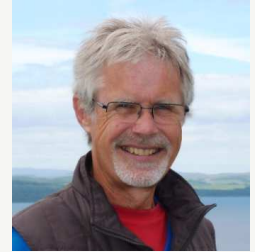
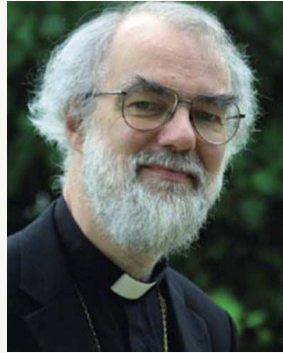
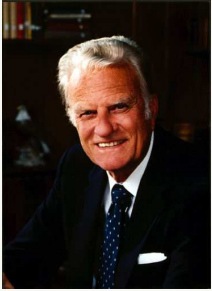




- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 4: Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

7. Our Attitude to Other Christians



One of the surprising results of the window-opening by John XXIII has been the involvement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement—which had itself begun as long ago as the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1920. Instead of thinking of Protestants as ‘the enemy’, Catholics began to see them as fellow Christians tragically separated from Catholic Christianity by past historical events. Further, our relations with the Eastern Churches—separated from Western Christianity as long ago as 1054—have been improved immensely. Instead of concentrating on differences, what we have in common has increasingly been brought to the fore. We can proudly proclaim that ‘truth subsists within the Catholic Church’ without denying the truth that other Christians share with us. In the *Decree on Ecumenism* of Vatican II we find the following:

- Every renewal of the Church consists essentially in an increase of fidelity to her calling...Christ summons his Church to that continual reformation of which she is always in need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth.
- There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from newness of attitudes, from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity take their rise and grow toward maturity. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity toward them.
- Let all Christ’s faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity. For they can achieve depth and ease in strengthening mutual brotherhood to the degree that they enjoy profound communion with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Rule 19

What contact have you had, and in what ways have you worked with, other Christians?



Scripture—

John 17. 20-24

‘ I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ’

Gal 3. 23-28

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.