

TOGETHER IN CHRIST



Vol. 14, No. 44. June 1996.

Main Contents

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Wesley and Ignatius | (Rev) Leslie Griffiths |
| 4. Diversity Within Unity | Alfred Kenyon |
| 5. The CCBI Assembly | Valerie Stroud |
| 11. Called to be One | David Carter |
| 15. Ecumenism in Moscow | J.C. |
| 17. A Chance to Start Again | |

60p

Together in Christ is published by the Christian Unity Commission for the Archdiocese of Southwark

Copyright © 1996. All rights reserved.

Price 60p per copy, Annual subscription £1.80
For postal subscriptions £2.70

Material for publication and all correspondence to be sent to the Editor: Mrs Una Ratcliff.

(Copy dates: 15 December, 15 April and 15 August for the February, June and October issues respectively)

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

Officers of the Area Commissions:

The Rt Rev C J Henderson

S E Area:

Sister Eileen Hewlett (Chair) Mrs. Margaret Moloney (Sec)
Sidney & Una Ratcliff (Area Distributors)

S W Area;

Mrs. Kate Moir (Chair) Mr Alfred Kenyon (Sec)
Mrs. Grace Singarajah (Area Distributor)

Kent Area:

Sr Kathleen Clapham (Chair) Mrs Kitty Hart (Sec)
Mr. John Wilkinson (Area Distributor)

EDITORIAL

News of the CCBI Assembly; the 'Called to be One' process; the Millennium preparations; the radio channel in Moscow, thoughts on Wesley and Ignatius; and on Diversity pack our bulletin with rich material to be studied and enjoyed and to which responses are invited. Grateful thanks to all contributors.

WESLEY AND IGNATIUS

Blow the trumpets, let the news go forth. We're in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Can't you sense the excitement and trembling anticipation up and down the length of the land?

The search for the unity of all Christians, as an act of witness and as an evangelical imperative, should not have elicited this half ironic, half sarcastic opening blast from me. But honesty forbade me to begin in any other way. "Talks about talks" seem more like "talks about how to stop people asking us questions about our talk", or "talks about seeming to talk", rather than rigorous, vigorous conversation by people excited at the prospect of new ways of acting and being together. To avoid the risk of raising anyone's blood pressure by publishing my only-too-predictable views about our conversations with the Church of England, I thought I'd skip over Canterbury this time and move directly to Rome.



Leslie
Griffiths

It's ten years since I lived in Loughton, a tiny community that snuggles up to the beautiful Epping Forest in the county of Essex. We Methodists had decided to knock down our 80 year old church and build a new one. We were an active bunch and faced a year of homelessness. We had no idea how we were going to manage. Then at the eleventh hour, in rode the cavalry in the form of the Roman Catholic parish of St Edmund. "Use our church hall", they said. "Done", we replied before you could say "infallible". And what a wonderful experience it was.

Methodist and Roman Catholic worship took place at the same time on Sunday morning and there was a common vestry for both Communities. While we preachers and priests were putting on our glad rags, someone was stoking up the incense-burner (known technically as a thurible) and wafts of holy smoke covered us all like climbers on Mount Snowdon. At the same time we could hear our Organist playing "mood music" to get the congregation disposed for Worship. He liked playing old-fashioned Methodist tunes. I swear that this combination of incense and the hymns of Charles Wesley was positively inebriating. I'm glad there was no random breath testing to fear in those days.

The Roman Catholic church hall had a bar in it. Our people sat with their backs to this challenging symbol. Those of us leading the service couldn't help but see it. It

opened at 12.15p.m. (15 minutes later than usual - in deference to us) and, if I half-opened an eye during the prayers of intercession, I could see the barman getting organised for his customers. Of course, all this made the choice of certain hymns problematical. What about "Open thou the crystal fountain whence the healing stream shall flow", for example? But we had a wonderful year.

The parish of St Edmund was run by Jesuits. I had long felt a deep fellow-feeling for members of the Society of Jesus as a result of my passion for the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Their spirituality, coupled to their out-and-out commitment to social (and if necessary, political) action, has always attracted me. The way they keep their sense of identity within the Roman Catholic Church has always seemed to offer a model for a Society of Methodists within a renewed Church in England. And any way, who could dislike their three wise men, Josh Hughes, Mike Bailey and Adrian Howell, three wonderful pastoral priests with an ecumenical spirit that was like a lifebelt to a drowning man.

On one occasion they asked me to preach a sermon at the main mass on the feast day of St Ignatius (their equivalent of Aldersgate Sunday). I accepted with alacrity and had the extra honour of reading the Gospel and of whooshing both it and the congregation (I can think of no better verb) with a few healthy swings of the thurible. I then proceeded to offer some points of comparison between St Ignatius and John Wesley. They ran something like this:

- * Both were "provincial people" Ignatius a Basque and Wesley from Lincolnshire.
- * They were well-connected, Ignatius belonged to one of the leading land-owning families of his region. Wesley's folk had access to the landed gentry and even royalty.
- * In their youth they gave themselves almost fanatically to a cause "Ignatius to the war against France, brother John to the battle against "heathenism" as a missionary to the Indians.
- * Both realised the need for something deeper and more vital •
- * Both read and were profoundly moved by Thomas A Kempis' spiritual classic *The Imitation of Christ*.
- * Both were soundly converted to evangelical Christianity: Ignatius described this as his "transformation of soul" after suffering a terrible injury in the war. John Wesley's "heart was warmed" after his crisis of faith and the end of his missionary adventure.
- * Both were supported by women as to food and shelter.
- * Both gathered a close group of committed men around them, Ignatius in the University of Paris and John Wesley at Oxford
- * Ignatius and Wesley were reviled, persecuted, misunderstood, and accused of heresy by others within the Church.
- * They were both skilled organisers. At the death of Ignatius - there were 13 provinces in Europe and beyond with 1,000 members of his fledgling society and

38 professed fathers. At Wesley's death in 1791, there were 72,000 Methodists in Britain and 64,000 in America.

Interestingly, in his own lifetime, Wesley was accused of being a Catholic, a papist and (horror of horrors!) a Jesuit. I'm fascinated that Wesley's abiding spirituality is found in his Forty Four Sermons (of which no fewer than thirteen develop texts from the Sermon on the Mount) and in the hymns of his brother Charles while Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, concentrating on human sin, the kingdom of Christ, the passion of Christ and the resurrection of Christ continues to be a spiritual classic.

Clifford Longley, in a strong piece in the Daily Telegraph, argues that Anglicans need to understand that Methodists come to them bearing gifts they in the Church of England desperately need. For Longley the supreme gift we bring is our understanding of the doctrine of holiness. He regrets current emphases on the need for a more numerous Church or even a busier and more efficient Church. "A busier Church" he writes "would do little to restore the spiritual foundations of the nation unless it was also a more saintly Church. Renewal begins within; and in this case, it should begin (with the Anglicans) admitting the Methodists".

That's what I hope for too. But why stop at the Anglicans? What about the Roman Catholics too? I know that my Jesuit friends would raise a glass to that.

(Rev) Leslie Griffiths

(This article first appeared in Methodist Recorder, 18.1.96. and is reproduced here with permission.)

MONSIGNOR MICHAEL JACKSON

Very many people at home and abroad are going to miss the presence of Michael, especially at the numerous and varied ecumenical initiatives and dialogues in which he has been involved. He has been an efficient and hard working secretary of the Bishops' Conference Committee for Christian Unity, and a delightful colleague for its chairman, Bishop Murphy-O'Connor and all its members

In our diocese, Mgr Jackson has spoken at Study Days and other events where his expertise, coupled with his unfailing warm and friendly approach have been greatly valued. He has also been a regular reader of, and an occasional contributor to *Together in Christ*.

We offer Michael our sincere and deep gratitude; our best wishes go with him as he returns to his diocese of Arundel and Brighton at the end of the summer, together with our continued prayers for him and his future ministry.

Father Bernard Longley, at present lecturer in Dogmatic Theology at St John's Seminary, Womersley, will be Michael's successor; he has a degree in English, and studied at the Gregorian University in Rome. We look forward to welcoming him.

Una M Ratcliff

(Member of the Bishops' Conference Committee for Christian Unity)

DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY What questions should we ask?

The Holy Spirit has done a lot for Christian Unity in the last few decades. In the earlier part of this century the churches eyed one another with much mistrust. The different traditions treated each other defensively. **I** am right, you are wrong.

There were of course fundamentalists on all sides; fundamentalism suited the defensive mood of the time. There was some extreme fundamentalism among both Catholics and Evangelicals, for example, often with much in common. At the same time there were 'indifferent-ists', Christians who thought that defined doctrines were not needed, that belief was a matter for the individual conscience. When Pope Pius XII defined the doctrine of Our Lady's Assumption, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, then Archbishop of Canterbury, commented that he could not see this doctrine as being 'necessary to salvation'.

Thanks to a dramatic intervention by the Holy Spirit, the whole relationship between the churches has been transformed since those days. The churches are now in earnest dialogue with each other, praying together, working together, learning from each other and resolving their differences at an astonishingly rapid pace. Progress is astonishing if we apply the human yardstick of how many centuries we had spent growing apart and hardening our attitudes.

Now we have Pope John Paul II urging all Christians to take another great leap forward in the remaining years of the second millennium. and giving us a great agenda for unity in *Ut Unum Sint*. Yet even now we hear the odd voice asking whether some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, and some of those of fundamental evangelicals are 'needed for salvation'.

Could It be that the Holy Spirit is steering us gently away from that question? Why do we have to have a set of beliefs? Surely because the Church would not be a Church without a teaching magisterium to define what has been revealed. In his letter to the Galatians St Paul tells us of a sharp dispute about the need for circumcision. Was it possible to be a Christian without accepting the entire body of the Jewish law? The matter was resolved because it had to be resolved. The process of defining doctrine began in the New Testament. not in the second century when Gnosticism became an issue. Yet none of the disputants would have claimed that either view about circumcision was 'necessary to salvation' .

Perhaps the better question to ask now is not whether this doctrine or that is necessary for salvation but what minimum doctrine has to be agreed before we have the answer to Jesus' prayer that we may all be one. When unity comes, it will surely be a unity with room for much diversity, with each tradition continuing

with some of its traditional beliefs, yet with an agreed inner core of what the reunited Church must teach if she is to present her revealed faith to the world. For that is the purpose of unity. Jesus prayed 'May they all be one . . . so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. (Jn. 17:21)
Is that what the Holy Spirit is telling us now?

Alfred Kenyon

THE CCBI ASSEMBLY 1996.

As I am not qualified I cannot speak definitively about the CCBI Assembly, but as a *baptista* who was privileged to be there, I would like to share with you an experience which enthused and excited me. I would like to thank Bishop Charles and the Diocese for giving me the opportunity to be at Swanwick at the end of February this year.

First, to set the scene, I can do no better than quote from the CCBI introductory leaflet:

"The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland is a fellowship of churches in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They commit themselves to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church which is his body, and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world. "

"The ASSEMBLY of CCBI made up of 350 delegates from churches and other member bodies, meets every other year to decide the direction and agenda of the Council for the next two years reflecting the needs of the world and the church."

"The CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES MEETING of some sixty senior representatives of the churches meets twice a year for prayer, discussion and study to indicate how the work of the churches can be undertaken ecumenically. It appoints six Presidents, the senior staff of CCBI and the Moderator of the Steering Committee. "

"The STEERING COMMITTEE is made up of twelve people elected by the Church Representatives Meeting and the Assembly, together with the General

Secretaries of CCBI and the national ecumenical bodies. It meets frequently to co-ordinate and manage the whole work of the Council. "

I would like to compliment the way in which the CCBI itself and our own Bishops' Conference do their best to ensure that a delegate is able to relax and enjoy the Assembly while making a valid contribution to it.

I divide my narrative into four parts:

1. INITIAL, INFORMAL INFORMATION.

Mrs Dorothy Morris, who was my predecessor, gave me invaluable help in telling me about the previous Assemblies. I am most grateful for this because at an early stage it enabled me to orientate my thoughts and give greater attention to listening to other Catholics to find out their points of view.

2. PREPARATION MEETING.

This took place at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney on 9/10 February at the invitation of the Bishops' Conference Committee for Christian Unity. I went with all manner of preconceived notions about what would be expected of me. Bishop Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who chaired the meeting, put us all at ease. I must admit I was enthused by the inclusive, friendly, and purposeful atmosphere which pervaded. For twenty four hours we experienced the best of 'Collaborative Ministry'. Clergy and people mixed easily and fruitfully, whether in group discussion, informal debate or social activity.

Una Ratcliff led a beautiful time of prayer at the end of the first evening. This was a refreshing oasis in a busy programme of presentation and discussion. These were: **Ut Unum Sint**

i was absorbed by Mgr Michael Jackson's presentation and the excellent handout. He traced the roots of ecumenism back into the early nineteenth century and brought us through the various stages, and hiccoughs, until the 1995 Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. He compared this latest teaching with the earlier encyclical *Mortalium Animos* (1928). Whereas we had previously been exhorted to keep ourselves apart we were now urged to consort and build relationships with other Christians in order that we may converge and become one. In our discussion group we were conscious that the earlier teaching was still deeply embedded in the minds of all of us and we discussed ways in which we could all grow in understanding and wisdom.

John 17:21.

In our preparation pack we were all sent a thirteen page exegesis of John 17:20—26. It gave everyone in our discussion group the courage to participate and share our reflection when we discovered that we had all found the scholarly text challenging .

Introduction to the CCBI .

Bishop Vincent Nichols led this session and set the scene. The CCBI was not the vanguard to unity but an instrument to help churches to work together. Neither was it empowered to make decisions but it offered a fountain of experiential knowledge from which decisions could be formulated and made. The Assembly enabled Christians from a wide variety of traditions to meet and experience one another. We were assured that, on the part of other Christians, there was a real desire to get to know and enter into contact with Roman Catholics. One of the issues to be faced was how we talk about personal experience of the Lord in an ecclesial context.

Inter-Faith Activity.

Mgr Bill Steele introduced the video "Barriers or Bridges which explored Christian/ Muslim relationships in Bradford. I believe the film graphically illustrated the importance of personal interaction, discussion and real education in the message of our Faiths. Before we can even begin to share the richness of our beliefs we must facilitate a language in common and at the level of all, a social milieu which allows people to meet and an inner confidence in our own spiritual tradition and culture which frees us for encounter.

Aid and Development .

Cathy Corcoran from CAFOD explained the relationship and meshing of CAFOD and Christian Aid. There had been talk of amalgamating them but investigation had shown that more was gained by remaining separate but closely collaborative. An ecumenical Family Fast Day was suggested together with more equitable use of Lottery profits.

The meeting ended with the celebration of Mass.

CCBI ASSEMBLY PRE-MEETING (26/27 February 1996).

This gave new participants in the Assembly an opportunity to meet CCBI staff and gain background information about the work of the various commissions and departments. As a Roman Catholic I was particularly interested to hear Colin Davey (Church Life) explain, as part of his presentation, the programme for response by the CCBI to the papal invitation to dialogue on the Petrine ministry. We also heard how the CCBI listens and responds on the International front, in Public Affairs and in Mission. I participated in a discussion on Mission which explored the effective use of all the baptised in evangelisation. John Reardon also led an *ad hoc* session in which a group of us could ask questions about our own specific areas of interest. These mainly centred around gender, young people and finance.

THE ASSEMBLY (27 February - 1 March 1996)

Theme: "Unity and Diversity in Church and Society"

After a very imaginative opening ceremony which made us feel as though we had known one another for years, we embarked on a programme of addresses, bible studies, group discussions, thematic hearings and workshops. All of the hard work was offered to the Lord in periods of prayer and meditation in the Taize tradition led by Brother Paolo. To begin the day a number of churches invited participation in their acts of worship. I particularly enjoyed that offered by the Salvation Army.

Addresses

The Rt Rev Michael Nazir Ali, Bishop of Rochester, gave the opening address entitled *So that the world May Believe*. He challenged us to conceive ecumenical activity as having a Trinitarian base and how, by reflecting on the Trinity and living in love, we would move towards a unity which encompassed the richness of all traditions.

In mid-assembly Dr Karel Blei, General Secretary of the Netherlands Reformed Church addressed us on *European Unification and Church Unity*. As Europe becomes 'more and more a real, federal union' so, he argued, will this help Christians to work through the diversity, to the unity between them?

Bible Studies.

Professor James Dunn of Durham University led, over three daily sessions, a most stimulating study of Romans 9 15: 7 to reflect on unity and diversity in the New Testament. He made us think of our attitude and relationship to Judaism (and by

implication, other faiths) . We had to look at the variety of gifts which could be used in ministry. On the last morning he challenged us to look at ourselves: some might concentrate on strict adherence to rituals, laws and tradition while others felt that dependence on God was the essence with no need to depend on other things. He summed up by offering 'a key to today's crises'. If reconciliation is not possible, then recognition is not enough; there must be at least genuine respect for one another

Group Discussions.

We were divided into groups of about twelve and the discussions were intended to be of two types: reflective, centred on the bible study, and thematic, around unity and diversity in and among the churches, the nations and peoples of Britain and Ireland and finally in Europe and the wider world. Our group found a pleasant balance: we appreciated and respected when a reflection was offered but found it invigorating to come to grips with an argument offered in debate. In the group were people who were passionate about their cultural identity and the consequences of gender and ethnic stereotyping and discrimination. Each group appointed a Reflector who took their insights to a co-ordinating group so that all views may go forward to the Church Representatives.

Thematic Hearing.

I chose to go to the Hearing on *Beijing and Beyond* where We heard about the NGO Forum and UN Fourth World Conference on women which was held in September 1995. Many issues of concern were identified but in the UK the Catholic platform for action will particularly centre around: Women and Domestic Violence, Women and Poverty, The Rights of the Girl Child. (NBCW, 13.4.96)

Workshops .

We had the opportunity to participate in two of twenty workshops on a wide variety of themes. I was interested in, and found very helpful, *Is Nothing Sacred? The Betrayal of the Pastoral Relationship* in which Mary Shanahan and Leslie Macdonald provided some understanding and information on what constitutes sexual abuse within the ministry, including sexual harassment; how to readily identify unethical conduct and potentially abusive situations within pastoral relationships; vulnerability and dual relationships; some components of effective policy and procedures. The following day Robin Robison, from Quaker Social Responsibility and Education, asked *Should the Churches be concerned about democracy and openness?* and told us about the work which he and the Quakers had done in their quest for truth and integrity in public affairs. This says that

government should be a moral activity reflecting the same values we expect from each other in daily life. As a committed Christian I need to be a little more critically aware.

Conclusion .

I very much enjoyed the opportunity to listen and talk to people from a variety of Christian backgrounds. It is amazing how much one learns and contributes over meals and cups of tea and coffee (not to mention something a little stronger!) . There were two issues which we asked that the Assembly, being ourselves in conference, comment on:
peace in Northern Ireland and the whole of Britain;
our support and solidarity with the churches' opposition to the Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Some people who had been to previous Assemblies commented on the greater ease and harmony in the atmosphere of this one. I would suggest that this was because the theme allowed 'us' to be diverse and to share that diversity. Because we felt affirmed in who we were, and wanted to be, so we could reach out to others in empathy and understanding. We were 'building bridges'.

Valerie J Stroud

(Valerie Stroud is a member of the Kent Area Commission for Christian Unity.)

CALLED TO BE ONE

Churches Together in England have just published a highly significant report on ecumenism, entitled *Called to be One* (CTE publications, from Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL) . It is meant for everyone in all the churches. The hope is that it will help us discern the next steps we should take on the road to unity.

It represents a new approach in ecumenism. Until recently, one could classify most ecumenical initiatives under two headings. First were the 'getting to know you / exploring together' initiatives. These were vital in the early stages. Next, especially in the 60's and 70's were the various actual schemes of union.

The Catholic Church was primarily concerned with the first type, partly because it was not able to play a full ecumenical role until Vatican II, but also because the nature of the differences between the Catholic and Protestant churches meant that there was bound to be a long period of mutual travelling together before there was any prospect of safe arrival at the destination. However, the advance of Catholic ecumenism, the failure (except as regards the URC) of

attempts at reunion among the other churches, the arrival of the Black-led and Orthodox churches on the English ecumenical scene have all made for extensive rethinking.

Churches Together in England was set up in 1990. It was deeply influenced by the feeling that the churches could all, in the interim, and as a way of facilitating growth into unity, be doing much more together. In the process, they would discover each other. Also important was the situation of the hundreds of 'Local Ecumenical Partnerships' which had grown up in the 80's and early 90 's. They needed to be helped and affirmed in a situation where it was not at all clear how and when their 'parent' denominations would be able to unite.

Churches Together in England contains a wider spread of churches than any earlier ecumenical body. We have already given some idea of the spread. It also contains the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army with their very distinctive views, and several smaller Free Churches that have not, in the main, been deeply involved in ecumenism earlier.

It was decided it was important to start a process of reflection on the nature of the Church and the sort of unity to which we are called. In a sense this carries on the Lent '86 process with its studies: *What on Earth is the Church For?* which had a considerable impact at the time. It is increasingly apparent that we all regard the Church and its unity as important, but we do have different views about them. We need to avoid confusion, we need to see whether the differences can be reconciled. We need - and this is a lesson from some earlier unity schemes, to be sure that we are carrying our people with us. 'Reception' is vital.

The "*Called to be One*" process started with the member churches being asked to state their views on a number of questions, including their understanding of the Church and the nature of its unity. The responses were intended to be provisional rather than definitive, i.e. the people who gave the responses on behalf of their churches were asked to state the normal range of views held at the time and not to give opinions that would be seen as committing the churches in any formal sense. Questions were also asked about their understanding of ministry and mission, church membership, authority and eucharistic communion. These were then worked over by experts in these matters in order to see where there were convergences and divergences of thought. Summaries of these preliminary studies are given at the back of the main report.

A group was then appointed to give detailed consideration the material as a whole and to issue a report. The Group consisted of persons nominated by the churches, plus the three key staff of Churches Together in England, with Dr Mary Tanner of the Anglican Board of Mission and Unity acting as an adviser. They produced the current document. The work was stimulating, but not easy. We were aware of the need to do justice to a wide range of views. We trying to discern hopeful avenues of advance.

Our report now goes back to the churches for comment. We hope that they will see that it is studied as widely as possible, and that their considered replies to it represent as fully as possible the views in their churches. We hope that from the process it will be possible to take new and fruitful steps towards unity.

The report then, aims to set out clearly the current range of views held in the member churches of CTE. It aims especially to where they converge and where they diverge. Most importantly it throws out a series of challenges, both to the churches in general and to specific churches, in the hope that these will enable closer reflection and new thought about their practice.

All the churches are asked to do three things. Firstly, to renew their understanding of the Church, local, national and universal. Secondly, to examine the bonds that hold them together. Thirdly, to renew their understanding of service and evangelism in the world and to do them together.

There are important reasons for highlighting these three. The studies showed that all churches have a very strong sense of the 'local' church and its fulness and integrity as such, while realising that all local churches must relate to the universal. Churches that have, in the past, emphasised local autonomy, such as the Baptists, are asking new questions about the need for structures of communion and authority at wider levels to enable fuller cooperation. The Roman Catholic Church, which for so long has seemed to emphasise central authority, is now anxious to emphasise the importance of the 'local' church. We seem, collectively to be reaching for a new relationship between 'local' and 'universal' in the Church. Partly from this stems the concern with the bonds of communion. All the denominations have factors that help their cohesion, even if these are looser in some cases than others. Can we learn from each other? Can we have the courage to modify our patterns? An interesting additional challenge is towards what the Group calls 'retraditioning' i.e. learning from both others and from insights that are new to us in the life of the Church. Such an idea should not be strange to Catholics in view of what the Church has said since Vatican II about the spiritual riches of Protestantism and orthodoxy. It also witnesses to our belief that the Holy Spirit is at work in Christ's Church, leading us into all truth.

There are also challenges to individual churches. It is clear that many churches still have a great fear that unity would mean a dull, even dictatorially enforced uniformity despite the constant teaching of church leaders, including the Pope, that there is an enriching diversity within the Church that must be preserved for the good of all. These fears are perhaps greatest among some Free Church people, who also fear 'hierarchy' as 'authoritarian'. Consequently, the Baptists and Congregationalists are challenged to discuss with Anglicans what the latter mean when they say that they are 'Synodically governed and episcopally led'. Equally however, the episcopal churches are challenged as to how they can make episcopacy more 'user-friendly', maybe by having much smaller dioceses. The

Catholic Church is challenged as to how it might involve lay people far more in actual decision making, not just in consultative processes.

A particularly important emphasis is placed on spiritual ecumenism and the exchange of gifts. It is interesting to see the former emphasised most strongly by two churches usually considered at the opposite ends of the spectrum, i.e. the Friends and the Catholics. It is true, of course, that they have differing views of the shape of unity, the Friends wanting mutual spiritual recognition and ad hoc cooperation and the Catholic Church, of course, wanting full koinonia in sacramental life, with all that that implies. All regard the exchange of gifts, and the learning from different styles of spirituality as important. However, though we all now agree that diversity is enriching, there are still some difficult problems to face over the extent of legitimate diversity in such sensitive areas as doctrine and sacramental practice.

Many suggestions are made as to practical forms of cooperation which will help the churches to engage more effectively in mission, and, at the same time, draw them closer together. It is suggested, in particular, that much more could be done in the way of joint theological education, a point which I, personally, heartily endorse.

One final point should perhaps be made. The Report, bearing in mind certain recent ecumenical moves, reminds readers that unity may come for some member churches in advance of others. It addresses the concern that some have felt about this, that it may lead to the neglect of those churches that cannot, for whatever reasons, travel so far so fast. It makes clear that unity between any two or more churches is only to be seen as a stage on the way to the fuller unity of all. Speaking personally, as a Methodist, whose church is engaged in 'talks about talks' with the Anglicans to see if any new initiative can be taken in unity between our two churches, I welcome this statement. Much as I hope for the unity of the two churches, I wish to see it followed up, as soon as possible, by wider Unity to which I hope it would be a spur and encouragement .

Catholics will note with interest many parallels between the thought contained in *Called to be One* and the recent Papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. The latter had its wraps taken off at the time of our *Called to be One* meetings. Those of us at it were interested, during informal conversations, to get the initial reactions of our convenor, Canon Martin Reardon, who had been at the press launch of *Ut Unum Sint* just before. The similarities in the thinking of the two documents are, however, not primarily due to such chances as we had to get to grips with the Pope's thought. Rather, they are the result of a very encouraging convergence in ecumenical insight and method that goes well beyond our group or the Pope and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Contrary to the gloom that has been around at times in the last few years, I think there are clear signs of the Spirit working in all this.

Like the '*Called to be One*' group, the Pope is asking us to take each other's concerns very seriously. He says: "We must take care to meet the legitimate desires and expectations of our Christian brethren, coming to know their way of thinking and their sensibilities" (UUS 87) . He stresses the need to go behind controversial formulae which state truths in a less than balanced way in order to find full perspectives. "Controversies have made incompatible assertions out of what was really the result of two different ways of looking at the same reality. Nowadays we need to find the formula which, by capturing the reality in its entirety, will enable us to move beyond partial readings and eliminate false interpretations" (UUS 38) . Above all he emphasises the way in which, even in separation, we have received gifts "which are meant to embellish the koinonia " (UUS 85) .

Catholics will want, then, to be in the forefront of a process which is recommended by all the English churches, including of course, their own, and is clearly quite closely in line with the Pope's recent highly affirmative teaching.

David Carter.

CALLED TO BE ONE : The next stage of the process

We have now entered the next stage of this important process which consists of widespread consultation about the findings presented in the report, leading towards an enlarged and extended CTE Forum meeting in July 1997. All churches will be putting into effect their plans for consultation. It is proposed that theologians and ecumenical experts, the decision making body of the Church and members at intermediate and local level will all be invited to make their response.

It is anticipated that each diocese in the Catholic Church will be asked to make the appropriate arrangements for their response, and that a helpful resource to guide them will be made available. Please watch out for further announcements.

The Bishops' Conference Committee for Christian Unity meets twice a year with representatives of diocesan ecumenical commissions and responses to "Called to Be One" will be on their agenda for their meeting in February 1997.



ECUMENISM MOSCOW

Orthodox and Catholic on the same wavelength

Ever since the beginnings of the new religious liberty in Russia, from 1990/91 onwards, there has been a strong demand for a Christian radio channel. On June 1st this became a reality, when the "Christian Channel" went on the air for the first time in the Moscow region.

This radio station reaches a potential audience of 20 million people, right in the heart of the country, and transmits 17 hours daily, from 7 a.m. till midnight .

The offices, housed in the journalism faculty of the Moscow State University, are flooded with listeners letters - over a thousand a month - and the channel's phone lines are jammed with callers. Most phone in during live broadcasts, when Irina Alberti answers listeners questions .

There are some 50 people involved in the making of these programmes. They come from various backgrounds, clerics and laity alike. The programmes are rooted in Christian Faith and touch all aspects of human life. There are many catechetical programmes, of course, but Church history, Christian culture and art, family and social problems are also included, as is commentary on the current political and religious situation in Russia. There are two basic and inspiring principles: a Christian vision of human life and society and cooperation between Catholics and Orthodox.

This Christian radio station is unique in that the members of two sister churches - Catholic and Orthodox are working together in full harmony and mutual respect concentrating their energy on the common task of evangelisation .

The enthusiastic response of the Russian people to these programmes has surprised all concerned. At the same time, by its very openness and dedication to Christian reconciliation, the station has aroused strong reactions from violent opponents of ecumenism. These enemies include ultra-nationalist orthodox and communists, united in hatred, One editor even received hate mail in which he was "sentenced to death", another was "excommunicated".

These same dark forces were the source of a news report, published in the West on March 12, claiming that the Moscow Patriarch had "relieved" Archpriest Ioann Sviridov, the director of the "Christian Channel" of all his ecclesiastical duties. The truth is that, as far back as November 1995, Fr. Ioann had asked for, and obtained, permission to be released from another task in the Patriarchate, in order to be able to dedicate himself more fully to his radio apostolate. And the fact

remains that he is still the director of "Christian Channel" which enjoys the support of many members of the hierarchy, both Catholic and Orthodox, even at the highest level. Thus, the Orthodox Patriarch of Moscow himself recently delivered his Lenten sermon using the channel.

Irina Alberti one of the station's senior editors, was visiting Moscow recently from her home in Paris. She invited listeners to meet her and the director Fr. Ioann Svrlidov that same afternoon in the radio studios. It was a last minute invitation and the weather was very cold. They expected a few dozen at the most. Instead over 800 people turned up! They filled the largest hall available. Not only was it clear that they entirely supported the vision and goals of the station; they also showed so much gratitude and love that the participants suddenly realised the full magnitude of what is really happening in Russia, thanks to this initiative supported from the very start by Aid to the Church In Need. In 1996 the organisation hopes to give a further £500,000 to support this project.

J . C.

(With acknowledgements and thanks to *Aid to the Church in Need*)

A CHANCE TO START AGAIN (Marking the Millennium 2000)

NOW IS YOUR CHANCE! Prepare now in the churches in our country, to celebrate the Year 2000 and witness to the real reason for such celebration is, the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A position paper has been published by Churches Together in England, emphasising in its introduction the vital importance of a prominent part to be played by Christians and suggesting "the basic set of understandings and considerations from which the Churches need to work if maximum impact is to be made."

Recommendations of marks and characteristics for forms of activity at whatever level are summarised as:

- Christ focussed
- Community engaging
- Positive yet penitent
- Dialogue seeking
- Jubilee proclaiming
- Other faiths sensitive
- Lord's Prayer conscious
- Demonstrating Christian Partnership

The text which follows reflects these marks and characteristics, as it presents, in relation to the Millennium —

It is about Jesus Christ

The concerns of Jesus Christ

The theme of Jubilee

The moods of our society

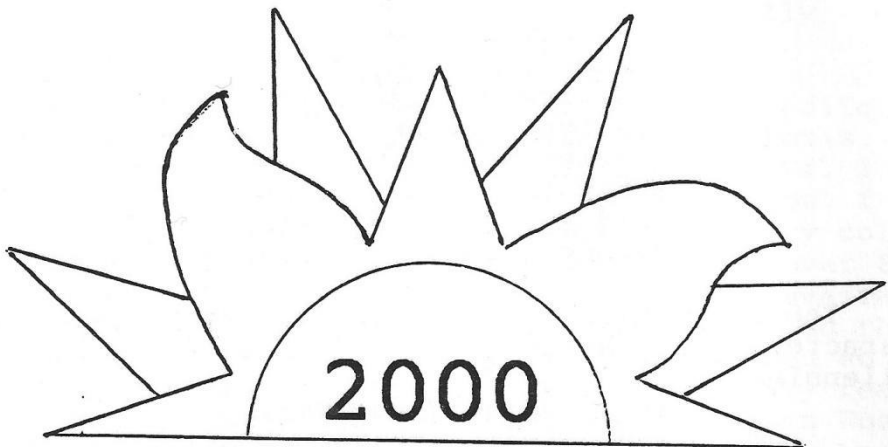
The challenge to the churches

Facing the challenge in England

Projects proposed

To focus on Jesus Christ, publicly and privately; to pray deeply; to be zealous in mission; generous and active in caring for those in need; to lift burdens of debt; to be a community of reconciliation and love; to repent and have a change of heart; to contribute positively and nationally to reflection and dialogue on the kind of society we want to bequeath to our children these are some of the challenges and opportunities for Christians to take up in real earnest as the 2000th anniversary of Christ 's coming into our world is approaching . We should be ready to "open people 's imaginations to the story of Jesus Christ which has so deeply affected our past and which we believe can strengthen us to face the future. . . ."

This position paper is warmly recommended : It is published by Churches Together in England.



Marking the Millennium