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A Comparative Study of Koinonia and the Motivations for Evangelical Ecumenicity

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KOINONIA AND THE MOTIVATIONS FOR
EVANGELICAL ECUMENICITY

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by
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CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The constant use of the term "fellowship" as related to the concept of visible unity in the evangelical movement raised some questions as to the relationship of one to the other. The researcher wanted to obtain a thorough understanding of koinōnia or fellowship as it was found in the Bible.

This concept of fellowship was then to be related to the motivating factors of evangelical ecumenism. It was the desire of the researcher to find if the concept of koinōnia as it related to the concepts of the evangelicals to unite were compatible.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to make a comparison between the concept of koinōnia and the motivations for Evangelical Ecumenicity.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

It was believed there were many questions about evangelical ecumenism and its motives. The question raised was, is this ecumenical movement based on biblical principles?

There was not a definitive statement among many evangelical authors who wrote in this field as to the reasons or bases why evangelicals should be brought into a common group. The questions most often asked

concerned the method and goals of such a union.

There was concern over what kind of union this was to be; spiritual union only or a physical structure. Also what was the structure to be, even if it was a spiritual union. What basic bible principles were to be followed in organizing a body of evangelicals into a spiritual force?

Some people believed that the evangelical movement was only man-centered with a few strong personalities trying to build an hierarchy for themselves. These men were believed to be building a structure for the advancement of man rather than God.

On the other hand it has been said that some concepts of ecumenism were so spiritually conceived that they were not physically practical. These followers wanted only abstract concepts unadulterated by the mistakes and choices of human endeavor.

Another area of concern was in the basic concepts of "fellowship." This term had been widely used and sometimes abused. Many proponents for the ecumenical cause have freely used the term "fellowship" in and out of biblical context.

There were several uses, mainly in degree, for "fellowship." It seldom referred to the intensity of degree the speaker had in mind. Not only were several uses made of the term "fellowship," but also fellowship and other terms were used synonymously. Fellowship and witnessing; fellowship and loving service; fellowship and love; fellowship and unity; fellowship and union, have all been interwoven together at times. This would make "fellowship" equivalent with any of the terms, even though there could be basic differences in the meaning of the words with which

it was associated.

The above mentioned areas of difficulty plus many others were of sufficient importance to justify a study of the problem.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

Since a study of koinōnia and the motivations of evangelical ecumenicity was undertaken, many limiting factors were necessary.

A limited study of the Old Testament concept of koinōnia was necessary. To do a full study in the Old Testament would have included a study of the covenants, sacrificial system, the freedom of the will in Old Testament men, development of man's destiny in the Old Testament, Jehovah's direct and indirect relationship to man, the necessity of a spiritual contact with God, plus other theological, psychological and philosophical involvements. Representative, pertinent, typical references were used that contained the concept of koinōnia.

Only a cursory study was given of the Apocrypha. This would have involved the validity of the apocryphal books as well as their value, this study was not involved in that argument. Representative, pertinent, typical references were used that contained the concept of koinōnia.

It was recognized that more time and space could have been given to the secular Greek concept of koinōnia. However, the researcher limited his observations in this area to where they applied in the general context of chapter two.

The word metechō and its cognates were not considered in this

study. Their meanings were very closely related to koinōnia and an expanded study including these related concepts was not the intention of this study.

The researcher did not make a study of the nature of the Church, or the methods that the church has established for evangelism, missions, etc. These would be necessary in an expanded study.

The researcher limited himself to the facts of motivation among evangelicals. Background material was read but not included, as it was too lengthy to include history, philosophy, psychology, and theology of the various ecumenical movements.

Although the World and National Council of Churches were mentioned throughout the paper, they were only used as background, or for purposes of comparison. The researcher limited the study to the evangelical movement.

At the time of writing there was a movement among evangelicals called "holiness ecumenism." This movement was not singled out in particular, although some of its leaders were influential in the evangelical point of view, especially through the National Association of Evangelicals.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Fellowship. The working definition of fellowship or koinōnia as the two expressions were used interchangeably throughout the paper was, a participation, partnership, communion, unity, and sharing. These words were used depending on the context and the basic grammatical structure in which koinōnia was found.

Evangelical Ecumenism:

Evangelical ecumenism is the movement in the universal visible church upon earth by which, under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church comes into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.¹

V. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The English and Greek Bibles were used as primary sources where needed. The commentary of scholars was used to amplify or clarify the findings, as well as to introduce new materials to the study.

Chapter two was devoted to discover the scriptural use of koinōnia. This discovery followed a brief study in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, Negative and Positive factors in fellowship, and a comprehensive study of koinōnia in the New Testament.

Chapter three contained the motivations of evangelical ecumenism. There was a broad scope of motivations given, and then these motivations were narrowed down to five basic motivations of evangelicals.

Chapter four brought the study of koinōnia in chapter two and the motivations of evangelical ecumenism in chapter three together in order to compare the two concepts.

Chapter five contained a brief summary, the conclusions derived from the entire investigation and certain suggestions for further study.

¹J. Marcellus Kik, Ecumenism and the Evangelical (Grand Rapids 6, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 3.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

THE SCRIPTURAL USE OF FELLOWSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION

The problem under consideration in this chapter was to make an inquiry into the varied uses of "fellowship," especially in the Scriptures. It was discovered, however, to do this adequately a brief study was necessary in extra-biblical sources to clarify and make distinctions in the study.

Thus a study in the Old Testament and Jewish Writings was made. Following this a brief survey of some secular Greek concepts was done. With this background, a major portion of this chapter was given to the New Testament concept of "fellowship."

The introduction of this chapter was enlarged to include an enlarged definition of fellowship. The definition of koinōnia was given here. Throughout the chapter the shades of meaning were given for the other parts of speech involved in the study.

Koinōnia is an abstract term from koinōs and koinōneō. It denotes a participation especially with a close bond. It expressed a two sided relation. The emphasis may be on the giving or receiving. Thus it means, 1. "participation," 2. "impartation," 3. "fellowship."¹

¹Gerhard Kittel (ed.), Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 797.

Koinōnia comes from an adjective which means "common." Its literal meaning is a common participation or sharing in anything.²

Koinōnia, that which is common. It is a partnership or union with others.³

Koinōnia is that union with others in the bonds of a business partnership, social or fraternal organization. It could also include membership in the local church. It was also a partnership in the support of the Gospel and in the charitable work of the church.⁴

"The Christian koinōnia is that bond which binds Christians to each other, to Christ, and to God."⁵

These varied yet similar definitions were given to help understand the meanings of the various shades of meanings that were given. Even though there were variations of meanings, the basic concepts of "participation," "partnership," "fellowship," "communion," and "unity" was maintained throughout the study.

II. THE OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF FELLOWSHIP

The researcher found several divergent views on the subject. Since

²James Hastings (ed.), Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 150.

³Merrill C. Tenney (ed.), The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 282.

⁴Ibid.

⁵William Barclay, A New Testament Wordbook (New York: Harper & Brothers - Publishers, n.d.), p. 72.

this was not the main part of the study only a brief survey of the subject was given. All pertinent information was given without going into a detailed study of the Hebrew language and the detailed involvements.

Fellowship between God and His people. It was observed that the concept of fellowship derived from the "koiōn" stem was not prominent in the Old Testament. The LXX uses koinōnikos three times; koinōneo five times; koinōnia once in the Old Testament.⁶

"In the English versions 'communion' never occurs in the Old Testament, 'fellowship' only once in the Revised Version, twice in the Authorized Version."⁷

Even though the LXX failed to translate some words by use of the "koiōn" stem there was at least one Hebrew term "charbar" which could have a meaning very close to that of koinōnia.⁸ The primary meaning of "charbar" is bind or joining together.⁹ From the research it was found that this term "charbar" in the Hebrew could refer to inanimate, as well as animate objects.

The study of the Old Testament showed this concept in several scriptures. It is used of: joining curtains together (Exodus 26:6, couple; 26:4, 10, coupling; 28:7, join): nations forming alliance (Genesis

⁶Kittel, op. cit., p. 800.

⁷Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 81.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

14:3, joined together); of fishermen (Job 41:6); comrades (Ecclesiastes 4:10, fellow); join together for a common task (II Chronicles 20:35ff); bond uniting worshippers of the Lord (Psalms 119:63, companion); accomplices in wrong-doing (Isaiah 1:23, Proverbs 28:24, companion); an association with false gods (Hosea 4:17, join).

There were many more references that could have been given. For the sake of this study these were chosen to show the relationship between these meanings and those previously given for fellowship. It was found that the LXX was not always consistent in using the "koinōn" stem to translate from the Hebrew into the Greek.

With this observation, a study of the relationship between God and His people was made. "The significant thing is that. . . neither "charbar" nor "koinōn" is used in the Old Testament of the relation of men to God."¹⁰ "The most significant point in the Old Testament findings is that neither כִּי nor koinōn is used for the relation to God, as so often in the Greek world."¹¹ ". . . communion between God and man. . . is generally implicit and not actually expressed terms of 'communion.'"¹²

Herein was expressed the distance which the righteous Israelite felt from God, as distinct from the Greek.¹³

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Kittel, op. cit., p. 801.

¹²G. A. Buttrick, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York • Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 664.

¹³Kittel, loc. cit.

Though the men of the Old Testament had fellowship with God as seen by the sacrificial meals, yet they avoided using the natural word to denote it. "The reason for this was their consciousness of the distance between God and man. . ."¹⁴ These men spoke more in terms which emphasized inequality and distance. This was observed in Deuteronomy chapter twelve, where the joy of the communion was obviously present, the distance and inequality were underlined by the choice of the preposition, "before" the Lord (Deuteronomy 12:7, 12, 18).

The LXX never expressed the relationship between God and man with koinōnia, even with its Greek structure. "This is a surprising fact."¹⁵ There was very little doubt that in the ancient Israel sacrifice, or the sacrificial meal, there was a sense of sacral fellowship between God and man. The entry of God into sacral fellowship was expressed by the sprinkling of blood on the altar.

Yet in respect of the close sharing and fellowship actualized in the sacrificial meal the word group κοινωνία koinōn is avoided. Deuteronomy 12 paints the joy of these festivals in glowing terms, yet even here we find distance rather than the (koinōn) of fellowship (v. 7, 12, 18). When the description seems to be veering towards an expression of the closest and truest fellowship with God. . . it suddenly breaks off with the unrelated "and did eat and drink" (v.11). Even at this climax there is no expressed statement concerning fellowship with God. . .¹⁶

It was observed, however, that even if the language and meaning of koinōn was not used, the spirit of fellowship between God and man was throughout the Old Testament.

¹⁴Richardson, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 801. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 802.

Everything in the Bible is communication between God and man; everything is relationship. God spoke; God commanded; He called; He appeared--it all means an event happening between God and man.¹⁷

If this was correct then God had a fellowship with man. Since this was not an exhaustive study of the Old Testament concept of koinōn, only one area of God's communication with man will be observed briefly. This area will be God's fellowship with His people through the covenant relationship.

"The covenant involves the closest fellowship between God and His people. . ."¹⁸ The foundation of the covenant was in the promise, "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12). This suggested a very close relationship among His people, and also the access to Him which this implied. The divine presence was symbolized in the ark, which represented and mediated the covenant (Numbers 10:35-36). The ideas associated with the cloud leading the people (Exodus 33:7-11), spoke of the covenant's relationship and communion with God. Then later on the presence of God among His people was represented by the temple at Jerusalem, and by Israel's possession of the revealed will of God as set out in the Law.

Many other incidents could have been given, but this was enough to show that God and His people did have a close relationship which could be classified in the broad definition of "fellowship."

¹⁷Eliezer Berkovits, God, Man and History, A Jewish Interpretation (New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1965), p. 15.

¹⁸Buttrick, op. cit., p. 664.

Fellowship between God and individuals. Certain individuals were granted a special and peculiarly close relationship to God. Moses was marked out from all other men as one with whom God had direct fellowship, without an intermediary.¹⁹

When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses . . . thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Exodus 33:9-11).

His fellowship with God was thus different from that of the prophets: "And there has not risen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, who the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

The prophets themselves were treated with a special sense of God's fellowship also.

filled with power,
with the spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression
and to Israel his sin (Micah 3:8).

The prophets were men whom the Word of the Lord came to, (Jeremiah 1:2), and to whom God revealed the meanings of His acts. "Surely the Lord does nothing, without revealing his secrets to his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

Many other individuals could have been cited as receiving individual communion and fellowship from God but these few examples were believed enough to point out that God did have a distinct fellowship with individuals in the Old Testament.

¹⁹Ibid.

Fellowship in relation to Israel's hope. The spirit of the Old Testament was always one of drawing closer to God, and having a fellowship with intimate meaning.²⁰ Israel's hope lay in a continuing revelation of God and His hoped for nearness in the form of personal fellowship. The hoped for fellowship was not, ". . . an idea which is conveyed, but a relationship formed. . . not a meditation. . . but fellowship with God established."²¹

In this sense the hope of Israel was seen as the essence of a new relationship to God, which might be described as one of personal communion rather than external observances:

This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. . . (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

This was the hope of a deeper fellowship between God and man, which was seen by the New Testament writers as having been fulfilled in Christ.²²

During this period before Christ there was a hope within the Israelites. There were various means by which this hope was kept alive. The one activity that was mentioned as seeming most meaningful was the

²⁰ A. B. Davidson, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), p. 280.

²¹ Berkovits, op. cit., p. 17.

²² Buttrick, op. cit., p. 664.

sacrifices. Davidson stated that the sacrifices were offered, ". . . to prevent the communion existing between Him and His people from being disturbed or broken by the still inevitable imperfections of His people, whether as individuals or as a whole."²³ Communion and fellowship with God were, thus, the desired end of the sacrificial system.

The sacrificial system was devised as a means to an end. This end was the hoped for closer fellowship of God in a more direct and personal means, rather than through the media of non-personalities.²⁴ These non-personalities were the animals used in sacrifice.

Thus there was a "hope," a longing for a closer fellowship with God even in the midst of a fellowship guaranteed by the covenant relationship, and the sacrificial system. Out of that longing sprang the hope of the nation of Israel, its confidence in God to bless its people with His continued communion and fellowship with Him.²⁵

III. THE APOCRYPHA CONCEPT OF FELLOWSHIP

It was not the purpose of this study to exhaust the sources of "fellowship" in the Apocrypha. Thus a very brief consideration of the subject was observed.

The value of this brief consideration was to acquaint the reader

²³Davidson, op. cit., p. 317.

²⁴Hermann Schultz, Old Testament Theology (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1892), II, 355.

²⁵H. Wheeler Robinson, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 184.

with the fact that koinōn was used in other religious writings besides the Old Testament. Thus a review of some passages was deemed valuable.

Passages from the Apocrypha considered. In the Apocrypha, koinōnos¹ was often used for close fellowship. "Again some friend is a companion (koinōnos¹) at the table. . ." (Ecclesiasticus 6:10). It was also used in sharing and cooperating in unlawful acts. ". . . of unjust dealing before thy partner (koinōnōu) and friend;" (Ecclesiasticus 41:18).

Koinōneo¹ denotes a close comradeship with the wicked or rich. ". . . and he that hath fellowship (koinōnon) with a proud man shall be like unto him (Ecclesiasticus 13:1ff).

Koinōnia is used of material participation. "And great pleasure it is to have her friendship (koinōnia). (Wisdom 8:18) ". . . to enjoy the partnership (koinōnian) of marriage. . ." (III Maccabees 4:6).

There were many other references but these have shown that the Apocrypha did have a concept of fellowship, and the Greek thought of the koinōn was found.

In all that was observed and read, the Apocrypha did not have a clear concept of fellowship between God and man; in fact this human-divine concept was not found. Human relations were found in numerous Apocrypha books, but the Old Testament concepts were not found in these writings.

IV. THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF FELLOWSHIP

In the New Testament there were a number of words which had the

basic meaning of fellowship. These words came from the basic root koin. It was observed that Paul used the terms more extensively than the other writers of the New Testament. Paul's usage of the term was in a religious content exclusively.

In the New Testament the basic term translated variously as, "communion, fellowship, communicate, partake, contribution, common, stems from the Greek root koin."²⁶

There were two adjectives, koinōnos (found ten times) and syn-koinōnos (three times). The noun koinōnia occurred twenty times.²⁷

It was observed that the concept of fellowship was involved through out the New Testament. Where the terms for fellowship was not designated it was strongly implied.

Before an intensive study of koin and its cognates was undertaken a study of some of the factors of fellowship was undertaken. This was done in order to establish the fact that fellowship was an integral part of the believers' life experience.

Negative factors of Fellowship. The New Testament disclosed certain relationships that were incompatible with Christian fellowship.

(1) A Christian could not have real fellowship with an unbeliever (II Corinthians 6:14-16).

²⁶ J. D. Douglas (ed.), The New Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 245.

²⁷ Ibid.

Their natures were radically different: one was a child of God; the other a child of Satan (I John 3:10-12). (2) The Christian could not partake in the rites of pagan ceremonies (I Corinthians 10:20-22). Paul said that such things belong to demonism. (3) A Christian must, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). Light and darkness had no affinity. The believer was a child of the light; the unbeliever dwells in darkness (I Thessalonians 5:4-8; Romans 13:11-14; I Peter 2:9-12, 4:3). (4) The Christian could not participate in the sins of others and expect continued harmonious fellowship with God (I Timothy 5:22). (5) The believer could not have fellowship with God while walking in darkness (I John 1:5). This darkness was identified as hatred of a Christian brother (I John 2:9-11; 3:15). Those believing in Christ could not live contrary to the teaching of Christ (II John 9-11). Error and truth could not co-exist in the same fellowship. Some times those in error must leave (Acts 20:29f; I John 2:18f); some times the Christian had to leave the external fellowship (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

Positive factors of fellowship. "There is a foundational unity among true believers. . ." ²⁸ This fact was born out by a survey of some scriptures that dealt with this statement.

(1) Christians partook of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4). The divine seed was planted in them at the new birth making them new

²⁸ Everett F. Harrison, Baker's Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1960), p. 219.

creatures (II Corinthians 5:17; I John 3:9). (2) Christians partook of Christ (Hebrews 3:14). The "new man" (Ephesians 4:24) was "created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10). (3) The believer partook of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 6:4). They were the temple in which the Spirit dwelt (I Corinthians 6:19). (4) The Christian had a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1). Their real citizenship was in heaven (Philippians 3:20); they were pilgrims and strangers (I Peter 2:11). (5) The believer partook of Christ's suffering (Philippians 3:10; Hebrews 10:33; I Peter 4:13). In some mystical way the believers entered into the suffering of their Lord. (7) Christians were to partake in the future glory (II Corinthians 1:7; I Peter 5:1). They will share in the glory of their Lord's return (II Thessalonians 1:10).

These have been a few instances directly from the New Testament that revealed the positive factors of the Christian fellowship. This fellowship was one of partaking in all that was available from God to the Christian.

Expressions of Christian fellowship. Many were the ways, both tangible and specific, in which fellowship was expressed among Christians. The following examples were only a few of the many that could have been given.

- (1) A student shared in the material needs of his teacher (Galatians 6:6).
- (2) A church supported its minister (Philippians 1:5; 4:15).
- (3) Ministers recognized the cooperation of others in the work of God's kingdom (II Corinthians 8:23; Galatians 2:9; Philemon 17; III John 5-8).

(4) Churches unitedly helped a needy church (Romans 15:26; II Corinthians 8:4; 9:13). (5) Christians spontaneously shared their wealth with other Christians (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32). (6) Christians assembled regularly for worship and edification (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25). (7) They prayed for one another (Ephesians 6:18).

These appeared to be signs that there was a fellowship among believers. These were tangible signs that showed an outward action in response to an inward reaction of helpfulness for his brother.

The next statements reveal that this fellowship was not only between Christians, but a more meaningful expression of this fellowship is expressed between the believer and the Godhead.

The New Testament bears out the fact that each believer had fellowship with each member of the Trinity. (1) Fellowship with the Father (I John 1:3, 6). (2) Fellowship with the Son (I Corinthians 1:9). In the inner sanctuary of the soul this fellowship was realized at the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 10:16f). The Christian also desired to enter into a deeper meaning of their Lord's suffering (Philippians 3:10). (3) Fellowship with the Spirit. This fellowship was a blessing in the benediction (II Corinthians 13:14) and was realized in Christian experience (Philippians 2:1).

The factors of fellowship, both negative and positive, and the expression of fellowship, were given as a background for a more intensive study in the area. It was observed in the three points above many areas that needed clarification. In the following pages an exegetical approach will be taken and intensified to bring the full meaning of fellowship into

focus.

A comprehensive study of the terms. "The fundamental connotation of the root koin is that of sharing in something (genitive) with someone (dative)."²⁹ The literal meaning of the koin group, ". . . is a common participation or sharing in anything."³⁰ Another source showed this basic concept of sharing, ". . . It implies fellowship or sharing with someone or in something."³¹ Another idea was, "Fellowship posits as its prerequisite a likeness of nature that transcends external and temporary differences."³²

More meaning to the above definitions was observed as individual words and scriptures were investigated. These terms were used in their contexts of the various scripture references used.

The scriptural use of koinōnas. As was stated koinōnas was an adjective used ten times in the New Testament. This term was used in the sense of a sharer.³³ Jesus said that the Pharisees claim that if they had lived in the days when their fathers killed the prophets they would not have "shared" (koinōnoi) in such action (Matthew 23:30). "Paul says, ". . . are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"

²⁹Douglas, op. cit., p. 245.

³⁰James Hastings (ed.), Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 150.

³¹Kittel, op. cit., p. 797.

³²Harrison, op. cit., p. 218-219.

³³William Barclay, A New Testament Word Book (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, n. d.), p. 73.

(I Corinthians 10:18). The use of koinōnoi was once more noted. Koinous was also used, ". . . and I would not that you should have fellowship with the Devil" (I Corinthians 10:20).

"It is used in the sense of a partner."³⁴ James and John are Peter's koinōnoi in the fishing business. ". . . James and John. . . , which were partners with Simon" (Luke 5:10). In this reference koinōnoi is used of partnership in work which may even be taken as a legal partnership.³⁵ Paul described Titus as his koinōnos, his partner and fellowworker (II Corinthians 8:23). Paul's claim on Philemon, when he was pleading with Onesimus, is that Philemon was his koinōnos (Philemon 17). This sharing was one of deep relationships, ". . . the bond is that of a relationship or love."³⁶

This term was also used in a sense of a sharer in an experience.³⁷ ". . . knowing that as partakers of the sufferings. . ." (II Corinthians 1:7). Paul used the term koinōnoi once more to indicate that the believer was a partner in sufferings, which was an experience to share together. Paul knew the Christians at Corinth were at heart, "sharers both of his sufferings and of his comfort."³⁸ He was anticipating their fellow-feeling with him as he was about to tell them of a trying experience

³⁴Ibid., p. 74.

³⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 807.

³⁶Ibid., p. 797.

³⁷Barclay, op. cit., p. 74.

³⁸Philip E. Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 15-16.

that happened to him in Asia. Robertson looked on this partakers of sufferings as being partners much like that of Luke 5:10,³⁹ which was mentioned previously.

Sharing an experience is also shown by:

. . . whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. (Hebrews 10:33).

In this context the Christians were suffering, but they also shared each others trials by becoming koinōnoi or companions of one another in their experience of suffering.⁴⁰ "The Hebrews so far from abandoning their fellow-Christians, courageously claimed connection with them. . ." ⁴¹ These Hebrews were sharing in the experiences of sufferings with their fellow-Christians. "Between Christ and man, and man and man there is that sympathy of those who have passed through a common experience."⁴²

The term koinōnoi is used once of man's sharing in the divine nature, (II Peter 1:4). This sharing is one of the, "common sharing in direct spiritual realities"⁴³ This sharing in the divine nature could have been expanded to include more of the context but a clear, concise statement that summed up this reference was, "Peter is referring to the

³⁹A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York and London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1931), III, 210.

⁴⁰J. A. Seiss, Lectures on Hebrews (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 305.

⁴¹B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 336.

⁴²Barclay, op. cit., p. 74. ⁴³Douglas, op. cit., p. 245.

new birth."⁴⁴ This sharing in the divine nature was becoming one with Christ as to sharing in His nature.

Thus the term koinōnos could include the meanings of: (1) a sharer in an action or course of action, (2) in the sense of a partner, (3) in the sense of sharing, a sharer in an experience, and (4) of man sharing in the divine nature.

"The main element in koinōnos is that of fellowship. Hence the word is especially adapted to express inner relationship."⁴⁵ These inner relationships were even deeper and more meaningful than the outward concept of a legal partnership would suggest.

The scriptural use of synkoinōnos. This term was found in four scripture passages. It is an adjective which was also used as a noun. Synkoinōnos had the same general meaning as koinōnos but stresses the "with" idea.⁴⁶

The structure of the word with the prefix "sun," the "n" is changed to "g" before a "k," resulted in a close relationship to the concept of the koin root. This prefix "sun" had the concept of "fellowship far closer and more intimate than that expressed by "meta," although in the New Testament this distinction is much oftener neglected than observed."⁴⁷ The idea was expressed that "sun" carried the concept

⁴⁴A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (New York · London: Harper & Brothers, 1933), VI, 150.

⁴⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 797.

⁴⁶Richardson, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴⁷J. H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York · Cincinnati · Chicago: American Book Company, 1889), p. 598.

of, ". . . accompaniment and fellowship, whether of action, or of belief, or of condition and experience."⁴⁸

With this background a study was made of the four scriptures where this term was found. Romans 11:17 stated ". . . wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree." The term sugkoinōnos appeared where the English translation "partakers" was used. The sense here was more than just a passive onlooker, but, "an active co-partner"⁴⁹ in this experience of being grafted into the spiritual life. "Once engrafted on this stem, the wild branches have become co-participants (sugkoinōnoi) of the root."⁵⁰ There was no reason to enter the argument of who this was, Jew or Gentile that was to be grafted into the "fat olive tree," the point to be stressed that who ever it was, they were a "partaker of the fat olive tree."⁵¹

Another verse that showed a similar meaning was, "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be a partaker thereof with you" (I Corinthians 9:23). Another translation of "partaker" represented by the word sugkoinōnos was "a joint partaker."⁵² "Paul's sole ambition is that I may be a joint-partaker in it (with those I save) that he may win the gospel's salvation along with many others. . ."⁵³ This verse literally

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Robertson, op. cit., IV, 396.

⁵⁰F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Publishers, 10 and 12 Dey Street, 1883), p. 405-6.

⁵¹W. R. Nicoll (ed.), The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), II, 680.

⁵²A. Marshall, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, 4 New Bridge Street EC4, 1964), p. 680.

⁵³Nicoll, op. cit., p. 855.

means, "that I may become co-partner with others in the Gospel. . . sunkoinōnos is a compound word (sun, together with, koinōno, partner or sharer)." ⁵⁴ This verse showed that Paul did not want to share this gospel by himself. His heart and passion was that he might be a co-partner with others in the ministry of the gospel.

The third place sunkoinōnos was found was ". . . in defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all were partakers of my grace" (Philippians 1:7). Paul gave the impression from this context that if it was a privilege to preach Christ then it was a privilege to suffer for Christ. This literally means, "my co-sharers in grace." ⁵⁵

Vincent commented:

Better as partakers with me of grace. Literally, the grace, either the divine endowment which enabled them both to suffer bonds, and to defend and establish the Gospel, or the loving favor of God, which confers suffering and activity alike as a boon. The two may be combined. ⁵⁶

A more special meaning of this verse was given as, "joint-contributors to the gift which I have received." ⁵⁷

Lightfoot further stated:

But though charis sometimes refers specially to almsgiving (eg. I Corinthians xvi:3, II Corinthians viii:4), such a restriction here seems to sever this clause from the context and to destroy the whole force of the passage. ⁵⁸

⁵⁴Robertson, op. cit., IV, 148.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 437.

⁵⁶M. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), III, 4:17.

⁵⁷J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898), p. 85.

⁵⁸Ibid.

The whole force of this passage was one of joint-participation between Paul in prison and the Church at Philippi in all levels of Christian fellowship, material or spiritual.

The fourth and last use of sunkoinōnos¹ was found in, "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation. . ." (Revelation 1:9). Here our term was translated "companion" in the King James Version. Another translation was, ". . . and co-sharer in the affliction. . ." ⁵⁹ This term was treated by the authors in very much the same way as Paul's sufferings were treated. Here John was identifying himself with them, those to whom he was writing, through the common media of afflictions.

These four uses of synkoinōnos bore out the relationship of a joint participation among people. It was stronger than just the participation of a casual onlooker, it was a participation between two or more people in every area of the whole man.

The scriptural use of koinōneo. This was one of two verbs used. This verb, koinōnew, was used seven times in the New Testament. Since this was a verb the action of sharing and fellowship was active. There was an interpersonal relationship where ever this term was investigated.

The first scripture observed was, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same. . ." (Hebrews 2:14). The verb here was kekoinōneken, a perfect active indicative. "The children have become partners (koinōnoi) in flesh

⁵⁹Marshall, op. cit., p. 957.

and blood."⁶⁰ "Kekoinōnēken marks the common nature ever shared among men as long as the race lasts."⁶¹ "Kekoinōnēken" . . . pointing to the common lot which the children have always shared. . ."⁶² Thus the idea from this verse was that all men shared something in common, namely, flesh and blood. The most literal of the meanings in this context was, to have in common, or share.

Following this, two scripture verses were investigated and were found to have the idea of becoming implicated or being a party to a matter. The first scripture observed was, ". . . For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things. . ." (Romans 15:27). The verb here was ekoinōnēsan, first aorist active indicative. More literally, "the nations shared."⁶³

According to Paul there was a particularly close bond of union between Jewish and Gentile Christians, since Gentile Christians had acquired a share of the spiritual blessings of the original community, they are thus under obligation to help the Jewish Christians with material gifts.⁶⁴ It should be said that the whole context of this verse is found in Paul's taking a gift to the poor at Jerusalem. Thus Paul

⁶⁰ A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1932), V, 348.

⁶¹ Westcott, op. cit., p. 53.

⁶² W. R. Nicoll (ed.), The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), IV, 267.

⁶³ Marshall, op. cit., p. 651.

⁶⁴ Kittel, op. cit., p. 807.

wants Christians to have an active participation, and be party to giving to the poor because it then becomes a fellowship because of the active sharing of one Christian with another.

The other verse which has a close connection with Hebrews 15:27 as far as participation in an act is, "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." (I Peter 4:13). This sharing was not in material gifts, but in an abstract point of view. Even so the meaning of suffering for the sake of Christ was just as real and tangible as giving of gifts. This suffering with Christ was shared with Christ for the future glory. ". . . the present sharing with Christ in his sufferings being thought of as a future sharing with him in his glory."⁶⁵ "Fellowship with Christ means that present participation in one phase, namely, that of humility and suffering. . . leading to that of glory."⁶⁶ The Christian life was not complete without some concept of the sharing in Christ's sufferings. It seems like active participation as some form of suffering hones one for the future sharing of Christ's glory.⁶⁷ "To suffer in Christ's name is to suffer as representing Christ. . ."⁶⁸ This verb koinōneite was a present active indicative, thus showing that this participation was active and not a passive stance taken by the

⁶⁵Richardson, op. cit., p. 82.

⁶⁶Kittel, op. cit., p. 806.

⁶⁷Buttrick, op. cit., p. 665.

⁶⁸W. R. Nicoll, The Expositor's Greek Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), V, 74.

weak. This active sharing was done in order to partake of the future sharing of Christ's reward for suffering on His behalf, namely, a place in future glory.

Along with the above thought, only in a different light was found in, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. . ." (I Timothy 5:22). This verb was koinōnei, present active imperative. This was in the form of a command with "mē" which was a prohibition. This phrase "be not partakers of other men's sin" is certainly, "connected with the disciplinary rebuke of sin. . ."⁶⁹ This kind of fellowship or sharing was to be avoided. Here was given the command to actively avoid taking part in sin as this would not allow one to engage in the sufferings of Christ which would lead to future glory with Christ.

Following the ideas given in the last three scriptures there was another concept given by the verb. This concept was one of association by sympathy and assistance. This was observed in, "For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 11). The verb once more is koinōnei. In the context of this verse it must be remembered that the people met in private homes. There were many going around spreading heresy, and if the people accepted them into their homes great evil could be done. This verse was not given just to discourage hospitality to strangers, the deeper concept was to have nothing to do with false teachers.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Nicoll, op. cit., IV, 137. ⁷⁰Robertson, op. cit., VI, 255.

The verb also gave another idea of sharing and fellowship and that was through the communication of fellowship by aid and relief. There were two verses that contained the verb with this idea. The first verse was, "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). Here the verb is in the form of a participle koinōnountes. More accurately the word "distributing" could have read, "to assist effectively"⁷¹ thus, assist effectively to the needs of the saints. There were many arguments as to what this assistance was. Whether it was just entertainment, actual material gifts, or a pledging of remembrance, was not fully disclosed. However, the context would suggest that hospitality was one of the chief meanings of this verb in that context. This was a form of, "charity much needed by traveling, exiled, or persecuted Christians."⁷² In the broad scope of pursuing hospitality for the Christians they would have included them in any of the general arguments for the meaning of this particular verb in the context. Perhaps a broad meaning of the verb was more desirable here than a limited meaning. In its broadest sense the, "meaning is sharing in the necessities."⁷³

Another verse that showed the idea of communicating the sense of aid and relief was, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Galatians 6:6). The verb here

⁷¹Godet, op. cit., p. 436.

⁷²Nicoll, op. cit., II, 693.

⁷³Vincent, op. cit., III, 159.

was a third person singular present imperative koinōneitō. Those who received instruction were called on to "contribute" (better than "communicate") for their education.⁷⁴ "The word koinōnein contains the key to the meaning of this verse. . . Our versions understand it here. . . in the sense of communication to others,"⁷⁵ but Nicoll says, "but I can find no warrant for this in the Greek language."⁷⁶

Here. . . it enjoins upon the leaders of the Churches the duty of admitting all the members to participation in any spiritual blessing they enjoy. It continues, in fact, the protest against the arrogant pretensions and selfish exclusiveness of Judaising leaders.⁷⁷

The authors were once more divided on this verse as to its literal meaning. Kittel suggested the same as Robertson, "the pupil who receives valuable spiritual goods in his course of instruction, ought to give the teacher a share in his material possessions."⁷⁸

Literally, "let him go shares with. The word is properly intransitive and equivalent. . . to be a partner with."⁷⁹ Thus it seemed that both the ideas of a payment to the teacher was involved to help him, but also the teacher was in partnership with his student. This partnership and the teacher doing his duty as the other half of the partnership.

⁷⁴Robertson, op. cit., IV, 316.

⁷⁵Nicoll, op. cit., III, 189.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Kittel, op. cit., p. 808.

⁷⁹J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905), p. 218.

This same theme was dealt with later under a different type of word study yet meaning much the same as the above study.

The scriptural use of synkoinōnēō. This was the second of the two verbs found in the New Testament. The prefix syn was added to stress the "with" idea. The discussion of this "syn" prefix was discussed previously, and its meaning applied to our present study.

This verb form appeared three times in the New Testament and will be treated in the same manner as the other investigations. The general meaning of this verb was, "to become partaker together with others, or to have fellowship with a thing."⁸⁰

In the first two verses studied the meaning of synkoinōnēō was, to involve oneself in the action or be an accomplice to the action. The first verse was, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). The verb was synkoinōnēite second person plural present imperative. This was a command to have, "no partnership with, present imperative with mē."⁸¹ It was a command to have no dealings with those workers which, "yield no gains, yield nothing pleasant or profitable; bring no blessing or reward with them."⁸² This verse eleven no doubt refers back to verse seven, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them." This paragraph in Ephesians dealt with the problem of light and darkness mixing. Paul said, have

⁸⁰Thayer, op. cit., p. 593.

⁸¹Robertson, op. cit., IV, 543.

⁸²Nicoll, op. cit., III, 357.

no fellowship with them that bring darkness. There was to be no mixing of truth and error.

"The participation of the righteousness in what is holy has an exclusive character. . . as children of light, Christians cannot possibly have a part in sin. . ." ⁸³ Thus the command was in the negative. There was to be no active involvement with that which was in error.

In the next verse there was an active involvement in a positive sense that was commanded by Paul. "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction" (Philippians 4:14). The verb here, sunkoinōnēsantes, was first aorist active participle. Robertson translates it, "Ye did well contributing for my affliction." ⁸⁴ Lightfoot had a similar view, "by making common cause with my affliction, by your readiness to share the burden of my troubles." ⁸⁵ However, Lightfoot went on to suggest that it was not the pecuniary relief that Paul valued, it was the sympathy and companionship in his sorrow that Paul valued. ⁸⁶ In this verse, "shared feeling moves over into the sharing of active assistance, and in this Paul is thanking them for the gift which he has received." ⁸⁷

⁸³Kittel, op. cit., p. 804.

⁸⁴Robertson, op. cit., IV, 462.

⁸⁵Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 164.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Kittel, op. cit., p. 807.

The research on this verse gave the general idea that fellowship went beyond feeling, but also had the task of active participation. The Philippians were accomplices in Paul's joys, but even more noticeable in his trials. This participation was in sympathy as well as contributions.

The next verse was eschatological in nature, but very similar in content to Ephesians 5:11. This verse said, ". . . come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins: (Revelation 18:4). Here the sunkoinōnēsete was a first aorist active subjunctive with the purpose clause hina mē. Literally, "that ye have no fellowship with her sins."⁸⁸ Ephesians 5:11 gave this same directive, stay away from sin. Kittel said, "Hence the people of God must leave Babel lest they share in its sins and the resultant judgment (Revelation 18:4)."⁸⁹

From these three verses it was observed that there could be active participation in sin but it was soundly condemned. Also, as in Philippians 4:14, there was a welcome for Christians to not only feel a closeness to Paul, but also to express this fellowship by tangible gifts. The abstract feelings of fellowship could easily be shown by the concrete act of material help.

The scriptural use of koinōnia. The past uses of the koinōn words have laid a foundation for study of koinōnia. This word was used eighteen times by the New Testament writers. This usage in the New Testa-

⁸⁸Robertson, op. cit., VI, 437.

⁸⁹Kittel, op. cit., p. 304.

ment brought the concept of koinōnia to its apex. Here were found deep and mystical meanings of man's relationship to God. The realism of his relationship to God was in direct proportion to his relationships to man and the institutes of the church.

Before a close examination of koinōnia in the New Testament was made, a brief statement of the secular Greek concept was in order.

In classical Greek koinōnia means association or partnership. Plato uses the phrase the koinōnia of women with men for 'co-education.' Human koinōnia is the Greek for human society. The word is also used to express the idea of community. Plato says, 'there must be a certain koinōnia between pleasure and pain.' In later Greek koinōnia is used as the opposite and contrast to pleonexia, which is the grasping spirit out for itself. Koinōnia is the spirit of generous sharing as contrasted with the spirit of selfish getting. In the contemporary colloquial Greek koinōnia has three distinctive meanings. (i) It means very commonly, a 'business partnership.' In a papyrus announcement a man speaks of his brother 'with whom I have no koinōnia,' no business connection. (ii) It is used specially of 'marriage' two people enter into marriage in order to have koinōnia of life,' that is to say, to live together a life in which everything is shared. (iii) It is used of a man's 'relationship to God.' Epictetus talks of religion as 'aiming to have koinōnia with Zeus.' So in secular Greek koinōnia is used to express a close relationship into which people enter.⁹⁰

This showed some of the broad concepts of the Greek thinking on the subject of koinōnia. Another statement which showed a more precise concept was:

. . . Marriage. . . is closer and more comprehensive than all other forms of fellowship.

For the Greek world, however, friendship is also a supreme expression of fellowship. In Greek thinking this includes a readiness to share material possessions. Sharing the same city underlies the fellowship of equal citizens. . . In Platonism koinōnia acquires its

⁹⁰ Barclay, op. cit., p. 71.

greatest systematic significance. Koinōnia is the basis of. . . the whole cosmos, which includes both men and gods. This is what underlies Plato's projected political ideas on the community of goods and wives. . . To Stoicism. . . the small city state is alien, but the concept of fellowship is still dominant. The world is the state for the Stoics. Hence they value the model harmony and fellowship which is found in the universe and which is the basis of its preservation. The idea of an unbroken relationship between God and man is thought to be wholly Greek.⁹¹

It was out of this background of the Greek emphasis that the New Testament writers brought the concept of koinōnia to its height in Christian thought. The researcher could not locate any definitive statements as to the New Testament writers dependence solely on the Greek concept. It was believed that the Old Testament had a great emphasis on this concept of koinōnia even if the LXX did not have very many passages translated by the word koinōnia. It was believed that both the Old Testament and secular Greek had an influence on the writers.

With this background in mind a study was made of some of the pertinent scriptures dealing directly with the concept of koinōnia. The first concept of koinōnia was, in the Christian life there was a sharing of friendship, and an abiding in the company of others. Two verses were used to stress this point. The first was, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42). On this verse the scholars once more were vague or could not give a definitive meaning. Robertson thought that this verse could mean a variety of things. He thought the chief meaning was one of a partner and sharing in common interest.

⁹¹Kittel, op. cit., p. 798-9.

What that sharing was could have been, a partnership in the blood of Christ, cooperation in the work of the gospel, contributions to those in need, oneness in the community of believers, or to the fellowship of the Lord's Supper.⁹²

A more concise concept was, ". . . the living together as one family, and having things in common."⁹³ To receive the full meaning of this verse it must be recognized that this Pentecost experience was unique. It appeared that this was an exclusive experience in the lives of Christians on that date. Thus everything was new and the Holy Spirit welded a group into a "fellowship" that was active and a oneness and unity they did not want to sever.

With this thought in mind, Nicoll also gave many arguments, but his conclusion was, ". . . it may be taken to include the inward fellowship and its outward manifestations. . ."⁹⁴ Kittel went on to say, ". . . koinōnia does not denote the concrete community or society of Christians . . ."⁹⁵ But it did mean it was rather, "an abstract and spiritual term for the fellowship of brotherly concord established and expressed in the life of the community."⁹⁶

In contrast to this verse there was another verse which had a negative concept of companionship with others. This was, "Be ye not

⁹²Robertson, op. cit., III, 38-9.

⁹³Henry Alford, The Greek Testament (London · Oxford · Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1865), II, 29.

⁹⁴Nicoll, op. cit., II, 95. ⁹⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 809.

⁹⁶Ibid.

unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Corinthinans 6:14). The English word that was noted was "communion," the word for "fellowship" was metochē.

Paul was stressing, "Partnership to light. . . with, facing darkness."⁹⁷ Thus the thought was, light and darkness cannot mix. "Light is the figurative expression for truth and purity. . . and darkness, is the common metaphor for error and wrong conduct."⁹⁸

In the content of this verse Paul was striving to show that these Christians must not go back into idolatry, moral sins, etc., and must have no part in such activities. Thus the fellowship was negative and prohibitive.

There was another concept of fellowship which was observed. In the Christian fellowship there was a koinōnia which meant practical sharing with those less fortunate. Paul uses this specific term, koinōnia, four times in connection with the collection he took from the churches for the poor saints at Jerusalem.

The first verse was, "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." (Romans 15:26). This, ". . . brings out with delicacy the free and at the same time accidental character of this collection, both

⁹⁷Robertson, op. cit., IV, 237.

⁹⁸J. P. Lange, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures (New York: Charles Scribner, & Co., 654 Broadway, 1868), VI, 117.

as to the thing in itself and to the amount."⁹⁹ A further statement on this same thought, "the abstract koinōnia becomes for Paul the concrete collection."¹⁰⁰

The second verse along this thought was, "Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (II Corinthians 8:4).

Literally, "with much entreaty begging of us the favor and the partnership in the ministry to the saints."¹⁰¹ In this verse the real meaning of Christian fellowship was observed. "The Macedonian Christians did not wait to be asked to give; they asked to be allowed the privilege of giving, refer to Acts 20:35."¹⁰²

Further evidence of this thought was, "Koinōnia has here the sense of, ministration, support. . ."¹⁰³ Lange further stated that, "the main idea of koinōnia undoubtedly is that of a common unity in sympathy, labors, and responsibilities."¹⁰⁴ To strengthen this concept further Thayer observed that in this verse the main concept was, "a benefaction jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof for fellowship."¹⁰⁵

Through these collections, however, Paul wished for deep

⁹⁹Godet, op. cit., p. 484. ¹⁰⁰Kittel, op. cit., p. 808.

¹⁰¹Robertson, op. cit., IV, 243.

¹⁰²Nicoll, op. cit., III, 85.

¹⁰³Lange, op. cit., p. 139. ¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Thayer, op. cit., p. 352.

spiritual meaning. In this verse the concept of fellowship and union was stressed. The gathering of money was not the main aim of the apostle. What really counted was the fellowship of Christians expressed in the collection.¹⁰⁶

The third verse discussed under this concept of fellowship was, ". . . and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men." (II Corinthians 9:13). This was literally translated, ". . . and (on the) liberality of the fellowship toward them and toward all men."¹⁰⁷

As far as Paul was concerned the liberality of the Gentiles giving to the Jews was the main concern. This would show that Gentiles made as good a Christians as Jews. The fellowship would show that their actions were as good as their words.¹⁰⁸

Here the idea of koinōnia was once more observed to include the thought, "koinōnia communion includes the idea of communication of material things. . ."¹⁰⁹

Kittel brings the concept to a higher level when he observed that the abstract and active sense of sincere and ready sharing was evident. The fellowship of outward acts showed a depth of understanding that could only come from a spiritual understanding of the term.¹¹⁰

Therefore, Paul showed that the collections were a part of true

¹⁰⁶Kittel, op. cit., p. 808. ¹⁰⁷Marshall, op. cit., p. 729.

¹⁰⁸Robertson, op. cit., IV, 250.

¹⁰⁹Vincent, op. cit., III, 337.

¹¹⁰Kittel, op. cit., p. 808.

fellowship. Hence, Paul spoke in this verse of the saints in Jerusalem rejoicing over the Corinthians and their obedience to their profession of the gospel, as well as the generosity of their fellowship. By their actions the Corinthian Church showed the true unity and catholicity of the Church.

The relationship of one local church with another in this deep concept of fellowship showed the universal aspect that could exist in the Church universal. This fellowship, ". . . explains the very special importance which he (Paul) attached to this collection as demonstrating the spirit of genuine ecumenicity."¹¹¹

The fourth verse, Hebrews 13:16, was treated much the same as the last three verses discussed. The authorities consulted, referred time and again to Romans 15:26, II Corinthians 8:4, and II Corinthians 9:13, as having the same meaning as Hebrews 13:16.

Following these verses the next observation was, there existed a koinōnia in the Christian life which was a partnership in the work of Christ. There was one verse that had this concept, "For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:5). Here Paul has given thanks to the Church at Philippi for their partnership in the gospel.

This verse was also the recipient of much discussion among the scholars. The two basic views were: (1) does this partnership just

¹¹¹P. E. Hughes, The New International Commentary on the New Testament--The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 340.

deal with the physical gifts given Paul, or (2) does this fellowship have an all encompassing meaning.

Robertson had this viewpoint, "the particular kind of partnership or fellowship involved is the contribution made by the Philippians for the spread of the gospel. . ."¹¹²

Nicoll reasoned that at the first glance koinōnia referred to their mutual harmony as Christians. A closer examination revealed that this whole passage was concerned with Paul's personal relationship to them. This whole context really included the idea of united action on the one hand, and the concrete expression of their helpfulness, their gift, on the other."¹¹³

Vincent observed that this verse could have the idea of almsgiving and contributions. But a better sense was the larger idea of sympathetic cooperation.¹¹⁴

Alford indicated that the total meaning was one of fellowship and partnership in every area of life. The almsgiving happened to be part of that fellowship at that time. Paul would have treated any other act of friendship and partnership in the same way. Koinōnia must not be restricted to monetary values alone.¹¹⁵

Another contribution along this thought was, "Paul was usually

¹¹²Robertson, op. cit., IV, 436.

¹¹³Nicoll, op. cit., III, 419.

¹¹⁴Vincent, op. cit., III, 416-7.

¹¹⁵Alford, op. cit., III, 153.

thinking of the good standing of the readers in faith. . . Philippians 5:1 refers to the inward and undisturbed participation of the Philippians."¹¹⁶

Wuest showed an insight when he maintained that the preposition "in" was a preposition of motion. Thus the common interest and activity was in the progress of the gospel. The Philippians supported Paul with their prayers and finances while he went about his missionary work.¹¹⁷

Finally, Lightfoot maintained that the context showed that their cooperation was in the widest sense. Their whole hearted participation was with Paul whether in sympathy or in suffering or in active labor or in any other way.¹¹⁸

From this passage and the majority of sources it was observed that there was an active partnership between the people of Philippi and Paul. This partnership was to help give the gospel as far an outreach as possible. Thus an active partnership in Christ is maintained by the concept of koinōnia.

Another significant concept was, in the Christian life there was a koinōnia, fellowship, in the Spirit. It was observed that the Christian lives in the presence, company, help, and the guidance of the Spirit.

This concept was found in two verses; the first verse, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the

¹¹⁶Kittel, op. cit., p. 805.

¹¹⁷K. S. Wuest, Philippians In the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942), p. 31-2.

¹¹⁸Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 83.

Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." (II Corinthians 13:14). The part of this verse that interested the researcher could literally be translated, ". . . the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."¹¹⁹

The sources did not deal very adequately with this verse. The main emphasis they gave was Paul's concept of the Trinity and that this was the most complete benediction of all his writings. The real meaning of koinōnia was not expressed, only in general terms and with the larger concept of Paul's relationship to the total church body at Corinth.

The other verse, ". . . if any fellowship of the Spirit. . . " (Philippians 2:1) was generally referred to meaning the same as that in II Corinthians 13:14. However, there were some statements made that showed the believer had an active part in the Spirit's activities.

"Communion with the Spirit of love is not a mere idle name, but a real thing."¹²⁰ This fellowship was active and with the Holy Spirit, not just spiritual communion which could be in any realm.¹²¹

Nicoll observed that the community of believers was the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ was the unifying principle. Paul rendered an unspeakable service to the Church by emphasizing this conception. By doing this he saved the spiritual gifts of the Apostolic Age from degenerating into mere unnatural excitement.¹²²

The fellowship in the Spirit was something present in man, not

¹¹⁹Marshall, op. cit., p. 741. ¹²⁰Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 107.

¹²¹Alford, op. cit., p. 105. ¹²²Nicoll, op. cit., p. 432.

something that the Spirit alone effected. Christ came to believers through the Spirit, and the fellowship was one of participating in the joys that the Spirit was responsible in bringing.¹²³

Wuest gave the most detailed account of this verse among the sources consulted. He maintained that the fellowship here spoke of a common interest and active participation in the things of God in which the believer and the Holy Spirit were joint participants. Paul appealed to the Philippians to be like-minded in view of the fact that each of them participated with the Holy Spirit in a common interest and activity. Therefore, if each saint is interested in the same things of the Spirit, there should naturally follow unity. The Holy Spirit by thus controlling each life produced a unity and accord. Paul's working basis for unity was, if each saint would live a Spirit controlled life then unity would be natural and there would be no difficulty in this area.¹²⁴

Thus the Christian who lives "in the Spirit" experienced a deep sense of spiritual at oneness with God because he was with God at heart and in life. In that connection Asa Mahon added a further demension to the study. He maintained that when two minds, the mind of the Spirit and the believer were in contact with one another each seeking common interests an intercommunion develops. As they exchanged thoughts, the one with the other, each found in the other a character, spirit and leading views and sentiments wholly like his own. In their inter-communication there was a consequent sympathetic blending of thought with

¹²³Kittel, op. cit., p. 807. ¹²⁴Wuest, op. cit., p. 57-8.

thought, feeling with feeling, sentiment with sentiment, and purpose with purpose. There was an intercommunion in which full joy was consummated. This deep and sympathetic intercommunication and intercommunion, this mind with mind was represented by the term, "fellowship." In that relationship minds are said to have taken their abode, the one with the other, each finding its happy dwelling-place in the heart of the other.¹²⁵

Not only was there fellowship of the Spirit, but the believer also experienced koinōnia with Christ. There were two verses that distinctly brought this to the fore. The first one was, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (I Corinthians 1:9).

This concept was not fully agreed upon by many of the authorities. Furthermore there did not seem to be a definitive statement that was pertinent to all that this verse would seem to entail.

Robertson said, "It is a high fellowship with Christ both here and hereafter."¹²⁶

Nicoll said, ". . . into a communion belonging to (and named after) God's Son. . . denotes a collective participation."¹²⁷

All that Alford said was, "The mention of koinōnia may perhaps have been intended to prepare the way. . . for the reproof which is coming."¹²⁸

¹²⁵Asa Mahon, The Baptism of the Holy Ghost (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 62 & 64 Bible House, 1870), p. 153.

¹²⁶Robertson, op. cit., IV, 72.

¹²⁷Nicoll, op. cit., II, 762.

¹²⁸Alford, op. cit., II, 4476.

Lange maintained that fellowship with Christ was through faith, through His sufferings, and in His glory. The fellowship with Jesus Christ embraced one's entire condition making one conformable to Christ.¹²⁹

The researcher was disappointed in the lack of information regarding the many sources consulted. Perhaps the most meaningful contribution was from Kittel. He maintained that Christians were called to fellowship (participate) with the Son. They are lifted up to be His fellows. They enter into a spiritual communion with the risen Lord. Since there was no question of mystical absorption in Christ, this participation in Christ and fellowship with Him arose only through faith, which implied an identification of the believer's life with His. By the very nature of the case this participation in the Son is a present possession of the Christian to salvation.¹³⁰

Along with the previous thought came the deeper idea of fellowship with Christ. This was located in, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (I Corinthians 10:16).

This verse produced many arguments as to the nature and method of the sacraments. These arguments were not germane to the study, the concept of fellowship with Christ was paramount in the researcher's consideration. Thus the facts below will not deal too specifically with the nature of the sacrament, only the results.

¹²⁹Lange, op. cit., p. 26. ¹³⁰Kittel, op. cit., p. 804.

This verse undoubtedly was a spiritual participation in the blood of Christ which was symbolized by the cup. The same inference was maintained by the loaf.¹³¹

An expanded idea was:

. . . the Lord's Supper constitutes a "communion" centering in Christ, as the Jewish festal rites centered in "the altar" (18) and as "the demond," the unseen objects of idolatrous worship, supply their basis of communion in idolatrous feasts (21f.). Such fellowship involves (1) the ground of communion, the sacred object celebrated in common; (2) the association established amongst the celebrants, separating them from all others: "The word communion denotes the fellowship of persons with persons in one and the same object."¹³²

Along with this thought Alford went a step further in his concept of fellowship with Christ. "The strong literal sense must here be held fast, as constituting the very kernel of Paul's argument."¹³³ He went on to explain by taking the bread the believers became as One Bread, i.e., One Body. Thus the close literal participation in Christ. One cannot render this as representing or symbolizing the body of Christ or the argument is made void. On the other hand he hastened to say that the gross materialism of transubstantiation could not be considered.¹³⁴

There was a great variety of opinions as just these men above have attested. There did not seem to be a general statement that could conclude this verse as to the real and definitive meaning of fellowship

¹³¹Robertson, op. cit., IV, 154-5.

¹³²Nicoll, op. cit., II, 863.

¹³³Alford, op. cit., II, 558.

¹³⁴Ibid.

with Christ. However, Kittel in a long treatment of the subject brought into focus a few pertinent facts that were alluded to by other writers.

Some of these ideas were very meaningful. Kittel believed that Paul made a highly significant use of koinōnia for fellowship in the Lord's Supper. Participation in Christ, which was known basically and perfectly in faith, was achieved and experienced in enchanted form, with no dogmatic implication in the sacrament. Along with Nicoll, Kittel suggested that the feasts of the Old Testament helped the people to become companions of God. The altar represented and guaranteed the presence of God. It was equally self evident to Paul that those who partook of pagan feasts became companions of demons, 10:20. By analogy, those who partook of the Lord's Supper became companions of Christ. Thus the nature of the Lord's Supper as expounded by Paul was in terms of fellowship with the Person of Christ, namely, with His body and blood. To Paul the exalted Christ was identical with the earthly and historical Christ who had body and blood. Koinōnia was here expressive of an inner union. This inner union was the most important part in the Supper. Paul declared in verse seventeen, that at the Lord's Supper, as at the sacrificial feasts, there was fellowship between the participants. This was not apart from Christ. It arises out of a common union with Him, as Christ was represented by the lone loaf.¹³⁵

Not only was their fellowship with Christ in the sacrament, but also in His sufferings. Paul laid great import on this concept. It seemed that suffering with Christ revealed the mettle of a man. When

¹³⁵Kittel, op. cit., p. 805-6.

the Christian suffered, he had amidst the pain, the joy of knowing that he shared things with Christ.

The verse that brought this idea to the fore was, "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:10).

Having this verse in mind Wuest maintained that the Greek word for fellowship here meant a joint-participation. The sufferings were not of course His substitutionary sufferings on the cross but His sufferings for righteousness sake while on earth.¹³⁶

Another thought was, ". . . participation in his sufferings. . . is the necessitating condition of being brought under the power of his resurrection. . ."¹³⁷

Following this idea Robertson said, "The agony of Gethsemane. . . will be reproduced however faintly in the faithful servant of Christ."¹³⁸

Nicoll expanded the above statements to include a broader scope of the total Christian man. In this verse was seen Paul's deepest secret of the Christian experience. There were two experiences that could not be separated, (1) the power of Christ's resurrection, (2) the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death. It was only the power of the resurrection that gave him (Paul) insight to the real meaning of Christ's sufferings and death. Paul thought of this as a spiritual process that was carried on in the soul of him who was united to Christ.

¹³⁶Wuest, op. cit., p. 91. ¹³⁷Alford, op. cit., III, 181.

¹³⁸Robertson, op. cit., IV, 454.

He had no idea of martyrdom before him. The only sufferings that could have been Paul's were those disciplines in overcoming sin. Christ, in Paul's view carried the man who clings to Him in faith through all the great crisis which come to him. The deepest of men's saving experiences ran parallel to the cardinal events of the Christian revelation, especially to that atoning death for all men.¹³⁹

Lightfoot continued with the thought that participation in Christ's sufferings partly followed upon and partly followed the power of the resurrection. It followed as the practical result on the believer's life; it preceded, as leading up to the full and final appreciation of the resurrection power.¹⁴⁰

Hence, fellowship with Christ meant that present participation in one phase, namely, that of humility and suffering, gave assurance of winning through to participate in another phase, namely, that of glory. The spiritual union with Christ which characterized the whole life of Paul was especially described in terms of a spiritual fellowship in suffering with Him. This was not just a living again of Christ's sufferings. Nor was it a mere spiritual conformity. Nor was it the retrospective passion of dogmatics. By spiritual participation in Christ's sufferings the apostle entered into a real part of the total suffering which was laid on Christ. By participation in Christ's sufferings Paul had hope of participation in Christ's glory. "When the Christian suffers he has,

¹³⁹Nicoll, op. cit., III, 455.

¹⁴⁰Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 151.

amidst the pain, the joy of knowing that he is sharing things with Christ."¹⁴¹

From this area the researcher went into the final phase of the concept of koinōnia. This fellowship was seen to be, a fellowship with God. The main area dealt with was located in I John. It was observed that in I John 1:3-6 fellowship with God was John's utmost concern. It was also observed that this fellowship was ethically conditioned.

The concept of fellowship with God the Father was: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (I John 1:3).

If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. (I John 1:6).

I John 1:3 was dealt with first. In this verse the authorities brought many suggestions to the fore. Nicoll brought out the idea:

Christ walks no longer in the flesh among us, but He appears continually to the world of men and reveals Himself to those who love Him. Through faith a real personal contact with the Christ now glorified in the Spirit is possible. . . there is a gracious constraint on all who know this blessed fellowship. . .¹⁴²

The context was important to recognize what John was trying to declare. In I John 1:2, John described the subject of his message as, "the life eternal," now he described it as, "that which we have seen and heard."

That Life was manifested in fellowship, a twofold fellowship, human and divine. John contemplated first the fellowship which existed in the Christian body itself, and then it rose to the thought of wider privileges resting on a divine basis.

¹⁴²Nicoll, op. cit., V, 170.

Westcott maintained that fellowship with the Father and fellowship with His Son was directly coordinated. Such coordination implied sameness of essence. Yet the fellowship with the Father was not only said to be established through the Son, the fellowship with the Father was involved in fellowship with the Son. The consummation of this fellowship is the, "being in God."¹⁴³

The importance of this fellowship was also cited by Thayer. He considered that according to John this fellowship consisted in the fact that Christians were partakers in common of the same mind as God and Christ, and the blessings arising therefrom.¹⁴⁴

It was this type of fellowship that brought true unity to the Christian. Only through honest participation of the mind of man and of God could fellowship be maintained on the highest spiritual level.¹⁴⁵

The fellowship that was discovered in I John was a favorite term to describe the living bond in which the Christian stood. This fellowship was an inward fellowship on a religious basis. To be a Christian was to have fellowship with God. This fellowship was with the Father and the Son. The believers communion with God or Christ consisted in mutual abiding, which began in this world and reached into the world to come.¹⁴⁶

From these citings it was observed that spiritual fellowship must

¹⁴³B. F. Westcott, The Epistles of St. John (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 12-13.

¹⁴⁴Thayer, op. cit., p. 352. ¹⁴⁵Buttrick, op. cit., p. 665.

¹⁴⁶Kittel, op. cit., p. 807-8.

repose upon a spiritual knowledge of God. The Christian had to know what God was and what he himself was.

God's knowledge flowed to the believer, and the incarnation of Christ was the apex in knowing what God was. This knowledge began to function as fellowship when the consciousness of God, began to awake the consciousness of man. When man began to have intercourse with God on the spiritual level then a welding together of minds took place, inasmuch as man began to have an inner fellowship in the spirit which became the ultimate in inward stability.

This stability was only achieved on the ethical condition of maintaining this fellowship. This condition was, "if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:6).

To choose darkness as the sphere of movement was necessarily to shun fellowship with God. In fellowship with God, however, brought two main results in regards to men and God. There was fellowship realised one with another, and in the vision of God's holiness the person became aware of his own sin, being in darkness. That fellowship was the pledge of divine fellowship, and only as the believer allowed himself to walk in light rather than darkness was full fellowship achieved with God the Father.¹⁴⁷

It was only the light from God that could give men true knowledge. It was evident that the knowledge of God wherever it extended created

¹⁴⁷ B. F. Westcott, The Epistles of St. John (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 19-20.

fellowship.¹⁴⁸ It was therefore through ignorance of God that men continued or fell into darkness. Fellowship is conducted in the light where it could be seen through spiritual perception. Disunity found its place in hidden dark corners of the soul.¹⁴⁹

"God is light and sin darkness, and it is impossible to be living in sin or compromising with it and at the same time be enjoying fellowship with God."¹⁵⁰ In connection with this statement Wuest had a similar idea. Things possessed in common were a like nature, thus the same likes and dislikes. The thing possessed in common here by both saints and God was light. No one proclaiming a holy life could walk in darkness. This was a spiritual impossibility. In the case of God, His essence was light. In the case of the believer, he lived in the sphere of the light which God was.¹⁵¹

In bringing this chapter to a conclusion the researcher was aware that not all the verses were treated with equal emphasis, nor were all the verses in the Bible dealt with in this study. Due to time and space it was reasoned that the treatment given was of sufficient depth and breadth to give the meanings of fellowship.

To bring the meanings of fellowship that have been given to its most dynamic apex a statement from Westcott and Hort about koinōnia was

¹⁴⁸G. G. Findlay, Fellowship in the Life Eternal (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), p. 100.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 102-3.

¹⁵⁰Robertson, op. cit., V, 171.

¹⁵¹K. S. Wuest, Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1941), p. 98.

in order. "They insisted that nouns ending in "ia" or "is" bear the meaning of an active principle.¹⁵²

Thus all that has been said of koinōnia must take the idea of an active, vibrant, quality existing between subject and object. That was between man and man, man and God, and God and man.

Summary. Some of the most pronounced concepts of koinōnia in this chapter included: (1) fellowship was a sharing of friendship, (2) fellowship was a practical sharing with others, (3) a partner in the work of Christ, (4) being in the Spirit, (5) a fellowship with God, (6) fellowship through the Lord's Supper, (7) fellowship in the sufferings of Christ.

¹⁵²B. F. Westcott and F. Hort, The New Testament in the Original Greek (New York • Cincinnati • Chicago: American Book Company, 1935), p. 17 of Lexicon.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

THE MOTIVATIONS FOR ECUMENISM

The motives for world-wide unity of whatever category were many and varied. These motives found expression within most groups belonging to the visible church. The motives of personal power among men were not discussed, not because of their absence, but because a broader view was intended. Despite the many abuses of power by individuals, there were many motives for Christian unity that appeared to be worthy of note.

The broad scope of ecumenism. In the broadest sense the following motivations for unity and fellowship seemed to be the main forces.

1. The world situation presents a powerful incentive to act with Christian unity.
2. The conquest of the heathen world forms a powerful drive for the Christian church to become united.
3. A frequent mentioned incentive to ecumenism is the prevalent secularism.
4. The growing power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church creates a motive for a united Protestant church that has great popular appeal.
5. A common complaint expresses concern that divided Protestantism cannot speak with one voice and act with united purpose.
6. The most powerful motive for the establishment of a world-wide church is the conviction that God desires his worshippers to be with- in the frame work of one ecclesiastical structure.¹

Another emphasis was also noted and could be included in the broad term and meaning of ecumenical motivation. These statements were in ascending order of significance:

¹J. Marcellus Kik, Ecumenism and the Evangelical (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 4-8.

1. Consultation for fellowship and mutual counsel.
2. Comity, i.e., agreement to divide responsibility and eschew overlapping or competition.
3. Cooperation in joint action.
4. Federation of churches or church agencies.
5. Union institutions.
6. Full organic church union, in which the identity of the uniting bodies disappears or is wholly incorporated within the new church.²

The above statements were Van Dusen's classification for the six major structural motives for organized conformity. He was an advocate for the World Council of Churches, and called the views of the W.C.C. the, "copestone of the ecumenical arch."³

In the social sphere there were some motivations for a unity among the churches. These trends were:

1. Social changes which have transpired in such areas as race, class, sectionalism, and nationalism.
2. The emergence of new social patterns, such as mass communication and the organizational revolution.
3. The persistence of previously existing patterns, such as common value themes and national observances.⁴

Visser't Hooft past secretary of the World Council of Churches maintained that the goals for the ecumenical movement were:

1. The ecumenical movement should keep prominently before the churches the obligation to serve each other and should provide channels for such interchurch service.
2. The ecumenical movement must help the churches to be servant churches in the society in which they live.
3. The ecumenical movement must help the churches see their service

²Carl F. H. Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1967), p. 85.

³Ibid.

⁴Robert Lee, The Social Sources of Church Unity (New York • Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 24-5.

in the perspective of the total needs of mankind, and act.⁵

The motivations of evangelical ecumenism. Many were the statements of faith and order among the various groups that called themselves evangelicals. It was difficult to arrive at definitive statements as to the main motivating factors. They all mentioned that their basis of fellowship and unity was based on faith, and sound doctrine. However, many pages of discussion by various men revealed that there was not a consensus on basic doctrine. Characteristic of the "Fellowships," "Alliances" and other bodies was their willingness to sign various statements of faith, even though they were not in full agreement. "They just allowed themselves the right to interpret the meaning of the terms in the statement."⁶

In spite of the above observation there were some goals and motives in the minds of these men seeking to form an evangelical structure in which evangelicals around the world could feel warmth and fellowship with one another. The World Evangelical Fellowship declared their purpose to be:

1. Honoring God and His Word
2. The furtherance of the Gospel
3. The defense and confirmation of the Gospel
4. Fellowship in the Gospel.⁷

⁵W. A. Visser't Hooft, The Pressure of Our Common Calling (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 57-9.

⁶W. Stanley Mooneyham (ed.), The Dynamics of Christian Unity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 92.

⁷J. D. Murch, Cooperation Without Compromise (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), p. 186-7.

There did not follow an interpretation of these motives, although a statement of faith was given that all members were to adhere to, but this statement of faith was not interpreted either, thus the goals and motives as well as the statement of faith could and was by some members interpreted to fit their theological persuasion.

Carl F. H. Henry gave some goals and motives that he would attempt for the evangelical cause. These were:

1. Make it a matter of conscience that one fourth to one third of the conciliar leaders are nominated by and from evangelical Christians.
2. Assign the leadership of the W. C. C. Committee on Evangelism and a majority of its membership to churchmen who support biblical evangelism, and not to those who repudiate it.
3. Restore the Bible to proper centrality in the Churches as the authoritative norm by which all pronouncements are to be tested.
4. Encourage denominational publishing houses to seek out religious literature that advances biblical Christian faith instead of exploiting deviations.
5. Seek proportionate representation for articulate evangelicals in the administration and faculty of all Protestant colleges.
6. Call a moratorium on official ecclesiastical endorsements of political legislation until the churches agree on a proper role in public affairs, and refer legislators directly to their political constituencies for their views.
7. Seek a renewal of moral conscience among the church going multitudes by emphasizing divinely given principles of conduct and haunting the souls of men with an inescapable sense of public responsibility.⁸

Carl F. H. Henry further stated that the challenge to evangelicals was not to allow arguments over structure and organization to deplete their energies. By the very nature of the evangelical's stance his motivation was to fulfill his evangelical duty. This duty was the production of virile theological literature in the Biblical mould, the energetic fulfillment of the missionary task, and the deepest possible alliance

⁸ Henry, op. cit., p. 98.

of evangelicals across all institutional lines. These were the concerns that were to remain in the forefront of vision and the evangelical thrust.⁹

A somewhat looser motivation was presented by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones as some of the factors that desired to bring evangelicals together. The most common view maintained that what was desired was a visible unity and coming together of all who called themselves Christians in any sense whatever. These people should have met together, had fellowship together, and should work together to present a common front to the enemies of Christianity. This coming together for the evangelical was to be a forum where the various views of the Christian faith were to be discussed and people were to present their different insights, hoping that as a result they may eventually come to some common agreement.¹⁰

Following this a statement was given, not as a motivation necessarily, but as the standard to follow. "Perfect sanctification is the goal and the standard of God's fellowship; it is not its prerequisite."¹¹ A good check to see if the ecumenical movement was evangelical was to ask and determine, where we would be if God took the same attitude toward others as the evangelical has taken.¹²

⁹Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁰D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Basis of Christian Unity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 6.

¹¹J. Y. Yoder, The Ecumenical Movement and the Faithful Church (Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1963), p. 17-18.

¹²Ibid., p. 18.

The previous statements were varied as the sources themselves. Some were overlapping yet these representatives of various evangelical movements had different motivations and goals in degrees of emphasis.

Among some evangelicals there was even the concept that there were no goals or motives that could be defined, although there would be a future ecumenism. A typical approach by some writers could be summed up "by the idea of Kik." He stated that evangelical ecumenism looked forward to the time when the church came into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ. This represented the ideal of fellowship and unity in the Scripture. Lesser ideals have attracted men because they felt achievement seemed possible and near. The only way in which true fellowship and unity was to be found was in the long arduous road to the fullness of Christ: this had to be the goal of evangelicals.¹³

At the practical level of strategy and motivations for evangelical ecumenism another concept was thrust into the picture. The alliances and fellowships around the world could have encouraged pastors' retreats for spiritual revitalization to carry out the Great Commission. Another practical implementation could be a united effort in evangelism. This was necessary to demonstrate that the evangelicals were in spiritual oneness with Christ. Evangelicals could give dynamic leadership in combined efforts in missionary radio, as well as unified production of literature. The ultimate purpose of Christian fellowship was to offer

¹³Kik, op. cit., p. 9 and 151-2.

fellowship to the various churches and groups in anyone nation. The zenith of fellowship was reached when internationally these evangelicals of like faith, although not necessarily totally uniform in their theological belief and emphasis, could get together and find that they are one in Christ. Thus the goal was, on the continental and international level, to have fellowship, is spiritual oneness before the world.¹⁴

To stress the international aspects of the ecumenical movement further, a view of the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin was in order. In the closing hours of the congress the following statement was made:

As an evangelical ecumenical gathering of Christian disciples and workers, we cordially invite all believers in Christ to unite in the common task of bringing the Word of Salvation to mankind in spiritual revolt and moral chaos. Our goal is nothing short of the evangelization of the human race in this generation, by every means God has given to the mind and will of men.¹⁵

The researcher believed that these statements showed the divergent concepts of various members of the ecumenical view, yet some basic motivations emerged as prominent. These motives will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter.

In keeping in harmony with the whole concept of the study one other statement brought the study to its focal point of fellowship. ". . . there must be a unity of faith. There must also be a unity of fellowship."¹⁶

¹⁴Mooneyham, op. cit., p. 94-5.

¹⁵Henry, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 101.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KOINŌNIA AND THE MOTIVES OF EVANGELICAL ECUMENISM

This chapter was devoted to the study of koinōnia and the motives of evangelical ecumenism. This was very difficult, because the motives of evangelical ecumenism have not really been put in definitive form, from the researcher's findings. These motives varied from one persuasion to another depending upon theological, and philosophical concepts.

Despite these differences there emerged five basic motives that seemed to give an impetus to the present day thrust of evangelical ecumenism.

While dealing with ecumenism, the researcher also considered the study of koinōnia in chapter two. It was the purpose of this chapter to bring the two concepts together and discover if they were compatible with one another. It was also the purpose of this chapter to discover, if any, the differences of major consequences, or new concepts that have not emerged among evangelical thinking at this writing.

A short review of the findings in chapter two was in order to once more bring into focus the meaning of fellowship especially in the New Testament.

It was observed that fellowship was a sharing of friendship and an abiding in the company of others (Acts 2:42; II Corinthians 6:14).

There was a practical sharing with those less fortunate (Romans 15:26; II Corinthians 8:4; II Corinthians 9:13).

There was a fellowship in being a partner in the work of Christ (Philippians 1:5).

In the Christian life there was a fellowship in the Spirit (II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1).

There was also a fellowship with Christ (I Corinthians 1:9). That fellowship was found through the Sacrament (I Corinthians 10:16). The fellowship with Christ was also made meaningful through His sufferings (Philippians 3:10).

Following this there was also a fellowship with God (I John 1:3-6).

It was found that the Christian koinōnia was that bond which bound Christians to each other and to each member of the Trinity.

KOINŌNIA AND MOTIVES OF EVANGELICAL ECUMENISM

The world situation presented a powerful incentive for ecumenism. This was the first motive considered. Leaders claimed that the dreadful consequences of destructive hydrogen and atomic bombs should work together for the elimination of war. Communism has caused great fear that the evangelical message would be controlled if not stopped. One prominent arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, Action magazine, had international features which included articles, ". . . a drive to get recognition of evangelicals on the Voice of America, a government operated world-wide radio propaganda agency in the cold war with Russia."¹

¹J. D. Murch, Cooperation Without Compromise (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), p. 172.

If evangelicals shunned the realm of politics, economics, social order, then, the whole conduct of world affairs would be forfeited. If evangelicals withdrew from socio-political engagement, they would enable others who profess Christian social concerns to promote non-evangelical programs that lacked a sure connection with the principles of early Christianity. Thus a form of united front was necessary to preserve as far as possible a world worth living in.²

More briefly stated, "the world situation leaves no room for a divided Christian presence."³ This Christian presence was needed as never before in the area of social ethics. Mavis enforced this position by observing that the forces making for social destruction have never been as powerful as they are today. Communism, nationalism, secularism, and racism, all threatened the very existence of society unless the inward spirit of man was renewed.⁴

From the above observations it was noted that there were some men who considered the world situation as a reason for uniting Christians into a fellowship of workers to improve the plight of the world.

The researcher was unable to bring into focus, from the study conducted in chapter two any relationship between the world situation at the time of the New Testament and the concept of fellowship set forth by

²Carl F. H. Henry, Evangelicals at the Brink of Crisis (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1967), p. 54ff.

³Martin E. Marty, Church Unity and Church Mission (Grand Rapids, Michigan • London: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 134.

⁴W. Curry Mavis, Beyond Conformity (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1958), p. 78.

the writers. The world situation in the Old Testament times and under the Roman rule may have been the catalyst for the concept of fellowship, but this was not derived from the study.

There did not appear to be any references in the Bible, that inferred that because of the world situation Christians should band together in a unified front to better augment their message.

Christ, in His teachings did not encourage that type of move. The New Testament writers spoke of each individual in their respective churches holding their testimony and lives before their immediate associates.

The study conducted in chapter two revealed that the sharing in fellowship was an inner spirit that translated itself to others of like faith and understanding. The motives of scriptural koinōnia did not include that of confronting governments or political systems. Elton Trueblood spoke of this idea when he observed that the universality of Christian vocation and fellowship meant that God chose what was weak to shame the strong and that God could use those who had no professional religious skills. Renewal was unable to come merely by acts of professional renewers or by hierarchial operations, it would only come with the concept of the universal vocation of each Christian.⁵

"Not numbers but the power of God and his Christ are the important factors in controlling world events for the good of mankind."⁶ In searching

⁵Elton Trueblood, The Incendiary Fellowship (New York • Evanston • London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), p. 114.

⁶J. Marcellus Kik, Ecumenism and the Evangelical (Grand Rapids 6, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 5.

the contexts where koinōnia was studied the researcher was unable to find where God wanted His people to unite in an organized, structured body to face the evils of their day. Their fellowship was found in Christ, in a spiritual sense rather than governmental. History has shown that God had not worked through huge organizations with much success, but He had used individuals like Paul the Apostle, Luther, Calvin, Wesley and others to bring reform.

However, it must be implied that the fellowship of believers could have an influence on governmental leadership by having believers elected to office, advisors, or others in influential capacities. An illustration of this would be Paul as he talked with the Roman and Jewish leaders of his day concerning spiritual ideas. Yet it was also observed that Paul did not organize a united movement with the express purpose of influencing government.

Missions an incentive for evangelical ecumenism. The second motive under consideration was the condition of the heathen world. "The World Congress on Evangelism gave solid evidence that evangelical ecumenism has already garnered world momentum at the evangelistic level."⁷

At the largest ecumenical strategy conference of Protestants in North America held at Wheaton College, April 9-16, 1966, the members agreed that the missionary movement must unite wherever it can to evangelize the heathen world.⁸

⁷Henry, op. cit., p. 90.

⁸Carl F. H. Henry (ed.), Christianity Today (Washington, D. C., 1014 Washington Building: W. E. Benedict Publisher, Oct.-Sept., 1965-66), X, 795.

The Wheaton meeting also gave this statement on unity, "We shall encourage evangelical mission mergers when such shall. . . produce more efficient stewardship of personnel and resources. . ." ⁹

These were only three references that reflected the views of most men involved in evangelical ecumenism in missions. Their main thrust was to unite in order to reach as many as possible.

In relating koinōnia to the above motivation, the researcher observed that fellowship was not the basic motivating factor that caused interest in missions. Paul did not form groups of Christians from the various churches to unite, in going throughout the Roman Empire to evangelize.

However, it must be observed that the very nature of the gospel called for its message to be spread, i.e. the Great Commission. How this Great Commission was interpreted determined how the message was spread. The disciples were scattered abroad to spread the message, not as a group, but individually. Paul's missionary journeys were an individual endeavor, although he did receive help from individual churches, which Paul called a "fellowship."

"Not organization, but deep. . . religious convictions attended by the Spirit of God will bring about fruitful results in heathen lands." ¹⁰

The power of the Roman Catholic Church created a motive for evangelical ecumenicity. The third motive under consideration was the

⁹Bruce L. Shelley, Evangelicalism in America (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 104.

¹⁰Kik, op. cit., p. 6.

evangelicals awareness of the Roman Catholic Church.

We need a leadership that will articulate and not mutter. . . one that extends every courtesy to Roman Catholic leaders and resolutely defends their freedom everywhere on earth, but one which has no doubt whatever about its own right to be free.¹¹

This leadership was to be in the form of a united front of evangelicals.

Henry discussed the idea that evangelicals must unite in order to keep the Bible the center of focus rather than the traditions of the Catholic Church. Evangelical Protestants should join forces in order to keep the ideals of faith and freedom before the world. It was the duty of unified evangelicals to keep alive the true meaning of the Gospel.¹²

Evangelicals must be warned of the dangers of the Roman Catholic Church. Though it has shown signs of renewal, it has not changed its basic theological stance and was still a legitimate field for evangelism.¹³

In the area of comparing koinōnia with the Roman Catholic Church, there naturally was no biblical references made to the Roman Church. Thus there could not be a direct tie between koinōnia and the motive of evangelicals in regard to this subject.

Divided evangelical forces could not speak with one united voice. This was a fourth motivation for evangelicals to unite. Nash referred to this when he maintained that evangelicals ought to realize the importance

¹¹C. Stanley Lowell, The Ecumenical Mirage (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 198.

¹²Henry, op. cit., p. 101 f.f.

¹³Henry, op. cit., X, 795.

of uniting among themselves in order that they might speak with the authority of a strong and united minority.¹⁴

This same opinion was stated:

Evangelical convictions need a united voice. . . If, as is often remarked, the Federal Council of Churches is the voice of Protestant liberalism in America, Protestant evangelicalism too needs a single voice. When such unity comes, the present competitive spirit of evangelical groups shall be overruled to the glory of God.¹⁵

The major organization of evangelicals, National Association of Evangelicals, had this motive from the beginning of the organization.

"We propose, therefore, to organize an association which shall give articulation and united voice to our faith and purposes in Christ Jesus. . ."¹⁶

Henry expressed an opinion that if evangelicals do not unite in an ecumenical thrust before 1975, the evangelical message would be in a critical stage because there would be a lack of influential places to proclaim the message. He also maintained that if evangelical Christians did not join heart to heart, will to will, and mind to mind, that by 2000 the true Church would become a wilderness cult in a secular society.¹⁷

These were representative opinions by leading evangelicals in the quest for ecumenical cooperation. These opinions were given, however, without supporting answers to some obvious questions that would arise.

Some questions that must be answered, and were not answered in the

¹⁴Ronald H. Nash, The New Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 104.

¹⁵R. Lee, The Social Sources of Church Unity (New York • Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 207.

¹⁶Murch, op. cit., p. 59. ¹⁷Henry, op. cit., p. 109 f. f.

sources available to the researcher were: Who made up the content of the message for the one voice to express? Would the content of the message be determined by the membership, by ecclesiastical experts, by theologians, by a hierarchy? Would the church become involved in politics, and how much would this involvement entail to get the "one voice" to the people? What would be the acceptable media for communication?

In comparing the above motive for fellowship and unity of evangelicals with koinōnia, there was a decided silence on the subject. The researcher was unable to locate any direct reference in the study of koinōnia with the concept of having a large group of people in one accord to present the message of the gospel.

Many indirect sources could have been used to show the possibility that a united voice could have been effective but that was not within the scope of this work. Koinōnia was not a part of the Christian's behavior to show authority or even suggest power through a bond of fellowship.

Illustrations apart from the study of koinōnia could imply that a unified voice was not even necessary to speak to the world in the early New Testament days. Jesus proclaimed that the Kingdom was not of this world, but was a spiritual understanding of Godly principles (Mark 4:10,11). Jesus did not command the disciples to form a structured union to have a strong voice in voicing the claims of salvation.

Further, none of the New Testament leaders, i.e. Paul, Peter, John, called for a fellowship of believers to join together in one to have a "voice" to appeal to governments, society as a whole, or to large organizations.

The concept of koinōnia, was rather, that all believers were united in Christ through a spiritual bond rather than a visible organization. Even if this was so it also must be recognized that the very nature of the evangelical belief would unite all believers to deliver the message in a unified voice.

An observation from chapter two in regard to this motivation under consideration could also imply that when believers do have fellowship in the truest sense, then they automatically would speak with a united voice. This united voice would be communicated in what ever sphere of influence the respective believers would find themselves.

God wants the establishment of a world-wide Church. This seemed to be one of the most powerful motives for Protestants to unite. From the resources available every man referring to this motive cited John 17:21 and Ephesians 4:4-6 as the basis for their thought. These verses were:

That they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:21).

There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4-6).

In regard to John 17:21 one author pointed out that it was clear that the Lord had a visible unity in view of His disciples. This unity was necessary that the "world may believe." Even as the Son was visible with God dwelling in Him so must the church be visible with the Godhead visible therein. It was important to recognize this because some have argued that this was only a spiritual unity that Christ was praying

for.¹⁸

This was the only author of the evangelical persuasion that went that far in interpreting the above references. The reason this source was cited was because of Billy Graham's statement in regard to this book, ". . . this is the finest discussion of scriptural fellowship. . . that I have read."¹⁹

The above verses were used by those men who followed the World Council of Churches viewpoint. These men based their motives for organic union upon the premise that these verses meant organic union.

On the other hand the evangelicals searching for ecumenism interpreted these verses as meaning a spiritual union, as the following statements suggested.

Nash suggested that Christ prayed for unity, but not for organizational unity. He prayed that his followers might be one. This implied a vital unity, and a vital unity implied fellowship.²⁰

Still in regard to John 17:21, another observation included the thought that Jesus was basing his plea for Christian unity on a spiritual basis. There was no suggestion here of the achievement of Christian unity by organizational or mechanical methods.²¹

Mavis maintained that a thoughtful exegetical view of John 17,

¹⁸ Frank Colquhoun, The Fellowship of the Gospel (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1957), p. 20-1.

¹⁹ Ibid., (foreward).

²⁰ Nash, op. cit., p. 105.

²¹ Stanley Mooneyham (ed.), The Dynamics of Christian Unity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), p. 100-1.

demonstrated conclusively that Jesus was praying for the spiritual unity of his disciples and not for the organizational union of the churches. Biblical scholars rejected the organizational twist that many have given the message of John 17. One must observe that there was no suggestion of a unity of organization. Evangelicals believed in an ecumenicity of the Spirit which they considered to be the highest type of Christian unity.²²

In keeping with the above statements, Lowell, claimed that the kind of oneness Christ extolled in John 17:21, could only be a spiritual unity. Only tortured exegesis could be made to indicate a structural monolith. The kind of oneness He wanted was the same as the relation between Himself and His Father. The reference was hardly in the most remote sense applicable to ecclesiastical organization. The spiritual identity of true believers in the oneness of the Father and the Son was meant.²³

The Wheaton Declaration, declared that our Lord's earnest petition to the Father on behalf of His Church (John 17) was for her essential spiritual unity and its visible expression in the world. His concern was that all the disciples may be one in order that the world could realize that Jesus was the answer.²⁴

In the context of John 17:21 it was observed that Jesus did not

²²Mavis, op. cit., p. 145-6. ²³Lowell, op. cit., p. 35-6.

²⁴Harold Lindsell (ed.), The Churches' World Wide Mission (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966), p. 231-2.

give an exhortation for the disciples to do anything, but was a prayer to His Father to preserve the situation as it existed. An observation by Lloyd-Jones followed that thought when he maintained that Jesus was simply praying to His Father to preserve the unity that already existed. This unity was spiritual, and this unity showed itself in a common belief and reception of the teaching concerning the Lord's Person and work.²⁵

Thus, the authors generally agreed that Christ was not referring to a structural organization in His prayer contained in John 17, but rather to a spiritual unity. This spiritual unity was to be the same among believers as the fellowship between the Father and the Son.

Evangelicals held a similar position in regard to Ephesians 4:4-6. Thus a couple of observations were all that was necessary to point to their interpretation of this verse.

Lowell believed that application to the structural form of the church from Ephesians 4:4-6 appeared to be a tortured form of exegesis. Paul was speaking not of church organization, but of personal behavior of Christians. They were to be worthy of the calling with meekness, patience and love. The whole context of the chapter was a description of the way Christ was related to believers. The apostle was not speaking of a church organization as such.²⁶

From Ephesians 4:4-6 the question arose as to what was the nature

²⁵P. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Basis of Christian Unity (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962), p. 14-5.

²⁶Lowell, op. cit., p. 36.

of the unity of the Spirit. Lloyd-Jones maintained that his was not just a question of friendliness or fellowship, of good nature, or of a desiring to do good together. It was something more, that lifted the believer into the realm of the blessed Holy Trinity. That unity must always be conceived of in that exalted way and never merely in terms of human fellowship, or cooperation or organization.²⁷

It was observed that the above motivation was not held by the majority of evangelicals. The general consensus of opinion was that God wanted a spiritual church rather than a man-made organization. This same feeling was observed in the study of koinōnia in chapter two.

Koinōnia was spoken of mostly as a spiritual force. This was observed in the study of II Corinthians 13:14 and Philippians 2:1. These verses revealed that the Christian lived in the presence, the company, the help and the guidance of the Spirit.

The concept of koinōnia compared very closely with the above discussion of the authors who regarded John 17:21 and Ephesians 4:4-6 as referring to the spiritual union of Christ and the believer. It was also found that koinōnia and God's pattern for a world-wide church was not only spiritual, but was also a visible union. This union and fellowship was not visible because of name or structure but was visible through individuals who portrayed the Spirit of God through their lives. The community of believers was the body of Christ. That koinōnia between believer and Spirit was a union and fellowship, because the Spirit and

²⁷Lloyd-Jones, op. cit., p. 26.

believer had a common interest and active participation in actions that were truly spiritual. The Holy Spirit, by thus controlling each life, produced a unity of fellowship that could not be defective.

The real strength in comparing koinōnia and the motive of a world-wide church appeared to be in what concept was acceptable for the united church. The strength of the comparison was in accepting the concept of a spiritual fellowship and making this fellowship as near as possible as the fellowship that held the Trinity together.

Motivations not mentioned by Evangelicals. There were some distinct areas that the study of koinōnia covered that were not mentioned as motivations for evangelical ecumenism. These areas were dealt with in order to show that the concept of koinōnia covered an enlarged view.

Koinōnia and the sacraments. The move for a united fellowship of evangelicals did not include a place for the sacraments to a large degree. Shelley maintained that the National Association of Evangelicals has taken the road of least resistance over the concept of the sacraments. The N.A.E. has found that tensions are reduced by avoiding the questions which provoke differences. One of the questions that has precisely divided the followers of Christ was what should be the meaning and place of the sacraments in the church.²⁸

Mavis contributed to that view when he observed that evangelicals believed normally in the sacraments but they considered inner spiritual dynamic of greater importance. Many evangelicals feared the present trend

²⁸ Shelley, op. cit., p. 124.

in emphasizing the place of the sacraments in the Church by some groups. They did not want to see the church again become sacramentarian. They knew the tendency of people to rely on physical means which were pledged to bring about spiritual effects. Many evangelicals look upon the emphasis of the sacraments as a perspective in the wrong direction.²⁹

Those thoughts were also voiced by Cavert, who, not of the evangelical movement, noticed that evangelicals had difficulty in the area of the sacraments. He observed that to profess a spiritual fellowship, while unable to meet in the deepest act of communion in the Lord's Supper suggested how unrealistic it was to make a sharp distinction between the unity of the spirit and its manifestations in visible forms and practice.³⁰

Kik maintained that any church groups trying to organize must face the issue of the sacraments. These groups became painfully aware that the Lord's Supper, many times divided the visible church. Instead of revealing the unity of believers it actually pointed to the divisions that existed.³¹

The above usage of the term "sacrament" referred more specifically to the Lord's Supper, as this was where koinōnia really applied in this study. The basic concepts of koinōnia as studied in Acts 2:42 and I Corinthians 10:16 in regard to the Lord's Supper was one of fellowship in

²⁹Mavis, op. cit., p. 144.

³⁰Samuel M. Cavert, On the Road to Christian Unity (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1961), p. 105.

³¹Kik, op. cit., p. 139.

Christ.

The evangelical ecumenists that the researcher had access to failed to transmit this concept in the Lord's Supper. It was found that they were concerned over form and interpretation, rather than ultimate meaning. In comparing the New Testament concept of koinōnia and evangelical concepts of the Lord's Supper it was difficult to find a corollary expression that included the depth of meaning that koinōnia described, with the difficulty present day groups have in coming to a decisive statement on the Lord's Supper.

Koinōnia and the sufferings of Christ. Closely related to the above observation was the lack of information concerning the believers and their concept of suffering. In the researcher's study there was not one definitive statement that included the concept of a united evangelical church experiencing suffering. There were slight hints that the evangelicals may suffer if they did not unite, but in the findings of the researcher there was no hint that evangelicals should band together to experience ". . . the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering. . ." (Philippians 3:10).

In fact the researcher was unable to compare koinōnia with how evangelical ecumenists thought of Christ's place in modern day thought. Henry maintained that there was not a formal organization sheltering emerging evangelical ecumenism, and that pressures are mounting for a definite structural framework to coordinate biblical realities. Influential evangelical leaders want to reflect the sovereignty of Christ into

this structural framework. But neither Billy Graham nor Christianity Today has thus far encouraged such a step.³²

Henry continued to say that there would be two perils involved in such a move of asserting Christ's place in that framework. One would be the further fragmentation of evangelical forces, and the other peril would be the premature coordination of forces into a global organization predicated on evangelical premises.³³

The above two statements of Henry's were in connection with the World Congress on Evangelism. These same statements were reflected in his whole concept of the emerging evangelical movement for fellowship and unity.

The Wheaton Declaration mentioned that the world situation demanded a deep renewal of commitment to Christ's Lordship and willingness to pay any price and suffer.³⁴ However, the price to be paid or the nature of the sufferings were not given a definition.

In koinōnia the concept of suffering takes the idea that when one suffers as Christ did here on earth in His everyday activities the believer had the joy of knowing that he was sharing things with Christ. The study in chapter two included the idea of suffering as being a necessary part of making a whole spiritual man.

Thus koinōnia in suffering and modern evangelicals could not be compared in the same light at the same time. However, it must be observed

³²Henry, op. cit., p. 93. ³³Ibid.

³⁴Lindsell, op. cit., p. 218.

that through the study, the very nature of the gospel would demand a certain type of suffering, but even this was not alluded to in very direct terms by evangelicals.

Summary. The study in this chapter revealed that in comparing koinonia and the evangelical concept of ecumenism, several ideas emerged.

It was observed that the motivations of evangelicals that emphasized structural organization could not be compared directly with the concept of koinōnia. Those motivations that centered on spiritual concepts seemed to agree to a larger degree with the concept of koinōnia in chapter two. These were the motivations under consideration:

1. The world situation presented a powerful incentive for ecumenism.
2. Missions an incentive for evangelical ecumenism.
3. The power of the Roman Catholic Church created a motive for evangelical ecumenicity.
4. Divided evangelical forces could not speak with one united voice.
5. God wants the establishment of a world-wide church.

There were two areas that evangelicals did not enter, either because they did not want to or because they were not aware of the areas. The one field was the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper. The other area that was not dealt with was the concept of suffering with Christ.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A summary of the major findings of this study, the conclusions derived therefrom, and suggestions for further study were recorded in this chapter.

I. SUMMARY

First, it was found in chapter two that the concept of koinōnia in the Old Testament was not as intimately expressed as in the New Testament.

Second, the Apocrypha Books did not yield a definitive or very strong meaning for koinōnia.

Third, the New Testament concept of koinōnia found its greatest strength in relation to the abstract, spiritual nature of man to God. It was found that some physical, and material necessities were involved with the concept of koinōnia. The majority of instances used these incidents to produce a stronger spiritual tie, either between man and man, or man and God.

Fourth, some of the more meaningful concepts of koinōnia in the New Testament included: (1) fellowship was a sharing of friendship, (2) fellowship was a practical sharing with others, (3) a partner in the work of Christ, (4) being in the Spirit, (5) a fellowship with God, (6) fellowship through the Lord's Supper, (7) fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. It was found that Christian koinōnia was that bond which bound Christians

to one another and to each member of the Trinity.

Fifth, chapter three revealed five basic motivations for evangelical ecumenicity. These five main motivations were: (1) The world situation. (2) The missionary thrust. (3) The power of the Roman Catholic Church. (4) The need for a united voice. (5) God wants the establishment of a world-wide church.

Sixth, chapter four showed the comparison between the concept of koinōnia and the motivations of evangelical ecumenicity. It was found that koinōnia and the motivations of evangelical ecumenism compared favorably when both were referring to spiritual matters. It was also found that koinōnia was not directly related to those motivations that demanded material and structural unity of evangelicals.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were derived in regard to the problem of this study.

1. Since the concept of koinōnia was not expressed in the Old Testament, Apocrypha, or secular Greek writings as lucidly as in the New Testament, it indicates a progression of emphasis in the concept of koinōnia in the Bible.

2. Since koinōnia in the Bible was not the motivating factor in organizing believers in a structured framework to meet the problems or challenges of their day, it was concluded that organic union of the Christian church does not in itself guarantee fellowship.

3. The motivations for evangelical ecumenicity and koinōnia com-

pared very favorably when fellowship was related to spiritual unity that exists between Christ and His Church. It was concluded that there is a vital relationship between koinōnia and evangelical ecumenicity on the spiritual level.

4. Since it was observed that evangelicals interpret John 17:1-26 and Ephesians 4:4-6 as being purely spiritual, yet they tried to formulate a structure based on humanly devised organization to proclaim the evangelical message, it was concluded that evangelicals feel the need to make the concept of spiritual unity visible.

5. Since evangelicals have not adequately emphasized the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ as a motivation for ecumenicity, it is concluded that more emphasis should be given to this truth since it was supremely emphasized in the New Testament.

AREAS FOR FURTHER POSSIBLE RESEARCH

The study revealed that many areas of additional research would add to a more meaningful understanding of the problem discussed.

1. An expanded treatment of the Old Testament in regard to the covenant, sacrificial system, the concept of Jehovah, in relation to koinōnia would add a deeper meaning to the New Testament concept of koinōnia.

2. An in depth study in secular Greek would be valuable in order to see how greatly the concept of Greek koinōnia affected the New Testament writers.

3. An enriching study would include the Reformers' concept of koinōnia as well as their concept or lack of a concept of ecumenicity.

4. For a deeper study, the National and World Council of Churches should have been included to present a broader picture of the ecumenical movement and a different concept of koinōnia.

5. In contrast to number four above, a study that would be valuable would be the smaller denominations and even individual churches seeking fellowship through various media.

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