The Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order (WCFO-V) of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC) took place in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 3-14 August 1993, with its theme “Towards a Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness.” When Konrad Raiser, who had assumed the post of General Secretary of the WCC at the beginning of 1993, was asked about the widespread perception that the ecumenical movement is in a period of stagnation, at least in its institutional form, he admitted that “there’s a different atmosphere as compared to the situation 30 years ago after the Second Vatican Council when there was unexpected progress in the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.” But Raiser added that “if many of the high hopes that people entertained at that time have not been fulfilled,” he maintains, nevertheless, “that the ecumenical movement has had great success and that to a certain extent the loss of enthusiasm is due to the fact that the churches are much more ecumenically open than they were 20 years ago.”

With the WCFO-V just recently finished, this article will reflect on the progress of the ecumenical movement, and hopefully be able to help towards answering questions that ecumenically-minded Christians are more insistently asking: when will the churches reach real visible unity? When will Christians mutually recognize one another’s baptism and be able to come together to share at the eucharistic table? And for our Catholic readers,

how far has the Catholic Church progressed in its ecumenical endeavors?

PROGRESS OF CONTEMPORARY ECUMENISM: FROM LAUSANNE (1927) TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (1993)

The beginnings of the ecumenical movement as we know it today can be found already during the early years of the present century. Before the First World Conference in Lausanne, Switzerland in 3-21 August 1927, Protestant churches had already seen the need for conferences among Christian communions that will deal, for example, with missionary activity and world-wide student evangelism. One such missionary conference was held in 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland. One of those who attended this conference was Charles Henry Brent, American Episcopal bishop in the Philippines. He and some friends already saw the need for a world conference that would explore faith and order issues. Under Bishop Brent’s inspiration, the general convocation of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, 19 October 1910, voted

That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior be asked to be united with us in arranging for and conducting such a conference.2

Soon the call for a world conference on Christian unity was being echoed by different Christian communions and the different churches were each appointing their own commission on Faith and Order. Then, in August 1920, a preparatory conference of persons from the commissions of seventy churches and forty countries met in Geneva about the world conference. The Geneva conference’s most important decision was the election of a 51-person Continuation Committee, entrusted with responsibilities for the first WCFO. And so the stage was set for the first of the

four WCFO.³

FROM LAUSANNE (1927) TO MONTREAL (1963)

Just over eighty years have passed since the holding of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1910 which figured in the origins of the Faith and Order movement. And sixty-six years have passed since the first WCFO in Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1927, followed by the second in Edinburgh (Scotland) in 1937. The third came in 1952 in Lund (Sweden), and the fourth in Montreal (Canada) in 1963.

When we examine the wide, wide range of themes covered in these four WCFO and all the theological studies and books that have been produced in between the conferences, we realize that the ecumenical movement has indeed advanced a long, long way. Many themes regularly recurred, and some were raised but not followed up, and then brought up again and re-discussed. Some of the themes that regularly came up were those on the unity of the churches, sometimes specified as unity in life and worship; the nature of the church, the ministry of the church and the sacraments, the message of the church (the Gospel) and the Word of God. Very noticeable among the topics discussed in different conferences, assemblies and books that were produced starting with Lund (1952) was the study on faith, order and worship together with the relevant social, cultural, political, racial, and other factors in their bearing on the unity of the churches. Church people have become particularly sensitive to the relation between the unity of the churches and the human community. Especially noteworthy is the inclusion in Montreal of the section on “Scripture, Tradition and Traditions.” As Paul Crow concludes in his article: “Each of these four conferences reflects its moment in history and each brings spiritual insight, but also deep frustrations to our search to fulfill our common calling to unity.”⁴

4. Ibid. 13.
HOW ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

Perhaps of greater interest to our readers is the question of the Catholic Church's role and contribution to the ecumenical movement. It is now a truism to say that the Catholic Church is a newcomer to the ecumenical movement, at least as we know the movement today. A striking indication of this is the participation of Roman Catholics in the five WCFO. In Lausanne (1927) the Vatican forbade Roman Catholic participation, but two priests nevertheless came in an unofficial capacity. In Edinburgh (1937) several Roman Catholics were secretly present; in Lund (1952) four Roman Catholic observers came; and in Montreal (1963) for the first time the Roman Catholic Church, which after Vatican II was to become a full member of the Faith and Order Commission, was represented by five official observers. This year in Santiago de Compostela, for the first time the Catholic Church as such participated in a WCFO with all the rights and also with all the obligations which such a participation implied. (More will be said below about the participation of Roman Catholics in Santiago.)

THE POPES AND ECUMENISM

Pope John XXIII: Even before Vatican II came up with its "Decree on Ecumenism" (Unitatis Redintegratio), John XXIII was already avidly promoting contacts with various Christian leaders. When on January 25, 1959 he announced his intention to call an ecumenical council, he emphatically declared that he wanted "an Ecumenical Council for the whole Church." He asked that observers be delegated by the Orthodox and Protestant churches. When the Council finally opened in October 1962, there were some forty observers representing 17 churches and religious

5. Ibid. 3, 7, 9, 11.
6. On November 20, 1964 the final text of the Decree was voted on by the Council Fathers. The vote was 2,054 for, 64 against. The following day when the final ceremonial vote was taken, only 11 were against the Decree. The Decree was promulgated by the Pope, and the Catholic Church became fully involved in the ecumenical movement.
organizations encompassing all major Christian groups. The Pope had these observers seated in St. Peter's across the aisle from the cardinals. John also established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU) that would be at the service of the observers. To head the new secretariat, he chose the biblical scholar Augustin Cardinal Bea. Deeply desiring the unity of Christians, John XXIII received some historic papal guests: the first Greek Orthodox sovereign to visit the Pope since the days of the last Byzantine emperor, an Archbishop of Canterbury who came to call for the first time since 1397, the first chief prelate of the U.S. Episcopal Church, the first Moderator of the Scottish Kirk, a president of a Negro Baptist Church, and the first Shinto high priest.

By his example of openness and love, Pope John encouraged church leaders and scholars to join in discovering how much of the Christian faith they shared. Dr. William Visser't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, said of Pope John: "He changed the history of church relations."^8

Pope Paul VI: The most obvious role undertaken by Paul VI was to continue the Second Vatican Council after Pope John died following the first session. It was Paul VI who guided and inspired the work of the Council Fathers, and who promulgated the Council's documents that have been very helpful in promoting the work of ecumenism among Roman Catholics. Especially important among these documents are: the Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum), and the Declaration on Religious Freedom (Dignitatis Humanae).

The search for Christian unity was one of the principal concerns of Vatican II, and at this Council the Catholic Church solemnly pledged itself to work for this unity. Paul VI called for the prompt application of the teachings of the Council in the life of the Catholic Church. And from the time of the Council onwards, fraternal relations with churches and ecclesial communities have intensified, and an increasing number of international bilateral dialogues have been initiated between the Roman Catholic

8. See Time Magazine (June 7, 1963) 41.
Church and Christian World Communions. Since 1965 the Catholic Church has joined with the WCC to form the Joint Working Group (JWG). The cooperation with the JWG has already produced quite a number of important studies.  

But Pope Paul also took a very personal interest in promoting Christian Unity. On December 4, 1963, at the end of the second session of Vatican II, the Pope revealed his plan to pay history’s first papal visit to the Holy Land, the homeland of the Lord and His Vicar St. Peter. And so it happened that on the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6, 1964, Paul VI, the Patriarch of the West, the 261st successor of St. Peter and Bishop of Rome, embraced the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, the chief Orthodox Patriarch of the East, the 261st successor of St. Andrew, legendary founder of the church there. By praying at shrines in Israel and Jordan that honor events in the life of Jesus, Paul VI dramatically brought to mind Christianity’s roots in Judaism, and by meeting with Athenagoras created an opening to the East.

And so for the first time the highest ranking prelates of Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism came together after they were sundered by the Great Schism of 1054, and the first time since the Council of Florence in 1439 when there was a tentative reconciliation between the two great branches of Christendom. Touchingly, Athenagoras addressed Paul: “This moment, Your Holiness, is one of the most significant for mankind. Humanity at its highest spiritual level has the opportunity at last to guide the world toward peace.” And Pope Paul answered: “Your Holiness, we must bring our churches closer together. It will not be easy, but we are already on the right road.”

Pope John Paul II: The commitment of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement is best brought out by what the present Pope said as part of his message to the assembled members of the WCFO-V at Santiago de Compostela. He said: “I wish likewise to reaffirm the commitment of the Catholic

10. For the details of this meeting, see the report in Time Magazine (Jan. 17, 1964) 36 ff.
Church to promoting Christian unity, so that the prayer of Jesus ‘that they may all be one’ (Jn 17:21) may be realized in accordance with his providential design for his flock.”

Only a few weeks after his pontificate began, John Paul II expressed his deep commitment to ecumenism in his first address to a plenary assembly of the SPCU which met November 13-18, 1978. He said then: “The restoration of unity among all Christians was indeed one of the principal aims of the Second Vatican Council, and, since the moment of my election, I have formally engaged myself to promote the carrying out of its guiding principles and directions seeing this as one of my first duties.” What John Paul said in his message to the WCFO in Santiago de Compostela in August 1993 was a re-echoing of what he had already said in 1978 at the beginning of his pontificate.

In the years in between, John Paul has had many ecumenical contacts including a variety of direct contacts with the WCC and the various organizations connected with it. The task of the Church with regards to ecumenism is best summarized in the homily that John Paul gave at a Mass in Goa, India, 6 February 1986: “The gift of unity which the Church has received from God gives her a special responsibility in the human family: namely, to promote dialogue and understanding among all, and to work for unity and peace in our divided world . . . It is in this divided world that the Church is sent forth today to promote harmony and peace, unity and justice.”

ROMAN CATHOLICS AT SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

The impetus that has moved the Catholic Church towards ecumenism has been the Second Vatican Council. And the involvement has clearly progressed steadily so that it can be said

now that Roman Catholics are making a solid contribution to the ecumenical movement. Whereas in Montreal 30 years ago, there were only five Catholic observers, the optimism generated by Vatican II moved the Catholic Church to join in creating the JWG that linked Rome with the WCC in 1965. Three years later, the Vatican sent representatives to the Faith and Order Commission on which they have served for already a quarter of a century.

Catholic participation at Santiago was significant. All in all, there were thirty-two members of the Catholic delegation — twenty-six voting delegates, plus three consultants and three younger theologians. Of the twenty-six voting delegates,15 twelve were members of the FO Commission and so have been very much involved in the preparations of the WCFO. Participation by the local Catholic Church was also significant. The opening worship took place at the Catholic Cathedral in Santiago, and Archbishop Antonio Maria Rouco Varela of Santiago presided. Archbishop Ramon Torrella Cascante, Archbishop of Tarragona and former Vice-President of the PCPCU, preached. Also very helpful were some local priests who helped in the different details of the Conference. Finally very many of the young people who took care of the countless details of the Conference were Roman Catholics.

Other noteworthy contributions of Catholics came from Cardinal Edward Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), who was one of the speakers in a plenary session on the future of the ecumenical movement. The Cardinal affirmed the Catholic Church’s “irrevocable commitment” to the ecumenical movement. His talk was greeted by sustained applause. Bishop John Oneiyekan of Nigeria was a speaker in another plenary, and Father John Tillard, one of the officers of the FO commission, moderated one of the plenary sessions and was an active, lively facilitator in several occasions.

ECUMENICAL GAINS

The speakers who examined and reflected on the progress of

15. From the Asia-Pacific region, there were three voting delegates, a priest and a nun from Australia and the present writer.
ecumenism during the past decades and up to the opening of the WCFO at Santiago de Compostela generally agreed on the following points as the clear gains of ecumenism: the convergences and agreements in faith that were achieved in dialogues in different conferences, consultations, meetings, and bilateral dialogues between church communions; the common witness in which different church groups have together brought the Gospel values to bear on social issues; the common prayer that has motivated and reminded churches of God’s will to unity, especially the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; and the emergence of united and uniting churches and of ecumenical structures fostering reconciliation.

Especially significant have been certain events that could be considered landmarks in the ecumenical movement. Among these would be the historic meeting in Jerusalem in 1964 between Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I, and then a year later in 1965, their common declaration putting aside the mutual anathemas issued during the Great Schism of 1054 and turning to dialogue as the way to reach full communion. Among other milestones, and there were many, the publication by Faith and Order in 1982 of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) was one. Cardinal Cassidy described this book as the “result of 55 years of reflection; the theological agreements and convergences found in BEM illustrate important steps in a gradual evolution towards a common acknowledgment by Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Roman Catholic Christians of the one apostolic faith, and sacramental life.” An important addition to BEM is the recent Faith and Order publication, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry 1982-1990 — Report on the Process and Responses*, which contains the official responses of the churches to BEM.

There have been numerous conferences, consultations and meetings by commissions and committees, and from all these two books that are especially important have been published

18. Faith and Order Paper No. 149, WCC.
recently: Confessing the One Faith and Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of the Human Community. About Confessing the One Faith: In 1982, the Lima meeting launched a new study called “Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today” which was the collaborative attempt of the churches towards an ecumenical explication of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 A.D.). As Günther Gassmann further explains the project: “It is to help the churches to appropriate the common apostolic faith, to recognize it in one another’s faith and life, and on this more profound basis, to confess it together in our present-day world.” The very fruitful result of the project was the book Confessing the One Faith. On the other hand, the study that focused on Church and the World sought “to understand the essential link between the vocation of the Church and the destiny of the world in the perspective of the Kingdom. Without this work we should be in danger of spending too much energy on what it means to become churches together, apart from the world, rather than churches together in and for the world.”

KOINONIA — VERY PROMISING THEME FOR ECUMENICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

The theme that has become increasingly central in bilateral dialogues and in the self-understanding of the churches in recent years is that of koinonia. It is in fact considered “the most promising theme of contemporary ecumenical theology.” Koinonia became the focus of the discussions of the WCFO-V. It describes the richness of the lives together of Christians in Christ: community, communion, sharing, fellowship, participation, solidarity. This koinonia springs from the Word of Life, and so is nothing less than the reconciling presence of the love of

21. From the still unpublished “Report of the Director” at the WCFO-V. Günther Gassmann, a Lutheran Pastor from Germany, has been Director of the Secretariat of the Commission on Faith and Order in Geneva since 1984.
22. See the still unpublished address of Mary Tanner, “The Tasks of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order in the Perspective of the Future.”
23. Ibid.
God — a koinonia of love, the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{24}

In Catholic ecumenical theology, the theology of communion (koinonia) has been prominently discussed in recent years. Already in 1974, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, who was then President of the PCPCU, wrote an article "The Future of Ecumenism," where he concluded that the "ecclesiology of communion is a great possibility, perhaps the greatest possibility for tomorrow's ecumenism."\textsuperscript{25} As a matter of fact, in many international bilateral dialogues where the Catholic Church was involved, the focus was on the ecclesiology of communion: among those dialogues were those with the Anglicans, the Orthodox, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Pentecostals.\textsuperscript{26} But the ecclesiology of communion is equally important for the self-understanding of the churches. For example, in 1990 the Lutheran World Federation changed its Constitution so as to describe itself as a "communion of churches."

In the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church accepted the idea of the Church as communion as its guiding ecclesiological idea.\textsuperscript{27} And in its letter of 28 May 1992, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith offers guidance to the Catholic bishops of the world on the way communion (koinonia) should be interpreted. The document recognizes that the nature of koinonia has always been central to her self-awareness and is especially significant today because of efforts among the Churches to work toward visible and organic unity.\textsuperscript{28}

WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

The discussions in the WCF0-V showed that the ecumenical


\textsuperscript{26} Cardinal Cassidy's unpublished talk, WCF0-V.

\textsuperscript{27} See Walter Kasper, \textit{Theology and Church} (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1993) 48-65.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Catholic International} 3/16 (Sept. 1992) 761-67. In this issue, four responses from different churches are published: Orthodox, Methodist, Reformed Church and Anglican.
movement has come a long way. But much still remains to be done. It is clear that the Lord who prayed that “all may be one” (Jn 17:21) is calling the Churches to full Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness, to visible unity. Serious obstacles to full communion remain. The “Final Message” of the WCFO mentions them. “The churches still have not come to full mutual recognition of baptism. There are still obstacles that prevent the sharing together of Christians from all churches at the Lord’s Table.”

The sharing of the Lord’s Table calls for further work on ecclesiology, especially as it touches on the relationship of the ordained ministry to the priesthood of the whole people of God.

The final “Message” of the WCFO spells out the concrete challenges still facing the churches:

In relation to faith, the churches must continue to explore how to confess our common faith in the context of the many cultures and religions, the many social and national conflicts in which we live. Such confession emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of the church and its apostolic character in the light of Holy Scriptures.

In relation to life, the churches must dare concrete steps toward fuller koinonia, in particular doing all that is possible to achieve a common recognition of baptism, agreement on a common participation in the eucharist, and a mutually recognized ministry. In relation to witness, the churches must consider the implications of koinonia for a responsible care for creation, for a just sharing of the world’s resources, for a special concern for the poor and outcast, and for a common and mutually respectful evangelism that invites everyone into communion with God in Christ. But beyond all particular challenges, the churches and the ecumenical movement itself are called to the conversion to Christ that true koinonia in our time demands.

A final point that was mentioned by several speakers may be considered as the “unfinished agenda” of the WCFO, and that is the formal reception of dialogue reports. Especially telling are the words of Cardinal Cassidy when he talked about the future of the ecumenical movement:

30. Cardinal Cassidy’s unpublished talk, WCFO-V.
Dialogue and reception are interrelated . . . Much remains to be done in this field of reception. Indeed, we have to admit that we are really only at the beginning of this vital process. It is urgent that more thought be given to “strategies for reception” and more effort dedicated to this process.\textsuperscript{32}

Much remains still to be done if visible unity among all christians is to be achieved. For this, real conversion, real change of heart and holiness of life is needed. For as Pope John Paul II in his message to the WCFO said:

A deepened awareness of the profound mystery of ecclesial communion moves Christians to confess that God and not man is the source of the Church’s unity; it leads them to repent of their sins against fraternal charity; and it encourages them, under the inspiring grace of the Holy Spirit, to work through prayer, word and action to attain that fullness of unity which Jesus Christ desires.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Cardinal Cassidy’s unpublished talk, WCFO-V.
\textsuperscript{33} Pope John Paul II’s unpublished message to the WCFO-V.
A NOTE ON SORROW FOR SIN IN THE QUR'ĀN

Thomas J. O'Shaughnessy, S.J.

The repentant Christian by saying, "I have sinned," shows sorrow for not having committed himself to God's plan of salvation. A Muslim expresses his need for forgiveness in a formula often used in the Qur'ān: "My God, I have wronged myself." So the Queen of Sheba is made to say (27. 44/45): "My Lord, I have wronged myself [by my past idolatry]. With Solomon I surrender myself to God (i.e., profess Islam). . . ." So too it (16. 118/119) explains dietary restrictions imposed on the Jewish people as a punishment for their sins of disobedience: "To the Jews We (God) forbade what We told you of before. We did them no injustice but they were wronging themselves." It also tells how Adam and Eve lament their sinful disobedience (7. 23/22): "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us . . . we shall be among the lost." The Qur'ān also distinguishes greater from lesser sins in the following verses (3. 134-135/128-129): "... God loves the doers of good. When such persons commit an abominable deed or when they [merely] wrong themselves, they remember God and ask to be forgiven for their sins (and who but God forgives sins?) and they do not persist in what they did wittingly."1 The word "merely" inserted here

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1. Other verses using the same expression are 2. 54/51; 2. 57/54; 2. 331; 3. 117/113; 4. 64/67; 4. 97/99; 7. 23/22; 7. 160; 7. 177/176; 9. 70/71; 10. 44/45; 11. 101/103; 14. 45/47; 16. 28/30; 16. 33/35; 18. 35/33; 28. 16/15; 29. 40/39; 30. 9/8; 34. 19/18; 35. 32/29; 37. 113; and 65. 1. In the Qur'ānic references where the verse-number in Flügel's edition differs from that in the Egyptian standard edition, that of Flügel is given after the diagonal.