

ECUMENICAL MOVEMENTS IN NIGERIA AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA (ANGLICAN COMMUNION) IN UPHOLDING UNITY

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Abstract

The journey toward unity among Christians is an urgent concern for the entire Church, encompassing both the faithful and the shepherds. This quest is imperative in Nigeria, a nation marked by significant cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. Despite various efforts, a noticeable gap exists in the literature regarding the stages and contributions of different Christian denominations within Nigeria's ecumenical movement. While previous studies have documented the history of ecumenism, they often overlook the specific roles and interactions of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) at each stage of development. This paper aims to fill this gap by presenting a detailed analysis of the evolution of ecumenical movements in Nigeria, highlighting the participation and contributions of various denominations, particularly the Church of Nigeria. This study will focus on the interactions and attitudes of Christians in Nigeria that hinder unity, including ignorance of ecumenical teachings, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and prevailing ethnic sentiments. The research employs qualitative methodologies, utilizing historical analysis and interviews with church leaders to gather insights on ecumenical practices and challenges. The findings suggest that fostering ecumenical cooperation among churches can significantly enhance mutual understanding and promote unity in diversity. Thus, this paper concludes with a recommendation for spiritual ecumenism and collaborative initiatives as essential strategies for achieving Christian unity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Ecumenical movement, religious denomination, Anglican Church, Christian Unity

Introduction

Nigeria is a country of great diversities and a multi-religious society that is acutely aware of the tragedy of both ethnic and religious disunity, as well as intra-

Christian discord. In various spheres of life, even within family circles, opinions differ, allegiances are divided, feelings can easily be wounded, and doubts are cast about the original unity of the people. Consequently, Christianity may appear to be disintegrating. The ecumenical movement is part of the Church's response to some of these debilitating experiences.

There are several ecumenical movements in Nigeria, including the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and more recently, the Nigeria Anglican and Roman Catholic Commission, as well as the Nigeria Anglican and African Church Commission, among others. These various bodies come together to enhance unity among churches in Nigeria. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has been actively involved and has initiated dialogues aimed at unifying the Church in Nigeria. The problem, as observed, is the lack of national unity among the Christian Churches in Nigeria since the 1960s, despite some interactions among them. This interaction has been sectionalized into three main blocs: the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) in the South, the Christian Movement in the North, and the more cohesive and united Roman Catholicism, whose highest national authority is the Catholic Episcopal Conference. While there were serious attempts by the CCN to establish a nationally unified Christian presence during the colonial period, this effort could not succeed for three reasons. First, there was the absence of a commonly perceived national threat. Second, limitations imposed by the colonial administration hindered socio-cultural interaction among Nigerians from the South and the North¹

This study explores the ecumenical movement within the context of Nigeria's diverse and multi-religious society. Nigeria, characterized by its numerous ethnic groups and religious affiliations, has faced significant challenges related to ethnic and religious disunity, particularly among Christian denominations. Scholars such as Ojo³⁰ emphasize the necessity for unity among Christians to foster peace and cooperation in a society marked by division. Despite the existence of various ecumenical movements, including the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), a notable gap remains in the literature regarding the effectiveness of these movements in promoting genuine unity among Christian churches in Nigeria².

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the stages of the ecumenical movement in Nigeria and assess the contributions of different Christian denominations, particularly the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), towards achieving unity. This exploration is essential as it seeks to address the persistent lack of national unity among Christian churches, which has continued despite efforts to engage in dialogue and collaboration.³¹ The scope of this research encompasses the historical development of ecumenical initiatives in

Nigeria from the colonial period to the present day, providing a comprehensive overview of interactions among various Christian groups.³

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform church leaders and policymakers about the obstacles to unity and to propose actionable recommendations for fostering collaboration among Christian denominations. By addressing the attitudes and challenges identified by authors like⁴, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on ecumenism in Nigeria, highlighting the unique challenges faced in this context

Data for this study will be collected through qualitative methods, including interviews with church leaders and surveys among congregants, to gather insights on their experiences and perceptions regarding ecumenical efforts. The analysis will employ thematic coding to identify common trends and issues, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the factors that promote or hinder unity among Christians in Nigeria.³² This study will operate within a theoretical framework grounded in the principles of ecumenism, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, mutual respect, and understanding among diverse Christian traditions.⁵

Ecumenical Movement in Nigeria

The initial ecumenical movement in Nigeria began among the protestant missionaries who according to Ekpunobi came with the aim of destabilizing the ten Roman Catholic Missionary dominance in the country⁶ but because of a lack in ideological insight, the dream was ultimately shattered. However the renewed zeal for ecumenism in Nigeria finally began in earnest from 1970.³³ With this, there was an enhanced theological and liturgical dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians.⁷ Again, this renewed move, affected CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria) – the national umbrella organization that looks after the Christians in Nigeria. Truly, it was not meant to be an ecumenical group *ab initio*,³⁴ but this renewed zeal for ecumenism affected it both in concept, context and nature, and the result was that CAN became the foremost ecumenical group.

The concept of ecumenism began formally about 1900 in Edinburgh, with the aim of ensuring co-operation and unity among the Christian denominations. The ecumenical dreams came on board because the church of Jesus Christ which from time immemorial was founded on the basis of unity and love was subjected to persistent schism, proliferation and disintegration. The Church founded by Christ was *ab initio* indissoluble, but heresies and schisms arose, many centuries after that which threatened the said unity.

The term “ecumenism” has been variously defined by scholars from diverse backgrounds etymologically it comes from the Greek “*Oikoumene*” and Latin “*Oecumenicus*” meaning the inhabited world.⁸ The Chambers’ Dictionary sees it as the doctrines and practices of the Christ in Ecumenical movement³⁵; A.S.

Hornby sees it as a noun that implies the principle on aim of uniting different branches of the Christian faith. John Hardon's *Pocket Catholic Dictionary* sees it as the modern movement towards Christianity unity whose protestant origin seems from the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910, and whose Catholic principles were formulate by the Second Vatican Council in 1964.⁹

Ecumenism is thus the promotion of unity or cooperation between distinct religious groups or denomination of Christianity. Christian ecumenism is distinguished from interfaith activity. Some people think that ecumenism tends towards religious pluralism and relativism which is distinct from ecumenism. The interfaith movement strives for greater mutual respect, toleration, and co-operation among the world religions. Ecumenism as interfaith dialogue between representatives of diverse faiths, does not necessarily intend reconciling their adherents into full, organic unity with one another but simply to promote better relations. It promotes toleration, mutual respect and cooperation, whether among Christian denominations, or between Christianity and other faiths. In fact ecumenism is an authentic attempt by Christians in restoring unity among themselves in fulfilment of one of Jesus' prayers "that they may all be one" (Jn17:21). It originated in and began among Christian missionaries who in the mission fields discovered how Christianity divisions hinder their missionary efforts so they saw the need for a united approach to issues affecting the church in the world. Therefore, it is good to say that ecumenical initiatives started in Christendom and it is not contrary to God's will. Ecumenism is an authentic initiative of Christians for their common good. The challenge is usually to do with whether the participants are sincere and committed to its true intent. In the work, "We Are Closer Than We Think: An Analysis of Contemporary Issues in Ecumenism", Emma Ekpinobi explains ecumenism under three broad categories such as the linking of all Protestant Churches, the linking of all Protestant Churches and Roman Catholic Church; and finally, the linking of the above plus other faiths. The first category was the formation of the Nigerian Church Union, which is the precursor of the ecumenical movement in Nigeria, and which saw their relationship with the World Council of Churches enhanced their ecumenical work. The explanations are seemingly comprehensive, but disagrees with the stand that ecumenism is the linking of Christianity plus other faiths.

Benjamin Diara, whose work is titled

"Anglican Spirituality: The Practice of Christianity", establishes that the spirit of ecumenism is Christian. He further notes a number of worthwhile concerns in the Lord's Prayer for unity to override divisions and that God's mission should override the price of individual churches and also that there is the need for correction of denominationalism.¹⁰ All these factors resulted to the need for ecumenism. The balanced argument because of the above reasons and a lot more is the concern of ecumenism and should be the major concern of every Christian in order to facilitate the missionary work of the Church. This is quite clear for this lack of unity in Christendom greatly affects her missionary

work. ByangKato, lends his voice in “Theological Pitfalls in Africa”, where he reviews the evolution of ecumenical work in Africa. He explained ecumenism, generally, as a “brotherhood” gathering which brings together both Roman Catholics and Protestants, and specifically as drive for Christianity unity which envisages bringing all churches including Roman Catholic Church under one ecclesiastical tent.¹¹

The Beginning of Ecumenism in Nigeria

The foundation of what resembled ecumenism in Nigeria was laid in 1911 when the Presbyterian initiated a missionary conference on more practical issues. The outcome of the conference was to secure uniformity of discipline within the native churches founded by the different missionary societies, (and) discuss such matters as the relation of the church to marriage under native law, the baptism of women who are Christians but married to polygamous husbands, the definition of spheres of influence in the untouched field among others. Besides, the conference was attended by the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists. Although the main reason according to Ekpunobi for convoking the conference was to fight denominational competitions, that it was convened in order to break the Roman Catholic monopoly of the mission fields in Nigeria. During the conference, the issue of organic unity was ultimately discussed – the type that will erase denominationalism. A.W. Wilkie, a participant of the conference declared:

We are not here primarily to establish in Africa, Presbyterianism or Methodism or any other-ism, but to preach Christ and take a lowly place under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the foundation of a Church which shall not be foreign to the African. The missionaries also felt that there is an urgent need for ecumenism in the land for the denominational gospel they brought to the Africans has created rivalry, division and enmity among the Christians instead of unity and love.³⁶

Apart from this, the conference was also stimulated by the World Christian Conference of 1910. The conference seemingly declares the aim of missionary effort to be the establishment of one Church of Christ. The conference resolves that to attain this unity, there should be mutual and full recognition of the discipline of the churches of Southern Nigeria. That an effort be made to obtain corporate unity of native churches. The argument here is that it is only by agreement that the desired Christian unity would be realized. In order to achieve the unification dream, the union was named “Evangelical Union of Southern Nigeria” by 1923. Moreover, by 1947, another missionary conference was held at Onitsha with Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Qua Iboe and Sudan United Mission, in attendance. However, the Sudan United Mission (the

missionary body working in Northern Nigeria, by then) was forced to withdraw from the conference because the colonial policy then could not favor her.³⁷

Though they seriously worked for the unification, they did not succeed but the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, and its mandate on the unity of churches, gave them the impetus the struggle. Though a date for the inauguration of the Church Union (United Church of Nigeria) was fixed for 11th December, 1965 it was aborted. Ekpunobi depicts the scenario; that despite all the noise about the proposed Church Union, it however failed for lack of clear ideology, inadequate mass education, personality conflict, ethnic sentiments etc. The failure of the church union initiative was because of interdenominational antagonism. Kalu opined that the missionaries came together to champion the course of church unity, but failed to fight the forces of rivalry. Therefore, they ended up fighting or pursuing their denominational interests, which finally killed the vision of the Church Union. The initiative was not a total failure, it gave birth to the Christian Council of Nigeria. The Council was made up of various "Protestant Churches notably Church Missionary Society (CMS), now Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterian, Qua Iboe and Salvation Army. The newly formed Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) provided a forum for member churches to co-operate in various projects relating to pastoral education, joint ownership of schools, and health institutions. And their aims were to foster and express the fellowship and unity of the Christian Church in Nigeria, which will further enhance the realization of its oneness with the church throughout the world. Finally, it aims to keep in touch with the International Missionary Council and the WCC (Article).³⁸ Moreover, it was this CCN that later on changed into CAN in the Northern Nigeria.

The Strength of Ecumenical Movement in Nigeria

The move for the church union (ecumenism) in Nigeria was orchestrated only by Protestant

missionaries championed by the CMS at this time, while the Roman Catholics stayed aloof. On this John Baur said that:

The African church was slow in its acceptance of ecumenism because for Protestants, the ecumenical movement has been restricted to a search for unity among the Protestants churches, sometimes as a strengthening bond against the so-called Roman danger". For Catholics, the prohibition of any participation in worship with heretics and this meant all Protestants had been so severely inculcated that ecumenism could only mean – pray for them in order that they may return to Rome".³⁹

With this faulty understanding of the parties – both Catholics and Protestant, even after the Vatican II Council, it took a long time for the African Catholics

to perceive that Vatican II Council was a new reformation in which Catholic Church accepted the basic ideas of Protestant Reformation. It was really on this basis that both groups began to see themselves as brothers and sisters from the same Lord, and discover that “what unites is greater than what divides them.” With this new insight, coupled with the impetus given to them by both the World Council of Churches and Vatican II Council, ecumenism became a common agenda of both Catholics and Protestants in Nigeria, though their effort were minimal. However from 1970 till present, the wind of ecumenism increased. Both formal and informal conversations, meetings and theological discussions began earnestly among Catholic and Protestant Ministers with the aim to facilitate the desired Christian unity in Nigeria.⁴⁰

Another point worth noting at this juncture is the fact that before the real ecumenical endeavour began in Nigeria, there has been the existence of a body known as CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria) in the Northern Nigeria among the Protestant Churches. It was made up of both lay and clerical leaders of the Church, who used the platform to pursue a common cause for the Church. So we can say confidently that the Protestant Church championed by the Anglicans were at the forefront of this venture. However, with the ecumenical fragrance already saturating everywhere, CAN became redefined, restructured and reconstituted as a national ecumenical body⁴¹. It is through this new body that both Catholics and non-Catholics channel their vices together in pursuit of the desired Christian unity in Nigeria.

The story of CAN started with some Christian leaders in the north at that time thought it wise to come together and find ways and means by which they can fight against the move to forcefully make people Muslims by Sardauna. The Association was successful in the sense that it helped many people to stand firm by their religious conviction and not give it up simply because of the fear of losing their job or their position. Hence, Christians in the North decided to continue to meet from time to time. Around 1975-76, during the Obasanjo regime, things were happening in the country in such a way that Christians in Nigeria thought it would be a good thing for them as a body to have an organization that would bring them together to discuss and see in what way they can ensure that their rights are respected and so on.

The Catholic Bishops have link with the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) to find the possibility of agreeing with the CCN on ecumenical matters as it affect Christian unity in Nigeria. So, to really formalize virile Christian Association – a united one –they had to think about the group named ‘Others’ which were brought on board later. They were the Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria/Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN/PFN), Organization of Instituted Churches (OAIC), and ECWA/TEKAN group of

Churches to form five blocks of CAN. The Church also faced antagonism mounting against Christianity in the country and so the need for a united front became very important at the national level. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) went ahead to create an Office with a Director for Ecumenism and encouraged every Diocese to appoint a Priest as Diocesan Director of Ecumenism. Prior to this, the CCN has been championed by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in order to promote ecumenical activities within the Church and between the Church and others. Consequent to this they (Anglican Communion) has led the CCN from its inception to the formation of CAN in the Northern Nigeria to her present state.

In order to further collaborate with the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria in order to enhance the “National Anglican/Roman Catholic Commission” (NARC). When in full stream, NARC would be engaged in theological reflections on themselves that have been discussed at the international forum for consultation between the two Churches i.e. “Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). A number of areas have been discussed and joint documents produced by ARCIC, giving expression to the relationship between the two denominations. However, Ecumenical dialogue is more than that. It should mature to the dialogue between experts and theologians either in the Ivory towers, theological institutes or religious formation houses. Here, absolute care and high level of preparation is made in order to discover the areas of both convergence and divergence. This paper sees the Roman Catholic Church as a facilitator of the much-expected ecumenical dialogue which has not been seen in Nigeria.

Challenges Facing Ecumenism in Nigeria

Despite the achievement recorded by the Church in their ecumenical work in Nigeria, she has persistently encountered difficulties, which has made her work incomplete and weak. One of such problems is fear of syncretism. Many Catholics see ecumenism as a step to syncretism. In fact, a renowned Catholic such as Abbe-George De Nante condemned the Vatican II Council’s document on ecumenism “*Unitatis Redintegratio*”. According to him, bringing both Catholics and non-Catholics together for the purpose of unification means joining both real and quasi-church together which is real syncretism⁴². This often makes the whole effort null and void. Although syncretism does not have only negative connotation, still the argument here is that seeing ecumenism as syncretism makes the people shun it or view it as evil. Sequel to this is the fact that some Catholics also see ecumenism as false-Pan- Christian Unity. There is a school of thought especially the traditionalist Roman Catholics which believed that any form of unity that is against a “return to the Catholic faith” in ungodly or a contradiction to the church’s interpretation of the Bible.

The Superiority Complex among the Roman Catholic Clergy also impedes the ecumenical progress in the country⁴³. Notwithstanding, the efforts of Vatican II experts in convincing the church of the need to accept others as brethren, many of the catholic clergy still rate them as inferior or mushroom churches. This, as a matter of fact, intimidates some of the Protestant Churches that they feel that accepting to be with Roman Catholic means losing their identity. Therefore, they perceive Catholics as intimidators, and partnering or dialoging with them cannot bring about ecumenism. Conservatism and intransigence on doctrinal matters by the Roman Catholic hierarchy also hinders the ecumenical action in Nigeria.

Change is consistent in life and is not easily accepted by any system. When the Vatican II Council's message on ecumenism came on board, the majority on the clergy were reluctant to let go of the old order because they were at ease with it. It was believed *ab-initio* that salvation can only be found in the Catholic Church, but Vatican II Council changed that, but the problem till today is that the majority of the Catholic Clergy still refuse to partner with the Protestants. For instance, the unpleasant incident that occurred during the Reinhard Bonke Healing Crusade at Nsukka proved that the impact of such discussion had not been felt. The coordinators of the crusade visited the Catholic Bishop of Nsukka to ask his support for the crusade, but he rejected and chased them out⁴⁴; so, continuous denominational prejudice and rivalry have also made the message of ecumenism peripheral. According to one observer, ecumenical efforts in Nigeria had been weak for some reasons which include:

- a) There were bitter memories of strife and rivalry in Eastern Nigerian between the Catholic Mission on one hand and all the Protestant Churches from 1850's right up to the 1980's. The memories of hate, hostilities, mistrust and suspicion were still fresh and raw. They had not been able to make Catholics and Anglicans see themselves as comrades of the same Christian religion⁴⁵. In a similar way, N. Ndiokwere maintained that rivalries, unhealthy competition, mutual distrust and skepticism are bane of ecumenism in Nigeria. While H.O. Okeke, concluded that the denominational rivalry is worse between Catholics and Anglicans at least in Eastern Nigeria where each target the other in their relentless criticism and attacks.
- b) Denominational Bias instead of seeking a way of unity, each denomination spends time protecting her denominational boundary almost to the detriment of other denomination.
- c) The Proliferation of Churches in Nigeria has continued to hinder the dream of Christian unity. The problem here is that despite the evils inherent in proliferation, some protestant groups justify it in the name of church planting. But regardless of their claim, the church has

continued to disintegrate thereby making the dream for unity an unrealizable one even with the relentless effort of both CAN and PFN.

- d) Fundamentalism, and holier-than-thou attitude among the Protestants especially the Pentecostals hinders the ecumenical work in Nigeria. In fact, the majority of the non-Catholic Churches claim to be living churches while others are dead. They thrive only by destroying other churches through vitriolic criticism. Indeed, outside the call to repentance and acceptance of Jesus as one's personal Lord and Saviour, some of these new religious movements/sects have no other doctrines to preach. As a result, there is hardly any basis for meaningful dialogue on doctrinal matters with such groups. Even the fundamentalists among them believed that unity with the Roman Catholics in ecumenism means paving the way for one religion that may ultimately enthrone Anti-Christ. Indeed the problem here is that as long as this mindset is not removed, the whole noise about Christian unity will be a wasted effort.
- e) Mutual Suspicion is another thing that hinders ecumenism in the country. Each denomination avoids the other as one does a leper. H.A. Adigwe, said that there is too much suspicion in the approach of Catholics to the Pentecostals. He maintained that if one approaches a Pentecostal clergyman, his quick impression is that he wants to convert him to Catholicism⁴⁶, vice versa.
- f) Ignorance of the Context of Ecumenism also hinders the efforts towards ecumenism in Nigeria. In Christendom today, many are ignorant of the context of ecumenism, even with the level of awareness created by both Vatican II Council and World Council of Churches. As a result, there has been persistent infighting and character assassination among the hierarchy and lay faithful of both traditions.
- g) Doctrinal Differences also affect negatively the move for church unity in Nigeria. This is because most of the Christian Churches in Nigeria have doctrines which kicks against the unity of the Christians. And the problem is that these doctrines are difficult to change because their churches have their headquarters elsewhere. Therefore, in matters that affect those doctrines, they find it difficult to touch them or if they must, it may take a long time, thereby slowing down the speed of the ecumenical work in Nigeria.
- h) Governmental Indifference also draws the hand of clock of ecumenism back.

The government knows that a united Christianity will positively affect the sociopolitical unity of our country. Even the freedom of worship enshrined in our constitution supports the continuous proliferation which is against the spirit of

ecumenism. However, instead of correcting these anomalies which will enhance Christian unity, the government chooses to stay aloof.

The Anglican Ecumenical Posture

The Anglican Church is a liturgical Church; Anglican Churchmanship though of diverse nature is rooted in the Book of Common Prayer. There is however inclusiveness with room for diversity in worship. However it should be noted that Anglicanism stands firm on issues of accepting the Bible as the standard for the faith and salvation. And should also be noted that in none essentials not requisite for salvation Anglicanism is tolerant. Anglicans honor and respect their traditions and the writings and practices of the early church and seek to find ways to both maintain their heritage while moving forward to address current issues, thereby living out the middle way or "*via media*," which is an Anglican ideal. The *via media* locates itself between the position of the Roman Catholics and the Puritans. She however maintained a position on the Supreme Authority of scripture using Hooker's renowned Tripod of Scripture, tradition and reason.

- a) Scripture - Anglicanism pays great attention to the unique place of the Scripture in correct understanding of the Christian faith. Therefore, the scripture is sufficient for faith and salvation and both Old and New Testaments are compatible. The scripture is the supreme authority for establishing the doctrine of the Christian Church.
- b) Tradition - Tradition provides the context of worship in community that was history so that the interpretation of the scripture will be consistent with what the Ancient fathers have believed everywhere and by all. Apostolic tradition therefore ensures that the Church fathers guard the authentic witness of the scriptures. The Scriptures and the tradition are indispensable tools for the sustenance of the faith. The two mutually interdependent.
- c) Reasons - Anglicanism also makes appeal to reason in the perception of what is right and wrong. Reason is not extraneous to the Scripture. Reason is the God given capacity/faculty for men to use the Scripture appropriately.

Therefore, we realize that there is an interconnection of the scripture, tradition and reason that gives complimentary roles. The Scripture is a product of a well-articulated tradition that is thought out by individuals who were reasonable and were inspired by God (II Timothy 3:16). Anglicans continue to work with other churches and denominations in many ecumenical efforts to bring unity to the world wide Church. Anglicans are also at the forefront of interfaith dialogue and seek to work together in unity with people of other religions rather than oppose them. Hence the House of Bishops of the Church of Nigeria adopted 1886 Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. It is stated clearly thus: "we Bishops of the Church of Nigeria at Synod assembled as Bishops in the Church of God do

hereby solemnly declare to all whom it may concern, and especially to their several spheres who have contended for the faith of Christ”.

Furthermore, we do affirm that the Christian unity can be restored only by the return of all Christian communions to the principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Church universal during the first ages of its existence; which principles we believe to be the substantial deposit of Christian Faith and Order committed by Christ and His Apostles to the Church unto the end of the world and therefore incapable of compromise or surrender by those who have been ordered to be its stewards and trustees for the common and equal benefits of all men in the church.

Conclusion

The ecumenical efforts started by the simple agreement to come together will enhance interaction at least in the form of dialogue. The various associations and commissions will eventually work together as time goes on. There will be a better understanding and of course agreement which is necessary for walking and working together in unity as Jesus declared that they all may be one. While the Roman Catholic talk of ecumenism their posture suggests that they are only paying lip service as they are not in any way promoting it. It is the Anglicans that continue to work with other churches and denominations in many ecumenical efforts to bring unity to the world wide Church. Anglicans are also at the forefront of interfaith dialogue and seek to work together in unity with people of other denominations rather than opposing them. The Roman Catholic should shed their pride of *Primus Inter paris* and embrace other Christian denominations all in the spirit of ecumenism while the Anglican Communion should still continue in their efforts at sustaining the unity.

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