

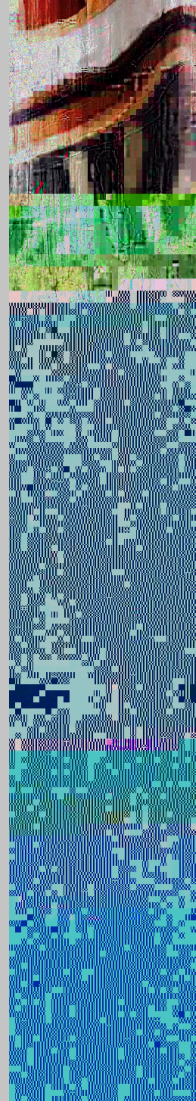


NSW Ecumenical Council
Theological Reflection Commission

A Celebration of
Ut unum sint
The 25th Anniversary

Edited by
Doru Costache and Diane Speed

Sydney
2020



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other questions are emerging about the level of local church interest in the ecumenical movement and what the very idea of ecumenism might mean to ordinary Christians.

TRC has been aware that both national and international experts have or might have been asked to write with authority about either the encyclical or ecumenism generally but, to a significant extent, this collection of reflections has had the more modest aim of recording a range of community responses and insights that might not otherwise have been noted—yet the ecumenical imperative is a matter for the whole church. Accordingly, this book presents reflections on both *Ut unum sint* and its reception and ecumenism and church unity more broadly. Some contributions are analytical or historical, others reflect on personal journeys or the future of the ecumenical movement.

We are grateful for the assistance of the Very Revd Dr Shenouda Mansour, the Council's General Secretary, who tirelessly promoted this initiative. We are also thankful for the enthusiastic support of our TRC colleagues and for the Council Executive members who wrote essays, as well as for the contributions of interested people from across the ecumenical spectrum, clergy and laity, women and men. Furthermore, we give thanks for the people who regretted not being able to contribute but indicated their support for the undertaking. Last but by no means least, we express our profound gratitude to the Revd Professor Gerard Kelly, who kindly provided an excellent introductory study on the reception and impact of the encyclical.

The Editors

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Catholic Church. The ecumenical work that has gone on, in both formal and informal settings, may help us to arrive at a more penetrating interpretation of the vision of *Ut unum sint*. It is not unreasonable to speak of a reception of the encyclical beyond the Roman Catholic Church and in the *oikumene* more broadly.

Ut unum sint begins with a vision of God's plan for the unity of the whole of creation and situates the unity of the church in this context. The unity of the church is not for its own sake, but for the glory of God; and God is glorified when the creation achieves its purpose as given by God. The church is a sign and instrument of that unity. While ever the church remains divided, the plan of God is less visible in the world. From this we see the urgency Pope John Paul II places on ecumenism. He says it cannot be considered as just some sort of appendix to normal church life, rather it should form an organic part of the church's life and work (20). Twenty-five years on, it seems that this is an insight that needs to be re-received. Christian churches are struggling to give a credible witness to the Gospel of God. At the same time, the divisions in our societies seem to be getting wider. At a time when people and groups are building walls around themselves to keep out other opinions, the churches have an opportunity to show what God's plan may look like when we take respectful dialogue seriously.

In the years since the publication of *Ut unum sint*, the wider

question is 'what will the unity of the church look like?' For more than one hundred years the churches have struggled to arrive at a common understanding of what unity will look like. In fact, different models of unity are held by the various churches. The Roman Catholic Church speaks of organic unity, but spelling out what that means has not always been easy.

Roman primacy. Acutely aware that the role of the pope is one of the divisive areas of faith and order for Christians of all ecclesial traditions, the pope called on other churches to engage with him in a patient and fraternal dialogue on reforming the Roman primacy so that it might be exercised in a new situation for the service of the whole church. Significantly, he records that the request for such a study has come from other Christian churches, notably the Faith and Order World Conference in 1993. It is surely a sign of the ecumenical times that the pope is listening to the voice of other Christians calling for dialogue on this topic. The response to this invitation is indicative of the influence *Ut unum sint* has had in the ecumenical movement. While it is true that the reform of the papacy is far from complete, with *Ut unum sint* we can say that it has clearly begun, and that the Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical partners are contributing to the reform.

Twenty-five years on, this encyclical still has the power to encourage further dialogue. May whatever dialogue it generates help us all to take the next steps towards full communion.

Reflecting on *Ut unum sint*

1 Clabon Allen

The *Ut unum sint* papal encyclical was an important landmark in a long process of ecumenical discussion and dialogue. I want to concentrate on some of the earlier ecumenical developments, and especially those where I was involved.

One of my clearest memories from my theological training at Mansfield College, Oxford, was to hear firsthand reports from my theological lecturer about Vatican II. Revd Dr George Caird had attended sessions of the Vatican Council as a Protestant Observer (it helped that he had fluent Latin). He came back from his trips to Rome very excited about developments at Vatican II. He believed that the Holy Spirit was creating new possibilities in the whole life of the Roman Catholic Church. In particular, Vatican II statements talked about their irrevocable commitment to the ecumenical movement. As an interesting historical addendum, Dr Caird became the first Non-Anglican to be appointed as a Regius Professor at Oxford University. One of the staff members of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity in the 1960s was Father Thomas Stransky CSP. He helped to write the statements on the ecumenical commitment for Vatican II.

Some of the later developments after Vatican II did not fulfil the hopes of the Protestant Observers. There was, however, one good result. At the suggestion of the Protestant Observers, it was decided to set up an ecumenical theological institute in Jerusalem.

Pope Paul VI pushed ahead with this despite a war and conflict

misrepresents the love of God and prevents us from more fully proclaiming the Gospel through our actions.

Here, John Paul II's words echo loudly:

I think of the grave obstacle which the lack of unity represents for the proclamation of the Gospel. A Christian Community which believes in Christ and desires, with Gospel fervour, the salvation of [hu]mankind can hardly be closed to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who leads all Christians towards full and visible unity. Here an imperative of charity is in question, an imperative which admits of no exception. Ecumenism is not only an internal question of the Christian Communities. It is a matter of the love which God has in Jesus Christ for all humanity; to stand in the way of this love is an offence against him and against his plan to gather all people in Christ.

There is little doubt that most ecclesiastical bodies take seriously the authority of Scripture and desire to see unbelievers drawn to Christ; so why do so many divisions remain? The answer to this question is complex as there are multiple theological and practical differences amongst the various ecclesiastical bodies. Nevertheless, these differences need not prevent us from being more united than we currently are. A significant step towards unity will be accepting that unity does not mean uniformity. It is highly unlikely that the various ecclesiastical bodies will reunite into a single entity; still, we must be more intentional about finding our common ground while recognising, accepting, and even celebrating our differences. In so doing, we can better embody and exemplify

missional/ministry responsibility. It was acknowledged that God had entrusted Paul with bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles and Peter with bringing the Gospel to the Jews. Galatians 2:11-14 also gives an account of the struggles that existed between the various groups as they sought to live out their shared commitment amid the tensions this new reality brought. Unity takes commitment and hard work to maintain. Peter and Paul, as well as many of the other leaders, had differing theological perspectives both before and after the Jerusalem Council. Nevertheless, they were united in their shared calling to bring the Good News of God to the whole world. Hopefully, we too can recognise that God gives people (and churches) different gifts to meet the challenges of their particular callings in their particular contexts. It is not a competition; we can all share this load together, even if we do so in different ways and with differing theological understandings as the basis for our actions.

It seems fitting to give John Paul II the final word in this short reflection: ‘If Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in the awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what unites them’.

3 Philip Kariatlis

The preeminent sentiments expressed in *Ut unum sint*, namely, those in relation to Christian Churches overcoming ‘long-standing misgivings’ and actively responding to Christ’s call

by Christ himself. From this it is clear that the unity between the Christian Churches is to be founded upon the communal relations between God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ—or more broadly from within the mystery of the Trinitarian life.

Notwithstanding the ontological gap between the divine and created realms—and therefore, by extension, the impossibility for any absolute correlation between God and his creation—the dominical prayer found in the Johannine Gospel does in fact allow for, and indeed validate, some form of relationship between the Trinitarian God and—in our case—the unity or communion of the Christian churches. Reflecting a little further, the claim could be made that, in the same way the particularity of each divine Person, within the Trinitarian paradigm, is not compromised, but is instead preserved, so too, in the case of the unity of the Christian Churches, their fellowship or unity need not necessarily imply uniformity of the f.:

in ‘dialogue’, ‘mutual exchange ... and enrichment’ in order to discern ways in which this ministry might be seen to be more acceptable and appropriate as a service of unity. Might not this encyclical have paved the way for what today is referred to as ‘receptive ecumenism’, a call towards an openness to learning and receiving from one another in a spirit of shared exploration? Still further, might not Christ’s call for unity and reconciliation be such which will embrace diversity—indeed, a diversity constitutive of unity—as we saw in the case of the Trinitarian mystery?

4 Vincent Long

21st August marked the 25th anniversary of the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint*, meaning that ‘they may be one’. It was the first encyclical ever devoted exclusively to the ecumenical imperative. In this ground-breaking exercise, Pope John Paul II affirmed that the ecumenical commitment made at Vatican II was irreversible and that the quest for Christian unity ought to be sustained both internationally and in the local churches.

The encyclical recalls the conversion of the Ukrainian people in 988 as an example of how accepting, and even encouraging diversity, is essential in the Church. John Paul II called it a key event in the evangelisation of the world. The Church must breathe with her two lungs! In the first millennium of the history of Christianity, ‘ecumenism’ refers primarily to the relationship between Byzantium and Rome.

Praising the evangelical work of the first millennium, St John Paul II called it a period when ‘the development of different experiences of ecclesial life did not prevent Christians, through mutual relations, from continuing to feel certain that they were at home in any church, because praise of the one Father, through Christ in the Holy Spirit, rose from them all, in a marvellous variety of languages and melodies; all were gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist’.

Looking ahead to greater unity between the Orthodox and

gives rise in me to a deep sense of my connection to others—all others. The pressing importance of being together, of releasing energy and resources for aid, research, and support to deal with the virus led the United Nations in March 2020 to issue a global call to cease all armed conflict—an opportunity to stand together in solidarity and turn swords into pruning hooks at least for a time. A second call to a global ceasefire came from the UN Security Council in July in its Resolution 2532. But research by the University of Edinburgh reveals that the initial surge in ceasefire agreements was short-lived, and we have returned to conflict-as-usual. Secretary General António Guterres remarked that ‘the fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war’.

The gift of Christian unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and prior to the division that marks the history of the Church; and that division ‘openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world, and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the Good News to every creature’ (6 quoting *Unitatis redintegratio* 4). The text, ‘There is one body and one Spirit ... one Lord, one faith, one baptism’ (Ephesians 4:4-5), oddly absent from the encyclical, makes Jesus’ call for his followers ‘to be one’ a call to ‘become who we are’.

As someone who, for a number of years, has practised silent, contemplative prayer, I find that coming to stillness before utter love connects me with God, the source of love, and allows an

The way Christians are to be one is by coming to participate in divine self-giving, self-emptying, forgiving, life-giving love. As the encyclical says, Christian unity is Trinitarian, grounded in the unity of God and the love of Father, Son, and Spirit (8).

Ut unum sint

tradition) is of the essence of the ‘one true Church of Jesus Christ’, while in the second case the essence of the church is seen in terms of love and inclusion (also defined by the tradition). In almost every case, the dogmatic group will reject the inclusive group on the grounds of doctrinal orthodoxy, while the inclusive group will not extend their inclusiveness to the (in their opinion) harmful bigots who insist on total agreement on every aspect of doctrine. New Testament metaphors point to the basic unity of the church, but does that require the uniformity of a single denomination? Or do such metaphors as ‘the body of Christ’, the ‘new Israel’, a ‘building’, and the ‘vine’ emphasise that there is a diversity of parts that forms the single whole under the headship of Christ?

John Wesley, the eighteenth-century founder of Methodism, was an evangelical Anglican clergyman who greatly valued the early Fathers of the Church (both Eastern and Western), and drew upon a broad range of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, and Calvinist writers in shaping his personal faith and that of his emerging movement. In his sermon, ‘Catholic Spirit’ (first published in 1740; see John Wesley, *Sermons II*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985) 81-95), Wesley reminded his followers that the second great commandment (James 2:8; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19) requires us to love our neighbour as a core element of the whole Gospel. This command must be displayed by and towards all who ‘love God’ (81–82). He notes how few do this, being divided by the fact that ‘they can’t all think alike’ and consequently ‘can’t all walk alike’ (82). He then asks the question, ‘although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may preve
preve

may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?’ (82). The sermon text (2 Kings 10:15) reflected this conviction: ‘Is thine heart right. As my heart is with thy heart? ... If it be, give me thine hand’ (82). At first glance this would put him into the ‘inclusive’ camp—all that matters is that we love each other, and we need not separate over doctrinal opinions, worship practices or forms of church government (83–87).

The critical point is what Wesley meant by ‘Is your heart right with my heart?’ At the close of the sermon he says that a catholic spirit is not ‘speculative latitudinarianism ... an indifference to all opinions’ (92). A person of ‘a truly catholic spirit ... is as fixed as the sun in his judgment concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine’ (93). A ‘muddy understanding’ with no ‘settled, consistent principles’ results in holding a jumble of opinions that are the very opposite of genuine faith. Nor is it a ‘practical latitudinarianism’ that demonstrates utter indifference to the manner and practices of public worship. A person of truly catholic spirit is deeply convinced that their mode and practice of public worship is ‘both scriptural and rational’ (93). Nor is a catholic spirit an indifference to which congregation a person attends, rather, it is a deep attachment to one single congregation (93–94).

In order to have a heart right with God the person must have a loving and obedient relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, even if the understanding and expression of the relationship varies according to tradition and experience. Every life needs to reflect the character of Christ by loving, praying for, and serving the neighbour. Furthermore, ‘catholic love is a catholic spirit ... rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints’

when our routines and expectations have been upended by a global pandemic. The wisest word about the experience of this past year is that we should use the slowdown to evaluate more deeply what we have been accustomed to practise; and to take the opportunity to envisage a future that is not merely a return to the old normal, but a turn to new ways of seeing, judging, and acting. We Christians have a word for that: conversion.

The goal of full communion which Pope St John Paul II puts before us so passionately in this encyclical letter is not, as he sees it, something that Christians may ignore. The work for unity is not only for the removal of a stumbling block that inhibits the preaching of the Gospel: above all it envisages the identity of the Church as a sacrament of unity for the whole

among some members of the Church. These ‘dead-spots’ on the road to unity are found, not only in the relations between denominations, but also within them. At one extreme is a hardening of distrust and imperviousness to recognising others’ ecclesial gifts, which collapses hope for a dialogue of conversion. At the other extreme is a complacent mood of post-denominationalism, which has the same outcome.

However, what the Second Vatican Council’s decree on ecumenism called ‘the impulse of God’s grace’ gently and insistently pushes us forward. In *Ut unum sint*, John Paul accepted this responsibility as central to his Petrine ministry; and his successors have continued in that awareness. Pope Francis is writing a new chapter in inviting all Christians to work for human fraternity, building bridges with followers of other religions. His latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* expresses this call clearly. Some of its thinking was anticipated in this year’s document coauthored by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue,

8 Tim O'Hearn

One of the most joyous aspects of the lockdowns and restrictions occasioned by the COVID period has been the refrain that the ABC used:

We are one, but we are many
And from all the lands on earth we come
We'll share a dream and sing with one voice
'I am, you are, we are Australian'.

It may have brought back memories of the Seekers for many; it gave encouragement to all of us, in that we all shared in this crisis, which was beyond our personal control.

Yet, for me, it was about this time that the Theological Reflection Commission was deliberating about the significance of Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 'that they all may be one'. A worthwhile dream? Much more than that: it was a call for Christians to unity. The call appears in the Jewish Testament: 'Hear, O Israel, YHWH is our God: YHWH is one' (Deuteronomy 6:4). The call is also that of Jesus Christ, for all to be one as 'the Father and I are one' (John 10:30) and further in John 17:21: 'As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us'. The call is repeated in Ephesians 4:5-6: 'There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God 64.9 (.) (l) 0.2oT 1 ET Q qr2 0.2 (s)- Tm /TT1d(t)

Why not: *ut unum simus*: ‘that we may all be one’. There is a covert undertone in the document that suggests that if all non-Catholic Christians were to join the Catholic path and understanding of scripture, and follow the sacramental ecclesiastical practices, then we would all be one.

I must point out that the view from the pews is not always the same as that preached from the altars. The Christian lay followers of Jesus are understandably less theological literate than the priests and the ministers. Their ‘oneness’ is often not based on scripture or ecclesiastical adherence; rather, it is based on lived experiences. It is reflected in their relationships with their neighbours, those with whom they share other allegiances: be it football teams, clubs, and often a marriage partner. The oneness that they share might often still be a shared view and belief in Jesus as God, a shared lived experience of trying their best to fulfil the teachings about the common good, the need to focus on the poor, the dispossessed, the hungry the widows, as well as those in their various ‘prisons’.

Pope Francis has taken the earlier encyclical to a better place in his document released after his visit to Mexico this year. In his *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), especially the fourth chapter, he captures the spirit of Jesus in a way that resonates more with our times. For example, consider the following passage:

106. In an Amazonian region characterised by many religions, we believers need to find occasions to speak to one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions

9 Alex Scutt

The third chapter of the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint* is in the form of a question, *Quanta est nobis via?* ‘How much further is our way?’ I want to hazard a brief answer. I do this mindful of Christ’s prayer ‘that they all may be one’.

In 1995 I was on an ecumenical team that offered chaplaincy

saw the Catholic Church becoming a full participant. *Ut Unum Sint* gave the ecumenical endeavour in this country extra impetus.

Ecumenical and doctrinal dialogues such as ARCIC were the subject of lively discussion in Australian theological colleges of the 1980s and laid the ecumenical groundwork for my generation of church leaders. In some places in this country theological education was being done ecumenically. Despite pessimism that in the 1990s progress on ecumenism had slowed, it had not stopped completely. Small community groups made up of people from various churches came together to form collectives to serve the interests of refugees, justice for the poor, reconciliation with indigenous people, climate change, and the care for creation. c(re) 0.2geellsdiC frommunity

schools and universities to link that same thirst for justice with their call to faith in Christ—a link which most of the institutional churches have struggled to build.

Now in 2020, with a worldwide pandemic laying waste to millions of lives worldwide and affecting the *oikoumene* in every nation, Pope John Paul II's question is once again posed, *Quanta est nobis via?* What are we discovering about the nature of our connection with those to whom we are bound in Christ?

Ut unum sint speaks of the eucharist as one of the areas in need of fuller study before a full consensus of faith can be achieved (79), and now in 2020 many Australian Christians are discovering new ways of nurturing faith and worship, including eucharistic devotion. Unexplored ways of gathering, worshipping, learning, praying, and caring for each other are bringing hope in a time of despair and isolation, the more so because they include people who were hesitant about modern technologies. Pastors and clergy have discovered new ministerial skills not envisaged by even the most progressive of theological colleges. We are discovering the church as a learning community, not just as a teaching institution.

chat, to pray and to study. A group in Queensland does the same thing.

Even when ecclesial communities are once again able to gather for worship and fellowship the lessons learnt and the new discoveries made will continue into the future. Ecumenism will find new impetus similar to that given twenty-five years ago by Pope John Paul II and re-echoed in our current age through the words and actions of his successor Pope Francis, and Christ's prayer that we *all* may be one will be enlivened, lived, and pursued with renewed purpose and vigour.

10 Diane Speed

the pursuit of Christian unity means quite the same in 2020 as it did in 1995.

Christian unity is described in *Ut unum sint* as ‘full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist’ (78) and ‘full communion, of which the Eucharist is the highest sacramental manifestation’ (97); and the encyclical as a whole is, unsurprisingly, articulated from the point of view of the Catholic Church. In my reading, while there is an acknowledgment of real fellowship with other churches and a deep concern for them, and while there is enrichment to be gained from that fellowship (50), the communion that exists by dint of a shared faith in Christ crucified and resurrected is less than full. Essentially, the pursuit of ecumenical relations is designed to find ways to bring them into the fold of the Catholic Church, to achieve the full Christian unity that will come when there can be a sharing of the Eucharist with perfect agreement on its significance.

Areas identified in the encyclical as being ‘in need of further study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved’ (79) are, in abbreviated form:

1. the relationship between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition;
2. the Sacrament of the Eucharist;
3. the Sacrament of Ordination;
4. the *magisterium* (‘authority’) of the Church entrusted to the Pope and the Bishops;
5. the Virgin Mary.

which is included in this volume as an invitation to us all to pray to the one God as brothers and sisters, living in fraternal love. This is not a change in actual theology since 1995, but in focus.

It seems to me that Pope Francis allows us in 2020 to consider a more open way forward to Christian unity that is not focussed so precisely on the authority of the Catholic Church, while in no way denying a traditional sacramental approach to the ideal. That was inevitably a key feature of Pope John Paul's encyclical, in itself a highly important and influential contribution to ecumenical discussions that built, in turn, on the ground-breaking work of Vatican II. Perhaps *Ut unum sint* might be best celebrated as a key step on a journey rather than an end in itself.

As they stand, the specific areas for resolution listed by Pope John Paul would seem to stand little if any chance of being

unity, but to celebrate sacramentality as a unified whole that embraces the traditional sacraments in their multiplicity.

11 Clayton Spence

(On behalf of the Divisional Commander, NSW/ACT Division of The Salvation Army Australia)

The Salvation Army is committed to ecumenism and in actively pursuing interdenominational harmony and cooperation at every level. This has been part of the Salvation Army spirit from its earliest days, when it began, not as a separate denomination, but as a para-church movement working alongside existing churches. Even as the Salvation Army grew, and its structures and practices made it a separate identity, the Salvation Army engaged in dialogue with other churches in how the Salvation Army might work within the existing structures of these institutions. While the outcome was not successful and the Salvation Army continued as its own independent denomination, it has remained committed to working with all who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as brothers and sisters in shared mission.

In the twenty-first century, dialogue between the Salvation Army and other churches has a focus on cooperation, shared faith and identity, shared service and worship, and the learning experiences of receptive ecumenism.

In 2008 the Salvation Army published the statement *The Salvation Army in the Body of Christ: An Ecclesiological Statement*, which states in summary:

1. The Body of Christ on earth (also referred to in this paper as the church universal) comprises all believers in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.
2. Believers stand in a spiritual relationship to one another, which is not dependent upon any particular church structure.
3. The Salvation Army, under the one Triune God, belongs to and is an expression of the Body of Christ on earth, the church universal, and is a Christian denomination in permanent mission to the unconverted, called into and sustained in being by God.
4. Denominational diversity is not self-evidently contrary to God's will for his people.
5. Interdenominational harmony and cooperation are to be actively pursued for they are valuable for the enriching of the life and witness of the Body of Christ in the world and therefore of each denomination.
6. The Salvation Army welcomes involvement with other Christians in the many lands where the Army is privileged to witness and serve.

The Salvation Army therefore affirms the essence and core message of the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint* that believers in Christ are united in their singular confession of 'the one truth about the Cross'. As part of the ministry of reconciliation that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 5:18, Christians seek the unity of all divided humanity as the will of God, including a restored unity among all Christians.

The Salvation Army affirms with the Roman Catholic Church that our unity is constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith and the communion with the Father and the Son in the Spirit (9). We would argue that differences in the understanding of sacraments are not a cause for disunity; rather, we affirm that the positive elements present in other churches and ecclesial communities ‘come from Christ and lead back to him’ (13). Indeed, the Salvation Army affirms that ‘being together’ should not demand a change or compromise in doctrine (18) or even practice, but that by being united in prayer around Christ we grow in the awareness of how little divides us in comparison to what unites us (22). As such, what should matter is the prayer and the desire of all Christians for unity and reconciliation.

The Salvation Army therefore affirms dialogue and practical cooperation among churches and has valued opportunities for this to happen. Between 2007 and 2012, delegates from the Salvation Army and the Catholic Church met on five occasions for informal dialogue in London and Rome. In recent years, more frequent contacts have been made between the Holy See and the Salvation Army. In 2019, General Brian Peddle, international leader of the Salvation Army met in conversation

12 André Van Oudtshoorn

The encyclical *Ut unum sint* remains an inspiring theological reflection on church unity. As a Reformed theologian, I am deeply impressed by its call for church unity to flow from (a) faithfulness to the Gospel; (b) the need for humility, repentance and a renewed mind in all participants; (c) the quest for theological truth rather than theological compromise as a foundation for church unity, and (d) its emphasis on prayer as a necessary spiritual dimension in constructing the dialogue between different denominations and believers. In offering some critical comments, I do not wish to subtract from the

affiliation, are brothers and sisters in God's family. Nevertheless, it does not equate this 'family unity' with church unity. The encyclical seems, instead, to envisage church unity primarily as formal, structural unity, preferably consummated under the unifying authority of the pope. The Catholic Church, both in her praxis and in her solemn documents, holds that the communion of the particular churches with the church of Rome, and of their bishops with the bishop of Rome, is—in God's plan—an essential requisite of full and visible communion. In other words, the bishop of Rome must ensure the communion of all the churches. For this reason, he is the first servant of unity.

The document does not consider other possible modes of expressing church unity which may not require the unifying role of a pope. Refocusing on church unity as a Christological given which reaches beyond the Roman Catholic Church may inspire new, creative ways to demonstrate Christian unity across denominational boundaries.

2. Repentance

The encyclical stresses the need for all churches to be open for the Spirit to convict them of sins which may obstruct

absolves the church of Rome beforehand of any need to repent of possible false historical interpretations of the Gospel or human additions to the biblical witness which contradict the Gospel message. Genuine openness to repent, as advocated in the encyclical, requires all churches to seriously reexamine those issues which make it difficult, if not impossible, for other believers to join them in worship.

3. Theological dialogue

The encyclical calls for a loving and respectful dialogue between various churches in the hope of creating a theological consensus. Of course, there already exists a broad theological consensus on critical aspects of the Christian faith, as contained in the *Apostolicum*, for instance, which is accepted by many Christian churches. Underlying this quest is a modernistic view of truth as something that can be discovered by using the correct methodology and which, once found, demands rational acquiescence by all parties. Theological truths, however, are more than static, logical constructs. They are relativised by the person of Christ, who stands over against all human constructs as 'the truth'. Theological truths are always provisional. Christians will only know the final truth with the return of Christ. This eschatological dimension means that theological conversations between Christians can never stop. Church unity is not realised when theological disagreements cease. Critical theological battles are, instead, signs that Christians have not given up on each other. As in a healthy family, our disagreements do not annul our sense of belonging together.

Pope John Paul II's sincere commitment to church unity shines through *Ut unum sint*. Much of its contents will continue to

family. Does disagreement about these things really need to lead to exclusion from the sacrament?

Right now, it is vital for the witness of the church that Christians from different backgrounds continue to seek ways to express their fellowship in Christ, and that they share their different understandings with graciousness and a readiness to learn, as well as to explain and explore differences. This is what the encyclical seeks to do, and I look forward to further ecumenical sharing and progress in coming days and years.

14 Ray Williamson

I well remember the year, 1995, in which this papal encyclical of John Paul II, *On Commitment to Ecumenism*, was published. It was a time of ecumenical expectancy in Australia. We were celebrating the first birthday of our National Council of Churches, of which the Roman Catholic Church was a founding member; the first steps were being taken in the National Covenanting process; four of the Roman Catholic

will begin to make fundamental differences to their relationship with one another. Often it can feel as though an ecumenical

‘during her earthly pilgrimage the Church has suffered and will continue to suffer opposition and persecution’, he wrote, ‘the hope which sustains her is unshakeable, just as the joy which flows from this hope is indestructible’ (*Ut unum sint* 3, 8, 4).

Christian discipleship is never only an individual journey; it involves walking with others. This truth makes disunity a terrible scandal. We need each other, with our differences, different experiences and perspectives, different gifts, and even disagreements, just as we see in the disciples in the New Testament. The long and tragic history of Christian disunity has been, in effect, the history of the disciples of Jesus Christ

individual Christians and for that constant reform of the Church ... which represent the preconditions for all ecumenical commitment' (*Ut unum sint* 82). The encyclical remains a powerful challenge. It remains visionary and full of hope.

Ecumenism Then and Now

15 Lex Akers

A Romanian Orthodox Priest and a Wesleyan Methodist Minister walked into a Pub... It sounds like the start of some kind of religious joke, but instead it reflects an insight into an unusual ecumenical friendship. Father Doru Costache and I have been friends since we were introduced four years ago by a colleague while Doru was looking for a place for his small parish church to meet. Prior to our first meeting, I was nervous and wondered how Methodism could work with Orthodoxy but it turns out the answer is 'very well'. My wife and I were recently appointed to the Pittwater Wesleyan Methodist Church and, after praying about the approach by Doru, we felt that a true representation of Christian faith would be to offer the hand of fellowship and share our small worship space. If I had known then what I know now I would not have hesitated. Doru and I have developed a deep and mutually beneficial friendship. We meet almost weekly for a few hours and discuss a wide variety of topics about church life and theology from our different perspectives. We will discuss anything from Patristics to Pentecostal experience, from St Gregory to St Paul, from Maximus the Confessor to John Wesley. What we have discovered is that there is more that connects us than what separates us. There is something about a friendship like this that breathes sustenance into ministry. Outside of the institutions that we are familiar with, we are free to speak of disappointments and celebrations, hurt and frustrations, dreams and visions. And on many more than one occasion we have been surprised by the insights shared by the other and the depth of understanding this creates. Our discussions often bring clarity to difficult situations and our respective views of

theology and the church bring refreshing perspective to well worn thinking.

Of course, for this kind of ecumenical connection to work, you need to have an open mind. Simply defending one's long held position immediately closes off the possibility of enlightenment. Sometimes we agree to disagree, but not often. I am more and more convinced that one of the problems we have in our traditions is the unwillingness to engage in dialogue for the fear that this may corrupt the perfection of our system. But, on the contrary, for me at least, this has been the birth of better thinking or more rounded thinking, and has led me to a deeper understanding of the faith of a fellow minister.

I don't support the idea of some kind of ecumenical blend of every tradition that produces a new colour called 'ecumenical beige', but I do support and encourage more generous dialogue that fosters understanding. For too long we have been

another in love, humility, and wisdom will achieve the full restoration of the divided body of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, continue to guide our church's comprehensive efforts and bless the future work that lies ahead.

Thus the visible unity of the one, holy, universal, and apostolic church can be fully achieved in Christ.

17 Philip Bradford

My experience of ecumenism was greatly enhanced when I became the Rector of the Anglican Parish of Hunters Hill, NSW, in 2000.

Believing the things that unite us as Christians are far more important than the things that divide us, in that year 2000, a group of women from Villa Maria Catholic Parish had a vision for a combined churches event that would bring together all the Christians in the area at Easter time, for a united act of Christian witness. This was the origin of the 'Way of the Cross', a Good Friday procession through the streets of Hunters Hill, reenacting Jesus' journey from his Last Supper with his disciples all the way to the cross. Much planning was required to make the vision into reality. All the churches in the area were approached, and a committee made up of

route was planned, Council permission was obtained, and volunteers recruited to act the roles of Jesus and his disciples and the other characters from the passion narratives. Other volunteers were organised to provide bus transport for those unable to walk the distance, and the walk was advertised widely through the churches and local media. The response was beyond expectations, and the local police who provided escort for the crowd estimated the numbers at between four and five hundred.

The event has continued each year (apart from this year when COVID restrictions made it impossible) and has grown steadily in popularity. The basic format has remained the same: the first tableaux, the Last Supper, takes place in All Saints' Church and then, following this scene, a drummer leads the actors and the crowd out of the church and into the garden. From there the crowd starts the journey through the streets of Hunters Hill, stopping at several places along the way to enact the next stages of the Way of the Cross journey, and finally arrives in the spacious grounds of Villa Maria (Holy Name of Mary) Church for the final scenes. At each stop an appropriate hymn

and lay people, and we met regularly. Once a year we took it in turns to have a Combined Parishes Dinner, which was always well attended. Sometimes we had a visiting speaker and at other times we had individual parishioners sharing something about their spiritual journey. In the four years before I left Hunters Hill I developed a strong friendship with the local Catholic Priest, Father Kevin, and not long before I retired from the Parish we took the brave step of exchanging our pulpits one Sunday. I found that to be a very moving experience, which I will never forget.

18 Rosemary Bradford

When the Kenyan colony began, there was no momentum to provide universal education for the local population. Although Africans were seen as a source of cheap labour, however, missionaries already in the country began to strongly advocate for education. They began to set up primary schools and, taking a long view, saw that the cost would be prohibitive. In 1913 Dr John Arthur from the Anglican mission in Kikuyu arranged a conference with other Protestant missions to discuss the issue. By 1918 the Alliance of Protestant Missions was formed with the Church of Scotland Mission, the Church of the Province of Kenya, the African Inland Mission (interdenominational), the Friends' Church, and the Methodist Church. The British Government needed to take the initiative in making education available to Africans as a matter of right and Arthur was instrumental in promoting this idea. The Devonshire White Paper came out in 1923 and endorsed the idea that Africans

the first four classrooms. We took up residence in one of them and began a new voyage of discovery. The partners were Anglicans from Australia and New Zealand, Africa Inland Mission, and Mennonites, and those groups provided personnel and also Tanzanian teachers were recruited. The Mennonites ran a school for the children in the highlands and raised their own food, slaughtered the meat, and cooked everything from scratch. We were taught the Bible with earnest enthusiasm, and I couldn't help but be impressed by their way of life and the unity of faith and life. The food was delicious; we worked in the garden, studied hard, and that year of being in the north of

The school in Musoma grew apace, the students became younger as more attended primary school, and the building program gave way to a dynamic and full school life. A better solution to schooling was found for me in a girls' school in Kenya, which offered Cambridge A Level. I could come home for holidays, and I joined the choir and the Young Farmers Club, among other interests. The daily chapel took us through the Bible, taught us the psalms, and taught me to sing a wide range of beautiful music. Oratorios, music appreciation, and eisteddfods enriched every term. It inspired me in a new way, adding a rich layer to the joyous African church experience, the lovely Mennonite harmonised hymns, and warm hospitality.

The school was opened with great aplomb by President Julius Nyerere in 1960, and it proved to be an asset to the community, taking a new generation to university entrance and national leadership. But my parents found that school issues for their five children were becoming impossible, and a letter of resignation from the position of principal was sent to the Ministry of Education in 1967. Four weeks later an announcement was made over the radio that all school principals' positions were to be nationalised forthwith. Overnight it became a government school and took on a new identity. Nationalisation of banks followed also and, although some staff stayed on to work there, things changed rapidly as the Christian culture of the school changed. Yet an ecumenical legacy still lives on in many hearts and minds.

19 James Collins

I have been involved in the ecumenical movement for over forty years now—in Perth in WA (remember ARCIC?), in Tasmania, and now in NSW—and I give thanks to God for all that he is doing in our midst as we continue our journey into the depths of understanding and mutuality that we glimpse only partially, regarding how we are all members of the Body of Christ and how we might all grow more fully into the relationship of love that exists between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and how this love might be lived out and manifest, not only within the Body of Christ, but with all humankind and all creation.

I say that we glimpse this unity only partially, for we seem to be entering a new phase of partisanship around the globe, as fault lines between left and right, liberal and conservative, progressive and regressive seem to be fracturing the global community politically, socially, and religiously. I lament this situation.

As Tim Costello recently pointed out, we need these extremes to be held together as individual freedoms need to be held in balance by concerns for justice and equity.

Fear of the ‘other’ has become a common factor leading to these divisions and the truth of all people being created in God’s image is being lost as the ‘other’ is demonised and pilloried.

Perfect love cast out fear, and the mission of the Body of Christ to bring healing and wholeness and flourishing to all of God's creation seems to be more important now than ever. Sadly, at this precise moment when our witness to the world is crucial, we see many people of faith retreating into their bunkers and echo-chambers, where they live with and listen to only those who share their own views.

Receptive ecumenism helps us to listen to the 'other', and we are able to learn from our engagement with the 'other' and grow because we have been enriched by our encounter with the 'other' and receive the blessing of God as we live into the unity of the Body of Christ and realise more fully our mission in the world to work together to bring healing, wholeness, and, above all else, love.

I would like to have had the time to write more about my rich experience of ecumenism over the past four decades, but life at St Paul's, Burwood, is too full, as we seek to live out the vision of what the Body of Christ might be and do in our world today, as we care for everyone in our community.

20 Joy Connor

One of the highlights of the ecumenical Christian year in the Blue Mountains, NSW, is the 6 am Easter Day Dawn Service on the escarpment at the Leuralla Amphitheatre in Leura.

the meadows in spring present a particularly delightful prospect. They display to the beholders a rich diversity of flowers which arrests them with its charm, for it brings delight to their eyes and perfume to their nostrils. One part of this meadow blushes with roses; in another place lilies predominate, drawing one's attention to themselves and away from the roses. In another part the colour of violets blazes out, resembling the imperial purple. In short, the diversity and variety of innumerable flowers affords enjoyment both to nostril and to eye on every side. (*The Spiritual Meadow*, prologue, trans. John Wortley, 1992; slightly altered)

This is how I perceive the landscape of Christian diversity. I don't see a hell of doom and gloom, of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Suspicion, condescension, and resentment—which still poison the chalice of Christian love—are not what I gather from all around me. What I see are flowers who do their best to praise the Creator by being what they should. I see what Nikos Kazantzakis rendered in what he called a Franciscan haiku, 'I said to the almond tree, "Sister, speak to me of God". And the almond tree blossomed' (*Report to Greco*). What I see are flowers in bloom, 'trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither' (Psalm 1:3).

That said, I realise that, while we all do what we must, we still do it the wrong way. We walk our separate ways as though we're worlds apart. We seem to have forgotten that 'no man is an island', to paraphrase John Donne (*XVII Meditation in Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*). No blade of grass the

a common friend who belongs with yet another church tradition, the Revd Associate Professor Glen O'Brien, to whom I am also grateful. This, I believe, is ecumenism at its best, when Christians help other Christians, regardless of the colour and the scent of the flowers. Such is the work that the Lord wishes us to perform in the garden. There is hope!

Truly the Lord is generous! He keeps pouring grace upon grace in the lives of those who seek him. My encounter with Lex proved to be the beginning of a genuine friendship. Grace upon grace. It has been many years, indeed, since I had a true friend, someone who would be there not expecting any gains from me. The last time it happened was long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away. After my relocation to Sydney, I almost lost hope in this regard, but Lex—a man of another Christian tradition—proved me wrong. Our frequent get-togethers amount to intense Christian experiences. I see our meetings as iterations of the Lord's Supper, as paradisaical events. We talk about our churches, our spiritual traditions, our approaches to prayer and to the scriptural wisdom. We talk about things in heaven and on earth. Our friendship is deepened by our thirst for holiness, as well as by numerous common interests. We are both amazed by the beauty of God's creation. Above all, we both are disposed to learn from one another, and from each other's church traditions. We discovered that there's more we hold in common than what—to many eyes—might seem strong reasons to keep walking apart. And thus we walk together, praying for the day when all the blades of grass, and the variously scented flowers, and the different kinds of fruitful trees will come together in one place, in paradise. Our friendship and cooperation prove that it can be done, no matter how much apart our worlds might be.

Here's my ecumenical journey so far. I am grateful for every bit of it.

22 Mervyn Duffy

In a seminal article on ecumenism ('Baptismal Unity in the Divided Church' *Worship* 75:6 (2001): 511-27) Gerard Kelly proposed that progress may be able to be made in ecumenical theology if the focus was put on the mutual recognition of baptism as well as on the different understandings of the Eucharist. He refers to the Canberra Statement's use of the Letter to the Ephesians in presenting a vision of 'a plan to

intention of doing what Christians do. This treats baptism as if it were a charm or magical spell which ‘works’ when correctly invoked.

Kelly obviously prefers the ‘sacramental’ understanding of what happens when one church community recognises the action of a sacrament in another church community. So, there are at least two layers at work here. One is the action of the community which baptises, and the second is the action of the other community in recognising that baptism is a true sacrament.

Baptism is a sacramental action that changes the status of the recipients of the sacrament. They become children of God, a new creation, and members of the faithful. Baptism establishes a relationship between the neophyte and the Holy Trinity—this relationship, this friendship, we often call ‘grace’. Baptism creates communion, communion with God and communion with one’s fellow Christians. In the light of the letter to the Ephesians, baptism also changes the relationship of the recipients to the whole of Creation. Their way of being in the world and with the world is different because they have been claimed for Christ.

When one Christian community recognises the baptisms done by another community there are numerous implications. Recognition of the baptism of the individual means recognising the power and authority of that Christian community to mediate God’s grace in the world. Accepting their baptism as valid implies accepting their right to speak ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’.

And so, the act of recognition (and mutual recognition even more so) changes relationships and creates a communion. It brings the two Christian communities into a sacramental communion. The respect for the foundational sacrament they share, necessarily implies a respect for each other. Recognition of Baptism implies accepting the communion and community that sacrament creates. Saying that the community can baptise, involves acknowledging that God is at work among them, that they share in the intention of making disciples of Christ. A community that celebrates sacraments is a sacramental community.

According to St Augustine:

Therefore, whoever the person be, and whatever office he holds who administers the ordinance, it is not he who baptises, that is the work of him upon whom the dove descended. (*Ep.* 89, 5; *PL* 33, 311)

Since we follow Augustine in believing that baptism is the work of Christ, recognition of baptism involves recognising Christ at work. When a Christian community engages in the ecclesial act of recognising the baptism of another Christian community, they are recognising the action of Christ and of the Holy Spirit within that community. They are

invisible reality of the inclusion in the new order of Creation and the family of God. When ecclesial communities engage

suspect that I am not alone in holding to a worldview that regards the 'other' as something/someone to be understood, but whose understanding remains compartmentalised within me in a way that holds it separate from my soul or spirit. I suspect that many Christians today understand less than I do about traditional Aboriginal religion and spirituality or the modern Aboriginal Christian faith. They regard the knowledge they hold about Aboriginal culture as useful and helpful information, but quite separate from their own religious and spiritual practice.

What would it be like if we in the mainstream Australian church began to ask the question, 'In what ways might my Christian life be enhanced by drawing on the religious

involves action. It is more than merely telling and it has a prophetic element. This practice resembles the two ways of imagining in the Ignatian Exercises.

Champion uses her experience in the task group for the Stolen Generations to illustrate *Anhangha idla ngukanandhakai*. The process allows the Stolen Generation to remember their experiences, creating an opportunity to hear those experiences, and to hear them with close and willing attention. It then provides an opportunity for revelation. Champion's revelation focuses on the story of Nehemiah's night ride surveying the broken walls of Jerusalem and the subsequent decision to engage all the participants in rebuilding the walls. The taskforce reveals the damage that had been caused. The Nehemiah story provides the prophecy and the action by which together we can repair the damage and build a great new city. She also provides another example of the practice by remembering a Dreaming story of an old woman, two lost children, and a bellbird's assistance in finding them. The story requires remembering, attentive listening, and then being open to the revelation. Champion connects the lost children to the Stolen Generation and to the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and ultimately human lostness, with God as the mother figure, the loving parent. This final thought causes her to reflect on the role of women in the church.

my experience. He suggests that even old and senior Aboriginal ‘men of intelligence and stamina’ will respond to ‘inquisitions’ concerning the meaning of Aboriginal religion by replying, ‘it is a thing we do not understand’. They exhibit an ‘uninquiring acceptance’ to the religion. Inquiry based on ‘direct and indirect questions’ leads to the conclusion that ‘it is impossible to ask questions bearing directly on the matter’. Ceremonies do not include explicit teaching, and no ideas or concepts are developed through the form of an argument based on reason. At the same time, ceremonies have great power. They create a sense of the noumenal, a powerful sense of mystery. They provide great ‘emotional appeal’ and ‘aesthetic pleasure’.

Stanner’s interpretation seems congruent with Champion’s process. People come together in a religious context where they remember the great stories, where they are willing to hear, and where there follows a showing, a revelation, a prophetic event that is highly affective, unrelated to reason, a recognition of mystery that leads to action by following up the Dreaming. These elements may benefit those of us in the Christian church within western civilisation in the twenty-first century, even if it only raises the question, ‘To what extent are we active in following up our Dreaming as revealed by Jesus the Christ?’

24 Monica Ibrahim

The participation of Orthodox churches in the World Council of Churches (WCC) provided Orthodox women with the opportunity to explore the role of women in the Orthodox

church. In 1976, with support from the WCC, the first Orthodox women's consultation took place in Agapia Monastery, Romania. It was one of a series of consultations and inter-Christian meetings that later coincided with the

never made available for the English-speaking world. Just recently we saw published *Women and Ordination in the Orthodox Church*, a volume consisting of a series of essays and

within their own tradition. The involvement of Orthodox women in the ecumenical dialogue has embodied this approach by encouraging Orthodox women to reflect critically on adverse practices and teachings that impact on their involvement in the life of the church, and search for answers within their own tradition and beyond.

25 Shenouda Mansour

The term ‘ecumenical council’ is not new: it is an ecclesial term that defines churches coming together to discuss certain theological matters or difficulties and concluding with a resolution. This is how the early Church Fathers resolved matters relating to the church. The early Church Fathers valued the ecumenical councils as means to gather, be united and solve matters cordially with love. At the time, the Christian faith was one up to 451 AD. Today, the church is not the same as before 451 AD. The prayer and the words of Jesus in John 17, ‘that they may be one as we are’, challenge the churches today. One of the missions of the ecumenical bodies is to work towards visible unity, though not for organisational unity. The churches have much in common and, according to the World Council of Churches’ Faith and Unity statement, the Lund Principle of 1952, they must work in areas where there are strong shared convictions; where there are areas of difference, the churches are encouraged to work separately. In this light, the use of language, the appreciation for culture and a sense of belonging to a certain church faith tradition has to do with identity and difference. Since the modern settlement of Australia in 1788,

To be part of the ecumenical movement is to understand myself together with the other. The more I engage with other church communities, the more I discover my own tradition. This allows me to see the Body of Christ in a way that I would not have discovered if I was not involved in the ecumenical movement.

Today, the ecumenical movement is challenged by a number of obstacles, but there are also opportunities for the future. One of the obstacles is the very word, 'ecumenism'. This word is understood differently in different Christian traditions. But, over and above its many understandings, the language of ecumenism is the ability to engage with the other. Accordingly,

Zinzendorf's aim was not to replace existing denominations with a super-church. He did not desire an immediate organic union which would dispense with the denominations; he

of these intra- and inter-denominational disputes is failure to see what is already there: our unity in Christ. The unity of the Father and Son as described in John 17 is the model of the unity which we have and actually will always have in Christ Himself. What we call 'churches' are only local entities; and so Paul writes not to 'the church of Corinth' but 'to the church of God which is at Corinth'. I am afraid that denominationalism will always be with us and we will have to work our way around it. Our task is to realise the unity that we already have in Christ and make it clear to all around us, so that it will be said of us, as Tertullian imagined a pagan saying, 'See how these Christians love each other'.

27 Alanna Nobbs

The Greek word from which our 'ecumenical' is derived refers to bringing together the entire inhabited world. As Christianity spread throughout the Roman imperial Mediterranean (including North Africa and Mesopotamia) in the first three centuries, various doctrinal differences caused tension leading to hostilities. The four earliest ecumenical councils were called

imagination. If 'begotten' meant that the Son was created by the Father from his own identical being, He therefore would have had no beginning. If he was created out of nothing, then he would have had a beginning. That would lead to the conclusion that the Son is in some way subordinate to the

The influence of the emperor was felt throughout. His purple clothing was resplendent in its imperial grandeur, and as in our modern Olympic Games there was an impressive opening ceremony preceded by less formal but heated consultations

After the council the matter was not wholly settled and continued to inflame the church as it grew under Imperial patronage. Hence the calling of further ecumenical councils to attempt to gain consensus on matters concerning the Trinity. Today, however,

Geoffrey Fisher paid a visit to Pope John XXIII in Rome, but in a private capacity rather than as Archbishop of Canterbury.

John Moorman, Bishop of Ripon, was one of the Anglican observers and he witnessed the whole of every session prior to writing his book mentioned above. For him the result of the Council 'has been to alter the whole ecumenical pattern and to carry the ecumenical discussion into a new field' (184). He concludes as follows: 'Difficult and humiliating though it may be, we must look at all schemes for partial union in the light of possible unity—as the Lambeth fathers urged us to do in 1908' (205). In 1967, the same year in which this particular book was published (in fact, during his lifetime Moorman wrote no less than fifteen books), he became chairman of the

differing emphases from its members. All Christendom should be grateful for this to the Pope, whose catalytic influence enabled these differing emphases to become patent.

I also consulted from 1962 onwards numbers of the *St Mark's Review*, a leading journal of Christian thought and opinion founded in 1955. There are no fewer than twelve articles either on the Council in particular or on ecumenism in general. It is heartening to see that the editorial for No. 30, November 1962, is timely and is entitled 'The Ecumenical Council'. The editor at the time was Cecil Allan Warren (who in 1965 was consecrated Assistant Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, and then in 1972 was to become its seventh Bishop). It's a balanced piece in which, on the one hand, he hopes that the winds of change 'might sweep through the Council and enable a fresh and realistic approach to reunion with non-Roman Christians',

August 1965 was appointed as one of the Observers to represent the Australian Council of Churches at the final session of the Vatican Council in Rome, which was to commence on 14 September. Cuttriss explained in a sermon of 22 August 1965 that as an official observer he would ‘be representing all the non-Roman Catholic Churches in Australia at the great assembly in Rome’. He had chosen as his text that day 1 Corinthians 12:4-6: ‘Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all.’

As Bruce Kaye (formerly the General Secretary of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia) correctly points out in his book *Anglicanism in Australia*: ‘For many Anglican churchgoers the most memorable trend of the 1960s was the lowering of the walls that had kept each denomination largely isolated from its neighbours. Old prejudices evaporated’.

While the response in Sydney might not have been as great as elsewhere, I think it’s true to say that most Anglicans in Australia, who had long regarded the Roman Catholic Church with a mixture of envy and distrust, applauded the Council’s ‘renewal’ of Catholic worship and doctrine and, in 1965, the end of the strict rules that had prevented Roman Catholics from attending ‘non-Catholic’ worship.

I see four particular fruits of the Second Vatican Council as significant for Anglicans and other non-Roman Christian traditions. The first was putting the liturgy into the vernacular: the Mass was no longer a mystery, but something that all could now understand. A second gift was the Three-Year Lectionary,

which Australian Anglicans welcomed in

the luxury of division. Each variant of Christianity has something to offer to the needs of the world.

We should consider praying, as the *Prayer Book* invites us to:

eating meat on Fridays was for many a milestone, as was the whole dilemma of plenary indulgences.

My aim here is not to presume a theological analysis of what ecumenism is about—nor to seek to justify an opinion on the whole range of issues involved—there are innumerable others far better qualified than I am to do that. Rather, I seek to relate life experiences in a variety of settings, which lead me to a personal view of practical ecumenism based on respect for others and the acceptance of the dignity and validity of the path they take in their search for faith and meaning.

My professional life involved an extensive exposure to community services including work with dysfunctional families, child protection, community development generally and the management of significant natural emergencies. This necessitated a close working relationship with people who shared a common compassion for those less fortunate and a keen desire to make their clients' circumstances better.

They came from all denominations and they consistently demonstrated the high standards of ethical and professional conduct, consistent with the faith values upon which their vocation was founded. My experience with chaplains in the armed services has been similar: the key feature of their chaplaincy was their ministry, not their denomination.

In recent years, many, or possibly all Christian faiths have had to face the consequences of the behaviour of some of their number who have betrayed their stated beliefs by abusing those less able to protect themselves. That fact does not change my experience of the vast majority.

After forty years in government service, I retired and joined a major faith-based community service organisation. They sought someone who understood how government actually works—often a challenge for many. Though I was from a different faith tradition, they were the essence of generosity and acceptance of

Perhaps some thought needs to be given to the 'many rooms' cited by Jesus in John 14:2. There may well be more room for unison rather than unity. Just a thought!

30 Neil Ormerod

authors, Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Küng, and various liberation theologians. I also had a growing interest in the work of Jesuit theologian and philosopher Bernard Lonergan, which began to

North Turrumurra), sharing conversations about all manner of things in the journeys we shared.

This meeting was an initiation into a twenty-year participation in the life of the SCD, working with fellow academics from all types of Christian backgrounds. There was some degree of coming and going in the SCD, with colleges joining and leaving at various times. Still, in the various meetings I attended, the work I shared, there was a growing bond of fellowship and friendship with them all, Catholic, Protestants, Orthodox, Pentecostal, all working together in a common project of theological education. Some of these friendships have endured over the years even as people have moved to

friendship, able to share the strengths and weaknesses of our

sacramental service where a Catholic priest would concentrate elements alongside an Anglican priest. Once again, there was push back, with many delegates boycotting the service along with a great deal of tension. Then in 2014, the Ministers' Fraternal refused the entry of my nephew, a Salvation Army officer, because he was 'too liberal'. While our society has come a long way ecumenically, there are still diehard pockets of resistance.

To make matters worse, the Royal Commission into institutional child abuse opened up many wounds, revealing some churches functioning way below the standard of behaviour required. Systemic abuse and cover-up has distressed many church members. As a psychologist and minister, I conducted a treatment program for many decades, but with little interest shown by my own church. A wide range of Christian denominations and other faiths established Safe Church Programs; it soon became clear, however, that the committed became involved and many others shied away from the grimy details. It is problematic that there is still no ecumenically based assessment and treatment program for psychosexually dysfunctional church leaders in Sydney and at least one major denominational program had funding withdrawn, leading to closure.

It troubles me, given what I have said so far, that some churches spend a great deal of time on mission strategies, with one eye on the Church Life Survey indicating their imminent demise. I do not read much about strategies to save dying churches in early church history. What I read about is a movement of radically changed people facilitating social and

we realise that there is more than one way to do anything and that parts of church practice or tradition that one denomination holds dear may be less important in another denomination or part of it, but that other aspects become highlighted: for instance, some churches are focused on the Eucharist, and others are less focussed on it. For some, the melodies of the hymnody of the centuries bespeak poetry, beauty, and the mystery of our interaction with the triune God. For others silence is profound.] re W n /and

34 Joseph Meelis Zaia

The Lord has blessed me abundantly since I was selected by the late Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, HH Mar Dinkha IV, to be member of the Dialogue Committee between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church in 1990. His blessings have continued as I have become the Co-Chair of the Dialogue Committee between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church.

This dialogue started in mid-eighties and has continued to the present day. As a result of almost twenty-six years of meetings and fraternal discussions, the counterparts signed two important documents that put an end to 1500 years of schism and disagreements between the two churches. Both the Common Christological Declaration signed on 11 November 1994 by HH the late Pope John Paul II and HH Mar Dinkha IV Catholicos Patriarch, and the Common Statement on Sacramental Life of 24 November 2017, signed by me on behalf of the Assyrian Church of the East and HE Cardinal Kurt Koch from the Catholic Church, are considered huge milestones on the path to reconciliation and ecumenism. They are a great illustration of how churches can turn the sad and unfortunate contentious pages of history into a passage towards fulfilling the call of Christ ‘that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me’ (John 17:21).

In the past twenty-six years, both churches have demonstrated that dialogue, with a sincere fraternal spirit of recognition of past errors, testing political circumstances, and philosophical dialectical debates, can indeed alter negativity into a positive,

Father are one, so Christ's people must be in unity. And when we are seen bonded in Christ-like love, the world will believe that Christ is continuously working among his own. Then the world will come to the conclusion that the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was, and is, present in this world. Therefore, ecumenism must be considered an extension of divine love, to be practised and longed for.

The objective is clear. We are to be one in the Lord and one with one another. All of our aspirations must be directed towards fulfilling his will. Then we can all come together and jointly praise his name: 'Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, and prior to the beginning *Brasheth*, is now, and ever shall be'.

In Conclusion

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer
From Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*
4 October 2020

O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.

NSW Ecumenical Council
Theological Reflection Commission
2020