

# Christian Churches Together: Its History and Organization

## A RESEARCH REPORT

### PART ONE OF FOUR

#### 1 - INTRODUCTION

*Several closely connected events required that I prepare this in-depth research report.*

- For decades, Protestant leadership has, in vain, urged the Roman Catholic Church to unite with them in a unified (ecumenical) organization, which could be used to achieve commonly held objectives.

- We know that **there is only one religious doctrine** which such an organization could translate into a single objective, which they could use to "Christianize" the nation: Sundaykeeping.

- **An entirely new ecumenical organization was suddenly founded** in late 2001, as a result of an intense but quiet campaign of coaxing and urging. —It has, in less than six years, rapidly grown to now include 36 of the largest denominations in America.

- **It has the full approval of the National Council of Churches (founded in 1950); it already has as many denominations (36), and will probably supplant that less active organization.**

- Also headquartered in New York City, its official name is "Christian Churches Together in the U.S." (CCT); **it is already claiming to be the broadest ecumenical organization in American history.** In six years, CCT has accomplished more than the NCC did in over 50. (The NCC now has more than 50 million people, in 140,000 congregations across the United States, within its ranks. CCT has now achieved that same total membership, but it has no intentions of slowing down.)

- **This new ecumenical organization was initially launched directly at the instigation of the Roman Catholic Church itself,** with the full concurrence of several Protestant leaders!

- **This Catholic project had to be done by a direct order from the Vatican;** for the U.S. Conference of Bishops would not themselves have dared to initiate something of this nature.

- For over 20 years, prior to becoming Pope Benedict XVI on April 19, 2005, Joseph Alois Ratzinger was in charge of preparing all doctrinal statements and positions, official and secret, of the Vatican. **It had to be Ratzinger who directed that Christian Churches**

**Together be started in America.** What was his purpose in doing this? **Why did he arrange (through CCT's By-Laws) for the Catholic Church to be able to so thoroughly direct the plans and objectives of this new organization?** What is the objective that he and his staff at the Vatican are working toward?

- Ratzinger is now pope, with supreme Vatican power to work toward his goals for CCT. Born on April 16, 1927, Ratzinger is now 80 years old. **He knows he must work quickly in order to fulfill his objectives;** for he cannot know how many more years he will have before he must pass his crosier to his successor.

- At a meeting held in Pasadena, CA on February 6-9, 2007, a *Ten Point Statement* of Objectives was quietly approved by a small committee. Two points in that *Statement* are of special interest to us. They are the only points on which CCT, and its member churches, could work powerfully to coerce the U.S. Congress into enacting radical, new legislation. Here they are:

**"3. The Ten Commandments are to be subscribed to by the nation . . ."**

**"7. Throughout all the land, a National Day of Rest shall be honored by governments, industrial manufacturers, and public shopping facilities."**

These objectives would **require U.S. federal legislative enactments and presidential approval,** before they could be implemented.

- This ten-point set of CCT objectives will be gradually released to the media, point by point, at the appropriate time for each to be made public. At the present time, only one point is being publicized. But they were definitely approved as a private set of working objectives. Organizations do not usually tell ahead of time what they are planning to do later; and CCT is no exception.

- **The one objective, which CCT publicly announced on June 10, 2005 at Los Altos CA, is to reduce poverty.** This is a goal to which no one can object, not even the atheists. But, as of February 2007, CCT now has another, very special, one to be brought forth to the public—and to Congress—at the appro-

## 2 WAYMARKS [1386-1389]

priate time.

I am told that giving this information disturbs people. But those who do not wish to be disturbed are the ones who are not reading *Great Controversy*. It is all there. If you would understand what is soon to come upon the entire world as an overwhelming surprise—and mark the beginning of the end,—read the following chapters again, in this order: *Chapters 29, 25, 35, and 36* in the 1888 or 1911 editions. (The chapter numbers are different in the 1884 edition.)

**With all this in mind, it became urgent that, first, careful research be done into the history of CCT and, second, that an attempt be made to ascertain exactly who is the kingly power behind the small group of men making its decisions. Here are the results of this research.** (All bold and brackets within quotations have been added.)

### RATZINGER'S BACKGROUND

The man, whom we believe is behind CCT, has been a leader in defending and promoting Catholic teachings for decades. Here is a brief review of the priest who, it is well-known, has been in charge of writing all papal documents since November 1981.

#### *Joseph Alois Ratzinger*

#### *Official Vatican Biographical Statement*

**"From 1962 to 1965 he made a notable contribution to Vatican II as an 'expert'; being present at the Council as theological advisor of Cardinal Joseph Frings, Archbishop of Cologne.**

**"His intense scientific activity led him to important positions at the service of the German Bishops' Conference and the International Theological Commission.**

**"John Paul II named him Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and of the International Theological Commission on 25 November 1981. On 15 February 1982 he resigned the pastoral governance of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising. [At that time, he permanently moved to the Vatican.] . .**

**"He was President of the Preparatory Commission for the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which after six years of work (1986-1992) presented the new Catechism to the Holy Father.**

**"On 6 November 1998 the Holy Father approved the election of Cardinal Ratzinger as Vice-Dean of the College of Cardinals, submitted by the Cardinals of the Order of Bishops. On 30 November 2002 he approved his election as Dean . .**

**"Since 13 November 2000 he has been an Honorary Academic of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. [He drafted the papal statement announcing that evolutionary theory is acceptable, as long as man was directly created by God.]**

**"In the Roman Curia he has been a member of the Council of the Secretariat of State for Relations with States; of the Congregations for the Oriental Churches, for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, for Bishops, for the Evangelization of Peoples,**

**for Catholic Education, for Clergy and for the Causes of the Saints; of the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity, and for Culture; of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, and of the Pontifical Commissions for Latin America, "Ecclesia Dei," for the Authentic Interpretation of the Code of Canon Law, and for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law of the Oriental Churches . .**

**"His address to the Catholic Academy of Bavaria on 'Why I am still in the Church' had a wide resonance; in it he stated with his usual clarity: 'One can only be a Christian in the Church, not beside the Church.'"**—*Official Vatican Biographical Statement.*

It is significant that the above sentence was the only quotation from Ratzinger in this autobiographical summary. It is the age-old dictum, "Outside the Church of Rome, there is no salvation."

### INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS BY CCT

#### *Current official CCT Summary Statement (no date, but not written later than 2006)*

**"Christian Churches Together in the USA began in September 2001, with a meeting of church leaders in the US who explored the need for expanding fellowship, unity, and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith today. They lamented the absence of any one place where representatives of historic Protestant, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Orthodox churches [can] come together officially to strengthen their unity in Christ and empower their mission. They decided to convene another meeting in April 2002, to continue this exploration and invite broader participation from other church leaders. At this meeting, held in Chicago, the vision of CCT was crafted and publicly announced (see *Chicago Statement*).**

**"The next step was to agree on an organizational plan, including theological affirmations, purposes, categories of participation, a governing structure, and a proposed timeline. An expanded group of 55 denominational and other church leaders met at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California in January 2003, for this purpose. **The Organization Plan resulting from that meeting was approved by consensus by all who were there as "Participants."** This proposal and plan for Christian Churches Together in the USA was presented to the various denominations and organizations involved in the process. In 2006 in Atlanta, thirty-four churches and organizations adopted the **By-Laws** and officially organized as CCT."**

We will later quote from both, above-mentioned, documents. The following general statement introduces their apparently benign objectives.

#### *The Chicago Statement, An Invitation to a Journey, April 6, 2002, Chicago, Illinois*

**"As Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic church leaders, we write to all Christians in the United States to share our longing for an expanded Christian conversation in our nation. In Baltimore on Sept 7 - 8, 2001, we met to pray, to listen and to seek the guidance of God on whether all who confess the Lord Jesus**

Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures can talk together about how to share with the world our common confession of Jesus Christ. We continued this prayerful conversation in Chicago on April 4-6 and sensed the Holy Spirit leading us to new possibilities.

**"We lament that we are divided** and that our divisions too often result in distrust, misunderstandings, fear and even hostility between us. **We long for the broken body of Christ [to be] made whole, where unity can be celebrated** in the midst of our diversity.

**"We lament our often diffuse and diminished voice on matters critical to the gospel in our society.** We long for a more common witness, vision and mission.

"We lament how our lack of faithfulness to each other has led to a lack of effectiveness on **crucial issues of human dignity and social justice.** We long to strengthen **the prophetic public voice of the Christian community in America.**

"We lament that **none of our current organizations represents the full spectrum of Christians in the United States.** We long for a place, where our differences could be better understood and **our commonalities better affirmed.**

"In Chicago, we began to see a vision of a new life together. This vision has led us to provisionally call ourselves 'Christian Churches Together in the USA.' With excitement we began to sketch the outlines of a new level of relationship **and action that offer a common witness for Christ to the world.**

"This **common witness** will be visible through our celebrating **a common confession of faith** in the Triune God; seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit through biblical, spiritual, and speaking to society **with a common voice;** promoting the **common good of society;** fostering faithful **evangelism;** seeking reconciliation by **affirming our commonalities** and understanding our differences; and building **a community of fellowship and mutual support . . ."**

[How can they have a common witness, prayer, evangelism, and witness,—when there is only one aspect of their worship in common: Sundaykeeping?]

"We have only just begun to explore how to walk together. The questions for conversation, the ways to talk together and **the paths to take** all remain to be fleshed out [identified later], . . . but we long to allow the Holy Spirit to answer our Lord's prayer to the Father, **'that they may all be one . . .** so that the world may believe that you have sent me.' John 17: 21 . . .

"Revised May 21, 2002."—CCT: *The Chicago Statement.*

### **CCT: Frequently Asked Questions**

"There are already a number of organizations that bring churches together; what does CCT offer that is unique?

"Christian Churches Together offers a space **that is inclusive of the diversity** of Christian families in the United States — Evangelical, Orthodox, Roman Catho-

lic, Pentecostals, historic Protestant, Racial and Ethnic churches. [Something that can in some way unify us in spite of all our diverse beliefs.]

**"Until CCT came into existence, there was no national process in the United States to bring together churches** from all the major groupings or families of churches. Both the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) are national organizations, but neither brings together churches from all the Christian families.

"While these organizations maintain significant ministries with their constituencies, after fifty years it seems evident that neither organization **will secure the involvement** of those churches not presently a part of their membership.

**"CCT is the first national ecumenical group that US Catholics have joined;** with over 67 million members, the Catholic Church is the largest church in the United States. Christian Churches Together is unique in providing the only venue where churches from all the major groupings of churches, representing over one hundred million Christians, come together for prayer, dialogue, fellowship and witness."—CCT: *Frequently Asked Questions.*

**Because it has the largest, apparent membership, the Catholic Church would automatically tend to dominate CCT. In fact, as we will learn later in this investigative report, behind the scenes, it is doing just that.** (I said "apparent" because I have a book in my library, which explains that the Catholic Church has "thousands" of members in every nation—which do not actually exist. The number of real practicing Catholics throughout the world is exaggerated in order to increase its influence.)

## **2 - HISTORY**

### **CCT: Frequently Asked Questions**

"What did it take for CCT to get started?"

**"In 2001, a number of US church leaders began discussing the possibility** of forming a new organization that would provide a broader-based space than that provided by the National Council of Churches or the National Association of Evangelicals. **On September 7-8, 2001, various American church leaders met informally in Baltimore** to explore whether or not the time had come to **"create a new, more inclusive body."** At the meeting no votes were taken, but there was a strong desire among the participants for a broader structure of some kind that would include all the major groupings of churches, Protestant, **Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal groups.**

**"This conversation continued in Chicago (April 4 - 6, 2002), in Pasadena (January 27 - 29, 2003), in Houston (January 7 - 9, 2004), and in Los Altos (June 1 - 3, 2005) with an ever expanding and more diverse group of Christian leaders.** The participants at these meetings prayed, listened and sought God's guidance. They experienced an increasing sense of purpose and vision that resulted in the decision, by thirty-four churches and organizations, **to form Chris-**

#### 4 WAYMARKS [1386-1389]

**tian Churches Together in the USA in Atlanta on March 30, 2006.**—CCT: *Frequently Asked Questions*.

#### ELCA Announcement: June 11, 2002

"ELCA Welcomes Possible New Organization for U.S. Churches, June 11, 2002—Representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), as well as other mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal **and Roman Catholic churches**, have signed *An Invitation to a Journey*, a document envisioning a new organization—Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. (CCT)—**to bring all U.S. churches together as a united force for witnessing** to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**"After a September meeting in Baltimore and an April meeting in Chicago**, the 34 church leaders wrote 'to all Christians in the United States to share our longing for an expanded Christian conversation in our nation.' They wrote, 'It is our longing **which most clearly points us toward "something new"** as a possibility'

Jon S. Enslin, interim director, ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs, signed the document for the ELCA. He described the meetings as 'exciting and filled with spiritual energy. Decisions were made by consensus, and there was a unanimous agreement that now is the right time to broaden our ecumenical conversations.' [Throughout this report, "Rev." and "Father" are omitted for Biblical reasons.]

"The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC) serves many but not all of the country's churches. Enslin said, **'The opportunity to expand churchly interaction to include Roman Catholics, some Evangelicals and some Pentecostals should not be missed.**

"We clearly need to know one another better for the sake of the gospel in this country. If we are able to find areas of cooperation together, our voice will be much clearer in an increasingly secular and multi-religious society,' said Enslin.

"The ELCA is one of the NCC's 36 member churches. The NCC was founded in 1950, and its member churches include more than 50 million people in 140,000 congregations across the United States."—*ELCA Announcement: June 11, 2002*.

Do not miss the fact, mentioned above, that **CCT was designed to include, not only the Catholic Church, but also a number of Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations—which had never joined the NCC as full voting members.**

**The only new thing about CCT, which NCC lacked—is the addition of the Catholics.** Their willingness to join created a sensation among Protestant church leaders in America. *At last, Rome was willing to join!* This was considered great news.

**In all of the news clips for the general public (to be read by Protestant leaders and church members), you will notice the following, carefully con-**

**trived points:**

- "Several church leaders" met "informally" somewhere in Baltimore, and decided to start a new ecumenical organization (item quoted above).

- After a meeting in Baltimore and a later one in Chicago, 34 church leaders invited other churches to join. By that time, even the Catholic Church was considering joining.

- The Roman Catholic Church, which apparently had been very hesitant about joining, had held back. But then, after a few years of anguished soul-searching, on November 17, 2004, the Catholic Church finally relented and joined.

- That is what the public is told. **But, digging deeper, you will learn that it was the Cardinal of Baltimore who arranged for a fellow Catholic leader and two Protestant leaders to meet with him. (He would only dare do this by a direct command from the pope!) —He then broke the news that the papacy was willing to unite with Protestantism in a brand-new ecumenical organization.**

The idea that the Catholics took the trembling step to join CCT during three years and two months of that summer 2001 overture and after much prodding—is fiction. This is characteristic Catholic dissemination. It was one of the highest Vatican representatives in the U.S. which got CCT started! I suggest that, from the very beginning, the Vatican decided each step in the process, and continues to do so today.

It was Benedict's theoreticians (Jesuits?) who arranged for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to repeatedly appear to hesitate about fully joining.

As evidence of the clever master plan, **the man who got everything started—is now the man in charge of CCT's executive committee which makes all the decisions in the organization, sets all its goals, and writes all its statements of objectives!**

This is only part of what I have discovered from this research. More will follow later in this report.

**Here, collected from several news clips, intended only for Catholic readers (not for the Protestants), is the truth about that first meeting.** The following paragraphs were buried deep within three Vatican releases, intended for the eyes of Catholic readers:

**First came the initial invitation, sent by the Cardinal of Baltimore to key Protestant church leaders in the summer of 2001. I have learned from a special source that this meeting was held inside the Cardinal's official residence in Baltimore. The date of this meeting is not given anywhere.**

**Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004**

**"CCT began with an invitation sent out to a number of church leaders in the summer of 2001 by Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore; Robert**

# Christian Churches Together: Its History and Organization

## A RESEARCH REPORT

**PART TWO  
OF FOUR**

W  
M

1  
3  
8  
7

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

Edgar, National Council of Churches general secretary; Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary of the Reformed Church in America; and Bishop Tod D. Brown of Orange, Calif., chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. [I have omitted the phrases, "Rev.," "the Rev.," and "Father" from this and other places in this report.]—*Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004.*

**Then came what is frequently alluded to as the "first meeting."**

**Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004**

**"In response to the invitation 27 church leaders met Sept. 7-8, 2001, at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore to explore the idea** of a broader structure under which the wide diversity of Christian churches could come together to strengthen their unity in Christ and empower their witness and mission.

"There was unanimous agreement on the value of such an entity and the need for all five major families of Christian churches to be included among the participants. **The group adopted the name Christian Churches Together in the USA and appointed an interim steering committee** to organize further meetings with wider participation and chart the initial phases of development."—*Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004.*

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Release, April 7, 2006**

"The vision of CCT began with a diverse group of Christian leaders gathered in the fall of 2001 who expressed a longing for an expanded Christian conversation in this nation. **At the end of that meeting, which was hosted by Cardinal Keeler in Baltimore,** the group expressed the need for a new ecumenical forum in the United States . . .

"Cardinal Keeler said he was 'delighted that the work we began in Baltimore has continued to prosper.'"—*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Release, April 7, 2006.*

**As you might expect, Cardinal Keeler, who got everything started, was appointed as one of the five "co-presidents" of that initial steering committee. Because of the way CCT's executive committee is arranged, he has been the leading figure coordinat-**

**ing all CCT's activities and meetings since then. At the present time, he remains its key member.**

**Catholic News Service, April 10, 2006**

**"Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore, who hosted a 2001 meeting in Baltimore at which plans for the new organization first took shape, will represent the Catholic Church as one of its five co-presidents.** He said he was 'delighted that the work we began in Baltimore has continued to prosper.'"—*Catholic News Service, April 10, 2006.*

**The following brief overview of the history of CCT is based on its own historical summary:**

**In September 2001, 27 church leaders met in Baltimore** (location undisclosed), "considered the state of U.S. Christian churches," and decided "that there is a need to expand and broaden fellowship and unity among the diverse expressions of Christian faith." A Steering Committee was appointed to coordinate this project. (Much more about that "Steering Committee" will be mentioned later.)

**In April 2002, 36 church leaders met in Chicago** and "affirmed that broadened participation from other church leaders is necessary" for "expanded Christian conversation, unity, and empowered mission." **The name, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. was selected.** Another meeting was scheduled to meet later, with expanded participation. Apparently, for the first time, a public announcement was issued.

(Not so. The above summary of CCT's history from late 2001 to early 2005 disagrees with a Catholic press release, issued in November 2004, that the name was selected as early as September 7-8, 2001, at a Catholic seminary in Baltimore):

"The group adopted the name Christian Churches Together in the USA."—*Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004 [will be quoted in full later].*

In reality, the name may have been selected in the initial planning stage at the Vatican, before that fateful summer 2001 meeting by the Cardinal with three others at his mansion in Baltimore.

**From June to December 2002,** the Steering Committee prepared a draft of the *CCT Organization Plan*, and actively sought to broaden and expand participation of church leaders in CCT. The agenda was prepared for the January 2003 meeting. They also began contacting the churches interested in joining to send

## 6 WAYMARKS [1386-1389]

funds to help with the project.

**In January 2003, 57 church leaders met in Pasadena, CA,** and considered, modified slightly, and then adopted the *CCT Organization Plan*, prepared by the Steering Committee. They decided to expand CCT to include Christian organizations that are national in scope. (This was, of course, the original plan, first proposed in the summer of 2001. The Vatican wanted to replace the NCC by a mirror image organization,—but one which would be dominated by the Catholic Church.) At this meeting, it was agreed that CCT would not be initially launched as a full-fledged ecumenical organization until 25 denominations had agreed to join it. It was also decided that those present would work earnestly to increase the number of its member churches. An interim budget was determined, and another public announcement was issued to the press. **The initial Steering Committee was enlarged somewhat.**

**From March to December 2003,** the Steering Committee, with very few members, initiated the provisional CCT organizational infrastructure. (This would be expected because it was arranged that no other group in CCT would have this authority.) Active broadening of membership continued. A CCT website was developed, and plans were laid to incorporate CCT. Grant proposals for funding were written and carefully guided the various churches as they adopted the *CCT Organization Plan*. Plans were laid for the agenda of the Houston meeting.

**In January 2004, 51 leaders met at Houston,** refined the *Organization Plan* somewhat, and then adopted it. By this time, over 25 denominations had joined CCT. A *By-Laws Sub-committee*, and several *Outreach Sub-Committees* were formed. It was decided to “launch” CCT as an official organization at a meeting in 2005. The Steering Committee was once again enlarged somewhat, and another press release was issued.

**From February 2004 to June 2005,** the Steering Committee finalized the proposed CCT organizational structure, initiated plans for officially organizing the meeting and a CCT launch worship celebration. It was felt that there was an urgent need to bring the Black, Evangelical, and Pentecostal Churches into CCT. They had never earlier joined the NCC. *Special Historic Black, Evangelical, and Pentecostal Outreach Committees* were formed for this purpose. The Steering Committee also prepared the proposed *Articles of Incorporation*, along with *By-Laws*, a dues structure, staffing plan, job descriptions, compensation packages, budget forecast, and a fundraising plan. The agenda for the Los Altos meeting was carefully prepared.

Next followed the June 1-3, 2005, meeting at Los Altos, CA. It was held “at a Jesuit Retreat Center, Los Altos, California.”

Not until you reach heaven, will you and I realize the extent to which Christian Churches Together has, from start to finish, been a child of the papacy.

**Here is a rather lengthy Catholic news report, which will tell you about “how difficult” it was for Catholic leaders to consider joining CCT—over three years after it was first promoted by the cardinal back in the summer of 2001.**

### **Bishops Join New U.S. Ecumenical Forum**

“Catholic News Service

“November 18, 2004

“by Jerry Filteau

**“The U.S. Catholic bishops Nov. 17 took a historic ecumenical step by joining** the new national ecumenical forum Christian Churches Together in the USA [the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; USCCB].

**“It marks the first time that the U.S. Catholic Church is a partner church in such a national body** [in America], although Catholic churches in about 70 other countries belong to national councils of churches or similar bodies.

“The bishops approved the proposal to join CCT by a vote of 151-73, slightly more than a 2-to-1 margin.

“Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, presented the proposal to the bishops and urged its adoption, **noting that the Holy See** [the Vatican] **has also encouraged it.**

“He called the new organization ‘a forum for participation’ through which Christian churches can ‘pray together, grow in understanding together and witness together.’

“ ‘The purpose of Christian Churches Together is to enable churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ **in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world,**’ said a 25-page background report the bishops had before them in preparation for the debate and vote.

**“Bishop Blaire emphasized that for the Catholic Church the ultimate goal of ecumenism is the full, visible unity of all Christian churches in the one apostolic faith** [Catholicism].

**“In that framework, the church views the CCT as an ‘interim process’** rather than a final goal [into full Catholicism], ‘even though it is a fresh and creative initiative to broaden the ecumenical table,’ he said.

“He said the main focus in the organization’s early years will be to pray together and develop relations of mutual understanding and friendship.

“Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Neb., asked if the other churches in the CCT are aware of the perspective from which the Catholic Church approaches the organization. [The Catholic perspective is that, apart from submission to Rome, there is no salvation.] Bishop Blaire said **not only are the other churches aware of the Catholic view, but many of them also believe that full, visible unity is the ultimate goal and that organizations such as the CCT are only interim steps.**

“Several bishops expressed concern whether there are **sufficient safeguards in the organizational structure of the CCT to protect the Catholic Church from being associated with statements that contradict**

**Catholic beliefs. Bishop Blaire said such safeguards are in place . . .**

"He told the bishops that their membership decision was crucial to the survival of the CCT, since it will not exist without adequate membership from each of **the five 'families' of churches — Catholic, Orthodox, historical Protestant, historical racial and ethnic, and Evangelical and Pentecostal.**

"Bishop Blaire told the bishops that upon joining Christian Churches Together, **the USCCB will be the only Catholic member as a church.** The USCCB president will appoint the bishops' 10 delegates to the CCT General Assembly and one of those delegates will be designated as the spokesman for the group, he said. [This is an important point: Of the five "families," Vatican-controlled delegates will constitute one entire "family," and thus quite a few of the delegates.]

"In response to a question whether other churches that call themselves Catholic can also be admitted as members of the 'Catholic family,' Bishop Blaire said that **the bishops' conference [the USCCB] will have sole authority over who is recognized as Catholic. The conference will be the only church member in that family,** he said.

"In addition to Christian denominations, the CCT permits membership by national Christian organizations, but they can form no more than 20 percent of the total CCT membership. Bishop Blaire said **the bishops' conference will have final say about which Catholic organizations may be recognized and admitted to CCT membership** as national Christian organizations.

"He said Catholic membership will cost the bishops' conference about \$12,000 to \$15,000 a year, which will come out of the budget of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

"The costs will be kept low because the organization's staff will consist only of a director and an assistant, he said. Business will be conducted by the yearly General Assembly and, between assemblies, by a steering committee. **That committee will be composed of three representatives from each of the five church families** and three at-large members, chosen from among national Christian organizations according to criteria to be developed by the steering committee. [We will discover later that, at the present time, four of the 21 members of the Steering Committee are Catholics; more than the CCT *By-Laws* permits.]

"**CCT began with an invitation sent out to a number of church leaders, in the summer of 2001, by Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore; Robert Edgar, National Council of Churches general secretary; Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary of the Reformed Church in America; and Bishop Tod D. Brown of Orange, Calif., chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.** [I have omitted the phrases, "Rev.," "the Rev.," and "Father" throughout this report.]

"**In response to the invitation 27 church leaders met Sept. 7-8, 2001, at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore to explore the idea of a**

broader structure under which the wide diversity of Christian churches could come together to strengthen their unity in Christ and empower their witness and mission.

**"There was unanimous agreement on the value of such an entity and the need for all five major families of Christian churches to be included among the participants. The group adopted the name Christian Churches Together in the USA and appointed an interim steering committee to organize further meetings with wider participation and chart the initial phases of development."**

[We earlier learned that, in the official "history" of CCT, it is claimed that it was not until April 2002 that 36 leaders from U.S. churches first selected the name.]

"In subsequent meetings the number of church leaders involved grew. At a meeting in Houston earlier this year [January 24, 2004], it was decided that an inaugural assembly could be planned in 2005 because enough churches [over 25] had already joined or were in the process of making that commitment.

"Cardinal Walter Kasper, **president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity,** has encouraged USCCB membership in CCT.

"In a June letter to Bishop Blaire the cardinal said that 'one of its [CCT's] strongest points is the effort to bring into discussion **those Christians such as Evangelicals and Pentecostals who are among the fastest growing Christian communities, and who have not been sufficiently involved in the ecumenical dialogue.**'

"He suggested **the new U.S. organization would likely contribute to the Vatican's own ongoing efforts to build stronger relations with Evangelicals and Pentecostals.**"—*Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004.*

**The original master plan required that all the major groups of Christian denominations had to be crowded into CCT, before it could effectively begin fulfilling its objectives.**

One might ask why this would be necessary. **Why do all the churches have to be jammed into this new Catholic-coordinated political-action organization, before it can begin working toward its special goals to change life in America?** We sense here a strong urgency to gather the forces together—so there would be so many pulpits and church members behind this organization, that it would have the political strength to ram certain objectives through Congress. The fact that an immense number of American voters would be needed in order to coerce Congress into making extreme enactments was recognized. (And, by the way, no need to worry about the Supreme Court; a majority of its members are already Catholic.)

**Official starting date of CCT postponed**

**"Launch of Christian Churches Together is postponed - Catholic News Service - June 10, 2005**

"Founding members of Christian Churches Together in the USA, meeting in early June [June 1-3] in Los Altos, Calif., decided to delay the formal launch of the

## 8 WAYMARKS [1386-1389]

new ecumenical association.

"The original plan to have an inaugural worship celebration of the new association this September at the Episcopal Church's National Cathedral in Washington has been postponed **to give more churches and national Christian organizations time to join as founding members.**

**"Thirty-one churches and national organizations have already decided to join** the ecumenical group.

**"One major gap in membership is the historic black Protestant churches.** None of the African-American Methodist or Baptist denominations have signed on, although several are in the process of studying and deciding on membership.

"At the June 1-3 meeting, **held at the Jesuit Conference Center** in Los Altos, representatives of the member churches **and observers from 20 additional denominations that are actively considering joining** Christian Churches Together prayed and worshipped together and engaged in intensive dialogue and sharing.

"The gathering at Los Altos brought together a wider, more diverse circle of Christian church leaders than at any of the previous four meetings,' said a news release sent out after the meeting by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, chairman of the new ecumenical group's steering committee.

"The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops voted last November to participate in Christian Churches Together. **Of the 67 church leaders at the June meeting, 11 were members of the Catholic delegation,** which was led by Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., chairman of the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs."

[Those 11 delegates are in a position to block anything unfavorable to Catholicism; and their influence enables them to push things through which might otherwise be considered unwise. In addition, the other delegates well-know that if the Catholic delegation were to walk out,—CCT would collapse overnight.]

"The Los Altos meeting was to have been the final organizational meeting, but now at least one more such gathering is anticipated—probably sometime between January and May 2006, said Robert B. Flannery, president of the National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers and a member of the Catholic delegation at the meeting.

"In a telephone interview Flannery told Catholic News Service that the approach to delaying the formal inauguration of the ecumenical forum 'was all very positive; **things are going ahead like we'd want.'**

"**'We didn't want to rush prematurely to a formal inauguration** while other churches are still gathering information about what Christian Churches Together is and what membership in it would entail,' he said.

"Arthur Kennedy, executive director of the bishops' national Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious

Affairs, noted that church bodies have different procedures to go through in deciding on matters like joining a new organization. "It takes time," he said, and some denominations that are considering the issue simply need more time to go through the necessary steps.

"From the start the new association has been conceived as a broadly inclusive ecumenical forum for sharing, building relationships and acting jointly in mission and witness where possible, with minimal staff or program structure. **A key element has been an effort to bring together substantial representation from the five main Christian families in the United States:** Catholic, Orthodox, historic Protestant, historic racial and ethnic, and Evangelical and Pentecostal.

"The news release said participants at Los Altos 'agreed that the next meeting would continue common activities of prayer, biblical reflection, worship and relationship-building **as well as wrestle in depth with the issue of poverty** in the United States.'"

[It was at this June 1-3, 2005 meeting at Los Altos that, for the first time, the issue of "poverty in America" was brought to the front as an issue to be dealt with. **In a CCT statement on Frequently Asked Questions, it is clearly stated that "poverty" is only the first issue to be placed before the member churches as a matter demanding attention. But that later, other issues will handed to them by the Catholic-dominated Steering Committee,** which decides on such matters. "Participants will decide on specific actions to take together, to address the scandal of poverty in the U.S. Other concerns will follow." (This quotation will be quoted again later, in context.)]

"It [the news release] said participants enthusiastically reaffirmed their commitment to 'grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.' And the decision to delay the association's formal launch was made 'to continue the productive and positive conversation with churches and organizations actively considering joining.'

"Currently the largest national ecumenical body in the United States is **the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, which has encouraged the formation of Christian Churches Together.** [At the present time (Spring 2007), both organizations have 36 member denominations; so CCT has been growing fast!]

"While the Catholic Church is a member of similar national councils in a number of other countries, the sheer size of the U.S. Catholic Church has been an obstacle to its membership in the NCC. With some 67 million members, the Catholic Church has about 22 million more adherents than all NCC member denominations combined."—*Catholic News Service, June 10, 2005.*

**All through the above press release for Catholics, we sense urgency—a deep concern to push, push, for as many as possible to join CCT, and as soon as possible**

# Christian Churches Together: Its History and Organization

## A RESEARCH REPORT

**PART THREE  
OF FOUR**

W  
M  
1  
3  
8  
8

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

sible.

### CCT officially launched

**"United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Media Relationships, press release, April 7, 2006.**

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2006) — **Thirty-four churches and national Christian organizations, representing over 100 million Americans, have formed the broadest, most inclusive fellowship of Christian churches and traditions in the USA,** in a gathering at Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center near Atlanta, Georgia, March 28 – 31, 2006. [During the postponement, two black denominations had been added. Notice that, in acknowledgement of this, this annual meeting was held in a Southern State.]

**"National leaders from five Christian families** — Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, **Historic Racial/Ethnic**, Orthodox and Catholic—made the historic decision to organize officially as 'Christian Churches Together in the USA' (CCT). Its mission is 'to enable churches and Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.'

'The Catholic bishops of the United States voted to participate in CCT at their November 2004 meeting. A **twelve-member USCCB delegation** was present at the Atlanta meeting, headed by Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, a former Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

'In accord with the structure of the new organization, **the USCCB delegation chose Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore; Bishop Blaire; and Ronald G. Roberson, CSP, of the staff of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, as the three members of the CCT Steering Committee reserved for the Catholic family.**

**"Professor Ana Maria Pineda, R.S.M., of the Religious Studies Department of Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California, was also chosen as an at-large member of the Steering Committee** [a total of four Catholic members on the Steering Committee, more than the number reserved for any other family].

'Each family also elected one of five CCT Presidents, and **Cardinal Keeler** [the original initiator of CCT, back in the summer of 2001, even before the first fall meeting] **agreed to serve as the first Catholic President.** Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Atlanta led Morning

Prayer on March 30, and extended his greetings to the participants . . .

**"The vision of CCT began with a diverse group of Christian leaders gathered in the fall of 2001 who expressed a longing for an expanded Christian conversation in this nation. At the end of that meeting, which was hosted by Cardinal Keeler in Baltimore, the group expressed the need for a new ecumenical forum in the United States** in these words: 'We lament that we are divided and that our divisions too often result in distrust, misunderstandings, fear and even hostility between us. We long for the broken body of Christ to be made whole, where unity can be celebrated in the midst of our diversity. We long for more common witness, vision and mission.'

'Over these past years, a process of mutual engagement, agreement on purposes, and organizational planning has now resulted in an historic new expression of relationships among churches. 'We finally found the courage to confront our obvious and longstanding divisions and to build a new expression of unity, rooted in the Spirit, that will strengthen our mission in the world,' affirmed Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America, who has served as interim moderator. 'We are filled with excitement, hope and expectation for how God will use this new expression of our fellowship together.' **Cardinal Keeler said he was 'delighted that the work we began in Baltimore has continued to prosper.'**

'For his part, Bishop Blaire said that **'the Catholic Church is deeply committed, as integral to her mission, to the full, visible communion of all Christians.** Participation in Christian Churches Together is **an important step forward in the process towards Christian unity** that Jesus Christ wills for us.' Roberson said he believes the decision taken in Atlanta to establish CCT will eventually be seen as a watershed moment in the history of ecumenism in the United States. 'At the same time,' he said, 'we did this with a sense of incompleteness. We really felt the absence of some of our country's churches, and we continue to hope they will join us in this new initiative.'

'In addition to the 36 participant churches and organizations, **eight churches and national organizations, who are considering participation, were present** as observers. CCT continues to extend a warm invitation to all churches, Christian Communities and National Christian Organizations to consider becoming active participants and to working together with others to present a more credible Christian witness

in and to the world.”—*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Media Relationships, press release, April 7, 2006.*

**“Christian Churches Together in the USA is officially started - Catholic News Service - April 10, 2006**

“WASHINGTON (CNS) — Christian Churches Together in the USA—the broadest, most inclusive ecumenical movement in U.S. history—was officially founded during a March 28-31 gathering near Atlanta. Its founding 34 Christian churches and national organizations represent more than 100 million Americans. Twenty-two additional churches and organizations are participating as observers or are in the process of deciding about joining, and more than 30 others are in conversation with Christian Churches Together. **Cardinal William H. Keeler of Baltimore, who hosted a 2001 meeting in Baltimore at which plans for the new organization first took shape, will represent the Catholic Church as one of its five co-presidents. He said he was ‘delighted that the work we began in Baltimore has continued to prosper.’** Christian Churches Together is intended as a forum of ecumenical dialogue and witness involving the participation of representatives from all five major Christian families of churches in the United States: Catholic, Orthodox, historic Protestant, Evangelical/Pentecostal, and historic racial/ethnic.”—*Catholic News Service, April 10, 2006.*

**In the following CCT statement, notice that the leaders representing the member churches are told that the immediate purpose is to learn to work closely together, learn the teachings held in common, and practice promoting the first CCT project (“poverty in America”), while getting ready for “other concerns” requiring united action later. We happen to know that the eventual “action” will be pushing Congress to enact legislation on Sunday observance.**

**CCT: Frequently Asked Questions**

“Is CCT going to do anything?”

“It is probably necessary, in our American context, to affirm that ***being together and building relationships is doing something.*** [Italics theirs] The first four tasks, as stated in the *By-laws*, relate to being together: (1) to celebrate a common confession of faith in the Triune God [a single Being with three manifestations, which is not the Biblical view], (2) to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer and theological dialogue, (3) to provide fellowship and mutual support, (4) to seek better understanding of each other **by affirming our commonalities** and understanding our differences. This process takes time; there are no short-cuts.

**“Out of this process of growing together, participants discern how and when to take action together in common witness to our society.** The *By-laws* mention three specific tasks: (5) to foster evangelism faithful to the proclamation of the gospel, (6) **to speak to society with a common voice whenever possible,** and (7) **to promote the common good of society.**

**“As a first example of action that emerged in this way, the 2006 annual meeting focused on poverty in the USA** and participants committed themselves to finding the distinct contribution that CCT can make in eliminating poverty. **In 2007, participants will decide on specific actions to take together** to address the scandal of poverty in the U.S. **Other concerns will follow** as participants discern the needs to be addressed together.”—*CCT: Frequently Asked Questions.*

**Next we have the announcement of the February 2007 CCT meeting.** The announced purpose was solely to celebrate the fact that CCT had been launched. —Yet that was an event which had occurred nearly a year earlier (in March 2006)! Apparently, the Steering Committee could not think of anything else to put on the agenda; while they were well-aware that **the delegates needed an additional opportunity to deepen friendships with one another, so they would be all the more unified and committed to CCT, when the Steering Committee eventually decided to initiate definite legislative campaigns.**

**“CCT-USA Press Release (undated) - Major New Initiative in Christian Unity to be Celebrated**

“The leadership of thirty-six churches and national Christian organizations will gather at Pasadena Presbyterian Church, Pasadena, California, Wednesday, February 7, at 7:30 pm **to celebrate the formation of Christian Churches Together** in the USA (CCT).

“Christian Churches Together began in 2001 out of a deeply felt need **to broaden and expand fellowship, unity,** and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith today. Over the past five years, with a focus on praying together and building relationships, CCT has become the broadest, most inclusive fellowship of Christian churches and traditions in the USA, including Evangelical/Pentecostal, Orthodox, Catholic, historic Protestant and Racial/Ethnic churches among its participants.

“As part of the celebration, the five CCT Presidents, Cardinal William Keeler, Archdiocese of Baltimore; Dr. William Shaw, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox Church in America; Bishop James Leggett, International Pentecostal Holiness Church; and Larry Pickens, United Methodist Church, will speak on the significance of the CCT vision for faithful Christian witness. In the symbolic action of lighting candles, all CCT Participants will commit themselves ‘to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.’

“In cooperation with Fuller Seminary and the Southern California Ecumenical Council, CCT invites church leaders and pastors in the greater Pasadena area to join in this celebration and to be present at the reception that follows.”—*CCT press release, undated (probably late fall 2006).*

**Notice that, in the above announcement of the February meeting, it was stated that Fuller Seminary was one of the local sponsors of the forthcoming February 2007 meeting.** Some who afterward phoned Fuller Seminary about that meeting were told that Fuller had

nothing to do with it; this is puzzling. Yet, prior to its occurrence, CCT said Fuller was one of its primary southern California promoters.

**Here is a second press release about this forthcoming February meeting.** Oddly enough, it is dated February 7,—although the meeting began the evening before.

#### CCT press release, February 7, 2007

##### **“Christian Churches Together will meet in Pasadena’s Lake Avenue Church February 6-9, 2007**

*“Ed. Note: Media are welcome to attend the open sessions on Wednesday, February 7. [Italics theirs.]*

“Pasadena, Calif., February 5, 2007—Representatives of nearly 40 Christian denominations and groups committed to ‘being together’ will meet here February 6-9 in the Lake Avenue Church. [Apparently, this is the same as the ‘Pasadena Presbyterian Church,’ mentioned in the preceding news clip.]

“This will be the sixth annual gathering for Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT), an informally structured organization that began in 2001 to provide a meeting place for all the major groupings of Christian traditions . . .

**“An important topic on the meeting agenda will be discussion of the CCT’s Poverty Committee,** which is recommending that the members come together on a major initiative to overcome poverty in the U.S.”—*CCT press release, February 7, 2007.*

On this agenda, prepared earlier by the Steering Committee, “poverty” was to be the topic for the delegates to discuss and to be released to the media.

**But there was also a special agenda item discussed by a smaller decision-making group at that meeting, which included the eventual plan for CCT to heavily promote Sundaykeeping in America. That item was not released to the general public.**

In the following announcement, released the day after the February meeting, **it is stated that this gathering “marked the official formation of CCT.” —Yet that had occurred a year earlier, in March 2006.**

Although Los Angeles has many, many important religious leaders, **those present were first to be officially welcomed to this yearly assembly by a Catholic cardinal.** (The pastor of the church in which the meetings were held also extended them a warm welcome.) No other “welcomes” are mentioned.

#### **“Christian Churches Together officially organized - February 10, 2007**

“A publicly announced consensus on the importance of evangelism and the need to eliminate domestic poverty **marked the official formation of Christian Churches Together** (CCT) meeting in Pasadena, CA, on February 6-9.

“The CCT is composed of 36 churches and national organizations from virtually all U.S. Christian groups who have been seeking to come together for fellowship, worship and opportunities to share in impor-

tant ministries . . .

“A Celebration and Commitment Service Wednesday highlighted the gathering that included over 150 participants and observers and a group of seminary students and young leaders. **The 36 founding members includes the most recent groups to become official participants in CCT: the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America** were warmly welcomed. Other groups are currently investigating membership, said the Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America, chair of the CCT steering committee.

**“ Seeing the leaders of all the participating churches and organizations standing and praying together in their commitment to this vision was a powerful, visible sign of hope.”** Granberg-Michaelson said. ‘We have said from the beginning that **our purpose is to grow closer together** in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world . . . [At this meeting] we all experienced how this is truly happening, and this fills us with joy for the future’ . . .

“Participants wrestled with the challenge to consider future cooperative possibilities while recognizing and affirming the common efforts and cooperation that already exists on many levels.

**“The service of celebration and commitment included words of welcome from Cardinal Roger Mahoney of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles** and Dr. Barbara Anderson, co-pastor of Pasadena Presbyterian Church, host of the service. The Coptic Orthodox Choir of the Diocese of Los Angeles and other musical contributions complimented scriptural readings and words from the five presidents on the importance of joining this movement for Christian unity.

“Bishop James Leggett of the International Pentecostal Holiness church proclaimed that we must follow Jesus in his prayer **‘That all might be one.’** Along with Dr. Shaw, Pickens, Bishop Leggett and Kishkovsky, **Bishop Richard Sklba of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops** (representing Cardinal William Keeler of the Archdiocese of Baltimore) joined together as the presidents of the five faith families of CCT and, in a symbolic action of lighting candles, committed **‘to grow closer together** in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.’ ”—*Christian Churches Together, official press release, February 10, 2007.*

### **3 - WHO IS IN CHARGE OF CCT?**

The following CCT statement tells the “benefits” which the member churches will acquire by joining the organization. But notice how carefully these “benefits” are worded.

No mention is made of the fact that, because the Steering Committee prepares the meeting agendas for them to rubberstamp, **these member churches will not have very much say in the management of the organization. Most important of all, they will have no part**

in deciding what the plans and objectives of CCT will be. According to the *By-Laws*, those are entirely in the hands of the Steering Committee. However, tantalizing phrases are included which indicate that, in some way not yet stated, CCT will eventually be able to change American society.

### **CCT: Frequently Asked Questions**

"What are the benefits to participant churches?"

"Christian Churches Together provides a context—marked by prayer, theological dialogue and fellowship—in which churches **can develop relationships** with other churches with whom they presently have little contact. This is one response to our Lord's Prayer that all who believe in Him might be one with God and with one another so that the world would believe in Him as God and Savior (John 17:21). CCT offers the possibility of **face-to-face relationships** with participants across the major church families in the U.S. As participants grow closer together in Christ, differences can be better understood and **commonalities affirmed**. In praying and studying the scripture together, **spiritual resources will be deepened** and **prophetic voices strengthened**. There will be **new possibilities for shared witness**, new coalitions formed among churches on various issues. CCT, out of its **commitment to grow closer together** in Christ, **can offer a significant and credible voice in speaking to contemporary culture on issues of life, social justice and peace.**"—CCT: *Frequently Asked Questions*.

### **THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**It is the CCT Steering Committee which decides the agenda of this suddenly gigantic new ecumenical organization.** This is the planning committee of the organization, the small committee which decides where CCT should be headed and the goals it should work toward.

According to the *CCT Organization Plan*, **the Steering Committee is in total control of CCT between the yearly two-and-one-half-days that the General Assembly meets.** This makes the Steering Committee very important! It makes all of CCT's decisions during the rest of the year. It even sets all the agenda items to be discussed at local "forums" and the yearly General Assembly.

As with other church organizations (ours included), most of each CCT yearly meeting is occupied with introductions, speeches, visiting, and special events. **Very little time is spent on business meetings—and the agenda (that which is discussed and voted on) is planned ahead of time by the Steering Committee.**

The *Organization Plan*, as well as the *By-Laws*, also states that not one of the five types ("families") of Christian Churches can have more than three members on the Steering Committee; yet we will discover later in this report that **the Roman Catholic Church has four**

**members on the Steering Committee, and no other denomination has more than one or two. That is an undisputed fact!**

Here is an excerpt, about the Steering Committee, from the *CCT Organization Plan*:

"Steering Committee:

**"The Steering Committee will consist of 18-24 members. [It currently has 21.] Each of Christian Churches Together's five families** (Evangelical/Pentecostal; Historic Protestant; Historic Racial/Ethnic; Orthodox; Roman Catholic) **will have three members each** on the Steering Committee. Each of the five families will choose their three representatives according to their own procedures. **The Steering Committee will have at least three additional at-large members.** These at-large members may be representatives of participant national Christian organizations (selected according to criteria to be developed by the Steering Committee).

"Upon joining Christian Churches Together, each communion or association of churches will choose which of the five families they wish to join for purposes of selecting the members of the Steering Committee.

**"The Steering Committee will elect its officers, develop bylaws** (including length of term on the Steering Committee), **and attend to the business of Christian Churches Together between meetings of the General Assembly.** The purpose of the Steering Committee is to facilitate and serve the decisions of the General Assembly."—CCT *Organization Plan*.

According to the *By-Laws* of the CCT, **the Steering Committee is in charge of the whole organization; it is the board of directors!**

**" 'Steering Committee' shall mean the board of directors of the [CCT] corporation.**"—CCT *By-Laws*, "Definitions."

"[It was decided that] the term 'Steering Committee' is preferred over the term 'Board of Directors.'"—CCT *By-Laws*, Article 8, Section 8.1.

The Steering Committee also determines where the CCT headquarters will be located in New York State (where CCT is registered), and whether it will have any subsidiary offices.

"The office and registered agent of this Corporation in the State of New York shall be as determined by the Steering Committee.

"The Corporation may have such other offices either within or without the State of New York, as the Steering Committee may from time to time determine."—CCT *By-Laws*, Article 1, Sections 1.1-1.2.

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Carefully checking through the list of the members of the CCT Steering Committee, I find that, of those members representing major denominations, four**

# Christian Churches Together: Its History and Organization

## A RESEARCH REPORT

### PART FOUR OF FOUR

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

members of the 21 Steering Committee represent the Roman Catholic Church—of which two are bishops and one a cardinal! This gives the Vatican immense influence in each meeting of the Steering Committee throughout the year. The cardinal and two bishops will tend to overawe the others present!

Of the 11 members representing major Protestant denominations, three represent various Baptist denominations, two represent different Methodist denominations, two represent different Orthodox denominations, and only one of each represents the other major denominations (Reformed, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and Episcopal). The remaining members of the Steering Committee represent various separate organizations or tiny split-off churches.

—In strong contrast, four members represent one denomination: the Roman Catholic Church! While the others are broadly divided in beliefs and practices, the Catholic members are solidly united in fulfilling the wishes of the Vatican.

Four out of 21 is nearly one-fourth (25%) of the total Steering Committee; yet this is different from the *Organization Plan* arrangement for the full membership of CCT.

“No more than 20% of Christian Churches Together will be participant national Christian organizations.”—*CCT Organization Plan*.

In addition, no one church family can have more than three members on the Steering Committee; yet the Catholic Church has four.

“That committee will be composed of three representatives from each of the five church families.”—*Catholic News Service, November 18, 2004*.

“Each Church Family shall be entitled to three representatives on the Steering Committee.”—*CCT By-Laws, Section 8.2*.

At this juncture, someone will surely say you must be wrong! Here is the proof that there are four dedicated Catholics on the Steering Committee:

“The Catholic bishops of the United States voted to participate in CCT at their November 2004 meeting. A twelve-member USCCB [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops] delegation was present at the Atlanta meeting, headed by Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, a former Chairman of the Bishops’ Com-

mittee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

“In accord with the structure of the new organization, the USCCB delegation chose Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, Bishop Blaire, and Ronald G. Roberson, CSP, of the staff of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, as the three members of the CCT Steering Committee reserved for the Catholic family.

“Professor Ana Maria Pineda, R.S.M., of the Religious Studies Department of Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California, was also chosen as an at-large member of the Steering Committee [a total of four Catholic members on the Steering Committee, more than the number reserved for any other family].”—*U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, press release, April 7, 2006*.

There are also two other “at-large” members of the Steering Committee; but, because they represent various denominations, they do not help compose a solid block for any denomination on that committee.

As of Spring 2007, here are all 21 current members of this Steering Committee. I have arranged them in three categories. (For Biblical reasons, I have omitted “Rev.” and “Father” from before names.)

#### REPRESENTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Cardinal William Keeler, Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Bishop Stephen Blaire, Catholic Diocese of Stockton.

Ron Roberson, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Ann Marie Pineda, U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops.

#### REPRESENTING ALL PROTESTANT AND ORTHODOX DENOMINATIONS

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Reformed Church in America.

Bishop Roger Haskins, Free Methodist Church of North America.

Jacob Jang, The Korean Presbyterian Church in America.

Archbishop Cyril Karim, Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox Church in America.

Bishop James Leggett, International Pentecostal

## 14 WAYMARKS [1386-1389]

Holiness Church.

Larry Pickens, The General Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns, The United **Methodist** Church.

Dr. William Shaw, National **Baptist** Convention, USA.

Ms. A. Bowle Snodgrass, The **Episcopal** Church Center.

Dr. Stephen Thurston, National **Baptist** Convention of America.

Dr. Daniel Vestal, Cooperative **Baptist** Fellowship.

### REPRESENTING SMALL CHURCHES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Jeff Farmer, Open Bible Churches.

Steve Haas, World Vision.

Elder Ricardo Moreno, AMEN.

Bishop Serapion.

Ronald J. Sider, Evangelicals for Social Action.

Don Dixon Williams, Bread for the World.

### THE FIVE PRESIDENTS

In addition, there are five "presidents," as follows:

"The five CCT Presidents [are] Cardinal William Keeler, Archdiocese of Baltimore; Dr. William Shaw, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox Church in America; Bishop James Leggett, International Pentecostal Holiness Church; and Larry Pickens, United Methodist Church."—CCT press release, undated (probably late fall 2006).

**Who selects those five presidents?** Not the General Assembly? As usual, they hardly do anything. **The three members, of each "family," on the Steering Committee select their own new president,—and they are only permitted to do that when a vacancy occurs!** Such a pattern makes for powerful long-term control by the Steering Committee and its presidents of everything that CCT plans and does!

"Vacancies in the position of President shall be filled by a consensus of the remaining Steering Committee members representing that Church Family and ratified by the Steering Committee."—CCT By-Laws, Section 8.5.

These "presidents" are members of the Steering Committee. The authority of each one is limited to being the spokesman for his "family" of delegates.

"Each family also elected one of five CCT Presidents, and Cardinal Keeler agreed to serve as the first Catholic President."—U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Press release, April 7, 2006.

### MORE ABOUT THE STEERING COMMITTEE

As we learned earlier, **it was Cardinal Keeler that initially got CCT started!** In the summer of 2001, as you will recall, he sent out calls for others to meet with him; and he hosted the first planning session on September 8-9 of that year. He is now the leader of the most powerful single voting block on the Steering Committee. When all members of the Steering Committee are present, **all he needs is the votes of six other members in order to have a majority.**

—But, reading the fine print in the *By-Laws*, we find that **only 11 members of the Steering Committee need be present—in order to have a Quorum!** At such times, even though only one from each of the other "families" is present, **the Catholic block needs only one additional vote** in order to enact anything it wishes.

**"A majority of the Steering Committee members shall constitute a quorum** for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Steering Committee. At least one person from each of the five designated Church Families must be present."—CCT By-Laws, Section 8.7 (d).

**How are members of the Steering Committee changed?** Based on recommendations by the Steering Committee, vacancies on the Steering Committee are filled in the following manner. But note that only vacancies are filled!

"At such Annual Meetings the Participants shall choose Steering Committee members (if there are vacancies)."—CCT By-Laws, Section 7.1.

On a rotation basis, **each year one of the three members of a "family," on each of the five Steering Committee families, is changed.** But this in no way interferes with plans and objectives of the one Steering Committee "family" which represents Rome. This is because it is the remaining members of that family who select their replacement!

The CCT By-Laws (Section 8.3) explains that the term of office of each member of the Steering Committee is normally three years.

**"Each Church Family shall be entitled to three representatives on the Steering Committee.** [But the Catholic family has four.] Their terms shall be staggered. At the Annual Meetings of participants **each of the Church Families shall caucus [meet together alone] to elect one representative** to the Steering Committee."—CCT By-Laws, Section 8.2.

**How often are meetings of the entire assembly held? They only need be held once a year,** and the time, location, and complete agenda to be approved—is determined in advance by the Steering Committee. (Since only churches and organizations are "members," those who attend are given the subservient name of "participants." That word gives the impression that they lack the authority that delegates would have.)

"A meeting of Participants shall be held **at least once each year** at a place designated by the Steering Committee."—CCT By-Laws, Section 7.1.

In summary, we find that CCT has structured their organization much like our denominational organization, except that we have more levels. On each level, a small group decides everything that is done and prepares the agenda for its infrequent general assembly to approve. However, we go one step further and provide the delegates with only one name for each office that they must fill.

"Christian Churches Together will sponsor, in the name of Christian Churches Together, various Fo-

W  
M  
1  
3  
8  
9

rums, national and regional, on diverse topics (e.g., evangelism, worship, public policy). **The Steering Committee will have full authority over the topics and the program (speakers, etc.) for Forums sponsored by Christian Churches Together.**—*CCT Organization Plan*.

A special part of the work of the Steering Committee is to identify Christian churches and organizations **which share its concerns and "theological convictions"**—and invite them to become members.

"The Christian Churches Together Steering Committee will develop a broad invitation list of national church bodies, associations of churches and national Christian organizations, which will be invited to become participants in Christian Churches Together. Participant national Christian organizations will be those that **strongly share the theological convictions and purposes of Christian Churches Together**, are deeply related to its churches, **and which have the strong support of a wide variety of churches** that will compose Christian Churches Together."—*CCT Organization Plan*.

"Criteria will be developed to welcome into the fellowship those national church bodies, associations of churches and national Christian organizations, **which, based on the discernment of the governing bodies of Christian Churches Together, will uphold its theological affirmations, further its purpose**, and promote unity."—*CCT Organization Plan*.

It should be mentioned that, regarding the *CCT Organization Plan*, we are told this:

"This document was first approved by consensus by the participants at the January 27-29, 2003 meeting at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California."—*CCT Organization Plan*.

#### CONCLUSION

***It was only because of the urgent importance of the following two facts that I researched out all this data:*** (1) **The Catholics have, for the first time, united with the Protestants** in America in a single ecumenical organization. (2) **Its secret ten-point set of objectives, drawn up by a small committee at the February 2007 meeting, calls for an eventual campaign for Sunday sacredness** and attendance in the U.S. This will doubtless lead to a demand for a National Sunday Law. (See our two recent reports, *Call for a National Sunday Law* [WM-1378] and *Sunday Law Objective* [WM-1383].) **Because of the utmost gravity of this situation, we want to know all we can about the inner workings of CCT.** I have presented it in this present report.

***In the process, we have discovered from official CCT statements*** that (1) **CCT was brought into existence by the urgent call of a Catholic cardinal.** (2) **In less than six years, CCT has become the most powerful ecumenical movement in U.S. history.** (3) **The Steering Committee makes all CCT decisions,** (4) that **the Catholic Church dominates that committee,** and (5) **that domination will be perpetual.** It will never end as long as CCT exists.

If you will read pp. 44-47 in my 208-page, *Mark of the Beast*—and pp. 30-56 of my 112-page, *National Sunday Law Crisis*, you will be given a detailed account of the fact that **U.S. ecumenical organizations have had the enactment of a Sunday law as their primary objective for many decades in the 19th and early 20th centuries.** But, back then, they did not have the fabulous political strength of the Catholic element in with them—so they could push a National Sunday Law through Congress.

It is well-known by U.S. politicians that, at the present time, Evangelicals in the U.S. have a 25%-30% voting block, when they want to use it, and the Catholics have another 25%-30%. Combined, they can push anything through Congress that they wish. But now they have added at least 25% of the Protestant black vote.

Repeatedly, in the 1980s and 1990s, the right-wing conservative coalitions have been unable to muster the Catholic vote—because the Vatican has previously not wanted to be too closely tied in with the Evangelicals. So they lacked a voting majority. But times are beginning to change.

#### PROTESTANT ECUMENCALS WEAKENED

***Of major significance***—Today, as I conclude this report, two of the Protestant leaders in the Christian ecumenical movement are now out of action. **This is likely to cause other Protestant ecumenical leaders in America to look more to the Catholic bishops in CCT for leadership and direction.**

These recent events have greatly strengthened the bargaining position of the Catholic bishops, and placed more power and influence in the hand of their stepchild: Christian Churches Together.

***Death of Jerry Falwell***—This morning, May 15, Jerry Falwell died, apparently of a heart attack, at the age of 73. He founded the *Moral Majority* in 1980, which helped to elect Ronald Reagan and gave Senate control to the Republicans.

He stepped down from the *Moral Majority* in 1987. His 22,000-member Thomas Road Baptist Church and 7,700-student Liberty University are located at Falwell's headquarters in Lynchburg, VA.

***Kennedy's heart attack***—D. James Kennedy, 76, who had a heart attack in December, was recuperating in a Michigan hospital when, **on May 8, his political action organization, Center for Reclaiming America, totally closed down its operations!** Leaders at Coral Ridge had learned that Kennedy had been permanently disabled by his heart attack.

Kennedy's annual *Reclaiming America for Christ 2007* conference meeting was held in Fort Lauderdale on the weekend of March 2, but without his presence.

Last week, on May 11, Kennedy returned to Coral Ridge, hardly able to speak and using a walker.

D. James Kennedy, who founded Coral Ridge Church in Fort Lauderdale in 1974, later emerged as an internationally known evangelist whose *Coral Ridge Hour* (along with James Dobson's *Focus on the Family*) be-

came the leading Protestant voice in America, demanding a return to "moral values." **It was one of the nation's leading grassroots political organizations; and now it is closed down.**

**This end of two powerful ecumenical careers comes at a challenging moment for the religious right.**

**The Christian Coalition**, founded in 1989 by televangelist Pat Robertson and credited with helping Republicans seize control of Congress in 1994, **has dwindled financially and politically.** It boasted a budget of \$26 million in the late 1990s. By last year, the group was \$2 million in debt, fighting off creditors and facing defections from some of its strongest state chapters, including those of Iowa, Ohio, and Alabama.

Among Kennedy's goals were these: *The Constitution Restoration Act*, which was a bill promoted during the 2005 *Confronting the Judicial War on Faith Conference* that sought to authorize Congress to impeach judges who fail to acknowledge "God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government" and to limit the power of the federal judiciary—all federal courts, including the Supreme Court—to rule in religious liberty cases.

Kennedy sought to "reclaim America for Christ" in which government policies and laws would be consistent with Evangelical Christianity. Many of his public messages on this topic focus on claims that the Founding Fathers of America were Christian and intended to establish a Christian constitution and nation.

**Protestant leaders divided**—But **quarreling among these Christian political activist organizations has arisen.** Rick Warren (pastor of the immense Saddleback Church and author of the popular book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*) drew the ire of some conservative Christians for inviting Democratic Sen. Barack Obama to an AIDS conference at his Saddleback Church in southern California.

Along about the same time, 86 Evangelicals, including Warren and Florida's Joel Hunter (former president-elect of the *Christian Coalition*), backed an initiative on climate change, drawing criticism from James Dobson and other conservatives who oppose Christian involvement on climate issues.

Then, last week (May 8), a coalition of Evangelical leaders launched an initiative to lobby Congress for immigration reform.

Many Christian conservatives disagree with such efforts, arguing that the Bible speaks more directly on pro-life and marriage issues.

"The social conservative movement should not change its agenda," said John Stemberger, president of the Florida Family Policy Council. "While the scripture speaks to all areas, it speaks with more clarity to some areas than others."

As we near press time: Francis J. Beckwith, associate professor at Baylor University (Baptist) in Waco, TX, has just resigned (May 5) from the presidency of the Evangelical Theological Society, the largest association of Protestant theologians in America (with 4,300 members)—because he has joined the Roman Catholic Church! Although some fellow theologians may secretly be happy, many are stunned by the news.

But Joel Hunter, who was among the Evangelical leaders who signed the recent statement on immigration reform, said Christian activists must diversify their platform to remain relevant.

Christian Churches Together, under the joint leadership of Catholic and Protestant ecumenicals, will continue to grow in influence in America and in the halls of Congress.

We have learned that the special objective of CCT goes far beyond helping the poor, fighting AIDs, placating the homosexuals, or readjusting the climate. **Avoiding infighting among themselves, the pattern is ecumenical. And the ultimate objective is to unite the churches by urging the sacredness of Sunday worship services and coercing Congress into enacting a full-blown National Sunday Law.**

—vf

**We have been reading current history. Let us now read the future:**

**"The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church.** And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries. **Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation.** While they are bent upon the accomplishment of their purpose, Rome is aiming to re-establish her power, to recover her lost supremacy. **Let the principle once be established in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured.**

"God's Word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. **She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls,** in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. **All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her.** We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the Word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution."

—*Great Controversy*, 581