



DISCIPLES—ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE:

The Promise of a Distinctive Dialogue

Comments on the Agreed Statement
*Receiving and Handing on the Faith:
The Mission and Responsibility of the Church* (2002)

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I. The History and Character of the Disciples—Roman Catholic Dialogue

It is a privilege and a pleasure to contribute these comments on “Receiving and Handing on the Faith: The Mission and Responsibility of the Church” (2002),¹ the Agreed Statement from the third phase of the Disciples—Roman Catholic dialogue. This text is best understood in the context of the dialogue as a whole, and I would like to begin by noting the history and distinctive quality of these Disciples—Roman Catholic conversations. Following that I offer some reflections to the text, noting areas of special interest and drawing attention to points of contact between it and other current ecumenical work (especially in the multilateral setting). Finally I venture to suggest several possible topics and perspectives for the future work of the dialogue.

The dialogue with the Roman Catholic church is the oldest and most developed of the Disciples’ international dialogues with major confessional bodies, the others being with the Reformed tradition (through the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, WARC) and with the Russian Orthodox Church. Each of these dialogues has its own aim and process. The former has worked towards “a reconciliation of memories,” pursued in two meetings between the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council (DECC) and WARC, in 1987 and in 2002, with the recent meeting calling for “the development of comprehensive partnership in pursuit of the vision of the two eventually becoming one.”² The dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church has sought “growth in mutual respect” through meetings in 1987 and 1990 as well as the visit of a Disciples delegation to Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1998.³

These indicate the longevity and special intensity of the Disciples’ bilateral engagement with the Roman Catholic church. Some form of Disciples—Roman Catholic dialogue began as early as 1962 in the United States.⁴ The present international dialogue began in 1977; its first

phase was completed in 1982 with the publication of “Apostolicity and Catholicity,”⁵ covering the topics “Our Life Together,” “Spiritual Ecumenism,” “Baptism,” Faith and Tradition,” “Affirmations about the Unity we Seek” and, in conclusion, “Looking to the Future.” The second phase of dialogue covered the years 1983–1992 and culminated in the text “The Church as Communion in Christ.”⁶ This reviewed “The Specific Nature of this Dialogue” and then explored “Differences in Christian Faith and Life,” “A Convergence of Vision?,” “New Creation and Communion,” “Eucharist and Continuity with the Apostolic Community,” “Teaching and Continuity with the Apostolic Community,” “The Gifts of the Spirit for the Church,” “The Church.” The text concluded by identifying four areas for future work: the Eucharist; the “fundamental structure of the church,” including the issue of episcopacy; the “nature of the rule of faith in a changing history,” and the primacy of the bishop of Rome.

The third phase of the dialogue (1993–2002) has now concluded with the publication of “Receiving and Handing on the Faith: The Mission and Responsibility of the Church”⁷. This takes up the third of the future topics named at the conclusion of the 2nd dialogue phase, namely the holding to—and handing on of—faith in the midst of “a changing” history. It focuses on the topics “The Word of God, Proclaimed and Received,” “Holding to the Faith: The Church in History,” “Receiving the Faith: the Individual in the Community,” and “Handing on the Faith: the Mission of the Whole Church,” and concludes by restating the intention to tackle the three remaining areas for future work in later phases of the dialogue.

Each phase of the dialogue has proceeded through annual meetings, central to which have been not only theological discussions on the similarities and differences between

the two churches, but also a shared life of fellowship and prayer, as well as encounter with local congregations. One particularity of the dialogue is that the churches concerned do not have a direct experience of division: when the Disciples were in process of formation their concerns were with other Protestant, most particularly Reformed, churches, and issues (whether theological, ecclesiological, or institutional) arising from the Roman Catholic church were not involved. Thus the special “common history” of the two churches, officially speaking and as evidenced by the present dialogue, began within the context of the modern ecumenical movement and has flourished within that context. It has benefited from the common engagement of both churches in multi-lateral ecumenical projects; the best-known is the development of the convergence text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* by the WCC’s Faith and Order Commission—a body in which both churches have provided strong leadership over the years.

Several commentators have referred to the distinctive quality of this international bilateral. The building of mutual understanding, trust and respect, while important for every such dialogue, has perhaps been of special significance for this one. For even if the churches did not have a history of division there were, and are, very considerable differences between them, and some of these on fundamental issues of the faith. There was a need for the churches to learn to know each other, not just as theological and liturgical “systems” but as living faith communities. Thus it is scarcely surprising that the agreed statement from the second phase of the dialogue emphasised the notion of “ethos” (see para. 4-10), understood as “the social, mental, religious and philosophical atmosphere surrounding a group and influencing its way of life.”⁸

The dialogue has been characterised by a steady, patient sharing of each church’s faith and practise with the other. The aim, as Jean-Marie Tillard noted, has been not the construction of common theological formulations, but the discovery of existing (and often unexpected) areas of convergence between the two churches⁹—and, I would add, the identification, and clarification, of theological and ecclesiological differences between them. Tillard, whose special affection for this dialogue is well-known, attributed its fruitfulness to the commitment of the churches involved; to its realistic goals, stressing mutual exploration; and to the lack of self-imposed pressure to reach premature or artificial agreement. Speaking informally to the Faith and Order Commission, he said it was precious as one of the few dialogues for which the goal was not unity of these two churches in a formal or structural sense, but the discovery of one another as Christians and

churches, each living out the faith in its own distinctive way, and each with something to teach, and to learn from, the other about faithfulness to the Gospel.

Although the structural unity of these two churches is not the aim of the dialogue, unity has been central to its vision—the unity, that is, of *all* the churches, as a reality already given by God but, due to the division of the churches, not fully manifested in history. “Receiving and Handing on the Faith” begins by noting that at the beginning of the dialogue “the Commission accepted ‘as a basic principle of ecumenism that there can be only one Church of God (*unica Ecclesia*) and that this Church already exists’; furthermore it stated, ‘We see ourselves as having a communion *in via* . . . Now we have the task of giving external expression to the communion *in via*’” (*Apostolicity and Catholicity*, paras. 52, 57).

Each dialogue develops its own style of working and reporting on its work. This dialogue has proceeded through a demanding series of annual meetings, with no less than 5 for its first phase, and 10 each for phases 2 and 3. I would characterise the agreed statements as balanced, insightful, charitable; they breathe a certain gracious air. They have a habit of being well-written and clear—estimable virtues, by no means automatic in ecumenical texts. The explanatory notes are genuinely helpful (for example, Note 3 to para. 3.9 on the formation of the canon). And all this without skirting difficulties: Fr. William Henn, OFM CAP, began his commentary on “The Church as Communion in Christ” by noting that its authors “cannot be accused of ignoring important differences in belief and practice between their respective communities.”¹⁰ The style of work in the dialogue as a whole, and the tone of the agreed statements, is well captured in the Introduction to “Receiving and Handing on the Faith.” This notes that Disciples and Roman Catholics share a commitment to the Gospel, that they “place a similar emphasis on the Church as communion, and on the sacraments of baptism and eucharist,” and that “they share some common beliefs about the nature of the Church.” Then it continues:

yet there are also some differences, which reveal themselves in different structures. Perhaps the major query from a Roman Catholic perspective is how Disciples, with an apparent lack of structure and creedal formulations, have handed on the Gospel. For Disciples, on the other hand, the main question is whether the more elaborate hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church, with an apparent emphasis on uniformity, gives people sufficient freedom of conscience in their response to the Gospel. (I.4)

I would like to mention in particular one quality of the dialogue which I think is of special importance for other bilateral and multilateral dialogues, and the ecumenical movement as a whole. Just because Disciples and Roman Catholics differ significantly in theology and Christian practice, yet are discovering significant agreement on some central convictions of the faith, the question arises again and again of the relation between the reality of the faith, and the diverse formulations used to express it. Significantly, this issue is mentioned in a well-nuanced way in the section on “Future Work” which concludes “Receiving and Handing on the Faith”:

As we have grown to understand each other better, we have also become aware that we often do and say the same things but for different reasons. There is a need to investigate whether there is mutual recognition of the legitimacy of

different ways of arriving at the same practices or the same conclusions. We also sometimes do different things to achieve the same purpose, and there is a corresponding need to reflect upon the legitimacy of that. (6.1)

When working towards mutual recognition, when seeking to discern the church in other churches, how do we know when a form of words or practice which differs from ours expresses, in fact, the same understanding of the faith? More troublingly, is it possible that the same form of words or practice in fact expresses, within another confessional or cultural context, a different understanding of the faith? It seems to me that this dialogue is well-placed to address these issues, which are of enormous significance for all the churches as they seek to extend their mutual recognition. We will return to this briefly at the conclusion of these comments.

II. “Receiving and Handing on the Faith”—A Creative Ecumenical Contribution

As noted above, “Receiving and Handing on the Faith” tackles the question of the “nature of the rule of faith in a changing history.” It does so by beginning with the Word of God as the record of how the faith was inaugurated (section 2). Significantly, this starts with an affirmation of “The Missionary Nature of the Church” (2.1-2.2), a theme which returns in section 5, “Handing on the Faith: The Mission of the Whole Church,” to conclude the body of the document. This *inclusio* strengthens the intention of the document “to renew the vital link between the mission and unity of the Church.” (1.7)

A section on “Hearing the Word of God” introduces the notions of proclamation and (at least implicitly) reception, which form underlying themes throughout the rest of the document. Then it explores how the Church throughout history has maintained the faith (section 3), with the formation of the canon (3.1-3.10) and the councils of the ancient church (3.11-3.19) serving in a sense as “case studies” of the process through which the Church may discern how to be faithful to the Gospel in a particular age and place. A further discussion explores issues of discernment “in every age” (3.20-26). This leads to discussion of reception of the faith as a process experienced by “the Individual in the Community” (section 4), pursued through discussions of the closely-interrelated issues of conscience and freedom (4.2-4.8) and “Teaching with Authority” (4.9-4.16). Section 5 on mission emphasises the themes of “Equipping the Faithful for Evangelisation” (5.1-5.7) and then “Evangelisation by Word and Witness” (5.8-5.13). Section 6 concludes by pointing to future work to be done in the dialogue.

I would like to offer a general comment, and then reflections on three specific aspects of the text. To my mind the

creative achievement of this document lies in its treating the question of faith in “a changing history” within the broad context of the life of the church as a whole, stressing that both proclamation and reception—however individual they are as primarily experience—happen within the community of the faithful, guided by the Holy Spirit. What could easily have led to a narrow discussion of inculturation and cultural equivalence (and all the more easily in connection with the theme of mission), becomes a sustained reflection on the nature of the church as a community of the faithful in mission. This enables the text to consider questions of “correct” teaching, individual conscience, and authority not as issues of freedom, control and church structures, but as part of a process belonging to the whole people of God to ensure that the faith which is being handed on, is in fact the faith received from the Apostles.

A first more specific comment concerns the relationship between the faith of the individual and that of the Christian community as a whole, and over time. This is discussed in complementary ways in the sections “Conscience, Freedom and Being in Christ” (4.2-4.8) and “Teaching with Authority” (4.9-4.16). The treatment of individual faith and the faith of the church needs, I believe, to be related to baptism, which is the classic point at which this question becomes visible for most believers, and the present text would I think, be further strengthened by reference to recent ecumenical work on baptism. Understandably the document does not delve deeply into baptism, that having been treated in some depth in “Apostolicity and Catholicity” (paras. 22-35). Thus “Receiving and Handing on the Faith” pauses only to affirm that “a believer’s Yes to Christ incorporates that

person into the Yes of faith spoken by the Church throughout the ages (cf. 2 Cor 1:20)" (1.6). This is close to the thought developed in the Faith and Order text-in-progress "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation."¹¹—a text which, incidentally, learned something from "Apostolicity and Catholicity"—and some interaction with that text could be helpful. By placing the once-for-all moment of baptism more clearly within the process of life-long growth into Christ, it seeks to help the churches gain a fresh appreciation of how the faith of the individual grows, however individually it may be experienced, grows within the Christian community and is nurtured and tested there:

As Christians mature, their faith grows into conformity with the faith confessed, celebrated and witnessed to by the Christian community, both locally and worldwide. The believer's faith grows and deepens in the relationship with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and that faith finds its fullness in the faith professed by the whole church throughout the ages. Thus, the faith which the believer comes to confess as his or her own is *that* faith and no other. The "we believe" of the Christian community and the "I believe" of personal commitment become one.¹²

This raises the larger question of how far the dialogue should return to topics already dealt with, in cases where significant developments have occurred either ecumenically, or in the lives of particular churches. An example in this context would be the increasing frequency (for both faith-related and cultural reasons) of adult baptism also in churches which baptise infants. "Apostolicity and Catholicity" is aware of the phenomenon: "Catholics see the fundamental belief of their church regarding baptism as expressed with new clarity in the revised rite for adult baptism, which includes personal confession of faith" (para. 28). But it would be valuable to review that discussion of baptism in light of the 25 years' liturgical and theological experience since "Apostolicity and Catholicity" was published, and relate the churches' recent experience with baptism to the appropriate sections of "Receiving and Handing on the Faith."

A second specific comment relates to the extended discussion of "Councils and the Declaration of the Faith" (3.II-3.I9). The common affirmations made in this section are a remarkable example of how Disciples' thinking has grown and developed through our engagement with the ecumenical movement, and not least through the present dialogue. But the text is also helpful in pointing clearly to remaining differences between Disciples and Roman Catholics in this area: for example,

" . . . Disciples are more reluctant than Roman Catholics to provide official teaching on a wide range of matters." (4.I3) (That, it has to be said, is putting it mildly indeed.)

There is a great deal to be learned from the acute and perceptive commentary on the present text by Avery Cardinal Dulles S.J.¹³ He notes a fundamental issue arising from the agreed statement's treatment of the councils: "the restriction of conciliar authority to the early centuries is a point that calls for more explicit discussion than it receives in the present statement. Has the presence of the Holy Spirit to the Church and its pastors diminished since the first millennium?"¹⁴ . The implication seems to be that just as the Holy Spirit's action through the councils is granted (insofar as we accept their authority, however that may be understood), so we need to grant the Holy Spirit's power and freedom to act later on in history. If I read the argument aright, in the context of this discussion that means: to act through the Church and its organ for the discernment of truth, the magisterium.

That is, of course, a very "Roman Catholic" reaction; and my reply is equally a "Disciples" one: Why, indeed, limit the Holy Spirit to the first millennium? That is a question which many of the churches stemming from the Reformation have asked; indeed in many cases they have claimed their own foundation, precisely as a separate ecclesial body, as a work of the Holy Spirit. They least of all would deny the Holy Spirit's activity throughout history; but the question is, where, in what capacity, and with what relation to the existing churches? My point is that if we are to gain urgently-needed clarity on "the way in which the Church can authoritatively proclaim what has become clear only in more recent times,"¹⁵ the question of the Holy Spirit's activity will have to be asked in the context not only of the Church, but of the churches in history. And, for that matter, in the context of the ecumenical movement, for many are convinced that that has been one primary *locus* of the Holy Spirit's activity throughout the previous century—including at moments when the ecumenical movement has challenged the churches in their continued separation from one another.

A third more specific comment to the text deals with the Disciples—Roman Catholic "joint understanding that no teaching of the faith can ever be a completely solitary task" (5.2) . The "teaching of the faith" is then placed within the context of the life of the church, including the role of faithful parents in guiding their children into the faith, formal catechesis and Sunday School instruction, and in seminaries and church-related universities (5.2-5.5).

Importantly, the role of worship, particularly the Eucharist, as well as the liturgical year are recognised as central to the Church's teaching function.

The discussion of this teaching function should be developed, I believe, in relation to the practise of *ethical reflection*, in order to strengthen the link between faith, witness, and action for the sake of justice and reconciliation in the world. The text is aware of the need to relate these dimensions of the Christian life, acknowledging that the hunger for justice and reconciliation is intrinsic to true evangelisation: "Those who are led to profess the Gospel will also show lives truly turned from concern for self to love of neighbour. Such love today will issue in witness to the cause of justice." (5.10) That is a crucial affirmation. But the discussion could benefit, in my opinion, from the creative multilateral work done in the WCC's "ecclesiology and ethics" study and particularly in "Costly Commitment,"¹⁶ the report from a consultation held at Tantur in 1994. Picking up the theme introduced at Roende, Denmark in 1993 of the church as "moral community,"¹⁷ "Costly Commitment" urged the churches to acknowledge ethical reflection and engagement as intrinsic to their witness and mission, indeed to

their very identity. Further, it challenged the churches to *common* ethical reflection and, where possible, action as the most faithful expression of the mission of the one Church of God.¹⁸

But responsible ethical reflection and engagement are not matters for the structures and hierarchies of the churches alone, but for the *whole* people of God, and for this the task of the Church in *moral formation*—the inculcating of a pattern of life based on reflection on ethical issues in light of the Gospel—is essential. Furthermore, this moral formation takes place not only through the formal teaching activity of the church, but through its whole life of worship, fellowship, and witness, and in its own life as an institution within history:¹⁹ "Practices, structures and roles (like moral exemplars and like catechesis) are morally potent."²⁰ And this implies the possibility of *malformation*, when the life of the Church as an institution within history is distorted by the sinfulness of its members. In short: it is crucial to hold together faith, evangelistic witness, and action on behalf of justice and reconciliation; and the Agreed Statement could be strengthened through engagement with recent ecumenical reflection on ecclesiology and ethics.

III. The Disciples—Roman Catholic Dialogue: Prospects for the Future

To summarise, we have suggested in the above discussion some lines for further work: first, to pursue the question of words and meanings, in order to discern more truly when we in fact share a common faith despite different formulations and practises; second, to note the matter of developments in baptismal practise and understanding, and in ecumenical reflection on baptism; third, to address the question of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and the churches, throughout all of history; and fourth, to respond to the urgency of linking faith, evangelistic witness, and action for justice and reconciliation, through exploring the Church's role in the moral formation of its members.

As already indicated, the dialogue has identified three areas for its further work: the Eucharist, the structure of the Church including the matter of episcopal office, and the primacy of the bishop of Rome. I would like to mention two perspectives which could be helpful as Disciples and Roman Catholics approach these topics together, for their own benefit and that of the ecumenical movement as a whole.

First, in the work on Eucharist it will be important to clarify *the relation of the Eucharist to baptism*. This could be of considerable help to the on-going multilateral work on baptism,²¹ which is not far developed in this regard. Furthermore it would help everyone, I am convinced, if a clear and convincing description could finally be given of

the precise difference between baptism and the Eucharist, such that some churches which mutually recognise one another's baptisms are unable to meet together at the Lord's Table. I freely confess to a blind spot here: which of the restrictive arguments about sacramental office and succession currently applied to the Eucharist, could not also be applied to baptism? And why is it that—thanks be to God!—they are not so applied? Could the suggestion of the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland in 1954 be helpful here, to see the oft-repeated Eucharist as in some sense the "eschatological repetition" of the once-for-all act of baptism?²²

Second, the work on the structure of the Church and the bishop of Rome must inevitably raise the question of *the meaning of the unity we are given in relation to the unity we seek*. So far the dialogue between these two distinct churches has located itself within the overall unity of the Church, as given by God. But will it not eventually be necessary to ask: What visible shape may—or *must*?—this unity take? Or, to put it most sharply: is a particular organisational form of the church an intrinsic part of Christian revelation? The trust built within this dialogue could enable work on *structures and forms* of unity that would be helpful for the whole ecumenical movement. In this work I would hope that the self-understanding and experience of Disciples as a *uniting church*²³ would be prominent, perhaps more explicitly so than it has been in the dialogue so far.

Allow me to close with a related but more general, and more personal, comment. We are all familiar with the phenomenon whereby clear statements of one or another church's self-understanding, may be heard by other churches in a negative way, or as posing obstacles to ecumenical progress. My own conviction is that clarity is essential for genuine ecumenical progress, but it works best within a community of conversation where there is a shared understanding, or at least common exploration, of the possible *visible forms* which unity might take, and how legitimate diversities would be honoured within that unity. The absence of such an understanding invites us, when faced by perceived challenges, to fall back into

unhelpful stereotypes. Perhaps "communion" ecclesiology, for all its benefits to the ecumenical movement, has encouraged a certain neglect of questions of structure and form. Here we would be helped, I believe, by a renewal of the old discussion of "models of unity," in this context particularly of organic union and the communion of communions.²⁴

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Notes

- 1 "Receiving and Handing on the Faith: The Mission and Responsibility of the Church" (1993-2002), Agreed Statement from the third phase of the Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue, in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 41, no. 4, October, 2002, pp. 51-77.
- 2 David M. Thompson, "Disciples-Reformed Dialogue," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 332-333; Report of the January, 2002 available from the Council on Christian Unity, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), P. O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206, USA; on the internet at <http://www.disciples.org/ccu/documents/Disciples-RCC.docmeeting>; and from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 150, rte. de Ferney, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland; see also *Towards Closer Fellowship: Report of the Dialogue between Reformed and Disciples of Christ*, Geneva, WARC, 1988; "No Theological Obstacles: Report of the Disciples of Christ - Reformed International Dialogue," in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 27, no. 2, April, 1987, pp. 183-195; A. P. Sell, ed., *Reformed and Disciples of Christ in Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1985.
- 3 Paul A. Crow, Jr., "Disciples-Russian Orthodox Dialogue," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, p. 334; "Communique on a Visit: Disciples and Russian Orthodox in Dialogue, 1987," in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 27, no. 3, July, 1988, pp. 295-298; *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, vol. 12, 1987.
- 4 J.-M.R. Tillard, "Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition, Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom F. Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Pauline Webb, eds., Geneva, WCC Publications, 2002, pp. 333-334.
- 5 "Apostolicity and Catholicity" (1977-1982), Agreed Statement from the first phase of the Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue, in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 41, no. 4, October, 2002, pp. 80-95. See also Basil Meeking, "Review of the Dynamics and Issues in the Previous Five-Year Dialogue," *Mid-Stream*, vol. 23, no. 4, October, 1984, pp. 335-345; and R. K. Welsh, "Reflection on the First Five Years: A Disciples of Christ Perspective," *Mid-Stream*, vol. 23, no. 4, October, 1984, pp. 346-350.
- 6 "The Church as Communion in Christ" (1983-1992), Agreed Statement from the second phase of the Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue, in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 41, no. 4, October, 2002, pp. 96-114. See also J.-M. R. Tillard, "The Contribution of the Disciples of Christ / Roman Catholic Dialogue for the Ecclesiology of the Ecumenical Movement," *Mid-Stream*, vol. 31, no. 1, January, 1992, pp. 14-25.
- 7 "Receiving and Handing on the Faith: The Mission and Responsibility of the Church" (1993-2002), Agreed Statement from the Third Phase of the Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue, in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 41, no. 4, October, 2002, pp. 51-77. See also Paul A. Crow, Jr., "Presentation of the Agreed Statement," in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 41, no. 4, October 2002, pp. 1-5.
- 8 "The Church as Communion in Christ," Note 1.
- 9 J.-M.R. Tillard, "Disciples-Roman Catholic Dialogue," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 333.
- 10 William Henn, OFM CAP, "An Evaluation of 'The Church as Communion in Christ'," in *Information Service of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, No. 84, 1993/3-4, pp. 170-175.
- 11 "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation," FO/2001:24, Faverges, October 2001.
- 12 "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation," para. 48.
- 13 Avery Cardinal Dulles, "'Receiving and Handing on the Faith': Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Disciples of Christ, Comment by Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J.," in *Information Service of*

- the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, No. III (2002/IV) pp. 252-255.
- 14 Avery Cardinal Dulles, "Receiving and Handing on the Faith," p. 253.
- 15 Avery Cardinal Dulles, "Receiving and Handing on the Faith," p. 255.
- 16 "Costly Commitment," in *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church*, pp. 2-23, especially paras. 5-10.
- 17 "Costly Unity," in Thomas F. Best and Martin Robra, eds., *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997, pp. 24-49. The study was conducted jointly by WCC Faith and Order staff and staff of the WCC Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation. In some respects, this picked up important work done earlier in Faith and Order's study "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community." See *Church and World: The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community*, revised edition, Faith and Order Paper No. 151, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1990.
- 18 "Costly Commitment," para. 17.
- 19 "Costly Commitment," paras. 51-74.
- 20 "Costly Commitment," para. 68.
- 21 Cf. "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition of Christian Initiation," and Thomas F. Best and Dagmar Heller, eds., *Becoming a Christian: The Ecumenical Implications of Our Common Baptism*, Faith and Order Paper No. 184, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1999; Report, pp. 74-97.
- 22 Report of the Commission on the Ministry [of the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland], Birmingham, 1954, p. 16. I have begun to explore this theme in a Disciples context (where one could imagine not only baptism but also the Lord's Supper, to which all baptised Christians are invited by Christ as its host, as our "bond of unity") in Thomas F. Best, "Disciples Identity, Ecumenical Partnership, and the Ecumenical Future," in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 32, no. 3, July, 1993, pp. 18-21.
- 23 I am thinking, for example, of the involvement of the Disciples in the Consultation on Church Union, the Ecumenical Partnership with the United Church of Christ, the participation of many Disciples churches around the world in the formation of united churches, and the leadership of Disciples in the world-wide family of united and uniting churches. This constant commitment to organic union, in the sense of the structural integration of previously-divided churches, has marked the Disciples deeply.
- 24 See Thomas F. Best, "Unity, Models of," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 1173-1175 and "Unity, Ways to," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 1179-1181; Paul A. Crow, Jr., "Reflections on Models of Christian Unity," in Thomas F. Best, ed., *Living Today Towards Visible Unity: the Fifth International Consultation of United and Uniting Churches*, Faith and Order Paper No. 142, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1998; and *Mid-Stream*, Vol. 27, No. 2, April, 1998, pp. 116-134.