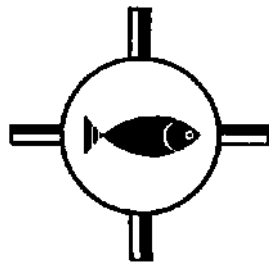


LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF STUDIES



Unit 15

Paper 4

CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

BY

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INTRODUCTION

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion", writes the author of the first epistle to Timothy:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by the angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory. (3:16)

The earliest recorded teaching of the Church, on the Day of Pentecost, told of the death and resurrection of a certain Jesus of Nazareth. It claimed that the person of Jesus had been foretold in the ancient prophecies of Israel and that, through his exaltation to a position of authority with God, He had been made "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Those who responded to this message were advised to: "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38), and they were promised the Holy Spirit as a sure sign that the new Messianic Age had already been inaugurated (Act 2:38b, 2:4f, Joel 2:28-32).

Luke gives two descriptions of this new community. The first is brief: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Act3 2:42). The second is more detailed:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. (Acts 2: 44-47).

The community first organised in Jerusalem was soon scattered throughout Judea and Samaria as a result of persecution (Acts 8:1). Outside this area, the Way, as the new religion was first known, spread to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch (Acts 11: 19) through the preaching of the persecuted to their fellow Jews. Through the work of itinerant apostles and prophets, the message was carried further throughout the Greco-Roman Empire.¹

Within the Empire, four cities held political, economic, and cultural dominance. These were Antioch in Syria Alexandria in Egypt Rome, the capital and Byzantium, its de facto successor after the enthronement of the Emperor Constantine and the increasing incursions of the "barbarian hordes" into Italy. ²

Following the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 these four cities became the major Christian centres too, and established four distinct styles of Christian practice and worship.

¹ The work of the "apostles and prophets" is referred to in the Canticle to the Shorter Form of the Holy Eucharist, of the Liberal Catholic Liturgy; the canticle itself is based on Ephesians 2: 19-22 (see also Acts 13:1f) For a description of the early role of these charismatic teachers see the "Didache" (a convenient version is contained in M. Staniforth: Early Christian Writings, Penguin 1980, pp. 230-235).

² My account of the four patriarchates (Jerusalem was later re-established as a fifth in 451) loosely follows that given in E.E. Finn S.J. These Are My Rites (Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minnesota, 1980)

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the four patriarchates were united in a single belief. The explication of the core teachings, in relationship to the propositions of Judaism and the cultural assumptions of the Empire and its provinces took considerable time. In this development of the doctrine of the Church, the following events were of primary importance: the determination of the Christian scriptural canon; the establishment of a threefold system of government (based on bishops, priests and deacons, rather than charismatic teachers); the elaboration of the teachings of the "Fathers of the Church", partly in reaction to the teachings of Gnostic sects; and, in particular, the determination of "orthodox belief" through the intricate discussions and political maneuverings of the Ecumenical Church Councils. Two councils were especially important: that held in Nicea in 325 A.D., and its successor, the Council of Chalcedon 451 A.D. Through the Councils, the teaching of the two natures of Christ, one human one divine, was affirmed.³

Following the so-called "Nicene Creed", we may suggest that the basic beliefs of the orthodox Christian community at the end of the fifth century A.D. included: the sovereignty of God the Father; the pre-existence of Christ, as the Son of God, who was incarnate, crucified and resurrected, for the salvation of mankind; the Holy Spirit; the Church, as a community of the baptised and redeemed; and the necessity for a future judgement of all mankind, involving a general resurrection of the dead.

From the teachings of the Fathers, we may add to this agreed minimum standard of belief: the regular celebration of the Eucharist; the veneration of the Theotokos ("The Mother of God") and, in some places, saints and certain holy persons; and an orderly system of church government.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We may call the Christian Church described above "the Great Church"; it certainly considered itself both "catholic" and "orthodox". As a result of the condemnation of Nestorianism at the Council of Ephesus in 431⁴, large sections of the Patriarch of Antioch were lost to the Great Church; so too were sections of the Patriarch of Alexandria, following the condemnation of Monophysitism by the Council of Chalcedon in 451⁵.

The Emperor Diocletian had divided the Roman Empire into two sections in 290, one in the West (centered on Rome), the other in the East (centered, after the reign of Constantine, on Byzantium). These cities, and the religious communities they continued to contain, differed in respect of their particular major language (Greek in the East, Latin in the West), their cultural styles (philosophical and mystical in the East, strongly legal in the West), and in the geographical areas over which they were to contain- authority (Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, on the one hand, and Western Europe, on the other). The final formalisation of these massive differences came in 1054, when Cardinal Humberto served Leo IX's excommunication against the Byzantine Patriarch Michael Caerularius.⁶

³ A useful introduction to the church of the first five centuries A.D. is Henry Chadwick: The Early Church (Penguin 1980).

⁴ Nestorius taught that as there were two "natures" in Christ, there must also be two "persons"; the Council of Ephesus insisted that there were two natures in Christ united in one person.

⁵ The Monophysites claimed that there was only one "nature" in Christ.

⁶ The matter has been widely discussed by contemporary historians. It is generally accepted that the excommunication was invalid as Pope Leo IX had died before Humberto delivered the edict. The event has really only a symbolic function, recognising long-standing differences almost entirely of a non-theological nature.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES

There is no single "Orthodox Church" today, but rather "a family of self—governing Churches", whose differences are not doctrinal but ethnic. These Churches exist separately from that governed by the Patriarch of Rome, whom we shall henceforth describe as the Pope and his church as the Roman Catholic Church.

The origin of the "family" may be attributed to the effect of the withdrawal of the more Eastern wing of the church into christological heresy and the Western wing into Latinity; this left the North as a major direction for the expansion of Orthodoxy. In 863, Saint Cyril and Saint Methodius began missionary work among the Slavs, beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire; their efforts led to the eventual conversion of Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia. Today Orthodoxy comprises the four ancient patriarchs of Byzantium, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, and the eleven other "autocephalous" churches of Russia, Romania, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Albania and the miniscule Sinai.⁷

The glory of Orthodoxy is its adherence to "Tradition", which has been kept exactly as it has been received.⁸

Two strands of Tradition are outstanding. The first is the writings of the Fathers, still a living vital body of Works.⁹ The other is the whole pattern of worship, elaborately structured to mark the seasons of each individual life; of each year — seen as a careful working through of the Divine Economy; and each day, constantly sanctified by prayer and scripture. For the individual, the personal rites are baptism (with chrismation), marriage, perhaps ordination, and the last rites. For the Church, the mysteries of our Lord's life (His birth, theophany, the entry into Jerusalem, His crucifixion and resurrection, Pentecost and the Transfiguration), together with the mysteries of Mary (her birth, entry into the temple, annunciation, presentation and assumption), form an annual round of intense worship and praise. For those in monasteries, the hours are carefully kept, from one sunset to the next.¹⁰

Being ethnic churches, Orthodox history is an integral part of the history of each nation, and too elaborate to detail here. Three great events, nevertheless, ought to be mentioned.

The first was the terrible sacking of Constantinople in 1204, by western crusaders, followed by the fall in 1453 to the Turks; both events served to render the division between East and West more absolute. The second was the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and the later political supremacy of Communism in other Eastern European countries; this introduced a new, secular and materialistic ideology, which consciously saw itself in opposition to the work of the Church. The last has been the Orthodox diaspora, which was intensified by the Second World War. For the first time, Orthodox

⁷ T. Ware: The Orthodox Church (Penguin 1978), p. 15.

⁸ The work of Cyril and Methodius, and details of the various branches of the Orthodox Church, is given in Ware: ibid.

⁹ In the West, the works of the Fathers are generally considered to have come to an end with the writings of the great St John of Damascus (675-749); in the East, "it is dangerous to look on 'the Fathers' as a closed cycle of writings belonging wholly to the past To say there can be no more Fathers is to suggest that the Holy Spirit has deserted the Church", Ware: ibid., p. 212.

¹⁰ An excellent introduction to Orthodox liturgical practice is the Festal Menaion, edited by Archimandrite Kallistos Ware and Mother Mary (Faber and Faber, London 1969).

churches now exist in pluralistic societies (such as France, America, and even Australia. In this last situation, the challenge to Orthodoxy is to move out of its "glorious past", and to struggle to find a new and authentic form of expression, which does duty both to its apostolic richness and to the young, raw societies in which it will either live transformed or die with the old people.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Timothy Ware has written:

In the East there were many churches whose foundation went back to the Apostles; there was a strong sense of the equality of all bishops, of the collegial and conciliar nature of the Church. The East acknowledged the Pope as the first Bishop in the Church, but **saw** him as the first among equals. In the West on the other hand there was only one great See claiming Apostolic foundation - Rome — so that Rome came to be regarded as the Apostolic See. The West, while it accepted decisions of ecumenical councils, did not play a very active part in the Councils themselves; the Church was seen as less as a college and more as a monarchy — the monarchy of the Pope.¹¹

From Peter to John-Paul II, there stretches a single line (sometimes confused by schism it is true) of bishops, whose major claim is to be the Supreme Pontiff of Christendom.

The credal stance of Roman Catholicism is similar to that of Orthodoxy, making allowances for the differences of style outlined above on page 4. These differences were strengthened by the emergence of scholasticism during the Middle Ages, the Council of Trent at the time of the Reformation, and the First Vatican Council in the late nineteenth century. Much of the rigidity of Catholicism vanished after the second Vatican Council, 1963-65.

At this Council, the relationship of the Church to the needs and forms of the contemporary world was a major concern. Like Orthodox worship, Catholic worship too is largely sacramental. The changes here also were away from tradition and towards modern forms of expression.

In government, the Catholic form of government is at once hierarchical — with laity, diocesan priests and bishops, and religious congregations, carefully related in submission and responsibility to each other — and dispersed: "Each bishop in his own diocese is representative of Jesus Christ".¹²

The autonomy of bishops works against national forms of the Church (there is no head of the whole denomination in Australia, for instance). Yet, naturally, national forms of Catholicism have emerged, and, to some degree, have increased since the use of vernacular liturgies for the Eucharist and the decreasing attention now paid to the study of Latin. The Latin diaspora is both complete and (relatively) successful.

LUTHERANISM

The accommodation of the Church to the State has sometimes been of benefit to the advancement of the spiritual work of the Church as the Kingdom of God on earth; more often, however, the result has been quite the opposite. Martin Luther (1403-1546) was not the first to protest against the material corruption and moral laxity of the Roman Church¹³; he was, nevertheless, the most successful person to do so. The history of Christianity in the West after the sixteenth century can, very largely, be read as a reaction to the doctrines of Rome and an ever increasing fission within the bodies of "Protestantism".

¹¹ Ware: op. cit., p. 55.

¹² Following the words of Rev. Mgr. P.J. Connors, in a personal letter to the author, 25th May 1984.

¹³ A useful introduction to the Reformation is Owen Chadwick: *The Reformation* (Penguin, frequent reprints).

Luther based his reform on the Scriptures (excluding those works commonly called the Apocrypha). In seeking a return to "apostolic purity", he rejected the Tradition of the Middle Ages and such of the teachings of the Fathers as were not concerned with the salvific work of Christ. His major concern was with the individual appropriation of salvation in Christ through a personal act of faith. In most of this, Luther was a faithful Augustinian, with a good sense of the early history of the Church and a practical distrust of Mediterranean ways. The accepted Confessions of the Lutheran Church include the historic creeds (Nicene, Apostles, and Athanasian), the Augsburg Confession, and Luther's own Small Catechism.

The major form of worship is the weekly Common Order of Service, which is based on a set liturgy of hymns, psalms, Bible-readings and a sermon. Communion is usually taken on great festivals, and at monthly intervals throughout the year.¹⁴

Lutherans retained the use of the crucifix, candles and vestments, from the Roman Mass, but introduced the use of the vernacular, and the participation of the congregation in singing, confession and prayer.

The Lutheran Church is the largest of all Protestant denominations in the world. Nevertheless, each local parish is, in theory at least, autonomous. In fact, one or more local congregations usually form a "parish", under the leadership of a pastor and lay officials, and the congregations of a particular region (in Australia, each State) also unite in Districts, which are especially concerned with home missions, social welfare, and primary and secondary education. Districts are governed by officials elected by the annual District Convention. Finally, the Lutheran World Federation "offers autonomous Lutheran churches an avenue for cooperation and mutual encouragement"¹⁵ (The present head of the Lutheran Church in Australia — the President General — is the Rev. Dr. L.B. Grope of Adelaide, South Australia.)

ANGLICANISM

In broad terms, the Anglican Church is a loose confederation of independent national churches which are "in communion with the See of Canterbury ... and uphold and propagate the Catholic and Apostolic faith and order generally set down in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer".¹⁶

The Anglican Church arose in England during the reign of Henry VIII, and its doctrinal differences with Rome (partly derived from Luther, but also from earlier English movements such as that of Wycliffe) were encouraged by the monarch's personal needs. The church was later taken abroad as the accepted church of the English nation at home and in the colonies. The first clergyman to officiate in Australia was an Anglican, for example, and it was not until 1962 that the church became officially "the Church of England in Australia".

¹⁴ This is the practice, at least, in Australia: see T. van Sommers, Religions in Australia (Rigby, Adelaide 1965), p. 122.

¹⁵ Introducing the Lutheran Church (Lutheran Church of Australia, Adelaide, no date of publication), p. 5.

¹⁶ van Sommers: op. cit., p. 12. A fairly detailed introduction is S. Neill: Anglicanism (Penguin, 3rd ed. 1965).

Standards of doctrine for the Anglican Church comprise the "39 Articles of Religion", the Book of Common Prayer, and the ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. Perhaps a little sweepingly van Sommers claims:

in essence, Anglicanism differs from Roman Catholicism only in that Anglicans reject Transubstantiation ... the doctrine that the Pope is infallible, and some beliefs about purgatory, the fate of infants who die unbaptized, the immaculate conception and the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary.¹⁷

Such is the comprehensiveness of Anglicanism, however, that there are some "High Anglicans" for whom none of these doctrines present any difficulty at all. (in the history of Anglicanism, the mid—nineteenth century plays a particularly important role, as it was at this time that both the Oxford Movement and the Evangelical Movement first arose.)

In many countries, the Book of Common Prayer is now supplemented by a local service book. (in Australia this is the Australian Prayer Book.) Like Lutherans, Anglicans commonly recognise only two sacraments, baptism and Eucharist. There seems to be some move towards placing the Eucharist at the centre of the worshipping life of parish communities, rather than the essentially "daily offices" of Morning and Evening Prayer.

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Anglicans were not the only Englishmen to be strongly influenced by the German Reformation- The Anabaptist movement, which emphasised the baptism of "believers" (rather than infants), also gained followers. The first Baptist church was formed of English Independents, under the leadership of John Smyth, a former Anglican priest. This took place, however, in Amsterdam in 1609, and it was not until 1612 that they were able to return to England and establish their denomination there.

In Australia, communion of bread and unfermented wine is offered twice monthly, once after a morning service and once in the evening. Otherwise, the major form of worship is the fairly standardised (but not set) Sunday service, "distinguished by the emphasis placed on singing, and by fervour".¹⁸

In accordance with their Congregational origins, each congregation decides its own affairs, under the guidance of its ordained minister and lay officials. Various national Baptist Unions serve "for the purpose of fellowship and coordinating missionary, social and educational works". These unions are affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance.

¹⁷ van Sommers, p. 15.

¹⁸ ibid, p. 27.

PRESBYTERIANS

Second only in importance to Martin Luther in the work of the Reformation was the French theologian John Calvin (1509-64).

Calvin accepted the necessity for an individual faith in the salvific work of Christ, yet he also accepted that God had already predestined some persons to eternal life and others to eternal damnation. His influence was particularly strong in the township of Geneva, and extended to secular as well as religious affairs.

Those churches who followed Calvin's teachings on the Continent were known* as the "Reformed Churches". The Reformed discipline was brought to Scotland by John Knox, a refugee from the persecution of the Protestant Churches established by Mary Tudor, who had served with Calvin.

The churches under his leadership took the name "Presbyterian", in recognition of their earlier struggle to establish a congregational form of government under the leadership of elected elders and deacons. (in Scotland the appointment of bishops had often been misused for political purposes and the convenience of the royal family; to abolish the post of "bishop", by identifying it with the role of the "elder", was, thus, both a theological and a political move.)

The faith of the church was spelled out in "The Scots Confession of Faith", drawn up in 1560 by Knox and five other theologians. The structure of the Confession follows the divisions of Calvin's Institutes, dealing respectively with the sovereignty of God, the redemption of man by the death and resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the nature of the Church. ¹⁹

Presbyterian worship tends to be simple, with set and extempore prayers, and plain music; Holy Communion, as set out in the Book of Common Order, is celebrated once a quarter.

The Presbyterian Church in Scotland broke into two groups in 1843 — the "Established" and the "Free"; members of this latter group objected to the political control of the church which its position as the established church of Scotland required. First established in Australia in 1809, the Presbyterian "Church of Eastern Australia" (which supported the Scottish Established Church) largely, but not completely, disappeared here after the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977.

METHODISTS

The Methodist Church was founded by John Wesley, who in 1738 had a spiritual experience "which he later described as a conversion". Working with his brother Charles, who was an Anglican minister like himself, John Wesley set out as a travelling preacher and evangelist to revive "Christian enthusiasm and holiness within the Church of England". ²⁰

¹⁹ The Scots Confession can readily be found in (ed.) M. Owen: Witness of Faith, Historic Documents of the Uniting Church in Australia (Uniting Church Press, Melbourne 1984), pp 55f.

²⁰ van Sommers, p. 129- A fairly detailed introduction is R.E. Davies: Methodism (Penguin 1963).

His followers were at first known by the derisory title of "Methodist", either because of their scrupulous life-styles, or intense self-examination (or both).

Wesley's aim was not to found a new denomination'. He accepted the Scriptures as the sole authority for Christian conduct and cautiously- modified the Anglican "39 Articles", so as to emphasise justification by faith and the assurance of the salvation of those who believed in Christ. In his teachings - and the Methodists came to give a special value to his "Forty—four sermons" — he emphasised the power of sanctification, in which the baptised Christian, filled with the Spirit, could lead a genuinely holy life.

In 1784, Wesley made provision for a "yearly conference of the people called Methodists"; in- 1795, the Methodist Conference permitted its chapels to hold Holy Communion services, with the sacrament administered by its authorised preachers. The official beginning of the church is commonly taken to be this latter date. Many of the first ministers were, like the Wesleys, Anglican priests; hence, as van Sommers states, "Methodism has few theological tenets unique to itself and its doctrinal links with Anglicanism are strong".²¹ In some ways, the very existence of the movement is a witness of the weakness of Anglicanism at the end of the eighteenth century (note also the rise of Evangelicism and the Oxford Movement in the next century.)

Perhaps as a development of Wesley's own itinerant work, individual Methodist churches are organised into "circuits", and these into districts. Districts hold annual synods; these, in turn, are subject to the Annual Conference which decides policy for the wider Church.

Established in Australia in 1812, the Methodist Church merged completely with the Uniting Church in 1977.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

The Churches of Christ were founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century by two Presbyterian- ministers, Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander. Their aim was to return to a pure form of New Testament Christianity, in which local autonomous congregations would again be united in one Church. (Like other denominations of this type, the Churches of Christ also have a central conference for the co-ordinating of good works and the training of ministers and missionaries.)

Individual congregations are governed by their minister, in association with elected elders and deacons. Communion is held weekly, and is led by various persons appointed from the congregation. The church also practices baptism of believers.

Like the Methodists, the Churches of Christ quickly gained a large following in America, where the denomination, in its various forms, is particularly strong. The first chapel in Australia was built in Adelaide in 1846.

²¹ van Sommers, p. 132.

AMERICA

Our story so far has concerned itself with the growth of Christianity in Europe. We have seen the separation of the Great Church into Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism, and the splitting of the latter by Luther and Calvin in the struggle to "return" to a more pure form of the earlier faith, freed from excessively rigid hierarchical structures, whether of the state or within the church itself. Once started, the process within Protestantism has been towards an ever greater number of denominations and sects, each marked by small differences of doctrine and patterns of government.

In what follows we now turn to the "New World of America", itself largely found by religious persona seeking greater personal opportunity for religious self-expression. The denominations we are concerned have not only "devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings" but added what they consider to be significant new insights into the teachings of Christ, dependent (usually) on new revelations made to their founders.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

In 1823, Joseph Smith, the son of a Vermont farmer, announced that he had been led by an angel to discover a number of gold plates covered with hieroglyphic writing, which He was able to read with the assistance of a special pair of lenses. His translation of these platea appeared in 1830 as *The Book of Mormon* and describe the history of one of the lost tribes of Israel in America, together with the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection to them. In 1830 Smith also organised the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which he claimed was the restoration of the Church as it had originaliy been instituted by Christ.

The life of the new community was stormy. They settled for a while in Nauvoo, Illinois, where they continued to suffer persecution, includine the eventual assasination of Smith while in prison. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, the Mormons then moved further west, settling in Salt Lake City in the State of Utah, where they were relatively free from outside interference. Confirming a revelation to Smith made in 1843, Brigham Young officially introduced polygamy among his community in 1852; this practice was outlawed by the United States government in 1887 and quietly abandoned by the Saints.

Part of the Church seceeded from Young's leadership in 1852 and formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; they invited a direct descendant of Joseph Smith to be their President in 1860. The leadership of the Reorganized Church has continued in the Hands of Smith's descendants to this day.

Both groups base their teachings on the Bible and *The Book of Mormon*; they share slightly different versions of the manual of precepts *The Book of Doctrine and Covenants*; The Reorganized Church does not aaccept *A Pearl of Great Price*, which was first published in 1851 and claims to be "a translation of some ancient reoords, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham".²²

The Mormons accept that the Trinity comprises three distince beings, of whom God the Father and God the Son are resurrected, glorified human beings. The Church

²² Cited in van Sommers, p. 105; the Reorganized opinion on this book ——"a translation made by Joseph Smith 'without any claim to extraordinary assisstance' is given on p. 112.

teaches that all persons have the potential to become gods, and that an important part of this process involves faith, repentance, baptism by immersion and the laying on of hands. The living may be baptised on behalf of the dead. Those who have died since the creation of the world have the opportunity of receiving the church's teachings from Christ and, if they accept it, of being assigned to the highest category of the afterlife.

The highest category of the after-life is the "Celestial Glory", which is the presence of God the Father, in Heaven. The second, "Terrestrial" category, is under the government of Jesus, although He is not present there, and is for persons of lesser faith and righteousness. The "Terrestrial" category is for those who have been least obedient to the divine commands.

Mormons expect the Second Coming to be soon and that, when this occurs, Christ will rule over the earth, and the righteous who have been resurrected, for a thousand years. There will be two Zions during this time: one in Jackson County, Missouri (prophesied by Smith), the other in Jerusalem. At the end of the millennium, there will be a great struggle between the forces of Christ and those of Satan.

The Reorganized Church is more cautious in its statement of these beliefs. It teaches salvation by faith rather than divinisation; rejects the doctrine that God is man-made perfect; does not baptise on behalf of the dead; and does not "seal marriages" for all eternity as a condition of everlasting life.

Mormon Temple ceremonies are not revealed to outsiders. The Reorganized Church practices a regular form of free worship, with a minimum of liturgy; the Lord's Supper is administered, usually monthly baptised members of the church.

Mormon government is strictly organised and heavily male. The lower rank of priesthood is the Aaronic priesthood: a youth may be ordained deacon at 12, teacher at 14, and priest at 16.

The entry to the Order of Melchizedek is through the position of elder at the age of 19. Geographically, the church is organised in terms of wards (regions), stakes (comprising six to ten wards), through to the highest bodies in Utah. The Reorganised Church prescribes no ages for ordination to particular levels; it is also governed by a series of linked "conferences" through to the world conference level, and is similarly headed by a President, who is regarded as a divinely inspired prophet.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was first established in Australia in the 1850s; the Reorganized Church became established after 1874.

THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Seventh—Day Adventist Church arose out of the "Great Awakening", a movement which spread rapidly through America in the 1830s in expectation of the immediate coming of Christ. The movement was begun by William Miller, the son of a New England farmer, in 1831. Miller eventually set a precise date for the Advent: the 22nd October 1844. When the Lord did not appear, most of Miller's support fell away. Some persons continued in their expectation and, under the leadership of Ellen G. White, eventually formed themselves into a distinct denomination. It can thus be said that Adventists, as a specific group, date from 1844, although they were not formally organised as such until 1863. Through contact with Seventh-Day Baptists, and their own study of the Bible (where they found no command to keep Sunday as

the Sabbath of the Lord in place of the earlier commandment of the decalogue), Adventists came to keep the seventh day, and thus reached their full title "Seventh—Day Adventists".

Mrs White was regarded as the divinely inspired leader of the church. She was a prolific author, both on doctrine and the practice of Christian living. (Recent scholarly study has, however, suggested close parallels between many sections of her works and those of contemporary authors. Adventists defend this as creative, divinely inspired, "borrowing")

The closeness of the Second Coming and the importance of Sabbath keeping form two important key-stones in the church's teachings. Mrs White also taught that the Second Coming had actually begun in 1844, but that this was the "investigative judgement" to be carried out by Christ in the innermost heavenly sanctuary. During this time of judgement, he would evaluate the lives of all who had lived on earth and their worthiness for salvation. After this legal process was complete, Christ would return to earth in glory to inaugurate the millennium. Adventists do not believe in the natural immortality of the soul; the righteous dead were expected to be resurrected at the Parousia of the Lord, the unrighteous at the end of the millennium and prior to the final struggle of Armageddon.

Mrs White's teachings are often referred to as "the spirit of prophecy" and take their place as second only to the Scriptures. In matters concerning the Trinity, the necessity of faith for salvation, the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit among believers, Adventists take a recognisably Protestant and generally orthodox position. The Adventist life-style is commonly more rigorous than that of other Protestant denominations; participation in secular amusements is discouraged, Adventists do not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, and are almost invariably lacto-ovo-vegetarians.

Adventist worship services consist of congregational singing, scripture reading, preaching and prayer. Divine worship is usually preceded by a period of systematic Bible Study known as "Sabbath School" at which all ages are encouraged to attend. The service of Holy Communion is conducted four times a year, and follows the Ordinance of Humility (or "footwashing" , cf. John 13:14).

The government of the church is done through a series of linked executive bodies, from the congregation to conferences and unions covering increasingly large areas, through to the General Conference Committee which has the responsibility for the church throughout the world.

The first Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries arrived in Australia in 1885. The Australian Division is one of the 13 divisions of the church, and includes the Trans-Australian, Trans-Tasman, Central Pacific, Papua New Guinea, and Western Pacific Union Conferences and Missions areas.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Mormonism and Adventism retain traces of their origins in the strict, literalist, puritanism of fundamental Christianity as practiced on the frontier of white settlement in America.

The roots of Christian Science, on the other hand, are closer to the somewhat more genteel and metaphysical "New Thought" movements of the east coast of America in the latter part of the nineteenth century (which may also be considered to include Theosophy).

Mary Baker Eddy was born in 1821 in Bow, New Hampshire, and was strongly influenced in her upbringing by her Calvinist father's "relentless theology" and iron will.²³ Her two marriages, prior to her marriage to Asa Gilbert Eddy in 1887, were both unsuccessful.

As an adult, Mrs Eddy had developed a keen interest in not only orthodox medical treatments but also in the popular remedies of the time, including homeopathy and treatment through suggestion. In 1866, she experienced a sudden healing while reading the New Testament after a severe fall. The healing not only reversed the pattern of invalidism which had marred so much of her life; it also "left her with the conviction that she had glimpsed the meaning of Jesus' life and teaching more clearly than ever before". She became convinced that healing was a natural part of Christian life, the outcome of spiritual awakening through prayer, and could be practiced systematically, even "scientifically".²⁴

Her ideas were published in her principle work Science and Health in 1875. In 1879, she met with fifteen of her students and they voted to "organize a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing".²⁵

A few years later the church took its present form as The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts. This church, together with its branch churches and societies in 58 countries throughout the world, constitutes the Christian Science denomination. The organisational framework of the church was prescribed by Mrs. Eddy in the Church Manual which she completed in 1895.

Other than the distinctive emphasis on healing, the church's major tenets may be summarised as: "the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal life"; Acknowledgement and adoration of "one supreme and infinite God", acknowledgement of "His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness"; the acknowledgement of "God's forgiveness of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal"; "Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love"; the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus as means "to uplift faith to understand eternal life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter".

The government of the Church was vested by Mrs. Eddy in the Church Manual itself. These bylaws are administered by a board of five directors, while branch churches are governed democratically by their own members also within the general Manual framework.

²³ Christian Science: A Century Later (Christian Science Publishing Society, Boston Massachusetts 1982), p. 14.

²⁴ ibid. p. 17.

²⁵ from the Manual of the Mother Church, p. 17; cited in Facts about Christian Science (Christian Science Publishing Soc., Boston 1959), p 1.

In 1894, she also ordained the Bible and her book Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (revised after 1889) to be the church's pastor.

The church has no clergy. In branch churches the services are conducted by a First and Second Reader, elected by and from the membership for a limited period. (in the Mother Church, the two Readers are appointed by the Board of Directors for a three year period.) The Sunday Service consists of three hymns, silent prayer, the Lord's prayer (prayed congregationally, but with Mrs Eddy's interpretation given by the First Reader after each clause), and two Bible readings, one of which is accompanied by related readings from Science and Health. These Lesson-Sermons, covering 26 subjects, are composed in America and used by all branch churches throughout the world.

The first. Christian Science services were held in Australia in 1891.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Match Tower magazine was established by Charles Taze Russell in 1879, to prorate his own religious ideas, including his conviction that the "end of the Gentile Times" would occur in 1914. At his death in 1916, Russell left behind him a well-established following and an organisation, known as "The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society", to publicise and print his writings.

Leadership of the movement then passed to Joseph Franklin Rutherford. Rutherford believed that the bodily resurrection of the patriarchs David, Abraham, Issac and Jacob, on earth, was at hand in the 1920s; that the Kingdom of God had arrived in 1914, in a spiritual sense; and that the resurrection of the dead on earth would take place before the end of the twentieth century.

The movement took the name of "Jehovah's Witnesses" in 1931; they have continued steadfastly to believe that "the end of the present world system and the beginning of a new order or millenium is at hand and will begin within the present generation".²⁶

In the millenium, Christ (who is a separate being from God, and not part of a Trinity) will rule the earth from heaven. With him will be the "heavenly class" of 144,000 redeemed persons (cf. Rev. 14:1-4); not all Jehovah's Witnessess now automatically consider themselves to belong to this number, apparently, and many simply describe themselves as being of the "earthly hope", i.e. with the expectation of eternal life on earth, first during the millenium, then forever afterwards, following the Last Judgement. It is believed that when the last member of the 144,000 dies, the Kingdom of God will be complete. (The number of members of the "heavenly class" has been steadily decreasing since 1914.)

Worship among Jehovah's Witnesses is held regularly throughout the week, with a special hour-long afternoon address on Sundays, which is open to the general public, and a further study meeting, in which Biblical texts are examined in the light of a question-and-answer exploration of Watch Tower explanatory literature.

The Last Supper, or the "Lord's Evening Meal" , is celebrated according to the Jewish calendar on the 14th day of Nisan. Only members of the heavenly class actually partake of the

²⁶ van Sommers, p. 88.

unconsecrated unleavened bread and red wine. Witnesses recognise no sacraments; although members are admitted by baptism, which is immediately followed by ordination to the ministry, these are simply regarded as symbols of dedication. Ordination to ministry, of course, involves a commitment to spreading the teachings of the church.

Government is not democratic but "theocratic". The affairs of each congregation are controlled by a presiding minister, appointed by the organisation's branch Office in each country, and two assistant ministers. A number of congregations form a circuit; several circuits form a district; so many districts come under the jurisdiction of a branch office; and branch offices are arranged in one of ten zones. Overseeing the whole process is a governing body of president, vice-president, and officers of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, of Pennsylvania (whose offices, nevertheless, are in Brooklyn, New York).

Jehovah's witnesses were first established in Australia in 1903. Their organisation, which is essentially pacifist, was banned by the Commonwealth government in 1941 as "seditious and subversive"²⁷, but this decision was overturned by the High Court in 1943. Beside their attitude to war, Witnesses have occasionally come into conflict with government authorities because of their refusal to authorise blood transfusions, particularly to minors, in crucial emergencies.

CONCLUSION

The author of the epistle to the Ephesians insists that; "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all" (4:4-6). He therefore begs his readers to "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain- the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (4:1—3).

It is not always easy to see the "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" as equally present in all the denominations which have been discussed so briefly above, and in the many hundreds more which have not.

Indeed, the author of the First Epistle of John even insists that this is not always wise. "Beloved," he writes, "do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (4:1). And he offers a means of testing:

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. (4:2-3)

Trusting in the spiritual reality of the One Church, seeking to "love God and obey His commandments" (1 John 5:2), the Liberal Catholic does not criticise other denominations but prays, as Jesus Himself prayed for his disciples, "that they may all be one" (John 17:21) in the heart of God.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 93

APPENDIX**PENTECOSTALISM****THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Teaching on the Holy Spirit forms a sui important, but far from clear, aspect of the teaching of the early Christian Church.

Within the gospels, the Commencement of Jesus' ministry is marked by the presence of the Spirit at His baptism (see Mark 1:10, Luke 3:21), and much of His successive work (e.g. Mk 1:12, Lk 4:14, Jn 1:33). It is likely that the presence of the Spirit in Jesus' life in general was taken by the church as a sign that the end-times had begun. John's words: "He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His shovel is ready in his hand, to winnow his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his granary; but he will burn the chaff on a fire -that can never go out" (Lk 3:17), strongly suggest that control over the Spirit was an aspect of Jesus' work as the final judge of all mankind.

There is also some suggestion that it was the presence of the Spirit in Jesus' dead body which gave him the gift of His own resurrection (Acts 2:33, Rom 1:4).

The founding of the early church is often dated from the Day of Pentecost. On this day, as the book of Acts tells, the Apostles "were all together in one place, when there came from the sky a noise like that of a strong driving wind, which filled whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues like flames of fire, dispersed among them and resting on each one. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in tongues, as the Spirit gave them the power of utterance" (2:4).

There seems no doubt in my mind that the Holy Spirit is particularly associated in both the Old and the New Testaments with the power of inspired speech, that force which moved all authentic prophets. The presence of the Spirit in Jesus confirms His prophetic status; its presence at Pentecost confirms the special presence of God with the Apostles.

This presence is immediately proven by their preaching. Peter includes in his speech a particularly important quotation from Joel 2:29f, which states that in those days, the last days before the coming of the Kingdom of God, "your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men see visions. I will pour out my spirit in those days ..." (Acts 2:16f). The mark of God guaranteeing the authenticity of the church as an "end—time community" was, thus, the presence of the Spirit and the power of inspired utterance. The vitality this gave the church, as well as the problems it often caused, can be understood through a careful reading of Paul's epistles, and especially the first letter to the Corinthians.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC CHURCH

It is widely accepted that the major leaders of the post—Apostolic church were "apostles and prophets"; this can be seen in the work known as "The Didache" (cf also Acts 13:1, Eph 2:20). Certain texts in the gospels also suggested that the Spirit would teach new

things, revealed by God but not necessarily declared by Jesus to his original disciples (e.g. John 16:12f). There was much division, almost from the beginning (see, again, Paul's epistles), among those who claimed new revelations, given by the Spirit, and those who stubbornly clung to what they considered the original, and final, teachings of Jesus. In crude terms, those who emphasised charismatic gifts, after the end of the first century, commonly came to be called "gnostics"; their traditional-minded opponente, "catholics".

Catholic teaching on the Holy Spirit received little attention until the fourth century. The deliberate omission of the topic by the early Church Fathers is striking. At the Council of Nicea, the words "... and in the Holy Spirit" are used; this is an absolutely minimal statement of belief. Following debate with the Arians (who taught that the Son had been created by the Father, and the Spirit by both), this phrase was expanded at Constantinople to read: "... and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son, who spoke by the prophets". It was only in the works of St Gregory and, especially, St Basil, that the Holy Spirit was firmly accepted as an equal partner in the Holy Trinity, a person of separate (but dependant) status.

PENTECOSTALISM

The term "Pentecostalism" refers strictly not to a single denomination but to a variety of churches, and even groups within churches, which emphasise the Pentecostal experience of empowerment by the Spirit and (usually) speaking in tongues. In Australia, specific pentecostal denominations include the Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church, the Full Gospel Churches, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and various Christian Revival Crusades; pentecostal (or "charismatic") movements are also to be found in the Roman Catholic Church, to a limited degree in Anglicanism, and, to a very small extent, within the Orthodox Churches.

Among the first churches to make the belief in the gift of tongues a major feature of doctrine were the Catholic Apostolic congregations (Irvingites), which grew out of the revivalist mission of the Scottish Presbyterian minister, Edward Irving. The Catholic Apostolic church slowly died during the nineteenth century, due to its refusal to consecrate new leaders, but the example of its teaching and practice were widely taken up throughout Protestantism, nowhere perhaps more enthusiastically than in America. There were major Pentecostal movements in Wales and in America throughout the nineteenth century, which may be considered to have culminated in- the "Great Revival" of 1904-5. From this revival, we may see the further growth and consolidation leading to the final organisation of the Apostolic Church in 1922, the Assemblies of God in 1929, and the Foursquare Gospel Church, also in 1929. The nature of charismatic teaching, with its emphasis on personal domination by the Spirit, probably assista this ready fragmentation of denominations.

DOCTRINE

Within specifically pentecostalist denominations, the following points of doctrine would seem to be particularly important :

- (i) An emphasis on fundamentalist teachings relating to God and Christ, the nature of the Bible, the creation of the world and the final judgement.
- (ii) The necessity for personal repentance from one's sins and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

- (iii) The confirmation of this acceptance through full immersion in baptism (cf Acts 2:38, 8:13, etc.).
- (iv) The reception of the Holy Spirit as a second form of baptism. This is normally evidenced by the experience of speaking in tongues, that is, in a language inspired by the Holy Spirit but unknown to the speaker. (Some persons may actually arise from the waters of baptism and immediately break out into tongues.)

Note, however, the following words by a Pentecostal minister, Barry Chant: "A few radical, minority groups teach that one is not born again until one has repented, been baptised in water by immersion and spoken in tongues. The teaching of these groups is strongly opposed by orthodox Pentecostals who go to great lengths to point out that even water baptism is not essential to salvation — although clearly an act of obedience and blessing — let alone speaking in tongues! They stress that salvation; is by simple trust in Christ — and, ultimately, that alone."

PRACTICE

Baptism in water and in the Spirit may be seen, then, as acts of "obedience" and as blessings. A Communion service is held every "Lord's Day" and is considered central to the Morning Worship Service. It is seen as a memorial, an opportunity for self-examination, and as a pointer to the final coming of Christ (1 Cor 11:26). The procedure of these services is relatively free. The Pastor usually presides (though in some churches any member may do so) and is assisted by members of the congregation. The communicants remain seated as the "emblems" are distributed to them: broken pieces of bread, and individual glasses of unfermented wine. The "Table" is immediately followed by a meditation upon the Word. Evening Services are much freer in their mixing of biblical teaching, prayer, speaking in tongues and other acts of worship.

GOVERNMENT

Forms of government vary among the various pentecostalist churches. On the one hand, there is the example of some of the New Testament communities: "in the first place apostles, in the second place prophets, third teachers; then miracle-workers, than those who have gifts of healing, or ability to help others."