

**ARTICLES**

<i>Kenosis and the Church. Catherine E. Clifford</i>	2
Moments of Crisis and Grace: Jewish-Catholic Relations in 2009 <i>David Neuhaus</i>	6
John Calvin in an age of Ecumenism: a sketch. <i>Alec Ryrie</i>	25
Pride and Prejudice: the Vocation of the Eastern Catholic Churches. <i>Robin Gibbons</i>	35
The Primacy of Peter: an Eastern Perspective. <i>Demetrios Charbak</i>	54
The Petrine Ministry. <i>Colin Battell</i>	61
Mixed Marriages and Sharing in the Eucharist: Universal Catholic norms and some particular Catholic norms (part 2). <i>Georges Ruysen</i>	75
Roman Catholic-Reformed Dialogue. <i>David Carter</i>	99
Edinburgh 1910 to 2010: Centenary Assessment and Mission Renewal. <i>Kenneth R. Ross and Kirsteen Kim</i>	113
Bilateral Dialogues between the Churches: Milestones on the Path of Unity. <i>André Birmelé</i>	136

**DOCUMENTS**

Address by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Willebrands Centenary Symposium in Rome, 12 November 2009.	154
A Response to 'Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ'. <i>The Anglican Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada</i>	167

**REPORTS & EVENTS**

Reflections on the Faith and Order Plenary, Crete, October 2009: Renewing the Marks: Called to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. <i>Jamie Hawkey</i>	183
Receptive Ecumenism and Faith and Order. <i>Paul D. Murray</i>	189

**BOOK REVIEWS**



## EDITORIAL

‘Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.’ Catherine Clifford’s opening essay on Philippians 2 is perhaps an appropriate *cri de coeur* for this edition of ONE IN CHRIST, as it must be for all ecumenical endeavour. There is a sense of pleading from various contributors for a way forward which respects the lived experience of their respective church communities, and is not just ‘more of the same from above’.

This is perhaps crystallised in Archbishop Rowan Williams’ plea, echoed by others, for a ‘genuinely theological doctrine of the Church’ which enables us to discern ‘how the nature and character and even polity of the Church are grounded in and shaped by the nature of God and of God’s incarnation in history’ (p.155, below).

Jamie Hawkey’s reassessment of the four marks of the Church as vocative statements illustrates this more properly theological approach. In the liturgy, we proclaim our belief in the Church as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, recognizing both what we already are, and what we hope to become. The whole project then becomes a prayer, becomes eucharist, which is surely right.

## **KENOSIS AND THE CHURCH: PUTTING ON THE MIND OF CHRIST**

**Catherine E. Clifford\***

*This essay was first presented as a meditation on Phil 2: 1-11 during the Second International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism and Ecumenical Learning, Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham University, England, in January 11-15, 2009. The line of theological reflection presented here is developed more extensively by the author in 'Kenosis and the Path to Communion,' *The Jurist* 64/1 (2004): 21-34.*

'Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself (Phil 2: 5-6). Paul calls upon the church at Philippi to take on the mind and heart of Christ, to realize in its life the self-emptying and self-giving love of Christ. Note that Paul links this fundamental kenotic stance to the harmony and the unity of the church: 'be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind' (v. 2). What is the significance of his call for the church in the present context? We stand today at the threshold of a new moment in the ecumenical movement. For some time now many of our churches—confounded by both the unexpected discovery of consensus on many fundamental theological questions that were once considered church dividing, and on the other hand, by the emergence of new disagreements and challenges to church unity—seem to have stalled in a kind of fear of moving forward, of taking concrete new steps toward fuller communion. They ask, 'Can we possibly change without sacrificing something that is essential, that defines us as who we are as Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, or Protestant Christians, without betraying a tradition that has been entrusted to us by the apostles—those first witnesses to the resurrection of Christ?'

Saint Paul invites us today, as he once invited the Christians of Philippi, to put on the mind of Christ. In an act of condescension, he tells us, the Divine Word emptied himself to embrace our humanity.

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When we read the gospels we discover that his kenotic love did not end there. The choice of self-emptying love was renewed again and again in the many decisions taken in the daily existence of Jesus. His whole life and mission is marked by this spirit of self-giving and self-sacrificing love. Jesus rejects the popular messianism of his time, refusing to seek after or abuse his authority as a power over others. Instead, he takes on the role of a 'defenseless prophet' in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. Jesus is not the focus of his own preaching. Rather than affirming his own self-importance, he directs his listeners' attention to the unfailing love of the Father. His self-emptying is made complete in his passion and death on the cross. This paschal mystery is a paradox at the heart of the Christian faith: the glory of God is revealed in the humility (and even the ignominy) of the Suffering Servant; it is in losing ourselves that we gain eternal life. Piet Schoonenberg once wrote of Christ's total self-gift: "The more radical the self-emptying, the fuller the outpouring of love towards us, but also the more reckless the trust in the Father."<sup>1</sup> Is it not to this radical and reckless trust in God that our churches are being called in the present context?

At base, the kenosis of Christ, and our share in the dynamic of his self-effacing love, is a profound act of faith. Making that act of faith, each time we do it, requires that we turn away from our complacency, self-sufficiency, and fear, and turn anew towards God in a genuine conversion of heart. Our participation in the self-giving love and communion of Christ leads to a fundamental re-ordering of our interior disposition. Saint Paul invites the Christian community not only as individuals, but also collectively, to such a reorientation of its deepest self. At the same time, his call is an invitation to consider how we might need to be set free from our attachment to a false sense of self.

Reflecting on the great Christological hymn of the letter to the Philippians, theologians have seen in it a kind of double kenosis: first, the self-emptying of the Divine Word to embrace our humanity and second, the repeated choices of the earthly Jesus as he continually places his faith in the Father in a movement of return. Of course, the two are inseparable, and the dynamic is one and the same. This framework of double kenosis can be extended to the church. Indeed, the Second Vatican Council—in a frequently neglected section of the

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<sup>1</sup> Piet Schoonenberg, 'The Kenosis or Self-Emptying of Christ,' *Concilium* (1966/2): 27-36, at 36.

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium* 8), which cites Phil 2:6-7—recognized that just as Christ emptied himself to become a servant, to become poor, the church, which carries on his mission in the world, ‘is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to spread humility and self-denial also through its own example’. In the context of our ecumenical commitment, we might ask how, in our day, our churches are being called to pour themselves out for one another? To what extent are they willing to put their gifts at the service of those with whom they are not yet in full communion? How willing are they to work with other churches in the service of humanity?

Where Jesus was made perfect through obedience and reverent submission in a response of perfect love (Heb 5: 7-8), the obedience of the pilgrim people of God—somewhat less than perfect—will always imply a measure of repentance. For the church, this second movement of kenosis is a return to communion, a turning back to that participation in the self-giving love of Christ to which we are called through baptism. Our obedience is utterly dependent upon that of Christ who, being obedient even unto death, has made us righteous by his free gift. Our obedience begins when we open ourselves to receive that gift.

At this second level, the path toward unity is a return to our original covenant with God, a deepening and renewal of the vocation of the church itself. In these days as we reflect together on the work of receptive ecumenism, it is worth considering what it is that we have to receive—not simply from the riches of one another’s traditions, but ultimately from God. For the basic identity and vocation of the church are established in the covenant love of Christ with the Father through the Spirit. How do we define our ecclesial selves? Of what, in our time, are our ecclesial selves called to be emptied? What needs to get out of the way so that we are truly open to receive God’s gift? What is the purification and renewal of which we have need (*UR* 4)?

It has been suggested that some of what needs correcting is our very sense of self, our sense of identity, which has too often confounded confessional identity or self with the identity or self of the one church of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Or, as one commentator has put it, we tend to see our selves as the center of the ecclesial universe, the sun around which the other

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<sup>1</sup> This observation is carefully developed by the Groupe des Dombes in *For the Conversion of the Churches*, trans. James Grieg (Geneva: WCC, 1993).

planets, or other churches, must orbit.<sup>1</sup> The impulse to retrenchment in denominational identities reveals that we have at times reversed the order of priority and placed the sense of confessional identity above fidelity to the church of Christ, or confused historically and culturally conditioned forms of doctrine and church practice with the timeless tradition of the apostolic faith. To move forward on the path of receptive ecumenism we must have the humility to make an honest assessment of where our churches may have a distorted perception of their ecclesial selves.<sup>2</sup>

To truly receive the faith of the apostles anew, the churches might need to be freed from a false sense of self, or an inordinate attachment to confessional expressions of faith where these have come to be taken as defining characteristics, not only of the confessional churches, but of the church of Christ itself. It is of these false selves that we must be emptied. The ecumenical movement has consistently called the churches to move from being self-centered, or confessionally centered, to adopting a sense of church that is Christ-centered. Through this process, Christ and the Spirit will become the criteria for our unity in the place of our particular ecclesial selves. Only then can we hope to be of one mind in Christ. Every faith community must pass through this kenotic way if we are to grow in genuine communion.<sup>3</sup> Let us work and pray that our churches might courageously heed Paul's exhortation: 'Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind' (Phil 2:2).

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Kinnamon, *The Vision of the Ecumenical Movement and How it Has been Impoverished by its Friends* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 62.

<sup>2</sup> This a key task of ecumenical dialogue, as it was spelled out in the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism (*UR* 4): 'all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the church and accordingly to undertake with vigour the task of renewal and reform.'

<sup>3</sup> 'In the teaching of the Second Vatican Council there is a clear connection between renewal, conversion and reform. The Council states that "Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of human beings here on earth. Therefore, if the influence of events or of the times has led to deficiencies ... these should be appropriately rectified at the proper moment" (*UR* 6). No Christian Community can exempt itself from this call.' John Paul II, 'Encyclical Letter on Commitment to Ecumenism (*Ut Unum Sint*),' Ottawa: CCCB Publications, 1995, no. 16.

## MOMENTS OF CRISIS AND GRACE: JEWISH-CATHOLIC RELATIONS IN 2009

**David Neuhaus\***

*Composing an annual chronology of events in the field of Jewish-Catholic relations has been a cause for celebration ever since the Second Vatican Council, thanks to a breathtaking surge in encounters, dialogue and common projects between Jews and Catholics at all levels. Conversations, collaboration and friendship are the order of the day wherever Jews and Catholics live together. And everywhere the Catholic Church repeatedly insists on its Jewish roots in the Scriptures of Israel and on the inalienable Jewish identity of Jesus of Nazareth and his first disciples. This article presents the major events of the year 2009, and then analyzes at greater depth three issues that have been at the center of Jewish-Catholic relations during the year.*

The year 2009 was eventful for Jewish-Catholic relations not only because of the many joint ventures that took place<sup>1</sup> but also because of a number of crises that surfaced in the course of the year. ‘Crisis’, a word derived from the Greek κρίσις, originally means judgment, decision or discernment. In this article, I will focus on the moments of ‘crisis’ that made headlines because they constitute moments of truth and grace that reveal not only where Jewish-Catholic relations stand today, but also what are the most sensitive issues, and what are the processes and mechanisms that have been set in place to deal with these issues and to promote the ongoing rapprochement between Catholics and Jews, the Church and Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the events of 2009 was the meeting of the International Council of Christians and Jews that took place in July in Berlin. The statement released there, ‘A Time for Recommitment: The Twelve Points of Berlin’ is another reflection on how much progress has been made and what remains to be done. For the text, see the Council’s website.

## A chronology of Jewish-Catholic relations in 2009

### *The Gaza conflict*

The year got off to a troubled start with the violent conflict in the Gaza Strip. Israeli retaliation, initiated on 27 December 2008, for rockets fired into Israeli territory by Palestinian radicals included a full scale invasion lasting twenty-two days, massive destruction and loss of life. Among the many victims of the violence were at least three Gaza Christians.<sup>1</sup> The events in the Palestinian territories and the Holy See's reaction provoked tension in Jewish-Catholic relations. In harmony with the international community, the Holy See expressed its deep concern at the situation. In the annual meeting with diplomats held on 8 January 2009, the Pope insisted that 'military options are no solution'.<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the Holy See's permanent observer at the United Nations, expressed the Church's position on the failure to bring the violence to an end in his brief address to the General Assembly on 16 January 2009, in these terms: 'so many failed efforts are due to insufficiently courageous and coherent political will for establishing peace from every side'.<sup>3</sup> One particular moment of tension was when Cardinal Martino, president of the Vatican Council for Justice and Peace, compared Gaza to a 'big concentration camp', leading to vigorous Israeli protest.<sup>4</sup> Rumors abounded that in the light of the conflict the Holy Father would cancel his planned visit to the region, already announced in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

### *Fraternity of Pope Pius X and the Williamson affair*

On 21 January 2009, the Vatican lifted the act of excommunication that had been imposed on four men, illicitly ordained bishops in 1988.<sup>6</sup> The four belonged to the Fraternity of Saint Pius X, a traditionalist group

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<sup>1</sup> 'Christians of Gaza, back to normal amid fear and frustration,' *Asia News*, 26.1.2009.

<sup>2</sup> 'Papal State of the Planet address,' *Zenit*, 8.1.2009.

<sup>3</sup> 'Holy see on Israeli action,' *Zenit*, 16.1.2009.

<sup>4</sup> 'Israel condemns Vatican's "concentration camp" remarks,' *The New York Times*, 8.1.2009.

<sup>5</sup> The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Fouad Twal, announced that the Pope would go the Holy Land in May 2009, in his Christmas message, published on 23 December 2008 (cf. *Zenit*, 23.12.2008). The Pope confirmed his visit during the Angelus prayer on Sunday, 8 March 2009.

<sup>6</sup> 'Decree lifting Traditionalist Bishops' excommunication,' *Zenit*, 25.1.2009.

founded by Mgr Marcel Lefebvre, which had rejected the teachings of the Church as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. The decree was presented in the words of Pope Benedict as 'a sign for the promotion of unity in charity of the universal Church and ... to remove the scandal of division'.<sup>1</sup> One of the major issues with regard to the Fraternity was its continued refusal to accept the teaching concerning the Jews and Judaism promulgated in Vatican II's *Nostra aetate*.

The situation was further complicated when an interview was broadcast on Swedish television with one of the four illicitly ordained bishops, Richard Williamson, in which he expressed doubts about the number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust and the existence of gas chambers. Although the interview had been recorded in November 2008, its broadcast on the day of the lifting of the excommunication led to immediate outrage. Pope Benedict and other Catholic Church leaders published a series of comments in the hope of calming the storm.<sup>2</sup> They explained that the lifting of the excommunication did not compromise Jewish-Catholic dialogue and that, more specifically, the Pope and the entire Church rejected any form of Holocaust denial. A Vatican clarification, published on 4 February 2009, stated, 'The viewpoints of Bishop Williamson on the Shoah are absolutely unacceptable and firmly rejected by the Holy Father.'<sup>3</sup> It was also repeatedly pointed out that the officials in charge of the negotiations with the Fraternity had not known about Williamson's views on this subject. Williamson himself was silenced by the head of the Fraternity, Bernard Fellay.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, on 12 March 2009 the Pope himself published a letter explaining his own position on the issues: 'An unforeseen mishap for me was the fact that the Williamson case came on top of the remission of the excommunication. The discreet gesture of mercy ... appeared as something completely different: as the repudiation of reconciliation between Christians and Jews ... That this overlapping of two opposed processes took place and momentarily upset peace between Christians

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<sup>1</sup> 'Decree,' *Zenit*, 25.1.2009.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'Vatican clarification on Lefebvrites, Holocaust,' *Zenit*, 4.2.2009.

<sup>3</sup> 'Vatican clarification,' *Zenit*, 4.2.2009.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 'Bishop Fellay's Apology for Holocaust Statements,' *Zenit*, 27.1.2009.

and Jews, as well as peace within the Church, is something which I can only deeply deplore.”<sup>1</sup>

Although certain Jewish organizations initially expressed deep disappointment with the Vatican in the light of the affair,<sup>2</sup> the Pope did receive visits from the Conference of Presidents of Jewish Organizations on 12 February 2009 and from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel on 12 March 2009, seemingly restoring relations to normality.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Pope Pius XII controversy*

In 2009, the debate continued on the person and actions of Pope Pius XII, the Roman pontiff during the dark years of the Shoah. A positive development with regard to this issue was the organization of two study days at Yad VaShem, the Israeli national memorial and museum for the Shoah in Jerusalem, held on 8-9 March 2009, and organized by Yad VaShem and the Holy See through the offices of the nuncio to Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Although rumors abounded that the controversial inscription concerning Pope Pius XII in the Yad VaShem museum, an inscription that suggests that the Pope did not do enough to save Jews during the Shoah, would be the cause of the Pope's refusal to visit Yad VaShem during his visit to Israel, this was firmly denied by Vatican spokesmen.<sup>5</sup>

On 19 June 2009, Fr Peter Gumpel SJ, the promoter of the beatification of the late Pope, claimed that Pope Benedict XVI had not signed the decree recognizing the heroic virtues of Pope Pius XII because of pressure from Jewish circles. However, Vatican spokesman Fr Frederico Lombardi SJ issued a statement, insisting that the Pope alone had

<sup>1</sup> ‘Papal letter on Society of St. Pius X,’ *Zenit*, 12.3.2009.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Anti-Defamation League declaration (24.1.2009); American Jewish Committee declaration (24.1.2009); Yad Vashem declaration (25.1.2009); letter of Oded Wiener, Director General of Israel's Chief Rabbinate (27.1.2009); US Holocaust Memorial Museum declaration (27.1.2009); Elie Wiesel to Reuters (28.1.2009).

<sup>3</sup> The major Jewish organizations published statements welcoming Vatican clarifications on this affair, cf. World Jewish Congress statement (4.2.2009); American Jewish Committee (4.2.2009); Anti-Defamation league (4.2.2009).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust—Current State of Research,’ press communiqué, Yad VaShem, 8.3.2009.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Pope Benedict will not visit Israeli museum which denigrates Pius XII,’ *Catholic News Agency*, 7.3.2009.

competence on the issue.<sup>1</sup> On 19 December 2009, Pope Benedict formally recognized the heroic virtues of Pope Pius XII (along with twenty other Catholics, including Pope John Paul II) and the declaration provoked the expected negative reaction from certain Jewish spokespeople.

### *German and US Bishops' Conferences on Dialogue and Mission*

The year 2009 also saw the continuation of the passionate debate on the issue of mission to the Jews and the question of salvation in an age of dialogue. On 9 March 2009, the discussion group that deals with Jewish-Christian dialogue within the Central Committee of German Catholics (*ZdK*) published a statement entitled 'No to Mission to the Jews—Yes to Dialogue between Jews and Christians.'<sup>2</sup> The statement claimed that 'since the Second Vatican Council, the formula "dialogue without mission" has characterized the new Jewish-Christian relationship'. The statement went on to propose theological reasons for the refusal to engage in any missionary activity that is directed towards Jews.

On 5 May 2009, however, the chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, announced that the statement of the discussion group 'does not do justice to the Church's commitment to Christ in all of its fullness.'<sup>3</sup>

This sensitive debate was not confined to the German Catholic Church. In the United States, the Committee on Doctrine together with the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), finally published a statement titled: 'A note on ambiguities contained in "Reflections on Covenant and Mission"' on 18 June 2009.<sup>4</sup> 'Reflections on Covenant and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Pope Pius XII promoter says Jewish pressure an obstacle to sainthood,' *Catholic News Service*, 23.6.2009.

<sup>2</sup> Discussion Group Jews and Christians of the Central Committee of German Catholics, 'No to Mission to the Jews—Yes to Dialogue between Jews and Christians,' 8.3.2009. Posted on the website of the *Council of Centers on Jewish Christian Relations* <<http://CCJCR.us>> hereafter: CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> R. Zollitsch, 'The Church's commitment to Christ and the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,' 5.5.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>4</sup> Committee on Doctrine and Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 'A Note on Ambiguities contained in "Reflections on Covenant and Mission,"' 18.6.2009, posted on CCJCR.

Mission' had been published in 2002 by Jewish and Catholic scholars, the Catholic scholars being advisors to the USCCB's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Cardinal William Keeler, Archbishop of Baltimore, had insisted that the statement did not represent the position of the bishops.<sup>2</sup> Among the reactions to the document, the one penned by the prominent theologian Cardinal Avery Dulles had insisted that the bishops must clarify the ambiguities in the document.<sup>3</sup> Seven years later, in the June 2009 note, the bishops stated: 'The principal ambiguities in question involve the description of the church's mission and, in particular, what evangelization means with regard to the Jewish people.' Some Jewish and Catholic observers reacted with dismay, suggesting that these statements set back the dialogue.<sup>4</sup>

This was followed by a further clarification with regard to the US Catholic Catechism for Adults at the end of August. An original formulation, 'Thus the covenant that God made with the Jewish people through Moses remains eternally valid for them' was replaced with a formulation derived from the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the subject: 'To the Jewish people, whom God first chose to hear his word, "belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ"' (Rom 9: 4-5. Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 839-840). The USCCB issued a statement saying 'The clarification reflects the teaching of the Church that all previous covenants that God made with the Jewish people are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Consultation of the National Council of Synagogues and Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission,' 12.8.2002, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>2</sup> "Reflections" represent present state of dialogue, Cardinal says,' press communiqué from USCCB, 16.8.2009.

<sup>3</sup> A. Dulles, 'Covenant and Mission,' *America*, 21.10.2002.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Anti-Defamation League, 'ADL troubled by US Bishops' Statement that appears to green light missionizing of Jews,' 22.6.2009; D. Berger and F. Schonfeld, 'Response to Statement of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on Covenant, Mission and Dialogue,' 8.7.2009; National Jewish Interfaith Leadership, 'Letter on USCCB 'Note on Ambiguities,' 18.8.2009. All posted on CCJCR.

<sup>5</sup> USCCB, 'Recognition of Change in Adult Catechism,' 27.8.2009, on CCJCR.

In the light of the tensions that resulted from the statements of the USCCB, Cardinal George of Chicago, president of the USCCB, together with four other bishops, published a statement of principles regarding the dialogue with the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup> This was sent together with a letter of clarification to the members of the National Jewish Interfaith Leadership,<sup>2</sup> who responded with a letter of gratitude for the clarifications made regarding dialogue and proselytism.<sup>3</sup> A further letter announced to the Jewish representatives that two particularly troubling sentences referring to implicit Christian witness to Christ within the dialogue with the Jews, in the June 2009 clarification had been annulled.<sup>4</sup>

### *Israel—Vatican relations*

The negotiations on the final status of the Catholic Church in Israel continued in 2009 with the atmosphere alternating radically between optimism and despair on the Catholic side. Following the signing of Fundamental Accords between the Holy See and the State of Israel in 1994 and 1997, negotiations on the final status of the Catholic Church in Israel have dragged on for years. Despite optimism that significant progress would be made before Pope Benedict's planned visit to Israel in May,<sup>5</sup> the negotiations have in fact continued without significant progress through 2009. The Vatican repeatedly expressed concern about the delays in coming to an agreement that adversely affect the fiscal status of the Church, the functioning of Catholic institutions, particularly schools and hospitals, the ability of the Church to bring clergy and religious from the surrounding Arab countries into Israel for purposes of Church ministry and study and a variety of other issues.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> F. George et al., 'Statement of Principles for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue,' 2.10.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>2</sup> F. George et al., 'US Bishops' reply to Jewish Letter of Concern,' 2.10.2009 posted on CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> National Jewish Interfaith Leadership, 'Jewish Interfaith Leaders respond to Bishops' Letter of October 2', 13.10.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>4</sup> F. George, 'Reply from Cardinal George to Various Letters', 21.10.2009, posted on CCJCR. The reference is to sentences at the end of paragraph 7 in the June clarification.

<sup>5</sup> 'Papal preparation aids Vatican-Israeli relations,' *Zenit*, 8.4.2009.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. M. Chabin, 'For Israel and Vatican, a taxing issue,' *The Jewish Week*, 13.5.2009; 'Israel will not seize funds from Catholic schools,' *Zenit*, 8.6.2009.

A series of brief television transmissions that explicitly claimed to be revenge for the Williamson denial of the Shoah and that portrayed Jesus and Mary in a disrespectful light also troubled relations between the State of Israel and its Catholic citizens as well as the Holy See.<sup>1</sup>

### *Pope Benedict's visit to the Holy Land*

A central event of the year was the official visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the Holy Land (Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Territories), 8-15 May 2009. During the visit to Israel, Pope Benedict was careful to address some of the issues that had caused controversy with Jews in the past but he was also calmly insistent on the particular context of the Church he was visiting, the Church of Israel, Palestine and Jordan, where Christians, who are predominantly Arab, have the unique position of living as a tiny minority within large Jewish or Muslim majorities. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, John Paul II, the Pope made two highly symbolic pilgrimages during his visit to Israel: one to the Western Wall, where he placed a written prayer into the Wall, and the other to Yad VaShem. It was at these two high places that the Pope could be present to Jews in their spiritual-religious and in their historical-national dimension.<sup>2</sup>

### **Thematic analysis of some principle issues in the dialogue**

A review of the year 2009 with regard to Jewish-Catholic relations raises at least three issues which are central to the ongoing dialogue between the Jews and the Church: the issue of salvation, the writing of common history and the status of the State of Israel. In this second part of our article, these issues will be analyzed in greater depth.

### *Salvation of the Jews*

Part of the revolution worked by the Second Vatican Council was the enthusiastic embrace of the Jewish roots of the Church and the resounding affirmation that salvation is indeed from the Jews, the first to hear the Word of God as proclaimed in the Old Testament (cf. John 4: 24). It is significant that during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Pope Benedict chose to speak of the inalienable link between Church and Israel in Jordan, an Arab country and predominantly Muslim: 'The

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<sup>1</sup> 'Vatican irked by "blasphemous" Virgin Mary TV spoof in Israel,' *HaAretz*, 20.2.2009; 'Holy See denounces blasphemous Israeli TV show,' *Zenit*, 22.2.2009.

<sup>2</sup> For an extensive analysis of the papal visit, cf. D. Neuhaus, 'Benedict's visit to a land called to be holy,' *Thinking Faith*, 9.6.2009.

ancient tradition of pilgrimage to the holy places also reminds us of the inseparable bond between the Church and the Jewish people.” This bond is emphasized and celebrated in the Catholic Church today. However, a burning question that has emerged in recent years is: whereas salvation is *from* the Jews, whence comes salvation *for* the Jews? This has been one of the major themes in the dialogue between Jews and Catholics in 2009. Does and should the Church preach the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ to the Jewish people? Or is Judaism a path of salvation parallel to that proposed by the Church in Jesus Christ? Although certain Catholics tended to give clear answers—yes to mission to the Jews from the conservatives, no to mission to the Jews from the liberals—the Pope, the bishops and official spokespeople tended to give a more complex answer that continued to arouse some discomfort among Jewish and Catholic activists in the dialogue between the Church and Israel, as well as among conservatives.

Pope John Paul II had repeatedly proclaimed that God's covenant with the Jews was ‘unrevoked’ by God.<sup>2</sup> Does this mean that the Church is proposing that Judaism is a parallel path to salvation, alongside the path of Jesus? Some Jews and some Catholics seem to think so, meaning that the Catholic Church no longer engages in any kind of missionary activity among the Jewish people, who have no need of an explicit relationship with Christ in order to be saved. On the Pope's visit to Israel, two prominent Orthodox rabbis made reference to the issue in these terms. Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen, a leading member of the commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel for dialogue with the Catholic Church, wrote in an open letter to the Pope: ‘The Catholic Church accepted the theological principle that Jews need not change their religion to merit redemption.’<sup>3</sup> During the Pope's visit to the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem on 12 May 2009, Rabbi Yona Metzger, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel said to the Pope: ‘The Church will

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI on Mount Nebo, Jordan, 9 May 2009, cf. official Vatican website.

<sup>2</sup> The oft repeated phrase is based upon Rom. 11: 29 and was cited in Vatican II's *Nostra aetate*, in paragraph 4: ‘Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle.’

<sup>3</sup> S. Cohen, ‘An open message to the pope,’ *The Jerusalem Post*, 11.5.2009.

henceforth cease all missionary activities and all solicitations to our co-religionists to change their religion.”<sup>1</sup>

Under the leadership of Pope Benedict XVI, the Catholic Church however has subtly begun to clarify the theological implications of the theology of ‘the unrevoked covenant’ with the Jewish people. Noteworthy during 2009 were the efforts at clarification that took place at the national level of local bishops’ conferences in the United States and in Germany (two particularly significant environments for the Jewish-Catholic dialogue), provoked by liberal Catholics who have tried to formulate the theological consequences of the ‘unrevoked covenant’ theology.

The declaration adopted by the *ZdK* (Central Committee of German Catholics) in March 2009 echoed the 2002 US Jewish-Catholic document ‘Reflections on Covenant and Mission’,<sup>2</sup> arguing even more strongly against Catholic mission to the Jews. The declaration concluded: ‘Because the covenant of God with Israel already makes salvation attainable, the Church has neither to be concerned with the salvation of Israel, nor to convert Jews to the Christian belief nor to induce Jews to baptism for the sake of their own salvation.’<sup>3</sup> The answer proposed to the question of salvation for the Jews is that there are two paths to salvation, a Jewish path and a path in Jesus Christ.

The Bishops’ Conferences in Germany and in the US clearly perceive this position as undermining the Church’s understanding of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ. Archbishop’s Zollitsch’s statement in the name of the German bishops, rejecting the *ZdK* March 2009 document, pointed to its ‘theological deficits’, declaring that it ‘does not do justice to the Church’s commitment to Christ in all of its fullness.’<sup>4</sup> He also thanked Bishop Gerhard Muller of Regensburg for his rebuttal of the declaration, in which he stated that ‘the Church’s

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Vatican to stop missionizing Jews,’ *The Jerusalem Post*, 12.5.2009.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Consultation of the National Council of Synagogues and Bishops’ Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, ‘Reflections on Covenant and Mission,’ 12.8.2002, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion Group Jews and Christians - Central Committee of German Catholics, ‘No to Mission to the Jews – Yes to Dialogue between Jews and Christians,’ 8.3.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>4</sup> R. Zollitsch, ‘The Church’s commitment to Christ and the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,’ 5.5.2009, posted on CCJCR.

undiminished confession of Christ remains constitutive of the Catholic faith and a central point of reference in the dialogue with the Jewish people.<sup>1</sup>

The June 2009 USCCB document of clarification regarding the 2002 'Reflections on Covenant and Mission' was slightly more nuanced when it stated that 'Catholic evangelization relative to the Jews ... [will] take an utterly unique form, precisely because God has already established a particular relationship with the Jewish people.'<sup>2</sup> Although the Church recognizes that Judaism derives from divine revelation, the document went on to say that 'it is incomplete and potentially misleading in this context to refer to the enduring quality of the covenant without adding that for Catholics, Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God fulfills both in history and at the end of time the special relationship that God established with Israel.' In dialogue with the Jewish people, the Catholic participant is 'always giving witness to the following of Christ.'<sup>3</sup> Finally, the USCCB clarification concludes: 'With St Paul we acknowledge that God does not regret of, or change his mind about the "gifts and the call" that he has given to the Jewish people (Rom 11:2 9). At the same time, we also believe that the fulfillment of the covenants, indeed, of all of God's promises to Israel, is found only in Jesus Christ.' This position was also made clear in the reformulation of the text in the US Catechism that spoke of the Jews.

Cardinal George and four other bishops published a brief résumé of the Church's position on dialogue with the Jews.<sup>4</sup> The statement begins with an affirmation of the 'covenant of eternal love, which was never revoked', enduring until today 'as a vital witness to God's saving will for his people Israel and for all humanity.' However, the statement went on to insist that Jesus Christ is the 'unique savior of all humankind' and that Catholics have 'a sacred responsibility to bear witness to Christ at

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<sup>1</sup> G. Müller, 'The Church's confession of Christ in the Christian-Jewish dialogue,' 14.4.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>2</sup> Committee on Doctrine and Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 'A Note on Ambiguities contained in "Reflections on Covenant and Mission,"' 18.6.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, this formulation was later effaced as explained in the letter written by Cardinal George of Chicago to Jewish leaders.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. F. George et al., 'Statement of Principles for Catholic-Jewish Dialogue', 2.10.2009, posted on CCJCR.

every moment of their lives.’ The bishops clarified at the same time that Jewish-Catholic dialogue ‘will never be used ... as a means of proselytism.’ Jews who meet Catholics must however meet them as ‘committed to the teachings of the Church’. The firm rejection of overt proselytism was welcomed by the Jews to whom Cardinal George and his colleagues sent a letter of explanation.<sup>1</sup> The tension remains though because Catholics engage in the dialogue with the conviction that Jesus Christ is the savior of Jews as well as of Gentiles. In order to allay Jewish fears, Cardinal George sent a letter to the Jewish representatives announcing the cancellation of two sentences in paragraph 7 of the ‘Note’ of June 2009 referring to the virtual disappearance of ‘the core elements of proclamation and invitation to life in Christ’ which insisted that the ‘Christian dialogue partner is always giving witness to the following of Christ, to which all are implicitly invited’, even if there is no explicit invitation in the dialogue with the Jews.<sup>2</sup>

Jewish and Catholic liberal responses to the Church’s insistence on clarifying where the salvation of the Jews is from have been mostly negative, expressing disappointment and a fear that the gains of the Second Vatican Council are being rolled back. This has often taken the form of a continued tendency to portray Pope Benedict XVI as a conservative who is backtracking.<sup>3</sup> The participants in the ‘Jews and Christians Discussion Group’ in Germany expressed disappointment at the position of the German Bishops and commented: ‘The question of the unrevoked covenant requires an intra-Catholic answer ... True dialogue requires eye to eye equality. To desire the “enlightenment” of the other is incompatible with dialogue.’<sup>4</sup> Dr Hanspeter Heinz, Catholic chairman of the discussion group, published a long preface to the second edition of the declaration in which he insisted that the context of the discussion group’s long and ongoing experience of dialogue was

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. National Jewish Interfaith Leadership, ‘Jewish Interfaith Leaders respond to Bishops’ Letter of October 2,’ 13.10.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>2</sup> F. George, ‘Reply from Cardinal George to Various Letters,’ 21.10.2009 posted on CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> One example of this type of reading comes from long time Catholic activist in the dialogue with the Jews, John Pawlikowski OSM, cf. J. Pawlikowski, ‘Pope Benedict on Jews and Judaism: Retreat or Reaffirmation’, published on website *Jewish-Christian Relations*, 1.5.2009.

<sup>4</sup> Jewish members of the Jews and Christians Discussion Group of the central Committee of German Catholics, ‘Statement,’ 16.6.2009, posted on CCJCR.

essential for understanding the declaration. He repeated the historical reason for rejecting mission: 'We must not disregard the catastrophe that the past mission to the Jews was. Over centuries, it caused fear and horror for innumerable Jews. It violated the Jews' religious dignity, and it is responsible for the deaths of Jews. Through the mission to the Jews, the Church lost great credibility.' However, he did not restrict himself to the historical dimension, adding a fundamental theological perspective: 'Our thesis is: Even without believing in Jesus as the Christ and without baptism, the Jews are, as the people of God, on a path to salvation ... The decisive argument for our thesis is the "never revoked old covenant" (John Paul II)'.<sup>1</sup> Jewish and liberal Catholic responses in the United States were also overwhelmingly negative to the clarifications of the US Bishops, predicting a crisis in the ongoing dialogue between Jews and Catholics.<sup>2</sup> In a letter sent to the USCCB, two Jewish leaders stated: '[The] assertion that the Christian partner enters the dialogue with Jews with the intention of extending an implicit invitation to join the Church strikes at the very heart of the dialogic enterprise and undermines the most basic understanding that makes the enterprise possible.'<sup>3</sup> Although the authors of the letter note that the Catholic position is not 'morally objectionable', they do insist that it makes open Jewish-Catholic dialogue impossible.<sup>4</sup>

The Church, under the authority of Pope Benedict XVI, has continued to insist that God's plan of salvation for all people comes to its fullness in Jesus Christ. Interreligious dialogue makes the Church aware that non-Christian believers have knowledge of God and of His relationship with humanity. The Church's mission in proclaiming the Gospel cannot ignore the ongoing relationship between God and the faithful of other religions. Among the religions of the world, Judaism has a particular

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<sup>1</sup> H. Heinz, 'Preface to the 2nd Edition of "No to mission to the Jews—Yes to Dialogue between Jews and Christians,"' 4.5.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jewish reactions, e.g. National Jewish Interfaith Leadership, 'Letter on USCCB "Note on Ambiguities,"' 18.8.2009; and liberal Catholic reactions, e.g. Superior General and General Councillors 'Letter of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion to Several American Bishops,' 15.9.2009, both posted on CCJCR.

<sup>3</sup> D. Berger and F. Schonfeld, 'Response to Statement of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on Covenant, Mission and Dialogue', 8.7.2009, posted on CCJCR.

<sup>4</sup> F. Schonfeld is chairperson of the Jewish delegation from the Rabbinical Council of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

place for Christians because it was to the Jews that God first revealed the fullness of His Word—first in the Old Testament and then in Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of all the promises in the Old Testament. Judaism played and continues to play a unique role in the history of the salvation of the world and therefore the Church's relationship with Israel is unique. Nonetheless, whereas Israel might not accept the fullness of salvation in Christ within history, the Church's obligation is to bear witness to this salvation to Jew and Gentile alike. Christians believe that at the end of time Jews and Christians will form one people in Christ. The insistence on this theological principle on the Catholic side certainly impacts dialogue with the Jews and raises the question about whether the dialogue is now solid enough to deal with the issues where Jews and Catholics might indeed differ.

### *Writing history together*

The attitude towards Pope Pius XII and the behavior of Catholics during the Shoah continued to provoke both Jews and Catholics in 2009. An underlying, fundamental question is: In a new age of increasing trust, can Jews and Catholics write history together? Although much progress has been made as Catholics express greater willingness to ask forgiveness of their Jewish brethren for centuries of 'a teaching of contempt', there are still issues that have not yet been resolved. One particularly illustrative moment was when Pope Benedict XVI visited Yad VaShem, the memorial to the victims of the Shoah in Jerusalem, in May 2009. Some Jewish auditors were quick to find fault with the German pope, who made no personal reference to how he had experienced the events of those dark years.

Whereas for many Jews, the history of Church and Israel is primarily a history of a traumatic relationship submerged in a valley of tears, a history of persecution, suffering and alienation; for many Catholics, on the other hand, the history of the Church remains a sacred history despite the glitches that have occurred. This basic difference in attitude reaches almost tragic tones in the case of the historical discourse about Pope Pius XII, who was Roman pontiff throughout the Second World War. Defenders of the Pope present him as a saintly and ascetic man who did everything in his power to save Jewish lives. Critics of the Pope argue that he lacked courage or even compassion with regard to the fate of the Jews and did far too little at the hour of crisis. A continuing challenge is to write the history of the Shoah together and to agree on

what can be said about Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church he headed during this period.

At the 2009 joint Vatican-Yad VaShem colloquium on Pius XII, the nuncio to Israel, Mgr Antonio Franco, said in his opening address: 'it is clear that one cannot be Catholic if he denies the Shoah.'<sup>1</sup> Despite this, readings of the actions of the war-time Pope differed greatly. Did the Pope do enough? The question itself is framed in terms that underline basic prejudices in the responses proffered by both sides. For conservative Catholics, the Pope always does enough, almost by definition. The apologetics that characterize the work of those seeking to justify Pope Pius XII are largely hagiographical. However, the incessant criticism of the Pope is no more academic or historical. The fact that six million Jews died during the Shoah is itself the resounding accusation against the Pope, the Church and the world. This voice of criticism seems to be suggesting that the only thing that would have been enough in such circumstances would have been for the Pope to put on the yellow star and join the millions being sent to their death. Between the accusation that the Pope did not do enough and the defense that the Pope did everything possible, the historian, whether Jew or Christian, is called to document what the Pope did do within the precise context of the events at the time. Hopefully, this slow and laborious process might be able to bridge the emotional positions being espoused by two sides in a still highly emotional debate.

The ultimate challenge though is much broader than the singular issue of Pope Pius XII or the events that took place between 1933 and 1945. The real challenge is whether Jews and Catholics have come far enough on the long and tiring path of reconciliation, friendship and trust to write history together and thus educate future generations of Jews and Catholics in an atmosphere of truth and mutual respect.

### *Attitudes to the State of Israel*

A very different issue that provoked 'crisis' in 2009 is the status of the State of Israel for Jews and for Catholics and its place in the dialogue. This issue was particularly prominent during the Pope's visit to the Holy Land as well as during the war in Gaza and within the context of the ongoing negotiations between Israel and the Holy See. Whereas

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<sup>1</sup> Yad VasShem press release, 'Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust—Current State of Research,' 8.3.2009, on Yad VaShem website; 'Holocaust deniers "not Catholic": Israel nuncio,' *CathNews*, 11.3.2009.

many Jews posit the State of Israel as more than a simple political reality and link the State to the core question of Jewish identity, the questions for Catholics might be formulated as: Does the State of Israel take on theological significance within the dialogue with the Jews? How does the modern State of Israel relate, if at all, to the Bible? Concomitantly, what should the position of the Church be in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, a part of whom are Catholics?

During the first decades of the vibrant dialogue between the Church and the Jews after Vatican II, the Jews registered constant disappointment that the Church ignored the reality of the State of Israel in its declarations and promulgations on the subject of the Jews. This was addressed when the Church signed the Fundamental Accords with the State of Israel in 1993. The subsequent visits of Pope John Paul II (2000) and Pope Benedict XVI (2009) to the State of Israel were seen as occasions to encounter not only the State of Israel as a socio-political reality but also to understand the centrality of the State of Israel in the life and identity of the Jews in the modern world. Many Jews continue to insist that the Church must recognize the State of Israel as a fundamental component of Jewish identity in the theological dialogue between Church and Israel. The 2000 *Dabru Emet* document formulated this issue thus: ‘As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised—and given—to Jews as a physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics.’<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church has been reticent about attributing theological significance to the State of Israel. At least four major reasons for this reticence might be suggested:

**Theologizing the political:** The Church is cautious about attributing theological significance to political realities. The immigration of increasingly large numbers of Jews to the Holy Land beginning in the late nineteenth century and the establishment there of a political entity that became the State of Israel in the mid twentieth century are socio-

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<sup>1</sup> *Dabru Emet* (Speak the Truth) is an initiative of a group of Jewish rabbis and educators who published a document in 2000 that attempted to define a Jewish response to the positive dialogue initiatives of the Christian Churches, thus formulating a Jewish view of Christianity. The document can be read on the CCJCR website or on other websites concerning the dialogue.

political facts that the Church engages as such. The theological significance of these political facts is a matter of great debate even within Jewish circles. The tendency of some Jews and some Christians to see these facts as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy (referring to the prophetic texts in the Old Testament that describe the Return from Exile) is based upon a reading of the Bible that is often fundamentalist and literal, an approach of which the Catholic Church generally disapproves.<sup>1</sup>

**Ongoing conflict:** The issue of the Catholic approach to Israel would undoubtedly provoke debate even if the State of Israel was a peaceful place but the issue is made even more complex because of the ongoing conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs as well as between Israel and her Arab neighbors. The ongoing conflict has made the Church acutely aware of the significant problems that were created at the time of the establishment of the State of Israel in the heart of the predominantly Arab Muslim Middle East. Catholics are to be found among both the Arab peoples in general and among the Palestinian Arabs in particular and they have constantly called the Church to solidarity with the Palestinian people. An important lobby in the Church promotes an awareness of issues of justice and peace, and among the festering sores in this domain are the questions of the Palestinian refugees and Palestinian aspirations to statehood.

**Different readings of the Biblical 'land':** Furthermore, Catholics and Jews often have quite different understandings of the Biblical concept of 'land'. Whereas, for many Jews, the term 'Israel' evokes the inalienable link between Jewish people and the land of Israel, for the Church, 'Israel' has a more universal application as a concept. Without seeking to replace the Jewish people as Israel, the Church does see herself as part and parcel of Israel, the people of God. With regard to the Biblical concept of land, Catholics often tend to see the transformative moment with regard to the land as that of the Resurrection, when the 'land' that is called to be holy is no longer

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<sup>1</sup> For the attitude to fundamentalist Biblical interpretation cf. Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 1993, n. 1F.

restricted to the biblical land of Israel but rather comes to signify the face of an earth transformed by Jesus' victory over death.<sup>1</sup>

**Different understandings of Jewish vocation:** Finally, many Catholics tend to be uncomfortable with the Zionist doctrine that Jews should 'ascend' (immigrate) to the Land of Israel. Especially after Vatican II, the Church is committed to fighting anti-Semitism and other forms of racism so that Jews might find their home and their security among the nations of the world and fulfill there their historic vocation.

During his visit to the Holy Land in May 2009, Pope Benedict XVI's insistence on clearly separating between the relationship with Jews and Judaism (spiritual, religious) and the attitude to the State of Israel (political), provides the basis for a coherent distinction in the dialogue with the Jews. The patrimony that Jews and Christians share is indeed vast and deeply significant for Catholics. However, Catholics cannot ignore the obligations of justice and peace with regard to the Palestinian people. The Pope reminded one and all that religion must be a factor that contributes to justice, peace, pardon, reconciliation and the respect for human rights within the concrete situation of the Holy Land particularly with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This message is not always a popular one especially when many Jews expect firm Catholic solidarity with Israel in the light of centuries of traumatic Catholic-Jewish relations.

### *Recognizing difference, living together*

Perhaps with some of the moments of crisis in mind, at his meeting with the Chief Rabbis of Israel at the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem in May 2009, Pope Benedict XVI issued a plea for trust in the ongoing dialogue between Jews and Catholics. 'Trust is undeniably an essential element of effective dialogue. Today I have the opportunity to repeat that the Catholic Church is irrevocably committed to the path chosen at the Second Vatican Council for a genuine and lasting reconciliation between Christians and Jews. As the Declaration *Nostra aetate* makes clear, the Church continues to value the spiritual patrimony common

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<sup>1</sup> For an extensive discussion of the Catholic view of the concept of 'land' cf. D. Neuhaus and A. Marchadour, *The Land, the Bible and History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

to Christians and Jews.”<sup>1</sup> The Pope returned to his reflection on the spiritual heritage that the Church shares with Judaism in his final words at Tel Aviv Airport. ‘We are nourished from the same spiritual roots. We meet as brothers, brothers who at times in our history have had a tense relationship, but now are firmly committed to building bridges of lasting friendship.’<sup>2</sup>

The year 2009 has undoubtedly shown that there is much still to be done in order to deepen and strengthen the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jews. Whereas the first decades following the Second Vatican Council were focused on what Jews and Catholics shared, what is emerging in recent years, borne out clearly also in 2009, is that the Church and the Jews must now deal more systematically with the issues on which they differ. This should not be seen as negative or even as dramatic. On the contrary, it will undoubtedly lead to a deepening of relationship based upon a firmer understanding of who each partner in the dialogue is. Discovering what they hold in common reassured Jews and Catholics that relationship was possible after centuries of teaching contempt and engaging in conflict; now however, in the growing trust, collaboration and sharing between Jews and Catholics, room must be found for an honest even if difficult accommodation of difference.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Benedict XVI's address at the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, 12 May 2009, see Vatican website.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Benedict XVI's final address at Ben Gurion Airport, 15 May 2009, see Vatican website.

## JOHN CALVIN IN AN AGE OF ECUMENISM: A SKETCH

**Alec Ryrie\***

*John Calvin has a justified reputation as an aggressive, divisive theologian, but in his own terms he was an ecumenist, doing more than anyone else to forge Reformed Protestantism into a single body (against Rome). This article considers some of the theological priorities around which he built that unity, but which appear unattractive to most modern Christians: in particular his views on predestination, idolatry and discipline. It suggests some of the reasons why these doctrines and practices might once have seemed compelling and asks what the modern Churches might have to learn from them.*

It would be fair to say that John Calvin, the quincentenary of whose birth was being marked in 2009, is not a hero of modern ecumenism. Outside the dwindling number of Presbyterians and other old-school Protestants who defiantly embrace his legacy, his name has become an insult. In British popular culture, he surfaced most recently in Bill Duncan's grimly funny memoir-cum-quotation-book which presented the dour face of north-eastern Scotland to the outside world, and which he titled *The Wee Book of Calvin*. Within my own Anglican tradition—a tradition which has done its best to forget Calvin's role as one of its founding fathers—he is now normally reviled. The Anglican blogger who recently described him as the 'Dr Goebbels to Our Hitler in Heaven' is only a little more impolite than most of his co-religionists.<sup>1</sup> A few months ago I met an American Episcopalian, with whom I was discussing the reputation of a genuine monster of Anglican history, King Henry VIII. My dim view of the old tyrant quickly became clear (massive plunder, indiscriminating judicial murders, grotesque

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<sup>1</sup> <[http://gallicananglican.blogspot.com/2009\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://gallicananglican.blogspot.com/2009_09_01_archive.html)> (accessed 17 November 2009).

theological egotism...). But, my friend replied (as if this excused everything), at least Henry VIII wrote a book against Calvin. In fact, Henry wrote against Luther (a man with much more blood on his hands than Calvin ever had), but apparently Anglican romanticism would prefer to redeem the old king's memory by setting him against the Protestant Reformation's most enduring theological bogeyman.

So it is partly that most Calvinist of qualities, sheer awkwardness, which makes me rally to his defence. For in truth, his detractors have some powerful points. He was, notoriously, implicated in and an apologist for a religious killing which outrages modern sensibilities and outraged a few (a very few) of his contemporaries, the execution of the Spanish anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus in 1553. Yes, virtually every other theologian in Europe either approved of or actively supported the execution, and the political case for killing Servetus was overwhelming; but one might have hoped that John Calvin, who had possibly the most brilliant mind of his age, would have risen above such concerns. And while that might be downplayed as an isolated incident in the life of a theologian whose politics were far more pacifist than most contemporaries liked, it is also true that Calvin was (to say the least) a difficult character. He was arrogant and argumentative; faults of which he himself was painfully aware, but which he could not shake off. He could not abide to be crossed when he believed he was right (which was virtually always). He could be vicious, especially to his friends. His chronic ill health left him chronically short-tempered. And some of the surviving portraits suggest that he really did look like a querulous goat.

And yet ... modern ecumenism can do more with Calvin than treat him as an awful warning. This is partly because he was an ecumenist himself, in that most un-ecumenical age. As the most impressive of the quincentary biographies<sup>1</sup> makes clear, when Calvin was at the height of his powers in the 1540s and 1550s, he threw himself into the effort to bring the quarrelsome fragments of the Protestant Reformation together. He was not the first to attempt this. His mentor, the Strassburg reformer Martin Bucer, had laboured mightily for reconciliation not merely between Protestants, but across the hardening Protestant-Catholic divide. Bucer's style, and its limitations, are reminiscent of some twentieth-century ecumenical efforts: his approach was simply to keep talking, in the hope that forms of words could be found which might either paper over the theological chasms

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

between the parties, or bury them under an avalanche of unreadable prose. Calvin's approach was different, although he did share some of Bucer's wiliness. It was Calvin's statesmanship which was responsible for the only genuinely successful interconfessional agreement of the entire sixteenth century, the so-called *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549, a carefully worded statement of Eucharistic theology which he agreed with the chief pastor of Zurich, Heinrich Bullinger. The *Consensus'* significance was not immediately apparent, as this was simply an agreement between one important Swiss church (Zurich) and one rather less important one (Geneva). Moreover, Calvin gave quite a lot more ground than Bullinger did. No matter: the *Consensus* provided a form of words which managed to neutralise the potentially toxic divisions over the Eucharist, and over the years that followed Reformed Protestants of all stripes used it to contain and manage those divisions. It did not end the theological arguments. What it did was to restore trust.

It also laid the groundwork for the much more ambitious programme on which Calvin embarked in the 1550s. Having pacified one side of the Protestant family, he was determined to bring the other side—Luther's followers—back to the table with the rest. Calvin was personally starstruck by Luther (twenty-five years his senior), treasured his memory after the older man's death in 1546, and longed for a reconciliation. But the sentiment was not reciprocated, and in the bitter internecine divisions that convulsed Lutheranism after Luther's death, reunion with Reformed Protestantism was the policy of the faction which eventually lost. To his credit, Calvin never quite understood the bile with which his overtures were rejected. In any event, he failed, and mainstream Protestantism remained split into two mutually antagonistic camps. Yet this campaign did help to bring all magisterial Protestants *except* the Lutherans under a single umbrella. Strictly speaking, it is inaccurate to label that umbrella 'Calvinism'. Reformed Protestantism is a diverse tradition, with numerous founders—Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, Oecolampadius. Yet Calvin, as well as being the most eloquent exponent of that tradition, did more than anyone else to forge its diversity into a workable unity. Attaching his name to it has a certain rough justice.

So, Calvin as ecumenical icon? Perhaps, but the purpose of his ecumenism is worth noticing. The reason he was so keen to bring Protestantism together was to present a united front against the true

enemy, namely Rome. That was also a major reason for his willingness to kill Servetus. Anti-Trinitarian radicals (whom Roman Catholics executed almost as a matter of routine, of course) threatened to discredit Calvin's more respectable Reformation by association. This was ecumenism as prioritisation: an insistence that minor disagreements could not be allowed to distract from the real battle. It may not seem attractive to modern sensibilities, but given Calvin's conviction that the papacy was Antichrist, it made perfect sense. And the phenomenon is hardly alien to modern ecumenism. No-one believes that it is a coincidence that western Christianity discovered its ecumenical vocation at the same time as it discovered the shared threat of secularism. One of the only demonstrably effective ways of stopping Christians from fighting one another is to present them with a common enemy.

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But it is scarcely fair to Calvin to treat him simply as an exemplary, or cautionary, tale of the ecumenical enterprise. If his ecumenism had a distinctive flavour, it was in his refusal to compromise on doctrine or practice, and his insistence instead on forging unity around an overwhelming vision of Christ and building it on the common ground of Scripture. And it is precisely Calvin's doctrines and the practices he advocated which have left him in such bad odour amongst modern western Christians. Of all the Christian theologians who have advocated or participated in heresy executions, it is Calvin who is the most notorious: in part, I suspect, because it provides an easy pretext for dismissing his theology. Yet even those who have no intention of becoming Calvinists might benefit from a glance at some of Calvinism's distinctive theological concerns, and perhaps even from tasting the bitter, savoury morsels that it brings to the ecumenical feast. I propose to look at three concerns in particular: predestination, idolatry and the covenant.

Predestination is the doctrine which is most readily associated with Calvin, and it is a doctrine which has always aroused revulsion. It is this doctrine which led my Anglican blogger to label Calvin a Nazi, and to call his God 'a deity of well-nigh infinite sadism'. The problems with Calvin's doctrine of double predestination are almost too obvious to mention. Ethically, it appears to suggest both that God is the author of sin and that he created some humans (indeed, in the classic version, most humans) with the specific purpose of consigning them to eternal

torment. Pastorally, it tends to produce either despair, self-satisfaction or an unstable lurching from one to the other, fuelled by intense anxiety. Politically, it is the ideal tool for a self-serving elite which wishes to justify and perpetuate its privileges. Calvinism, of course, has answers to all those accusations, although not everyone will be convinced by them. But behind them lies a more serious problem: the doctrine is repugnant emotionally, and perhaps especially so to modern sensibilities. We appear instinctively to feel ourselves to be free and able to choose, even if it is difficult to make that concept make philosophical sense. It is sometimes suggested that we are predestined to believe in free will.

In which case, the obvious question is: why on earth would anyone formulate such a repellent and counterintuitive doctrine, and having done so, why would anyone else believe them? For the idea is a persistent one. Anyone who takes their Augustine seriously cannot avoid it. Luther (who has largely escaped blame on this front) was an avowed predestinarian, albeit his doctrine was not quite so crisp as Calvin's. But then, anyone who takes their Paul seriously cannot avoid it either. Christians whose gorge rises at the doctrine have to deal with Romans chapter 9, in which Paul uses the story of Jacob and Esau to argue that we are chosen before we are born, and in which he appears to teach that some people were created specifically in order to be damned. An Augustinian-Calvinist reading of this chapter is of course not the only one possible, but nor is it a difficult one. As well as scriptural evidence, the doctrine is powered by relentless logic, arguing from the sovereignty of God as well as following through the Protestant doctrine of justification.

Calvin's own view was that this doctrine was to be taught cautiously: he would never advocate concealing it (his reverence for truth and his loathing for clericalism made sure of that), but he was well aware of its pastoral dangers, and warned against 'penetrating the sacred precincts of divine wisdom. ... We should not investigate what the Lord has left hidden in secret.' Such a course, he warned, leads the Christian to 'enter a labyrinth from which he can find no exit.'<sup>1</sup> His successors blithely ignored these warnings. Especially in the Netherlands and the English-speaking world, predestination became *the* signature doctrine of the Reformed churches in the seventeenth century, with all its

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 922-5.

implications lovingly teased out and with the most elaborate pastoral theologies constructed around it. This is often used to distance Calvin from the perceived excesses of later Calvinism, which is fair enough, but it can be read another way. For many Reformed Christians of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, it appears that Calvin was wrong, and that the doctrine of predestination was not a labyrinth. Instead, improbably, it was a source of spiritual nourishment. That seems so unlikely to modern eyes that it is worth our looking at.

For the experience of thousands of early modern Christians was that the doctrine of predestination was profoundly attractive. This applied especially to those facing danger and persecution, a situation which many early Calvinists experienced and which their theology, for excellent Biblical and political reasons, suggested was normative for Christians. As the book of Revelation witnesses, one of the standard Christian responses to persecution and to worldly hardship is a strong doctrine of divine sovereignty. Those who might be daunted by the wrath of an earthly king can remember that there is a greater king, whose purposes will not be thwarted. And one of the key elements of the doctrine of predestination is the concept of the perseverance of the saints—the doctrine that the elect *cannot* lose their salvation under any circumstances, for God has decreed it from before all worlds. For those trembling as they face the prospect of imprisonment, torture or execution for their faith, this is a powerful comfort. Their faithfulness is not in their own weak hands; it is assured by God. Predestination may not be so attractive to armchair theologians, but there are no (well, fewer) freewillers in foxholes.

And indeed, even when Calvinism's initial crises had passed and it had become an establishment, the doctrine retained an appeal. This is partly because Calvinist societies retained an ongoing sense of crisis, a sense which, in the age of religious wars, was not imaginary. But the great achievement of Calvinist, or post-Calvinist, pastoral theology was to discover that the stark opposites of predestination could be turned into spiritually fruitful paradoxes. Recovering an almost Lutheran emphasis on the necessity of suffering—physical or spiritual—for the Christian life, the English Puritans took predestination's tendency to produce spiritual despair, and turned it into an advantage. As Richard Sibbes put it in his bestselling tract *The bruised reede, and smoaking*

*flax*, 'none are fitter for comfort than those that thinke themselves furthest off. ... A holy despaire in our selves is the ground of true hope.'

The logical power, and problems, of predestination have not faded, but the sense of its pastoral appeal has: since the eighteenth century, it has found few friends. It is worth asking whether the modern Churches can learn anything from the comfort and power which the doctrine once offered.

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Although Calvin has become inextricably associated with predestination, he would not have seen it as the heart of his theology. Closer to that heart was his concern—indeed, the wider Reformed Protestant concern—with the sin of idolatry.

It is scarcely possible to take the Scriptures as seriously as Reformed Protestants professed to and *not* be concerned with idolatry. At least, one might imagine so: but in fact, in the modern world, this perennial Christian concern has largely lapsed, and the ascetic caution about improper worship which once pervaded Protestantism has retreated to a few conservative redoubts. It is worth recalling the breadth of Calvinism's worries about idolatry. It was Reformed Protestantism which broke with the Latin West's tradition by renumbering the Ten Commandments so that the prohibition on idolatry once again became a commandment in its own right. Reading their Old Testaments, Reformed Protestants observed that almost the only criterion by which the worth of the rulers of ancient Israel was assessed was their willingness to destroy idols. They even noticed, in 2 Kings 18: 4, that King Hezekiah destroyed the bronze snake which God himself had commanded Moses to erect, on the grounds that it was being abused. If that could become an idol, then anything could.

Calvinists were well aware of the grounds on which western Christians had traditionally defended the use of images in worship. They understood that this was not idolatry in a crude sense; that no-one believed that a crucifix (for example) was literally a god, and that worshippers understood themselves to be worshipping God by means of such physical objects. But they saw this as irrelevant. The Deuteronomic prohibitions on inventing one's own form of worship were too sweeping for such special pleading. As a result, visual imagery,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Sibbes, *The bruised reede, and smoaking flax* (London: [M. Flesher] for R. Dawlman, 1631), 43.

and also music, was drastically curtailed and simplified. Calvinists were also well aware that idolatry is not committed by objects, but by people, and that the human heart is perfectly capable of creating idols within itself regardless of the physical props available. They found that the battle against external idols was a reminder of, and a preparation for, the greater, internal battle.

To modern eyes, this is a piety of vandalism. It was certainly responsible for a holocaust of medieval Christian artworks in a number of countries. But before we rush to deplore this, we should remember that it is truer to the original purpose of sacred art to destroy it as an idol than to put it in a museum because it is pretty. Compared to Calvinism, most other Christian traditions are open to the accusation of not taking seriously the very widespread Scriptural prohibitions on idolatry. If we do not wish to honour those prohibitions as Calvinism has done, it behoves us to consider how we *do* wish to honour them.

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Our third topic, covenant, brings us to the heart of the Calvinist conception of the Church: which is as a covenanted community, a new Israel, a consecrated people with all the privileges and responsibilities which that implies. This is a rich and troublesome theological theme, but one of the ways in which Calvin developed it, is particularly troubling to modern sensibilities, and perhaps especially so in my own Anglican tradition. This is his emphasis on the role of collective discipline in church life.

Once again, this is a practice founded on a strong Scriptural base, in this case a direct set of New Testament examples (chiefly Matthew 18: 15-17, and numerous Pauline passages such as Titus 3: 10-11). Calvin's mentor Martin Bucer introduced him to the idea that the Church is responsible for overseeing the morals of its members, an idea which Calvin implemented rigorously in Geneva, and which later Calvinists in Scotland and the Netherlands elevated into being an indispensable mark of a true Church. Because this is Calvinism, the principle is shot through with a radical egalitarianism: discipline is enforced by clergy and laity alike, and Calvin and others strove to maintain the principle that discipline was indifferent to wealth, rank, status or gender.

To modern, liberal instincts, this is perhaps Calvinism's least attractive feature. Calvinist discipline can look like totalitarianism in the bud. Its insistence that we are all our brothers' keepers is a snooper's charter. The concentration on avoiding scandal is almost an

open invitation to hypocrisy. Privacy, diversity and the individual conscience are all subordinated to a grimly conformist authoritarianism.

Again, since its flaws are so obvious, it is worth pausing to note its more positive dimension. The purpose of Calvinist discipline—in intention, and to an impressive degree in execution—was not punitive, but pastoral and reformatory. Although Calvinist consistories and kirk sessions did function remarkably like courts, they were not in the business of punishing crime, but of bringing sinners to repentance. The penalties they imposed were aimed at demonstrating that repentance, or at excluding the impenitent from the community (although these penalties could certainly sting just as much as any secular punishment). The historical study of Calvinist discipline in recent decades has established how painstakingly pastoral it habitually was.<sup>1</sup> The elders of Calvinist churches spent long hours resolving quarrels between neighbours, or patching up marital arguments (and, in cases of domestic violence, ordering separations and sometimes permitting divorce and remarriage). The ambition that the ministers and elders themselves should be judged by the same high standards was fulfilled impressively often, and there were even earnest and sometimes successful attempts to impose those standards on the nobility and gentry.

Of course, Calvinist discipline was intended as a prototype neither of the totalitarian state nor of the welfare state. Its purpose was not primarily to control or to assist the people, but to consecrate them, and to ensure that the people as a group were holy. Leaving morals to the consciences of individual believers, in the modern fashion, was an abdication of ministers' responsibility for their flocks, and of all Christians' responsibility for one another. This set of ambitions was not, of course, universally popular. Many of those hauled before consistories accepted their faults and were duly penitent, and many more found it prudent to pretend to be so; but others denied their guilt, disputed the consistories' expansive definition of sin or rejected the moral majority's authority. But it is worth emphasising that establishing and maintaining discipline of this kind was only possible on the basis of consent. Most Reformed Christians were persuaded of its legitimacy

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<sup>1</sup> This is ably summarised in Graeme Murdock, *Beyond Calvin: the Intellectual, Political and Cultural World of Europe's Reformed Churches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004).

and its value. There is good evidence that these systems won more than compliance; they won respect. The moral seriousness which they conveyed was attractive; not least because being in good standing with a consistory suddenly became a powerful testimony to one's own moral status.

Needless to say, it would be impossible to impose a classic Calvinist system of discipline on any modern community, even if a church could be found which was deranged enough to want to attempt it. Yet there may have been a baby worth keeping somewhere in that murky and unlamented bathwater. There are good grounds for thinking that there is a Christian responsibility to care for one another's morals, to function as an ethical community rather than as atomised individuals, and to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers. There are even grounds for thinking that that might entail drawing boundaries to the community on some occasions. The classical Calvinist means of fulfilling these responsibilities are clearly not workable now, if indeed they ever truly were. In which case, what other means are we going to adopt?

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I should make my own position clear: I am not a Calvinist in any precise sense, merely a normally muddled Anglican who sometimes feels the tug of Calvinist logic. I belong to the tradition which (in the words of those subtle historical commentators W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman) sees Calvinism as 'right but repulsive':<sup>1</sup> strong meat, the dry prose of theology. But I do suspect it brings an undervalued set of gifts to the modern Churches: mulish determination, a stubborn willingness to follow uncomfortable trains of thought to the end and to ask spiky and awkward questions to which there are not comfortable or obvious answers. Few of us now, perhaps, would agree with Calvin's answers to those questions. But he deserves a hearing: not simply because his answers are sometimes more compelling than we give them credit for, but because unlike most of us, he had the nerve and clear-sightedness to raise the questions in the first place.

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<sup>1</sup> W. C. Sellar and R. J. Yeatman, *1066 and all that* (London, 1930), chapter 35.

## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: THE VOCATION OF THE EASTERN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

*Eastern Catholic Churches have too often featured as a 'problem' in discussions between the Roman Church and the Orthodox. The vocation of these Churches needs instead to be portrayed positively, for example by exploiting the biblical figures of Abraham and Sarah. Their 'double communion', enabling them to fulfil a bridging role between Catholic and Orthodox traditions, may then be exploited for the benefit of the whole oecumene. The spirit and recommendations of the Balamand Statement are as valid now as when it was issued in 1993.*

**Robert Gibbons\***

### **A way forward not a way back**

Once asked about reunion between Rome and Canterbury, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, himself a committed ecumenist, pointed out that although these two Churches had much to share there was also a lot to deal with, that for over four hundred years they had walked apart. He was articulating in simple language that the development of doctrine, practice and life that is necessarily a part of a Christian community's journey, has to be taken into account; that there is no magic wand which can restore the pre-schismatic times when East and West were in communion, nor a voice which can say, we are back at the moment of division, let us put aside our differences now! The recent approach by members of the Anglican Communion to Pope Benedict XVI and his willingness to create a model by which to receive them into the Catholic fold only serves to underline this point. His proposal to create an ordinariate (20 October 2009), rather than work on the Eastern Catholic Model of Church *sui iuris*, that is, whose 'mother

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church' or roots do not belong in Rome *per se* but in one of the ancient patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople or Jerusalem points up an important distinction. These ancient groups are, usually in the case of the autocephalous churches, in communion with Rome through their Patriarch, and not under Rome. This theology of *koinonia* serves to identify them as 'sister' churches not subsidiary members of the Latin Rite. In contrast the ecclesiology of the proposed ordinariate for members of the Anglican Communion seeking corporate reunion has to take into account the factor of separation from Rome as something 'intrinsic' to their origin as a community that broke with Rome, but then developed in another manner only to seek reunion in an integrated way as part of the Latin Church.

The historical break is different in both cases and there is no real comparison, for unlike these particular Anglican communities, the Eastern Churches have no theological necessity to be assimilated into the 'structures' of the Roman Church, rather the opposite: they need to retain a strong identification with their Orthodox sisters and retain their autonomy as a Church. A problem of Christian history is that once a fissure has been created between two ecclesial bodies, it is inevitable that there will be further development, doctrinal, ecclesial, pastoral and liturgical after the initial split. Responding to mission and the vagaries of political history takes a community into new regions, new thoughts, new visions, sometimes to a place very different from before. None of that can be readily jettisoned; as it is a part of the tradition and experience of a particular community it must be taken into account when any attempt at dialogue or reconciliation takes place.

There are though, significant problems for the Eastern Catholic Churches in diaspora areas where they have no resident bishop and rely on close co-operation with the Latin Ordinary and Diocesan structures. Besides the long process of education, the dominance of the Latins can also mean that they are in danger not only of having unnecessary pressures put on their own integrity (sacramental life of children for example) but also of losing the other connection with their Orthodox identity. I am one in sympathy with the late Melkite Archbishop Elias Zoghby, who advocated a 'double communion' with Rome and Orthodoxy through a common declaration of faith inspired by the first millennium, and whose visionary declaration still points the road less travelled, but ultimately the only road for those Churches of the East.

He was passionate about reunion and so his words here carry a distinctly ironic tone:

In principle the decisions of our synods can be annulled by the Roman Congregation. About 40 years ago I used to call the Congregation the 'Colonial Office'. I ask myself, who are the patriarchs and bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches? ... The apostolic patriarchates are subordinated to a Roman Congregation ... I repeat that we are grateful to Rome, which has helped us so much, but we want to be helped within Orthodoxy. We no longer want to be ruled by people who do not know our history and our traditions. It is not just, it is not Christian, it is not in accord with God's plan.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Eastern Catholic communities this is the essential point to consider: nearly all of them are originally from an Orthodox church, but their union with Rome has made them walk a different path. Whilst it has never been totally synonymous with the Latin (Roman) church, in certain cases pressure has been put upon them to adopt and take on broad practices and doctrines important to Latin Christianity. Amongst other things there is the impression that the Roman tradition is embarrassed by these Eastern communities. A particular insight is the mere fact that forty years after the Council the term 'uniate' is still widely used by Roman Catholics and others, which in a small way shows that the problem of these churches has not been widely understood.<sup>2</sup> We can also note that when the Roman Church deals with the Orthodox in any discussion of reunion, it is always the 'problem' of the Eastern Catholic Churches that is placed high on the agenda, *not their right to exist* which comes some way down the list of boxes to tick. In fact in certain circles the intention is that these churches will, if unity is to be found, melt back into their Orthodox sisters or parents. But that cannot happen without some form of reciprocation. In the Catholic Catechism a legal term is used about them: they are it says, churches *sui iuris*. In other words they have their

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<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Elias Zoghby, Archbishop Emeritus of Baalbek, Lebanon, quoted in an interview with Francesco Strazzari of *Il Regno-Attualità* in June 1996.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'uniate' is not a simple term, it carries the particular weight of historical interpretation behind it and in an historical sense refers to *Uniatism*, a totally different process of reception into the Catholic Church. Instead, the various documents on the Eastern Catholic Churches use the terms 'Eastern Catholic', 'Greek Catholic', and so on. Today, 'uniate' carries pejorative overtones and out of sensitivity should not be used.

own identity, charism and structure, their liturgical rites are authentic, their customs legitimate, their doctrine sound. They cannot be understood as aberrant communities, neither fish (Roman) nor fowl (Orthodox): because of their commitment to unity with Rome and their history, they are quite simply more of a phoenix, as witnesses to the unbroken continuity of the ancient Church. They are valid Eastern Churches, Catholics of a particular tradition be it Greek, Coptic Syriac, or other. If the Roman Church is itself a church *sui iuris* and accepts other autocephalous Orthodox churches as valid in the 'great tradition'—and that is a given part of the ecumenical dialogue—then both sides need to take another look at the way they perceive these *autocephalic* Catholic Churches. That is the point of the title. In place of current prejudice, what we need is a measure of pride by both Catholics and Orthodox in these churches. They are, because of misunderstandings and situations, very much the churches of the poor little ones of God and have suffered much for Christ. In fact they too, along with so many of the Orthodox, have given witness by various forms of martyrdom and continue to do so—one has only to think of the situation of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church under Stalin or the trials of the churches in the Middle East today. The prejudice of both Orthodox and Catholic towards these churches is in itself a scandal, a lack of care on both sides, one as a sister looking to bond with one of their own, the other a sister accepting independent thought and activity as a necessary part of the family of God in the world.

It would be invidious to list the historical problems that the Eastern Catholics have undergone in their fidelity to communion with Rome, nor would it be a totally unbiased portrait of a relationship to say that this communion has also been beneficial at times, usually politically. However on balance it is more than obvious that there has frequently been sacrifice, difficulty and at times wanton and wilful imposition of Latin custom and thought completely alien to the ethos of the tradition.

At times it might have been easier to return to the communities of origin or separation, rather than continue the journey in faith, but there is something incredibly scriptural about their pilgrimage. It is almost as if, cut off from one community and attached by slender links of charity to another, they represent the fragility of God's promise, dependent as it is on our co-operation and acceptance. Their vocation seems to me very much that of Abraham and Sarah ... ancient in days (as were Sarah

and Abraham), rooted in a particular culture (the East), yet called out to travel on a pilgrimage toward a promised land without the great luggage that many Churches have, be it plant, wealth or influence. The vision God gives Abraham is not of one single undivided people but rather that he (Abraham) will, with his old wife Sarah, be the parents of a vast multitude. Is not that vision just what the Eastern Catholic Churches represent?<sup>1</sup> But it is also the vision of Abraham and Isaac, the boundless quest for the encounter with the Divine presence who transcends boundaries and transforms and challenges us as well.<sup>2</sup> It is also the image of Trinitarian faith as exemplified in the story of the three Angels at Mamre, so beloved in the Orthodox tradition as an Icon of great power and beauty.<sup>3</sup> In keeping alive that witness of the ever close presence of God these communities, particularly through their liturgical life, show how the work of the Trinity is that of distinction and difference, as Karl Rahner puts it:

God's relationship to us is three-fold. And this three-fold (free and unmerited) relationship to us is not merely an image or analogy of the immanent Trinity: it is this Trinity itself, even though communicated as free grace. For what is communicated is the triune personal God.<sup>4</sup>

Taking the Abraham metaphor a step further, these poor communities witness in their lives to a reality of God, a God whom Hagar calls 'a God of seeing'<sup>5</sup> who also opens her eyes in time of tribulation.<sup>6</sup> But the faith they possess is a witness to the spiritual reality of a God who calls us all to walk before him, as he did Abraham: 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless.'<sup>7</sup> That is the vocation of a covenant people: it is also a precarious one.

### **Humility and pride**

As the title of this article suggests, the vocation of these Eastern communities is twofold, to be both a source of pride in their long fidelity to a tradition but also, and more importantly, to deal with the

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 13: 14-18; 17: 15-21.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 22: 1-14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 4 (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1966), 96.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. 16 :13-14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 21: 19.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 17: 2.

poison of prejudice amongst the churches. On the one hand they witness to the Orthodox the hope of Christianity undivided, 'One in Christ'. To the Catholic, on the other hand, they represent the rich diversity that can exist healthily and unequivocally in that unity of essential faith. For the Reform churches they show how one can differ in certain areas of belief and practice yet retain as an essential element that unity of faith with Peter's successor in Rome, for as we are apt to forget, Antioch itself has a prior claim to a Petrine ministry and the business of being a sister church is also to hold to account the other members of the family. They too are a Church of Peter and Paul. In this matter the lessons of the Book of Acts points to a humble vocation for them; the task of family members is not only to strengthen one another, it is also to deal with problematic issues. True *koinonia* is reciprocity, not the perceived hegemony of an elder brother over others as is often the interpretation of a Petrine ministry. Even if one examines the notion of *primus inter pares*, it is evident that the interpretations of this places partnership at its heart! If, as we must acknowledge, these ancient families have distinct apostolic origins apart from Rome and an inheritance as rich and legitimate as the Latin Church, and if the discipleship of Jesus involves continual humility and service, then there is much that these churches can give to the service of the Lord in the Great Church. Part of the scripturally based model found in Acts is not that of an infallible *magisterium* dictating what needs to be done in order to preserve truth, but more that of a synodal, conciliar activity, where the gift of gentle humility in discerning the workings of the Holy Spirit is operative. If we look to the dispute in Acts, Peter takes his place with Paul and James at the discussion table, and may have to alter his opinion(!). For many this may seem a step too far, but we live in challenging and changing times and the proclamation of the Kingdom demands new messengers and different methods of proclamation.

Part of this change can be found in the workings of the Second Vatican Council. Whilst not an Ecumenical Council in the sense the Orthodox understand, it has, nevertheless, reached beyond Catholic confines. There has been much disturbance in the Church of God since the 1950s and 60s, but even the most conservative members of the Catholic Church must recognise that Reform of the Reform<sup>1</sup> can never be a 'Lot's wife' solution: chronological time takes us forward and

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<sup>1</sup> A term used by various groups concerning the ongoing debate about liturgical change in the Roman Rite.

society changes. That was what this Council understood. The world of the twenty-first century Church is not and cannot be that of the nineteenth century, or of some primordial 'golden age'! National concerns and old historical concerns are changing even as I write this article—who would have thought in 1963 that a European President was on any agenda—and so times shift and the Church, composed of human beings must adapt to these circumstances! Even with the pastoral guidance of Pope Benedict XVI and a more 'conservative mien' the Council vision matters more than ever. The Roman Catholic Church has changed since 1963, so have the Catholic churches in communion with Rome, as well as the Orthodox. John Binns in his book on the Orthodox Church sums it up succinctly:

It is no longer possible to reach back beyond the controversies and re-create the church of the first millennium, since developments in both East and West have resulted in new entities which can no longer claim to be identical with the undivided Church.<sup>1</sup>

In a world of rapid communication all Christian communities are affected by each other and the Vatican Council has reached beyond Catholic confines to touch other churches in so many different ways. Peta Dunstan makes the point when talking of change in one Anglican Benedictine community, that even the conservative stance of Pope John Paul II did not herald a return to pre-conciliar models, 'nor had the theological shifts of the Second Vatican Council been abandoned. The interpretation of them was more cautious but they had not been overturned.'<sup>2</sup> And despite rumour and supposition that is also true today.

In these matters the Eastern Catholic Churches have, like others, learnt to adapt and change: but by virtue of circumstance such as witness in hostile territories, martyrdom, emigration, they also have much to give. Ancient but not antiquarian, rooted in tradition but not traditionalist, rich in spiritual treasure but often materially poor, they point to the pearl of great price, the presence of God in our World. Archimandrite Lev Gillet, himself a great apostle of communion between the Churches, writing prophetically put it succinctly:

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<sup>1</sup> J. Binns, *An Introduction to the Christian Orthodox Churches* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 222.

<sup>2</sup> Peta Dunstan, *The Labour of Obedience* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009), 175.

O strange Orthodox Church, so poor and so weak, with neither the culture nor organisation of the West, staying afloat as if by a miracle in the face of so many trials, tribulations and struggles; a Church of contrasts, both so traditional and so free, so archaic and so alive, so ritualist and so personally involved, a Church where the priceless pearl of the gospel is assiduously preserved, sometimes under a layer of dust; a Church which in shadows and silence maintains above all the eternal values of purity, poverty, asceticism, humility and forgiveness: a church which has often not known how to act, but which can sing the joy of Easter like no other.<sup>1</sup>

Though Fr Lev was writing in the 1930s and specifically thinking of the persecuted Russian Orthodox Church, his poetic words carry a resonance far beyond that period: they are prophetic, for in them we can recognise the same struggle of the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches today, maybe not now in Russia where since glasnost a resurgence of Orthodoxy has brought its own problems, but in the Middle East, the very birthplace of Christianity and in countries of their diaspora.

A sea change is still required. The decree on ecumenism of Vatican II puts it concretely:

To remove any shadow of doubt, then, this sacred Synod solemnly declares that the Churches of the East, while keeping in mind the necessary unity of the whole Church, have the power to govern themselves according to their own disciplines, since these are better suited to the temperament of their faithful and better adapted to foster the good of souls.<sup>2</sup>

Given previous historical attitudes to the Eastern Churches, this statement was a milestone and has gone a long way to encouraging debate as well as removing a major obstacle in the formative process of ecumenism. However the process cannot simply rest on its laurels, for whatever has been achieved in rapprochement has also been costly, and the healing of old wounds takes time as in some cases mutual acknowledgement of theological damage done to each other is necessary before there can be any concrete move forward. That doesn't have to be the work of great theological commissions either—symbols are important and often bypass the need for words. Take the debate about the *filioque* for instance: given that theological parameters in

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<sup>1</sup> Archimandrite Lev Gillet, quoted in Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *Lev Gillett. A Monk of the Eastern Church* (Oxford: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1999), 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Decree on Ecumenism*, 16.

Christological understanding have moved beyond the language and concepts of the first millennium (even in the East) wouldn't it be a gesture of great drama, yet deeply symbolic, for the West, so knowledgeable and articulate in systematic and historical theology, to go back to the formula of Nicaea as it originally stood and agree to share a common declaratory text for liturgical use? Then on a more pragmatic level, the date of a common Easter should be another issue: though this may be a nightmare given the depth of opinion about calendars, if we are a Gospel people then those in authority, 'who know how to act', should exercise the humility of Christ and step out in love to heal the breach with the tremendous power of simple gesture and symbolism!

### **Ecclesiological issues**

The image of a pilgrim Church makes a great deal of sense when considering the role of our diaspora communities. In the case of the eastern churches this is particularly evident. Our own knowledge of them is probably gained either by visiting another country or by finding them in our diocesan and ecclesial structures, perhaps by sharing a church building, a hall—or maybe by a chance encounter at a retreat day. In Britain there are more Eastern Christians now than ever before and amongst them an increasing number of immigrant Eastern Catholics. This is also the case in Europe, America, Canada and Australia. My own engagement with, and transfer to, the Melkite Church came about through their gradual establishment of a 'parish' centred on London, but as I know only too well, it is a hard learning process for all concerned. At the heart of the matter is the need for good ecclesiology. Let me show you an example of the kind of difficulties that emerge. Pope John Paul II in an address to the Congregation for the Eastern Churches on October 1 1998, said this:

The Congregation therefore has the task of expressing the universal Church's concern for these Churches that everyone can be fully acquainted with this treasure and thus feel, with the Pope, a passionate longing that the full manifestation of the Church's catholicity be restored to the Church and the world, expressed not by a single tradition, and still less one community in opposition to one another.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, Congregation for the Eastern Churches, 1 October 1998. See *Osservatore Romano*, 28 October 1998.

This phraseology is based on the conciliar decree *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* and picks up further references from the apostolic letter *Oriente Lumen*. Basically it is a recognition of legitimate diversity within the Church of Christ: one which sees beyond the divisions of the past to recognise the fundamental resonance of the community represented in Acts—one heart and mind in love, prayer, service and sharing—which must be at the heart of any reconciliation. Ecclesiologically, no *one* community should dominate another. Later on in the same address the Pope makes explicit reference to the tradition of synodal governance within the Eastern Church, particularly important in the pan-Orthodox groupings. In passing it should be noted that the Eastern Church as a whole and in its many autocephalic forms has managed to survive without the need for a Curia such as the Vatican; though whether the same could be said for the Roman Church without the Vatican is an interesting exercise in ecclesiological speculation!

These statements mark a significant shift in ecclesiological awareness, whereas history points to continual attempts at hegemony by one community over another: and it is in this area of misunderstanding and problematic theological discourse that the long history of the relationship of the Eastern Catholic Churches with Rome needs to be told truthfully, not to apportion praise or blame but in order to learn from past mistakes.

Let me share a few examples of negative ecclesiology at work. In a number of areas, the discipline of the Eastern Church is more flexible than that of the West. One example has been the use of vernacular languages in some of the Byzantine Churches, particularly the Melkite, where this principle of adaptation is seen as a matter of pastoral necessity, especially for the survival of a community in hostile or new areas. However as recently as 1960 it was a point of contention between the Melkites and Rome, the dispute centring on a prohibition from Rome about the use of the vernacular in their liturgies celebrated in the West (that is, in countries of immigration). In a letter to Pope John XXIII, Patriarch Maximos IV made a number of important theological points. On the matter of the spiritual and liturgical importance of this change he wrote:

If we have been able to keep our Christianity in spite of twelve centuries of domination, that is due in great part to the fact that the Liturgy, celebrated in a language understood by the people, was for them a living sermon. ... The religious fervour and apostolic influence of our

communities is greatest precisely in those areas where our priests have adopted the language of the people in the liturgy.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst I do not want to unpack every nuance, implicit in this short extract is an understanding that for the East the Liturgy has always been a primary source of spiritual life and devotion. Given the accretion of devotions in the Latin Church at that time (i.e. before the Council of 1963) and the pressing need for liturgical reform, this comment was particularly apposite, but it led to more considered reflections on the very necessity of the vernacular not only as important for public participation in the liturgy as ‘celebrants’ but pastorally as a tool for survival. Indeed, in a rather pointed and poignant comment, the Patriarch reminded the Pope that whilst the Arab Christian Churches survived by using the vernacular, the great Arab Latin Church of North Africa was lost to Islam:

[T]he whole Christian northern Africa where, at the time of Saint Augustine, there existed over one hundred dioceses but where the people could not understand the rites celebrated in Latin, was totally conquered by the Moslems even though the people there were not submitted to as much harassment as their brethren in the East.<sup>2</sup>

Today such a letter would, one hopes, be totally unnecessary as the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches has gone some way to enshrining their autonomy in such matters, but as several Eastern Catholics point out, the whole Code is couched in Roman terms and whilst an important instrument as an attempt to deal with the situations of the Eastern Churches it will necessitate further revision to adapt to a more eastern understanding of *economia* amongst other theological concepts, perhaps even being replaced by authentic canons from the east!

However one has to be on a continual watch for sentiments that militate against the rapprochement of the Latin Church as a ‘sister partner’ of the East. The Balamand Statement between the Orthodox and Catholics in June 1993 examined the whole problem of ‘Uniatism’. Whilst it acknowledged the difficulties of the past, as well as the re-emergence of the Greek-Catholics in the Ukraine and other Eastern European Countries, it nevertheless clearly states that the Eastern

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Patriarch Maximos IV Sayegh to Pope John XXIII, 5 February 1960, reprinted in *Eastern Churches Journal*, 5/3 (1998): 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Catholic Churches 'have a right to exist and to act in response to the spiritual needs of the faithful.'<sup>1</sup> Whilst there were various objections from both the Orthodox and Catholic theological commissions present at the meeting, several key points emerged, all indicating a real need to grasp the nettle and involve the Catholic Eastern Churches in any and all further dealings with the Orthodox. Thus, in the ecclesiological principles, sections 6-18, the overarching theme is that of working to achieve the unity Christ desired.<sup>2</sup> There is an acknowledgement of several attempts towards unity and of the failure to achieve it, as well as a repudiation of any form of proselytism by the Churches which had already been agreed in the *Tomos Agapis* by Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I at the Phanar in July 1967 and in an agreed statement of December later that year.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the Statement the principle of 'sister Churches' is constantly reiterated and to this end any form of rebaptism was condemned. As for the Eastern Catholic Churches the theological commission explicitly recommended that

These Churches then, should be inserted, on both local and universal levels, into the dialogue of love, in mutual respect and reciprocal trust, found once again, and enter into the theological dialogue with all its implications.<sup>4</sup>

But theological statements are of little worth unless there are practical rules which help engender dialogue and *koinonia* in a pragmatic and structural sense, so the Commissions drew up a set of practical rules. It is interesting to note just what they were suggesting then, mainly because two decades on they have not been implemented and are needed more than ever.

At the heart of the joint endeavour to understand each other's position and heal the breaches of the past is a the general thrust to work together in a spirit of reconciliation and renewal, what is termed in a succinctly Johannine phrase, 'the dialogue of love', but this dialogue can only be achieved by hard work. Listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit is not a passive reception but an active 'obedience'—hearing, and then doing the work of God. As always the generous spirit

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<sup>1</sup> *The Balamand Statement*, Plenary Session VII, Balamand, Lebanon, 17-24 June 1993. Introduction, 4. Published in *Eastern Churches Journal*, 1/1 (1993/94), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Balamand 6. *ECJ* 18.

<sup>3</sup> Balamand 7, 8, 12, 18. *ECJ* 18-20.

<sup>4</sup> Balamand 16. *ECJ* 20.

of the late Pope John Paul II articulated clearly the vision and direction in which he understood God to be calling the Churches. In an address to the Orthodox in Poland in 1991, three years before Balamand, he said:

The ages belong to God. He is Lord of human history, the God of the ultimate future. This future is mankind united in the Trinity of God, reconciled and transformed. ... Dialogue is an obligation for all of us.<sup>1</sup>

This was picked up in the following suggestions: that the Churches put an end to anything that could foment division;<sup>2</sup> that they exchange information about pastoral activities in different areas; that they do not encourage 'passing over' i.e. proselytising;<sup>3</sup> that they respect religious liberty and freedom; and that they engage in open dialogue, where social and pastoral projects are involved. It urges condemnation and proactive avoidance of violence, coercion, verbal or physical of communities against each other.<sup>4</sup> Then in liturgical and spiritual matters all Churches are called to inculcate and show respect for different and legitimate liturgical custom, and the spiritual life of another community.<sup>5</sup> Finally there is a stunning statement that gives encouragement to those who feel weary with the task and vocation of ecumenical dialogue today. It is worth quoting for it reaches to the heart of this issue of pride in an ecclesial reality and the nailing down of prejudice:

To pave the way for future relations between the two Churches, passing beyond the outdated ecclesiology of return to the Catholic Church connected with the problem which is the object of the document (the Eastern Catholic Churches) ... first of all everyone should be informed of the apostolic succession of the other Church and the authenticity of their sacramental life. One should also offer all a correct and comprehensive knowledge of history aiming at a historiography of the two Churches which is in agreement and even may be common. In this way, the dissipation of prejudices will be helped, and the use of history in a polemical manner will be avoided. This presentation will lead to an

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<sup>1</sup> From the address of Pope John Paul II to the Orthodox in Poland, Bialystok, 5 June 1991, text in *Osservatore Romano*, 7 June 1991. English Translation from *Information Service*, Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 77, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Balamand 20.

<sup>3</sup> Balamand 21.

<sup>4</sup> Balamand 24, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Balamand 28, 29.

awareness that faults leading to separation belong to both sides, leaving deep wounds on each side.<sup>1</sup>

Prophetic and important words still!

### **Time to create a sense of truthful pride!**

It might seem that I have spent a lot of time in this article on what is after all a small document, but the point is that unlike papal documents such as *Orientalis lumen* and the conciliar decrees of Vatican II, this is a *joint statement* not a Roman one, which seeks to engage both east and west in theological, pastoral and spiritual renewal from a position of equality. The fact this has not yet happened matters little to those of us involved in the work of reconciliation especially from within the context of the Eastern Catholic Church, for these words are still of great importance. Having spent over twenty years in theological education at university level in Great Britain, I find it salutary to reflect that of the different faculties of theology in our higher education system, there are perhaps three that have a reasonable programme of study about the Eastern Church, including one full module taught at undergraduate level.<sup>2</sup> This needs remedying, in particular for any engaged in ministry, especially in the context of historiography and an accurate ecclesiology, particularly so in the case of the split between east and west and the position of those communities and Churches in communion with the Pope of Rome.

It would possibly surprise some people that the date 1054, the Reunion Council of Florence of 1438-39 or the Union of Brest in 1596, whilst historically significant, did not relate to a complete break, for some Eastern Churches always remained in either full or partial communion before and after these times.<sup>3</sup> However the damage done to any hope of reunion by the Constitution *Magnus Dominus* of 1596 which incorporated the Ruthenians into union with the Pope on an individual and not ecclesial basis, thereby explicitly denying the ecclesiology of Sister Churches, needs to be recognised as symptomatic of that deficient understanding of 'Church' in which one institutional

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<sup>1</sup> Balamand 30.

<sup>2</sup> It would be invidious to name names, but the undergraduate module specifically about these Churches is one I teach myself at St Mary's University College, Twickenham.

<sup>3</sup> Waclaw Hryniewicz, 'The Union of Brest and the Ecclesiology of Sister Churches', *Eastern Churches Journal*, 4/1 (1997), 107-124.

model dominated all others. We have to note that Churches *sui iuris* such as the Maronites, or communities like the Byzantine Italo-Albanians, and at particular times ancient Patriarchates such as Antioch, maintained good relations with Rome. In particular it has to be noted that the Arab Melkite Church which was not involved in the schism of 1054 and did not subscribe either to the condemnation of the Roman legates or the Patriarch of Constantinople, tried (unsuccessfully) to bring about reconciliation. Of particular interest as communities with varied and interesting histories, are the Churches in the Middle East, for amongst some Arab communities there is a measure of reciprocity between Orthodox and Catholic groups. (Of ongoing significance is the Byzantine Patriarchate of Antioch, both 'Melkite' Catholic and Orthodox.)<sup>1</sup> As Bishop Nicholas Samra from the Eparchy of Newton pointed out in his lecture entitled 'The Melkite Initiative' at a seminar on 'Eastern Church Traditions and Celebrations' at Notre Dame College, Ohio in 1997, not only had this Arab church remained in friendship with both Rome and Constantinople, but after their particular split in 1724, the Catholic Antiochians (known as the Greek-Catholic Melkites) were never hostile to Orthodoxy within their Catholic communion, but rather remained firm in their eastern traditions.<sup>2</sup> For Bishop Nicholas and many others like him, the work of ecumenism cannot simply be left to international committees. Many of the fissures and splits started out as problems between local Churches and it is at the local level that the process of healing these breaks must begin. A restoration of a certain amount of basic pride would help matters!

These Catholic and Orthodox Middle Eastern Churches are very conscious of their ancient roots, but also of the hardship they have continually faced in keeping the Christian faith alive, often against great odds. Of cause for concern to them is the rapid disappearance of Christians from these territories, in particular the place we often refer to as the Holy Land which covers Palestine, Jordan, Israel and disputed

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<sup>1</sup> Of great significance for a model of union was the 'Melkite Initiative', a proposal for a profession of Faith by Archbishop Elias Zoghby which would effectively unite Orthodox and Catholic. This was circulated at the Melkite synod of 1995. In turn the synod produced a document, *Reunification of the Antiochian Patriarchate* (July 1995) which set out eight points for reunion.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Nicholas Samra, 'The Melkite Initiative: A Profession of faith to Heal Divisions', *Eastern Churches Journal*, 4/1 (1997), 25.

territories; and more recently from Iraq, part of the tragic aftermath of the invasion. Church leaders are concerned to stop the haemorrhaging of people from these lands and to call for a return to the 'homeland'. We need to be sympathetic and alert to this problem, but as I can personally witness working with our Melkite Church, we also need to be aware that the growth of these Churches in the Diaspora (in particular in Europe) is also creating new issues and problems, by virtue of third generations who are not necessarily going to return to their ancestral roots, nor have Arabic as a first language. As the present Patriarch of the Melkites, Gregorius III has often said, historically the Byzantine tradition is also a European one, not purely Eastern, as in the case of the Syrians or Copts. The adaptability of the Byzantine 'Church' has seen it flourish across Eastern Europe, parts of Italy and the Adriatic and of course in countries such as Greece. It influenced early Christianity in many European countries, including Britain, and now returns again in the third millennium to be a partner in witness and mission. With its understanding of church as sacrament, it brings to the table another dimension of the great spiritual tradition of Christ's disciples.

It is my own contention that the situation these Catholic Churches now find themselves in, and their historical role (though misunderstood) as communities that do in a pragmatic way bridge Catholic and Orthodox traditions, equips them to be active partners in dialogue. And not only with Christians, for many, if not all of these communities have lived alongside Judaism and Islam for many centuries and can play an important role in bridging other divides. It comes as a great surprise to many western Christians that the Churches in the Middle East often have good relationships with Islamic religious leaders. In Syria, for instance, the Catholic and Orthodox Patriarchs in Damascus go formally to congratulate the Chief Imam and senior religious leaders on the celebration of Eid at the end of Ramadan, and reciprocal greetings are given at Holy Pascha (Easter). In historical terms though relations have been strained, there has also been a synthesis of ideas and a borrowing of ideas and religious practice—what after all is the origin of Ramadan? Look at the way Moslems pray, then look at the postures and gestures of Eastern Christians in their liturgical and prayer life, and the roots for Islam are obvious; and if you ever have the chance to enter the Golden Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and marvel at its beauty, remember that those who

built it were Byzantine craftsmen! There are even shared saints, besides biblical ones: the oft decried patron of England, Saint George, is loved by Christians and Moslems alike. If a true sense of historical awareness and pride were inculcated, then George, an Eastern saint could stand as a unifying hope for faiths in the multi-cultural milieu of twenty-first century England. Truly, an Eastern Christian gift!

### **And where do we go? The pilgrimage continues**

Writing this article has been a cathartic experience, for in examining so many strands of Eastern Catholicism, I am more aware than ever of the weight of history and the problems that have occurred. It has however given me at least a sense of renewed vocation, to speak and write and engage in dialogue, as one who is now part of the Eastern family, yet Catholic. In the past many great men and women fought hard for the cause of unity amongst Christians and for dialogue with other faiths. Remarkable people touched with the Holy Spirit, whose names are still well known: Fr Bede Winslow, Fr Lev Gillet, Mother Maria, Père Couturier, Patriarch Maximos IV, Patriarch Athenagoras, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Fr Bede Griffiths, Pope John XXIII and so many others from the 'great crowd of witnesses', gone before us in faith. But our task is to continue on their pilgrimage of faith taking the example of Abraham and Sarah as a model of trust that in God's time, the divisions on earth will be brought low and the Kingdom of Heaven be manifest amongst us. Fr Alexander Men, the Russian Orthodox priest murdered in Russia in September 1990, was a disciple of unity, who often quoted the words of Metropolitan Platon of Kiev (d. 1891): 'Our earthly walls of separation do not reach up to heaven.'<sup>1</sup> But he was also realistic about the problems of Christian unity, and for him the vision depended on the martyrdom of strong love and witness to Christ's values. It was not a matter of power or doctrinal difference. In his writings he often returned to this theme. 'I have arrived at the conviction that in reality, the Church is one and that Christians have been divided especially by their narrowness and their sins.'<sup>2</sup> Aware of this greater reality of the Church of Christ, his own life was a witness to openness. He described the narrowness of confessionalism as *agoraphobia*, a sickness and fear of the other places of religious experience. And for this reason he would

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<sup>1</sup> Yves Hammant, *Alexander Men: A Witness for Contemporary Russia* (California: Oakwood Publications, 1995), 145.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

not dissuade people from choosing what they considered their right path even if it was away from Orthodoxy. This attitude requires true greatness of heart and an eye that begins to see through the lens of God. Here are more of his words on the subject of division: 'Unfortunately not all Christians are able to recognise what is of value in other confessions. Those whose faith is not very sure, who feel the ground moving under their feet, prefer turning in on themselves.'<sup>1</sup> However like so many who learn to walk with God, Fr Alexander believed in the miracle of true ecumenism, but it came for him, and comes in reality from an ability to let go of preconceptions and learn from the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The Eastern Church is very much that of the Spirit, it is definitely the Church of Pentecost, but it needs to move outwards in loving concern. The vocation of the Eastern Catholic Churches may indeed be to disappear, to adapt to the challenges of the twenty-first century, but until that time, they breathe with lungs of both east and west and must continue to help resuscitate the breath of the spirit in the whole Church of Christ. The miracle as Alexander Men saw it is the love of Christ, but a practical love that deals with situations: 'For the moment let us at least overcome lack of understanding, the aggressive feelings and relations we have. If the members of different communities were to get to know each other better, this would inevitably bear fruit.'<sup>2</sup> This is the vision of those who are able to bridge the gaps and see beyond the immediate past. Another noted ecumenist, himself a person who left the Latin rite to join one of the ancient Syrian traditions in India, was Fr Bede Griffiths who echoed the insight of so many when he said: 'Behind all the differences of religion, and when we get beyond all the multiplicity to unity, we find a common tradition, a common wisdom that we all share. That is the hope for the future; that religions will discover their own depth.'<sup>3</sup>

In the Christian family one small part in recovering that unity is given to the Eastern Catholic Churches. It is my hope that representatives will be more involved in theological, liturgical, pastoral and other commissions, that seekers after unity will rise up in this generation and inspire, that the vision will burn brightly with the light of the east. Pope Benedict XVI has agreed to have a Synod for the Churches in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>3</sup> John Swindells (ed.), *A Human Search: Bede Griffiths Reflects On His Life: An Oral History* (London: Burns & Oates, 1997), 94.

Middle East in Rome during 2010, with on the agenda a paper from the Melkite Patriarch Gregorius III dealing with issues such as the Pope's role as Patriarch vis-à-vis the other Patriarchs. There is hope!

I will end with words from Archbishop Elias Zoghby, which stand for what I and others hope will be:

Without Christ, all is nothing. I continue to search. I work above all on the project of double communion (with the Orthodox). My dream is the reunification of the Byzantine Patriarchate of Antioch. Believe me I am not a fanatic. I am an Eastern Christian, in love with Christ and rooted in the tradition of the Holy Fathers. And a bit of a poet. *Dalla doppia comunione all' unita di cristo.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'From the double communion of all united in Christ.' *Il Regno-Attualità*, 14/96.

## THE PRIMACY OF PETER: AN EASTERN PERSPECTIVE

### Demetrios Charbak\*

*Primacy remains a—or even the—crucial ecumenical issue. Orthodoxy recognises the need for primacy, but not in its modern forms, and not as a supreme authority. Instead, the ministry of primacy is to express and preserve the unity of the universal Church. Recent ecclesiology renews our sense of the Church as the one, organic Body of Christ. As a universal body, the Church must have a head. But equally, the Church is wholly present wherever there is Eucharist. The only authority in the Church is that of the episcopacy, whether in individual or in conciliar modality.*

#### Introduction

The question of universal primacy is a central ecclesiological issue of our time. According to Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, ‘the issue of primacy is perhaps the most important ecumenical problem.’<sup>1</sup> A recent agreed statement of the World Council of Churches shows that, while some degree of ecumenical consensus exists on the issue, much work remains to be done.

During the 1960s the prophetic patriarch of Constantinople, Athenagoras I, pointed out the pathway to the future. In his opinion, only a reunited Christianity would be able to respond to the twofold challenge of our time: on the one hand, the unification of the planet, and on the other, the passionate intensification of differences, through the Trinitarian meaning of otherness within unity.

In Athenagoras’ view, the fundamental split in the history of Christianity was the one that occurred between East and West at the beginning of the second millennium. That split, he said, set off a chain

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<sup>1</sup> J. Zizioulas, ‘Primacy in the Church’, *Eastern Churches Journal* 5/2 (1998): 116. See also Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The primacy of the successor of Peter in the mystery of the Church: Reflections of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, in <<http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/cdfprima.htm>>

reaction of disintegration, and it was this that needed healing, beginning with Rome and Constantinople, the two protagonists.

Receiving Paul VI at the Phanar, Athenagoras greeted him as 'the very holy successor of Peter'. When the patriarch in turn came to Rome, he acknowledged that the bishop of Rome was

the bearer of the apostolic grace and the successor of a constellation of holy and wise men who have made this See illustrious, this See which is the first in honor and rank in the living body of Christian churches spread throughout the world, and whose holiness, wisdom and struggles on behalf of the common faith of the undivided Church are a permanent possession and a treasure of the entire Christian world.<sup>1</sup>

The pope and the patriarch emphasized the existence of a common language between the two sister-churches, that of the Apostles and that of the Fathers, as well as over a thousand years of experience as an undivided Church.

The patriarch, for his part, stressed that it was not the mystery of Roman primacy that was questioned by the Orthodox, only some of its modern applications. Time and again he used the expression of Ignatius of Antioch, speaking of a 'presidency of love' vested in the Church of Rome.

The dialogue between the two Churches, now truly theological in the proper sense, finally got under way, and a joint commission, meeting at intervals, produced some important documents concerning both the sacramental structure of the Church and the problem of the 'Greek Catholic' Churches.

By primacy we mean here an ecclesiastical authority, superior to that of a bishop whose jurisdiction is limited to his diocese. In Church history and canonical tradition we find the following forms of primacy:<sup>2</sup>

(1) Regional primacy within an ecclesiastical province or metropolitan district, i.e. in a group of dioceses (as defined, for example, in Apostolic Canon 33);

(2) Primacy within the so-called autocephalous churches. The authority of a patriarch or archbishop (e.g. the patriarch of Moscow); and

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<sup>1</sup> *Tomos Agapis* (The Book of Love), Constantinople-Rome: 1971, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> See Alexander Schmemmann, 'The Idea of Primacy in Orthodox Ecclesiology' in J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter: Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1992), 145.

(3) Universal primacy: that of Rome or Constantinople.

We have defined primacy as a form of authority. This definition, however, must be qualified at once. For there is a preliminary question: is there in Orthodoxy an authority superior to that of a bishop, i.e. an authority over the bishop, and hence over the Church of which he is the head? This question is essential for the whole problem of primacy. But the answers given to it by ecclesiology on the one hand, and the various ecclesiastical administrative systems on the other, are contradictory. Theologically and ecclesio-logically the answer should be 'no': there can be no authority over the bishop and his Church (i.e. diocese).

But in the present canonical structure of the Church such supreme authority not only exists, but is commonly understood as the foundation of the Church, and the basis of its canonical system. Theoretically, it is true, a personal authority of one bishop over another bishop is rejected; the 'supreme authority' is exercised usually by the primate together with the governing body, be it synod, council, etc. For us, however, the important fact is that such supreme ecclesiastical government is always characterized as authority over bishops, who are therefore subordinated to it. 'Supreme authority' is thus introduced into the very structure of the Church as its essential element.<sup>1</sup>

Having rejected and still rejecting it in its Roman form, i.e. as universal authority, the Orthodox conscience has easily accepted it in the so-called 'autocephalies.'

In this situation the question we have formulated above cannot be answered simply by reference to historical precedent or canonical texts, isolated from their context, as is too often done in contemporary canonical controversies. We must go deeper into the very sources of Orthodox doctrine on the Church, to the essential laws of her organization and life.

Orthodox tradition is unanimous in its affirmation of the Church as an organic unity. This organism is the Body of Christ and the definition is not merely symbolic but expresses the very nature of the Church. However, little by little it became an autonomous sphere in which the visible ecclesiastical structures, the exercise of authority, and the relations between churches, ceased to be explained in terms of the Church-Body of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop Michel Yatim, *The Position of the Bishop of Rome in the Western and Eastern Tradition* (Syria, 1999), 22.

Today, however, an ecclesiological revival is taking place. And it is moved primarily by the desire to express the Church—her life, her structures, her visible unity—in adequate theological terms, and first of all in terms of the Body of Christ. It is within this revival and in connection with this ‘rediscovery’ of the traditional concept of the Body that new attempts are being made to clarify the basic ecclesiological notions of organism and organic unity. And these, in turn, shape and condition the whole understanding of primacy.

The Church is an organism. The Church is organic unity. In a series of articles the contemporary Russian theologian and canonist Fr N. Afanassieff has shown that there existed (and still exist) two ecclesiological ‘elaborations’ or interpretations of this organic unity: the universal and the eucharistic. This distinction is of capital importance for the understanding of the Orthodox idea of primacy.

### **Organic unity: universal**

Here the only adequate expression of the Church as organism is the universal structure of the Church, its universal unity. The Church is the sum of all local churches, which all together constitute the Body of Christ. The Church is thus conceived in terms of whole and parts. Each community, each local church is but a part, a member of this universal organism; and it participates in the Church only through its belonging to the ‘whole’.

The important point here is for us to see that in the light of this doctrine the need for and the reality of a universal head, that is the Bishop of Rome, can no longer be termed an exaggeration. It becomes not only acceptable but necessary. If the Church is a universal organism, she must have at her head a universal bishop as the focus of her unity and the organ of supreme authority. The idea, popular in Orthodox apologetics, that the Church can have no visible head, because Christ is her invisible head, is theological nonsense. If applied consistently, it would also eliminate the necessity for the visible head of each local church, i.e. the bishop.<sup>1</sup>

### **Organic unity: Eucharistic**

Through the Eucharist, we have the whole Christ and not a ‘part’ of Him; and therefore the Church which is ‘actualized’ in the Eucharist is

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<sup>1</sup> See Schmemmann, ‘The Idea of Primacy ...’

not a 'part' or 'member' of a whole, but the Church of God in her wholeness. For it is precisely the function of the Eucharist to manifest the whole Church, her 'catholicity.' Where there is the Eucharist, there is the Church; and, conversely, only where the whole Church is (i.e. the people of God united in the bishop, the head, the shepherd) is there Eucharist.

The essential corollary of this 'Eucharistic ecclesiology' is that it excludes the idea of a supreme authority, understood as authority over the local church and her bishop. The ministry of authority, as all ministries and charismas, has its source in and is performed within the organic unity of the Church. It is rooted in the sacraments, whose aim is to fulfil the Church as the Body of Christ. This ministry of authority belongs to the bishop and there is no ministry of any higher authority. A supreme authority would mean authority over Christ himself. The bishop is vested with authority, yet the root of this authority is in the Church, in the eucharistic gathering, at which he presides as priest, pastor and teacher.

And for the early church all this was a living reality.

When, for example, our present and highly 'juridical' canon law affirms that all bishops are equal in grace, does this not mean what has been affirmed above? For what is the grace of the episcopate if not the 'charism' of authority? And since the Church knows of no other charism of authority, there can exist no authority higher than that of the bishop over the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Does all this mean that Orthodox ecclesiology simply rejects the very notion of primacy? No. But it rejects the fatal error of universal ecclesiology which identifies primacy with authority, transforming it from a ministry in the Church into authority over the Church.

The sacrament of episcopal consecration reveals the first and essential form of primacy, or rather the basis for primacy: the synod of bishops. In Orthodoxy, the synod is usually given an exceptional importance. The Church is often described as the 'Church of the Councils,' and her government as 'conciliar' (*sobornyi* in Russian). But very little has been done to define the nature and function of synods in theological terms. Canonically, the synod is interpreted as the 'supreme authority' in the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Fr George Khawam, *The Bishop of Rome* (in Arabic, translated from *L'évêque de Rome*), (Lebanon: Al Maktaba al Boulesiyé, 1987), 21-22.

What of this primacy in the first millennium? Orthodox theology is still awaiting a truly Orthodox evaluation of universal primacy in the first millennium of church history—an evaluation free from polemical or apologetic exaggerations. Such a study will certainly reveal that the essence and purpose of this primacy is to express and preserve the unity of the Church in faith and life; to express and preserve the unanimity of all churches; to keep them from isolating themselves in ecclesiastical provincialism, from loosening the bonds of catholicity, and so separating themselves from the unity of life.

From this brief analysis of the concept of primacy we can draw the following general conclusion. Primacy in the Church is not 'supreme authority,' this notion being incompatible with the nature of the Church as Body of Christ. But neither is primacy a mere 'chairmanship' if one understands this term with its modern, parliamentary and democratic connotations. It has its roots, like all other functions, in the Church-Body of Christ. In each church there fully abides and is always 'actualized' the Church of God; yet all together the churches are still the same one and indivisible Church of God, the Body of Christ.

Primacy is the necessary expression of the unity in faith and life of all local churches, of their living and effective koinonia.<sup>1</sup>

Primacy is authority, but as authority it is not different from the authority of a bishop in each church. It is not a higher authority but indeed the same authority, only expressed, manifested, realized by an individual. The primate can speak for all because the Church is one and because the authority he exercises is the authority of each bishop and of all bishops. And he must speak for all because this very unity and agreement require, in order to be effective, a particular organ of expression, a mouth, a voice. Primacy is thus a necessity because therein lies the expression and manifestation of the unity of the churches as being the unity of the Church.

The idea of primacy thus excludes the idea of jurisdictional authority but implies that of an 'order' of churches which does not subordinate one church to another, but which makes it possible for all churches to live together this life of all in each and of each in all, thereby fulfilling the mystery of the Body of Christ, the fullness 'filling all in all'.

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<sup>1</sup> Yatim, *The Position of the Bishop of Rome ...* 9.

This concept of primacy, as has been said already, is rooted in the 'Eucharistic ecclesiology' which we believe to be the source of the Orthodox canonical and liturgical tradition.

### **Conclusion**

In this context of uncertainty, let us conclude by recalling a prophetic event that took place in the Middle East, in the Antiochian era. At the time of the synod of the Greek Catholic Church held in Lebanon, from 24 July to 4 August 1995, nearly all the bishops signed a profession of faith, which consisted in the following two points: 1) I believe everything which the Orthodox Church teaches; and 2) I am in communion with the bishop of Rome, in the role that the Eastern Fathers accorded him before the separation.

This text was in fact approved by one of the greatest bishops of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Metropolitan George Khodr, with the agreement of the Patriarch himself, Ignatius IV Hazim. George Khodr declared, 'I consider this profession of faith to set the necessary and sufficient conditions for re-establishing the unity of the Orthodox Church with Rome.' One should not look for any results, other than extremely modest ones, during the Antiochian era.

The healing over of the wounds has begun, and no longer just in the heart; for the first time its possibility is foreseen in the very structures of the Church. Let us not forget that it was at Antioch that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians!

## THE PETRINE MINISTRY

### Colin Battell OSB\*

*Papal supremacy and infallibility have become the 'greatest obstacle' to the ecumenical movement. Vatican I's statement of infallibility is presented in its European, historical context. Newman's moderating voice stresses the developmental life of Church doctrine: from the earliest times, all statements of faith have a dynamic quality, requiring reception, interpretation, even re-reception. The question is not if there is a Petrine, apostolic ministry, but what form it should take, within a conciliar context, if Rome is to offer the ministry of universal primacy which the Church needs today, 'presiding in love'. It is a question needing the efforts of all to answer.*

'The Pope is undoubtedly the greatest obstacle in the path of ecumenism.' This statement of Pope Paul VI<sup>1</sup> is one that many non-Catholics, both Orthodox and Protestant would might find themselves in agreement with. The role of the Bishop of Rome is one that cannot be ignored in the quest for unity. Many of the problems for ecumenism are about authority—where it is located, by whom it should be exercised and in what manner. Often it is an emotional issue for many raising painful memories and opening up old wounds, some of which go back centuries but are still relevant in the hearts and minds of many baptised Christians. These too need addressing—they need to be healed.

### The Vatican Councils

All Churches and ecclesial bodies have participated in the ecumenical movement whether through international bodies such as the World Council of Churches in which Orthodox have been participants since its inception or through active participation in other ways, as the Catholic Church has done since the Second Vatican Council. The decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio* represented a fundamental shift in attitude towards other Christians and this has been reinforced often since, for example, by the encyclical *Ut unum sint* (1995) while the

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<sup>1</sup> Addressing the (then) Unity Secretariat, 28 April 1967.

Apostolic Letter *Orientalis Lumen* of the same year spoke of the importance of the links between East and West and in particular the contribution of monasticism. As early as 1988 Pope John Paul II had famously spoken of the Church having two lungs, Catholic and Orthodox, both of which needed each other for the proper functioning of the Body.<sup>1</sup>

Initial enthusiasm has not always been easy to sustain and some have even spoken of the winter of ecumenism, but as was pointed out by the late Cardinal Basil Hume, the season of winter is the precursor and herald of spring. It is very important that we have the will for it—that we want passionately to see the prayer of the Lord fulfilled, which he prayed on the night before he died that his followers might be one as He and the Father are One, i.e. not just an agreement to differ and live side by side reasonably charity but an ontological unity, which does not necessarily mean uniformity. There cannot be unity unless we have the will for it. It is clearly not good enough to retreat behind entrenched positions and put up the barricades. The Holy Spirit we are promised by the Lord leads the Church into the Truth—that is to Jesus Himself and we have to be open and willing enough to be led outside our familiar boundaries.

The Faith is ‘once delivered to the saints’ and cannot change but our apprehension of it does if our faith is to deepen. ‘To live is to change...’ as Blessed John Henry Newman remarked. Our faith like Peter’s depends on revelation but what is implicit takes time to unravel, as witnessed, for example, by the great Christological and Trinitarian statements of the early Ecumenical councils. Moreover, as we shall see, statements are not static. They need interpretation and this is the work of theologians and others so that a *consensus fidelium* emerges. It even took time to recognise which councils were truly ecumenical and which were not—for a time, for example, the Arian party were a majority and great orthodox fathers such as St Athanasius found themselves isolated and even exiled.

In his encyclical *Ut unum sint* Pope John Paul II asked forgiveness for painful memories caused in the past. He recognises that the so-called papal claims have a long history and represent a complex problem that involves many facets—biblical interpretation, church history, ecclesiology, and the interpretation of conciliar texts as well as historical, sociological and political elements in the secular sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> Apostolic letter *Euntes in mundum*, 12.

It might be tempting to despair at the seeming lack of progress in solving what look like intractable problems, and we still seem a long way from solutions and answers. For some, the papal claims as expressed at the First Vatican Council and reaffirmed at the Second would seem to preclude further useful discussion but that is certainly not the case for either side in the current Orthodox—Catholic dialogue. Above all, as we need to reiterate constantly, there was a Petrine ministry of some form during the first millennium of Christian history that was exercised in such a way that communion was not ruptured. For a thousand years there was full *koinonia* despite differences of emphasis and approach. The current dialogue at its meeting in Cyprus in October 2009 is to look at the role of the Bishop of Rome in the communion of the churches in the first millennium.

From a purely pragmatic point of view, in today's globalised world, many can see a need for a ministry of unity that might speak on behalf of all Christians to people of other faiths or none. In ecumenical dialogue the division arises over how this ministry should take concrete form—how it should be exercised. Already the Pope receives wide media attention for his statements and is sometimes seen by the secular world as a kind of spokesman on behalf of Christianity. It is also recognised that the way in which the ministry of the Bishop of Rome has been exercised *vis-à-vis* the universal Church has varied considerably in history and is still developing in response to new situations.

Pope John Paul II was well aware of this when he made a remarkable appeal in *Ut unum sint* asking how his ministry might be exercised in a way that was acceptable to all Christians. To discover this, he says,

is an immense task, which we cannot refuse and which I cannot carry out by myself. Could not the real but imperfect Communion existing between us persuade Church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for His Church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea 'that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (John 17:21)?

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<sup>1</sup> *Ut unum sint* 96.

A little earlier in the same encyclical he recognises that

I have a particular responsibility in this regard above all acknowledging the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of the Christian Communities and in heeding the request made of me to find a way of exercising the primacy which while in no way renouncing what is essential to its mission, is nonetheless open to a new situation.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of more recent history, and especially since Vatican I's decree on the subject, papal infallibility seems such a large hurdle for the present ecumenical endeavour: and yet it was not always seen thus. At the last meeting at the highest level between East and West, the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439, four months was spent discussing the addition of the Filioque to the Creed in the West and two months on belief in purgatory, but only two weeks was devoted to the papal claims.

In 1993, the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission affirmed that it was time to begin a new study of the question of the universal ministry of Christian unity. It is undoubtedly true that many Orthodox have been made hostile by some of the maximalist interpretations of the decree on infallibility, but those interpretations are no longer the position of most Catholics today. Equally, there are some Orthodox who recognize the need for a service of unity on a universal scale but who would want to accompany this with a healthy conciliarity to guarantee the diversity which Catholicism requires.

The late Alexander Schmemmann, for example, expresses it thus:

An objective study of the canonical tradition cannot fail to establish beyond any doubt that along with local centres of agreement or primacies the Church also had a universal primacy. The ecclesiastical error of Rome lies not in her affirmation of the universal primacy. Rather the error lies in her identification of the Primacy with 'Supreme power'.<sup>2</sup>

## **Primacy and Scripture**

It cannot be denied that in the New Testament the person of Peter has an 'eminent place'.<sup>3</sup> He is the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God and is told that this can only be known by revelation (Matt. 16: 17). Jesus goes on to say 'you are Peter and on this

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* 95.

<sup>2</sup> *The Idea of Primacy in Catholic Ecclesiology*, 148

<sup>3</sup> *Ut unum sint*, 90.

rock I will build my Church.' To him are entrusted the keys of the Kingdom. As if to show that this depends on the grace of God and not on any human achievement, he is straightway rebuked—even being addressed as Satan—when he fails to grasp that the Christ must suffer and die.

Aware that Peter will deny him three times, St Luke contains a unique saying addressed specifically to Peter: 'Simon, Simon, listen, Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail you; when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.' The three-fold denial is followed in St John's Gospel by the three-fold restoration and commission to be a pastor to the flock of Christ.

Peter is always mentioned first in any group of disciples and he is with that inner group that also includes James and John at moments of great importance such as the Transfiguration. He takes the initiative on the day of Pentecost and is prominent in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul comes to him in Jerusalem after his conversion. According to the universal tradition of the Church he was martyred at Rome around the same time as Paul and the apostolic foundation of the Roman Church is accepted by all.

Of course, Peter does not exist in isolation; it can be argued that he has a 'primacy', to use the later language, within the college of the apostles. I am aware that the scriptural evidence can and has been variously interpreted, but in any case it too should not be seen in isolation. As the Metropolitan of Pergamum, John Zizioulas has wryly remarked, 'If we wait for Scripture scholars to agree on the hermeneutics of individual texts, we can be prepared to wait for another Millennium.'<sup>1</sup>

Some, while granting a primacy for Peter in the New Testament have questioned how this can be transferred to his successors as bishops of Rome. This would seem to me to be in the same category as apostolic succession. Catholics and Orthodox both accept that the apostolic faith was handed on through the bishops as successors of the Apostles. We find this in embryo form in the New Testament but exactly how this came to emerge as the monarchical episcopate of Ignatius of Antioch in the early second century is not altogether clear. The same could be said

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Recent Discussions on Primacy in Orthodox Theology', *The Petrine Ministry*, ed. W. Kasper (New Jersey: Newman Press, 2006), 231 ff.

of how Linus, the first bishop of Rome and successor of the apostle Peter emerged as head of the Roman Church.

### **The development of Primacy**

Obviously, it is anachronistic to project later developments back to the first century. The Petrine office has been exercised in many different ways in response to different historical situations. But that should, in turn, give hope to future developments that might be accepted by all but the most prejudiced, some of whom seem only interested in repeating slogans from ancient entrenched positions.

Many Orthodox reject the way in which the primacy is exercised rather than the Primacy itself. Nicholas Cabasilas (d. 1363) could affirm that

As long as the Pope observes due order and remains in the truth, he preserved the first place which belongs to him by right. He is the head of the Church and Supreme Pontiff, the successor of Peter and all the Apostles; all must obey him and treat him with complete respect.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Nicholas nor, for instance, Eustratios Argenti of Chios thought that Nicholas's condition—that the Pope 'observe due order and remain in the truth'—had been met.

Orthodox object to the idea of the Pope as a ruler set over the rest of the Church and prefer scriptural and pastoral categories to legalistic and juridical terms. Ignatius describes the Church of Rome as first in honour, 'which presides in love'. It has to be remembered that authority in a Christian context is different from the secular use of power as the Lord makes clear in the Gospel in response to the request that James and John might have the chief seats in the Kingdom of God.

You know that among the Gentiles the rulers lord it over them and great men make their authority felt. Among you this is not to happen. No, anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:24ff).

Let us remember the title devised by Gregory the Great and carried by Bishops of Rome ever since: 'Servant of the servants of God'.

Every Church Council or Synod had a *protos*, so it would be logical that the ancient Pentarchy of sees—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem—would too. He might be described as a *primus*

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<sup>1</sup> PG 728D-728H.

*inter pares* (first among equals) but what exactly does that mean? Does one stress the *primus* or the *pares*? It is not just honorific. A primacy necessarily carries with it some kind of authority (*exousia*). Often, appeals were made to Rome from all parts of the Church before the Great Schism (1054), for example, by such diverse figures as Athanasius, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Studion. In the words of Photius (861):

If there is anything in the Patriarch's reply about which you feel any doubt or disbelief, you may ask the elder of Rome for clarification, as has been the practice from the beginning according to inherited tradition.<sup>1</sup>

The East turned to Rome not as to the Church endowed with universal jurisdiction but to the Church 'which presides in love'.

The exercise of the Petrine office in the second millennium was rather different from the first with the emergence of the papacy as a temporal power with serious political implications. Historical events and the religious situation have shaped its role. The long separation of East and West has also shaped the conflict so that at times the discussion of the Petrine office almost seemed like a frontier zone between two hostile countries. Happily, for many Orthodox and Catholics this is no longer the case. The lifting of the mutual anathemata by His Holiness Patriarch Athanagoras I and Paul VI was a significant moment in Catholic—Orthodox relations.

### **The historical context of Vatican I**

For many, the problem of the primacy of Rome and the Petrine claims seem to have been exacerbated by Vatican I's declaration *Pastor Aeternus* which seems so uncompromising and to Orthodox would seem to place the Pope in isolation above the rest of the Church. The Bishop of Rome is endowed with a power of jurisdiction over the universal Church that is 'full and immediate'. When he speaks *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals his statements are regarded as infallible independently as it would seem of reception by the faithful: *ex sese non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*.

The Catholic Church is committed to these statements made at the First Vatican Council and reiterated in the Second. But crucially it recognizes that any statement needs to be interpreted and does not exist independently of its historical context. There has also been a

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<sup>1</sup> *Letters* II, 86.

debate within the Catholic Church concerning the interpretation of the dogma. It is necessary to clear away misunderstandings and obscurities. Above all, we need to believe that dialogue is possible. We can learn from each other and I would say (pace Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev) that it is not necessary to wait until there is Orthodox agreement on the subject before a dialogue with the West is possible.

Interpretation has been different at different times just as the way in which the Papacy has functioned in practice has varied, influenced by prevailing views on ecclesiology and the contemporary political and social situations.

The reason for the declaration made at Vatican I was to preserve the unity of the Church and its autonomy at a time when this was under threat. Before he became Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger as then was called for a 're-reading' of Vatican I and Yves Congar recommended a 're-reception' that recognizes that there can be progressive reception of the truth behind the formula. There is a history of understanding and interpretation which in no way means a rejection of the affirmations of the Council but their acceptance by the ecclesial community. This can take time and can be a creative way forward that all can share in.

Cardinal Kasper has made a number of helpful points in this connection. First, the unity of the Church is the *raison d'être* of the Petrine ministry and it is a tragic irony that it has sometimes seemed to have had the opposite effect. It needs to be understood in the context of ecclesiology. Vatican I was interrupted by the Franco-German War and was unfinished. There were unbalanced maximalist views at the time such as those of Manning and the Ultramontane group who wanted all the Pope's utterances to be deemed infallible. Although that group was in the ascendant at the time of the Council, the Pope's powers were carefully defined and limited at a time when the Papal States and even Rome itself was about to be in the hands of secular powers that would make the Pope the 'prisoner of the Vatican'. When the German statesman Bismarck claimed that the Pope was now a universal sovereign and the bishops merely his tools, not only did the German bishops reject this but so did Pope Pius IX as well. 'It is a complete misunderstanding of the Vatican decrees to believe that because of them "Episcopal" jurisdiction has been absorbed into the Papal.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the text of the German episcopal declaration, see Denzinger and Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion definitionum* (Rome: Herder, 1965), 31127.

At a time of emerging nation states, some saw the Council's decree as the only hope of guaranteeing the independence and autonomy of the Church, in the context of the battle for the freedom of the Church. Also there were intellectual movements such as rationalism, materialism and atheism that questioned the very foundations of the Church. The dogma was not promulgated out of a lust for power but because of the threat to the faith and the autonomy of the Church. The first draft of the Conciliar decree was more extreme, but the Church is not an absolute monarchy and the bishops are not vicars of the Pope. The Pope is not a universal Bishop (his relationship with the see of Rome is different from that with, say, Gubbio) nor is the world his diocese. The issue at the time was: is there an authority above the Pope which can limit his authority? The Ultramontane group were in opposition to the French movement called Gallicanism which wished to restrict the power of the Pope, especially in temporal matters which could have restricted the independence of the Church.

Even at the time of the First Vatican Council there were some voices who wanted a moderate and nuanced interpretation of the decree. A distinguished proponent of this position was Cardinal Newman. He would have preferred that no definition be promulgated and thought that it inopportune, though he of course accepted it and could see that it was a bulwark against state interference in the affairs of the Church. He believed that divine intervention had stopped a stronger statement that would have seen statements such as the Syllabus of Errors, with its condemnation of much of the modern world, as infallible. He also believed that the decree of Vatican I would be completed in a way that made it look different by a subsequent Council. The decree needed to be completed rather than undone. 'Let us have faith and a new Pope and a re-assembled Council may trim the boat.'<sup>1</sup> He saw this as a general pattern in the life of the Church. In the early Church dogmas 'were not struck off all at once but piecemeal—one Council did one thing another a second and so the whole was built up; the first portion of it looked extreme and controversies led to subsequent Councils ... [which] explained and completed what was first done'. Many would see Vatican II's statements on collegiality and the role of the bishops which

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<sup>1</sup> This and subsequent Newman quotations are from Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: a Biography* (Oxford: OUP 1969), ch. 17.

was defined at Vatican I as an illustration of this same principle at work.

Popes are protected against error; infallible statements do not come from a positive divine guidance but through human means, research, consulting, theologians, etc. All pronouncements need interpretation and explanations just as lawyers might explain Acts of Parliament. 'I have never been able to see myself that the ultimate decision rests with any but the general Catholic intelligence.'

Finally, Newman stressed the sovereignty of conscience, the aboriginal Vicar of Christ. Paul for example resisted Peter at Antioch on a matter of conscience. But conscience needs to be informed and false conscience is culpable; but acting in accordance with conscience is not. This should, however, be seen in the context of loyalty and obedience to legitimate superiors. Newman concludes his letter to Gladstone with the famous imaginary toast:

Certainly, if I am obliged to bring religion into after dinner-toasts, (which indeed does not seem quite the thing) I shall drink to the Pope if you please—still to Conscience first and to the Pope afterwards.

### **Infallibility and the process of reception**

The statement on infallibility is now seen in the context of Communion and Ecclesiology. Any bishop is the ordinary pastor of his diocese. The phrase *ex sese non autem ex consensu ecclesiae*, added at the end on the insistence of Manning and others and which seems so at variance with Orthodox ecclesiology is perhaps best seen as asserting that definitions made *ex cathedra* do not need ratification from a higher source. Clearly, infallibility is not separate from the faith of the Church. The Council fathers did not think that they were inventing something new but affirming the ancient tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, and appealing to the consensus of the first millenium: '*secundum antiquam atque constantem universalis Ecclesiae fidem*'.

Limits are placed on the exercise of this extraordinary magisterium which is seen to be linked with 'the divine assistance promised to Peter'. The ordinary teaching authority of the Church is shared by the bishops. Nor has it been defined exactly when infallibility has been exercised—the proclamation of the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption can be seen as examples, though other instances are disputed. The Church is hesitant to make the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary magisterium in any way that might suggest that the ordinary should not be taken very seriously.

Infallibility is connected 'to the exercise of his office not to his person per se'. The Pope speaks ex cathedra as 'the shepherd and teacher of all Christians'. If he resigns, he loses it. Moreover it is confined to faith and morals i.e. it does not extend to politics and other aspects of life such as science. The condemnation of Galileo in the seventeenth century, for example, is acknowledged to have been wrong as was the support for fascism in the twentieth. Infallibility does not give omniscience but is meant to preserve the Church in the truth of the Gospel. Most of the Pope's utterances come under the ordinary magisterium of the Church. It is to be seen in 'the context of the infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy'. The Lord is present in his Church for all time and there is an indefectibility to the truth of the faith that the whole people of God possess.

Vatican II in no way renounced the teaching of Vatican I—indeed it reaffirms its teaching—but it is seen in the context of collegiality and the stress on the importance of the local as well as the universal Church. Some see here two, at times almost competing, ecclesiologies. The relationship between the universal and the local Church perhaps remains the work of a future Council. Just as Newman saw that Vatican I needed a Vatican II so Vatican II also needs a Rio de Janeiro I or Vatican III or whatever, though first the teaching of Vatican II has to be more fully assimilated.

### **The interpretation of Primacy**

*Unitatis redintegratio* recognises that the Oriental Churches can rule themselves according to their own canon law.

A key question is the relationship between the local Church of a region and the Universal Church. Apostolic Canon 34 which is accepted by both East and West puts it thus:

The bishops of each province (*ethnos*) must recognize the one who is first (*protos*) among them and consider him to be the head (*kephale*) and not do anything without his consent (*gnome*). Each bishop may only do what concerns his own diocese (*paroikia*) and in dependent territories. But the first (*protos*) cannot do anything without the consent of all. For in this way harmony will prevail and God will be praised through the Lord in the Spirit.

The present tendency to centralisation in the West should not exclude subsidiarity and it is also well known that there have been different methods of appointing bishops at various times in the history of the

Church, while acknowledging of course that to be a Catholic means being in communion with the Bishop of Rome. Some questions concerning the operation of subsidiarity are yet to be resolved. Moreover, each Council is to be interpreted in the light of the whole tradition and of all Councils.

The Holy Spirit does not contradict Himself (pace Hans Küng who wants to reject the teaching of Vatican I outright). While a return to the first millennium is impossible, what is true of the first is also true of the second. Pope Benedict sees the first millennium as crucial in this discussion. Orthodox have not 'received' the teaching of Vatican I and indeed have been absent from all councils in the second millennium, which might reduce these in the eyes of some to General rather than Ecumenical councils. Their integration would certainly result in different forms of the exercise of the Petrine ministry as in the first millennium and as in the Oriental Catholic Churches today.

Historical interpretation of previous councils is also necessary. The unchangeable faith is expressed in changing historical forms. 'The deposit and the truths of Faith are one thing, the manner of expressing them is quite another.'<sup>1</sup> The Decree on Ecumenism also speaks of 'an order or hierarchy of truths since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.'<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the dogma also has to be interpreted in the light of the Gospel. Primacy, for Catholics, is rooted in the Gospel. A purely historicist understanding of the Gospel that looks only to the 'historical' meaning is obsolete. The Bible belongs to the Church and its interpretation is part of a living tradition.

The Church of Rome's historical position is viewed by Catholics as a fulfilment of the need for a Petrine ministry seen as a pastoral service for the unity of the Church. Primacy of jurisdiction should not be set in antithesis to a primacy of service. How *episkope* can be carried out with *exousia* in the spirit of the Gospel is a question that we, Orthodox and Catholics, need to address together.

So a 're-reading' of the definition can help to distinguish between the invariable essence and what can be considered as the historical, contingent and variable characteristics of Papal primacy.

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<sup>1</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, 62.

<sup>2</sup> *Unitatis redintegratio*, 12.

## Primacy and Conciliarity

Read out of context the definition of infallibility can seem at first sight to preclude any form of collegial/synodical authority as well as the process of reception and this cannot but cause alarm to Orthodox. How may we express this in ways that can allay their legitimate fears?

Western Canon Law (1983) sees the Bishop of Rome's ministry in the context of the Church not in isolation from it. 'The Roman Pontiff in fulfilling his office as supreme Pastor of the Church is always joined in full Communion with the other bishops and indeed with the whole Church.' He does have the right to determine 'according to the needs of the Church' whether this office is to be exercised 'in a personal or collegial manner'. It also accords the Pope 'supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power in the Church' but even this is seen as a way of protecting the unity of the episcopate. The situation in the first millennium should show that this need not necessarily threaten the immediate and ordinary jurisdiction of bishops. The non-appealability of the primacy of Rome was meant to be a protection against encroachment by the State. When understood in terms of Communion then the idea of separate powers competing against each other is eliminated, as with Peter and Paul at Antioch.

John Zizioulas recognises that a universal Council must have a *protos* as other Synods and Councils always did. The Church is not democratic. For Orthodox the highest authority is an Ecumenical Council but Primacy must be incorporated into Conciliarity. Each local Church is a Catholic Church but then what is the place of universality? There are a number of Orthodox perspectives and views on this and there is no official view as such.

Orthodox rightly fear a universal primacy if it means a papal expansionism leading to a kind of ecclesiastical totalitarianism, but all synods have a primate, which is never exercised in rotation, but this primacy cannot exist in isolation from the Synod or Council of which it is part. Zizioulas even compares it with the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity where the *arche* of the Father is relational and cannot exist outside of Communion. Rightly expressed, it is a form of *diakonia* serving the unit of the Church as *koinonia*. Before defining primacy in a form that could be acceptable to East and West, it is necessary to decide the relationship between the local and the universal Church.

In the East it has proved difficult to hold a Council. A Pan-Orthodox Conference did some work in preparation for this in relatively recent

times but it has not happened yet and seems unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. Orthodox are well aware that in the globalised world of today national churches or those in the diaspora can experience isolation. The Church sometimes needs a voice to speak for all and it might seem appropriate for Rome to do this. But the Pope must not be seen as separate from or above the Church.

The Pope is not seen by Catholics as an oracle to be consulted; rather he articulates the faith of the Church of which he is part. While Orthodox might prefer the term indefectibility to infallibility, what is needed is a way of expressing that God is still present in his Church, leading it and guiding it into the Truth, as Jesus Himself promised.

Brotherly service and mutual love should be the model for all Christian ministry. A universal primacy has proved very useful to prevent schism and to resolve disputes in a definitive way and those ecclesial bodies and Christian communions that lack this find it difficult to discover a mechanism for resolving such differences.

Papal infallibility is not a way of providing 'revelation on tap'. As Eamon Duffy has written:

No controversy in the first thousand years of Christianity had been settled merely by papal fiat. Even Leo I's Tome had been adopted by a General Council. Agreement on the truth in early Christianity had emerged by convergence, consensus, debate, painful and costly processes which took decades and even centuries to crystallize. Manning and his associates wanted history without tears, a living oracle who could short-circuit human limitations. They wanted to confront the uncertainties of their age with instant assurance, revelation on tap.<sup>1</sup>

The West has often preferred concise definitions and preferred juridical language while the East went for a wider latitude. How can we try to understand the position of others—what is the truth they are trying to assert and protect?

No-one should underestimate the problems that remain to be resolved but above all we must have the will to want to see the Lord's prayer for the unity of His Church fulfilled. Unity is the will of God for His Church so we all have to work and pray fervently for it—and all this has a missionary and evangelistic urgency and imperative, for the Lord prays for his followers to be one as He and the Father are One 'so that the world may believe'.

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<sup>1</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners* (Yale University Press, 1997), 230.

## MIXED MARRIAGES AND SHARING IN THE EUCHARIST: UNIVERSAL CATHOLIC NORMS AND SOME PARTICULAR CATHOLIC NORMS (part 2)

Georges Ruysen SJ\*

*Part one of this study focused on the general Catholic norms. Part two draws on some particular Catholic norms, and resumes the main points of the particular norms or guidelines issued by Bishops and Episcopal Conferences in France, the United Kingdom and Ireland, South Africa, Canada, Switzerland, Australia, Germany and the US. Exceptional Eucharistic sharing does not mean an open, general or reciprocal Eucharistic hospitality. It is foreseen in situations of joy and sorrow in the lives of individuals and families, celebrations and other important events. Instead of concentrating on the sorrow of separation at the Eucharistic Table, the particular norms root Eucharistic sharing for mixed marriages or families in the double sacramental bond of baptism and marriage. Also, Eucharistic sharing is not necessarily limited to one-off situations, but can be repeated as long as it remains exceptional, and so excludes continuous sharing, e.g. each Sunday. Some particular norms also clarify conditions for Eucharistic sharing, regarding e.g. the content of Catholic Eucharistic faith, and how it is expressed*

### **Introduction: the fifth paragraph of canons 844/CIC and 671/CCEO**

After having dealt with the universal Catholic norms for sharing in the Eucharist in the context of a mixed marriage or family in part one, in this second part we propose to investigate how this universal discipline is applied by analysing some of the particular norms established by bishops and bishops' conferences. We have seen how the general discipline on sharing in the Eucharist, formulated by canons 844/CIC and 671/CCEO, and by the Ecumenical Directory of 1993 (ED), only set out a general framework in giving an overall matrix of conditions and situations for sharing in the Eucharist (cf. the provisions of the canons).

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Therefore, this general discipline must be applied in an appropriate local context, taking into account the conditions of each area, be it local, regional or national.

Such contextualization is typical for all ecumenical action. This was expressly referred to in the Ecumenical Directory of 1993, which rightly states:

In a predominantly Catholic country the ecumenical task will emerge differently from that arising in one which has a high proportion or a majority who are Eastern Christians or Anglicans or Protestants. The task is different again in countries where the majority is non-Christian ... Likewise the ecumenical task will greatly vary depending on whether our Christian partners belong mostly to one or more of the Eastern Churches rather than to the Communities of the Reformation. Each has its own dynamic and its own particular possibilities. There are many other factors, political, social, cultural, geographical and ethnic, which can give distinct shape to the ecumenical task. (ED 32-33)

As we did for the universal discipline, we will concentrate on sharing in the Eucharist in the context of Catholic-Reformed mixed marriages and households.

First of all, canons 844/CIC and 671/CCEO do contain a fifth paragraph which leaves the field open to particular norms, which allow the diocesan bishops and the bishops' conferences to clarify, verify and judge the conditions and the situations, foreseen in the general norms, according to the circumstances of each particular ecumenical context.

Canon 844/CIC §5 states:

For the cases in §§2, 3 and 4 neither the diocesan Bishop nor the conference of Bishops is to enact general norms except after consultation with at least the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or Community.

Canon 671/CIC §5 is, allowing for its specific oriental terminology, identical.

These specific particular norms are a great help, and even a necessity, for they manage to guide Catholic pastors in the application of the discipline on sharing in the Eucharist in definite cases, for example in defining situations of 'grave and pressing need' in which our non-Catholic brothers and sisters in a mixed marriage or household may be admitted to Holy Communion, or in itemizing the required elements of Catholic faith which are required for admission to Communion (cf.

canons 844/CIC §4 & 671/CCEO §4)<sup>1</sup> and also in determining the indicators by which the Catholic faithful can evaluate ‘necessity’ or the ‘genuine spiritual advantage’ in which they may receive Holy Communion from non-Catholic Ministers (cf. canons 844/CIC §2 & 671/CCEO §2).

Concerning the 1993 Directory, we have seen how it repeats the general discipline concerning sharing in the Eucharist in a mixed marriage or household (ED 159, 160). It does not give examples of concrete situations, thus leaving a discreet opening to other situations which arise in the course of married and family life. We have highlighted how the foundation of this ‘opening’ rests precisely on the ecclesiological evaluation of the mixed marriage or household as ‘domestic Church’ and of its ‘serious spiritual need of the nourishment of the Eucharist’ in order to establish, build up and nourish its conjugal and family life. This is why, in its turn, the 1993 Directory appealed to diocesan bishops to ‘establish general norms for judging situations of grave and pressing need and for verifying the conditions mentioned below’ (ED 130), all the while taking into account the norms established by the bishops’ conferences or by the Eastern Catholic authorities, e.g. a patriarchal synod. Such particular norms might also include criteria for the Catholic faithful and ministers in order to respect more fully the discipline and mentality of the non-Catholic Churches and Ecclesial Communities; this with a view to preserving good relationships and dialogue with the separated ecclesiastical authorities, and to avoid any suspicion of proselytism or scandal. For example:

A Catholic who legitimately wishes to communicate with Eastern Christians must respect the Eastern discipline as much as possible and refrain from communicating if that Church restricts sacramental communion to its own members to the exclusion of others. (ED 124. See also ED 107, 111d, 122 and 125)

It is in this sense, and also referring to canons 844 §5/CIC & 671/CCEO §5, that the new Directory imposes the obligation to consult the authorities of other Churches or separated Ecclesial Communities, at least the local ones, before establishing particular norms:

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<sup>1</sup> Any judgment on the situation of ‘other grave and pressing need’ falls to the bishops in the episcopal conferences, cf. canons 844 §4/CIC & 671/CCEO §4.

In accord with Canon Law, these general norms are to be established only after consultation with at least the local competent authority of the other interested Church or ecclesial Community. (ED 130)

We now move to an analysis of some directives and pastoral guidelines established by bishops or bishops' conferences which concern the pastoral issue of mixed marriages related to sharing in the Eucharist. Pastors, bishops and episcopal conferences, when faced with more and more pressing demands for sharing in the Eucharist, are not on the whole insensitive, but try to respond with courage and ingenuity.

A great number of particular norms just simply repeat or insist on the universal norms. This group of norms contains essentially those norms established by bishops' conferences, and which as general decrees have obtained the *recognitio* from the Holy See, following 455/CIC §2. These are the less interesting norms.

There are, on the other hand, norms which engage themselves in creative research in order to exploit the margins left by the general norms. We will see how certain norms have, nevertheless, tended to push the margins beyond their limits. (See below, the first South African Directory, and the diocesan norms from Australia.)

This second type of norms are essentially directives or pastoral guidelines on sharing in the Eucharist which are non-judicial, or non-obligatory. These can be more general (as *Guidelines* from the USA) or more contextualized (as *Zur Frage* from Germany), more pastoral (as *Blessed and Broken* from Australia) or more doctrinal (as *One Bread One Body* from the UK and Ireland), more liberal (as *Revised Directory* from South Africa) or more prudent (as the French and Swiss norms), shorter (as *Policy* from Canada) or more detailed (as *One Bread One Body*).

### **The exceptional character of sharing in the Eucharist**

These norms, even if they are more doctrinal, tend to underline the exceptional character of sharing in the Eucharist. All the norms are in agreement that full sacramental communion or normal Eucharistic communion presupposes full ecclesial communion. No particular norm goes so far as to authorise a total 'open' communion, or to formulate a general invitation to communion, open to all separated Christians, as is in the Reformed tradition. Neither does any norm allow reciprocal hospitality with the Reformed Churches, for these have 'not retained the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness' (UR 22). The Catholic spouse is therefore not allowed to communicate at the

Protestant Eucharist. Following the practice of certain Catholics who in conscience judge that they may receive communion at a Protestant Eucharist, certain bishops<sup>1</sup> and bishops' conferences have had the courage to express themselves on this issue, such as the Episcopal Commission for Unity of the French Episcopal Conference in the second section of its *Normes sur l'hospitalité Eucharistique* of 1983, and the Swiss Bishops, in their *Note: L'hospitalité Eucharistique* of 1986.<sup>2</sup> These norms are based on the famous diocesan Synod of Würzburg in Germany of 1969-1976<sup>3</sup> in which it was made clear that such a practice does not accord with the union between the Eucharist and Ecclesial communion, and prejudices the common understanding of the sacred ministry and the full Catholic form of ministry, lacking in the Protestant ministry. At the very most reference is made to the personal conscience of the Catholic, in which it is recalled that receiving communion at a Protestant Eucharist may not put into jeopardy their belonging to the Catholic Church, or constitute a denial of their Catholic faith. Far from being an authorisation, even a hidden one, for Catholics to receive communion at a Protestant Eucharist, the norms draw the attention of Catholics to their conscience, indicating that it is their own responsibility should they go against the prohibition of their Church in this matter.

The French and Swiss norms have the great merit of not hiding the basic problems that are present in the field of French and Swiss ecumenism between Catholics and Reformed Christians. In considering

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<sup>1</sup> One of the first to do this was Mgr Elchinger, Bishop of Strasbourg, in his *Directives Elchinger* of 1973, cf. L. Elchinger, 'Directives de Mgr Elchinger aux fidèles du diocèse de Strasbourg au sujet de l'hospitalité Eucharistique pour les foyers mixtes', *Documentation Catholique* 70 (1973) 161-165; also those of Mgr Le Bourgeois, Bishop of Autun, in his note, 'Hospitalité Eucharistique, précisions pour le diocèse d'Autun', *Documentation Catholique* 69 (1972) 531-2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Commission épiscopale pour l'Unité, Note de la Commission épiscopale pour l'Unité aux prêtres et aux fidèles catholiques au sujet de "l'hospitalité Eucharistique" avec les chrétiens des Eglises issues de la Réforme en France', *Documentation Catholique* 80 (1983), 368-369. Évêques suisses, 'Note des Évêques suisses: L'hospitalité Eucharistique', *Foyers Mixtes* 74 (January/March 1987) 30-32.

<sup>3</sup> Gemeinsame Synode der Bistümer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Beschlüsse der Vollversammlung. Offizielle Gesamtausgabe I* (Freiburg im Breisgau-Basilea-Viena, 1976), 216.

any practice of reciprocity, they disapprove of it and judge it against the principles of the Church. Nevertheless, these norms understand that pastorally there is an urgent demand for this, especially within mixed marriages and households, thus the Catholic spouse may feel a spiritual necessity in such a concrete situation. In our opinion, this is the spirit in which these norms grasp the thorny question of this practice of participation in the Protestant Eucharist. Instead of a deliberate blindness in ignoring what is under their eyes, these norms make clear to Catholics that notwithstanding the disapproval of the Church, certain criteria appeal to their conscience and to a responsible attitude to the problem. However, the norm is negative, and is not a sort of blank cheque for the individual Catholic's conscience to ignore or defy the discipline of the Church.

Certain norms, such as those of *One Bread One Body* and *Blessed and Broken*, clearly affirm that it is not allowed for Catholics to receive holy communion from Anglican, Lutheran or Protestant Ministers because of the lack of fullness in their Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

It is not permissible for Catholics to receive Holy Communion, or the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick, from Ministers of the Anglican Communion ... the Church of Scotland or of other faith Communities rooted in the Reformation. It is for that reason that exceptional sacramental sharing ... cannot be reciprocal. (OBOB 117)

Equally, the norms of the Archbishop of Brisbane go in the same direction:

The Catholic Church does not allow her members to receive Holy Communion in Anglican, Lutheran and Protestant Churches.<sup>2</sup>

We can add to this all requests for sharing in the Eucharist without raising the question of Ecclesial communion or belonging.

The problem in Eucharistic hospitality is very often the following: that some people may wish to share and participate in the Catholic

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England & Wales, Ireland and Scotland, *One Bread One Body. A teaching document of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and the establishment of general norms on sacramental sharing* (London, 1998), n<sup>o</sup> 110. This will be cited as OBOB, followed by the paragraph number.

<sup>2</sup> See also: Archbishop of Brisbane, *Blessed and Broken, Pastoral Guidelines for Eucharistic Hospitality* (Easter, 1995), <<http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/brisbane.shtml>> This will be cited as BaB, followed by the paragraph number, here BaB 2.

sacraments, while at the same time rejecting, or having reservations about, Catholic ministry, its teaching, magisterium and moral teaching. This is linked with the idea of 'Eucharistic hospitality'<sup>1</sup> and a view of 'open' Communion which does not presuppose an indissoluble link with the Church, on the grounds that it is Christ who invites to the Banquet.

It is essentially Reformed theologians and pastors who underline that it is Christ who is the principal agent and the host in the Eucharistic celebration, and therefore it is Christ who invites all the baptised to the Eucharistic Banquet. From the Catholic point of view it is clear that if it is Christ who invites to the Banquet, he invites the baptised through his Church, the Body and Spouse of Christ. OBOB 98 warns explicitly against such a practice:

We are aware that Ministers in other Christian Communities often invite all baptised Christians in good-standing with their own churches, including Catholics, to come forward for Communion. Some Catholic priests have acted outside the prescribed norms and invited other Christians to receive Communion, on occasion even issuing an open invitation. There are Catholics who do not see the difficulty in receiving communion at the Eucharist of another Christian denomination; some have alternated, for example, between receiving communion at Catholic and Anglican Sunday services. In these ways, Catholic teaching about the Eucharist, and the discipline that reflects this, has been either ignored or judged negatively against the practice of 'open Communion' by others.

### **Precisions on the circumstances of serious spiritual need**

In one way or another, all particular norms state that it is only 'in certain circumstances, by way of exception, and under certain conditions, [that] access to these sacraments may be allowed, or even commended, for Christians of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities' (ED 129). However, they differ on the meaning of these words. Concerning the circumstances of other 'grave and pressing need', one can observe that the majority of the particular norms

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<sup>1</sup> For a critique of this ambiguous term see W. Kasper 'L'engagement œcuménique de l'Eglise catholique'. Address of Cardinal Walter Kasper on the occasion of the General Assembly of the Protestant Federation of France, March 2002 in *Documentation Catholique* 99 (2002) 490; also *idem.*, the French Norms of 1983.

interpret this in the light of the opening which is created by the notion of 'serious spiritual need of the Eucharistic nourishment' in the Instruction *In quibus rerum circumstantiis* of the Secretariat for Christian Unity 1972 (cf. 4b), combined with the ecclesiological qualification of mixed marriages and households as 'domestic Church'.<sup>1</sup> This includes situations of joy and sorrow in the lives of individuals and families, of celebrations and important events on which the serious spiritual need may be based. *One Bread One Body* states:

Admission to Holy Communion ... may be given to baptised Christians of other faith Communities if there is a danger of death, or if there is some other grave and pressing need. This may at times include those who ask to receive [the Eucharist] on a unique occasion for joy or for sorrow in the life of a family or individual. It is for the diocesan Bishop or his delegate to judge the gravity of the need and the exceptional nature of the situation. The conditions of Canon Law must always be fulfilled. The exceptional nature and purpose of the permission should be made clear, and appropriate preparation should be made for the reception of the sacrament. (OBOB 106)

Thus, the idea of serious spiritual need has become interiorized, or has been rendered quite subjective. This idea of spiritual need nevertheless preserves the dual personal and ecclesial dimension, and does not limit itself to a purely private or interior desire. As we have seen above, this phenomenon appears clearly in the context of mixed marriages and households: first communions, baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, nuptial Masses, funerals, important liturgical feasts (Christmas, Easter), or other events (retreats). We can illustrate this with the norms from *One Bread One Body* :

Requests to be admitted to Holy Communion may come from the parent of a child to be baptised during Mass, or receiving First Holy Communion or Confirmation; the parent or wife of someone being ordained; the intimate family of the deceased at a Funeral Mass. (OBOB 112)

The norms of the 1999 *Policy* of the Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops foresees that

An Anglican or Protestant party in a mixed marriage who has a serious spiritual need for the Eucharist may receive communion on special occasions, such as principal anniversaries, funerals of family members,

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<sup>1</sup> We refer to our part one, on Universal Catholic norms.

on Christmas and Easter if the family attends Mass together, and other occasions of ecclesial and familial significance. (Pol. 2)<sup>1</sup>

The most exhaustive list of such situations is to be found in the norms issued by the Bishop of Saskatoon, Canada in his 2005 *Pastoral Directives*:

The partner who is a baptized Anglican or Protestant in an interchurch marriage may wish to receive Holy Communion in a Catholic Church on occasions of ecclesial or familial significance, when he or she experiences a serious spiritual need. In such a case the normal canon law requirements are in effect. Prior consultation with the pastor will assist such a person to consider all the criteria for proper discernment. In light of such discernment, the spouses themselves will recognize occasions when they have a strong spiritual need to receive Communion, and the conditions are met. There should be special meaning to such occasions; they are not meant to become routine practice.

A marriage partner from one of these Christian denominations who meets the conditions laid out may request the Eucharist from a Catholic pastor on special occasions such as:

- a) their Marriage and subsequent anniversaries celebrated with a Mass;
- b) Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, graduation Mass, and wedding or ordination Mass of a child, grandchild, or close family member;
- c) major Feast days: Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas;
- d) times of serious illness and/or approaching death;
- e) funeral of their partner, child, or grandchild;
- f) retreats, Marriage Encounters, Parish Missions, and religious workshops when these are attended with their partner;
- g) other special circumstances in consultation with the pastor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Policy on Cases of Serious Need in which the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick may be administered to Anglicans and Baptized Protestant Christians* (1999). <[www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2001jano8.shtm](http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2001jano8.shtm)>

This will be cited as Pol, followed by the paragraph number.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, *Pastoral Directives for Sacramental Sharing in particular circumstances between Catholics and Baptized Christians of other Denominations*, Saskatoon (Canada) 2005. <[http://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/pages/documents/P.D.%20Brochure%20english%20revised%20Sept\\_22\\_08.pdf](http://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/pages/documents/P.D.%20Brochure%20english%20revised%20Sept_22_08.pdf)> This is cited as SasDir followed by the paragraph number.

Not all the particular norms give such a list of situations or events.<sup>1</sup> In place of concentrating on the sorrow at the separation which is deeply felt by mixed marriages and households at the Eucharistic table, the norms develop a doctrinal reflection based on the double sacramental bonds of baptism and marriage, as the base of sharing in the Eucharist, as seen in the Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris consortio* and in the 1993 Ecumenical Directory (FC 55 and 57; ED 160. See our part one on Universal Norms). *One Bread One Body*, although recognizing the suffering of the division of Christians felt within mixed marriages and households by spouses and children who belong to different denominations (OBOB 79, 83, 86 repeating ED 27), does not consider this as an ecclesial foundation for sharing in the Eucharist. Citing the Constitution *Lumen gentium* which describes the family as 'domestic Church' (cited by OBOB 79, 86) and inspired by the Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, it affirms that the spouses form by their marital covenant one flesh, and reflect in their lives the love of God for his people and the covenant between Christ and his Church (GS 48 1 and 4; OBOB 79). *One Bread One Body* underlines that when a non-Catholic Christian marries a Catholic spouse they enter together in a *consortium totius vitae*. By his or her baptism the non-Catholic Christian is already in partial communion with the Catholic Church (OBOB 79), but further, 'a new form of communion still partial and incomplete, is brought about through the sacrament of Marriage' (OBOB 79). Following the Ecumenical Directory of 1993 (ED 160), *One Bread One Body* recognizes that the spouses in a mixed marriage have a special double sacramental communion (of baptism and marriage). However:

Such couples and families ... are not in full communion which each other in their Christian faith; the sacrament of Marriage does not remove the incompleteness of the communion shared by the Catholic Church and the faith Community of the other Christian. The sacrament of Marriage makes the couple 'one flesh' and hopefully 'one heart', but it does not make a couple in a mixed marriage fully one in the faith of the Church (OBOB 81). An interchurch family is ... united in many ways in Christ and yet not still fully at-one in faith (OBOB 86).

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the French Norms (cf. supra), the *Revised Directory* of South Africa, or *Zur Frage* (cf. infra) and the *Guidelines* of 1996 of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the USA do not have such a list. Cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Guidelines for the Reception of Communion* (14 November 1996), *Origins* 26 (1996-97) 414.

This reflection is taken up in the South African *Revised Directory*:<sup>1</sup>

A unique situation exists as regards spouses of a mixed marriage who attend Mass together in a Catholic Church. The uniqueness consists in the fact that their baptismal unity in Christ has been still further sealed by the sacramentality of their marriage bond, a bond that of its very nature seeks to be expressed and deepened by the unity of the couple at the Eucharistic table. (RDESA 7.13)

This is inspired by the February 1997 norms, *Zur Frage* of the Ecumenical Commission of the German Bishops' Conference:

The basic principles which regulate sharing in the Eucharist in exceptional cases note that the Eucharist constitutes the sign and source of the unity of the Church as well as being at the same time spiritual food. These principles are precisely in the cases of mixed marriages loaded with specifically theological aspects. The conclusion of a valid marriage between two baptised constitutes according to Catholic discipline a sacrament which is the sign of the union between Christ and his Church ... the non-Catholic spouse shares through this sacrament in the sacramental reality of the Church ... the Christian family must be considered as an ecclesial reality which shares in the mission of the Church. This is also valid for the non-Catholic spouse.<sup>2</sup>

Equally, the norms of the Bishop of Saskatoon observe

Interchurch marriages ... whose communion is rooted in baptism and strengthened by the sacramental nature of their Christian marriage ... (SasDir 11) The baptismal and marital oneness of interchurch marriages draws the couples toward sacramental sharing as a sign of their unity in Christ and as a source of grace for their marriage and is the basis for the exceptional admission to the sacrament of the Eucharist. (SasDir 19)

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<sup>1</sup> Bishops of Southern Africa, *Revised Directory on Ecumenism for Southern Africa* in *Origins* 29 (1999-2000) 733-738. This is cited as RDESA, followed by the paragraph number.

<sup>2</sup> Ökumene-Kommission der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, *Schreiben der Ökumene-Kommission der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz an die Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen in Nürnberg. Zur Frage der Eucharistischen Gastfreundschaft bei konfessionsverschiedenen Ehen und Familien* (11 Februar 1997) in *Una Sancta* 52 (1997) 85-88. This will be cited as ZFEG followed by the paragraph number. Here ZFEG 3.

## **Sharing in the Eucharist: limited to one-off situations or repeatable?**

Concerning the exceptional character of sharing in the Eucharist an important debate begins to emerge. On one side there is the vision that exceptional sharing in the Eucharist only embraces unique occasions which are not repeated ('one-off situations'). It is *One Bread One Body* which insists the most on the exceptional, unique, one-off nature of the sharing in the Eucharist.

Admission to Holy Communion and to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick may be given to baptised Christians of other faith Communities if there is a danger of death, or if there is some other grave and pressing need. This may at times include those who ask to receive them on a unique occasion for joy or for sorrow in the life of a family or an individual. (OBOB 106)

What do we mean by a 'unique occasion' in the life of a family or an individual? We are thinking of an occasion which of its nature is unrepeatable, a 'one-off' situation at a given moment which will not come again. This may well be associated with the most significant moments of a person's life, for example, at the moments of Christian initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion), Marriage, Ordination and death. (OBOB 109)

What might be meant by other unique occasions for joy or sorrow in the life of a family or an individual? These are situations in which there may be an objectively grave and pressing spiritual need for a person to receive Holy Communion. We give examples of such circumstances, without in any way intending to suggest categories of situations in which admission to the sacrament would be generally granted. The admission of a particular individual on one such unique occasion does not mean that another individual would necessarily be admitted in a similar situation. (OBOB 112)

The great criticism, in fact the disappointment of the Association of Interchurch Families of England is located precisely in that, for mixed marriages, sharing in the Eucharist is only considered for those unique occasions which are 'one-off situations' (OBOB 109). In their February 1997 meeting with the Bishops, who were responsible for the drafting of the document, the members of this Association had suggested taking into account the grave and pressing spiritual need which is 'on-going' and not simply occasional. Ruth Reardon wrote: 'The requests were that the Bishops ... recognize that in some cases the need might be on-going,

not occasional'.<sup>1</sup> It is true that neither canons 844/CIC §4 & 671/CCEO §4, nor the 1993 Directory (cf. ED 130) mention unique occasions, apart from the reference to the celebration of a mixed marriage in the 1993 Directory (cf. ED 159), although both highlight the notion of 'other grave and pressing need' and say that 'sharing in the Eucharist can only be exceptional' (ED 160).

Without taking a position ourselves, we present the following extracts from Ruth Reardon's article:

To say that only the rite of passage type of occasions are special and unique enough for our needs to be recognised is to trivialise the special nature of the Eucharist and the liturgy, and to trivialise the vows of marriage ... The temptation, however, is to see these visible and vivid occasions as the criteria, rather than as signs pointing to a sacramental reality ... The Eucharist is a repetitive sacrament; we need it often to strengthen and keep us in our baptismal and married lives. That is why the idea of unique occasions for sharing in the Eucharist fills some interchurch families with despondency.<sup>2</sup>

Let us focus on the actual text of *One Bread One Body*. It seems important to underline that paragraph 106 has 'if there is some other grave and pressing need. This may at times include ...' This passage is an addition to the proposed text of 1996 for OBOB which had:

The sacraments of Penance, Eucharistic Communion and Anointing of the Sick may be given to those who ask to receive them on a unique occasion for joy or for sorrow ... an occasion which of its nature is unrepeatable (e.g. a wedding or a funeral).<sup>3</sup>

This addition in the final text of *One Bread One Body* suggests that admission to the sacraments in case of 'other grave and pressing need' need not necessarily be limited to unique occasions. The proposed text for OBOB of 1996 is thus more subtle in the sense that sometimes, at certain moments, the 'other grave and pressing need' is able to include unique occasions, but is not limited to them. There is, therefore, room

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<sup>1</sup> R. Reardon, 'One Bread One Body: a Commentary from an Interchurch Family Point of View', *One in Christ* 35 (1999): 111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 125-126. 'So for the British Bishops the exceptional cases referred to by the Directory apply not to people specially in need, but only to one-off situations.' See also 'A hard saying', *The Tablet*, 3 Oct. 1998, 1271.

<sup>3</sup> For the 1996 proposed text of OBOB of 1996, cf. R. Reardon, 'One Bread One Body: a Commentary', 126.

for instances of 'other grave and pressing need' outside unique occasions, but all of which are exceptional.

Another passage affirms that 'The Directory also envisages that a grave and pressing need may be experienced in some mixed marriages' (OBOB 110). The proposed earlier text of OBOB had 'The Directory envisages that in certain cases of mixed marriages a grave and pressing need might on occasion be experienced.'<sup>1</sup> This passage was eliminated from the final text of *One Bread One Body*. It is therefore recognized that a sense of grave and pressing spiritual need experienced by the mixed marriage couple is not limited to these unique occasions, but also may be felt outside these occasions.

One can, nevertheless, not avoid the impression that the bishops wished to limit the cases of sharing in the Eucharist to exceptional, unrepeatable circumstances. They did not choose here to introduce into their norms anything about repeated or continuous sharing in the Eucharist. No doubt the bishops worried that such too frequent or continuous sharing in the Eucharist would eventually lead to the norm losing all its meaning, and lead to an habitual, regular and general 'open' communion. That is why the bishops insisted repeatedly on the exceptional character of sharing in the Eucharist (cf. OBOB 83, 89, 93, 101, 106, 107, 111) and on the fact that each particular case must be examined and evaluated on its own, case by case.

The norms we establish apply to individual cases rather than categories of situations. When applying these norms to a particular case, there is no intention to present that case as a type or precedent for other apparently similar cases. In other words, a specific and particular case is being acted upon rather than a category being created. Each individual case in which admission is sought must be examined on its own merits. (OBOB 107)

The admission of a particular individual on one such unique occasion does not mean that another individual would necessarily be admitted in a similar situation. (OBOB 112)

On the other hand, there is the acknowledgement that repeated sharing in the Eucharist is not excluded, while remaining always exceptional, i.e. without becoming habitual, regular, systematic or continuous. The fact that sharing in the Eucharist is 'exceptional' does not, of itself, exclude any repetition. It is clear that in the case of imprisonment, persecution, hospitalisation, or of being part of a Christian 'diaspora',

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

sharing in the Eucharist may be repeated, without being limited to unique occasions. Such a practice, even in the case of mixed marriages and households does not seem to us to cross the line of the universal norms. We can illustrate this with a few particular norms.

Hence a spouse in such a marriage, now commonly called interchurch marriage, could well experience a serious spiritual need to receive Holy Communion on occasions he or she accompanies the family to a Catholic Mass. (RDESA 7.13)

An Anglican or Protestant party in a mixed marriage who has a serious spiritual need for the Eucharist may receive communion on special occasions, such as principal anniversaries, funerals of family members, on Christmas and Easter if the family attends Mass together, and other occasions of ecclesial and familial significance. (Pol. 2)

The *Notes for those who may benefit from the Policy* which accompany the norms of policy 2 make clear:

Ultimately, the non-Catholic spouses themselves determine what are the occasions of ecclesial or familial significance when they have a strong desire to receive Holy Communion. However, there should be a special significance to the occasion: it is not meant to be a routine practice.<sup>1</sup>

One finds the same passage in the 2005 Pastoral Directives of the Bishop of Saskatoon.

In light of such discernment, the spouses themselves will recognize occasions when they have a strong spiritual need to receive Communion, and the conditions are met. There should be special meaning to such occasions; they are not meant to become routine practice. (Sasdir 19)

Only the Australian diocesan norms evolve in the direction of a continuous sharing in the Eucharist for mixed marriages and households each time the non-Catholic spouse accompanies the family to Mass, such as the norms *Blessed and Broken* (Brisbane).

The Directory on Ecumenism states that sharing in the Eucharist for a spouse in a mixed marriage can only be exceptional. The Directory, however, recognises a category of mixed marriages where each partner lives devotedly within the tradition of his and her Church. It sees such couples making a significant contribution to the ecumenical movement.

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<sup>1</sup> *Conditions allowing non-Catholics to receive Sacraments from a Catholic Minister: Notes for those who may benefit from the Policy*, <<http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2001jano8.shtm>>

A spouse in such a marriage, now commonly called an interchurch marriage, could well experience a serious spiritual need to receive Holy Communion each time he or she accompanies the family to a Catholic Mass. Requests for this kind of Eucharistic hospitality should be referred by the parish priest to the Archbishop or one of the auxiliary Bishops. (BaB 4)

This was inspired by the first 1998 *Directory on Ecumenism for Southern Africa*.

A unique situation exists as regards spouses of a mixed marriage who attend Mass together in a Catholic Church. The uniqueness consists in the fact that their baptismal unity in Christ has been further sealed by the sacramentality of their marriage bond. Hence both may experience a real need to express that unity by receiving holy Communion whenever they attend Mass together ... In cases where both parties attend Mass together virtually every Sunday, then the non-Catholic party may approach the local ordinary through the parish priest for permission to receive communion every time he or she attends Mass with his or her spouse.<sup>1</sup>

We find the same spirit in the *Diocesan Guidelines* (Rockhampton, Queensland)<sup>2</sup> and the norms *Real yet imperfect* (Maitland-Newcastle, suffragan of Sydney).<sup>3</sup>

Such spouses who are experiencing a pressing need to receive communion, whenever accompanying the family to Mass can request admission to the Eucharist. This request is ordinarily made to the Parish Priest, but in exceptional cases can be referred to the Bishop or the Vicar General. (Rockhampton 2 inspired by BaB 4.)

Both (spouses) may experience a real need to express their unity by receiving the Eucharist whenever they attend Mass together ... If this occurs frequently, the non-Catholic spouse may request permission to receive the Eucharist every time s/he attends Mass with his/her spouse, but joint pastoral care by the clergy of both denominations should be

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<sup>1</sup> Bishops of Southern Africa, 'Directory on Ecumenism for Southern Africa' *Origins* 27 (1997-1998) 606-610.

<sup>2</sup> Ecumenical Commission of the Diocese of Rockhampton, *Rockhampton Diocesan Guidelines for Sharing in the Eucharist* (May 1998), <<http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2000julo4.shtm>>.

<sup>3</sup> M. Malone, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle, *Real yet imperfect: Pastoral Guidelines for Sacramental Sharing* (March 2001), <[http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/about/policies/policies\\_real\\_yet\\_imperfect.htm](http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/about/policies/policies_real_yet_imperfect.htm) (11/01/2006). The Norms *Real yet imperfect* represent the final point of the interpretation of the universal norms.

offered to help the person understand the significance of such requests.  
(*Real yet imperfect* 5)

This is no longer a question of exceptional sharing in the Eucharist, or of unique occasions (OBOB 106, 109, 112). Equally, the idea of serious spiritual need (Instr. 4b) becomes a simple need. This results in a new general category of continuous Eucharistic sharing in the context of a mixed marriage, in which there is no question of a case by case decision by the diocesan bishop (OBOB 113).

We may agree that repeated sharing in the Eucharist can remain within the limits of the universal norms for exceptional sharing in the Eucharist. It seems to us, however, that any continuous sharing (e.g. each Sunday, each time the couple or family attend a Catholic Mass together), while it may meet the desires of certain mixed marriage couples and families, nonetheless removes the exceptional character of this sharing. The result is to sacrifice the principle articulated by the Conciliar decree *Unitatis redintegratio* in speaking of the common worship of Christians (*communicatio in sacris*), according to which 'the bearing witness to the unity of the Church ... very generally forbids common worship to Christians' (UR 8).

This was, for example, expressed by Ruth Reardon:

I hope therefore that as our Bishops come to understand more fully the continuing need of some interchurch families for sharing in the Eucharist, rather than focusing on their pain, we shall gradually see in some cases a moving beyond unique occasions to a continuing sharing in the Eucharist officially allowed and commended.<sup>1</sup>

We are of the opinion that the time has come when the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, or better, an interdicastery Commission of the Roman Curia, will consider the question of sharing in the Eucharist in the context of mixed marriages and families (occasional, repeatable, exceptional, continual, case by case, as a general category).

### **Clarifications with regard to the conditions for Eucharistic sharing**

Concerning the conditions for sharing in the Eucharist, certain norms contain clarifications of the content of the Catholic faith required with regard to specified sacraments. Such are the 1983 French norms, the February 1997 German norms *Zur Frage*, and *One Bread One Body*

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<sup>1</sup> R. Reardon, '*One Bread One Body: a Commentary...*' 119.

which emphasizes the triple aspect of the Eucharist as the memorial of Christ (OBOB 27-44), the presence of Christ (OBOB 45-55), and finally the link between Eucharistic communion and full Ecclesial communion or in other words the inseparable link between the Eucharist and the Church (OBOB 56-67).

There should be an unambiguous faith both in the sacrificial element of the memorial and in the real presence, as well as in the relationship between the Eucharistic Communion and the communion of the Church. (French Norms, II, 2)

The 1997 German norms, *Zur Frage*, are less precise. There should be the belief that

the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, has given himself to us in the Eucharist both as giver and as gift of bread and wine, and by this builds up his Church. The decision for Christ implies therefore also a decision for his Church. (ZFEG 4)

Joined to the Eucharistic faith is the fact that only a validly ordained priest is able to preside at the Eucharist as minister of the sacramental sacrifice of Christ, because he realizes the Eucharistic sacrament *in persona Christi* (cf. OBOB 40).

It is therefore essential that the one who presides at the Eucharist be known to be established in a sure sacramental relationship with Christ ... through the sacrament of Holy Orders conferred by a Bishop in the recognised apostolic succession. (OBOB 41)

Further, the bishops warn that ‘a love for the Eucharist’ or ‘commitment to the Eucharist’ does not prove that their understanding of the Eucharist and its implications are in harmony with that of the Catholic faith (OBOB 114).

The relationship between the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders belongs to the truths of the Eucharistic faith. This was further stressed by the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of Pope John Paul II of 17 April 2003.

[T]he denial of one or more truths of the faith regarding these sacraments and, among these, the truth regarding the need of the Ministerial priesthood for their validity, renders the person asking improperly disposed to legitimately receiving them. (EE 46)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, <[http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENGo821/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENGo821/_INDEX.HTM)> This will be cited as EE followed by the paragraph number.

Other norms go so far as to lay down how this Catholic faith is expressed, for example in the response 'Amen' at the end of the Eucharistic prayer, or at the time of Communion. Such is the manual of Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna.<sup>1</sup> This small manual was also referred to by Cardinal Kasper:

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna has edited what he calls a 'manual' ... Each Catholic Eucharist is celebrated in the communion between the heavenly Church and the real earthly Church. Whoever says 'yes' with faith to this communion, and confirms this by responding 'Amen', finds himself in ecclesial communion by his personal conviction; on the contrary, whoever considers this communion to be incompatible with his own profession of faith, is—if he is sincere—not able to share in this communion.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise the *Directives* of the Bishop of Saskatoon:

The believer, manifesting Catholic faith, affirms this by responding 'Amen' when the Minister presents the sacred bread and saving cup. (SasDir 11)

The *Pastoral Commentary* and the booklet *Notes for those who may benefit from the Policy*, which accompany the 1999 Canadian norms *Policy* also state that

(one) should acknowledge that the sacrament is the body and the blood of Christ given under the form of bread and wine. The believing Christian manifests faith in the Eucharist by responding Amen to the Minister who presents the sacred bread and saving cup.

Concerning the impossibility of access to one's own minister, this now follows on from the nature of the situation at hand, as in the case of a marriage celebration, funeral, or other family events (e.g. first communion of a child). Thus *One Bread One Body* :

There may be times, however such as in the particular circumstances or on the unique occasions exemplified above, when access to one's own Minister is impossible given the very nature of that occasion. (OBOB 114)

Also, the South African *Revised Directory* affirmed that physical or moral impossibility of receiving the sacrament from one's own minister

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Anon, 'Konfessionsverbindende Ehen: Gemeinsam zur Kommunion?' *Thema Kirche* 9 (1999) 10.

<sup>2</sup> W. Kasper, 'L'engagement œcuménique de l'Eglise catholique...', 490-491.

need not to be one that exists over a period of time but could arise out of the nature of the situation in which the petitioner finds himself or herself. (RDESA 6.3.7)

We recall that Cardinal Willebrands, in his intervention at the synod on the family in October 1980 on the subject of mixed households and sharing in the Eucharist, did not hesitate to affirm that

these conditions are often fulfilled in mixed marriages. But there is a fourth condition : it is required that the non-Catholic Christian be unable for a prolonged period to have recourse to a Minister of his own Church. To my mind this condition is less closely connected with the Eucharistic doctrine and faith.<sup>1</sup>

Certain norms also provide criteria to evaluate ‘the serious need of the spiritual nourishment of the Eucharist’ within the mixed marriage or household, underlining that the need must be more than just a pious desire, or a simple need not to feel left out, but should be a real need to increase one’s growth in spiritual and ecclesial life. The norms *Zur Frage* of the Ecumenical Commission of the German Bishops’ Conference clarify that such a serious need is present when the separation of the couple at the Table of the Lord would seriously put at risk the spiritual life of one or other spouse, or of both, or when this would lead to indifference towards the Eucharist, or worse, when this would result in abandoning Sunday worship or in alienation from Church life (cf. ZFEG 2, 5). Also, the *Pastoral Commentary* which accompanies the Canadian norms *Policy*, clarifies the notion of serious spiritual need.

More than a simply passing desire or a response to a feeling of being excluded (inspired by OBOB 108), spiritual need implies both a need for an increase in spiritual life and a need for a deeper involvement in the Church and its unity. Interchurch couples and families may experience spiritual need in certain circumstances. Being unable to share the Eucharist may lead to serious risk to the spiritual life and faith of one or both partners. It may endanger the integrity of the marriage bond or result in an indifference to the sacraments, a distancing from Sunday worship and from the life of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J. Willebrands, ‘Mixed marriages and their family life: Cardinal Willebrands’s address to the Synod of Bishops, October 1980’, *One in Christ* 23 (1981): 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Sacramental Sharing between Catholics and other Christians in Canada: a Pastoral Commentary to assist Priests, Deacons and Lay Ministers in Determining Cases of Serious Need*, <<http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2001jano8.shtm>>

There are thus considerable variations among the different guidelines and pastoral directives concerning the admission of mixed marriage couples and households to sacramental sharing, without going as far as breaking with the spirit and the main points of the universal norms. For example, all the norms insist on the simultaneous presence of all required conditions, on their verification, as well as on a case to case judgement of the demands for sacramental sharing. Certain norms give more importance to the exclusive competence of the diocesan bishop (cf. French norms, II, 3; OBOB 95, 113), whereas other norms are more inclined to delegate to parish priests (*Zur Frage* 5), while reserving difficult, doubtful or recurring cases to the bishop, the local ordinary, or his delegate (cf. *Policy* 4, *South African Revised Directory* 7.13; *Blessed and Broken* 4).

### **Some final observations by way of conclusion**

By way of a conclusion we would like to indicate the widening gap between on the one hand the universal and particular norms concerning sharing in the Eucharist, and on the other hand the practice, attitude and behaviour of Catholic faithful, including ministers, or of faithful and ministers of other Churches or Ecclesial Communities, disregarding all regulations and calling for a more open, regular communion, which in fact would be continuous.<sup>1</sup> The position of the Catholic Church concerning sharing in the Eucharist is often criticized as being too rigid, on the grounds that it is Christ who invites to the Banquet, and no one can claim ownership of the Eucharist in which Christ becomes present. Intercommunion or continuous reciprocal Eucharistic hospitality is regularly practised under the noses of the often powerless ecclesiastical authorities. Putting aside the question of which is the bigger scandal—the abuse of sharing in the Eucharist, or the lack of unity among Christians—it must be underlined that it is not the norms for sharing in the Eucharist that are the cause of division among Christians. The fact that full communion at the Table of the Lord is not yet possible is a consequence of the broken unity. Very often the question of Eucharistic communion is only considered from a purely individualistic point of view, i.e. stressing the purely personal, individual aspect of one's communion with Christ, the Saviour, while

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<sup>1</sup> For a full description of all sorts of abuse concerning sharing in the Eucharist see J. Vanderwilt, *Communion with non-Catholic Christians: Risks, Challenges and Opportunities* (Minnesota, 2003), 196-201. Cf. also OBOB 98.

the Catholic point of view—still preserving the personal dimension of communion with Christ—gives more weight to the fraternal, communal and ecclesial aspect of Eucharistic communion (the bond between Eucharistic body of Christ and Ecclesial body of Christ).<sup>1</sup> In other words, one cannot raise the issue of Eucharistic communion without also raising the issue of ecclesial communion. That is why the term ‘Eucharistic hospitality’ is ambiguous, for it means inviting in to one’s community a ‘guest’ from a different confession; whereas ‘whoever shares in the one bread and the same cup is not a special guest; he is not a guest at all; he is part of the family’; he or she is somehow part of the ecclesial Community.<sup>2</sup>

The French norms are aware that

the expression ‘Eucharistic hospitality’, though belonging to received vocabulary ... remains not without ambiguity. Indeed, the impossibility of granting this hospitality does not have to be considered as a lack of charity, or a refusal to welcome one’s brothers and sisters. (French norms, footnote p.2)

The term ‘Eucharistic hospitality’ is more often used among the Reformed, and is felt to be a response to the call of Christ, and therefore considered as normal; while this same notion is, in general, considered by Catholics as running the risk of falsifying the will of Christ, and therefore anomalous. There is, therefore, a double ambiguity with Eucharistic hospitality: for refusing hospitality might be seen as a lack of charity, and a refusal to hear the call of the Lord himself; whereas open hospitality may imply that it is up to us, here and now, to declare that all difficulties have been overcome, or to act as if the shared Eucharist is no longer the final goal of full unity among Christians.

Furthermore, the idea of hospitality also implies a particular understanding of reciprocity in the field of Eucharistic sharing, i.e. to what extent a Eucharistic hospitality one receives is matched by a Eucharistic hospitality one gives in return. This conception goes beyond the principle of lawful reciprocity.

I would like to underline the importance of reducing frustration, of drawing attention away from Eucharistic communion as if divided

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<sup>1</sup> W. Kasper, *L'identité confessionnelle: richesse et défi*. Conférence du Cardinal Walter Kasper au *Kirchentag* œcuménique à Berlin du 28 mai au 1er juin 2003, DC 100 (2003): 817.

<sup>2</sup> W. Kasper, ‘L’engagement œcuménique de l’Eglise catholique...’, 490.

Christians were faced with a kind of ‘all or nothing’ in sharing the Eucharist—and of developing instead the idea of spiritual communion, the practice of blessings, the receiving of ‘blessed bread’ (or pre-sanctified gifts) and of knitting the question of Eucharistic communion to the issue of Ecclesial communion. At the same time, faced with repeated and urgent requests for continuous sharing in the Eucharist (that is each Sunday, every time one accompanies one’s family to the Catholic Mass), we must still work at achieving full communion with the Catholic Church, which is the basis of full and normal sacramental communion.

Certain norms do emphasise spiritual communion, by means of receiving a blessing (EE 34, OBOB 41, 43, 84, 85), sharing the pre-sanctified gifts (*antidoron*) in the Eastern liturgies (cf. *Instrumentum laboris* of the October 2005 Synod on the Eucharist, 87), and bringing the separated brother or sister to a full understanding of what sacramental sharing means (*Blessed and Broken* 3), should that person decide to become a Catholic (*Directives of Saskatoon* 10). We are fully aware that this relativisation of the importance of Eucharistic Communion may irritate certain mixed marriages and households, in the sense that this stress on spiritual communion with an encouragement to receive a blessing or the blessed bread could constitute, in their eyes, a lack of consideration for their demands, and for their spiritual need for Communion.

Whatever reflection one wants to make on the topic of sharing in the Eucharist for mixed marriages and households, it has to be drawn from the double principle regulating all sharing in the Eucharist as articulated in the Decree on Ecumenism (cf. UR 8). This implies, first of all, that one cannot compromise the indissoluble link between Eucharistic communion and Ecclesial communion: full sacramental sharing presupposes and signifies full communion in faith, worship, and ecclesial life. For our non-Catholic brothers and sisters this raises the question of their ecclesial belonging. But, the sacraments are also a means of grace. This can be linked to the normative principle, *salus animarum suprema lex* [the salvation of souls is the highest law], which also applies in the context of sharing in the Eucharist for mixed marriages and households. It is at this level that we have developed a reflection, starting from the idea of ‘domestic Church’ with the dual sacramental bond between spouses (of baptism and marriage), along with the idea of the ‘serious spiritual need of the Eucharist’ necessary to

root, build and nourish conjugal and family life. We must continue the search for pastoral solutions—as certain particular norms have tried to do creatively—so that, in individual cases, non-Catholic spouses can be allowed to share in the Eucharist, at important family and ecclesial occasions, when they feel a grave or serious spiritual need, still on condition of a Catholic faith in the sacraments, a right disposition, and a spontaneous request. Some have spoken out, for example Cardinal Lehmann in Germany, and put their finger on the insufficient character of such casuistical, individual pastoral solutions as a response to requests for sharing in the Eucharist—especially for mixed marriages and households—along with the risks of taking up too much of the Catholic bishop or minister’s time, and of failing to ensure equal treatment for all.<sup>1</sup>

*Translated by James Cassidy CRIC, Diocese of Northampton*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. Lehmann, *Einheit der Kirche und Gemeinschaft im Herrenmahl, Zur neueren ökumenischen Diskussion um Eucharistie- und Kirchengemeinschaft*, <[www.dbk.de/imperia/md/content/schriften/dbk4.vorsitzender/vo\\_21.pdf](http://www.dbk.de/imperia/md/content/schriften/dbk4.vorsitzender/vo_21.pdf)> 15.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC—REFORMED DIALOGUE

**David Carter\***

*This article surveys the most recent report (2007) of the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, entitled The Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God. Emphasising orthopraxy as much as orthodoxy, it is noteworthy for the fact that it takes account of the practical cooperation of the two communions in three specific situations as well as dealing with the ecclesiological and theological issues concerned in the general theme.*

### **Introduction**

The final report of the third round of the international dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches was published by the Information Service of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Its overall theme and title was *The Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God*. The Information Service appends a summary of the theme of the kingdom of God in international ecumenical dialogue in general, and a commentary by Fr Jos Vercruyse SJ. The summary is a tribute to the seriousness with which the two communions take the contribution of other ecumenical partners to their chosen task. The report has also been the subject of an extensive report in the Belgian ecumenical journal, *Irénikon*.<sup>2</sup>

The international dialogue between the two communions began in 1970. The first round of talks concentrated on the theme of *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* and produced its report in 1977.<sup>3</sup> The second round, from 1984 to 1990 focused on the understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> IS 15, 110-156; commentary by J. Vercruyse, 157-168. Numbers in brackets at the end of relevant sentences or paragraphs indicate paragraphs in the Report.

<sup>2</sup> *Irénikon*, 4(2007): 603-9.

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced in H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds), *Growth in Agreement, Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World level* (New York/Geneva: 1984), 433-464.

the Church with the report, published in 1991, entitled *Towards a Common Understanding of the Church*.<sup>1</sup> This opened with a substantial contribution in the sphere of the reconciliation of memories and a mutual sharing of ecclesiological concerns. It ended with an expression of the belief that the churches were being called to consider bearing common witness, a theme that is effectively taken up in the present report.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches was formed in 1970 when the International Congregational Council and the Alliance of Reformed Churches in the Presbyterian tradition amalgamated. The Alliance constitutes a family of 216 churches in over 100 countries with an estimated 75 million faithful.<sup>2</sup> Despite some differences in ecclesiology between those churches of Presbyterian structure and those of Congregationalist government, the churches share a common loyalty to the reformed theological tradition as it developed at the Reformation under the influence of various leaders of whom John Calvin of Geneva was the most prominent but not the only influence, others such as Zwingli and Bucer having also fed the tradition. The reformed tradition became particularly strong in Holland, Scotland and much of Switzerland, where reformed churches became officially established. Emigration spread the tradition to North America, South Africa and Australasia, as did missionary activity to many parts of Africa and Asia.

The overall theme was chosen because of its significance for practical cooperation in Christian witness and activity between the two communions. The understanding of the Kingdom of God was an important subject of debate between Protestant theologians in the early stages of the ecumenical movement, in the first half of the twentieth century. Anglo-Saxon Protestants often tended to talk of building the kingdom in a very activist way whereas continental Protestants stressed the mysterious eschatological nature of the kingdom which could only come by divine initiative and not by any human effort. Roman Catholic biblical scholars became increasingly involved in the debates but the nature of the kingdom and its relationship to the Church did not

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in J. Gros, H. Meyer and W. Rusch (eds), *Growth in Agreement II. Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations at a World level, 1982-1998* (New York/Geneva: 2000), 780-819.

<sup>2</sup> Figures as given by Fr Vercruyse in his commentary, 157.

become prominent in early ecumenical dialogue.<sup>1</sup> This report is only the second to approach the question directly rather than tangentially, the previous one being the Anglican—Reformed report of 1984, *God's Reign and Our Unity*. The present report, however, advances beyond that one in significant ways.<sup>2</sup>

In his commentary, Fr Vercruyse estimates that the present report advances logically from the starting points established in the two previous dialogues and that it constitutes 'a theological and ecumenical reflection on the church which can be enriching to the whole ecumene.'<sup>3</sup> Particularly interesting and suggestive for other partnerships are two features. The first is the extensive discussion of three very diverse situations, namely: the struggle for aboriginal rights in Canada, the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, and the reconciliation of communities in Northern Ireland; and of how increasing cooperation between the two communions has helped bring them closer, leading them to the conviction that proper cooperation in such matters is part of a necessary witness to the values of the Kingdom (66-123). The second is the extensive illustration of how the very process of dialogue can be a reconciling experience (199-210).

### **Dialogue as a reconciling experience**

This section of the report is particularly moving and significant for all other communions. Amongst the points made in it are the following: That ecumenical dialogue can itself be a form of common witness (199); and that both partner traditions must respect each other profoundly.

There is a quotation from another dialogue to the effect that 'far from encouraging relativism, genuine dialogue begins with an immersion in one's own tradition and a desire to share its riches with others for the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Avery Dulles, 'Images of the Church' in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1991), 566-568.

<sup>2</sup> The summary, however, gives a very detailed account of the references to the Kingdom in other dialogues. It was *God's Reign and our Unity* which produced the later oft quoted definition of the Church as 'sign, instrument and first fruits of a reality that comes from beyond history—the kingdom or reign of God (para 29).

<sup>3</sup> *IS* 15, 159. The report is hereafter cited as *Church and Kingdom*.

salvation of the world.” It is important within that context that dialogue partners discern which of their past assertions were simply due to lack of love, and now can and should be repudiated, and which were due to elements of significant truth that must continue to be repeated to each other in love (Eph. 4: 16) (208).

In receiving the identity of the other, the dialogue partners are challenged to affirm the same truth expressed in different or complementary forms (202). The statement of Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam* is cited: ‘Truth is not a thing we possess but a person by whom we have allowed ourselves to be possessed.’<sup>2</sup> ‘In the light of the paschal mystery, dialogue purifies its participants so that each can approach the other with the freedom that comes from taking on the mind of Christ’ (201).

The work of the Vatican Theological Commission on the healing of memories is particularly commended for its candid examination of biblical passages and paradigms for confession of sin by the whole people of God. A previous report in the dialogue is quoted: ‘God’s fidelity in maintaining the Church is to do so also through “the transfiguration of human failure”.’<sup>3</sup>

Finally, in this section, it is stressed that the commitment of the two dialogue teams is not just to resolve theological differences but also to achieve a greater degree of common witness as a vital contribution to ecumenism. The hope is held out that the two communions ‘can truly live for each other in order to be witnesses to Jesus Christ’ and that, ‘if we can each affirm that the church is a kind of sacrament of the Kingdom of God, let this be the basis of our dealings with one another.’<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, 2000. Cited in Veliko, L. and Gros, J. *Growing Consensus II. Church Dialogues in the United States, 1992-2004*, 370.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiam suam*, 82, cited in *Church and Kingdom*, 203.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* para. 209, citing *Towards A Common Understanding of the Church*, 109.

<sup>4</sup> *Church and Kingdom*, 221-23. We should also note that though many encouraging things are said in this section, there is also frank admission of two grievous hurts encountered during the period when the dialogue team was at work. The Roman Catholics were distressed when the World Alliance of Reformed Churches withdrew from the Ecumenical Committee of the 2000 Jubilee in response to the indulgence proclaimed. Similarly, the Reformed were wounded by statements in *Dominus Iesus*.

## The Kingdom in Scripture and Tradition

The report begins with an extensive discussion of the interpretation of the concept of the Kingdom of God within Scripture and later Tradition (17-65). The general theme was chosen both because of its solidly biblical roots and because of 'its general helpfulness in addressing the concerns of contemporary Christians which relate to the hope for a measure of greater peace, justice and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14: 17) in our turbulent world' (17). It is admitted that the very translation of the relevant Hebrew and Greek terms is problematic. Stress is put on the fact that the understanding of the kingdom was a relatively neglected theme at the time of the Reformation controversies. Particular attention is given to twentieth century developments of the theme within both communions, especially at and since Vatican II.

The paradoxical nature of the kingdom, already in part present, particularly within the life and activity of the Church, but also elusive and yet fully to come by God's grace, is emphasised. Two key points, relative to the Church's engagement with human society as a whole, are made: first, that the concept of the future kingdom does not lead to passive quietism but relativises the present, indicating that evil is not in accordance with God's will; and secondly that the Kingdom hope is not for a world beyond this one but is to be fulfilled precisely within this world, thus giving hope to human expectation.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is also stressed that though Christians are called to prepare for it by removing injustices that act as obstacles to its coming and by the faithful, lived practice of the Church in worship, service, acts of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, they can in no way build the kingdom as some naïve liberal Protestants once imagined. We may prepare for and seek the kingdom but only God can give it (30).

Nevertheless, in worship and in sacrament, the community celebrates and experiences the kingdom breaking into the community's life which enables, empowers and equips it for its mission in serving the kingdom (47).

Stress is placed on the values of the kingdom, compassion, passion for justice, responsibility and thankfulness. In examining the legacy of Vatican II and its aftermath in Catholic teaching, emphasis is placed

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<sup>1</sup> *Church and Kingdom*, 27-8: The kingdom 'relativizes the present—often oppressive—situation and makes it clear that evil is not God's will, and emboldens believers to try to correct social evils.'

upon the fact that the mission of Christ is a spiritual one but one with consequences for the ordering of the world. The 1971 Synod of Bishops is quoted as calling action on behalf of justice ‘a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel’ (55-6).

The relationship of Church and Kingdom is particularly delicately outlined in paras 62 and 64:

The Kingdom is a multifaceted reality, part of the mysterious design of God for the salvation of the world ... it is present with a special force and power within the Church ... but ... at the same time is broader than the Church; it is present in a hidden manner wherever the Spirit of the risen Lord inspires individuals and communities to live according to the values of the Gospel.

The Kingdom is truly already present in the Church and yet it is beyond the Church as the destiny of the whole of creation. The Church is meant to serve the establishment of the Kingdom as a prophetic sign and an effective instrument in the hands of God.

### **Working Together in the light of the Kingdom**

Section 2, ‘Witnessing to the Kingdom’ (66-123) with its moving account of the cooperation between members of the two communions and other Christians in the three above mentioned situations in Canada, Northern Ireland and South Africa, reminds us that *orthopraxy*, the right following of Jesus Christ in personal relationships and social engagement alike, is as fundamental to Christian life as *orthodoxy*, right belief and doctrine. The strong witness of both communions in the struggle against apartheid is underlined. The trenchant ruling of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches that apartheid was sin and involved heresy at three key points is stressed alongside a mention of the witness of the South African (Catholic) Bishops’ Conference that ‘it is the church’s task to bring God’s concern and guidance into the political realm, and not to give the impression that God is found only in religious worship or personal relationships’ (86,93).

A very important ecclesiological statement, with relevance for understanding the symbiotic communal relationship between local churches and the Universal Church is made at para. 101. It is argued in respect of both communions that

their own experience of the universal church helped to renew the church in South Africa and contributed significantly to the ways in which the local church responded to the affront which apartheid posed

to the credibility of the gospel of Christ. Equally ... the local church in South Africa, in trying to live the gospel in a context which dealt with some of the major challenges facing humanity, bore witness to the universal church of some timeless truths, namely that theology and ethics, doctrine and life, confession through words and action are impossible to separate.

This reminds us that it is the whole Church that is simultaneously a learning and a teaching community, that the Church's understanding alike of its faith and discipleship is developed and enriched both by insights that come from below, from within the day to day life of the local churches, as well as by the thinking of theologians and church leaders at the national and even the global level. The role of church leaders, precisely as ministers of communion, is to enable the freest possible circulation of all such insights.

### **Discerning God's will in the service of His Kingdom**

The very considerable third section of the report (124-158) is devoted to the topic of discerning God's will in the service of the Kingdom. Discernment is described as

the process of listening to the Holy Spirit in order to discover the presence of God, the signs of God's activity in human history and God's will or call in any given situation. It uncovers the presence of the Kingdom of God, which Paul described succinctly in terms of 'justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14: 17).

Discernment of spirits is one of the gifts bestowed by the Spirit for the common good, enabling the Christian community to promote the gospel values evident in the words and deeds of Jesus (125).

For both churches, the word of God is held to be the primary source by which the Holy Spirit guides the Church, though it is also mutually accepted that 'the paths by which we claim access to the Word can be quite different.' Naturally, the Roman Catholic stress on Tradition is greater. However, in the conversation, the Reformed accept that new interpretations can acquire authority for them provided they conform to the message of Scripture. For the Reformed all ecclesial statements are subject to revision just as all structures are subject to reform under the continuing guidance of the Spirit. Ultimately, this is the rationale for their conciliar system of church government (130-6).

Two highly significant points are made towards the end of this section, the first being that while the paths taken to discernment may differ the results are often surprisingly similar (158). The second is that

through learning from each others' emphases, on the local-contextual for the Reformed and on the universal for Roman Catholics, both communions might come to a richer and more rounded style of discernment (146). These are important pointers to future possibilities for fuller mutual ecclesial recognition and reception and are in accordance with the discovery noted above in the discussion of paragraph 101.

One wonders whether, in due course, the Reformed may come to see the value of a universal focused ministry of personal episcopate which takes a particular responsibility for stimulating and coordinating the insights of local churches. From the Roman Catholic side, is it possible that future exercise of the papal magisterium might always be preceded by full synodical consultation with the episcopate and their local churches?<sup>1</sup>

### **Church and Kingdom**

The most important section of the report for future work, not just for the two partners to this dialogue but to some extent for all the reformation and post-reformation traditions in dialogue with Rome, is the fourth section which gives extended consideration to the relationship of Kingdom and Church, beginning with the question, 'What does the focussed attention of Christians on the kingdom of God imply for our understanding of the nature and mission of the Church?' (159-197).

It begins by stressing the centrality of the kingdom in the message and activity of Jesus. It emphasises that whoever becomes involved with Jesus becomes involved in the kingdom (160). It goes on to state that, though in the past Roman Catholics have tended to see more of a direct link between church and kingdom (as in *Lumen gentium* 3, which

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<sup>1</sup> As, indeed, has usually informally been the case. When Pius IX prepared to issue the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, proclaiming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, he consulted the Roman Catholic bishops as to whether this was, indeed, the faith of their local churches. Other churches might be happier if they saw the principle of prior consultation with the bishops and the local churches in dogmatic matters securely anchored in canon law. So far, however, the reformed approach to the possibility of a future reception of the Petrine ministry has been more negative than that revealed in the Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church. See, for comparison, the relevant essays in J. Puglisi (ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press), 1999.

describes the church as ‘the kingdom of God now present in mystery’), whilst Reformed have tended to stress the kingdom as ‘a principle of critique with respect to the church and the surrounding culture’, both communions now accept that ‘although the kingdom may not be identical with the church, that does not mean that the signs of the kingdom are not present in it’ (162). The Reformed, influenced by ecumenical insights, now accept that the church ‘serves as an instrument of the kingdom that Jesus Christ proclaimed and inaugurated’, this last being a citation from the Reformed-Pentecostal dialogue.<sup>1</sup> The wider ecumenical use of *koinonia* language for the community that is placed by the Holy Spirit in this relationship with the kingdom is affirmed as particularly appropriate (164).

The next subsection stresses the celebration of the kingdom in worship as being a sharing in which ‘the church discovers anew its own nature as a communion’ (165). The strikingly apt statement is made that ‘in the proclamation of the word and the celebration of the sacraments, the sights, sounds and fragrances of the kingdom may be discerned’ (166), a moving testimony to the eschatological nature of such worship in which, as Charles Wesley would put it, we are borne up on eagles’ wings and feast with Jesus and his friends. The link between worship and the necessarily consequent liturgy of the service of the kingdom in practical love is stressed. Fr Vercruyse is later critical in his commentary of a failure, at this point, to stress the Roman Catholic emphasis upon the role of the sacraments in building up the Church. I think, however, it can be held that such an emphasis is implicit within what is said about the eucharist and epiclesis.<sup>2</sup>

The third subsection (173-179) is entitled ‘Witnessing to the Kingdom in word and deed’. To receive the kingdom is to be called to bear witness (*martyria*), continually not occasionally, to God’s will for the salvation and transformation of the world.

It is stressed that such witness occurs primarily in the gathering of the Church for the word and sacraments. It also occurs when Christian

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<sup>1</sup> In the report *Word and Spirit, Church and World*, 2000, para 59.

<sup>2</sup> See 167-8. ‘Liturgy as such is an epiclesis, an invocation of the Holy Spirit, through whom the crucified and risen Christ is really present in the gathered community’s eucharistic celebration.’ See also 169 and its statement of the eschatological paradox at the heart of worship: ‘Christian liturgy invites us into a world renewed, a world that we can only hope for and yet already can experience.’

communities are established 'concretising in their own life justice, peace, freedom and respect for human rights' and thus offering 'a countersign to society at large'. A third aspect of witness follows from this prophetic critique of human society, seeking to energise the world to 'transform itself along the lines of the kingdom'. Finally, there is the witness of faithful daily prayer for the coming of the kingdom (175).

The stress upon the importance of the Church acting as a counter-cultural sign in respect of the sinful deformations that occur in culture and human society is an important one, recently explored at the Churches Together in England Forum by Timothy Radcliffe OP.<sup>1</sup>

The final three paragraphs of this subsection contain important ecclesiological and inter-faith challenges for the future. It is stated that 'costly witness calls for mutual accountability ... common witness is a matter of obedience.' This constitutes a particular challenge to the reformed churches, especially where the congregationalist heritage amongst them is still strong, and even more to churches within the 'independent' tradition.<sup>2</sup>

The church must also ask how other religions relate to the kingdom. 'The distinction between church and kingdom thus can help us to engage fruitfully with the world and its destiny and to enter into a more open and creative dialogue with other religious traditions or secular ideologies' (178).

The fourth subsection, 'The Kingdom of God as a principle of Action', raises some particularly interesting ecclesiological and ecumenical points. Both churches see the current dialogue as contributing to the renewal of their life by pointing to the kingdom of God as 'their principle of action' (188). Both accept their awesome responsibilities in witnessing to the kingdom and recognise implicitly thereby that the church is always, as Cardinal Kasper would put it, *ecclesia semper*

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<sup>1</sup> 7-9 September 2009.

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches contains churches that of both Presbyterian and of Congregationalist origin. The former accept that a degree of authority lies with presbyteries consisting of several congregations and, in many cases also, with a nationally representative assembly; whereas Congregationalists accept no binding authority above the local congregation, though they may be involved in federations for mutual counsel and fellowship. The stress on mutual accountability, if received by Congregationalists would inevitably mean a dilution of their principle of the absolute autonomy of local churches.

*purificanda*. There is an interesting link between this and the ecclesiological assertion made by the Reformed in para. 183 where they state that they do not attribute ultimate authority to their confessional statements but see them as always revisable in the light of later exigencies. This in turn is, as previously stated, linked to their essentially conciliar ecclesiology.

### Some ecclesiological consequences

It strikes me that the time is now ripe for an important dialogue relating to the possible compatibility in the context of a differentiated consensus of the Catholic stress upon *ecclesia semper purificanda*, as expressed at Vatican II and reiterated more recently by Walter Kasper,<sup>1</sup> and the Reformed emphasis upon *ecclesia semper reformanda*. The former relates to the belief that there are certain structures with which God has endowed the Church for all time, such as the episcopate and the Petrine ministry. These must be maintained but the way in which they exercise their responsibilities vis-à-vis the entire people of God and its mission will need updating and refreshing from time to time. Such an updating took place in part at Vatican II, bolstered by the twin emphases upon episcopal collegiality and active lay responsibility and apostolate. Earlier, a theological basis for this had been laid by Yves Congar in his book *Vraie et fausse réforme dans L'Eglise* with its stress on any reformer's need for patience and avoidance of schism.<sup>2</sup> The Reformed stress, by contrast, is upon the necessary alterability of church structures, particularly where the integrity of the Gospel and the resultant mission are felt to be at stake.

The late Roman Catholic ecumenist, George Tavard, was fond of talking of the Church's developing capacity for progressively imaging

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<sup>1</sup> In *Lumen gentium* 8, cited by W. Kasper, *That They May All Be One* (London: Continuum, 2004), 48.

<sup>2</sup> This book was published in 1950 and got the author into considerable trouble with the pre-Vatican II authorities in his church. A good discussion of the principles in it can be found in the recent study by Joseph Famerée and Gilles Routhier, *Yves Congar* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 86-90. It should be noted that Congar stresses not simply the need for patience on the part of those who see the necessity of reform but also the responsibility of the leaders of the Church to be aware of the continuing need for reform.

the Kingdom in its life.<sup>1</sup> If the Kingdom is indeed righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit as the Reformed-Roman Catholic Commission, following Paul (Rom. 14: 17) argues it is, then the two churches might together seek a form of structured communion in which the key goal is to ensure all the charisms of the people of God are brought fully into play and in which the *sensus fidelium* would be consulted not just *informally* by the leaders of the Church but *formally and constitutionally* through councils and synods in which there was full lay representation. Such a process would also complement the challenge thrown down by the Methodists in successive rounds of their dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and would also meet the desire of many Anglicans to see that a truly synodical structure was adopted in any reunited Church.<sup>2</sup>

Such a conversation might lead to surprising discoveries on both sides. It might result in the envisioning of a reformed papacy working within conciliar structures and never apart from them and in the development of a style of episcopacy and episcopate at both local and universal levels that is concerned with equipping and freeing the people of God in each place for the witness appropriate to their particular context.<sup>3</sup> In this context it is interesting to note the Reformed affirming their contribution to traditional 'organic unions' of churches whilst saying that they do not regard this as a blueprint for all time. 'The shape and form that such unity should take in the future will emerge in the continuing ecumenical dialogue.' Thus room is made for future and perhaps unexpected developments which will, nevertheless, be linked to the determining factor of the coming gift and challenge of the kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. his article 'Tradition as Koinonia' in *One in Christ*, 24 (1988), 97-111, esp. 110.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. *Speaking the Truth in Love* (report of the 7th round of the international Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue), 2001, 78-9; also *The Grace Given You in Christ* (report of the 8th round of the same dialogue), 2006, 115. See also the Anglican defences of synodality in responses to ARCIC's *The Gift of Authority* in P. Fisher (ed), *Unpacking the Gift*, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> In this dialogue the Reformed were particularly keen to emphasise the importance of *contextual* theology.

<sup>4</sup> And is perhaps more in accordance with developing Roman Catholic Tradition than might be thought. Yves Congar stressed the importance of allowing for the unforeseeable action of God as does Jean-Marie Tillard in his evaluation of the 'Pauline' element within the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. See Famerée and

A final, fifth subsection reconsiders, in the light of the relationship between church and kingdom, the balance between the concepts cherished, respectively, within the two traditions, Reformed and Catholic, of the church as *creatura verbi* and *sacramentum gratiae*. It is now accepted that both phrases encapsulate essential and complementary aspects of the nature of the church and the way in which it serves the kingdom. The church is the result not of human effort but of divine grace to which human beings are privileged to respond. 'To the extent to which the church is an instrument intended by God to serve in bringing about the kingdom, it must then be an instrument of grace' (191). Para. 193 further states that 'not only are these visions mutually informative and complementary but also that neither is perfectly adequate without the other.'

It is accepted that in the past each church has tended to emphasise only one of the pair and to neglect the other. 'In such a case, arriving at full communion will amount to a process within which each community recovers the full scope of God's provision for the whole church' (193).

Finally attention is given to the way in which relating the kingdom instrumentality of the church to the Holy Spirit allows us to acknowledge together a more dynamic vision of the church as sacrament of the kingdom of God. The emphases of the Reformed on the freedom of the Spirit and of the Roman Catholics upon the guidance of the Spirit in the church are now seen as complementary. The church is seen as a kind of sacrament of the kingdom with a role in its mediation, but only in so far as it is utterly dependent on the grace of God (195-7). The dialogue partners state 'our agreement in this gives us hope that we have also made some progress in opening the way to greater convergence' (197).

That is certainly the impression of this Methodist commentator. There is a very important convergence in terms of the mutual recognition of the need for reception of complementary truths. This particular report seems to endorse the hope of the fathers of Vatican II

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Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 66 and J-M.Tillard, *L'Eglise Locale* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 540. The late John Paul II also spoke of dialogue 'making surprising discoveries possible' in *Ut Unum Sint*, 38; and also in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 12 of the Spirit as 'always capable of new surprises'.

that Roman Catholic scholars ‘would search together with the separated brethren into the divine mysteries.’<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In sum, this report is a very considerable achievement, illustrating the potential that new approaches have for opening up fresh and reconciling expressions of our common faith, particularly, in this case, a common praxis in living out the kingdom hope. It is indeed a report to be studied by other ecumenical partners and not just by the two communions concerned. It contains much that should become the subject of further reflection and advances in mutual understanding and potential convergence. Both churches show that there are points at which they should learn from each other’s emphases and find their own catholicity mutually enriched.

The report breaks new ground in international ecumenical dialogue by placing such a strong emphasis upon orthopraxy and practical Christian action for peace and justice without, however, ignoring doctrinal issues. This practical emphasis should appeal particularly to the ordinary faithful in the Anglo-Saxon world with their stress upon the practicalities of Christian discipleship in the world. It should help them to see that ecumenical dialogue is not a hobby for theologians but can have real practical relevance to their everyday Christian lives and the effectiveness of their witness to their faith in the real world.

It is devoutly to be hoped that the report will be properly received at every level within the two communions. It has already received some attention in the Theology and Unity Group of Churches Together in England. It should receive further attention in the recently constituted United Reformed Church-Roman Catholic dialogue in England. Its sheer length means that national, diocesan and provincial ecumenical officers and commissions will need to think hard about producing a shorter and more user friendly guide in order to communicate its key challenges at every level.

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<sup>1</sup> Vatican II *Decree on Ecumenism*, 11.

## **EDINBURGH 1910 TO 2010: CENTENARY ASSESSMENT AND MISSION RENEWAL**

**Kenneth R. Ross and Kirsteen Kim\***

*This article recalls the influential World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910 and offers analysis of the exciting process which is underway to mark the centenary. As emblem of the modern missionary movement, birthplace of the ecumenical movement and harbinger of a new era in world Christianity, Edinburgh 1910 has proved to be a defining event in Christian history. After 100 years its shortcomings and blind-spots are clearly visible yet there is abundant evidence to vindicate its fundamental conviction: that the good news of Jesus Christ can take root in every culture across the world and produce fruit in church and society everywhere. The centenary, like the original event, is being marked by both a study process and an event in Edinburgh. The entire effort aims to be polycentric, worldwide and inclusive, making full use of contemporary technology and communication media. The study process is already yielding insights which may be vital to the renewal of Christian mission for the twenty-first century.*

In June 1910 the city of Edinburgh hosted one of the most defining and most long-remembered gatherings in the entire history of Christianity. The 'World Missionary Conference' was a climactic event of the nineteenth century missionary movement: a mountain top on which

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leading representatives of Protestant Christianity gathered to survey their achievements and to assess the work which remained to be done. Its significance in this respect is not to be underestimated. John R. Mott the Conference chairman called it: 'the most notable gathering in the interest of the worldwide expansion of Christianity ever held, not only in missionary annals, but in all Christian annals.'<sup>1</sup>

The ambitious scope and analytical approach of the Conference has ensured that many of the issues it discussed remain pertinent even in the vastly changed world of today. The Commission Reports which gave the conference its substance, together with the discussions which they each provoked at the conference, will amply repay study by those concerned with mission in today's world.<sup>2</sup> Even more than in its detailed points of analysis, however, the conference challenges us today by the extensive scope of its ambition. As Andrew Walls explains: 'Edinburgh sought to survey and assimilate the accumulated experience of the interaction of Christian and non-Christian worlds with a view to bringing the encounter to a new stage.'<sup>3</sup>

We live at a time when the paradigm of mission represented by the Western missionary movement has run its course. New dynamics of mission are emerging, as yet unclear and liminal in their outline. Can the memory of Edinburgh 1910 provoke us once more to take stock comprehensively of the progress of Christianity in relation to its missionary mandate? Can it identify and stimulate the new vision and the fresh energy which will shape church and mission in the twenty-first century? Can the marking of the centenary do for the twenty-first century what Edinburgh 1910 did for the twentieth, i.e. catch a vision and set an agenda which will give direction and energy to churches and missionary movements?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865-1955: A Biography* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 342.

<sup>2</sup> See David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now* (Oxford: Regnum, 2009). The Edinburgh 1910 reports are available online at <[www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)>

<sup>3</sup> Andrew F Walls., *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2002), 59.

<sup>4</sup> See further Kenneth R. Ross, *Edinburgh 2010: Springboard for Mission* (Pasadena: William Carey International University Press, 2009).

In this article, we look back at Edinburgh 1910 to assess it and highlight challenges it poses to the centenary celebrations. We then introduce Edinburgh 2010 and report on what is emerging from the contemporary study process for the renewal of mission in the twenty-first century.

### **Edinburgh 1910: Its place in history**

The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910 was held on 14-23 June in the Assembly Hall of the United Free Church of Scotland on the Mound in Edinburgh. It brought together more than 1200 delegates from a wide range of Protestant missions and church mission boards, 'to consider missionary problems'. The conference was prepared for by a thorough study process by eight different 'commissions' on pressing mission issues of the day.<sup>1</sup>

The legacy of this research is one of the reasons that Edinburgh 1910 is being remembered now when other missionary conferences of the late colonial period are largely forgotten. Another reason was the revival atmosphere generated by the conference, which was remembered long afterwards by those who attended. The spiritual life of the conference also induced a desire for continuation which led to the founding of the *International Review of Mission(s)*<sup>2</sup> and the International Missionary Council (IMC). A third reason for the impact of Edinburgh 1910 was that it was attended by some of the most significant church leaders of the day and stimulated the formation of the ecumenical church Commissions on Faith and Order and on Life and Work, as well as cooperation in theological and mission education. These different strands came together in 1948 to form the World Council of Churches

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<sup>1</sup> The eight Commissions in 1910 considered the following themes: (1) Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World; (2) The Church in the Mission Field; (3) Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life; (4) The Missionary Message in Relation to the Non-Christian Religions; (5) The Preparation of Missionaries; (6) The Home Base of Missions; (7) Missions and Governments; (8) Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity.

<sup>2</sup> The *IRM* was founded in 1912 and has been published continuously since. In 1969 it changed its title from *International Review of Missions* to *International Review of Mission* (singular) in recognition of the theology of *missio Dei* that mission is primarily God's initiative, not the churches' endeavour.

(WCC), with which the IMC was also integrated in 1961.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, the passion for world evangelisation exhibited at Edinburgh in 1910 is also appreciated today by churches and organisations beyond the membership of the WCC such as the Roman Catholic Church, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement. Fifth, among the 1200 delegates there were 20 'native' representatives who were not of European descent. Though few in number, the presence of representatives of 'younger churches' spoke volumes about the changing character of Christianity, and the Asian delegates who addressed the conference offered some of the most incisive contributions to the discussions at the conference which shaped the future of Christian mission.<sup>2</sup>

In several ways Edinburgh 1910 has a unique place in Christian history.

### *Emblem of the modern missionary movement*

Although none realised it at the time, Edinburgh 1910 stood at the close of one great chapter of Christian history and at the opening of another. The chapter approaching its close was one in which the initiative in world Christianity lay with the Western missionary movement. Though 'the missionaries' have often been caricatured for excessive religious zeal, cultural insensitivity and complicity in Western imperialism, their achievement speaks for itself. Whereas at the start of the Western missionary movement Christianity was largely confined to Europe and North America, its impact has been such that Christianity has become a faith with more adherents in the Global South than in its historic heartlands. For all its faults, the Western missionary movement was the instrument which began this dramatic change. The world's religious demography has been transformed while Christianity itself has discovered new character and direction. We are ever more aware of how much of this movement of Christian expansion is attributable to the initiatives of indigenous people, yet there can be no denying the seminal role of the Western missions, which were at the height of their influence in 1910. The conference in Edinburgh became emblematic of the movement when it was still bursting with energy and ambition. The

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<sup>1</sup> Ross, *Edinburgh 2010: Springboard for Mission*, 19-27. See also Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 21-33.

<sup>2</sup> See Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 91-131.

thorough study process drew on a wealth of missionary experience and documented the situation of world mission in that era through the work of eight 'Commissions' which published thorough reports on different aspects of the missionary enterprise.

*Birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement*

While it functioned as the climax and summation of one remarkable religious movement, Edinburgh 1910 was perhaps even more significant in heralding the advent of a new era in Christian history. Marking its golden jubilee in 1960, Hugh Martin observed that:

By the general consent of all competent judges the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in June, 1910, was one of the most creative events in the long history of the Christian Church. Its significance is all the more clear in the perspective of fifty years after. In many respects unique in itself, it was also unique in the impetus it gave to Christian activity in many directions. It opened a new era in the missionary enterprise but it was also the beginning of what we now call 'the ecumenical movement'. 'Edinburgh 1910' was in fact a fountain head of international and inter-Church co-operation on a depth and scale never before known.<sup>1</sup>

For all its fecundity, the nineteenth century missionary movement was fragmented with a wide variety of agencies pursuing their own objectives, sometimes in outright competition with one another. One thing which united the Edinburgh delegates was the conviction that much more could be achieved if their agencies could work in cooperation with one another. The Asian representatives had the imagination to push the discussion further: could they think not only of cooperation but also of unity? They recalled the prayer of Jesus that 'they may all be one' (John 17: 20). This question set an agenda for the century to come. As church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette concluded: 'The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, was the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Martin, *Beginning at Edinburgh: A Jubilee Assessment of the World Missionary Conference 1910* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1960), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, 'Ecumenical Bearings of the Missionary Movement and the International Missionary Council', chapter 8 in Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill, eds., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948, Vol. I*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Geneva: WCC, 1993 [1954]), 362.

### *Mission at the heart of the church*

The validity of this historical judgement is beyond question yet it is also important to remember that the Conference was inspired not so much by unity for its own sake as unity for the sake of mission. The conference marked a ‘coming of age’ of the missionary movement. Even within the church, it had often been regarded as peripheral and eccentric. Now its assembled delegates heard no less an ecclesiastical leader than the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, stating that ‘the place of missions in the life of the Church must be the central place, and none other: that is what matters’. Davidson went on to conclude:

Secure for that thought its true place in our plans, our policy, our prayers; and then – why then, the issue is His, not ours. But it may well be that, if that come true, there be some standing here tonight who shall not taste of death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power.<sup>1</sup>

Thus placing the missionary movement at the heart of the faith and action of the church gave a great sense of the momentousness of the event taking place. It also introduced the thought that ‘mission’ is the mission of the church—something which would be a major theme in twentieth century developments.

### *Glimpse of world Christianity*

The delegates were united by the conviction that they stood at a moment in history when, like never before, there was a realistic possibility that they could fulfil Jesus’ command to ‘go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation’ (Mark 16:15). Pragmatic in their outlook, they were focused on finding the means to achieve this evangelistic objective. Edinburgh 1910 stands as a reminder to Christians that they have received good news and their task is to share it with the world around them. The Conference throbbled with this great purpose and lit a torch which has been carried forward as the evangelistic mandate has been taken up by succeeding generations. It offered a clear glimpse of a truly worldwide Christian church. This epoch-making vision of the church as a global missionary community has continued to inspire subsequent generations, making it an enduring point of reference for those who hear Christ’s call to a mission

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<sup>1</sup> W.H.T. Gairdner, *Edinburgh 1910: An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 43.

which extends to the ends of the earth. As mission historian Andrew Walls summarises:

The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, has passed into Christian legend. It was a landmark in the history of mission; the starting point of the modern theology of mission; the high point of the modern Western missionary movement and the point from which it declined; the launch-pad of the modern ecumenical movement; the point at which Christians first began to glimpse something of what a world church would be like.<sup>1</sup>

### **Edinburgh 1910: A centenary critique**

Acknowledging the spell cast by the 1910 Conference is not necessarily to be blind to its limitations and shortcomings. From today's perspective there is no mistaking the reality that Edinburgh 1910 was a deeply flawed occasion. With the benefit of hindsight we can see how much the Conference was limited by the conceptual landscape of its participants. Not only were they almost all of European descent, they were also overwhelmingly male and middle-aged. At that time women missionaries outnumbered men, but only 1 in 6 of the delegates were women and their voices were hardly heard in the commission reports or the conference proceedings. Although the organiser of the conference, the Scot Joseph Oldham, was only in his mid-thirties, it was observed that most of the delegates then had 'gone gray in service'.<sup>2</sup>

#### *A territorial idea of Christian expansion*

The thinking of the Conference was premised on a territorial idea of Christian mission. A key distinction was drawn between 'fully missionised lands' and 'not yet fully missionised lands'. The task of mission was to 'carry' the gospel from the 'Christian world' to the 'non-Christian world'. This 'Christendom model' of Christian expansion would be obsolete within half a century. As Andrew Walls points out: 'Today some of what in 1910 appeared to be "fully missionized lands" are most obviously the prime mission fields of the world.'<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile parts of the 'non-Christian world' have become heartlands of Christian faith. The century which followed would expose the destructive potential of

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<sup>1</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 53.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 73.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 237.

the dualism inherent in unbounded confidence in the 'Christian' West and the belief that the 'non-Christian world' must give way to its steady advance. The use of the territorial principle also meant that Europe, North America and Latin America were excluded from the consideration of the Conference. The status of Latin America as a 'missionised land' was disputed by some but insisted on by Anglo-Catholics as a condition of their participation and a recognition of the integrity of the Roman Catholic Christianity of the continent. These Christendom assumptions distorted the understanding of mission and meant the event belied its title as a 'World Missionary Conference'.

### *Complicity with imperialism and colonialism*

As a century of critique has made plain, the Conference did not acquire sufficient distance from the Western imperialism which was at its height at that time. The fact that the Western 'Christian' powers dominated world affairs underlay a great deal of the optimism of the Conference regarding the missionary enterprise. The enthusiasm and drive which marked the Conference drew much more than it realised on the optimistic self-confidence of imperial expansion and technological advance. Much too easily the Conference bought into the colonial assumption of the inferiority of the colonised. For example, they largely accepted a colonial caricature of Africa as a savage, barbaric and uncultured continent. While abuses of colonial rule such as the opium wars or the atrocities in the Congo might be subject to criticism, there was almost no awareness that colonialism, in itself, was damaging and that there would be a heavy price to pay if Christian mission were too closely allied to it.

### *Mission in military metaphor*

The territorial understanding of Christian expansion was allied with an activist mentality and a military metaphor. The Conference was marked by the mood of the Protestant missionary movement described by the missiologist David Bosch as 'pragmatic, purposeful, activist, impatient, self-confident, single-minded, triumphant'.<sup>1</sup> This mood unfortunately was often expressed in the vocabulary of aggression, attack, conquest and crusade. In the discourse of the Conference, missionaries were often described as 'soldiers' or Christian 'forces'. The reports and speeches abounded with metaphors such as 'army', 'crusade', 'council of

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<sup>1</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 336.

war', 'conquest', 'advance' and 'marching orders'. Participants saw nothing incongruous in using the language of violent military campaigns to describe their missionary engagement and aspirations. The aggressive and confrontational understanding of Christian mission which characterised Edinburgh 1910 has provoked much resentment and does not serve to commend Christian faith today. This is not to say that Christians should lack confidence in the message they proclaim. The issue is one of respect for those who adhere to other faiths. For all that the Report of Commission Four showed the sympathetic appreciation of other faiths which many missionaries had developed, its militaristic and triumphalist language strikes a note of antagonism which could hardly be expected to make for cordial inter-faith relations or for a culture of peace. It concludes by celebrating: 'the spectacle of the advance of the Christian Church along many lines of action to the conquest of the five great religions of the modern world ...'<sup>1</sup> As we approach the centenary of Edinburgh after a century of sickening violence, amidst neo-imperial wars and in face of the ever present threat of nuclear holocaust, it has become all too clear how unsuited is the military metaphor to the purposes of Christian mission.

#### *Patronising attitude to the emerging churches*

The Conference was marked by an unmistakable ambivalence towards what it described as 'the church on the mission field'. On the one hand, the objective of the missionary movement was the emergence of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches. On the other, the missionaries were jealous of their 'field' and showed an ill-disguised interest in retaining the initiative. The new churches emerging in the mission fields were regarded as 'infant' churches and it was expected that they would require the care and direction of their 'parents' for many years to come. This led to a somewhat distant and patronising relationship to the leaders of the churches which were already emerging as a result of the missionary movement. One of their number, V.S. Azariah, in what proved to be the most remembered speech of the Conference, expressed both appreciation and exasperation in his concluding peroration:

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<sup>1</sup> World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions, Report of Commission IV* (World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 273.

Through all the ages to come the Indian church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labours of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us FRIENDS!<sup>1</sup>

Much of the journey ahead in the twentieth century would be occupied with answering this request.

### *Restrictions to discussion stored up problems for the future*

Tactically, in order to achieve the widest possible participation, it was a stroke of genius to exclude doctrinal and ecclesial issues from the consideration of the Conference. Pragmatically, it made for a Conference which could find focus and energy by concentrating on the key issues which were facing Western missions as they engaged with the non-Western world. However, there was a price to pay. It meant that the discussion of mission was abstracted from theological debate about the content and meaning of the gospel, and from ecclesiological debate about the nature and calling of the church. This meant that it was necessarily an incomplete discussion. When it was taken forward in the course of the century which followed the Conference, it was necessary to attempt a more integrated discussion of faith, church and mission. Insofar as Edinburgh 1910 was achieved through a papering over of the cracks, doctrinal and ecclesial divisions reasserted themselves. While the conscious thrust of Edinburgh 1910 was aimed at achieving greater unity, the structure of its discussion traded short-term gains for long-term struggles as the years ahead would see more fragmentation than integration.

### *History reveals that confidence was ill-founded*

It has to be recognised that, in many respects, the Edinburgh Conference was over-heated and over-ambitious. It was carried away by the self-confidence of the Western powers at the height of the age of empire. Its slogans proved to be hollow. The world was not evangelised in that generation. The gospel was not carried to the entire non-Christian world. Within a few years of the Conference, the energies of the Western 'missionised' nations would be consumed by a war more destructive than any experienced hitherto and a great deal of the worldwide evangelistic effort would be put on hold. Nor was this to

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<sup>1</sup> World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The History and Records of the Conference* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 315.

prove to be a temporary interruption. Edinburgh 1910, which understood itself to be on the brink of a great new surge of missionary advance was, in fact, the high point of the movement. Never again would the Western missionary movement occupy centre stage in the way that it felt it did at Edinburgh. For most of the mission boards and societies represented, the twentieth century would be one of remorseless decline in their operations. The scenario envisaged by the Edinburgh delegates never came to pass.

*Nonetheless: a great new fact*

Despite the many limitations of the Conference, however, the twentieth century has witnessed a vindication of a fundamental conviction of Edinburgh 1910: that the good news of Jesus Christ can take root in every culture across the world and produce fruit in church and society everywhere. The great drama of the coming century, in terms of church history, would be the growth of Christian faith in Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America. In some respects it has surpassed even the most sanguine expectations of 1910. The extraordinary growth of Christianity in Africa, for example, was not foreseen by any of the Edinburgh delegates. Nor had they anticipated how Latin America would become the theatre of a powerful renewal of Christian faith. This worldwide flourishing of the faith stands as a demonstration of the validity of their missionary vision that the gospel could be received and find expression in completely new contexts. As Andrew Walls notes,

The fact remains that, by a huge reversal of the position in 1910, the majority of Christians now live in Africa, Asia, Latin America or the Pacific, and that the proportion is rising. Simultaneously with the retreat from Christianity in the West in the twentieth century went—just as the visionaries of Edinburgh hoped—a massive accession to the Christian faith in the non-Western world. The map of the Christian Church, its demographic and cultural make-up, changed more dramatically during the twentieth century than (probably) in any other since the first.<sup>1</sup>

Without the missionary impetus represented by Edinburgh 1910, the prospects for Christianity as a world religion might well be doubtful today, particularly as its long-time European homeland is proving to be difficult ground. Largely as a result of the seeds planted by missionary endeavour, vigorous and numerous expressions of Christian faith are to

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew F. Walls, 'Commission One and the Church's Transforming Century', in Kerr and Ross, *Edinburgh 1920*, 27-40.

be found on all six continents today. The delegates who gathered in Edinburgh in 1910 caught a vision of something which did not then exist: a 'world church' with deep roots and vigorous expression widely apparent on every continent. Certainly so far as Protestantism is concerned, no event was more definitive for the emerging shape of Christianity in the twentieth century than Edinburgh 1910. It was the first clear glimpse of what William Temple would describe as 'the great new fact of our time'—the truly worldwide Christian church.<sup>1</sup> This epoch-making vision of the church as a truly global missionary community has continued to inspire subsequent generations, making it an enduring point of reference for those who hear Christ's call to a mission that extends to the ends of the earth.

### **Edinburgh 2010: Beyond 1910**

The centenary of 1910 'brings people together in a creative way' and 'opens up new perspectives on mission today'.<sup>2</sup> The significance and potential of the anniversary was recognised by Revd Prof. Kenneth Ross and others in the University of Edinburgh and the Church of Scotland, which jointly sponsored a study process called 'Towards 2010' from 2002-2007, in which leading mission theologians from around the world were invited to reflect on Edinburgh 1910 from the perspective of today.<sup>3</sup> Since 2005, the centenary celebrations have been organised by an ecclesially and globally representative body called Edinburgh 2010. The Church of Scotland is acting as banker and employer, and the University of Edinburgh is another employer and will host a centenary conference in Edinburgh in 2010. Dr Brian Stanley, recently appointed Professor of World Christianity and Director of the Centre for the Study of World Christianity at the University, has released what looks likely to be the definitive history of Edinburgh 1910.<sup>4</sup> The staff team is led by the International Director of Edinburgh 2010, Revd Dr Daryl Balia, a South African Methodist and mission theologian who was appointed in 2007.

The aims of Edinburgh 2010 may be summarised as:

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<sup>1</sup> William Temple, *The Church Looks Forward* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1944), 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Edinburgh 2010 publicity leaflet and website, <[www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)>

<sup>3</sup> See *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now*, cited p.114 note 2, above.

<sup>4</sup> *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, cited p.116 note 2, above.

1. Celebrating what God has done and prayerfully committing to God the witness of the churches;
2. Affirming and articulating the call to mission;
3. Initiating a conversation on mission between South, North and East;
4. Developing guidelines and publications for church and mission leaders;
5. Strengthening networks for mission;
6. Discovering a new vision, renewed spirituality and mission ethos; and
7. Facilitating centenary celebrations throughout the world.

Like, its predecessor, Edinburgh 2010 is both a study process and an event. The study process, which was based around nine main study themes and seven 'transversal' themes, was conceived as polycentric and is made up of many other study processes around the world. A conference is planned at the Pollock Halls in Edinburgh on 2-5 June 2010 for 150 delegates sent by the stakeholders and a further 70 more from the different aspects of the study process. The Edinburgh 2010 conference has two main purposes: first, the study process will be moved forward by interaction between the leaders of the main study themes, and those coming from the perspective of transversal topics and regional and confessional studies; second, world church representatives will begin to engage with the findings and together identify some priorities for mission and calls to common action by the churches. As in 1910, the conference delegates will also spend time in prayer and worship. Indeed a group under the leadership of John Bell of Iona is planning not only worship sessions but the 'spiritual life' of the conference. The conference will be followed by a celebration on Sunday 6 June, in the same Assembly Hall used in 1910, for local people and international visitors. The event, which will be in the form of a service of worship, will be beamed around the world and linked to other local events in many different places around the globe.

### *Wider ecumenism*

The appeal of the centenary is such that eighteen different global church and mission bodies have come together with the Church of Scotland and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to support it. The Edinburgh 2010 General Council includes all the main Christian confessions: the Protestant world bodies (Lutheran, Anglican,

Reformed, Methodist, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist), three Evangelical bodies (World Evangelical Alliance, Lausanne Movement and Latin American Theological Fraternity), the Roman Catholic Church (represented through the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity), the Orthodox Churches (represented by a lay academic of the Greek Orthodox Church), the Asian Pentecostal Society and African Independent Churches.<sup>1</sup> The main drivers of Edinburgh 2010, and the main funders, are the WCC and 'mainline' European Protestant churches and their mission agencies. However, all the organisations on the General Council will support their delegations and others have also contributed to the general funds. In a concrete illustration of the fact that the financial power of the churches no longer lies exclusively in the North Atlantic zone, South Korean churches have also contributed generously. Since the Protestant churches in South Korea took their indigenous life from a revival movement which was almost contemporary with the 1910 conference, it is arguably they who most preserve the Spirit of 1910.<sup>2</sup>

Edinburgh 2010 is thus an exciting experiment in a new and wider ecumenism. The reality in the twenty-first century is that the Protestant churches of Europe and the Orthodox churches around which the WCC was constructed do not fully represent the world's non-Catholic Christians. In view of the complexity of world Christianity and of the impasse in movements toward organic unity, Edinburgh 2010 represents a new way of bringing churches together.

### *Polycentric, worldwide and inclusive*

The conference of Edinburgh 2010 is consciously constructed to correct limitations of Edinburgh 1910. So, first, it is not intended to be centred in the West, although its office is in Edinburgh, but it takes a polycentric approach to the study process and the 2010 events. Second, representation is not confined to the North Atlantic, but there is an intentional bias to the South (60 per cent is the conference target) and a worldwide scope. Third, it is not a conference of overseas missionaries but mainly of church representatives. And fourth, these are not confined to mainline Protestantism, but include the whole range of Christian traditions and confessions. Finally, a better gender and age

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of the General Council can be found on the Edinburgh 2010 website, <[www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)>

<sup>2</sup> Walls, 'Commission One and the Church's transforming century', 34.

balance is intended (50 per cent women and 20 per cent youth at the conference). The constituency achieved by Edinburgh 2010 is already extremely broad, including almost every conceivable category of Christian. The regional balance is widespread across the globe but some areas are at present un- or under-represented, notably China, the former Soviet Union and Central Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific Islands. The wider participation is achieved because Edinburgh 2010 is mainly a conference of church bodies which see themselves as worldwide.

Those leading research into the nine main study themes of Edinburgh 2010 also represent all the main church traditions and include various nationalities: one from Aotearoa-New Zealand, four British, two Canadians (one a member of the First Nations), a German, two Greeks, a Hungarian, two Indians, a Kenyan, two Koreans, a Nigerian, a South African, and a Swede.<sup>1</sup> However, largely because there are fewer funding and educational opportunities in the global South, just over half of these are European or of European descent, and almost all are based in Northern institutions. Partly to address this issue, regional study processes have also been encouraged in several places in the global South: India, West, East and South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore and Latin America. Many other regional or confessional Edinburgh events have been or will be held during the year 2010, including several in Europe and others in Asia and in the Americas. The Roman Catholic Church has six institutions in different continents working on Edinburgh 2010 themes.<sup>2</sup>

### *Web methodology*

The study process of Edinburgh 2010 stands for both continuity and discontinuity with 1910. As a hundred years ago, study focuses on several main themes judged significant for contemporary mission. The groups working on these themes are producing not whole volumes as in 1910 but chapters for a hardbound pre-conference publication. After the conference there will be a post-conference report volume. Most of the study groups are also generating other publications which will be published as part of the Edinburgh 2010 series or in association with it.

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of the conveners of the main study themes and their institutions can be found on the Edinburgh 2010 website.

<sup>2</sup> Details of all events linked to Edinburgh 2010 can be found on the events pages of the website.

Unlike a century ago, however, the main medium of Edinburgh 2010 work is electronic, utilising email, electronic groups and the internet. The overall outcome will be the final form of the website—[www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org). It will document and link all the different study processes, both those organised centrally and the many others organised by different churches and organisations around the world. The web format perhaps best represents the networking approach of Edinburgh 2010 but Edinburgh 2010 can also be found on Facebook and Twitter. In this way, and through the online streaming of events next June, far more people will be linked in than was possible in 1910.

### **Edinburgh 2010: Mission Renewal**

In several ways the challenge to revise the old certainties of 1910 and to renew mission thinking for the twenty-first century is already being taken up in the Edinburgh 2010 study process. The pre-conference publication will be the first of many to be published in 2010.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Mission as an ecumenical and theological question*

The nine main study themes of Edinburgh 2010, defined by an international group brought together in 2005 and 2006, are as follows:

1. Foundations for mission
2. Christian mission among other faiths
3. Mission and post-modernities
4. Mission and power
5. Forms of missionary engagement
6. Theological education and formation
7. Christian communities in contemporary contexts
8. Mission and unity—ecclesiology and mission
9. Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship.

Unlike 1910, when doctrine was considered divisive and could not be discussed, the 2010 themes have developed in an explicitly theological way. The first theme for 2010 is ‘foundations for mission’, showing that in our generation mission is not a given but needs to be defined and justified. A theological approach is possible partly because the basic data about world Christianity, which the Commissions of 1910 spent

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<sup>1</sup> Daryl Balia & Kirsteen Kim (eds), *Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today* (Oxford: Regnum, forthcoming 2010).

much of their time collecting and collating, is already known,<sup>1</sup> and also because the 2010 member bodies are prepared to engage one another theologically. It is also necessary in 2010 because the main questions about mission are no longer only methodological. Major criticisms of mission were raised in the post-colonial period from ethical and theological perspectives. It is no longer taken for granted that all Christians agree on what mission involves except in so far as it begins from the initiative of God. Because mission is the mission of God (*missio Dei*), it is a theological as well as a practical question. In Theme 1, as in all the groups, the theological work of the groups is stimulated and informed by real-life mission issues and includes attention to case studies.

Of the nine themes for Edinburgh 2010, the current Theme 8, Mission and Unity was added later at the request of the World Council of Churches. Its omission from the original list perhaps indicates that, in the context of the open and inclusive approach of 2010 and after one hundred years of ecumenical activity, the link of mission with unity was taken for granted. The premise of Edinburgh 2010 is that understanding mission and theology can best be done by all the churches together. In this way it realises the vision expressed in 1910 by Charles Gore, Bishop of Birmingham:

A universal religion, a catholic religion, needs a common message such as is contained in the Apostles' Creed, and as is recorded in the Bible, but a common message comprehended by very different and various peoples and individuals, each with very different gifts, so that each in receiving the one message brings out some different or special aspect of the universal truth or character which lies in the common religion.<sup>2</sup>

### *Mission as a spiritual endeavour*

The close links between the missionary movement and colonialism in 1910 meant the Conference was preoccupied with church-state or church-government relations. The relative absence of such references in the study themes for 2010 illustrates the fact that Christians today, even in Europe, no longer see themselves as being at the centre of

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross (eds.), *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Report of Commission III* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 406.

global political power. Instead, a wider discussion of power is introduced in Theme 4 which interrogates the exercise of power by churches as well as political bodies and suggests a theology of power in weakness. The voice of those nations and peoples who suffer under the economic and political dominance of others is more directly heard in 2010, and as a result there is a recognition that mission has its victims as well as its heroes, and that the centenary is an occasion for repentance as well as celebration.

The absence of reference to governments in 2010 also reflects a world in which the development activities into which the 1910 mission organisations were pouring so much time and money—through schools, hospitals and other institutions—are largely now in secular hands. This is illustrated clearly by the fact that the education under discussion in Theme 6 of *Edinburgh 2010* is explicitly theological, whereas in 1910 education was discussed with reference to ‘the Christianisation of national life’.<sup>1</sup> Although the themes of 2010 are much concerned with promoting human welfare, the means are now less institutional and more concerned with political advocacy on behalf of the poor and marginalised.

Theme 4 is complemented by Theme 9, which deals with ‘mission spirituality and authentic discipleship’. Whereas 1910 encouraged the spiritual and moral character of the individual missionary and intercessory prayer in the churches as important for effective mission outcomes, 2010 understands mission itself to be a spiritual endeavour. There has been a noticeable shift in the language of mission from ‘kingdom’ language to ‘spirit’ language. These represent two different sets of mission vocabulary which are somewhat paralleled in the New Testament. Matthew and Mark major on the kingdom, John and Paul prefer to talk about the Spirit, and Luke combines both. In 1910, ‘kingdom’ language was current because of the background of colonial empires headed by monarchs, and it was used to encourage the triumphalism and military metaphors so prevalent there. In our day, the kingdom of God is interpreted primarily as a spiritual vision rather than a realm on earth, which is brought about by the activity of the Spirit of God in which human beings participate. Mission is not the glorious expansion of the church but joining in with the movement of the Spirit of Christ in humility and hope. Both forms of expression—kingdom and spirit—are in danger of being subverted by the world. In

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

our day the language of Spirit, spirits and spirituality is more in keeping with a form of globalisation that relies less on territorial expansion but more on hegemony by means of global flows, global communications and cultural influences. But both terms may also be redeemed as vehicles of expression of an alternative globalisation, based on the power of love.

*Mission everywhere in a plural world*

In 2010, the second theme, and the one which is probably generating most interest, is 'Christian mission among other faiths'. In 1910 European Christians were confident that Christianity was *the* world religion in the sense that it was final and absolute, that there is no further truth to be found in other faiths, and that Christianity is intended for all humanity. At Edinburgh 1910 the relationship of the gospel to other religions was considered under the heading of 'The missionary message in relation to the non-Christian faiths.' As the title suggests, the main concern was with the gospel as truth, and the appeal was 'to the *minds* of non-Christian peoples' (*italics added*).<sup>1</sup> Other faiths were regarded as inadequate and the dominant theology was of Christianity as the intellectual fulfilment of other faiths. In reaction to this, the dialogical approach to other faiths which has been promoted since the 1970s often rejects the use of the word 'mission' in connection with other faiths. In the light of this, the title 'Christian mission among other faiths' has proved somewhat controversial and represents something of a redressing of the balance. Theme 2 of Edinburgh 2010 is mostly concerned with Christian witness—a matter of actions as well as words—in contexts of religious plurality in which Christianity is regarded as one faith among many. Edinburgh 2010 shows how Christians continue to believe, as they did in 1910, that it is Christian duty to witness to Christ and proclaim his unique message for the sake of the world, and it wrestles with how to do that both with integrity and with sensitivity in the pluralistic contexts of contemporary societies.

Theme 3 in 2010 deals with something missing from the agenda of Edinburgh 1910 altogether: mission and contemporary secular

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<sup>1</sup> World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions, Report of Commission IV* (World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 1.

philosophies, in this case termed 'postmodernities'. Misgivings were expressed at Edinburgh in 1910 about the corrupting effect of aspects of European society at home, but in the era of Christendom the interest of missionaries was with the 'non-Christian world' which was clearly demarcated from 'home' and assumed to be dominated by other religions. Nevertheless, it was actually stated at Edinburgh 1910 that 'there is no Church that is not a Church in the mission field',<sup>1</sup> although the implication that this invalidates the home-overseas divide has only been worked out subsequently. Now the need for the local churches of Europe to be missionary in their own contexts is well appreciated—as reflected in the contemporary interest in 'missional church' or 'mission-shaped church'. However, although Europeans have involved themselves in mission in every other continent, the help of missionaries from other parts of the world in mission to Europe is not always welcomed. The reasons for this need further exploration in the Edinburgh 2010 process if the patronising attitudes of Edinburgh 1910 are truly to be repudiated.

#### *Mission method as local and diverse*

It is no longer taken for granted, as it was in 1910, that mission is carried out by the 'older' churches working overseas through missionary societies or mission boards of churches. In 2010 mission methods come under close scrutiny in Theme 5, Forms of Missionary Engagement and in Theme 7, Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts. These themes express two significant shifts in mission methods since 1910. First, there has been a shift in the agency of mission from mission societies to churches and Christian communities. This is a result of the realisation, as missionaries withdrew from the colonies, of the missionary nature of the local church. However, the result of this tended to be a rather static vision of local churches each doing mission in their context (or territory). In 2010 churches are no longer seen as planted for ever in one place; many are on the move because of migration movements. Another factor of the current era is that missions are back in a big way—not from Europe but from South Korea, India, Brazil, Nigeria and other countries where churches are growing.

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<sup>1</sup> World Missionary Conference, 1910, *The Church in the Mission Field, Report of Commission II* (World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 4.

For the delegates in 1910 the missionary societies were the practical vehicle of mission but their existence was justified on the basis of historical contingency and not on biblical or theological grounds. In 2010 there is a need to reappraise transnational missionary movements in the light of world Christianity and globalisation, and develop a theology of mission organisations and missionary movements alongside the recognition of the missionary nature of the local church.

A second shift affecting mission method is from a centralised model of the church to a poly-centric one. Edinburgh 1910 represented the beginning of a return to the conciliar model of inter-church relations which characterised the early church, and away from the centralisation that was at its height at the turn of the twentieth century in the wake of the First Vatican Council (1870). Brian Stanley finds an intriguing connection that suggests an influence of Edinburgh 1910 on the openness of the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65.<sup>1</sup> Through Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church also has recognised the need to join the dialogue between Christian communities and, through regional synods since 1994, recognised the different experiences of its component churches worldwide. The world Christian community is so diverse and fragmented that the formal conciliar relations of the WCC have proved inadequate but, as Edinburgh 2010 shows, there is ongoing conversation between churches from different contexts. While increasingly recognising the diversity of Christian expressions, by confession and by culture or region, Edinburgh 2010 is challenged to find new ways of expressing Christian unity as well.

### *Contemporary mission issues*

As well as the main study themes, the Edinburgh 2010 study agenda includes a further seven ‘transversal’ themes, which will exercise a critical function in respect of the others. These are:

1. Women and mission
2. Youth and mission
3. Healing and reconciliation
4. Bible and mission—mission in the Bible
5. Contextualization, inculturation and dialogue of worldviews
6. Subaltern voices

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 11-12; see further Joan Delaney, M.M., ‘From Cremona to Edinburgh: Bishop Bonomelli and the World Missionary Conference of 1910’, unpublished manuscript, 1999.

## 7. Ecological perspectives on mission.

The transversal themes partly represent interest groups: women, youth, subaltern voices, biblical and ecological perspectives. The list was drawn up with the main themes in 2005 and one wonders whether ecological perspectives would make it onto the list of main themes if it were redrawn now. Also surprising in 2009 is the lack of a separate study of mission as it relates to markets and economic forces, especially in view of the prominence of the North-South divide in the formulation of the themes. However, given the representation at the conference of people from many different parts of the world, this subject will surface in many places at the conference itself. The highly topical theme of ‘mission and migration’<sup>1</sup> is not prominent either but is being covered under Theme 7.

### *Contemporary definitions of mission*

Two other topics are included in the ‘transversals’, which are both possible re-definitions of mission. The first is ‘Contextualization, inculturation and dialogue of worldviews’. In fact, there has been relatively little interest in this topic, which was a big issue in 1910, as well as the subject of much discussion in the twentieth century, and is today at the heart of international relations and of many other issues. Perhaps this is because its significance for mission is now so well appreciated. The second is ‘Healing and reconciliation’, which gained prominence as a mode, if not the supreme mode of mission, in the last decade and a half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Mission as reconciliation could not be further away from the militaristic language of 1910. However, the language of conflict is not entirely absent from the 2010 themes because peace cannot be achieved without the struggle for justice.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Stephen Spencer (ed.), *Mission and Migration* (Sheffield: Cliff College Publishing, 2008); Kirsteen Kim (ed.), *Reconciling Mission: The Ministry of Healing and Reconciliation in the Church Worldwide* (Delhi: SPCK, 2005); Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West*, (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Jacques Matthey (ed.), ‘Come, Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile’: *Report of the World Council of Churches Conference on Mission and Evangelism, Athens, May 2005* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2008); <[www.mission2005.org](http://www.mission2005.org)>; Robert J. Schreiter CPPS, *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1998).

Although it was not used at the Conference itself, the Student Volunteer Movement watchword: 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation' came to be closely identified with Edinburgh 1910. In that era, 'evangelisation' or 'evangelism' was almost synonymous with 'conversion' and 'Christianisation'. Although in 1910 traditional doctrines of Christianity were doubted in the wider society, and there were anticlerical and secular movements, it was generally assumed in the West that most people needed a religion and that 'occupying' non-Christian lands with the gospel and Christianising populations in both name and behaviour had widespread support. In our context, when there is much scepticism about Christianity and its benefits, it needs to prove itself worthy of its message. The slogan of Edinburgh 2010 is not about the Christianisation of the world but 'witnessing to Christ today'. The emphasis is not on finding effective and efficient methods to complete a project of world evangelisation but on the quality of individual and church life which will draw people to Christ and partake of the transformative mission of his Spirit in the world.

Edinburgh 1910 and 2010 represent two different worlds and different understandings of Christian mission within them. But there are also many similarities and parallels between the two events, and between the two run continuous links through institutions and movements. In both cases Christians and churches of the time are trying to be faithful in the world of their day to what they have received and experienced of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Christians of 2110 who will be able to see the shortcomings of Edinburgh 2010 but it is hoped they will also see in the study process and Conference another significant assessment and renewal of Christian mission.

## **BILATERAL DIALOGUES BETWEEN THE CHURCHES: MILESTONES ON THE PATH OF UNITY**

**André Birmelé\***

*This article surveys the dialogues which have taken place between Reformation Churches and the Catholic Church. This year the Council's Decree on Ecumenism is forty-five years old, and it is surely helpful to look beyond a snapshot of the current ecumenical situation which is not without its difficulties, in order to focus on the new and broader perspectives to which we are all committed. Some key moments in our dialogues are identified, along with the major issues which have been at stake, and which have brought precious gains on the path of unity.*

The first theological dialogues between Churches date from the decade preceding the Second World War. Their official framework was the Faith and Order movement, founded in 1927 at Lausanne. The Catholic Church was the great absentee but informal meetings, arising out of private initiatives, took place in various places and were more or less tolerated by Rome—for example, the Malines Conversations between Anglicans and Catholics from 1921 onwards, and the work of the Dombes group which from 1937 brought together French Protestant and Catholic theologians. In the 1950s, official dialogues were set up among the Reformed, Lutheran and United European Churches. An initial impetus had been provided some twenty years earlier by the experience of the Confessing Church. The shared commitment forged at that time of political drama had ended up convincing the Churches concerned that new ways had to be found to overcome historically

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inherited divisions. A first pan-European meeting at Davos (1955) welcomed the different dialogues begun in various European countries and sketched the first outlines of a European agreement between these traditions.<sup>1</sup>

The decisive impetus for numerous international dialogues was however provided by the Second Vatican Council (1962-5). The new self-understanding of the Roman Church set out in the conciliar decree on the Church (*Lumen gentium*) demonstrated that this Church no longer saw itself as the sole possible expression of the one Church of Christ<sup>2</sup> and thus opened the way to dialogues which were not just tolerated but demanded by the same council's decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis redintegratio*).<sup>3</sup>

The history of the dialogues which started officially in 1965 and which continue today can be divided into three stages. This structure reveals a linear development and allows us to see the gradual emergence of a number of dominant characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

## 1. The birth of the Official Dialogues

1. At the end of the council, the Catholic Church entered into theological dialogue with the major Reformation traditions (the Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist Churches). At the same time, an intense collaboration began between Rome and Constantinople, which materialised in a series of joint declarations by the two patriarchs of the East and the West (the Orthodox Patriarch and the Pope). At the same time, dialogues were developing amongst Reformation Churches, and between the latter and the Orthodox Churches.

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<sup>1</sup> For this see M. Lienhard, *Lutherisch reformierte Kirchengemeinschaft heute. Ökumenische Perspektiven* 2 (2nd ed., Frankfurt: Lembeck-Knecht, 1973) and E. Schieffer, *Von Schauenburg nach Leuenberg. Entstehung und Bedeutung der Konkordie reformatorischer Kirchen in Europa* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> This was the reading given to the famous '*subsistit in*' of LG 8 (cf. UR 3) at the time of the council.

<sup>3</sup> UR 4

<sup>4</sup> We restrict this study to international bilateral dialogues to which could be added numerous local, regional and national dialogues, impossible to cover in these few pages. It is nonetheless true that the issues which we analyse here are present in all dialogues.

These six Churches and their ecclesial organisations (the Vatican, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches) were the participants in the first fifteen years of dialogue, and the initial results of the labours of this first period were published before 1990.<sup>1</sup>

The methodical procedure of these dialogues was impressive. After an initial brief period of getting to know each other better, they progressed rapidly to fundamental questions. The aim was clear: the dialogues had to reach agreements which could overcome the divisions.

This is particularly clear in the case of the dialogue between Rome and the Reformation Churches. The international Lutheran—Roman Catholic dialogue noted in its first report (*The Gospel and the Church*, 1972) that there was an ‘ample consensus’ in their understanding of the Gospel and of the doctrine of justification. The next step should therefore be to test this consensus with respect to its ecclesiological implications; and the dialogue proceeds logically to a study of *The Lord’s Supper* (1978) followed by *The Ministry in the Church* (1981), in the course of which it is realised that many controversial issues are no longer pertinent. Nonetheless, disagreements still remain in the area of ecclesiology, disagreements which must be overcome. The Methodist—Roman Catholic dialogue proceeds along similar lines. Having established broad agreement in understanding the Gospel, it tackles the question of the Eucharist (1971 and 1976), followed by problems about ministry (1976). This dialogue also takes up the question of authority in the Church, through a study of spirituality and pneumatology. Similar observations can be made about the Reformed—Roman Catholic dialogue (*The Presence of Christ in Church and World*, 1977), and for the Anglican—Roman Catholic dialogue (ARCIC) which, following an

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<sup>1</sup> They were **first** published in German: *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung (DWÜ)*, H. Meyer, D. Papandreu, H.J. Urban and L. Vischer (eds.), 3 vols. (Frankfurt: Lembeck/Paderborn: Bonifatius, 1983, 1992 and 2003). These three volumes (a fourth is now needed!) contain more than 2,500 pages. For English versions of the dialogues see H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growth in Agreement I: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level* (WCC, 1984); J. Gros, H. Meyer and W. Rusch (eds.), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (WCC, 2000); and J. Gros, T. Best and L. Fuchs (eds.), *Growth in Agreement III: International Dialogue Texts & Agreed Statements, 1998-2005* (WCC, 2007).

initial, more general report (1968), produced short declarations subsequently completed by clarifications concerning the Eucharist (1971 and 1979), ministry and ordination (1973 and 1979), and authority in the Church (1976 and 1981).

Dialogue amongst the Reformation families took a different route. Between Lutherans and Reformed it took place first at national, and subsequently at continental level (Europe and North America). An international dialogue would only be broached on the basis of local agreements—a procedure which corresponds to the self-understanding of these traditions. In the international dialogues between, on the one hand, Lutherans and Anglicans, and on the other, Reformed and Anglicans, agreement was to cover not only how the Gospel is understood, but would also include ecclesiological issues, in particular the question of ministry—including the apostolic succession. This last matter, considered delicate for any dialogue with Anglicans, was already clarified in the Lutheran—Anglican dialogue of 1972: historical succession in the episcopal ministry is a sign, but no guarantee, of the Church's apostolicity. In this way Anglicans were able to confirm the apostolicity of other Churches of the Reformation. At this initial phase it seemed that the Churches of the Reformation could realistically envisage a declaration of ecclesial communion, a step which was taken in 1973 by the *Leuenberg Agreement* which proclaimed communion between Lutheran, United and Reformed European Churches.

Dialogue with Orthodoxy followed a different logic. For the Orthodox, dialogue with the Reformation Churches was limited to getting to know each other better. Their priority was dialogue with Rome, which proceeded on the basis of joint declarations between the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople. From 1965, traditional mutual condemnations were lifted. The bilateral dialogue proper came later (Munich 1982, Bari 1987, Valamo 1988) and established a wide range of agreement in ecclesiology (Eucharist, sacraments, episcopal ministry) which was still not enough to lead to concrete steps expressing a greater communion. Arguments were presented why things should remain unchanged—arguments which, for the outside observer, seemed rather to belong to the category of strange excuses.

2. The first conclusions of the dialogues gave rise to considerable public interest, as well as no little media attention. There was clearly something to celebrate. That which, only a few years before, had

seemed inconceivable, was suddenly entirely possible. The international dialogues were in many places accompanied by national dialogues, and their results became the subject of parish meetings, showing how much basic Church communities were interested. People discovered, with no little surprise, that many of the traditional controversies had lost their *raison d'être*.

For many questions, the dialogues had simply adopted the conclusions of modern theological research. The work of exegetes, historians and systematic theologians had prepared the ground and was simply assumed by the dialogues. This was true, for example, for the whole Gospel/Scripture/Tradition problematic, as well as for understanding salvation (the message of justification).<sup>1</sup> Other questions needed a fresh approach. But people discovered that, even for the most delicate of problematic issues, the way that the various traditions approached them had shifted, and moved closer (e.g. for the Eucharist and for baptism). Other topics never made it on to the agenda as they had never been controversial (e.g. the theology of creation).

Once dialogue had quickly shown that consensus existed about questions which up to then had divided the Churches, the initial phase was followed by a refocusing on the remaining disagreements. The logical consequence was to concentrate dialogue on ecclesiology. So it is that an emphasis on ecclesiology is clearly discernible in all the dialogues of this first stage, as we saw above. Even when attention was turned to an entirely different matter, the ecclesiological consequences could scarcely be avoided. What was at stake was not so much 'ministry', itself quickly identified as a major theological problem, as how the Church was understood much more generally. Even those traditions which owed more to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and were less exercised by this problematic, could not avoid the pull towards ecclesiology. The very fact that this subject was, for them, of secondary importance, meant that it had to be on the agenda. How the Church is understood acted like a magnet, exercising an irresistible attraction on every dialogue—a tendency which still exists today.

3. Dialogues are not private initiatives. Whether at international or national level, they have been mandated by the Churches (or ecclesial

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<sup>1</sup> So it was that the international Lutheran—Catholic dialogue was able to conclude the first day of its first meeting with the realisation that they shared an 'ample consensus' in their understanding of justification.

organisations such as the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion). Given this ecclesial mandate, dialogues are followed and accompanied by the Churches which initiated them. Their conclusions therefore are 'owned' by the Churches and only become truly authoritative when they are received by the Churches.

The dialogues have a clear mandate: set up at a time of Church separation, they must overcome this state of affairs. The state of separation consists in failing to recognise the other community as a full and authentic expression of the *una sancta catholica et apostolica ecclesia* of Jesus Christ. Though some traces and elements of the true Church may remain in the 'other Church', it is still not 'true Church' in the full sense of the word. From the start, the aim of dialogue was convergence and, if possible, a consensus enabling the Churches to overcome the current state of division, and to recognise each other as full and authentic expressions of the one Church of Jesus Christ. Towards the end of the initial stage, this conviction, shared by all the dialogues, produced some first thoughts on the method and aim of dialogue. Reflecting on the nature and structure of this consensus was soon necessary. Generally speaking, all the dialogues contain four kinds of observation which variously 1) call to mind fundamental, shared beliefs; 2) aim to develop elements which, although present in a particular tradition, may not be explicitly stated or lived out; 3) correct certain deficiencies of one or other tradition; and 4) express the acceptance of certain characteristics of the other tradition which do not have to be adopted by its partners and which do not of themselves inhibit rapprochement.

## **2. The vision of Unity**

1. A second stage begins towards the end of the 1970s and is the immediate consequence of the first stage. The fundamental consensuses and agreements as well as the remaining differences between the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed traditions were now known quantities. There was no point in resuming the dialogues with a view to reaching different conclusions on the questions which remained open. The dialogues had mobilised the best specialists and the quality of work had been recognised by all. The best examples are such texts as *The Lord's Supper* and *The Ministry in the Church* from the Lutheran—Roman Catholic dialogue. Thirty years later, their conclusions remain highly relevant. And yet, the classic

theological dialogues between these traditions had not become pointless. The dialogues could still dig deeper, and they still can today.

Nonetheless, the era of 'great discoveries' drew to a close around 1980. The essential questions had been subjected to minute examination, and the principle conclusions had been drawn.

It was decided, almost simultaneously, to test out the conclusions of these major international dialogues by means of regional, national and continental dialogues. The Anglican—Lutheran dialogue was decentralised into dialogues in America, African and Europe, which confirmed the international conclusions.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of these local dialogues a new international dialogue became necessary, to sum up all the results. The worldwide Anglican—Lutheran dialogue in particular took up the question of ministry and in 1987 brought out the *Niagara* report. As there was no longer any issue dividing them, this new international dialogue proposed to their respective Churches that they pronounce themselves in ecclesial communion, a proposition which was ratified both by the Lambeth Conference of 1988 and by the general assembly of the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Curitiba, Brazil in 1990.

The international Lutheran—Catholic dialogue followed a similar path. Various national dialogues were to verify the achievements of the corresponding international dialogue, in particular concerning how justification is understood. A decisive report, *Justification by Faith* was produced in the USA in 1983, following studies on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.<sup>2</sup> In Germany the same enterprise produced the text *Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do they still Divide?* which proposed lifting the historical condemnations around justification, a step which was however considered premature with regard to Eucharist and Ministry.<sup>3</sup> The first period of dialogue had also encouraged the idea of initiating new dialogues with traditions which had not been directly involved in that first stage, for example, the Churches of Baptist and Pentecostal tradition, and pre-Chalcedonian Orthodoxy. At the start of the 1980s, everybody was dialoguing with everybody else. One could not hope to give an account in a few words of this multitude of dialogues, or sum up all their conclusions. Some of the dialogues hardly

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<sup>1</sup> Thus for example the European *Cold Ash Report* of 1983.

<sup>2</sup> See *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Minneapolis, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> See K. Lehmann and W. Pannenberg (eds.), *Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do they Still Divide?* (Fortress, 1989).

progressed beyond the 'getting to know you' stage, as their records indicate. Others however made it possible to overcome age-old controversies, as for example that between Rome and the pre-Chalcedonian Churches, with regard to Christology.<sup>1</sup>

2. The dynamic of these dialogues made it clear that it was now necessary to clarify what kind of unity was being sought, what model of unity was in question. It was now time to be more precise about the aim of overcoming divisions, a goal which although stated in the first phase, remained too vague. From a multitude of agreements, the task was to work out an agreement about consensus. In 1980 the international Lutheran—Roman Catholic dialogue had tried to clarify its objectives in the report *Ways to Community*. This report was supplemented in 1984 by the concrete proposal *Facing Unity*, though this proposal was only partly received by the Churches.

On the basis of the achievements of the first stage, the 1980s saw the development of the concept of *unity in reconciled diversity*, in which the aim of dialogue is to reconcile the various ecclesial expressions so that they can reach the point where the 'other' Church can be recognised as a legitimate expression of the *una sancta*. For this to happen, divisive differences had to be transformed so as to lose their divisive quality and thus cease to be obstacles to true communion between Churches, hitherto divided. This way of seeing includes the conviction that Christ's Church knows various expressions, as well as different theological and spiritual languages and forms. The aim of dialogue is not to abolish all difference, for the Church can only exist in a variety of expressions. So it is not a matter of overcoming difference as such, but of changing its nature, from divisive to legitimate. In this perspective, it seemed essential for the dialogues to work at lifting the mutual doctrinal condemnations, pronounced in the past, since the result of these condemnations was that each community no longer considered the other as true Church of Christ.

The expression 'lifting condemnations' is not without its problems, for a doctrinal condemnation cannot be lifted. What has one day been condemned as heresy, stays a heresy. Instead, it is a matter—if what has

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<sup>1</sup> This dialogue is, after the declarations signed by Rome and Constantinople in 1965 lifting their mutual condemnations, the first instance of official reception by the Roman Catholic Church. The Christological condemnations dating back to the fifth century were overcome.

been achieved in dialogue so permits—of declaring that the historical condemnation, while remaining valid, is no longer applicable to the present partner in dialogue. The various traditions have evolved in such a way that many of the traditional condemnations are now pointless, in that they no longer apply to the partner, with its current doctrine. Even though some of the condemnations were based on misunderstandings, and never did apply to a real ‘adversary’, most of them were well and truly justified. However, they no longer have any real bearing, as the community in question has distanced itself from the particular false teaching. This strategy was adopted in the 1980s and was closely linked to an evolving understanding of consensus, as something which not only tolerates legitimate differences but rejoices over them, considering them an essential dimension of consensus—the famous ‘differentiated consensus’.

This model of unity, the direct result and logical consequence of the bilateral dialogues, inevitably conflicted with other ‘models of unity’. The main opposition came from the multilateral dialogue taking place at the level of the World Council of Churches, and in particular from its *Faith and Order* department, of which the Roman Catholic Church is a full member. Having reached the end of a complex and difficult dialogue involving all the confessions at a multinational level, this dialogue had in 1981 succeeded in producing the famous *BEM* document (*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*). The WCC general assembly meeting at Nairobi (1975) had, on the basis of its work, put forward a ‘conciliar community’ model of unity. The WCC favoured a unity of local Churches, ‘truly’ one, of Churches which, once and for all, had overcome their confessional identities. One might thus imagine a Council bringing together the Church of France, the Church of Germany, etc., thus giving concrete expression to the vision of a grand universal Council as put forward by the earlier WCC assembly at Uppsala in 1968.

The model of ‘unity in reconciled diversity’ did not consider confessional bodies as negative elements that had to be overcome. On the contrary, it saw them as positive, and pleaded for a vision based on the existing confessional families, which would progress towards a new kind of relationship, namely, of reconciliation. Instead of the WCC model, which started from united territorial Churches, the world-wide confessional families preferred a unity beginning with the already existing communions, each with their own peculiarities, but which

already transcend local geographical dimensions. This approach was first put forward by the Lutheran Churches, then taken up by the Anglican Communion, and was much more in line with the self-understanding of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This conflict between the different conceptions of unity lasted many years and was only resolved, albeit provisionally, during the 1990s. At its Canberra assembly in 1991, the WCC approved a declaration on the Church understood as Communion (*The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling*) which for the first time countenanced the idea of a legitimate ecclesial diversity in a particular place, confirmed at the following assembly at Harare in 1998. It was only after this period of development that some agreement was reached about the relationship between bilateral and multilateral dialogues. Multilateral dialogue is the indispensable place where all the Christian families meet to work out the general framework suggested by different convergences; whereas it is for the bilateral dialogues to transform these convergences into agreements opening the way to ecclesial communion.

3. The 'unity in reconciled diversity' model has often, and not always without reason, been blamed for keeping the Churches separated. The complaint is that it is merely an end in itself, and involves no real change, no overcoming of divisions, since the model is not concerned to overcome every difference. In response, it must always be stressed that this approach aims, of course, to overcome divisive differences between Churches. It only celebrates differences in so far as they are legitimate, that is, a positive dimension of consensus. Where then does one locate the boundary between a legitimate, necessary difference, and one which is illegitimate and divides Churches? This will become a major preoccupation of the dialogues during the 1980s.

The classic response of the Reformation—echoed in the dialogues by Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans and Methodists—is the distinction set out in the 1530 Augsburg Confession. In its article 7, this Lutheran Confession distinguishes between what is necessary for unity, and all other matters. Elements necessary for true unity are those which make communion in Word and Sacrament possible. Such communion is sufficient (*satis est*) and it is not necessary (*non necesse est*) for people everywhere to have the same humanly instituted ceremonies: the unity of the Church is communion in proclaiming the Word and celebrating the Sacraments. In dialogue, the Catholic tradition stressed the importance of this approach, while adding that true celebration of

Word and Sacrament necessarily implies mutual recognition of ministries, and therefore a joint exercise of ministry.<sup>1</sup> Of course, communion in Word and Sacrament would perhaps be a last-but-one stage, but there was a resolute, shared commitment to seek out this new ecclesial identity. At this point we must be careful to avoid a frequent misunderstanding: the agreement necessary for communion in Word and Sacrament has nothing to do with a minimalist consensus. There is no suggestion that doctrinal agreement regarding Word and Sacrament is sufficient, while all other doctrines could be subject to an arbitrary pluralism. On the contrary, the possibility of the shared celebration of Word and Sacrament is the touchstone which shows up the legitimacy, or illegitimacy, of any difference. Communion in Word and Sacrament is in a sense a hermeneutical key, constituting the Church and its unity. If, in any area of ecclesial life, there exists a crucial issue which prevents the common celebration of Word and Sacrament, then that issue has to be seen as divisive, and so become the object of a search for a consensus. If the issue does not prevent communion in Word and Sacrament, it has to be seen as an expression of legitimate diversity. For the Lutheran tradition, this became particularly apparent at the time of the debate over apartheid in South Africa. The general assembly of the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Dar es Salaam (1978) were minded to exclude the white Lutheran South African Churches which approved of apartheid, an exclusion which was pronounced six years later by the subsequent general assembly (Budapest, 1984). The argument ran as follows: approving of apartheid is a *casus confessionis*, for of itself it rules out Eucharistic communion within Lutheran Churches in South Africa, for black people are not admitted to a Eucharist for whites.

It is the same for any aspect of bilateral dialogue: any area may become the occasion of a divisive difference. It becomes so when the difference no longer allows the joint celebration of Word and Sacrament.

4. Reflections on models of unity and the methodological questions related to this research were characteristic of the second stage of bilateral dialogues, from the end of the 1970s to the beginning of the 1990s. Ways to communion was a frequent topic of discussion. Each

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<sup>1</sup> This was confirmed by documents from the Lutheran—Catholic dialogue: *Ways to Community* (1980) and *Facing Unity* (1984).

family had its particular concerns. However, there was consensus on certain fundamental issues which meant that dialogue had a clear orientation, and a purpose agreed by all.

The following statements were the object of fundamental agreement: the one Gospel exists in different places under different forms; and if Churches declare themselves to be in ecclesial communion, this means that they recognise each other, are able to celebrate Word and Sacrament together, share a single ministry, and are above all open to the action of the Holy Spirit who alone establishes, creates and renews the Church. Reconciliation is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The model of false uniformity was overcome, making room for legitimate diversity. Even in understanding Word, Baptism and Eucharist, one may envisage a certain doctrinal and theological diversity. The essential point is that 'my' Church is able to recognise, in the 'other' tradition's baptismal and Eucharistic celebrations, the Baptism and Eucharist of the one Church of Christ.

However, not all difficulties had been overcome. Other areas were discovered to be in need of further attention. They had not previously been evident, for they were the logical consequences of this new approach. There was talk on all sides of ecclesial communion in Word and Sacrament, and of the mutual recognition of ministries which this requires: yet it became increasingly clear that the various traditions had different ways of articulating these fundamental features of any ecclesial life. The 'hierarchies of truths', to borrow a Vatican II expression, are not the same. It was therefore necessary to question the compatibility of the various approaches, of the different hierarchies of truths, especially with respect to the Reformation Churches on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic Church on the other. We have already noted that the Roman Catholic Church attaches particular importance to the Church's ministry, and its common exercise, with respect to achieving ecclesial communion. Unless and until that is achieved, it is impossible to recognise the other tradition's eucharistic celebration. What is at stake is not so much the ministry as such, as the articulation between ministry, Word and Sacrament in the Church's very being. What is sufficient for some (*satis est*), is not so for others. Thus, agreement on ministry has a quite different importance in a dialogue with Rome, than in dialogue between Reformation Churches. For Rome, mutual recognition of ministries is the precondition for all eucharistic communion, whereas the opposite is the case for most

Churches of the Reformation. How then can, and should we manoeuvre the various building blocks of agreement, so that we are able to build a common dwelling? Behind this question lies the question of how we understand the Church. Thus it became clear that all the questions which remained between our traditions could be recapitulated in the problematic of the Church's saving action. Dialogues about Ministry, Eucharist, about Scripture and its authoritative interpretation, all lead remorselessly back to this still partly open question: Is the Church itself sanctified by God to the point where it can exercise a sanctifying function? Even if Churches of the Reformation do not necessarily reply in the negative, their understanding of the Church's salvific action will be quite circumspect. When the Church acts, it must be transparent to the sole action of God. In a Catholic perspective, the Church might be conceived as cooperating in a more active manner, since it is mandated by God to that effect.

This second phase of dialogue thus opened the way to a more fundamental consideration of the agreements achieved and the differences that remained.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. From consensus to ecclesial communion

1. The third important phase of the work of dialogue begun twenty years before takes off around the 1990s. The 'reception' of the dialogues' conclusions now becomes the central problem. There are several strands to the idea of 'reception'. It is generally understood as the process by which, not just ecclesial organisations, but also the basic communities inform themselves, or are informed, about these results, and make them their own. This process is indeed essential. Reception however is more than that. Dialogues are not received until the moment they correspond to their initial mandate, that is, the moment they make Church unity possible. Dialogues achieve their purpose when the Churches, who mandated the dialogues, adopt their conclusions and are able adequately to put them into effect, and so

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<sup>1</sup> For this see A. Birmelé and H. Meyer (eds.), *Grundkonsenz-Grunddifferenz* (Frankfurt, Paderborn: 1992) and the French study, *Consensus oecuménique et différence fondamentale* produced by the *Comité mixte catholique protestant en France* (Paris: 1987). This major question would provide the starting point for a new phase of the international Lutheran—Catholic dialogue which began in 1986 and culminated in the report *Justification, ecclesiology, sacramentality* (1986).

forge a new relationship. A state of dividedness must give place to a new relationship, expressing a new quality of communion. In the last analysis, true reception demands that Churches pass from dialogue to ecclesial communion.

Against this background, it is important to distinguish between the different kinds of texts. On the one hand there are the conclusions of dialogues drawn up by theologians and which remain their property. There are also those brief declarations of communion which are the fruits of the earlier texts, but which are now Church documents, approved by the competent authorities (the synods) and which enable new relationships between Churches hitherto separated. If they are taken seriously, dialogues transcend themselves, for they must promote the redaction of official Church declarations. It is only in this way that a dialogue fulfils its real purpose, and becomes authoritative—by ceasing to be the main point. Its conclusions are adopted and enable the redaction of a different kind of text, that is, a declaration which was only possible on the basis of the dialogue's conclusion, but which transcends the dialogue. Joint declarations, including declarations of Church communion, are the goal of bilateral dialogues.

This fresh development was now possible, and was put to work from 1985 on. As an example we may cite the international Anglican—Lutheran dialogue, mentioned above. After the first report (Pullach, 1972) and various regional verifications (e.g. *Cold Ash*, 1983) a concluding international meeting took place which in particular took up the question of episcopal ministry and ended up with the Niagara report of 1987. The dialogue had done its work and could now recommend that the Churches take concrete steps on the road to visible unity. This next step was taken and materialised in a whole series of declarations of communion between Anglican and Lutheran Churches.

The Lutheran—Catholic dialogue followed a similar path. First came a number of reports including *The Gospel and the Church* (Malta, 1972), *The Lord's Supper* (Sigtuna, 1978), *The Ministry in the Church* (Lantana, 1981), *Facing Unity* (Rome, 1984), and *Church and Justification* (Würzburg, 1993), in total over 300 pages. The Churches themselves were then in a position to put together a short text which could be approved by the competent bodies and so transform the earlier reports into a new relationship based on consensus. This came about in 1999, through the redaction and confirmation of the *Joint Declaration on the*

*Doctrine of Justification [JDD]*], a declaration with which the World Methodist Council associated itself in 2007. Such a step forward is not easy. It demands above all a clear political will on the part of the responsible ecclesial bodies to go beyond the old rifts. A good example is the political will of John Paul II who, in spite of some internal opposition within the curia, promoted and insisted on the *JDD* breakthrough. Without the political will of the Church authorities dialogues run the risk of going round in circles. This is a real danger, and is evident when a dialogue presents its findings to the Churches, which thank everyone for their remarkable achievement and then look around for another subject to keep the group busy for another few years ... and so on and so forth. This circle was broken in 1985, when the dialogues which had begun at a time of separation were now opening up a new situation ... if that is what the Churches wanted.

Once the joint declarations are approved, the new starting point is the consensus and fundamental shared understanding as expressed in the declaration. Any new dialogues which are still needed and must therefore be pursued, can deepen what is already shared. They take place on a new footing, which is a new quality of communion.

2. The declarations of communion are a particular characteristic of new relationships between Reformation families of the sixteenth century. In 1973 the European United, Reformed and Lutheran Churches were able to reach a first declaration of ecclesial communion, in the *Leuenberg Agreement*, which declares communion in the celebration of Word and Sacrament, and includes the mutual recognition of ministries, as well as the interchangeability of ministers. After 1987 there were nine more declarations of communion, involving the following: Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist Churches in Europe, the US and the Middle East; Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe, North America and Australia; and Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican Churches in Europe.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The details are as follows: 1) Lutheran – Reformed in Europe (*Leuenberg Agreement*); the *Formula of Agreement* (Lutheran, Presbyterian and Reformed along with the United Church of Christ, US, 1998); Lutheran and Reformed in the Middle East (*Amman Declaration*, 2005); 2) Communion of Lutheran, United, Reformed and Methodist Churches (*Vienna*, 1994, in force from 1997); and 3) Communion between Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed Churches of England and Germany (*Meissen common statement*, 1987); the *Porvoo Declaration* (1994) between Anglicans and Lutherans in the Nordic and Baltic region; the *Reuilly Declaration* (1999) between the French Lutheran and

In each case, one could show how the declaration only came about after long years of theological dialogue, and often only adopted after difficult and complex synodical procedures. They have given birth to a new state of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

All these declarations apply the model of 'unity in reconciled diversity'. They are based on a common understanding of the Gospel and the gift of God in Word and Sacrament. As the means of grace by which God justifies believers, creates and maintains his Church, these are the necessary and sufficient elements for the unity of the Church. Once doctrinal condemnations are lifted, the way is open to recognising the other community as authentic and legitimate expression of the one Church of Christ, and to declaring ecclesial communion, including the mutual recognition of ministries. Theologically, this step is possible given a consensus about the nature of the Church. Sacramental communion is not preconditionally tied to the joint exercise of ecclesial ministry, but this joint exercise is a consequence of communion. On this point, the breakthroughs which the Reformation families have managed to achieve are quite different from the Roman Catholic approach.

It is also important to observe that legitimate differences are not just tolerated by the agreement but are seen as integral parts thereof. The declarations are no new confessions of faith, nor do they pretend to be. Rather, the *una sancta* has different faces, which are the different confessional identities. The declarations bridge these different identities. They reconcile Churches 'of different confessional positions'.<sup>2</sup>

The Churches which have signed these declarations are now faced with a double challenge. The first danger is to be content with a mere signature. Mutual recognition demands that the communion which has been declared take its necessary visible form. This aim has by no means been achieved, and it is now for the Churches to put the communion

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Reformed and the British and Irish Anglican Churches; the *Called to Common Mission* agreement (2000) between the Lutheran and (Anglican) Episcopal Churches in the USA; and the *Waterloo Declaration* (2001) between the same Churches in Canada. A declaration between Anglicans and Lutherans in Australia is in preparation.

<sup>1</sup> For the history of these declarations may I refer to my work, *La communion ecclésiastique. Progrès œcuméniques et enjeux méthodologiques* (Paris: Cerf, 2000), especially ch.6.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the *Leuenberg Agreement*, 37.

they have declared into effect. The point is especially underlined by Anglicans for whom this much needed visibility includes in particular the common exercise of episcopal ministry. If unity does not become visible, one quickly falls back into the old status quo, where the declaration is no more than the certificate of an unconsummated marriage. This danger is by no means theoretical: instances are, alas, not lacking of Churches which have contented themselves with an exclusively spiritual unity, with no real visible and concrete expression. To this is related a second challenge, that of going beyond those declarations of communion made at national and continental level, and validating them worldwide, for all the Churches belonging to the traditions involved. For this to happen, Churches have to get over their national parochialism, and develop supra-local ecclesial structures, able to take decisions. A lack of catholicity, and of an awareness of the need for a greater catholicity, are the Achilles heel of such traditions. Progress has to be made in this area. A lack of openness to a greater catholicity is not just a problem too often left unresolved: it is a test of the ecumenical capability of these families and for the model of unity which they are establishing between themselves.

3. In the dialogue with Rome, the final, decisive breakthrough has not yet been possible. At stake, above all, is the theological concept of the Church. Like Constantinople, Rome experiences some difficulty in recognising any other ecclesial expression as an authentic expression of the one Church of Christ. And yet it is on this point that these two traditions will reveal their ecumenical capability, just as the Reformation Churches do so when it comes to catholicity. In today's ecumenical context, dialogue now points up the final question, which is at once easy, and especially difficult. Rome is nonetheless committed to this path, as is clear from the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Consensus once achieved, it was possible to progress from the dialogue's conclusions to a joint declaration, approved by the highest ecclesial authorities. The traditional condemnations no longer concern the present-day partners. From now on, the starting point for any dialogue that Rome has with Lutherans or Methodists is no longer division, but a basic consensus. Now, the ecclesiological consequences need to be drawn. And here it is a matter of overcoming difficulties that do not arise in the same terms as they do in the dialogue between Reformation families, but which are nonetheless fundamental for the Roman Catholic Church, namely, the mutual recognition of ministries,

the compatibility of different hierarchies of truth, and different conceptions of the Church. These still open questions are referred to at the end of the *JDDJ*. In spite of certain recent Roman statements about the ecclesiality of other traditions, new developments still seem possible, as is shown by the recent signing of the *JDDJ* by Methodists. These are not easy times, but dialogue has reached a stage at which new possibilities are becoming evident, as long as the political will is there. This is the case, not only for the dialogues, but for the whole ecumenical movement. It is the moment of truth for those dialogues instituted more than forty years ago. If the Churches so wish, they can reach the goal which they set them.

*Translated by John Bolger*

**DOCUMENTS****AN ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY TO A SYMPOSIUM AT THE GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY IN ROME, HOSTED BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY TO CELEBRATE THE CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF JOHANNES CARDINAL WILLEBRANDS, FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, 19 NOVEMBER 2009<sup>1</sup>**

*This text includes passages that because of the constraints of time could not be delivered in the symposium session itself.*

Since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church has been involved in a number of dialogues with other churches—including with the Anglican Communion—which have produced a very considerable number of agreed statements. This legacy has been brought together in a recent publication by the Vatican department to promote Christian Unity, whose first President during and after Vatican II, Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, is justly and happily celebrated in today's centenary conference.

Let me give an outline of what I want to say in the half an hour or so available. The strong convergence in these agreements about *what* the Church of God really is, is very striking. The various agreed statements of the churches stress that the Church is a community, in which human beings are made sons and daughters of God, and reconciled both with God and one another. The Church celebrates this through the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion in which God acts upon us to transform us 'in communion'. More detailed questions about ordained ministry and other issues have been framed in this context.

Therefore the major question that remains is whether in the light of that depth of agreement the issues that still divide us have the same weight—issues about authority in the Church, about primacy (especially the unique position of the pope), and the relations between the local churches and the universal church in making decisions (about matters like the ordination of women, for instance). Are they *theological* questions in the same sense as the bigger issues on which

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<sup>1</sup> © Rowan Williams 2009

there is already clear agreement? And if they are, how exactly is it that they make a difference to our basic understanding of salvation and communion? But if they are not, why do they still stand in the way of fuller visible unity? Can there, for example, be a model of unity as a communion of churches which have different attitudes to how the papal primacy is expressed?

The central question is whether and how we can properly tell the difference between 'second order' and 'first order' issues. When so very much agreement has been firmly established in first-order matters about the identity and mission of the Church, is it really justifiable to treat other issues as equally vital for its health and integrity?

1.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the journals written during the Second Vatican Council by figures like Willebrands and Congar is the record of a struggle for what I shall call a genuinely theological doctrine of the Church. Part of what Vatican II turned away from is a way of talking about the Church as primarily an institution existing because of divine decree, governed by prescription from the Lord, faithfully administering the sacraments ordained by him for the salvation of souls—'an external, visible society, whose members, under a hierarchical authority headed by the pope, constitute with him one visible body, tending to the same spiritual and supernatural end, i.e. sanctification of souls and their eternal happiness.'<sup>1</sup> But what is missing from this account is any real explication of how the nature and character and even polity of the Church are grounded in and shaped by the nature of God and of God's incarnation in history. A *theological* understanding of the Church would be one that makes this connection.

De Lubac's outstanding work in the first half of the twentieth century had laid the foundations—or, better, had excavated foundations long obscured; and the much-maligned Pope Pius XII had helped to bring some of these insights into the mainstream of Catholic thinking. But Vatican II pressed further, absorbing silently but effectively some of the critiques of ecumenical observers at the Council: Congar's journal for the 1 October 1963, gives a good example of what was finding its way unobtrusively into the Council's work by way of the observers,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pietro Palazzini, s.v. 'Church (Society)' in the *Dictionary of Moral Theology*, ed. F. Roberti and P. Palazzini, originally published in 1957.

<sup>2</sup> Yves Congar, *Mon journal du Concile*, vol.1, pp.415-418.

summarising contributions from various ecumenical interlocutors around the themes of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the Church as sacrament of God's presence in the midst of humanity, the prophetic vocation of the people of God and so forth. And the general ethos and idiom of ecumenical dialogues since the Council illustrate the longer-term results of this 're-theologising' of the Church (it is no accident that the late Jean Tillard OP, very much a disciple of Congar, played a major role in all these encounters). A striking feature of the current *Harvesting the Fruits*<sup>1</sup> document from the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity under the name of our greatly loved and respected friend Walter Kasper, is the integral connection between what is said about the nature of God and what is said about the Church, its mission and its ministry. All these dialogues, it appears, have been deeply influenced by the new style in ecclesiology rooted in Vatican II and the work of Willebrands and his colleagues—and it is worth mentioning the way in which this new style is paralleled in other ecumenical dialogues, notably the Anglican-Orthodox document on *The Church of the Triune God*.

In broad outline, the picture is something like this. God is eternally a life of threefold communion; and if human persons are to be reconciled to God and restored to the capacity for which they were made, they must be included in that life of communion. The incarnation of God the Son recreates in human persons the possibility of filial relation with the Father, standing in the place of Christ and praying his prayer; and only the Holy Spirit, which animates and directs the entire human identity of the Incarnate Word, can create that filial reality in us. To be restored to life with God is to be incorporated into Jesus Christ by the Spirit; but because the gift of the Spirit is what takes away mutual fear and hostility and the shutting-up of human selves against each other, it is inseparably and necessarily a gift of mutual human communion also. The sacramental life and the communal disciplines of the Church exist to serve and witness to this dual fact of communion, with the Father and with all believers. To take only one of the countless formulations referred to in the *Harvesting* document, in this case from the 1993 Lutheran-Catholic statement on *Church and Justification* (#6), 'According to the witness of the New Testament, our salvation, the

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<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London/New York: Continuum Books, 2009). Reviewed below, pp. 196-8.

justification of sinners and the existence of the church are indissolubly linked with the triune God and are founded in him alone.' What is more, there is a clear recognition that the Church's *mission* is to be conceived in the same way, as the mission 'of the Son and the Spirit', communicating to all places and all ages the divine invitation to communion (see the 2007 IARCCUM document, *Growing Together in Mission and Unity*, #27).

So there is a clear line of connection between fundamental doctrinal commitments (the doctrines of the creed concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation) and issues around the shape and mission of the Church. The former lead into the latter; the latter only make sense against the background of the former. But what are the implications of this for our continuing ecumenical engagement? In what follows, I shall suggest some possible lines of further enquiry. But I also want to put a bit of a challenge to some trends across the board in current thinking, trends that might encourage us to adjust our expectations downwards in ecumenical dialogue, given the apparent lack of progress towards institutional or organisational unity. I do so in the hope that if we can recognise the remarkable degree to which what we could call Willebrands' legacy in ecclesiology has triumphed in the life of the dialogues, this may yet stir us to new insights and possibilities.

2.

If the *Harvesting* document is to be taken seriously, the issues between Christians in the historic churches are *not* about the essential shape of our language concerning God and God's action in Christ. Whatever shaky theologies may be advanced by individuals in this or that particular pulpit, divinity school or seminary (Catholic *and* otherwise, be it said), the self-definitions of the churches remain solidly anchored in the Nicene faith, understood precisely as the faith that makes sense of the experienced reality of communion in Christ. The common centre is a twofold vision: filial relation with God the Father as the realisation of the human vocation; and, as an immediate corollary of this, communion with other believers, offered to the whole world as promise and hope, a model for human life together in accord with the creator's loving purpose. As the ecumenical statements in varying words agree, the ongoing debate is not about these fundamentals, but about where the fullest realisation of communion is to be found.

Even in discussion over sacramental forms and doctrines, a powerful convergence is evident that takes us well beyond any tired polarities.

We cannot any longer assume that there is a fundamental disagreement between Catholics who think of the sacraments objectively and Protestants who think of them only in functional or 'memorialist' ways. The links from trinitarian doctrine straight through to the meaning of the Lord's Supper are strongly affirmed on all sides. The whole discussion of sacramental life is centred upon how the believer is established in filial communion through the act of the triune God; there is little to suggest that outside the Roman fold there is any ambiguity over this priority of the divine act, or any separation between the act of God in salvation and a purely or predominantly human activity of recalling or expressing that act through human practices.

And this is where the difficult questions begin to gather. If the picture just sketched is true, what exactly are the points that still divide us? *Harvesting* returns several times to a few key matters: I want to pick out three for further reflection. There is an issue over *authority*: in several places, continuing disagreement is noted over the nature or indeed the very possibility of the magisterium. Is there a mechanism in the Church that has the clear right to determine for all where the limits of Christian identity might be found? Then there is an issue, naturally connected with the first, about the nature of *primacy*. Is the integrity of the Church ultimately dependent on a single identifiable ministry of unity to which all local ministries are accountable? And this relates immediately to a third set of questions about the way in which we think of the universal Church itself. Is it an entity from which local churches derive their life, or is it the perfect mutuality of relationship between local churches—or indeed as the mysterious presence of the whole *in* each specific community? I want to propose that we now need urgent clarification of whether these continuing points of tension or difference imply in any way that the substantive theological convergence is less solid than it appears, so that we must still hold back from fuller levels of recognition of ministries or fuller sacramental fellowship.

3.

As to authority: the summary on pp.137-8 of *Harvesting* puts it very well in describing convergence around the belief that 'the ministry and the ministries in the Church are not an end in themselves'; the Church is called to obedience, and thus to the discerning conservation of the authentic gospel in its teaching and preaching. But is that obedience, discernment and conservation in some sense the task of the entire body

of the baptised or essentially that of a group designated as having binding power?

A properly *theological* answer to this would challenge the premise of the question as expressed in those terms. It should rather come from a clear sense that responsibility, the 'authority to become children of God' (Jn 1.12) given to all those who belong in the communion of the baptised, is something allocated and distributed in the Church by the leading of the Spirit. If we are not just going to reaffirm the language of rule and hierarchy established by decree, with fixed divisions between teachers and taught, rulers and ruled, then we must approach the question as one that has to do with the way in which the gifts of the Spirit are properly distributed. In the light of the ecumenical ecclesiology we have been outlining, what is the status of differences over how responsibilities are allocated in the Church? How practically deep and non-negotiable are the divisions if what is at stake is not the basic reality of filial holiness? If the issues are *less* basic than the agreement over the Church's central character, then the future ought to be one in which there is a search for practical convergence in administrative responsibility and visible structures of governance, while allowing a significant mutual recognition of sacramental authenticity in the meantime—perhaps including some sacramental fellowship, as hinted at in #8 of *Unitatis redintegratio*).

I suspect that what makes this unattractive from the Roman Catholic side is the wariness of lapsing back into another kind of non-theological ecclesiology, allowing decision-making in the Church to become no more than a 'democratic' process in which the search for corporate discernment became no more than campaigning for majority votes. Those of us with synodical styles of governance influenced by parliamentary procedure may well understand the anxiety. Yet, understandable as this anxiety is, it would be a mistake to say that anything other than a clear commitment to a centralised magisterium would be bound to be a secularised democratism. It is never a good idea to take the worst risks and distortions of a system as normative. It would be as pessimistic as the reaction of a reformed Christian convinced that any ordained magisterium would be bound to be an unaccountable tyranny. If we really do agree about what the Church is for, then we ought to be able to see in one another the desire to be obedient—and to recognise that inevitably any particular embodiment

of that desire will need to be scrutinised theologically and is likely to be historically variable, vulnerable and in some way inadequate.

The question becomes whether we can find ways of creating structures in which ordained authority and conciliar collaboration are properly accountable to each other and to the whole Body. It is about how we look—at the very least—for joint means of decision-making between churches differently ordered in their systems of authority, as several ecumenical texts propose (not least the IARCCUM documents); and at most for a means of making possible exchange of ministries and sacramental provision (with all that this might entail in terms of requirements for simple canonical recognition and incorporation).

4.

As to primacy: convergence is probably less clear here, but there is a quite widespread recognition that, just as local ministry serves coherence and mutual openness within a congregation, so there is a powerful theological case for a ministry of universal focusing and gathering cast in the same terms. To put it like this is, once again, to see it in relation to the Church's purpose overall: this is a ministry existing for the sake of filial and communal holiness held in a universal pattern of mutual service—a point worth taking very seriously in the context of a globalised culture.

The disagreement comes over whether existing forms of primacy are—on the one hand—despite all their historic ups and downs, fundamentally unavoidable embodiments of the agreed principle or—on the other—so allied to juridical privilege and the patterns of rule and control I have referred to earlier that they simply fail to do what they say they are there for. This is to put the difference quite sharply, I know, in a way that ignores the fluidity of recent debate and the remarkable initiative represented by *Ut Unum Sint* and what has flowed from it. But once again, the ecumenical issue for those outside the Roman Catholic fold is whether the necessity of the existing form of primatial ministry is so *theologically* crucial a matter that the Church's integrity, its faithfulness to its essential purpose, is wholly compromised by a diversity of understanding about primacy. Is there a level of mutual recognition which allows a shared theological understanding of primacy alongside a diversity of canonical or juridical arrangements? The slightly sensitive discussion of the nature of papal jurisdiction outside the historic Western Patriarchate might be a door-opener here. But it is surprising to find support in another quarter, in

the shape of a bald statement (quoted in *Harvesting*) from the Lutheran-Catholic Report of 1972 'that the question of altar fellowship and of mutual recognition of ministerial offices should not be unconditionally dependent on a consensus on the question of primacy' (#66).

To present the question in these terms is in fact to look back to Cardinal Willebrands' celebrated sermon in Cambridge in 1970 which spoke (using the language of Dom Emmanuel Lanne) of a diversity of *types* of communion, each one defined not so much juridically or institutionally as in terms of lasting loyalty, shared theological method and devotional ethos. The underlying idea seems to be that a restored universal communion would be genuinely a 'community of communities' and a 'communion of communions'—not necessarily a single juridically united body—and therefore one which did indeed assume that, while there was a recognition of a primatial ministry, this was not absolutely bound to a view of primacy as a centralized juridical office.

It is of course impossible to open up these issues without some brief reference to issues of very immediate interest in the lives of the Anglican and Roman Catholic communions. The current proposals for a Covenant between Anglican provinces represent an effort to create not a centralised decision-making executive but a 'community of communities' that can manage to sustain a mutually nourishing and mutually critical life, with all consenting to certain protocols of decision-making together. As *Harvesting* notes, Anglicans have been challenged to flesh out their rhetoric about communion through the crises and controversies of recent years, and this is simply part of a variegated response that will, no doubt, continue for a good while yet to be refined and formulated.

The recent announcement of an Apostolic Constitution making provision for former Anglicans shows some marks of the recognition that diversity of ethos does not in itself compromise the unity of the Catholic Church, even within the bounds of the historic Western patriarchate. But it should be obvious that it does not seek to do what we have been sketching: it does not build in any formal recognition of existing ministries or units of oversight or methods of independent decision-making, but remains at the level of spiritual and liturgical culture, as we might say. As such, it is an imaginative *pastoral* response to the needs of some; but it does not break any fresh *ecclesiological*

ground. It remains to be seen whether the flexibility suggested in the Constitution might ever lead to something less like a 'chaplaincy' and more like a church gathered around a bishop.

5.

As to the broad issue of local and universal Christian identity, much that has emerged in discussion involving Roman Catholics, Anglican and Orthodox has had the effect of challenging simplistic opposition between the two poles, as if the choice were between a conglomerate of local and almost randomly diverse communities vaguely federated together, and a monolithic global corporation. The re-theologising of ecclesiology, especially in dialogue with the Christian East, has meant that we are now better able to see the local community gathered around the bishop or his representative for eucharistic worship not as a portion of some greater whole but as itself the whole, the *qualitative* presence, as we might put it, of the Catholic reality of filial holiness and Trinitarian mutuality here and now. In one sense, it needs no supplement or validation from a wider institutional reality; in another sense, of course, it is itself only as related with other communities doing the same thing in all times and places. To quote from the Roman Catholic-Reformed dialogue, 'It is only by participating in the local community that we share in the life of the universal Church, but the local community without universality ... runs the risk of becoming a ghetto or of being arbitrarily dominated by individuals' (*The Presence of Christ in Church and World*, #62). Or, in the words of the ARCIC statement on *The Gift of Authority*, 'No local church that participates in the living Tradition can regard itself as self-sufficient' (#37).

So the question here becomes one about what criteria help us establish that the *same* Catholic life is going on in diverse communities. The facts of corporate reading of Scripture, obedience to the Lord's commands to baptise and make eucharist, shared understanding of the shape and the disciplines of what we have called filial holiness—can these be utilised as they stand or do we need a further test—visible communion, say, with a universal primate? And if that further step is necessary, can it be shown to be theological in exactly the same sense as the rest of the discourse? If not, once again, is it a ground for maintaining the level of non-recognition currently in practice? To revert to a rather old-fashioned idiom, while we might recognise universal structural isomorphism or a universal canonical system as something belonging to the *bene esse*, the good order or well-being of

the Church, is it so much a part of the *esse* as to preclude shared practice?

An answer to this would have to look at some of the complex and neuralgic issues that arise around local decision-making. To take the most obvious instance in the relations between the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches at present, the local decision to ordain women as priests—and as bishops in some contexts—is presented by Roman Catholic theologians as one that in effect makes the Anglican Communion simply less recognisably a body ‘doing the same Catholic thing’.

*Harvesting* records the substance of the early consensus in ARCIC on the nature of ordained ministry and also the acknowledgement that there had as yet been no consideration of *who* could be ordained (the 1973 *Ministry and Ordination* text, #17). Since then, this latter issue has been defined by the highest authority in the Roman Catholic Church as one in which the Church does not have the liberty or the competence to license change as regards the historic prohibition against women in holy orders. This is now presented as a clear obstacle to any further recognition of Anglican orders.

I don’t want here to rehearse the arguments for and against the ordination of women, only to ask how recent determinations on the Roman Catholic side fit with the general pattern of theological convergence outlined. The claim of certain Anglican provinces is that the ordination of women explicitly looks to an agreed historic theology of ordained ministry as set out in the ARCIC report and other sources. Beyond that, many Anglicans have been wary of accepting a determination of who can be ordained that might appear to compromise some of the agreed principles about how ordination relates to the whole body of the baptised. This, by the way, would hold for at least some who believe that a decision within a divided Church about a matter affecting the universal ministry should not be taken by a single province or group of provinces. But for many Anglicans, *not* ordaining women has a possible unwelcome implication about the difference between baptised men and baptised women, which in their view threatens to undermine the coherence of the ecclesiology in question.

And the challenge to recent Roman Catholic thinking on this would have to be: in what way does the prohibition against ordaining women so ‘enhance the life of communion’, reinforcing the essential character of filial and communal holiness as set out in Scripture and tradition and

ecumenical agreement, that its breach would compromise the purposes of the Church as so defined? And do the arguments advanced about the 'essence' of male and female vocations and capacities stand on the same level as a theology derived more directly from scripture and the common theological heritage such as we find in these ecumenical texts?

Let us take this a stage further. All ordained ministers are ordained into the shared richness of the apostolic ministerial order—or perhaps we could say ministerial 'communion' yet again. None ministers as a solitary individual. Thus if the ministerial collective is understood strictly in terms of the ecclesiology we have been considering, as serving the goal of filial and communal holiness as the character of restored humanity, how much is that undermined if individuals within the ministerial communion are of different genders? Even if there remains uncertainty in the minds of some about the rightness of ordaining women, is there a way of recognising that somehow the *corporate* exercise of a Catholic and evangelical ministry remains intact even when there is dispute about the standing of female individuals? In terms of the relation of local to universal, what we are saying here is that a degree of recognizability of 'the same Catholic thing' has survived: Anglican provinces ordaining women to some or all of the three orders have not become so obviously diverse in their understanding of filial holiness and sacramental transformation that they cannot act together, serve one another and allow some real collaboration.

It is this sort of thinking that has allowed Anglicans until recently to maintain a degree of undoubtedly impaired communion among themselves, despite the sharpness of the division over this matter. It is part of the rationale of supplementary episcopal oversight as practised in the English provinces, and it may yet be of help in securing the place of those who will not be able to accept the episcopal ministry of women. There can be no doubt, though, that the situation of damaged communion will become more acute with the inability of bishops within the same college to recognise one another's ministry in the full sense. Yet, in what is still formally acknowledged to be a time of discernment and reception, is it nonsense to think that holding on to a limited but real common life and mutual acknowledgement of integrity might be worth working for within the Anglican family? And if it can be managed within the Anglican family, is this a possible model for the wider ecumenical scene? At least, by means of some of the carefully

crafted institutional ways of continuing to work together, there remains an embodied trust in the possibility of discovering a shared ministry of the gospel; and who knows what more, ultimately, in terms of restored communion?

6.

Once again, I am asking how far continuing disunion and non-recognition are justified, theologically justified in the context of the overall ecclesial vision, when there are signs that some degree of diversity in practice need not, after all, prescribe an indefinite separation. I do not pretend to be offering a new paradigm of ecumenical encounter, far from it. But the very quality of the theological convergence recorded, and very expertly and lucidly recorded, in *Harvesting* prompts the sort of question I have been raising. At what point do we have to recognise that surviving institutional and even canonical separations or incompatibilities are overtaken by the authoritative direction of genuinely theological consensus, so that they can survive only by appealing to the ghost of ecclesiological positivism? The three issues I have commented on may all seem, to the eyes of a non-Roman Catholic, to belong in a somewhat different frame of reference from the governing themes of the ecumenical ecclesiology expressed in the texts under review. If the non-Roman Catholic is wrong about this, we need to have spelled out exactly why; we need to understand either that there are issues about the filial/communal calling clearly at stake in surviving disagreements; or to be shown that another theological 'register' is the right thing to use in certain areas, a different register which will qualify in some ways the language that has so far shaped ecumenical convergence.

Cardinal Willebrands would, I suspect, have been uncomfortable with the latter option and would have wanted (if he had agreed that these issues were critical, unresolved, and in need of resolution) to keep our attention fixed on the former, so that our language and thinking about the Church remained theological in a sense recognised by all involved in the discussion. To say this is not to foreclose consideration of these and other outstanding areas of diversity, let alone to say that they are 'political' matters and that there is no point in approaching them theologically, or that they are 'second-order' questions. But it is important to be clear about just how much convergence there is, as witnessed in the survey offered in *Harvesting*.

All I have been attempting to say here is that the ecumenical glass is genuinely half-full—and then to ask about the character of the unfinished business between us. For many of us who are not Roman Catholics, the question we want to put, in a grateful and fraternal spirit, is whether this unfinished business is as fundamentally church-dividing as our Roman Catholic friends generally assume and maintain. And if it isn't, can we all allow ourselves to be challenged to address the outstanding issues with the same methodological assumptions and the same overall spiritual and sacramental vision that has brought us thus far?

## A RESPONSE TO 'MARY: GRACE AND HOPE IN CHRIST'

### Introduction

The members of the Anglican Roman Catholic dialogue of Canada carefully studied the agreed statement of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), 'Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ'<sup>1</sup> (hereafter MGH), during its meetings from 2006 to 2008, considering the document in light of our diverse theological, liturgical, and devotional traditions. We welcome the approach of MGH as a significant re-reception of our common faith in the unique mediation of Christ and its affirmation of the normative role of the Scriptures for our theology, prayer, and spiritual practice as they relate to the role of Mary in God's saving plan. Further, we wish to express our appreciation for ARCIC's assessment of the Catholic dogmatic teaching concerning Mary, the mother of the Lord, as being 'consonant with the teaching of the Scriptures and the ancient common traditions' (§60). In what follows, we wish to reaffirm the areas of convergence in our theology and practice, identify a number of ways to further build upon this agreement, and consider how it might be received in our context. It is our hope that these reflections will not only be taken into consideration by the authorities of our two communions, but that they might serve as a resource for Anglicans and Catholics in Canada as they study and learn from MGH.

### Mary According to the Scriptures

ARCIC adopts a self-consciously typological approach to the reading of Scripture. This is a departure for ecumenical dialogue: generally speaking, historical criticism has been the method most widely used for coming to a common reading of the biblical text. Though by no means rejecting historical-critical insights, as is made clear in MGH §7, ARCIC proposes a creative retrieval of the ancient practice of figural reading which has a firm basis in our common tradition. This 'ecclesial and ecumenical' approach can only be welcome.

Given its relative newness, ARCIC may wish to be even more explicit about the convictions and assumptions that underlie the typological approach, indicating that it unfolds within the church's Christological

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<sup>1</sup> Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (Toronto: Novalis, 2005).

and Trinitarian rule of faith. Moreover, it is important to point out that a chastened figural reading was as important to the Reformers as it was to the early Church Fathers and medieval theologians. MGH's brief comments on Reformation approaches to biblical interpretation (§7) might give the impression that the insistence on the 'clarity and sufficiency' of Scripture comes at the detriment of reading Scripture as an ordered whole. In fact, the very opposite is the case. If the Church is to read the canon as a unity, the Christological center actually requires Old Testament types and figures for its full display, against the broad eschatological horizon of salvation history. This is a broadly shared ecumenical conviction, even if it is sometimes obscured in our day.

We therefore welcome ARCIC's desire to situate Mary within a larger biblical trajectory of grace and hope, embracing both Old and New Testaments. This approach strikes a balance between Scripture as witness to God's grace (the special insistence of Reformation Christians) and the fruitful outworking of grace in the lives of those called together in faith, the church (a consistent concern of Catholics). Viewed in this light, Mary is both part of the biblical witness (MGH §6), and for just this reason, part of the church's life today.

### **Mary in the Christian Tradition**

We welcome ARCIC's presentation of the foundations of our common faith in relation to Mary's role in God's plan of salvation as it developed in the first millennium, and of the seeds of contemporary discussion in the debates among the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. While recognizing that there were 'widespread reactions' in the Reformation period against 'exaggerated devotions' by many Reformers (MGH §44), it must be recalled that the theological understanding of Mary's place in the history of salvation and in the life of the church was not the motive for the breakdown of unity between the Church of England and the Church of Rome during the sixteenth century. Our churches' practice of prayer and devotion, and later their theology and teaching with regard to Mary, evolved in diverse ways over the centuries of our separation. They have, at times, been tainted by both anti-Catholic and Counter Reformation sentiment. Our own review of the historical evolution of our respective traditions in the period of ecclesial separation has enabled us to better appreciate the nature of our diverse theological expression and practice.

We affirm with MGH that the English Reformers 'continued to receive the doctrine of the early church concerning Mary' (MGH §45).

Although many Marian shrines and places of pilgrimage were destroyed in the English Reformation, and the place of Mary in the liturgical life of the Church of England somewhat attenuated, the Book of Common Prayer retained a number of significant Marian feasts, the Magnificat continued to hold a prominent place in the order of Evening Prayer, and many churches and chapels continued to bear her name.

During the reigns of Edward VI (1547-1553) and Elizabeth I (1558-1603) the question of the invocation of saints was identified as a scholastic novelty, or else as an aberration promoted by the Church of Rome. The practice was relegated to a group of rejected doctrines and practices considered as 'fond things, vainly invented,' that is, as fanciful and irrational matters not known to the earliest ages of Christianity, not warranted by Scripture and in fact 'repugnant to the word of God' (Article XXII). Reforms of the Eucharistic prayer and the Liturgy of the Hours were motivated by a concern that the Scriptures serve as the norm for the prayer of the Church and that the practice of prayer not obscure the unparalleled mediation of Christ (1 Timothy 2:5). Though the Restoration of this period sought a *via media* between the best of the Catholic tradition and the evangelically motivated concerns of the Reformers, it was not free of anti-Catholic polemic.

In the seventeenth century, the Caroline Divines displayed a more conciliatory approach. Many recognized a special role for Mary and the saints as 'patrons' to specific societies and individuals. While some cautioned against the invocation of the saints and Mary, yet others considered such practice as benign. Though not warranted by the scripture, and thus, not a required practice, they considered such practice as permitted. The Divines frequently acknowledged that Mary, the 'Mother of God,' is deserving of high honor, taking the Apostles' Creed as their witness. From the seventeenth century onward there is evidence of non-devotional statues of Mary being erected in Anglican churches.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), called in response to the Protestant Reformation, did not treat the doctrine of Mary extensively. It encouraged the veneration of the saints and Mary, affirmed the virgin birth, and left the matter of the Immaculate Conception open to theological debate. We regret that, in its account of the evolution of the Catholic tradition from the Reformation to the present day, MGH passes all too quickly from the Council of Trent to the nineteenth and

twentieth century definition of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption (§47).

ARCIC makes no mention of the fact that Catholic piety and theological reflection concerning Mary took a significant turn during the seventeenth century under the influence of the French school of spirituality.<sup>1</sup> The influence of the French school spread widely through the preaching of the religious congregations which they founded.<sup>2</sup> These and many other religious congregations inspired by the French school of spirituality have deeply marked the life of the Catholic Church in Canada through their apostolic works and seminary education. Today, more than eighty religious congregations in Canada trace their history back to this movement of Catholic Revival. It has been instructive for us to consider the importance of this movement in shaping the conscience of Canadian Catholics.

Early settlers in New France named their villages after Mary (Ville Marie, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons), and dedicated many of their

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<sup>1</sup> MGH does note that Catholic theology and practice 'while moderated by the reforming decrees of the Council of Trent (1545-63), also suffered the distorting influence of Protestant-Catholic polemics. *To be Roman Catholic came to be identified with devotion to Mary.*' (§47) (Emphasis added).

The primary representatives of the French School were Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629), an important protagonist of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, two of his disciples, Jean Eudes (1601-1680) and Jean-Jacques Olier (1608-1657), and later Louis-Marie Grignon de Monfort (1673-1716). They were deeply influenced by the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola and their manner of engaging the imagination and the heart in contemplating the Scriptures, especially in the contemplation on the mysteries of the early life of Jesus. Their works also reflect the impact of a significant turn to the subject and a preoccupation with interiority that characterized the Renaissance movement in the European culture of their day. As a result, their reading of the Scriptures is focused largely on the psychological and interior attitudes of Jesus and Mary, on their corporal sufferings and the inner dispositions of their heart.

<sup>2</sup> Bérulle founded the French Oratory in 1611. Jean Eudes established the Society of Jesus and Mary (Eudists) in 1643, dedicated to the education of priests and to missionary work. He promoted devotional prayers to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, composing the prayers of the Mass for the Feasts of the Holy Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, introduced into the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar in 1648 and 1672 respectively. Olier founded the Society of Saint-Sulpice dedicated to the education of priests. Grignon de Monfort, educated by the Suplicians, would compose a rule of life for the Company of Mary (Monfortists / Monfortains) and for the Daughters of Wisdom.

churches to Our Lady. Later, Catholic immigrants from Ireland and many other European countries, brought with them their devotional practices relating to Mary. Marian Shrines and places of pilgrimage were established following the declaration of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX (1854) and the apparitions of Mary at Lourdes (1858). A resurgence of popular Marian devotion marked the life of the Catholic Church in Canada in the period surrounding the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII (1950) and was particularly influenced by the Marian Congress held at Ottawa in 1947. This Congress, which had an international impact, was a triumphant moment for the Catholic community and inspired fervent prayer for peace in the world reeling from the devastation of World War II.

The Church of England in Canada and elsewhere did not know a parallel development of Marian piety and theology. However, the French school of spirituality's focus on the Incarnation and a cultural turn to the subject may well have predisposed both Anglican and Catholic theology toward a renewed focus on the Incarnation during the nineteenth century. Devotional statues of Mary began to appear in Anglican churches with the second generation of Tractarians. The influence of Catholic devotional practice, including the recitation of the Angelus and the Rosary, is apparent in the Anglican Confraternity of Our Lady, founded in 1880, and the League of Our Lady, established in 1902. These two movements would merge into the Anglican Society of Mary in 1931. Today some Anglicans are given to Marian devotional practices and choose to recite the Rosary, asking Mary to 'pray for us.'

### **Mary within the Pattern of Grace and Hope**

ARCIC clearly seeks to build on previous consensus identified between Anglican and Catholic theologies of grace. This desire is signaled early on: 'God's grace calls for and enables human response' (§5, citing *Salvation in the Church* §9).<sup>1</sup> The grace-hope pattern that informs MGH is one in which God's grace is primary, the human response secondary. MGH presents Mary as a type of pattern of the Christian person more generally. The grace at work in her earliest beginnings is the grace of

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<sup>1</sup> Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, *Salvation and the Church: An Agreed Statement*, London, Church House / Catholic Truth Society, 1989. Traduction française: 'Le salut et l'Église,' dans *Anglicans et catholiques. Approches de l'unité*, Paris : Cerf, 2000.

God's election, by which God knows his children even before they are in their mother's womb (Psalm 139: 13-16; Jeremiah 1: 1-5; cited in §10). The conviction that she partakes of God's new creation even now points to the hope that awaits us all. This approach to Mary through an 'eschatological anthropology' is highly creative and promising. While it may not resolve all disagreements, especially those surrounding the Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, it offers a framework that allows us to relate Mary to the heart of the Gospel. Our historical studies of the Marian dogmas have confirmed that such an interpretation of the Catholic teaching on these questions has a firm basis in the context for the promulgation of these dogmas in 1854 and 1950 respectively.

Our common understanding of the work of God's saving grace rests upon our shared conviction concerning the unique and primary place of Christ in the plan of God: 'there is one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all' (1 Timothy 2: 5,6; cited in MGH §68). A possible peril of an anthropological approach to understanding Mary as exemplar of the pattern of grace and hope is that it may have a 'leveling' effect in the relationship between Mary and her son, the Incarnate Word: both Jesus and Mary might be viewed as the eschatological human on the way from grace to hope, although she is the penultimate and he the ultimate embodiment thereof.<sup>1</sup> While such an impression would not be consistent with ARCIC's distinction between Christ's unique Mediatorship and its diverse mediations in the ecclesial sphere, it might be further averted by a more consistent use of Romans 8 to frame the discussion. In addition, to avoid any such confusion we wonder whether it might be better to avoid the term 'mediation' when speaking of Mary's intercession, reserving it as a strictly Christological category (e.g.: MGH §68).

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<sup>1</sup> See Timothy Bradshaw's perceptive remarks in his Commentary on *MGH*, noting the similarity between the document's Mariology and Donald Baillie's Christology in his classic *God was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Scribner's, 1948). Baillie's Christology is frequently criticized for its account of Jesus' person as, in effect, a super eminent instance of the grace-filled person: inspiration rather than Incarnation. It would perhaps be acceptable if our picture of Mary followed this model. It would be disastrous if that of Christ did.

ARCIC's use of Romans 8 to frame its theological reflection on Mary is one of its most striking contributions to the re-reception of our common faith. But for Pauline theology to do its work, it is not enough to say that the pattern of grace and hope achieves its climax in Christ. We must go beyond this to say that his death and resurrection provide the ontological ground, basis, and direction of the pattern as a whole. It is not that Jesus fills out the pre-existing categories of grace and hope, but that we can read the biblical story (and indeed the human story as a whole) in these terms only because of what God has done in him. MGH makes this point in its own way in §§52-53. The hope of humanity and of all creation, of which Mary is both sign and prophet (MGH §56; and §§2 and 76 respectively), is grounded in the gracious act of the God who 'subjects it [creation] in hope' (Romans 8: 20). Thus, we are happy to endorse MGH's eschatological construal of God's activity in the new creation. We do think the document could state more clearly than it does that Christ is the concrete reality and foundation of that new creation.

### **The Papal Definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption**

Rereading of the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Mary within the framework of grace and hope (Romans 8: 30) can be seen as a common appropriation of the insights that these teachings were intended to promote at the time of their promulgation. It helps us to appreciate them as teachings about the pattern of salvation offered to us all in Christ and reveals Mary as the model of attaining the fullness of the human vocation, having faithfully placed her hope in God's saving help. We regard MGH's presentation of the trajectory of her life as an illustration of the universal pattern of salvation effected by grace as an important resource for a renewed and common catechesis concerning Mary.

Pius IX's teaching on the Immaculate Conception of Mary bears the anthropological concern that is developed in MGH. Catholic writers in the nineteenth century displayed a concern to redress an overly optimistic view of human nature that was evident in the rationalist currents of thought of the day.<sup>1</sup> This teaching sets Mary as a model for

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<sup>1</sup> William Ullathorne (1806-1889), Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, writing in 1855, just a year after the definition of the Immaculate Conception: 'Which is

all Christians, an anthropological ideal to which we aspire and in the pattern of divine assistance which moves us towards our goal. In what is said about Mary and her relationship with God, the Christian view of the meaning of human life according to the message of the Gospel is presented. Thus the dogma of the Immaculate Conception teaches not just about Mary but also – and perhaps especially – that for every human person, grace – and not genetics, education, hard work, or any purely human attribute – is the main engine of human transformation.

A similar concern might be seen in the promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption in the wake of the World War II when optimism concerning the capacity of the human person for goodness had been sorely wounded.<sup>1</sup> It is striking to consider the motif of Christian

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their grand philosophical cry? The perfectibility of man: the pagan's confidence in human resources for human happiness. This is upsetting religion, and policy, wherever it comes. Perfection is to be reached, and even equality of perfection, not through God's grace, but by men's efforts – by combination of their energies; by working in the products of nature; by commerce in them; by new social arrangements to come out of the conflict of opinions or of weapons; by enlightenment, that is, by the rejection of traditional wisdom; by fitting religion to each man's natural tastes and so rejecting authority. (...) Now Mary is the highest example of human perfection and of created happiness. And this great fact strikes down a thousand theories. In every earthly sense of the word she is weak, as she is lowly, poor and humble; yet she is perfect as no one else ever was perfect. And her perfection is the work of a sublime grace, which puts her nature in order and sets her higher powers free in God. The Immaculate Conception is the mystery of God's strength in weakness, of His height in humility, of His glory in purity.' *The Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God*. Revised by Canon Isles with an Introduction by the Bishop of Birmingham. (Westminster, UK: Art and Book Company, 1904 (1855)), pp. 210-211.

<sup>1</sup> One author from this period observed: 'In addition to its specifically Marian content, the dogma teaches us about man generally. It projects and silhouettes man in his true dimensions, against his true horizon. The solemn definition of Our Lady's glorious Assumption stands forth as a timely—indeed, desperately needed—affirmation of Christian Humanism. Over against atheistic materialism and naturalism on the one hand, and exaggerated spiritualism and ultrasupernaturalism on the other hand, Christian Humanism declares man for what he really is, a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God; Christian Humanism upholds the value and dignity of human beings in body and soul; Christian Humanism acknowledges the worth of life here on earth but, at the same time, warns that our destiny is not confined to this world; and, finally, as to that destiny—supernatural salvation,

anthropology reflected in the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, from this same period: "The Conference, believing that man's [sic] disorders and conflicts are primarily due to ignorance or rejection of the true understanding of his nature and destiny as revealed by God in Jesus Christ, affirms that man has a spiritual as well as a material nature, and that he can attain full stature only as he recognizes and yields to the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and to the influence of his Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup> The fact that the Assumption of Mary was proclaimed in the Feast of All Saints situates Mary in the communion of all the saints served to emphasize her solidarity with all believers, and indeed with all of humankind. Understanding the Marian dogmas as responses to important contemporary intellectual movements which challenge the Christian view of the human person helps to make their connection to the fundamentals of the Christian faith clearer and their relevance more obvious. This aspect of their significance was recognized, at least by some, at the time of their promulgation. To re-receive them in this sense, therefore, is not to alter their meaning but to recapture the fullness of their intended meaning.

Over twenty years ago ARCIC rightly pointed to a significant degree of consensus in faith, and pointed especially to the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption, in particular of their relationship to Scripture and the manner of their promulgation as requiring common study.<sup>2</sup> MGH makes a significant contribution

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Christian Humanism insists that it is not purely spiritual but embraces the whole man, body as well as soul—in short, the human person.' George Shea, 'The Assumption,' in *The Mystery of the Woman: Essays on the Mother of God Sponsored by the Department of Theology of Notre Dame University*. O'Connor, Edward D., ed. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), pp. 61-114 at 104-105.

<sup>1</sup> Lambeth 1948, Resolution 1, at

<http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1948/1948-1.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> 'We agree that there can be but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, and reject any interpretation of the role of Mary which obscures this affirmation. We agree in recognizing that Christian understanding of Mary is inseparably linked with the doctrines of Christ and the Church. We agree in recognizing the grace and unique vocation of Mary, Mother of God Incarnate (*Theotokos*), in observing her festivals, and in according her honor in the communion of saints. We agree that she was prepared by divine grace to be the mother of the Redeemer, by whom she herself was redeemed and received into glory. We further agree in recognizing in Mary a model of holiness, obedience,

towards a common understanding of these teachings in relation to the biblical revelation. We do not consider that it adequately addresses the difficulties raised by the status or doctrinal weight of these papal teachings, nor the matter of whether their acceptance would be required as a condition for ecclesial unity (MGH §63). This is, at bottom, not a matter of unity in faith, for ARCIC succeeds, in our view, in demonstrating a substantial unity in our deepest convictions regarding the Mother of our Lord. The fact of our unity in faith raises the need for greater clarity concerning the authoritative nature of these teachings and the real conditions for ecclesial reconciliation.

### **Mary in the Life of the Contemporary Church**

We heartily welcome ARCIC's affirmation that since the Second Vatican Council there has been a significant re-reception of the place of Mary in the life of prayer in both the Anglican Communion and in the Catholic Church. This is most evident in the renewed liturgical rites and calendars of each.

Anglicans expressed misgivings about Pius XII's promulgation of the dogma of the Assumption in the 1950s, expressing their concern that it might have the effect of placing her at a remove from the wider human community and obscuring the unique role of Christ in the plan of salvation.<sup>1</sup> Responding to these and other ecumenical concerns, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council presents Mary as figure of the church and a model of the faithful Christian disciple, placing her squarely within the context of the whole community of saints (Lumen Gentium chapter VIII). As MGH acknowledges, the Council affirmed that the honor and veneration accorded to Mary 'in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power' (LG 60; cited in MGH §67). Further, the council insisted upon

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and faith for all Christians. We accept that it is possible to regard her as a prophetic figure in the Church of God before as well as after the Incarnation' (§30). In Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, *Authority in the Church II* [1981], in *The Final Report* (London: Church House / Catholic Truth Society, 1982).

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Henry Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1951): 163f. Chadwick suggests an influence of Monophysite, one nature Christology behind the teaching, and perceived in it a devaluation of the humanity of Christ and of humanity in general. ARCIC's re-reception of this teaching unfolds the dogma's intent, on the contrary, to affirm Mary's solidarity with the whole human community.

'the subordinate role of Mary' in relation to the place of Christ in the saving plan of God (LG 62). While encouraging devotion to the Mother of the Lord, the conciliar teaching gives pride of place to the veneration of Mary in the liturgy (LG 67), insisting that the practice of prayer be guided always by the norm of Scripture. MGH's discussion of Marian devotion, in particular of the practice of calling upon Mary to intercede for us, might be strengthened by greater attention to the liturgical center of Christian prayer, thus providing a foundation for diverse spiritual practice in the common features of our corporate prayer.

The place of Mary in the contemporary Catholic spirituality has been significantly influenced by the liturgical renewal set in motion by the Second Vatican Council. It is in the Eucharist where most Catholics come into contact with this renewal. If in the past, Marian devotion was often separate from the liturgy (being appended after the end of the official prayer of the Church) or in competition to the liturgy (saying the rosary during Mass), devotion to Mary today may be said to begin in the liturgy, flow from it and lead back to it. This approach takes seriously the warnings of both Vatican II and Pope Paul VI of two extreme positions to be avoided: a narrow-minded elimination of Marian devotion or an exaggerated or superlative devotion.<sup>1</sup> It is neither sentimental nor emotional, but rather encourages disciple-ship, that is, the gift of self to Christ within the Church and for the life of the world. The Catholic Church's commitment to this approach in presenting Mary liturgically has continued, as is evident in resources issued for the Marian Year (1987-1988)<sup>2</sup> and the Collection of Masses of the Blessed

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<sup>1</sup> For example: 'But it exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word to abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrow-mindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God.' Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, §67. See also, Pope Paul VI: 'the ecumenical aspect of Marian devotion is shown in the Catholic Church's desire that, without in any way detracting from the unique character of this devotion, every care should be taken to avoid any exaggeration which could mislead other Christian brethren about the true doctrine of the Catholic Church.' *Apostolic Exhortation for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis Cultus)* (Daughters of Saint Paul, 1974), §32.

<sup>2</sup> In Canada, the National Liturgical Office for the Episcopal Commission for the Liturgy issued 'Mary in the Liturgy' in 1987 as resource for the Marian Year. It is Number 3 in the *Canadian Series in the Liturgy*.

Virgin Mary (1986).<sup>1</sup> More recently, the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy (2002)<sup>2</sup> has given further principles and guidelines for the liturgical dimension of veneration of Mary.<sup>3</sup> As MGH has noted, the liturgical renewal has resulted in a new prominence of Mary in Anglican worship (§49). A significant effect of this renewal in both

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<sup>1</sup> The official text of this liturgical source appears in two volumes: *Congregatio pro cultu divino, Collectio missarum de beata Maria Virgine, editio typica altera* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987) and idem, *Lectionarium pro missis de beata Maria Virgine. Editio typica* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987). An English version of this source is the *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Volume I, Sacramentary* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1992). These liturgies were developed largely in response to a need for texts at Marian shrines and places of pilgrimage.

This resource does not modify or change the directives of the General Roman Calendar (1969), the Roman Missal (1975), or the Lectionary (1981), nor is its use obligatory. It is largely unknown in Canada, not having been formally approved for use by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

<sup>2</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> '[L]iturgical worship, notwithstanding its objective and irreplaceable importance, its exemplary efficacy and normative character, does not in fact exhaust all the expressive possibilities of the People of God for devotion to the Holy Mother of God' (§183); the liturgy, nevertheless, 'must be...the source of inspiration, constant reference point and ultimate goal of Marian devotion' (§184). Citing the Congregation for Divine Worship's Circular Letter, *Guidelines and Proposals for the Celebration of the Marian Year* (§8), the Directory gives two pointed cautions with regard to Mary and the liturgy for the Church. Marian devotion 'should give expression to the Trinitarian note which characterizes worship of the God revealed in the New Testament, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the Christological constituent, which makes evident the sole and necessary mediation of Christ; the pneumatological aspect, since every true form of piety comes from the Spirit and is exercised in the Spirit; the ecclesial character, in virtue of which the faithful are constituted as a holy people of God, gathered in prayer in the Lord's name (cf. Mt. 18: 20) in the vital Communion of Saints;' and, 'have constant recourse to Sacred Scripture, as understood in Sacred Tradition; not to overlook the demands of the ecumenical movement in the Church's profession of faith; consider the anthropological aspects of the cultic expressions so as to reflect a true concept of man and a valid response to his needs; highlight the eschatological tension which is essential to the Gospel message; make clear missionary responsibility and the duty of bearing witness, which are incumbent on the Lord's disciples' (§186).

Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, shaped by a return to the sources of our common tradition, is a genuine rapprochement in our consciousness of faith. Its importance should not be underestimated.

Christian liturgy is primarily worship of God for what He has done and continues to do in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Commemoration is at the heart of praise: one remembers what God has done, and in remembering, enters anew into the experience of God's saving work. When the principal events of salvation are recalled in the Eucharistic prayer, at the central part of each celebration, a place is given to Mary. This is true of both contemporary Roman Catholic and Anglican Eucharistic prayers.<sup>1</sup>

In the revised Anglican and Roman Catholic calendars for the liturgical year, the prayer life of the Church highlights and orders the mystery of redemption. A place is given to Mary and all believers who are related to Christ in these mysteries. The liturgical year is dotted with obligatory appointments with Mary. There are striking parallels between the principal Marian feasts in the liturgical calendars of the Roman Missal and the Book of Alternative Services<sup>2</sup> of the Anglican Church of Canada: we honor Mary together on the feasts of the Presentation of the Lord (February 2), the Annunciation of Our Lord (March 25), the Visitation (May 31), and the Birth or Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8). The day when Catholics mark the 'Immaculate' Conception of Mary, is appointed as the feast of the 'Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary' in the Anglican calendar (December 8). Finally, when Catholics celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption (August 15), Anglicans mark the feast of 'Saint Mary the Virgin.' Where the date in the Prayer Book is designated as a lesser commemoration, it assumes the status of a principal holy day in the Book of Alternative Services. The only feast day for which we have no parallel is the Catholic Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (January 1), a day on which Anglicans commemorate the naming of Jesus. In these

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<sup>1</sup> See Eucharistic Prayers I, II, III, and IV in the *Roman Missal* which honor Mary in the communion of saints; Eucharistic Prayers 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the Anglican Church of Canada's *Book of Alternative Services* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985) recall the Virgin Mary's role on the Incarnation. The latter of these also includes a prayer recalling her place in the communion of all the saints.

<sup>2</sup> Cited above. Similar comparisons could be made of other contemporary Anglican prayer books.

celebrations we recall Mary's association with the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord, and the fullness of the realization of salvation in the human person. The celebration of Marian Feasts is an occasion to praise God together for the great things He has accomplished in her. When she is honored in the liturgy, we recall what God has done for humanity in Christ.

In the prayer of the church Mary is always presented in relation to Christ and all the saints. Liturgy looks to the day when all will be in Christ and so has an eschatological dimension. If Mary and the saints continue to live in Christ and if the Church embraces those in heaven as well as those on earth in one community, then the saints pray with and for us in Christ, as MGH explains (§69). Notably, the liturgical prayers of both our traditions generally exclude any form of singular invocation to Mary in the context of the Eucharistic prayer. In the liturgy of the eucharist, the memory of Mary is always indirect and in a rather rigorous schema of prayer directed to the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

### **A Need and Opportunity for Shared Catechesis in the Canadian Context**

In recent years, Catholics in Canada have encountered movements of exaggerated and unorthodox teaching and devotion to the figure of Mary. A case of particular concern is the so-called Army of Mary. This movement has been addressed directly by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and by local Catholic bishops.<sup>1</sup> The Army of Mary, no longer in communion with the Catholic Church, promotes views that go far beyond the biblical revelation concerning Mary, including her purported re-incarnation, her supposed qualities as 'coeternal,' or as 'coredemptrix' and the 'feminine equivalent' of the one Redeemer, Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> See, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 'Doctrinal Note, August 15, 2001,' <http://www.cccb.ca/MediaReleases.htm?CD=258&ID=1017>); Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec, 'Message pastoral concernant l'armée de Marie: April 2004,' [http://www.diocesequebec.qc.ca/documents/pdf/05-04-04\\_armee\\_de\\_marie.pdf](http://www.diocesequebec.qc.ca/documents/pdf/05-04-04_armee_de_marie.pdf) ); Paul André Durocher, Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria Cornwall, 'Pastoral Letter regarding the Fils de Marie, May 25, 2005,' <http://www.alexandria-cornwall.ca/b-messages.php?id=132>). In 2007, after a series of unauthorized ordinations, the Archbishop of Quebec issued a decree indicating that the members of this group were no longer in communion with the Catholic Church: [http://www.diocesequebec.qc.ca/documents/pdf/2007032\\_declaration\\_armee\\_marie1.pdf](http://www.diocesequebec.qc.ca/documents/pdf/2007032_declaration_armee_marie1.pdf).

Christ. Canadian Catholic Bishops have rightly warned that the teaching and activity of this movement poses a grave danger to the faith of sincere Christians, and threatens the unity of the community of believers. Those who sympathize with this and similar distortions of the catholic faith regarding Mary would be aided by MGH's insistence on the need for careful discernment in cases of apparitions and private revelation: 'When it leads us away from [Christ], when it becomes independent of him or even presents itself as another and better plan of salvation, more important than the Gospel, then it certainly does not come from the Holy Spirit.'

The presence of such movements indicates an urgent need for a renewed catechesis in the Canadian context. Considerable vigilance is required by all those having pastoral responsibility for teaching, preaching and catechesis, so as to form Christians with a sound understanding of the place of Mary in the life of the Church and to ensure that devotion to her is in harmony with our emerging ecumenical consensus. We therefore consider the publication and reception of MGH as a timely event and an important opportunity for a renewed catechesis.

### **In Summary:**

We affirm that MGH represents a significant advance in our consensus regarding Mary.

- By reconsidering Mary together against the biblical pattern of the economy of grace and hope, we can receive together our respective teachings in her regard as consonant with the Scriptures.
- Presenting Mary as an exemplar of the pattern of grace and hope or turning to her intercession must never detract from the unique mediation of Christ for the salvation of humankind (1 Timothy 2: 5).
- Common study of the papal definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption help us to appreciate more fully their Christological and anthropological significance. They point to the power of God's grace in raising up the human person at every moment in life's trajectory.
- Consensus on the fundamental meaning of the Catholic teachings of 1854 and 1950 creates a new context and urgency for future

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<sup>1</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 'Theological Commentary on the Message of Fatima,' June 26, 2000. Cited in MGH §73.

dialogue to clarify their doctrinal weight in light of the hierarchy of truths, as well as the extent to which their acceptance might be required by Catholic authorities as a condition for ecclesial unity.

- Common study of the historical evolution of our respective traditions allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the biblical and Spirit-filled origins of our diverse devotional practice. Contemporary liturgical practice brings us closer together in our devotional practice and provides natural opportunities for common catechesis and celebration.

We urge the leaders of the Anglican and Catholic Churches of Canada to make use of this document as a resource for a shared catechesis of our common faith concerning Mary, Mother of the Lord, as witnessed by the Scriptures and handed down in the rich heritage of our traditions. It ought not to remain on the shelves of theologians. It is our hope that it might inform the life and practice of Anglicans and Catholics and inspire new initiatives for common prayer and devotion.

Members of ARC Canada participating in the development of this text:

Anglicans

Rt. Rev. Anthony Burton (2007)  
 Bishop Dennis Drainville (2008)  
 Ms. Ann Cruickshank  
 Rev. Kevin Flynn  
 Dr. Joseph Mangina  
 Rev. Canon Dr. David Neelands  
 Rev. Michelle Staples

Catholics

Most Rev. François Lapierre  
 Dr. Susan Mader Brown  
 Dr. Catherine E. Clifford  
 Rev. Jacques Faucher  
 Rev. Dr. Luis Melo  
 Rev. Dr. Gilles Routhier

Secretaries

Rev. Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan    Ms. Janet Somerville

**FAITH AND ORDER PLENARY COMMISSION OF THE  
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, ORTHODOX  
ACADEMY OF CRETE, 7–14 OCTOBER 2009**

*We present the reflections of two who attended the recent Plenary Commission. Jamie Hawkey reinvokes the four 'Marks of the Church', not as static labels, but as criteria for recognising ourselves, and others, as Church. On the one hand, the Marks engage with the visible, lived reality and experience of the Church; on the other hand, in the liturgical Creed, they are cries of hope for the eschatological realities to which the Churches aspire, as not yet fully One or Holy. Paul Murray considers the Commission's structure and some of the Plenary's themes. He locates Receptive Ecumenism at the heart of Catholic ecumenical commitment, as a strategy which reaffirms and complements the traditional work of both Faith and Order, and the bilaterals.*

**RENEWING THE MARKS:**

**CALLED TO BE ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC**

**Jamie Hawkey\***

The 2009 Faith and Order Plenary *Called to be the One Church* came in the midst of what has often been described as an 'ecumenical winter'. As has been said increasingly over the last ten or so years, the hopes of Lausanne, the hopes of forty years ago, of New Delhi and of *BEM*<sup>1</sup> have not materialised in the full, visible and eucharistic unity to which the Churches must remain committed. But as Mary Tanner reminded the Plenary in her paper,<sup>2</sup> we do now truly live 'beyond the limits' of the ecclesial landscape which our grandparents knew. There is no doubt that the achievements of the ecumenical movement generally, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper 111, the 'Lima Text').

<sup>2</sup> 'A View from the Past', FO/2009:10, p.1.

Faith and Order in particular, are many and varied. Such achievements are testified to in the regular practice of common prayer, which expresses the communion we already share, and are documented in the myriad of bilateral agreements between churches, in convergence documents and studies which are still in the process of reception, a process which needs encouragement and reinvigoration, as also in friendship. These are all our responses to the call to be the One Church, and it is with an attitude of gratitude for graces received that our future work must proceed.

The Plenary was realistic about the fairly radical new situations in which we find ourselves. The Moderator of the Commission, Metropolitan Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos, posed some key questions plainly in his report: 'Do the Churches today really want unity? ... For which unity do we speak and for what Christians when the biggest number of Christians are refusing to take part in the process ... rejecting the Ecumenical movement as a whole.'<sup>1</sup> Increasingly, there is a seemingly new, growing and strange landscape within the Christian world. Also, despite the many treasures contained in countless ecumenical documents, many in the 'mainstream' Churches are experiencing some tiredness with the sheer volume of words which have been produced in the history of the ecumenical movement. At the risk of adding to these words, it seems to me that these two realities combine to encourage us to forge new and imaginative methods of appreciating and evaluating each other's—and our own—ecclesiality. In what follows, I want to suggest that one way of doing this might be to refocus our attention on the four classic 'Marks' or 'Notes' of the Church which embody the nature of the Church, and on how different Christian communities might appreciate each other through these four essential prisms.

*The Nature and Mission of the Church*,<sup>2</sup> together with the two study projects 'Moral Discernment in the Churches' and 'Sources of Authority', was a major focus of the plenary, and already has some good reflection on the four Marks.<sup>3</sup> However, a number of those present in Crete commented that the current text gives a somewhat static

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<sup>1</sup> Report, FO/2009: 03, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter *TNMC*

<sup>3</sup> Especially Section II: A 52-56, *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 198, World Council of Churches, Geneva.

impression of the Church, rather than sketching a vibrant reality which is pregnant with eschatological hope. In a document which necessarily has so many different ecclesiological methods and sources of authority at play, this is an understandable problem. But it became clearer as this plenary assembly advanced that the Churches need criteria for theologically evaluating 'lived experience' and of relating objective, observable reality to rich theological conviction about the Church.<sup>1</sup> We need to affirm very strongly that there is a need for ecclesiology not only to look at principles, but also at the lived reality of the Church in a rapidly-changing world through lenses which are faithful to the Tradition. As Fr Jorge Scampini OP pointed out in his paper, all theological reflection on the Church 'only becomes meaningful if it leads us to renew our Church life, to widen the horizons of our mission...'<sup>2</sup> There is a need to change gear, slightly, as we recognise that new cultural complexities and new horizons summon us to what Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima described as 'a new ecumenical *ecclesial space of togetherness*'<sup>3</sup> so that the churches, with their changing cultures, may recognise each other within the call to be the One Church.

### **One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic**

The Credal confession of One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is objectively complex to say the least, given the reality of ecclesial separation and schism. On the basis of objective evidence, the Church Militant is most certainly *not* fully One or fully Holy. Maybe this unmasking of a popular myth is one of the unintended fruits of the ecumenical movement, part of the necessary 'radical conversion' of which the Ecumenical Patriarch spoke in his Address to the Plenary.<sup>4</sup> Theologically it is necessary to affirm the integrity of the Church and her vocation due to her origin and relationship in the life of the Holy Trinity, as *TNMC* makes very clear early on in the document.<sup>5</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup> Contributions from Latin America, China, Cuba, South Africa and especially Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos' paper on an Indian Perspective (FO/2009: 29) led us to consider this in specific contextual situations.

<sup>2</sup> The Nature and Mission of the Church: An Evaluation from a Latin American Perspective, FO/2009: 27, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> Called to be the One Church, FO/2009: 08, p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Unity as Calling, Conversion and Mission, FO/2009: 02, p.3.

<sup>5</sup> *TNMC* I: A.13.

although it later goes on to affirm that ‘all four attributes relate both to the nature of God’s own being and to the practical demands of authentic mission’,<sup>1</sup> the document does not expand on the dynamic nature of the four Marks, nor does it interpret them in reference to other more ‘descriptive’ accounts of the Church in the document, such as *Church as Sign and Instrument*.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the sudden gear change between sections one, *The Church of the Triune God* and two, *The Church in History* is quite revealing in this regard, exhibiting the apparent dichotomy between ‘the being and the becoming modes of the Church.’<sup>3</sup>

For the sake of illustration, and at risk of over-simplification, the problem might be articulated as follows. Work on the four Marks in *TNMC* has tended to focus on the Marks as static badges of identity, rather than as rich, dynamic marks which are primarily spoken (or sung) testimony and proclamation within the worshipping community. In the liturgical confession of the Creed do Christians just utter those four words as a static description of the Church’s life, a kind of ‘tick-box’ assent, or rather as an aspirational hope-filled reality which we long for, albeit already present by eschatological grace? Of course, it has to be both. But it is the second of these qualities which is often underplayed in ecumenical reflection. In terms of how ecclesiality is measured, it is necessary to reaffirm that the Marks are aspirational, dynamic realities, rather than static description. Nowhere is this more important than within the current changing context of ecumenical work.

### **The Cries of the Creed**

When seen within the context of a liturgical declaration, the Marks are the cries of confident longing which identify the Church as the Church. Professor David Ford describes a cry as ‘a sign of the limits of speech, a gesture towards the inadequacy of any words to this content ... breaking the bounds of terms and categories.’<sup>4</sup> Partially because of the new ecclesial landscape which appears to be changing and

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<sup>1</sup> *TNMC* I: B.35.

<sup>2</sup> *TNMC* I: C.43.

<sup>3</sup> Geevarghese Coorilos, ‘Nature and Mission of the Church’: An Indian Perspective, *FO/2009*: 29, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> David F. Ford, *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 19.

complexifying faster than we can document, and because of the vast quantity of written material which already abounds and still needs to be received, we are frequently at or near the 'limits of speech'. This should prompt us to enter the realm of a new kind of evaluation of each other.<sup>1</sup>

So, our profession of the four Marks is, in a sense, structured in the vocative tense. But if the Marks are a call, or a cry, the question surely is *from* whom and *to* whom? The liturgical statement in the Creed 'I believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church' is surely a cry *to* God from the gathered *ekklesia*. It is an expression of commitment to the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed, and also to the final consummation of all things in the New Creation.<sup>2</sup> But since the Church's prayer is always an 'Amen' to God's 'Yes' in Christ,<sup>3</sup> the Church's liturgical cry of assent to the Marks should firstly be seen as our *response* to God's *primary* and gratuitous invitation to participation in the Triune Life. As Hans Urs von Balthasar put it in his reflection on the theology of Denys the Areopagite: 'Everything lies in the circular movement between procession and return.'<sup>4</sup> The title of the Faith and Order Plenary 'Called to be the One Church' was then of supreme importance because it reaffirmed that the ecumenical enterprise is a Divine *call* to the whole Church to participate in this dynamic, reforming reality. It is a call, a cry from God to the Church, echoed back in the hopefilled cries of prayer, assent and trust from the Church to God. The Marks are the cries of the Creed, that the character of the Church triumphant might be more visible in the Church militant.

The Marks are dynamic in their insistent cries for the further realisation of our unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. This reasoning cannot remain at an abstract level. For example, in each particular context, how a Church cares for the vulnerable and the outcast might be considered as much an evaluation of its Apostolicity as its resolve to confess the Apostolic faith. We need to ask, what are the observable qualities of a Church's life which mark it out as growing

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<sup>1</sup> Receptive Ecumenism promotes this challenge, but largely in a self-critical, receptive mode. My concern here is rather how the churches view and evaluate each other.

<sup>2</sup> This world-focussed approach was present in many papers at the Plenary.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 1: 17-22.

<sup>4</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. II, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 166.

in the vocation to be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic? The creative challenge is to identify how the lived experience of the Church can be said to exhibit this grace-filled reality, already inaugurated but still so clearly *in via*. One reason why Metropolitan Geervarghese Coorilos' paper<sup>1</sup> was a turning point in the conference was because it did just that. Coorilos challenged us with an ecclesiology 'from below' in the Indian context which revealed (specifically) the call to holiness and apostolicity in action. He also implicitly spoke of how the Church cannot claim to be One unless the poor, in the words of Gutierrez, 'raise the question of what being the Church really means.'<sup>2</sup> The four Marks offer us prisms through which to evaluate the wide variety of highly particular cultural questions in Churches already at the ecumenical table. But such evaluation has yet to be properly applied to some of the new Christian movements which appear to be, at best, very distant cousins to the mainstream historic Churches, and which in some ways take us to the limits of our speech. The Marks, when seen as the vocative cries of the Creed, open us all up to a new ecclesial future, where none can say to the other, however seemingly strange or risky, 'I have no need of you.'

## Conclusion

These are a series of preliminary observations which will need to be enlarged upon elsewhere. But it is my belief that further reflection on the four Marks as dynamic, vocative realities may help us navigate cultural and ecclesial complexities which are strange to most of the historic Churches, providing the anchor of Tradition, whilst enabling us to put out further 'into the deep'.<sup>3</sup> Faith and Order is well-equipped to do this very imaginatively. The Marks, when appreciated as vocative cries, can allow us to see any distinction between *ontos* and *praxis*, being and becoming, as false, and may help us to interpret diversity and new challenges more generously, more creatively, and more faithfully.

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<sup>1</sup> FO/2009: 29.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Julio de Santa Ana (ed.), *Towards a Church of the Poor* (Geneva: WCC, 1979), 152, in turn quoted in FO/2009: 29, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 5: 4.

## FAITH AND ORDER AND RECEPTIVE ECUMENISM

**Paul D. Murray\***

In January 2009 the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, the incoming Director of the Faith and Order Commission, and Dr Tamara Grdzeldze, one of the Executive Secretaries and a long-standing staff-member of the Commission, participated in the second international Receptive Ecumenism conference at Ushaw College, Durham: *Receptive Ecumenism and Ecclesial Learning: Learning to Be Church Together*.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, I was invited to write a short paper exploring the relationship between Receptive Ecumenism and the work of the Faith and Order Commission for distribution to the members of the then forthcoming Plenary Commission in Crete, and also to attend this meeting as an invited consultant representing the Durham Receptive Ecumenism projects.<sup>2</sup>

At the Ushaw conference, John Gibaut had been invited to present one of the opening plenary papers exploring a Faith and Order perspective on Receptive Ecumenism. Similarly, Tamara Grdzeldze was invited to present one of the final plenary reflections, looking back on the work of the conference from the diverse perspectives and contexts of the panellists. In a paper expressing great appreciation for Receptive Ecumenism, John Gibaut raised some pointed questions concerning the relationship between it and the work of the Faith and Order Commission and, more generally, the work of the bilateral dialogues: does Receptive Ecumenism represent a judgement on and alternative to the traditional work alike of Faith and Order and the bilaterals, or does it represent a reaffirmation and complement? In immediate response

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<sup>1</sup> For a report on the first phase of the Receptive Ecumenism projects see Murray (ed.), *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism* (Oxford: OUP, 2008). For a brief overview of the projects and the key thinking behind them, see Murray, 'Recent Developments in Receptive Ecumenism at Durham University', *One in Christ*, 42/1 (2008), 207-11. For further initial information, conference reports and the like, see <[www.centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk](http://www.centreforcatholicstudies.co.uk)>

<sup>2</sup> An extended version of this paper will be published as 'Receptive Ecumenism: Aims, Vision, Practice and Its Relationship to the Work of Faith and Order', *The Ecumenical Review*, 62 (2010), forthcoming.

that evening and many times subsequently throughout the following days together, I and others were able strongly to affirm that the latter is indeed the explicitly envisaged case. In the course of her conference-closing reflections and response, Tamara Grdzeldize extended the dual invitation mentioned above.

A key aim of the second phase of the Receptive Ecumenism projects has been to disseminate the fruits of the first phase, in which the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity had been intimately involved, and thereby promote wider potential adoption of the strategy of Receptive Ecumenism by appropriate regional, national and international bodies, e.g. by local and national ecumenical officers, by national and international dialogue committees/commissions, by Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and—most significantly for present purposes—by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

It was with this background and purpose, and with great excitement at the prospect of learning about the workings of the Faith and Order Commission first-hand (and, indeed, of Greek Orthodoxy in its home context), that I travelled to the Orthodox Academy of Crete.

### **Crete: the Setting**

Having to arrive late on the evening of Wednesday 7 October, due to flight options and other obligations, meant, to my great sadness, missing the opening address of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. I was able however, both that evening and in the course of his departure the following morning, to catch something of the reverence in which he is held in many parts of the Orthodox world. More generally, there was a sense of immediate total immersion into Orthodox culture and Cretan hospitality that lasted throughout the week: whether in the unstinting provision of festive meals in ever more splendid locations; in the *Zorba the Greek*-style dancing that inevitably followed such meals; in the celebratory visit to the tomb of Eleftherios Venizelos (d. 1936), the honoured Cretan revolutionary and first Prime Minister of a united Crete and Greece; in the visit to the oldest olive tree in the world in the company of the delightful and rightly proud Mayor of Chanai; or, most profoundly, in the invitation to participate in the wonderfully dignified yet strangely homely celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Kastelli, under the presidency of His Eminence Metropolitan Amphilochios of Kisamos and Selinon, President of the Orthodox Academy of Crete.

None of this immediate immersion prepared me, however, for possibly the greatest of Cretan gifts that enveloped me the following morning when I opened my shutters onto the awesomely quiet, still beauty of Crete's sun-blended, topaz azure seascape/skyscape, punctuated only by majestic mountain ranges, inviting yet forbidding. In such a place—a 'thin place' as some traditions would name it—our already-but-not-yet sacramental participation in and deep orientation towards the communion of all things in the Trinitarian communion of God becomes all the more tangible. Indeed, my only regret about what was a very special week with special people is that the hectic timetable did not allow a little more time for absorbing and being absorbed by this beauty and stillness.

### **Structure and Themes**

In terms of structure, aside from meals and visits to various places, the meeting was built around a varying daily combination of small-group scripture sharing and prayer, plenary presentations and discussion, small group discussion, and plenary liturgies representative of the cultural diversity of the assembly. In terms of content and focus, it was built around three key themes: reactions to and comment upon *The Nature and Mission of the Church*; a progress report on and practical involvement in the major Faith and Order project, 'Tradition and traditions: Sources of Authority for the Church'; and, as interesting complement to the latter, an imaginative small-group, case-study process exploring respective approaches to 'Moral Discernment in the Churches'. Given that executive power has now been devolved to the Faith and Order Plenary Commission's Standing Committee, which meets every eighteen months, the full Plenary Commission itself effectively operates as a large consultancy and dissemination forum, perhaps more effectively in the latter regard given the pressure of time on plenary debate and the relatively few opportunities for reporting back from the small groups; a situation compounded by the need to spend a fair amount of plenary time inducting many new and younger members into the story and work of the Faith and Order Commission.

Quite apart from the always excellent small-group discussions, graciously and very effectively led in my own case by the Revd Dr Ruth Gouldbourne (Baptist Union of Great Britain), and the wonderful liturgies collectively representing a powerful experience of the world church, the plenary highlights in my judgement were the papers by Dr

Vasilios Karayiannis (Metropolitan of Constantia–Ammochostos and Moderator of the Faith and Order Commission), the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut (Director), Dame Mary Tanner (co-President WCC), Dr Minna Hietamäki, the Revd Dr Susan Durber and the Revd Dr Paul Collins.

Taken together, Metropolitan Vasilios and John Gibaut did a masterly job of, in the former case, tracing the history of the Faith and Order movement and the various ecumenical ecclesiologies that have been operative and, in the latter case, of inducting all new members into the current work and workings of the Commission in general and of this plenary gathering in particular. Of particular importance was the emphasis John Gibaut placed on the centrality of relationship in ecumenical work: it is not just what we do that matters but the manner in which we do it.

In turn, drawing upon a professional lifetime of international ecumenical involvement, Mary Tanner presented a profound analysis of the various strategies that have guided the work of Faith and Order, culminating in a pleasing endorsement of Receptive Ecumenism as a significant fresh initiative fitted to the context in which we now find ourselves. Even more important than her analysis, however, was the tangible, infectious love and enthusiasm for the ecumenical vocation that Dame Mary communicated. In no sense was this ecumenism as burdensome obligation but ecumenism as freedom and opportunity.

For her part, Minna Hietamäki, a ‘younger theologian’ from Finland, complemented Mary Tanner’s paper by emphasising the need for Faith and Order to engage not simply the varying beliefs of the traditions, but their respective practices, cultures and ethos in a way that requires—as shared also by Receptive Ecumenism—traditional doctrinal approaches to be complemented by the use also of more empirical modes of analysis.

Susan Durber gave a moving reflection on how her participation in the ‘Tradition and traditions’ project as co-Moderator had led her to a fundamental reevaluation of the place of the teachers and witnesses of the early church as authorities in the ongoing task of discerning the living Tradition today.

Finally, in terms of my selection at least, in what was probably the most conceptually demanding of the plenary papers, Paul Collins called for a self-conscious focussing on matters methodological and the various and not always well integrated ways in which doctrine is

regarded as operating in *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. With some reference to George Lindbeck's influential 1984 work on *The Nature of Doctrine*, but preferring his own labels, Paul Collins first contrasted 'indicative' or 'aspirational' approaches to the doctrine of the church on the one hand and 'aesthetic' or 'experiential' approaches on the other, before then seeking to identify their interweaving in *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. It may have been helpful, in this context, to explore Lindbeck's own preferred regulative approach to doctrine, itself born out of a lifetime of ecumenical involvement and reflection.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Participation in the Plenary Commission was undoubtedly a tremendous experience—without question one of the two most significant experiences of the world church I have had—and, over and above the many opportunities for informal encounter and small-group discussion, also afforded an invaluable insight into the workings of the Faith and Order Commission. The relative lack of opportunity for plenary discussion was a little disappointing, particularly given the intended 'consultancy' dimension of the event. Similarly frustrating at times was the fact that the majority of the plenary presentations tended to remain at the level of reporting on the relevant state of things rather than pushing through to the analysis of difficult issues and the testing of possible constructive ways forwards. Perhaps this is inevitable given the size of the gathering, the breadth of the agenda, and the need to carry together the full range of participants, with widely differing levels of previous ecumenical engagement between them. Perhaps also it is a product, in part, of the natural tendency of official delegates representing their respective traditions to incline towards the non-controversial rather than to engage the more challenging but absolutely crucial task of identifying and analysing difficult issues in the light of how they might be constructively addressed through receptive ecumenical learning.

Pulling this together, alongside tremendous appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this most recent Faith and Order Plenary Commission, I was left with two thoughts. One is that whilst these large convention-style events certainly have their place, they could usefully be complemented by a number of smaller, colloquium-style events in which participants were not always in 'official representative'

capacity—perhaps organised in partnership with academic participants and their respective institutions—and which could focus on difficult substantive and methodological issues, geared towards rigorous analysis and constructive proposal-testing. Second is that—unsurprisingly given the context out of which came my invitation to participate—the principles of Receptive Ecumenism could very usefully be put to work to shape the ethos and focus of the plenary presentations and related conversations in future such meetings. In short, the intrinsic relationship and complementarity which I had believed to exist between Faith and Order work and Receptive Ecumenism was strongly confirmed for me by participation in the plenary commission. Far from Receptive Ecumenism in any sense being an alternative to or competitor with Faith and Order work, Receptive Ecumenism seeks to bring to the forefront the only attitude that can enable long-term progress towards unity to occur, that of self-critical receptivity.

*CONFERENCE ADVANCE NOTICE*

A substantial conference is planned for Saturday 15 May 2010 to mark 15 years since *Oriental Lumen*, the apostolic letter on Catholic-Orthodox relations and unity.

It will be a joint enterprise supported by Heythrop College's new Centre for the Study of Eastern Christianity, the Pontifical Society of St John Chrysostom, Minster Abbey and the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge.

The aim is to capture the progress so far in Catholic-Orthodox dialogue since Vatican II, and the work in response to *Oriental Lumen* since 1995.

Speakers will include Archimandrite Demetrios Charbak of the Patriarchate of Antioch and Dr Frans Bouwen from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It is hoped to have Ukrainian Catholic, Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as Roman Catholic involvement.

Space will be limited so tickets will be by application. Notification of interest in the first place to: [johnchrysostom@btinternet.com](mailto:johnchrysostom@btinternet.com)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue*, Cardinal Walter Kasper (London/New York: Continuum Books, 2009), xv, 207. ISBN: 978-1-4411-6272-4

I'm told that in seminaries the Catechism of the Catholic Church is used as a text book, as a handy summary of the Vatican II documents and subsequent teachings that the trainee-priests should have read in detail. Ecumenical experts now have their own Catechism in this book by Cardinal Walter Kasper. It is a summary of progress so far of the four ecumenical dialogues into which the Catholic Church has entered: with the Methodists and Lutherans, (both since 1967) and the Anglicans and the Reformed Church (both since 1970). The subtitle: *Ecumenical Consensus, Convergences and Differences* indicates that the book is not a painting over the cracks, but a clear description of the current state of play.

Given that the first documents to which reference is made come from the 1970s and are long since out of print, it is useful to have a vade-mecum which brings together the various documents. This is done in a synthetic way: there are four chapters: 'Fundamentals of our Common Faith: Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity,' 'Salvation, Justification Sanctification,' 'The Church,' and 'The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.' Each of these is subdivided into headings, and where appropriate these are further divided and sub-sub-divided. This enables the reader to look down the contents and following the divisions move from 'The Church', to 'Source of Authority in the Church', to 'Scripture and Tradition', to 'The importance of the early Councils of the Church'. Under the sub-sub-title 'The importance ...' will be found four paragraphs, each one dealing with a particular dialogue.

Thus, one has a very structured book which reports on what the dialogues achieved, or did not. For example, on Ministry – Ordained Ministry: there are two major sub-divisions: on the ARCIC consensus on ordained ministry, and on the ordained ministry according to other dialogues. The ARCIC section ends with a paragraph on the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy. However, the 'other dialogues' section does not mention the ordination of women; it was not a topic in those particular talks. There is but one sentence in a concluding paragraph to the chapter: 'As a final point, the question of the ordination of women has now become a major issue between the Catholic Church and most of the Reformation church communities' (152). Yes, but how will the ARCIC dialogue influence the other ones, and vice versa?

Where a subject has been treated in more than one dialogue then reference is made to each. For example, in the section on Salvation, Justification and Sanctification, we find a synthesis of the ARCIC document on 'Salvation and the Church' (1987), the Catholic-Lutheran 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification' (1999), and the Reformed-Catholic report 'Towards a Common

Understanding of the Church' (1990). Other areas too, have a common consensus, for example 'The Word of God as a common source of Scripture and Tradition,' or 'Episcopé and collegiality.' Nevertheless, the broad areas for further study are also indicated, as in the three-fold pattern of ministry. There is a frankness to the book, as exemplified at the end of the section on Universal primacy, 'in conclusion it must be said that the old polemics regarding the Petrine ministry have been overcome, but full consensus is still far from sight' (137). This is not just a report to be filed away, the topics which are outstanding are delineated.

The concluding chapter, 'Some Preliminary Conclusions' is clear as to the pluses and minuses of the dialogues. It is realistic, highlighting the exchange of gifts, and the shared apostolic faith, and the renewed understanding of the relation between Scripture and Tradition, and the nature of the Church, as well as the agreement on the doctrine of justification and the new approaches to the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. It also poses questions: do the other churches have a theology based on their binding creeds or confessions? What does the primacy of Scripture within Tradition mean? How can the Church be understood? Given the basic consensus, how are other truths bound up with this, understood? How is the Eucharist understood as the memorial representation of the unique sacrifice of Jesus? This chapter can be compared to a refuge on a mountain-side: we can see how far we have come, and how far there is to go until the summit. We must not lose heart.

On reading this book one may ask how the Pontifical Council co-ordinates the dialogues? Obviously there is no inter-change of membership, the people chosen by the Vatican as its nominated participants are chosen individually for each dialogue. One would like to know if the Council ever facilitated a sort of cross-fertilization, so that the participants were aware of what was happening in the other dialogues, and the way they were moving. Perhaps it was policy to let each one flow freely, guided by the Spirit, selecting the major topics as it seemed best to each group; but it would be nice to know if this was a deliberate choice, or one that just happened.

I find it curious that the book is copyrighted to Cardinal Kasper, and published by an Anglo-American publishing house. Given that it is based on official dialogues, and put together by him, or under his name as Prefect of the Pontifical Council, I wonder why it was not published under the Vatican copyright by the Vatican publishers, and made available in other languages. Is this a sign of the marginalising of Ecumenism by the Vatican, and a sop to the English-language ecumenical enthusiasts? Have his bold statements in the concluding paragraphs of the first chapter: 'What we share in faith is therefore much more than what divided us. The common ground we share can be a solid basis to overcome the divisions between us' (28) penetrated into the fabric of the other Vatican dicasteries? They deserve to be proclaimed from the roof of St. Peter's, *Urbi et orbi*.

James M. Cassidy CRIC, Diocese of Northampton

*'You will be called Repairer of the Breach': The Diary of J.G.M. Willebrands 1958-1961*, Theo Salemink (ed.) (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), viii, 450, paperback. ISBN: 9789042922570

The heart of this volume, published in the year that would have seen his hundredth birthday, is the English translation of the diaries of Johannes Willebrands (1909-2006), as preserved in three notebooks dated 31 July 1958—27 September 1959, 1 May 1960—28 August 1960, and 1 September 1960—6 March 1961 (pp. 37-269). Maria ter Steeg, secretary of the Cardinal Willebrands Archive in the Netherlands, tells how these notebooks were discovered in a box that came from Rome in 2005 to Denekamp, where the Cardinal spent the last nine years of his life. The editor, Theo Salemink of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Tilburg University, provides a 30 page introduction and copious helpful explanatory annotations to the text, so that the reader is never left wondering who is this person that Willebrands is referring to. An appendix (pp. 273-428) gives the original Dutch text of the Notebooks.

The role of Cardinal Willebrands was immensely important in the official entry of the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement and later in his work as Secretary of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity under Cardinal Bea, and then as President himself. It is fascinating to have this account of his activities during the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council. He was not writing for publication, but quickly, informally, creating an aide-memoire that would help him in his ecumenical contacts.

By 1958 he had proved his commitment to the ecumenical movement. His first contacts had come during the Second World War, when he was teaching at the Haarlem diocesan seminary at Warmond. His lifelong friend Frans Thijssen, who features largely in the diary, introduced Willebrands to Catholics and Protestants who were helping Jewish refugees to escape from the Nazis, and also met for discussion. Then in 1948 he became chairman of the Saint Willibrord Society (SWV) and organised dialogues with Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox churches in the Netherlands. In the early 1950s he and Thijssen began travelling throughout Europe to develop a network of Catholic ecumenists. They visited bishops like Lorenz Jaeger of Paderborn, and met theologians like Josef Höfer of Paderborn, Fr Dumont OP of the Istina centre for the study of Eastern Churches in Paris and Dom Theodore Strotmann OSB of the Benedictine monastery for unity at Chevetogne in Belgium. Their work led to the formation of the Catholic Conference for Ecumenical Questions in 1952 (CCEQ); it was Willebrands who first thought of such a development. Their plan had been presented to some of the consultors of the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome, and one of them, Fr Augustin Bea SJ, Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, was particularly enthusiastic. Soon after this Willebrands and Thijssen first made tentative contacts with the World Council of Churches and its General Secretary Visser 't Hooft, a Dutchman like themselves, encouraged by Bea.

Willebrands began his diary on 31 July 1958 because on 1 August he was to start work as Episcopal Delegate for Ecumenical Affairs, appointed by the Archbishop of Utrecht. During the first three months he made very short daily entries (on many pages the explanatory notes take up more space), mainly mentioning the people he met and the meetings he attended. These included one at Utrecht between the World Council of Churches and the Russian Orthodox, about which he had to write a report for the Archbishop. He often visited the Tiltburg, the headquarters of the Grail movement, since it housed the secretariat of the CCEQ, and he was later to be much helped in his ecumenical work by some of the young women who were members of the Grail.

Already on 31 July he had talked with a Protestant pastor about the course he was to give at Bossey, the WCC study centre near Geneva, which drew together an international group of Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox students each year for a winter session. Bossey broke entirely new ground in 1958-9 by choosing 'The Roman Catholic World' as its theme. From 19-26 September and 9-11 October Willebrands was doing intensive preparation for Bossey. Again from 19-26 October his daily entries were 'study ecclesiology in preparation for Bossey', first at the Dominican convent in Strasbourg, where he talked with Yves Congar, and then in Paris where he could talk with the Dominicans at Istina. From Paris he went directly to Bossey. Now entries get longer and more informative: his lectures, discussions with staff and students, and 'very important', 'open and friendly' and 'fruitful' talks with WCC staff in Geneva. He talked again with Visser 't Hooft when he left Bossey on 11 November, and then with Thijssen (who had joined him at Bossey) drove to Rome. They were delighted when Cardinal Ottaviani, then pro-secretary of the Holy Office, approved plans for a joint discussion on the WCC study on the Lordship of Christ, to be organised by Willebrands and Hans Heinrich Harms of the WCC Division of Studies. They found the climate in Rome far more favourable to ecumenism than it had been under Pope Pius XII, and everyone seemed to approve the work they had been doing. Willebrands was 'very satisfied and happy', Thijssen was 'extremely happy' and 'at the Germanicum everyone is happy; Fr Klein thinks it is a miracle'.

The early contacts with Visser 't Hooft and the WCC, and his care to keep the Holy Office informed, together with the very positive support of his own bishop, made Willebrands a trusted expert in Rome. The reader becomes aware of how his earlier work in the CCEQ and the numerous contacts he made during it were influential in shaping official Catholic ecumenism once Pope John XXIII had decided to call together the Second Vatican Council. The 1958 session at Bossey seems particularly significant—strangely, Willebrands is not mentioned as the first Roman Catholic lecturer there either in Hans-Ruedi Weber's history of Bossey nor in Visser 't Hooft's memoirs. There is no record of such intense preparation for any other lectures or sessions he gave, and the work he put in stood him in good stead for the future, as did the personal relationships he developed not only with the staff, but with that year's students.

On 25 January 1959 Willebrands preached at Amsterdam for the closing day of the Week of Prayer for Unity—and did not even mention in his diary that Pope John XXII had called the Second Vatican Council! He went off to Germany next day on CCEQ and WCC business, and while there met the young student Fr Tom Stransky, who later joined the staff of the Unity Secretariat. Back in Holland he studied ‘questions of the Council’ on 30 January (the first mention in his diary) and next day wrote an article on the Council. Then there were discussions in Strasbourg with Congar, Dumont from Paris and Rousseau from Chevetogne about the Council and what contribution the CCEQ might make; then to Geneva to talk with the WCC; then to Rome in March to report. Cardinal Ottaviani asked him to collect non-Catholic reactions to the Council—expenses could be charged to the Holy Office. Again he was off to Geneva and Rome in June; he found confusion in Geneva about the Council, and in Rome he explained to Bea that the WCC would like an address in Rome to answer their questions about the Council. He reflected that he himself would rather not live in Rome—but this was important work, and he would not refuse.

Willebrands’ diary also sheds new light on the ‘Rhodes incident’ of August 1959; he and Dumont were accredited journalists (not yet Observers) at the session of the Central Committee of the WCC. The Orthodox in Rhodes suggested a meeting with them and a few other Catholic priests who had come to Rhodes. Press reports suggested some kind of official negotiations between them, and Visser ’t Hooft was furious at what he saw as an abuse of WCC hospitality and an attempt to draw the Orthodox away from the WCC. Eventually he blamed Dumont and apologised to Willebrands. In September Willebrands was again in Rome to report, and clearly his diplomatic skills in defusing an embarrassing situation were appreciated.

In Willebrands’ diary we see the eventual establishment of the Secretariat for Christian Unity. In May 1960 Bea told him that a special organ for ecumenical contacts would be appointed; they discussed whether Willebrands might be Secretary or a consultor. Willebrands felt he would be in danger of suffocation in Rome. In June 1960 he was in Geneva to give advance news of the new body to Visser ’t Hooft, at Bea’s request, and to suggest a secret meeting between Bea, who was to be its President, and Visser ’t Hooft, who was enthusiastic at the idea. On 28 June, back in Holland, he was told that Vatican Radio had announced that he had been appointed Secretary of the Secretariat for Christian Unity; he didn’t know beforehand, but it can hardly have been a surprise. On 8 July he had his first talk with Bea as Secretary on the difficulties they were to expect in Rome; the relationship was very cordial, and Willebrands hoped it would be like that in the office. A week later they had compiled a list of proposed members, consultors and correspondents for the Secretariat, and happily the Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Council accepted it. Willebrands had to give up his hopes for an Ecumenical Institute in the Netherlands, and an Oratory to live the spirituality of unity in community.

In August Willebrands was off to the meeting of the WCC Central Committee in St Andrews, calling at Lambeth on his way and finding the Church of England very positive about the Council. Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury, would like to make a private visit to Pope John XXIII in December 1960. The diary gives fascinating details about the preparations entailed by such an unprecedented event, and near the end, in February 1961, it records the plan for the Archbishop of Canterbury to have a personal representative in Rome.

One can only rejoice that these notebooks were not irretrievably lost.

Ruth Reardon, Turvey

*A Century of Prayer for Christian Unity*, ed. Catherine E. Clifford (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2009), 143, ISBN: 9780802863669

This short volume is a timely reminder that whatever our problems with structural and doctrinal change it is as human beings in prayer that we discover and best express our true relationship to one another as already One in Christ and One in God. This tension between the 'now' of God and the 'not yet' of our realising this as creatures is evident throughout the rich variety of reflections presented here as celebration of a century of prayer for Christian Unity. All tussle with the need to present a properly ordered chronological account of what has taken place, with its setbacks, qualifications and shortcomings, with the ever-present hope and acknowledgement that it is not in one sense really up to us anyway, but rather a matter of stepping into and accessing a process of gift. This dynamic is expressed in many different ways and to differing degrees by the various authors. Catherine Clifford stresses the need for 'prayer without ceasing' in order to cultivate the awareness of God as ever-present, and for us to then be in Christ both as a sacrament and sign of union with God and with one another (*Lumen Gentium*, 7). This is a matter of digging deeper (or transcending current differences) 'to draw from the unique source of our communion in the life of the divine Trinity' and indeed 'to receive what we are' (23). Cardinal Kasper reiterates this insight and offers three criteria for the discernment of whether what is happening is of the Spirit: it must be universal, i.e. rooted in everyday life; it must be centred on Christ, i.e. essentially biblical and sacramental; and it must take ecclesial consciousness seriously, i.e. it must allow for a sharing of gifts within the one Church of Christ. Our reason for hope then lies not in or own limited resources but in the Trinitarian love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

James Puglisi continues in this vein with an emphasis on prayer as changing us so that we want what God wants which is indeed 'to be transformed into the very gift that God is offering' (41). One is reminded of the comment of Dom Constantine Bosschaerts—founder of the 'Vita et Pax' Benedictine Foundation—that he did not make plans but simply followed the plans God laid before him. This requires though a change of mindset and is a risky business. For, to quote John Paul II: 'The Lord Jesus, when he prayed to the Father "that all may be one ... as we are one" (John 17: 21-2) opened up vistas

closed to known reason. For he implied a certain likeness between the union of the Divine Persons and the union of God's children in truth and charity' (*UR* 4, quoted 58). And this is indeed our assurance: 'Even before it takes historical shape, the Church is one in God's plan' (Paul VI, quoted 60).

Charles Sherlock's account of the development of prayer for unity in the Anglican tradition takes us back to the sixteenth century and is a largely historical account but, as with all the others, he highlights the inspirational significance of individual personalities and particularly the praying together of Michael Ramsey and Paul VI in 1966 which 'electrified Anglicans to new possibilities' (78), and one hopes that may be true again of Rowan Williams's recent meeting with Pope Benedict! George Tavard's valedictory insights into the personalities at work behind the scenes at Vatican II similarly put flesh on the bones of the otherwise mysterious workings of the ecumenical process. People matter, and can make all the difference.

This reviewer was especially impressed by the monastic insights offered by Sr Minke de Vries and her detailed delineations of the influence of Protestant monasticism on ecumenical matters. Once again there is an emphasis on the docility demanded of each individual to the work of the Spirit and on the fact that this is best effected in weakness and through the way of the cross, so that being rooted in the life of the Trinity we 'can never claim to take the place of God, to be the only ones who are right, or to have full possession of the truth' (110). Prayer, in short, should lead us to be receptive to the gift of God given to us in one another. Steven Harmon gives us a Baptist perspective which focuses on the eschatological tension between the now and not yet of the Kingdom and finds hope in our ability to be united in praying, if not at the Lord's table (see 126).

The name which recurs throughout and remains of immense importance to this fundamental approach of 'spiritual ecumenism' is that of Paul Couturier. And one can do no better than re-cite his oft quoted maxims:

not that others may be converted to us but that we may all be drawn closer to Christ;

that we pray for the unity that Christ wills, as he wills, when he wills it.

Dom John Mayhead OSB, Turvey Monastery

*The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), paperback, 324. ISBN: 9780802863607;

*Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now*, ed. David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2009), paperback, 317. ISBN: 9781870345736

To reflect today on the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh, 1910, is to approach an event that has acquired all the mythology and ambiguity of other world-historical transitions. It is common to conceive of the conference either as having 'given birth' to Christian ecumenism in a direct and linear way,

or else as being a fork in the road of global Christianity at which the evangelical and ecumenical communities began to diverge. But as we draw near to the centenary of the conference—an event which is being approached with a similar combination of sobriety and preemptive canonization—it is valuable to return to the source and gain a clear view of the proceedings, content and immediate aftermath of Edinburgh 1910.

Towards this purpose, the two texts reviewed here have been recommended as reference material by the study process committee of Edinburgh 2010. Brian Stanley splits his work between ‘a close account of the [1910] World Missionary Conference as an event in itself and ... a synthetic interpretation of the western Protestant missionary movement as it reached the apex of its size and influence’ (p.xx). The book is first a narrative of the history, and then a reflection on the ideas, of Edinburgh 1910. David Kerr and Kenneth Ross take a different approach by bringing together diverse modern voices to consider the eight ‘commissions’ of the 1910 conference and their distance from or proximity to missionary concerns today.

Within the tremendous detail and methodical structure of Stanley’s text is one running theme of particular importance. From his first chapter, he calls attention to the discrepancy between the conveners’ expectations for Edinburgh 1910 and the legacy that modern scholars ascribe to the conference. Part of this variance is due to the limited horizon of the conference’s time and place—but to an equal or greater extent, Stanley argues, contemporary retrievals of Edinburgh 1910 as a great dawn of ecumenism tend to misread the trajectory on which the conference lies. Notably, he demonstrates that it was the inauguration of neither inter-denominational collaboration on mission, nor of the ‘ecumenical movement’ per se. The former can be traced back much further—an inter-denominational mission conference, for instance, was held in 1810 at Capetown. Nor can the ecumenical movement, in Stanley’s analysis, be said to have properly begun at Edinburgh 1910, due to the conference’s almost unanimously evangelical Protestant orientation and studious evasion of most theological and ecclesiological questions. Certainly now this character does not reflect the meaning of ‘ecumenical,’ but more strikingly, neither did it meet the criteria then! The term ‘ecumenical’ was in fact dropped from the original name of the conference (‘The Third Ecumenical Mission Conference’) and replaced by the term ‘World,’ to reflect the horizon, rather than the perspective, of the assembly (p.19).

But where unique groundwork for the ecumenical movement was laid at Edinburgh was in the conveners’ careful attention, before the conference even began, to the potential meltdown that could be caused by any suggestion that Protestant missionaries were justified to evangelize in Roman Catholic or Orthodox communities around the world. Stanley emphasizes the tension that built as it was being deliberated whether to include the voices of Protestant missionaries in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and he discusses at length the final decision not to do so (although some delegates represented societies

with *other* members in such countries—p.303). Although the decision was largely, at the time, a point of compromise to secure Anglo-Catholic participation in the conference, it had ramifications beyond the subtle addition of ‘Non-Christian’ to the conference’s original mantra: ‘the evangelization of the whole [non-Christian] world in this generation.’ Throughout his text, Stanley turns a spotlight on Edinburgh 1910’s recognition of non-Protestants as *legitimately Christian*, which, however tacit, was indeed a keystone for later expansion of ecumenical relations.

There was a price to rejecting Christian proselytism in this way, one that we can see clearly in hindsight: an ever more pronounced binary between ‘Christian’ and ‘non-Christian’ lands, which Stanley describes as ‘the division of humanity into two along lines that were not strictly confessional, but primarily geographic’ (72). This binary, however, bore the weight of what fragile ecumenical consensus existed going into the conference—and while the binary of Christian and Non-Christian territory had begun to erode within two decades of the conference (305), the ecumenical groundwork on which confessional difference *could* be overcome in solidarity remains essential to this day.

Brian Stanley’s text can be dry and circumambulating, but it is exhaustively researched and annotated, making it an important reference text. The level of detail provided in every aspect of the conference—from the tensions between American and British convening assemblies (31), to the particular timing structure of the delegates’ presentation of and responses to each commission (Chapter Four), to the particular questions asked of each committee’s contacts in ‘the field’ (various chapters’ appendices), straight down to the delegates’ various lunch options (84!)—is well above satisfactory for those seeking to review the proceedings chronologically and with scholarly distance from contemporary chilliness towards the Edinburgh 1910’s more imperialistic or naïve ambitions. Indeed, Stanley has written an excellent work of history.

However, when it comes to our full appreciation of the *content* of the Edinburgh 1910 commissions in the present day, such a strict historical approach has its limitations. Although Stanley is justified in stressing the extent of the delegates’ ideological homogeneity (whose extreme fringe—absurdly so today—was occupied by the Anglo-Catholics and the few Asian Protestants present), if the 1910 conference is to provide value as we articulate the inheritance and horizon of twenty-first century mission, it will need to be addressed by more than one, historical-critical voice. We will need more polycentric, polyglottal, multidisciplinary reflections.

And here is the value of *Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now*, edited by David Kerr and Kenneth Ross. In this collection of seventeen essays, with introductions and commentary by the editors, each of Edinburgh 1910’s eight commissions is addressed from perspectives that confront head-on the impact that the 1910 conference had on the theological and ecclesiological history of the subsequent century.

Kerr and Ross introduce their text in a similar way as Stanley does his: while less cautionary than Stanley, they do remind the reader that Edinburgh 1910 was neither without precedent nor in and of itself ecumenically significant without the reflection we bring to it (4). But they too emphasize the elements of the conference's organization and content that were inaugural in various ways. Of particular import: the conference was a milestone in Protestant theology of religions—indeed, it was the only theology examined closely by the delegates (13), as a 'safe' question that did not appear to have controversial ecclesiological implications. Perhaps it is because these implications were avoided that Visser 't Hooft essentially passes over Edinburgh 1910 in his account of the genesis of the WCC (17). But the question of whether the conference is or is not a turning point in the overall history of ecumenism comes back to the 'true sense' of the term, and who is defining it. Was Edinburgh 1910 'proto-ecumenical' or *genuinely* ecumenical—just in the narrowest, intra-Protestant, pre-expanded sense? This question hits home for us in 2010 as we consider the ways in which ecumenism has pushed its horizons outward over the last century, coming to encompass not only a far broader spectrum of Christian witness but inter-religious solidarity on behalf of the shared 'household of life' (cf. Konrad Raiser, *Ecumenism in Transition*, 1989). The extent to which this expansion is legitimate and of consequence for inter-religious relations, whether missionary or otherwise, is likely to be a concern of Edinburgh 2010.

As noted above, the wrestling reflection on Protestant mission in Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries was inspiration for both the stripping of 'ecumenical' from the conference's name and for the formulation of the final version of that name: 'World Missionary Conference: to Consider Missionary Problems in Relation to the Non-Christian World' (17). It is in this light that Commission One—Carrying the Gospel to all the Non-Christian World—can be considered, though perhaps not in retrospect the 'most important,' certainly the 'flagship' commission of the conference itself.

Commission One's depiction of the 'Non-Christian World' is at the heart of the missionary discussion both in 1910 and 2010. In the Kerr/Ross text specifically, the two authors writing on this commission agree that this depiction took for granted a *fully evangelized home base*—in other words, a clear binary in territory, not only in identity. And both agree, unremarkably, that this classification is obsolete. But there is some disagreement between the respondents, Andrew Walls and Kosuke Koyama, which for me exemplifies the importance of such a plural perspective in interpreting Edinburgh 1910 and its legacy. Walls argues that the most striking rejoinder to Commission One (and indeed to Commission Two, 'The Church in the Mission Field') is that today the binary has inverted—2010's representative Christians are African, Asian, Latin American, while it is Europe that could be described as the 'non-Christian culture' (37) in need of missionary attention in all its nuance. But for Koyama this is too glib, discounting the divisions and ambiguities within civilizations

that eroded the binary to begin with. He suggests, rather, that 'the concept of the Christian world is as unrealistic as that of the non-Christian world' (42). From this perspective, the missionary task is not merely to redirect the translation of the gospel towards the idiom of Western, humanistic society—it is to consider how the work of loving *relationship* between culturally and spiritually divergent people has become a relevant issue at every point on the earth.

Most of the commissions are treated in this multi-voice manner, and the text holds interest all the way through. There is no space here to discuss each commission in depth, but a few additional reflections should serve to highlight issues that were of central importance in 1910 and are achieving new resonance in 2010.

According to Kerr and Ross, Commission Four (The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions) and Commission Eight (Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity) are the two that have received the most attention from ecumenical scholars to date. Of all the commissions, Four received the greatest number of responses from the field (over 200) and Eight had the greatest number of speakers address it at the conference itself (over 50). Each commission, moreover, demonstrates a high degree of reflection from missionaries in the field and a significant level of continuing commitment after the conference ended, and each complicates the caricatured picture of turn-of-the-century evangelism that many today may hold. In their introduction to Commission Four, for instance, Kerr and Ross include a number of quotes from the commission's organizers that exemplify this complexity (122-123). Phrases such as 'We are all agreed that Christianity is the final and absolute religion' (Robert Speer) are combined with those such as 'Do we not need the broadening and deepening of all our conceptions of the living God?' (David Cairns), 'Christ's own attitude towards Judaism ought to be our attitude to other faiths' (J. N. Farquhar), and 'No one believes we have the whole Christian truth' (Speer again!) to give a picture of genuine, if not yet wholly coherent, pilgrimage in love among other faiths.

Vinoth Ramachandra, in his own reflections on the commission, asks us to consider that it may have been a blessing in disguise that no conclusion was reached on this theme in 1910; perhaps, to attempt closure today would equally risk being 'inevitably reductionist' (147) in the attempt to systematize a theology of religions. The tension of missionary encounters—between the need to communicate the truth we have inherited and the need to approach other faith traditions with humble unknowing towards the truth that they contain and can convey—remains today at the heart of a viable approach to missionary vocation. Ramachandra might not agree entirely with this formulation, but he does invoke the closing words of the Commission Four Report, which I do believe to be aligned with it: 'But at least as remarkable as that spectacle of the outward advance of the Church is that which has also been revealed to us of the

inward transformations that are in process in the mind of the missionary, the changes of perspective, the softening of wrong antagonisms, the centralising and deepening of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the growth of the spirit of love to the brethren and to the world. Once again the Church is doing its duty, and therefore once more the ancient guiding fires begin to burn and shine' (150).

The treatment of Commission Eight in Kerr and Ross's text is significant because it approaches Edinburgh 1910's inter-denominational cooperation not only from the single synthetic perspective of the WCC or from the historically apt stance of Protestant evangelicals, but also through authors within the major Christian traditions that were conspicuously absent at the conference: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal. However, the reflections of these authors tend to fall somewhat short of the opportunity to look towards a uniquely twenty-first century ecumenism. In each chapter, the future of mission resembles the best of twentieth century mission—in each writer's tradition of reference. For Ionita (Orthodox), mission will be oriented by a renewal of high Christology (268) and a balance between liturgical richness and diaconal service (270). For Radano (Catholic), visible unity, repentance, respect, and continuity will remain at center stage (286-287). For Robeck (Pentecostal), ecclesiological unity will increasingly be recognized as not an end in itself but chiefly as a tool for the free movement of the Spirit into all corners of the world (299).

The point is not that these values are themselves problematic, nor that they do not deserve to be voiced just because they are specific to their traditions. Indeed, viable ecumenism requires such insights grown within tradition, in addition to synthetic theologies at the constructive crossroads. But to the extent that the ecumenical worldview has become polycentric over the last century (308), it is the responsibility of each tradition to speak not only from its own experiential center but *also to the heart of each other's tradition*.

Both in terms of inter-denominational communion and inter-religious hospitality, mission after 2010 may well be an open-ended dialectic of parts, rather than a crowding together of existing wholes. Kerr and Ross suggest as much in their concluding chapter, and they invoke Ramachandra's statement that when we reach out to the other in ecumenical solidarity we must 'go expecting to meet the God who has preceded us' (311). It is a sentiment that is uniquely resonant both with the pluralistic and post-pluralistic instincts of the contemporary theological academy and with the moments of deepest and humblest vision in the documents of Edinburgh 1910. Some of the closing words of Commission Six—an example of these moments that inspire us equally today—are also the closing words of this wonderfully rich and diverse anthology: 'We can never understand our own Holy Scriptures until they are interpreted to us through the language of every nation under heaven...'

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*Ökumene des Lebens als Herausforderung der wissenschaftlichen Theologie / Ecumenism of Life as a Challenge for Academic Theology. Proceedings of the 14<sup>th</sup> Academic Consultation of the Societas Oecumenica*, Bernd Jochen Hilberath, Ivana Noble, Johannes Oeldemann, Peter De Mey (eds.), Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau Nr. 82 (Verlag Otto Lembeck: Frankfurt am Main, 2008), 342pp. ISBN: 9783874765725

The present stage of ecumenism has been described in various ways. Those who speak of an 'ecumenical winter' seem to dominate the assessment of the current situation, yet Cardinal Walter Kasper calls it an 'intermediary stage': considerable mutual convergence has been reached, decisive things have happened in life, but there remain obstacles to be overcome. Hence, Kasper proposes an 'Ecumenism of Life' with reflection on Baptism as both a point of departure and a point of reference, and argues that practice no longer be considered the mere application of various aspects of ecumenical consensus, but practice itself must become a *locus theologicus*. Can this 'Ecumenism of Life' as proposed Kasper solve the current ecumenical crisis, or is it simply an avoidance of the evident difficulties?

This question, posed in the introduction to this compilation of 22 contributions to the 14<sup>th</sup> Academic Consultation of the Societas Oecumenica (2006, Prague), invites readers to engage in stimulating discussion concerning the concept of ecumenism of life. The texts of 13 of these articles are in English, with the remaining nine in German. The publication includes the keynote lectures, along with several contributions, mostly from junior scholars, and thus provides a good mixture of voices from both well-established and emerging scholars in the field. The book is organized in three parts. The first, 'From Experience to Interpretation: Ecumenism of Life in Different Cultural and Confessional Contexts', is introduced by Bernd Jochen Hilberath who proposes a 'communicative theology' as the methodology for an ecumenism of life.

Although Kasper's concept of 'Ecumenism of Life' is discussed in several papers, the term 'ecumenism of life' is also used in a much broader sense, and with different points of emphasis. Antoine Arjakovsky, for example, offers a contextual exploration of God's love as the foundation of ecumenism of life, focusing on the experience of the Institute of Ecumenical Studies of the Ukrainian Catholic University. Meanwhile, Johanna Rahner examines the change of perspective in Vatican II, which she concretizes through three points (common action, the ecclesiological significance of the local church, and Baptism) which are relevant to ecumenism of life. Rahner finally develops hermeneutical-theological and practical consequences of an ecumenism of life. Ecumenism of life is not 'ecumenism lite'. Instead, it has great potential to be explored further.

Andrew Pierce introduces the theological dialogue with religious fundamentalism which, he argues, is lacking in 'academic theology'. Pierce asks how theological engagement with the fundamentalist 'other' might contribute

to an ecumenism of life. Other contributors to the first part approach ecumenism of life from various disciplines: Fedor Kozyrev discusses a 'humanitarian' versus a 'holistic' concept of religious education in the postmodern age; Achim Budde suggests ecumenism of life as encouragement to live 'what we can already do'. He explores the Liturgy of the Hours, which does not include the Eucharist, as a chance for lived ecumenism. It is indeed an exceptional opportunity as the celebration of this 'basic cycle' of ecclesial life does not require us to wait until the question of intercommunion is solved. Stefanie Schardien introduces ethical discussion on end of life-decisions. Though euthanasia is certainly a growing concern for the European churches, the article, at first glance, appears to be somewhat ill-fitting in this volume. However, Schardien notes the absence of reference to the ecumenical discussion of ethical issues in Kasper's concept, and considers the term 'theology of life' as preferable to 'ecumenism of life'. Thus, her proposal poses a challenge to Kasper's concept. Finally, Verena Feldhans, explores how the instrument of customary law entailed in canon law can provide opportunities for ecumenism of life.

Christoph Schwöbel's paper on perspectives of ecumenical hermeneutics introduces the theme of the book's second part, 'Hermeneutical Keys for Ecumenical Theology: Doctrinal Consensus and/or Shared Life?' Schwöbel suggests that the problems posed by an ecumenical hermeneutics of consensus and a hermeneutics of difference can be overcome by an ecumenical hermeneutics of reference. A referential consensus is to be understood as a consensus in those areas that refer in a pure (*pure*) and right (*vere*) way to the foundation of the church and the foundation of the unity of the church. In his response, Anton Houtepen agrees with Schwöbel's main thesis that the real reference point of the Christian faith is that all live of the same grace of God, and of the same *pneuma* of God, and that there is an ecumenism of reference in ecumenical dialogues, which refers to the content of Christian faith and life. Nonetheless, Houtepen emphasises that all churches live of 'the faith of the church through the ages', which they have received in the 'paradosis of the gospel'. Geoffrey Wainwright's paper, which follows, was the final lecture at the conference. Wainwright suggests including the elements of 'life', 'truth', and 'love', employed by Kasper's tripartite formula 'ecumenism of truth', 'ecumenism of love', and 'ecumenism of life', under the headings, which themselves overlap, of 'ideas' and 'gifts'. As a 'responsible theologian', he expresses both the desire and hope that a theology of ecumenism of life might combine an exchange of ideas *and* an exchange of gifts such as charisms, treasures and riches of the respective traditions. The following three contributions from Catherine E. Clifford, Dietrich Oettler, and Martina Bár examine ecumenism of life from various perspectives. Mentioning examples from recent dialogues, which confirm the thesis that the method of ecumenical dialogue is expanding and becoming more complex as ecumenists take the living faith of the churches more seriously as an object of theological reflection,

Clifford investigates methodological questions which explore linking theological consensus and ecumenism of life. Oettler introduces Hans Urs von Balthasar's contribution to the debate on ecumenism of life and consensus ecumenism, while Bär reflects on the hermeneutics of dogma in regard to Kasper's 'Ecumenism of Life'.

The book's third part discusses the question 'From Theological Interpretation to Common Witness: Easier said than Done?' starting with Ulrike Link-Wieczorek who suggests a third way of ecumenism which fosters—in addition to ecclesiological dialogues and the conciliar process—an interdenominational theological community of those who are searching (as recommended by the Faith and Order Commission in Bangalore (1978) which suggested to live the visible unity of the church in a *lived* unity of the church in a visible way). The leading question is explored further by the contributions from Parush R. Parushev, Myroslav Marynovych, Eddy Van der Borgh. Parushev concludes that common witness is possible, desirable, and theologically justified, and suggests e.g. the Agape feast, and mission as promising areas. Marynovych describes ecumenism of life in concrete terms, with examples from his experience as a Greek Catholic prisoner of the Soviet Gulag in the Ukraine, and during the 2004 Ukrainian Orange Revolution, when Christians experienced the transfiguring power of love and ecumenism itself became a *living* phenomenon. Finally, Van der Borgh examines *the Accra Confession of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches* (2004) and its hermeneutics of life, which has a different scope than Kasper's plea for an ecumenism of life, but which he sees as congruent with an actualized liberation theology. Articles by René Beaupère, Ivana Noble, Ruth Reardon, and Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi which focus on the gift, grace and challenge of inter-church marriage and discuss the 'double belonging' experienced in interconfessional families conclude this fine volume which provides the reader with a lively impression of the various facets of ecumenism of life as discussed at the conference. The volume itself, as a compilation of conference proceedings, is a 'mixed bag', but one which gives a good snapshot of where the ecumenical movement is at the moment. Ecumenism of life certainly poses a decisive theological challenge for the ecumenical movement. One can look forward to the further development of this concept, and hope that it bears fruit.

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*One Baptism: Ecumenical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Baptism*, Susan K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 218. ISBN: 9780814653067

Ecumenical agreement on Baptism is almost taken for granted among the sacramental churches, and remains most neuralgic with these churches and Believers' Baptist communions. However, the ecumenical movement has both clarified and deepened our understanding of the sacrament and the different theological understandings grace, mediation, initiation and the role of the Church, which stands behind this common rite. This book is a helpful, readable

summary and theological reflection on the volume of ecumenical work, liturgical reform and theological research of the last century.

The volume begins by situating baptismal theology and practice within Christian eschatology and understandings of salvation. The author develops her theme, recognizing the interdisciplinary character of baptismal research; the intersection of Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, faith, church, justification and discipleship; as well as the link between liturgical and systematic sacramental theology. In the first chapter the recovery of the role of Jesus' baptism and Romans 6 in forming the early development of baptism, and the issues that seem unresolved in the churches' interpretation of the tradition are spelled out.

This opening chapter is followed by two on the doctrine of baptism: up to the eve of the Reformation and in the Reformers' and Catholic responses to one another. Chapters four and five treat patterns of initiation in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions and in Protestant traditions, focusing on Lutheran, Anglican, Reformed and Anabaptist developments. A full chapter is devoted to the important debates and developments on the relationships between faith, justification and baptism. The agreements included in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by Lutherans, Catholics and Methodists provides the framework for assessing convergences in a more personalistic notion of faith, and the role of community and mediation.

The final chapter, on baptism and the Church outlines some gains in ecclesiology from discussion of baptism, some remaining issues especially with the Reformed tradition illustrated by Barth's theology of baptism, as well as the heritage of the invisible church/visible church dichotomy. The shift from 'membership' to 'communion' language in Catholic understanding of initiation is illustrative of how Christology and eschatology help in ameliorating the polarizations over relationships, mediation and belonging. This chapter illustrates, also, the continuing unresolved issue of the sacramentality of the Church, especially in the World Council discussions.

For a brief volume a great deal of theological and ecumenical ground is covered. It will be a very important resource for pastoral leadership and ecumenists as well as for educators in passing on the common heritage that has developed among the churches in their common understanding and mutual recognition of baptism. It is likewise clear and irenic in identifying areas where continuing research, dialogue and communication needs to be done if the reconciling will of Christ is to be served.

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