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## **INTERCHURCH RELATIONS IN POST-PERESTROIKA EASTERN EUROPE: A SHORT HISTORY OF AN ECUMENICAL MELTDOWN**

By Joseph Loya

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"The Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church have been granted the grace of once again recognizing one another as sister Churches and of journeying towards full communion." (Pope John Paul II)<sup>1</sup>

"We have come to you bringing with love the ethos of freedom in Christ, together with the rich tradition of our orthodox East. At the same time, we have come to receive what the Latin West has to offer to the common cause of the reconciliation of our Churches. We have come for an exchange of spiritual treasures, in a spirit of love and esteem." (Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I)<sup>2</sup>

"Catholic and Orthodox have fought each other with word and sword. Each has tried to humiliate the other, to dominate the other, to suppress the other where possible... (but) a new climate has been created. We can meet as sharers in divine life to search out new way for healing old wounds as well as those which are more recent." (Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, former President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity)<sup>3</sup>

These sentiments, all spoken in 1988, reflected the elation and hope of more than a quarter-century of bilateral theological dialogue dedicated to healing the long and difficult schism between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Orthodox East. The substantial list of consensus statements forged by the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Churches includes the following titles: "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity" (Munich, 1982), "Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church" (Bari, 1987), "The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church" (Valamo, 1988). Such concord can be seen as the theological fruit of earlier dramatic symbols of ecumenical intent such as the historic embrace of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople (1964), the mutual lifting of the anathemas of 1054 (1965), and subsequent exchanges of visits and messages.<sup>4</sup> In 1988 it would have been difficult to conceive that these events and statements would so soon be looked upon as markers of the halcyon days of interchurch relations; as of this writing, the relationship between Catholic and Orthodox Churches is sorely tested by feelings of rancor, bitterness and mistrust.

How did the former climate of warm mutual regard degenerate so quickly into the present heated atmosphere of charge and countercharge? A hint may have been provided as far back as 1965 when a perceptive Orthodox commentator characterized Vatican II's Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches as a "gunpowder keg, capable of blowing sky-high the dialogue being pursued between Orthodox East and the Latin West."<sup>5</sup> The world witnessed the barrel blow in 1990 in a kind of spontaneous combustion not wholly unlike the unleashing of destructive powers when interethnic or interracial tensions reach their flashpoints. Alternatively, perhaps it would be more apt to describe the situation as one in which a critical mass of long suppressed Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic antipathies were detonated by a potent charge of political freedom. Ground zero--the Western Ukraine. My purpose here is to provide a chronology of events that conditioned this ecumenical Chernobyl and to describe the extent and intensity of the fallout as it continues to contaminate the atmosphere of interchurch relations throughout the ecumenical world.

The roots of the complex relation under study reach back to the sixteenth century and the eastern regions of the United Kingdom of Poland-Lithuania. At the close of the sixteenth century Ukrainian Orthodox bishops labored under difficult circumstances: from the east came frequent and onerous demands for funds issued by the Patriarch of Constantinople and, closer to home, the Church of Moscow's growing shadow of influence. To the west was the enviable degree of education, pensions, and parliamentary membership afforded to Roman Catholic clergy. At home the cultural and ecclesial identity of their people were being threatened by the *cuius regio, illius et religio* solution of the Peace of Augsburg.<sup>6</sup> Union with the Church of Rome with the guaranteed right to maintain their traditional Orthodox ecclesial life presented itself as the most advantageous avenue of recourse. This was in fact the way taken, through the instrument known as the 1596 Union of Brest-Litovsk.<sup>7</sup> By the late eighteenth century two-thirds of Western Ukraine was Byzantine Rite Catholic. Meanwhile, other such unions were established with parts of Orthodox and non-Chalcedonian communities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1646), Romania (1698), Armenia (1742), Syria (1742), and, later, Egypt (1895).

All such unions--all such expressions of recognition of the Pope's primacy both in honor and jurisdiction--have been consistently interpreted by the Vatican as revivifications of the 1439 Catholic-Orthodox reunion council of Ferrara-Florence. This council, in turn, was considered a return to Catholic-Orthodox unity ante 1054, a period considered most reflective of the unity intended by Christ when He prayed that "all may be one so that the world may believe" (John 17). The Eastern Orthodox, for their part, viewed all such partial unions as crass and blatant examples of papal "sheep stealing" and the willful disruption of Orthodox communion effected through greed, lies, pride, ambition and false promises. Eastern Catholic communities came to be considered by Orthodoxy as traitorous splinter groups sadly used and abused by the Church of Rome as they were first subverted then elevated to represent the "return of the Eastern schismatics."<sup>8</sup> That Rome has through the centuries trumpeted the Eastern Catholic communities as "bridge churches" to the Orthodox while at the same time utilizing them as proselytic spearheads served only to exacerbate Orthodox enmity.<sup>9</sup>

Attention now is turned to post-World War II Ukraine, a spoil of war garnered from Germany. Stalin was well aware of Orthodox animus towards Eastern Catholicism and knew that he could not afford to accommodate anti-Soviet churches owing their ecclesiastical allegiance to an authority situated beyond the Soviet borders. In 1945 he began to subject Eastern Catholic hierarchy, clergy, and leading laypersons to arrest, imprisonment, exile, execution. In 1946 the Soviet government staged a reunion synod (the Council of Lvov) in which the Catholic Union Council of Brest-Litovsk was rescinded. Eastern Catholicism was declared unlawful and henceforth non-existent within Soviet borders; all Eastern Catholics were now to be integrated into the Orthodox communities.

The Orthodox, instead of protesting the injustice, celebrated the dictates of this council and received Eastern Catholic properties and structures. Since its ranks were filled by the former Eastern Catholics, the Russian Orthodox Church took its turn to apply triumphant "return" rhetoric, this time to a situation in which the freedom of conscience of a particular ecclesial body had been blatantly violated.<sup>10</sup> Catholics refusing to allow themselves to be coerced into Orthodoxy took up the life of a catacomb church.

In the 1960's and 1970's Khrushchev's de-Stalinization measures quickened the resolve of the underground church to press for its re-legalization and repossession of churches. During the period of 1986-1987, in the spirit of glasnost and perestroika, nearly all political prisoners were released, a percentage of whom was to become the backbone of a movement for human, national and religious rights in Ukraine. Catholic activist organizations generated campaigns for the restoration of the Church's status quo ante 1945. Public Catholic religious services were being attended by huge throngs of worshippers at a time when official channels to the world abroad were still denying their existence. Petition drives, the publication of the uncensored journal *Khrystyyanskyi holos* (Christian Voice), hunger strikes, confrontations with governmental authorities, plus written, audio and video appeals to the West were all employed in the effort to publicize the plight of the Catholic Church in Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

The degree of sharpness in partisan polemics quickly escalated. Stepan Khmara, Ukrainian Catholic activist leader, emphasized in 1988 "the unconditional inadmissibility of the Russian Orthodox Church having any say in the future of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. He and his committee would not recognize the legitimacy of any discussion in which the Russian leadership played a role, either with or without the participation of the Vatican."<sup>12</sup> For the Orthodox side Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev spoke of "self-styled Uniate zealots" who "are out to set the Church and the State against each other and make a rift between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. And if--God forbid--the Ukrainian Catholic Church acquires a legal status, its zealots will brew a terrible strife and hinder the effort for beneficial change in Soviet life - to live in peace and concord."<sup>13</sup>

In July 1989, the reformist publication *Moscow News* challenged the official version of the "reunion of the Uniates," charged the Russian Orthodox Church with having consistently supported Stalin's repressive measures against the followers of the Uniate Church and warned that attempts to continue a repressive policy against the Uniates

threaten to both aggravate social tensions and complicate the USSR's relations with other countries. An article in the October issue of the mass circulation journal *Argumenty i fakty* helped shatter the pretense of canonicity of the Russian Orthodox in Ukraine and was perceived widely as sure portent of a policy shift in Moscow. The official Soviet, and therefore Russian Orthodox, rejoinder at this time was to label the Ukrainian Catholic Church as a purely political, nationalist and separatist organization and therefore ineligible for registration.<sup>14</sup>

In August of 1989 Papal initiatives for resolution of the situation resulted in the opening of negotiations between the Vatican and the Orthodox Moscow Patriarchate. The latter proposed the de facto dissolution of the Eastern Catholic Church by imposing upon Eastern Catholics the choice of becoming either Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic.<sup>15</sup> Of course, the Pope declined; no greater insult could be visited upon the memory of Eastern Catholics who have suffered and died for their church. Also, resolving the tension between two Churches - Roman Catholic and Orthodox--by the elimination of a third Church--the Eastern Catholic - would be unconscionable ecumenical methodology. In October the Pope addressed a gathering of exiled Ukrainian Catholic bishops, assembled in Rome, with his strongest statement to date on the necessity of recognizing the rights of the Eastern Catholic Church in the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

Between 19 and 21 October 1989, Archbishop Angelo Sadano, The Vatican's Secretary for Interstate Relations, met in Moscow with a Soviet delegation that included Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. Again in the spirit of perestroika, the Holy See was assured that a new law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations would legalize the Ukrainian Catholic Church, though the practical aspects of legalization would have to be resolved through agreement among the Holy See, the Soviet Government, and the Moscow Patriarchate in the context of closer ecumenical dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches.<sup>17</sup> The trustworthiness of this assurance seemed to be confirmed when, in concurrence with Gorbachev's visit to Rome in search of political rapprochement with the Vatican, the following statement was published December First by the official Novosti News Agency under the rubric Declaration of the Council of Religious Affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR: "Subject to their unconditional observance of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR and the legislation on cults, Greek Catholics may enjoy all rights which are provided by law on religious association in the Ukrainian SSR . . . Questions of the registration of these or other religious congregations will be decided in accordance with the will expressed by the believers themselves."<sup>18</sup>

Ukrainian Catholics received the statement as something wholly inadequate to the scope of their demands, especially in light of subsequent commentary by the chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Religious Affairs to the effect that the statement was only an expression of the Council's willingness to recognize Eastern Catholics as one of any number of "groups of believers" eligible to apply for governmental registration and to request leases on unused houses of worship from the authorities. There was to be no question of returning Eastern Catholic churches or any other ecclesiastical property which had been nationalized, nor would the Council recognize the corporate, canonical

structure and hierarchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The response of Ukrainian Catholics was to commence the physical take-over of their former churches from the Russian Orthodox Church. Within six months nearly thirteen hundred churches were so taken in Ukraine and Eastern Slovakia.<sup>19</sup>

The Orthodox reacted with immediate and vehement protest. Eastern Catholics were charged with illegal seizure, intimidation, persecution of Orthodox believers, inciting to riot, arson and murder.<sup>20</sup> In response, a January 1990 declaration issued by a meeting of a wide spectrum of Eastern Catholic intelligentsia and informal organizations called for an end to this alleged disinformation disseminated by the Soviet Press and the Eastern Orthodox Church. This call, along with a charge that the Council of Religious Affairs was stonewalling registration procedures pertaining to Eastern Catholic interests, was appended to following list spelling out the terms upon which the Eastern Catholic Church should be legalized: the Eastern Catholic Church should be politically rehabilitated; the Church should have the rights of juridical person restored to it, and accordingly, all its property, including churches, art treasures, relics and cathedrals, returned to it; the 1946 Council of Lvov should be declared a violent, anti-constitutional act of Stalinism; conditions should be created to allow for theological seminaries, publication of religious literature, and religious education.<sup>21</sup> It has been pointed out by an American commentator that the apparent Eastern Catholic commitment to a program of *restitutio in integrum*, while seemingly a logical solution to difficulties achieved through adherence to legal principle, in fact does little to rectify the complexity of the situation. Consider the case of the venerable Monastery of St. Nicholas near Mukachevo: initially established by the Orthodox in the end of the fourteenth century, the residence of an Eastern Catholic Bishop in the seventeenth century, confiscated by the Soviets and given to the Orthodox for use as a convent in the twentieth century, currently demanded to be returned by the Eastern Catholics. The answer to the question "to whom does the monastery rightfully belong?" is by no means clear.<sup>22</sup>

Also in January of 1990, Vatican representatives led by Cardinal Willebrands and including Archbishop Miroslav Marusyn, the Ukrainian Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, met with a Russian Orthodox delegation in Moscow to produce "Recommendations on the Normalization of Relations Between the Orthodox and Catholics of the Eastern Rite in Western Ukraine."<sup>23</sup> It was agreed that the "normalization of the position...should guarantee for Catholics of the Eastern Rite the right to religious activity, recognized for all, in accordance with the Constitution of the USSR and Soviet legislation (paragraph 1). It emphasized that "it is extremely important to avoid all unlawful actions especially those involving violence...which are incompatible with the spirit of Christianity and must be condemned" (paragraph 4). The Orthodox, having consistently taken the position that disputes should be resolved by mutual negotiation in such a way as to take into consideration the present religious affinities within a particular region, inserted in the "Recommendations" a suggestion that the issue of property ownership should be decided by local plebiscites in the difficult cases where a parish is divided and each community seeks exclusive use of the Church. The whole program of negotiations and plebiscites was strenuously rejected by Ukrainian Catholics. Said Ivan Hel, one of the most ardent and vocal advocates of Ukrainian Catholic

interests: "the lawful owners (i.e., the Ukrainian Catholics) are being asked to plead with those who stole their property."<sup>24</sup>

Another of the Moscow recommendations was the creation of a joint quadripartite commission for the resolution of practical questions that would arise in the process of normalizing relations between Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This commission, composed of representatives of the Holy See (headed by Archbishop Marusyn), the Moscow Patriarchate (headed by Metropolitan Mofody of Voronezh and Lipetsk), Ukrainian Orthodox (led by Bishop Irenei of Lvov) and Ukrainian Eastern Catholics (led by Archbishop Volodimir Sterniuk of Lvov) did indeed meet in March. From the beginning the Ukrainian Catholics expressed dissatisfaction with the constitution, conduct and constraints of on the agenda imposed by the commission. The meeting completely ran aground when Archbishop Sterniuk and other Eastern Catholic bishops walked out in protest over the Moscow Patriarchate's refusal to concede that the 1946 Council of Lvov was invalid or to recognize the canonical, corporate nature of the Eastern Catholic Church and its hierarchy. They followed up their action with a letter of protest extremely critical of the policies and attitudes of Soviet authorities and the Orthodox Church. Also, the dissenters registered their desire that the head of the Ukrainian Church, Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky, be raised by the Pope to his rightful rank of Patriarch.<sup>25</sup> Ukrainian Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Julian Voronowsky portrayed Bishop Marusyn as one who "did more damage to the Eastern Rite Ukrainian Church in ten days than the KGB did in forty-four years."<sup>26</sup> Stepan Khmara, now on the new People's Deputies of Ukraine, wrote a letter of protest to the Pope in which he said "we will never allow our Ukrainian Catholic Church to become an object of trade between the Vatican and the Moscow Patriarchate. We resolutely protest at the manner in which the Vatican is conducting its policy."<sup>27</sup> Commentator Colin Davey correctly discerns the feeling out of which statements of this timbre proceed: for over forty years the Eastern Catholic Church demonstrated its resilience and endurance in the face of severe persecution, and now it wishes to play its part in inter-Church relations in its own name as an equal partner having its own identity. From the Eastern Catholic view others cannot simply make decisions on its own behalf and expect such a process to succeed.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, the revival of civil society, its growing politicization, and the rapid growth of the national democratic movement asserted their effects on the religious situation in Ukraine. The direct elections of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet and the lower-level soviets in March provided the occasion in which advocates of national cultural, linguistic, and religious demands awakened to the fact that they could influence the resolution of their demands through the ballot box. In Western Ukraine the democratic, pro-Catholic block registered an overwhelming victory.<sup>29</sup> The new, popularly elected authorities set about implementing the Eastern Catholic agenda. Following Ukraine's declaration of the sovereignty on 16 July 1990, the republican authorities proceeded to assume, at the expense of Moscow, control over church-state relations within the republic. On 15 June 1991, the governmental Council on Religious Affairs registered the statute of the Eastern Catholic Archdiocese of Lvov; it is now with an officially sanctioned Eastern Catholic Church that the Moscow Patriarchate must deal.

In another part of Eastern Europe, tensions in Romania escalated on 19 May 1991, when Byzantine Catholics took possession of their old cathedral in Blaj. The Romanian Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist reacted sharply, demanding suspension of all dialogue with the Catholic Church for the duration of the pontificate of Pope John Paul II.<sup>30</sup>

Besides the issue of Uniatism and the very existence of Eastern Catholic Churches, another factor contributing to the neuralgia of the moment is summed by the term "proselytism." In the midst of the tumult caused by property ownership issues, Pope John Paul II has proceeded to appoint bishops to cities in Siberia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and to Moscow itself. That these appointments were made in the absence of prior notification having been sent to local government and Orthodox church authorities aroused the ire of the Moscow Patriarchate and of the extended Orthodox world.<sup>31</sup> These unilateral actions, plus the presence in Russia of Protestant evangelical missions and heavily financed efforts of pious Catholic organizations, awaken among the Orthodox an old and familiar fear: ever since the Reformation Russian Christians have taken deep umbrage at having often been targeted for concerted "conversion" attempts by zealous groups from the Christian West. In light of this fact the Vatican's recent revival of its Pontificia Commissio pro Russia (in abeyance since the beginning of the cold war) did nothing to allay apprehension within the Moscow Patriarchate. In November of 1991, Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow even expressed distrust of Archbishop Francis Hurley's efforts to found a missionary center in Magadan along the Eastern Siberian coast.<sup>32</sup> It is of little wonder that the Pope's invitation to the Orthodox to participate in the December 1991 Roman Catholic Synod "The New Evangelization of Europe" received such a cold reception in the Orthodox world.<sup>33</sup> By way of comment, fair assessment could affirm that to the extent that the protests reflect a Church rendered vulnerable by a seventy-year inability to be socially involved with its own adherents (through the fostering of church schools, hospitals, universities, charitable organizations and the like), Orthodox defensiveness is to a considerable degree understandable. On the other hand, to the extent the complaints may represent characteristic Russian xenophobia or the unwillingness (or inability) to compete in the new free market of religion and ideas, a deep and difficult self-assessment as to Orthodoxy's ability to recapture and hold the religious imagination of its own believers seems to be in order.

Fear of proselytism also inflames intra-Catholic relations as it intensifies the chronic contentiousness that exists between native Poles and Ukrainians. (In post World War II Poland most Byzantine Catholic properties went to the Roman Catholic Church.) In December 1990 the Pope unilaterally appointed a Roman Catholic bishop to Lvov. Appointments of Polish ordinaries to other Ukrainian locals followed. In an expression of its dissatisfaction, the city council of Lvov refused to make the former residence of the Polish Archbishop available to the new incumbent, and the plane carrying the visiting Polish Primate Cardinal Glemp was turned back upon being refused permission to land in that city. Meanwhile, in the Ukrainian city of Peremyshl' (Premysl) just inside the Polish border, the Poles refused to allow the new Eastern Catholic bishop of Peremyshl' access to the Eastern Catholic cathedral and residence. These conflicts have continued and worsened.<sup>34</sup>

How have these developments affected the theological deliberations conducted by Orthodox and Roman Catholics on the international and national levels? Clearly, the events have overtaken the theological discussions. Already in October-November 1986, the Third Pre-Synodical Pan-Orthodox Conference at Chambesy, Geneva, proposed that "the realities of Uniatism, as well as proselytism enacted through Uniatism or by other means, should be examined in one of the stages of the dialogue, as a priority of ecclesiology."<sup>35</sup> The International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches adopted the suggestion at its 1988 meeting in Finland. A mixed subcommission met from 26 to 31 January, 1990, in Vienna to study the problems raised by the problematic nature of the existence of the Eastern Churches united with Rome. The work of the subcommission was conducted under the joint chairmanship of Msgr. Edward Cassidy (chair of the Pontifical Council for the Unity of Christians) and Archbishop Stylianos of Australia (representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). The result was important agreement in principle on ecclesiology, proselytism, and on the use of force in settling disputes: on the basis of their discussions the subcommission unanimously agreed that Uniatism is no longer considered to be a viable model for the union of Churches, since the ecclesiology within which it developed did not have as its inspiration the Tradition common to the undivided Churches. For this reason, the search for unity should have as its model that of sister Churches, within the framework of eucharistic communion ecclesiology.<sup>36</sup> It was agreed that any form of soteriological exclusivism contradicts the ecclesiology of sister Churches and that any kind of proselytism violating the religious freedom of conscience and using illicit or illegitimate means has to be rejected. The subcommission declared that on no account should forceful methods be used to solve any problems whatsoever between the Churches, since the use of violence in presenting claims is contrary to Christian teaching and is condemned unhesitatingly.<sup>37</sup>

The next plenary meeting of the Joint Commission took place at Freising, Munich, 6 to 15 June 1990. The Commission was scheduled to take up the study of the theological consequences of the sacramental structure of the Church and particularly the relationship between authority and conciliarity in the Church, but due to the gravity of recent events the whole meeting was dedicated to the questions posed by the origin, existence and development of the Catholic Churches of the Byzantine Rite. The Commission explained that "because of the conflictual situation existing in some regions between the Catholic Churches of the Byzantine Rite and the Orthodox Church, 'Uniatism' is an urgent problem to be treated with priority over all other subjects to be discussed in the dialogue."<sup>38</sup> Uniatism was then defined as "the effort which aims to bring about the unity of the Church by separating from the Orthodox Church communities or Orthodox faithful without taking into account that, according to ecclesiology, the Orthodox Church is a sister Church which itself offers the means of grace and salvation....Where 'Uniatism' has been employed as a method, it failed to achieve its goal of bringing the Churches closer together; rather, it provoked new divisions. The situation thus created has been a source of conflict and suffering, and these have deeply marked the memory of the collective consciousness of the two Churches. On the other hand, for ecclesiological reasons, the conviction has grown that other ways must be sought out." On the practical level, the Commission registered the following convictions: 1) religious liberty is both "a right

which must be totally respected" and "a gift of the Spirit for the building up of the Body of Christ" which therefore "excludes absolutely all violence, direct or indirect, physical or moral"; 2) proselytism is to be excluded as a "misuse of pastoral energy" and a "counter-witness to those who observe critically the way the Churches use their new liberty and who are ready to detect and utilize every sign of rivalry. This means that the pastor of a community should not interfere in a community entrusted to another pastor, but rather should give a common witness to the world in agreement with this other pastor and with all others, in order that all their communities progress towards the same goal, that of a common witness to the world in which they live."

Concern over Uniatism sustained its impetus when in January, 1991, the representatives of the various Orthodox Churches involved in the international dialogue issued the following statement: "It is clear that if this problem [the rebirth of Uniatism] is not resolved, all efforts by Orthodox and Roman Catholics to improve their relations and attain the goals of their dialogue will be in vain. For this reason, the participants think Uniatism should now be the exclusive subject of the dialogue."<sup>39</sup>

The Coordinating Committee of the Joint Commission assembled between 10 and 15 June 1991, in Rome to compose a single document on the basis of three papers prepared within a year by three subcommissions. The first convened in December of 1990 in Rome, the second in March of 1991 in Rome, and the third in April of the same year in Vienna. The working document thus compiled is entitled "Uniatism as a Method of Union in the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion."<sup>40</sup> Beyond the Freising Document "Uniatism as a Method" provided the added component of a historical reading of the origin of Eastern Catholic Churches and their subsequent histories in the context of Orthodox-Roman Catholic relations. Otherwise, the call for the cessation of violence and proselytism was underscored, the counselling of local pastors to wisdom and peace was elaborated, the necessity for solutions obtained through dialogue conducted in a calm atmosphere was reinforced, and the commitment to guard the principle of religious freedom was re-asserted. With regard to freedom of conscience Pope John Paul II's letter of 31 May 1991, was cited as a reminder that freedom of conscience and the right of everyone to adhere to a Church of his/her own choice is to be respected (paragraph 19). This working document was to have been the prime agenda item for a meeting of the Joint Commission scheduled for May 1992, but the meeting was postponed a year at the behest of Orthodox participants feeling the need to attend to pressing concerns in home territories, most notably Russia and the former Yugoslavia.

#### Concluding Remarks.

The high walls of separation that have inflicted deep psychic wound in Eastern European Christians cannot be quickly and simply skirted, forgotten or ignored by these peoples. Nor can the walls be leveled by sheer moral indignation emanating from those of western liberal traditions for whom historical memory is relatively short. The pull of the future is felt more than the weight of the past. Interchurch relations are comparatively cordial, and religion and law, theology, and jurisprudence have long since been disengaged. The obstacles to unity can only be transcended (employing the term in the fullness of its

religious connotation) in the spiritual reconciliation that accompanies the healing of memories and re-commitment to the unity envisioned in the Sacred Writ.

"No one comes to this controversy with clean hands."<sup>41</sup> Western Christians, Catholic and Protestant, bear the stigma of a millennium of patronizing arrogance toward Orthodoxy. Many Eastern Catholics feel that the Vatican continues to treat them as members of a secondary rite within the Roman Catholic Church in contradiction to the dictates of the Vatican II's Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches. The Orthodox come with the shame of easy acquiescence in governmental suppression of other churches and with bankrupted credibility for playing the role of mouthpiece for the Soviet propaganda machine in international ecumenical discussions of the past four decades. Eastern Catholics have at times come dangerously close to equating vigilance over cultural purity and national allegiance with the preservation of the Saving Truth.

Already the darkness of the hurt-filled situation reviewed here is being penetrated by positive and hopeful signals great and small: every pronouncement and document on the subject from the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue in the past four years has included a commitment to continue dialogue among the Churches despite the pressures of spontaneous injurious events in the homelands; Uniatism had rightly been condemned as an ecumenical method while the right of Eastern Catholics to maintain their faith and church life has been affirmed as something to be honored and guarded; the Commission has committed itself to recognizing Eastern Catholic Churches as participants possessing an autonomous and respected voice in dialogue; Orthodox Bishop Arkadiy of Magadan and Archbishop Hurley have sealed through an exchange of gifts the intention to seek a common course of action with regard to the latter's missionary institute in Siberia.

Of great significance is the fact that as of late the Vatican has given evidence of increased sensitivity with regard to evangelism in the ecumenical context. On 1 June, 1992, the Pontificia Commissio pro Russia issued "General Principles and Practical Norms for Coordinating the Evangelizing Activity and Ecumenical Commitment of the Catholic Church in Russia and in Other Countries of the Community of Independent States (C.I.S.)."<sup>42</sup> Pertinent excerpts read as follows (emphasized phrases are original to the document):

Apostolic activity in the territories of the C.I.S. and Eastern Europe requires of Catholics both fidelity to their own mission and a true concern for their Orthodox brothers and sisters, with respect for the latter's faith, so that they can join with them in preparing for the ecclesial unity willed by Christ. (Section I, no. 4).

In full respect for religious freedom, which is an inalienable right of every person, Bishops and priests will take care to consider attentively the motives of those who ask to enter the Catholic Church. Such people must also be made aware of their obligations toward their own community of origin. (no.5)

It is of course true that the activity of the Catholic Church in the territories of the C.I.S., which are so deeply imbued with the presence and the activity of the Orthodox and Armenian traditions, needs to be conducted in ways which differ substantially from those of the mission "ad gentes". . . . The Latin Rite Catholic Church in those lands must therefore hold in great esteem the Eastern traditions which are deeply rooted in them, and particularly those of the Orthodox Church. Having emerged from a long period of persecution, difficulties and conditioning of every kind, the Orthodox Church is now faced with the challenge of a new evangelization of traditionally Orthodox peoples who have been brought up in atheism. Therefore, in fraternal dialogue with the local Bishops of the Orthodox Church and with full respect for the citizens' religious confession, the Pastors of the Latin Church should try to promote cooperation with the Orthodox Church in all areas where this is possible, so that everyone may become clearly aware of the unity in charity which must reign between the two Churches, as a prelude to full ecclesial communion." (no. 7).

The Bishops and Apostolic Administrators, who are responsible for and guarantee all pastoral initiatives...must take care to ensure that no activity undertaken within their ecclesiastical circumscriptions can be easily misconstrued as a `parallel structure of evangelization'. . . both false ecumenism and 'immoderate zeal' are to be avoided. (Section II, no. 2).

May these and all future interactions between the churches as they attempt to deal with these difficult situations be marked not so much by the conventional problem solving and mediational techniques common to the contemporary professional world but by the prayerful discernment of God's will that is characteristic of true Christian decision-making.

#### ADDENDUM:

The seventh plenary session of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Catholic and the Orthodox Churches took place from 17 to 24 June 1993, in Balamand, Lebanon. The following is a listing of the prohibitions, rejections and affirmations that were issued from that meeting. Rejected are ecclesiologies that envision one's own church as the sole locus of salvation and initiatives (identified by the term "uniatism") that seek unity through the fusion of one church to another or the absorption of one church in another. Among that which is subject to prohibition is the formation of proselytizing missionary apostolates having the goal of converting or `bringing back' individuals or groups to one's own church, glorying in or drawing argument from marks of persecution and suffering in order to accuse or disparage the other church, the proffering of financial, educational, or material benefits in a manner that might compromise a believer's freedom of conscience and religious liberty, the use of violence to occupy a place of worship; unilateral establishment of parallel pastoral organizations or activities, taking recourse to the intervention of civil authorities for practical solutions to the problems that arise between Churches or local communities, the dissemination of tendentious and misleading information to the mass-media. Like the anathemas and

disciplinary canons of old that can be read as a kind of photographic negative that develops into a positive picture of what was threatening the unity and peace of the Church in those former times, so are these proscriptions revelatory of the thoughts and actions that contribute to the current 'time of troubles' in Eastern Europe.

Among the affirmations, the following are noted: That the Catholic and Orthodox Churches continue to recognize each other as sister churches, responsible together for maintaining the Church of God in fidelity to the divine purpose, most especially in what concerns unity; that the Eastern Catholic Churches should be "inserted, on both local and universal levels, into the dialogue of love, in mutual respect and reciprocal trust found once again, and enter into the theological dialogue, with all its practical implications"; that there be reciprocal exchanges of information about various pastoral projects and cooperation between bishops and all those with responsibilities in the Churches; that those in charge of the communities concerned "should create joint local commissions or make effective those which already exist, for finding solutions to concrete problems and seeing that these solutions are applied in truth and love, in justice and peace"; that bishops and priests have the duty before God to respect the authority which the holy Spirit has given the bishops and priests of the other Church and for that reason to avoid interfering in the spiritual life of the faithful of that Church; that the formation of future priests and of all those who are involved in an apostolic activity carried on in a place where the other Church traditionally has its roots should be objectively positive with respect to that other Church; that the Churches come together in order to express gratitude and respect towards all, known and unknown, who suffered, confessed their faith, witnessed their fidelity to the Church and experienced persecution. [Text of Joint Commission's document is available in *Ecumenical Trends*, vol. 22, no. 8, 1993, pages 3-7.]

#### ENDNOTES

1. SPCU Information Services 66, 1988 (I), p. 32.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
3. SPCU Information Services 68, 1988 (III-IV), p. 139.
4. For an overview of these events and communications, see "Clearing a Path through a Minefield: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogues, 1983-1990" by Colin Davey in *One in Christ*, Vol. 26, no. 4, 1990, pp. 285-307.
5. Professor Ionnis Karmiris, quoted by Davey in the second installment of "Clearing a Path...." *One in Christ*, Vol. 27, no. 1, 1991, p. 32.
6. John A. Meijer, C.S.S.R., "The Union of Brest-Litovsk," *Diakonia*, Vol. 2, no. 4, 1967, pp. 359-373.

7. See "The Articles of Union of the Brest Union 1596" by Bohdan Demczuk in *Diakonia*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 1979, pp. 75-79.
8. Paul Lazor, "The Uniate Question," *The Orthodox Way*, Vol. 7, no. 10, October 1967, p. 3.
9. Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia, "The Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue Caught between Hope and Failure," *Sourozh*, no. 47, February, 1992.
10. In *Uniate Church: Forcible Establishment, Natural Failure* (Kiev, Politvidav Ukraini Publishers, 1983), Orthodox Metropolitan Nikolai of Lvov and Ternopol is thus quoted in his estimation of this council: "(the) aspirations of the Ukrainian people were fully realized in 1946 at the Lvov Church Council. That was the realization of the age-long dream of believers - to return to the fold of the Mother Church." pp. 193-194.
11. Reported by Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 20, no. 1, Spring 1992, pp. 18-20.
12. Michael Bourdeaux, from his book *Gorbachev, Glasnost and the Gospel*, London, 1990, p. 164.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.
14. Bociurkiw, p. 19.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
16. Reported by Sergei Keleher, "Out of the Catacombs: The Greek-Catholic Church in Ukraine" in *Religion in Communist Lands*, Vol. 19, nos. 3-4, Winter 1991, p. 254.
17. Bociurkiw, p. 21.
18. *Lyudnya i Svit*, January 1990, pp. 8-9.
19. Bociurkiw, p. 22.
20. For the Russian Orthodox Church's charges of alleged Eastern Catholic injustices, see "Declaration of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Regarding the Situation in the Western Oblasts of the Ukrainian Exarchate," *Keston News Service*, December 15, 1989; "Open Letter to His Holiness Pope John Paul II" from Archbishop Iriney of Lviv, "Appeal of the Hierarches of the Ukrainian Exarchate to the Clergy, Monastics, and All believers of the Ukrainian Exarchate," both in the March 1990 issue of *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*; The comments of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom as reported in "Clearing a Path through a Minefield: Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue" by Colin Davey in *One in Christ* Vol. 27, no. 1, p. 21; "An Analytical Report of the Religious Situation in Eastern Slovakia" by Archbishop Nikolai of Preshov, *Sourozh*, no.45,

August, 1991, pp. 17-32. For a Ukrainian Catholic's refutation of these charges, see commentary by M. Bojcun, "Ukrainian Catholics Reject Orthodox "Violence Charges," Keston News Service, 341, January 11, 1990.

21. Bociurkiw, p. 23.

22. John Erickson, "A New Crisis in Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue," *Ecumenism*, Vol. 27, no. 107, September 1992, p. 23.

23. Text in *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, no. 5, pp. 2-9; *Episkepsis* 436, 1 April, 1990, pp. 5-8.

24. Erickson, p. 23.

25. Davey, "Clearing a Path...." *One in Christ*, Vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 24-25.

26. *The Tablet*, 23 June, 1990, p. 782.

27. *The Tablet*, 31 March, 1990, p. 430.

28. Davey, "Clearing a Path through a Minefield....," *One in Christ*, Vol. 27, no. 1, 1991, p. 25.

29. Bociurkiw, p. 24.

30. Reported by Cardinal Edward I. Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, to the Scientific Council of the Johann-Adam-Mohler Institute in Paderborn on 2 April, 1992. A summary of this speech is provided in *One in Christ*, Vol. 28, no. 3, 1992, pp. 203-217.

31. Cardinal Sadano, Vatican Secretary of State, firmly responded to the concern of the Orthodox. In effect, he pointed out, no new dioceses were erected, residential bishops were not appointed to defined sees, only temporary organizational structures of the type constructed in 1926 were created, and apostolic administrators were appointed to assure a minimum of religious assistance for scattered communities Latin Rite Catholics. Reported by John Borelli, "The End of the Cold War and the Persistence of Orthodox/Catholic Relations," *Mid-Stream*, Vol. 31, no. 4, October 1992, p. 316.

32. Reported by the Most Reverend Rembert G. Weakland in his article "Crisis in Orthodox-Catholic Relations: Challenges and Hopes," *America*, Vol. 166, no. 2, 1992, p. 33.

33. According to Cardinal Cassidy, The Patriarchates of Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria and the Orthodox Church of Greece decided to express their solidarity with the Patriarchate of Moscow by not sending a Fraternal Delegate to the Synod. From the

Orthodox only the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Georgian Patriarchate sent representatives to Rome. (*One in Christ*, Vol. 28, no. 3, 1992, p. 212.)

34. Serge Keleher, "Out of the Catacombs...", p. 260.

35. *Episkepsis* 369, 15 December, 1986, pp. 12-13.

36. The principles of this ecclesiology are presented in "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion," released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 15 June, 1992; published in *One in Christ*, Vol. 28, no. 3, 1992, pp. 283-293. Also, from an Orthodox perspective, communion ecclesiology is treated as a major subject in John D. Zizioulas' *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press; Crestwood, N.Y., 1985).

37. Davey, p. 23.

38. *Episkepsis* 443, 15 July, 1990, pp. 11-13.

39. *Episkepsis* 452, 15 January, 1991, pp. 2f.

40. Available in English in *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, no. 10, 1991, pp. 60-62.

41. The expression is that of the Most Reverend Weakland, in his article "The Next Steps in Orthodox-Catholic Relations," (*Ecumenical Trends*, Vol. 21, no. 6, June 1992, p. 4.)

42. Text available in *Ecumenism*, Vol. 27, no. 107, September 1992, pp. 40-43.