

3. Factors contributing to the Modern ecumenical movement.. viewed historically and critically.

a. Theological liberalism

Already discussed at some length, I need only add here that without this and the willingness to accept a pluralistic theology there is really no potential for success. The very weakness of liberalism and its inability to build and strengthen churches calls for a merger of ideologies...not a union in faith.

b. Ecclesiastical social consciousness

This is somewhat due to the contracting of the world in terms of global society and the recognition that it is necessary to have a world view with a greater understanding of the totality of society than may have been true in past generations. The church has always had something of a social consciousness but it has grown with better information on world need and in the view of the great wars and stresses that have ravaged society.

c. Envy of Rome

The "success" of Rome has always been a point of envy for many protestant leaders caught in the morass of endless competition and duplication of effort with minimal cooperation. Rome has not always been nearly so successful as some have thought but it has presented a monolithic picture of accomplishments that charms much protestant mentality with the glitter of uniformity or oneness. This continues to be true in spite of some rather heavy divisiveness in the Roman system in recent years.

d. Loss of rationale for individual denominations.

Some of the rationale was always poor, as you may know, but if you no longer believe something...why stand for it? With the demise of solid theological foundations, many churches have no real reason for continuing as competent entities. Mergers and unions are the apparent better path.

e. Desire for greater efficiency.

In any objective analysis the church has not been an efficient instrument. It would be hard to find any organization showing less skill in this area. Greater efficiency might be accomplished with a centrality of organization or control.

f. Elimination of proselytizing

Always a thorn in the flesh...but if there were but one church...?