

A Typology of Christian Unity Concepts and Their Relational Content

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1. Types	2. RMT Reference models	3. Alternative terminology	4. IOR or networks analogies	5. Examples, organizations, movements
A. Juridical	Authority Ranking			
(1) organic union	radical	reunion, unification	merger, monopoly	United churches, reversed schisms
(2) mutual recognition	moderate	reconciled diversity; church fellowship	systemic production network, cartel	Leuenberg Church Fellowship, Porvoo Communion
B. Cooperative	Equality Matching			
(3) cooperative-federal	radical	conciliar ecumenism	joint venture	WCC, NCCs, other conciliar types of ecumenism
(4) alliance model	moderate	lay movements, voluntary associations	partnership, cooperative	Bible Societies, interdenominational mission societies
C. Communicative	Market Pricing			
(5) “ecumenism of profiles”	radical	confessional ecumenism	friendly competition, strategic alliance	denominational alliances (on various levels)
(6) forum	moderate	conversation, open space	research consortium, communication network	Global Christian Forum, Christian World Communions
D. Experiential	Community Sharing			
(7) “spiritual unity”	radical	revivalism, grassroots ecumenism	ad hoc alliance	Pietism, mystics, Christian Ashrams, 19th century Disciples of Christ
(8) “ecumenism of life”	moderate	ethical ecumenism, grassroots ecumenism	sympiosis, informal network	interchurch families

Types	6. Typical activities	7. Relational metaphors	8. Relational issues in view	9. Role of unity	10. Importance of structural unity	11. Nature of unity and relationship	12. Closeness aspect of relationship
A. Juridical							
(1) organic union	unification negotiations	marriage, fusion	lack of unified organization	primary focus	extremely high	institutional	medium
(2) mutual recognition	consensus dialogue	contract, reconciliation	lack of (ecclesial) recognition		very high		
B. Cooperative							
(3) cooperative-federal	council discussions	federation, council	lack of coordination	focus or by-product or peripheral	high	diaconical-missional	medium or low
(4) alliance model	service strategizing	coalition, partnership	lack of cooperation		moderately high		
C. Communicative							
(5) “ecumenism of profiles”	dialogue	patchwork, orchestra	lack of clarification	not in focus; pre-supposed	not very high	communicative, processual	low
(6) forum	conversation	forum, hospitality	lack of communication		not very high		
D. Experiential							
(7) “spiritual unity”	prayer, worship	fellowship, experience	lack of common experience of unity	by-product or assumed to subsist already	low	natural	high
(8) “ecumenism of life”	everyday activities	friendship, solidarity	lack of faith lived in common		low		

Types	13. Chief advocates	14. Slogans applicable	15. Emblematic biblical references
A. Juridical			
(1) organic union	Anglicans, Roman Catholics	“Visible unity”	1 Cor 1:13: “Is Christ divided?”
(2) mutual recognition	Anglicans, Mainline Protestants, Orthodox, Roman Catholics	“What unites us is greater than what divides us”	Eph 4:3: “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”
B. Cooperative			
(3) cooperative-federal	Anglicans, Protestants	“We intend to stay together”	Phil 4:2: “I plead with Euodia and ... Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.”
(4) alliance model	Evangelicals, Pentecostals / Charismatics	“The whole gospel through the whole church to the whole world”	Mark 9:40: “Whoever is not against us is for us.”
C. Communicative			
(5) “ecumenism of profiles”	Conservatives of all backgrounds, Evangelicals, Pentecostals	“Speaking the truth in love”	Phil 1:18: “The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached.”
(6) forum	Evangelicals, Independents, Pentecostals / Charismatics, Postliberals	“Unity in diversity”	Matt 7:1: “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”
D. Experiential			
(7) “spiritual unity”	groups with a congregational polity, non-denominational groups, individuals in all traditions	“We are one in the Spirit”	Matt 18: “Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”
(8) “ecumenism of life”	individuals in all traditions	“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity”	John 13:35: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Types	16. Denominations are...	17. Biblical metaphors for the Church	18. Ecclesiological emphases
A. Juridical	negative		oneness
(1) organic union	a scandal	temple, body, ark	hierarchy
(2) mutual recognition	a historical reality to be mended	family, brotherhood, tree, branches of the vine	authority
B. Cooperative	significant		catholicity
(3) cooperative-federal	unavoidable	assembly (ecclesia), household, nation	comity
(4) alliance model	instruments of ministry	army, servants	ministry
C. Communicative	positive		apostolicity
(5) “ecumenism of profiles”	important for identity	ambassadors, letter from Christ, light, witnesses	witness
(6) forum	to be acknowledged	people of God, citizens	exchange
D. Experiential	insignificant		holiness
(7) “spiritual unity”	irrelevant	remnant, the elect, friends, disciples	mystical body
(8) “ecumenism of life”	of secondary importance	salt, aroma, exiles	fruit and gifts of the spirit

This table is based on ALAN P. FISKE’s general relationship theory (RMT). For details, see his book *Structures of Social Life: The Four Elementary Forms of Human Relations*, New York: Free Press, 1991.

N.B. Some of the terms in column 4 (IOR / networks analogies) have been taken from CATHERINE ALTER and JERALD HAGE, *Organizations Working Together*, Sage Library of Social Research 191, Newbury Park: Sage, 1993, 51, 60–61, and FUESS, “Die Organisation von Kooperationen,” 51. It should be noted that these, as well as the terms used for the types and those in the metaphor column, are often used with varying meanings. The biblical metaphors for the Church have been selected from MINEAR, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*.