ultimately. Sharing in ecumenical endeavour may cause other members of our own denomination to view us with perplexity if not with hostility. There are those who are wrapped nup denominationally that they regard this kind of relationship as positively dangerous if not downright disloyal, and who may suggest to us that consorting with others like this could lead toa weakening of our ties of kinship. But it is just because we have come to know each other and to trust each other, and dare I suggest, love one another, that we have actually discovered that our pilgrimage together, far from weakening our ties with family actually strengthens them because we have discover ourselves to be, like Ruth, part of a much wider and older family than we guessed at the beginning. More than that, we find we have a host of brothers and sisters whom we would never had met had we remained within our own enclosures.

VENTURE OF FAITH

There was something else in Ruth's decision that required courage. It was a venture of faith. "Your God will be my God," she said to Naomi. The ancient understanding was that gods didn't move from one place to another nor did they operate in more than one fairly small area. So Ruth, being a woman of Moab, would worship the god Chemosh, the national god of the Moabites. To go with Naomi meant a change of course as far as her faith was concerned, for by her commitment to Naomi she was also taking on a commitment to the God of Naomi's people.

But she knew Naomi, and in coming to know Naomi she had come to know the God whom Naomi worshipped. Is it stretching the story too far to suggest that because of Naomi Ruth had made a discovery of God that would have been denied her if she had remained among her own people in Moab? Is it too fanciful to suggest that her choosing to go with Naomi was part of a much greater plan that God had for his people? You see, we discover when we read the rest of this lovely little book that when they came to Bethlehem "after many adventures" Ruth found a new husband, Boaz and bore him a son called Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David, who, was, of course an ancestor of our Lord. So the choice to go with Naomi was not only a step of faith for Ruth, but a major leap for humankind as God prepared for the incarnation of his own Son.

It is often suggested to us that by sharing ecumenically we are in danger of weakening our own faith, or even of watering down the faith "once delivered to the saints". On your experience both in your own marriage and in the Association of Interchurch Families you are able to demonstrate how untrue that kind of charge is. In fact, I dare to suggest that it is because of those experiences that your horizons of faith have widened and that you have discovered new insights into God and his amazing love for humankind and for his creation; that your own faith has been strengthened and others brought to faith in Christ. One small step of faith can become one large leap in the purposes of God for all people. Not only so, but you have discovered and are able to demonstrate that in fact the People of God is a much broader concept than a denomination or a group of denominations. We actually come home when we engage in a covenant relationship with our fellow Christians. Not only so, but we believe that in a mysterious way as yet

hidden from us we are fulfilling the purposes of God by our coming together.

This sermon was published in the Interchurch Family Newsletter No 2, Summer 1989. We acknowledge, with gratitude, the permission given by Rev Hugh Cross and Mrs Ruth Reardon, Secretary of A. I. F. to reproduce it here.

The Association of Interchurch Families is a charity. Interchurch couples belong as a couple. membership is open to all interested individuals who wish to further the work of the Association. (Annual subscription minimum £2)

The Secretary of A.I.F. would be pleased to give any further information

SALMESTONE GRANGE

A small group of members from the Canterbury branch of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary visited Salmestone on Saturday, may 27th, feast of St Augustine of Canterbury, by kind permission of Mr. W. Whelan, the present owner of the Grange. The monastic building of Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular with a trace of Norman work in a small vaulted passage on the ground floor, has had a chequered history over the past centuries. monks from St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, are known to have been present in Salmestone from as early as the seventh century. The present-day small chapel which was dedicated in November 1326, was built on the site of an earlier chapel according to the Register of Archbishop Reynolds which is recorded in Volume 12 of Archaelogia Cantiana.

Outside the little chapel stands a beautiful shrine of Our Lady of Salmestone where the Virgin Mary holds the Holy Child in her arms. The two Harnett sisters had the present shrine erected, after World War II, on the site of the medieval shrine which Lies destroyed years ago. Lindsey Clarke, the architect of the shrine, also worked for the friars in the Carmelite shrine at Aylesford. The Holy Child, in Mary's arms, holds a single grain of wheat in his right hand, which is a symbol of Christ's own life, referred to in John 12:24:

"Believe me when I tell you this, a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it remains nothing more than a grain of wheat; but if it dies, then it yields much fruit.

The Rev Fr Lawrence OSB, Prior of Ramsgate Abbey, who later talked about the stained glass windows, invited the group to join him in prayer in front of the shrine before visiting the ancient chapel.

The windows of the chapel, as Father pointed out, are one of its most inspiring and beautiful features. Their stained glass was produced early this century by an Australian artist, John Trimmer, who had previously studied design in the School of William Morris in London. It took the artist twenty-one years to design and complete the windows which are a superb twentieth century work of importance.

The creation window includes the creation of light, the firmament, a dove brooding over chaos, Eve and finally the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden. Each scene is beautiful, sensitive and stunning.

Symbolic Old Testament stories, which are related to work in the Grange, such as sowing and reaping, include the theme of Ruth, the wife of Boaz, who was the grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:13) and one of the ancestors of Christ, and another of Joseph who supplied his people with corn from Egypt, and was a figure of Christ. (Gen. 44:1)

The New Testament scenes include the Annunciation, the Adoration of the magi, the Presentation in the Temple, The Flight into Egypt, the Baptism of Christ, Mary Magdalen and John the Evangelist. Each image is associated with Christ and his Blessed mother.

Other scenes include St. Augustine of Canterbury, the apostle of England, and St. Erconwald, a Benedictine Abbot who did so much to help the people of East Kent in the seventh century. It is worth recalling that Erconwald was a famous bishop of London whose body lay in the old St. Paul's Gothic Cathedral in London until it was destroyed at the Reformation. The image of St. Bernadette of Lourdes is a reminder of present-day devotion to Our Lady.

Side by side with the scene of the dead God where Our Blessed Lady mourns over the death of her son are the symbols of two pagan religions, in Aphrodite and Adonis,

which represent a god who dies and which prefigures, as it were, all unknown to the pagan world, what was going to happen to Christ. Confronted with such evidence the unbeliever can argue that Christ is just a myth like the other pagan mythologies, but the Christian rejects such thinking and is convinced that God reveals himself even in paganism. It is very unusual to find such a theme expressed in a stained-glass window. However, the Christian mystery which is present in paganism was a subject which Vatican II discussed in its document on non-Christian religions during the last Council; so the Elysium mystery has a link with the Christian mysteries. While addressing the group Father Lawrence admitted that the Benedictines have not any special devotion to Our Lady like the Brown Scapular of the Carmelites or the Angelus of the Franciscans. However, the Benedictines have two Abbeys, one in Montevirgine near Naples and a second in Einsiedeln in Switzerland where the monks look after shrines of Our Lady.

Father then spoke about the importance of Votive masses and the Office of Our Lady, which are often said on Saturdays, especially in monasteries. In this context he outlined some of Mary's virtues, especially her faith and her faithfulness; her ability to listen and to learn "the Word" and her readiness to respond or to obey. Mary's "yes" was responsible for Christ having been conceived within her. When the faithful receive Holy Communion they experience the same privilege as Mary did. They receive Christ's body.

Father reminded the group of the humble surroundings of the chapel and of those present. He added that Salmestone is not a great shrine but stressed that it was all the better for that. He pointed out that it is a parable of our own lives which is humble and is surrounded by humble things. But, he continued, "they are hiding this great mystery, this pearl of great price" as Pere de Caussade calls it in his famous book Abandonment to Divine Providence. The group was reminded that these are the circumstances in which they have been placed and in which God says: "This is the very best thing that you could offer. I do not want the great things from you. I want the little things." So the shrine at Salmestone is a reminder of Mary's virtues, especially of her humility and obedience.

The Ven. Archdeacon G B Timms thanked Father Lawrence for his address and led the group in saying the Society's Ecumenical Office of Mary. Afterwards the group enjoyed tea and cakes in what used to be the monks' refectory years ago, after a successful and worthwhile pilgrimage. Sister Margaret Mary O'Grady, Secretary, Canterbury Branch E S B V

(Salmestone Grange lies behind the seaside resort of Margate in Thanet. It is about a quarter of an hour's walk from the sea front - Ed)

QUOTED IN THE NEWSLETTER OF THE E S B V M:

"Instead of being a cause of division among us, Christian reflections on the role of the Virgin Mary should be a cause of rejoicing and a source of prayer."

Max Thurian Frère of Taizé Reformed

"Mary is to be seen as the daughter of grace, not as the mother of grace: for she too is saved only by the loving-kindness of the Word. A future development of ecumenical liturgy may well be this glad recalling of Mary as the sign of salvation."

Ross Mackenzie, Presbyterian theologian and pastor.



PRAYING FOR UNITY

There is nothing new, or even recent, about prayer for the unity of all Christians, after all, there is quite a well-known one in Saint John's Gospel isn't there? But it must be admitted that over the years of a bitterly divided Christianity, some of the prayers developed would now have a very hollow sound. Let's take two examples of what I mean.

As far as the Roman Catholic position is concerned, the traditional view of Church Unity, held until the second Vatican Council, had been explicitly set out by Pope Pius XI in 1928, in his encyclical Mortalium Animos:-

"The union of Christians cannot be fostered otherwise than by promoting the return of the

dissidents to the one true Church of Christ, which in the past they so unfortunately abandoned."

Any response to a prayer for unity which was not supportive of this view would have been inconceivable. On the other hand, there were those who would not grant that Roman Catholics were even Christian; presumably Roman Catholics would not, therefore, qualify for inclusion within the Christian unity those folk were seeking.

It is only in our own time, with the impetus of Vatican II and the Inter-Church process that objective prayer in unison for the unity of all Christians has taken off in a meaningful way.

In the history of joint prayer for Christian Unity, pioneers have not been wanting, men of vision who had caught the Lord's own view of what Christian Unity should be, men who sowed the seed for the plant which is just now beginning to show signs of sprouting, that plant which must be allowed to have the tending of the Holy Spirit and much, much joint prayer if it is to come into full bloom. Thinking back over the past hundred years or so, such names as Spencer Jones, Wattson, Halifax and Couturier come readily to mind.

Although there had been earlier proposals for the setting aside of a specified date for joint prayer for unity, the first society actually founded to pray for unity was the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of what Christendom. It was founded in 1857 and numbered among its members Anglicans, Orthodox and Roman Catholics. A few years later, however, membership was forbidden to Roman Catholics, presumably on the grounds that a continuing approved Roman Catholic membership would be tantamount to officially accepting the "Branch Theory", which held that The Anglican, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches were all branches of the one Catholic Church, with equal authority within their own spheres of influence.

At an event arranged by the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity at the turn of the century, the Rev Spencer Jones, the Anglican vicar of delivered a sermon, which, under the encouragement of Lord Halifax, he expanded into the book England and the Holy See. This book attracted the attention, among many others, of the

Rev Lewis Thomas Wattson, a priest of the Episcopal Church of America (the founder of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement). A correspondence developed and in 1907 they jointly produced a further book, The Prince of the Apostles.

Towards the end of 1907 Jones suggested to Wattson that the feast of St Peter, June 29, would be a fitting day for sermons to be preached in all Anglican churches on the subject of Christian unity. Wattson liked the idea, but in his turn suggested that the eight days from the feast of St Peter's Chair (January 18) to that of the Conversion of St Paul (January 25) should be set aside for prayer for that end. Spencer agreed and the prototype of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity as we now know it took place in January 1908.

About ten months later Wattson and all his followers were received into the Roman Catholic Church.

The observation of the Octave won the approval of the Roman Catholic Church and was commended to its members, but its Papal orientation did not commend it universally. It was left to a later apostle of unity to broaden its appeal.

There is no room here to dilate on the life and work of Paul Couturier, the Lyonnais priest at whose hands "the Octave had been baptized into a new and more evangelical life" , but for a very clear and readable biography of this outstanding priest the reader is directed to: Geoffrey Curtis: Paul Couturier and Unity in Christ, SCPO Press, 1964, from which the above quotation is taken. Curtis writes (pp 64-65):

"...it was abundantly clear to Abbé Couturier that the vast majority of Christians found the Papal basis of the Octave an insuperable obstacle to participation; and he set himself to seek away and a formula in which all might join in praying for unity without any wounding of denominational loyalties. He found this implicit in the Roman missal where the Church asks in almost every Eucharist that our Lord who prayed on the eve of his Passion that all may be one, will grant to his Church 'that peace and unity which is according to (his) will'. It was necessary for the intention of the Octave - an intention clearly identical with that of Christ, since it uses this prayer from the Missal, albeit with Petrine versicle and response implying the Papalist viewpoint - to be expressed in a form to which every Christian in

whatever religious tradition or stage of development could subscribe. The Abbe came therefore to ask all to join in prayer 'that God will give the visible unity to his kingdom such as Christ wishes and through whatever means he wishes''

Amen to that.

It was in 1935 that the Abbé was building up the Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In 1920 the newly formed Faith and Order Commission, comprising Anglicans, Orthodox and Protestants agreed that a week of prayer for Christian Unity should be held each year at Whitsuntide, but with the growing popularity of Couturier's week they decided to move theirs to the same date from 1941.

The promulgation of the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Council of the Vatican on November 21 1964 was the prelude to the Roman Catholic Church's direct involvement in the preparation of the material for the Octave. Since 1966 the material for the Week of Prayer has been prepared by a Joint Working Group formed by the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. Each year, a different country is invited to submit a draft, which is then revised by the Joint Working Group and distributed to regional or national Councils of Churches for adaptation to their own situation.

In Britain, this task is committed to SCUP.

Sidney M. Ratcliff.

WHAT IS SCUP?

SCUP is the Standing Conference on Unity in Prayer of the British Council of Churches, succeeding an earlier Committee on Unity in Prayer which operated in 1970, as part of the BCC's Division of Ecumenical Affairs. The first secretary was Fr. Emmanuel Sullivan, SA, so we note there has been Roman Catholic involvement from the outset.

At present, the Field Secretary is Sister Hilda (who succeeded Sister Aloysius), the Chairman is Rev Neil Smith (Anglican), Miss Daphne Fraser (Anglican) is secretary, and the rest of the members (who are appointed by their Churches) come from different Christian traditions. I have had the privilege of being the Roman Catholic representative for two years, and have come to realise the tremendous amount of prayer and hard work undertaken by those especially responsible for the

spiritual service which SCUP offers. SCUP's promotion of Christian spirituality for today throughout the Churches which the Inter-Church Process represents, affirms the supreme value of Spiritual Ecumenism.

WHAT DOES SCUP DO?

The main mammoth task of SCUP is the editing and production of the Week of Prayer material.

From March 13-15 this year, SCUP members met at Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, and were busily engaged in the consideration of the text for 1990, which originated from an ecumenical group in Madrid, consisting of 4 Catholics, 2 Orthodox and 2 Protestants. They selected as the theme:

United in the Prayer of Christ:

"That they all may be one . . . That the world may believe" (John 17)

Some members of that group subsequently met with the committee of representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, to prepare the international text.

SCUP members edited this text use in Britain, working sometimes in small groups on a section allocated to them, and in plenary sessions.

SCUP will publish:

- a BOOKLET containing the eight days of prayer together with an outline ecumenical service;
- a PLANNERS' RESOURCE with background information, and additional prayers and worship suggestions;
- a POSTER for advertising local events;
- a PRAYER CARD.

Chapter 17 of the Gospel of John, though widely used for ecumenical occasions, has not previously been taken as theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The titles of the eight days are as follows:

- Day 1 "Knowing you"
- Day 2 "Keep them in your name"
- Day 3 "Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth"
- Day 4 "Sent into the world"
- Day 5 "Those who believe in me because of their message"
- Day 6 "That they may be one"
- Day 7 "I gave them the same glory you gave me"
- Day 8 "That the love you have for me may be in them"

We hope this information will help with your planning of the Week (January 18 - 25, 1990). It is expected that the material will be available in November.

WHAT ELSE DOES SCUP DO?

SCUP has published other worship material and has organised Retreat/Conferences for clergy and those engaged in pastoral ministry. SCUP also prepared the worship for the historic Inter-Church Conference at Swanwick in 1987.

ALL YEAR ROUND!

The most notable publication (apart from the Week of Prayer material) which has been produced since 1987 is the attractive resource material for worship: ALL YEAR ROUND. Its compilation was entrusted to Editors and an editorial team working along with SCUP'S Chairman, Field Secretary and secretary. The present editor is Rev. Edmund Banyard. I was invited (through the Committee for Christian Unity) to join the editorial team since its inception in 1986, and this has been an enriching experience in addition to SCUP membership.

The team meets to select and edit material submitted by many contributors as well as that by the team itself. It is fascinating to consider the great variety and wide provenance of the contributors, and to appreciate their prayer and spirituality. All contributions are very welcome.

All Year Round includes prayers, meditations, drama, hymns, liturgies. It has sometimes been commissioned to prepare worship material for special occasions, a recent example being that to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II on September 3rd.

All Year Round is available by subscription CIO a year, including postage and packing, a ring binder and approximately 48 pages of contents each quarterly issue. All enquiries and orders for the Week of Prayer and All Year Round go to:

The British Council of Churches Bookroom,
Inter-Church House,
35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL.

Finally, and most importantly, please pray for SCUP!

Una M. Ratcliff.