and the emphasis on the ordained priesthood. In so doing they stressed Sacred Scripture, denied the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, and in abolishing the ministerial priesthood, highlighted the general priesthood. Yet the original Protestants maintained considerable ritual. It took a second reform movement, that of the Separatists, to attack this formality.

The situation was not unlike that which took place in the wake of the Arian dispute; it was the reaction that firmed up non-participation. The Church again over-reacted, became even more cautious and defensive, played down that which was emphasized by the protestors, and thus delayed for centuries truly needed reform. So much stress was placed on the Divine institution of the sacrificing priesthood and so little attention given to the priesthood of the baptised that this latter scriptural tenet was all but denied. In the process, the idea and ideal of active participation of the laity in the life and worship of the church continued to be obscured, in effect denied.

The Council of Trent, 1570, eliminated some abuses and superstitions that had developed in the mass, but provided neither for participation nor for a better understanding of the true nature of Eucharistic celebration. The liturgy remained in Latin. The purposes of the Tridentine counter-reformation, liturgically, were mostly negative: “To suppress abuses and excessive diversity that were found in the deteriorated liturgies of the west.” 10 The Roman Missal of Pius V (1604), indirectly a product of the Council, with few exceptions remained the basic mass text from that time until Vatican II.

In the intervening centuries the split in Christendom was more emphasized than ameliorated. Although there were frequent, if unheeded, urgings towards reform, little change was effected until Vatican II’s celebrated Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, Protestants have researched the same liturgical sources and have come up with an almost identical Shape of the Liturgy and kindred ideals of participation.11 Few Christians, Protestant or Catholic, would argue with these relevant citations from Vatican II:

1. This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful ... to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ. . . . 7. . . . Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations . . . He is present . . . when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20). . . . In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.

11. Pastors of souls must therefore realize that . . . it is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing,

11 op. cit.