## **Society for Ecumenical Studies**

Catholic-Methodist Dialogue The Eighth Report of the International Commission

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At the recent conference of the World Methodist Council in Seoul, the eighth report of the international Roman Catholic-Methodist International Commission was also unanimously received. Potentially, if properly received by the two churches concerned, it represents a very significant step forward in the Catholic-Methodist relationship.

The Roman Catholic-Methodist international dialogue began in 1967, at about the same time as ARCIC. Sadly, it has received less attention than it deserves both within the Catholic and Methodist churches and the rest of the oikoumene. Throughout, a fine balance has been maintained between a clear acceptance on both sides that the goal is and must be full communion in faith a sacramental life and mission and an acceptance that, despite growing mutual esteem and very real convergence on some issues, there remain others that continue to be problematic. One such issue is that of women's presbyteral and episcopal ministry where the fifth report, The Apostolic Tradition, made it quite clear that Methodists were of one mind on the issue and the Catholic Church of another. Realism, however, is balanced by the conviction that we are called to continue the dialogue with faith in Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, even if, at this stage, we cannot see how some of the remaining problems may be resolved. In the meantime, and this is the particular emphasis of the most recent report, there is much learn from each other, a lot that we can give to and receive from each other because, as the present report makes so clear at the beginning, we recognise in each other that which is of Christ and the Gospel and, thus of necessity of the Church.

The seven previous reports were concerned to show Catholics and Methodists how much of the core of Christian faith they held in common, much more than most of them would have realised in previous eras. They were concerned to help the two churches understand each other, that being particularly the case with the seventh report (2001) Speaking the Truth in Love, which dealt with the exercise of teaching authority in the two churches. The approach of the present report is to help the two churches become more aware of the spiritual gifts and riches of each other in order that there may be that exchange of gifts between them which was first implied in the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II and then forcefully underlined by the late John Paul II in Ut Unum Sint. A vital part of the context of this report is the current rediscovery of the emphasis upon spiritual ecumenism that was so strong in such pioneers of the Ecumenical Movement as Paul Couturier. Another is the emphasis upon the reconciliation of memories and the need for a re-reading, both of our common history, the first fifteen centuries, and of the later period in which the Catholic and Methodist churches existed separately. A key related feature of the report is the very extensive interweaving of guotations from key contemporary Catholic and Methodist sources, prominent amongst which are the Decree on Ecumenism, Ut Unum Sint, Through Divine Love (the most recent report of the Roman Catholic-United Methodist dialogue in the States), the Book of Discipline<sup>1</sup>, and the most recent ecclesiological statement of the British Methodist

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The *Book of Discipline* contains the canon law of the United Methodist Church of USA. It is, however, more than a compendium of regulations since it continues to contain much of the spiritual advice given by Wesley to his 'assistants', the early Methodist preachers.

Conference, *Called To Love and Praise*. This shows Catholics and Methodist seeking to learn from each others' distilled wisdom as witnessed in authoritative teaching.

Particularly significant as a methodological precursor of the present international report was the 2004 report of the dialogue between the United Methodist Church and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Through Divine Love*. Like the subsequent international report, it decided to major on ecclesiology, starting from the shared emphases upon the Church as communion and 'a dynamic relationship between the local expression of the church and the church universal as it exists in each place throughout the world'.<sup>2</sup> It argued that 'an ecclesiology of communion provides a lens through which we may pursue our common and divergent understandings of the nature of the church local and global. This shared vision of the Church as a partnership of divine love also calls us to learn from one another, identify issues in need of attention in our own traditions, and seek to identify movement forward toward greater agreement as a result of our dialogue<sup>3</sup>.

Through Divine Love shows the two teams of theologians engaging seriously with each others' insights, looking to lessons that can be drawn from the dialogue for the renewal of their respective churches, showing a properly ecumenical preparedness to challenge and be challenged in love by each other and, finally, proposing steps for growing closer together though these are spelt out in less detail than in the subsequent international report. Clearly, however, it has been an important resource for the international dialogue.

The international report is entitled *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church.* It begins, as recent ones have done, with a biblical passage, Paul's greeting to the Church at Corinth in his first letter (1 Cor 1:1-10), which, as the Commission state, 'resonates with our experience' since it is an appeal to 'be united in the same mind and the same purpose'. It is then divided into four chapters.

The first, entitled *Mutual Reassessment*, deals with the way in which Methodists and Catholics over more than a couple of centuries have understood and evaluated each other. For much of that time, mutual attitudes were largely, though not wholly, ill-informed and prejudiced, Methodists misunderstanding much of Catholic teaching on the veneration of the saints and Mary, Catholics believing that Methodists were just one more fissiparous Protestant sect. Occasionally, there were flashes of real appreciation of the other as when Newman remarked, in 1850, that Wesley had the qualities that 'make up the notion of a Catholic saint'. Since Vatican II, however, there has been a radical change of attitudes, Catholics now being able to see that the Methodist Movement was characterised by a desire to make known the love of Christ, to reform the inner life of the Church, to encourage participation in the celebration of the eucharist, to serve the poor, to impassion professed Christians into articulate witness for Christ's sake'. Equally, Methodists have come to recognise the importance of the Catholic witness to unity as essential to the Church's mission. They have come to appreciate the Catholic emphasis upon continuity across time and to recover Wesley's own deep appreciation of the holiness of so many catholic saints, a view that he continued to hold despite his many attacks on aspects of Catholic faith and practice. Finally, both sides have come, in the words of the Commission and in the general context of the Ecumenical Movement, to realise that 'separated Christian communities must eventually grow toward one another if they are to grow closer to Christ. They are formed by the Spirit to be one and not divided'.

Like much else in the report, this first chapter has an importance beyond purely Catholic-Methodist relationships in that it demonstrates the importance of the reconciliation of memories of a common re-reading of the history of separated Christians in order to come to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Through Divine Love, para 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid, para 7.

a new appreciation of how ecumenical partners have been formed and how they now need to be positively re-evaluated in the common process of growing together in Christ.

The second chapter, entitled *Together in Christ*, deals with the common understanding of Church that has developed as a result of the earlier stages of the dialogue. It begins with an emphasis upon the Church as both visible reality and invisible mystery. 'Its visibility is essential to its nature and mission. But...only the eye of faith can discern its deepest reality, its invisible mystery'<sup>4</sup>.

This chapter illuminates both the ecclesiological convergence that has taken place within the general context of the developing ecclesiological consensus within the Ecumenical Movement as a whole and the identification of themes that are particularly, though certainly not exclusively, common to the two partners, the most obvious being the *connectional* nature of the Church<sup>5</sup>. In particular, the work of the fourth and fifth quinquennia of the dialogue, *Towards A Statement on the Church* and *The Apostolic Tradition* is harvested and there are the emphases on the trinitarian basis of ecclesiology and on koinonia that one would expect. There is a detailed examination of the common missionary emphasis of both churches in the section entitled *Sharing the Divine Mission* which recalls 'our common understanding of graced cooperation' and participation in God's work, which allows us with St Paul to call Christians 'God's co-workers'.

Paragraphs 60-1 and 85 are especially significant in this context. Para 60 stresses that 'The Church is by nature a connectional society', 'a web of interactive relationships. Both Methodists and Catholics have an essentially 'connectional understanding of Christ's call to discipleship, to holiness and to mission...This connectional principle derives from the understanding of holiness common to Catholics and Methodists: holiness is never a private affair, but a call to perfect love of God<sup>6</sup> and of one another'.

Para 61 states 'The dynamic of communion belongs not only to local disciples gathered together in community, but also to the world-wide community of those local communities united together as one Church, the Body of Christ. The Church of Christ is truly present in and effective in some way in all local congregations of the faithful who are gathered together by the preaching of the Gospel and for the celebration of the eucharist. But to be truly ecclesial, each community must be open to communion with other such communities...The Church of Christ is an interdependent whole...Such a connectional understanding of the Church means that both Catholics and Methodists recognise the need for effective pastoral ministries of unity and oversight within the one Church of Christ. Catholics and Methodists firmly believe that Christ wills one visibly united Church, even though they may differently identify the structures needed for such full communion'.

The common ecclesiological heritage of the two churches could not be more precisely stated together with the urgency and necessity of a continuing dialogue on the structures necessary to such connexion and communion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The Grace Given You in Christ, para 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This term is usually spelt connexional in British English but in Methodism everywhere it reflects the understanding that there is one mission to God's one world and that in that mission, the sharing of resources by and between all local churches is essential.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Agreement on the essentially pastoral nature of ministry has characterised the earlier stages of the dialogue. The issue of understanding the relationship between the unique priesthood of Christ and the royal priesthood of all the faithful (often referred to within Methodism as the 'priesthood of all believers') on the one hand, and the priestly dimension of episcopal and presbyteral ministry remains an issue for further exploration as the present report stresses. The Catholic team commend the sensitive treatment of the issue in *Called To Love and Praise* but point out that its teaching is not fully congruent with Catholic understanding.

Paragraph 85 stresses the common acceptance by both churches of the need for continued reformation and renewal under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. The process involves development in understanding of its teachings but involves more than that. 'There must be growth in love to achieve more insightful knowledge of the riches of faith. In other words there must be growth in holiness'. Here we have an echo of the teaching of the great Benjamin Gregory that the order is 'not first understand in order to love, but love in order to understand'<sup>7</sup>.

This whole chapter is characterised by prudent balancing of truths that need to be held in tension and by an holistic vision. An emphasis upon the divine aspect of the Church, a 'reality imbued with the hidden presence of God' is balanced by an emphasis upon the Church as 'a community of weak and vulnerable human beings who often fail, alone and together' and thus upon the Church as being 'always in need of purification and renewal'. The total dependence of the Church on the Holy Spirit is several times stressed. Para 77 concludes with this important agreed statement.

'Methodists and Catholics agree that 'in all situations, the underlying truth of the Church's nature remains the same: by its life and witness the Church points towards, by its sharing and worship it anticipates, and through its mission it us an instrument of the ultimate reality of the Kingdom of God, actualised in Jesus Christ'<sup>8</sup>.

The total vision of the relationship between individual discipleship and universal fellowship and mission is encapsulated thus, 'For Methodists and Catholics, the call to holiness and the call to be the Church belong together and spirituality and theology are inseparable<sup>9</sup>.

Having dealt with commonly accepted ecclesiological perspectives, the report moves on in chapter 3, *Deepening and Extending our Recognition of Each Other*, to look at what the two churches might be able to give to and receive from each other. The first para, 97, puts the point movingly when it asserts,

'It is time now to return to the concrete reality of each other, to look one another in the eye with love and esteem to acknowledge what we see truly to be of Christ and the Gospel, and thereby of the *Church* in each other'.

A degree of stress is put on the fact that the contrasting approaches of the two churches are not necessarily incompatible. Thus, the Methodist emphasis upon the faith of the individual is complementary to rather than incompatible with the traditional Catholic emphasis upon the faith of the community. Historically, Methodists have been unwilling to unchurch others, whereas Catholics have tended to stress the defects or lack of full ecclesial status of other churches; the gap between these emphases has narrowed since Vatican II with its teaching on the authentic ecclesial elements within other bodies and the very real importance of those ecclesial bodies in the salvation of their members. The report suggests that the two churches are edging towards a common understanding of Church as sacrament, citing both the report Through Divine Love of the American Catholic-Methodist dialogue and the teaching of the British Methodist ecclesiological statement, Called To Love and Praise. It asserts, 'the idea of a sacrament is ideally suited to holding together internal and external, visible and spiritual and both Methodists and Catholics have begun to speak of the Church itself in a sacramental way'. Previous reports had moved rather tentatively in this direction, noting some Methodist reservations over using such language other than of the two 'gospel' sacraments. The development of a common discourse of sacramentality in ecclesiology

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Gregory, B. *The Holy Catholic Church*, London, 1873, p 172. (Gregory's work is the leading classical Wesleyan statement on ecclesiology)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> citing *Called To Love and Praise*, 2.3.19, with italicised emphasis added by the Commission!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The Grace Given You in Christ, para 56.

may, as *Through Divine Love* seems to indicate be of some value in refining a more theological and less purely pragmatic understanding of Methodist ecclesiological structures. Thus, in *Through Divine Love*, we read that 'United Methodists acknowledge a need to grow in an appreciation of the sacramental dimensions of their own structures and practices, which are not simply functional. Connectionalism and itinerancy, for example, have ecclesiological and sacramental meanings that go beyond their practical utility'<sup>10</sup>.

Two sections of this chapter are then devoted to the exchange of gifts. First, the Methodist perspective is examined. Methodists recognise the common trinitarian faith of the two churches. They accept that the eucharistic teaching of the Roman Catholic Church resonates with that in the classical hymns of the Wesleys. They see many of the 'emphases' of Methodism paralleled in the Catholic Church, especially those on regular attendance at worship, the regular and faithful use of holy communion and the other means of grace, the commitment to justice and peace and, above all, the common stress on the call to holiness. Methodist recognise that the time has come to take seriously some Catholic forms of devotion of which they have previously tended to be wary. 'Greater awareness of the communion of saints and the Church's continuity in time, the sacramental use of material things and sacramental ministry to the sick and dying are also ecclesial elements and endowments that Methodists might profitably receive from Roman Catholics'. The emphasis upon the Church's continuity in time is reinforced with the statement that Methodists can now see the episcopal succession as a sign (but not a guarantee) of the unity of the Church in space and time. They are also reminded of the statement about the Petrine ministry in the earlier report Towards A Statement on the Church<sup>11</sup>.

Methodists then 'invite Roman Catholics to receive afresh from the common Christian heritage certain ecclesial elements and endowments that currently may be more evident in Methodism than in the Roman Catholic Church'. These include the gift of Christian conference as a means of discerning God's will for the Church, a greater lay activism and leadership in the mission of the Church and a greater flexibility and pragmatism in mission. They invite Catholics to consider the role of the ministry of the Word, Bible reading and study and 'meeting with others in small groups for fellowship, extempore prayer and mutual pastoral care'.

From their side, Catholics acknowledge the commitment of Methodism to holiness and to the connectional understanding and practice of Church. They recognise the emphasis common to both traditions upon 'responsible grace'. They accept that they can learn much from Methodism about the value of Scriptural devotion, hymnody and lay ministry. They believe that they can find inspiration in the example of the Wesleys. They commend to Methodists a re-examination of many of the issues that were divisive at the Reformation and subsequently, such as the nature of eucharistic sacrifice, priesthood and the issue of 'absolute confidence in Christ's work through the ministry of word and sacrament'.

These Catholic challenges are of immense importance for the future of the dialogue. They could also powerfully aid the ongoing reassessment of presbyteral and episcopal ministry that is going on within Methodism on both sides of the Atlantic, in the case of Britain at least partly as a result of the Covenant relationship with the Church of England, the statement within the Covenant that both churches are agreed upon the common acceptance of the principles of episcopal ministry and the current British exploration of possible models of episcopacy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ibid, para 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> para 58, in which Methodists accepted that whatever was essential to the unity of the Church must by its very nature be part of God's will for it.

The Catholics record their appreciation of the great care with which (British) Methodists treated the question of priesthood in Called To Love and Praise whilst recording their observation that the traditional teaching of the British Methodist Deed of Union that 'the Methodist Church holds the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and consequently believes that no priesthood exists which belongs exclusively to a particular order or class' is marked by 'a Reformation rivalry between the royal priesthood and the ministerial priesthood'<sup>12</sup>. In fact, the phrasing of the Deed of Union was as much influenced by a late nineteenth century reaction against the claims of Anglo-Catholics (rather than Roman Catholics) that grace could only be mediated through the sacraments administered by an episcopally ordained priest. This seemed to contemporary Methodists to deny the immediacy of the relationship between the believer and Christ as the sole absolute intermediary between the Christian and the Father as well as ignoring the value of other and non-sacramental means of grace, both instituted and prudential.

However, as the Catholics state, hope of a possible rapprochement is to be found in recent work on the focusing and representative nature of presbyteral ministry within British Methodism. It will perhaps also be helpful to stress the emphasis of the 1937 British Methodist statement on ministry as both arising within the Church yet also God's gift to it as potentially reconciling the nature of presbyteral ministry as representative both of Christ and His people who, of course, are inextricably linked<sup>13</sup>. It is also important to stress that the ordained ministry receives its essential rationale from its service of the royal priesthood of all the faithful, to which its is essentially ordered<sup>14</sup>.

The question of episcopal ministry could also be further explored. Both *Through Divine Love* and *The Grace Given You in Christ* accept that there is not yet full agreement on the nature and function of a bishop. The international report stresses the traditional United Methodist teaching that bishops do not, strictly speaking, belong to a separate order of ministry but are presbyters chosen for a particular wider function<sup>15</sup>. However, it should be noted that in recent years, the Discipline of the UM Church has stressed their role as teachers and guardians of the faith in a way that comes closer to the Catholic understanding of their role. An important continuing difference is that Methodist bishops are servants of the will of the presbyterium or of any mixed lay and presbyteral diocesan council. Nevertheless, recent ecclesiological research by such scholars as Jean-Marie Tillard, has indicated that bishops have a particular responsibility to safeguard the particular traditions of their local churches and to communicate their concerns to other churches. It seems to me that there is room for rapprochement in a joint meditation on the dictum of Cyprian that he never acted without consulting his presbyterium.

On the question of eucharistic doctrine, there are certainly signs that rapprochement could become even closer. Methodists are challenged by Catholics both as to their faith and practice, but the challenge is put with due sensitivity to the way in which earlier presentations of the doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice may have given the wrong impression. 'Catholics regret any impression that they may have given of a repetition of Christ's sacrifice in the Mass'<sup>16</sup>. They put forward part of the famous Lima statement as a basis for agreement. The

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that this was also the view of some Catholics before Vatican II, who followed the teaching of Jerome on this matter

<sup>16</sup> para 131

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Para 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cf the emphasis of Charles Wesley in HP 622

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Never without his people seen,

The Head of all believing men'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> As taught by Vatican II in

eucharist is 'the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ, who ever lives to make intercession for us'.

Methodists recognise that there is a resonance between Catholic teaching and that expressed in the eucharistic hymns of the Wesleys. The present writer argues that the recovery of the weekly eucharist as the norm for the main Sunday worship would represent a proper re-reception of the fullness of the Wesleyan tradition which was both evangelical and eucharistic. He would also argue that the corpus of the Wesley hymns might possibly received as a common statement of eucharistic faith. They would perhaps be seen by some Catholics as breathing too much of a degree of reverent agnosticism concerning some aspects of catholic eucharistic faith; one thinks for example of the lines

'Who can tell how bread and wine God into man convey'

On the other hand, they could also be seen as thus witnessing to and protecting the ineffable nature of the mystery.

The Catholics stress that 'the Eucharist truly as a sacrificial character because Christ is really present there in the very act of his supreme self-gift to the Father'. One might also emphasise that he is also present in his self-gift to us, the very identity of giver and gift, the latter being assimilated to the former being guaranteed by the perfection of his love in which the giving never (in contrast to that of sinful human beings) falls below that of the fullest extent. 'Having loved his own, He loved them to the end' (John 13.)

The international Commission might also ponder the statement made by both Catholics and Methodists in Through Divine Love. 'both churches, however, affirm Christ's real presence...Both churches view the Eucharist as a type of sacrifice, and both view holy communion as the communion of the Church. Both churches see the eucharist as making present the one, unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ<sup>17</sup>. It is worth adding, though, that Through Divine Love also records one important matter of difference not really addressed in The Grace Given You in Christ, the Methodist 'Open Table' vis a vis the Catholic emphasis that eucharistic hospitality is normally only extended to those with whom there is full communion in faith, life and mission. It could be argued that the two contrasting disciplines result from privileging *contrasting* aspects of the eucharist, that is to say its rile in commemorating Christ's table fellowship with and openness to sinners as against its role in expressing the fullness of ecclesial communion existing.

Finally, under the heading of these Catholic challenges, comes the question of absolute confidence in Christ's action through the ministry of word and sacrament. This question was the subject of inconclusive debate in the previous round of the international dialogue, after which the present writer suggested that the resolution of the problems felt by both sides lay in a confidence in the utter faithfulness of God<sup>18</sup>. The question of faith in the action of Christ through the recognised means of grace, sacramental and non-sacramental, instituted and prudential, is easier to resolve than the question of teaching authority.

The final chapter of The Grace Given You in Christ is entitled *Principles and Proposals for Developing Relations between Catholics and Methodists*. It admits that there are still many hard theological issues to be resolved but begins by stating that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Through Divine Love, para 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Speaking the Truth in Love, paras. See also my article in One in Christ.

'If relations between Catholics and Methodists are to develop further, gestures are required from both our communions that are both realistic and appropriate at the present time'. It is important to deepen the already existing degree of communion between the two churches and to advance 'unity by stages'.

The recommendations are addressed to the Methodist conferences, to the Catholic bishops' conferences, to bishops and equivalent church leaders, to the theologians of both traditions and to those responsible for ministerial formation. They include the caveat that, in neither case, should anything be done which breaches the discipline of either church but that both accept that there are very real gifts to be shared with the partner church. Both churches are encouraged to consider carefully what is essential within their respective traditions and what might, with integrity be changed or 'let go of'.

Catholics are encouraged to give concentrated attention to lay leadership within the Church, to the contribution of women to the Church's ministry and to 'the Church's corporate assurance as the context for the infallibility of the Pope'. Methodists are encouraged to consider the historic succession of bishops and the individual exercise of episcope within a collegial ministry of oversight and to consider the exercise of universal primacy for the sake of unity and as an expression of the universality of the Church. Both churches are encouraged to invite members of the other to experience their forms of worship and spiritual devotion and to examine the bounds of legitimate diversity within the Church. Catholics are invited to be inspired by the example of the Wesleys and to promote the place of evangelical preaching, Bible study and hymn singing in the Church whilst Methodists are encouraged to consider making a weekly eucharist the norm in their pattern of Sunday worship as well as exploring Catholic forms of devotion such as the Stations of the Cross and the veneration of Mary. Both churches are encouraged to co-operate in mission and in peace and justice projects.

These practical suggestions may, in the last resort prove to be the most significant aspect of the report. If faithfully acted upon, they will lead to a much greater degree of growing together than has, so far resulted from other bilateral dialogue reports. From fuller mutual reception of each others' authentic insights into Christian faith and authentic gifts may result a vision of the catholicity of the Church fuller and richer than its previous embodiment in either communion<sup>19</sup>. A key statement of faith in the ultimate guidance of the Holy Spirit occurs in para 144, where we read

'Full communion between Catholics and Methodists 'will also depend upon a fresh creative act of reconciliation which acknowledges the manifold yet unified activity of the Holy Spirit throughout the ages. It will involve a joint act of obedience to the sovereign Word of God'.

It is clear that the Commission expects such an act to occur, though they cannot at present prophesy either its timing or exact from and content. In my article, 'Some Methodist Principles of Ecumenism', I suggested that there were three, recognition, followed by reception, followed by connexion. *The Grace Given You in Christ* clearly testifies to a high degree of mutual recognition and urges a much greater degree of mutual reception as necessary preliminaries to the as yet unforeseeable act that will eventually bring about full connexion of full ecclesial communion (to use both Methodist and Catholic terminology)

This report, in the way in which it combines serious theological reflection with a concern for practical and practicable initiatives in Christian life an witness represents an important methodological advance in ecumenical dialogue an deserves to be deeply pondered not just

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> A point made both in the Methodist ecclesiological statement of 1937 and in the teaching of the late Yves Congar. The catholicity of the Church is dynamic not static and thus develops under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

within the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches but by all committed to the Ecumenical Movement. The report is itself the fruit of a profound group experience on the part of the Commission members of the exchange of gifts. A moving tribute to the way in which the teaching and practice of the Wesleys has helped to enrich his own life and ministry as a Catholic bishop was given at the recent Durham conference on *Receptive Ecumenism* by the Catholic co-chair of the Commission, Bishop Michael Putney.

January 2007