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EDITORIAL

A broad spectrum of ecumenical activity is reflected in these pages, including reports and analyses of the following bilateral dialogues and interchurch conversations: Lutherans and Catholics (Burkhard); Orthodox and Catholics (Barbu); Evangelicals and Catholics (Siniscalchi); the Church of Scotland and Scottish Catholics (in reports); Catholics and Anglicans (Pecklers and Canadian communiqué in reports); and Anglicans and Lutherans (Carter).

In addition, Höschele and Davie give comprehensive accounts of the various interchurch conversations which Adventists and Anglicans, respectively, have engaged in. The broader perspectives of Christian-Jewish (Corkery, +McDonald) and Christian-Muslim (Wright in reviews) relations and interconnections are also explored.

Some inflection of exclusivism, intended or not, is rarely absent, when one church or faith group considers, or speaks of another. Issues of ecclesial and sacramental validity, which feature in a number of contributions, are especially sensitive in this respect.

Two contributions speak of these matters, as it were, in a different tone of voice. First, Adventists, with their eschatological emphasis, remind us that the church, while the Body of Christ in time, is also penultimate to the pleroma (Höschele). Secondly—and sharing that eschatological consciousness—movements of Charismatic Renewal, including Catholic, with their experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Moran), may broaden the vision of any church that sees itself as the exclusive gatekeeper of salvation, or channel of sacramental grace.

Fifty years after the opening of Vatican II, we include two anniversary items (+McDonald, Hawkey). It is thanks to the Council that we are validated in our task—in the words of the former—of ‘identifying where the energy is in ecumenism’, and of ‘identifying and reclaiming our shared reality’.
APOSTOLICITY IN RECENT LUTHERAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

John J. Burkhard*

Apostolicity and apostolic succession have been divisive issues between Roman Catholics and the churches that issued from the Reformation. In recent years, Catholics and Lutherans have worked hard to identify what they hold in common on them. The 2006 document of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, The Apostolicity of the Church, has made a major contribution in identifying points of consensus, of differentiated consensus, and of disagreement requiring further discussion. This article reviews the contents of this important ecumenical study and its reception by representatives of the two churches.

The theme of apostolicity has continued to be of interest in the ongoing dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Apostolicity is still a neuralgic issue between the churches and it continues to defy easy solution. It is wrapped up in a congeries of considerations that include both apostolicity of the faith and apostolicity of office and includes the thorny issues of episcopacy and apostolic succession. Still, considerable progress has been made in recent years. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, signed on 31 October 1999 by both the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church has cleared the air between the churches and encouraged more positive steps on other divisive issues.¹ Thus,

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¹ The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000). Also in Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-98,
the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, established shortly after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), in 2006 published the important document *The Apostolicity of the Church: Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity*.¹ This document represents a break-through on many issues relating to apostolicity and it has elicited a series of helpful responses that seek both to clarify the points of agreement between the two churches and to signal the issues that demand further attention by the Commission. In this article I intend to summarize the contents of *The Apostolicity of the Church* and then to examine the responses to it.² In a concluding section, I will point out one direction the dialogue needs to take on apostolicity at this juncture.

**Summary of the Study Document *The Apostolicity of the Church***

*The Apostolicity of the Church* was published under the auspices of the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and represents the results of consultations conducted between 1995 and 2006. The document, it should be noted, is not an agreed statement of the two churches but represents the results of the consultations in the form of a Study Document preparatory to any eventual ecumenical accord. Rich in detail and suggestive of many areas of agreement, the Study deserves greater attention.

The Study consists of four parts: (1) New Testament Foundations of the notion of apostleship and the apostolicity of the church (1-64);³ (2) the primacy of the apostolicity of the gospel and the resulting apostolicity of the church (65-164); (3) issues of ordained ministry and

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³ Unless otherwise noted, the numbers in the text and in parenthesis refer to the appropriate numbered paragraphs in the Study Document.
the nature of apostolic succession in ministry (165-293); and (4) the role of authoritative teaching in the church and its connection to the apostolicity of the church (294-460). The method of the Study contains common sections written by representatives of both churches. These include general scriptural, historical, and theological background, as well as mutually agreed-on statements. It also includes separate treatments by Lutherans and Catholics of topics where differences of interpretation continue to exist or where the churches place different emphases. The latter include ‘A Catholic Ecumenical Vision of Participated Apostolicity’ (106-123) and ‘An Ecumenical Lutheran Account of the Apostolicity of the Church’ (124-143); ‘Vatican II on the Ordained Ministry’ (235-251) and ‘The Ordained Ministry in Lutheran Teaching Today’ (252-269); and ‘The Church Maintained in the Truth according to the Lutheran Reformation’ (355-389) and ‘Catholic Doctrine on the Biblical Canon, Interpretation of Scripture, and the Teaching Office’ (390-428). It is not possible to present the Study’s contents in detail, and I must content myself with highlighting the principal points of scholarly agreement, as well as the points where Lutheran and Roman Catholic scholars diverge in their interpretations.

Part One is entitled ‘The Apostolicity of the Church—New Testament Foundations.’ 1-13 begin by claiming that for both Catholics and Lutherans Scripture is normative, even though our two traditions diverge on some interpretations of these Scriptures. Jesus came to proclaim God’s kingdom and he enlisted his closest twelve disciples in that mission. The earliest Christians experienced the power and presence of the Spirit Jesus has sent them. In 14-34 the Study accepts the breadth and fluidity of the term apostolos in the New Testament writings, and is usually content to point out the differing interpretations of the biblical data among the Pauline, Deutero-Pauline, and Lucan meanings of apostolos.

35-53 explain how, though never without leaders, the nascent church evinces a wide diversity of ministers. Together with the apostles, other forms of leadership and instruction emerge, namely, prophets, teachers, helpers of various kinds, presbyter-bishops, male and female deacons, and a single episkopos. The Study points out both the identity of meaning of the Greek terms episkopos and presbyteros in some passages but also the possibility of the emergence of a separate office of episkopos in others. It also reviews the various rites
of laying on of hands for different ecclesial situations—sacramental baptism, assigning a temporary task, election to ministry, association with a ministry, and finally, installation in office. The Pastoral epistles are concerned with installation in office in particular and view it as a charism or gift of the Spirit.

In 54-64 the importance of some form of continuing apostolic authority or office for preserving the truth of the gospel is highlighted. In the biblical perspective, apostolicity characterizes the time of the church’s foundation by the apostles and of its message, the apostolic gospel. This proclamation was multi-faceted: missionary, apologetic, instructional, ethical, and liturgical, and was expressed in a variety of literary genres. In the center always stands the authority of the apostolic gospel. The authority of its preachers and ministers is derived from the gospel, not vice versa. From its earliest years, but especially in the Pastoral epistles, the New Testament data point to efforts by the first-century church to strengthen those ministries and offices that hand on and defend the apostolic gospel.

Part Two, ‘The Apostolic Gospel and the Apostolicity of the Church,’ concentrates on the apostolic character of the gospel as the surest foundation of the church’s apostolicity. In 65-81 the gospel is characterized as both the message preached by Jesus during his ministry and the message about Christ. Jesus’ own gospel is expanded by the apostles in the experience of Christ as present to them and under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

82-92 present the emergence of the conviction of the church’s apostolicity from the late first century up to the Reformation. In 93-97 the Study strives to maintain the delicate balance Luther sought to establish between the priority of preaching the apostolic gospel and the necessity of a duly authorized preacher. 98-102 offer the Lutheran history of how the church strove to keep a balance between proclamation of the word and the ecclesial practices it inherited from the earlier church, even while it tried to purge the church of exaggerated and misplaced theologies concerning salvation, the Eucharist, and papal authority. In 103-105 the Catholic partners honestly point out the inadequacies of the post-Tridentine efforts to focus on the external signs of credibility of Catholicism at the expense of its rich interior resources.

In 106-111 the Catholic authors point to the teaching of Vatican II on revelation as the gospel of salvation. The bishops serve the gospel as a
college that expresses the communion of particular churches, always together with the bishop of Rome. New bishops are incorporated into the college which has the responsibility for proclaiming the gospel. Vatican II made it amply clear that bishops are called to be preachers of the gospel first and foremost and so its authoritative teachers who model this to other ministers. 112-123 develop the fuller understanding of tradition recovered by Vatican II. The Study does not hesitate to call this teaching a ‘renewed understanding’ of tradition. Thus, the Council showed reserve in speaking about independent ‘unwritten traditions’ supplementing the witness of Scripture and preferred instead to speak about tradition as a dynamic process involving the whole life of the church. The church’s life and faith cannot be disengaged from one another but together constitute a saving whole. Moreover, the Council spoke of the real but imperfect communion between the churches, and the Catholic participants go so far as to say: ‘Catholic ecumenical theology is justified in concluding to an implicit recognition of these churches and ecclesial communities as apostolic, since the very elements listed are not meteorites fallen from heaven into the churches of our time, but have come from Christ through the ministry of his apostles and are components of the apostolic tradition’ (121).

Lutherans, too, have deepened their appreciation of the apostolicity of the church by reaffirming and reexamining their resources in 124-143. First, the Lutherans point out the primary importance not simply of the elements of apostolicity but of their proper configuration: what is the right pattern among the elements, and how are they understood and used in the church? For example, the gospel is seen more and more as proclaimed and lived in the context of the sacraments: ‘The preached gospel must be joined with the sacraments, along with the ministry of the keys. This is the vital center of the church’s life’ (128). Second, the Study distinguishes between what is ‘necessary’ and what is ‘needed’ in the forms of church order and pastoral care, namely reform and a deeper understanding of the church’s mission: ‘Today such reform should go hand-in-hand with the recollection that according to Christ’s will the communion of Christians with one another is intrinsic to their witness’ (134). Finally, the Lutherans point to the inevitability of theological diversity in the church and challenge the churches to reconcile the diversity. Lutherans challenge their Catholic dialogue partners to take more seriously the configuration of
elements in the Catholic Church, particularly how the historical episcopate and papal primacy relate to apostolicity. In 144-164, the authors recapitulate what has been accomplished in Part Two: the shared foundational convictions of the churches, the understandings of apostolicity that are shared by the two partners, and the differences that remain and require further study.

Part Three, ‘Apostolic Succession and Ordained Ministry,’ tackles the neuralgic issue of the role and forms of ministries in the church. After a brief introduction in 165-171, the Study begins in 172-183 with the New Testament conviction that Christ alone is the foundation of the church on which the apostles build. In addition to the fundamental office of apostleship, the New Testament evinces a wide diversity of other ministries: there are presbyters, deacons, prophets, teachers, house patrons, pastors, and overseers (episkopoi). It is their responsibility to teach what the apostles teach and to assure unity in their communities. Later strata of the New Testament show a growing interest in the need for protecting the truth of the teaching of the apostles from misunderstanding and deviations, and the presbyters and overseers in particular are entrusted with this task. Still, in the New Testament itself at this point, there is no uniformity of how this is to be done, or how presbyters and overseers relate to each other in terms of authority. We also find increasing use of a rite of the laying on of hands to designate those who have responsibility for teaching authoritatively what the apostles taught.

184-193 treat the classical threefold form of ministry with a single bishop, a college of presbyters, and a group of deacons that emerged sometime in the second century, though elements of the triad can be found already in the New Testament. Only in the third century did this triadic form receive its final shape, accompanied by the laying on of hands. The question of the relationship of local churches to each other led to seeing the bishop as the expression of the corporate reality of the local church with other local churches. The increased prominence of the bishop in turn led to an ecclesiology of the communion of the churches that was expressed in the collegial bond among the bishops. When Christianity exploded in the fourth century, the threefold ministry was retained, even though its configuration was altered to allow the presbyters to minister more directly to growing congregations. This new configuration eventually led to theological questions about the relationship of presbyters to bishops. The solution
of St Jerome on the sacerdotal equality of presbyters and bishop was followed by many, including Peter Lombard. Eventually, the priestly character of the episcopacy itself was questioned in favor of a juridical explanation of the difference.

Luther’s teaching on the ministry is presented in 194-224. Central to his understanding was the rediscovery of the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers, but it did not exclude the need for a pastoral ministry of preaching the word and administering the sacraments. Normally, appointment to the pastoral ministry is through ordination by a bishop, but in emergency situations ordination by presbyters was permissible. Furthermore, Luther saw the pastoral ministry as endowed with God’s authority, since it is God who acts directly to save through the instrumentality of the church’s ministers. Historical contingencies of how episcopacy was exercised in Germany at the time obfuscated the theological meaning of the office for both Catholics and Lutherans, and this extended to the distinction between episcopal ministry and pastoral ministry. In Luther’s view, there is a real need for an office of oversight to insure that the true gospel is preached. Its form and exercise might be historically contingent, but it is theologically necessary. Finally, in the Lutheran perspective on the question of successio apostolica by ordination, the Study makes it clear that the practice cannot be traced back to the apostles themselves but from subsequent practice. The Study offers several helpful historical observations from the time of the Reformation that show how Lutheranism at this time clearly understood ordination as more than appointment to a specific congregation but included incorporation into the one ministry of the gospel.

The teaching of Trent on the nature of ministry is presented in 225-234. The Council wanted both to defend the apostolic order it had inherited from the past and reform it. It insisted on the centrality of an ordained priesthood to offer the sacrifice of the Mass and it emphasized the office of bishop over the offices of priest and deacon. The Catholic authors also point out that Trent’s reform decrees stressed the dimension of the pastoral ministry of the priesthood together with the priest’s power to offer the Mass. Trent also preferred to speak more flexibly of ecclesial ministries by saying they were ‘by divine appointment (divina ordinatione)’ rather than the more restrictive ‘by divine institution (iure divino),’ and it did not speak of
the bishops as ‘succeeding to the apostles’ but in a more open-ended way of the bishops ‘succeeding to the place of the apostles.’ The Catholic authors go so far as to state that ‘on ordained ministry, the Council was not able to integrate its teaching into a coherent ecclesiological framework’ (225).

235-251 are devoted to the contemporary Catholic understanding of ordained ministry. For Catholics, Vatican II regained the centrality of the doctrine of the priesthood of all the baptized without denying the special character of the ordained ministry. Moreover, the apostolic ministry needs to be understood within the broader perspective of the apostolic mission in which all believers share in Christ’s roles as prophet, priest, and king. Episcopacy has been rethought more broadly within the perspectives of apostolic tradition, the sacramental basis of the order of bishops, and the collegial character of this office whose members express the communion of the local churches. For a Catholic, after Vatican II it no longer suffices to point to the act of personal episcopal ordination in isolation from its constitutive theological elements. ‘Apostolic succession’ is tradition, sacrament, and the communion of the bishops among themselves as a college.

The contemporary Lutheran understanding of ministry is presented in 252-270. Today Lutherans hold that the pastoral office, though based on the priesthood of all believers and of service to it, is a special ministry authorized by ordination and exercised in the power of grace. It has two basic characteristics: it is public and ordered to all the members of the community of faith. Ordination to the ministry is not to be repeated, and women may be admitted to the pastoral office. An episcopal or supervisory office is needed to concretize the fact that all local congregations understand themselves as related in the Spirit to all other congregations and to assure the proper exercise of the ministry. Finally, the historic episcopate is a valuable sign of the apostolicity of the whole church that contemporary Lutherans are rediscovering and reevaluating.

In conclusion, 270-293 present both points of agreement between Catholics and Lutherans, as well as the differences that remain, and new ground is broken in the section that tries to reconcile the differences. First, what are the implications of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification for the apostolicity of the church? If apostolicity of faith is primary for the apostolicity of the church, then the existing differences must be measured against this fundamental
agreement in faith. Can the differences on how the episcopal office is exercised in the two churches be reconciled in the light of what unites them? What are the implications of this relationship of secondary to primary elements? Second, is the notion of differentiated consensus applicable in the case of apostolicity as it is in regard to justification? Does the more fundamental agreement between the churches in understanding apostolicity allow room for differences in speaking about apostolicity and differences in the way ordained ministry is exercised? The Study points to substantial consensus on essentials and differentiated consensus on explanatory issues as the way to surmount the remaining difficulties.

Part Four, ‘Church Teaching That Remains in the Truth,’ takes up the issue of how the pastoral ministry of the church is of service to the truth of the apostolic gospel. 294-313 examine how both Catholics and Lutherans acknowledge that God preserves the church in revealed truth by the gift of the Holy Spirit. But even the Spirit’s activity does not exclude all conflict and disputes in the church about the meaning of the gospel. Human nature’s proclivity to error and its limited vision of the truth call for vigilance among the faithful and require vehicles for defending and defining the truth of the Christian faith. 314-354 present some of these means for remaining in the truth: the earliest creedal formulae in Scripture, the early formulation of ‘the rule of faith’ (second and third centuries), baptismal and dogmatic creeds, e.g. the Creed of the Council of Nicaea, the emergence of the office of bishop, and especially the formation of the canon of Scripture. Other indispensable means for remaining true to the apostolic gospel were the teachings of the councils of the first eight centuries, earlier conciliar decisions, the agreement among the great thinkers or ‘Church Fathers’ and the various schools of thought and methods of interpretation they fostered, and increasingly too the contributions of theologians and exegetes.

Lutherans point to a number of factors that explain how they understand the church’s ministry to God’s revealed truth in 355-389. Although there is no official list of which books of Scripture Lutherans consider canonical, they have shown an historical preference for the shorter Hebrew canon, without entirely excluding the longer canon of the Septuagint. Moreover, there are internal criteria for understanding the meaning of Scripture. Does the interpretation lead to Christ? Does the interpretation conform to the gospel of justification? Do the words
of Scripture themselves lay open the text’s meaning? Is a doctrine taught by the church well founded in Scripture? Other aids to the correct interpretation of Scripture cherished by Lutherans include the church’s official Creeds, the witness of the Church Fathers, the church’s Confessions and Catechisms, the human experiences of study, prayer, and submitting to temptation, and finally the supervisory process of the bishops over what is preached, taught, and practiced in the church. There is also a legitimate theological diversity regarding the understanding of Scripture as long as the diversity does not contradict its truth. Finally, although episcopal supervision is generally exercised regionally, the Lutheran church does have resources at the supra-regional level and has even exercised this authority.

The Catholic partners strive to put to rest a common misunderstanding of the Catholic position on the scriptural canon in 390-410. Catholics accept the longer Bible of the Septuagint not because the hierarchy has invested these books with canonical status but because they recognize in them the word of God for the life and faith of the church. The historical process by which the Catholic Church has arrived at this decision has been long and multi-faceted, including heeding the voice and practice of the faithful. The Catholic position on the matter of interpreting the meaning of Scripture is complex and many-layered. The hierarchy has encouraged the contributions of scholars to the understanding of the biblical text, especially in the past century and at Vatican II. It has also fostered the formative influence of Scripture on the fuller life of the church, especially in spiritual and liturgical matters. The church’s magisterium or teaching authority is interested in the meaning of Scripture to the extent that it affects the understanding of the doctrines of the church and not for the sake of determining the meaning of any given text. Finally, the meaning of a text of Scripture for the life of faith emerges over time in the ongoing tradition of the church, or as the Catholic authors say, ‘Scripture has made itself present in the tradition, which is therefore able to play an essential hermeneutical role’ (410).

In 411-428 the Catholic partners explain how the magisterium gained prominence in the context of the confrontation of the church with Enlightenment views of revelation and human freedom. Unfortunately, the conflict was resolved in a primarily juridical way at Vatican I (1869-70). That this perspective was too narrow a foundation
is shown in the attempts of Vatican II to expand the context of the magisterium in terms of the broader church that includes the universal episcopate and the ‘sense of the faithful (sensus fidelium).’ Though the documents of Vatican II evince tension between the juridical and the broader view of the church as communion, after the Council Catholics understand the magisterium in an ecclesiologically more balanced way. As the text says, ‘The whole people of God thus become bearers of revelation and subjects who carry ahead tradition’ (421). The statement by the Catholic partners points out how limited definitions are of their very nature. A definition cannot state everything about a tenet of the faith and often in the attempt to exclude an error it results in a narrowing of doctrinal perspective. The process of reception of a dogma by the whole church sometimes results in the retrieval of lost or neglected aspects of an article of faith. Catholic doctrine on teaching with authority includes the ‘sense of the faithful,’ reception, and openess to new formulations of the truth of revelation, in addition to episcopal and papal exercise of authoritative teaching.

In 429-460 both dialogue partners return to the matter of the truth proclaimed by the church. The Study demonstrates full consensus between Lutherans and Catholics on the following three points: (1) the gospel is grace for the salvation of men and women; (2) the church has received the apostolic gospel and succeeds to the apostles in proclaiming it authoritatively; and (3) the Scriptures are the rule, guideline, and criterion of the correctness and purity of the church’s proclamation, her doctrinal teaching, and her sacramental life and practice. It singles out three other areas where a legitimate diversity exists between the churches that does not imperil the consensus. First, the difference in the list of canonical books of the Old Testament is deemed a secondary issue and one that is undergoing change in the light of the incorporation of some of the apocrypha in the Lutheran lectionary. Second, both partners see the primacy of Scripture in a broader context of the full life of the church that includes such contributions as ‘the rule of faith,’ creeds, the teachings of the Councils as well as their condemnations of error, the doctrinal consensus among the Church Fathers, confessional statements, and official catechisms. And third, both communities agree that an office of supervision on the local and regional levels is necessary for safeguarding doctrine and discipline, even though over the years of
being separated from each other the forms and procedures for assuring orthodoxy and orthopraxis differ.

**Responses to The Apostolicity of the Church**

There have been several official responses to the Study Document *The Apostolicity of the Church* emanating from churches of the Lutheran World Federation. On the part of the Catholic Church, Cardinal Walter Kasper and two Roman Catholic theologians have offered responses. What strengths and weaknesses do these responses observe in the Study? Which areas do they identify as in need of further clarification? What suggestions do they offer to improve the Study?

**Lutheran Responses**

**Finland**

In a document approved by the Council for International Relations and dated 2 June 2008, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was the first Lutheran commentary on the Study. Entitled ‘Comments from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to the Lutheran World Federation on the Document *The Apostolicity of the Church: Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity,*’ this modest commentary of four printed pages welcomes the Study and reacts positively to it. First, it situates the Study in the context of earlier dialogue statements and points to the special character for the Lutheran churches of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.* It indicates that because the Lutheran Church in Sweden and Finland has preserved the historic episcopate up to the present, dialogue with the Catholic Church has encountered fewer difficulties than dialogues elsewhere in the churches of the

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1 Mention should be made of David Carter’s early essay ‘The Apostolicity of the Church. Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity,’ *One in Christ,* 42/2 (2008): 382-99. In it Carter reviews the contents of the Study, critiques several points, and reports on a seminar on it held on 17 June 2008 under the auspices of the Lutheran Council of Great Britain and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference Office.

2 The text is available online at: https://evl.fi/evlfi.nsf/Documents/454DFD3C54931B10C22576B700376F11/$file/Apostolicity.pdf
And although the agreement on the primacy of the apostolic gospel in Part Two of the Study speaks of ‘a significant Consensus’ between the Lutheran-Roman Catholic partners, the Finnish response asks pointedly why the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church (2007) did not better reflect the more positive approach of the Study (see p. 2).

The Finnish response welcomes the openness of the Study to what Christians believed and practiced in the early church despite considerable variety of expression. But it reminds its fellow Lutherans that the Bible as the sole source of doctrine had limitations in the course of the church’s history and that the biblical witness did not exclude ‘arguments also from church tradition and the teaching of the fathers’ (ibid.). The authors point to the importance of ecclesial practice in resolving the issue of infant baptism: ‘The matter could not be solved merely based on the Bible’ (ibid.). The Finnish response applauds the efforts by the Lutheran dialogue partners to acknowledge the necessity of ‘mediating forms of apostolic continuity’ (p. 3) even in the face of the claim to the priority of the apostolic gospel. Historical mediation, encapsulated in the process of tradition, and the apostolic gospel are not mutually exclusive. The response welcomes the agreement on the biblical canon in the Study and points out how so-called deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament have been included recently in the liturgical texts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (see ibid.).

The Finnish response points to a certain reticence of the Lutheran partners when it comes to expressing all the dimensions of the office of bishop in the Lutheran church: personal, collegial, and synodical. It points to greater clarity on the issue as expressed by the Lutheran members of the international ecumenical dialogues involving the Lutheran World Federation in their 2002 statement entitled “The Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church: A Lutheran Statement” (see p. 4). The Study would have benefited from the

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1 The document is available online at http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/OEA/OEADocuments/EN/LWF-Episcopal-Ministry-Statement. It is curious that this fine resource by Lutheran members of the Lutheran World Federation’s international ecumenical dialogues is not referenced by the Study. On some points regarding the episcopal ministry and the
latter’s greater clarity on the matter, as well as that of ‘The Porvoo Common Statement’ (see ibid.). Finally, on the question of ordination to the ministry, the Study might have expressed itself more forcefully on the reality of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the one ordained (see ibid.).

Commentary: The Finnish response concentrates primarily on the Lutheran partners and challenges them to greater boldness on the matter of episcopacy in particular, reminding them of agreement already reached with the Anglican Communion. As for the Catholic Church, the response wonders why the Vatican would issue an untimely statement precisely when Lutherans and Catholics were struggling to reach consensus and had advanced so far. In general, the very positive tone of the Finnish response is a positive sign for the reception of *The Apostolicity of the Church* by both churches, while realistically pointing out areas in need of further study.

Germany
In 2010, the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation issued an official statement entitled *Stellungnahme des Deutschen Nationalkomitees des Lutherischen Weltbundes zum Dokument ‘Die Apostolizität der Kirche’ erarbeitet vom Ökumenischen Studienausschuss (ÖStA).* For reasons that are not disclosed, the German text of the Study was not published until 2009. The German Statement [*Stellungnahme*] is an important document that examines the Study Document in considerable detail and, while praising its positive accomplishments, is forthright in expressing disagreements and suggestions for further study. The Statement is divided into three parts: (1) the hermeneutic and method of the Study, (2) observations on the degree of ‘differentiated consensus’ arrived at in the Study, and (3) the reception of the Study.

apostolicity of the church it is clearer, more direct, and more reassuring for a Roman Catholic reader. On the other hand, it cannot approach the Study in comprehensiveness, balance, and depth of historical detail regarding the Lutheran view of episcopacy.


2 The text consists of 36 pages and is available online from the Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands at http://www.dnk-lwb.de.
After some general introductory remarks (1.1,2) the members of the Ecumenical Study Committee (ÖStA) examine the hermeneutical and methodological issues in the Study’s interpretation of the historical material from the patristic and medieval periods up to the outbreak of the Reformation. In this section the Lutheran authors of the Statement pose serious questions for the understanding and use of the historical argument in favor of apostolicity, episcopal ordination, and teaching. This is especially true of what they regard as simplistic statements regarding the early appearance of a form of primacy of the Bishop of Rome and the spread of the monarchical model of episcopacy at the expense of other factors that institutionally limit it, e.g. a more collegial form that recognized the roles of presbyters, male and female deacons, and other ‘charismatic’ ministries together with the bishop. To the members of the Ecumenical Study Committee the historical presentation is so narrow as to be of limited value for interpreting the apostolicity of the historic episcopate. The authors even go so far as to maintain that they have the impression that the historical sections written in common by Lutherans and Catholics show a distinctly Catholic bias and do not adequately represent how many Lutherans would interpret the same material. On the other hand, in the sections written only by the Lutheran partners, the Statement demonstrates a greater degree of historical reliability, even though at several points the authors take exception to what the Study presents, and conclude that ‘in general, in chapters 2.4, 3.4 and 4.4 the Lutheran understanding of apostolicity is presented judiciously in the main’ (concluding paragraph, 1.3).

In concluding remarks on section one, the authors recognize the validity of both partners striving to be as appreciative as possible of each other’s positions, and yet the actual doctrine and practice of each church cannot be ignored. Catholics have an easier time of meeting this task because they have before them the teachings of Vatican II, whereas Lutherans only have a systematic-theological summation fashioned from their confessions and the insights derived from the Reformers—as a source hardly as authoritative as what Catholics have to work with. But this situation has changed lately by reason of the authoritativeness of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. Now Lutherans, too, have a normative document they can consult to elaborate their doctrine on apostolicity. The authors conclude by saying:
The underlying procedure is determined by the will first of all to arrive at agreement, then to acknowledge the variations as different but possible answers to the same problem. An attempt to work out an explicitly formulated consensus of the theologically controversial themes that have been treated is rejected. Why has the risk of proposing concrete suggestions for clearer understanding not been pursued? The method is directed to ‘differentiated consensus’: fundamental agreement, together with the remaining differences, and finally dissent that preserves the consent. A proposal could emerge from this that would then lead to teaching in common. But the authors either could not or willed not to take this step together. (Concluding paragraph, 1.4. The author’s translation.)

Section Two of the German Statement examines the differentiated consensus arrived at by the authors regarding (1) apostolicity and apostolic succession, (2) ordination to office and episkope, and (3) responsibility for teaching. The Statement welcomes the Study’s conclusion that since both churches already possess the necessary elements of apostolicity, ‘we therefore mutually recognize, at a fundamental level, the presence of apostolicity in our traditions’ in spite of ‘important differences’ (160). The authors wonder how this happy conclusion can be squared with recent statements of the Vatican that continue to deny the designation of ‘church in a proper sense’ to the Lutheran community. Is the distinction made in the Study between ‘elements of apostolicity’ and the ‘configuration of these elements’ adequate to the task of speaking of an identity of both churches in apostolicity even in the presence of differences? The Ecumenical Study Committee calls for more reflection on the distinction. On the issue of apostolic succession, the Statement can do no more than second the Study’s own call for further clarification on the relationship between the fundamental apostolicity of the gospel for the churches and its connection with an institutional element—ordination (2.1).

The Statement pursues the question of apostolic succession in the following subsection. It asks for clarification on seven points. (1) The fact that an office holder is ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands does not exclude the importance of the role of the community of believers in a person’s entrance to and exercise of the office. Does the Study take seriously enough the questions that remain open about the relationship of an office holder to the community? (2) The understanding of the priesthood of all believers in the Catholic and
Lutheran traditions needs further attention and clarification. Do the traditions teach the same thing regarding the universal priesthood of believers? (3) Furthermore, the role of the faithful in declaring and defending the faith is inadequately presented, without denying the regional and supra-regional responsibility of the bishops for the faith. Why does the Study so quickly pass over the responsibility of community church councils (Kirchengemeinderäten), church representatives (Kirchen-vorständen), and synods? (4) Greater awareness could be shown for Lutheran sensibilities regarding ‘responsibility’ (Verantwortung) vis-à-vis ‘office’ (Amt). Why is the Study’s language so tone-deaf when it comes to traditional Lutheran concerns? (5) Ordination to office includes multiple tasks—leadership, teaching, and the unity of the church by way of proclaiming the Word and making the sacraments available to the faithful. Furthermore, the Reformers and their successors manifested their awareness of the utility of ordination. But does this mean that episcopal succession is the only expression of apostolic continuity? (6) The Study fails to give adequate expression to the mutual responsibility for the apostolicity of the church. Does the increased attention nowadays for the role of episkope in ecumenical circles unduly overshadow the role of other expressions of responsibility and of all the faithful? (7) The authors question the wisdom of concentrating exclusively on the papal ministry as the ministry of unity of the whole church, without giving due consideration to the Lutheran ‘organizational model’ that includes synodal, collegial, and episcopal elements, while not neglecting the responsibility of all the faithful for the apostolic faith. Why does the Study only envision the Catholic model, while passing over the strengths of the Lutheran model? The subsection concludes with a reflection on the interaction of the three fundamental elements of the church: its constitutional foundation (Grund), its corresponding nature (Wesen), and its concrete form (Gestalt). These three elements would seem to open up broader perspectives of discussion and agreement than the Study evinces (2.2).

On the question of the church’s doctrinal responsibility, the German Statement shows itself to be in broad agreement with the positions of the Study on the authority of the canon of Scripture and the relationship of tradition to Scripture. But if, as the Study declares, the church does not ‘generate new truths,’ how are the Catholic dogmas of
the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to be reconciled with this claim? The teaching authority of the papal ministry in particular, especially as it has developed in the centuries following the Reformation, has created new tensions. It was perhaps wise for the authors of the Study to defer treatment of this question, since it certainly deserves its own study. Nonetheless, the absence of agreement on the papacy means that for Lutherans important questions relating to doctrinal authority and teaching are left in abeyance. All attempts of the Study to avoid caricaturing the teaching authority and practice of the papal ministry cannot hide the fact of a certain ‘asymmetry’ between the Lutheran and Catholic conceptions of the office. To the Lutheran authors of the Statement, certain declarations of Vatican II about the servant role of the magisterium, a spirit of conspiring between bishops and the faithful, the necessary consensus of the church, and the role of the ‘the sense of the faithful’ simply do not ring true. In view of these ‘massive differences,’ the Study should have paid greater attention to these inherent tensions. Finally, both churches appear to be blind to the issue of the role and competence of academic theology in elaborating the faith within the church. For Lutherans there is widespread lack of agreement on the place of theology; for Catholics, their idealistic expressions do not measure up to the existing tensions in the Catholic Church (2.3).

The final section, though brief, is very important. It deals with the question of the reception of the Study by the partner churches. The Statement of the Ecumenical Study Committee itself is only one element in the continuing process of dialogue. The authors challenge the churches not to wait until all the issues surfaced in the Study are finally resolved, but to proceed to at least partial reception of those positions identified by the Study as capable of immediate consent by both churches.¹ The history of the modern ecumenical movement has shown that failure to act on positive agreement hic et nunc can result in the loss of confidence in the ecumenical credibility of the partners. It should not be required that unless all issues have been satisfactorily

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¹ The agreed-upon positions can be found in the Study in the following paragraphs: 146-160 (‘Shared Foundational Convictions of Faith’ and ‘Shared Understandings Discovered’); 271-280 (‘Agreements’ [on Apostolic Succession and Ordained Ministry]); and 432-434 (‘Shared Foundational Convictions of Faith’).
resolved, consensus statements on difficult and often intractable issues between churches must always start over again (3).

Commentary: The Lutheran authors of the Statement are critical of many points made in the Study, but with a view to improving the document and avoiding what they deem overly idealistic positions. They have clearly taken their responsibility seriously and challenged their fellow Lutherans to be more assertive of Lutheran positions. They continue to be open to constructive dialogue with Roman Catholics, but inform the Vatican that further ecumenically insensitive assertions can only harm future progress. Sometimes the authors’ suspicion vis-à-vis their fellow Lutherans in the dialogue creates the impression of undue hypersensitivity. Nonetheless they definitely challenge both churches to continue their efforts and to have the courage to take on the difficult issue of the papal ministry and its claims. They also point out those issues that require deeper reflection: succession to the episcopal office by reason of ordination and how it is related to the fundamental apostolicity of the gospel; the personal, collegial, and synodical dimensions of episcopacy and how they are interrelated; and the nature of the priesthood of all believers and its exercise in the churches. Their suggestion that the churches reach partial resolution on issues where consensus now exists merits serious consideration.¹

¹ In an essay entitled ‘The History, Methodology, and Implications for Ecumenical Reception of the Apostolicity Study of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Dialogue,’ William G. Rusch situates The Apostolicity of the Church in terms of the earlier documents emanating from the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, succinctly summarizes the contents of the Study Document, and examines the methodology of the work. See Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism: Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue, ed. John A. Radano (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 77-92. In an accompanying essay in the collection, Jared Wicks, S.J. has also examined the Study Document. His article seeks to determine the status quaestionis on apostolicity between Lutherans and Roman Catholics and to outline the points of consensus between the two partners on this perennially thorny ecumenical issue. See ibid. 55-76, at 66-73. Dr Wicks was a Catholic consultant during the process of the composition of the Study Document from 1998-2006. I wish to thank Dr Wicks for information on how the process unfolded and for his advice on several points treated in my essay.
Roman Catholic Responses

In his important book *Harvesting the Fruits*, Cardinal Walter Kasper has spoken positively about the results of the international bilateral dialogues of Catholics with Anglicans, Reformed Christians, Methodists, and Lutherans since the conclusion of Vatican II, including the Study Document *The Apostolicity of the Church*.¹ In concluding observations at the end of each of the four chapters and in a section that concludes the whole book, ‘Some Preliminary Conclusions,’ Kasper spells out some of the remaining difficulties in these international dialogues. The Cardinal is realistic about the remaining difficulties of these dialogues, but remains fundamentally very positive regarding their final outcome.

Two Roman Catholic scholars, the German Wolfgang Thönissen and the Leuven theologian Pieter De Witte, have also written commentaries on the Study Document. Each has reservations about it which I propose to examine in this section. Though both scholars express appreciation for the advances that the Study clearly represents, both ultimately feel the Study does not do justice to the generally accepted Catholic position.

Wolfgang Thönissen

Wolfgang Thönissen, Director of the Johann-Adam-Möhler Institute for Ecumenism, Paderborn, Germany, was the first Catholic to write on the Study, and his commentary has come down to us in English and in German.² There are slight but important differences in the two versions, and it will be necessary to examine and compare them. In the English version, we read the following:

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¹ *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (New York: Continuum, 2009). It should be noted that the book appeared with Cardinal Kasper as its author and not as an official document of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. By acting as the book’s author, Cardinal Kasper has taken responsibility for its contents and views. I wish to thank Jared Wicks, S.J., for pointing out to me this significant difference.

In Catholic understanding, the sacramental structure of the church, which is realised in the eucharist and in the ecclesial office including the teaching office, is essential. There the fundamentally incarnational character of the church is realized. The Catholic understanding seeks thereby to unswervingly maintain the salvation event of Jesus Christ in the community and in the living witness of the church, as the body of the Lord in his many members. Therefore from the Catholic viewpoint the study document, in referring to the relationship of the church to the word of God or the gospel, fails to give sufficient expression to this sacramental structure of the church. It does not satisfactorily clarify the indispensable necessity of the concrete form of the sacramental office of consecration and in particular of the sacramental episcopal office in apostolic succession.¹

It is very clear in the English version just how concerned Thönissen is of the fact that the Catholic authors of the Study may not have given adequate weight to the Council’s teaching. But when one turns to the German text, no such sentiment is to be found. Rather, it sounds a more positive note: ‘If, when referring to the relationship of the church to the word of God or the gospel, the Study Document accurately states what from the Catholic point of view this sacramental structure of the church maintains, then what we have before us is a consensus [dann liegt ein Konsens vor].’² In the conclusion to the German version Thönissen has added a sentence that is not in the English version. Addressing the issue of episcopal apostolic succession as both a sign [Zeichen] and an instrument [Werkzeug] of the apostolicity of the church, Thönissen adds the following: ‘It must be made clear that what we have here [in the Lutheran and Catholic positions] are very different perspectives that need not, however, be separated from one another. This way of viewing the matter admits a differentiated consensus [between us].’³

When read in German, Thönissen’s commentary is definitely positive in its assessment of The Apostolicity of the Church.

Commentary: In the long English quotation above, we note how Thönissen stresses the teaching of Vatican II regarding the church as

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¹ Information Service No. 128, 138.
sacrament and its relevance for statements made by the Study. He declares that this teaching of Vatican II makes it difficult to see how the positions taken by Lutherans and Catholics provide sufficient basis for their positive claims. It is clear that Vatican II expressed a teaching about the church as a sacrament, but the meaning of the teaching is not entirely evident. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church it is stated that the ‘church is in Christ as a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity (ecclesia sit in Christo veluti sacramentum seu signum et instrumentum intimaee cum Deo unionis totiusque generis humani unitatis)’ (LG, art. 1).

The note of caution expressed in the elliptical conjunction veluti demands attention. The church as sacrament was championed at the Council by the German bishops and their theologians in particular, but they never attempted to give a direct explanation of the meaning of the term sacramentum. This fact has given rise to questions about the normative signification of this teaching. How does it relate to the other overarching teaching of Vatican II, the church as a communion? In the light of these questions, it seems to this observer premature to use the church as sacrament to exclude an underlying consensus between the Lutheran

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1 *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2, ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 849. There are eight other passages in the documents of Vatican II where the church is called a sacramentum: the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, art. 5, 26; the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, art. 9, 48; the Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, art. 1, 5; and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, art. 42, 45.

and Catholic participants in the dialogue. At the very least, Thönissen needs to explain the teaching of the Council in greater detail.

**Pieter De Witte**

More recently, Pieter De Witte of the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, has examined the Study with a view toward its argumentation and success as a statement in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue.¹ De Witte appreciates the difference for the Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue initiated by the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. The accord reached in it by Lutherans and Catholics is so fundamental and reaches so widely that it fairly demands resonance in such areas as ecclesiology, ecclesial authority, church unity, and ministry. As De Witte writes: ‘The consensus on justification needs to “prove itself” in these areas.’²

It is the use of the category of ‘differentiated consensus’ in *JDDJ* that interests De Witte. The *Apostolicity of the Church*, however, employs a different category from ‘differentiated consensus,’ a category derived from differing institutional structures and practices—differing practices of how the two churches understand and concretize their ‘reconciled diversity’ of belief in their church orders. Drawing on the work of Harding Meyer and William G. Rusch, De Witte calls this new category ‘differentiated participation.’ Is the new approach valid? Do we exercise the episcopal office and practice succession to it in a way that unites us? De Witte writes:

> The idea of differentiated participation seems to indicate a way forward for the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue. Yet, as long as its connection to a differentiated doctrinal consensus is not clarified, this idea remains the mark of a problem, rather than a path towards a solution. ... A differentiated consensus in matters of doctrine could be described in terms of recognition. One of the key elements in the development towards the method of differentiated consensus was the insight that the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic doctrinal traditions can be considered different languages of faith. Many conflicts have been overcome or reduced by distinguishing the different cultural-linguistic backgrounds of seemingly opposing doctrinal statements.... Differentiated participation in the same ministry, on the other hand, because of its stronger extra-linguistic component, is more difficult to

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² Ibid. 319.
explain in terms of a (mental) act of recognition. Therefore, if ‘differentiated participation’ implies a more embodied kind of unity than ‘mutual recognition’, ... then the question has to be addressed as to which embodiment is needed in order for the churches to be one in their ministries.¹

De Witte, however, has reservations with extending the method of ‘differentiated consensus’ to include ‘differentiated participation,’ with extending mutual recognition of doctrines to include mutual recognition of ministries.

The authors of the Study presume that their ‘differentiated participation’ includes ‘differentiated consensus.’ De Witte writes:

The Roman Catholic insistence on a succession of the laying on of hands is viewed as one aspect of apostolic succession. It is however the church as a whole, rather than the individual ordained ministers, that stands in apostolic succession. Therefore, the ‘decisive sign’ of apostolicity for Roman Catholics is not the chain of the laying on of the hands, but communion and consensus among the bishops. ... It is fundamentally a recognition by Lutherans and Roman Catholics of the fidelity to the gospel as the core of the church’s apostolicity and of the succession of episcopal ordinations as one of the possible signs of this apostolicity.²

To De Witte, however, the historical mediation represented by episcopal ordination as practiced by the Catholic Church is normative for Catholics. De Witte wonders whether the verbal agreement between the Catholic and Lutheran authors of the Study on what is primary (the apostolic gospel) versus what is secondary (episcopal ordination to office) does in fact correspond to the official positions of each other’s church. In De Witte’s mind, the Catholic authors of the Study have underestimated the historical mediation of episcopal ordination.³

¹ Ibid. 321-22.
² Ibid. 327-28.
³ De Witte seems genuinely caught in the grip of the ambiguity of the current Catholic theology of the episcopal order. One must choose between either the classical theology of episcopacy that locates the office in the sacramental act of ordination by other bishops who have themselves been duly ordained by bishops in proper succession [the historic episcopate], or in the theology of episcopacy enunciated in 291 of the Study Document, that episcopacy resides in being ‘in communion with the whole order of bishops which as a whole
In order to test the validity of his reservations, De Witte concentrates on the issue of ‘apostolic succession’ treated in Part Three of *The Apostolicity of the Church*. To resolve the aporia of the relationship between primary/secondary or higher/lower criteria of apostolicity, De Witte avails himself of David S. Yeago’s ‘pragmatic’ criterion of truth that he formulated in the course of the discussions leading to the accord on justification in *JDDJ*.\(^1\) To De Witte, a pragmatic criterion ‘allows for secondary criteria which are themselves assessed by and at the service of the primary criterion of the gospel. Episcopal succession, for instance, may be considered then as a criterion for the church as long as it serves the gospel. Trust in the church as institution and in its abiding in the truth during its journey through history is potentially beneficial if it promotes trust in God.’\(^2\) Yeago’s pointing to the primacy of trust gives De Witte the key he is looking for to unlock the aporia of the apostolic gospel as the sole foundation of the church and the role of episcopal apostolic succession as historical mediation of the same apostolicity. Ultimately, Lutherans and Catholics must trust one another’s doctrines and institutions. Only recognition by both churches that God is working for the good of the church’s mission and for the preservation of revealed truth provides an adequate reason to accept ‘differentiated participation’ of their polities. Everything else, in particular mutual recognition of each other’s ministries, is merely ‘penultimate.’ Only trust in God’s indefectible will for the church can resolve the issues of apostolicity and the place of apostolic succession. The Study Document *The Apostolicity of the Church* comes close to resolving the tension but without being entirely successful.

Commentary: De Witte has made it clear that both Catholics and Lutherans work with two or more coordinated elements to understand the church. We speak of a divinely willed ‘foundation’ of

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\(^1\) See *ibid.*.

\(^2\) see *ibid.*.
the church and its historical need for mediated ‘forms’ or ‘structures;’
we speak of the church in terms ‘sign’ and ‘instrument;’ and we speak
of the res of the church (and of apostolicity), while also speaking of
the signum of the reality itself. However, the fact that both Lutherans
and Catholics seem willing to work with an understanding of
apostolicity that includes coordinated elements does not dispel the
nagging questions that remain between the two churches. Is the Study
overly concerned with the desire to smooth over real problems? I do
not read De Witte as dismissing the degree of agreement reached in
the Study, but rather as warning the participant churches that perhaps
they have not yet asked the ‘ultimate question’—the question of
mutual trust founded on trust in God.

Conclusion

The Study Document The Apostolicity of the Church deserves to be
better known and studied in the churches. It has courageously taken
on one of the most intractable theological issues debated by
ecumenists and moved the discussion forward. As the Lutheran and
Roman Catholic responses to it indicate, the Study is to be warmly
welcomed by the churches. But as a Study Document it invites
critique as well as affirmation. It is already having a positive influence
by challenging the churches to come to a clearer understanding of
what each church genuinely teaches and by clearing away false, but
often widely held interpretations.

Regarding apostolicity as a dialogue topic between Lutherans and
Catholics, the next logical step is to officially welcome those areas of
substantial consensus and continue to identify the areas of
differentiated consensus while clarifying the issues that require
further study. As a Catholic, this author challenges his fellow
Catholics to reach greater clarity on the office of bishop. Currently,
the official Roman Catholic theology of ordination is confusing
because it appears to operate out of two different theologies of the
office of bishop. Traditionally, accession to the office of bishop has
been located in the sacramental rite of ordination of a candidate by
bishops who themselves have been duly ordained. After Vatican II,
however, the theology of episcopal ordination has given greater
importance to the act of being incorporated into the college of
bishops over an isolated act of the laying on of hands by bishops in
historic apostolic succession. This theology is admirably expressed in
the Study Document’s statement that ‘[i]t is Catholic doctrine that an individual bishop is not in apostolic succession by his being part of a historically verifiable and uninterrupted chain of imposition of hands through his predecessors to one of the apostles. It is instead essential that he be in communion with the whole order of bishops which as a whole succeeds the apostolic college and its mission.’ The Catholic Church urgently needs to address what it teaches regarding the doctrine of episcopacy.

The implications of a renewed theology of episcopacy are of immense importance in the dialogue of Catholics and Lutherans. A renewed theology of episcopacy could narrow the gap between the churches on ordination to the episcopal office and the recognition of the apostolicity of each other’s ministry. A renewed Catholic theology of apostolic succession in episcopal office does not mean that proper episcopal ordination is no longer required but that it is a ritual expression of something more fundamental, namely, participation of the new bishop in the body or college of bishops as the sacramental expression of the communion of the apostolic churches. A renewed theology of episcopacy can remove the misunderstanding that genuine episcopacy is derived solely from sacramental ordination into the historic episcopate and so exclude any formalistic or quasi-mechanical misunderstanding of episcopal ordination.

It is evident to all who follow the Lutheran-Roman Catholic international dialogue that the issue of the papacy or the Petrine ministry in the church needs to be addressed on its own terms. A future phase of the international dialogue will certainly address this perennially divisive issue. Nevertheless, I contend that it cannot be addressed satisfactorily until both churches reach greater clarity on the episcopal office itself. The Pope himself is the Bishop of Rome, as Pope Francis constantly reminds us, and as such is a member of the episcopal college.

In the meanwhile, we should continue to mine the treasures already contained in The Apostolicity of the Church.

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1 The Apostolicity of the Church, p. 132.
EUCHOTOGY AND THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE: INSIGHTS FROM ADVENTIST INTERCHURCH CONVERSATIONS

Stefan Höschele*

Unlike many other bilateral theological dialogues, the interchurch conversations in which Seventh-day Adventists were involved contain substantial discussions about eschatological themes. This paper presents a first thematic analysis of the denomination’s dialogues; it focuses on some aspects of those papers that deal with aspects of eschatology and suggests that this theme, and continued Adventist participation in bilateral conversations, can be fruitful for ecumenical dialogue.

Introduction

The debate on constructive interchurch relations emerged as a theme of its own relatively late in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.2 This is not surprising and similar for many other churches. Often denominations which started as movements inside other churches or as interdenominational revivals, and then went their own way, needed time to organize and define themselves before being able to connect with other church organizations in dialogical ways. In the case of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it took about a century until the first significant attempts were made to relate to non-

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1 I wish to express my gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers of this article. An earlier and shorter version was presented at an Adventist European theologians’ convention, Cernica, Romania, 28 April 2011.

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2 The first Adventist book-length publication on ecumenical issues is Bert B. Beach, Ecumenism: Boon or Bane? (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974).
Adventists in an official manner¹ and, more specifically, in the mode of theological conversations.²

In spite of a general Adventist ecumenical hesitancy, positive relationships to other Christians as individuals have always existed, and resolutions and documents clarifying the Adventist attitude to other churches were drafted even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³ This paper, however, focuses on Adventist theological dialogues (often termed ‘conversations’ by Adventist representatives). In this setting the denomination encountered other Christians officially and in a manner that expressed mutual respect


³ In 1870, the denomination’s General Conference passed the following action: ‘Resolved, that for the sake of our blessed Redeemer we desire to cultivate fraternal feelings, and maintain friendly relations, with all who name the name of Christ; and in particular with those who in common with us hold to the unpopular doctrine of the second advent of our Saviour near’ (GC Business Proceedings, March 15, 1870, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Department of Archives and Statistics, Silver Spring). An official statement on the Adventist relationship with other denominations originated in the context of missionary activities in East Asia around World War I; see Stefan Höschele, ‘From Mission Comity to Interdenominational Relations: The Development of the Adventist Statement on Relationships with Other Christian Churches,’ in Borge Schantz and Reinder Bruinsma (eds.), Exploring the Frontiers of Faith: Festschrift in Honour of Dr. Jan Paulsen (Lüneburg: Advent-Verlag, 2010), 389–404.
and implied the recognition of others being sincere Christians.¹ Thus these conversations represent a distinct new phase in the history of Adventist interchurch relations. The fact that this phase began about two generations ago but has not yet generated any overall evaluation² warrants an analysis of the content of these dialogues and of their implications. This is what this paper attempts to do; a major focus is eschatology. The sources for this study are papers presented in Adventist theological dialogues and dialogue reports.³ While most reports have been published,⁴ many of the papers have remained unpublished and are somewhat scattered.⁵  

¹While space does not permit to discuss the different dynamics developing in the various Adventist dialogues, they were all similar (and differed from other types of bilateral dialogues) in that mutual understanding was the major goal, not doctrinal consensus or structural unity; cf. also the clarifications in section 3 and note 3, page 44.  
³This study focuses on the final version of the papers and reports. I also observed one day at the Adventist-World Evangelical Alliance dialogue in Prague 2006. In other dialogues, observers are often not admitted.  
⁴Dialogue reports have been collected in Stefan Höschele, Interchurch and Interfaith Relations: Seventh-Day Adventist Statements and Documents, Adventistica 10 (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 2010), 99–160 (part II).  
The question behind the inquiry was what elements of Adventist dialogues are most significant both for the whole of the denomination’s interchurch conversations and for the body of bilateral dialogues in general. Eschatology has emerged as the crucial element; therefore, the approach taken in this article is to provide an overview of Adventist dialogues (section 2), to demonstrate the importance of eschatology in them and to point to questions this theme raises for bilateral dialogue at large (section 3), and finally to formulate some preliminary insights that can be derived from Adventist dialogue activities (section 4). Because of the importance of eschatology in this denomination’s bilateral conversations—and indeed in the Ecumenical Movement in general—the opening section presents a discussion of the role of the theme in other dialogues with the intention of making the Adventist colours more clearly discernible in the overall picture.

1. Christian Eschatology: A Neglected Field in Bilateral Dialogues

The role of eschatological themes in the context of bilateral dialogues becomes more clearly visible when surveying the overall configuration of themes in international interchurch conversations during the twentieth century. Such a survey reveals that there has been a strong leaning toward issues of ecclesiology, the Eucharist, the ministry,

Adventists [hereafter BRI]; many others are unpublished and are partly available at the BRI, the Council on Interchurch-Interfaith Affairs, and the General Conference Archives, all located in Silver Spring, Md., USA. Some are only available from authors or dialogue participants.

1 This survey and the next paragraph are based on the thematic indexes in the German volumes that parallel the three Growth in Agreement tomes (Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung, which cover the years until 2010; hereafter abbreviated DwÜ I–IV and GinA I–III [for the English version]). The English versions cover differing years but present much of the same material; however, they do not have such indexes. A helpful, but partial, overview of themes is also presented in Confessions in Dialogue: A Survey of Bilateral Conversations among World Confessional Families, 1959–1974 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1975), 142–229.

2 Harding Meyer, ‘Wer ist sich mit wem worüber einig? Überblick über die Konsensustexte der letzten Jahre,’ in Peter Lengsfeld and Heinz-Günther Stobbe (eds.), Theologischer Konsens und Kirchenspaltung (Stuttgart:
baptism, authority, and marriage. This is not surprising, for these are the questions that divide churches most when one looks at denominational divisions from a practical and institutional point of view. Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, mission and the Holy Scriptures (the latter together with issues of hermeneutics, authority, the canon question, and the issue of Bible and tradition) were also of significance in the dialogues, but clearly represent a second level of importance as far as how often they occurred in the dialogue reports and consensus texts is concerned.

When looking for eschatological topics, one can observe an interesting orientation in the body of dialogue texts. In the overwhelming majority of reports, hardly any aspect of eschatology is discussed, even if they do contain some *en passant* references to the eschatological nature of the church and the Eucharist, Jesus’ ministry, and Christian life. In total, even themes such as the diaconate and Mariology appear considerably more often than discussions of eschatology as an independent theme. Without the Adventist dialogue reports, the quantity of references to substantial deliberations parallels such topics as excommunication, the veneration of saints, religious orders, speaking in tongues, and religious liberty. Fewer references are found, e.g. regarding healing (in the Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue), the Sabbath (only in Adventist dialogues), euthanasia, and homosexuality.

This short overview shows that crucial Adventist interests are somewhat underrepresented in theological dialogues as a whole. This, of course, is understandable; some typically Adventist concerns such as the Sabbath (or the significant Adventist emphasis on health) are non-themes for many other bodies and traditions. As for Eschatology, it hardly seems to be a divisive issue for many ecclesial bodies—at least at a first glance. Perhaps it is because dialogue discussions commonly address theological problems to be overcome that themes

Kohlhammer, 1981), 21, already observed that these three are the most prominent themes.

1 There are also a few regional dialogues in which eschatology has been debated. Among them are the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, Round XI (2005–2010); see Jeffrey Gros, ‘Hope for Eternal Life: The Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue,’ *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 46/2 (2011): 259–269; and the Roman Catholic-Southern Baptist scholars’ dialogue of 1978; see Frank Stagg, ‘Eschatology,’ *One in Christ* 17/3 (1981): 255–270.
such as the judgment, the parousia, resurrection, the state of the dead and particular views on the end-time do not rank high on the agendas of ecumenical dialogues.

Where eschatology does appear as a significant theme in the almost 200 international dialogue reports and consensus texts, one finds in several cases either a focus on personal eschatology and the role of the dead for the church or on the general importance of an eschatological perspective for Christian life. Only three texts on eschatology, arising from dialogues apart from those with an Adventist participation, offer more comprehensive treatments of the topic. One comes from the Old Catholic-Eastern Orthodox dialogue of 1987. This emphasizes the eschatological nature of the Christian faith and of the church, pointing out that we live in the end time since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Both the resurrection of the dead and Jesus’ second coming are affirmed, as is ‘the renewal of the world’ and the judgement. The declaration further asserts doctrines that Adventists would reject—the ‘eternal punishment of the wicked’ and life after death implying ‘fellowship between the living and those who have passed on.’

The second significant treatment of eschatology appears in the 2001 Reformed-Pentecostal dialogue report. It is most interesting for Adventists because of its closeness to their thought on the last things and the way in which several main themes are presented. While placing the whole discussion in a pneumatological framework (‘Spirit, Kingdom and Eschatology’), what features most prominently are the parousia and an understanding of the kingdom in which the church is

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1 GinA II, 96–97 (Anglican-Orthodox 1984 Dublin Declaration, with a section on the ‘Communion of saints and the departed’); and section 5.2 (no. 290–308) of the long 1993 document ‘Church and Justification’ (Lutheran-Roman Catholic; GinA II, 485–565), which discusses the ‘Communion of the Church on Earth with the Perfected Saints’ and the relationship between ‘The Church and the Kingdom of God’.

2 The Porvoo Common Statement of Anglicans in Great Britain and Ireland and Nordic and Baltic Lutherans, 1992, affirms, among many other articles, the common eschatological hope and its significance for Christian existence; a similar wording is contained in the Reuilly Declaration of Anglicans in Great Britain and Ireland and Lutheran and Reformed Churches in France, 2001.

3 GinA II, 264–266.

4 GinA II, 552–554.
its preliminary instrument rather than an entity in its own right. The text also refers to the biblical teachings of the resurrection and the new earth, as well as the ‘dynamic tension between the "now" and the "not yet" of the fulfilment of God’s kingdom’. Moreover, both the Reformed emphasis on Christ as judge and the Pentecostal premillennialism mentioned in the document represent interesting parallels to Adventist teaching.

The third report that includes significant discussion on an eschatological theme focuses on the Kingdom of God and contains a noteworthy theological and historical discussion of this topic. Thus it parallels the significant Kingdom of God discourse in the Faith and Order Movement and the eschatologically oriented outlook of ecumenical conferences such as the Evanston assembly of the World Council of Churches. Yet on the whole the relative paucity of extended discussions on eschatology in interchurch dialogue texts is remarkable. Admittedly, the last two decades have seen a slightly increased interest in the issue. Still, given the importance of

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1 The report of the fifth phase of the Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue also has a few sections that highlight eschatology and refer to some motifs with similarities to Adventist thinking; see DwÜ IV, 938 (no. 169), 943–944 (no. 183), and 965 (no. 246).


4 While DwÜ I contains no reference to eschatology as a theme in its index, DwÜ II contains two and DwÜ III four (in addition to two in texts with Adventist participation). DwÜ IV lists significantly more, even though most of these refer to instances in which eschatology is not an independent theme.
eschatology both in the New Testament and in the ancient creeds, one would perhaps expect at least some more affirmations of what Christian hold in common in this matter.

Perhaps the lack of specifically eschatological content is partly due to the potential in the Christian doctrine of the last things of relativizing some of the very issues that are commonly held as important in ecumenical encounters: inherited church structure, peculiar understandings of Communion, and traditions of ministerial or priestly offices. By pointing to their preliminary nature, the eschaton has an enormously critical potential, which might shift the ecumenical discussion from the second last to the last things, thus redefining debates and centring them more on God’s future than the present with all its human ingredients. A continued Adventist participation in such dialogues, therefore, might help Christians of other backgrounds to rediscover this potential. With its roots in an interdenominational apocalyptic-inspired revival, the Millerite Movement, such a contribution would certainly be consistent with the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

2. Adventist Distinctives: A Necessary Aspect of Theological Conversations

Before turning to a reflection on some aspects of eschatology in Adventist interchurch conversations, a short overview of the dialogues conducted so far by this denomination is helpful as a context in which these themes were discussed. This overview reveals a certain heterogeneity: among the twelve dialogue partners, two were very small sabbatarian churches (COG7D; AOY), others large interdenominational organizations (WCC; WEF; WEA). Some partners represented regional church entities (PBC; PCUSA) and others Christian World Communions (SA I, II; LWF; WARC; PCPCU).


\[2\] For these and the following abbreviations, see Table 1, p.38 below.
In a few cases, there were no reports (COG7D, SA I, AOY, WEF),\(^1\) and for a number of dialogues no papers can be traced so far (SA I, AOY, PBC, WEF), possibly because in some of these no formal paper presentations were scheduled. The most important dialogues, therefore, were those seven with larger churches or interchurch organizations that led to a significant outcome in terms of documentation (WCC, LWF, WARC, PCPCU, SA II, WEA, PCUSA). Hence the following analysis focuses mainly on these. The dates and presented papers available are listed in Table 1 (page 38).\(^2\)

A broad classification of the 50 Adventist papers and 35 papers presented by the dialogue partners yields the categories set out in Table 2 (page 39).

This overview leads to several observations on the theological content and foci of Adventist interchurch conversations.

(i) In addition to general introductions to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its doctrine (category 1) and a few presentations specializing in topics relevant to particular situations (category 7), five areas emerge as major (and almost equally important) themes of discussion: eschatology, scripture, ecclesiology and mission, social issues, and soteriology and the law. Thus one can conclude that several major areas of Adventist theology and of the Adventist ethos are well represented in the dialogues.\(^3\)

(ii) There are also areas which were hardly discussed at all: creation, christology, pneumatology, the doctrine of God, and personal ethics. This is understandable when one bears in mind that these contain—or

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\(^1\) SA II has an unofficial report, which remained unpublished because the Salvation Army General so decided. See Council on Interchurch/Interfaith Relations Minutes, January 17, 2008, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring.

\(^2\) Most of the details of dialogues and dates were gathered from the Council on Interchurch/Interfaith Relations Minutes, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring.

\(^3\) For a denominationally commissioned overview of Adventist theology, which also reflects these areas, see Raoul Dederen (ed.), *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology* (Silver Spring: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2001).
at least appear to contain\textsuperscript{1}—little potential for interdenominational conflict, at least in the context of such dialogues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue Partner</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Papers (SDA/ partner)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Council of Churches</td>
<td>1965–1971</td>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>7 / 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God (7th Day)</td>
<td>1980–1986</td>
<td>COG7D</td>
<td>2 / 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army (I)</td>
<td>1980, 1985</td>
<td>SA I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of Yahweh</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>AOY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Evangelical Fellowship</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>WEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Bishops’ Conference</td>
<td>1985–2000</td>
<td>PBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Alliance of Reformed Churches</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>WARC</td>
<td>5 / 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity</td>
<td>2001–2003</td>
<td>PCPCU</td>
<td>3 / 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army (II)</td>
<td>2004–2008</td>
<td>SA II</td>
<td>12 / 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Evangelical Alliance</td>
<td>2006–2007</td>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>5 / 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church in the USA</td>
<td>2006–2011</td>
<td>PCUSA</td>
<td>6 / 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total:                                  | 50 / 35      |              |                       |

\textit{Table 1}

\textsuperscript{1} The understanding of creation and issues of personal ethics, which are often strongly contested between ‘conservative’ and ‘liberal’ parts of denominations, would certainly pose a challenge in some dialogues. The reason why such themes are not very prominent in interchurch conversations may be precisely because there is little unity on them inside many churches.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Adventists</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. General (Adventism, Doctrinal overviews)</td>
<td>10 4xSA, 3xPCUSA, 2x WARC, PCPCU</td>
<td>5 2xSA, PCUSA, WCC, WEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Eschatology</td>
<td>7 3xLWF, SA, WARC, WCC, WEA</td>
<td>3 3xLWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scripture and Hermeneutics</td>
<td>7 2xWCC, LWF, SA, PCPCU, PCUSA, WEA</td>
<td>5 2xLWF, PCPCU, PCUSA, WCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ecclesiology and Mission</td>
<td>8 3xSA, 2xLWF, 2x WCC, WEA</td>
<td>9 5x SA, 3xLWF, WARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social Issues</td>
<td>7 3xSA, 2xWARC, 2x PCUSA</td>
<td>6 3x WARC, 2xSA, PCUSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Soteriology, Law (including the Sabbath-Sunday issue)</td>
<td>7 2xLWF, COG7D, SA, PCUSA, PCPCU, WEA</td>
<td>6 2xLWF, SA, PCPCU, PCUSA, WARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Exegetical Papers and Miscellaneous</td>
<td>4 2xWCC, COG7D, WEA</td>
<td>1 COG7D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

(3) The themes that were discussed frequently played different roles: social and public issues served mainly as common ground, thus providing a platform for mutual acceptance and agreement; ecclesiology and mission were unavoidable topics in interchurch dialogues; the area ranging from soteriology through the law to the Sabbath was necessary because of the Adventist Sabbath teaching and the question as to what the Adventist view of the law means for its Protestant identity.¹

¹It is somewhat surprising that the Sabbath appears as underrepresented: only two Adventist papers on the Sabbath have been identified so far, both presented by Ángel Rodríguez (LWF and PCPCU), plus one on the Lord’s Day
(4) Both general Christian doctrine and the most distinctively Adventist teachings\(^1\) were present in the dialogues. Altogether, these two groups of doctrine are represented in a meaningful balance.

(5) Eschatology, being the original impetus for the existence of the denomination and one of its most marked features, took considerable space in several of the dialogues. Thus one can conclude that Adventists remained true to their central theological concern in their way of conducting theological conversations.

(6) The discussion of the role of the Bible and, directly connected with it, of hermeneutics, emerged as a central issue in several of the conversations, especially in the WCC, LWF, and PCPCU dialogues. The relationship between eschatology and hermeneutics in the papers is significant: a discussion of the one area mostly leads to the other and vice versa.\(^2\)

3. Eschatology and Apocalyptic: A Crucial Theme in Adventist Dialogues

Before a closer look is taken at those dialogue contributions which include eschatological content, a short overview of Adventist eschatological emphases will provide a background to the

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\(^1\)E.g. ‘remnant’ ecclesiology, the sanctuary/pre-advent judgement, the prophetic ministry, a holistic view of humans, and the Sabbath. For concise summaries of these, see the pertinent sections in Dederen, *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, and their respective bibliographies: Hans K. LaRondelle, ‘The Remnant and the Three Angels’ Messages’ (857–892); Angel M. Rodríguez, ‘The Sanctuary’ (375–417); George E. Rice, ‘Spiritual Gifts’ (610–650); Aecio E. Cairus, ‘The Doctrine of Man’ (205–232); and Kenneth A. Strand, ‘The Sabbath’ (493–537).

\(^2\)This is highlighted in a particular way in Lukas Vischer, ‘Analysis of Discussion on “Apocalyptic Prophecy”,’ *Ecumenical Review* 22.2 (April 1970): 167–169. Vischer, whose text arises from the WCC-SDA conversations in the late 1960s, indicates that the relative importance, specific interpretation, and predictive nature of passages in Daniel, Matthew 24, Revelation, etc., as well as the eschatological nature of other doctrines, was much debated between the two sides.
observations that follow.¹ While Seventh-day Adventists are best known for their sabbatarian views and practice, their origin was a nineteenth century revival movement emphasizing the imminent parousia on the basis of a premillennialist interpretation of the books of Daniel and Revelation. The attempt to maintain a sense of immediacy regarding the Second Coming resulted in an emphasis on Christ’s present high priestly ministry (the ‘sanctuary doctrine’), connected with a peculiar interpretation of God’s final judgement beginning before the awaited advent, thus implying a special urgency of proclamation and mission.

These various elements are summarized, together with Christology and other pertinent doctrines, in a model of salvation history commonly called ‘the Great Controversy.’ The concomitant rejection of the doctrine of an eternal torment may be understood as an affirmation of the conviction that the history of God with humans must come to a real end; thus the Adventist preference of the biblical language of a ‘second death’ (and, likewise, an emphasis on the ‘new earth’ rather than ‘heaven’) is an alternative both to the traditional view of ‘hell’ and to a universal salvation position. Altogether, it is probably not an overstatement that most of Adventist theology is impregnated with eschatology.²

The seven Adventist dialogue presentations on eschatology³ and other pertinent Adventist materials in the dialogues reveal a broad

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¹ Among the vast literature on Adventist eschatology, the following study—the first major scholarly study of any aspect of Adventism by a Roman Catholic—is most interesting in the context of interchurch dialogue: Cosmas Rubencamp, ‘Immortality and Seventh-Day Adventist Eschatology’ (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1968).

² One fourth of the denomination’s ‘Fundamental Beliefs’ deal with eschatology and apocalyptic (the last five: ‘Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary’ [24]; ‘The Second Coming of Christ’ [25]; ‘Death and Resurrection’ [26]; ‘The Millennium and the End of Sin’ [27]; ‘The New Earth’ [28]; and two others: ‘The Great Controversy’ [8]; and ‘The Remnant and Its Mission’ [13]). Several other doctrines are traditionally also given an eschatological slant. For an exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs, see Seventh-Day Adventists Believe ...: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines, 2nd ed., Silver Spring: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005.

³ This paper only deals with the Adventist side, for no eschatology papers were presented by representatives of the denominations involved in dialogues with
spectrum of themes.¹ Some of the papers are biblical or exegetical studies (Cottrell on end-time events, Paulien on Rev. 12 and 13, Shea on the judgement, Gane on the heavenly sanctuary).² Others offer systematic-theological reflections that utilize more of the Christian and Adventist dogmatic traditions to present a particular position: Heinz’s treatise on the importance of eschatology in general and in Adventist theology, Andreasen’s discussion of individual eschatology, Adams’s interpretation of the book of Revelation as a cry for and promise of ultimate justice; and LaRondelle’s paper, which aims at reuniting soteriology and eschatology.³ Taken together, these studies

Adventists except by Lutherans. As Adventist eschatology is closely connected with the interpretation of some apocalyptic biblical texts, ‘eschatology’ is used here for both the systematic-theological reflection and the specific Adventist tradition of exegesis on these apocalyptic texts.

¹ A short survey of Adventist eschatology is found e.g. in George W. Reid, ‘Seventh-Day Adventists: A Brief Introduction to their Beliefs,’ paper presented at the Roman Catholic-Seventh-day Adventist informal consultation, Geneva, 8–9 May 2001.
present a fairly comprehensive picture of Adventist teachings on the last things and of the themes in Christian eschatology in general.

When examining the role of eschatology in these papers and the dialogue reports, one can discern several dimensions of the way the theme was handled:

(1) Eschatology emerges as *the most important issue* between Adventists and other denominations. By way of contrast, general hermeneutical assumptions differ significantly between Adventists and only some churches (Roman Catholics, Lutherans) or at least many of their representatives,¹ and soteriology is an important issue, but not one that causes much divergence between Adventists and other Protestants. While Sabbath beliefs and practices are not shared by most other denominations, the dialogues do not reveal opposition to this tenet of Adventist theology—only to the question of its importance. Adventist remnant ecclesiology may not find acceptance among other Christians, but many other denominations also consider themselves the ‘true church’ or at least ‘truest church’ of some kind, thus representing analogous cases.

In the case of eschatology, not only is the relative silence of dialogue partners (except Lutherans) striking. In addition to the Adventist presentations, the dialogue reports also clearly state how far the conversing parties were apart in this field in some respects. The WEA-Adventist dialogue report, for instance, in spite of affirming ‘extensive commonality of belief and spirituality’ and noting that Adventists ‘subscribe to the WEA Statement of Faith,’ which includes Jesus’ ‘[p]ersonal return in power and glory’ and a resurrection before the final judgement, also highlights several ‘areas of disagreement.’ Among them are the Adventist view of a heavenly sanctuary and the pre-advent judgement.²

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¹ Because of an Adventist *tota scriptura* emphasis, they generally view the Lutheran *was Christum treibet* principle with some suspicion; their *sola scriptura* emphasis implies they disagree with Roman Catholics regarding tradition.

² Joint Statement of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2007; online:
The Lutheran-Adventist and WCC-Adventist dialogue reports each devote several pages to the general agreement and specific differences on eschatological views.\(^1\) While a detailed discussion of these texts would necessitate a study of its own, especially so many years after they were written, one can easily summarize their main concern. Both reports affirm the importance of eschatology and biblical apocalyptic as well as far-reaching agreement on what could be called the overall structure of New Testament eschatology, i.e. the present and future dimensions and the idea of salvation history. However, they also document considerably diverging views about the importance of (a) interpretations of particular texts and (b) appropriate approaches to understanding biblical prophecies. The root issue, therefore, is clearly a hermeneutical one.

(2) Both explication and mediation\(^2\) appear to be Adventist dialogue principles. While interchurch conversations often aim at consensus or at least a differentiated consensus, the organizers and participants of Adventist dialogues have commonly considered mutual understanding as the major goal\(^3\) and did not aim at reaching formulas implying a doctrinal recognition of some sort.


\(^1\) See *Lutherans and Adventists in Conversation*, 18–21 (section III of the final report), and Vischer, ‘Analysis of Discussion on “Apocalyptic Prophecy.”’

\(^2\) Mediating elements are seen in most papers: Heinz stresses continuity with the ancient church, the Reformation and revival movements (‘Eschatology in the Adventist Faith,’ 227); Paulien confesses that ‘we can learn balance from each other’s testimony’ (‘Eschatology and Adventist Self-Understanding,’ 238); Shea observes the importance of the judgement doctrine in many Christian traditions (‘Seventh-Day Adventist Teaching on the Judgment,’ 254–256); Adams does not emphasize Adventist distinctives but the general importance of the parousia (‘The Apocalypse’); Gane explicitly states common ground with Evangelicals and takes it as a point of departure (‘Christ at His Sanctuary,’ 1–4); and Cottrell includes a subsection on ‘The Problems and Pitfalls of Belief in an Imminent Advent’ (‘The Eschaton,’ 55–57), thus honestly sharing Adventist difficulties.

\(^3\) Similar goals are visible in the Pentecostal approach in the dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, in which this orientation even translated into a peculiar dialogue method: the ‘Hard Questions’ method, which meant that
At the same time, an emphasis on common ground and mediating lines of argument are seen in numerous dialogue presentations. Among those dealing with eschatology, two may suffice as examples. Hans Heinz asserts that ‘Adventists assume a really ecumenical standpoint’ by preserving and emphasizing the Christian eschatological heritage. This point is worth considering, for it declares the very arena of greatest differences as a field of ecumenical relevance. Of a similar nature is the suggestion by LaRondelle that the Adventist sanctuary doctrine with its view of ‘the ongoing mediatiorial work of Christ during the Last Judgment’ can resolve a paradox which is vexing for Protestant thinking: that a Christian is ‘saved by faith as a present reality, while he will be judged ultimately according to works as a future reality.’

(3) The bulk of the material presents traditional Adventist doctrine: premillennialism connected with an expectation of an imminent parousia, often including detailed exegesis that attempts to demonstrate the validity of some denominational point of view. Yet some papers are of a more experimental kind or include details of a more preliminary nature. Due to the highly official manner of representation since the 1980s and the lacking search for consensus


1 Heinz, ‘Eschatology in the Adventist Faith,’ 227.


3 LaRondelle, ‘The Seventh-Day Adventist View,’ 131.

4 The denominational ‘Council on Interchurch Relations’ was founded in 1980 and officially coordinated subsequent dialogues, as opposed to the 1960s
formulas from the Adventist side, theological dialogues are evidently not the preferred place for their creative theologizing to take place. Thus even those instances where Adventist representatives made some limited novel suggestions must be considered to be noteworthy.

Beyond the two voices of mediation mentioned above, two instances of uncommon views with far-reaching consequences can illustrate this point. Paulien’s description of ‘The Biblical Concept of End-Time Deception’ narrows down the final crisis of history before the parousia to a deception of all the five senses, which ‘will suggest that the counterfeit trinity is the true God.’ This certainly goes significantly beyond what is established Adventist doctrine. On the other hand, a novel approach to apocalyptic in the Adventist context is provided by Adams, who suggests using both what he calls the denotative (historicist exegetical) and connotative (reader-focused) approach to the study of the book Revelation. He observes that while the denotative approach has been typical for Adventism, a too heavy reliance on historicist interpretation of apocalyptic literature is problematic because it can ‘ignore the meaning of the text to those who first received it, and so arrive at unwarranted ... applications of the symbolism.’ While this statement may sound non-innovative in the general Christian context, it articulates a position inside the Adventist denomination that reflects the increasing discussion on the hermeneutics of apocalyptic and its eschatological consequences.

These observations lead to questions raised by and problems inherent in the same eschatology papers.

(1) The presentations raise questions of fundamental theology which are rarely referred to directly but nevertheless play a crucial role in interchurch discussions. Beyond the innovative aspects mentioned,
some papers—evidently mainly the exegetical ones—take positions (here on apocalyptic interpretation) that do not represent official denominational doctrine.\(^1\) Other statements made in the papers may be details that somehow constitute a part of common Adventist thinking but do not appear in the denomination’s Fundamental Beliefs of 1931 or 1980 (e.g. an expected end-time persecution due to Sabbath keeping).\(^2\) Such items raise the question as to how one is to determine what are significant Adventist traditions, what are mere exegetical details commonly accepted or inherited in the denomination, what are theologoumena, and what (if anything) is in some way ‘official’ or theologically binding beyond the Fundamental Beliefs. In a church that continues to confess that the Bible is its only creed but that has developed both agreed theological statements and a tradition of theological discussions, the unconscious theological hermeneutical assumptions inherent in these developments need considerably more discussion and clarification.

(2) A related, but distinct problem concerns the role of eschatological teachings for Christian theology in general and for the Adventist view of other Christians. To what degree can the strong Adventist interest in eschatology and the denomination’s specific interpretative tradition be taken as a measure for other Christian theologies? The latter may be lacking eschatological focus when assessed from an Adventist perspective; however, the question is whether the perspectives presented in the dialogues can help change this situation. One example: After a thorough exegesis of connectors between Daniel 7, 8, and 9, Roy Gane wonders, ‘Why don’t more people accept the eschatological aspects of sanctuary teaching, including a pre-Advent judgment taking place now?’\(^3\) According to him, the last of seven possible reasons is ‘[t]he fact that interpreting the time prophecies of Daniel is a rather complicated process.’\(^4\) This honest admission leads

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\(^1\) E.g. regarding the interpretation of Gog and Magog in Rev. 20 (Cottrell, ‘The Eschaton,’ 43–44) or finer points in the interpretation of Revelation 12–13 (Paulien, ‘Eschatology and Adventist Self-Understanding,’ 242–247).


\(^3\) Gane, ‘Christ at His Sanctuary,’ 16.

\(^4\) Ibid. 17.
to the question of how important some specific details of eschatological interpretation really are—a question that can, of course, be asked of many other church-dividing doctrines.

(3) A third issue arises when eschatology is related to the hermeneutical basis on which Adventist interpretations are built. All Adventist dialogue papers dealing with hermeneutics\(^1\) stress the *sola scriptura* principle and reject any external interpretative norm. Gane, Merlin Burt and Denis Fortin all stress that the denomination’s 19th century prophetess, Ellen White, did not play a noteworthy role in formulating Adventist doctrines or interpretations.\(^2\) At the same time, Fortin does liken Ellen White’s writings to the writings of other denominations’ founders and those churches’ confessions of faith; he

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\(^2\) Gane, ‘Christ at His Sanctuary,’ 16; Burt, ‘Ellen G. White and Sola Scriptura,’ 9–11; Fortin, ‘Ellen G. White’s Ministry,’ 8–17.
actually speaks of the ‘secondary authority’ that these writings have.¹ Cottrell even includes Ellen White’s writings in his ‘basic assumptions’ in the sense that they convey ‘information and instruction from God for Seventh-day Adventists, designed to enable us to relate wisely to the problems and challenges of our day and to cooperate intelligently and effectively with His purpose in events leading up to the second coming of Christ.’² From Cottrell’s thinking one can deduce that many facets of Adventist eschatology are fixed because Ellen White commented about them. However, whether or to what extent this thinking can be reconciled with the sola scriptura principle is a contested question even inside Adventist theological discourse.³

4. Insights

Beyond the observations and perceived problems mentioned above, the eschatology parts of Adventist dialogues shed light on the importance of this denomination’s engagement in interchurch conversations. Such conversations represent an open space for contributing to the whole of ecumenical conversation and provide an opportunity of benefitting in various ways. Among the gains from a continuing Adventist participation in dialogue are the following:

(i) An emphasis on exegesis. A twofold danger in the dynamics of theological dialogues between denominations is that each side presents its positions either to insist on their correctness or to look for consensus formulas that may be acceptable to both parties but cannot necessarily be deduced from the biblical foundations of the Christian faith. Adventists are not immune to this; however, their approach to interchurch dialogue may help dialogues to increase in biblical content and exegetical foundations. Adventists may thus even contribute to a modified understanding of theological dialogues as an ecumenical practice: they would become more of a search for truth than processes of compromise, mere mutual information, or

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¹ Fortin, ‘Ellen G. White’s Ministry,’ 21. He further reflects, ‘One contribution I believe Adventists can make to dialogues with Evangelical Christians is how to interface the primacy of Scripture’s authority with the secondary authority given to writings of church founders and professions of faith.’ (Ibid.)


recognition of the Christian character and good will of the respective partners. Of course this does not mean that a systematic-theological approach should become underrepresented (and it is not in Adventist dialogues, not even in the eschatology papers). But actual Bible study, in spite of hermeneutical differences with other Christian traditions, is one of the strengths of Adventism, and certainly one that can steer theologians involved in interchurch conversations back to the basic theological task: listening to the Word. Thus the very dialogical principle in interchurch conversations can also redirect the attention from merely speaking with other Christians to a living dialogue with the Bible.

(2) An emphasis on learning together. Dialogues are not only exercises in mutual understanding; they are also always learning experiences. Adventists, who have strong convictions they want to share with others, entered theological dialogues with the aim of being better understood and of listening to others. Whether they are ready to learn from the Other in addition to listening to him or her will probably also make a difference to the successful communication of their own convictions, which needs mutual trust and understanding as a basis. Moreover, the Adventist emphasis on the Bible and its study can initiate processes in which dialogue partners learn from the Scriptures and each other’s perspectives, a process that is well-known to Adventist because their weekly ‘Sabbath School’ emphasizes exactly these dynamics. Seen from this perspective, theological dialogues mirror a crucial Adventist worship practice in a larger setting.¹

(3) An emphasis on eschatology. One of the strengths of many dialogues is also their weakness: thorough discussions of churches and their theologies as they are—i.e. of penultimate realities. Adventists are among the heirs of a quasi-ecumenical movement of its own kind, the Christian Connection of the nineteenth century, which rejected denominationalism, church traditions, creeds, and various aspects of

¹For an insightful discussion of the Adventist Sabbath School by a non-Christian anthropologist, which emphasizes these elements of searching for truth from the Bible and from each other in Christian fellowship, see Eva Keller, ‘Towards Complete Clarity: Bible Study among Seventh-Day Adventists in Madagascar,’ *Ethnos* 69/1 (2004): 89–112. Keller calls this manner of finding religious truth ‘Socratic’ because of the similarity to the ancient philosopher’s method which she sees in Adventist Bible study practice.
theology perceived as unscriptural. In this movement, as in the Millerite Movement, penultimate ecclesial realities were radically questioned. The Millerites added a most powerful motif to this critical and relativizing stance—the near advent—and developed an ecumenical character of its own kind. In spite of their denominationalization, Seventh-day Adventists as their major heirs can contribute to the dialogue between the churches a concern of both antecedent movements: a focus on ultimate things.

\[\text{footnote}{1}\] The Christian Connection was a distinct part of the larger Restorationist Movement in nineteenth century America, which is today often called the ‘Stone-Campbell Movement’; see Thomas H. Olbricht, ‘Christian Connection,’ in Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 190–191. Several of the leading early Adventists had been Connectionists.
BAPTISM AND THE EUCHARIST IN BEM AND WIDER ECUMENICAL CONVERSATION: AN ANGLICAN PERSPECTIVE

Martin Davie*

This paper begins by summarising what Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry says about Baptism and the Eucharist. It then looks at the use of this material in six ecumenical agreements between Anglicans and other Christian traditions. It suggests that these documents use the material from BEM as one of a number of elements that are brought together to create mosaic-like ecumenical statements and that the challenge for the ecumenical movement is to bring these individual mosaics together as parts of a larger whole in order to achieve the vision of unity classically set out in the 1961 New Delhi Statement.

I. Introduction
1. At its third assembly held in New Delhi in 1961 the World Council of Churches produced what has become the classic statement of the goal of the ecumenical movement, a statement that has been nuanced but never superseded. This statement, the New Delhi Statement, declares:

We believe that the unity which is both God’s will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that

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ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.\(^1\)

2. If they are to move towards the attainment of this goal, churches that are now separated from each other will need to achieve an ever growing convergence on matters of both faith and order so that they can continue to overcome those things that still divide them. The significance of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (hereafter BEM), the so called ‘Lima’ text produced by the World Council of Churches’ Faith and Order Commission at its meeting in Lima in January 1982, is that it has been widely seen as a major step on the road towards this convergence.

3. The preface to BEM itself emphasises the importance of the convergence achieved in the Lima text in the following terms:

> This Lima text represents the significant theological convergence which Faith and Order has discerned and formulated. Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice on baptism, eucharist and ministry, will appreciate the importance of the large measure of agreement registered here. Virtually all the confessional traditions are included in the Commission’s membership. That theologians of such widely different traditions should be able to speak so harmoniously about baptism, eucharist and ministry is unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Commission also includes among its full members theologians of the Roman Catholic and other churches which do not belong to the World Council of Churches itself.\(^2\)

4. As this quotation indicates, the production of BEM was a major milestone on the ecumenical journey. What I want to explore in this paper is where the ecumenical journey has gone since then. Specifically, I want to consider what use the churches have made of the statements in BEM on Baptism and the Eucharist as they have sought to move towards the goal set forth at New Delhi in 1961.

5. In order to do this I shall first of all summarise what BEM has to say about Baptism and the Eucharist.

6. I shall then look at how this material has been used in six subsequent ecumenical statements in which Anglicans have reached


\(^2\) *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), ix.
ecumenical agreement with Christians of other traditions, the *Meissen Common Statement* of 1988, the *Porvoo Common Statement* of 1992, the *Fetter Lane Common Statement* of 1996, *An Anglican-Methodist Covenant* of 2001, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* from 2007 and *Healing the Past—Building the Future* from 2011. The reason I have chosen these texts is twofold. Firstly, as an Anglican these are texts with which I am familiar. Secondly, they are agreements between a number of different Anglican churches and a range of other churches of different traditions: Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, Methodist and Roman Catholic. They thus provide a reasonable sample of the way in which a variety of Christian traditions have made use of BEM in ecumenical dialogue.

7. I shall finish by suggesting that the way in which these statements have used BEM shows us that it has not been seen as possessing unique authority. It has instead been used as one of a number of elements that have been brought together to create mosaic-like ecumenical statements. I shall argue that the challenge for the ecumenical movement in the future is to think how to bring these individual mosaics together as parts of an ever larger whole in order to achieve the vision of unity set out in the New Delhi statement and that as they do this the churches need constantly to remember to hold together a commitment to unity, faith and order with a commitment to mission and political and social engagement.

II. BEM on Baptism and the Eucharist

*Baptism*

8. The chapter on Baptism in BEM consists of 23 paragraphs divided into five sections.

9. Section I, ‘The Institution of Baptism’ (paragraph 1), states that Baptism is a gift of God that is rooted in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is administered in the Triune name, it was commanded by the risen Christ in the Great Commission, it has been the universal practice of the Church from its earliest days and it is continued by the churches today as a rite of Christian commitment.

10. Section II, ‘The Meaning of Baptism’ (paragraphs 2-7), declares that Baptism is a sign of new life through Jesus Christ and its significance is expressed in the New Testament through a variety of different images:

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1 Ibid. pp. 2-7.
participation in Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12); a washing away of sin (I Cor. 6:11); a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14); a re-clothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27); a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5); the experience of salvation from the flood (I Peter 3:20-21); an exodus from bondage (I Cor. 10:1-2) and a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division, whether of sex or race or social status, are transcended (Gal. 3:27-28; I Cor. 12:13).

Baptism implies confession of sin and conversion of heart. It involves the work of the Holy Spirit who marks the baptised with a seal and matures the life of faith in their hearts. It brings people ‘into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church in every place.’ It is a sign of God’s kingdom and of the life of the world to come.

11. Section III, ‘Baptism and Faith’ (paragraphs 8-10), teaches that Baptism is ‘both God’s gift and our human response to that gift.’ It involves ‘life-long growth into Christ’ and has ethical implications ‘which not only call for personal sanctification, but also motivate Christians to strive for the realization of the will of God in all realms of life’ (and not just in the Church).

12. Section IV, ‘Baptismal Practice’ (paragraphs 11-16), explains that some churches practice the baptism of infants brought by parents or godparents while others only baptise ‘believers who are able to make a personal confession of faith.’ In both cases faith is involved, with infants making a profession of faith later in life and those who profess faith when they are baptised having to continue to grow in their faith. All baptisms also involve a profession of faith by the whole congregation. Baptism cannot be repeated. There is agreement that participation in Christ’s death and resurrection in baptism is linked to receiving the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. However, there is a continuing difference of understanding about whether the gift of the Spirit is associated with the use of water, anointing with chrism, the imposition of hands (often called confirmation) or all three. Finally, the importance of mutual recognition of baptism is being increasingly recognised.

13. Section V, ‘The Celebration of Baptism’ (paragraphs 17-23), reiterates that baptism is administered with the use of water in the Triune name and notes that immersion can vividly express the reality of dying and rising with Christ. It further notes that, as in the early centuries of the Church, the gift of the Holy Spirit may be signified by additional signs such as signing with the cross, anointing and laying
on hands. Baptism, it says, is normally performed by an ordained person, it should normally be administered during public worship, the scriptural meaning of baptism should be explained and the following elements should be present in the baptism service:

- the proclamation of the scriptures referring to baptism;
- an invocation of the Holy Spirit;
- a renunciation of evil;
- a profession of faith in Christ and the Holy Trinity;
- the use of water;
- a declaration that the persons baptized have acquired a new identity as sons and daughters of God, and as members of the Church, called to be witnesses of the Gospel.

Some churches, it declares, consider that Christian initiation is not complete without the sealing of the baptized with the gift of the Holy Spirit and participation in Holy Communion.

*The Eucharist*

14. The chapter on the Eucharist in BEM consists of 33 paragraphs divided into thee sections.

15. Section I, ‘The Institution of the Eucharist’ (paragraph 1), declares that the Eucharist (also known as the Lord’s Supper, the breaking of bread, holy communion, the divine liturgy and the mass) is a ‘gift from the Lord’. It is ‘a sacramental meal which by visible signs communicates to us God’s love in Jesus Christ, the love by which Jesus loved his own “to the end” (John 13:1).’ It was prefigured by the Passover and it continues the meals which Jesus shared with his followers during his ministry and after his resurrection. In particular it recalls the liturgical meal which Jesus celebrated in anticipation of his coming death.

16. Section II, ‘The meaning of the Eucharist’ (paragraphs 2-26), states that the Eucharist is a sacrifice of praise offered to the Father for his acts of creation, redemption and sanctification. It is an ‘anamnesis’, a remembering and proclamation of the work of Christ that is a ‘living and effective sign’ of his sacrifice offered once for all mankind, in which the Church ‘offers its intercession in communion with Christ, our great High Priest.’ Through the living word of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit (invoked in the eucharistic *epiklesis*) ‘the bread and wine become the sacramental signs of Christ’s body and blood’ in which Christ is really present and is discerned by faith. The Eucharist involves communion with Christ and at the same time

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1 Ibid. pp. 10-17.
communion with all the other members of the body of Christ in all
times and in all places. Sharing together in the Eucharist demands
reconciliation and sharing in the Church and a search for appropriate
social, economic and political relationships in the world. The
Eucharist is the foretaste of the coming kingdom of God and as those
reconciled in the Eucharist Christians are called to mission as servants
of reconciliation among men and women and witnesses of the joy of
resurrection.

17. Section III, ‘The Celebration of the Eucharist’ (paragraphs 27-33),
states that the eucharistic liturgy is essentially a single whole which
has consisted historically of the following elements:

hymns of praise; act of repentance; declaration of pardon;
proclamation of the Word of God, in various forms; confession of faith
(creed); intercession for the whole Church and for the world;
preparation of the bread and wine; thanksgiving to the Father for the
marvels of creation, redemption and sanctification (deriving from the
Jewish tradition of the berakah); the words of Christ’s institution of the
sacrament according to the New Testament tradition; the anamnesis
or memorial of the great acts of redemption, passion, death,
resurrection, ascension and Pentecost, which brought the Church into
being; the invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiklesis) on the community,
and the elements of bread and wine (either before the words of
institution or after the memorial, or both; or some other reference to
the Holy Spirit which adequately expresses the ‘epikletic’ character of
the eucharist); consecration of the faithful to God; reference to the
communion of saints; prayer for the return of the Lord and the
definitive manifestation of his Kingdom; the Amen of the whole
community; the Lord’s Prayer; sign of reconciliation and peace; the
breaking of the bread; eating and drinking in communion with Christ
and with each member of the Church; final act of praise; blessing and
sending.

18. It is Christ who invites people to the Eucharist and presides at it
and in most churches his presidency is signified by the presidency of
an ordained minister. The minister at the Eucharist ‘represents the
divine initiative and expresses the connection of the local community
with other local communities in the universal Church.’ The Eucharist
should be celebrated frequently and at least every Sunday, and every
Christian should be encouraged to communicate regularly. There is a
difference between those churches which emphasise the presence of
Christ in the elements and reserve them and those which emphasise
his presence in the act of celebration and the need to consume the elements. Both sides should respect the piety of the other and it should be remembered that ‘the primary intention of reserving the elements is their distribution among the sick and those who are absent’ and that (without excluding their use for communion of the sick) ‘the best way of showing respect for the elements served in the eucharistic celebration is by their consumption.’

III. The use of BEM in six ecumenical statements

The Meissen Common Statement

19. The Meissen Common Statement of 1988 was an agreement on faith and order between the Church of England, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the old GDR. It is now the basis of ecumenical relations between the Church of England and the re-united Evangelical Church in Germany. In this statement there are three references to the material in BEM on Baptism and the Eucharist.

20. Paragraph iii of the section of the statement on ‘Agreement in Faith’ states

We celebrate the apostolic faith in liturgical worship. We acknowledge in the liturgy both a celebration of salvation through Christ and a significant factor in forming the consensus fidelium. We rejoice at the extent of ‘our common tradition of spirituality, liturgy and sacramental life’ which has given us similar forms of worship, common texts, hymns, canticles and prayers. We are influenced by a common liturgical renewal. We also rejoice at the variety of expression shown in different cultural settings.¹

21. The footnote to this paragraph refers to paragraphs 17-23 of the BEM section on Baptism and paragraphs 27-33 of the BEM section on the Eucharist, thus suggesting that in their liturgical practice the churches involved conform to what is said in these paragraphs from BEM about the celebration of Baptism and the Eucharist. The footnote also refers to what is said about the doctrinal role of the liturgy and the need to overcome differences of practice and spirituality with regard to the Eucharist in two other ecumenical documents, the report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission

(ALERC) and the Anglican-Reformed report God’s Reign and Our Unity (GROU).

22. Paragraph iv of this section, which deals with baptism, does not refer to BEM, referring instead to ALERC and GROU. However, paragraph v, which is on the Eucharist, does refer to BEM. It states

We believe that the celebration of the eucharist is the feast of the new covenant instituted by Jesus Christ in which the word of God is proclaimed and in which the risen Christ gives his body and blood under the visible signs of bread and wine to the community. ‘In the action of the eucharist Christ is truly present to share his risen life with us and to unite us with himself in his self-offering to the Father, the one full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice which he alone can offer and has offered once for all.’ In this celebration we experience the love of God and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes again and brings his Kingdom to completion.  

23. The first footnote to this paragraph (at the end of the quotation) refers to what is said in paragraph 65 of GROU, which in turn refers to what is said in paragraph 5 of BEM on the Eucharist about the Eucharist as the living and effective sign of Christ’s once for all sacrifice. The second footnote (at the end of the paragraph as a whole) refers to paragraph 1 of the BEM section on the Eucharist, thus suggesting that it is in line with what is said there about the institution of the Eucharist. There is thus a double reference to BEM here, one direct and one indirect.

The Porvoo Common Statement

24. The Porvoo Common Statement is an agreement on faith and order between the four British and Irish Anglican churches and all but one of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches (Latvia is still not a signatory).

25. The paragraph on baptism in the section ‘What we agree in faith’, paragraph g, makes no reference to BEM, referring instead to the Meissen Common Statement, the ALERC report and the Pullach report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission.  

1 Ibid. pp. 16-17.

26. However, the paragraph on the Eucharist, paragraph h, quotes the words of paragraph 2 of the BEM section on the Eucharist, saying that in the Eucharist ‘God himself acts, giving life to the body of Christ and renewing each member.’ Paragraph h also refers to ALERC and the Pullach report and to the Final Report of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission.¹

*The Fetter Lane Common Statement*

27. The Fetter Lane Common Statement is an agreement on faith and order between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland.

28. The paragraph on Baptism in this statement is made up of material drawn from BEM and the *Porvoo Common Statement*. There are three sentences which are based on material in BEM: ‘Baptism is both God’s gift and our human response to that gift in repentance and in faith’ (BEM Baptism paragraph 8); ‘Baptism is related not only to a momentary experience, but to life-long growth into Christ’ (BEM Baptism paragraph 9); and ‘The life of the Christian is necessarily one of continuing struggle yet also of continuing experience of grace’ (BEM Baptism paragraph 9). In the first sentence, ‘in repentance and faith’ is added to BEM, in the second sentence ‘a’ is added and the third sentence is an exact quotation from BEM. The material from Porvoo is also slightly adapted in similar fashion.²

29. The paragraph on the Eucharist begins with newly written material, then has a quotation from *God’s Reign and Our Unity*, and finishes with the following sentence which it references to BEM Eucharist paragraph 1: ‘In the Eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church experiences the love of God and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and proclaims his death and resurrection until he comes and brings his Kingdom to completion.’ The footnote reference says ‘cf BEM, Eucharist, para.1’ indicating that unlike the material in the Baptism paragraph this is not a direct quotation from BEM, but a statement which is in line with what is said in BEM.³

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³ Ibid. p. 18.
An Anglican-Methodist Covenant

30. An Anglican-Methodist Covenant is an ecumenical agreement between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain.

31. Paragraph 122 of this document refers to agreement on the BEM material on Baptism as a way of establishing the existence of agreement between the two churches about baptism:

The Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain responded positively to the section of BEM that deals with baptism. This suggests that there are no significant differences of theological understanding between us as far as baptism is concerned. BEM’s rich scriptural imagery of baptism is reflected in the liturgies of initiation of both churches.¹

32. Paragraph 123 then summarises paragraphs 2-6 of BEM on baptism as a way of saying how the two churches understand baptism. It finishes with an unacknowledged quotation from BEM, Baptism, paragraph 6.

As BEM affirms (B2ff), summarising Scripture, baptism is the gift of God and is administered in obedience to our Lord. Baptism is with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is the sacrament of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection. It signifies death to sin and newness of life in Christ. It is given for the forgiveness of sins. Baptism is the sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism we are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Water baptism is linked in Scripture with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. BEM concludes that our one baptism into Christ therefore constitutes a call to the churches to overcome their divisions and to manifest more visibly their baptismal fellowship.²

33. In the next five paragraphs An Anglican-Methodist Covenant goes on to talk about the two churches’ understandings of infant and adult baptism and confirmation, but these paragraphs contain no references to the BEM material on these topics.

34. Paragraph 132 on the Eucharist again uses agreement with the BEM material as a way of establishing that there is doctrinal

² Ibid. p. 40.
agreement between the two churches. Like paragraph 123 it contains a summary of what is in BEM:

As with baptism, so with the Eucharist; both churches responded positively to Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. BEM affirmed (BEM E 2-4) that in the eucharistic meal, in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine, instituted by the Lord, he grants communion (koinonia) with himself. God is acting in the mystery of the Eucharist, renewing the life of the Church, the body of Christ. In accordance with Christ’s promises, each communicant receives assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the pledge of eternal life. The Eucharist eloquently proclaims the Lord’s death until he comes. It is a great sacrifice of praise which, in anticipation of the ultimate redemption of creation (Romans 8:19-23), the Church offers on behalf of the whole creation. Christ unites the faithful with himself, and, by virtue of his life, death and resurrection, includes their prayers within his own intercession.¹

35. Paragraphs 133-138 then go on to discuss the similarity between Anglican and Methodist eucharistic liturgies, theological differences over the understanding of the Eucharist within the two churches and differences of practice between the two churches with regard to the administration of the Eucharist and the disposal of the elements. In these paragraphs there is no reference to BEM.

Growing Together in Unity and Mission

36. Growing together in Unity and Mission is an agreed statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission that aims to harvest the results of forty years of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue. The sections in this document on baptism and the Eucharist have a number of references to BEM.

37. Paragraph 34 refers to the whole of the BEM chapter on Baptism to justify the statement that ‘Together with other Christians, we accept the meanings baptism has in the Scriptures, and the tradition and practice of the early Church.’ In other words, if you want to know what these meanings are then BEM will tell you.²

38. The paragraph goes on to declare that ‘By baptism, through faith, Christians are united with Christ in his life, death and resurrection. Along with all our human sinfulness, we are buried with Christ (cf. Romans 6: 3-11) and raised to a new life, which begins here and now,

¹ Ibid. p. 42.
in the power of his resurrection.’ This statement is supported by a reference to paragraph 3 of the BEM chapter on Baptism.

39. Paragraph 36 then quotes BEM, Baptism, paragraph 6, on the unity achieved through baptism. ‘Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place.’

40. On the subject of the Eucharist, paragraph 39 of Growing together in Unity and Mission refers to BEM, Baptism, paragraph 20, in relation to the statement that ‘Anglicans and Catholics agree that the full participation in the Eucharist, together with Baptism and Confirmation, completes the sacramental process of Christian initiation.’

41. Paragraphs 42-44 then refer to BEM, Eucharist, paragraphs 13, 22-26, 6 and 19, in relation to agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics that ‘The bread and wine become the sacramental body and blood of Christ in order that the Christian community may become more truly what it already is, the body of Christ,’ that the Eucharist is the ‘meal of the kingdom’ and a ‘foretaste of the Kingdom’ and that ‘every celebration of the Eucharist has to do with the whole Church, and that the whole Church is involved in each local celebration. The communion established in the body of Christ is a communion with all Christians of all times and places.’

42. In all these paragraphs from Growing together in Unity and Mission the references to BEM are interspersed among references to the bilateral agreement between Anglicans and Roman Catholics about Baptism and the Eucharist achieved in the ARCIC documents Salvation and the Church, Church as Communion, and Eucharistic Doctrine, and it is these bilateral statements that provide the main basis for what is said.

Healing the Past—Building the Future

43. Healing the Past—Building the Future is the report of a joint study group between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church that was subsequently affirmed by both churches. In paragraph 105 the report explains that a comparison between what is

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1 Ibid. p. 24.
2 Ibid. p. 25.
said about the sacraments in the Church of England’s *Thirty Nine Articles* and *Book of Common Prayer* and the United Reformed Church’s *Basis of Union* led the members of the study group to believe that the two churches can affirm together what is said about baptism in paragraphs 3, 5 and 6 of the World Council of Churches’ ‘Lima Statement’, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry:

Baptism means participating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus went down into the river Jordan and was baptized in solidarity with sinners in order to fulfil all righteousness (Matt. 3: 15). This baptism led Jesus along the way of the Suffering Servant, made manifest in his sufferings, death and resurrection (Mark 10: 38-40, 45). By baptism, Christians are immersed in the liberating death of Christ where their sins are buried, where the ‘old Adam’ is crucified with Christ, and where the power of sin is broken. Thus those baptized are no longer slaves to sin, but free. Fully identified with the death of Christ, they are buried with him and are raised here and now to a new life in the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, confident that they will also ultimately be one with him in a resurrection like his (Rom. 6: 3-11; Col. 2: 13,3:1; Eph. 2: 5-6).

The Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of people before, in and after their baptism. It is the same Spirit who revealed Jesus as the Son (Mark 1: 10-11) and who empowered and united the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2). God bestows upon all baptized persons the anointing and the promise of the Holy Spirit, marks them with a seal and implants in their hearts the first instalment of their inheritance as sons and daughters of God. The Holy Spirit nurtures the life of faith in their hearts until the final deliverance when they will enter into its full possession, to the praise of the glory of God (II Cor. 1: 21-22; Eph. 1: 13-14).

Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world. 1

44. In paragraphs 106-109 the report goes on to affirm what is said in *God’s Reign and Our Unity* about the ‘practical consequences’ of a shared understanding of baptism in terms of work for church unity

1 http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1283590/gs%201841.pdf
and work to overcome the divisions in wider society, and to discuss Church of England and URC attitudes to infant and adult baptism without reference to what is said about these two forms of baptism in BEM.

45. In paragraphs 110-12 the report outlines agreement on the Eucharist, but it refers to the Leuenberg agreement between European Protestant churches, to the Reuilly agreement between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed churches and to God’s Reign and Our Unity rather than to what is said in BEM.

IV. What can we learn from all this?

46. The first thing we can learn is how valuable the chapters in BEM on Baptism and the Eucharist still are simply as pieces of theological writing. Looking again at these chapters I was struck afresh with the way in which they present the faith and practice of the churches in relation to Baptism and the Eucharist in a way that is clear, coherent and rooted in the Bible and the Christian tradition, and that achieves the difficult feat of being concise while at the same time comprehensive.

47. It is true that the chapters are now somewhat dated. Thus the chapter on Baptism does not engage with the Pentecostal emphasis on ‘baptism in the Spirit’ and the chapter on the Eucharist does not engage with the growing North American practice of opening up the Lord’s table to all comers in line with what is seen as the radical inclusivity of Jesus’ practice of table fellowship during his earthly ministry. However, this caveat aside, this statement can still be recommended to anyone who wants a reliable introduction to what the mainstream of the Christian Church believes and practices in relation to the two dominical sacraments.

48. The second thing that we can learn is that the churches involved in the dialogues to which I have referred clearly believe two things:

• That the BEM chapters on Baptism and the Eucharist accurately reflect, to some extent at least, what they can affirm together about these two sacraments. These two chapters of BEM are therefore successful convergence texts in the sense that they do genuinely express convergence between the churches on sacramental theology and sacramental practice; and
• that these two chapters therefore provide useful material which can be drawn upon in bilateral and multilateral ecumenical agreements and statements. We know that they think BEM contains useful material because, as we have seen, they actually use it. Section III, above, has given many instances of this use.

49. The third thing we can learn is that the ecumenical statements that we have looked at use the chapters on Baptism and the Eucharist in BEM in four different ways:

• As a way of giving theological authority to new statements on Baptism and the Eucharist with reference to already agreed texts (all the statements);

• as a source of useful quotations (Porvoo Common Statement, Fetter Lane, Growing Together in Unity and Mission, Healing the Past—Building the Future);

• as a useful basis for summarising what the churches involved believe about Baptism and the Eucharist (An Anglican-Methodist Covenant, Growing Together in Unity and Mission);

• as a way of showing that there is doctrinal agreement between the churches involved by the fact that both agree with what is said in BEM in terms of their belief and practice (An Anglican-Methodist Covenant and Healing the Past—Building the Future).

50. The fourth thing that we can say is that in spite of the excellent qualities of the BEM material, in these statements this material is not given unique significance over and above other ecumenical texts, or over and above material produced during the course of the theological dialogues themselves.

51. There is no evidence that the theologians involved started their thinking about Baptism and the Eucharist by looking at what BEM had to say and moving on from there. What they did instead was to start by thinking about what they wanted, or were able, to say together about Baptism and the Eucharist. They then used material from BEM, alongside material from other ecumenical agreements and material that they simply wrote themselves, to help them to say it.

52. What we are dealing with is therefore a pragmatic and contextual use of BEM with the question that is being asked being ‘will what BEM has to say about Baptism and the Eucharist help us to say more effectively what we want to say about Baptism and the Eucharist as the churches we are and at this particular point in time?’
53. The fact that all the statements to which I have referred in this paper seem to have operated in this way means that they all have the character of theological mosaics. That is to say, they have not started from scratch using one single type of material. They have, instead, taken a variety of different types of material from various sources and then fitted these together to create an overall picture of what they want to say about the theological issues which they cover.

54. Creating mosaics in this way is far from new. Indeed it has Scriptural precedent in the way that St Paul, for example, constructs his epistles from citations from the Old Testament, traditions about Jesus, letters sent to him by his churches, early Christian liturgical material and his own personal reflections.

55. However, the fact that all the various ecumenical dialogues seem to be creating their own mosaics, all of which are different, raises a key challenge for the future of the ecumenical movement. How can we bring together these different mosaics to produce ever larger mosaics as we seek to create ever larger amounts of convergence between the churches in order to move towards the achievement of that vision of unity set before us in New Delhi in 1961?

56. A fifth and final observation is that while BEM relates Baptism and the Eucharist to mission and the need to work for appropriate social and political relationships in the wider world this is not picked up in the use of this material in the ecumenical statements I have looked at.

57. The ecumenical movement still needs to work at holding together a concern for unity, faith and order on the one hand, with an equally strong concern for mission and social and political engagement on the other. God’s Reign and Our Unity is a report that manages to hold these two concerns together in a very effective way, but it is, I would argue, like BEM, an exception that proves the rule.
The Sacraments of Initiation in the Orthodox–Roman Catholic Dialogue and the Issue of Ecclesiality: A Eucharistic Ecclesiology Solution?

Ştefăniţă Barbu*

The question of validity of the sacraments performed outside the Church has been a continuous challenge for Orthodox theologians and canonists alike. The discussions in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue showed that the question is intrinsically connected with the topic of the limits of the Church and ecclesiality. The present study analyzes the Orthodox perspectives on the construct sacraments–limits of the Church–ecclesiality, both by way of looking into the Church’s canonical practice and the positions theologians such as Florovsky and Stăniloae adopted. As a possible solution for further progress in the ecumenical dialogue the author suggests a larger reception of Eucharistic Ecclesiology.

It must first be said that the issue of mutual recognition of sacraments constitutes a very important topic in ecumenical dialogue. Let us recall, thirty years after the Lima document (BEM, 1982), that to ‘be in basic agreement on baptism, eucharist and ministry’ was considered ‘an essential prerequisite’ in the process of achieving visible unity. The Orthodox–Roman Catholic dialogue has shown that the two Churches share to a large extent this position the Lima document expressed, dedicating along the years several meetings to the issue of the sacraments. However, the results achieved in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue rather contradicts the Lima document since

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1 Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Geneva: WCC, 1982), Coll. Faith and Order No. 3, viii.
although the two Churches share to a very large extent the same teaching on sacraments, especially on baptism, eucharist and ministry, still communion has not been re-established, as one might have expected or hoped.

This situation should not surprise anyone given the fact that it is well known that the dividing issues between Orthodox and Roman Catholics have always been somewhat outside the sacramental realm, bearing in mind papal primacy and the *filioque* clause.

In the present study we propose to investigate the relationship between the sacraments of initiation and ecclesiality in conjunction with two other issues, namely the reception of the non-Orthodox baptized into the Orthodox Church and the problem of the limits of the Church.

Our aim is firstly to explore the present *status quo* regarding the complex relationship between sacraments, limits of the Church, and ecclesiality in the Orthodox Church, and secondly to bring forward the extremely rich perspectives of Eucharistic ecclesiology, whose potential for overcoming the present theological and ecumenical deadlock is unjustly neglected.

We will firstly present Orthodox attitudes regarding the recognition of non-Orthodox baptism. We will continue thereafter by way of investigating the relationship between the sacraments of initiation and church unity in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue, concluding the present study with an analysis of the ways Orthodox theology has dealt with the issue in discussion in the more recent period. We will confine this last section to the works of Dumitru Stăniloae,\(^1\) Georges Florovsky\(^2\) and Nicholas Afanassieff.

**I. Canonical Perspectives on the Issue of the Baptism of Non-Orthodox Christians**

From the outset one needs to assert that, in what concerns the validity of Baptism celebrated outside the juridical borders of the Orthodox

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Church, as well as the reception in the Orthodox Church of non-Orthodox baptized converts, official Orthodox positions have varied both in time and in place.

a) Early and Byzantine Church

The problem of the validity of Baptism of those outside orthodoxy\(^1\) was first discussed in Africa by Cyprian of Carthage together with thirty-two African bishops, at a synod in AD 257. There the decision was taken to re-baptize the heretics and schismatics who wished to return to orthodoxy.\(^2\) Thus, the synod affirmed:

We ruled that there is but one baptism and that is established within the Catholic Church; by this baptism we do not rebaptize but rather baptize all those who, coming as they do from spurious and unhallowed waters, need to be washed clean and sanctified in the genuine waters of salvation.\(^3\)

For Cyprian, being thus outside the Orthodox/Catholic Church equated with being a heretic, and thus all schismatics needed to be re-baptized.\(^4\)

In the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea also examines this issue and introduces a distinction between heretics, schismatics and ‘parasynagogues,’ or dissidents, and the ways they should be received back into orthodoxy. Thus although all of them are outside the juridical borders of the Church, Baptism was required only in the case of heretics (Manichaeans, Gnostics, and Marcionites, at that time).\(^5\)

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1 By orthodoxy (with small ‘o’) we mean the mainstream Church, as opposed to the ‘heretics’ and ‘schismatics’.
4 De Halleux, ‘Orthodoxie et Catholicisme’, 437.
5 Cf. The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy’ (St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary,
The same threefold distinction was adopted by the Sixth Ecumenical Council (in Trullo) in its canon 95.

The Donatist debate prompted a departure from Cyprian’s principles. Thus, although Augustine follows Cyprian’s principle according to which ‘outside the Church there is no salvation’ and concedes that the Baptism of schismatics does not confer the Holy Spirit, he does not accept re-baptizing them; rather, he recognizes their baptism’s validity yet not its efficacy.\(^1\) Whereas the Cyprianic vision (with the Basilian nuances) will be followed by the Byzantines, Augustine’s theory, while not totally ignored in the East, will remain the main sacramental theory of the Latin West.\(^2\)

\(b\) Post-Schism Byzantine Church

After 1054 the problem of the validity of baptisms performed by Latins, and later on by Protestants, arose. The manner of their reception within the Orthodox Church varied according to the way Latins (Roman Catholics and then Protestants) were regarded: sometimes as heretics, and therefore the converts needed to be re-baptized; other times as schismatics, and therefore only the anointing with myron (Chrismation) was required as sign of penitence.

A synodal decision concerning the reception of Roman Catholics to Orthodoxy was taken by a Constantinopolitan Synod in 1484. It prescribed that Latins should be received by Chrismation and by signing a *libellus* of faith.\(^3\)

However, at times the validity of their baptism was related to liturgical practice as such.\(^4\) Thus the Byzantines changed the 1484 decision on the occasion of another Synod in Constantinople in 1756, when, at the insistence of Patriarch Cyril V, the Synod decided to ask

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1. Augustine, *De baptismo*.
for the re-baptism of Latin converts.¹ The Synod does not recognize any baptism performed outside the Orthodox Church and condemns any form of Baptism performed otherwise than by way of threefold immersion.² Strong support was given to this synodal decision by the Pedalion (The Rudder), an 1880 work by Nicodemus the Hagiorite, the Athonite monk who furnished the Orthodox Tradition with the Philokalia. It was Nicodemus who adapted the pastoral principle of oikonomía³ and applied it to sacramental theology. The distinction Nicodemus creates between oikonomía and akribeia in regard to the sacraments has been strongly criticized by theologians as Georges Florovsky who consider it as ‘a private theological opinion’,⁴ as well as by the members of the North American Orthodox-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation,⁵ who even dismiss it as not representing the ‘tradition and perennial teaching of the Orthodox Church’.⁶ However, in spite of this significant Athonite support, it seems that the re-baptism of Latins did not become a universally accepted practice. Several synodal decisions (1879, 1880, 1888), though not

² The entire English text of the Horos of the 1775 Constantinopolitan Synod is found in Dragas, ‘The Manner of Reception’, 243ff. Although this objection is found in the correspondence Patriarch Jeremias II had with the Lutheran theologians from Tübingen (in 1575), it is still a rather new objection brought against the Latins. Under Photius, for example, the only Byzantine objection related to Baptism was that the Latins were reserving Chrismation exclusively to the bishop. Cf. Tia M. Kolbaba, ‘Barlaam the Calabrian. Three Treatises on Papal Primacy: Introduction, Edition, and Translation’, in Revue des études byzantines, 53 (1995): 41-115, 43.
³ Erickson defines the concept of oikonomía as a departure or suspension of strict application (akribeia) of the Church’s canon and disciplinary norms. According to the principle of akribeia all the non-Orthodox sacraments are null and void, but using the principle of oikonomía, the Orthodox Church can decide to accept the sacraments of non-Orthodox entering the Church as valid ‘by economy’. John H. Erickson, ‘The Problem of Sacramental “Economy”’, in The Challenge of Our Past (Crestwood, NY: SVS, 1991), 115-132, 116-17.
⁴ Florovsky, ‘The Limits of the Church’, 125.
⁵ Hereafter: NORC.
⁶ Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy’, II.B.7.
annulling the 1755 decisions, allowed the reception of communicants by Chrismation and did not impose re-baptism.¹

c) The Russian Tradition

The Russian Orthodox tradition of receiving the non-Orthodox has known variations as well. The earliest practice was to re-baptize Roman Catholics and Protestants (Moscow Synod, 1620), but this practice soon came into question. Thus, Peter Moghila in his Trebnik published in 1646 accepted that Roman Catholics be received into the Orthodox Church by Chrismation and not by re-baptism.² In 1667 the Moscow Synod adopted Macarius of Antioch’s reasoning that Roman Catholics are not heretics but schismatics and Latin Baptism is true, since it was performed in the name of the Holy Trinity, the Synod requesting only a confession of faith and Chrismation.³

Until 1718, the Protestants (Lutheran-Calvinist) were treated differently than the Roman Catholic converts. But Patriarch Ieremias II of Constantinople, in a letter addressed to Peter the Great permitted them to be received into the Orthodox Church only by confession of faith and Chrismation, instead of re-baptism.⁴ Since 1757 the Russian Church requires from Roman Catholic converts only a confession of faith, whereas for the Protestants confirmation continued to be required.⁵

In what concerns the contemporary situation, things are far from being uniformly treated, as John Erickson shows, the way Roman Catholics or Protestants are received into the Orthodox Church ‘depending upon the group or bishop receiving’ them.⁶

¹ Ibid II. B.4.
³ Dragas, ‘Reception of Roman Catholic Converts’, 251.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Dechatelez, ‘L’économie baptismale’, 21. The reason, as John Erickson explains it, seems to reside in the fact that, for the Orthodox, Protestants lack the apostolic succession and thus valid orders. John H. Erickson, ‘The Reception of Non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church: Contemporary Practice’, in St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly [SVTQ], 41 (1997): 1-17, 5.
II. The relationship between the sacraments of initiation and church unity in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue


Between 9 and 16 June 1987 at the Spiritual Center Oasi Santa Maria in Cassano delle Murge near Bari, there took place the Fourth Plenary meeting of the International Commission of Dialogue between Orthodox and Roman Catholics. It was the second time the International Commission met in Bari. The previous meeting had taken place just the year before. However, due to many difficulties the commission faced, the discussions conducted in Bari 1986 could only be concluded at Bari 1987.¹ After the second meeting in Bari, the International Commission of Dialogue published the text *Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church*,² known as the Bari Document which represents the second common declaration the Commission adopted.

After the first common statement by the International Commission issued in Munich (1982), which dealt with *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Holy Trinity*, the Commission wished to remain in the sphere of sacramental theology and initiated

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discussions on the relationship between Faith and Sacraments and their bearing upon the issue of unity.

The significance of the Bari document resides (among other things) in the fact that in it the Commission laid down perhaps one of the most significant principles of the O-RC dialogue, namely, that the unity of the Church presupposes unity in faith and in sacraments, or, as the commission explains in para. 21, ‘true faith is presupposed for a communion in the sacraments’. The Commission made it very clear that ‘liturgical tradition is an authentic interpreter of revelation and hence the criterion for the expression of the true faith’ (14), a statement that raises serious questions when one confronts it with the difference in practice existing between the two ecumenical partners. But to understand what faith means for the members of this commission, it suffices to quote part of para. 7: ‘As for its content, faith embraces the totality of doctrine and church practice relating to salvation. Dogma, conduct and liturgical life overlap each other to form a single whole and together constitute the treasure of faith’.

The second part of the document, although entitled The Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Their Relation to the Unity of the Church, is focused on the theology of these sacraments (especially of Baptism and Chrismation/Confirmation). According to one of the members of the Commission, Frans Bouwen, it was this second part of the Bari document which raised the most difficulties for the commission, even though the primary focus was on liturgical rather than on doctrinal aspects.¹

The Commission affirmed strongly that the three sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation/Confirmation and Eucharist, although each have their particular importance and specific character, should nonetheless be regarded as a whole, together representing the sacrament of Christian initiation (37). Baptism, which is done ‘with water and the Spirit’, is ‘participation in the death and resurrection of Christ and new birth by Grace’ (37), whereas Chrismation is ‘the perfection of Baptism’. As to the Eucharist, it is affirmed that it is ‘the completion of the other two’ (37) and ‘grants participation in the Kingdom of God, including forgiveness of sins, communion in divine

¹ It is because of disagreements concerning liturgical practices that the Commission did not reach an agreement in Crete (1984) or in Bari (1986). Bouwen, ‘Bari 1987’, 106.
life itself and membership of the eschatological community’ (37). It is somewhat surprising that the Commission does not at this point make any reference to Baptism as the sacrament through which sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38), especially original sin, reserving this to the Eucharist. This position is modified in para. 49.2. However, this remark led the North-American Orthodox-Roman Catholic consultations to criticize the Bari text, on the grounds that it ‘suggests that baptism itself does not already achieve entry into the divine communion and participation in the eschatological community’.1

Participation in the Kingdom of God is conditioned by receiving the Eucharist ‘under proper conditions’ (37), an expression which remained nevertheless unexplained in the text. However, when one considers the theological works of one of the most prominent members (and even co-presidents) of this commission, namely Metropolitan John Zizioulas, one can infer that these ‘proper conditions’ refer to the celebration of the Eucharist in an ‘episcopocentric structure’.2

In paragraphs 38 and 47 it is acknowledged that both traditions, Orthodox and Roman Catholic, maintain the indivisibility of the three sacraments, at least at the doctrinal level—although at a practical level, and for pastoral reasons, especially in what concerns the Roman Catholic Church, these sacraments came to be celebrated at different times in the life of the person (47-48). Nevertheless, as paras. 42-46 show, the early church’s practice of having the sacraments of initiation performed by the bishop, or by his delegate the priest during the Liturgy (44.4), in one single complex liturgical service (45), remains for both parties the ‘ideal’ (46) practice.

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The points of agreement are listed in para. 49 and some theologians consider them the ‘essential points of the doctrine of baptism’. According to the Bari document, these are:

1) the necessity of baptism for salvation;
2) the effects of baptism, particularly new life in Christ and liberation from original sin;
3) incorporation into the Church by Baptism;
4) the relation of baptism to the mystery of the Trinity;
5) the essential link between Baptism and the death and resurrection of the Lord;
6) the role of the Holy Spirit in baptism; and
7) the necessity of water which manifests baptism’s character as the bath of new birth.

Concerning the differences existing between the two Churches, the Bari document mentions the Orthodox objections to the Roman Catholic practices of baptism by infusion and that a deacon can be the ordinary minister of baptism (50). However, the document stresses the fact that the Catholic Church recognizes the ‘primordial importance of Baptism by immersion’ (50.1), and that the changes which appeared in the practice of administering the three sacraments, as we have seen, ‘did not concern the theological understanding of the fundamental unity, in the Holy Spirit, of the whole process of Christian initiation’ (47).

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2 According to Emanuel Lanne, early Church Tradition does not dismiss such a practice. Emmanuel Lanne, ‘Foi, sacrements et unité: Réflexions complémentaires sur le document de Bari’, in Irénikon, 61 (1988): 189-206, 198, note 29. A. de Halleux, another member of the Commission, shows that the practice of immersion had also been defended as the normative practice by Thomas Aquinas for whom ‘Christ’s burial is more clearly represented by immersion: wherefore this manner of baptizing is more frequently in use and more commendable’. Summa Theologica, part III, quest. 66, art. 7,2o, quoted in André de Halleux, ‘Foi, baptême et unité: A propos du texte de Bari’, Irénikon, 61 (1988): 155-188, 162.
Nevertheless, theologians like Metropolitan John Zizioulas\(^1\) and Alexander Schmemann have shown that the early church’s consciousness could not separate theological reasoning from liturgical practice—a consciousness that, as the ecumenical discussions reveal, has been preserved in the Orthodox tradition and needs to be further discussed. Thus, Schmemann argues that:

The essential character ... of this eschatological symbolism, is not simply its realism in the sense of the presence in the sign of the reality which it signifies, ... [but] the fact that in it the very distinction between the sign and the signified is simply ignored. ... In it the sign and that which it signifies are one and the same thing. The liturgy, we may say, happens to us.\(^2\)

A more peculiar objection is made against the practice of accepting at the Eucharist persons who have been baptized with water but have not received the sacrament of Chrismation. This practice, found among ‘certain Latin Churches’ (51), is condemned both by Catholic and Orthodox members of the Commission. However, a question arises: if the sequence Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist is considered as the only normative order, how should one regard the Syrian tradition which practiced Chrismation before the other two sacraments until the fourth or fifth century?\(^3\)

To resolve the divergences existing between the two churches, the commission offers, though without further explanations, the decision of the Council of Constantinople (879-880), namely ‘that each See would retain the ancient usage of its tradition, the Church of Rome preserving its own usage, the Church of Constantinople its own, and the thrones of the East also doing the same’, which practically left the question of different liturgical practices surrounding Baptism unresolved, since, as de Halleux remarks, this synod’s decision was not

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\(^1\) Cf. John Zizioulas, ‘Some Reflections on Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist’, in Sobornost, 5 (1969). We have used for this study the more recent republication of this text in The One and the Many: Studies on Man, God, the Church and the World Today (Sebastian Press, 2010), 91-100.


particularly concerned with the differences in baptismal practice existing between the two Traditions.\textsuperscript{1} However, other theologians have appreciated the reference to diversity implied by this quotation and proposed further elaboration of this principle in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue.\textsuperscript{2}

The adoption at Bari (1987) of an agreed document on the sacraments of initiation did not stop the controversies in the Commission on the relationship between liturgical practice and theological significance.\textsuperscript{3} Thus, comments such as Thomas Fitzgerald’s that one ‘would have appreciated greater elaboration on a common understanding of the true significance of these liturgical practices’,\textsuperscript{4} are perfectly justified.

The Bari document, in spite of the many points of agreement between the two traditions, still does not end with a mutual recognition of the sacrament of Baptism, a reason which determined de Halleux to consider the discussions as an échec [failure].\textsuperscript{5}

\textit{b) Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy’ (NORC, St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary, Crestwood, NY, 1999)}

The document \textit{Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy}\textsuperscript{6} of the North American Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation is one of the most audacious agreements the Orthodox were ever a part of. NORC had offered its opinions on the issue of Baptism on two previous occasions: in its 1984 response to BEM,\textsuperscript{7} and in its 1989 response to the Bari document, already mentioned above. In 1999, the American Consultation, for various reasons explained in the introductory part of

\begin{itemize}
  \item De Halleux, ‘Foi, baptême et unité’, 166.
  \item Bouwen, ‘Bari 1987’, 107.
  \item Fitzgerald, ‘Faith, Sacraments, and the Unity of the Church’, 150.
  \item De Halleux, ‘Foi, baptême et unité’, 166.
  \item \url{http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/ecumenical/orthodox/baptism-and-sacramental-economy.cfm}
\end{itemize}
the document,¹ offered its own official text on Baptism. The document is quite comprehensive, comprising not only a section on the points of agreement, but also a significant historical part, as well as several recommendations offered to the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church.

From its first lines on Baptism, NORC acknowledges that ‘Baptism rests upon and derives its reality from the faith of Christ himself, the faith of the Church, and the faith of the believer’ (I.A). It also underlines that ‘baptism, like all the sacraments, is given to us first of all as the result of Christ’s loving fidelity to His Father, and as a sign of His faithfulness in the Holy Spirit to fallen humanity’ (I.A.1).

Baptism is an ‘indelible seal’ (I.B.4), it ‘introduces us into the life of the Church’, and ‘establi

Baptism represents ‘new creation’ and ‘the beginning of each believer’s life in the Spirit’ (I.A.3). Through it ‘we believe that we recover the royalty of Adam in Paradise’ (I.A.3). The relationship between sin and baptism is further developed at I.B.3:

Baptism is at once a death and a new birth, a washing-away of sin and the gift of the living water promised by Christ, the grace of forgiveness and regeneration in the Spirit, a stripping-off of our mortality and a clothing with the robe of incorruption.

The issue of differences in administering the Sacraments of Initiations is raised in I.B. To the Orthodox century-old objections, the Commission wishes to respond by presenting several facts:

a) ‘immersion’ in the ancient church did not always mean total submersion—archaeological research indicates that many ancient baptismal pools were far too shallow for total submersion;

b) the Orthodox Church itself can and does recognize baptism by infusion as valid in cases of emergency;

c) for most of the past millennium, the Orthodox Church has in fact recognized Catholic baptism as valid (I.B.2).

The differences of liturgical practice are not considered by the Commission as affecting the substance of the mystery (I.C). Thus, acknowledging that both traditions share ‘the same teaching and faith

¹ Baptism and ‘Sacramental Economy’, 426.
in one baptism’, the members of NORC make a decisive step forward in Orthodox-Roman Catholic relations and declare: ‘we also recognize each other’s baptism as one and the same’ (I.C). In consequence and as an ecclesiological necessity, the members of the Commission recognize each Church’s ecclesiality:

The fact that our churches share and practice this same faith and teaching requires that we recognize in each other the same baptism and thus also recognize in each other, however ‘imperfectly,’ the present reality of the same Church. (III.A.3)

However,

the mutual recognition of baptism does not of itself resolve the issues that divide us, or reestablish full ecclesial communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, but ... it does remove a fundamental obstacle on our path towards full communion (III. B. 5).

III. The sacraments of initiation and the limits of the Church

For modern Orthodox theologians the issue of the recognition of sacraments outside the Orthodox Church has been strictly an ecclesiological problem conditioned by the issue of the limits of the Church. Thus, Stăniloae identifies the limits of the Church with the presence and work of Christ (the Christologic model), Florovsky differentiates between the juridical borders and the mystical or charismatic borders of the Church (the Augustinian model), whereas Afanassieff identifies the Church with the Eucharist (the Eucharistic ecclesiology model). In what follows we will analyze these three models and their significance for the issues here under discussion.

a) Dumitru Stăniloae’s sacramental theology as well as his ecclesiology are Christocentric: ‘All the Sacraments in the narrow sense have their basis in the mystery of the Son of God who took flesh’,¹ and ‘The Church is Christ prolonged and in process of prolongation through the Sacraments’.² The value of the Sacraments stems from the fact that they are acts of the Church in which Christ abides: ‘The whole Church is filled with Christ. Therefore its acts—especially those instituted by Himself—are as well filled with Him and

¹ Stăniloae, ‘Ființa Tainelor’, 4. (All translations from Romanian are mine, unless otherwise indicated.)
² Ibid. 7.
the human person that receives them is set and grows in this Church’s order, in Christ’s mystical body.\footnote{Ibid. 8.}

Christ, the main mystery, uniting human persons with Him through the Sacraments in the narrow sense, or extending Himself in human persons, constitutes the Church. Thus the Church is constituted through the Sacraments, feeds herself and extends herself through them. Once constituted, the Church becomes the one that carries on the Sacraments. The Sacraments represent the Church’s dynamic.\footnote{Ibid. 7.}

Although Stănilioc argues that ‘outside the Church there are no Sacraments’,\footnote{Ibid. 9.} his theology which stresses the personal relationship that the faithful person has with Christ, determines him to admit that outside the Church there can be ‘countless other forms of relationship with Christ’\footnote{Stănilioc, ‘Numărul Tainelor’, 211.} so that ‘one can speak of different degrees of relationship human persons have with Christ’.\footnote{Ibid. 212.} For Stănilioc, the Sacraments are ‘means by which human persons enter into full and normal relationship with Christ’.\footnote{Stănilioc, ‘Numărul Tainelor’, 211.} Thus, what happens outside the Church can have only an imperfect character.\footnote{Ibid. 212.}

We cannot say precisely what those outside the Church receive through their so-called sacraments. All we can say is that these ceremonies are not mere empty forms lacking any kind of objective content, but involve something that—in some cases more, in other less—can constitute the basis for an addition and strengthening of the relationship initiated between that human person and Christ.\footnote{Ibid. 8.}

Nevertheless, Stănilioc is not willing to accept the validity of Sacraments performed outside the Church. For him only the Orthodox Church’s Sacraments offer the ‘normal and full’ relationship with Christ.\footnote{Ibid.} Recognizing the validity of the Sacraments of those who ‘do not enter the Church, but remain in their confession, would represent a recognition of the fact that that confession leads their \footnote{Ibid. 9.}
members to salvation in an equal manner with the Orthodox Church, which would be false. The Sacraments of those outside the Church cannot be recognized because they ‘do not lead to certain salvation’. Stănăiloae believes that, by applying the principle of oikonomia, the Orthodox Church can validate the sacrament of baptism performed outside its borders in the name of the Holy Trinity and by aspersion with water. Thus, the Orthodox Church extends over the external part (of the sacrament) the Church’s atmosphere filled with grace, which existed in a more or less accentuated manner in the Christian community from where that baptized person comes. This recognition represents some later completion of the external part of the Baptism with the Divine power received now fully by the one that is baptized outside the Church, by way of placing him in full accord with the Church’s faith. However, the Church can also baptize those baptized outside and who come to her, due to the lack of fullness of Grace or of Christ’s work in the Christian community from where that person comes, and due to the fact that in that unity there is no fullness of faith.

In these circumstances one cannot but notice that the concept of oikonomia appears to be the deus ex machina of the Orthodox theology, the magic formula that solves an unbreakable paradox, remaining thus, at least from an ecumenical perspective, a highly questionable concept.

b) Georges Florovsky’s concerns as to the limits of the Church are based on the same identification Stănăiloae has made between Christ and the Church. Thus, Florovsky contends that since Christ has not been divided, neither can the Church, his body, be divided. That being so, Florovsky calls into question Cyprian’s presupposition that the ‘canonical and charismatic limits of the Church completely and invariably coincide’, asking whether ‘the unity of the Church [is]
really constituted by human unanimity and agreement, by human obedience and loyalty?" Florovsky’s argument is that the unity of the Church is a divine gift which does not depend on human loyalty. Moreover, he dismisses the presupposition that the Church, as a sacramental body, can be described in ‘canonical or legal terms and categories alone’, and argues that: ‘In her sacramental being she [the Church] defies and surpasses all merely canonical measurements’. Thus, Florovsky proposes that the limits of the Church be mapped onto the sacraments and the charismatic nature of the Church: 'Where the sacraments are accomplished, there is the Church.'

Florovsky believes that the history of reception of non-Orthodox baptized into the Orthodox Church confirms his theory that the Orthodox Church has recognized the validity of those sacraments celebrated outside its borders.

Following Augustine, Florovsky employs the distinction between ‘validity’ and ‘efficacy’:

The sacraments of schismatics are valid, that is, they genuinely are sacraments. But they are not efficacious (non-efficacy) by virtue of the sect itself, of division. For in sects and divisions love withers and without love salvation is impossible.

This seems to contradict what he affirmed about the divine nature of the sacraments, namely:

They [the sacraments] have their own subsistence, being grounded in the redeeming will of God, which can never be ultimately frustrated by human failure.

As to the ecclesiality of those outside the Church, Florovsky adopts a middle way solution, not entirely denying yet not fully affirming their ecclesial character, but declaring that

It would be truer to say, the church continues to work in the schisms in expectation of the mysterious hour when the stubborn heart will be

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1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid. 118.
melted in the warmth of ‘preparatory grace’, when will burst into flame and burn the will and thirst for communality and unity.\footnote{Florovsky, ‘The Limits of the Church’, 128.}

Therefore, Florovsky does not wish to adopt the clear distinction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the Church, but prefers to adopt the theory of degrees of participation in the Church, a principle also to be found as we have seen in Stâniloae.

Thus, in the last resort, we are driven back, on the strength of our own reasoning, exactly to an ‘Augustinian’ distinction between the canonical and mystical limits of the Church, between the ‘historical’ and ‘eschatological’ aspects of her life (of which St. Augustine was fully aware), or else to a distinction between ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’ membership in the Church.\footnote{Florovsky, ‘The Doctrine of the Church’, 157.}

However one wonders whether Florovsky’s distinction between Church-in-history =imperfection and Church-in-eschaton =perfection is not in fact contradicting his own understanding of the unity and unicity of the Church.

c) A much more coherent position, in our opinion, is found in the works of the former St Serge professor of Canon Law, Fr Nicholas Afanassieff.

Afanassieff attempted to offer a solution to the problem here under discussion in a 1949 study entitled ‘The Limits of the Church’ (Granicy Cerkvi),\footnote{The essay was originally published in Pravoslavnaya mysł’ 7 (1949): 17-36. For the present study we have used a draft translation done by Vitaly Permiakov, whom I wish to thank for making this text available to me. VP’s translation includes two additional sections (12-13), which are not present in Pravoslavnaya mysł’, but which are part of the Lectures.} a study which, as far as we know, was never completed. In this first part, Afanassieff brings into discussion the incoherencies that marked theology, especially the Orthodox tradition on the issue concerning the baptism of those outside the limits of the Orthodox Church.

The claim of Orthodox scholastic theology that the Orthodox Church ‘recognizes as correct and valid every baptism performed in the name of the Holy Trinity, whoever might be the person who performed it’
does not agree with the Church’s canonical statements, neither with its practice or theological doctrine.¹

In Afanassieff’s perspective, the decisions many councils adopted as to the way non-Orthodox (either schismatics or heretics) were to be received into the Orthodox Church, were much influenced by Church politics and immediate interests.² Thus the Fathers did not judge the various cases from the perspective of a general norm and teaching, but rather tried to offer some general norms, starting from the various cases. In consequence, the same cases received different solutions at different periods, and no general rule has emerged, as is shown by the various practices existing in Orthodox Churches concerning the reception of non-Orthodox into the Church.³

For the Paris theologian, the synthesis attempted by ‘textbook theology’ to reconcile the two mutually exclusive positions—on the one hand, ‘that all baptism of heretics or schismatics is declared as null and void’, and on the other, ‘that the baptism of some heretics and schismatics is recognized as valid’—is practically impossible.

The core of the problem resides in the fact that there seems to be a lack of dogmatic clarity with respect to the doctrine concerning the Church, in particular ... the lack of clarity with respect to the issue, where are the limits of the Church and to what measure the fabric of the Church is ruptured with the departure of a community from Orthodoxy and in which circumstances the integrity of the Church’s body becomes irreparably broken.⁵

Afanassieff argues that ‘[t]he question concerning reception into the Church has to be decided on the basis of the teaching about the

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¹ Afanassieff, Limits of the Church, §2.
² Ibid. §7.
³ Afanassieff identifies five ways of reception of non-Orthodox into the Orthodox Church: ‘the first one, wholly identical with the mode of receiving into the Church pagans and non-Christians in general; second, through the sacrament of baptism without any preliminary catechesis; third, through the sacrament of chrismation; fourth, through the sacrament of repentance; and fifth, through a simple written statement of adherence to the Orthodox faith and rejection of previously upheld heretical teachings’. Afanassieff, Limits of the Church, §7.
⁴ Afanassieff, Limits of the Church, §11.
⁵ Ibid.
Church, rather than on the basis of some other presuppositions, whether theological or not."

Although Afanassieff in his study The Limits of the Church does not offer a solution to the complex issue of the triadic relationship between sacraments, limits of the church, and ecclesiality, still he emphasizes several principles found in Cyprian’s work, namely: 1) there are no sacraments outside the Church; 2) ‘the Holy Spirit is not given with measure, but completely pours itself upon the faithful person’, thus ‘one cannot deny some characteristic deficiency or conditionality of the sacraments, e.g. baptism, performed outside the Church’; and 3), ‘all sacraments constitute one entity within which they are tied with each other. To recognize as possible for one sacrament to be performed outside of the limits of the Church entails recognition of other sacraments as well’.

We will try to complete Afanassieff’s vision on sacraments performed outside the Orthodox Church, as well as on the limits of the Church, from his other works.

In a study dedicated to the changeable or unchangeable character of the canons, Afanassieff indirectly dismisses Florovsky’s thesis on the separation between the sacramental and canonical realms in the Church, arguing that ‘the existence of jus humanum is unknown to Orthodoxy’. In analyzing the Church and its structures one should employ the Chalcedonian Christological formula: asynchytôs, atreptôs, adiairetôs, achôristôs (‘which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation’), a formula that makes ‘all decisions [in the Church] divinely inspired’. In other words, the canonical limit of the Church is identical to the charismatic, and the eschatological Church is identified with the historical church.

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1 Ibid. §12.
2 Ibid.
3 Quotation from Cyprian, Letter 69.14.1; Afanassieff, Limits of the Church, §12.
4 Afanassieff, Limits of the Church, §12.
5 Ibid.
7 Afanassieff, ‘The Church’s Canons’, 34.
However, this identification does not of itself solve the problem of sacraments outside the Orthodox Church and their validity, and even less the issue of the ecclesiality of those non-Orthodox communities celebrating the sacraments.

The solution to this complex equation comes from Afanassieff’s concept of the Church. If for the Joint International Commission of Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue (and for many Orthodox theologians), the ecclesial character seems to stem almost exclusively from the confession of the right faith (in its maximalist form, as we saw above), for Afanassieff, the ecclesial character is given by the celebration of the Eucharist, which in itself, though a minimalist one, is nevertheless a confession of faith and in fact the main confession of faith of the Church.

Thus, Afanassieff argues that ‘the Church is where the eucharistic assembly is’, and ‘the eucharistic assembly is the distinctive, empirical sign of the Church’, an expression which made history. Moreover, ‘Every “local” church is the Church of God in Christ, for Christ dwells in His Body in the congregation at the Eucharist’.

Therefore, the limits of the Church are drawn by the sacrament of the Eucharist and not by the confession of faith, or by the bishop, two elements which in Afanassieff’s ecclesiology receive only secondary importance.

For Afanassieff, ‘each local church affirmed herself as autonomous and independent’, the relationship between churches being conditioned by the love and mutual recognition of each other’s acts. Every Church is independent, Afanassieff argues, in the sense of ‘any power, of any kind, exercised over it would be exercised over Christ and His Body’, whereas it is autonomous ‘because fullness of being belongs to the Church of God in Christ, and outside it nothing is, for

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4 Afanassieff, ‘Una Sancta’, 14, 26ff
5 Ibid. 15.
6 Ibid. 15ff.
nothing can have being outside Christ’. For Afanassieff this independence/autonomy justifies neither indifference or separatism vis-à-vis other Churches because, as he argues, a local Church could not live apart from the other churches. It could not shut itself in or refuse to be acquainted with happenings in other churches: for anything that happened in other churches, as well as in its own, happened in the Church of God, the one and only Church. All the multitude of local churches forms one union founded on concord and love.²

Therefore, what has been termed as schism is nothing more, in Afanassieff’s perspective, than a ‘cessation of relations’,³ which of itself does not call into question the validity of the sacraments, or the ecclesial character, of the other Church.⁴

**Conclusions**

Until the present moment the Orthodox Church seems to be incapable of formulating a common coherent position as to the sacraments performed outside its borders. The topic, although it has been raised since the early days of the Church, has failed to receive unanimous recognition and understanding. Current Orthodox practices concerning the reception into the Orthodox Church of non-Orthodox baptized, as well as the ecumenical dialogue, testify in this respect. At the same time the works of many Orthodox theologians exhibit the same theological deadlock that does not let them assert either the exclusive Orthodox possession of sacramental grace, or the full reality of the sacraments performed outside Orthodox borders.

Throughout the centuries the Latin Church adopted the Augustinian distinction between validity and efficacy, whereas the Byzantines adopted the equally contested concept of ‘oikonomia’, as possible solutions to the issue. Both approaches stem from the need to reconcile the paradoxical nature of the sacraments of initiation, namely that the sacraments make the Church and at the same time are the manifestation of the Church, as well as from the need to do justice to Cyprian’s formula *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* and at the

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² Ibid. 112.
⁴ Ibid. 17, 19.
same time to the universal character of Christ’s incarnation and sacrifice confessed through the sacraments.

It is our opinion that the inconsistencies that dominate the Orthodox–Roman Catholic dialogue as well as the long history of the admission to Orthodoxy of non-Orthodox baptized Christians, indicate both the limits of a Cyprianic-rooted ecclesiology, and an insufficiently developed baptismal and sacramental ecclesiology.

Afanassieff’s ecclesiology, in spite of its many limitations, distinguishes itself from the other position by the fact that it seems to offer a coherent theological account of the triadic complex here under analysis namely, sacraments-Church’s limits-ecclesiality.

Its success springs from its accentuation of the Church’s dependency upon the sacraments, and not the other way around. Afanassieff’s great contribution to the discussion consists also in enlarging the notion of the Church by redefining the elements that confer the ecclesial character to a particular community. For this reason Afanassieff has in fact accepted both the ecclesial character of the Roman Catholic Church and the validity of the sacraments it performs.

Furthermore, Afanassieff’s Eucharistic ecclesiology renders the controversial distinction between ‘validity’ and ‘efficacy’, as well as the concept of ‘oikonomia’, unnecessary. Eucharistic ecclesiology does justice to the Cyprianic principles, namely: there is no salvation outside the Church, and grace is not given with measure. At the same time it confirms Florovsky’s and Stăniloae’s insights concerning the unity and indivisibility of the Church, as well as their awareness that the grace of God also works outside the borders of the Orthodox Church.

Yet as Michel Stavrou and others noticed, in spite of the large reception of Eucharistic ecclesiology in the Orthodox world and beyond, it remains largely marginalized. This is evident especially in

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1 Afanassieff, ‘Una Sancta’, 22.
2 ‘But it must be admitted that, despite the conviction of many theologians and its acceptance by many our Church leaders, Eucharistic ecclesiology, while accepted in theory, is not sufficiently taken into account in the life and actions of our Churches.’ French original in Michel Stavrou, ‘L’ecclésiologie eucharistique du Père Nicolas Afanassieff et sa réception’, in *La Pensée Orthodoxe* (nouvelle série) 9/2012: 7-27, 21.
the Orthodox–Roman Catholic dialogue, especially the International
dialogue (JICD). 1 In this regard, NORC comes closer to an Afanassian
ecclesiology, perhaps because of the lasting memory of Afanassieff in
the North American Orthodox theological landscape, perpetuated in
the works of A. Schmemann and J. Meyendorff, among others.

In the end we would like to recall several documents and statements
affirming the mutual recognition of sacraments made by Orthodox
and Roman Catholics, yet which seem to have been overlooked during
the bilateral dialogue.

Thus, concerning the Roman Catholic position as to the validity of
the sacraments performed by the Orthodox Church, the Second
Vatican Council in Unitatis redintegratio, 15 recognized both the
validity and the efficacy of Orthodox sacraments, 2 a position re-
affirmed in 1993 by the PCPCU Directory for the Application of
Principles and Norms on Ecumenism (99a). 3

From the Orthodox side the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, in a
Letter addressed to Pope Paul VI, recognizes ‘that we never ceased to
recognize the validity of each other’s apostolic priesthood, or [the
validity] of the Divine Eucharist as celebrated by each other’. 4 After
Athenagoras (d.1972), the next Ecumenical Patriarch, Dimitrios (1972-
1991) also affirmed the identity of the sacraments between the two
Churches. 5

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1 Cf. our study ‘From Rhodes to Vienna: Thirty Years (1980-2010) of Orthodox-
Roman Catholic Theological Dialogue’, in P. De Mey, A. Pierce & O. Schuegraf
Beiheft zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 91, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt,
2012), 303-23.

2 ‘These Churches (Eastern Churches), although separated from us (the RCC),
yet possess true sacraments and above all, by apostolic succession, the
priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are linked with us in closest
intimacy.’ Unitatis Redintegratio 15.

3 ‘There is no doubt about the validity of baptism as conferred in the various
Eastern Churches’. On-line at:
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/general-

4 ‘Réponse du patriarche Athenagoras à la lettre du pape Paul VI (21 mars

5 Cf. Lanne, ‘Foi, sacra
ments et unite’, 191.
NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH?
EVANGELICAL THEOLOGIES AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Glenn B. Siniscalchi*

This essay is dedicated to assessing the work of prominent evangelical theologians and how they have confronted the challenges concerning the soteriological problem of evil. Distancing themselves from the strict exclusivism of their fundamentalist predecessors, many evangelicals have come to embrace positions that are compatible with Catholic theology. As a result of this development, both Catholics and evangelicals should be more attentive to each other’s positions when facing skeptical challenges related to ‘the scandal of particularity.’ A dialogue of this sort might help them to fortify the uniqueness of Christian faith without having to undercut the missionary impulse that is imperative to both of them.

Because of the global outreach of the church, Catholic theologians seek to address the problem of Christian uniqueness in the face of a bewildering amount of different religious claims. Another responsibility of Catholic theologians is to keep abreast of current developments in the broader theological community in response to this perennial challenge. Evangelicals have also become a leading voice in providing responses to religious diversity. Because the Catholic-evangelical dialogue on the salvation of the formally unevangelized should be developed, this essay is dedicated

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1 Most of the formal Catholic-evangelical dialogues have not focused on the doctrine of the church as the universal sacrament of salvation. For a general
to assessing the work of prominent evangelicals and how they have confronted the challenge. Distancing themselves from the strict exclusivism of their fundamentalist predecessors, many evangelicals have come to embrace positions that are compatible with Catholic theology. As a result of this convergence, both groups should be more attentive to each other’s positions when facing skeptical challenges related to ‘the scandal of particularity.’

Written from the perspective of a Catholic theologian, I am an inclusivist on the possibility of salvation outside the boundaries of the institutional church and an agnostic on either the identity or number of the ‘outsiders’ who will be saved. Given this conditioned outlook on Christian uniqueness, this essay will explore, celebrate and encourage the shift that is taking place in many evangelical circles from exclusivism to inclusivism for the greater purposes of dialogue, convergence and collaboration. Some questionable control beliefs underlying evangelical exclusivist positions might prevent their adherents from wanting more of a consensus with inclusivists. I will also expose and explore some of these theological presuppositions.

**An Exposition and Critique of Evangelical Exclusivism**

Catholic theologians need to analyze many issues when attempting to understand different theological viewpoints. Perhaps the most well-known and uncompromising defense of exclusivism was found in Hendricks Kraemer’s landmark work, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (1938). Like Karl Barth before him, Kraemer’s work has strongly influenced contemporary evangelical thinking. Indeed strict formulations of exclusivism are alive and well in many evangelical quarters of the church. As the evangelical thinker Ken Ghanaian admits: ‘There is still a prevailing Barthian disdain for

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1 I am also a former evangelical Christian (1999-2002).
religions in most of us." Gerald McDermott adds: ‘Yet in its attitude toward other religions, American evangelicalism is remarkably similar to ... Chinese fundamentalism. Like its distant Asian cousin it has often regarded non-Christian religion as taboo—consisting of either foolish nonsense or demonic delusions.'

Many prominent evangelical theologians remain exclusivists: Ronald Nash, R.C. Sprout, John Piper, Carl Henry, Daniel Strange, and D.A. Carson come to mind. Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson have more recently edited a book with essays specifically dedicated to defending exclusivism over religious inclusivism. Many Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and mainline Protestants (and many other evangelicals to be discussed in the following section) will have a difficult time accepting these views, but justification for embracing a restrictive theology of exclusivism is often based on a variety of underlying presuppositions.

Ronald Nash, for instance, has established himself as a prominent evangelical exclusivist. Centering almost exclusively on the biblical texts to make his case against inclusivism, he confidently avers that St Paul makes it plain that ‘general revelation’ does not and cannot save: ‘Where, then, is the clear unambiguous biblical support inclusivists need for their belief in the salvific function of general revelation? The

4 Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2008).
simple answer is that there is none.” Although God wants everyone to be saved, the salvation of the inculpably ignorant is predicated upon the church’s initiative to reach these individuals with the gospel.\(^2\) When the church’s missionaries fail to live up to their divine calling, God cannot do anything to save the inculpably ignorant. When pressed for answering the question as to why so many individuals would be prevented from hearing the message, Nash says they are damned for the sake of an unknown greater good: ‘God could conceivably desire all kinds of things to happen and still allow those things not to happen for some good reason.’\(^3\) Without seeming to realize it, Nash has conflated the incomprehensibility of God with an agnostic outlook on the divine will.

Usually exclusivists argue that sacred Scripture shows no unequivocal examples of saved individuals outside the Christian church. Nash’s position is no different. For them inclusivism is unbiblical. In agreement with Nash, Winfried Cordovan comments: ‘It simply does not follow from the fact that a particular option has not been closed off explicitly by a biblical text that, therefore, it is valid to align this option as a possibility alongside those explicitly stated by the Bible.’\(^4\) Anyone working in the theology of religions knows that it is highly debatable whether there is a biblical basis for the salvation of the outsiders. To be sure, many inclusivist evangelical theologians would dispute the exclusivists’ claim. As Stanley Grenz said: ‘the Bible allows no such unequivocal rejection of the possibility of either faith or true worship beyond the central salvation-historical trajectory of Israel and the church.’\(^5\)

Corduan shifts the biblically-based discussion to systematic theology and adds that the only other way for inclusivists to make a convincing case is if they appeal to the ‘theoretical understanding of the divine attributes.’ But he immediately adds that this will only become a

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1 Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* 119.
2 Ibid. 135.
3 Ibid.
fruitless ‘off-the-cuff’ debate. By contrast, inclusivists respond by noting that many doctrines of the historic Christian church were formulated in this way: the trinity, the hypostatic union, etc. These doctrines could be formulated and defended because of an *extrascriptural source* that helped to tease out what was implied by general teachings of sacred Scripture. In the case of the salvation of the unevangelized, for instance, the basic teachings under consideration would include (1) God’s omnibenevolence and (2) the ‘scandal of particularity,’ namely, Jesus Christ.

Since Corduan and Nash resist the historic position of the Christian church (namely, open exclusivism, or inclusivism) because of not having an extrascriptural teaching authority that enables them to understand the extent of biblical teaching, they settle for ‘extreme caution’ instead. But, that extrascriptural teaching authority might have the theological capital that is needed to declare a doctrinal position that is not only consistent with Scripture, but is also capable of convincingly balancing the two undeniable biblical truths that Corduan and Nash already defend. Representing the historic Christian church, the magisterium claims that it is possible for ‘outsiders’ to be saved. What is more, she has never defined how many will be saved. Thus one of the major reasons why evangelicals become or remain exclusivist is that they are influenced by *sola Scriptura*. When the authority of tradition is divorced from Scripture, one is left speculating about the relationship of God’s omnibenevolence and his special disclosure(s) to humanity. Thus ecumenists should be more attentive to developing more of a consensus between Catholics and evangelicals on the proper relationship between Scripture and tradition for the purposes of developing a more unified vision on the salvation of the unevangelized.

Moreover, it has been said that the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* has led to many divisions in the body of Christ. With respect to divisive issues in the theology of religions, the Catholic magisterium has retired many positions that are still being defended in evangelical circles: the possibility of receiving Christ after death (Donald Bloesch, Gabriel Fackre), universal salvation for everyone, and the denial of the existence of hell (some annihilationists would include John Stott).

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1 Corduan, *A Tapestry of Faiths*, 150.
Phillip Hughes, John Wenham, and Michael Green). Cathol ics who are unfamiliar with the current scene in evangelicalism will find it perplexing that such positions are still being hotly debated.

Evangelical inclusivists who agree with Catholic teaching about the errors of annihilationism, universalism, and postmortem salvation have also keenly pointed out that these extreme positions are often formulated and defended as an overreaction to the problems accompanying restrictive versions of exclusivism. If one does not reject exclusivism—but will not overreact and accept the extremism of pluralism de jure either—then they might be compelled to conjoin their exclusivist outlook with annihilationism or the ‘second chance thesis’ (i.e. the possibility of post-mortem salvation). But surely these divisive teachings will impede the entire church’s witness: ‘Such division ... damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.’ But when the church universal is truly one, then she becomes more effective in her case for faith. One cannot deny that divisions exist within the Catholic church, but these corruptions are nowhere nearly as devastating as the substantial divisions within Protestantism.

Another advocate of exclusivism is R. C. Sproul. In one of his books he has a chapter titled: ‘What About the Poor Native Who Never Heard of Christ?’ Though he recognizes the urgency of providing an answer to the question, he says that compassion should not get in the way of theology. ‘When someone asks about the destiny of the innocent person who has never heard of Christ,’ says Sproul, ‘it should be noticed that the assumption of innocence is incorrect. There are,’ he contends, ‘no innocent people. All are guilty before God.’ Paul’s teaching on general revelation is ‘clear and unambiguous ... Man’s problem is not that he doesn’t know God but that he refuses to acknowledge what he knows to be true. The revelation is sufficient to

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1 For an exposition and critique of these views within evangelicalism, see Erickson, How Shall They Be Saved? 65-83, 159-175, 217-232.
2 Unitatis Redintegratio, 1, cf. 12.
3 Sproul, Reason to Believe, 47-59.
4 John Sanders, No Other Name? An Investigation Into the Destiny of the Unevangelized (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 59.
render man inexcusable.\(^1\) Because pagans reject God, they are forced to invent religions that are completely devoid of God’s grace.\(^2\)

Sproul’s work highlights another underlying reason for the defense of exclusivism. Exclusivism is, in some cases, driven by the endorsement of certain versions of Calvinism.\(^3\) Indeed Calvin has had an enormous influence on North American evangelicals. His theology is typically characterized by ‘five points’: total depravity; unconditional election to salvation and damnation; limited atonement (Christ died for the elect and no one else); irresistible grace (no one can resist God’s will); and perseverance of the saints.\(^4\) With these underlying control beliefs in mind, it is understandable why some evangelicals (e.g. Sproul, Piper, and Nash) would become exclusivistic. According to the reformed exclusivist evangelical Daniel Strange:

> Unlike special revelation, general revelation simply does not contain the truth content necessary for saving faith and so is not an appropriate vehicle for the Spirit’s saving work of regeneration. ... The principle status of humanity after the fall is that of ‘total depravity’, ‘antithesis’ and ‘idolatry.’ As a result, ‘natural law’, ‘libertarian freedom’ and the ‘common good’ have found it hard to take root in Reformed soil ... the depth of sin in the Reformed view means that talk of ‘truth’ and ‘holiness’ in other religions must be heavily qualified remembering the invisible unity of other religions and the dynamic and idolatrous nature of religions to suppress and exchange revelation against the Living God.\(^5\)

Notice the tendency to absolutize the corrupt nature of general revelation and the human condition. Says Strange: ‘non-Christian religions are essentially an idolatrous refashioning of divine

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\(^1\) Sproul, *Reason to Believe*, 52.

\(^2\) Ibid. 55.


revelation.” Undoubtedly he paints a dismal picture because of his reformed theology. Exclusivists have often failed to appreciate God’s activity in the pre-Christian heart and mind.

Since human beings are totally depraved in certain versions of the reformed view, the only way for one’s spiritual eyes to be opened is if God regenerates those whom he arbitrarily chooses to save. In this deterministic perspective of salvation, a normative means of salvation seems like a misnomer, if not an ontological accident. To be sure, a ‘normative means of salvation’ allows for many exceptions. For if the Creator’s relationship to the creature is characterized by monergism, and if an essentialistic view of God’s nature is superseded by Occamist voluntarism, then it follows logically and inescapably that predestination obtains in the strict sense of a divine determinism. The possibility of being saved outside the preaching of the gospel seems to entail that God was not in control of his saving encounter with those individuals he arbitrarily wanted to save. But, since God is utterly in control of everything, including human decisions, then it follows that God will always orchestrate the surrounding circumstances to have the elect hear the gospel and respond favorably to it. By God’s own incomprehensible decree, these resistant individuals initially came to God by kicking and screaming against the cleansing effects of the Spirit through the preaching of the gospel, but once they were regenerated by God’s irresistible grace, they became willing to cooperate with God in faith.

Though we cannot delve into the problems associated with hyper-Calvinism, some of them can be mentioned. First, why does an omnibenevolent God save some and not others? Scripture claims that God loves the entire human race and is persuasively working to save everyone (John 3:16). He died for all (2 Cor. 5:13, 14; 1 John 2:2).

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2 When I speak of ‘hyper-Calvinism’, I am referring to the heightened emphasis on Calvin’s five points which can be traced back to pronouncements made at the Synod of Dort (1619). For a critique of ‘hyper-Calvinism’—one that is mostly compatible with Catholic theology—see Norman L. Geisler, Chosen But Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Bethany, 2001).
Second, why did God create a world knowing in advance that some individuals would be prevented from believing in Christ? Further, why blame those individuals (the inculpably ignorant) who had no choice to respond to the explicit message of God’s love for them? Moreover, how does a Calvinist explain the cosmic and moral problems of evil? Driven by the strong determinist’s own logic, God must be the author of good and evil. These are just some of the questions that extreme Calvinists have a difficult time answering to the satisfaction of Catholic theologians. Another difficulty stems from the lack of biblical support for the ‘five points’ (see 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). What is more, other than the later Augustine, the view lacks support among the church fathers.

These challenges are not meant to offer a comprehensive critique of Calvin’s five points. The principal issue is to expose the fact that hyper-Calvinists’ views on the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom have influenced some evangelicals to embrace restrictive versions of exclusivism. As the evangelical theologian Millard Erickson correctly notes: ‘In general, exclusivist views are found more commonly among Calvinists than Arminians. More correctly, we should refer to Augustinianism rather than Calvinism. In this connection, because Martin Luther was an Augustinian monk, his view is in many ways similar to that of Calvin, making the continental Reformation virtually unanimous in its exclusivism.’ Thus hyper-Calvinism needs to be confronted and honestly assessed if some sort of theological convergence is going to be achieved between evangelicals and Catholics.

**The Shift to Evangelical Inclusivism**

Although the term ‘evangelical’ can be traced back to the Reformation, the contemporary evangelical movement grew out of dissatisfaction with the theologies formulated by fundamentalists and liberal Protestants at the beginning of the twentieth century. Growing increasingly dissatisfied with both groups, evangelicals began to engage culture in ways to strengthen the credibility of the gospel. Compared to the mainline denominations within Protestantism and the Catholic Church, however, evangelicals have lagged behind when it comes to constructively engaging the problem of the ‘soteriological

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1 Erickson, *How Shall They Be Saved?* 49.
problem of evil.”¹ In the last twenty to thirty years, many reputable evangelicals have published a number of serious works in response to religious diversity.² These evangelicals have departed from their Protestant forebears, embracing perspectives that are consistent with historic Christianity. As the evangelical Harold Netland observes: ‘It is becoming increasingly evident that one issue upon which there is considerable disagreement among evangelicals is the question of the fate of those who have never been exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.’³

Many Catholics do not interact with scholarly evangelical contributions because many of the latter are automatically considered ‘exclusivists’ or ‘particularists.’ Curiously, many of these evangelical ‘exclusivists’ maintain that the invincibly ignorant, such as the mentally handicapped, can be saved.⁴ Further, these ‘exclusivists’ often remain agnostic about the destiny of the formally unevangelized.

¹ Many evangelicals admit that they are latecomers in the theology of religions. See Kärkkäinen, An Introduction to the Theology of Religions, 148; Nash, Is Jesus the Only Savior? 107; Harold Netland, Encountering Religious Pluralism (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 309; Craig Ott and Steven Strauss, Encountering Theology of Mission, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 293; Pinnock, A Wideness in God’s Mercy, 13; John Sanders, No Other Name? 20, 81, 83.
³ Harold Netland, Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth (Vancouver: Regent, 1997), 264. Also see Nash, Is Jesus the Only Savior? 106, 107, 175; Pinnock, A Wideness in God’s Mercy, 41, 42; Sanders, No Other Name? 20–24.
⁴ Ronald Nash considers himself an ‘exclusivist,’ but curiously holds that infants can be saved. See Is Jesus the Only Savior? 135–6. For other evangelical ‘exclusivists’ who admit that the formal outsiders can be saved, see J.I. Packer, God’s Words: Studies of Key Bible Themes (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 1981), 210, and D.A. Carson, The Gagging of God (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 309, 311, 312.
Evangelicals may use whatever term they’d like to characterize their position, but the point is that ‘exclusivism’ loses its distinctive meaning if ‘faith in Jesus Christ’ is not necessary for salvation. As a case in point, Douglas Geivett and Timothy Phillips once represented the ‘exclusivist’ position in a point-counterpoint book in dialogue with pluralists and inclusivists, but they forthrightly acknowledged the possibility of outside salvation ‘in very special circumstances.’ Although they did not explain what is meant by ‘special circumstances,’ their brand of exclusivism is compatible with Catholic teaching.

Many of these evangelicals are resistant to being classified as inclusivist. For them inclusivism is unwittingly equated with ‘accessibilism’ (meaning that the majority of the human race will be saved). But surely inclusivism is compatible with restrictivism, or the view that only a minority of the human race will be saved. To be sure, pluralism itself is compatible with restrictivism. No human being is in a position to make definitive statements on the identity or final amount of the elect. An analysis of divine revelation and Christian theology does not indicate how many will be saved in the end. Simply put, there is no unambiguous answer to this challenge. Accessibilism and restrictivism are not biblically based, and both positions might be considered theologoumena. Thus the evangelical dissatisfaction about ‘bare exclusivism’ smoothly converges with Catholic teaching. The Catholic Church does not have an official position on who will be saved. Nor is the question an important one (cf. Luke 13:23-30) for upholding the credibility of the Christian faith.

One of the first evangelicals to depart from the strict exclusivism of yesteryear was Norman Anderson. Affirming with unwavering consistency the centrality and uniqueness of Christ, he wrote: ‘we dare not assert that God is not at work by his Spirit, in ways we may not comprehend, among those born in other religious traditions, “to

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2 Erickson, *How Shall They Be Saved?* 197.
uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow”, and then “to build and to plant” (Jer. 1:10)—or, indeed, that he cannot so work in individual lives that they may be brought within the salvation that is in Christ alone, even if they have never been in a position to join his visible church.” He maintains that the Scriptures ‘do not of themselves exclude anyone.’ Though outsiders may be saved, we should remain agnostic on the amount of those who will be saved: ‘we dare not dogmatize about the salvation of others.’

Christianity and the other religions are a mixture of truth and error. But, in Christianity, the errors are not found at the foundational level: ‘It is true that “empirical Christianity”, like all other religious institutional religions, inevitably includes much that is false and defective as well as a great deal that is noble and true. But it is distinguished from other religions by the event which gave it birth; and it is itself continually corrected and purified in so far as Christians go back to that event—and its necessary implications—as their starting-point, their touchstone and their inspiration.’ This point nicely coincides with the conciliar teaching expressed in *Lumen Gentium*, 16. Anderson also departed from the extremism of fundamentalism by affirming that Christianity was/is continuous (and discontinuous) with other world religions. Christianity is seen as the fulfillment of all other religions: ‘Other religions may indeed, include the belief that God, or one of the gods, manifested himself once, or many times, in human form, or that some “divine light substance” has passed from one individual to a succession of others.’ He posits a difference in degree (and not merely in kind) between Christ and other religious founders. It is at least theoretically possible that God was at work in the life of Muhammed and the others. Although God did not reveal himself in any other religion in the same way he disclosed himself under the old covenant and in the person of Jesus, holiness can certainly be found outside Christian belief. Other

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1 Norman Anderson, *Christianity and the World Religions* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 1984), 110.
2 Ibid. 31. Cf. 43, 110, 144, 145, 146, 151, 153.
3 Ibid. 32. See also 162-9.
4 Ibid. 47, 48.
5 Ibid. 169-74.
religionists may therefore be closer to God than ‘Christians,’ meaning those who are in the church in body, but not in their hearts.

Clark Pinnock and John Sanders picked up on Anderson’s reasoning (along with Leslie Newbigin and Stephen Neill) and have become two major pioneers of evangelical inclusivism. Claiming inspiration from the Second Vatican Council, Pinnock upheld the same theology as *Lumen Gentium*, 14: ‘Election does bring privileges, but primarily it carries responsibilities. God chose Israel because he had a special task for the Jews to perform, not because he loved them as opposed to loving others, or because they were better than the rest.’ Salvation becomes more demanding for those who have been exposed to the truth, not easier to attain. Pinnock portrayed the church as a sign that points away from itself to the reality of God’s universal salvific will. God is impartial and desires to save everyone: ‘Our proclamation is that God is healing the nations through the mediation of his Son, rather than in some other way. In his wisdom, God is reconciling the world to himself, not through religious experience, not through natural revelation, not through prophets alone, not through all the religions of the world, but through Jesus Christ.’ One must distinguish between the ontological necessity of Christ as the Savior and the relative situation of each person. Thus there might be many ways to the one Christ. Sounding similar to Catholic theologians, Pinnock affirms that although Jesus Christ is the Logos made flesh, the Logos is not constrained to any particular time or place. Sanders complements Pinnock: inclusivists ‘believe that appropriation of

1 Ibid. 152, 153.
4 Sanders, *No Other Name?* Pinnock, *A Wideness in God’s Mercy*.
6 Ibid. 49.
7 Ibid. 77.
salvific grace is mediated through general revelation and God’s providential workings in human history."

Pinnock does not hold that other religions are theological and spiritual zones of utter darkness. One may find genuine, spiritual truths in them: ‘On the one hand, we should celebrate and honor whatever goodness and truth there is anywhere, even in the context of other faiths. On the other hand, we must not blind ourselves to the ways in which religions enslave and darken the minds of men and women, distort their perceptions, corrupt their wills, and harden their hearts.’ Because grace can be found within the sphere of general revelation, pre-cognitive acceptance of this grace enables these individuals to be saved. Theology is not as important as receiving God’s grace. Religions, however, are not inspired by God. Evangelicals commonly cite Pinnock as an accessibilist, using his work as a reason to not embrace inclusivism. But Pinnock is not an accessibilist (nor is he a restrictivist): ‘No one knows how many holy pagans there may be. Some missionaries tell me they have encountered people like Cornelius, but not many. Others are more hopeful. But we are not in a position to know how many there are. Only God can know people’s heart responses to him.’ Nobody knows how many will be saved in the end.

Though Harold Netland would rather be called a particularist than an inclusivist, he emphasizes the notion of different degrees of incorporation into Christ. The metaphysical truth of Christ—an objective, absolute, and unchanging reality—is compatible with epistemological relativity. This notion of different degrees of understanding resonates well with Ad Gentes, 6. In this paragraph the bishops referred to the singular moral standard that God lays down

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1 Sanders, No Other Name? 118.
2 Ibid. 86.
4 Pinnock, A Wideness in God’s Mercy, 15.
5 Ibid. 106.
within the depths of each person’s conscience. This standard, however, is not indiscriminately binding on every person, but is relative from one person to the next. Only God knows each individual’s circumstances and works in each person’s life in a unique way. Various factors contribute to God’s work in everyone’s life: experience, upbringing, personality, culture, work, geographical locations, friendships, genetics, political environment, education, etc.

The notion of different degrees of incorporation into Christ is closely linked to different levels of accountability.¹ This point also seems to coincide with Vatican II: ‘All the Church’s children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged.’² The more one has been exposed to the truth, the more one is expected to live up to the demands entailed by it. Netland himself says we should remain agnostic about the identity (and amount) of the ‘outsiders’:

> It seems to me that the wisest response to this perplexing issue is to recognize that we cannot rule out the possibility that some who never hear the gospel might nevertheless, through God’s grace, respond to what they know of God through general revelation and turn to him in faith for forgiveness. But to go beyond this and to speculate about how many, if any, are saved this way is to move beyond what the Scriptures allow. ... Indeed the clear pattern in the New Testament is for people first to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and then to respond by God’s grace to the gospel in saving faith. (Emphasis mine)³

We should not be so worried about the millions of people that have not heard the gospel as much as we should be concerned with what God will do with us if we do not live by the standard he has shown us. Not everyone in other religions is saved because of that religion’s formal teaching, but is somehow in Christ (and therefore en route to salvation). Jesus preached the doctrine of hell (and hellboundedness!), but it did not apply to those individuals that the religious authorities of his day expected. Jesus often gave comfort to those who were ‘outsiders’—and challenged the ‘insiders’ who claimed to know God.

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² Lumen Gentium, 14.
Though ‘outsiders’ may be saved, evangelicals have rightly stressed the importance of faith in Jesus. Norman Anderson, Clark Pinnock, John Sanders, Harold Netland, John Stott, J.I. Packer, Chris Wright and Millard Erickson affirm that ‘outsiders’ can be saved, but they also hold that this possibility should not detract Christians from engaging in mission work. The gospel clarifies and fulfills many competing interpretations of the natural moral law. Christ is applicable in all times and places. More important for our purposes is that this posture is an unequivocally Catholic one. Interreligious dialogue is always engaged, in one way or another, for the greater purposes of evangelization. Dialogue is not always immediately accompanied by the proclamation of the gospel. But, it serves as a springboard for the evangelist. As Avery Dulles suggests: ‘all Catholics should be ready to hear the prophetic voices of the radical evangelicals. They remind us, as we all need to be reminded, that the Cross and the world will always be in conflict. They prevent us from settling too easily in the paths of compromise and mediocrity.”

Take the religiously diverse world of the ancient Mediterranean basin as an example. Christianity had not influenced the world at the time, but this did not prevent the first believers from debating and evangelizing the pagan world. And some of these believers were martyred because of their beliefs. Worshipping Christ also placed strict demands on pagan converts to renounce all other forms of pagan worship, demanding an exclusivist approach to worshipping Jesus. Regardless of the variation in expression, devotion to Jesus was at the center of their worship: ‘We cannot appreciate early Christian worship unless we keep before our eyes the fact that for Gentile Christians it represented a replacement cultus. It was at one and the same time both a religious commitment and a renunciation, a stark and demanding devotional stance with profound repercussions.”

This exclusivist perspective obligated new converts to abandon certain aspects of common life, and in some cases this created

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tensions in family life and with their other relationships.\textsuperscript{1} The sustenance of Christian monotheism in the face of the Roman religions was a striking feature. The worship of one God was clearly at odds with the polytheistic belief that the gods could be worshipped in any combination. Pagans could not understand why they could not add worship to Jesus alongside the worship of other gods.\textsuperscript{2} Since Christianity was just one religion competing in a marketplace of religions, and considering it had an exclusivist stance in worship, this made it powerfully attractive to outsiders, winning converts at an astounding rate.\textsuperscript{3}

Many evangelicals hold that outsiders can be saved in special circumstances (e.g. invincible ignorance and premature death), but this should not detract Christians from taking the Great Commission seriously. As Erickson (a self-professed ‘exclusivist’) observes: ‘the essential nature of saving faith can be arrived at without special revelation ... Perhaps, in other words, it is possible to receive the benefits of Christ’s death without conscious knowledge-belief in the name of Jesus.’\textsuperscript{4} Endorsing the possibility that ‘outsiders’ may be saved should not undercut the believer’s motivation to engage in mission work.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[1]{Hurtado points out that the Romans allowed for many different forms of religious expression. Thus, it was unique for the Christians to enter the highly diverse and pious religious scene of the Roman world and claim that all religions other than Christianity were illicit.}
\footnotetext[2]{Hurtado, At the Origins of Christian Worship, 18. Cf. 39. He states on page 18, ‘Likewise with scant basis are the occasional scholarly assertions of a “trend” or “tendency” toward monotheism in the Roman period. To be sure, among some sophisticated writers in the ancient world there were attempts to posit a unity behind the diversity of gods. But this is hardly monotheism as we know it in classical forms of Judaism, Christianity or Islam, in which one deity is worshipped to the exclusion of all others.’}
\footnotetext[3]{The quick success of Christianity partly depended on showing where pagan religious devotion was in error. This, in turn, provided an opportunity to share the Christian message of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.}
\end{footnotes}
Gerald McDermott is another prominent representative of evangelical inclusivism. Chastising some of his colleagues for triumphalism and their unwillingness to treat ‘non-Christians’ as persons, McDermott is concerned that exclusivism will only serve to undercut the credibility of the gospel. Fortunately, he says, ‘inclusivism has steadily gained favor and is beginning to challenge restrictivism for supremacy among published evangelical thinkers.’ Speaking of the possibility of salvation within the sphere of general revelation, he says: ‘Condemnation is indeed the result of some of this revelation (Rom. 1:20), but Scripture also hints that the Spirit uses this revelation, no doubt in conjunction with others, to lead some to God (Acts 17:27; Rom. 2:15)’ (emphasis mine). The Scripture passages that witness to God’s universal benevolence for humanity connote that some individuals outside the influence of Christianity have known God in a saving way.

The similarity between Christianity and the religions is also marked by dissimilarity. Christianity is unique in degree and in kind from all other religions: ‘There may exist revelations from God in other religions, but only in the religion of the Christ is there the revelation of God as incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth.’ Missionaries for Christ can refer to the sacramental shape of the graces manifested in non-Christian teachings to help the unevangelized receive the fullness of the gospel. On the one hand, the spiritual truths found in other religions are not equivalent to God’s special, inspired revelation. On the other hand, they are not the same thing as knowing truths of the natural law. Rather, they are known, received and articulated within the structures of religious institutions. Because divine revelation encompasses and affects the entire person, it cannot be reduced to propositional understandings of doctrine. That limitation would restrict one’s religiosity to the externals alone. Grace that is received

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2 McDermott, Can Evangelicals Learn From World Religions? 42.
3 Ibid. 54.
4 Ibid. 92.
5 Ibid. 103.
6 Ibid. 110-3.
and expressed outside the influence of special, divine revelation within Christianity can be expressed to depict God’s triune identity in the form of non-Christian doctrines and practices. ‘Furthermore,’ he insists, ‘they were not merely human insights but developments (albeit twisted and broken) of original perceptions granted by God Himself.”

McDermott’s theology of grace—which is set within the parameters of general revelation—enables him to affirm that Christians can enter into dialogue with persons from other religions and life-views. Dialogue might help each party to catch insights about their own faith in a more holistic, cosmological sense.² His study of the early church fathers on the doctrine of salvation outside the church led him to conclude: ‘God used many different teaching methods over thousands of years to communicate the truth. It was the same truth, but it came through different methods and modes because of different hearts and capacities to learn.”³

**Conclusion**

Catholic and inclusivist evangelicals have much to learn from one another. One area of (generally unrecognized) convergence between Catholics and evangelicals pertains to the question concerning the destiny of the formally unevangelized. Departing from the strict exclusivism of yesteryear, many evangelicals have come to defend theologies that are compatible with the theology of Catholic Christianity. This essay has highlighted this convergence by demonstrating that evangelicals should not be easily equated with modern-day fundamentalists. A careful look at their writings indicates that many of them are outspoken inclusivists. Another group of evangelicals shies away from being called ‘inclusivist,’ but they are open to the possibility of salvation outside the church. Their admission would qualify them in the ecumenical convergence that was explored in this essay.

It is surprising that Catholic theologians have not paid much attention to the evangelicals’ contributions in the theology of religions. Although Catholics and evangelicals have discussed the

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¹ Ibid. 114.
² Ibid. 212.
extremism of pluralism *de jure*, there is a conspicuous lack of intra-inclusivist dialogue between both groups.\(^1\) A dialogue of this sort might help to fortify the uniqueness of the Christian faith without having to undercut the missionary impulse that is imperative for both of them. As Dupuis said, nothing less than ‘the very credibility of the Christian message for the future’\(^2\) is at stake in the church. Hopefully this essay will play a role in bringing Catholic and evangelical readers closer together by exposing some of the similarities they currently share. I also focused on some reasons why some evangelicals remain restrictive exclusivists. Catholics and evangelicals need more of a consensus with respect to the control beliefs underlying exclusivist positions before they should expect to see more agreement on ‘outsider salvation.’ By exposing these control beliefs and bringing them onto the table of dialogue, theologians can expose the factors which drive Christians to come to the positions that they do.

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ADDRESSES

ADDRESS ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF VATICAN II

+ Kevin McDonald*

We are grateful to the Society for Ecumenical Studies for permission to publish in full the address given at Heythrop College on 11 October 2012 by Archbishop Kevin McDonald at an occasion to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, together with the response given by the Revd Dr James Hawkey (see below).

I am very grateful to the Society for Ecumenical Studies for the invitation to address you this evening at this event to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. That Council was, indeed a landmark event in the last century, not least because of its implications in relation to people who are not Catholics, people who are not Christians, and people who are not religious. It is in that wider perspective that the topic of this evening’s lecture arises. In the letter I received from Fr Woodruff, I was invited to review the Council’s ‘effects and significance, as well as its future reception with a view to Christian Unity.’ So I understand I am being asked to say something about the significance of the Council itself and more specifically the significance of its ecumenical teaching. I am also to say something about what has happened and will happen after the Council—the fruits of its ecumenical teaching, the consequences and the way it has been received.

Now that is quite a lot to cover and, needless to say, there are a number of quite different ways in which that brief could be taken up. Perhaps it would be good for me to start by saying a little about myself and about the background I am coming from in addressing these questions because someone with a different background would probably give a quite different kind of lecture. First, some biographical anecdotes. In 1980, when I had been ordained for six years,

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Archbishop Dwyer asked me to chair the diocesan ecumenical committee in Birmingham and in 1984 I was asked to go to Rome to work in the Secretariat for Christian Unity. I duly went there in 1985 and took over the desk formerly occupied by Mgr Richard Stewart, an outstanding ecumenist, who, sadly, died very suddenly that summer. I was responsible for Anglican and Methodist relations in our office which was presided over by Cardinal Johannes Willebrands who together with his principal collaborator, Fr Pierre Duprey, had worked closely with Pope John XXIII during the Council and with Pope Paul VI both during and after the Council. The office was set up before the Council and its first task had been to organise invitations to Orthodox and Protestant leaders to attend the Council as Observers. During the Council the office was involved in preparing both the Decree on Ecumenism and the document that became the Decree on Non-Christian Religions. After the Council Pope Paul tasked the office with implementing the provisions of the Council on ecumenism. Now the President of the Secretariat—first of all Cardinal Bea who was then succeeded by Cardinal Willebrands—was also to be the President of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. It is, of course, extremely significant that the office for the Jews has always been housed within the office for Christian Unity and not the office for non-Christian religions. When I arrived we were well into the pontificate of Pope John Paul II who of course, was making a colossal personal contribution to the ecumenical movement.

I stayed in Rome for eight years and when I returned to my diocese of Birmingham, I was made parish priest of a mostly Muslim part of the city and there began my interest in relations with other religions which is what I have been more involved in since then. It is a quite different area but is nonetheless organically and theologically related to ecumenism.

Now I mention this for a number of reasons but particularly because when I speak about ecumenism I speak, as it were, as an insider. My job in Rome was to work and to speak officially on behalf of the Catholic Church and not on the basis of my own ideas or enthusiasms. And that is still my mindset. For me, the teaching of the Second Vatican Council is a given. Today people talk about the Council in different ways. Some people feel that the promise of the Council has not been fulfilled. They feel that the spirit of the Council requires us to go further or be more radical in our approach to the issues facing
the Church today. Others feel that those kinds of sentiments are false and that what, in fact, happened after the Council was a kind of cultural revolution in Catholicism which the Council never intended, a cultural revolution that found expression in a casual approach to liturgy, and, generally in the shaking off of tradition.

There is, then, a debate or argument about the Council which is really an argument about the whole question of continuity and of change. It is not to my purpose to focus on that. I just want to note that because it is part of the context or background music to a lecture on this topic. Earlier in the year I did consider the question of continuity and change when I gave a lecture on *Nostra Aetate* at Georgetown University in Washington in which I argued that the positive perception of other religions that we find in the Second Vatican Council was not a novelty but was in some way part of Catholicism from the outset. It has particular roots, I would suggest, in the doctrine of prevenient grace, that is the belief that the Holy Spirit can be at work in peoples’ lives, bringing them to salvation even prior to any explicit faith in Christ. It also has roots in the history of faith in a just and merciful God.

That, of course, is also entirely relevant background to the Council’s teaching on ecumenism but with ecumenism there was a distinct change in tone and approach vis-à-vis what had been said previously about non-Catholic Christians. So the developments in relation to ecumenism can look like more of an about-turn than the developments regarding other religions about which much less had been said and much more assumed.

Now, the issues of unity and disunity have been part of the story of Christianity from the outset but the explicit project of seeking unity between Christians is usually seen as dating from 1910. That was the year of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. It was a gathering of Protestant missionaries who came to realise that in their missionary work, the gospel of the unity of humanity in Christ was being preached from competing, and, indeed, conflicting pulpits. Out of that meeting came two movements, Life and Work and Faith and Order. The first had as its objective to promote collaboration between Christians of different Communions because the lack of collaboration and mutual respect had come to look like a scandal. The second, Faith and Order, was concerned with the task of seeking unity of faith
among Christians since Christians can only witness and evangelise together to the extent that they have a shared faith to proclaim.

These two movements became two key programmes of the World Council of Churches when it eventually came into being in 1948, shortly after the Second World War. The mainline Protestant Churches all joined and so did the Orthodox though they made it clear that this in no way compromised their ecclesiological beliefs. The Catholic Church, however, stood aloof from the ecumenical movement and forbade Catholics to get involved, seeing it as a danger and as giving the impression that all Christians were on an equal footing. There was some softening of that position in the years immediately prior to the Council and, of course, there were theological developments—particularly the nouvelle théologie—which were actually preparing the way for change. Change eventually came with the Dogmatic Constitution in the Church, *Lumen Gentium* and the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*.

The Council clearly affirmed that the gifts that God has bestowed on the Church for its life and witness are to be found in their fullness in the Catholic Church. Catholic unity has never been lost because it has continued to be a reality in the Catholic Church. But other Churches and Ecclesial Communities share in differing degrees in that unity. They are in a situation of partial or imperfect Communion. The depth of that communion depends on the extent to which those gifts are shared. With the Orthodox there is a profound degree of communion since we recognise them as having the same sacraments as we have including, crucially, the Sacrament of Orders. With the Protestant Ecclesial Communities there is a lesser but very significant degree of communion grounded in our shared baptism, our shared scriptures and many other things as well. So this was a very considerable change of tune.

I think it is important to touch on some of the general background to these and other developments at Vatican II. One, of course was the Second World War which revealed a depth of human conflict and sheer evil that shocked the whole world. Another was the increasing concern, not least in the United States, about religious freedom, a concern that bore fruit in the Council’s Declaration on Religious Liberty. Now I mention the war and the Holocaust because that decisively triggered a change in our relation to the Jews, a change, I suggest, which had great significance for relations between Christians.
It became clear at the Council and even more so in the subsequent teaching of Pope John II that the question of the Jews is not a question about people who are ‘out there’. For Christians the Jewish question is about who we Christians are. This is something that has been gradually becoming clearer in the teaching both of Pope John Paul and in the teaching of Pope Benedict. In this country we have had the ground-breaking work in this area by Professor James Dunn. Cardinal Koch, the current president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity has written very interestingly on this. In a lecture he gave on 30 October 2011 he said ‘the schism between synagogue and church forms the first split in the history of the Church which the Catholic theologian Erich Przywara defines as the "primal rift".’ In other words the story of Christian disunity begins with the break between the Church and the Synagogue, begins, that is, with the gradual emergence of Christianity and Judaism as two quite distinct religions. It was in that context that issues of truth and salvation first arose. And I submit that our openness to the unity for which Christ prayed—a unity which will only ever happen as a gift—is not a completely separate matter from our prayer for reconciliation between Christians and Jews. It is important to say that, in order to highlight the depth and complexity of the Council’s overall vision including its teaching on ecumenism. Moreover, the Popes since the Council have made it clear that this developing understanding is precisely not an indication for seeking the conversion of the Jews. It is about the nature and the depth of our hope in the promises of God.

But let us look now at the upshot of the Council. As I have said, the Secretariat for Christian Unity (which later became the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity) had the job of implementing the provisions of the Council and particularly of seeking to move from imperfect communion to full communion of faith and sacramental life. One of the first Communions to come knocking on the door was the Anglicans in the form of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey. He and Pope Paul set up the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission that subsequently became one of the most ambitious of the dialogue Commissions. It is important to remember that there are two types of ecumenical dialogue in which the Catholic Church has been engaged. One is dialogue with those Communions with which there has been a historic breach of one kind or another, such as the Orthodox, the Anglicans or the Lutherans. Then there are
those with Communions which came into being as a result of developments within the Protestant world such as the Methodists or Pentecostals. With the former group, the method has been to try to seek agreement today on those issues which were historically areas of disagreement and of division. With the Orthodox, for example that would include the question of the papacy, with the Anglicans the Eucharist and the Ordained Ministry, and with the Lutherans, justification.

With the Anglicans the first ARCIC Commission produced a Final Report that claimed to have reached substantial agreement on the Eucharist and the Ordained Ministry and a measure of agreement on the question of authority in the Church. Now this text is one of the few to have had an official response from the two sides. The Lambeth Conference of 1988 passed a motion saying that the agreements on Eucharist and Ministry were consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans and the Authority statement was a good basis for further work. The response from the Holy See was much more cautious. It expressed appreciation of the work done by the Commission but said basically that to claim substantial agreement was to claim too much too soon. This, of course was a disappointment to the Anglicans especially those Anglicans who had hoped that a positive outcome to the dialogue would pave the way to recognition of Anglican ordinations and unity with the Catholic Church. Indeed some of the Anglicans who have since become Catholics whether individually or in the context of the Ordinariate have said that they began to think seriously about becoming Catholics once it was clear that that kind of outcome was not on the horizon. The dialogue with the Anglicans has, of course, continued and flourished but it is no longer followed with the kind of hopes that some people harbouried in the 1970s.

The dialogue with the Byzantine Orthodox—those in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople—did not begin until 1979 when Pope John Paul visited the Ecumenical Patriarch for the Feast of St Andrew. An enormous amount of groundwork had been done by Pope Paul VI and clearly this dialogue was of massive importance, Eastern and Western Christianity having been estranged for a thousand years. This commission developed a progressive approach beginning with a wonderful study of ecclesiology, moving on to a shared vision of sacraments including the sacrament of Orders and the intention was to approach a discussion of the ministry of the
Bishop of Rome via a historical and theological agreement about the essential nature of episcopacy. To cut a long story short, the dialogue hit trouble with the fall of communism and the subsequent revival of the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches which had been suppressed under communism and which had always been a serious bone of contention for the Orthodox. The dialogue was suspended for a while. It is on again now but those issues to do with the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches and the related allegations of proselytism are still there. Pope John Paul passionately wanted the Church to breathe again with both lungs, the East and the West and Pope Benedict has been committed to the same goal. That happy outcome does not seem very near though the work continues and the potential for real progress is definitely there.

With the Oriental Orthodox, that is the Churches that became separate after the Council of Chalcedon in 451—Churches like the Copts, the Syrian Orthodox and the Armenians—the approach has been somewhat different. It has been top down rather than bottom up. What happened was that Pope Paul and Pope John Paul made statements of agreement with the leaders of several of these Churches—notably the Copts and the Syrians—in which they expressed their faith in Christ together fully but without using the language that caused division at the time of Chalcedon, that is the language of one divine person with two natures. In a sense these agreed statements are a model of ecumenical methodology—seeking to express our faith together today but without using the language that was divisive in the past. The problem, of course is that while the Pope and the Patriarchs of these Churches can express agreement, at grass-roots level we are talking about Christian cultures that have had 1600 years to grow apart. When there is a break in communion differences are compounded and the road to ecclesial communion will inevitably be a long one and require rapprochement at every level. That, incidentally, is why I find it rather tiresome when people say that the ecumenical movement doesn’t make much progress. As Pope John Paul once said you cannot redo in a short period what was undone over a long period.

There isn’t time to talk about all the dialogues in which the Church is engaged. There were eleven going on when I worked in Rome, but let me make a brief comment on the dialogue with the Lutherans. In many ways this is the dialogue that has gone deepest both historically
and theologically. The results of the international dialogue as well as the dialogue in the United States have been exemplary for their seriousness and integrity. Serious work has also been done in dialogue with other Communions in the West, such as Reformed, Methodists, Baptists and Pentecostals. All the dialogues have taken place in the context of changing relationships at institutional and at local level. In this country we have had the involvement of the Catholic Church in new ecumenical instruments and at parish and diocesan level, relationships between some local communities have been transformed. That, of course, is not true everywhere, but there is still much to celebrate. As far as the Western Communions are concerned we have to reckon with the fact that many of the issues that cause problems today are not issues about which there was any conflict at the time of the Reformation. In the sixteenth century the issues were dogmatic ones such as Church, sacraments, salvation, but today the more obvious differences—at least in the popular perception—are about issues of gender and of sexuality. As I have said, in the centuries of division, differences are compounded.

So I want now to move on to future prospects. I don’t actually know how things will progress in this century. Change is often shaped by factors outside the control of those who are affected by it. But I want to draw attention to some issues that will continue to be in play as the relationship between separated Christian Communions unfolds.

I have just referred to the differences between Catholic and Protestant sensibilities at official level on issues of gender and sexuality. The context of this is the quite different way in which Catholics and Protestants have engaged with modernity. Some say that the Enlightenment was born with the Reformation and its principle of private judgment. Be that as it may, it is certainly the case that the Enlightenment, the development of science and the processes of democratisation have impacted upon Protestant culture in a way that has no real parallel in Catholicism. In that perspective, differences on an issue like the ordination of women are not so much a cause of disunity as a symptom of it.

With the Eastern Churches things are different. The estrangement goes back to the first centuries of Christianity and the Eastern Churches have a history of defining themselves over against Catholicism. They are also national Churches and that brings into play other non-theological factors like ethnicity and politics.
In relation to both East and West, there is much that is fundamental which is shared, but it is shared in religious cultures that are very different. What is more, the world in which we Christians practise and celebrate our faith is itself rapidly changing. In the West, society has become massively more secular and to many, perhaps most in our society, the concerns of religion are strange and alien. Vatican II’s Decree on Religious Liberty argued against any kind of coercion in matters of religion. But our culture has made individual choice a kind of absolute which sits uneasily with notions of unity based on agreement of faith.

That said, we also live in an age of unparalleled religious revival. I am thinking particularly of the more radical forms of Islam and of Pentecostal Christianity. Pentecostalism is by far the fastest growing form of Christianity and in the Catholic Church tens of millions of people have been affected by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, a development which is historically and spiritually related. In some parts of the world Pentecostals are very anti-Catholic, but where there is dialogue between Pentecostals and Catholics, this can be a very fertile terrain for ecumenical dialogue. It is a dialogue that reaches back to the very beginnings of Christianity—before the break with the synagogue—and what is shared is the gifts that were shared in the earliest Christian communities such as the gifts of tongues, prophecy and healing. That suggests to me that in the future ecumenism might focus more on dialogue with movements rather than simply between Communions—movements like Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism which transcend denominational boundaries. There has already been important work done using this approach. When I was in Rome, there was a very interesting project called the Evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue on Mission. There have been similar initiatives elsewhere and it is really a matter of identifying where the energy is in ecumenism.

Whatever happens, the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism is very strong and it has changed the Catholic Church profoundly. The change is irreversible even if the goal seems far distant but I feel positive about it. Ecumenism is now integral to the life of the Church. We don’t do ecumenism despite being Catholics, we do ecumenism because we are Catholics. Chapter II of Lumen Gentium together with Unitatis Redintegratio and all the wealth of teaching of Pope John Paul and Pope Benedict provide us with an agenda and a responsibility that we cannot shy away from. Pope John
Paul undertook a kind of single-handed programme of world evangelisation, but ecumenism was a dimension of that outreach from start to finish. He spoke of his own primacy as being a primacy in the search for unity and that has a message for all Catholics. Our commitment to dialogue—especially with the Jews and with separated members of the Body of Christ—is integral to our Catholic identity.

To put the whole matter in its widest and deepest perspective I want to finish by returning to the question of the Jews. I am thinking, firstly, of some things Pope Benedict has said in his second volume of *Jesus of Nazareth*. Again, it is cited in the lecture by Cardinal Koch that I referred to earlier. Pope Benedict says:

> After centuries of opposing positions we recognise it as our duty that these two ways—Christian and Jewish—of reading the Biblical writings must enter into dialogue with one another in order to rightly understand the will and the word of God.

This is an agenda for Christians together. So, too, is the vision that should motivate and underpin our efforts. When Pope Benedict visited the Rome Synagogue in 2010 he said:

> In exercising justice and mercy, Jews and Christians are called to announce and to bear witness to the coming Kingdom of the most high, for which we pray and work in hope each day. On this path we can walk together, aware of the differences that exist between us, but also aware of the fact that when we succeed in uniting our hearts and our hands in response to the Lord’s call, his light comes closer and shines on all the people of the world.

Now I give those quotes because I think that it is becoming clear that this is the perspective and the vision within which we should see all ecumenical relations. Pope John Paul often said that in ecumenism we need to rewrite our common history. What I would suggest is that the ecumenical movement as appropriated and interpreted by the Second Vatican Council is a matter of identifying and reclaiming our shared reality as well as praying for the coming of the Kingdom together. If I were to choose an ecumenical prayer, as well as the Our Father, I think we could do no better than the hymn at the beginning of Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians where he says:

> His purpose he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph. 1:10)
VATICAN II: AN ANGLICAN RESPONSE ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUNCIL

James Hawkey*

This paper originated in the author's response to Archbishop Kevin McDonald's address, for which see above.

It is a huge privilege to be invited to address you today, and to respond to Archbishop Kevin’s paper. On your behalf as well as my own I want to highlight the debt of gratitude we owe to him not only for his reflections tonight, but also for his ministry at the ecumenical and interfaith chalk-face.

In what follows, I hope to do three things: firstly to outline what I see in broad terms as the extraordinary ecumenical hopefulness of the Council, secondly, I’ll respond briefly to a few of Archbishop Kevin’s specific points, and thirdly I’d like to highlight a couple of challenges which I suggest are related to the Council.

The Pastoral Council

I want to begin by highlighting what, in ecclesiological and ecumenical terms, was perhaps the most striking overall feature of Vatican II. This was, unprecedentedly, to be a council with no anathemas. In his first encyclical, Ad Petri Cathedram of 29 June 1959 Pope John XXIII wrote: ‘This event will be a wonderful spectacle of truth, unity, and charity. For those who behold it but are not one with this Apostolic See, We hope that it will be a gentle invitation to seek and find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to His Father in Heaven.’ This was truly to be a Pastoral Council, which

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1 Ad Petri Cathedram III: 62. See: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_
aimed to throw the net even wider than the new technologies of communication would allow. To quote Pope John again, ‘When we fondly call you to the unity of the Church please observe that we are not inviting you to a strange home, but to your own.” Three years later, presiding at the first session on 11 October 1962, in his opening speech, the Pope encouraged the Council Fathers to discover a new enthusiasm, a new joy and a serenity of mind... we must work out ways and means of expounding these truths in a manner more consistent with a predominantly pastoral view of the Church’s teaching office... Today... Christ’s bride prefers the balm of mercy to the arm of severity. She believes that present needs are best served by explaining more fully the purport of her doctrines, rather than by publishing condemnations.

There can be no doubt that it was this very substantial change in attitude—an utterly theological as well as pastoral step—which led directly to the rescinding of the excommunications between Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in 1964, and to the Joint Declaration between Pope Paul and Archbishop Michael Ramsey two years later. But, I want to suggest that the theological influence of this Pastoral council with no anathemas goes even further than these two specific ecumenical events, and further even than the abolition of the Index of Forbidden Books in 1966: it offered a way of doing authoritative, ecclesial theology which was open to Reception. Precisely because the topics were not closed down by anathemas, there would be room for elaboration, further exploration and ecumenical probing. Such an attitude offered a pattern which not only changed the atmosphere of ecumenical discussion, it also offered an example for how other churches could deal with their own theological and ethical housekeeping—I think in particular of the indaba method of discernment pursued at the 2008 Lambeth Conference as the most recent example.

But, to borrow another phrase from Pope John’s opening speech, ‘Extending the frontiers of Christian love’ did not stop in just deciding not to issue anathemas. The entire embrace of the Council, as Archbishop Kevin implied in his beautiful use of the Ephesian hymn, was towards the world—to use Anglican language, it was reasonable,
taking the world seriously on its own terms. Re-reading the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, I am struck enormously by how the Council generously examined questions of broader culture, expecting to find the activity of the Holy Spirit in this hopeful age.

All this was enabled by the substantial change in theological method which the Council represents. Archbishop Kevin referred to the essential importance of *la nouvelle théologie* which was developing in the years immediately before the Council. Such freedom from a rigid neo-scholasticism gave the Church a much more capacious theological vocabulary and a broader mileu with which to embrace the world. As a former student of the Angelicum I’m the last person to underestimate the importance of the Angelic Doctor and his theological school, but it is worth highlighting that the theological language and style of the Council is a million miles away from Leo III’s *Aeterni Patris* and Pius XI’s *Studiorum Ducem* which had narrowed the parameters of theological discourse in quite recent history. Also, practically, the Council’s theological language made official Roman Catholic theology much fresher, more approachable and more easily digestable for Ecumenical partners from East and West: for the East because of its patristic learning and relentless Christological focus, and for the Anglican and Protestant West because of its scriptural focus, its attention to the Greek and Latin Fathers, and its own obvious embrace of reason.

**Specifics**

From this general basis, I’d now like to make a few specific comments in response to themes raised by Archbishop Kevin:

1) Cardinal Walter Kasper has helpfully reminded us about the binding nature of *Unitatis Redintegratio* for Roman Catholics. Two themes specifically highlighted in *UR* are how the ‘riches of Christ’ are present in traditions other than the Roman Catholic Church, and also how within the Catholic Church itself, the ‘hierarchy of truths… vary in their relation to the

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1 1879 *On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy.*
2 1923.
3 Walter Kasper, *That they may all be one* (Continuum, 2004), p. 6ff.
4 *Unitatis Redintegratio* I: 4.
foundation of the Christian faith.\(^1\) When held together, these two utterly ground-breaking principles held together lead us to question the nature of the Council itself, in a context of Christian division which can’t just be written off as heresy. Much more theological exploration is needed to articulate precisely what authority an Ecumenical Council holds in the context of a fractured Christendom, but where Christians today are invited to receive from one another.

2) This leads me onto a consideration of a hermeneutic of continuity or rupture. Whilst it may seem slightly presumptuous for an Anglican friend to comment on this, this is an experience which Anglicanism has at the very heart of its own identity! I want to suggest that it is a thoroughly proper and faithful theological conclusion to affirm that the Council was necessarily both continuity and rupture, and that there are extremely good precedents in scripture and tradition for this being a good, godly, and spirit-filled thing. All proper reflection on the identity of the Church is rooted in the death, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost of the Lord. What is the *Pascha* of the Lord itself if not continuity and rupture? What was the schism between church and synagogue if not both of these? What was the Council of Jerusalem if not both of these things? The reformations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also often both continuity and rupture. We’ve discerned over the last fifty years that there need to be ways of guaranteeing accountability to one another in such a process, but it would be an ecumenical gift indeed to affirm that such dynamics are not irreconcilable, but rather belong together for the *bene esse* of the whole Church.

3) Archbishop Kevin mentioned the distinct change in tone and approach towards non-Roman Catholic Christians—the notion of the Church fundamentally as *communion* opened a whole new ecclesiological frontier. Ecclesial otherness was redefined by the explicit recognition of other churches’ baptisms and the declaration of already-shared but imperfect communion. The language of fraternity immediately allowed not only for the possibility of exploring contested issues of past theological

\(^1\) *UR II*: 11.
disagreement, but also for the exploration of one another’s contemporary family likeness. It’s impossible to do this without asking quite starkly what is at the very centre of Christian ecclesial life? Vatican II answers relentlessly, the mirabila Dei revealed in Christ. We must continue, then, to explore the notion of participation in these mysteries much more deeply as the ecumenical key—how each of our communities participates in the Divine Life and therefore in one another, so that the whole Church can visibly be seen to be ‘a people made one by the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ to use the language of Lumen Gentium. It might be that the language of intensity and extensity could be of specific help here, measuring just how recognisable another Christian life is in its relationship to Christ and his followers. It would certainly be useful in dealing with the ever-growing numbers of new Christian communities, with whom a family likeness is harder to discern and a shared grammar is increasingly difficult to articulate.

4) My next point is related to our understanding of the Church as communion with God, and to our imperfect communion with one another. Archbishop Kevin reiterated the teaching of the Council that ‘the gifts God has bestowed on the Church for its life and witness are to be found in their fullness in the Catholic Church’ although other churches and ecclesial communities ‘share in differing degrees in that unity.’ Fifty years since the Council, in a period when the world has seen such proliferation of new Christian movements, and a crisis in all kinds of institutions, we need to assert more boldly that all communion is graded—communion with God and communion with one another. If any of us were to be in perfect communion with God, the process of theosis(377,721),(525,755) within us would be complete. That is the eschatological reality. So, if all communion is expressed in grades, what does this mean for ecumenical exploration? It is a controversial thing for some (especially although not exclusively the Orthodox) to argue that each Church (or ecclesial community if you like) has what we might call an ecclesiological deficit. This is affirmed by the Receptive

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Ecumenism movement, but also implicitly in the magisterium of John Paul II in his document *Ut unum sint* when he bravely asked for the advice of other Christians in how he might exercise the Petrine Office. I don’t want tonight to get into the knotty area of *subsistit in*, but admitting that each and every part of the Church *lacks the fullness that Christ alone can bring and perfect in us* does highlight our absolute need for one another precisely so that we can each and together share more deeply in the Divine Triune Life of God.

_Future challenges_

As we know so well, it was the Council which made formal non-adversarial theological dialogue possible. I want to turn now and consider the relationship between mandated representative theological commissions and the wider church. Archbishop Kevin spoke of the situation surrounding the publication of the Final Report of ARCIC I: the 1998 Lambeth Conference received the documents on Eucharist and Ministry as consonant with the faith of Anglicans, whilst the Holy See (and specifically the CDF) responded with much more reserve. It has been recorded elsewhere that many on both sides were dismayed at what appeared to be a failure of the CDF to take into account the ARCIC method, and not to allow Episcopal Conferences to respond before making any kind of final judgement (despite that the French had already responded favourably). Whatever the complex circumstances here, it is clear to me that both our communions need to pay closer attention to their processes of reflection/reception. When communions mandate particular groups of theologians for dialogue and discernment on their behalf, such groups themselves have to be considered _in some way_ authoritative. This needs careful handling, but we do need to work on what the process of ecumenical theological discernment means theologically, as well as the nature and status of agreed statements, and the process by which these are tested and received. It ought not be so easy to ignore or dismiss the carefully discerned theological agreement of those who have once disagreed!

Over the last twenty years, it has become abundantly clear that theological dialogue cannot continue without careful reference to broader culture and cultural disciplines. As well as Archbishop Kevin’s point that dialogue is frequently dealing with Christian cultures which have grown separately and apart for long periods of history, we now
have a situation in which cultural identities are becoming more complex—are extensifying—faster than at any other period in human history. We all watch the Synod on the New Evangelisation with huge interest and respect as it considers, in part, how to respond to this sociological phenomenon. All Christian communities are challenged in how to respond together to the insights of new disciplines and new questions. These areas are complex, but it is, I would suggest, a genuine demand of Vatican II that we do not ignore or diminish them, but rather humbly seek to discern what they might reveal to us of Christ and creation. Archbishop Kevin drew a distinction between the way in which Catholic and Protestant cultures have engaged with modernity. There is surely much truth in this, although as ever particular histories will reveal interesting counter-narratives.

However we approach this, there is no doubt that Vatican II was in part an opening to the Enlightenment and its associated disciplines. The disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology and other areas of scientific research are currently highlighting that the issues *du jour* of gender and sexuality are simply much more complicated than we understood even twenty years ago. Whilst it may be possible to draw a series of fundamental distinctions somewhere between how historically Protestants, Anglicans and Catholics have dealt with the Enlightenment, these new questions have become properly *theological* questions for the whole household of faith, and need to be honestly dealt with as such. I am reminded of the one-time salutary warning of Bishop Richard Holloway, that the perennial danger of religion is that it answers new questions with old answers. It will be a sign of our interdependence in one another, a true sign of allowing our imperfect communion to deepen, if we can ask these questions together, and allow the mind of Christ to emerge, giving the women and men of our age the time and the answers they deserve from Christ’s body, answers which take their concerns and the concerns of truth seriously.

So, the question starkly remains, quite how these disagreements sit within the wider corpus of agreed, reconciled theological truth. In terms of the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue, our agreements are not just money in the bank for a happier day. They already represent fundamental advancement. As Archbishop Rowan Williams asked in his 2009 lecture at the Gregorian University,
when there is already such fundamental agreement between two (or more) communions on the fundamentals of faith, are they *theological* questions in the same sense as the bigger issues on which 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? 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 [such as the precise outworking of papal primacy and the ordination of women] as equally vital for its health and integrity?¹

These are still fairly new questions. I pray that we don’t simply give old answers, because the Spirit-filled challenge of the Council, and our newly articulated belonging to one another do not allow us the pseudo-luxury of pulling up the proverbial drawbridge. We must resist any such attempts not just for our own sake, but for the sake of the world—which will be united in Christ, in the fullness of time, according to his purpose (Eph 1: 10).

At the launch of this book in Dublin, October 2012, the following address was given by Jim Corkery SJ of Boston College, Dublin.

Reading this book has been a delight. It is a work of the most thorough and painstaking scholarship, offering reliable access to the thought (and praxis) of two of the greatest Jewish scholars of the twentieth century, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) and Edith Stein (1891-1972) and teasing out the significance of what they have contributed for Jewish-Christian dialogue in the twenty-first century.

Dr Palmisano listens, with remarkable attentiveness, to what Stein and Heschel say. He searches, probes and (with his perceptive gentleness) critically questions what they, and the lives they lived, disclose about prophetic witnessing—backdropped by the horror of the Shoah (3). His method, like theirs, is phenomenological (4f.): ‘We ... cautiously venture,’ (thus his Introduction), ‘to name our project as an interreligiously attuned phenomenology on empathy’ (5). And attuned it is, to Heschel’s phenomenology of subjectivity (5-6), to Stein’s phenomenological theory and praxis (3) of empathy—and to the elucidation of her contribution through the lens of his (74, 78-79, 137). This book does not, dully, present, first, Heschel and then, Stein (though that is its basic order). Rather, a conversation is facilitated between the two, their perspectives being shown to ‘dialectically complement one another’s contributions in the key of prophetic witness’ (4; also 6-7, 52-59, 71-79). This conversation graces the entire book.

I mentioned ‘the key of prophetic witness’: Palmisano explores what occurs in the mystico-prophetic witness of Heschel and Stein. First, Heschel. The critical question is raised as to whether the prophet’s praxis, as he sees it, involves the dissolution of the ‘I’, the ‘self,’ as her prophetic witnessing unfolds. At first glance, Heschel is shown to exhibit a certain oscillation between two opposing poles on this matter, seeming to be of the view that the ‘self’ of the prophet will be overwhelmed by the divine pathos—by God’s moved concern for humanity, for the suffering of God’s people—as the prophet seeks to make this concern her own and to respond with sympathy to it (46f).
One must then ask: will the prophet’s response be able to be authentically personal, in such a way that a non-mutuality between God and the prophet can be overcome? It would seem not ... but then, in a meticulously attentive relecture of Heschel’s idea of sympathy through the lens of Emmanuel Mounier’s personalism (in Chapter 3), an understanding emerges of how the pathos of God calls, draws in, but need not overwhelm the prophet as Heschel understands her. It becomes gradually evident that a genuine ‘trans-subjectivity beyond non-mutuality’ can become possible for the person of the prophetic witness in relationship with the Subject God. This opens up a space for a more nuanced view—a kind of middle view—one that will correspond with the via media characterising the ‘hermeneutics from empathy’ of Edith Stein.

There is no neat ironing out of incompatibilities here, for an actual link to Stein is found, via a footnote of Max Scheler to her dissertation on empathy, where Scheler affirms her argument on the non-dissolution of the ‘I’. Heschel refers to this footnote in his work, *The Prophets*, agreeing with the quotation from Stein that he has found in Scheler (56). Stein, referring to Lipps’ example of a spectator who is absorbed in a circus acrobat’s performance, distances herself from Lipps by saying that she is ‘with’ but not ‘one with’ the acrobat. She is, as Palmisano says, eager (like Scheler) ‘to guard against the “dissolution” of the subject through an over-eager self-forgetfulness’ (59). She does not view empathy, the subject of her concerns, as ‘a feeling of complete oneness’ but as rising ‘con-primordially’: as arising, she means, from myself and from the other. It is ‘primordial’ as ‘my’ unique ‘present’ experience of the other but it is also ‘non-primordial’ in content, because the experience first and foremost belongs to the other (68). Its structure is thus dyadic: extraverted and introverted (70). In this exploration, the analysis of Stein on empathy is thorough, complex and painstaking and one would need to read Joe’s chapter ‘On Empathy’ to appreciate it better than we can do here. What is interesting for us here is that Palmisano manages to fashion a bridge between Stein and Heschel, showing that each is concerned to avoid the reduction of the ‘I’, Stein doing so by means of her notion of ‘con-primordiality’ and Heschel by means of his ‘trans-subjectivity beyond non-mutuality’ (recall above). Thus Heschel is quoted as saying: ‘Both communication and separation are necessary’ (59). And at the end of the subtle exploration of both, Joe Palmisano
is able to conclude: ‘it would seem that Heschel’s concept of “trans-subjectivity” actually speaks to what Stein wishes to accomplish through the use of “con-primordiality”’ (78). There is, at this point, a certain demonstrated correspondence between them.

The Challenge to Our Times of This Project

The thinkers on whom Palmisano has chosen to focus are counter-cultural. They exhibit a religious thinking, a thinking with assent (John Henry Newman), a committed thinking, that challenges not only the positivism and epistemological scepticism of our own time (which consigns religious thought to the margins and which puts all its eggs in the basket of reduced reason) but it challenges also the (Cartesian) subjectivism and arid (Idealist) conceptualising of the age that preceded it.1 Here, then, is ‘a thinking that is new,’ one might say. And though some might attempt to argue that a return to Heschel and Stein represents something of a journey back behind present-day postmodern philosophical ‘newness’—to a philosophy part forgotten: phenomenology2—it becomes clear, not least because Palmisano so deftly draws other, including more recent, philosophical voices into the conversation (Levinas, Foucault, Marion—hardly for the faint-hearted!), that here, indeed, is ‘a thinking that is new.’ Concentrating, as he does, on two faith-filled thinkers,3 who are existentially attuned

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1 As well as Stein’s challenge of the abstract conceptualising as a phenomenologist, there is Heschel’s challenge to it too, from his prophetic witness. Kosuke Koyama, on a page where both are being ‘unfolded,’ concludes: ‘Religious faith cannot be “it-ized”’ (p. 111).

2 For Stein (as for Husserl, its founder, and whose assistant Stein was), phenomenology had a thirst for the real and was sceptical about idealism (and Cartesian subjectivism), seeking even (recall Adolf Reinach) to penetrate in some way to the Absolute. Later, when Husserl appeared to move towards Idealism, his earlier students (among them Reinach and Stein) did not accompany him.

3 One a saint (Stein), the other so religious that he was, from the outset, aware of the Transcendent ‘borne’ in every contingent and ‘glimpsed’ in every concrete and could say (see p.13) that the human person ‘is a disclosure of the divine’ and that ‘[t]o meet a human being is an opportunity to sense the image of God, the presence of God.’ See also p. 35, articulating (through Kasimov) how Heschel’s ‘entire
to (fine-tuned for the demands of) living as prophetic witnesses, he selects an idiom in which to write that challenges contemporary attitudes that insist that only what is neutral (whatever that is!) is admissible. These are religious thinkers—but yes, thinkers—beacons of light for us in the duty of inter-religious dialogue today. From them this book distils the significance of empathy for conversing, as friends, with persons who are religiously other (13). As the Americans say—and our author is a North American!—this is where the rubber hits the road!

The Challenge to Christianity—and to Jewish-Christian Dialogue—of this Book

Dr Palmisano points out that his ‘methodology is phenomenological and narrative in approach, and is therefore necessarily contextual insofar as it takes seriously the post-Shoah situation’ (4). His prophetic witnesses, Stein and Heschel, witnesses to the terrible reality of the Shoah, are aware that, against such a background, all prophetic witnessing must include a remembering if it is not to be hollow. Of Stein, Joe Palmisano writes: ‘Above all, however, Stein is a rememberer. Stein’s hermeneutics from empathy, her emptying that gives, has been challenging us to deepen and widen our understanding of what it means to be a prophetic witness’ (129). On theological structure rests on the assumption that there is a personal God,’ a pathic God, a God whose ‘inner life is defined by His pathos, in that He is emotionally involved with human beings’ (Heschel—see p. 35 and note 33, p. 154). And see also the two bibliographical items referring, respectively, to Stein as ‘a saintly thinker’ (p. 166, note 57) and to Heschel’s book, *Israel: An Echo of Eternity* (p. 174, note 11). On religious thinkers/religious thinking, one does not forget here John Henry Newman’s expression ‘thinking with assent’ and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza’s highlighting of Saint Augustine’s hermeneutic (perplexing to our ways of thinking today): ‘what is of primary importance is not so much our knowledge of the material sign that enables us to interpret the eternal reality, but rather it is our knowledge of the eternal reality that enables us to interpret the material sign’ (Fiorenza, ‘Systematic Theology: Tasks and Methods,’ in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Second Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), pp. 1-78, at p. 9).
the part of Christians—those who have ‘presided over’ the Shoah—a remembering that is not about themselves and their guilt but about the sufferings and pain inflicted on their elder siblings in the faith, will be paramount.¹ Joe Palmisano quotes the chilling words of Stein’s niece and biographer, Suzanne Batzdorff: ‘The Christian religion to which Edith Stein converted was in our eyes the religion of our persecutors’ (102).

Visible here is the challenge that faces the Christian in Jewish-Christian dialogue today. For readers of this book, in particular Christian readers, I do not exaggerate when I say that we will not be able to read it and remain unchanged. This gradually unfolding insight and intuition lodged with me, with full import, on reading these words of Palmisano in his final chapter: ‘Edith Stein’s way of being a witness (martyr) compels her beyond a static attachment. She domiciles in the other’ (129). We shall have to allow ourselves to be similarly opened up. There is a preparedness that is required of us for entering into Jewish-Christian dialogue in our time and, after reading this book, one sees that there is no way around that.

**Concluding Remarks**

The scholarly apparatus, attention to detail, etc., of this study is stunning. Furthermore, the author exhibits, as he carries out his project, a kind of empathy himself: the ‘sound’ he hears in his authors is the sense he (onomatopoeically) reflects, so that the book, as it proceeds, is a dialogical expression of the very empathy it seeks to probe. And the reader becomes convinced of the potential fruitfulness of this empathy for the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

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¹ See page 113, where it becomes clear that remembering is not recalling guilt (that’s about me!) but rather it is remembrance for the misery caused to/suffered by the other.
Homily given at the Indian Orthodox Church of St George & St Thomas, Dublin, 18 January 2013

Frederick M. Bliss SM

Father Frederick Bliss was ordained in 1961 and holds a doctorate in theology from the University of St Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum), Rome, where he has been Professor since 1992. His lecturing focuses on ecclesiology, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. He has published a number of articles and books including Understanding Reception: A Backdrop to its Ecumenical Use (Marquette University Press, 1993); also Anglicans in Rome: A History (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2006); and Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope. Why the Catholic Church is Ecumenical and what She is Doing about it (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

When invited to preach in Dublin for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Father Bliss decided to tell the story of ecumenism, as it has unfolded in the lives of a number of ecumenists. His homily prompted the editor of One in Christ to ask him to first speak of his own ecumenical journey, and this is how it unfolds.

I was the son of a 'mixed-marriage', my father being a 'non-Catholic'. In those pre-Vatican II years the Church had a rather negative opinion about non-Catholics, and as I grew into adolescence, this Catholic negativity troubled me, if for no other reason than the fact that my father was a singularly good man. He died during my first year as a seminarian.

The Rector of the seminary, which was located just four miles from my home, visited me and my family to express the sympathy of the seminary staff and students, but also to explain to me that it was not possible for anyone from the seminary to attend the funeral. Given the times in which we lived I partially understood what he was saying. But it set me on a path of ongoing wonderment about Catholic negativity to people of other Christian denominations.

What prompted me to tread the ecumenical path was this personal Catholic experience which I have never really understand. Then the Vatican Council began to unfold, when the Church at last got it right! But the Council message needed to be studied, absorbed and
disseminated. With the permission of my Marist superiors I took myself off to Rome to study ecumenism at the Angelicum under Father Remi Hoeckman OP, where I obtained a license in ecumenical theology. My doctoral research was on a subject, then hardly spoken of or written about, but currently a matter of fashionable pursuit, namely 'ecumenical reception'.

My journey over the last 22 years has kept me in Rome and at the Angelicum, doing just that, promoting the reception of ecumenism among students from all the corners of the globe.

One of the aims of the Angelicum’s programme is to train and equip future Diocesan Directors of Ecumenism. Episcopal Conferences are expected to take ecumenism seriously, and for that they need committed and well-formed personnel. On the level of documents and agreements we have made great advances over the past fifty years, but these do not percolate down in the way they ought to. There are all kinds of obstacles and blockages to be overcome along the way. The training in ecumenism given to seminarians is often totally inadequate, or even non-existent. The clergy need to be convinced otherwise the fruits of the dialogues cannot be gathered, or spread. Ecumenical education is a huge field which has so many levels, and in which there is so much to be done.

Ecumenism is a matter both of knowledge and of commitment. The one without the other is insufficient. Since both are needed, taking up ecumenism educates the whole person. There is a conversion involved because it turns people and communities towards each other. For so many centuries we showed our backs to each other; now we have to show our faces. Many of the obstacles to ecumenism are not primarily intellectual but above all emotional. Reception is sometimes a matter of ideas, but is not just that; it includes receiving one another. There is much to be unblocked.
We are indebted to the Indian Christian students who cite the great injustices done to the Dalits of India, in their preparation of the background material for this year’s *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. They press us to reflect on the havoc that castes or religious divisions do to people, to communities and to the Christian Church. A matter of concern is when people accept caste or division, with the mind that we cannot do anything about it! When that moment arrives, precisely then, something beautiful is taken away from us.

To live with Christian division is one option. Another is not to accept the *status quo*, but to become pro-active disciples of Christ for the restoration of the unity for which He prayed (John 17, 11).

Tonight I have had to choose a track for our reflection. One approach is to go down the historic road, and speak of how our divisions came about; another approach is to examine the contemporary official efforts to promote ecumenism. In fact, I have opted for neither of these. I wish instead, to share with you the stories of people and communities who chose to make Christ’s prayer for unity, their own!

Our journey begins here in Dublin with a brief reflection on a great ecumenist, **Father Michael Hurley** who died in 2011. While many of you might have known him, I came to know him through his writings. His influence reached beyond Dublin, even beyond these shores. In an early text of his I discovered his expressed rationale for an ecumenical venture, and on reading him I was introduced to a man who believed in unity and championed it in every way possible.

To further his project, Father Hurley established the Irish School of Ecumenics, which continues to this day, and he co-founded the Columbanus Community of Reconciliation on Antrim Road, Belfast. He had great staying-power, enormous courage and a depth of knowledge, all of which contributed to his gift to Ireland and to the Churches in Ireland. Father Hurley was a strong and courageous man, who was prepared to chide, even his own Church! 'Is it not true', he wrote, 'that in much of Roman Catholic life since the Reformation we have emphasized our distinctiveness and differences?'

Then he turned and spoke just as firmly to Protestants, who over the centuries increasingly down-graded Mary’s place in the Christian Church. He said that Protestants would be more tolerant of Catholic doctrine and Catholic love of Mary, if only they were more familiar with the lead of their founders, for example, with Luther’s eighty
Marian sermons which have survived into the present day, and with his highly-respected writings on the *Magnificat* of Mary.

May the memory of Father Hurley and his gifts continue to have life in this city and in this land.

Since we are gathered for prayer for unity in this Indian Orthodox Church, my thoughts turn to a beautiful and strong lady, a woman ahead of her time—Sarah Chakko—from Cochin in Kerala, India, who had a strong and lasting love for her Syrian Orthodox tradition. Very interestingly, she developed a love and respect also for the Methodist Church where she would worship when an Orthodox Church was not in the locality of her work. She had great affection for the World Council of Churches, observing the first general assembly in Amsterdam in 1948; and at the second assembly in Evanston in 1954 she was the official delegate of the Syrian Orthodox Church. But it is in her remarks to a World Christian Youth Conference in 1952 that we gain an insight into the ecumenical breadth of this lady. “It is my hope”, Sarah said to the youth, “that as you come face to face with all kinds of challenges, from the ancient faiths and from modern ideologies, that from this learning you may become the channels through whom the message of Christ our Lord reaches those who hunger and thirst after the things of God.”

May we, too, heed her advice and become channels of Christ’s message of unity.

We now turn to two prophetic leaders, one from the east, the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, who believed that the unity of the Church and the unity of humankind are so closely linked that there is no place for intra-Christian quarrels. It was in the land of Jesus, in the city of Jerusalem where He was put to death and where He rose from the dead, that Patriarch Athenagoras met another great ecumenist, Pope Paul VI.

That was the first meeting in centuries of Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic Christianity. Why wait so long, we might ask? All we can say is that 1964 was the right time!

Together Paul VI and Athenagoras expressed their passion for a ‘communion of churches’, which was to bring to life an expression

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1 In what follows I have made use of *Ecumenical Pilgrims: Profiles of Pioneers in Christian Reconciliation*, edited by Ion Bria and Dagmar Helle (Geneva: WCC, 1995).
that had long faded from the Christian vocabulary, at least in the west. What they were saying is that Christians share a common endowment which is none other than the life of Christ who draws each into intimacy with his Father and the Holy Spirit; and because we are all baptized, we are disposed by grace to grow in Christian communion with one another. Our Christian vocation is to respond to the empowerment that the Baptismal graces give us. It is precisely these graces that brought us here tonight; the same graces should impel us to go from here so as to make a difference.

Making a difference is our Christian vocation! Though we are Christian in virtue of the Sacrament of Baptism, we have developed a variety of cultures, each of them with distinctive characteristics, including qualities and a dignity, though sometimes with thorns on the outer edges. We may not always understand one another, but that is what we are to work at, that is the ecumenical challenge, first, by coming to terms with our own identity and its demand for loyalty, while opening ourselves to the riches of other Christian traditions. In a word, our ecumenical intent is to develop within ourselves a mind and a heart for unity, and to establish around us a culture of unity and community. Our aim then is to become a communion of Churches. Therein lies the model of Christian reunion!

At this juncture I am reminded of two outstanding Archbishops of Canterbury who contributed significantly to the ecumenical cause. **Archbishop (1961-1974) Michael Ramsey** who, in 1966 established the Anglican Centre in Rome which continues in place to this day as a tangible presence in Rome of the Anglican Communion and in particular of the current Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Ramsey with Pope Paul VI, established ARCIC, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue which has produced a number of noteworthy agreements. To seal their bond of friendship, as it were, Paul VI took from his own finger the ring that had been presented to him by the people of Milan and placed it on the finger of the Archbishop; every subsequent Archbishop of Canterbury when visiting Rome, wears that same ring, which reminds us of the importance of symbols.

The second is **Archbishop (1980-1991) Robert Runcie** who suggested to Pope John Paul II when they met in Ghana that he might care to visit Canterbury which, in fact, happened in 1982. The fact is that no Bishop of Rome had ever been in Britain, yet it was Pope Gregory the Great who had sent the Benedictine monks there to found
the Church of Canterbury. Runcie observed that for over twenty years Anglicans and Roman Catholics had been rediscovering the unity they once shared; now, he said, we are beginning to receive from each other the gifts and treasures of our two traditions.

The journey unto unity begins in human hearts. One such man whose life witnessed to such an ideal was Akanu Ibiam, a Nigerian who studied medicine in Scotland, though he was determined that he would return home not just as a doctor, but as a Presbyterian medical missionary. He preached Christ by the example of his life and work, building bridges between Protestants and Catholics and Pentecostals. He served and never counted the cost. The title of his biography says it all: *Born to Serve*.

There are contemporary religious communities which demonstrate graphically that different Christian traditions can engage with one another, live and pray together. One such is the Chemin Neuf Community, dating from 1973. Their manifesto explains that 'Because divisions between Christians are the greatest obstacle to evangelization; because we believe that the prayer of Jesus Christ for unity will be fulfilled, together, Orthodox, Protestants, Catholics, without waiting any longer, we follow the humble path of shared daily life.' And they add: 'Because of our love for each other, because joy is more powerful than anything else, we commit our lives to serve the Church and the Unity of Christians.' This community has around 2000 members in over 30 countries.

Highly respected because of its ability to serve is The Salvation Army, a group of people totally committed to a demanding life of charity, without ever asking for an ID. Fitting comfortably within the Christian orbit, they have entered into a conversation with the Catholic Church, thereby modeling a special kind of relationship of two communities who share a concern for one another, for wider society, and for the needy.

May we conclude this reflection mindful of the founder of this week of prayer for Christian Unity, the Frenchman Abbé Paul Couturier who tells us that “there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement.”

A young Sardinian girl, Gabriella Sagheddu, believed these words so firmly that she offered her life for the unity of the church, and
when she died from tuberculosis at the age of 31, her one treasured possession was the gospel of St John, notably finger-marked at Chapter 17, the source of her ceaseless meditation. She is now the Blessed Gabriella Sagheddu, patroness of ecumenism.

**Notice**

**XXI International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox spirituality**

**THE AGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE**

*Bose, Wednesday 4 - Saturday 7 September 2013 in collaboration with the Orthodox Churches.* The Conference is open to all.

**Simultaneous translations will be provided into Italian, Greek, Russian, French, and English.**

Participants are kindly requested to arrive on Tuesday, September 3. The Conference will end on Saturday, September 7 with a festive meal.

Lodging will be provided at the Monastery and in the nearby area. There will be a daily transportation service for those who are not lodged at the Monastery.

To register for the Conference, please contact the Secretariat and then send the registration form by 20 August 2013. For further information, contact the Secretariat.

**Conference Secretariat**

Monastero di Bose
I-13887 Magnano (BI)
e-mail: convegni@monasterodibose.it
www.monasterodibose.it/content/view/4756/528/lang,en/
Baptism in the Holy Spirit is at the heart of the Charismatic Renewal. However, as we ‘come of age’ it would be wrong to see baptism in the Holy Spirit as something that we now fully understand. Or indeed, something that we can control by having all the right structures in place to help people receive baptism in the Spirit.

Theological understanding is something that unfolds through the on-going revelation of God, our lived experience and continued reflection. In 2008 the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) doctrinal commission began a series of theological reflections on baptism in the Spirit. The aim was to enter into dialogue with the Church through the Pontifical Council for the Laity and to produce a document which could serve Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) worldwide by presenting baptism in the Spirit from a theological perspective and by suggesting some pastoral guidelines for receiving and living this grace. The text was finalised after the international colloquium in Rome in 2011. However, our reflection on baptism in the Holy Spirit is still very much a work in progress.

Perhaps with this in mind, Chemin Neuf community, in collaboration with ICCRS, held an international ecumenical congress on baptism in the Holy Spirit in Switzerland from 7 to 10 March. There were around 200 people from different Church backgrounds and nations—theologians, exegetes, philosophers, church historians and key leaders in the Renewal.

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Michelle Moran is a founder member of the Sion Community, chairwoman of the English NSC and President of ICCRS. The article was written for the Good News Magazine, serving the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Great Britain and Ireland.
Some of the questions the Congress addressed were:

- Does baptism in the Holy Spirit correspond to experiences already present in ecclesial traditions or does it represent a special grace for our times?
- Is it designed for all or only given to certain people?
- Is it limited to the life of the individual or does it contain a communitarian or ecclesial dimension?
- Does it play any role in the renewal of ecclesial communion and the furthering of unity of Christians?

Fr Laurent Fabre, the founder of Chemin Neuf community, opened the congress on the first evening by presenting some broad areas for reflection. He quoted Pope Paul VI who had famously referred to Charismatic Renewal as 'a chance for the Church and for the world'. Then referring to Cardinal Suenens, he quoted that Renewal is a current of grace which was offered 'but not fully captured by the heart of the Church. Renewal is not just a gulf stream touching the coastline, it is meant to penetrate the heart of the country'. Fr Laurent noted that there has been some resistance from the Church and that generally speaking Charismatic Renewal has not been able to make much of an impact in the heart of ordinary parish life, perhaps with the exception of Alpha.

Building upon his opening comments he then set out some of the differing theological positions regarding baptism in the Holy Spirit which would form the basis of some of the subsequent lectures. One of the most passionately discussed topics at the 2011 colloquium was the question of terminology i.e. the use of the phrase 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' rather than 'effusion in the Holy Spirit / outpouring of the Spirit/ new or personal Pentecost'. I will not go into the details about this as they are well documented in the ICCRS publication. Suffice it to say that terminology isn’t just about translation; it also has theological nuances. Fr Laurent favours the use of the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' both for theological and ecumenical reasons. Five million Christians have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit and so the use of this term affirms our affinity with the wider Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

Another theological issue that has been debated since the early 1970s, is whether we should see baptism in the Holy Spirit as primarily a re-vitalisation of the graces of sacramental initiation or as something more distinctive. The dominant Catholic position is to explain
baptism in the Holy Spirit as entry into the conscious experience of graces objectively received in the sacraments of initiation; as the actualization of those graces and as a release of what was already within but not yet clearly manifest.

In this ecumenical congress there were some interesting reflections from those traditions who do not uphold infant baptism. They often prefer to speak of water baptism and Spirit baptism. Mel Robeck, the renowned Pentecostal church historian, who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, noted that there is not yet a well-developed Pentecostal theology. However, the majority of Pentecostals today would embrace a similar two-step approach with salvation followed by baptism in the Holy Spirit, or a three-step approach, with salvation, sanctification and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Fr Peter Hocken developed this in depth from a historical and ecumenical perspective. He is critical of the ‘re-vitalisation’ perspective for a number of reasons as he senses that the principle aim behind this thinking is to legitimize the Pentecostal experience within the Catholic tradition. This clearly prevents us from having a broader perspective and looking at what the Spirit is doing in the wider Charismatic ecumenical movement. Fr Peter strongly believes that the baptism in the Spirit is also a distinctive grace for our age, for this moment in the history of the Church. So he wants us to hold in balance that baptism in the Spirit is both a new outpouring in our day and that it activates the grace of sonship conferred in sacramental baptism.

The congress included contributions from several scripture exegetes. Professor Christian Grappe, who teaches at the Protestant theology faculty at the University of Strasbourg, delivered a paper about baptism and new life in Paul’s writings. He highlighted that there are two complementary ways of talking about baptism in Paul, firstly as new life in Christ and then, as how we enter into temple community. Similarly, we cannot only view baptism in the Spirit as a personal experience; it also has a communal dimension. Indeed the strap line of the congress was ‘from the hearts of men and women to the body of the Church’. The last day of the Congress focused upon baptism in the Holy Spirit and ecclesial life. Dr Mary Healy reminded us that baptism in the Holy Spirit is not something we do, it is the sovereign work of
God and it is often associated with a new mission. Therefore there can be no new evangelization without a new Pentecost. Apart from the depth of the theological reflection, for me, this congress was so rich because it drew upon such a wide range of theological perspectives from the Orthodox, Lutheran, Mennonite, Reformed, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic traditions. In the final roundtable Fr Peter Hocken gave a strong exhortation in saying that he senses that the ‘apologetic’ phase of CCR is now over and we must have the courage to take up today’s challenges. He expressed the belief that now is the time for an ecumenical inter-confessional study where we can more clearly discern what the Spirit is saying today—which would have not been possible in the past. He highlighted the eschatological dimension of baptism in the Spirit. At Pentecost Peter speaks of what had happened in terms of the fulfillment of the prophet Joel: ‘this is that which was spoken by the prophet’ (Acts 2:16). According to Fr Peter, this was the first accomplishment, but the final fulfillment—the fullness of baptism in the Spirit—will be on the last day. So we are living in a time of eschatological build-up. We are living something new at this point in history.
AN ECUMENICAL COVENANT IN ROME

Keith F. Pecklers SJ*

On Sunday 14 April 2013, the Third Sunday of Easter, the Anglican Centre Rome and the Oratory of Saint Francis Xavier ‘del Caravita’ formally signed a covenant, committing those two institutions to enter into a closer relationship. The pastoral and theological rationale derives from the real but incomplete communion which exists between the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of the Anglican Communion. This communion is grounded in a recognition of Anglicans and Catholics, deepened through five decades of dialogue, of the many constituent elements of the Church each tradition contains.

Those assigned to draft the covenant were mindful of close relations which had grown between the Anglican Centre and Caravita over the years. But they were also motivated by the 2007 statement of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, Growing Together in Unity and Mission, which drew attention to ‘the gap between the elements of faith we hold in common and the tangible expression of that shared faith in our ecclesial lives’ (§10). After attempting to harvest the constructive results achieved through dialogue in nine areas (Trinitarian and Christological foundations; the Church; the Word of God; Baptism; Eucharist; Ministry; authority in the Church; morals and discipleship; and Mary), Growing Together gives a variety of suggestions for closer cooperation in the areas of worship and prayer; common study; cooperation in ministry; and shared witness.

The drafters of the Anglican Centre-Caravita Covenant made a careful study of other Anglican-Roman Catholic covenantal

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relationships, notably diocesan covenants in Papua New Guinea; Brisbane, Australia; and Regina, Canada. In many respects, this Covenant seeks to affirm and articulate what, in fact, has already been happening over the years in the growing relationship between the Anglican Centre and Caravita. Indeed, there is a natural affinity between the two institutions: neither is a parish; both serve as centres of ongoing lay formation with an ecumenical mission whose heart is the weekly celebration of the Eucharist.

Building upon the first section of the covenant, which offers a very brief articulation of the faith we share, the drafters set out to ask what we can do together based on these elements of common faith. A series of commitments are at the heart of the covenant, wherein the two institutions commit themselves to common prayer and study, joint mission and witness, in the context of ongoing friendship as we seek to be faithful to the Gospel. These commitments are not an exhaustive list of what Anglicans and Roman Catholics can do together, but are a practical set of proposals appropriate for this time and place, drawing from Growing Together in Unity and Mission, and from our lived experience as unique institutions in the City of Rome. We have come a long distance in our relationship but are not yet able to take ultimate steps toward full visible unity. Thus, as a way of living in this interim period, this Covenant is a way of receiving and embodying the convergence and consensus achieved by dialogue in the everyday practice of our ecclesial lives.

This friendship between the Anglican Centre and Caravita dates back to 1992 when I arrived in Rome for doctoral studies and met the then Director of the Anglican Centre, Fr Douglas Brown SSM. When the Caravita Community was founded in the Jubilee Year of 2000, what began as a personal friendship between myself and various directors of the Centre grew into an ecumenical collaboration between the two centres. This bore fruit in 2002 when Bishop Richard Garrard, then Director of the Anglican Centre, was presented with a chasuble that continues to be worn in the Anglican Centre Chapel to this day. In February 2008, the Caravita Community presented the departing Anglican Centre Director, Bishop John Flack with the gift of an episcopal ring in the style of those given to Bishops at the Second Vatican Council. And in November 2009, on the occasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams’ preaching at Caravita, a bishop’s mitre purchased for the occasion to be worn by the
Archbishop, was later presented to the Anglican Centre as a remembrance of that historic occasion presided over by the then President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, Cardinal Walter Kasper.

Here in Rome, Anglicans and Roman Catholics have enjoyed a long-standing friendship for many years, already begun in the Malines Conversations of the 1920s, but especially helped by that extraordinary visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in March 1966. The generosity of the Doria Pamphilj Family has also played a significant role, not only in the establishment of the Anglican Centre but in the furthering of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the City of Rome in general. All this has led to a regular and quite natural contact and exchange between Anglican and English-speaking Roman Catholics resident in Rome—an exchange greatly facilitated by joint membership in the monthly meetings of the Ecumenical Clergy Fraternal and that of ‘Churches Together in Rome.’ It is also significant that for some years now, the Church of England Parish in Rome, All Saints, has been twinned with its Roman Catholic counterpart—the Parish of Ognisanti on the Via Appia Nuova. This twinning has led to an ongoing pulpit exchange between the Chaplain of All Saints and the Pastor of Ognisanti, and to a growing friendship between parishioners of both churches. There also exists a twinning between the Anglican Church of St Pancras in London, and the Church of San Pancrazio in Rome. Thus, our desire to enter into this covenant relationship should be seen in the wider context of the already established Anglican-Roman Catholic relationship present here in Rome.

The Anglican Centre-Caravita Covenant lists quite practical items on which we will collaborate: promote and publicize the programmes, events, and worship of the other institution, both verbally at the weekly Eucharist, but also on our respective websites, as well as list a link to the other institution’s website on our respective websites. Moreover, while remaining faithful to the liturgical discipline of both

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Churches, we pledge to encourage members to attend the worship of the other institution especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We commit ourselves to regularly remembering the other church and its leaders, and our relations, in our intercessions at the weekly Eucharist. And we commit ourselves to mention the name of the patron saint of the other institution during the Eucharistic Prayer, thus, recalling Francis Xavier at each Anglican Centre Eucharist, and recalling Augustine of Canterbury at each Caravita Eucharist.

The covenant also commits both institutions to a shared use of space when necessary and appropriate, for example, welcoming the Anglican Centre to utilize the Oratory of Caravita for its weekly Eucharist on Tuesdays, when its limits of space are unable to accommodate a larger group in its Chapel of Augustine of Canterbury. Similarly, the Anglican Centre has welcomed the Caravita Community in hosting a farewell lunch in honour of one of its priests.

Common worship is another constitutive element of the Covenant: beginning Lent together each year ecumenically at Caravita, with a joint Liturgy of the Word and imposition of ashes; holding ecumenical liturgies several times each year (e.g. Evensong) especially during the Easter Season, with the involvement of clergy from both institutions. Caravita will also host the official Liturgy of Installation for an incoming Director of the Anglican Centre in 2013 as it has held the official Liturgy of Farewell on several occasions for the departing Representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Director of the Anglican Centre.

There is also the dimension of collaboration and mutual support among the clergy of both institutions. The Covenant states that the Director of the Anglican Centre will regularly be included in fraternal moments shared by the Caravita clergy—times of prayer, retreat, and ongoing formation, for example, as well as times of informal social exchange and relaxation. The clergy of both the Anglican Centre and Caravita pledge their commitment to act together when feasible: for example holding occasional study days; arranging a joint component in our various programmes or jointly hosting a retreat day in Advent or Lent. There is also a mutual commitment to maintain communication between us when any new development in one of our churches has implications or challenges for the other. And when specific concerns or needs in either community are identified, the
Clergy of Caravita and the Anglican Centre will join together to find a way forward in providing relief and assistance.

The Ecumenical Evensong at Caravita on 14 April to say farewell to Canon David Richardson and his wife Margie, and to give thanks for their five years of ministry at the Anglican Centre, offered a fitting occasion for the signing of the Ecumenical Covenant. Presided over by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, the Covenant signing took place following the homily preached by Canon Richardson. After the assembly’s renewal of baptismal promises using the text found in the Church of England’s liturgical book Common Worship, and after the Cardinal moved throughout the Oratory sprinkling those present with water that had been blessed at the Easter Vigil as the congregation sang ‘The Church’s One Foundation,’ the Directors of both institutions moved together to the ambo where Anglicans and Roman Catholics are united in that place of the proclamation of God’s Word. There they alternated in reading aloud the various commitments to which both institutions pledged themselves, followed by a doxology read by the congregation. Both leaders then signed the document using a pen from the recently held ‘Malines Conversations Group’ meeting at the Benedictine Monastery of Chevetogne in Belgium—a gathering of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians who seek to revisit the famous Malines Conversations of the 1920s. The Cardinal then invited those present to exchange the Peace, before Canon Richardson and Cardinal Kasper shared the final blessing and dismissal.

Bilateral relations between churches are always at the service of a broader vision of the unity of all Christ’s disciples. Therefore it is our hope that this covenant would be the base of an ever-widening covenantal relationship among Christian communities in Rome and beyond. The Covenant which will be jointly reviewed and re-affirmed every three years ends as follows:

We give thanks to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the gifts we have received and which we have come to recognize in each other; for the joy we have come to know in our life in Jesus Christ; and for the renewed and life-giving relationship which has come to us from the Holy Spirit. To God be the glory, in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21).
ANGLICANS AND CATHOLICS FINDING ONE VOICE
‘TO EXPRESS OUR FAITH IN OUR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE’.
A COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIALOGUE OF CANADA

Inspired by the apostle Peter’s exhortation to offer ‘an account of the hope that is in you’ (1 Peter 3:15), members of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada (ARC Canada) are working on a project aimed at giving such an account with one voice.

Using as their starting point some of the fundamental questions that continue to be asked by people inside and outside of the church, members of ARC Canada are crafting short, accessible written compositions that offer responses rooted in the common Christian tradition shared by Catholics and Anglicans.

Among the questions being addressed by the Common Witness Project are: Why believe? Why is the world the way it is? What is my mission in life? Are science and faith compatible? What good is the church? Is suffering good for anything? Will it be okay?

“For over 40 years Anglicans and Roman Catholics have been engaged in dialogue, both at the national and international levels, mapping out the extent to which we share common elements of faith, and trying to make progress on communion-dividing points of doctrine and church practice,” said Bishop Don Bolen, the Roman Catholic bishop of Saskatoon and ARC Canada co-chair.

“The Common Witness Project builds on that work by addressing the challenge both our churches face in seeking a language with which to express our faith in our contemporary culture, addressing perennial human questions in the way they are being asked today. The project has been a gift for all of us working on it, and we look forward to finalizing it within the next year,” Bishop Bolen said.

The Common Witness Project emerged out of a desire expressed by the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops’ Dialogue of Canada for the two churches to speak together in the increasingly secularized context in which Canadian Anglicans and Catholics find themselves.

In doing so, ARC Canada co-chair Bishop Linda Nicholls said Anglicans and Catholics are reminded of the high level of agreement they share on matters of faith.
“It can be easy for us to focus on what divides us,” said Bishop Nicholls, who is bishop of the Trent-Durham area of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto. “The Common Witness Project is our opportunity to focus on the shared core of our faith and our witness to it in the face of the questions of daily life. Our own discussions of the questions have been rich and delightful and we hope that same richness will be shared by those who will receive the project in the future.”

The exact shape the Common Witness Project will finally take is still under discussion, but the intent is that it will become a teaching resource for both churches as they seek to proclaim the Christian faith to a new generation.

The Common Witness Project was the focus of ARC Canada’s work during its meeting in Montreal, May 16-18. The members of the dialogue express their gratitude to Bishop Barry Clarke and the Anglican Diocese of Montreal for their hospitality in hosting the gathering, which as usual included common prayer, shared meals, and social time.

ARC Canada will next meet in December in Niagara Falls. Part of that gathering will include a day-long joint session with the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bishops’ Dialogue of Canada, an annual pattern of meeting that began in 2011, and out of which the Common Witness Project emerged.

The Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue of Canada was established in 1971 and has been meeting continually ever since. Its current members are:

**Anglican**
The Rt. Rev. Linda Nicholls (co-chair)
The Rev. Dr. Eileen Conway
The Rev. Prof. Kevin Flynn
Dr. Joseph Mangina
The Rev. Dr. David Neelands
The Ven. Bruce Myers (co-secretary)

**Roman Catholic**
The Most Rev. Don Bolen (co-chair)
Dr. Catherine Clifford
Mr. Julien Hammond
The Rev. Dr. Raymond Lafontaine
The Rev. Alexander Laschuk
Dr. Carolyn Chau (co-secretary)
The conference was held on the day that Pope Francis was elected: Wednesday 13 March. It was the third conference organised by the Joint Commission on Doctrine in recent years, and each has offered an opportunity for a wide range of participants from not only the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland, but from various other denominations to address serious theological issues.

This conference had a double focus: first of all, the Year of Faith called for by Pope Benedict, where he asked that the documents of Vatican II be once again looked at in a serious manner; and secondly, the thirtieth anniversary of the World Council of Churches’ document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, which signalled an important step forward in ecumenical agreement.

The speakers were Dr Anthony Towey of St Mary’s University College, London, Professor David Fergusson of the University of Edinburgh, Dr Martin Davie¹ of the Council for Christian Unity of the Church of England, and the Reverend Dr Peter McEnhill. Dr Paul Nimmo delivered an address prepared by Professor Tom Greggs of the University of Aberdeen who was unable to attend because of ill health.

In his welcome Archbishop Philip Tartaglia quoted a recent article by a Baptist theologian he had met during the Synod of Bishops in Rome, Dr Timothy George. In his article, 'The Next Pope Should be a Catholic', on the website First Things, Dr George writes that all committed believers in every Christian tradition share a common quest for truth based on divine revelation; that Church unity will only be advanced by a ecumenism of conviction, not one of accommodation; and that Christian unity does not exist as an end in itself but as a service to evangelisation. These considerations set the scene for the conference.

The planning of the day had been jointly coordinated by Fr William McFadden, Vicar General of the Diocese of Galloway and parish priest

¹ Dr Davie’s paper to the Conference, 'Baptism and the Eucharist in BEM and wider ecumenical conversation: an Anglican perspective' is printed above, pp. 52-67.
of St Andrew’s & St Cuthbert’s, Kirkcudbright, and Dr Paul Nimmo, Meldrum Lecturer in Theology of New College, University of Edinburgh.

*Fr William McFadden writes:*

The participants at the conference were not only challenged by the various presentations, but also invited to move forward in their ecumenical journey as committed contributors. The theory and the practice of ecumenism were shown to be intimately connected, and it is obvious that ecumenical activity is without doubt an area of crucial importance for the Church today.

The Joint Commission for Doctrine of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland is a group whose task is to ensure that both churches are committed to theological dialogue at a level which goes beyond the bland and the insipid. This conference certainly showed that the Joint Commission is responding to this task with energy and enthusiasm. By raising serious and challenging issues the work of ecumenical dialogue is supported and promoted, and this conference offered a valuable statement in this regard.

*Dr Paul Nimmo writes:*

The Joint Commission conference was a great success, offering a terrific opportunity for ecumenical engagement and drawing a range of attendees from around Scotland. The four papers were given by speakers from different denominations, and this diversity reflected the emphasis on dialogue that lies at the heart of the Commission's work. Each of the four papers addressed a topic central to thinking about the current Year of Faith, and there were possibilities throughout the day for constructive conversation. The sense of trust that the Joint Commission has fostered in its activities over several years was very evident in these discussions, and perhaps above all in the collegial conversations over lunch and coffee. At the heart of the whole event was the increasingly widespread conviction that the churches in Scotland will face the challenges of today best if they continue to speak and work together.
TO LOVE AND SERVE THE LORD. DIAKONIA IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.’ THE JERUSALEM REPORT OF THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION (ALIC III), 2013

David Carter*

As far as I am aware, this is the first international inter-confessional dialogue report to be devoted primarily to the diaconal ministry of the whole Church, and every baptised Christian within it, as opposed to the diaconate as an order of ordained or instituted ministry within the Church.¹ The latter was indeed a key theme of an earlier stage of the same dialogue, in the Hanover Report of 2002, entitled The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity.² What was said then with particular reference to such particular ministries is now set in the much wider context of a central aspect of the Church’s identity.³

This report is particularly timely in terms of the secular context of a globalising world in which the gap between rich and poor continues to grow, adversely affecting the marginalized even in rich and developed countries. The mushrooming in Britain of food banks,

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¹ The reason for referring to ordained or instituted ministries is that not all separated diaconal ministries have involved ordination. In the independent tradition, common to Baptists and Congregationalists, members of a congregation are appointed as deacons, carrying out both a liturgical role in distributing the eucharistic elements and a disciplinary, supervisory role within the congregation concerned, but they are not ordained. Nor, in the past were many of the deaconesses of the continental Reformed and Lutheran traditions. Within the British Methodist tradition, the former Wesley deaconesses were ordained but regarded as layfolk and not as a second order of ministry (whereas Methodist deacons today are seen as members of an order of ministry). Deacons in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Communions have always been both ordained as such and seen as ministers of the third order of sacred ministry.


³ As can also be seen from the initial paragraph of the Hanover Report.
trying to provide some of the most basic of human needs for those who cannot now afford all the necessities of life, is sad testimony to this and requires of the Church the sort of holistic diaconal ministry to which this report refers when it states that:

Diakonia takes the forms of prophetic witness, advocacy and empowering action, as well as compassionate care. Diakonia means not only giving aid, but also confronting the concentration of power and wealth that is the cause of poverty. A diakonal church accompanies, bolsters and empowers the economically weak and vulnerable; with them it resists abusive manoeuvres that deprive them of their basic human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights.¹

These are strong statements, but certainly in line with much in Christian tradition that needs to be re-ceived. It is in line with the insistence of Gaudium et Spes on the importance of addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged.² It resonates with Wesley’s championing of the poor and his perceptive and prescient analysis of certain trends in economic development that he saw as damaging to the general welfare.³ Above all, as the introductory section of the Report makes clear, it is in line with the beginning of Jesus’ own proclamation of Good News to the Poor (Luke 4:18-19) and that ministry which he exercises as the supreme diakonos or commissioned servant and agent of the Father in his plan of salvation. Diaconal ministry, both in its ordained representative form and in its general form as lived out amongst all the baptised, is central to the mission of God in His Church.

¹ To Love and Serve the Lord, p. 9.
² ‘The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ’. Gaudium et Spes, initial sentence. See also especially para. 27, for a condemnation of ‘excessive economic and social differences between members of the one human family’, para. 40 where the Catholic Church ‘holds in high esteem the things which other Christian churches or ecclesial communities are doing cooperatively by way of achieving the same goal’ and para. 44, where it is said to be ‘the task of the entire people of God … to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age and to judge them in the light of the divine Word.’
³ For an analysis of Wesley’s thought, see Jennings, Theodore W., Good News to the Poor. John Wesley’s Evangelical Economics (1990), especially chaps 2-4.
The Report begins by citing John 15:14, glossing it with the comment ‘the friendship to which Jesus calls us is to be one with him in mission to the world’. It goes on to stress that ‘diakonia is central to what it means to be Church’ and that ‘diakonia is a bridge, holding worship and witness together in a faithful response to God’s mission’ (pp.4-5).¹

Above all, it is an apostolic ministry of the whole Church, ‘a ministry that belongs to every believer because it is rooted in the apostolic commission that all receive in baptism’ (p.9). It is most certainly not confined to those ordained or otherwise specially set apart as deacons or diaconal ministers, even though they ‘embody the diaconia of the whole Church in a particular way’ (p.37) and certainly have a particular responsibility for encouraging the laity in such service, a point which is strongly stressed within the ordained diaconal order in contemporary British Methodism.²

In the second section of the Report, entitled Diakonia Dei, Missio Dei, The Shared Imperative, there is strong emphasis on the fact that diakonia involves more than aid and compassion. It is to support individuals in vulnerable situations and to address conditions that create vulnerability ... it is not just a ministry of repair or protection ... it is also expressed in the ways in which the Church helps build up communities that are gracious, that value people because God values them without reference to their successes or failures. Constructive diakonia helps communities find the energy to move forward by pointing to God’s action in their prior history. (p.10)

One may say that, viewed holistically, it is an eschatologically orientated ministry of service, witness and action pointing to and, as far as possible in the present situation, embodying kingdom values that reflect in anticipation the life intended for the new heaven and the new earth. The Report cites both Isaiah 11 and Revelation 21, stating that they present both humanity and the natural world as destined ‘to be saved not just from the powers of sin and death but also for the kind of community in which the wolf lies down with the lamb and the nations bring their gifts into the new Jerusalem to share with each other’ (p.10).

God’s mission is represented as ‘the creation of communities that reflect the quality of life shared within the Trinity. The life of the

¹ In-text page numbers refer to the Report, To Love and Serve the Lord.
² See the quotation at the very end of this paper and p. 161 n.2.
Trinity thus gives both ideal and real shape to diaconal ministry which nurtures in communities a spirit of mutual trust and love, of interdependent empowering relationships, like those we see among the Father, Son and Spirit’ (p.11).

The importance of this statement for the social prophetic role of the Church, in an age when so many feel helpless in the face of the worship of market forces, cannot be overstated. History has not come to a full stop, as Francis Fukuyama alleged, with the triumph of the market economy over the collapsing command economy of the former Soviet bloc, but has yet to find its providential fulfilment in the transforming appearance of the sons of God fulfilling their providentially appointed diaconal ministry (Rom. 8:19-23).

It is interesting to note the similarity between the teaching in this Report and that of the last section of the recently published final version of the ecclesiological process of the WCC, The Church-Towards a Common Vision. In that report, it is also stressed that ‘the church was intended by God, not for its own sake, but to serve the divine plan for the transformation of the world. ... The Church needs to help those without power in Society to be heard ... faith impels them (Christians) to work for a just social order, in which the goods of this earth may be shared equitably, the suffering of the poor eased and absolute destitution one day eliminated’.¹ The diaconal mission of the Church is stressed, even if the term *diakonia* is little mentioned.

Another interesting feature, not just of the finished report but also of the dialogical process that preceded it, is the stress on the observation and citing of practical examples of diakonia from across the world, as lived out in particular churches of the partner communions. Thus five examples of such diakonia, as directly witnessed by the Commission during the course of their meetings, are cited (p.4). In addition, at varying points throughout the text, nineteen further examples of diakonia are cited in brief cameos, ranging from action for HIV victims in Tanzania to action on behalf of the dalits in South India to the creation of new styles of diaconal ministry in the Church of Ireland diocese of Clogher.

To an extent, this follows a model earlier adopted in the Reformed-Roman Catholic Report of 2007 on The Church as Community of Witness to the Kingdom of God where, however, three very diverse

¹ *The Church-Towards a Common Vision* (WCC, 2013), paras. 58, 64.
forms of diakonia undertaken jointly by the two communions were examined in some depth rather than in the briefer cameos used in the Anglican-Lutheran statement.¹

The third section of the Report, *Diakonia, Koinonia and the Unity of the Church*, stresses the eucharistic assembly as manifesting the leiturgia, martyria and diakonia of the Christ who is present to it and through it (p.14). It highlights the go-between role of all diaconal mission in linking the Church to the concerns of the world, going out from the church to the needs and hopes of the people beyond it (p.15). It stresses the many aspects of this ministry. First, it is a matter of ‘truth telling’ in which ‘the Church is called to look at the world’s problems from the bottom up rather than the top-down’. It can then involve protest, specifically described as ‘political diakonia, publicly confronting and working to change oppressive structures’, but also involving ‘accompaniment, in the power of the Spirit, of the wounded and voiceless’. Christians are to be ‘yeast and light, pioneering examples of public responsibility’, empowerers, helping people develop the capacity to act and speak. Finally, diakonia is to involve bridge building ‘allowing people with conflicting perspectives to engage with each other with respect and openness … providing enemies with an hospitable place to talk to each other, helping them struggle through the issues or events that drove them apart’ (pp.15-17).

The fourth section deals with historical approaches to diakonia in the two communions. It mentions Luther’s belief that the Gospel should undergird not just a personal sense of worth but also the healthy functioning of society. It cites his command to work for justice: ‘Govern yourself according to love and tolerate no injustice to your neighbour. The Gospel does not forbid this; in fact, it actually commands it’ (p.21).

An account is then given of the general Lutheran belief that care for the poor was seen as a responsibility attaching to all believers. This is followed by an account of the development of specific diaconal ministries within German Lutheranism from the 1830s (p.21).

Anglican deacons at the Reformation were stated to have the duty of searching out the poor in the parishes and intimating their needs to the Curate (i.e. the incumbent priest). However, from then till very

recent times, the diaconate was seen and used primarily as a transitional ministry for those soon going on to presbyteral ministry. In the late nineteenth century, the ministries of deaconesses and Church Army officers were developed but regarded as distinct from that of the ordained diaconate as such. Much more recently, some Anglican provinces and dioceses have developed a permanent diaconate which preserves the full liturgical functions of the traditional Anglican diaconate whilst stressing its servant role in the community in acts linking the needs of the world to the service of the Church (pp.23-4).

Finally, this section details the ways in which Lutherans and Anglicans have discussed diakonia with other ecumenical partners. The Lutheran-Reformed report Called to Communion and Common Witness stresses a common commitment to justice and the agreement that opposition to racism has status confessionis (pp.26-7). Lutherans and Mennonites have agreed that ‘the Church needs to maintain a critical stance in relation to the State in order to fulfil its prophetic witness and service to the world’ (p.26). Specific Anglican references in dialogues to diakonia have been less frequent but it is argued that their ecumenical work is informed by an awareness of the need to participate in God’s mission by working for the transformation of unjust relationships’ (p.27).

In the last section, Diakonia and Mission, challenges, first made in the Hanover Report, are re-issued to both churches about the ordained diaconate. Lutherans, in churches which still lack an ordained diaconate, are challenged to consider whether such a diaconate, grounded in word and sacrament, would be of value to the service of the Gospel. Anglicans are challenged to restore the diaconate to its character as a lifelong and distinct form of ordained ministry (p.34). The danger that over-emphasis on the ordained diaconate might overshadow the diaconal calling of the whole Church is acknowledged and it is once again stressed that ‘deacons and diaconal ministers, whether ordained or not, embody the diakonia of the whole Church in a particular way’ (p.37). Finally, Lutherans are invited to consider the joint American Anglican-Lutheran understanding of the diaconate as belonging to the triplex form of the one ministry (p.35). This is to help resolve the tension between the traditional Anglican understanding of the three-fold ministry and the
traditional Lutheran stress on the *one* ministry of word and sacrament.

The section ends with a series of suggestions for study and action at several levels of church life, parishes, regional and national churches, in theological education and in the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation.

Two appendices are added to the main Report: the first a series of regional reports on developing Anglican-Lutheran relationships across the world; the second relating to the issue of transitivity.¹

Both are important because of the increasing closeness of the two communions almost everywhere where they co-exist. In North America and over much of northern Europe, there are already relations of full communion, including inter-changeability of ministry. In many other areas, there are agreements allowing widespread co-operation and a degree of mutual eucharistic hospitality without, however, permitting full inter-changeability of ministry. Examples of this particular stage of relationships can be found in the Meissen and Reuilly Agreements between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Germany and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches.²

Of all the communions involved in bilateral dialogue, the Anglicans and Lutherans are perhaps closest to the possibility of forming a joint communion within another generation or so. In seeking this, practical co-operation in diakonia may be a powerful stimulating factor, appreciated and received at the grass roots. Theological dialogue, important as it is, is not the only spur towards closer unity. Quite apart from that, this Report has important things to say to the rest of the oikoumene, perhaps particularly appropriately as Francis I begins a pontificate in which mission to and alongside the poor is likely to be a priority. It seems likely that Archbishop Justin Welby will also take a robust stance on issues of diakonia.

¹ This relates to the applicability of regional Lutheran-Anglican agreements in other parts of the two communions
² For an excellent account of such developments, see Franck Lemaître, *Anglicans et Luthériens en Europe* (2011), which I reviewed for *One in Christ*, 2/45 (2011). Despite the title, Lemaître also says quite a bit about North America.
In conclusion, one may say that this report gives valuable theological underpinning to a renewed emphasis across many other traditions on both the diaconal ministry of the whole people of God and that of ordained deacons and other diaconal ministers\(^1\) who assist, encourage and lead them in that ministry. One may illustrate the wide context from these final two quotations, from a Methodist and a Roman Catholic source respectively:

**British Methodist deacons focus and represent the servanthood of Christ ...** The Methodist Diaconal Order exercises a leading, public and representative role of service in and on behalf of the Church ... it seeks to model for the Church a way of discipleship ... it pursues Wesley’s vision for the Methodist.\(^2\)

In the name of Christ the servant, deacons give the witness of evangelical service in order that the entire community should be involved in living the life of service in Church and World.\(^3\)

Paul reminds us in Ephesians that all ministry is ‘for the equipping of the saints’ (Eph 4:12). That is especially true of the symbiotic relationship of the diaconate with the whole serving Body of Christ.

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\(^1\) I think here of such people as the Church Community workers of the United Reformed Church and the lay diaconal ministers of the Irish Anglican diocese of Clogher, referred to above.

\(^2\) ‘What is a Deacon?’ in *Over To You, Reports from the Methodist Conference* (2004), pp. 16-32.

BOOK REVIEWS


Those who have seen the film ‘Of Gods and Men’ will remember the challenge that the Trappist community of Tibhirine faced. In an Algeria torn by civil war the rebels had ordered all foreigners to leave or risk death. For obvious reasons the Government offered every possible encouragement to non-Algerians to move away, if only till the war was over. The film shows the community of Tibhirine facing that choice and over time moving from a position where a significant number wanted to leave, to a unanimous vote to stay. They were motivated less by the services, especially medical, that they could offer, and more by their commitment to the Muslim community which had moved from being friendly to their Christian visitors from a foreign land to becoming a single family of mutual support united by a strong faith in the One God Who is always merciful. The evidence for this change came when the people of Tibhirine prayed day and night for the return of the monks and even today plead for their return.

There is still some mystery around how the monks died and who was responsible. A footnote in this book, on page 1 (no. 2), offers a new insight. It is perhaps as near the truth as can be attained at the moment: there will be more to come.

This book is not the story of the community but the theology and spirituality of its Prior, Christian de Chergé. The author, Christian Salenson, a French theologian based in the diocese of Nîmes and long time admirer of his subject, has produced the most organised presentation of his thinking. The main sources are his conferences and homilies given as Prior to his community.

De Chergé had been well educated in Islam at PISAI, (Pontifical Institute for the Study of Arabic and Islam) the famed university in Rome. He was in the rare position of being able to dialogue with the local Imam and his Muslim community in Arabic and engage with them in interpreting the Word of God as Spoken through the Qur’an. (For Christian readers not familiar with Islam, the sacredness of the Word Spoken in Arabic may be paralleled with the sacredness of the Real Presence that Catholics believe is found in the consecrated bread and wine.)
De Chergé’s reflection on these basic texts of Muslim spirituality alongside those of the Christian monastic tradition gave him a unique insight into the Word of God, revealed in two ways. These reflections were articulated amid the many daily chores of a small monastic community eking out its livelihood alongside their Muslim neighbours, in a semi-desert landscape and an increasingly tense political situation.

One of his tasks was to open his brethren to ways of working alongside the people of Tibhirine, building friendship, being of mutual service and establishing one community before the One God.

With this aim he particularly appreciated the importance of the daily round of Muslim prayer: his community stopped their own prayers and remained silent when the call of the muezzin was heard; the local community was given the use of a room to act as a mosque while their own was being built and they became an important centre for medical help. The hospitality of the community towards their neighbours was an exemplary interpretation of the Rule of Benedict, each brought closer to the other by the fragility of the situation.

When I visited Tibhirine in 2008, the Bethlehem Sisters were thinking of moving into the empty monastic buildings. Their superior asked whether it would be possible for the muezzin to refrain from his call to prayer: it would be distracting for them. Later the sisters abandoned their plan. Perhaps if they had read the book under review they would have spared themselves the time and cost. The opinion of that sister is not untypical. In spite of the statement in Nostra Aetate many Christians find it difficult to accept that the God of Islam and the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition is ‘the One God’.

For those seeking further enlightenment about this key text of Vatican II the fourteen chapters of this book outlining the spiritual theology of de Chergé provide an answer.

Following his decision to leave the diocesan priesthood to discern a call to monastic life de Chergé entered the Abbey of Aiguebelle. From there he proceeded to Rome for his studies in Islam. After three years he was able to read their revealed text and interpret it in ways similar to a Muslim scholar. He was able to see that monastic life has many similarities with Islam; from this he proceeded to an ever deeper relationship with the One God inviting Muslim and Christian to intimacy.
For Benedictines, the Word of God read, remembered, reflected and digested builds an ever deeper relationship with the One revealed in the Word. Muslims do the same; the Word of God, heard as Truth and Mercy, is read, reflected, pondered and remembered reminding them that they live in the presence of God, who is closer to them than their jugular vein.

In his book Salenson presents an analysis of de Chergé’s theology in two parts: the first ten chapters focus on spirituality and dialogue, and the last four on practical and pastoral theology.

He begins by reflecting on the important moments in de Chergé’s journey, from his early family life in Algeria, followed by his life-changing encounter with Mohammad while on National Service. Then followed a call to monastic life, with an opportunity to study Islam at depth from which he moved to the dependent priory of Tibhirine, where, now Arabic-speaking and enthused by Islam, he committed himself to the stability of monastic life.

The next six chapters focus on critical questions arising from his prayer: how does Islam fit into the plan of God? Is there a role for a Christ-like figure in this vision? He speaks of Christ as ‘the only true Muslim, for he was nothing but "Yes" to the will of the Father’ which echoes Muslim teaching with obedience at its core, constituting ‘the eternal covenant between God and mankind’ (p. 93). This theme is developed in the chapters which follow focused on the communion of saints, the positive value of ‘difference’ and new insights into eschatology.

After a short ‘transition’, the next four chapters deal with practical issues relating to dialogue with Islam. First, de Chergé proposes the notion of a Church of Visitation, in which he likens Christian-Muslim relations to the arrival of Elizabeth to Mary. Muslims come to Christians with a life-giving message. Its life initiates the dialogue. This is followed by three chapters: on martyrdom, the mission of a tiny Christian community in a Muslim country and how Christians and Muslims might pray together—all important to de Chergé and his community as they lived their life at Tibhirine.

There is one point of fact which needs further explanation. On page 178, the author states ‘the Cistercian monks of Tibhirine, like those of Midelt [the town in Morocco where the remnants of the community are now located], live out their ministry of prayer in the land of Islam. Thus, their witness is unique.’ They are not unique as a community
dedicated to the Rule of Benedict living in a Muslim country. I have visited such communities of men and women in Muslim Senegal, Burkina Faso and Indonesia. In these places each community has developed its own relationships with its Muslim neighbour. Their environments differ, their lifestyle more traditional, but they face the same threats from Muslim fundamentalists. These communities are more indigenous, with local vocations and are larger than Tibhirine ever was. But none of them has a Christian de Chergé: he is, at the moment, unique. Hopefully other followers of the Rule of Benedict will study Islam in the way he did and then reflect on its practical application to a Benedictine community in dialogue with Islam. Christian Salenson has provided a text which will encourage that to happen.

Timothy Wright OSB, Ampleforth Abbey


This book performs the extremely useful function of giving a flavour of almost all the bilateral dialogues in which the Roman Catholic Church has been involved with ecumenical partners. As far as I know, it is unique in that respect. Cardinal Kasper’s Harvesting The Fruits dealt, of course, with just four dialogues, admittedly very significant and long-term ones.

Naturally, in such a comprehensive book, no dialogue can be presented in great detail; nevertheless, its high points and its particular contribution to the oikoumene can be faithfully registered. The book had its origins in a symposium, held in 2010, at the St Paul Seminary School of Divinity in Minnesota.

The main section of the book is prefaced by four essays setting the wider context of the work of the World Council of Churches and in particular of its Faith and Order Commission. Wesley Ariarajah and Peter Bouteneff look at the WCC from, respectively, Protestant and Orthodox perspectives. Bouteneff’s finely nuanced appraisal registers both Orthodox frustration at much that preceded the more recent revisions on process within the WCC whilst pointing out that much in the complex relationship has been enriching.

Mary Tanner, with her usual clarity, sketches the history of the Faith and Order movement with particular attention to the creative impact
of the *Baptism, Ministry and Eucharist* report of 1982 on both bilateral dialogues and actual agreements leading to closer communion, such as ‘Porvoo’. Tanner also usefully points out that much of the work done in such studies in other commissions of the WCC, such as the *Programme to Combat Racism* and *The Community of Men and Women in the Church* had profound ecclesiological implications and were far from being, as some have imagined, part of a primarily secular agenda.

Jared Wicks makes an arresting comparison between the teaching of Pius XI’s *Mortalium Animos* of 1928 and John Paul II’s *Ut Unum Sint* of 1995, showing a very considerable overlap between the concerns in the two encyclicals on key dogmatic issues whilst allowing for the difference of tone as between them and the differences in context between an ecumenism which, in the twenties, seemed to Catholics dominated by liberal Protestant influences and one which, almost seventy years later, seemed much more anchored in a common core of basic credal doctrine.

Turning to the main section of the book, we find the largest number of pages given to the dialogue with the Pentecostalists, a dialogue originally rooted in the personal friendship between a Benedictine, Fr Kilian McDonnell and a Pentecostal leader, David du Plessis, who was dismissed from his post for being over-ecumenical. Despite such an inauspicious beginning from one side, the dialogue has gone on constantly for just over forty years and has yielded important fruits in parts of both churches. It is worth remembering that it is now a dialogue between the numerically two largest Christian constituencies in the world, there being an estimated 1.2 billion Catholics to 400 billion Christians in the broadly Pentecostal tradition. It is also worth remembering the increasing strength of both traditions in the global South.

That said, there is an imbalance within it to the extent that the Pentecostalists are divided into a myriad of separate denominations and independent congregations. The dialogue, whilst official from the Catholic side is far from welcomed by all Pentecostalists, some of whom, particularly in South America, remain viscerally anti-Catholic. In 2002, when I met him personally, the Pentecostal contributor to this book, Mel Robeck Jr. told me how much, particularly in the earlier stages of his involvement in the dialogue, he had suffered from disapproval of his involvement in it. Nevertheless, despite all the
problems, both he and the Catholic contributor, Ralph del Colle, heartily affirm the value of the dialogue.

The other dialogues described are those with the Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Reformed, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Evangelicals, Mennonites, Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox.

Perhaps the best account of any of these dialogues is that by Margaret O'Gara on the dialogue with the Disciples of Christ. The Disciples emerged in America in the early nineteenth century from a Presbyterian-Reformed background. They separated from this because they felt that the parent bodies in that tradition undervalued both the eucharist and the call to Christian unity. O'Gara charts the way in which the two key original concerns made them natural partners for Catholics. She shows the very considerable degree of convergence within the dialogue on teaching authority, both communions accepting the authority of the first seven councils. She particularly stresses how, within the dialogue, Catholics have learnt to appreciate the use of particular forms of liturgical practice, hymnody and preaching as resources for dialogue with others within the broad free church tradition.

Jeff Gros deals with the dialogue with the evangelicals, now conducted under the aegis of the World Evangelical Alliance. One of the problems of this dialogue is that the evangelicals are scattered both amongst the mainstream Protestant denominations (including Anglicanism) and also exist in a variety of confessedly evangelical denominations and independent congregations. They can vary sharply in their attitudes, for example to Marian piety, with which the evangelical Methodist Bishop, Thomas Oden, has no problem in contrast to many evangelicals who see it as verging on idolatry. Much of this dialogue is taken up with questions of mutual understanding, particularly in the area of mission. Gros, uniquely amongst the contributors, points to the value of some of the documents on mission produced by the dialogue, for seminary teaching.

The dialogue with the Baptists is also largely concerned with better understanding and discussion of mission. There is no thought, as yet, of going beyond this and making the recovery of visible unity the ultimate goal as it has been and continues to be in the dialogues with Anglicans, Methodists and Lutherans.

The dialogue with the Reformed reached a particularly interesting stage in its last session when it worked on *The Church as Community*
of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God. It developed a unique methodology in which it took into account both theological reflection and Christian experience in facing conflicts and seeking ways of reconciliation, thus combining both orthodoxy and orthopraxy, a point that will particularly appeal to the Reformed.

Finally, a word about the very fruitful Catholic-Mennonite dialogue. This is particularly relevant to Christian witness and ministry in a world of conflict since it brings to the table a peace church which has always renounced the violence of war. It is also important as a paradigm for dialogue on the healing of memories between a church which has been persecuted and a church which was one of the persecutors. It is worth noting that the Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue has dealt with similar issues.

I have concentrated in this review on the dialogues that are generally less well known to readers of One in Christ in order to highlight the value of this book to British and continental European ecumenists. I can assure readers that the Lutheran, Methodist and Anglican dialogues do receive due attention from such people as Bill Rusch, Lorelei Fuchs and Geoffrey Wainwright. The article on ARCIC particularly refers to recent ventures in practical reception and cooperation since 2001 under the aegis of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM).

This book can certainly be commended to anyone wanting an introduction to the dialogues and sources from which to begin to compare them.

David Carter, Methodist local preacher, Bristol


Since the publication of its first volume in 1983, *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung* (DwÜ) has become the pre-eminent reference work for ecumenical documents in German. This carefully edited fourth volume again brings together dozens of key texts related to the ongoing search for visible Christian unity. If available, German texts or official translations by the respective dialogue teams are used. Otherwise, translations from the original languages (mostly English) are provided. As translation is a sensitive matter, key terms which may
be misunderstood or have a specific meaning or connotation are followed by the equivalent in the original language between square brackets or explained in a footnote. It is not explicated whether or not the translations have been approved by the ecumenical partners involved.

Looking at the size of the fourth volume of the collection, one would believe that the ecumenical winter, if there ever was one, is definitely over. The fourth volume counts about five hundred pages more than its predecessor. Yet, the number of ecumenical texts has seriously decreased from fifty-one to thirty-nine. The obvious conclusion is that on average ecumenical documents are much longer than they used to be. Bilateral reports exceeding one hundred pages are no exception in this volume. As usual, all documents in DwÜ receive a code indicating the dialogue partners, which allows easy referencing. This volume is the first which comes with a CD-Rom in which the book is offered in digital format allowing searches which go beyond the limitations of the Subject Index.

As the four editors of the first three volumes have retired or died in the past decade, a new team has been formed. According to the jointly-written introduction, its composition takes into account the growing coalescence of Protestant churches in Europe and the increased engagement of free churches in ecumenical dialogue. The editors have chosen to organize the documents in four sections which differ slightly from the preceding volume.

The first section contains twenty-three reports from international bilateral dialogues between a wide variety of churches and Christian world communions. Contrary to the previous volumes, dialogues with the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) are integrated in the same list as other dialogues. With participation in eleven dialogues, the RCC continues to be the most active dialogue partner in international bilateral dialogues, followed by the Anglican Communion (5), the Orthodox Church (4) and the Lutheran World Federation (4). Quite a number of reports come from new initiatives, such as the Old Catholic-Roman Catholic dialogue, the Anglican-Baptist dialogue, and dialogues of Mennonites with Lutherans and with Roman Catholics. The dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Organization of African Instituted Churches, which took place from 1998 to 2002, is definitely also worth a mention as the resulting report is the first of a dialogue with AIC’s. It deals specifically with
Christianity in the African context and focuses thematically on ‘unity,’ ‘gospel and culture’ and ‘women’ (R-UAK/1 §11).

The other three sections of DwÜ together only take up a quarter of the volume. The second section offers us a collection of eleven joint declarations from the level of ecclesial authority. It is not surprising that in all statements well-structured churches and communions such as the Anglican Communion, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Orthodox Church are involved. The third section is entitled ‘Key Documents from the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) but contains only one document, the eighth report of the Joint Working Group of the RCC and the WCC evaluating their cooperation between 1999 and 2005. The final section aims to collect declarations of church communion. While the third volume contained eight such declarations, it is sad to note that in the last ten years only one major document on church communion was signed. The Amman Declaration (2006) affirms full mutual recognition of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Middle East and North Africa and thus stands in the tradition of the Leuenberg Agreement (1973) and the US Formula of Agreement (1997).

A collection of documents is always very vulnerable to criticism as one can always ask why a specific document has not been incorporated. I will not go down that road, but have a suggestion to offer to the editors arising out of the new structure of the DwÜ. In this volume, rather than bringing together different kinds of documents under the headings of specific ecumenical relations, dialogue reports (section A) are listed separately from official communications (section B). It is clear that DwÜ opts not to include in section A local dialogue reports or reports with an unclear or explicitly non-official character, such as the report of the dialogue between Classical Pentecostals and Oneness Pentecostals (2007). This policy can be well argued. But regarding section B, it could perhaps include not only communications from ecclesial authorities but also from important ecumenical gatherings or initiatives. Indeed, public messages from a WCC General Assembly, a Global Christian Forum conference, or Edinburgh 2010, evidence the same spirit and desire for growing communion as a communication following a meeting of the Pope with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Adding key documents like the Charta Oecumenica would allow even more insight into growing consultations and cooperations between ecclesial families. The gain of
witnessing to these manifold signs of hope from such thriving and diverse encounters would be definitely worth an enlargement of this admittedly already vast yet very valuable corpus.

Jelle Creemers, Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven


In the heady days from the 1960s to the 1980s when liturgical reform was a major concern of all the churches, it seemed to be clear that the various rites of the churches in the West were coming together, or at least moving in the same way. There were debates in the Church of England over the Alternative Service Book, legitimising variations, and there were similar debates in the Roman Catholic Church as the monolithic Roman Canon was moved from its solitary grandeur. Liturgists met, conferred, and exchanged insights, and the whole Christian community benefitted from the research.

Since then all seems to be quieter. We have Common Worship, the third edition of the Roman Missal, and various texts from the other churches. It is interesting that the recent debates over the new edition of the Roman Missal were all about translation, not about the content itself. Has the steam gone out of the Liturgical Movement?

The book under review, subtitled ‘Their Evolution and Interpretation’ hints at movement under the surface; but that is at the very end. The book presents a historical survey of liturgical texts concerning the Eucharist from the earliest time to the present day. It is supremely ecumenical: the authors are Anglican (Bradshaw) and Lutheran (Johnson) both of whom lecture at Notre Dame University (a Catholic institution) and it is published by the Benedictines, who hold the copyright of the work. The sources which the authors use are drawn from various traditions. Each chapter is concluded with a series of points as a summary of what has been discussed, and the footnotes and references are extensive, although mainly, but not exclusively, to English-language works. There are also lengthy pieces of liturgical text. However, the book is not just a text book for study (as is hoped by the authors, following their previous book, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. xiv) but also a guide to how the churches have reached where they are now in their liturgical growth.
The first chapters on the origins of the Eucharist (chap. 1) and the second and third centuries (chap. 2) remind the reader how fluid Christian worship was in the early church, and how influenced it was by normal meal customs. Bread and water eucharists are also mentioned briefly (p. 14). The slow development of Eucharistic Prayers in their various forms is charted, with the Apostolic Tradition being contrasted with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari (pp. 39–41). The eirenic tone of the work is visible when the various texts concerning the Eucharistic presence and the Eucharist as a sacrifice are discussed (pp. 44–58).

The fourth and fifth centuries have two chapters, devoted first to the history, and then to the theology, as Christianity became the religion of the state, and the clergy became ‘more professionalized’ and the people left worship to them (p. 66). The authors use sources both from the East and the West to illustrate their thesis that these two centuries were crucial in putting together the basic structure and texts which are still evident today. The sections on the Sanctus, the Epiclesis and the use of the Institution Narrative in chapter 4 provide a glimpse of current liturgical debate. I found it fascinating that they suggest that the introduction of the institution narrative into the anaphora could have been for catechetical and didactic motives, not theological (p. 128). The authors advise against looking for theological precision which does not exist, especially not to look for answers to Reformation questions (p. 131).

The chapter on The Christian East (chap. 5) is a brief survey of the seven liturgical traditions of the East: the Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopic, East Syrian, West Syrian, and Maronite rites. The authors guide the reader through the various rites, and present a selection of texts. They note with astonishment that the 2001 document, Guidelines for the Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, which permits Chaldean Catholics to receive Communion at the liturgies of the Assyrian Church of the East, in which the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is used, does not have an institution narrative. This, they say, is an official Catholic recognition that it is the entire eucharistic prayer which consecrates, not the institution narrative or the epiclesis (pp. 170–1). They also note that neither technical terms like transubstantiation nor practices like reservation are necessary to demonstrate a belief in the theology of the real presence (p. 185).
Moving to the Medieval West (chap. 6) the authors remind us that uniformity was not imposed by the Pope, but fostered by Charlemagne, and helped by returning pilgrims from Rome, who wanted to imitate its practices. They quote James White (A Brief History of Christian Worship, pp. 78–9): ‘for the most part Rome took a hands off approach’ (p. 195). They indicate the various stages of the development of the Roman Eucharistic Liturgy, and how it changed over the years, including the growth of ‘private’ Masses (p. 218).

It is only after two-thirds of the book has been read that one reaches the section (chap. 7) on the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. All that has gone before is the common history. This should not be under-estimated. The authors note that there was also a Catholic liturgical Reformation. They also note that there is a radical change: the move from belief following on from worship to belief shaping worship; it is the belief which is the prime mover (p. 237). The reforms of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and Cranmer (and subsequently, Elizabeth) are carefully described, reflecting the theology of each. In dealing with the reforms of the Council of Trent the authors note that St Pius V conceded that rites in use for over 200 years should not be superseded by the 1570 Roman Missal. However, the Constitution Quo Primum, promulgating the Missal, stated that ‘it is desirable that in the church of God there be ... one single rite for celebrating Mass’ (p. 287). This seems to deny the riches of the Church of the East, although the authors are too polite to mention this point. The establishing of the Congregation of Sacred Rites in 1588 to establish uniformity is also mentioned (p. 288). This may be contrasted to the ‘hands off approach’ of earlier centuries! They also note the development of the cult of the Real Presence, which influenced church architecture—the tabernacle had to be on the high altar (p. 289).

It is significant that we then move to the final chapter (8), 'The Modern Period'. The first date mentioned is 1947, the formation of the Church of South India, and the need for a new liturgy, and the Decree on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council is also quoted. (pp. 293–6). The Catholic Church is credited with implementing the most ecumenically influential reform of the Eucharist (p. 300). The Catholic Lectionary is also held up as the greatest ecumenical-liturgical gift of the twentieth century (p. 311). The recent problems of translation, and the Instruction Liturgiam Authenticam, are also mentioned (p. 309). There is a brief description of the Liturgical
Movement, which is joined to Ecumenism; and the World Council of Churches 1983 document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* is cited (pp. 297–8). There is an interesting comparative table showing the modern Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Methodist liturgies (pp. 334–5). The book concludes with a survey of contemporary liturgical theology.

The book is significant on two levels. First of all it indicates that liturgists work ecumenically, sharing insights. Secondly, it is a reminder that for the most part of its history the Eucharistic liturgy of the Christian Church in the West has never been frozen in an unchangeable form. Given that we often attend the Eucharist in churches which are not our own, this book will also help us understand more deeply what we are experiencing, and why we are experiencing it. The reader is left with a deeper understanding of worship, open to the various nuances of his or her tradition, and also open to the various insights of others.

To answer the questions posed at the beginning of this review: the liturgical movement is in good state, working ecumenically, as it generally has. It is sad that, for Roman Catholics, the liturgical debates seem to be glued to translation and the use of the 1570 Missal (slightly altered to 1962), rather than the development of the liturgy, the hidden riches of which are exposed in this book.

James M. Cassidy


One of our greatest social and spiritual challenges is how to build a common life in the midst of ongoing and seemingly irresoluble disagreement. The differences between our various faiths and world views have generated two deeply flawed philosophical responses. On the one hand, relativism denies that there is any objective reality about which we disagree. It ‘solves’ the problem of ongoing disagreement by playing down the seriousness of our differences, and denying the possibility of an objective truth which would challenge any of our current worldviews. On the other hand, positivism implies there is some neutral process of ‘rationality’ which will lead us to the truth—if only we are willing to discard our prejudices and submit to it. The endless disagreements among supposedly ‘rational’ secular philosophers make this claim less and less plausible.
Christianity has had its share of ongoing and seemingly irresolvable disagreements. Therefore, the question of how to build a common life in the midst of difference should be of great interest to those involved in ecumenical dialogue. In *Sustaining the hope for unity: ecumenical dialogue in a postmodern world*, Erin Brigham explores what those working for Christian unity can learn from the philosophical debate on these issues. Brigham’s starting-point is the philosophy of Jürgen Habermas. This is a promising philosophical choice, for Habermas’ theory of ‘communicative rationality’ has attempted to steer a course between relativism and positivism. Unlike the relativist, he argues for the existence of an objective truth, which lies beyond our current opinions and prejudices. However, unlike the positivist, he believes there is no simple, deductive process which will get us to the truth. Rather, different worldviews need to enter into a patient, respectful dialogue, which will only converge on truth if there is genuine equality of power between the parties to the conversation.

For Habermas, conversation between human beings is only possible if we have some common commitment to truth and to sincerity. When I speak to you, I only give you reason to engage with what I say if there is some likelihood that I am being truthful, about myself and the world around me. The primary role of conversation is to yield mutual understanding. Of course, we also deploy words strategically—to get things done—and sometimes this leads us to mislead and to manipulate, treating those around us as means and not as ends in themselves. But conversation is only possible because our primary use of words is to communicate with honesty. (In other words, manipulation and lying are parasitic on some foundation of essentially honest communication.)

Brigham’s book offers a helpful exposition of Habermas’ approach. It is sympathetic without being uncritical. She applies his approach (with a number of modifications) to the practicalities of ecumenical dialogue. In particular, Brigham is astute and perceptive in observing how apparently 'neutral' ways of proceeding in dialogue can mask biases and imbalances in power.

*Sustaining the hope for unity* focuses on the work of the World Council of Churches. Brigham points out just how difficult it is for any such institution to foster a genuinely open, non-question-begging dialogue. As she observes, if ecumenical dialogue is to be genuinely open to as many denominations as possible, it will have to resist being
too specific about either the nature of the goal of unity or the ecclesial status of the instruments by which it is pursued. She presents a convincing case for the claim that, if the WCC becomes more specific on these matters, it will cease to become a forum for open, equal interaction between different churches—and will instead embody a specific ecclesial position, excluding those Christians with different understandings. Brigham also makes a strong case for the prioritising of consensus-seeking over a more ‘Parliamentary’ model of proceedings. This surely flows from what the WCC is trying to be and do. The aim is to foster genuine unity, rather than enable 51 per cent (or even 67 per cent) of the participants to outvote the minority.

One of the ways in which Brigham makes the case for ‘communicative rationality’ is by describing what happens when ecumenical dialogue is not transparent, and when it is distorted by imbalances of power. At the heart of her argument are two historical studies of ecumenical failure. The first is Emperor Zeno’s *Henoticon*, a fifth-century text which masked ongoing and substantive Christological disagreement under ambiguous and evasive language. The second is the fifteenth-century Council of Florence, which unsuccessfully sought a reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christendom. Brigham described how an unequal balance of power was used to impose uniformity without genuine listening and consensus building. Though the processes which led to the writing of the *Henoticon* and to the pronouncements of the Council of Florence were rather different, Brigham suggests that their failure to build genuine unity has the same root cause—namely, unwillingness to engage in the kind of patient, domination-free dialogue which *Sustaining the hope for unity* is advocating.

As I have indicated, Brigham is not an uncritical disciple of Habermas. Drawing on feminist and postcolonial authors, she argues that Habermas needs to make more room for the sharing of stories and experience—in other words, that his account of ‘communicative rationality’ is too dominated by western and masculine attitudes. If the voices that are currently marginalised are to have a genuinely equal weight, there needs to be a less restrictive understanding of the ways in which truth is explored and shared in different cultural contexts. Brigham connects Habermas’ excessive rationalism with his limited appreciation of the role of religion and the imagination in humans’ acquisition of knowledge.
Brigham writes at some length about the importance of narrative, and of appreciating the embodied nature of all reasoning. Verbal dialogue is not the only means to grow in understanding. A deeper, more intuitive understanding is often created through some kind of common life rather than a common conversation. A shared vision emerges from shared discipleship—praying together, reaching out together in mission—as much, if not more, than through processes of ecumenical dialogue.

It has been interesting to read Brigham alongside Michael Barnes' excellent new book *Interreligious Learning: Dialogue, Spirituality and the Christian imagination* (CUP, 2011). This work demonstrates what a more embodied, narrative-based form of reasoning might actually involve. Barnes offers the reader a series of concrete examples of contemporary dialogue, which are rooted in particular spaces and time, and are expressed in rituals, actions and buildings as well as in words. Relationships within the Body of Christ surely offer even richer possibilities for this sharing of lives as well as words.

This kind of embodied encounter is necessarily local rather than global. Within the Body of Christ, the sharing of discipleship is increasingly possible. It is out of the building of a more substantial common life ‘on the ground’ that energy for a more fertile theological engagement is likely to emerge, precisely because the best theology emerges when prayer and loving practice are at least as central as intellectual reflection.

None of this is to decry the importance of ecumenical dialogue bodies such as the World Council of Churches. Indeed, these processes of dialogue—the relationships built and the affirmations made—have helped to create the space for more fruitful local encounters. If our account of rationality is too cerebral, we will see ‘Faith and Order’ and ‘Life and Work’ as competing approaches to ecumenism—one focusing on the building of agreement, the other on how to live amidst disagreement. If we follow Brigham’s promptings and attend to the embodied nature of reasoning, we will see common action, and common prayer, as vital to the development of a shared theological understanding.

Angus Ritchie, Contextual Theology Centre, East London
BOOKS RECEIVED


From Pentecost to the Triune God: a Pentecostal Trinitarian Theology, Steven M. Studebaker (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2012).


