

Grace

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TOGETHER IN CHRIST



CONTENTS

Editorial

4. Prophets of Reunion Dom Bede Winslow Pt. III

6. CTBI visit to the Holy Land

9. Speaking the Truth in Love

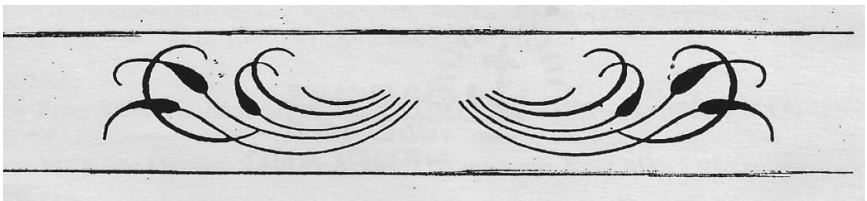
12. Christianity on the Move

14. The Declaration: *Dominus Jesus*

18. Praying for Unity: My Beckenham Experience

20. To Be A Pilgrim (continued)

Mission Statement and Prayer for Unity



EDITORIAL

Welcome to our February issue of Together in Christ. with very many thanks to all our contributors for interesting and varied articles. You will see our Mission Statement set out on at the back page; this has been produced by Bishop Charles Henderson and the three Area Commissions, and we hope you will be able to use it prayerfully and publicise it wherever possible.

In John Wilkinson's concluding article, there is a reference to Dom Bede's speaking of 'when' unity comes, not 'if'. A good reminder for us all!

We are grateful for Fr. Turner's account of the CTBI visit to Israel/Palestine; we continue to pray for a just and peaceful settlement in that troubled area.

Many thanks to David Carter, who brings to our notice the Report 'Speaking the Truth in Love'. We recommend our readers to obtain a copy and study it carefully.

"Christianity on the Move" demonstrates an event for which there was much prayer, careful planning, organisation and commitment on the part of all concerned - may it have good, positive results.

Canon Clements, always a faithful contributor, has set out carefully some of the main points of the Declaration, *Dominus Jesus*, and added his own wise comments.

Terry Davies, has certainly done sterling work in his frequent visits to local churches, to meet and pray with their members.

Helen Ratcliff shares with us her experiences of an ecumenical pilgrimage abroad, a very fruitful and enjoyable enterprise.

We wish you all a very holy and happy year, 2002, and hope that Together in Christ will give you some inspiration for you to further your ecumenical commitment. May God bless you.

20th CENTURY PROPHETS OF REUNION for the 21st Century (Part III)

Sr Benedict told us something of our third 'prophet', Dom Bede Winslow. Born in London in 1888 and raised as an Anglican, he later moved to the Isle of Wight. He and his brother Cuthbert, after considering the Orthodox church, became Roman Catholics in 1910. After writing to Dom Aelred Carlyle, founder of the Anglican community on Caldey, who, with the majority of that community had been received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1913, and was then at Maredsous, he entered St Augustine's Abbey at Ramsgate. He considered becoming a Carthusian and was given permission to try his vocation with them but soon returned to Ramsgate. He was professed there in 1915 and ordained Priest in 1922.

In 1924 he visited Rome and made his first contact with the eastern Churches. This seems to have been the beginning of the special vocation he felt to work and pray for unity, especially with the churches of the East. He was a founder member of the Society of St John Chrysostom and presented papers to it from 1926-29. In 1931 he founded the Eastern Churches Quarterly (ECQ) which appeared in *Pax*, the journal of the Prinknash (formerly of Caldey) Benedictines from then until 1935. From 1936 ECQ appeared as a distinct journal which Dom Bede continued to edit from then and through the years of the war. With Barbara Fry he organised, in 1938, the Eastern Churches Quarterly Study Group, which met in London, arranged conferences with Orthodox and Anglicans and published reports and papers in ECQ. He had made contact with Dom Constantine Bosshaerts and Dom Lambert Beauduin and with the Russian Orthodox in Paris.

Dom Bede was priest-in-charge of St Mildred's Parish, Minster, for a period in the thirties. He revived the annual pilgrimage in honour of St Mildred and secured the return of some other relics. His post-card to Benedictine nuns in Bavaria informing them that the buildings of the ancient abbey were for sale reached them at the same time as threats from the Nazi regime. This led, in 1939, to the arrival of the nuns to form the present community. Sr Benedict reflected on the delight Dom Bede would have felt at the conference in which we were presently engaged. His vision of a monastic community dedicated to reunion

began at this time. He wrote around to other monasteries but, with war looming, received no substantial support.

Dom Bede was always calm, tranquil and imperturbable, and it was impossible to quarrel with him. He received at least 170 people into the Catholic Church though he never proselytised - in fact he once prayed that all lapsed Christians should return to the Church of their original allegiance. He was not particularly gifted intellectually but pursued his vision resolutely. He always spoke of 'when' unity comes, not 'if.'

He was easy with young people, with families and with those with learning difficulties. While everything Eastern fascinated him, he remained completely faithful to the western tradition. and was, in fact, very traditional in his views.

Dom Bede died in October, 1959. In his recent book, *Western Monasticism*, Peter King writes of him, "He brought forward the work of Christian Unity first and foremost through personal contacts. No doubt only someone with his self-effacing manner and modesty could have pursued ecumenism in the bleak inter-church atmosphere of the time. He had numerous Anglican and Methodist friends but, above all, he cultivated his relations with the Orthodox."

The talks of the day were broken up with a midday office for prayer for Christian Unity and with packed lunches and afternoon tea in the "Old Schools", where we could inspect the display on our 'Prophets for Reunion' and buy from the range of selected literature set out there. We concluded with Mass and Vespers at which the chief celebrant and homilist was Rt Rev. Fr Bernard Waldron OSB, from Ramsgate Abbey. He had, of course known Dom Bede who, he told us, was referred to in the community as "The Archimandrite"! He reminded us that Benedictines were at Minster abbey before any of our present church divisions had come about. He was sure they would still be there when all these divisions had been healed.

John Wilkinson

CTBI VISIT TO ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Frank Turner SJ, an Assistant General Secretary to the Catholic Bishops Conference, writes of the visit.

A delegation of twelve people from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland visited the Middle East for two weeks in March at the invitation of the Middle East Council of Churches. This note on the visit focuses on our time in Israel-Palestine

Our party covered a fair span of the CTBI churches: the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Congregational Federation of Wales, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Union of Welsh Independents, the United Reformed Church, Paul Renshaw; who co-ordinated the visit for CTBI, and myself.

During the first week we had split into three groups of four, visiting Arab countries. Then we travelled to Jerusalem together. For part of the second week we were a single group in Jerusalem but for two days we again split into three, visiting respectively the West Bank, Galilee and Gaza.

The visit had a religious focus (the situation of the churches on the region and especially in the Holy Land, and inter-faith relations); and a geopolitical one, centred on the 'Middle East Peace Process' - which had become critical since the visit was planned.

Our purpose included: fact-finding, solidarity, publicity and advocacy, all with a view to the quest for a just and settled peace in the region.

Meeting a variety of people We met Christian religious leaders, rabbis, officials of the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, representatives of voluntary organisations, staff members of the Middle East Council of Churches, and some 'ordinary people'. We heard many and conflicting opinions, although the most extreme Israelis or Arabs would probably have been unwilling to meet a group such as ours.

A city under siege Our journey into Israel from Jordan dramatised some of the issues we would later discuss. We crossed the border in the Jordan Valley by the Allenby Bridge, close to the Dead Sea and Jericho but our intention to visit Jericho was thwarted. The city was

sealed off by the Israeli Defence Force and the hardships of those under siege can only be guessed at.

Settlements The bus then climbs from the arid valley for fifteen minutes before the surprising sign, 'Sea Level'. On the road up to Jerusalem you realise that many hills overlooking the road are crowned by settlements built since 1967. 'Settlements' is an odd and misleading word, connoting something transient, almost random: these are towns, strategically located and fortified.

Everyone loses The Old City of Jerusalem was almost deserted except for the bustling Arab Quarter near the Damascus Gate. Israeli merchants are having a bad year, but Arabs (often without capital) in many cases face destitution or selling up businesses to which they have given their lives. One evening, we went out for a meal but could find nowhere open to eat till we happened to meet a restaurant-owner who opened his restaurant specifically for us. Other sectors suffer as much as commerce. Parents cannot pay school fees, which means that schools cannot pay teachers. Everyone loses, and every month of the 'Second Intifada' destroys livelihoods as well as lives.

The Israeli Government view The Israeli Government claims that the Intifada was an assault pre-planned by the Palestinian Authority, and that the notorious visit to the Haram al-Sharif, or Temple Mount, by Ariel Sharon and one thousand guards at the end of September, merely offered a plausible pretext. On this view, Yasser Arafat bears almost exclusive responsibility. He rejected the best agreement conceivable and, since he controls 90% of Palestinians, could have prevented violence had he chosen to do so.

A desperate protest against Israeli failure However the Lutheran Bishop of Jerusalem spoke for many Palestinians when he explained the Intifada rather as a desperate protest against the Israeli failure to implement the Oslo Agreement of 1993, at which the Palestinians had made such radical concessions that nothing further could be conceded. Since then their situation has consistently deteriorated whilst the Israelis consolidate their dominance (for example by the relentless expansion of the settlements, which monopolise natural resources and cut off the Palestinian enclaves from one another, so that no state is viable). Arafat has been forced to negotiate with a series of short-lived Prime Ministers: Rabin (assassinated by an Israeli), Peres, Netenyahu and Barak (and since the Intifada broke out; of course, with Ariel Sharon). Every such change meant that negotiations started from

scratch, nothing solved: but the 'facts on the ground' that would determine the shape of any subsequent agreement were continuously created. Meanwhile, the international community was kept at arm's length by the chimera of a 'peace process'.

On this view, therefore, the Palestinians had gained nothing from the process following Oslo, in fact had been virtually cheated, and their patience had run out.

Intractable yet urgent The key issues to be negotiated remain both intractable and yet urgent: for example, the need to end - or at least, minimise - violence and human rights abuses; the status of Jerusalem; the right of return of Palestinian refugees; the equitable access to resources; the question of residency rights in Jerusalem. The full CTBI report of the delegation will be available in June [2001] for those interested.

The grimmest reality I experienced I end with some impressions of the grimmest reality I experienced, that of Gaza.

The Gaza Strip is 365 sq. km and is home to 1.2 million people. It is a territory of the Palestine Authority. Yet 42% of the land is reserved for 19 Jewish settlements with an overall population of 4,000 (guarded by more than a thousand troops). These settlers pay no tax to the Palestinian Authority. Even their security costs are paid by that Authority

There are even worse realities than this offensive disparity of resources arising from the nature of life in an Occupied Territory. With a few companions I watched a commandeered 'settler road' being made secure by the clearance of 500 metres of scarce agricultural land on each side, so that the settlers could drive to and from Israel to shop in safety. Yet Palestinians cannot even traverse their own territory without crossing Israeli checkpoints, and perhaps waiting for hours. Gaza, like Jericho, is under, 'closure' - a euphemism for 'siege'. The economy is strangled as exports are blocked (16 kilos of oranges were selling in Gaza for US.\$1!), and as families are prevented from visiting relatives, even for funerals. Unemployment is estimated at between 50% and 70%.

An NGO official summed up for us, the reality of life in Gaza, in words which identify the massive impediments to any genuine peace agreement, since genuine peace would require at least the beginnings of mutual trust and respect.

'There is an everyday message for all Palestinians. You are not equal to Israelis: your farm is not important and can be bulldozed, your olive trees are not important and can be uprooted, your children are not important and can be deprived of the chance of health and education'.

The consequences for Palestinians are demoralising The Gaza Community Mental Health Programme finds that 750,000 residents of Gaza have been imprisoned by the Israelis over 30 years, about 15% of the population over that period. If children, women and elderly men are discounted, probably more than half of the young men have been imprisoned - and in prison most have suffered physical and psychological abuse. Yet this is the generation that must sustain peace with Israel.

After a little more than 24 hours our small group again passed through the Erez Crossing, swapping Gaza's arid overcrowding for the fertile, well-watered agricultural land of Southern Israel. It was not easy to imagine how a just peace might be achieved or maintained, and readers will know that since March the situation has worsened tragically.

Frank Turner S.J.

For further information and to obtain the full Report of the Delegation that is mentioned in the article, contact: CTBI, Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London, SE1 ISA Tel: 020 7523 2121

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

At the end of July, 2001, the World Methodist Conference met at Brighton. This body is a consultative one rather than a governing one. It has no official authority over the many Methodist particular churches in the world, but it does influence them and all Methodists find it enlightening and sometimes inspiring to hear of the work going on in their sister churches throughout the world.

Ecumenical relations are always on the agenda and we were privileged to be addressed by Cardinal Cassidy on this occasion. Particularly significant was the presentation of the report of the seventh quinquennium of the ongoing dialogue of the International Methodist-Roman Catholic Commission.

This body was set up in 1967, at the same time as the rather better known ARCIC. In the opinion of the late Fr Michael Richards, one of its most distinguished former Catholic members, it has proved even more fruitful than ARCIC. Its last two reports, on 'The Apostolic Tradition' and on 'The Word of Life' have been studied locally by the Archdiocesan Commission and that of the diocese of Arundel and Brighton in co-operation with the Methodist London South-West District. Fr Michael Evans, the Parish Priest of Tunbridge Wells, is one of the members of the present Commission.

The present report is entitled 'Speaking the Truth in Love' and is primarily concerned with the question of the Church's teaching authority, which, as people will remember was also, in part, the subject of the last ARCIC report, 'The Gift of Authority'. The question is an acute one for a world in need of guidance, and also ecumenically.

The Report, which takes its title from *Ephesians 4 v 13*, lists matters on which Catholics and Methodists heartily agree. They agree (as did ARCIC) that teaching authority is a gift to the Church. It is to ensure 'faithfulness in what is believed', to ensure that the Church continues to preach the Gospel fully and with integrity. All teaching authority is subordinate to the Word of God which 'has primacy over all later formulations of revelation'. It is exercised under the indispensable guidance of the Holy Spirit, 'the Spirit of Truth'. It is exercised within the Church, in the context of the Church as a 'prophetic community' in which all the faithful are anointed with the Spirit of Truth. 'All the faithful share in the understanding and handing on of revealed truth'. The ministry of authority is given to aid the growth of those for whom it is exercised.

All that is agreed between our two churches. The Report faces very honestly some continuing differences and difficulties. One is over the degree of authority given to the highest teaching authority in our two churches. Methodists believe that when their Conferences, their national representative bodies, teach and that teaching can be shown to be consistent with Scripture, then that teaching should be received respectfully by the Methodist people. They do not, however, attribute to it the infallibility that Catholics attribute to General Councils and, on certain carefully specified occasions, to the teaching of the Pope. There is some disagreement about who should teach at the highest solemn definition. For Catholics this is a job for the entire body of

Bishops acting under the presidency of the Pope and, occasionally, for the Pope on his own, after usually consulting with the bishops. Methodists include ordinary ministers and lay people in their teaching Conferences. Each church questions the other as to why it carries on its present practice.

The Report also gives considerable attention to the 'means of grace', those sacraments and other devotional practices by which it is believed Christians grow in grace. Catholics explain their belief that the sacraments are always honoured by God even though the lack of faith of the recipient may mean that they are not fruitful in particular cases. Methodists explain Wesley's teaching about the 'covenanted means of grace', those provided in Scripture which include prayer and Bible reading as well as the sacraments of baptism and holy communion and the 'prudential means', later practices, such as the early Methodist class meetings, which are not Scripturally prescribed but which have always proved helpful to Methodists. Catholics ask how Methodists can be sure that a particular means of grace is a trustworthy channel of God's grace.

Many matters are identified as needing further common exploration and dialogue such as the relationship between ordination and teaching authority and the different forms of authority ascribed in the two churches to 'secondary' doctrines, which Catholics still believe are binding in contrast to Wesley's view that they are 'opinions' and thus not absolutely binding on all the faithful. A key question perhaps is what we understand by the promise of the Spirit 'to lead us into all truth' (John 16, v 13). Do we understand that in terms of formal teaching and doctrine or rather in terms of life and love, which is perhaps how many Methodist would see it?

Much is said in this Report which is inspiring and helpful to the ordinary life of both churches. What is said about being 'prophetic communities' is a challenge to the way we live out Christian koinoia in fellowship and witness in our troubled world. One key aim of the Catholic-Methodist dialogue has always been to further the missionary work of both churches.

There is a lot I haven't explored in this short appreciation which I hope can be profitably followed up.

David Carter.

The Report is published from the headquarters of the World Methodist Council in America

CHRISTIANITY 'ON THE MOVE'

Most Christians find it difficult to share their faith, but fortunately most at least have a heart to try and do something. This was demonstrated by a team of Christians from a number of churches in our area for four days during September. Morden town centre thronged with the music of worship bands. Passers-by were invited to stop and enjoy a free BBQ lunch and listen to the main group performing in front of the Civic Centre. There was the opportunity to share their needs and problems, pray with fellow Christians, or find out more about their faith.

These events are held all over the country, and are the brainchild of one time Chief Executive of The Kent Chamber of Commerce, Martin Graham.

Martin is now the Director of the registered charity 'On The Move' Grove Books have published a booklet, entitled *On The Move*, and below is an extract from the publication outlining a typical day's programme.

INTRODUCTION

A Day in the Life of an 'On the Move' Mission

At nine in the morning, perhaps 150 team members gather at the appointed 'Team Base' (a local church). They signed up months before when someone from On the Move did a whistle-stop tour of participating churches. Now, the crunch has come. Most have never done anything like this before; most find the project frightening; yet here they are, ready, as Jesus put it, to be sent out 'as lambs among wolves'!

But they are willing to have a go and are feeling 'fired up' from the training evening the previous day. From 9am to 10am is a time of worship and briefing. People are then divided into four main teams, each with a worship band, and at 10am they take to the streets. Each band takes a prearranged position in the main shopping centre or high street. A band might have two guitars, a flute, bongos, a violin and maybe a trumpet, plus half a dozen singers—attracting a lot of attention.

As shoppers move down the High Street, they notice the first band.—quite a spectacle. A bit further down the street there is another one.

Then another one. Then, just around the corner—there is another one! The combination makes for an almost carnival-like atmosphere. Other team members go up to passers-by and say, 'Can I invite you to a free barbecue?'—and hand them an invitation card. The card says organized by local churches and explains that it is a free barbecue from 12 noon to 2 pm in the nearby park or open space. Some really good conversations take place on the streets. There is a friendly and lively atmosphere. On an average day, 2500 to 3000 invitation cards are given out. The inviting goes on until 1.30 pm. Meanwhile, from 10 am, the team of cooks has been preparing the barbecue and at 12 noon it is ready to roll. Probably 20 white plastic tables, with chairs, have been set out. A queue for the food soon forms (maybe 50 people long) and good quality burgers and sausages in French bread are served. chairs fill up with people, with others standing around the edge. Over two-hour period there is a through-put of something over 600 people, with perhaps 150 being there at any one time.

Team members act as hosts, joining people at tables, introducing themselves, and being friendly ('What's your name...where are you from?'). There is a worship band with a PA system playing in the background.

As people start to open up, they surprisingly often tell us about their hurts and their needs. At one level, the scene is genuinely relaxed—a pleasant, low key, party in the park. Look more closely, and you can see team members praying with their guests. You can see tears. The Spirit of God is moving and changing hearts. The church is serving the wider population, making itself available—and being received. There are occasional messages from the microphone, welcoming people, explaining what this is about. Sometimes the speaker might admit that the church has not been very good at being there for people and that we are trying to put that right.

At 1.30pm, the 'inviters' and bands from the street come back to the barbecue and get a meal. The event winds down at about 2pm. Chairs and tables are stacked and taken back to the Team Base. There is then a short debriefing meeting for team members, with a time for people to share what has happened. There is a sense of excitement. Many team members tell of how they prayed for people; how some asked Jesus into their lives - and are thrilled to have found out that they can do it!

The team departs at about 2.30 pm, to meet again at 9 am the next morning and do the same thing for three more days. If this is a city mission, the same has been happening at the same time in other sectors of the city, with each grouping of churches concentrating on their local shopping area—perhaps in ten centres at once, each with 150 team members and four worship bands, and each having the privilege of feeding 600 plus guests, most of whom are completely unchurched. That adds up to 25-30,000 people fed over four days, and perhaps 150,000 personally invited! (Reproduced with kind permission of Grove BOOKS Ltd. Cambridge. CB3 9HU).

THE DECLARATION "DOMINUS JESUS"

On 16th June, 2000, Pope John Paul II ratified and confirmed a document, prepared by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, presided over by Cardinal Ratzinger, and entitled, in its English version "A Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church" - in other words, a document reminding us, and making clear, that Jesus Christ is the one and only Saviour of all mankind, and his saving grace is related, intimately and inseparably with the Church he founded. The document states nothing new, it is simply a reminder that this is what it is to be a Catholic. We must state, it says, what we believe to be true, fully and clearly, but with charity and in language which is not discourteous. At the same time we must listen to fellow-Christians and to people of other religions, and try to understand them, rejecting nothing that is good, entering into dialogue, but remembering Christ's command to 'go and teach all nations'. In this way, in God's providence, the truth will emerge. The document is addressed to bishops, theologians and lay Catholics, and proceeds to clarify where we stand; first by affirming the Apostles' Creed, and then by emphasising certain beliefs which we must hold and proclaim as part of our faith. The stated purpose of the document is to combat various forms of 'indifferentism'; the notions, for example, that one religion is as good as another, that there is no such thing as objective truth in religious matters; or that divine truth is so elusive that nothing can be known for certain. The document goes

on to enumerate certain truths which 'must be believed' as essential to Catholic teaching.

- God's revelation in Christ is once and for all. To that revelation we owe the obedience of faith which is itself God's gift.
- Jesus Christ, son of Mary, and He alone, is son of God and Word of the Father He alone, as mediator between God and all mankind, is our Saviour.
- This saving act is the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- God's will to save all mankind is achieved once and for all in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Son of God.
- Although the sacred books of other religions contain elements of goodness and grace, the books of the Old and New Testaments are unique, as alone inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- The Church of Christ, despite divisions of Christians, continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. Other Christian Churches derive their efficacy from her fullness.
- The mission of the Church is to proclaim and establish the Kingdom of God, of which she is the seed and the beginning. The Church is not an end in itself, but the means by which Christ wishes to establish His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God cannot be detached from Christ or from His Church. Nor can working for the Kingdom of God be detached from Christ or from His Church. Working for the Kingdom (which is God's plan for the salvation of all peoples) is the task of every Christian.
- The Church is necessary for salvation. God has willed that the Church founded by Christ be the instrument of salvation for all humanity The Church is, therefore, not just 'one way' of salvation alongside others, but the way. Nevertheless, God is greater than the Church and bestows his grace on non-Christians in ways known only to Himself. Other religions, with their rites and beliefs, can be a preparation for the Gospel. Respect is due to other religions, whilst recognising some deficiencies in them. All people, but not all religions are of equal worth.
- The Church of Christ is not merely a collection of churches seeking to achieve a future unity. Present disunity among Christians is a wound in the Body of Christ. But the one Church of

Christ 'subsists' in the Catholic Church, and her unity can never be lost.

The document, as a whole, distinguishes between

(a) The Catholic Church, the saving mystery of Christ in its fullness, governed by the Successor of St Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him.

(b) Other 'Churches', not in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, but united with by Apostolic Succession and a valid Eucharist.

(c) Other 'ecclesiastical communities,' because they have not preserved a valid episcopate, nor integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not in the sense understood in Catholic teaching. Their members are incorporated into Christ by Baptism, and are thus in a certain imperfect communion with the Catholic Church

(d) 'Other religions' ie. non-Christian religions, whose members are not incorporated into Christ by baptism, and have not the gift of faith, but whose beliefs to some extent reflect divine truth, and could be a preparation, in God's providence, for the gift of faith and acceptance of the Gospel of Christ.

The document concludes by saying that it set out to reiterate and clarify certain truths of the which we must receive and hand on. All persons have an obligation to seek the truth in what concerns God and his Church, to embrace it when known, and to hold fast to it. We are all ailed to share in the unity of the family of God's children.

COMMENT

On 22nd June, 2001, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, recently retired as head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, gave a lecture at Worth Abbey in which he stated that he and Cardinal Walter Kasper, his successor, were away from Rome when 'Dominus Jesus' was drawn up. They had sent in comments, but their presence, he averred, might have improved the document, which had nothing to say about the tremendous advances in work for Christian Unity achieved over the last thirty-five years.

We should not be surprised or distressed, in my opinion, if Cardinals disagree publicly with one another sometimes. They, with us, are struggling along the road to Christian Unity, listening to one another, and prepared to change (whilst holding on to truth) so that together we

may witness to other Christians, and with to other religions, and with them to all people of good will.

When we try to 'speak the truth with charity' it is always a problem to reconcile 'truth' with 'charity'. In our anxiety to speak the truth, we sometimes unintentionally hurt each other. Anglicans have been upset by the statement that 'they are not a Church in the proper sense', since we do not recognise the validity of Anglican Orders, and therefore of their Eucharist. Yet Pope Paul VI, as long ago as 1970, when canonising the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales, courteously spoke of the 'Roman Catholic Church', and of the Anglican Church as a "her ever beloved Sister in the one authentic communion of the family of Christ."

Some Christian bodies have responded very positively to 'Dominus Jesus', affirming its unswerving reaffirmation of orthodox teaching on the divinity of Christ and his unique role as Saviour of the world, on the work of the Holy Spirit and on the authority of Holy Scripture. Evangelical Christians in general would support such teaching. For example, the World Methodist Council, on 7th September, 2000, responded: - "The World Methodist Council welcomes the reaffirmation of Jesus Christ as the one Saviour of the world made by the Vatican in the recent document "Dominus Jesus". In its continuing dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the World Methodist Council looks forward to further exploration on the question of how each partner can come to a fuller recognition of the churchly character of the other".

On 15th August, 2000, the Russian Orthodox Church published a new document Principles of the Russian Orthodox Church towards Heterodox", which presents teaching similar in many ways to "Dominus Jesus".

But there is still a lot to do before we achieve the aim of 'full visible unity among all the baptised' expressed by Pope John Paul II in "*Ut Unum Sint*" on 25th May, 1995.

Cardinal Ratzinger's purpose was to state clearly where we stand as Catholics, when we enter into dialogue.

It is hard to do justice to such a close-knit document in a brief summary. Why not read the thirty-page document yourself

Canon
William Clements

PRAYNG FOR UNITY- MY BECKENHAM EXPERIENCE

I became Unity Contact for St Edmunds, Beckenham, in February, 2001. That came about because I attended all seven Unity Services held during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in late January; I got talking and was swiftly nobbled.

I had noticed during the 2000 Week of Prayer when I was still in my previous parish of St Ambrose, Warlingham (in Arundel & Brighton Diocese) the poor attendance. Warlingham had just 4 churches, 2 Anglican, 1 Methodist and 1 RC. The attendance at all the seven services (again I went to all seven) was usually 12 people, an average of 3 per church. Not impressive; no convincing evidence of an active interest in Christian Unity.

Similarly in 2001 at Beckenham; with our 15 (yes, FIFTEEN) churches 7 Anglican, 2 Methodist, 2 Baptist, 2 URC, 1 Icthus Fellowship and my own RC church, the daily attendance at most of the services was an average of 45. Again 3 per church. Again - not impressive.

So I decided to make an impression on all our 14 churches. I resolved to visit each of them to pray with the congregation. I meet the Minister, introduce myself and say where I come from and my role there. Then I say 'I've just come to pray and worship with you and your people.'

So far I've been received with courtesy and love at each church. Where a Blessing is allowed at the Eucharist I go up for it; and find it profoundly moving.

So far, in 9 months I have worshiped at 12 separate churches, but at the nearer churches to my home I am a more regular visitor. At some churches I have to call for 3 or 4 Sundays, since the Minister may be away. So progress is slower than planned. To finish the remaining 2 churches, 1 Anglican (evangelical) and finally tie Icthus Fellowship, I have arranged to call on Dec. 2nd & Dec. 9th

Then my pilgrimage round all the Beckenham Churches (CTI Beckenham) will be completed. And in January I can begin my second pilgrimage.

I now live alone so I am a free agent and can give more time than most folk to this work. I go to the 8am Mass at St Edmund's and after a light breakfast and completing Catholic Herald crossword I aim to

go to Holy communion or main service at the chosen church. And in the evening I often got to evensong or the equivalent.

On Wednesday nights I go to Sung Compline at the nearby St George's Church, where a church has existed some 900 years. Compline is 'a good way to end the day' and part of the ancient liturgical office. It lasts less than 30 minutes. There are between 1 and 6 present usually and the church choir of 5. On a rare occasion only 1 attended - guess who that was? Quite right! I was thanked by the Director of Music, who happens to be playing the organ at Westminster Cathedral next Sunday, 25th November.

On Maundy Thursday I attended the Passover Meal at St George's (Anglican) Church, and sat two places from the Canon. It was a combination of the Jewish 'Seder' Service with Christian Prayers intermingled, but not the four glasses of wine normal at one point. We had to make do with one only! Most unbiblical!

I was also welcomed at the Harvest Festival Supper there - sitting two seats away from the Canon. On another evening I sat next to Monica Furlong who was talking there about the state of the (Anglican) church.

I also became a Patron for the annual St George's Arts Festival which lasts 9 days, and at which two of my grandchildren were playing cello and clarinet in two of the Bromley Youth Music Trusts ensembles.

The local Methodist Church ran a 'One World - One Week' celebration recently. So naturally I went to the main Service; also to the dinner at which an African male voice choir entertained us. I enjoyed the African food - neglecting the UK, French, New Zealand and Indian dishes.

The Week highlighted the dire plight of so many refugees and asylum seekers -for whom Beckenham, like so many others local areas, does so much.

I am looking forward to March 2002 when I shall repeat my visit to the large Baptist Church (Chapel?). Last year I was invited to the home of one of them for a Welsh high tea (coffee and tea - but no alcohol!) followed by hymn singing in the lounge, with very thick hymn books - and some hymns in Welsh which I had almost forgotten. They included several by John and Charles Wesley (Methodists!) and by Isaac Watts. It was a happy and holy night. The Baptist Minister (Ken Walker) and his wife Heather (current Chairman of Churches Together in Beckenham) were there.

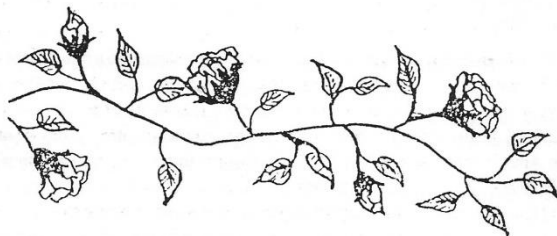
I've been accused of knowing more Anglicans & Methodists than RCs in Beckenham! Quite true! Aren't I lucky! So maybe I'm doing a good job? I do hope so!

At the 3 committee meetings I've attended at Eltham, I have been impressed with the reports from the other contacts. Perhaps I can do as well one day. I shall keep trying.

Perhaps I can get other parishioners to take a part in future?

Terry Davies,

Unity Contact for St Edmund's, Beckenham.



TO BE A PILGRIM (PART II)

The first part of this story was recorded in last February's edition of Together in Christ when I recounted the walk along the Sentier de St Jacques from Le Puy to Conques in Southern France. This is one section of the route taken by medieval pilgrims from various points in Europe to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain. Having completed this section of the route, we knew that we would not be satisfied until we'd visited the city at the end of the journey to which pilgrims had flocked since the Middle Ages. So it was quite fortuitous that Margaret, with whom I had walked in France, heard that a group from a local church was planning a holiday/pilgrimage in Portugal and Spain which included a day in Compostela.

That day was, therefore, a very memorable one. We arrived in Compostela in time for the 11am Pilgrim's Mass in the cathedral. The congregation was comprised of tourists and local people as well as pilgrims who had walked from France. My knowledge of Portuguese is minimal, but I could understand from the priest's opening address that we were praying for pilgrims and walkers as well as being asked to remember those who had died in New York on 11th September.

There was a great sense of fellowship and unity, even though we had come from all over the world, as we gave the sign of peace to those around us.

There are various rituals traditionally performed by pilgrims on arrival in the cathedral. Firstly, they pay their respects to the relics of St James which are contained in an ornate silver casket in a shrine under the high altar; then one walks up a short narrow staircase over the high altar which leads to the saint's statue where the pilgrim gives the statue a hug and a kiss in gratitude for a safe arrival. At the front entrance to the cathedral there is a statue of Master Mateo, the greatest of the 12th century craftsmen of the cathedral. The pilgrims touch the forehead of the statue with their own forehead which is supposed to impart some of Mateo's wisdom to the visitor. Finally, one places one's hand on a pillar which is carved with an intricate Tree of Jesse. Over the centuries these statues and sculptures have been worn by the touch of countless pilgrims. There is a very clear handprint in the marble of the Jesse Tree for example, and St James' shoulders are shiny from so many hugs! It gave me a sense of continuity and fellowship with all the pilgrims who have visited before. Some of those who had completed the whole route from France were quite overcome with emotion to have arrived at last.

Compostela Cathedral itself is, of course, very impressive in its vastness, intricacy and splendour. One of its unique features is its silver thurifer which weighs nearly 80kgs. Its purpose in times gone by, apart from sending incense heavenwards, was to mask the odour of hundreds of pilgrims packed together in the cathedral! Eight men operate an ancient rope and pulley system which reaches high into the dome of the cathedral to lower the thurifer and then swing it vigorously from one side of the cathedral to the other in front of the altar. This ceremony took place after the Mass and was quite an awesome spectacle.

Thus, Margaret and I felt that we'd experienced the end of a journey that had begun by walking the first 125 miles. So I will now return to the rest of the pilgrimage. We were part of a group consisting of 8 Catholics and 19 from the Church of England, led by an Anglican vicar and visiting Catholic shrines, monasteries and cathedrals. The emphasis was very much on praying and worshipping together. Our first experience of this was saying Compline together on the first night

in our hotel where a room had been made available for us for the half-hour service.

Our first experience of the Portuguese style of architecture known as the Manueline style came about on our second day. We were driven to the Jeronimus Monastery Just outside Lisbon. Our guide described it as a very exuberant style: a mixture of Baroque and Gothic with intricate and detailed lace-like carvings in the stone, flying buttresses, Gothic windows and, in the churches, extremely ornate interiors. The monastery was quite austere with an extremely high vaulted ceiling and beautiful serene cloisters We entered the church from inside the monastery to arrive in the choir loft. From here there is, naturally, an overall view of the church below. There is a rather graphic crucifix hanging from the ceiling in the choir loft - I found it a very moving representation. However, it seemed strange that it was up in the loft as it could not be seen from the main body of the church.

The trip had been billed as a holiday/pilgrimage and our second day was spent in sightseeing and shopping! We were staying in Estoril and our coach driver took us along the coast to Cabo da Roca which is the Westernmost point in Europe.

It looked like Cornwall. A lonely lighthouse stands at the top of a hill, steep cliffs lead down to the churning sea and further inland there are miles of sand dunes.

Our drive continued along the coast - with sand dunes on either side the road at one point - to Sintra. The town is built on a hillside with steps leading up the hill with shops on both sides of the narrow lanes all ascending from the main square. This was our lunch and/or shopping stop. It was most relaxing to sit in a restaurant in the square eating sardines and generally watching the world go by - until a sudden, heavy shower of rain caused shopkeepers and stallholders to rush out and cover up their wares as quickly as possible. We were, fortunately, under cover and sat watching as a large bowl of fruit salad slowly collected drips of water from the end of the awning. The proprietor had been told of this, but didn't seem in the least bit concerned We had ice cream for dessert on that occasion!

After lunch, we drove through the rain to what has been described as the Versailles of Portugal: the Palace of Quelez. This is a pink-stoned palace, whose splendour is now, unfortunately, much faded although it is very obvious how sumptuous the decoration would have been when new. Every door is mirrored on both sides, although now the

mirrors are tarnished; there is a large variety of Venetian chandeliers with multi-coloured glass in most of the rooms and the palace, now being State property, houses a valuable collection of decorative arts. There is Portuguese furniture, Chinese and European porcelain and jewellery placed in appropriate settings throughout the many rooms. The rooms themselves are relatively small but decorated with gilded carvings and paintings showing the development of Portuguese taste in art during the second half of the 18th century and early 19th century. The one corridor that has stayed in my mind is the Tiled Corridor. The floor is tiled in large black and white squares and all the walls are tiled from floor to ceiling depicting countryside scenes and characters from mythology, for example. The view from the windows showed vast ornamental gardens and fountains.

The day that was designated for our visit to Fatima started off very wet. The traffic through Lisbon was very heavy so our vicar suggested we had a hymn practice on the coach! Thus the time passed profitably until we reached our first stop which was the Monastery of Alcobaca. This is very impressive with its high stone vaulted nave which is completely plain as far as the altar. It was one of the most powerful abbeys of the Cistercian order and the everyday life of its monks was taken up by the choir, prayer, penitence and manual labour. There was no external ministry. Our guide described it as "a life where there was constant companionship in complete silence".

A winding stone staircase leads to the vast dormitory which takes up the whole of the first floor. There were not many people visiting other than our group and not all wanted to climb up the stairs- The silence was very noticeable in the vast stone space. Another staircase led to the upper cloisters where I found myself alone. It was very conducive to meditation to walk slowly around these beautifully carved cloisters. However, I was brought back to earth quite quickly when I realised I must have walked round all the four sides without having noticed the narrow door leading to the stairs. It is completely invisible when one is standing and looking round the walls and I had to hunt for it carefully!

The second stop was the Monastery of Batalha. The building of this monastery was started as a result of a vow made to the Virgin Mary by King Joao I after beating the Castilian army at the battle of Aljubarrota in 1385. Work ceased after 1477 because demands were being made for other royal buildings, the most important being the

Jeronimus Monastery which we had already visited This means that two chapels, known as the Imperfect Chapels, remain unfinished They are built in a circle at the end of the church; they have no roofs and the magnificent tracery and ornate carvings of the arches and walls stand open to the elements. I found this breathtakingly incredible. Batalha has the first stained glass windows in Portugal and they are found in the main chapel and the Chapter House. They were brought by master craftsmen from Germany and Flanders and date from c.1430 to 1440. We arrived in Fatima at around 2pm and the rain had stopped. So we walked the Way of the Cross first in case the weather changed again! The Stations of the Cross have been set up in the hillside above Fatima itself and are a series of statues representing the different events in the Passion of Christ, each Station corresponding to a particular event. This devotion began in the Franciscan order and the Stations are intended as a help to making a spiritual pilgrimage to the scene of Christ's suffering and death on the Cross. Some of the group were not familiar with this devotion but all found it a most moving experience. We walked along the stony path stopping before each Station where we listened to a meditation written by the vicar in such a way as to make each Station relevant to Our lives today. We prayed and sang a verse of a hymn after each one. Once again, we were united in prayer most memorably.

Our next stop was the vast basilica with an enormous piazza in front of it which on this occasion was practically empty. During the summer and on feast days, vast crowds make their way here, so we were lucky to have been able to move around at our own pace and sense the peaceful atmosphere, Fatima has been a place of pilgrimage to the Virgin Mary since three children witnessed an apparition of the Virgin over a period of time at the beginning of the last century. As we travelled back to our hotel on the coach, we prayed in thanksgiving for, among other things, having been able to accomplish so much in one day. We had seen such a display of beautiful buildings and artefacts designed in order to inspire devotion and worship.

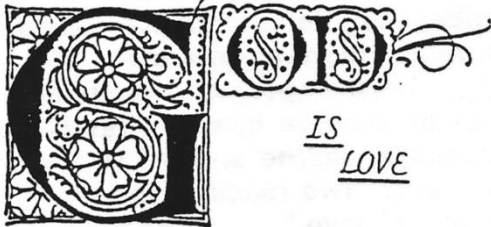
On another day we visited Braga where we discovered one of the more unusual dedications of a church; that of Our Lady of the Good Voyage. There is a statue which depicts Our Lady lying down in a boat and is invoked for a safe journey by sea. The church is extremely ornate and the altar is itself boat-shaped Our coach then drove us five miles outside Braga up the Espinho Mountain. Here is another

magnificent church which is reached by a monumental 18th century staircase, flanked by small chapels in which are to be seen life-size statues representing the events leading up to the Crucifixion; starting with the Last Supper. Halfway up the staircase there is a wide balcony with benches (very thoughtfully placed!) from which "can be enjoyed one of the most beautiful views in Portugal" according to the guide. The last part of the staircase is known as the Staircase of the Virtues. Five fountains can be seen each bearing a figure pouring water from the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and the final statue holding a jar from which water is pouring, to represent touch. On the next flight of stairs stand the statues of the three virtues as well as a number of other statues representing persons from the Old Testament. The Church of Bom Jesus do Monte (Good Jesus of the Mountain) was designed in classical style with its interior in the shape of a Latin cross. North of the church is the Yard of the Evangelists where four fountains and chapels dedicated to each Evangelist stand. It is an incredible sight to look upwards at the of staircases from the bottom of the hill and even more incredible when one finally reaches the top!

On the final Sunday, we worshipped together in a hotel room before attending Mass. It was almost a relief to be in a fairly plain local church after all the ornate and flamboyant styles we had seen. The singing of the lessons and responses to prayers was by a nun who had a beautiful soprano voice of utmost purity and clarity. As we gave the sign of peace to our own group and the local people, it seemed a fitting end to a most memorable pilgrimage of discovery and unity.

Helen Ratcliff

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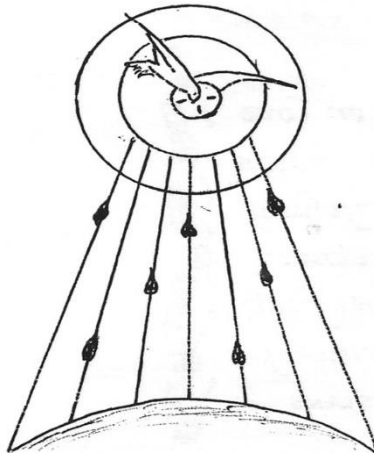
MISSION STATEMENT

By prayer and action we, the Commission members, respond to our Lord's prayer that "all may be one" (Jn 17:11)

To promote this ideal we will try to use every appropriate occasion both to foster friendship among Christians, and to celebrate and work together.

Our purpose is that:

- ◆ Everywhere the love of God will be known.
- ◆ The followers of Jesus will grow more united.
- ◆ The Good News will bring joy and contentment to all peoples.



PRAYER FOR UNITY

Father, pour out the gifts of your Spirit on all your children.

May all Christians receive love, support and encouragement.

Enable them to share more fully in faith, worship, witness and caring

Lead them to that fullness of unity for which Christ prayed.

Embrace them in your life of love.

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