for the benefit of the whole body. In pursuing this goal we must recognize the beautiful balance between unity and diversity which God has designed for his Body both within and among congregations.

Although different forms of witness may imply different particularized gifts, we believe that all Christians must be concerned with the developing of relationships which draw other people into contact with the believing community and thus eventually into a true corporation with the truth of God in Jesus Christ. It is along such lines of personal relationship that the Gospel usually moves.

Service to the world is the natural outgrowth of any attempt to understand Jesus Christ and his attitude toward mankind. It is impossible to be fully true to Christ and not maintain an attitude of concerned service to the world. We find that needs of people around us tend to define the points where we are called in service to the world.

The Christian is called to honest service, not to a manipulative or condescending reaction to people's needs. The Great Commission, to evangelize, must always be understood within the context of the great commandment, to love. In the acting out of our service to Christ, we recognize the opportunity for the Christian community to play a creative role, especially in building models that the world, including the secular state, can follow. We are thus involved in responding to the needs of the whole man, and the needs of all men.

THE NATURE OF THE UNITY OF THE LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL CHURCH IN EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH

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This is a difficult and "loaded" topic. Whatever position emerges out of it will have serious implications for our current understanding of the church and its missionary enterprise. Due to limitations of time I accepted this assignment reluctantly on condition that it be regarded as an Asian interpretive footnote to the crucial issue.

Our topic stands between Howard Snyder's paper on "The Church as God's Agent of Evangelism" and Henri Blocher's paper on "The Nature of Biblical Unity" — for both of which I am grateful. Our task here is to discover the nature of the unity between local and universal church with particular reference to evangelism which, in the Great Commission context, includes church growth.

Implicit in this subject also are such pressing missiological issues confronting evangelicals today as the following: (i) In the light of our understanding of the nature of this unity, what should be the role of the foreign missionary in relation to the emerging national churches in the Third World? (ii) Do foreign missions have the right to operate independently of the local national church, or to bypass it if the latter is not doing a good job in evangelism? (iii) What implications does this study have on the validity or continuity of culture-bound para-church structures such as denominations in the "mission field" today? These and many more related questions demand nothing less than a re-examination of some of the most basic presuppositions of the evangelical missionary enterprise hitherto yet unchallenged.

PART ONE: Local and universal churches: their relationship and unity

The term "local church" is generally understood as the local congregation, whether denominational, state-related, or independent churches. Often it is used correlatively. In the missiological context, local churches refer to the national "younger churches" planted by a sending church which is often called the "universal church." Within a denominational context, the worldwide church of the denomination is regarded as the universal church.

The meaning of "universal church" is further complicated by the term "invisible church," with which it is often used interchangeably. Here the correlative of the invisible church is the "visible church," which refers to the organized institutional church. Augustine was probably the first to introduce the concept of the "invisible church" as "the true body of Christ" to which all believers belong, even though

one might not be a member of a "visible" organized church. Reformed theologians since Wycliffe and Calvin have defined it in terms of predestination as "the totality of the predestined," including the saints who died and the elect who are not yet converted. Lutherans since Luther and Melanchthon have defined it in terms of justification as "the total believerhood now living on earth." They are found in the institutional churches, but their identity could not be discovered by man. How then shall we determine the nature of the unity of the local and universal church if we have so many variant definitions for the latter term? Should we regard it as the invisible elect or the unidentifiable believerhood or the sectarian denominational world church or the "sending church" of a particular locality? As our concern is with unity for evangelism, neither the invisible "elect" nor the unidentifiable "faithful" would do. On the other hand, we can hardly be satisfied with regarding denominational world churches or sending churches as our working definition for "universal church." We must, therefore, go to the New Testament for the basic definition of *ecclesia,* the church, and from there deduce the scriptural equivalents to the terms "local church" and "universal church."

1. *Union with Christ: the christological unity of the church*

The most comprehensive New Testament definition of *ecclesia* is simply "the assembly of God in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 2:14; Gal. 1:22; I Cor. 1:2). Howard Snyder's definition of the church as "the community of God's people" is very close to it. This simple formula has three essential components of the church: (i) the people assembled; (ii) God who assembles them; and (iii) "in Christ," the sphere into which they are assembled.

Howard Snyder has clearly expounded the church as the community of God's people. There is very little controversy on this point. Neither is there any serious argument on the church as the assembly of God, called out from the world by God the Father through the Gospel. It is "in Christ" that the nature of the unity of the church is to be found.

"In Christ" is the richest theological concept and soteric reality in the New Testament. Believers are incorporated into Christ through faith in him and signified by baptism. Thus Paul speaks of all believers as being baptized into Christ, into his death, and into his resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). To be baptized "into Christ" is also to be baptized "into the body of Christ" (I Cor. 12:13). Thus union with Christ is also union with the body of Christ; for Christ and his body are one. From Romans 5-8 we know clearly that evangelism is essentially the act of God in his transferring his people from "in Adam" to "in Christ" through the

proclamation of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. This transference takes place on an individual basis, which we call "personal conversion." Thus first and foremost the people of God stand in covenantal relationship to God "in Christ Jesus." Therein they receive forgiveness of sin, justification, sanctification, and life, which is none other than the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Union with Christ is, therefore, the basis and nature of the unity of all the people of God.

Although God calls his people into Christ by name, one by one individually, he does not call them to isolated individualistic existence. In Christ he creates a new humanity; in him he forms a new community, and fills it with his living Spirit so that the new christological humanity becomes a living community of his own. They are called from the world of sin, in time and space. Where they are called, there they are assembled into a new community in that locality, and he dwells in their midst through the Holy Spirit. Thus we find Paul addressing the churches in the New Testament in terms of "to the church of God in Christ Jesus which is in Galatia, in Corinth, in Philippi, in Colossae, in Rome, etc." (I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; Rom. 1:7). Paul further equates "the church of God in Christ Jesus" with "the saints in Christ Jesus who are in..." (Phil. 1:1, 4:21; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:2). Likewise Peter addressed the saints who were exiled in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, etc. (I Pet. 1:1-2).

The emphasis in the apostolic usage of the term *ecclesia* is definitely more God's people-oriented than congregation-oriented. The locality is rather incidental: wherever the people of God are called and congregated, they are called the assembly of God in that place. New Testament evangelism is God's calling out of his people from the world. It is not "church planting." Thus the stress is more on a vertical relationship between the God who calls and the people who respond to his call than on a horizontal relationship of missionary church extension from one denominational sending church to its "receiving church."

Thus viewed, each local church or local assembly of God in Christ Jesus is God's possession. Each is on a parity with the other. Each is a community of God's people, and the totality of the people of God's people is also God's people. Herein we find the nature of the unity of the local church and the Body of Christ, which is the biblical equivalent for the term "universal church." The nature of that unity is basically a unity of a part in relation to its whole. In other words, the local church as "the saints who are in Christ" is an integral part of the entire body of Christ. It appears that the problem is not so much the unity of the local church in relation to the entire body of Christ as the unity of one local church to another as fellow group-members of the same body. The question is not what is the nature of the unity between the church of Corinth and the Body of Christ, but what is the nature of the unity between "the Church of God in Christ Jesus which is in Corinth" and the "Church of God which is in Philippi"? To bring the question closer to home, the question is, "What is the nature of the unity between the Presbyterian Church on Third and Walnut Streets and the Methodist Church on Second and Walnut Streets in hundreds of towns?"

The nature of the unity among local churches is essentially an onto-

logical unity by virtue of their union with Christ as the people of God. It is, therefore, a christological unity. By virtue of their union with Christ, the people of God in these local churches also receive the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Hence the nature of the unity among local churches as the people of God is also a pneumatic (spiritual) unity. These are the "given" realities "in Christ Jesus" which believers are urged to preserve and experience as members of the same body.

2. *Solidarity of the Body: the context of pneumatic unity of the church*

The New Testament is very clear that although Christ is one and his body is one, the body has many members (Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12: 12-26, Eph. 4:15-16). This is necessarily so because the people of God are individual "saints." Just as the totality of the people of God in Christ Jesus is regarded as one body, so each local church is also called "the body of Christ" (I Cor. 12:27), and each saint members one of another. Oneness of the body is an ontological unity by virtue of its union with Christ, and the multiplicity of its members provides the diversity of ministry within the body.

The unity of the body is characterized by its unity of purpose: obedience to its head, Jesus Christ, "growing into Christ" (Eph. 4:15), and being transformed into his likeness (II Cor. 3:18). This is done through the mutual ministry of the members through the diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit. All exercises are "for the common good," toward the upbuilding of the body in love. This is why prophecy is regarded as the most desired of all gifts (I Cor. 14:1, 12, 22).

The unity of the body, and hence of the unity of the local churches in relation to each other, finds its functional unity in the Trinity: (i) one Spirit, but diversities of gifts; (ii) one Lord, but diversities of rule; (iii) one God, but diversities of operation (I Cor. 12:4-6). In real practice unity among local churches — whether within the same block or within the same region, or between churches cross-culturally, even "functional unity in evangelism" — can be achieved only through their joint submission to the rule of the Lord Jesus, appreciating the diverse gifts given by the Holy Spirit, and allowing diverse forms of operation as God chooses. God in his sovereignty delights in diversities within his Spirit of unity. This should warn us from desiring any kind of uniformity, for in so doing one might be working against the work of God. Spiritual discernment and spiritual submission seem to be the required guidelines for preserving unity while allowing diversities. Obedience is an art! That art is for all members to discover the mind of Christ and learn to "be of the same mind" (Rom. 12:16, 15:5-6; I Cor. 1:10; II Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:3; Phil. 1:27, 2:2, 3:16). This identity of mind among so many members, so many different individuals, is an impossibility on the human level, but it is possible when they are governed by love with body-building as their goal in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Thus the unity of one local church with another is a unity of obedience and a unity of love, the real visible manifestation of the Christo-somatic unity of the church with its pneumatic-charismatic diversities.

PART TWO: *The implications of Christo-somatic unity of the church for evangelism and church growth*

1. *The Great Commission: the common task of the church*

Within evangelical Christianity today there is a tendency to separate evangelism and missions. The former usually refers to local evangelism, and that latter to cross-cultural evangelism. There is also a tendency to absolutize missions to the devaluation of the local church, be it the sending church or the "receiving church." This is probably a result of inadequate theological understanding of the Christological and somatic nature of the church on the one hand and the influence of the institutionalization of foreign missions during the last two hundred years on the other hand. There is also a tendency to dichotomize "evangelism" from "church growth."

Students of the Greek text all know clearly that the command in Matt. 28:19-20 is "make disciples of all nations," a command that is to be carried out by (i) baptism into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and (ii) teaching them to observe all things that Jesus commanded his disciples, the chief of which is the commandment of love. These are nothing less than incorporating the believers into Christ and into his body, and helping them to experience the body life of love as the people of God. "Going" is a necessity in making disciples, but it is not the imperative; it is discipling which unites evangelism and church growth into one united task.

Likewise Peter declares that the people of God as a whole are charged with the great commission responsibility of declaring the mighty deeds of God in his work of salvation (I Pet. 2:9). It is true that in Matt. 28:19-20 Jesus was addressing the disciples who were to become apostles, and it is also true that in the early church Christ gave "leadership gifts" (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, and teachers), but even they carried out their ministry within the context of the body of the church. The church as the people of God and as a whole was to carry out the evangelistic mandate of Christ. These observations point us to the fact that God chose the concrete local church as the body of Christ to carry out his redemptive will. We should, therefore, give more significance to the local church as the basic unit of body life and as the primary base for evangelistic outreach. All members of the local Body of Christ have this evangelistic mandate, and all local churches as group-members of the total body of Christ have the same evangelistic mandate. Is this not the nature of the unity of the local church and the universal church in evangelism? It is a unity of task based on the unity of nature.

2. *The local church: the focus of challenge for unity in evangelism*

The term local church as used here means "the assembly of God's people in (a specified) place." That means we are referring to something more than a local congregation in its institutional form. What then should be the unity of the people of God in a certain locality

in their common evangelistic task? In terms of current Protestant institutional set-up, this would mean, "What should be the unity of the people of God in the twenty-odd congregations that belong to seven or eight different denominations, including the Catholics and the Green Orthodox brethren, in their common task of evangelism in that town?" If members of these congregations recognize their Christo-somatic unity, if they truly love each other as members of the same body, and if they are truly desirous to carry out their missionary responsibility in obedience to Christ, then they would be able to discover the mind of Christ for their evangelistic task. In fact, many churches of differing denominational affiliations do cooperate in joint evangelistic campaigns. But they seldom join together as one body in the exercise of their body life. A disjunction between evangelism and body building is sustained. This example illustrates the tremendous challenge for unity in body-building and evangelism on a limited regional level.

If a Presbyterian, a Methodist, a Baptist, and a Catholic happen to find themselves to be the only four born-again Christians in their neighborhood from which there are no other churches within fifty miles, and they desire to have fellowship as well as evangelism, what should they do? Should they each try to seek commission from their individual denominations and each start a "mission station" named after their denominations and work separately, sending reports to their "home churches?" Or should they join together as the people of God, build up each other, and preach Jesus to their neighbors? The answer seems so obvious, doesn't it? But the history of Protestant missions from the West is filled with agonizing and heartbreaking records of denominational agents trying to carry out their evangelistic task separately, each seeking to "plant" his own denomination churches to the great confusion of both new converts and non-Christians.

The challenge of the hour for effective worldwide evangelization is to work out real spiritual and visible unity among local churches in each locality. In the final analysis the nature of the unity of the people of God in Christ poses an unavoidable challenge to current denominational and other "para-church" divisions on the local level, especially in the mission fields. While denominational boundaries are being justified as "para-church" structures, it cannot be denied that they are not mere cultural wineskins that "aid" the mission of the church, but are actual barriers to a greater realization of the meaning of the somatic unity of the people of God in Christ in their common life and mission.

3. *The local (national) church and foreign missions*

Here we are confronted by the challenge of cross-cultural somatic unity in evangelism. What should be the role of foreign missionaries in a land where local national churches have already been established? How can the continuing role of the foreign missionary be scripturally validated? J. Robertson McQuilkin sought to validate it along traditional and pragmatic lines, "So long as the evangelistic mandate has not been completed, the Church of Jesus Christ has need for representatives with evangelistic ability to which it may delegate this responsibility." He advocates that a missionary is sent by a sending church, not called by a receiving church. Furthermore, he advocates that missions should bypass the national church if the latter is not an aid in completing the evangelistic mandate.

C. Peter Wagner is even more vocal in advocating that foreign missions should bypass the national church if the latter is not doing a good job. He seems to assume the legitimacy of the independent existence of missions, and he outlines a "mission-world" structure as the nature and ultimate objective of missions. He seems to mean that disciple-making is the same as conversion, "Disciples are made, not in the church, but in the world." He likens the church to an automobile that takes a person from New York to Pennsylvania. If the car runs well, fine. If the carburetor plugs or the transmission goes out "the car turns out to be a hindrance and you realize you would have accomplished your objective of reaching Pennsylvania better if you had taken the train," He seems to regard the church as a *means* to missions and that the church is disposable or may be bypassed. Clearly this is an evidence of the influence of American pragmatism on missionary strategy.

Can foreign missions bypass the national church if we examine this question from the nature of the unity of members of the Body of Christ as developed above? Should we permit a pragmatic approach to cross-cultural missionary strategy, especially when it concerns such a large segment of the Body of Christ in the Third World? Both Wagner and McQuilkin (and probably many others) seem to have failed to recognize the clear biblical teaching that the emerging national churches in the mission field are integral parts of the Body of Christ to which they belong, members who need the ministry of representatives of the churches in the West and whose ministry they need in carrying out an effective evangelistic outreach in that land. McQuilkin identified the sending church as the "church universal." Both failed to see that both the sending church and the receiving church are members of the Body of Christ, the true church universal; both are essentially local churches. As such they are on *a parity* with each other, equal in status and glory. Christ died for both. Does a missionary sent by one local church to a place where another local church is also seeking to serve her Lord have the right to ignore the latter or simply bypass it? Since the Holy Spirit ministers to each local church, would that not also be bypassing the bodily ministry of the Holy Spirit or bypassing the Lordship of Christ? Can the eye say to the foot "I have no need of you?" Should a stronger member of the body ignore the inferior part or the weaker part to whom God has given the greater honor? (I Cor. 12:22-23). The biblical doctrine of the unity of the body and the diversity of its members does not warrant such a pragmatic policy which is contrary to the explicit teachings of Scripture.

The missionary, in addition to his being a missionary, is ontologically and functionally a member of the local Body of Christ. As such he needs

the ministry of the body, and wherever he might be, he is obliged to minister to other members of the same body. Although he might be sent by his "home church," he is not an evangelist unless he is given the gift of an evangelist by the Spirit of Christ. All such "leadership gifts" are gifts to the church-at-large for the work of the ministry of the church, including evangelism. If *he* is a *gift* of the Holy Spirit, the local national church, in whom the same Spirit resides, would and should recognize such gift and would welcome such gift from the same Spirit. Thus the national local church as the Body of Christ is the agent for the verification of the missionary's gifts, and hence the validity of his being sent by the Lord. The local national church also has the right to discern whether such a missionary is a true prophet or a false prophet. Therefore it seems proper that when a missionary is sent to a land where there already exists local national churches the sending church should give the local church in the foreign field appropriate introduction of the missionary being sent. The missionary, as a member of the new Body of Christ, should submit himself to the authority of Christ administered through the local national church in love, unless he is sent to a pioneer situation. Apollos submitted himself to the local church at Ephesus and was ministered to and corrected by Priscilla and Aquila. As he departed from Ephesus he was sent away with the blessing and recommendation of the brethren at Ephesus" (Acts 18:25-28). Paul, the missionary, had the intention of evangelizing Rome. So he wrote the saints in Rome expressing his desire to see them, "That I might impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you." Then he quickly added, "That is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Rom. 1:11-12).

Such is the validity of the role of a missionary in a land where the saints already reside. The missionary has a "right" to go to a land where a national church exists, not on the basis of political treaty rights as in the case of China, but by virtue of his membership in the body of Christ, which entitles him to his membership in the local body of Christ, the national church. He may minister to the saints within the church or he may evangelize outside the church in accordance with the gifts that are given to him by the Spirit and as discerned by the Christ-ordained authority deposited in the local national church. A missionary should not be made responsible only to his sending church, but also, and even more so, to the local national church.

By virtue of a missionary's membership in the body of Christ, and in view of the Christo-somatic unity of all the people of God, the local national church has no right to say to the missionary "Go home!" on account of his racial difference. The national local church should regard the missionary as a brother with certain gifts, and encourage him to exercise his spiritual gifts for the upbuilding of the body and for reaching out to the non-Christians. This Christo-somatic approach to the church mission relationship will also necessarily invalidate C. Peter Wagner's "church development syndrome" theory. As an Asian I welcome any missionary whose gifts from the Spirit of God have been validated by the local national church's verification. I will also welcome him as a brother in Christ in whom we are united and with whom we share a

common task and a common destiny.

By the same token of the nature of the unity of local transcultural churches in Christ, I am inclined to say that foreign missions have no right "in Christ" to extend their administrative authorities to the local national churches as in the case of Western administration of younger churches in the mission field. Missions must learn to recognize the rightful rule of Christ over all of his churches. Similarly we may question the right of missions to import para-church structures to the mission field, though this is not the place to discuss it.

The nature of the unity between the local national church and foreign missions/churches is identical with that of fellow local churches within the same culture: members of the body of Christ whose unity is rooted in Christ. Cross-cultural evangelism too, must be carried out as the task of the body.

PART THREE: Visible unity, schism, and evangelism

Visible unity has been often understood in terms of organizational unity. This has marked the history of the ecumenical movement since 1910. It is interesting to observe that the movement began with an evangelistic concern and was successful while it was under the leadership of the International Missionary Council. It was a remarkable expression of modern Protestant search for unity for the purpose of evangelism.

Modern evangelicals of recent years have insisted that unity is not necessarily organizational unity, and certainly not uniformity, but rather a "spiritual unity." Having said that they have done very little to realize a visible functional expression of spiritual unity. For our present purposes, what then is the relation between visible unity and evangelism?

1. *Visible unity is the means to evangelism*

Jesus, at the eve of his glorification, gave a new covenantal commandment to his disciples, "Love one another . . . by this shall all men know that you are my disciples . . ." (John 13:34-35). Mutual love among the disciples is to be *the* trade mark of those whose master is Jesus. Love is the expression of unity and, in the believers, love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It seems that Jesus wants to attract the world to himself through the disciples' display of a new life style of love. Unity and love in the believers provide the incentives to non-believers for desiring to become disciples of Jesus. Thus unity is the best means to evangelism. Love is a visible expression of unity, which validates the Gospel as authentic.

2. *Schism: a visible disunity that hinders evangelism*

When I showed Dr. R. Pierce Beaver the assignment letter of this paper he commented: "More and more I am convinced that exported divisiveness is the greatest hindrance to the spread of the Gospel in the non-Christian world." There are currently at least three theories on unity and schism:

a. *That there can be no effective witness to the world without visible organizational unity.* The ecumenical wing of Protestantism is still pushing this form of visible unity. This attempt, however, has created a

widening gulf between ecumenicals and evangelicals. We must ask, "To what extent is such form of visible unity warranted by Scripture? Has the resultant hierarchical centralization of authority in some way usurped the Lordship of Christ? How much has this attempt built up the body of Christ as a demonstration of love?"

b. *That there can be no visible unity without doctrinal unity.* This is the Reformed and fundamentalist position. It is a continuation of the Protestant confessional mentality. However, the scriptural teaching is that the church should chase out false teachers rather than withdraw from a fellowship. But many evangelicals have, in American church history, withdrawn from larger churches that tolerated "liberals." Furthermore, doctrinal unity is the *goal* of church growth, not the condition of evangelism and church growth (Eph. 4:3, 13). This priority of doctrinal integrity over mutual love of the body members has been a cause of schism within the body, and thereby weakens both the task force and the witness of the body for evangelism.

c. *That unity in the form of cooperation may be expected in direct proportion to the degree of doctrinal agreement.* This is a kind of compromise of the above two extremes, but still basically adopting a "doctrinal integrity" approach to this problem. May we not ask, "In addition to doctrinal integrity, should we not apply the doctrine of the unity of the Body in Christ which demands love as another criterion for participating in visible forms of unity?"

3. *Schism: a breach of the New Covenant*

Schism is visible disunity. It disrupts the fulfillment of Christo-somatic unity and the love life of the body. As a factious spirit, it is essentially a breach of love, resulting in spiritual separation from other members of the body of Christ. It is a direct contradistinction of Paul's teaching on the interdependence of members of the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:32). As such it is a denial of the integrity of the body, a rejection of those for whom Christ died. It is an assertion of the autonomous spirit for independent existence away from the other members of the Body of Christ and a usurpation of the Lordship of Christ.

Schism is a self-imposed termination of spiritual fellowship with other parts of the Body of Christ, depriving oneself of the benefits of mutual ministry of members. As a rejection of the ministry of other members it is a form of rejection of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Schism is a member or a group of members' declaration to refuse to love the Body of Christ. This breach of love is basically a breach of the new covenant; it is declared disobedience to the new commandment, resulting in self-deprivation of the richer blessings of the new covenant.

Conclusion

The real issue confronting evangelicals worldwide today is not so much finding out the nature of the unity of the local church in relation to the universal church as the body of Christ, but understanding the nature of the unity among local churches within a given locality. The nature of that unity is an ontological, Christological unity by virtue of

believers' union with Christ. It is also a somatic unity within the body of Christ and with fellow members of the body. The greatest challenge today is to manifest that unity in the local churches and in the mission field between missionaries and national churches.

With particular reference to evangelism and church growth, the nature of the unity among churches is one of common task and common purpose. Biblical evangelism is both initial evangelism terminating in conversion and church growth aiming at the upbuilding of the body through the mutual ministry of its members. This is true for all churches, cross-cultural situation making no difference.

Mutual love and ministry within the body-life must be sought as the criterion for the development of visible forms of unity for effective evangelism. It should also be a deterrent to schism.

The evangelical world must re-examine its para-church structures in the light of the nature of the unity among local churches. Denominationalism as a significant form of schism is a barrier to the proper function of the body life for evangelism and church growth.