Christian Unity and Fellowship in Light of the Ecumenical Movement

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Abstract *In the beginning of this text author wishes to reflect on the questions of Christian unity and fellowship from the perspectives of biblical texts. From the contemporary context we also face questions of definition and understanding of ecumenism and Ecumenical Movement.*

There are also those non-theological questions of gender, social class or sexual orientation, which inevitably influence or burden questions of Christian unity and fellowship.

In the latter part, the author points to those questions which may be building our Christian unity or work against it.

Finally, author uses an imagery of a bird which uses two wings to be able to fly. So is the Church in need of two wings, one institutional and the other the wing of the Spirit. The two wings working in unison, can make the Church 'fly' over and beyond all its divisions.

Do two walk together without coming to an agreement?

The Croatian translator Šarić renders this Biblical text from the prophet Amos slightly differently: "Do two travel together without knowing each other?" This rendering, in addition to being somewhat closer to the original, gives a better illustration of our topic of unity as a journey together, but also of the unity which is founded on mutual knowledge and agreement. To know and to be involved in getting to know the one who is different, the other, is imperative to unity and fellowship. If it does not exist, instead of unity and fellowship, we will experience single-mindedness, the essence of which is dogmatic, intolerant and exclusive. This problem is outlined in the following sequence: that which we do not know,

we are afraid of, and that which we are afraid of, we do not like. It is evident that there is a relatively short distance between not knowing and repulsion, or even hatred. Travelling with a stranger may not always be pleasant, but one has to travel, and it can provide an opportunity to get to know the other.

Despite varied historical differences, and often moving in separate trajectories, Christ's and Christian churches nevertheless travel "together." Despite all these differences, the common journey is not a mere matter of our choice or good will. Christian unity and fellowship are elevated to the level of Christ's command: "This is my command, that you love each other as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). Nevertheless, as the Gospel of Christ is ultimately not a matter of Christian legislation and juridical predication, it becomes a fervent prayer of the Lord "that they all may be one. As you, Father, are in me, and I in you, so may they also be one in us" (Jn 17:21). It is somehow symptomatic that, even before the establishment of the Church, Jesus prays to the Father "that they all may be one." Is this perhaps a sign of a certain divine indication of the human disunitedness in the history which is to follow?

Let us glance at biblical literature and remind ourselves how the historical human yearning for unity and fellowship is depicted in the story of the tower of Babel. The onus of the story was not to reach "heaven," but to earn "a name to oneself" and "not to be scattered" (Gen 11:4). To stay somehow unified, with "one tongue," to be able to understand and be understood. Language has forever been used for carving boundaries between people and for building walls. Language can be a means of resuscitation or a mighty weapon for killing; with it we bless or curse (Js 3). Still, the unity of the tower of Babel did not collapse due to the malfunction of their "foreign language school" or the failure of their primitive Esperanto. The collapse of the Babilonian unity was not so much a matter of the lack of a "common tongue." On the contrary, the gist of their problem lay in their "political manifesto."

In all this, we observe significant differences between the texts and stories from Genesis 11 and Genesis 12, between Babel and Abraham. The former, those who inhabited Babel, built their political program on the basic premise, "let us make ourselves a name" (11:4). Due to their overall insecurity, their unity and fellowship had to be built on the enormous monument to their name. On the other hand, in the historical report about Abraham, there is actually no political program, except the program (promise) which God himself laid out before Abraham. And except for the fact that despite all unclarities and numerous dilemmas, by faith, Abraham submitted when he received the calling (Heb 11:8) and undertook the journey as Yahweh had instructed him (Gen 12:4).

Christian unity and fellowship, therefore, is not based on a political program, but on obedience and submmission to God's calling to unity and fellowship. It is

no wonder, then, that Paul exhorts Christians in Ephesus, in Philippi and all over the world of his time to "seek to keep the unity of the Spirit" (Eph 4:3). Whether we define this as Paul's ecumenism or something else is irrelevant. What is crucial is to understand Christian unity and fellowship not as a political program but as the Savior's prayer and command.

Siziphus' work

Much has been said about ecumenism in our circles, sometimes in a perfunctory way and lacking any real understanding of the issues, but sometimes also with true understanding of the issues involved. Ecumenism has also become part and parcel of the vocabulary of political correctness. Judging by the plethora of ecumenical events and undertakings, those following a regular pattern and those which occur at irregular intervals, involving high ecclesiastical officials and lower-ranking believing masses, one could infer that Christian unity in Croatia thrives and flourishes. But this would be a hasty conclusion. If each of us would undertake more careful scrutiny of our own backyard, and only then also over the ecclesiastical fence, we would soon abandon the romantic notion of an existing Christian brotherhood and unity. Before we speak to unity and ecumenism in the yard next to ours, let us reiterate, by way of rehearsing what we have learned, that there is still much to do in our own backyards. There is more than enough need for internal dialogue and self-interrogation. Let us also not forget that the principle *ecclesia semeper reformanda* is not an option. The conservation of existing circumstances is the most secure way to the Church's death and its social irrelevance.

This is how the work of Christian unity would look as perceived from Siziphus' point of view. Siziphus was "the shrewdest of all mortals and built the wonderful city of Corinth," but despite all his cunning and through his imprudence and deceit, he brought upon himself the wrath of Zeus who sent Thanatos (Death) to take Siziphus to the underworld. An eternal punishment awaited him there. He had to push a heavy marble rock from the plain up the steep ravine using his hands and legs. As soon as he began to think that he had managed to transport the rock to the top of the ravine, the rock would roll back down into the valley. This went on without end.[1] Many who work on bringing about Christian unity and fellowhsip often feel just like the legendary Siziphus. As soon as we have made success walking upwards "on all fours" towards the *summit of unity*, the unity, just like that enormous rock of Siziphus, rolls back down into the *valley of Christian disunity*. Just when we think that we have made significant progress, something happens which pulls us two steps back even further.

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[1] Comp. Schwab, 89.

In-House Conflict

Let us not forget that the notion of "Christian unity and fellowship" does not include only Christian and ecclesiastical life which takes place in, or refers to, the realm which transcends confessional boundaries. We have all experienced more than once that the problem of Christian unity was more of a challenge, or a more pressing challenge, within the same confession or denomination than across confessional boundaries. Who can hurt one more than one's own, as a saying goes, and this adage is confirmed by the practical experience of Christian traditions to which we belong and in which we live and work.

The History of the Ecumenical Movement

Within the European continent, Southeastern Europe is a region where the Christian east and west meet in a unique way: Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and, to a lesser degree, Protestantism. In other regions, the proportional representation of these Christian confessions and their relationship will be totally different. These geo-religious circumstances themselves warrant the Ecumenical Movement and all efforts in the direction of Christian unity, and urge us not only to discuss ecumenical relations but to give more serious energy to promoting Christian unity.[2]

Energy invested in promoting Christian unity is dependent on the time and space it occupies. Even though the Roman Catholic Church officially opened the chapter of Christian reconciliation in the form of the Ecumenical Movement only in the middle of the twentieth century through the results of the Second Vatican Council, its precursors in this region had already existed since the seventeenth century in the persons of theologians of Christian reconciliation such as Markantun de Dominis from the island of Rab and Juraj Križanić.

Here We Stand...!

There were other significant ecumenical practitioners. Some of them can be characterised as indirect proponents of ecumenism, such as the great Croatian Bishop Strossmayer. At the First Vatican Council in Rome (1869-1870), Strossmayer urged for the primacy of the Holy Scripture on account of which he was declared a heretic, a Protestant and a traitor of the Church. He certainly did not want to cause a schism in the Church, merely to direct attention to the roots of the faith which he found in the authority of the Holy Scripture.

One of the outcomes of Strossmayer's position was that certain cardinals

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[2] The notion of ecumenism in our region primarily applies to the relationship between east and west, Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism.

persistantly interrupted his address with exclamations "Step down! Out with the Protestant, Calvinist, the traitor of the Church!" He concluded his speech before the assembled cardinals with words which resembled those of Luther: "Save the Church from the threatening shipwreck. Only in the Holy Scripture seek the regulations of faith which we have to believe and which we have to preach. I have had my say: May the Lord help me!"

When Martin Luther was asked by the Emperor: "Martin, reply honestly, do you reject your books and their fallacies or not?" Luther concluded his reply with the well known statement: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. May God help me. Amen!" In some strange way, the history of ecumenism starts with this sentence by Luther.

Almost half a millenium has passed since this famous sentence was uttered, and it appears as if we still talk a lot about the matters of unity and fellowship and step in place. We also seem to be uttering this same sentence claiming that we stand here and are not able to do otherwise.

Theological and Ecclesiological Transitions

The unity of the Church cannot be examined independently of transitions and movements on the ecclesiological and wider theological plane. Thus, before we look into matters and differences which divide us, it has to be said that the Ecumenical Movement is subject to its *context*, as is everything else. One cannot speak of ecumenism in an Anglo-Saxon context of Protestant Western Europe and America in the same way as one can speak of ecumenism in the territories of the former Soviet Union.

In addition to these confessional, geopolitical and religious contextual differences, there are other factors which can no longer be treated as "non-theological" or irrelevant for the Church. These are questions of race, sex, class or sexual orientation. These considerations have resulted in the emergence of a variety of *contextualized theologies*. Alongside the existing ecclesial division into the western and eastern church and the plethora of theologies which transcend confessional boundaries (such as theology of liberation, theology of same-sex rights, etc.), there are also various statistics, e.g. that in the near future, fifty percent of all Catholics will live in South America, that the third World is Christianized to the effect that Christianity ceases to be the distinctive feature of the Western European cultural circle. All these are indications which cannot be ignored and which have a significant impact on future efforts related to the unity of the Church.

Indicative of these movements and advances is the BWA congress which took place in Canberra, Australia in 1991. It gathered representatives from over one hundred countries and three hundred churches – among them 35% women, 46% lay people and 11% young people. Furthermore, 130 delegates and partici-

pants came from Africa and 140 from Asia. This statistical information points to the significant step forward in the understanding of the unity of the Church and the efforts in furthering its cause.

The Question of Definition

The notions of *inter-religious dialogue* and *ecumenism* and the *Ecumenical Movement* are often used interchangeably in both popular and scholarly literature, and this custom unnecessarily creates confusion among uninitiated readership. This is why any talk about ecumenism has to start from the semantic level, i.e. on the level of definition.

It is self evident that two people from two different perspectives will speak about the same object in different ways. This kind of communication often degenerates into the communication between a deaf and a mute person. Therefore it is customarily necessary to offer a clear definition of the topic discussed or the terms which are used in the discussion. It is counter-productive to take anything for granted and make insubstantiated inferences or conclusions. Judgments are often arrived at which are insufficiently rooted in facts simply because of the absence of clear definition or an agreement about what is precisely being debated.

What is ecumenism and how is it understood or interpreted by various stakeholders? It is manifest that a Roman Catholic, Protestant, charismatic Christian or Orthodox will not speak about it identically. Nevertheless, Christian unity is the topic which is equally relevant for all of them, and they are all equally responsible for it. Any constructive discussion about ecumenism and the unity of the Church thus presupposes the attempt to clarify, and preferably define, what is meant by it. This, however, also means that any constructive and successful dialogue presupposes clarity about one's own identity. People who do not know what and who they are will have difficulty in conducting a successful dialogue with their neighbors. Finally, the inevitable precise *historical* moment at which Christian dialogue takes place determines the fine points of the framework in which dialogue about ecumenism takes place, as well as our understanding of it and approach to the dialogue.

In speaking about our understanding of ecumenism, we certainly must define several other terms and situate them in the appropriate context. The terms such as *Christian unity and fellowship* and *ecumenism* are not synonymous. This needs to be clearly stated for the purpose of a better articulation of the present topic, i.e. "Christian Unity and Fellowship in Light of the Ecumenical Movement." The title itself already indicates that the notion of ecumenism is understood as one historical movement among many others, while the notion of "unity and fellowship" originates from the Bible and is determined by the Savior's command and

prayer. The latter notion is thus wider and superior to any historical Christian or ecclesiastical movement, including ecumenism. Ecumenism can be optional – one may want to embrace it or not to embrace it and join it. Christian unity and fellowship are not optional and have no alternative because they are not rooted in *our plan* but in *God's* plan. Furthermore, ecumenism as a movement will always contain within it ailments in the same way as all other "isms" do, and is not exempt from this. God's plan and God's challenge to Christian unity and fellowship existed before the appearance of ecumenism, and will remain after ecumenism, should this "ism" collapse.

People approach, and have differing attitudes towards, both ecumenism as historically given, and the Savior's prayer and command related to unity. Some consider ecumenism, as well as Christian unity, a kind of *Siziphus' toils*. Others see it as a *threat*, and still others as a *coockoo's egg*. Despite differing views, we are all equally ready to pull as if from the hat, and appeal to the Savior's prayer "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). In doing this, we forget that building unity requires putting in effort, that it involves making sacrifices, and also that it is the work of the Spirit. In this sense, unity still does not fall from out of the blue, but it requires effort, will and determination. In this vein, Paul exhorts and reminds: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3).

Unity in Diversity

The ideal of Christian unity will manifest itself in their yearning for all Christians to be "under one roof," to share the same denominational designation and name. This involves talk about the so-called visible unity, although it is difficult to talk about some invisible unity considering that any genuine unity is visible. This certainly defines Christian unity as institutionalised unity, which even under the most ideal circumstances, is not in itself the guarantee of unanimity. What is more, for the adherents of this kind of unity, it means the annulment of all Christian confessions, and consequently the affirmation of the one "holy and universal (catholic) church."

Unanimity or Uniformity

When the Christian church in Corinth was torn apart by disunity, the Apostle Paul urged them to "agree with one another" and further that they all may be "perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor 1:10). A major key to the often striking misunderstandings related to the issue of Christian unity and the ecumenical movement lies in the different starting positions of those involved. Some identify *unity* with the dogmatic character of *jednoumlje* which is characteristic

of certain political systems but frequently also of a religous system which relies heavily on this dogmatic element. Some dogmas have lead many to the stake. Others threw them out of elite clubs. If we would judge unity by the uniformity of thought, genuine unity would have no future. It is better to speak of unanimity because unity comes from one Spirit. Unanimity, like unity, does not blend easily with that dogmatic element which originates in the insistence on the uniformity of thought. Further, it is manifest that those who think of uniformity have always been quick to organize themselves as an elite club or a totalitarian regime. The Church of Christ is neither an elite club of saints, nor should it be a totalitarian society of uniformity of thought with those who think the same. Unanimity is not dogmatic by nature because splits and separation do not belong among the fruit of the Spirit but among the works of the flesh (Gal 5:20).

It seems, therefore, that simultaneously with the danger of splits and disunity, there exists a real propensity towards *egalitarianism* and uniformity which should not be identified with unity. It is relatively easy to attain unity where all think the same about all issues, whether they want it or not.

What Unites us and What Tears us Apart?

There are three areas in the context of the ecumenical movement which can function as factors of Christian unity or disunity. They are *ecclesiology, theology* and *spiritual movements* through the history of the Church.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesial legitimacy is the hot potato of the Ecumenical Movement and Christian unity. It is expressed well in a frequently heard question, "Which church is right, then?" Many of us have often come across it in our everyday communication with people. The question of the right church has been a challenge particularly in the period after the Reformation, and that not only from the perspective of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, but also among churches and religious communities stemming from the Reformation.

The non-Roman Catholic side of Christianity is burdened with the unhappy classification of churches to the so-called "historic churches" and those others which are often dubbed "free churches" as if they are somehow free of historicity. This designation of "free churches" is then occasionally produced from the spiritual armoury and used according to the demands of daily church politics. It is not clear what the user of this syntax wants to communicate. Does it mean that some churches are historic and others are non-historic? It can be surmised that this dichotomy serves church-political purposes rather than the advancement of Christian unity. It can also be surmised that this dichotomy refers to ecclesiology

rather than to history. The Reformation churches which adopted the Episcopalian model of governance and those who are called "free" originated and developed roughly at the same time. Therefore it would be wiser and more accurate to speak about the ecclesial model rather than the so-called historiocity. Why not then use this ecclesial dichotomy instead of this preferred politicized syntax and the division to the so-called "political churches" and "other Protestant denominations"? Unless, of course, the full ecclesiality is predicated on historical continuity. Further, some may go so far as to declare certain Christian churches "Christian religious movements" without clergy and rituals, and thus deprive them of any and all ecclesial legitimacy.[3] It is indubitable that certain Christian communities or Christian churches do not even hide such tendencies and intentions. It is also true that through these intentions they work towards their own harm, and in this way they de facto lose their ecclesiality. However, this is a discussion for some other occasion. For a variety of reasons, the terminology used will be designations of church, community, movement or sect.

Theology

Despite discernable and acclaimed Christological unity, churches belonging to various traditions can find themselves divided by elements of dogmatic nature or even traditional religiosity towards which even the majority, the Roman Catholic Church, in Croatia occasionally shows certain reservations. On the other hand, there are well-known examples of the theological methodology of the majority, the Roman Catholic Church, in Croatia whereby it recognizes elements which have originated in popular religiosity and not in theological and Biblical reflection, and elevated them to the level of established dogma or teaching.[4] One such example is seen in Mariological devotions within the Roman Catholic Church which, to the majority of churches stemming from the Reformation, pose a serious obstacle to a more tangible fellowship. The dogmatic document of the Vatican Council entitled *Lumen gentium*, especially the text LG 66-67, describes the theological methodology which the Roman Catholic Church utilizes to confirm various forms of devotion which are "within the boundaries of healthy and orthodox doctrine" (LG 66). This specifically Roman Catholic confessional practice actually does not contribute to a wider Christian unity, especially as Mary is elevated to the level of the "mother of Christian unity" (*mater unitatis christianae*). Speaking of Mary as the protectress of Christian unity, Croatian Franciscan

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[3] The Quakers, who originated in the 17th century, were known as, and called themselves as, the "Religious Society of Friends" or simply as "Friends".

[4] For a more extensive treatment of "popular Marian piety" as a formative of Roman Catholic theology see J. Šimić in *Bogoslovska smotra,* 1993, pp. 1-2.

Karlo Balić, a distinguished Mariologist who gave a significant contribution at the Second Vatican Council, opines that "it is the duty of all Christians to invoke her so that she would bring them to the longed-for unity by her powerful intercession and protection" (Pezo:1993,54). It is needless to explicate how this kind of ecumenical presupposition would echo in the ears of Protestant believers or theologians.

It is evident that similar "methodologies" detrimental to Christian unity also come from the circles of other Christian traditions. The often questionable hermeneutics of some Protestant churches stems from various forms of devotion and not from orthodox biblical theology and proper exegesis of the Word of God. This is even more paradoxical since one of the pillars, and the historical cornerstone, of the Protestant and Reformed heritage is the principle of *Sola Scriptura*!

Spiritual Movements

One of the least expected difficulties in the efforts towards Christian unity comes surprisingly from those traditions within the Church which explicitly emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit. It is certain, and actually paradoxical, that precisely such spiritual movements, which are firmly anchored in the outworking of the Spirit, exist in the Roman Catholic Church and in the majority of confessional Christian communities, and in modern times appear in the form of charismatic movements, really work against Christian unity. Cold statistics show that from among forty Christian churches and religious communities in Croatia, one third comprise what? – what do they comprise?.[5] Some will interpret that fact as their growth and progress; others as fragmentation and disunity. The Church is compared with the Body. We are all well aware that the biological body grows through the division of cells but eventually it grows into one whole body. Can an arm say to the leg that it does not need it (comp. 1 Cor 12)?

Let us outline the causes of this quite surprising phenomenon. In his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 4:3-5), the Apostle Paul lists elements of Christian unity and thus provides a definition for it as the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3), the unity of hope (Eph 4:4) and the unity of the body (Eph 4:4). All this is the outworking of one Spirit.

The Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit

Taking biblical theology as the starting point, it becomes evident that modern spiritual movements (charismatic movements) almost entirely rely on the

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[5] This information is based on the investigation of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, the Association for Religous Freedom and the Governmental Commission for Communication with Religious communities.

manifestations of the the gifts of the Spirit, while the fruits of the Spirit are neglected.

The Culture of Foregoing and the Culture of Demand

One additional reason for the the absence of Christian unity in the framework of spiritual movements is a clash of two spiritual cultures. These are the *culture of foregoing* and the *culture of demand*. I deliberately speak of two *spiritual cultures* instead of two *theologies*.[6] The notion of culture, wider than the notion of theology, in addition to theoretical and theological components, also includes a common and inclusive set of values, a way of living, behavior and mutual relations. It stands in stark contrast to theology which can stagnate and degenerate into a mere academic discipline. Because of this, the teaching of Jesus is not a set of theological or doctrinal propositions, but is a corresponding way of life. Because of this, the teaching of Jesus is actually a culture of living founded in his teaching and life. And while we are able to establish this or that theology, Christ challenges us with his transparent spiritual culture of living. This is why we speak about the *culture of foregoing*, and not about the theology of foregoing. For the same reason, and relevant to the time we live in, we speak about the *culture of demand*, and not about the theology of demand.

It is not particularly difficult to trace the popular and socio-historical roots of these spiritual cultures which have spawned certain theological systems. Both of these cultures of foregoing and demand form an everyday human experience and operate in human lives. They are present in the very core of human community, i.e. in the family unit. Parents forego, children demand. Foregoing is, in many respects, the basis of of all *human fellowship* and *unity*; it is a constituent part of that successful part of our humanity. So also is demand, even from the earliest childhood days. Foregoing becomes an inalienable part of human fellowship and unity, from the smallest and basic unit of human society, i.e from marriage and family, through to the wider human society.

The Culture of Foregoing. The teaching and practice of Jesus point to foregoing rather than demand as the foundation of Christ's gospel. "He, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing" (Phil 2:6). Other translations render the last phrase "he emptied himself" or "made himself nothing." In this regard, we can discuss Christology as a theological system of God's assumption of human nature and incarnation, Jesus' human nature and the theology of kenosis, i.e. his relinquish-

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[6] The term "culture" comes from Latin "'cultura" for bringing up.

ment of "divine nature".[7] However, the act of giving up divine nature by Jesus is not only the highlight of the culture of foregoing, but it clearly points to his earthly life orientation and ministry, his basic teaching. That is why he stated: If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

The Culture of Demand. Foregoing is mostly foreign to spiritual movements since they are predominantly based on the culture of demand and claiming rights. In English Christian terminology, some aspects of these movements are termed name it and claim it[8] as they are rooted in a selective reading and interpretation of the biblical injunction, "Ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you" (Jn 15:7).

Christian unity and fellowship, just as any other fellowship in human society, to a large extent depend on foregoing. Still, foregoing does not connote *making a compromise*. It is not a compromise with regard to truth. Someone will rightly observe that one must not abandon truth nor the entirety of the gospel for the sake of fellowship and unity. In the same way, one cannot accept upholding partial truth or practising theological reductionism as evident in some spiritual movements. This, however, applies to all parties. We have already pointed to the significance and complements between the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, manifest in biblical theory, for ecclesial pastoral practise. These also point to the full and complete truth.

In Place of Conclusion

If the ecumenical movement is to rise above the present goal of Christian institutional and political unity, it must inevitably invest much more energy in dealing with the areas mentioned above, i.e. ecclesiology, theology and the work of the Spirit. A cursory and superficial glance at the situation reveals the responsibility of all parties involved, that is those who want to go together, those who are conscious of the unescapable need for tolerance and agreement without compromising the gospel.

Further, the Ecumenical Movement cannot be a political agreement made exclusively by church leaders and ecumenical commisioners of individual churches.

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[7] Baillie, D. M., 94.

[8] The challenges of the culture of demand, well known from the contemporary trends, gave birth to numerous doctrinal systems and biblically questionable theologies such as the Faith Movement, the Health and Wealth Gospel, the Prosperity Gospel and pronounced demonology. In addition to these doctrinarily suspicious movements, there have been cases of manipulation of people and their material possessions.

Fellowship is the outworking of the Spirit yet it demands a significant investment of energy. Every step of the conquered territory must be protected (Eph 4).

Finally, let us compare the Church with a bird. A bird has two wings, and both wings need to function properly in order for the bird to fly successfully. Taking off requires that both wings operate in a coordinated manner. In the same way, throughout history, the Church has always had two wings, one institutional and the other charismatic (spiritual). In order for the Church to take off and rise above our fleshly efforts, it needs both wings to be healthy, functioning and well-synchronized.

In necesarius unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas!

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Sažetak   *U tekstu autor nastoji ukazati na istinske temelje kršćanskog jedinstva i zajedništva kako se dadu uočiti iz biblijskog teksta i konteksta. Istovremeno iz suvremene perspektive, pretpostavka ovoj temi nalazi se već i na razini definicije. Što je i kako za koga ekumenizam? Ekumenizam iz naše današnje perspektive, ipak je samo jedan od pokreta u povijesti šireg nastojanja oko jedinstva i zajedništva kršćana. Je li za*

neke ekumenizam zapravo Sizifov posao? Što odista znači jedinstvo u različitosti? Kako se s time nosimo unutar-konfesionalno i preko-konfesionalno? Brka li se također, pokatkad u nekih kršćanskih tradicija jednoumlje sa jedinstvom i jednodušnosti?

Povijesna razmeđa ekumenizma, na europskom i na našem hrvatskom tlu, nezaobilazno se dotiču i onih 'neteoloških' pitanja - rase, spola (zaređenje žena), klase (teologija oslobođenja), seksualne orjentacije (istospolne veze). Sve su to pitanja koja posredno ili neposredno utječu na kršćanski dijalog i pitanja jedinstva kršćana.

U drugom dijelu autor ukazuje i na ono što nas kršćane potencijalno spaja a što razdvaja, usredotočuje se na pitanja tri pitanja: ekleziologije, teologije, duhovskih crkvenih pokreta.

U zaključku se ukazuje na perspektive i izazove prema istinskom jedinstvu kršćana, u odnosu na unutar-konfesionalni i preko-konfesionalni dijalog raznih kršćanskih tradicija. Autor potom prispodobljuje Crkvu sa pticom koju nose dva krila, u eklezijalnom pogledu, jedno je institucionalno, drugo krilo je duhovsko. Jedino koordiniranim i sinhroniziranim djelovanjem ovih dvaju krila Crkva može uzletjeti iznad svih svojih razjedinjenosti.

Translated by Davorin Peterlin