

**Towards a Ministry of Unity and Charity:
A Survey of the Christian Reformation
Leaders' and Theologians' Responses to Pope
John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint***

**邁向團結和慈愛事工
看基督新教領袖和神學家對
教宗若望保祿二世：願他們合而為一通諭
的回應**

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[ABSTRACT] This study intends to survey and examine a number of the responses, specifically the responses by the Christian Reformation leaders and theologians with a view to assessing the level of reception of the encyclical letter and of the papal office across the Christian Reformation world. This study attempts to highlight the significant contribution of ecumenical dialogue in relation to the attitudinal and paradigm shift that have happened both in the Catholic and the other Christian Churches. In the concluding part, it will highlight the influence of the ecumenical movement, in

particular, Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint*, in the joint project between the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) which is the International Conference on the Asian Ecumenical Movement in 1996 in Hong Kong.

【摘要】 本研究旨在調查和研究基督新教領袖和神學家就教宗若望保祿二世：《願他們合而為一》通諭（*Ut Unum Sint*）和教皇辦公室的接受程度。當中突出天主教和其他基督教會中態度和範例的轉變，並為合一對話帶來重要的貢獻。在結論部分，突出合一運動的影響，特別是在願他們合而為一通諭之下，由亞洲基督教議會（CCA）和亞洲主教團協會（FABC）主辦的聯合項目：1996年在香港舉行的亞洲基督徒合一運動國際會議。

Introduction

Almost half a millennium after the Great Schism (1054 A.D.) took place in the Church of Christ –the division between the Western Church (The Roman Catholic Church) and the Eastern Church (The Greek Orthodox Church) – that undermined not only the unitive aspect but also the holiness of the Church, a series of divisions ensued and this time it happened within the Roman Catholic Church. This series of separations is called Reformation Era. And 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of this painful event in the life of the Church of Christ.

Before the turn of the third millennium, a sign of hope for a possible unity of all Christians was foreseen brought about by the ecumenical movement. Realizing that the anomaly of disunity undermines the Christian proclamation of the gospel-truths, some of the Christian churches and ecclesial communities in the early years of the 20th century initiated the ecumenical project in which the

Catholic Church would officially embrace in the Second Vatican Council.

While substantial agreements between the Catholic Church and the Christian Churches and ecclesial communities have developed, several issues persist, needing further examination and clarification. Although the ecumenical movement has already made some progress towards the achievement of Christian unity, there remains a critical issue, a fundamental stumbling block which is at the heart of the ecumenical project of *koinonia*. In his encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint*¹, Pope John Paul II identified the question of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as one of the five major areas that need fuller exploration for bringing about the goal of ecumenical progress. Thus, he invited all concerned to participate in a "patient and fraternal dialogue" to help "find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation."²

This study will focus on Pope John Paul II's invitation to reexamine and reinterpret the issue of primacy of the Bishop of Rome. At the onset, this article will briefly look into the solemn declaration of the First Vatican Council's *Pastor Aeternus* on the papal ministry in relation to the Petrine commission in order to put into proper perspective the issue of authority in the Church. It will

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¹ John Paul II, "*Ut unum sint*" (Rome, May 25, 1995). [Hereafter *UUS*]. Website: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_2505_1995_ut-unum-sint.html.

² *Ibid.*, n. 95.

proceed by way of examining the salient theme on primacy as spelled out by the pope in *UUS*. The bulk of the study focuses on the responses of the other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities to the pope's invitation with a view to assessing the level of reception of the encyclical letter and of the papal office across the Christian Reformation world. This study attempts to highlight the significant contribution of ecumenical dialogue in relation to the attitudinal and paradigm shift that have happened both in the Catholic and the Christian Reformation Churches and ecclesial communities. In the concluding part, it will highlight the influence of the ecumenical movement, in particular, Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint*, in the joint project between the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) which is the International Conference on the Asian Ecumenical Movement in 1996 in Hong Kong.

I. First Vatican Council's *Pastor Aeternus*

The problematic of the twin concepts of authority and power in relation to the agency of leadership in the Church is not just a modern-day phenomenon. It is in fact one of the incommensurable situations confronted the apostles of Jesus Christ.³ Unfortunately, the passage of time did not really mitigate, if not terminate, the controversial issue. Rather, it was further intensified to the point where it reached its breaking point in several occasions: events like the Great Schism and the Reformation to name a few. The

³ In Matthew 20:20-28, it narrates about the mother of the two apostles who appealed to Jesus Christ about the possibility of her two sons to sit, "one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom." This, in turn, angered the other ten followers upon hearing such appeal. See New American Bible (Revised Edition). Website: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+20%3A20-28&version=NABRE>.

controversial issue of authority had reached a new level of gravity when the Catholic Church dogmatized the two papal doctrines of primatial authority and infallibility.

In 1869, Pope Pius IX convoked the 20th Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church in Vatican. This particular council of the church is considered as one of the most controversial, if not the most controversial, because of the two papal dogmas it defined which are enshrined in its conciliar document *Pastor Aeternus*, First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ. In the fourth chapter of *PA*, Vatican I solemnly declares:

that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex Cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals: and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irrefrangible of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church.⁴

This solemn declaration of the papal ministry implies several things, namely; that God is the author of all power and authority which the Church exercises, that the papal ministry is divine in origin being born out of the Petrine ministry, that the papal primacy

⁴ Pope Pius IX, "*Pastor Aeternus*, First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ," (Vatican, July 18, 1870). [Hereafter *PA*]. Website: <http://www.catholicplanet.org/councils/20-Pastor-Aeternus.htm>.

signifies the immediate and universal jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff over the entire Church of Christ, and that the teaching office of the pope when he speaks *ex cathedra* in relation to matters of faith and morals is infallible.⁵

However, these articulated significations of the twin papal dogmas of primacy and infallibility triggered a new level of animosity by the other Christian traditions towards the office of the papacy due to the fact that it “can evoke not only feelings of refusal, disappointment and even hatred.”⁶ The intention of the council fathers may be to put an end to the controversy of papal authority, it nonetheless incurred a negative result.

II. Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*

Living out the spirit of the Second Vatican Council’s conciliar document *Unitatis Redintegratio*⁷ [UR] that which avers that ecumenism “is not just some sort of ‘appendix’ which is added to the Church’s traditional activity”, but instead it “is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does,”⁸ John Paul II succinctly opines that “at the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church committed herself *irrevocably* to following the path of the ecumenical venture.”⁹ So far there are still

⁵ Norman Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II: Trent to Vatican II* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 811-816.

⁶ Walter Cardinal Kasper, *That They May Be One: The call to unity today* (London: Burns & Oates, 2004), 137.

⁷ Second Vatican Council, “*Unitatis Redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism. Rome,” (Rome, November 21, 1964). [Hereafter UR]. Website: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 20.

⁹ *Ibid.*, n. 3. Edward Idris Cassidy explains that *UUS* is the Holy Father’s response to the challenge of laxity of the ecumenical movement. “The reason for the movement away from the pursuit of full, visible unity within the ecumenical movement, which has in the past always been the goal of the Faith and Order Commission of the World

issues that "need fuller study before a true consensus of faith can be achieved."¹⁰ One of the major areas that need fuller study is the primacy of the bishop of Rome.

This is exactly what he initiated in *UUS*. This was a significant moment for the ecumenical movement. In *UUS*, John Paul II officially identified the question of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as one of the five major areas that need fuller exploration for bringing about the goal of ecumenical progress. As such, he recognized the immensity of the role of his office in addressing the issue of primacy. At the same time, he recognized that his office is considered the 'biggest stumbling block' that impedes the accomplishment of the project. That is why, he offered a platform to directly address the issue. This he did by extending an invitation to all concerned to participate in a "patient and fraternal dialogue" to help "find a way of exercising the primacy which, while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation."¹¹

II. The Christian Reformation Leaders' and Theologians' Responses to *Ut Unum Sint*

To have a general appraisal of the responses of the Reformation leaders and theologians to *UUS* and their level of reception of the

Council of Churches, is to be found, I believe, mainly in frustration and disillusionment at the slow rate of progress in this search for greater communion. The difficulties that the churches are encountering in this quest bring a natural tendency to limit the goal. *Ut Unum Sint* is a response to this challenge." See Edward Idris Cassidy, "Ut Unum Sint in Ecumenical Perspective." In *Church Unity and the Papal Office: An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint*, by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (eds.) (Grand Rapids and Cambridge U.K.: Eerdmans, 2001), 13.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, n. 79.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, n. 95.

issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, a brief survey of these responses is undertaken in this article. It is interesting to note that this work, by no means an exhaustive attempt, is rather selective one. From the pool of responses, the research shall select several responses that are available and representative of their own traditions with a view to assessing the level of receptivity of the papal office across the Christian Reformation world.

A. Lutheran

Martin Luther never intended to undermine the dignity of the office of the papacy. His intent was to correct the misgivings and abuses of the already diminishing integrity and credibility of the Catholic hierarchy. When he posted his ninety-five theses at the door of castle church in Wittenburg, he intended only to expose certain abuses committed by the hierarchy to the many uneducated laity. “His primary concern was to bring to light again and to make once more the original Gospel message of God’s grace in Christ, which alone and gratuitously reconciles man with God.”¹² In fact, it has been said that “[t]here are passages in the Lutheran Confessions which, theoretically, at least, seem to leave open the possibility of a certain primacy of the bishop of Rome, though strictly *de iure humano*.”¹³ He was, therefore, convinced that the reform he was suggesting was a form of service to the Church. It was due to the subsequent and unfortunate mishandling by the Catholic hierarchy of the incident that led to the definite break of Luther from the jurisdiction of the papacy and therefore from the Catholic fold. What

¹² Adriano Garuti, O.F.M., *Primacy of the Bishop of Rome and the Ecumenical Dialogue* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 98, cited from Meyer, “L’ufficiopapale”, 66.

¹³ *Ibid.*, cited from the document of the Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, “A Lutheran Understanding of Papal Primacy,” 130.

followed thereafter were the many "tag-of-wars" of impolite and unchristian-like accusations and condemnations against one another. As to the systematic criticism against the papacy, the Lutheran formalized it in 1537 in the Smalcald articles¹⁴.

Considering the historical antagonistic attitude of the Lutheran tradition towards the papal office, how was John Paul II's encyclical received by the Lutheran adherents? In the light of *UUS*, how do the Lutherans receive the papal office now?

In the light of the invitation of Pope John Paul II, the Lutheran tradition dedicated its issue of *Concordia Journal* to review the question of primacy. This is to appraise whether there is a "new situation" in the understanding and praxis of the primacy that would make it palatable to the Lutherans. Drawing from their historical and confessional terms, six articles were collated in the manner that provide a panorama of the Lutheran understanding of the "papacy and its claim of primacy."¹⁵ Since it is a prerequisite that when we talk of renewal it needs the review of the past, the articles put a lot of emphasis on the historical development of the Lutherans' attitude towards the papal office.

In his article, *The Beginnings of the Papacy in the Early Church*, Quentin F. Wesselschmidt reviewed the historical and confessional perspective of the Lutheran tradition on the Petrine ministry.¹⁶ He argued that the papal primacy is unsubstantiated scripturally. If the Catholic Church should insist on the divine origin of the primacy of

¹⁴ See *Ibid.*, 102-103, Cf. footnote 64: von Allmen, *Il primato della Chiesa di Pietro e di Paolo*, 47.

¹⁵ Quentin F. Wesselschmidt (ed.), "Editor's Note," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 351.

¹⁶ See Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, "The Beginnings of the Papacy in the Early Church," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 374-391.

the pope, he argued that it should present “[i]ndisputable evidence on which claims of papal primacy are built.”¹⁷ What happened, he insisted, was a later assertion on the part of the Catholic Church by way of reading “back into the earlier period.”¹⁸ A case in point was the listing of the bishops of Rome. To assert the authority of the bishop of Rome against the prevailing heresies of the time, he stressed, some Fathers of the Church traced the continuity of his authority back to the Apostle Peter. Another waterloo of the papal office that he underlined was the failure of the papal office to produce an individual that could equal the stature of the Fathers of the Church.¹⁹

The Lutheran tradition, according to him, saw the leadership in the Church as collegial and not monarchical: “there was no overall centralized authority” during the early period of Christianity. Instead, “all congregations were independent and able to make their own decisions.” It was their common belief and worship that enabled them to “have a sense of interdependence among congregations throughout Christendom.”²⁰ With the increasing need for visible authority after the glorious days of the Roman empire, the bishop of Rome, he opined, “gradually began to fill this vacuum....The bishop in Rome gradually became the most significant and recognized leader in the city.”²¹ This was a major shift that took place in the historical development of the primacy. With this survey, he concluded that “the Roman church went beyond what can be supported by historical evidence and biblical justification.”²²

¹⁷ Ibid., 374.

¹⁸ Ibid., 374-376.

¹⁹ See Ibid., 376-378.

²⁰ Ibid., 379.

²¹ Ibid., 383.

²² Ibid., 391.

This assertion was affirmed by Charles P. Arand in his survey of the *Confessions* framed by the reformers during the Reformation period. In his article, *AntiChrist?: The Lutheran Confessions on the Papacy*, Arand examined the historical framework of the Lutheran Confessions.²³ Considering the radical transformation and renewal the papal office undertook for the past recent years, the questions he asked were: "what do we do with those statements on the papacy? Do we simply repeat them today? Do we ignore them? Do we try to explain them away?"²⁴ To better understand the Confessions, Arand contended, it is important to recall the historical factors that led the reformers to frame as antichrist, the Bishop of Rome. The use of the label "antichrist" for the pope, Arand pointed out, was a common practice during that time. This however may not be the case anymore. But then again this new situation in the history of the Lutheran Confessions regarding the papacy created a sense of uncertainty to the Lutherans. In this new situation, two possibilities can be gleaned: on one hand, whether to treat the statements of the Confessions as "historical judgments", on the other hand, whether to treat them as "doctrinal decisions". Either of the treatment is simply problematic. "The former can easily relativize the confessional statements...and not take them with due seriousness. The latter runs the opposite risk of treating" them "as binding dogma upon Lutherans for all times regardless of historical context."²⁵ The alternative that he found feasible is to affirm the two possibilities but with the caveat that they should be seen in a different light. This is because he does not disregard the possibility that the historical instances may still happen in the future if the person in the papal office returns to the old

²³ See Charles P. Arand, "Antichrist?: The Lutheran Confessions on the Papacy," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 392-406.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 392.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

negative and abusive ways. “Thus, the church cannot be complacent. It must continue to watch and pray.”²⁶ Arand strongly emphasized that the Catholic’s claim regarding the headship of the pope in Christendom by divine right (*de jure divino*) has no substantial evidence, especially from the sacred scriptures. He reiterated the Confessional statement that the head of the Church is Jesus Christ. For him, the leadership exercised by the pope is only by human right (*de jure humano*) and nothing more. Nonetheless, he applauded the recent popes for living out the ideas and ideals of the papal office.

The third article, *The Papacy in Perspective: Luther’s Reform and Rome*, sketched the specific event that led Luther to attack the papacy.²⁷ Robin Rosin pointed out that the papacy was not the primary target of Luther. It was the abuses of Rome that he strongly criticized. The papal office became an accessory to his desire for reform in the Church.²⁸ His “efforts at reform” was centered “on justification.”²⁹ Unfortunately, reforms undertaken by Rome could hardly be felt and seen. If they were be felt, it was only for a time because the clerics would eventually return to their old ways. It was in 1520 that Luther “upped the ante by calling the Roman pope the Antichrist.”³⁰ Did Luther have a sense of hope for Rome and in particular the papacy? “Of course. Everything Luther had said to this point included that possibility...Luther prayed for that.”³¹ Was the prayer of Luther realized? This seems to be the case with the recent event in the Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council. Individuals like Fr. Yves Congar, a Catholic theologian, and Jean

²⁶ Ibid., 403.

²⁷ See Robin Rosin, “The Papacy in Perspective: Luther’s Reform and Rome,” *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 407-426.

²⁸ Ibid., 409.

²⁹ Ibid., 415.

³⁰ Ibid., 417. “Antichrist is no label to be tossed out lightly and is not used by Luther simply in anger but with awareness of the theological implications he was making.”

³¹ Ibid., 420.

Jacques von Allmen, a Swiss reformed theologian, claimed that both the Counter-Reformation and the Reformation had come to close by virtue of the Second Vatican Council. It seems like the long-prevailing issues were now of an end.

But according to Richard H. Harneck, in his article *Vatican II's Conception of the Papacy: A Lutheran Response*, this is not really the case.³² He said that "Lutherans reading the documents of Vatican II are painfully aware of the major rift between Rom[an] and Lutheran theology." Harneck identified the problem of primacy as the distinctive factor for the separation: "Lutheran theology is clearly at odds with this Catholic principle."³³ That is why, he posed the question: "Will the encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, succeed in alleviating Lutheran concerns over papal authority?"³⁴ According to him, the possibility of a significant alleviation will only take place when Rome reconsiders its position on the divine origin of the primacy. This claim appears to the Lutherans as "inimical to the Gospel of Christ."³⁵ Lutherans lamented the fact that very minimal space was given to the issue of justification by the conciliar documents. However, it should be noted that as far as Pope John Paul II's firm defense of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is concerned, especially pertaining to moral and social issues, the Lutherans found it highly commendable.

There is indeed a deep chasm between the Catholic Church's theology and that of Lutheran theology. This is the confession of Samuel H. Nafzger in his article, *Ut Unum Sint and What It Says*

³² See Richard H. Harneck, "Vatican II's Conception of the Papacy: A Lutheran Response," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 427-446.

³³ *Ibid.*, 441.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 440.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

about the Papacy: Description and Response.³⁶ This great divide, Nafzger said, is very much evident in the texts of the Lutheran Confessions and the Vatican I's *Pastor Aeternus*. However, there were attempts committed to address the separation. One concrete attempt was John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*. Nafzger applauded and commended the pope for taking the initiative to address the issue of the primacy. He also applauded the pope for recognizing the need of the two parties to be involved in "resolving what has been a longstanding impasse between Protestants and Catholics over the 'ministry of unity of the Bishop of Rome.'"³⁷ He enjoined his Lutheran brethren to "join the Pope in emphasizing that genuine agreement on this issue cannot be achieved by asking either side to compromise its doctrinal convictions."³⁸ However, he recognizes that there were serious questions that the pope raised in the encyclical pertaining to the issue of the Petrine ministry. In his personal assessment, the most important concern "has to do with the understanding of the church upon with the Pope's fraternal invitation is based, and the implications this understanding of the church has for the dialogue to which he invites 'other Christians'."³⁹ Nafzger takes issue with the fact that while the encyclical has a fraternal tone compared to other Church's documents, it cannot dismiss easily the implications of the following statements: that the pope has the sole "'definitive judgment'...on the reception of the results of the dialogues" and that "'the communion of all particular Churches with the Church of Rome' is 'a necessary condition for unity'."⁴⁰ For him, this signified an irony to the fraternal invitation because it seemed

³⁶ See Samuel H. Nafzger, "Ut Unum Sint and What It Says about the Papacy: Description and Response," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 447-462.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 457.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 457-458.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 458.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 459.

like the final outcome for the fraternal dialogue "has already been decided."⁴¹ It is in this regard that he proposed that before attempting to find some practical aspects that need some changes in the primacy, some changes should be made to *UUS* at least as to how it sees the doctrine of the Church, together with what it signifies.⁴² He ended his response by affirming the pope's concluding statements which is the high priestly prayer of Jesus: *that they may all be one*.

The last contributor was Edward J. Callahan. In his article, he tried to locate the element of primacy in the *koinonia* ecclesiology proposed by *UUS*.⁴³ Callahan pointed out that before the attempt made by Pope John Paul II to locate the primacy within the ambit of the Church, there was already a seeming shift in the attitude of the Lutherans towards the Petrine ministry. This can be gleaned from the document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, entitled *Differing Attitudes Towards Papal Primacy*. This shift is a valuable opportunity to further the dialogue on the question of the primacy. It was very helpful, according to Callahan, that Pope John Paul II highlighted the threefold source of the Lutherans' rejection of the primacy, namely: "theological reflection, concerns about its growing power, and experienced abuses."⁴⁴ With the growing sense of need for a universal leadership in the Christian world especially in this very challenging period, a new and positive attitude towards the Petrine ministry is on the rise. There is a willingness to change the Lutheran tendency of repudiating the concept of primacy to being open to it. In fact, Callahan noted, there is now a sense of willingness

⁴¹ Ibid., 460.

⁴² Ibid., 461.

⁴³ See Edward J. Callahan, "Papacy as a Constitutive Element of *Koinonia* in *Ut Unum Sint*? *Ut Unum Sint* and What It Says about the Papacy: Description and Response," *Concordia Journal* Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 2003): 463-482.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 473.

to reinterpret the Lutheran position on the issue of the primacy at least within the context of the need of the Church. Taking the hint from *UUS*, Callahan contended that the exercise of the Petrine ministry should be for the sake of service to unity and charity in the Gospel-truths.

B. Reformed

In his article, *The Ministry of Unity and the Common Witness of the Churches Today*, Lukas Vischer, sketched the Reformed attitude towards the papacy. Vischer tried to discover the possibility whether there is a space where the centuries-old impasse on the problematic of the primacy could maneuver in the Reformed world. The fact that at its conception the Reformed tradition categorically rejected the papal office, which seemed to be the status quo in the Reformed-Roman Catholic relations. Unlike the case of Luther where he directed his criticism to the abuses in the Church, “Calvin did not confine his critique to denounce the corruption of papal Rome but called into question the institution of the papacy as such.”⁴⁵ In other words, Calvin questioned the legitimacy of the papal office. It was his firm conviction that the Bishop of Rome “went beyond the evidence found both in the Bible and in the writings of the Fathers of the early centuries. The papacy in the form it acquired, in the course of the centuries, up to the Reformation, he argued, has to be considered the result of an erroneous development.”⁴⁶ This led him to label the pope as ‘antichrist’. Another consideration is that part of the tradition of the Reformed is their “mistrust of all forms of personal authority.”⁴⁷ That is why,

⁴⁵ Ibid., 137.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 140.

their theologians tried to lay out the valuable role of synods or councils.

Having these considerations in mind, is there still a possibility for the Reformed tradition to entertain the Petrine ministry? While the idea of the Petrine ministry was not readily applauded by the Reformed churches, they nonetheless considered the idea of a "ministry of unity."⁴⁸ Vischer pointed out that this idea conformed to the desire of their theologians to strengthening the role of synod or council, which they have not found any way of actualizing it. But the caveat is that this ministry of unity should be exercised within the framework of the "charismatic succession". This is based on the idea that Peter was appointed/chosen leader of the College of the Apostles not because of his person but due to the charism gifted him by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Vischer believed that only the one that exudes holiness should be considered as the minister in the ministry of unity. Vischer acknowledged that the setup of the ministry of unity is not really compatible with that of the papal ministry. That is why, the rest of his article revealed his sense of pessimism to the possibility of reframing the papal office to be of service to unity and charity. Vischer said that the different differing positions between the Reformed and the Catholic significantly contribute to the said difficulty. However, Vischer recognized that *UUS* had created "a new conversation", a conversation for the need of a minister for the service of unity in the Church of Christ.⁴⁹

C. Anglican

⁴⁸ Ibid., 141-144.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 150.

The Anglican Church “did not mean” to “break with catholicity, but rather desired a reform of the Church from within, with a view to establishing a Church that would be *simul catholicae reformatata*.”⁵⁰ But with the decision of Pope Pius V to excommunicate Queen Elizabeth I, it ushered in the partial breach in their relationship. The primary reason for the break therefore is not theological, but more political. Again, at the center of the controversy is the office of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome.

How did they see and receive then the pope’s invitation to help him look into the possibility of reinterpreting the manner in which the primacy should be exercised?

House of Bishops of the Church of England’s Response to *Ut Unum Sint*

After Vatican II, a series of dialogues was initiated between the Anglican communion and the Catholic Church in order to address the scandal of disunity. The result is considerably hopeful. An attitudinal shift from both sides is increasingly evident. This, in a sense, colored the way the Church of England welcomed the invitation of Pope John Paul II. That is why, immediately after the publication of *UUS*, the Church of England issued their initial response on behalf of Lambeth Palace and the PCPCU on May 30, 1995. At the end of their initial note, the Church of England promised a more considerable “response to the Encyclical and” they encouraged their members “to explore the text with their Roman Catholic brothers and sisters.”⁵¹ In June 1997, two years after the promise was made, the House of the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 198.

⁵¹ House of Bishops of the Church of England, “Initial Response of the Church of England to *Ut Unum Sint*,” (1995): #5, an Appendix in *May They All Be One: A Response of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to "Ut Unum Sint"*, (London, Church House, 1997).

Website: http://www.churchofengland.org/media/36072/may_they_all_be_one.rtf

Bishops of the Church of England issued their comprehensive response to *UUS*.⁵²

The Church of England put significant emphasis on the increasing relationship between the Anglican and the Catholic Churches since they commenced their bilateral dialogue. That is why, they could easily delineate a lot of critical issues from the encyclical that they find highly agreeable. It includes the primacy of common prayer, the need for repentance and conversion, recognition of our common baptism and the degree of communion that stems from it, the firm belief that unity is necessary in fulfilling the mission of the Church of Christ. In their response, they strongly stressed the valuable contributions of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) as instrumental in the effort to repair the ruptured relations, in which they agreed with the words of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, acknowledging that indeed "people of both sides were to blame."⁵³ It states that both the Anglican and the Catholic "histories have given birth to emotive and polarized language, which has often played a large part in the continuing separation of our churches." One important step ensuring a different "future lies in a generosity which willingly leaves behind the language of the past polemics in the search for a common understanding in faith."⁵⁴

The House of Bishops agreed with Pope John Paul II's claim that there are still critical areas that need fuller study, one of which is the role of the Bishop of Rome. A section is devoted to their reflection on the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. In the section, *The*

⁵² House of Bishops of the Church of England, "May They All Be One: A Response of the House of Bishops of the Church of England to '*Ut Unum Sint*,'" (London, Church House, 1997).

Website: http://www.churchofengland.org/media/36072/may_they_all_be_one.rtf

⁵³ *Ibid.*, #12.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, #16.

Role of the Bishop of Rome, they were “grateful for the Pope’s admission that the exercise of his ministry is a question for all Christians.” They assured the pope that they have a similar “understanding of the episcopate as a ministry, involving not only oversight of each local church but also a care for the universal communion of which each church is a member.” They highlighted ARCIC-I saying that “the office of the universal primate” is “an expression of care for universal communion among Christians that is inherent in the episcopal office itself.” That is why, they stressed that “Anglicans are thus by no means opposed to the principle and practice of a personal ministry at the world level in the service of unity.”⁵⁵ The caveat however is that they strongly believe that this ministry should “have both doctrinal and disciplinary elements.”⁵⁶

In their response, they expressed their concern regarding the issues faced by papal infallibility. While the House of Bishops acknowledged that the Anglican and the Catholic are in one in their appraisal of the episcopate as a ministry that involves oversight, “it would be quite another to agree to infallibility without the understanding of reception as” what they have indicated in ARCIC-I. They therefore encouraged further study on this issue.⁵⁷

The House of Bishops also admitted that it is difficult to agree on the “claim that the Bishop of Rome has by divine institution ordinary, immediate and universal jurisdiction over the whole Church.” They explained that this appears to be a “threat to the integrity of the episcopal college and the apostolic authority of the bishops.”⁵⁸ This showed the difference in the level of difficulty between the nuances of primacy as an oversight and primacy as a

⁵⁵ Ibid., #44.

⁵⁶ Ibid., #45.

⁵⁷ Ibid., #46.

⁵⁸ Ibid., #47.

jurisdiction. They said that this is not just about advocating a mere primacy of honor, "or for the exclusion from a universal primacy of the authority necessary for a world-wide ministry in the service of unity," but the fact that this claim has been found wanting and defective, especially in its developed form. History has it that the ministry of primacy was not able to serve the cause of unity but instead became instrumental to the many divisions that happened in the Church.⁵⁹

The House of Bishops proposed that these concerns be studied fully and significantly considering the experience of the Church regarding the exercise of primacy during the first millennium in juxtaposition with the pressing concerns presented by the 'signs of the times'. Important consideration, according to them, should be focused on the relationship between primacy and collegiality in the Church; an issue that is at the forefront of all ecumenical discussions and reflections as far as the problem of authority in the Church is concerned, in particular the question of the Petrine ministry. This issue is especially important to the Anglicans, they confessed. "It is widely recognized that within our Anglican Communion there is a danger that 'provincial autonomy' may be taken to mean 'independence'. Some consider that a primatial ministry with an appropriate collegial and conciliar structure is essential if this danger is to be avoided."⁶⁰ It can be sensed here the rich experience of the Church of England as far as the problem of authority is concerned. The Anglicans have experienced the exercise of both realities: primacy and collegiality. The Anglicans have seen the unpleasant consequences of advocating an extreme position. It is therefore their

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., #53.

belief that a more balanced approach be recognized and utilized as a means to better serve the unity in the Church of Christ.

Bishop John Hind's Response

In his introductory remarks in the symposium organized by the Society of the Atonement in preparation for its 100th anniversary of foundation, Bishop John Hind, a diocesan bishop and the chairman of the Church of England's Faith and Order Advisory Group, stressed that his response is not made on behalf of these two institutions he represented. Rather it was a personal response to the invitation of Pope John Paul II for a 'patient and fraternal dialogue'. In his response, he argued "that all forms of primacy, including the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, are forms of episcopal ministry."⁶¹ For the Anglicans, the framework from which they see the Petrine ministry is the 1988 Lambeth Conference. In its Resolution no. 8, it acknowledged the indispensable need for authority in the Church. In their case, they still struggled to frame the concept "of oversight that properly belongs to the Communion and the relation of personal oversight, primacy and collegiality appropriate at a level above the provincial."⁶² Reiterating the response of the Church of England to *UUS*, he said that the Anglicans are not really "opposed to the principle and practice of a ministry at the world level in the service of unity."⁶³ He believes that the reason for this kind of openness to this idea of ministry is a fruit of the ecumenical dialogue. He recalled the historical sentiment that led to the rejection of the primacy by the Anglicans. He said that it was the belief of "[t]hose who spoke and

⁶¹ Bishop John Hind, "Primacy and Unity: An Anglican Contribution to a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue," in *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: "Towards a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue"*, edited by Fr. James F. Puglisi (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999): 35.

⁶² M. Thurian, ed., "Churches Respond to BEM III," *Faith and Order Paper* 135, no. 158 (Geneva: W.C.C., 1987): 37.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 38.

wrote so intemperately...that the Roman Church had rejected the Catholic Church." It is also the firm belief of "the Anglican theologians" that "the papacy...had not proved a safeguard against doctrinal error."⁶⁴ But still there are some that take a more moderate stance on the primacy. This opening, according to him, could be utilized in furthering the reflections on the value of primacy in the Church at the universal level. Another valuable opening is the new situation presented by Pope John Paul II. That is why, Bishop Hind underscored that "the Anglican Communion rejoices at Pope John Paul II's invitation and looks forward to the development of the papacy as a ministry in the service of the unity of the whole Church—'a pope for all Christians.'"⁶⁵

D. Methodist

The relationship between the Methodist and the Catholic Church has already gained pace since they started their conversation in 1967, says Geoffrey Wainwright. In his article, *The Gift Which He On One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove*,⁶⁶ he pointed out that "recently Methodists have become more willing to recognize the Roman Catholic Church as an institution for the divine good of its members." Likewise, he underscored that "the Catholic Church since Vatican II certainly includes Methodists among those who, by baptism and faith in Christ, enjoy 'a certain though imperfect communion with the Catholic Church.'"⁶⁷ But he acknowledged that

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39-40.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁶ See Geoffrey Wainwright, "'The Gift Which He On One Bestows, We All Delight to Prove': A Possible Methodist Approach to a Ministry of Primacy in the Circulation of Love and Truth," in James F. Puglisi, ed., *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999): 59-82.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 61.

a lot of difficulties remain. One serious difficulty is papal primacy. That is why, in this article, he applauded the pope for the language he used in *UUS*. He opined:

They will resonate much more readily with the language of John Paul II when he speaks of ‘a ministry which presides in truth and love,’ so that the ship of the Church ‘will not be buffeted by the storms and will one day reach its haven.’ Those are the terms—‘truth and love’—under which the notion of a ‘presiding ministry’ may begin to find understanding among Methodists; and perhaps also, in the long run, the idea that it is as a ‘function of Peter’ that such a ministry ‘must continue in the Church, so that under her sole Head, who is Jesus Christ, she may be visibly present in the world as the communion of all his disciples,’ and just possibly, in the even longer run, the thought that such a Petrine function belongs historically and theologically to the bishops of Rome.⁶⁸

This is the language that is quite familiar to Methodists, he claimed. The language ‘truth and love’ is the characteristic feature of their ecclesiology. This provides, according to him, the basis for a future dialogue on the question of the primacy.

Relying on the biblical narratives as to how Apostle Peter exercised his ministry, Wainwright believed that it would be interesting if the idea of an “itinerant superintendency” be introduced to the table of dialogue.⁶⁹ In a sense, what he was proposing is to revive something in the primitive life of the Church that was found absolutely effective. The bulk of his response focused on the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

different documents produced by the Joint Commission emphasizing the significant areas that the Methodist and the Catholic Church agreed upon, especially in the area of ecclesiology. This, according to him, could help a lot in the appraisal of the Petrine ministry. Towards the end of his response, he offered a suggestion how the pope could exercise his ministry.

My respectful suggestion is that the pope should invite those Christian communities which he regards as being in real, if imperfect, communion with the Roman Catholic Church to appoint representatives to cooperate with him and his appointees in formulating a statement expressive of the Gospel to be preached to the world today. Thus the theme of the 'fraternal dialogue' which John Paul II envisaged would shift from the *theory* of the pastoral and doctrinal office to the *substance* of what is believed and preached. And the very *exercise* of elaborating a statement of faith might—by the process of its launching, its execution, its resultant form, its publication, and its reception—illuminate the question of 'a ministry that presides in truth and love.'⁷⁰

E. Presbyterian

In its publication, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, December 2000 issue, an article entitled *The Successor to Peter* was published. It was co-authored by Case-Winters, Anna, and Lewis Mudge. Although their co-authored response to the invitation of Pope John Paul II was personal in nature, it was nonetheless recognized by the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 82.

Presbyterian Church in the USA during its General Assembly in 2001.⁷¹ In a sense, it elevated the status of the article as an official response. In their article, they appreciated the initiative of Pope John Paul II for providing a platform to address the question of primacy. This new situation manifested the sincere desire of the pope to collaborate patiently and fraternally with the separated brethren in findings ways by which his office should be exercised. They commended the rhetoric employed by the Holy Father in his encyclical, which was quite different from the usual rhetoric of the past. They also applauded the pope for initiating a paradigm shift in viewing the Petrine ministry wherein it did not only take the biblical foundation of the Petrine ministry to justify its legitimation but rather he took it to deduce the essentials of the ministry of the Apostle Peter.

Although they recognized that there is an increasing need for some sort of universal ministry for the service of unity and charity, they confessed that they still struggle to reconcile the idea of absolute authority with collegiality. They found it difficult also to connect the idea of a universal ministry with a particular person for the sake of unity. Nevertheless, they were open to an idea that a credible and spiritual individual can exercise the universal ministry at the universal level. But still, this, he noted, is a serious difficulty that requires deeper reflection from both sides. It is in this regard that they were grateful for the initiative of John Paul II.

F. Pentecostal

⁷¹ See Anna Case-Winters and Lewis Mudge, "The Successor to Peter," *Journal of Presbyterian History* Vol. 80, n. 2 (Summer 2002): 83-102.

Pentecostalism is a new wave in the life of the Church of Christ specifically attributed to the mysterious works of the Holy Spirit. It was only recently that they involved themselves in the ecumenical movement. Part of better defining and understanding themselves, "the Society for Pentecostal Studies has brought together scholars from a variety of traditions studying the theology, history and ecumenical relations of the classical Pentecostal churches."⁷² One of the areas they dealt with was the invitation of the pope in his *UUS*. In the journal *ONE IN CHRIST: A Catholic Ecumenical Review*, two articles being published were responses of two Pentecostal theologians. The first one is the article of Terry L. Cross and the other one is that of Glen Menzies.

Terry L. Cross, an ordained minister in the Church of God, wrote an essay entitled, *Possintne Omnes Unum Esse? A Pentecostal Response to Ut Unum Sint*.⁷³ Cross commenced his article by indicating the kind of sentiment the Pentecostals have towards any institutionalized hierarchy or structure in the Church of Christ. This is the characteristic feature of Pentecostalism: an antagonistic attitude towards "one grand church" since for them this "weaken[s] the Gospel message".⁷⁴ The presence of the Pentecostals in the ecumenical movement is already an enigma for some of them. Nevertheless, he cannot but praise "John Paul II's plea for unity...[as] so genuine and his call for 'patient and fraternal dialogue' so reasonable."⁷⁵ Cross confessed that his personal experience manifested the difficulty Pentecostals face whenever they engage in

⁷² See "An introductory note by the editor to the Pentecostal Responses to *Ut Unum Sint*," *ONE IN CHRIST: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2006): 3.

⁷³ See Terry L. Cross, "*Possintne Omnes Unum Esse? A Pentecostal Response to Ut Unum Sint*," *ONE IN CHRIST: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2006): 3-22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

ecumenism. Cross identified the cause of the difficulty to “the leftover fundamentalist DNA that hangs on to the Pentecostal leaders and constituency.”⁷⁶ In any case, his response to *UUS* is a manifestation of his strong approval considering the fact that his reading of the documents of the two Vatican Councils gave him the impression “of superiority instead of a genuine interest in dialogue.” For him, *UUS* showed “a massive change of tone and for the first time in my ecumenical experience, I felt some type of genuine unity might be possible.” It helped a lot that “Pope John Paul II’s tone is pastoral and confraternal; his assessment of ecumenical attempts is both personal and hopeful; his theme seems to be *dialogue*.”⁷⁷ In any case, he proceeded by saying that the five issues or areas indicated by the Holy Father that needs fuller study may not necessarily be the main concerns for the Pentecostals. As such, he outlined the major and necessary issues that the Catholics and the Pentecostals may talk about over the table of dialogue. First, on the visible unity of the Church. Secondly, the papal primacy, Petrine ministry in the context of the ecclesiology of Pentecostalism. Here he confided that he sees “John Paul II’s view of the Petrine ministry as one of unique service that only someone in his position could fill at this time in history.”⁷⁸ However, while Pope John Paul II’s description of the role of the Bishop of Rome as servant of unity is palatable to the Pentecostals, his description of primacy as servanthood remains problematic due to their difficulty in reconciling the concept of ‘primacy’ with that of ‘servanthood’. So for him there still remains areas on the issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome that need fuller study and dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals. The remaining pages of his response was in fact a challenge addressed to his fellow Pentecostals: “it should

⁷⁶ Ibid., 3-8.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 11.

cause us to ask what we can bring to the table out of respect for our host."⁷⁹

In his article, *A Pentecostal Response to Ut Unum Sint*,⁸⁰ Glen Menzies, an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God who has been involved in Evangelical-Catholic dialogue for approximately nine years, started his response with a great expression of admiration and respect for Pope John Paul II for what he did on behalf of Christianity against "widespread attack...from the forces of humanism, materialism, secularism, and pluralism." His "forceful defense of Christian belief in the face of attacks from these enemies" merited great esteem from the Pentecostals. In fact, he confided that what led to the change of attitude of the Pentecostals from "that uncharitable posture toward Catholicism" is their common defense of fundamental Christian morality. Just like Cross, Menzies noted that there is a softening of that "long-time anti-ecumenical stance in the Assemblies of God."⁸¹ *UUS* is admirable, Menzies says, because while it proposes full and visible unity, it manifested no "compromising stance" which is one of the qualities of Pentecostalism. "*Ut Unum Sint* repeatedly warns of the dangers of skirting real differences in order to achieve some sort of false peace."⁸² As for the issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, he acknowledged that Pentecostals believe in the necessity of leaders in Church(es). He pointed out that "many Pentecostals would also be willing to acknowledge a special place to the Bishop of Rome as the most visible spokesman for worldwide Christianity" but with the caveat that "this special place" does not "involve any sort of ecclesial

⁷⁹ Ibid., 9-15.

⁸⁰ See Glen Menzies, "A Pentecostal Response to *Ut Unum Sint*," *ONE IN CHRIST: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 2006): 23-33.

⁸¹ Ibid., 23.

⁸² Ibid., 23-25.

or doctrinal authority over Pentecostals, but merely to reflect the reality of the situation.”⁸³ A clear indication is that in the Pentecostal communion, *UUS* created a significant stir for further studying and understanding the papal office. The Christological prayer used by Pope John Paul II has great psychological efficacy for the Pentecostals. For them, as Menzies pointed out, “If we choose to remain faithful to our commitment to stand under the authority of Scripture, we must each wrestle with whether or not we ourselves are impediments to the fulfillment of Christ’s prayer that those who believe in him ‘may all be one’.”⁸⁴ This is the fundamental reason why the encyclical is hard to ignore.

G. Evangelical

While the Evangelical sentiment on the problematic of primacy in the Christendom is not as intense as that of the Catholic counterpart relative to the level or degree of concern that requires immediate attention for the simple reason that the themes on papal primacy and the promotion of full and visible unity of the Church are not really high on their agenda, they nonetheless share the concern. They appreciated the fact that the pope had initiated to tackle the long-overdue concern in the Christian world. Such appreciation was expressed explicitly on several occasions.

Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA)

⁸³ Ibid., 31-32.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 33.

The Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA responded to PCPCU's document, *Petrine Ministry: A Working Paper*. NCCCUSA's response was entitled, *To The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity*.⁸⁵ The Faith and Order Commission expressed gratitude to Pope John Paul II for the invitation for further dialogue in areas that still remain problematic in the actualization of Christian unity. The reason is that they share the same concern. The Faith and Order Commission expressed a willingness to "engage in the process of dialogue in a spirit of deep humility before Christ and in a spirit of willing openness to his will for the whole people of God". It acknowledges the value of studying the issue of primacy as a response to, as well as a reception of, the Petrine ministry. It acknowledges that there are still divergences in the understanding of the nature and exercise of the Petrine ministry. But one thing is for sure, the various biblical studies on the scriptural foundation of the primacy provide valuable insights on the issue. Then again, despite the fact that there is only one bible, there still occurs a plethora of interpretations, each colored by particular traditions. It also clarifies an important concern regarding the communions' reception of the Petrine ministry. Notably, the level of reception varies from communion to communion, given the different appraisals of the Petrine ministry. It is not safe, therefore, to assume that when dialoging with others that they have only one treatment of the Petrine ministry. Interestingly, the different understandings among the communions on the nature of the church greatly affect the communions' reception of the Petrine ministry.

⁸⁵ Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, "To The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity." Website: www.nationalcouncilofchurches.us/shared-ministry/unity/Pontifical.pdf.

Paul Anderson

Paul Anderson is an ordained minister of the Evangelical Friends International. He has been involved with the ecumenical movement for quite some time due to his line of interests in Johanne studies and the early Church. His essay *Petrine Ministry and Christocracy: A Response to Ut Unum Sint*⁸⁶ is an unofficial personal response. It was an act of courtesy in response to the request of the NCCCUSA to provide a response to PCPCU's document *Petrine Ministry: A Working Paper*. Although his response was directed to the PCPCU document, it was nevertheless framed within the context of the invitation of *UUS*. As such, his response was an indirect one. In his response to the two documents, *Petrine ministry* and *Ut Unum Sint*, he expressed his appreciation of the Christological prayer of the pope since it was also his prayer for the Church of Christ. It is, therefore, his hope that his modest response could contribute to "further the vision for that unity and its actualization."⁸⁷ He believed that the pope's initiative opened 'a special window of opportunity' for the realization of unity. Moreover, he stressed that the Petrine ministry should be viewed within the context of Christocracy. By Christocracy he meant that Christ continues to lead His Church through the Holy Spirit: "The ministry of Peter in the early Church serves the leadership of Christ (Christocracy) rather than supplanting it."⁸⁸ His emphasis on the fundamental necessity of a centralized leadership as was exercised even during the time of Christ and the apostles allows us to appreciate the institutionalized structures in the Church. Taking the analogy of the body as a framework for structural leadership, he

⁸⁶ See Paul Anderson, "Petrine Ministry and Christocracy: A Response to Ut Unum Sint," *ONE IN CHRIST: A Catholic Ecumenical Review* Vol. 40, No. 1 (January 2005): 3-39.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

stressed that the scriptures are rich in passages about the centrality of the leadership of Peter. His reflection on certain Johannine passages, such as, chapters 10 and 17, provided valuable perspectives on the characteristics of the leadership of Christ, as well as on Peter's leadership. In a sense, his response was an elaboration of the new situations presented by *UUS*. But what is commendable is that his reflection was not only intended as a comment on the scope and limitations of the Petrine ministry, but also as a word to "all Christian leaders in all settings," that is, it was intended "to be catholic".⁸⁹ He divided his contributions into four major themes as proposed by the pope: the pastoral aspects of episcopal service, ecumenical responsibility, ways of exercising primacy, and an open ecumenical invitation.⁹⁰

Regarding the third theme, he acknowledged that "Christ indeed desires the unity of his church, and Christian leaders participate in that desire by virtue of their charge to care for the flock of Christ."⁹¹ He proposes that inasmuch as Christ desired unity, Christian leaders should manifest a firm resolve to live it out. He strongly stressed that the "[p]articular responsibilities of Christian leaders root in serving the particular needs of those under their care, and the full and visible sign of Christian Community will ever be the love of Christ." For him, the vocation to love "should be the embodiment of the love of Christ in the Church and in the world."⁹² This theme is a reflection of what Pope John Paul II elucidated, that the primacy should be an exercise of charity/love. Furthermore, he pointed out that the "primacy itself deserves to be recovered, not as a factor of position, privilege, authority, or power, but as a function of stewardship,

⁸⁹ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 15-33.

⁹¹ Ibid., 24.

⁹² Ibid., 25.

service, responsibility, and love.”⁹³ He also opined that in this ‘emerging new situation’ in the new ecumenism, the role of the Catholic Church, in particular the role of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, could be rediscovered in the fulfilling of its mission or vocation to be of service in forging Christian fellowship. For him, re-envisioning of the Catholic vocation necessitates going back to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Like Christ, the Bishop of Rome “should find a way to transcend particular church traditions inviting into fellowship the scattered sheep of Christ across the world’s time-worn landscapes.”⁹⁴ By magnifying the lordship and leadership of Christ, “this could lead to its being recognized even more broadly within and beyond the Roman Catholic Church.”⁹⁵

Commendable in Anderson’s response is his tendency to be more objective and forward-looking. Just like the wish of the Holy Father and the Second Vatican Council as a whole, significant steps could be taken only when Christians learn to avoid using imprudent language that would have significant psychological impact on others. Anderson definitely offers valuable insights that further deepen one’s understanding and appreciation of the universal leadership in the Church.

H. Baptist

The characteristic feature of the Baptist tradition is that the individual is of high priority. It is devoid of a sense of unity. “There is no unity among Baptist folk even though we have the [Baptist World Alliance] BWA. The emphasis on the individual find its expression in the so-called autonomy of the local church—a principle

⁹³ Ibid., 26.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

that is a distinguishing mark of Baptists.”⁹⁶ This is the confession of Erich Geldbach. Hence, his reflection on the Petrine ministry should be treated as “a Baptist perspective, not *the* perspective.”⁹⁷ In any case, his response covers the essential features of the Baptist tradition.

In his article, he recalled the beginning of the Baptist tradition. Geldbach said that it was part of the Puritan movement in the 17th century. Its first theologian who tried to frame its ecclesiology was John Smyth who wrote a book *Differences of the Churches of the Separation* in 1608. It contained the general description of what constitute the true church: it should be the true spouse of Christ. He further qualified that “[t]he distinctive mark of the new church...is not only its true constitution which is reflective of the true, primitive, apostolic Church, but also the *true apostolic mode of baptism*.”⁹⁸ According to him, the critique of Smyth was directed to two major institutions: the Church of England and the Roman Catholic. The Church of England, he branded it as harlot, while the “Roman Church as the source of all evil, as ‘Antichristianisme,’ and...the pope [as] ‘Antichrist’.”⁹⁹ Geldbach said this kind of polemical tone was not surprising during the seventeenth century this is because it was very common.¹⁰⁰ In the course of his presentation, he defended the Baptist’s pessimistic and antagonistic view of the Catholic Church in general and the papal office in particular. He said that

⁹⁶ Erich Geldbach, “The Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: A Baptist Perspective,” in *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church: “Towards a Patient and Fraternal Dialogue”*, edited by Fr. James F. Puglisi (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999): 153.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 156. [Emphasis added.]

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 157.

looking at history, it revealed to us the objectivity of the criticism of the Baptist tradition against the Catholic Church.

If this is the case, how did they receive *UUS* especially its invitation for ‘patient and fraternal dialogue’ on the question of the Petrine ministry?

A paradigm shift seemed to take place, according to Geldback, “when ‘good Pope’ John XXIII summoned Vatican II and invited ‘separated brethren’ as observers. Lines of communication were opened for the first time, and an official dialogue between the two communities was held between 1984 and 1988.”¹⁰¹ In their series of dialogues, they underscored certain areas that needed further study. One crucial area is *koinonia*. Geldback pointed out that their reflections on this theme revealed the great chasm that divide the Baptists and the Catholic Church. The Baptist see *koinonia* in an egalitarian context whereas the Catholic Church see it in the context of an institution, that is, hierarchical. Again, another impasse was discovered. Although he seemed to take the idea of the Petrine ministry introduced by Pope John Paul II, it remained problematic because such a ministry is concentrated only in one person. “Given these limitations, there seems only one possible solution for the Petrine ministry to be exercised. It is along the lines of a spokesperson for the world-wide Christian community.” But then again, he strongly insists that this should “never be done by one person alone.” What he was proposing was to model it on the ‘conciliar fellowship’ exercised by the World Council of Churches.¹⁰² Towards the end of his article, he noted that a lot of

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 161.

¹⁰² Ibid., 167.

things still need to be considered that which requires "much patience—on both sides."¹⁰³

III. Assessment of the Level of Reception

A survey of other Christian traditions' responses to *UUS* mostly come from scholars – historians, theologians, ecumenists – who, in one way or another, are involved in the cause of ecumenism. Their responses are either personal or representational of their churches' traditions. There are also responses that at the beginning were only considered personal but eventually are adapted as an official response by their church or ecclesial community. A case in point is that of the Presbyterian tradition. The nature of the examined responses, though varying according to the occasion was issued, delivered or published. There were those that were really the official response of a particular church or ecclesial communities, like the responses of the House of Bishops of the Church of England, the Bishops' Conference of the Church of Sweden, and the Presbyterian Church in the USA. It is notable that except for the House of the Bishops of the Church of England, no other else issued an initial response right after the publication of *UUS*. Responses came about only later on. The reason perhaps because the invitation of Pope John Paul II came as a surprise to all, even Catholics.¹⁰⁴ In fact, even the response of the Catholic Church came relatively late in the form of organizing symposiums, and the like.

It is noteworthy also that those who responded in kind to the invitation of the pope relative to the Reformation traditions came

¹⁰³ Ibid., 169.

¹⁰⁴ Whitehead, *The New Ecumenism*, 118.

from a broad range of Western Churches and ecclesial communities (Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian in the USA, Pentecostal, Evangelical and Baptist). Geographically, most of the responses came from Churches and ecclesial communities in Europe and USA.

As far as the reception by the other Christian traditions to the papal invitation to engage him in finding ways to better exercise his office, it is notable that the general sentiment expressed by the other Christian traditions manifest a great sentiment of approval and gratefulness. They were in unison in saying that the platform provided by Pope John Paul II to critically undertake and look into the question of the centuries old impasse created 'a new situation'. This, in a sense, is a 'significant shift' in the attitude of other Christian traditions towards the Catholic documents. It is believed that *UUS* is the most accepted and recognized encyclical document, probably at par with the conciliar document of Vatican II on the decree on ecumenism *UR*, in the Christian world. *UUS* was welcomed positively by other Christian traditions, one reason being that there is an observable shift in the language used and the tone by which the pope enunciated his message as nothing short of fraternal. They also applauded the humility that was manifested by the pope, especially when he reiterated his asking for forgiveness for the mistakes committed in the past. It is interesting to note also that their appraisal of *UUS* was in conjunction with the Vatican I's *PA* and Vatican II's *UR*. On the one hand, *UUS* emphasizes the pastoral aspect of the primacy compared to *PA* where it really emphasized the doctrinal dimension. *UUS* reiterated the Catholic commitment to the ecumenical movement as spelled out by *UR*. Considering the bulk of the first part of *UUS* was the reiteration of the Church's commitment to ecumenism, it suggests that the pope was serious in committing his office to reception of Vatican II. What they sense is a continuity

and consistency in the priority and attitude of the Catholic Church after Vatican II. Another good point they saw from the encyclical is that its title was an excellent choice. They associated themselves with the intention of the encyclical. For the other Christian traditions, *UUS* is also their prayer and desire for the Church of Christ. This is one major impetus for their readiness to engage the pope in 'a patient and fraternal dialogue' regarding the possibility of helping him find ways to better exercise his ministry.

Their responses to the issue of the primacy of the Bishop of Rome was altogether a different consideration. Their appraisal of the issue of Petrine ministry vary from communion to communion. But as far as their general sentiment and reception of the ministry of primacy, there seemed to be a common awareness about the growing need for a universal ministry in the Church of Christ. The main reason articulated in their responses is that it is the 'need of the Church' at this point in time. Considering the threats of the 'culture of death', degradation of moral sense and sensitivity, and the increasing depreciation of the value the Church and in general religion in people's and societies' life, posed great amount of challenge on the Christian world on how they can still witness the Gospel-truths to the world. It definitely does not help the Church's situation where division is the most pronounced feature of the Church of Christ that which lessens its credibility of witnessing unity in truth and charity. Although there is a perception of a need for universal oversight, some of them (Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, etc.), nonetheless, openly expressed opposition to the idea of papal oversight. The reason given is that the universal ministry should not be given to one person only, that is, the Bishop of Rome. They want to see a more democratic way of appointing or electing the one who is qualified for the universal oversight. Another reason given was

that they saw the historical events in the life of the papal office as a caution. History, according to them (Lutheran, Reformed, Baptist, etc.), revealed the undeniable fact that the office could become a disservice when the pope is not morally upright and at par with the ideas and ideals of the Petrine ministry. Absolute monarchical style of leadership, for them, is never healthy in the life of the Church.

Their theological and scriptural argument against the papal primacy is grounded on their firm belief that the Petrine ministry has no grounding in the scriptures. They rejected the idea that the Petrine ministry presently exercised by the pope has its historical link to the ministerial commission and function of Peter. They argued that the present ministry of primacy is but an evolution which is solely based on hypothetical suppositions of the Catholic theologians and the popes themselves to justify the exercise of ministry universally. The universal position of their responses is that the later assertion that the papal primacy had its historical link way back to Sts. Peter and Paul did not really help the cause of the Catholic Church in justifying the Petrine ministry. It is in this aspect that the Protestants across denominations come into agreement. Noticeable is their readings of the scriptural texts wherein they focused on how to prove the unsubstantiatedness of the Petrine ministry. Most of them argued that the Petrine commission, on one hand, was exclusive only to the person or faith of Peter, in effect, it was not transmittable. On the other hand, it saw Peter's appointment of service to the Church as representational of the College of the Apostles. This suggested, therefore, that all bishops inherit the Petrine ministry of leadership and servanthood.

The most fundamental contention of the other Christian traditions against the Petrine ministry is on the claim of the Catholic Church that the primacy is exercised by virtue of divine right. It is really their firm belief that the right that is exercised by the pope is

not by virtue of the divine right but only by human right borne out of the need of the Church to preserve and promote the visible unity in the Church. The other Christian traditions' unanimous finding that there is a non-conclusive evidence that the scriptures can substantiate the ministry of primacy led them to dismiss outrightly the Catholic's claim. The only alternative they can invoke as a ground for the legitimacy of the universal ministry is by way of human right, particularly seen in the context of the Church's need.

Another problem of the Petrine ministry indicated by the different traditions of the Reformation in their responses pertains to the twin dogma of the Roman pontificate, that is, the infallibility of the pope. They vehemently argued that the papal infallibility is superfluous. They believe that it has no biblical basis at all. For them, infallibility is but an unfortunate response of the First Vatican Council fathers to the pressing concerns of the Catholic Church during that time. Infallibility, for them, was a radical response by the Vatican I to an extreme situations posed by Gallicanism and the advent of intellectualism in Europe that undermined the Gospel-truths. They could not but express that the universal jurisdiction and papal infallibility posited by the papal office are radical departures from the Gospel-truths. According to the House of Bishops of the Church of England, the assertion of the Catholic Church regarding the universal jurisdiction of the pope as defined by the First Vatican Council as something *ordinary and immediate over all Churches and their bishops* is considered "a threat to the integrity of the episcopal college and the apostolic authority of the bishops, those brothers Peter was commanded to strengthen."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ House of Bishops of the Church of England, "May They All Be One," #47.

The other Christian traditions, however, proposed that instead of using Petrine ministry, which from them has no biblical basis, it should be 'Petrine function'. This idea was introduced by the Lutheran tradition which refers to "a particular form of Ministry exercised by a person, officeholder, or local church with reference to the church as a whole. The Petrine function of the Ministry serves to promote or preserve the oneness of the church by symbolizing unity, and by facilitating communication, mutual assistance or correction, and collaboration in the church's mission."¹⁰⁶ One function they introduced to be played by the Petrine function is to be the 'spokesperson' in behalf of the Christian world. Considering that they were reluctant to assign the Petrine function to one person only, that is, to the pope, the other Christian traditions seemed to be in unison in proposing that this should be exercised in a more democratic way. Meaning, they are proposing that the Petrine function should be concentrated not only to the pope but also to the leaders of the other Christian traditions, especially those who manifest a 'charismatic succession'.

The other Christian traditions' common awareness about the growing need for a universal ministry in the Christian world due to the 'need of the Church' at this point in time led them to consider the ministry of oversight at the universal level. The caveat, however, is that the ministry of oversight should be exercised within the context of collegiality. This ministry of oversight should also be exercised in a more scriptural and spiritual orientation. This means that the exercise of the ministry of oversight, as what Paul Anderson proposes, should be seen in the context of the leadership of Jesus Christ. It should therefore reflect the ministry of the Apostle Peter, who assumed the leadership after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁶ Paul C. Empie and T. Austin (eds.), *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church. Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VI*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974, 11.

Peter's ministry during the post-resurrection period was exercised in a more pastoral way. He also served as a teacher and a spokesperson of the remaining Eleven Apostles. For the Reformed tradition, there is also a significant shift in their appraisal of the Petrine function. The Reformed sees it in the context of the ministry of unity. The Reformed proposes that the ministry of unity should be exercised within the framework of the "charismatic succession". This is based on the idea that Peter was appointed/chosen leader of the College of the Apostles not because of his person but due to the charism gifted him by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. For the Methodist tradition, this Petrine function as a ministry of unity should be exercised in the service of 'truth and love'. The Methodists believe that the language of 'truth and love' is the characteristic feature of the Church of Christ. Relying on the biblical narratives as to how the Apostle Peter exercised his ministry, the Methodist proposes that the Petrine function as a ministry of unity should be exercised in the form of an 'itinerant superintendency'. It is in this regard that they applauded the pastoral activities of John Paul II. During his pontificate, he visited a number of other Christian Churches and communities, as well as, the communities of other religions. For the Methodists, the pope exemplified the itinerant superintendency exercised by the Apostle Peter. For the Evangelical tradition, the exercise of leadership should be seen in the context of the leadership of Jesus Christ. Leadership should be rooted in the service of the needs of those under the leader's care. Imbued with Christ's love, leaders in the Church should embody the love of Jesus Christ in the Church and in the world. For Anderson, an Evangelical, the "primacy itself deserves to be recovered, not as a factor of position, privilege,

authority, or power, but as a function of stewardship, service, responsibility, and love.”¹⁰⁷

Concluding Remarks

In the light of this undertaking, International Conference on the Asian Ecumenical Movement (ICAEM), it must be underscored that the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC) had highlighted John Paul II’s *UUS* in its joint project in 1996 with the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) entitled, Asian Movement for Christian Unity.¹⁰⁸ The project had heavily drew inspiration from the conciliar documents, especially from *UR*. It also drew inspiration from Pope John Paul II’s *UUS*. Interestingly, this collaborative project between the FABC and the CCA took place immediately after the publication of *UUS*. Moreover, the imprints of *UUS* are clearly manifested in the project’s rationale and are interspersed in the text itself. In the ICAEM, there is a mutual recognition that while the ecumenical movement had some significant achievements that could be seen in the paradigm and attitudinal shifts that took place in the different Christian traditions, there are still some areas that need to be addressed. In line with John Paul II’s assessment of the ecumenical landscape, both the FABC and the CCA agree that the issue of the authority in the Church should be the main focus of the dialogue. While the ICAEM addresses the ecumenical project in general, it specifically underscored the papal ministry. Accordingly, it acknowledges that while the papal ministry has been considered as a major stumbling block in the completion of the ecumenical project,

¹⁰⁷ Anderson, “Petrine Ministry and Christocracy,” 26.

¹⁰⁸ Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences and Christian Conference of Asia, “Asian Movement for Christian Unity: A Joint CCA – FABC Project (*Making Visible the Unity in Christ That Already Exists*)” (Cheung Chau, Hong Kong, 12-16 March 1996). Website: http://www.fabc.org/fabc%20papers/fabc_paper_77.pdf

it nonetheless recognizes the possibility of being a ministry in the service of unity.¹⁰⁹

Taking into account the various responses to the invitation of Pope John Paul II, it is safe to say that his persuasive invitation did not fall on deaf ears. It was received across the Christian traditions. His seminal move of promulgating his 21st encyclical letter was welcomed and hailed as "providential" and "prophetic" not only by Catholics but also by other Christian traditions. It was praised for its valuable contributions to the ecumenical world. And by emphasizing the necessity to undertake the most crucial issue, that is, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, *UUS* furthers the reflection in the ecumenical world.

A variation of reflections and discussions from a variety of responses across the traditions of the Reformation serve as valuable source of information that could help deepen our understanding of the Petrine ministry. A number of responses that we have surveyed provides us valuable insights on the question of primacy. In the responses, notable are the positive and negative comments towards the institution of the papacy. These reflections/comments/interpretations, in one way or another, help shape the scope and limitations of the understanding and applicability of the primacy.

However, significant number of responses seemed to indicate a new deadlock, and seems that nothing has been accomplished on the issue of primacy. Is this really the case?

Our survey of a number of responses by the other Christian leaders and theologians reveals that there is a significant shift in the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 22-23.

attitude towards the Bishop of Rome. This 'shift' is greatly attributed to the paradigm shift in the Catholic ecclesiology, as well as, the attitudinal shift in the Catholic Church as initiated by the Second Vatican Council. The attitudinal shift of the post-Vatican II popes reinforces the ongoing development in the reception of the papal office. Our survey shows us that the other Christian traditions manifest a sense of willingness to consider the role of Petrine function as a ministry of unity in the Church of Christ by virtue of human right. This gradual shift among some other Christian traditions from thinking of the papacy as an oppressive burden to now seeing value in the office is probably one of the more unlikely outcomes of the ecumenical journey thus far.

Taking into account the reflections and proposals of the different traditions of the Reformation regarding the understanding and exercise of the Petrine function that it should be exercised in a more scriptural and spiritual orientation, it is, therefore, the proposal of this study that the Petrine ministry/function should be exercised as *a ministry of unity* and *a ministry of charity*.

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