

Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism

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Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue

*In Commemoration of the Centenary of the
1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference*

Edited by

John A. Radano



**World Council
of Churches**
Publications

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF ECUMENISM

Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue

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Foreword

With two world wars and two totalitarian systems, the twentieth century was a dark century. The ecumenical movement, which can now look back with gratitude on 100 years, was a light-filled counter-movement to the bloody and tragic conflicts. It brought closer together once more churches and their people who had been separated and often hostile for centuries, and thus contributed to peace in the world.

It is appropriate, then, to pause and ask: What have we achieved? Where are we now? Where are we going?

This present volume shows in an exemplary manner that, on the challenging but also encouraging basis of Jesus' prayer "that they may all be one," in the 100 years since the World Mission Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 we have, with God's help, achieved far more than the participants of the conference dared to hope or were able to imagine. Therefore, in spite of all that has not yet been achieved, we still have reason to be thankful.

The numerous ecumenical documents that are expertly presented and analyzed in this volume demonstrate convincingly the high degree of commonality that already exists, in shared faith in the one God and one Lord Jesus Christ who binds us together as brothers and sisters in the community of the one Holy Spirit. We have not achieved the full visible unity of all Christians; but worldwide Christendom, with Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians, and Christians in the Anglican Communion and in the Free Churches, has drawn closer together. Despite all the barriers that still exist, it sees itself as a community of

Walter Cardinal Kasper

brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, and understands its duty to bear witness to fraternity and justice and peace between all people in today's world, which despite globalization is torn between the many poor and the few rich countries.

The path to the full unity of all Christians is nowhere near its end. But what has been achieved in the ecumenical century that lies behind us can give us courage and confidence that what the spirit of God has initiated will continue in the new century in a rapidly changing world, in ways that we human beings cannot predict. Here the present volume can provide us with assistance and guidance.

To all who have collaborated in this I express my appreciation and sincere thanks. I hope that this important publication will find many attentive readers, and that they will be encouraged not to cease building bridges of understanding between Christians, and to walk the path of unity in friendship and fraternal cooperation for the peace of the world.

CARDINAL WALTER KASPER

*Em. President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity
Rome, November 2011*

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I want to express my deep appreciation to the authors of the essays in this book, all of whom have contributed in substantial ways to different aspects of the ecumenical movement, for their willingness to participate in the Conference, and now to have their essays published here. A special word of thanks is offered to Walter Cardinal Kasper, for writing the Foreword to this book. His years of ecumenical leadership are appreciated throughout the Christian world.

Gratitude is owed to many persons related to the SPSSOD, in particular to David and Barbara Koch, whose generous support makes possible the “Scholar-in Residence” program; to Msgr. Aloysius Callaghan, Rector, for inviting me to take that position; to Dr. Christopher Thompson, Academic Dean, for his continual support for the conference; to Dr. Deborah Savage, Professor of Theology, for her enormous contribution to the organizational details of the conference, and seeing to the needs of the participants, and to Alexis Theis and the

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Abbreviations

- Anthology* Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope, eds., *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*. Geneva: WCC Publications and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- BEM* *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. III (1982), 25th Anniversary Printing. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1982-2007.
- Catechism* *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1992.
- DEM2* Nicholas Lossky et al., eds., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002.
- GA* Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer, eds., *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, Faith and Order Paper no. 108. New York/Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press and Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1984.
- GA II* Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Harding Meyer, and William G. Rusch, eds., *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Faith and Order Paper no. 187. Geneva: WCC Publications and Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000.
- GA III* Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Thomas F. Best, and Lorelei F. Fuchs, SA, eds., *Growth in Agreement III: International Dialogue and Agreed Statements, 1998-2005*, Faith and Order Paper no. 204. Geneva:

Abbreviations

- WCC Publications and Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007.
- GS Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 7 December 1965.
- IS Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City, *Information Service*.
- JDDJ The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- LG Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 21 November 1964.
- UUS Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint* of the Holy Father John Paul II on Commitment to Ecumenism, 1995.
- WCFO5 Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela, 1993*. Faith and Order Paper no. 166. Geneva: WCC Publications.

Perspective: With Gratitude for a Century of Ecumenism

1. The centenary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland is a time to celebrate a very significant development in modern church history. During the century since that event, many Christians have confronted together the divisions among them that started long ago. They have sought to respond to the prayer of Christ for his disciples, “that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe” (John 17:21). It has been a century of ecumenism.

2. During the past century, the conviction has gradually taken hold in the minds and hearts of Christians that divisions are a scandal and an obstacle to the proclamation of the gospel, and that unity must characterize relationships among the followers of Christ.

3. The 1910 Edinburgh Conference was convened to address the subject of world mission, and so it did. At the same time the one and only decision taken by the conference, and passed by a resounding acclamation, was the decision to establish a continuation committee. With this decision and vote, “The conference, apparently spontaneously, began to sing the doxology in relief and jubilation.” J. H. Oldham, the secretary of the conference, recalled fifty years later that this “was the turning point in the history of the ecumenical movement.”¹ Shortly after,

1. For these citations see Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), p. 300.

This statement was developed with the collaboration of some participants in the St. Paul Conference, on a “Century of Ecumenism,” June 17-19, 2010, and read by Dame Mary Tanner at the ecumenical prayer service during the conference.

some who had participated in Edinburgh 1910 began to promote the Faith and Order movement, insisting that attention to doctrinal issues was necessary if Christian cooperation was to develop, whether in matters of mission, or in service to each other and to the world. These movements of mission, service, and faith and order helped to fashion the modern ecumenical movement.

4. The movement since Edinburgh 1910 has flourished in ways too numerous to mention. It has radically changed the relationships between separated Christians. Within the World Council of Churches since 1948, and in councils of churches on the national, regional, and local levels, with all their strengths and limitations, Christians have come together to seek common cause and to give witness to the gospel for the benefit of society. During this century, there have been numerous examples of church unions. A particularly significant one was the founding of the Church of South India in 1947, which for the first time united this broad range of church traditions: Anglican, Methodist, Reformed, and Congregationalist. Countless ecumenical dialogues have taken place, especially since the Second Vatican Council. They continue to produce helpful reports, challenging the churches to reconsider and overcome the theological conflicts of the past, which were often shaped in the heat of polemics. The convergence text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), from the multilateral conversation in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, has influenced many other ecumenical advances. In the same way the bilateral conversation between the Lutherans and Catholics led to the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999) and has also been officially endorsed by the World Methodist Council (2006). These are only two of the many major results of the theological dialogue.

5. At the same time, those involved in that movement would admit that there is no easy road to unity. While numerous obstacles to unity have been overcome, there are still significant obstacles that continue to keep Christians divided. But that must not detract us from celebrating the important achievements and steps towards unity that have come about through the ecumenical movement.

6. We can look back over a century of ecumenism with a sense of gratitude, being ready, like those gathered at Edinburgh one hundred years ago, to sing the doxology with a sense of “relief and jubilation.” Not just for something that, like then, had just begun, but, now, for much that has been accomplished. For in this ecumenical movement,

“fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit” (*Unitatis redintegratio* 1), we have witnessed that the Spirit has moved Christians closer to one another and therefore to Christ.

7. There are many types of ecumenical activity that contribute to the movement towards unity, and are necessary on our common journey. The conference these days focuses primarily on one specific part of the ecumenical movement: the international doctrinal conversations, both bilateral and multilateral, which have served the ecumenical movement in a very particular way. The dialogues are vital and irreplaceable instruments in the cause of Christian unity, because they have sought, and in many ways succeeded, to clarify issues at the root of historic divisions, and new issues that have emerged and continue to emerge in the course of our history of separation. Even churches that do not see the goal of visible unity as the goal of the dialogues have deepened their mutual understanding and their ability to relate with fellow Christians in common witness. The results of dialogues are assisting churches and communions, still separated from one another, in their efforts to proclaim together in our generation, the one apostolic faith which is the basis of unity. The results of dialogue need to be received more and more into the life of separated churches, so that they continue to help create bonds of reconciliation between them.

8. So, for what has already been accomplished through dialogue over many decades we give thanks. For the achievements of a century of ecumenism we make our own the words of the Psalmist: “I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; . . . I will sing praise to your name, O Most High” (Ps. 9:1, 2).

Introduction

This book originated at a conference held at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 17-19, 2010, to commemorate the centenary of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Edinburgh Conference, though focused on mission, was also a major catalyst of the modern ecumenical movement. In that sense the centenary also marks a century of ecumenism. The book presents the papers given at the conference.

Two motivations led to commemorating the centenary and to focus on exploring the achievements of a century of ecumenism. First, Edinburgh 1910 set in motion movements that have contributed to the healing of divisions between long-separated churches and communions, a process in some way touching the whole Christian world. Commemorating this milestone would give an opportunity to review some of the major steps taken during that century toward the reconciliation of divided Christians, and to ascertain what has been achieved so as to be able to build on these developments in the continuing quest for Christian unity. Second, this century of ecumenism has produced significant results, not least through dialogue. But the reports of dialogues are too often little known, analyzed, and received into the life of the churches. This would be an opportunity to contribute to making these results better known.

The history of the ecumenical movement during that century is great and diverse, with achievements (and failures) in many areas, too many to take account of here. Therefore we focus here on just one significant ecumenical arena, namely, the international ecumenical theological

dialogues. This volume treats both the multilateral dialogue of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, which involves theologians of many Christian churches and traditions, and also international bilateral dialogues, co-sponsored by two churches or communions.

While many types of ecumenical contact and involvement contribute to breaking down the walls of separation between Christians, it was seen from the beginning that ecumenical theological dialogue to resolve doctrinal questions over which Christians have divided was urgent and fundamental. This was recognized by some participants at the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. That Conference itself did not include discussion of doctrinal questions on its agenda, knowing how divisive they were. But some who were there, inspired by the spirit of cooperation that the World Conference fostered, and convinced that this cooperation could develop seriously only if divisive doctrinal issues were faced, started immediately afterwards to plan for a world conference on matters of faith and order. Multilateral dialogue became a prominent and important ecumenical instrument in the first half of the century of ecumenism, though there were some bilateral dialogues during this period as well.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65), with its Decree on Ecumenism, committed the Catholic Church to the modern ecumenical movement that had developed since Edinburgh 1910. The Decree pointed to “dialogue between competent experts from different churches and communities” (no. 4) as a main feature of ecumenism. Even during the Council, the Catholic Church began to engage in the multilateral dialogue. In cooperation with the WCC, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity helped arrange for Catholic biblical scholar Raymond Brown to address one of the sessions of the 1963 Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order, in which five Catholic observers sent by Rome also participated. Also, steps were taken during Vatican II that led to the beginning of bilateral dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and some Christian world communions shortly after the Council ended. Bilateral dialogue became an important ecumenical instrument for the churches in the second half of this century of ecumenism, and a prominent feature of the Catholic Church’s ecumenical activity.

A New History

The chapters of this book convey many results of decades of ecumenical contact and dialogue. In contrast to the previous centuries of division among Christians, the ecumenical movement over the last century has spurred the beginnings of a new history in the relationships between separated churches. The results of the dialogues described herein point to some of the important chapters of this new history now developing.

The dialogues have published numerous reports over the decades, and collections of these reports published over the years provide convenient access to them. To mention just a few, in regard to multilateral dialogue two documentary histories of the Faith and Order movement have been published, one covering the period 1927-1963, and the other 1963-1993. These are mentioned in the Faith and Order essays in Part I of this book. These documentary histories show the major themes treated in that movement over decades, and many more reports have been published by Faith and Order since 1993. The reports issued by international bilateral dialogues since Vatican II have been published in thick collections such as the *Growth in Agreement* series published in 1984, 2000, and 2007, often cited in the essays in Part II. New bilateral reports produced in the last several years could already fill a fourth volume in that series if that were undertaken. And in both cases, multilateral and bilateral, one can find other volumes that have collected the results of dialogue.

Though obviously distinct, bilateral and multilateral dialogues are also interrelated. A forum on bilateral dialogues has met periodically since 1978, to assist the churches in fostering some common perspectives in the dialogues, and to help promote common directions in multilateral and bilateral dialogue, as both contribute, though in different ways, to the search for a common understanding and expression of the one Apostolic Faith. The Faith and Order convergence text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), for example, resulting from fifty-five years of dialogue, has presented a level of convergence on these three fundamental areas that has proven useful for bilateral dialogues. On the other hand, bilateral dialogues between two churches can deal directly with issues separating the two, in a way that multilateral dialogue cannot. They also can provide insights that can be useful in the multilateral dialogue.

It has often been lamented that while the dialogues have pub-

lished significant reports, many church leaders and church members do not know them adequately enough, and not much has been done with them. More *analysis* of these dialogue reports, and accounts of what they have achieved, are needed in order to highlight ways in which they have addressed old theological conflicts relating to divisions that took place centuries ago and have helped to resolve them, and to show how they have contributed to increased mutual understanding among the churches, and to fostering Christian unity today. The results of dialogues can also help us to see some of the lines developing in this new history of the relationships between Christian churches. They can assist the churches in formulating the theological argumentation regarding the next steps forward as these new relationships develop.

New projects of analysis are beginning to emerge. A recent and very important analysis of dialogue results is found in Walter Cardinal Kasper's *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (2009), to which several essays in this book refer. *Harvesting the Fruits* addresses four international bilateral dialogues, the first four undertaken by the Catholic Church after Vatican II: with the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, the Anglican Communion, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Involving a long process of study by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity over many months, initiated and led by the Cardinal, *Harvesting the Fruits* offered an extensive analysis of the way each of these dialogues, and the four together, have treated basic issues at the center of ecumenical dialogue, and suggested implications of these results for reception.

Though its method is very different, this volume adds another effort to show the effectiveness of dialogue. It includes analyses of international dialogue, both multilateral and bilateral. The eleven bilateral dialogues involving the Catholic Church presented in this book include, in addition to those just mentioned with Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, and Reformed, also those with Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, with other communions of the Reformation heritage such as the Baptist World Alliance, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Mennonites who continue the Anabaptist heritage of the Reformation and are today known as a historic peace church, as well as dialogues with those making an impact more recently, such as Pentecostals and Evangelicals. The range of dialogues analyzed here, and found in one volume, is unique.

The Structure of the Book

The book consists of two parts. Part I, “Achievements of International Multilateral Dialogue,” provides two analyses of the evolution and accomplishments of Faith and Order over the century, within the context of the World Council of Churches. One is by Mary Tanner, a former moderator of the Faith and Order Commission and a current WCC President. And since Roman Catholic theologians have participated in Faith and Order as voting members from 1968, the other is by William Henn, OFM Cap, a current member of the Commission. The Faith and Order movement, which grew out of Edinburgh 1910, was a key factor, along with others, that contributed to the founding of the WCC. But since the WCC’s formation in 1948, it has been the context within which Faith and Order has been based. Thus Part I begins with two analyses of the contributions and limits of the WCC. They are given by Wesley Ariarajah and Peter Bouteneff, both of whom gave years of service working at the WCC headquarters in Geneva.

Part II explores “Achievements of International Bilateral Dialogue following the Second Vatican Council.” Observer-delegates and guests at Vatican II helped to relate the various churches, Christian world communions, and/or the World Council of Churches from which they came, to the Catholic Church. Good relations, which did not exist before, began to develop even at Vatican II. This soon led to the beginnings of international bilateral dialogues between some of those churches and the Catholic Church just after the Vatican Council. As already mentioned, international bilateral dialogues have been among the most notable developments in the second half of this century of ecumenism, and various churches and Christian world communions have engaged in bilateral dialogues with one another in this same period. This volume, however, concentrates only on bilaterals in which the Roman Catholic Church has participated since Vatican II. Nor does it give much attention to the many significant national dialogues over the decades, although the appendix that is part of Jared Wicks’ presentation (chapter 5) illustrates, in one bilateral relationship, the fact that could also be found in others, that these dialogues have also produced important results during this century of ecumenism. Nonetheless, analyses of eleven international dialogues are presented here.

While the encounter of the observers of various churches and communions with the Catholic Church at Vatican II represented an

initial step in a new relationship, the start of formal dialogue represented a major step in that new relationship, a mutual determination to deal with the theological issues over which they are divided. Each dialogue began when the co-sponsors judged that it was time to engage in dialogue. The two partners decided together on the subject matter to be followed. In some cases the decision to engage in dialogue was the first major step in the new relationship, as was the case, for example, with the first two dialogues, which began in 1967, those of the Catholic Church with the Lutheran World Federation and with the World Methodist Council. In other cases, significant events in their new relationships took place years before the beginning of formal dialogue. The Orthodox–Roman Catholic international dialogue began in 1980. But already in their 1965 common declaration, Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I took a dramatic step of canceling the historic excommunications of 1054, and, around the same time, both began to describe the other as a “sister church.” The dialogue between the Catholic Church and the six families of Oriental Orthodox churches together began in 2003. But major steps fostering new relationships began decades before. The common Christological declarations of Popes and some Patriarchs of Oriental Orthodox churches, signed during the 1970s to 1990s, confessing together the same faith about Jesus Christ, already contributed to healing divisions that took place centuries earlier over the Christological language of the Council of Chalcedon (451).

The bilateral dialogues are presented here in chronological order, according to the year in which the actual dialogue began. Each dialogue is treated according to its own history and dynamics, and not in relationship to another, or others. Each author was asked to illustrate the achievements of a particular bilateral dialogue since its beginning after Vatican II. Since some dialogues continued quickly into subsequent phases, they produced more reports, while for others there was a hiatus of years before a next phase began. Each dialogue in its own way comprises a rich story, and the authors sometimes focused on particular aspects of that story as a way of giving a sense of the achievements of the whole dialogue. The achievements of the dialogues, as interpreted by these authors, provide some indication of where the partner churches are now in their mutual relationship.

Among the contributing authors, three have been co-chairs of the international bilateral dialogue of which they write, and five have served on multiple phases of the dialogue. Nine have participated also in other

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international and/or national bilaterals. Ten (including the presenters of Faith and Order in Part I) have served in both bilateral dialogue and Faith and Order (see the list of contributors at the end of the book). At the conference at which these essays were first given, the authors were asked to make their presentation in a framework of thirty minutes. In most cases, their presentations have been revised and sometimes amplified for this book. In important ways, but not in the order in which the essays are presented, the book follows some of the pattern of the St. Paul conference. The generous resources provided for the conference enabled it to include four presentations in Part I, and eleven bilateral dialogues in Part II, including, in the case of three bilaterals, two presentations, one from each side. The book follows this pattern as well.

New international dialogues involving the Catholic Church have begun in each decade since Vatican II, and those that began earlier have gone into multiple phases. Two began in 1967. The dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation is presented by Jared Wicks, SJ, who participated in two phases of the dialogue, and also by William Rusch, who took part in the USA Lutheran–Roman Catholic dialogue. The Methodist–Roman Catholic dialogue is described by Geoffrey Wainwright, who has been its co-chair from 1986 until now, and by Lorelei Fuchs, SA, a member of that joint commission since 2005. Two began in 1970: the Anglican–Roman Catholic international dialogue, discussed by Donna Geernaert, SC, a participant in the International Anglican–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission, and also the Reformed–Roman Catholic dialogue, presented by John Radano, co-secretary of the second and third phases of that dialogue. The Pentecostal–Roman Catholic dialogue began in 1972. Cecil M. Robeck, co-chair since 1992, and Ralph Del Colle, a member of its most recent fifth phase, analyze its achievements. Evangelical–Roman Catholic dialogue began, first with Evangelical leaders in 1977, and then in 1993 co-sponsored by the World Evangelical Alliance. Jeffrey Gros, FSC, who participated in the latter phase, shows results of both. Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also began in 1977; Margaret O’Gara, a member from 1983 until now, presents its achievements. In 1980, an international dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church began, and it is analyzed here by Ronald Roberson, CSP, a member of the USA Orthodox–Roman Catholic dialogue. Baptist–Roman Catholic dialogue started in 1984, and its results are presented by Susan Wood, SCL, a member of the re-

cently concluded second phase of dialogue. In 1998, the Mennonite–Roman Catholic dialogue began, and Helmut Harder, a co-chair of the dialogue, assesses its achievements. In 2003 the first international dialogue began between the Roman Catholic Church and the family of six Oriental Orthodox churches; it is presented by Ronald Roberson, CSP, a participant in that dialogue.¹

Towards Continuing Dialogue

The ecumenical dialogues have been effective instruments in fostering common understanding among Christians. We can expect the churches to continue to engage in dialogue and to address issues that, despite the dialogue that has already taken place, continue to persist as obstacles to the unity for which Christ prayed (John 17:21).

At the conference in which these papers were first presented, there was some time for discussion of each of them, but no opportunity to discuss all of them together, to see what larger picture of ecumenical insights might be drawn out of this. It is hoped that the publication, now, of these essays may provoke this discussion.

1. The Catholic Church has also participated in other bilaterals not given separate chapters here. These include, since 1989, dialogues, more on a regional basis, with two Malankara Orthodox churches of India, which continue today, and another, earlier one with the Coptic Orthodox Church; these three churches now participate in the dialogue with the families of Oriental Orthodox churches. There has also been an international dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East, which is presented briefly in the presentation of the Oriental Orthodox–Roman Catholic dialogue. A recent dialogue with the Union of Utrecht Old Catholic Churches has now finished a report, but it is not yet published. During the last decade there have also been informal international conversations between the Catholic Church and the Seventh Day Adventists, with the Salvation Army, and with nondenominational Christians (which have not published reports).