

## **(6) Settings**

Settings are the resultant complexes that grow from particular events. The multiplication of denominations is one example of how certain principles rightly espoused at the Reformation easily gave rise to a proliferation of religious bodies. The setting that has resulted is something from which we cannot escape and a mere comprehension of it is a fascinating undertaking. The tensions that exist among denominational groupings is a part of the setting and if we can understand how the setting came into existence we can also understand the tensions and what steps may be taken to allay the fears (and prejudices) of brethren separated in the various denominations. With interest we have watched the pacification movements between the Orthodox Eastern Church and Oriental Orthodox communities.<sup>5</sup> The present setting for those bodies lies in the disputes of distant centuries. To comprehend the problem an understanding is needed as to how the division came to be. With that knowledge we can understand as well the emotive difficulties to be overcome in such a task.

## **(7) Time**

It is inevitable that certain times are more propitious for one sort of advancement than for another. Essentially a "time" is a period of particular characteristics that set it apart from the periods of chronology that have such special characteristics. Thus, with careful study, one may distinguish the times of revival, for instance, and from such learn some of the aspects of renewal that might be cultivated and encouraged. It is true that occasionally an event will occur in what might otherwise be thought of as a contrary time and in such cases we are reminded of the workings of God that exceed our limited ideas. While such exceptions "test" the rule, they do not overthrow it.

It might seem that these objective entities are self-apparent as to need no elaboration. That is not right. It is precisely because persons do not see the content of history that they cannot apply its lessons when needed. Unless there is appreciation of the parts there will be no appreciation for the whole picture. No, we do not want to miss the forest for the trees, but in history this is rarely the case. The more usual occurrences in historical study is seeing neither forest or trees and barely noticing a green blob on the horizon.

To revisit church history with Allan MacRae was to meet the people, visit the places, participate in the events and sample history in the making. The facts of the content were spelled out in most forceful detail and the objective entities were the skeletal bones on which the academic structure was fleshed out.

## **The Subjective Assessments**

History is given meaning not only by the objective realities but also by