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EDITORIAL

We are most grateful for the quality of the contributions we have received for this issue which is focussed on unity and dialogue. A dialogue does not necessarily produce instant and visible results but more often resembles the seed in Mark's gospel: 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full-grain in the ear' (Mark 4: 26-29. Jerusalem Bible).

Thus, dialogue between Russian Orthodox and Catholic thinkers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was only later seen to have had a real influence on Catholic ecclesiology, an influence particularly evident in the *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. The ecclesiology of communion and the greater appreciation of the divine and human elements of the Church have their roots in this dialogue. Similarly, the notion of a Church in need of continual reform which emerges from Vatican II is not unrelated to the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century which, despite the missed opportunity for dialogue at the time, may appear today as an ecumenical event.

To enter into dialogue, as we see in many of the articles in this edition, is very demanding. It involves a willingness to learn from others and from our failures, coupled with an acceptance of our diversity and a recognition of the need to reflect on the language we use. This is important as the language Catholics have inherited to express their theology is sometimes confusing to others. This can be a source of frustration in the ecumenical dialogue.

The important questions which remain concern the nature of Christian unity itself and its visible signs.

THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF DIVINE HUMANITY AND CHURCH UNITY: SOLOV'EV, BERDYAEV AND BULGAKOV

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This article considers Church unity through the prism of bogochelovechestvo, the Russian term for divine humanity, particularly in the work of Vladimir Solov'ev (1853-1900), Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) and Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944). It studies the different ways these thinkers engaged with ecclesiology and ecumenism and how the divine and human dimensions of the Church provided them with the framework for this. The article concludes by considering the importance of bogochelovechestvo both in terms of Catholic ecclesiology (esp. Lumen Gentium 8), and more broadly in terms of its orientation to deification and its implications for the contemporary mission of the Church.

In a recent synodal document from the Russian Orthodox Church on the social conception of the Church, we read the following in the opening section on 'Basic theological positions':

The Church is a divine-human organism. Being the body of Christ, she unites in herself two natures – divine and human – with their characteristic activity and freedom. The Church is linked to the world by its human, creaturely nature. However, it interacts with it not as a particularly human organism but in all its mysterious fullness. Precisely the divine-human nature of the Church makes possible the graced transfiguration and purification of the world, being perfected in history

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in the creative cooperation, ‘synergy’, of the members and Head of the ecclesial body. [...] The Church, being the body of the God-man Christ, is divine-human. But if Christ is the perfect God-man, then the Church still is not perfect divine humanity, for on earth she battles with sin, and her humanity, although interiorly also united with the Divinity, is far from expressing Him in everything and corresponding to Him.¹

The language used here to describe the Church is largely unfamiliar to Catholic ecclesiology. Yet in *Lumen Gentium*, while one does not find the term ‘divine-human’, there is a recognition of the same theme presented in paragraph 8, which concludes Chapter 1 of the document, ‘The Mystery of the Church’:

Christ, the one Mediator, established and continually sustains here on earth His Holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as an entity with visible delineation through which He communicated truth and grace to all. But, the society structured with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor are the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form *one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element*. For this reason, by no weak analogy, it is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body.²

This text, perhaps somewhat neglected, certainly opens a door to engagement with the terminology used in the Russian Orthodox definition. Interestingly, the sources of this Orthodox description of the Church derive from the work of Vladimir Solov’ev, who introduced the concept of *bogochelovechestvo* (divine humanity) into Russian religious thought in his famous *Lectures on Divine Humanity* delivered to a packed St Petersburg audience in 1878 and published in revised form in 1881. He is, ironically, often viewed with suspicion by the Orthodox because of his Catholic sensibilities. Indeed, he is perhaps best known by Catholics as a pioneer of Catholic-Orthodox unity, as the author of the work *Russia and the Universal Church* which, apart from anything else, is an excellent source of proof-texts from the patristic east for the

¹ <https://mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/i/>

² My italics. See http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

primacy of the Petrine ministry. It is however the concept of divine humanity, *bogochelovechestvo*, which lies at the very heart of Solov'ev's thought. Although he died somewhat isolated, in 1900, his influence was immense, and this concept of divine humanity was seminal for many Russian thinkers who followed him. In this article I shall examine the theme as expressed in the work of Solov'ev, Nikolai Berdyaev and Sergius Bulgakov, and specifically with regard to its significance in the work for Church unity.

The key to understanding Solov'ev's *Lectures on Divine Humanity* is the final part of it, *Lectures 11 and 12*, which Solov'ev revised considerably prior to publication in 1881. Here Solov'ev's examination of the nature of the relationship between the human and divine in world history culminates in the Incarnation and in a description of the person of Christ which is central to his theological perspective: '[F]or the harmonization of the two natures in the Divine-human person to be a free spiritual act, human will has to take part in it – a will that is distinct from the divine will and that, through the rejection of any possible contradiction with the divine will, freely submits to the latter and brings human nature into complete inner harmony with Divinity'.³ This Christological position is, as Solov'ev points out, a perfect profession of Orthodoxy, and, in its emphasis on the two wills in Christ is one of many strong echoes of the influence of Maximus the Confessor in his overall theological vision.⁴ After establishing this Christological foundation, Solov'ev immediately outlines his basic ecclesiological position, writing that, '[h]umankind, as reunited with its divine principle through the mediation of Jesus Christ, is the Church' which, as an organic body, is 'growing and developing little by little' such that at the end of time the Church 'will encompass all humankind and all

³ Vladimir Solovyov, *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, trans. by Peter Zouboff, rev. and ed. by Boris Jakim (Hudson, New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1995), 159.

⁴ Solov'ev writes in a footnote here: "This definition follows from our conception of the "spiritual man", or the second Adam. It is identical with the dogmatic definitions of the ecumenical councils of the fifth to the seventh centuries, which were developed against the Nestorian, Monophysite, and Monothelite heresies, each of which represented a direct contradiction of one of the three essential logical conditions of the true idea of Christ'. For a full exposition of the influence of St Maximus on Solov'ev, see J. Pilch, *Breathing the Spirit with Both Lungs: Deification in the Work of Vladimir Solov'ev* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018), esp. 75-111.

nature in one universal divine-human organism'.⁵ What the Incarnation establishes, for Solov'ev, is a new ontological order of being, divine humanity or humanity called to deification which he equates directly with the Church.

In *The Spiritual Foundations of Life* (1882-84) Solov'ev emphasizes the ecclesial dimension of the Church much more fully than in *Lectures*, offering, in particular, an important account of the sacraments. Through the Church, especially through the sacraments, we receive the divine life and necessarily become mediators of that grace to other human beings and also to all of creation. It is primarily this 'graced' humanity, having received new birth in the Church, which Solov'ev understands as divine humanity. Since it is made up of people, the visible Church on earth is for him a 'divine-human organism' – the concept at the very heart of his ecclesiology. In formulating this definition Solov'ev is of course again drawing out the ecclesial implications of the Christological formulas of the Ecumenical Councils. 'The Church', he writes, 'founded by the God-man Christ, also has a divine-human composition. But the difference is that Christ is *the perfect* God-man, and the Church is still not perfect divine humanity but only in the process of becoming perfect'.⁶ This distinction between perfect and imperfect humanity is crucial and one which Bulgakov will later re-work in Sophiological terms. Solov'ev, though he is justly seen as the founder of Russian sophiology, does not in fact attempt to formulate a formal sophiological position after writing *Lectures* and develops his ecclesiology in traditional Christological terms.

It is necessary, Solov'ev argues, to recognize correctly what the divine and human elements are in the Church. Then one can

by every means to strive for the elimination (in oneself and others) of this discrepancy so that all that is human in the Church, as far as possible, becomes conformed to the Divine – so that the Divine name is all the more hallowed in people, so that God's kingdom spreads more and more widely and so that the will of God is perfected on earth as it is in heaven.⁷

⁵ Solovyov, *Lectures*, 164.

⁶ Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, t. III maech (Brussels: Zhizn' s Bogom, 1966-70), 385-86.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 387.

Effectively, the full manifestation of the will of God, the Kingdom of God, will happen, according to Solov'ev, when all that is human in the Church has become like the divine, when the Church becomes perfect divine humanity. The whole thrust of Solov'ev's thought here centres on the Visible Church becoming the Invisible Church by virtue of the divine essence incarnate in it, in its way of apostolic succession, creedal and conciliar faith, and sacramental life. As Stanislaus Tyszkiewicz has stated, 'it is Vladimir Solov'ev who is the first among Russian Orthodox thinkers to examine explicitly and *ex professo* the question of the divine humanity of Christianity'.⁸

While Solov'ev was writing *Spiritual Foundations* in 1882-84, a shift occurred in his ecclesial sensibilities. He turned away from the Slavophile position he had espoused at the end of *Lectures* and came to recognize the Pope as the centre of unity. After a series of articles on the east-west schism published in 1883 with increasing reluctance by Ivan Aksakov, the editor of 'Rus', Solov'ev addressed the task of the union of the Churches more directly in a project to which he devoted most of his efforts and written work of the 1880s.⁹ The works *A History and Future of Theocracy* (1885) which he was forced to publish abroad in Zagreb and *La Russie et L'Église Universelle* (Paris, 1889) are the main literary fruits of this endeavour. The core of Solov'ev's actual practical vision for reunion are not expressed explicitly here, but can be found in a lengthy two-part essay 'The Jews and the Christian Question', first published in *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie* [*The Orthodox Review*], nos. 8 & 9 (1884). In this he concludes that Russia and Poland, in particular, have the duty to 'reinstate Christian unity freely and consciously' for in them 'the Christian East and West stand face-to-face with all the untruth of their enmity, with all the necessity of their reconciliation', a perspective no less true today than it was then.¹⁰ This work contains a mixture of an extremely inspiring vision of a united and transfigured humanity, 'enchurched' in the expression of the twentieth-century Russian émigré

⁸ S. Tyszkiewicz, *La Sainteté de l'Église Christoconforme* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1945), 14.

⁹ *The Great Controversy and Christian Politics* was not published in Solov'ev's lifetime; there is as yet no English translation. See Vladimir Solov'ev, *Tri razgovora; Velikii spor i khristianskaia politika* (Moscow: AST, 2007).

¹⁰ Vladimir Wozniuk, ed. and trans., *Freedom, Faith, and Dogma: Essays by V. S. Soloviev on Christianity and Judaism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008), 87.

theologians, while also belonging manifestly to the nineteenth-century in terms of Solov'ev practical suggestions.

Often, it is thought that following the disappointment of not seeing his theocratic project for Church unity meet with success, Solov'ev no longer concerned himself with ecclesial matters, only returning to them in his final apocalyptic fictional work on the antichrist. This, of course, is to overlook Solov'ev's reception of communion and recitation of the Tridentine creed at a Mass celebrated by Fr Nikolai Tolstoi in February 1896 and also his ongoing communication with Princess Elizabeth Volkonsky regarding church union. In fact, Solov'ev's thought was still very much conditioned by divine humanity, which is evident in his *magnum opus*, *The Justification of the Good*. In the short middle part of this work, entitled 'The Good is from God', Solov'ev re-expresses the basic position of *Lectures*: 'The purpose of the world-process is the revelation of the Kingdom of God or of the perfect moral order realised by a new humanity which spiritually grows out of the God-man'.¹¹

While this work doesn't appear to focus on Christian unity it actually offers a valuable new approach because it explicitly disengages from trying to formally solve the problem of disunity. Solov'ev's pointed footnote is not insignificant in this context: 'The least attention on the part of the reader will convince him that I have not given any ground for serious critics to reproach me with the absurd identification of the Kingdom of God with historical Christianity or the visible Church (which one?). I reject such identification both implicitly and explicitly; nor do I recognize every scoundrel who has been baptized as a "spiritual" man or "a son of God"'.¹² In focusing on morality and the moral task of humanity Solov'ev offers an approach to Church unity which will result from holiness rather than structure and organization. For Solov'ev does not separate the moral life of humanity from the Church; indeed the Church is 'the fundamental form of the moral organisation of humanity'.¹³ As David Bentley Hart stresses in a

¹¹ Vladimir Solovyov, *The Justification of the Good. An Essay on Moral Philosophy*, trans. by Nathalie A. Duddington (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005), 168.

¹² *Ibid.*, 169. The identification of the Kingdom of God with historical Christianity is a feature of St Augustine's thought criticised by Evgenii Trubetskoï in his 1892 work on St Augustine and Latin theocracy of the fifth-century.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 373.

foreword to a new English edition of the book, '[j]ust as Solov'ov's investigations of the human constants at the ground of moral consciousness necessarily culminate in Christology, so his considerations of the practical particulars of ethical existence necessarily culminate in ecclesiology'.¹⁴ Solov'ev emphasises that ethics ultimately leads to divine humanity, the new ontological order effected by the Incarnation. In this way he offers a permanent avenue for ecumenical endeavour, at once obvious, yet always easily forgotten: the work of personal and social holiness – social deification one might call it – always builds up the body of Christ. As such, it moves the visible Church one step closer to the invisible and eternal heavenly Church it is called to become.

In the final part of the book, 'The Moral Organisation of Humanity as a Whole', Solov'ev returns to the theme of *Lectures* with regard to the Church as being in the process of becoming perfect divine humanity: 'There is no division but there is difference between the invisible and the visible Church, since the first is the hidden moving power of the second, and the second the growing realisation of the first. The two are one in essence but different in condition'.¹⁵ Solov'ev emphasises the divine essence of the visible Church through which actual unity may be obtained:

Perfect unity and holiness are in God; sin and division are in worldly humanity; union and consecration are in the Church which harmonises and reconciles the divided and sinful world with God. But in order to unite and consecrate, the Church must itself be *one* and *holy*, [that is, it must have its foundation in God, independently of the divided and sinful men who are *in need of* union and consecration, and therefore cannot obtain it of themselves.] *The Church, then, is in its essence the unity and holiness of the Godhead*, not, however, of the Godhead as such, but *as abiding and acting in the world*. It is *the Godhead in its other*, the true substance of divine humanity.¹⁶

While the twofold nature of Church as divine humanity is re-expressed here, Solov'ev now approaches the question of Church-state relations differently. Instead of advocating a direct alliance between Church and state and a formal 'kingly' role for temporal power in establishing or enforcing Church unity, Solov'ev now suggests the state freely accepts

¹⁴ *The Justification*, xlix.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 372-373.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 372.

its role in facilitating the sanctifying work of the Church: 'From the Christian point of view the state is only a part of the organisation of the collective man – a part conditioned by another higher part, the Church, which consecrates the state in its work of serving indirectly in its own worldly sphere and by its own means the unconditional purpose which the Church directly puts before it – to prepare humanity and the whole earth for the Kingdom of God'.¹⁷ Following this, and concluding the whole work, Solov'ev reflects further on the relationship between Church and state, arguing, still in Chalcedonian terms, for a separation between them so that the state may freely serve the Church. This is clearly a very different understanding of Church and state relations approved of by secular liberals in the west. Ultimately it is a re-expression of his 'free theocracy' project first expounded in *Lectures* and much developed in the 1880s.

The theme of divine humanity was further explored by subsequent Russian thinkers in the twentieth century after Solov'ev's death. Of Solov'ev's disciples, Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) stands out as the preeminent representative of Russian philosophical and theological thought in the west; his work was immensely popular across the world during his lifetime and in the years preceding Vatican II. Today he is much less read in the west and, where there is interest in the 'Russian school', other figures such as Bulgakov and Florensky probably hold a greater contemporary appeal. Nonetheless Berdyaev, together with Solov'ev and Ivan Ilyn, was suggested as recommended reading for Russian politicians a few years ago.¹⁸ The preeminent contemporary translator of Russian religious thought, Boris Jakim, considers that Berdyaev 'saw that the meaning of his own activity was to reveal to the western world the distinctive elements of Russian philosophy, such as its existential nature, its eschatologism, its religious anarchism, and its obsession with the idea of "Divine humanity"'.¹⁹ Indeed, having relinquished Marxism for Christianity in his early thirties, Berdyaev immediately expresses his faith within the paradigm of divine

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 391-392.

¹⁸ Subsequent reports appearing in western news outlets draw upon this article of 20 January 2014: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2383840> [accessed 29 May 2018].

¹⁹ Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Divine and the Human*, trans. by R. M. French (1949; 2nd edn., San Rafael, CA: Semantron, 2009), 208.

humanity. At the end of the preface to his 1907 work, *The New Religious Consciousness and Society*, he writes that:

[i]n both the old church which has preserved holiness, and in worldly culture and society, invisibly accumulating a new holiness, there must come a conversion of cosmic character, a transition to the Divine-human way... This conversion will noot be a renewal of the old, not a Lutheran Reformation, but something immeasurably greater: the changeover from a natural-human ... to a divine-human order. The essence of evil is the deification of the natural, human element, apart from God: the essence of good is making human nature divine, in union with God'.²⁰

Although Berdyaev's work was primarily philosophical, he nonetheless made an extraordinary contribution to the work for Christian unity. His friend Philippe Sabant considered that 'Berdyaev has done more than anyone else in our day, to give back to Christians the true dimensions of the Church' while F. H. Heinemann called him 'a link between East and West, between Christians of different denominations, between Christians and non-Christians, ... between philosophy and theology, between the visible and the invisible'.²¹ At the same time, he disengaged from explicitly ecclesiastical conversation, his friend and biographer Donald Lowrie noted that '[i]t was typical of Berdyaev that he never discussed religious-philosophic ideas, even those concerning the role of the church, with churchmen. It was not in his character to talk theology with theologians, and although Bulgakov shared Berdyaev's sense of the central importance of the God-manhood idea, the two men apparently never consulted each other on the question'.²² Yet few figures in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s were able to generate ecumenical encounters as he did and he was regularly requested as a lecturer and public speaker. When Berdyaev settled in Clamart in the outskirts of Paris, thanks to a generous gift from an Anglican benefactor, he established religious informal gatherings in which many Catholic thinkers were present.²³

²⁰ Cited in Donald A. Lowrie, *Rebellious Prophet: A biography of Nicolas Berdyaev* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1960), 129.

²¹ Nicolai Berdyaev, *Christian Existentialism: A Berdyaev Synthesis Selected and Translated by Donald A. Lowrie* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 24.

²² Lowrie, 249.

²³ This fruitful engagement with Catholicism was in evidence in *Put'* ('The Way'), the journal Berdyaev edited in Paris. See Antoine Arjakovksy, *The Way. Religious Thinkers of the Russian Emigration in Paris and their Journal, 1925-40*,

Furthermore, Berdyaev's own marriage was an ecumenical event, his wife Lydia living much of their married life as a Third Order Dominican. Her conversion was facilitated by discussion groups Berdyaev had hosted in Russia through which she met Fr Abrikosov, whose intense spirituality and asceticism impressed both husband and wife.²⁴

Berdyaev writes explicitly of the divine-human theme in one of his final works, actually published posthumously, which, written in war-time and dedicated to Lydia, he considered one of the most demanding he had ever written. Here he emphasizes that, '[t]he theme of God-humanity is the fundamental theme of Christianity' and notes that '[t]he very dogma of the divine humanity of Jesus Christ expressed the mystery of God-manhood, of the union of the two natures without confusion or identity'. He refers to his first book *The Meaning of Creativity*, in which he 'said that to correspond with the Christological dogma there should be a new anthropology, a Christology of man', adding the challenging observation that '[t]here is still no real Christian anthropology. Among patristic writers St Gregory of Nyssa came nearest to it. He was the greatest philosopher among the doctors of the Church and he endeavoured to raise the dignity of man'.²⁵

Part of Berdyaev's legacy and contemporary value is his own contribution to Christian anthropology. He highlights the immense importance of human freedom and also the essential truth that true humanism can only be a Christian humanism, thus addressing two of the greatest absurdities and commonplaces of the contemporary west, namely the ideas that to be a Christian means to limit one's freedom and that to be a humanist necessarily entails a rejection of faith. Thus, Berdyaev writes that '[t]here is a true and a false criticism of humanism (humanitarianism). Its fundamental falsity lies in the idea of the self-sufficiency of man, of the self-deification of man, that is to say in the denial of God-manhood'; rather, '[t]he highest humanity is embedded in Christianity for it relies upon God-manhood and Christian

(Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), esp. 138-188 and 337-347.

²⁴ For a history of this extraordinary Catholic community see Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, OP, *To Courageously Know and Follow After Truth* (Summit, New Jersey: DNS Publications, 2013).

²⁵ Nicolas Berdyaev, *The Divine and the Human*, trans. by R. M. French (1949; 2nd edn., San Rafael, CA: Semantron, 2009), 22-23.

personalism, upon the recognition of all human personality as the highest value'.²⁶

For Berdyaev, then, the implications of divine humanity are not so much ecclesial as personal and ethical. The Incarnation ushers in a new anthropology, and with this must come a new ethics. 'In the language of traditional terminology', Berdyaev writes, 'God-manhood corresponds to the union of grace and freedom. From this there also arises a new ethic, one which stands in opposition to the old racial ethic [...] The ethics of the human, the ethics of personalism, must be constructed upon an attitude which regards man, personality, as the highest value, it must be founded upon the unrepeatably individual and not on the impersonal common'.²⁷ Berdyaev could hardly have written his book at a more challenging moment in history, and the urgency of this endeavour was not lost on him. Yet with war and terrorism in many ways omnipresent in the world today, abortion claiming more unborn lives than ever, the givenness of humanity's created nature being constantly challenged by gender ideology, and enslavement to technology causing increasingly levels of ill health, his words resonate powerfully today: 'The hour is at hand when it becomes more and more clear that it is only in and through Christianity that the image of man can be preserved, for the elements of the world are destroying it'.²⁸

In his work *Freedom and the Spirit*, Berdyaev has an important chapter on 'Mysticism and the Way of the Spirit' in which his basic positions regarding Catholicism and Orthodoxy are expressed. Berdyaev reveals an extraordinary breadth of knowledge and offers, as ever, lots of stimulating reflections and points to quibble with. Once again, influential Catholic works are acknowledged, such as Poulain's *The Graces of Interior Prayer* and Auguste Soudreau's *The Mystical State* and 'the very interesting work by the Thomist Garrigou-Lagrangé, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation according to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*'.²⁹ In his support of Meister Eckhart Berdyaev draws on contemporary Catholic scholarship: 'The Dominican Denifle has shown that Eckhart was an orthodox Catholic to a much greater extent

²⁶ Ibid., 115-116.

²⁷ Ibid., 127. Berdyaev notes that he attempted to construct such an ethic in his book *The Destiny of Man*.

²⁸ Nicolas Berdyaev, *Freedom and the Spirit*, trans. by Oliver Fielding Clarke (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1935), 238.

²⁹ Ibid., 251 and 243.

than had hitherto been suspected and that in his recently discovered theological treatises he was completely Thomist'.³⁰ The key to Berdyaev's view on mysticism is not that east is better than west but rather that '[m]ysticism is the way of deification both for man and the world. On this point the mystics of all ages and creeds are at one'.³¹ Indeed, Berdyaev notes that '[m]ysticism also by its very nature overrides the barriers which divide Christians [...] however unpleasant it may appear to the fanatical supporters of confessional mysticism'.³²

In addition to this, what else does Berdyaev have to say about the Church and the question of unity? He devotes the final chapter of *Freedom and the Spirit* to the topic 'The Church and the World' and his views on this matter remain pertinent – and they cannot but have been inspirational for the ecumenical movement in the 1940s and 50s when 'everyone' was reading Berdyaev. Berdyaev opens his chapter challengingly: 'Is the Church an ontological reality? The catechisms give us no information on this point. The ontology of the Church is still scarcely revealed. It is a task which belongs to the future.'³³ Berdyaev's immediate answer is that 'the true reality of the Church, its being, is inward and mystical, and is something beyond buildings, clergy, rites, councils, etc.' and it is notable that he references a Catholic theologian here in support: 'Peter Lippert, S. J., has treated this question in an excellent manner in *Das Wesen des Katholischen Menschen*'.³⁴

An ecclesiology of divine humanity is one in which the deifying implications of the Incarnation are foregrounded. Without sliding into pantheism, this means that nothing exists beyond the reach of God's sanctifying grace. Berdyaev explains it thus:

In reality the natural as an independent sphere of being does not exist; for it is only a state of sin and of separation from God. The true being of man and of the world is rooted in God. That is how Orthodoxy regarded the matter and in this it was nearer the truth than Catholicism, which was intensely dynamic but did not imply the transfiguration of nature and its deification. Catholicism does not seem to expect the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 246.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

³² *Ibid.*, 244.

³³ *Ibid.*, 328.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 329.

Christianization of the cosmos and the human race, and this is why it always possesses a more juridical character than Orthodoxy.³⁵

Significantly he adds in a footnote that '[t]here are quite clearly in Catholicism not only mystics but even theologians possessed of a quite different spirit, especially in German Catholic theological circles. In Moehler, Scheeben, and, among contemporary writers, in Guardini, a more organic and mystical conception of the Church may be found'.³⁶

The central point of Berdyaev's position about unity is this: 'In the task of the reunion of the Christian world, the most important factor is the work of deepening the mystical life of Christendom so that the positivism and materialism of the churches may be transcended'.³⁷ Personal conversion, suggests Berdyaev, in a way that recalls Solov'ev's words to Princess Elizabeth Volkonsky, does not help the task of union: 'It is only by remaining in one's confession, and by deepening and broadening it, that one can work towards universalism or supra-confessionalism'.³⁸ The way of Christian unity is primarily an interior one:

[T]he difficult problem of the unity of the Christian world must be approached not from an external point of view, but from within. The churches will never be united by treaties signed by their respective governments or by mutual conventions and concordats. In order to achieve a real union of the churches it may even perhaps be necessary to avoid having union as our objective. [...] Only the Holy Spirit can unite the Churches; reunion can only be the result of grace and cannot be secured by purely human efforts.³⁹

Berdyaev places an important emphasis on a personalist approach to the work of reunion, encouraging 'an attitude animated by love which permits of mutual recognition of other confessions as also living in the same spiritual world'. This 'inner way of *spiritual* union' will in turn help 'to change the mutual relationships between Orthodox, Catholics, and Protestants rather than those of their churches'.⁴⁰ Berdyaev concludes with an explicit statement of a position also expressed by Bulgakov which pre-empt aspects of Vatican II's teaching on salvation:

³⁵ Ibid., 350.

³⁶ Ibid., 350.

³⁷ Ibid., 357.

³⁸ Ibid., 355.

³⁹ Ibid., 355.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 356.

'The limits of the universal Church do not coincide with those of the visible historic churches; the soul of the Church is one, and to it there belong, not only the members of the different churches, but even those who are outside the visible Church altogether. There is a great spiritual brotherhood composed of Christians to which not only the Churches of the East and West belong, but also all those whose wills are directed towards God and the divine, all in fact who aspire to some form of spiritual elevation'.⁴¹

The work of Sergius Bulgakov, in contrast to that of Berdyaev, is both more theological and formally addresses ecclesiology. Indeed, Bulgakov's most mature work, the divine-humanity trilogy, is widely regarded, at least by western theologians, as one of the most significant theological endeavours of the twentieth-century. Introducing the first volume on Christology, *The Lamb of God*, Boris Jakim writes that: 'The present volume is one of the greatest twentieth-century works of Christology and, in my opinion, represents that century's crowning achievement in the theology of Divine Humanity'.⁴² The final volume, published posthumously in 1948, *The Bride of the Lamb*, is a work of both ecclesiology and eschatology, and may be said to be Bulgakov's *magnum opus*.

Prior to this divine-humanity trilogy, Bulgakov had written separate books on both Sophia and the Orthodox Church, as well as participated in a number of ecumenical ventures. Bulgakov undoubtedly owes a significant debt to Solov'ev, and he acknowledges 'Solov'ov as having been my philosophical "guide to Christ" at the time of a change in my own world outlook, when I was moving "From Marxism to Idealism" and, indeed, even further, to the Church'.⁴³ Of all the Russian thinkers he developed Solov'ev's teaching. Bulgakov most explicitly explains divine humanity in sophiological terms. Indeed, for him, '[t]he central point from which sophiology proceeds is that of the relation between *God* and *the world*, or, what is practically the same thing, between *God* and *humanity*. In other words we are faced with the question of the meaning and significance of Divine Humanity – not only in so far as it

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 356-57.

⁴² Sergius Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, trans. by Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), viii.

⁴³ Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia, the Wisdom of God: An Outline of Sophiology*, trans. by Patrick Thompson, O. Fielding Clarke and Xenia Braikevitc (1937; rev. edn., New York: Lindisfarne Press, 1993), 10.

concerns the God-human, the incarnate Logos, but precisely insofar as it applies to the theandric union between God and the whole of the creaturely world, through humanity and in humanity'.⁴⁴

It is interesting, however, that in his work *The Orthodox Church*, Bulgakov places much less emphasis on both Sophia and divine humanity than he does in the trilogy. Only in the opening chapter, entitled 'The Church', is the basic theme expressed: 'The Incarnation is not only an idea or a doctrine; it is above all an event which happened once in time but which possesses all the power of eternity, and this perpetual incarnation, a perfect, indissoluble union, yet without confusion, of the two natures – divine and human – makes the Church'.⁴⁵ Just as Solov'ev shows, this Chalcedonian understanding of the Church embodies the exchange formula of patristic thought and the theology of deification: 'The Church is the work of the Incarnation of Christ, it is the Incarnation itself. God takes unto Himself human nature, and human nature assumes divinity: it is the deification of human nature, result of the union of the two natures in Christ'.⁴⁶ Bulgakov also emphasises that the Church extends across time including not just the living, but also the dead and those yet to be born. Furthermore, he includes within the reach of the Church the angels and all of creation, thus establishing an ecclesiology of cosmic proportions.

Later in this early work, *The Orthodox Church*, Bulgakov considers key aspects of the Orthodox Church, notably the concepts of *sobornost* which is 'the soul of Orthodoxy' in which 'according to the perfect definition of Khomiakov: "in this one word there is contained a whole confession of faith"'.⁴⁷ Bulgakov's approach to Church unity emerges from his understanding of this concept, which plays a larger part in his thought than in that of Solov'ev. For,

[i]n "sobornost" understood as "catholicity" each member of the Church, equally within the assembly of the members, lives in union with the entire Church, with the Church invisible, which is itself an uninterrupted union with the Church visible and forms its foundation. Then the idea of catholicity, in this sense, is turned inward and not outward. And each member of the Church is "Catholic" inasmuch as he

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁵ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Centenary Press, 1935; trans. rev. by Lydia Kesich, SVS Press, 1988), 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

is in union with the Church invisible, in the truth. Both the anchorite and those who live in the midst of the world, the elect who remain faithful to the truth in the midst of irreligion and general heresy, may be “Catholic”. In this sense catholicity is the mystic and metaphysical depth of the Church and not at all its outward diffusion.⁴⁸

Bulgakov places strong emphasis on this interiority as the foundation of ecclesiastical unity: ‘This quality, the unity of the life of the Church as the body of Christ, is manifested by a certain identity of life (unity of ecclesiastical experience) among its members, a oneness not depending on this external unity and even, in a certain sense, preceding it. [...] This internal unity is the foundation of the external unity’.⁴⁹ While acknowledging that this ‘must be connected with the empirical world, with the Church visible’, Bulgakov doesn’t suggest that union with the Pope, surely the representative *par excellence* of the empirical Church, might be appropriate.⁵⁰ Rather the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church is presented as the direct opposite of the essence of Orthodoxy: ‘The unity of the Church can manifest itself in two ways, in unity of life and faith, and in unity of organization, and these two sorts of unity must be in harmonious agreement. Now the idea of internal unity may gain predominance, now that of external unity. Accordingly, there are two types of Church unity, the Eastern Orthodox type and the Roman Catholic’.⁵¹

Bulgakov’s ecclesiology is coloured by this rather Slavophile stereotype of the Catholic Church and he does not engage with western Catholic theology in the way that Berdyaev did, showing little awareness, for example, of the work of Emile Mersch, whose books about the Church as the mystical body of Christ would surely have resonated strongly with him. Nonetheless, Bulgakov’s ecclesiology contains within it an implicit model for contemporary ecumenism, namely the deep conviction that the Church transcends exterior limits and is for all peoples. This universal mission of the Church, his emphasis on the ontological reality of the Church, is summed up with his words: ‘[t]he whole world is coming to be the Church’.⁵² The destiny of mankind, individually and collectively, is intrinsically ecclesial: ‘The

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵² Bulgakov, *Orthodox Church*, 146.

Church, since it is Divine humanity in history and develops through history, is inseparable from the life of humankind in time'.⁵³ For Bulgakov genuine unity, oneness is 'substantial, ontological', and '[i]t corresponds to the unity of divine life, which is one – not by the unity of emptiness, but by the unity of fullness, of the wholeness of all in all'.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Bulgakov stresses that '[o]ne should not diminish the ontological significance of this unity by transforming it into merely a figure, a simile: *like* a body or *similar* to a body. On the contrary, the apostle speaks precisely about *one* body (Eph. 4:4-6), in direct relation with the unity of God'.⁵⁵ What emerges forcefully in Bulgakov, who like Berdyaev and Solov'ev also strongly challenges any limitation of the Church to visible boundaries, is, as Aidan Nichols has observed, 'an extraordinarily high doctrine of the Church'.⁵⁶ Crucial to the ecclesiology of divine humanity is the unity of Christ and his Church, the divine presence of Christ in His Church in history, which challenges the somewhat timid words 'by no weak analogy' with which *Lumen Gentium* describes this relationship.

As noted in the introduction, the concept of the Church as a divine-human organism is largely unfamiliar in Catholic ecclesiology. Perhaps the major contemporary 'handbook' of Catholic ecclesiology is that by the Dominican Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, which appeared in English in 2014.⁵⁷ For all its thoroughness, this comprehensive work does not touch upon this idea (with the possible exception of a page about Mathhias Scheeben) and the whole area of Eastern Catholic ecclesiology does not feature at all, while Paul Evdokimov and Sergius Bulgakov are mentioned in passing with regard to Orthodox ecclesiology. Yet since the Council many of the problems the Church has experienced are a reflection of a severance of ecclesiology from Christology and can be understood best in these terms. Thus when Cardinal Ratzinger, whose primary teaching areas had been in

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁵⁴ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, trans. by Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 258.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁵⁶ Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Wisdom from Above: A Primer in the Theology of Father Sergei Bulgakov* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), 197-211.

⁵⁷ Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, trans. by Michael J. Miller (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014).

ecclesiology and eschatology, was interviewed some twenty years after the close of the Council, he reflected on the over-emphasis or simple misinterpretation of the term 'People of God' as a description of the Church, which had been highlighted in the document *Lumen Gentium*:

'Thus, without a view of the mystery of the Church that is also *supernatural* and not only *sociological*, Christology itself loses its reference to the divine in favour of a purely human structure, and ultimately it amounts to a purely human project: the Gospel becomes the *Jesus-project*, the social-liberation project or other merely historical, immanent projects that can still seem religious in appearance, but which are atheistic in substance'.⁵⁸

Ratzinger's emphasis on the connection between ecclesiology and Christology goes to the core of the origins of the concept of *bogochelovechestvo* which, as all three of the thinkers surveyed in this article make clear, has its origins in patristic Christology. Ratzinger similarly highlights that sound Christology provides the true basis for ecclesiology: 'In reality, there is no truly New Testament, Catholic concept of Church without a direct and vital relation not only with sociology but first of all with Christology. The Church does not exhaust herself in the 'collective' of the believers: being the 'Body of Christ' she is much more than the simple sum of her members'.⁵⁹

A recent 2011 work by a Polish theologian, Andrzej A. Napiorkowski, *The Divine-Human Communion: An Outline of Catholic Integral Ecclesiology*, notably uses the divine-human terminology favoured by the Russians. In the brief section of this work entitled 'The Church: A divine-human reality', he writes that the Church

'is at the same time a mystery of faith and an empirical reality... Both aspects of the Church should be kept apart and not confused with each other. On the other hand, they should not be separated. Despite the Church having been established "from above", it is realised in the world and in history as a place of people's free decisions. These dimensions (spiritual and visible) constitute the complex reality of the Church, which is merged from a divine and human element (*una realitas*

⁵⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. by Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1985), 46.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

complexa, complectens divina et humana, media salutis et fructis salutis).⁶⁰

Evidently, here, Napiorkowski's thought is moving close to the 'school' of divine humanity, but the Christological connections are not developed any further nor is the Russian contribution recognized in this context. The theme is taken further in regard to the sacramental nature of the Church, however: "The point of departure for approaching the Church as a universal sacrament of salvation is its theandric nature (Greek Θεός – God, ανήρ – man). In ecclesiology theandricism is understood as the divine-human structure of the Church'. Deepening this point, he then cites *Lumen Gentium* 8: 'In the conciliar Constitution of the Church we read: "As the assumed nature inseparably united to Him, serves the divine Word as a living organ of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the visible social structure of the Church serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body (cf. Eph. 4, 16)'"'.⁶¹

If there are elements of contemporary Catholic ecclesiology which are beginning to describe the Church in divine-human terms, how much richer these approaches may be if they were to draw upon the foundations laid by the modern Russian ecclesiological reflection. The ecclesiology of divine humanity is, therefore, ripe to be integrated into contemporary Catholic theology. This gift from modern Russian religious thought can deepen the insights of *Lumen Gentium* and heal some of the polarities which have emerged since the council in which a 'Chalcedonian' balance has been lost. Here a pathway lies open which can enable the Catholic Church to overcome some of the internal tensions experienced since the Council, and at the same time to recapture some of the ecclesiological openness to the traditions of the Christian east which was such a prominent part of Catholic scholarship in the decades preceding the Council. Moreover, since the ecclesiology of divine humanity ultimately postulates the divinization of humanity, it integrates within itself a spirituality which is both the fruit of true Christology and answers to the highest possible aspirations of humanity.

⁶⁰ Andrzej A. Napiorkowski, *The Divine-Human Communion: An Outline of Catholic Integral Ecclesiology*, trans. by Jerzy Warakowski (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2015), 210. Napiorkowski cites here from *Lumen Gentium* 8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 229. Again, Napiorkowski cites from LG8. See also 233-35.

LUMEN GENTIUM IN THE LIGHT OF ORTHODOX INVOLVEMENT IN THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

Edward Farrugia*

*Rome's re-appraisal of an ecclesiology of communion was preceded by Constantinople's bold initiatives in ecumenism (1902, 1920), just as N. Afanas'ev's proposal of a Eucharistic ecclesiology had been anticipated by H. de Lubac. Old and new, Catholic and Orthodox, blend in Lumen Gentium, and therein lies its genius (cf. Matt. 13:52). To see whether LG's ecclesiology of communion clinches a deal in ecumenism one has to go beyond Bellarmine's juridical ecclesiology, still felt in *Mystici Corporis*, by looking at Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III's encyclical of 1902, an opening to other Churches reaching its climax in the Ecumenical Patriarchates's encyclical of 1920. If LG raised expectations not yet fully realized, that is because Vatican II's potential is not yet exhausted.*

A text can be viewed in various ways – for instance, through a lens, focusing on a point, or as a prism, from which all rays part in order to reconstruct their own partial vision of the whole. As a compromise between these two possibilities, or an alternative to them, why do we not look at *Lumen Gentium* as a square, in which all interior angles are by definition right angles and all sides equal? This may serve as an image of Catholics meeting Orthodox halfway in Vatican II, thanks not least to the Orthodox Church's involvement in the contemporary ecumenical movement long before the Catholic Church officially did.

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Methodological Bearings

Before we jump straight in, *in medias res*, we have to set the coordinates right. Our general theme is *Lumen Gentium* (LG),¹ which was promulgated on 21 November 1964 and has therefore already passed its fiftieth anniversary. Just as we notice right away the differences between the way children and grown-ups celebrate their birthdays, so too something similar happens with important documents like *Lumen Gentium*. After a certain lapse of time, they come to be seen in a new light. In the case of documents, however, we need suitable instruments to discern correctly these differences, and the right measurements to go by.

It is well-nigh universally acknowledged that Vatican II was a Council on the Church. Even prescindng from its contents, however, it must first of all be seen as following on directly from the never-concluded Vatican I. This latter had managed to give us only four chapters on the Church when it was adjourned, and brought to a premature end on account of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Great developments in ecclesiological thinking between that time and the next Council, Vatican II, led to the twentieth century being called ‘the century of the Church’, for instance by Otto Dibelius,² and even ‘the century of ecumenism’. It was in this growing ecumenical context that Romano Guardini (d. 1986) noted that ‘the Church lives, grows and awakens in souls.’³ No wonder, then, that the overriding theme of Vatican II is generally considered to be the Church, and that the jewel in its crown is almost unanimously agreed to have been *Lumen Gentium*.⁴ A mere twenty-one years after the publication of that other great twentieth Century document on the Church, Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943), yet another great leap forward in ecclesiology

¹ As background to the present article, the author wishes to point out that he has already dealt with Vatican II as a whole, taking as his interpretative key ‘exchange of gifts’ (LG 13). See my article ‘Vatican II: An Exchange of Gifts’, *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of Theology* 64/1 (2014), 59-74.

² O. Dibelius, *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche*, Berlin 1926; this book was already in its sixth edition by 1928. For O. Dibelius see C. Nicolaisen, ‘Dibelius, Otto,’ TRE 8 (1981), 729-731.

³ ‘Die Kirche lebt, wächst und erwacht in den Seelen’.

⁴ A. Dulles, ‘The Church’ in W. M. Abbott (ed.), J. Gallagher (tr. ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (London, 1966), 10 (in his introduction to LG).

had been made, something that would have been unimaginable without Vatican II.

In *Mystici Corporis* Pius XII had tried hard to overcome the idea, dominant from the time of St Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) onward, that the Church is as visible as the Republic of Venice. Bellarmine had been obliged to take this stance against the Protestant Reformation, with its insistence that the Church was invisible.⁵ In that respect Pius XII had made a genuine advance, but his encyclical was still criticised on two counts. First, while it had been admirable in going to great lengths to describe the wonders of the Church's mystical union with Christ, it had failed to establish a new and plausible link between the mystical and the institutional sides of the Church. Secondly, this all too close identification of the Church with Christ was considered to be fraught with danger for then, it was said, all the negative things one could justly say of the Church could also be predicated of Christ.⁶

It must be emphasised right from the start that this second criticism was erroneous, and unfair. Even a cursory reading of *Mystici Corporis* reveals that the Pope had expressly anticipated and excluded all such interpretations.⁷ Against all such 'false mysticism' he had pointed out the need to distinguish very carefully between the Bridegroom and his Spouse, the Church. Even then, however, it must be admitted that this disavowal still floundered on another point: namely, the question of Church membership.

In one of his seminal articles, the title of which may be translated as 'Membership in the Church according to the Teaching of Pius XII's

⁵ Y. Congar, 'Die Lehre von der Kirche: Vom abendländischen Schisma bis zur Gegenwart', *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Freiburg, 1971), 54-56.

⁶ G. Pozzo, *Lumen Gentium: Costituzione dogmatica* (Casale Monferrato, 1988), 15-16.

⁷ Pio XII, *Mystici Corporis* in *Enchiridion delle encicliche: Pio XII, a cura di E. Lora e R. Simionati* (Bologna, 1995), 6:209-211: 'Costoro fanno unire e fondersi in una stessa persona fisica il divin Redentore e le membra della Chiesa: e mentre attribuiscono agli uomini cose divine, fanno Gesù Cristo soggetto a errori e a debolezze umane. Dalla falsità di questa dottrina ripugnano le fedi cattolica e i precetti dei santi padri, rifuggono la mente e la dottrina dell'apostolo delle genti, il quale, sebbene congiunga tra loro con mirabile fusione Cristo e il corpo mistico, tuttavia oppone l'uno all'altro come lo Sposo alla sposa (cf. Ef 5,22-23)'.

Encyclical “*Mystici Corporis Christi*”⁸, Karl Rahner hit the nail on the head by critically comparing the encyclical’s key idea with God’s will to save all human beings. At the moment in time when he published this article Rahner had not yet launched his idea of ‘the anonymous Christian,’⁹ but his critique already began to move in that direction. According to his more developed view of the matter, someone could be a Christian in all things without formally belonging to the Church,¹⁰ one whose faith in Christ is implicit but who may nonetheless be saved through Christ’s grace.¹¹ In contrast to the critique that Rahner was already able to make in this seminal article, the encyclical still presumed Bellarmine’s idea¹² that Church membership depended on explicit submission to the Pope.¹³ It was here that the Second Vatican Council was to make one of its major breakthroughs, especially in *Lumen Gentium*, as the present article will make clear. This development came about in great part through the Council having a new look at other Christians, but especially the Orthodox.

⁸ K. Rahner, ‘*Die Gliedschaft in der Kirche nach der Lehre der Enzyklika Pius’ XII. “Mystici Corporis Christi”*’, *Schriften zur Theologie* II (Einsiedeln, 1968), 7-94.

⁹ See his study written during the Council (1964): K. Rahner, ‘Die anonymen Christen’, *Schriften zur Theologie* VI (Einsiedeln, 1968), 545-554.

¹⁰ K. Rahner, ‘*Die Gliedschaft in der Kirche nach der Lehre der Enzyklika Pius’ XII. “Mystici Corporis Christi”*’, *Schriften zur Theologie* II (Einsiedeln, 1968), 17, 30, where Rahner comes close to making this explicit.

¹¹ The whole question is to be seen in line with what the Council says about the possibility of the salvation of non-Christians, e.g. in *Ad Gentes* 3, 7; see also *LG* 16 and *Gaudium et Spes* 16. See too C. O’Donnell, ‘Anonymous Christians,’ *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville MI, 1996), 15-16.

¹² Rahner mentions Bellarmine in ‘*Die Gliedschaft in der Kirche nach der Lehre der Enzyklika Pius’ XII. “Mystici Corporis Christi”*’, *Schriften zur Theologie* II (Einsiedeln, 1968), 7, 14, 19, 34; see K. H. Neufeld, *Rahner-Register*, Einsiedeln 1974, 53.

¹³ See Y. Congar, *L’Église de saint Augustin à l’époque moderne* (Paris, 1970), 370-380, for Congar’s comments on this point. Congar also puts in perspective the idea of a Church ‘*ab Abel*’, in terms of getting off to a start, whereas the real Church starts in all earnest only with Christ. He defines the Church as follows: ‘(*Ecclesiam esse*) *coetum hominum, eiusdem christianae fidei professione et eorumdem sacramentorum communion colligatum sub regimine legitimorum pastorum ac praecipue unius Christi in terris vicarii romani*’ (ibid., 137).

The 1902 Encyclical as a Starter

The beginning of modern ecumenism is usually dated from the Edinburgh meeting of missionaries in 1910. There is good reason for doing so, because it was at the Edinburgh Conference that missionaries from hitherto competing denominations proposed burying the hatchet once and for all, abandoning any hint of trying to win the others over to one's own side.¹⁴ And yet! There had been some anticipations of ecumenism well before 1910, all the more noteworthy because they had involved protagonists who were lone voices in their day. Indeed, theologians and thinkers who somehow anticipated modern-day ecumenism are often given the retrospective recognition that is their due, and are now rightly called 'ecumenists *ante litteram*'.

The encyclical of 1902 issued by the then Patriarch of Constantinople, Joachim III, was certainly one such effort, addressed as it was to 'the most holy autocephalous sister-Churches in Christ, in Cyprus, Russia, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro ...'¹⁵ The use of 'sister-Churches' at this early point is to be noted, for it was destined to have an ecumenical future. After the initial greetings, there follows an impassioned exhortation to make efforts to re-establish union among Christians, appealing to the words of St Paul: 'I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you...' (1 Cor. 1:10).¹⁶ Towards the attaining of this goal Patriarch Joachim outlined various concrete problems to be faced. These included considering ways of bringing the Orthodox Church up to date, for instance in regard to the question of the common calendar,¹⁷ and fostering relations with non-Orthodox Churches such as the Catholic Church and the Protestants¹⁸, as well as the Old Catholics.¹⁹

¹⁴ E. G. Farrugia, 'A Hundred Years of Ecumenism in Flashes and Promises to Keep' in E. G. Farrugia SJ (ed.), *From George Tyrell to Pentecostals (1909-2009): Making both ends meet in ecumenism* (Rome, 2011), 163-183.

¹⁵ C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva, 1978), 27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

One of the remarkable things about this encyclical is that it was written at the outset of Joachim III's patriarchate, in answer to the congratulations he had received on being made Patriarch. In a subsequent document in which he drew on the responses that this initial encyclical had elicited from the autocephalous Churches, Joachim noted that while not all had replied, those who had done had answered in positive and favourable terms.²⁰ Basing himself on these positive responses he was able to set out a programme, in which those identified as the closest to the Orthodox were the Old Catholics and the Anglican Church.²¹ With regard to bringing the Orthodox Church up to date, the rather typical conclusion was that it would be premature to change the Julian calendar since it was only 'allegedly' that it was said to be 'inexact'.²²

The Ecumenical Patriarchate then followed this up in 1920 with a further encyclical, which is much more emphatic and counts as the formal entry of Orthodoxy into the ecumenical movement.²³ Written at a time when the patriarchate was vacant, it is entitled with the significant address: 'Unto the Churches of Christ everywhere'.²⁴ It suggests that the Orthodox sister Churches should help to establish a 'fellowship (*koinonia*) between the various Christian Churches,' in spite of doctrinal differences between them.²⁵ Foreseeing a 'League of Churches',²⁶ this encyclical of 1920 is a passionate appeal for all Churches to abandon bitterness and in its place seek dialogue, a matter on which 'we earnestly ask and invite the judgment and opinion of the

²⁰ Ibid., 34.

²¹ Ibid., 37.

²² Ibid., 38-39.

²³ With its twofold appeals to abandon proselytism and to help found a League of Churches, Orthodoxy may be said to have formally entered the ecumenical movement with this encyclical of 1920; see C. O'Donnell, 'Ecumenism, Orthodox and Other Eastern Churches', in *Ecclesia: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Church* (Collegeville MN, 1996), 146-148.

²⁴ C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva, 1978), 40.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The League of Nations had been founded on 20 January 1920 following the tragedy of World War I.

other sister Churches in the east and everywhere in the world.²⁷ The list of *desiderata* towards attaining unity is now much longer and more complete than it had been in 1902. The question of the calendar returns, and various concrete recommendations are made. These include exchanging letters on the occasion of the great feasts, developing closer relations between the representatives of all Churches everywhere, encouraging a greater exchange of theological views and reviews and undertaking more impartial study of history in seminaries and in books, fostering respect for the customs of other Churches and initiating pan-Orthodox conferences. The encyclical also raised practical issues, including the use of chapels and cemeteries for the burial of believers who die in foreign lands, mixed marriages and mutual assistance for Churches in need.²⁸ Much of this programme would later influence many subsequent developments within Orthodoxy and even – why not? – Vatican II itself. In 1976 the programme was once again taken up by representatives of the autocephalous Churches gathered at Chambésy, in Switzerland, for the first in a series of pan-Orthodox meetings that were held in order to prepare for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church.²⁹ Many Orthodox see in the Synod of Crete, which took place in 2016, the realization of such a Council.

As already noted, one of the most remarkable things about all this was the use of the term ‘sister Churches’, a point which nevertheless went largely unnoticed at first. Although the term had been used in both these Orthodox encyclicals, that of 1902 and that of 1920, it was not to become an issue in the ecumenical dialogue until the year 2000. At that moment, and from then on, however, the term suddenly became controversial.

Sister Churches

By the year 2000 people were so accustomed to using the term ‘sister Churches’ indiscriminately that the *monitum* of the Holy Office urging them to employ it correctly came as a shock, and almost caused a

²⁷ C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva, 1978), 40-41.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

²⁹ T. A. Meimaris, *The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement* (Thessalonica, 2013).

scandal.³⁰ It is little known, and insufficiently recognised, however, that it was the Orthodox themselves who were against its indiscriminate use.³¹ One need only go back to the encyclical of 1902 to see why: the expression had originally been applied first of all to the relations of the Orthodox autocephalous Churches among themselves. It was only subsequently that Patriarch Athenagoras became the first, at least in recent times, to extend it to relations between Rome and Constantinople.³²

As to its origins, the phrase is used only once in the Bible, and that in a rather oblique way. In 2 John: 13³³ the author salutes the sister Church to whom he writes. At Vatican II the term is not found in *Lumen Gentium* and it appears only once in the other documents, in *Unitatis Redintegratio* 14, where it is expressly and exclusively used only in

³⁰ On 30 June 2000, a bare week before the plenary session of the Joint Catholic–Orthodox Commission was due to meet in Baltimore, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) published its ‘*Note sur l’expression “Églises sœurs”*’, for which see E. Lora (ed.), *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 19 (Bologna, 2004), 572–585 (bilingual version in French and Italian).

³¹ CDF, ‘*Note sur l’expression “Églises sœurs”*’ (30 juin 2000) in E. Lora (ed.), *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 19 (Bologna, 2004), 572–585.

³² *Ibid.*, 578. The phrase often expresses the wish to see communion re-established between the two sister Churches, Rome and Constantinople. Centuries before, at the time of the Latin patriarchate (1204–1261), Patriarch Camateros complained to Rome on account of its pretext to be mother, whereas she was only sister. Note, however, that in its response to the encyclical of 1902 the Russian Church addressed Constantinople as ‘the mother Church’ (p. 27), even though Joachim III had referred to Constantinople only as ‘their sister’. Paul VI, too, speaks of Rome and Constantinople as ‘sister Churches’ in *Ineunte Anno* (1967), as does John Paul II in *Slavorum Apostoli* (1985) where the term is used for East and West: see ‘*Note sur l’expression “Églises sœurs”*’, 578–580. See also *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) nos. 56 and 60, which treat this way of speaking as already accepted.

³³ ‘The children of your elect sister send you their greetings’ (2 John 13) in *The Holy Bible: The New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, Oxford 1989, 262. Since this sentence, which is the conclusion of the whole letter, has sometimes proved difficult to interpret, we reproduce Raymond Brown’s apt explanation: ‘The fact that the presbyter sends not his own greetings but those of a sister Christian Church illustrates that this letter is sent, not as a personal directive, but as part of the policy of the Johannine ‘we’ whom we heard speaking in 1John 1:1–4’: R.E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York, 1997), 397.

reference to the Churches of the East. 'Hence' the text of *Unitatis Redintegratio* notes, 'it has been, and still is, a matter of primary concern and care among the Orientals to preserve in a communion of faith and charity those family ties which ought to exist between local churches, as between sisters.'³⁴ As J. Erickson, an Orthodox canonist, has shown, it was the Orthodox who realised the kind of confusion that that might potentially arise from the use of a phrase like 'sister Churches' could, potentially, lead to.³⁵ It was therefore the Orthodox themselves who torpedoed the indiscriminate use of 'sister Churches', and not just Catholic theologians.

If we have to do with sisters, the question that arises is this: 'from which mother do they derive?' Naturally, as the CDF's Note went on to explain, one can consider the Church of Rome as a particular Church, hence as a sister Church. However, one cannot speak thus of the Catholic Church as such, for she is the mother of each and all. At the same time, it must be emphasised that the Note of the CDF did not condemn the expression 'sister Churches'; it only regulated its use, encouraging us to apply it correctly. The term 'sister Churches' refers exclusively to the relationship that exists between particular Churches, or between particular groupings of Churches gathered in Patriarchates or around a Metropolitan see.³⁶ As a corollary, in no way can the One Holy Apostolic and Catholic Church - i.e. the Church understood as the

³⁴ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 14, for which see A. Flannery (ed.), 'Decree on Ecumenism,' *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (New York, 1996), 513-514.

³⁵ J. H. Erickson, 'Concerning the Balamand Statement', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42, 1-2 (1997) 25-43; also J. Meyendorff, 'Églises soeurs: Implications ecclésiologiques du "Tomos agapis"', *Istina* 20/1 (1975) 35-46, especially 41, where the author criticises a confusion between the levels of the universal Church and the local Church. On this topic see also the excellent work of M. Jalakh, *Ecclesiological Identity of the Eastern Orthodox Churches – Orientalium Ecclesiarum 30 and Beyond* (Rome, 2014). With reference to literature of Greek provenance in North America about the Balamand Declaration (1993) Erickson writes: 'It is ironic that the concept of "sister Churches" has been singled out for criticism since, as is evident from the foregoing accounts of discussions leading to Balamand, this is precisely the concept which Orthodox on the international level have been trying hardest to advance'.

³⁶ CDF, 'Note sur l'expression "Églises sœurs"' (30 juin 2000), *Enchiridion Vaticanum* 19, E. Lora (ed.) (Bologna, 2004), 583 no. 10.

universal Church - be considered as anybody's sister Church.³⁷ It would be tantamount to the same misunderstanding, moreover, to use the expression 'our two Churches' in a way that undermines this unity because the Catholic Church, as such, is not on a par with any other Church, nor is the universal Church made up of a combination of two Churches.³⁸ These strictures notwithstanding, the last part of the CDF's Note brings us very close to the Orthodox view of things when it affirms that a particular Church can qualify as a sister Church only if it has a valid episcopate and a valid Eucharist.³⁹

All these considerations can be best understood by taking on board the specifically Orthodox use of the term 'sister Churches', as already found in the encyclicals of 1902 and 1920. If the expression had from the beginning been known primarily from its Orthodox usage, certain ambiguities which later arose would have been avoided. Nevertheless, a correct and positive understanding of the notion 'sister Churches' did in fact underlie *Lumen Gentium*, and this bore fruit in its use of the key term '*subsistit in*'. This is the phrase which allowed Vatican II to affirm both that the Church of Christ finds its realisation in the Roman Catholic Church and that there are nevertheless important elements held in common between Rome and the Eastern Churches, such as the Apostolic Succession and the Eucharist. It also led to an acknowledgement that some authentic elements of Church are shared with the Churches and ecclesial communities which derive from the Reformation. Here is the expression *subsistit in* as it is used in *Lumen Gentium* 8:

This is the unique church of Christ which in the creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care (John 21:17) ... This church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, *subsists in* the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and truth are found outside its visible

³⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 12.

confines. Since these are gifts belonging to the church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards catholic unity.⁴⁰

‘Sobornost’ and Collegiality

Tied to the question of the sorority of Churches is the further question of the fraternity of their leaders, and that means collegiality. Early Orthodox involvement in ‘pre-ecumenism’ was itself anticipated by others. The story concerns the Oxford Movement within Anglicanism (1833-1845) and one of its prominent members, William Palmer (1811-1879), a fellow of Magdalene College, who has to be carefully distinguished but not entirely separated from his older namesake, William Palmer (1803-1885) of Worcester College. In his two-volume work on ecclesiology entitled *Treatise on the Church of Christ* (1838) the elder Palmer had launched the idea of the ‘Three Branches’, according to which the true Church is Anglicanism for the English-speaking peoples, Catholicism for those who speak a language of Latin derivation and Orthodoxy for Greeks and Russians. This moved the younger Palmer so much that he betook himself to Russia to put the theory to the test. On his first trip, in 1840, he asked Metropolitan St. Filaret for communion, who turned him down. On his second trip, to St Petersburg in 1841, Palmer tried again, asking the Holy Synod to recognise the Anglican Church as orthodox. In response, the synod made him sit for an examination in theology which he took, but flunked. His request was therefore rejected. To conclude the story, it may be noted that in 1855 the same younger Palmer finally became Catholic.⁴¹

Out of this unfortunate episode a particularly propitious thing nevertheless emerged: namely, the correspondence of Palmer with Khomjakov. Although Palmer nowhere says he had met Khomjakov in Russia, and does not even mention him, it was as a result of this correspondence that Khomjakov took up his pen and became a theologian. His great little work, *The Church is One*, is at the origin of the renewal of Russian ecclesiology. Not just its content but even its title - *The Church is One* - is a direct and deliberate rebuttal of the elder

⁴⁰ A. Flannery (ed.), *‘Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church’* (Northport, New York, 1996), *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, 9 (italics added).

⁴¹ See W. Palmer, *Notes of a Visit to the Russian Church in the years 1840, 1841*, J. H. Newman (ed.) (London, 1882).

Palmer's Three-Branch theory. Khomjakov's intention was to insist that the Church is not three, but one. His critique of the Three-Branch theory was nevertheless accompanied by a rather naive and polemical typology which portrayed Catholicism as unity without freedom, Protestantism as freedom without unity, while Orthodoxy was unity and freedom in love. This schematization was to arouse the ire of V. Solov'ëv (d. 1900), not least for its apparent pretentiousness. Even here, however, Khomjakov's thought still had the benefit of constantly insisting on the oneness of the Church.⁴² The love, freedom and unity which he associated with Orthodoxy, and hence with the true Church were, for him, the ingredients of that untranslatable word '*sobornost*'.⁴³ By way of contrast, he saw the West's unilateral introduction of the *Filioque* into the creed as the very opposite of this - not freedom but, instead, fratricide.⁴⁴

Certainly, neither the Oxford Movement nor Khomjakov are to be considered 'ecumenical' in the technical sense of the term. Such movements and such personages only become so retrospectively, when hitherto hostile Churches draw closer and appeal to the other Church's theology. Russian theologians only became known to Catholics through the secret ecumenical meetings of Catholics and Orthodox which began to take place in the diaspora, especially in Paris, from the late 1920s

⁴² A. S. Khomjakov, *The Church is One*, N. Zernov (ed., introd.) (London, 1968), 21-22: 'The Church is called One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, because she is one, and holy; because she belongs to the whole world, and not to any one particular locality; because by her all mankind and all the earth, and not any particular nation or country, are sanctified; because her very essence consists in the agreement and unity of the spirit and life of all the members who acknowledge her, throughout the world; lastly, because in the writings of doctrine of the Apostles is contained all the fullness of her faith, her hope, and her love. From this follows that when any society is called the Church of Christ, with the addition of a local name, such as the Greek, Russian, or Syrian Church, this appellation signifies nothing more than the congregation of members of the Church living in that particular locality, that is Greece, Russia, or Syria, and does not involve any such idea as that any single community of Christians is able to formulate the doctrine of the Church ...' This quote is remarkable because, unlike modern trends in Orthodox theology, it stresses priority of the universal Church over the local Churches.

⁴³ For what Khomjakov means by love, freedom and unity see *ibid.*, 41-43.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

onwards. As his contribution became more widely and positively appreciated, so too did the influence of the idea of *sobornost*.

In Russian, the term *sobor* means both ‘cathedral’ and ‘council’ while *sobirat*, the verb from which it derives, means ‘to gather’. Perhaps one can take *sobornost* as a *nomen actionis*, essentially an ‘acting’, rather than a thing. Taken in this sense, the prayer used as an introduction to the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom may serve to render the idea: ‘Let us love one another so that of one accord we may be able to confess the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’⁴⁵ Yves Congar’s study, *Une Ecclésiologie Orthodoxe*, is also instructive in this respect.⁴⁶ It is this Russian idea of *sobornost* that underlies the notion which *Lumen Gentium* preferred to call ‘collegiality’, the introduction of which represented a major development in ecclesiology that would impact the whole of Vatican II. Even when a corrective was introduced so that Vatican II’s notion of ‘collegiality’ explicitly affirmed the role of the Magisterium, it still sounded so novel – so Eastern!⁴⁷ – that Paul VI felt the need to add a ‘Preliminary Explanatory Note’, the purpose of which

⁴⁵ P. P. O’Leary, *The Triune Church: A Study in the Ecclesiology of A. S. Khomjakov* (Fribourg, 1982), 89-90. Here prayer in life is taken as the model, as with the early Christian community who lived and prayed together with one heart and one mind (Acts 4: 32). Elsewhere I have argued as follows: ‘*Sobornost* somehow expresses at once catholicity, collegiality, conciliarity and canonicity. But the canonicity here at issue means being in tune with the Church from within as by a connatural feeling, as integral part of the Church’: E. G. Farrugia, “The Eucharist makes the Church”: An Orthodox Proposal and its Impact’, E. G. Farrugia, *Tradition in Transition*, P. Vazheparampil, J. Palackal (eds.) (Rome, 1996), 199.

⁴⁶ Published in Y. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d’un ‘œcuménisme’ catholique* (Paris, 1937), 249-275. This work is Congar’s first publication in his series on ecclesiology, *Unam Sanctam*. Congar explains that he has the Slavophil ecclesiology in mind. It may be added here that the now famous expression referring to the ‘two lungs of the Church’ seems to derive from Vjačeslav Ivanov (d. 1949), the great Russian poet, essayist and critic, while it was Congar who then passed it on to the West – and eventually to John Paul II. See A. Tamborra, *Chiesa ortodossa e Ortodossia russa: Due secoli di confronto e dialogo* (Balsamo [Milano], 1992), 415-419.

⁴⁷ Actually, however, Metropolitan Filaret had already corrected Khomjakov by openly talking of the ‘*sobornost* of bishops’.

was to assuage the doubts of those of the Council fathers who feared that it ran counter to the primacy of the Pope, as defined by Vatican I.⁴⁸

Eucharistic Ecclesiology

Among the members of the Russian diaspora in Paris was another Russian priest who was to exercise a notable influence on Vatican II: Nikolaj Afanas'ev.⁴⁹ This brings us to a third type of Orthodox intervention in ecumenical matters – through their actual presence at Vatican II itself! Afanas'ev taught at the Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris all his life, leaving it only for a brief period during World War II when he went to Tunis to do parish work. His views on the Eucharist were not new. It is generally recognised that Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) anticipated him with the phrase affirming that 'the Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church'. De Lubac then developed a Eucharistic view of the Church which had much in common with Afanas'ev's,⁵⁰ yet it was specifically Afanas'ev who orchestrated this Eucharistic theme in such a way as to open up whole new vistas in ecclesiology. This included a significant new approach to the primacy - he preferred to use the word 'priority' - as expressed in his study entitled 'The Church that Presides in Love'.⁵¹ In effect, this amounted to a recognition of the pastoral primacy of the Pope, and not just a position of honour, in those situations where the priorities of witness of one Church to another make it inevitable that decisions must be taken.⁵² The extensive discussion of the theme of

⁴⁸ 'Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,' A. Flannery (ed.), *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees and Declarations* (Northport, NY, 1996), 93-95.

⁴⁹ A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afanas'ev* (Cambridge UK, 1989).

⁵⁰ P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh, 1993), 75-97.

⁵¹ As discussed in J. Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter: Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church* (Crestwood NY, 1992), 91-143.

⁵² This point was raised by none other than H. Küng. Reflecting on the title with which Patriarch Demetrius addressed John Paul II during his visit to Constantinople in 1979, which included a reference to 'the Church that presides in love' (Introduction of *Epistula ad Romanos*), he concludes that this presiding in love is tantamount to a pastoral primacy: 'Auch der Osten ... gesteht dem Bischof von Rom zu, daß er der erste Bischof der Christenheit ist. Und dies ist – sieht man genauer hin – nicht nur ein "Ehrenprimat": "Vorsitzende der Liebe" –

primacy that has ensued in ecumenical circles shows no sign of abating, even now.

Afnas'ev was an official observer only at the fourth and final session of Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium* had already been published by then, having been promulgated the previous year. Some experts nevertheless indicate that *Lumen Gentium*, especially in its nos. 7, 11 and 13, already show the influence of Afnas'ev's theology.⁵³ Afnas'ev died shortly after the conclusion of Vatican II, without having much chance to reap the rich harvest which he had sown. His ecumenical influence may nevertheless be gauged not only by his having taken a whole generation to school, independently of their confession, teaching them to re-read their ecclesiology in terms of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, but also in the official dialogue itself. A theologian of the calibre of John Zizioulas, his critical disciple, presided over the Orthodox-Catholic Joint Commission for more than a decade until his retirement in 2017.

Other ecumenical points of contact: Protagonists

Ecumenism does not restrict itself only to official ecumenical encounters: we must also mention some of the main protagonists. Stefan Zankov⁵⁴ (1881-1965), Sergius Bulgakov⁵⁵ (1871-1944) and Georges

das würde man besser einen Seelsorge- oder Pastoralprimat nennen. H. Küng, 'Orthodoxie und Römischer Katholizismus', G.D. Dragas (ed.), *Aksum – Thyateira* (London, 1985), 162.

⁵³ Aidan Nichols notes that '[Afnas'ev's] study of the role of the Roman Church amid the communion of all the churches enjoyed wide acclaim, not only in Orthodoxy. It achieved a mention in the *nota praevia* to the draft "*De Ecclesia*" of the Second Vatican Council, and may be said to have influenced significantly the ecclesiology of that Council's documents': A. Nichols, *Theology in the Russian Diaspora: Church, Fathers, Eucharist in Nikolai Afnas'ev* (Cambridge UK, 1989), 59-60. Thus, *LG* 7 reads as follows: 'Really sharing in the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic body, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another. "Because the bread is one, we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). In this way all of us are made members of his body (see 1 Cor. 12:27), "individually members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).'

⁵⁴ See S. Zankov, 'The Church's Common Confession of Faith' in C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva, 1978), 161-165.

⁵⁵ S. Bulgakov, 'The Church's Ministry' in *Ibid.*, 166-171.

Florovsky⁵⁶ (1893-1979) may be considered to be pioneers on the Orthodox side, but with notable differences among them. Zankov, for example, having studied in Switzerland and Germany, even when he was considered to be a great Bulgarian Orthodox theologian, nevertheless felt rather close to Protestants and retained an aversion to Catholics, which has been explained through the influence which Khomjakov exercised on him.

Bulgakov's and Florovsky's participation in the meetings with the Anglicans organised by the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius was to bear fruit later on. Florovsky settled in the New World, as did John Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemmann. Through their intense contacts with Western theologians, and their permanent presence in the diaspora, they managed to translate Orthodox vocabulary by assimilating its Western equivalents, so that many barriers were torn down. Thus, many Orthodox who have followed in their wake find no difficulty to speak, for instance, of original sin and not just of the sin of our forefathers, or of sacraments and not only of mysteries, and so forth.

Vatican II: What remains of the great expectations engendered by *Lumen Gentium*?

It can be said that all ways of reading the documents of Vatican II eventually lead back to *Lumen Gentium*. Is this also true, then, of the relation to the Orthodox? There is more than a grain of truth to this, considering the manner in which Orthodox theology influenced that great document. Certainly, *Lumen Gentium* spoke a language which was until then quite uncommon in Catholic ecclesiology and, in part, that language, as we have seen, was deeply influenced by the work of Orthodox theologians. The benefit has been mutual, for *Lumen Gentium* has also gone on to influence further Orthodox theologians in its own turn. Some of the best things that are said about the East at Vatican II were said in this document, even more so than in *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, and it was *Lumen Gentium* that introduced the ecclesiology of communion. The response of another of the official observers at Vatican II, Albert C. Outler (d. 1989), a Methodist theologian, is also interesting. Outler rightly says of *Lumen Gentium* that it 'is the *fundamentum* of the other fifteen documents of Vatican

⁵⁶ G. Florovsky, 'The Elements of Liturgy' in *Ibid.*, 172-182.

II'.⁵⁷ Still more pertinent is his comment on its content: 'Even in the second and third revised versions, it still reflected the formalistic tendency that speaks blandly of "the Church as a mystery" and then proceeded to define that mystery.'⁵⁸ It is here that the Orthodox insistence on mystery is most tangible.

The theme of Chapter Two of *Lumen Gentium* – 'The People of God' – was not new to Rome, and goes back to the early centuries. One need only look at the triumphal arch of *Santa Maria Maggiore* where Pope Sixtus III (432-440) wrote in characters of gold: '*Sixtus III populi Dei*'. The story goes of a prelate during Vatican II who was reluctant to accept the ecclesiology of the people of God and when he saw this inscription he was quite taken aback! The collegiality of the hierarchy was the theme of *Lumen Gentium*'s third chapter. As we have seen, this was a term rejected by Khomjakov but accepted by Filaret. Through his contact with Russian Orthodox theologians of the Diaspora resident in Paris, Congar was quite familiar with *sobornost* long before the Council and helped to make it acceptable to Catholics in the modified form of collegiality, which, unlike Khomjiakov's *sobornost*, fully recognized the Magisterium.⁵⁹ Chapter Four of *Lumen Gentium*, on the laity, somehow brings to mind the fact that in Orthodoxy many offices, such as that of theologians, are primarily the preserve of the laity. The participation of lay people in synods has doubtless served as a model for the post-conciliar synods that were introduced after Vatican II, taking place every two years. In taking up the theme of the universal call to sanctification, Chapter Five talks like Chrysostom, insisting that there are not two standards of morality – all, without exception, are called to be holy.⁶⁰ As in the East, monks are not thereby any less esteemed, a

⁵⁷ A. C. Outler, 'A Response' in W. M. Abbott (ed.), J. Gallagher (tr.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, London 1986, 102.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁵⁹ Y. Congar published as nos. 5-7 in the series 'Unam Sanctam', dedicated to ecclesiology, he had founded in 1936: A. Gratieux, *A. S. Khomjakov et le Mouvement Slavophile: Les Hommes; Les Doctrines; G. Samarine, Préface aux Oeuvres théologiques de A.S. Khomiakov* (Paris, 1939).

⁶⁰ V. Guroian, *Incarnate Love: Essays in Orthodox Ethics* (Notre Dame IN, 1987), 100. To this, a Catholic expert replied: 'What, then, would he make of monasticism as the pinnacle of Orthodox spiritual life?' See R. Slesinski, Review of V. Guroian's book, OCP 55 (1989) 251-252. See also H. U. v. Balthasar, *Christlicher Stand* (Einsiedeln, 1977), 180-264.

theme treated in Chapter Six, on Religious, who are gathered from the lay people's call to sanctification. The difference between them and the laity lies in the being of Religious, rather than in their doing. That is, it lies in their *representing, as a class*, the universal call to holiness. This is certainly not a matter of Religious appropriating holiness as their exclusive terrain which would run contrary to the spirit of Christ in the Christological hymn of Philippians 2: 5-11, which portrays him as not being possessive even of his divinity.⁶¹

Chapter Seven too, on the eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church and her union with the heavenly Church, is reminiscent of key themes in Orthodox ecclesiology. Statements like the one affirming that 'our union with the Church in heaven is put into effect in the noblest manner when with common rejoicing we celebrate together the praise of the divine Majesty'⁶² are significant here. They create a bridge to the eschatology of the divine liturgy, an element that was greatly emphasised by those representatives of Eucharistic ecclesiology whom we have already mentioned, such as John Zizioulas.⁶³ To paraphrase Schmemmann, what we need is not the dead faith of the living, but the living faith of the dead.

Finally, Chapter Eight has the benefit of placing Mariology in the context of ecclesiology,⁶⁴ which thereby deflates extreme Mariologies of the type '*de Maria numquam satis*'. These sin against the hierarchy of truths by blowing out of proportion some truths which are less close to the fundamentals of the faith. Placing Mary within the Church as a co-

⁶¹ So I argue in Edward G. Farrugia, 'Monasticism was born in the Mediterranean – but is it bound to die there?' in David Raphael Busuttill and Silvano Busuttill (eds.), *Telos VIII – Monasticism in the Mediterranean: Now and Tomorrow* (Valletta: Fondation de Malte, 2015), 101-131.

⁶² LG 50 in W. M. Abbott (ed.), J. Gallagher (tr.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (London, 1986), 83.

⁶³ Y. Spiteris, *Ecclesiologia ortodossa: Temi a confront tra Oriente e Occidente*, Bologna 2003, 31-132, points out that there are two tendencies in Orthodox ecclesiology. The one is represented by J. Karmiris and S. Bulgakov which would see the Church from a protologist perspective, the Church being God's model which has to be incarnated, while the other is represented by N. Afanas'ev and J. Zizioulas, according to which the Church, in the divine liturgy, becomes in liturgical time what it will be for all eternity – the communion of saints.

⁶⁴ Compare with V. Lossky, 'Mariology' (1952) in C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva, 1978), 187-198.

pilgrim also makes it easier for her to be understood as the first disciple of Christ. This brings Mary closer to the way the Orthodox see her, for it is the way she is depicted in John's Gospel.

Conclusion

If *Lumen Gentium*, which is the masterpiece of Vatican II, was able to enjoy such great success, it is certainly in part due to the fact that the Catholic Church caught up with those aspects of the theology of communion which, despite belonging to the common patrimony, had been neglected in the West through an all too juridical ecclesiology. Besides dealing with a problem of great importance in a world where distances have become small, and where awareness of the very many others who live in it, besides ourselves, is becoming an everyday reality, the Church resorted to theology in a very specific way. Indeed, with the Church in many of its facets as its central object, theology even became the centrepiece of Vatican II.⁶⁵ By insisting, as John XXIII did, that the Church does not need to renew condemnations but should rather let the truth shine forth on its own merits, we came closer to that 'theology of glory' which is the quintessence of Eastern apologetics. There, indeed, truth does shine on its merits.

It might be objected that this shift in outlook would have gone deeper if Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988), who was especially noted for this type of aesthetic theology, had been invited to the Council. The Swiss theologian's omission, however, did not diminish the influence of Matthias Scheeben (1835-1888), whom von Balthasar greatly admired as the last great theologian. Helped by their theological experts participating at Vatican II, the fathers of the Council were not allowed to forget that Scheeben's most successful work had been *The Splendours of Grace*.

And so, we end as we started: we find ourselves in a square where East and West could meet halfway, and where conditions were created for them to continue to do so. Indeed, we may add that the ecclesiology of communion had long before been anticipated by Johann Adam Moehler (1796-1838) who is unanimously considered to have influenced Khomjakov. The reason for such mutual influence is that all the great spiritual theologians went back to Scripture and the Fathers. The secret

⁶⁵ P. Hünermann, 'Theologischer Kommentar zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche' in P. Hünermann, B.-J. Hilberath (eds.), *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil* (Freiburg i.Br., 2009), 269.

of Vatican II was that it not only urged us to return to these sources, but that it actually did so itself. If we look back to gauge the progress achieved from the time of *Lumen Gentium*'s promulgation until now, and compare it to the situation more than a century ago, we need only remember the trouble that Prince Max von Sachsen (1870-1951) got into in 1910 simply for using the term 'sister Churches', and contrast this with the trouble we now have to control its indiscriminate use.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ The whole episode in question was triggered off by an article of the Prince, entitled '*Pensée sur la question de l'union des Églises*' which appeared in the journal of Grottaferrata, *Roma e l'Oriente*. As a result, the Prince lost his chair at the University of Freiburg. See G. Croce, *La Badia greca di Grottaferrata e la rivista 'Roma e l'Oriente'*, (Vatican City, 1990), 141-211.

THE REFORMATION AS AN ECCLESIAL AND ECUMENICAL EVENT

Matthias Wirz*

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was an event that concerned the whole Church: in that case it must be considered as an ecumenical event. In fact, reform in itself is a constant critical principle in the Church. Furthermore, for its actors, the Protestant Reformation was intended to be realized in the one Church catholic. Finally, in spite of the divisions it has produced, the Reformation also had effects on the Roman Church. This helps us understand why this historical and ecclesial event need to be commemorated ecumenically, as it was in 2017. And ultimately, if Churches must be reformed today, it is in order to reach visible unity together.

In this paper, my intention is to reflect on the Protestant Reformation as an ecclesial event, an event that occurred in the Church, and that affected – and still affects – the Body of Christ as a whole, not only some parts of it. I would like to illustrate the ecumenical significance of the Reformation and demonstrate that the ecclesial dimension of the Reformation helps us to understand this sixteenth century event as an ecumenical event that continues to concern all the Churches.

The Reformation is generally regarded as an important event that reshaped the life of the Churches and impacted the faith of millions of people. But, first, we must admit that the 2017 Commemoration of the start of the Protestant Reformation five centuries ago is rather ambivalent in the present ecclesial setting of confessional division. In fact, by celebrating 1517, Protestants risked assuming a self-satisfied attitude, with potential polemical overtones, and Roman Catholics, on

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the other hand, would not be ready to celebrate the beginning of a schism. This reminds us that, by having had the consequence of dividing the Western Church, the Reformation was in fact a failure!¹ In the words of Pope Francis: ‘The intention of Martin Luther five hundred years ago was to renew the Church, not divide her’.² Can we in this condition of confessional division commemorate the 500th Anniversary of 1517, and really honour the Reformation?

We all know that last year’s commemoration happened in a new context. For the first time since the sixteenth century, a Jubilee of the Reformation was celebrated ‘in an ecumenical era’.³ Ecumenical dialogues have been in progress for fifty years between Protestant Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, leading to partial declarations of communion, in particular on the doctrine of Justification in 1999. The 2017 Commemoration was thus frequently presented as a ‘common commemoration’ of the Reformation. This change of context, which has led to transformation of attitudes, was illustrated in a very clear way by the decision of Pope Francis to take part personally, along with Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation, in the ceremony that launched the year of commemoration for the fifth centenary of the Reformation. The celebration took place on 31 October 2016 in the Cathedral of Lund (Sweden). In this ecumenical liturgy, both Lutherans and Catholics gave thanks for the gifts the Reformation brought to the Churches, lamented and repented of the division and violence that ensued, and committed themselves to common witness and service.

This shared celebration for the commemoration of the Reformation made it apparent that what happened from 1517 onward was an event

¹ Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, ‘Reformation und Einheit der Kirche’ (1973), in ID., *Beiträge zur systematischen Theologie*, vol. 3: *Kirche und Ökumene* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2000), 174-175.

² Francis, Address to Members of the Ecumenical Delegation from Finland (19 January 2017), https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/january/document_s/papa-francesco_20170119_delegazione-finlandia.html (last accessed on 10 November 2018).

³ International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From conflict to communion* (2013), no. 4, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/From%20Conflict%20to%20oCommunion.pdf> (last accessed on 10 November 2018).

in the Church that concerns all Christians and all Churches. The Reformation was a 'Catholic' event, we could say, understanding this adjective in its profound etymological, not its confessional meaning. Our new ecumenical situation allows us to recognize that the gifts of the Reformation are in fact meant for the whole of Christianity and not reserved only for the Protestant Churches which emerged in the sixteenth century event.

I would like to indicate here three reasons why the Reformation was in fact an ecclesial or Catholic event affecting the Church as a whole and, in this sense, an ecumenical event: 1) Reform is a continuous critical principle inside the Church; 2) the Protestant Reformation was thought to be a reform inside the One Church; 3) the Reformation contributed to renewal in other Churches, outside Protestantism.

1. Reform, a continuous critical principle in the Church

The Protestant Reformation arose out of the desire to reform the Western Church. In fact, reform is a critical principle in the Church that leads the institution to move forward. It is not so much a destructive or divisive movement, but much more an 'active principle'. The Milanese Church historian, Saverio Xeres, writes: 'The misunderstandings and mistakes which the Church endures along its way periodically demand some great reforms to resume the right orientation'.⁴

The reform movement which took place in the sixteenth century, commonly designated as *the* Reformation, was not a unique and isolated event. The sixteenth century is not the only century in the history of the Church in which aspirations to ecclesial reform have occurred. Indeed, there have been many reform attempts in the Western Church throughout the second millennium, some of which were actually promoted by the leaders of the institution. We can cite three of these key moments in the last ten centuries:⁵ the Reform undertaken by Gregory VII (eleventh century); the one promoted by the Council of Trent at the time of the Protestant Reformation; and, finally, the reform of the Second Vatican Council, which is still awaiting its full implementation. This last Council acknowledged that: 'Christ summons the Church to continual reformation (*perennis reformatio*) as

⁴ Saverio Xeres, *La chiesa, corpo inquieto. Duemila anni di storia sotto il segno della riforma* (Milano: Ancora, 2003), 16.

⁵ Cf. ID., *Una chiesa da riformare* (Magnano: Qiqajon, 2009), 8-33.

she sojourns here on earth. The Church is always in need of this, in so far as she is an institution of men here on earth'.⁶

In recent years, Pope Francis has also stressed this reality and urged the Roman Church to make crucial decisions today toward ecclesial reform. His apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* ('The Joy of the Gospel', 2013), which may be considered one of the programmatic writings of his pontificate, is deeply marked by the idea of reform and by the call for a profound renewal of thought and pastoral action. The Pope writes: 'I encourage each particular Church to undertake a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform'.⁷

In Protestant Churches as well, reform is not limited to an event of the past, but remains a movement to be pursued continuously. The motto *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* ('The reformed Church must always be reformed') does not go back to the sixteenth century reformers, but is attributed to Dutch Reformed theologians in the second part of the seventeenth century, when the Church perceived the ongoing need to renew reforming action in order to overcome decadence.⁸

Reform or reformation appears therefore as a permanent requirement of Church life which expresses a desire for, and a return to, the Gospel, a purification which the Christian communities feel is continuously necessary in order to counteract the worldly forces that always seduce and disfigure the Church. This movement is not limited to Protestant Churches: even the Church of Rome has to take part in it. 'In order to be faithful to her being and vocation, the Church must reform (renew) what in her represents a distance from her essence, her truth'; and paradoxically the purpose of this movement of transformation and

⁶ Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio* 6, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/va-at-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (last accessed on 10 November 2018).

⁷ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (24 November 2013) 30, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/pa-pa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (last accessed on 10 November 2018).

⁸ Cf. Xeres, *Una chiesa da riformare*, 27. 94-104.

reform, proper to all Churches, is 'to make her remain what she is'⁹ in her depth.

In the last century Paul Tillich (1886-1965) described this process against a background of Christian revelation and experience as a whole, and distinguished a 'Catholic substance' and a 'Protestant principle'. For Tillich, the Catholic substance defines the sacramental structure, the communion and the authority which characterize the Church institution; the Protestant principle, on its side, expresses a protest against this Catholic substance. But Tillich warns: 'If Protestantism is not what it should be – a protest within the Catholic substance –, if it neglects the Catholic substance, tradition, symbols, sacramental thinking, then it becomes empty'.¹⁰ The two aspects, the substance and the reforming principle must therefore go hand in hand: whatever remains only 'priestly' loses its critical aspect; whatever is just 'prophetic' necessarily degenerates into empty criticism. 'Only the connexion of the two aspects constitutes the religious reality and fulfils the Christian reality'.¹¹

Tillich does not simply attribute the 'substance' to the Roman Catholic Church and the 'prophetic' or 'critical' principle to the Protestant Churches. Only the simultaneous presence of the two realities – he says – guarantees the validity of Christian expressions, both Catholic and Protestant. If each confession is identified by its predominant affinity with one of these two aspects, each one is however constituted by both. The 'substance' gives content to the faith; the 'protest' preserves it from idolatry. This polarity is constitutive of authentic faith: it must not disappear, but rather develop with ecumenical dialogue.

If we consider the Protestant Reformation, we can recognize in it the critical principle which tried to reform the institutional substance, as has also happened in other contexts and periods of Church history. But in the sixteenth century the balance between the two realities of protest and substance was not kept, and the event split the institution. Nevertheless, the Reformation must be seen as nothing less than one of

⁹ Hans-Christoph Askani, "Ecclesia semper reformanda"?, in Matthias WIRZ (ed.), *Riformare insieme la chiesa* (Magnano: Qiqajon, 2016), 31.

¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *Substance catholique et principe protestant* (Paris-Genève-Laval: Cerf-Labor et Fides-Presses de l'Université de Laval, 1995), 354.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 355.

those reform events that shaped the Church in the second millennium. It stands in continuity with many other attempts at reform in the *ecclesia semper reformanda* and opens the way for other ecclesial conversions and reforms.

2. The Protestant Reformation inside the One Church

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and the other reformers of the sixteenth century perceived the need for reform in the Church, and generations of Christians have followed in their wake. In their efforts toward reform, they did not want to found new Churches. The Reformation, in the intention of the men who initiated it, was intended to be implemented within the framework of the Church 'Catholic', the *Una Sancta* that we profess in the Nicene Creed. In fact, the Churches which emerged from the Reformation continued to use the term 'Catholic' for themselves, claiming to be 'Catholic' (universal) until the end of the seventeenth century!

In itself, the Protestant Reformation was not a force for the creation of new Churches, nor was division a basic principle of the Reformation, but division became a historical reality because of mutual misunderstanding, and as a result of certain political decisions. 'Lutheran' Churches (and also 'Reformed' or 'Anglican' Churches) emerged while still understanding themselves as part of the Church of Jesus Christ in the continuity of Church history.

The Protestant Reformation cannot be understood without keeping in mind that continuity which linked the Churches that had been reformed with the Church as it was prior to the Reformation. The Protestant – Lutheran, Reformed or other – Church is therefore not a new creation, one which did not exist before the Reformation, but it is the same Church as before, which has undergone a process of purification, transformation. Various appeals issued by Luther and the other reformers of the sixteenth century for the convening of a council, in which it would have been possible to discuss the serious questions they were posing to the Church, indicate clearly that they intended to resolve their demands in the context of the existing Church and not to depart from her.

To understand the Reformation of the sixteenth century primarily as a rupture in the Church is therefore misleading. We can illustrate this with the example of Zwingli's ministry. The Zurich reformer had been ordained as a priest in the Church still in communion with Rome, and

he never denied that ordination. When the bishop of Constance put him out of office in 1522, the magistrate of the city of Zurich re-engaged him with the mission of preaching the gospel to the citizens. Zwingli was not re-ordained – certainly, the City Council would have had no authority to do so – but he was employed as an already ordained priest, thus qualified to be a minister in a Christian Church. Later, when ministers came to be ordained in reformed Churches, these ordinations would be viewed as valid because these Churches considered themselves to be the local manifestations of the *Una sancta ecclesia catholica* and, as such, competent to appoint someone to the ministry.

Similarly, we can observe that the catechisms of both Luther and Calvin, which intended to express the truth of faith, always refer to the Church as the *Una sancta*, defined as ‘the company of the faithful destined and chosen by God for eternal life’.¹² There is no idea of denomination in these definitions, nor any reference to a ‘Reformed tradition’ as opposed to other confessional traditions. Even the ecclesiastical Ordinances of Geneva (the Church rule adopted by the civil authorities of the city in the sixteenth century) recognize that the reason for the Church’s being in Geneva is to be the Church of Jesus Christ in that place and does not constitute a special confessional form. ‘If reformed theologians have a doctrine of the Church, there is no doctrine of the reformed Church’, we might observe with the historian Jacques Courvoisier.¹³

Even the Augsburg Confession of Augsburg, the confessional text that has been acknowledged as a reference for all Lutheran Churches since the mid-sixteenth century, can be considered as a ‘decisive effort to preserve the unity of the Church’.¹⁴ In fact, presenting this Confession to Charles V in August 1530, Melancthon hoped to demonstrate that the doctrines taught in the Protestant territories were those of the universal Church, thus witnessing to the agreement of the reformers with the faith of the Church Catholic.

¹² Jean Calvin, *Catéchisme de l'Église de Genève* (1545), No. 93, in Olivier FATIO et al. (ed.), *Confessions et catéchismes de la foi réformée* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1986), 48.

¹³ Jacques Courvoisier, ‘De la Réforme comme principe critique du protestantisme’, in *Verbum Caro* 25-26 (1953), 9.

¹⁴ Kurt Koch, ‘Un anniversario in comunione. La commemorazione del quinto centenario della Riforma’, in *L'Osservatore romano* (18 January 2017), 6.

Every action of the Church, whether Lutheran or Reformed, always takes place, from the sixteenth century onwards, in reference to the Church as the *Una sancta ecclesia catholica et apostolica*. Despite the epochal consequences the Reformation had in the political, social and cultural spheres, it should therefore be understood as an ecclesial movement, a return to the gospel which was meant to ‘purify’ the Church as a whole. As Cardinal Kasper writes, the purpose of the Protestant Reformation was ‘the renewal of the Church Catholic, that is, of all Christianity, starting with the gospel ... It was a cry of awakening and a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church’.¹⁵

3. The contribution of the Reformation to the Church

If the Protestant Reformation was an event in the Church Catholic, and for its benefit, it also had effects in the Roman Church. What remains of the legacy of the Reformation in the Church from which Protestants have been divided since the mid-sixteenth century? Of course, today’s Churches are no longer the same as those that experienced the disputes of 500 years ago: each one has elaborated an identity, a physiognomy we might say, in reaction to the others and as a consequence of changing times. But in this new scenario, what is the contribution of the Protestant Reformation – as an ecclesial movement – to the life of the Roman Church? I would like briefly to summarize in three points what we can consider the Protestant Reformation is saying today to the Catholic Church.¹⁶

a) First of all, the reformers were committed to the need for continuous renewal in ecclesial life, and this need has now been recognized in the Church of Rome. It is certain that the reformers’ demands, while judged unacceptable in Rome and Trent, nonetheless motivated an autonomous reform effort within the Catholic Church, even if, at first, that reform was only an alternative to the Protestant reform model.

During the ‘ecumenical era’, following several centuries of immobility and centralization in the Church of Rome, the renewal effort was re-initiated, particularly through the event of the Second Vatican Council. The ‘*aggiornamento*’ of the Church, sought by Pope John XXIII, allowed

¹⁵ Walter Kasper, *Martin Lutero. Una prospettiva ecumenica* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2016), 27.

¹⁶ Cf. Angelo Maffei, ‘Che cosa dice la riforma protestante alla chiesa cattolica oggi’, in *Riformare insieme la chiesa*, 103-125.

the Roman Church to make decisive ecclesiological changes, and to give to the idea of '*reformatio*' a wholly positive value and full legitimacy.

Martin Luther might have recognized the Second Vatican Council and its essential contribution as being the council for which he had appealed in vain during his life time. It is not by chance that this council linked the renewal efforts of the Church so closely with the commitment to the unity of all Christ's disciples.

b) A second gift of the Reformation to the Western Church was the rediscovery of the centrality of Scripture and its relationship to Tradition. On this point, the Second Vatican Council was a turning point for the Roman Church, demonstrated by the dogmatic constitution on Revelation, *Dei Verbum*. Once again, the Bible gained a central position in Christian life, and it was affirmed that the Church's mission is to interpret the Word and bear witness to it.

If the Protestant Reformation began 'as a consequence of a full immersion in the biblical text', which produced 'a profound rethinking of Christianity' and a 'biblical re-establishment and resuscitation of faith',¹⁷ then it can be said that the conciliar reform in the second half of the twentieth century allowed the Church of Rome to make the same rediscovery.

c) Lastly – by means of the third gift of the Reformation – the Catholic Church began to understand the confessional plurality of the Christian witness, not as antagonism, but as the expression of different gifts within the one Body of Christ. On this point too, Vatican II was decisive: the ecumenical openness of the Church, as witnessed in the objectives of the Council, relativized the self-sufficient identity which the post-Tridentine Roman had developed and allowed her to establish relations with the separate Churches on new and favourable bases.

The Reformation marked the end of the unity of Western Christianity and the rise of a plurality of ecclesial subjects detached from the See of Rome; the latter, with Vatican II, now recognizes the legitimacy of this diversity, which Protestant Churches defend (even theologically) with emphasis. But by renouncing references to ecclesial divisions and preferring the more neutral concept of pluralism, there is a risk of shutting the eyes to the truly dramatic aspect of the events that took

¹⁷ Paolo Ricca, 'Perché la Riforma del XVI secolo', in *Riformare insieme la chiesa*, 90.100.

place in the sixteenth century. For this reason, the forms and ways which the Catholic Church will develop in order to be able to hold unity and plurality together will be of the utmost significance for all Churches, to prevent them from falling into the error of an easy solution of imposed uniformity or a self-sufficient and closed ecclesial tradition.

If the Reformation of the sixteenth century was meant to be an appeal, a question to the Church, this question has now been answered: indeed, a dialogue has been established, which begs to be pursued.

Conclusion: Commemorate together, reform together!

In the light of what has been said, we realize that the 2017 Commemoration of the beginning of the Reformation was not an occasion for rejoicing in a division that took place half a millennium ago. Instead, it was an occasion to rejoice in the gifts of the Reformation for the whole Church – for all Churches – but also an occasion to repent – together – for the errors, the violence and the divisions that took place in the sixteenth and following centuries, thus preparing the way for reconciliation. Last year's 'Jubilee' was therefore not so much about memory and the glorification of the past, but much more about openness to the future: it offered the opportunity for a new impetus to move forward towards communion between Christians and Churches.

In this sense, commemorating together – in the precise context of that historic moment – was a preparation for reforming the Churches together. Drawing on each other, and celebrating the events that have marked each other, we begin to build unity. In this dialogue, Churches need to seek how much they can learn and receive from each other. This is, not only and not entirely, for the purpose of mutual enrichment, but much more: in order to offer a consistent and common witness to those who cannot believe, but who have the right to receive God's good news through the disciples' witness.

To commemorate the Reformation together, trying to perceive what the contemporary situation continually asks from the Churches, means then to be aware of the appeals for reform that continue to be addressed to all Churches. These appeals should be regarded as appeals for further efforts toward catholicity. Among the many demands placed on Churches, it is the state of our present confessional division that

necessitates a reform that overcomes it.¹⁸ In fact, the last decades have made it plain to Christians that the primary purpose of Church reform can only be to gather into the visibility of one ecclesial body all the dispersed children of God, 'so that the world may believe' (John 17:21).

¹⁸ Cf. Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Une réforme dans l'Église. Possibilité, critères, acteurs, étapes*, (Gembloux: Duculot, 1971), 22-26.

THE DIVERSITY OF 'LANGUAGES' AS AN INHIBITING FACTOR IN ECUMENICAL DEBATES REGARDING INTER-COMMUNION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Thomas O'Loughlin*

Ecumenical dialogue frequently appears to go nowhere with frustration for all concerned. Many reasons are adduced for this lack of progress ranging from vague 'non-theological factors' to ill-will. However, one problem that is frequently present but unnoticed is that Catholic theology has inherited two distinct 'languages' - not simply two technical jargon but epistemologies - which confuse all who use them. Noting this tension is a first step towards more fruitful discussions.

1. Dialogue and language

Dialogue is always difficult. Even in the simplest exchange between two family members there is the danger of misunderstanding and confusion, and the constant possibility that, despite a shared communication system, a language, and a common culture and situation, an exchange rather than fostering understanding can be the source of suspicions, resentment, and conflict. We have just to take note of our experience and recall how many family feuds took their origin in what began as a simple verbal exchange between siblings. Something was said, perhaps now regretted by one party as a misunderstanding, that was seen as a provocation, an attack, and an indicator of the bad faith of the other party – and language, which is that which can draw us together, becomes the vector towards deep division and conflict with those who are nearest to us.

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The possibilities that language will destroy dialogue increase massively once dialogue takes on the character of negotiation between individuals or groups. Now differences of perspective, background, experience, and culture all add to the challenge of dialogue; and a common language is not only a pre-requisite but acts as a metaphor for all the other commonalities that must be in place if dialogue is to be real, engaging, and to lead anywhere. In our experience this is recognised by the appeals in any set of talks that we should be 'singing off the same hymn-sheet' and by our willingness to describe problems within a dialogue in terms of 'not being on the same page.' The challenge in such exchanges is to develop a truly common base language, coupled with the need to develop creative ambiguities that allow 'wriggle room' for those who recognise the basic common element in their language but also acknowledge that in even such a created common language there will still be problems arising from the diversity of the users of the language.

Religious dialogue then presents its own unique challenges. Not only is religious language mythic and poetic in its origins and its practice – and so without the sort of definitional precision that can be brought to bear in many other human negotiations – but it is a language that works through the imagination. It is language which is analogical in nature, and when, if it abandons that analogical manner of relating to the world – supposing that it is a directly descriptive of the world – it ceases to be worthy of its subject matter. We need to constantly invoke that fundamental principle of God-talk / religious dialogue: *Deus semper maior* – while remembering that we not only do not know what we mean by '*Deus*' but we cannot conceive what '*semper maior*' means. Yet we must continue to use language for the only alternative, silence, does not do justice to that witness we believe we must make to the presence of the Holy.

Ecumenical dialogue seems particularly problematic because it straddles these three levels of exchange. Not only do the followers of Jesus imagine themselves as a fictive family: being sisters and brothers calling on God as Father, but we form human groups who must negotiate and seek to reconcile our corporate differences, and the matters of our dispute are framed in terms of the complex theological stories we tell ourselves to make sense of discipleship. In short, there is probably no other area of human affairs with so great a need for a shared language, a means of talking to one another that leads to the

diminution of division and suspicion, is creative of shared understanding within cultures that have been at one another's throats for centuries, and capable of being a means towards forging new respect for each other as sisters and brothers. The contention of this paper is that such a common language is further away than many think – and that this is a particular challenge for the Roman Catholic Church if ecumenical discussions are to be dialogue within shared faith rather than simply 'being friendly with the neighbours.'

2. Where are we?

It is now over fifty years since the end of the Second Vatican Council and despite this being a period of possibly unprecedented change in Catholic liturgical practice, the style of theology practised by Catholics, a different attitude to the other churches expressed in formal documents and different behaviour seen in various collaborations alongside a string of official ecumenical conversations, there has been no change in the official position of the Catholic Church on a central plank in any ecumenical endeavour: inter-communion¹ and the related, but possibly more complex, question of the mutual recognition of ministries. This is an unpalatable truth when we Christians meet, and when faced with greater global challenges, some feel that going back over older arguments, often phrased within a theology many of us barely recognise, costs time and effort that could be put to better use. Moreover, among many Catholic theologians there is a feeling that perhaps it is better not 'to pick at sores' but rather rejoice in what we now share: perhaps the problem will just disappear!

Others argue that actual sharing in the eucharist may not be so important. Can we not be content with joint witness and agree that we eucharistize apart?² I do not see that as satisfactory for three reasons. First, the eucharistic meal has been *the* gathering of Jesus' followers since before they were known as 'Christians' and an important marker of identity. It would be untrue to the broad tradition to avoid issues

¹ See, for example, the press statement of the German Bishops' Conference of 27 June 2018 on 'Pastoral Guidance on the matter of inter-denominational marriages and joint participation in the Eucharist'.

² It is a fundamental supposition of this paper that 'the eucharist' is the name of an *action* of the gathered People of God in union with the Christ; see Thomas O'Loughlin, *The Eucharist: Origins and Contemporary Understandings* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2015), 42-48.

relating to the eucharist even for some noble reason because that would suggest that eucharistic activity is peripheral. Second, as a Catholic I affirm the phrase used in Vatican II that the eucharist is the '*totius cultus et vitae christianae est culmen et fons*',³ and therefore cannot be indifferent to the fact that, on the one hand, I may now greet my Protestant friend as a sister or brother in Christ in baptism, but also hold that they do not celebrate the eucharist.⁴ And third, this is not a *recherché* curiosity but an issue that brings pain, time and again, to fellow Christians who experience exclusion and rejection on the basis of this canon: 'Catholic ministers may only lawfully administer the sacraments to the Catholic members of Christ's faithful.'⁵ Unlike debates about reconciling approaches to justification or the relationship of the Bible / the Scriptures to theology, here ecumenical theology merges with the urgency of pastoral care.

Moreover, after a short period in the immediate aftermath of the Second Vatican Council when this problem seemed to be about to disappear, there has been a growing hesitation among Catholics to engage with the problem, as steadily one bishops' conference after another insisted in their ecumenical directories that inter-communion with Protestant Christians was not possible except in very restricted circumstances – indeed circumstances that were so restrictive as to never occur in the course of everyday ministry. This restrictive approach fitted with the conservative approach to the sacraments during the papacy of John Paul II, and received added vigour during the rolling back of many conciliar liturgical developments that characterised the pontificate of Benedict XVI: any discussion of inter-communion attracted suspicious attention from Rome. It gradually emerged that, *de facto*, this was no longer an issue open for discussion

³ The exact form of the quotation as used here is that found in Canon 897 of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983). My rationale for citing this from the *Codex Iuris Canonici* rather than from the council documents directly will become clear later in this essay.

⁴ This language of the eucharist as 'the summit and centre' of the Christian life is usually attributed to Vatican II, but it can already be found in the chapter on the eucharist by the Anglican theologian, and famous World War I padre, G.A. Studdert Kennedy (see G.A. Studdert Kennedy, *The Hardest Part: A Centenary Critical Edition*, T. O'Loughlin and S. Bell eds. [London: SCM Press, 2018], 100-116).

⁵ Canon 844, 1 (the translations are my own).

among Catholic theologians.⁶ The position that has become widespread is that participation in the eucharist is built upon the unity of the Church and, therefore, supposes formal unity prior to normal sacramental sharing. This widespread opinion has been given the status of some kind of theological axiom in the form, as used in the recent German bishop's statement, 'eucharistic communion and church fellowship belong together.' This link is interpreted as being so intimate that they are, in effect, convertible terms: one cannot have communion without formal ecclesial belonging and such ecclesial unity is the prerequisite for eucharistic sharing. I refer to it as an 'axiom' not only because of its analytic nature but because it is not clear how this position is arrived at (apart from a generic citation of 1 Cor. 10:17), and because it is seen as a basic premise in all further argument. Moreover, there seems no awareness of its epistemic or practical limits as a statement. For example, as a statement about the life of the Church as a community of limited and sinful, human beings any reference to such theological and organic unity can only be imagined on the horizon of eternity. In other words, while the question of intercommunion arises in practical historical order of ministry to this or that group of people, the reply belongs to a meta-historical order where 'eucharist' and 'ecclesial unity' are conceived, if not as ideals, then at least *sub specie aeternitatis*. Indeed, the moment of such ecclesial unity is virtually identical with the moment when sacraments as we know them on earth will cease.

This unwillingness to examine the issue is, moreover, related to a more general fear in recent decades among many Catholics that any ecumenical rapprochement might pose a danger to their Catholic inheritance. Though it should be said that after almost every ecumenical statement, from whatever quarter and on whatever topic, it seems to some within every ecclesial body who are then fearful that

⁶ An excellent example of this tendency to present the question as closed (hence it will be used as a test case in this paper) is the 1998 joint document of the three bishops' conferences of the British isles entitled *One Bread One Body* (Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, *One Bread One Body* [London: Catholic Truth Society, 1998]) which was adopted, more or less *in toto*, by many other episcopal conferences around the world, and its influence can still be detected in the June 2018 statement by the German bishops' conference.

they have betrayed an inheritance or blurred a necessary line of demarcation.

This lack of discussion came to a surprising and abrupt end on 15 November 2015 when a Lutheran, Anke de Bernardinis, asked the Pope while he was visiting the Lutheran Church in Rome if there could be movement on sharing together the Lord's Supper? The Pope's reply is interesting on a number of points – allowing that it has the quality of *obiter dictum* – but two are significant. The Pope asks himself: “Is sharing the Lord's Supper the end of a journey or is it the viaticum for walking together?” I leave the question to the theologians, to those who understand.’ And then he ended by saying he could ‘never dare give permission ... because [he] does not have the authority. ... [and that she should] speak with the Lord and go forward. I do not dare say more.’⁷ While canonists have been quick to point out that this is not strictly a ‘papal statement,’ in the context of the implied invitation to theologians to examine the issues, it would be impolite to ignore it. It is as a response from one of those to whom Pope Francis has delegated the problem that I offer this paper.

However, while this answer by the pope was greeted with joy by many who long for inter-communion, there seems no prospect of any resolution in the near future, as witness the June 2018 German statement and their recent dialogues with various Roman dicasteries.⁸ To many, both within and without the Catholic Church, it appears that the whole engagement with ecumenical issues by Catholic authorities lacks sincerity. One day it seems as if intercommunion is simply the next step in recognising our common belonging to the community of baptism as we make our pilgrimage of faith as disciples, because we celebrate eucharistically at the Lord's table at which all of us are guests. The next day, the past seems to echo back around us in the form of formal exclusions, the contemporary form of *anathema sit*, and a presentation of the Catholic Church as the perfect Church. Other gatherings (who might self-identify as ‘churches’) are merely church-like (‘ecclesial gatherings’ in Catholic terminology) and can be characterised by their defects, while their eucharistic assemblies might

⁷ Cited from Vatican website: [papa-francesco_20151115_chiesa-evangelica-luterana.pdf](#)

⁸ All these documents can be found on the website of the German Episcopal Conference.

not be anything more than appearances ('invalid' in Catholic language) due to defects in order (i.e. there is no one who has been empowered by the Christ to preside) or intention (i.e. they do not intend to do what 'the [Catholic] Church does' when it celebrates).⁹

Is this swinging to-and-fro among the Catholic responses to be explained as a matter of ecclesiastical politics (some version of the conservative versus progressive dialectic we find in human organisations – and there is certainly an important element of this at work) or a lack of commitment (a form of bad faith whereby 'nice things' are said when in the spotlight of a world incredulous of the nature of inter-church disputes, but which are then not backed up in practice – and this is a feature of some ecumenical activities), or is there a deeper problem also at work? The contention of this paper is that, largely unconsciously, Catholics find themselves operating within two distinct 'languages' – with what Wittgenstein would call 'language games' – which, while having many common elements, are fundamentally incompatible with one another. This use of two languages within Catholicism is a problem even if all the other factors, the 'non-theological factors' such chauvinism about one's own tradition or someone's personal conservative tribalism, are excluded. Moreover, coming to grips with this confusing bilingualism regarding sacramentality is not only important for ecumenical dialogue between the churches but for a more fruitful theological discussion within the Catholic Church.

3. A common language? One Bread One Body (1998) as a case study

That there is such a Babel-like situation within Catholic discourse at the present time might seem to overstate the position. So my starting

⁹ Very few Protestant Christians share the training in scholastic categories which allows them to enter into this language game and exploit its inherent contradictions, but one who did was the nineteenth-century Anglican theologian Richard Whately – now better remembered as a logician than as a theologian – in his *The Scripture Doctrine concerning the Sacraments* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), 78-91, where he discusses 'intention'. What sets Whately apart from more recent theologians is in that book we meet a case of religious antagonists, where his approach could hardly be described as eirenic, using the same vision of theological language: both he and his opponents believe they can have a complete and comprehensive doctrine of the eucharist.

point is to look at just one actual example of this bilingualism at work. The case I take is the document issued in 1998 not just by one episcopal conference, but by three – those of (1) Ireland, (2) Scotland, and (3) England and Wales – acting together, and entitled *One Bread One Body*. This is a good case study for several reasons. Firstly, this is surely a significant case of non-Roman *magisterium* within the Catholic Church in that it involved several conferences within a single linguistic/geographical region. Secondly, it is not confined in its influence to the British Isles but has been used as a model by many other episcopal conferences for the expression of their position on intercommunion. It can be viewed, therefore, as a recent expression of what is seen as a settled matter among Catholic bishops. Thirdly, it has provoked a widespread debate of the commitment of the Catholic Church, and as to whether ecumenical discussion regarding the eucharist can ever make practical progress. In particular, it has provoked a very thoughtful response from the Church of England which itself illustrates the problems of incompatible languages.¹⁰ Lastly, *One Bread One Body* while not adopting the formal lexicon of scholastic theology tends to default to scholastic categories and, more importantly, to express its basic thinking using one language while expressing its desire for unity and dialogue within another.

Anyone reading *One Bread One Body* notices that there are both theological issues and issues of theological style in the rejection of arguments for intercommunion. However, trying to tie down what exactly are the crucial issues is far from easy – as becomes clear from even a cursory reading of the 2001 Anglican response. Why there is this lack of clarity is itself surprising, given that (a) Catholic magisterial documents tend to pride themselves on using precise language and (b) there is a tendency in most discussions relating to the sacraments to begin with some form of definition. It is the argument of this paper that this apparent lack of clarity has far deeper roots within Catholic discourse of the eucharist than is commonly recognised, and that explicitly identifying this issue is a preliminary, but necessary, step in dialogue relating to intercommunion.

An obvious presupposition of discourse, much less dialogue, is that there is a common language which is more or less understood by those

¹⁰ The House of Bishops of the Church of England, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity* (London: Church House Publishing, 2001).

using it. However, if we look at contemporary Catholic discourse we find that there are two languages relating to the sacraments, and especially the eucharist, being used simultaneously and rarely distinguished. The result is that both among Catholics themselves, and in discussions with other Christians there is a string of instances of that ambiguity.¹¹ Both of these languages are 'official' Catholic languages (i.e. used in church documents) for the doctrinal exposition of the eucharist but are so intermingled that many statements allow contradictory conclusions to be drawn.¹² It might be argued that these are conflicting theologies or approaches, but I think of them as 'languages' because each has its own lexicon, grammar, and world-created-by-language, and the differences tend to be far more opaque to the users, just as language tends to be. If one takes a theological position, that is usually visible in the statements one makes; but before one takes any theological stance, one adopts a 'language,' with all the assumptions that go with it, and it is at that level (which is deeper than the explicit theological content of one's utterances) that the confusion arises.

One easily recognized feature of this simultaneous use of two languages is that when any statement is made regarding the eucharist, in either language, very often Catholics feel that there is 'still "something" more to say' such than any one language, particularly the more modern language, appears to be 'somehow' inadequate and to call forth an iteration of older formulae lest 'something' should be lost. This tension in Catholic discourse regarding the eucharist is usually explained in terms of a theological dialectic among Catholics such as the very familiar conservative versus liberal debate, or, more precisely,

¹¹ This ambiguity takes the formal shape of being 'fallacies of four terms' (*quaternio terminorum*).

¹² Many of the disagreements among Catholics that have arisen in the matters of liturgical interpretation of Vatican II (e.g. the seemingly endless debates about the meaning of *actuosa participatio*: is *actuosa* to be understood as a binary term with *potentialiter* within a scholastic world of differentiating continuously between 'potency' and 'act'; or does *actuosa* mean 'actual' in general usage so that the aim is a community that is 'wholly celebrant' – I take this rendering from Richard Hurley's article 'The Eucharist Room at Carlow Liturgy Center: The Search for Meaning,' *Worship* 70/3 (1996) 238-51 at 238) can be explained in terms of these two kinds of language so when each claims the other side 'does not hear them' and both claim they are 'simply reading Vatican II', all concerned forget that there are two languages at work.

the clash between inherited 'scholastic' categories and the current post-scholastic mode of Catholic theology, or, more simply, as a conflict between theological 'principles' or 'models.' But while there is an element of all these dialectical processes involved, there are still other factors affecting the Catholic approach to eucharist that need to be identified.

Before going further, it is a good idea to look at a simple example of these two languages being used simultaneously. In 1972 the Catholic bishops in the United States published a document on music which contained this, now famous, statement:

Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy faith.

To celebrate the liturgy means to do the action or perform the sign in such a way that the full meaning and impact shine forth in clear and compelling fashion.¹³

The first of these statements has, over the past forty years, become an oft-cited principle among liturgists. Since the statement's general truth is known to most people engaged in actual communities' worship it seems to be little more than stating what should be obvious. Liturgy matters!¹⁴

However, while the statement has been often repeated in semi-official documents, it has also occasioned hesitation. In particular, the notion that a variable quality, such as that of performance, could be detrimental to faith, has troubled many Catholics. There is 'something else' they wish to affirm. On the one hand, the notion that well performed liturgy is itself a 'good' and, therefore, contributes to producing a good fruit, the nourishing and fostering of faith, is not problematic. However, the idea that the efficacy of a rite could be so

¹³ Bishops' Committee on Liturgy, United States Catholic Conference, *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, DC: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1972), nn. 6-7. The history of this statement demonstrates the hesitation that it generated: it began its career in 1968 U.S. Bishops' document *The Place of Music in Eucharistic Celebrations*; it evolved in form in the 1983 revised edition of *Music in Catholic Worship*, and then in *Sing to the Lord* (2007). For details of this evolution, see Edward Foley, *A Lyrical Vision: The Music Documents of the American Bishops* (Collegeville, NM: The Liturgical Press, 2009), 22, 32-3, 43, and 61.

¹⁴ I have developed this at greater length in *The Rites and Wrongs of Liturgy: Why Good Liturgy Matters* (Collegeville, MN.: The Liturgical Press, 2018).

vitiated by the nature of the performance that it would work against the rite's purpose and so be detrimental seems to overstep the mark in some way or other. Surely, many feel, a sacrament has its own reality, its own efficacy, its own intrinsic *potestas* and goodness whether or not it is 'well done.' The demands of 'liturgy' – when that term means more than the fulfilment of the ritual – are not *that* important that they destroy sacramental efficacy. Expressed another way: well-performed liturgy is a *desideratum*, but not a *sine qua non*. Indeed, having declared the opening statement to be *obviously* true (for most people somehow know that good liturgy builds up while they have seen many 'turned off' by bad liturgy), a great many Catholics would reject the notion that good liturgy is essential (certainly not if expressed as a '*sine qua non*') for the liturgy is the liturgy however celebrated – and consequently good liturgical practice is 'a bonus,' an 'add on,' or a peripheral matter to the actual event of making the liturgy happen. This is not only an argument that is self-contradictory in its own process of thought, but one that takes external, practical form: one asserts the centrality of the eucharistic liturgy, but then ignores the fact that provision for a 'good liturgy' may be wholly lacking. Similarly, in seminaries there may be much attention to training to ensure that the liturgy occurs correctly – irrespective of situations, numbers taking part or occasions – but little concern with presiding skills, but at the same time repeating the theme that the presbyter presiding at the eucharist stands at the centre of the assembled People of God and that each eucharistic celebration is an authentic expression of this actual community.

4. The differences between an empirical and a 'Neo-Platonic' language

How can we describe these two languages? Most of us, most of the time, and virtually always in contemporary scholarship, use language in an empirical way. We seek to describe what we are doing, why we are doing it, and 'to give an account of the hope that is within us' (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15). Because we are describing living processes we do not imagine that our words wholly embrace reality: all our statements are imprecise, incorrect, and incomplete. We hope to improve on this situation by practice, education, shared endeavour, and a continual process of revision, and in all this our thinking is playing 'catch up' because as we revise our understanding, so too reality changes. We are trying to build – note it is a continuing activity – a base of evidence to allow us to move

towards a better picture of the world, we are certainly doing more than seeking out 'authorities' and 'precedents' (in the manner of a lawyer prosecuting a case) which demonstrate the inherent rectitude and perfection of our existing position.¹⁵ The notion that any book or set of ideas is definitive is fundamentally alien to us: there will always be more to say. We, without ever reading Karl Popper, just sense that every body of theory – such as the theologies we use today to make sense of our living out of faith – is only sound to the extent that it has not been falsified and so become the basis for our next revision. Likewise, we assume that words are provisional items of code: better expressions will come along, words will date and be replaced, and there is always an element of uncertainty that what I mean by a word is not what you mean. Rather than dwelling on this, we work with words and, when necessary, seek to clarify our meaning. Moreover, since words bring us to a shared pool of meaning, as distinct from encompassing a reality, there is always a poetic element in human discourse and this is always the case when we use language in religious contexts. This paper, for example, is written with these assumptions in play.

But there is another 'language' with a long history in Christian discourse and which is, in particular, a part of the Catholic inheritance. In this discourse, language is, for those who use it, comprehensive of reality and, furthermore, its elements can be assembled to form in the minds of its users a replica of the actual universe under discussion. The internal world of the language, within the minds of those who use it and who regulate its consistency as a matter of mental discipline, is believed to be an exact *simulacrum* of reality.¹⁶ Now language builds a

¹⁵ This distinction between the lawyer seeking precedent and the historian seeking evidence is often ignored, but vitiates much 'historical' writing, particularly relating to sacramental theology that is used in Catholic debates. Thus, for example, a single 'precedent' for the use of unleavened bread is presented as the basis for it being 'an ancient tradition' despite the fact that it is a ninth / tenth century innovation in the Latin west. In such debates the issue is not the raw fact of what was once done, but the entire language that is being used.

¹⁶ The fundamental epistemological flaw of this manner of thinking was exposed and parodied by Lewis Carroll in 1893 when instead of a perfect map at a scale of 1:1 – which could not be unfolded as its damaged the crops – its inventors had to be content with what 'does nearly as well': 'the country itself

world which so mirrors reality that a command and understanding of the language is equivalent to a comprehension of reality *extra mentem*. This *imago mundi* does not need constant revision, nor does it see itself as conditioned and provisional: it not only described reality now, but by relating to the essential realities, its insight into what is 'really happening' beneath the appearances, is transcending time: one knows the parts of reality in their essential natures. When it succeeds – and sinful humanity will not always attain to this clarity¹⁷ – it is an ideal description of an ideal world. Of course, no one is so foolish as to imagine that they actually have this ideal language right now, but rather they are happy they are on their way to it and they certainly do not see understanding as subject to constant revision as new evidence comes to light: it is merely improved and 'developed' by a process of incremental addition. The historicity and particularity of knowing is not a foundation of this language but rather the noise in the system. Defects are due to human weakness or wickedness, but as in the classic image, derived from Plato, as the human being turns towards the light, the more that person is granted knowledge which rises above the ephemeral.¹⁸

Intellectually, we reject this second view of language as naïve and dated. We imagine that it belongs only to certain schools of mathematicians, formal logical systems such as computer programmes, and an out-dated physics. But it is also the view of knowing and language that has a long history in theology. We can see it emerging in the work of Isidore of Seville (c.560-636)¹⁹ in parallel with the earliest collections of canon law and it underpins centuries of argument on sacramental theology where many of the key notions used in argument had their origin in the early medieval period. It is not to be identified with the language of the university scholastics nor of the canonists, though they did tend to use it far more than they used the other, more

(L. Carroll, *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* as found in *The Complete Illustrated Works* [New York, NY: Gramercy Books, 1982], 727).

¹⁷ Traditionally, sinfulness both 'actual' and as 'an effect of Original Sin' were invoked to explain any 'noise' within the system.

¹⁸ *The Republic*, 514a-520a.

¹⁹ See Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Isidore's Hermeneutics: the Codification of the Tradition' in *The Theory of Biblical Interpretation: The Latin Fathers*, ed. Tarmo Toon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 206-231; and 'Isidore as a Theologian' in *A Companion to Isidore of Seville*, ed. Jamie Wood (forthcoming).

Aristotelian, language. However, many of the basic assumptions of the canonists can only be appreciated by noting their use of this language,²⁰ and it is principally (but not exclusively) through the use of canon law in Catholic sacramental discourse today that this language still survives. This may seem a bold claim, but it is always worth recalling that the system of the seven sacraments of the Latin church arose first among the canonists, while theologians such as Aquinas often used Gratian as the source of a *fons theologiae*.²¹

More importantly, while canonists today will point out the limits of canonical understanding, the fact remains that there is a canonical understanding of the eucharist, it is known by Catholic clergy and affects their everyday life, and, consequently, another language for discussing the eucharist is present through the canonical language. This older language is invariably 'running in the background' even when people are seeking a renewed theology of the eucharist in study, a better praxis in liturgy, or shared understanding in ecumenical dialogue. So if we want to see this other 'language' we can do no better than to look at how the eucharist is described in canon law. In linguistic terms, this older canonical language is a source of 'substrate interference' with the common language with which Catholics would discuss the sacraments with Protestants.

5. The vision of the eucharist in the 1983 Code

Canon 897 offers a canonist's definition of the eucharist using the language of 'centre and summit' but it is the definition of a legal object which is encountered by Christians – most significantly there is no hint that 'eucharist' is an activity of a gathering of Christians. Christians relate to 'it' – the eucharist – as to something independent of them, they neither 'do it' nor do they create it by their actions when gathered. This is further expanded in the following canon, 898, which speaks of the laity and the eucharist who are 'to hold the blessed eucharist,' an object *extra mentem*, in reverence, they are to receive it frequently, and see it as the object of adoration. The sacrament is not an encounter here

²⁰ See Stephen G. Kuttner, *Harmony from Dissonance: An Interpretation of Medieval Canon Law* (Latrobe, PA: The Archabbey Press, 1960).

²¹ In *Summa Theologiae* 3a, 73-78 – the central *quaestiones* in his treatment of the eucharist – Aquinas used Gratian on no fewer than twenty-two occasions; yet we rarely refer to Gratian's 'editorial' work in the evolution of eucharistic theology.

between the community and God, or even the community and the Christ, but is a distinct element in the divine scheme towards which there is an appropriate reaction as to an entity outside of themselves. Moreover, the eucharist has 'a doctrine' which is imagined as inherent in the object – rather than as a story of the community making sense of its activity. It is the duty of the parish priest to expound this doctrine, which is external to his own faith and understanding, and so any notion that a community can develop its own theology of the eucharist is wholly alien to this view. Likewise, there is no room within this view for the notion that a community's theology of the eucharist is evolving through their eucharistic practice, their reflection on that practice, nor through their encounters with other Christians who might not self-identify as 'Catholics.' But we all know that actual theologies of the eucharist are continually evolving,²² and the experience of Catholics and non-Catholics worshipping together is very often a spur towards transformation in the understanding for both groups.²³

So how does the eucharist come about?²⁴ Is it the action of Christ and the Church 'by ministry of a priest' (*sacerdos*), and there is no mention of the gathering – the assembled community, as such, is therefore not an agent.²⁵ Rather the gathering can participate in the reality (which exists anterior to that participation). This must be the case because otherwise a priest – significantly always referred to as a *sacerdos*²⁶–

²² See Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Eucharistic Celebrations: the Chasm between Idea and Reality,' *New Blackfriars* 91 (2010) 423-38.

²³ It is worth recalling that as recently as the early 1960s treatises on moral theology had a section under the heading 'sins against the virtue of religion' which included formal and material 'co-operation in false rites.' While material collaboration (e.g. a Catholic nurse calling a non-Catholic minister to visit a non-Catholic patient) could be justified as a human charity; formal collaboration (if that nurse answered prayers as if part of a congregation at the bedside) was forbidden.

²⁴ Within this language causality is a primary concern (which takes legal form in the concern over the exercise of a *potestas*) rather than the empirical question of 'what are we dealing with?'

²⁵ Canon 899.

²⁶ *Sacerdos* canonically covers both presbyters and bishops but its use focuses on the attention on 'powers' and, since the use of the word is then applied to Jesus through a particular way of reading the Letter to the Hebrews and then taking back to the presbyter what is there said of Jesus, further problems ensue for ecumenical dialogue. For an example of the recent confusion of the two

would not be able to celebrate Mass without a community: but this is plainly absurd. Therefore, the community (apart from the priest) cannot be imagined as active in bring about the eucharist. This view, that the priest alone is active is then seen in the link the code makes between the eucharist and sacerdotal identity (such as an encouragement to celebrate daily 'even if it is not possible to have the faithful present'²⁷). That the priest – in virtue of ordination rather than position in the community – is essential, is, for Catholics, uncontroversial;²⁸ but it means that all to do with the gathering – indeed the whole realm of liturgy while possibly praiseworthy or *ad melius esse* – is accidental to the realities involved. Only that which can affect the 'reality' of the eucharist – is it or is it not – can have the dignity of full seriousness. The real liturgy is not what one takes part in, which one sees and experiences, at 'a liturgy on a particular day' but something other of which this celebration on this particular Sunday is but a momentary manifestation.

But surely there must be at least a token congregation, a server justified as a token of the gathering? But that does not mean that it is not possible – and if possible, then the question becomes one of legality: and it is lawful for 'a just and reasonable cause' to have no other person present.²⁹ Then there is the hoary old question of consecrating just bread or wine or both without any celebration of the eucharist – again it is possible, but it is always a crime (*nefas est*) even if for a good reason.³⁰ Lurking here we see the presence of the late medieval discussions about the possibility of consecrating as a joke³¹ – and clearly

languages regarding this use of *sacerdos* in a semi-official Roman document, see Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Are the Bishops ... the "High Priests" Who Preside at the Eucharist'? A Note on the Sources of *Sensus Fidei*," *New Blackfriars* 98 (2017) 232-38.

²⁷ Canon 904.

²⁸ Canon 900.

²⁹ Canon 906.

³⁰ Canon 927.

³¹ This is the debate of whether consecration is an act done or the result of an intention, which in turn is seen to rest on the certainty of the sacrament operating '*ex opere operato*', while only '*sacramentalia*' operate *ex opere operantis* (i.e. the intention being 'a work' of the worker). This issue has a long and complex history and surfaces in a variety of places, for example, in the 1520 Bull of Leo X condemning Martin Luther, see Heinrich Denzinger – Peter

that is still considered a real possibility. In entertaining this possibility, we find ‘the bottom line’ regarding eucharistic presidency / presbyteral ministry: it is the stable possession of the power to consecrate; and we also see ‘the bottom line’ on sacramentality: it is a power so delegated to the Church that it can operate independently of the presence of faith and worship. Moreover, we should note that these canons do not refer to what would be good clerical conduct (Canon 929 on wearing vestments would be such a rule) but the nature of the crime involved in doing such a thing as consecrating a barrel of wine as an exercise of sacerdotal power: that the ‘power’ is there is not in question, merely its inappropriate use.

This naturally leads modern Christians to ask what image of ‘the Church’ underlies such canons (and so, by extension, those who speak this language / operate this system)? The clear vision of the Church implicit in all these canons is that the lay community is an accidental aspect of the sacrament; and, consequently, it is not their liturgy in the sense of it really ‘belonging’ to them as their activity. The baptised-who-are-not-ordained, often referred to in the Code as *Christifideles laici*, are present at an event, but which is exterior to them in that it is not their doing. But if the community’s presence is accidental to the sacrament, in terms of the individuals concerned that presence is participation in a theological object; and that presence is spiritually beneficial to them.³² Equally, it is not a communal participation *qua tale*, but individual participation by a collection of people (because the group is only an accident of quantity – one could add or remove

Hünemann eds, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum / Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (43rd ed.) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), n. 1462 [364].

³² It is in the light of this thinking we can understand why rendering ‘*ut meum ac uestrum sacrificium*’ as ‘our sacrifice’ could be seen as significant: it is at the base of all justifications of ‘having Masses offered’ that the ‘sacrificing’ by the priest is ontologically distinct in nature and not simply in degree from the ‘sacrificing’ of a lay person – otherwise, how would having a priest ‘say Mass for X’ (and offering him a stipend) be different from any person ‘offering Mass for X’? [and this *reductio ad absurdum* is the proof of the original premise: a priest’s place in the sacrifice is unique].

individuals without affecting the reality of the event).³³ So here we see the dissonance of the two languages: in the empirical language used by liturgists and in preaching we have words about the community as a real unity, with a presider, and that acting as the People of God *in Christo* offering worship to the Father. In the other language, we have the vision of a rigidly divided two-tier church (*sacerdotes* /everyone else) engaged in two activities: the *sacerdotes* celebrating the eucharist and the baptised attending that event and by that attendance carrying out, *singulariter singulis*, a Christian's obligations. In real life we now have a nasty set of problems of understanding: (a) which language are we to listen to as the genuine statement of the Catholic position; (b) are we seeking to listen to one but with the other as an 'interference'; or (c) have we a macaronic muddle in which people jumble bits from both languages willy-nilly and, very often, unconsciously?³⁴

But does it do an injustice to the canons to say they envisage the eucharist as a sacred object, an *ens* brought into being by a priest (albeit usually in the presence of other Christians)? The canons see him preparing for the action and then making a 'thanksgiving' after it.³⁵ The spectre of an infinite regress of a thanksgiving for thanksgiving does not occur to them because the priest is being thankful to God for the sacramental event which allows him to receive a sacred object, 'Communion,' and, indeed, for the gift to him of the power to celebrate, and, consequently to confect an event so wonderfully beneficial to other Christians. In this vein, the eucharist is virtually equivalent to 'communion' which is a substantial reality that should be received within 'Mass' although it can be lawfully given outside it;³⁶ and it is a

³³ It is in the light of this thinking we can see why replacing '*credo*' by the more liturgically aware 'we believe' was so abhorrent to many in the 1973 translation of the sacramentary: a liturgical 'we' was an ephemeral accident, but an 'I' was a subsisting substance.

³⁴ What U.S. Catholics call 'the culture wars' about liturgy and interpret as a battle between 'parties' (one conservative / one progressive) can be better understood on a case-by-case basis as resulting from macaronic confusion.

³⁵ Canon 909.

³⁶ Canon 918. This issue of communion outside a celebration of the eucharist is, in many ways, a touchstone of how the two languages conflict: the older language argues from isolated 'facts' such as it can be done and is not wrong, therefore it cannot be forbidden, and as such presents no problems – and so there has been the rise of 'eucharistic services' as a response to a shortage of

legal requirement on every Catholic to receive Communion once a year (and whether this involves participation in the eucharist is unclear).³⁷

However, the fullest expression of this reified, ontological approach is in the special chapter of canons on stipends given to have Masses offered for people (living and dead) and intentions.³⁸ Here the questions turn on quantities of Masses and it is presumed that quantities matter. This may abhor theologians – and there is a canon warning that there should be nothing that gives the impression of trafficking³⁹ – but the fact remains that once one begins to count objects, then it means you are dealing with discrete objects with distinct significance. Counting implies quantity. So we are back to the visions of Gregory the Great⁴⁰ and the need for an exact number of Masses to deal with a precise amount of divine punishment,⁴¹ which is still very much part of Catholic practice: indeed, ‘getting Masses said’ for the dead is a practice that continues long after any other faith commitment has disappeared. Meanwhile, both the diocesan bishop and the parish priest has a sworn duty ‘to apply the benefits of the Mass’ to his people on Sundays and holydays (this is quite distinct from any duty to actually preside where the community is assembled – which is not demanded by the law),⁴² but neither has a duty to give their people a well-resourced liturgy.

priests, but it then obscures the more important issues of appropriateness within a system of signs and the notion of faith as a sacramental encounter; see Thomas O’Loughlin, “Eucharist or Communion Service?” *The Way*, 38 (1998) 365-74.

³⁷ Canon 920.

³⁸ Canons 945-958.

³⁹ Canon 947.

⁴⁰ *Dialogi* 4,57 ; and see Cyrille Vogel, ‘Deux Conséquences de l’eschatologie Grégorienne: La multiplication des Messes Privées et les moines-prêtres’ in Jacques Fontaine, et al., eds, *Grégoire le Grand* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1986), 267-76.

⁴¹ See Thomas O’Loughlin, “Treating the “Private Mass” as Normal: Some Unnoticed Evidence from Adomnán’s *De locis sanctis*,” *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 51 (2009), 334-44 which examines the origins of the notion in the *Dialogi* of Gregory the Great.

⁴² Canons 388 and 534.

6. The situation confronting Catholics

I have not set out this synopsis of the Code as a vision of abuse but simply as a taste of what one finds there: this is the law that every Catholic cleric encounters and it provides the framework of his life. And this legal framework is symptomatic of the older, early medieval, sacramental language. Simultaneously, that presbyter reads documents like *Sacrosanctum concilium*, books written in its wake, and hears the actual language of the liturgy: all of which utilize not only a distinct theology but use a 'language' that relates to the world in a very different way. Our cleric may even hear part of the reply of Pope Francis to Anke de Bernardinis when he said: "Well there are explanations, interpretations ..." [as to why there are separations between the churches] Life is greater than explanations and interpretations.' Could there be clearer example of how we ordinarily use an empirical rather than a 'Neo-Platonic' language?

But the fact remains that Catholics are continuously hearing the two languages of sacramentality intermingled and in close proximity – indeed it is this bilingualism that may lie at the base of many of the factional disputes within the Catholic Church today. For the cleric, one is a language that seems full of abstractions and comes to him at occasional lectures and in accidental reading; the other greets him every day in the sacristy, in the structures he is expected to maintain, and it provides the standards against which he is held responsible. He is like the local people in Brian Friel's play *Translations* caught between two languages and who do not know to which world they belong. This is not just the choice between two theologies or two styles of celebration or even two cultures, but two non-compatible ways of imagining the world. With which do I interact? And confronted haphazardly and unconsciously by this question, most Catholics do not reject one in favour of the other but, again haphazardly, seek to keep both, oscillating between two worlds.

In this paper I have used the analogy of two languages to express not simply the difference between the content of our theological discussion on one side, and that which emerges for Catholics from their canonical inheritance on the other, but also from the different ways each imagines the religious universe. One side sees that universe essentially as a mystery which is explored, interpreted and examined in an on-going endeavour that will one day conclude with the *eschaton: omnia exeunt in mysterium*. The other is far more confident of its grasp of sacred

reality and, as is the way with law, there is a desire for consistency and coherence of the parts, and thus an elaborate sacramental world of objects can be constructed.

The weakness of the language analogy for this problem is that spoken languages are more or less equal in dignity: if I choose to use French as *my* language while you choose to use German as your language, then *ceteris paribus* we (you and I), for the purpose of a convenient dialogue, simply opt for one of them perhaps by tossing a coin so that neither of us can be accused of dominating the other. But the older sacramental 'language' is not of equal dignity with the empirical language of everyday life, theology, and prayer. That language arose within a particular set of circumstances and was perpetuated within another specific situation, and, today, its continuance is both a distraction, a source of confusion, and a real obstacle to ecumenism. If we manage to isolate this older language of the sacraments in, for instance, our canon law, it may allow us to identify other aspects of that image of the eucharist as the sacred commodity which is perpetuated in a range of practices that surround eucharistic celebrations, while at the same time fostering a language for worship practice that can be related more directly to the other aspects of the Christian life.

I am conscious that many more examples are needed to demonstrate the case I am making. In lieu of such repetitious examples I invite readers to consider situations both from within Catholic practice (e.g. the reluctance to consider the use of wafers from the tabernacle at the eucharist as a liturgical fault) and where Catholics' and others' practice diverge (e.g. that over most of the Catholic world communion '*sub utraque specie*' is rarely, if ever, given) and observe how the notion of these two commingled languages helps to clarify what is happening in the liturgy. This particular confusion of tongues makes life more difficult for Catholics, as well as hindering all Christians in singing God's praises with one voice.

Finally, has this any practical implications for the Church as it continues its journey? We have noted already the distinction drawn by Pope Francis between sharing the Lord's Supper as *the end* of a journey and sharing it as *the viaticum* for walking together. It is remarkable that this distinction, which he drew apparently in the moment, mirrors almost exactly the distinction of languages I have been exploring in this paper. To speak of 'ends' brings us into the world of a metaphysics that knows essences clearly, links transient events to those within a known

causal framework, and so can deduce actions (e.g. the inadmissibility of non-Catholics to eucharistic sharing) with certainty. To use the image of viaticum is to assume that every action of frail human beings has a provisional nature whereby we seek to understand the divine mystery in fragments over time with the clarity of knowledge only becoming visible to us in the vision of God summed up neatly in Newman's epitaph: *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*. But if this second route is to be taken, then we need to acknowledge and abandon the Neo-Platonic language and approach the questions with the searching openness, characteristic of empirical languages, not only to theological knowledge but of the messiness of human experience. This process, this language is always ragged and incomplete in its arguments and so we need to have a fallback that decides the benefit of the doubt – and for me that cannot be other than to adopt John 6:37 as a pastoral principle: 'Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive (*ekballo*) away.' On the other hand, we could adopt the notion that our language does grasp revelation to such an extent that we can construct a closed deductive system (or, at least, what approximates to such a system): the history of religions can furnish many examples of such confidence. Leaving aside the arguments for why such an option is a false path, we should simply note that in that case virtually all genuine dialogue with non-Catholics becomes impossible, as indeed it was taken to be until well into the twentieth century. And if we acknowledged that this language is our language for matters relating to the sacraments we would save all concerned much time and effort, as well as saving all who would seek to engage in dialogue with us, much frustration.

A TALE OF TWO DIALOGUES

David Carter*

This article reviews two international bilateral dialogue reports which appeared almost simultaneously in July 2018. Each has methodological significance for other such dialogues. ARCIC III makes intensive use of receptive ecumenism, a style of learning from the practice of dialogue partner churches which emerged with the first seminal conference on receptive ecumenism, held at Durham in 2006. The Baptist-Methodist dialogue, a much more recent one than ARCIC, has produced a very 'user friendly' study guide to enable better reception of its fruits in local Baptist and Methodist congregations, thus helping, potentially, to enable much wider reception than has usually been possible for dialogue reports. In both reports, there is much that can be learnt about the style of governance and life of the communions involved in the two separate dialogues. Both stress the importance of learning from the partner involved.

In July, two international bilateral ecumenical dialogues between two very different sets of partners produced reports. One, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church-Local, Regional, Universal* was the latest report of a long series, dating back almost continuously to 1967, the other, *Faith Working through Love* was the first report of a dialogue, which began only five years ago. The first report was specifically designed to apply the principles of receptive ecumenism and mutual learning to very specific problems within each of the two communions involved, the solution of which might be helped by learning from the practice of the other. The newer dialogue, whilst certainly acknowledging the value of receptive ecumenism and growth

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in mutual understanding and reception, was primarily concerned with making the partners more aware of each other and the possibilities for common fellowship and mission.

The two dialogues concerned are those between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church and between the World Methodist Council and the Baptist World Alliance. The first has the long term aim of full unity in faith and sacramental life: an aim that, in its first years, was believed by some to be achievable within the foreseeable future. However, by the 1980's, it was coming up against seemingly insurmountable problems, such as the admission, by an increasing number of Anglican provinces, of women to holy orders, a step which, from 1976, successive pontiffs felt the Roman Catholic Church was not authorised to take. Further problems were to occur in the new millennium when differences over the attitude to homosexuality and same-sex marriage began to create deep fissures within Anglicanism. From 2005 to 2011, there was a hiatus in the dialogue process.

Fortunately, however, the common sense of ecumenical vocation in both communions was so strong that the decision was taken to resume the dialogue, in the hope that both churches might find ways of learning from each other's strategy for keeping the communion together and coping with new issues that threatened to be divisive. Could a balance be found between Roman Catholic practice, that could seem too centralisingly authoritarian, and Anglican practice which seemed to value provincial autonomy to the point where it threatened internal communion and led to degrees of impaired communion between certain provinces and also *within* them? In particular, could the practice of receptive ecumenism offer real hope for advance? The principle was strongly endorsed by Archbishop Welby who stressed that ARCIC must ask 'not what we might give the other but what we lack that God might give us through the other'.¹ To this the Commission members add their own comment 'walking together means that, as travelling companions, we tend each other's wounds and that we love one another in our woundedness'.²

The second dialogue arose out of the desire within two other communions for greater practical co-operation and mutual

¹ *Walking Together on the Way* (hereafter cited as *Walking*), 18.

² *Ibid.*, 21.

understanding. In it, there was no problem analogous to the Roman Catholic-Anglican one of relating a church which claims to be the unique full embodiment of the Church of Christ to another communion that regards itself as a true part of the one holy catholic church along with a variety of other Christian communions. Both Methodists and Baptists claim to be part of the rich diversity of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. They have no difficulty over accepting each other's ministries. They both hold the essentials of the apostolic faith.³ There are tensions over differing practices with regard to baptism and some differing nuances over the ways in which justification and the authority of Scripture are understood but nothing that prevents common mission, in some cases, such as in Italy, Sweden and North India on a very close basis, in all three countries with third or more partners, in India also in common acceptance of a church with a ministry with the historic episcopate.⁴

Each dialogue reveals a common feature with lessons applicable to others. In the ARCIC case, it is the consistent application of the principles of receptive ecumenism to the practical problems of balancing central authority and more local acceptable autonomy. In the case of the Baptist-Methodist dialogue it is the development of a particularly useful *Study Guide* to accompany the main theological text, thus making reception at the grassroots level of local congregations and individual church members easier. Reception at this level has always been, and remains, the Achilles heel of the Ecumenical Movement. It must be tackled if the aim, alike of the fathers of Vatican II and ecumenists from all denominations, of making concern and action for unity a matter for all the faithful is ever to be achieved.

The *Study Guide*, devised by two members of the joint commission for the dialogue, explains the issues discussed in the various sections of the report in simpler language, unpacking such complex issues as the work on alternative patterns of Christian initiation and nurture in easier terms. It contains suggestions for discussion in local fellowship groups, appropriate scriptural readings, accounts of Baptist-Methodist co-operation past and present in mission and in service of the marginalised and lists of significant Baptist and Methodist teaching documents. To some extent, its method was foreshadowed in the work and suggestions

³ *Faith Working through Love*, (hereafter cited as *Faith*), 6,20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 87-9.

for local reception in the recent Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue report, *From Glory to Glory, the Call to Holiness* (2016) but this particular *Study Guide* is more fully developed and illustrated.

I now consider each report in detail.

Together on the Way

The ARCIC report *Walking Together on the Way* deals with the first part of a designed two-part process, the second part of which will be devoted to looking at how the two churches can make common decisions on key ethical issues that are currently the subject of controversy within their communions and, indeed, others. It is stressed that, until the Reformation, the communions concerned were at one and still retain similar episcopal and diocesan structures at local level; they both understand the term local church as meaning the diocese presided over by its bishop and not, as in some other traditions, the local congregation.⁵ The report examines the development of co-operation between local churches from New Testament times, tracing the development of regional and wider consultation through regional and universal councils, some of the former, such as the Councils of Elvira and Toledo, having significant consequences for the wider fellowship.⁶

Some account is then given of post-Reformation developments in the divided churches with particular attention to the differences at regional and universal levels. Anglicanism (a term not, of course, then used) remained effectively confined to the British Isles till almost the end of the eighteenth century. Roman Catholicism began overseas missionary expansion beyond Europe from the sixteenth century, though, for both communions and others, the great era of such expansion was the nineteenth century. In the Roman Catholic communion, the circumstances alike of the sixteenth century reaction against Protestantism and the nineteenth century reaction to both secular challenges and overseas mission brought about an increase of central papal power, with little attention being given to any need for decision making at regional level, the current development of national bishops' conferences having only come about through Vatican II and the direction of Pope Paul VI.

⁵ *Walking*, iii.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii.

Where Anglicanism was concerned, missionary activity and the settlement of large numbers of Anglicans in America and the colonies of British settlement necessitated the appointment of bishops and the formation bit by bit of provinces. The fact that the Church of England was the established church in England, but could not be so in America and elsewhere, meant the development of overseas provinces, which had to develop their own systems of regional church consultation and government. These generally created synods that contained lay representatives alongside the clergy, usually empowered to make significant changes in liturgy and ecumenical relations whilst always safeguarding the authority of the bishops who, as in the Church of England today, would have to agree independently of the clergy and lay representatives to any changes in liturgy, doctrinal expression or ecumenical accords.

From 1867, the Lambeth Conferences met every ten years. These are global meetings of Anglican bishops, intended to foster mutual support and debate on matters confronting all the Anglican provinces. The Archbishop of Canterbury convenes the conferences and plays a leading role in them but is not regarded as having any power over the provinces other than his own. He is certainly not an 'Anglican Pope'. A key distinction between the current Roman Catholic and Anglican systems of universal fellowship is that progress towards the restoration of full unity in faith and sacramental life can only be made at the universal level in the Roman Catholic Church whereas different Anglican provinces and national churches can make varying agreements, which are not necessarily shared by others. Thus, the Anglican churches of the British Isles are in the Porvoo Communion with Scandinavian and Baltic Lutheran churches.⁷ The churches of England and Ireland have covenant relationships with British and Irish Methodists, a recent Irish agreement also allowing for inter-changeability of presbyteral ministry, something not yet agreed in England.⁸ These agreements lack transitivity, that is to say they do not apply to all Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist churches across the globe, an act that, as things presently are, would require agreement in all the synods and conferences responsible for particular regions.

⁷ With the exception of the Church of Latvia.

⁸ My article in *One in Christ* (2014, no2, 194-214) deals with the developing relationships between Anglicans and Methodists as they stood then.

One can argue that the differences between the two communions are inherent in their different ways of understanding their relationship to the universal Church of Christ, as indeed, it is spelt out very early in the Report when it draws attention to the fact that Roman Catholics, while not denying that important elements of the Church exist in other Christian bodies, believe that the Church nevertheless *subsists* in the Roman Catholic Church as possessing all the elements of faith and order necessary even though obviously not developed to their fullest eschatological potential. Anglicans, while claiming to be a part of the one holy catholic Church, see themselves as a part of the whole alongside all other Christian communities in imperfect communion.⁹

To solve the dilemma of these contrasting claims, as the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales realised at the time of the *Called To Be One Process* in the 1990's, will involve neither a capitulation of one side to the other so much as a going forward together into a new and fuller future.¹⁰ It will involve important acts of recognition as to the extent of permissible variety of expression of the essentials of the Christian faith as well as acts permitting the reconciliation of ordained ministries which have not yet been mutually recognised.

Walking strains every theological muscle in seeking to propose useful avenues of advance. Pope Francis and Archbishop Justin say that they are undeterred by the many problems.¹¹ Paul Lakeland, in *The Tablet*, regards it as propitious that this work is happening under the present pontificate.

'My immediate reaction was: Pope Francis is all over this statement'. The way that the document embraces 'explicit ecclesiastical self-critique', synodality, the role of the laity. subsidiarity...all is pure Francis'.¹²

One key problem is the vagueness that has previously attached to thinking about levels of church between the purely local and the universal. All Christian traditions acknowledge the two terms albeit that some, particularly in the independent tradition, define local church very differently from the diocese around the bishop model,

⁹ *Walking*, 3.

¹⁰ Cited in *One in Christ* (1999), 230, 'a common quest for a new and deeper realisation of the unity that the Lord wills and gives to his Church'.

¹¹ *Walking*, 4.

¹² *The Tablet*, 14.7.2018.

common to both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. However, as already pointed out, church exists in a very real sense at national/regional levels, necessarily where the mission-based exigencies of sharing are involved, also in addressing particularly national issues of inculturation, church-state relationships and social justice. Regional synods have made important decisions, such as the synod of the pre-Reformation Church of England which decided, in 1281, with later ecumenical implications of which it was obviously then unaware, on the rule relating to confirmation and reception of holy communion.¹³ Overseas expansion caused the development of Anglican provinces without full consideration of the possible consequences for Anglican unity and cohesion. Roman Catholics intensified centralisation in the interests of unity without full consideration at the time of consequences for local decision making.

In seeking to contribute to the debate on the relationship between local and universal Church, the ARCIC Commission stress that both Anglicans and Catholics affirm the full ecclesial reality of the local church as they both understand it, diocese with bishop. However, they also recognise, to use the words of *The Church, Towards a Common Vision*, that the local church, 'though wholly Church is not the whole of the Church.'¹⁴ It must relate to the rest of the whole communion, but how? The two poles of church are in a certain tension. Too strong a local autonomy strains the bonds of unity and may fail to protect the local church from identifying too closely and insufficiently critically with the local contextual secular culture. Too great a degree of centralisation can inhibit necessary adaptation for local mission.¹⁵

A strong stress is then laid on the way in which their common baptism and participation in the *tria munera* of Christ, priestly, prophetic and royal, involves each of the baptised as Christ's instruments in the salvation of others. 'The loving adoption that is received in baptism urges the faithful to have care for the eternal and present welfare of everyone that they encounter...the service claimed by Christ carries with it the sense of common identity, calling and mutual

¹³ Classically defined as 'none may come to the holy communion except such as be confirmed or desirous of being confirmed'.

¹⁴ *Towards a Common Vision of the Church*. Statement of the Faith and Order division of the World Council of Churches (2012), 31.

¹⁵ *Walking*, 48-49.

responsibility.¹⁶ A strong emphasis is also placed on the operation of the *sensus fidelium* which, as is stressed in recent Roman Catholic teaching, also exists and is operative in other Christian communities.¹⁷ Theological reflection on the Church and other issues is not simply a matter for the hierarchy and theologians, it involves input from 'men, women and children who know God from within and sense what conforms to God's design for human beatitude'.¹⁸

We have here what Methodists and many other Protestants would call 'the ministry of the whole people of God' in which both ordained ministers and layfolk share responsibility together for the total mission to which God calls us in Christ and the mutual counsel and reflection which is involved in developing it. This strong stress will resonate with them, with Anglicans who generally have lay participation in all levels of regional provincial synods and will please those Catholics who wish to see a stronger lay voice in the affairs of the Church, feeling that the basis for this already exists in the teaching of Vatican II. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* calls for layfolk of spirit to give a Christian witness in action across a whole range of occupations.¹⁹

Later in the Report, a detailed analysis of Anglican and Roman Catholic church structures and synods is given. It is clear that in Anglican diocesan and regional synods there are usually houses of bishop(s), clergy and laity, all three having a share in the common responsibility for the mission. Collegial responsibility is stressed in the Roman Catholic Church at the episcopal level. All the bishops watch together over the welfare of the Universal Church in the same way as ministers in the Methodist tradition watch over the Connexion and each other in Conference in faith and love.²⁰ That such a principle should come to cover all Christians lay and ordained would seem to accord with a fundamental Christian instinct of *koinonia* and mutual collegial responsibility and accords with the suggestion in *Walking* that

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

¹⁷ I have explored this in my article in *Ecumenical Trends* (Feb. 2015), pp 6-13, where I examine the document produced by the International Theological Commission in 2014. Para 56 insists that Roman Catholics can learn from the *sensus fidei* at work in other Christian communities.

¹⁸ *Walking*, 54.

¹⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 273.

²⁰ Wesley's question about episcopacy in his time was 'who watches over them in faith and love?'

Roman Catholics take steps to involve layfolk and ordinary clergy more at diocesan and national levels.

Reverting the section on the need for effective instruments of communion, the Commission stress that they need to serve the needs of true catholicity in unity and legitimate diversity. 'To belong to the Church is to belong to a particular local community that is not turned in on itself but reaches beyond itself to become a community in full communion with other communities. Each Christian belongs to a local church and thus shares in the life of every other local church with which that church is in communion.'²¹ At every level, local regional, universal, the Church needs the instruments to serve such communion.

One of the key general overall differences between Anglican and Roman Catholic polity is that the latter generally provides constitutionally for the representation of clergy and layfolk in diocesan and provincial synods, whereas the Roman Catholic system leaves the decision as to whether to involve clergy at diocesan level to the bishop concerned, and as to whether to involve laity in a parish council at the parish level to the parish priest concerned. It is up to the Pope as to when to call a General Council or a particular synod of bishops. Appointment of bishops is nearly always a papal prerogative, though usually involving the use of the national papal nuncio concerned and his consultation with the existing local hierarchy. Anglican bishops are generally appointed through a system in which the clergy and layfolk of diocese have a say.²² Whether the Roman Catholic system should change to something more like the Anglican system, with involvement of people from below is a moot point.

It is, however, accepted that the Anglican system of diocesan and provincial/national synods is not without its snags. The synodical system within dioceses and provinces can fall victim to a rather confrontationalist style of debate which does not always augur well for soberly divining the working and leading of the Spirit on complex issues. It can also eclipse the need to concentrate on catechesis and renewal. It is recommended that Anglicans might learn from a more reflective culture, as found in some Roman Catholic synods, in which

²¹ *Walking*, 6.

²² In England bishops are technically appointed by the Crown, but, today, local opinion is carefully consulted within the total process.

the stress is on seeking to come prayerfully to a common mind.²³ At the same time, the Commission make it abundantly clear that they feel that the current Roman Catholic models of governance ‘seem not to give adequate recognition to the anointing of all the baptised and their share in the Good Shepherd’s pastoral ministry...The lay faithful, for their part, not only receive teaching, but also offer their own expertise and faith to the Church’.

Paragraph 96 further reinforces the case for the need for Roman Catholics for lay discussion, debate and disagreement. It further argues that, valuable and right as it is, ‘the instinct for unity can, however, result in the suppression of difference, the inhibiting of candid conversation, and the avoidance of contentious issues in open fora.’ The Commission conclude the paragraph by stating that the consultative processes involved in the Synods on marriage in 2014-16 seem to point in the right direction.

Paragraph 97 relates to the challenges of church growth and shortage of clergy, particularly in the RC tradition. It draws particular attention to some Anglican developments, in team ministry, use of non-stipendiary clergy and alternative models of formation which might be adoptable in the RC Church. The value of women clergy in contemporary Anglicanism is stressed though not, for obvious reasons, commended as such to Roman Catholics, though it could have been noted that Pope Francis has already agreed to a commission on the possibility of women deacons; elsewhere the report asks if women might preach and possibly enter the ancient minor order of lector.²⁴

In the subsequent section, devoted to receptive learning at local levels, it is argued that Anglicans are particularly faced with the need for unity both within the local and provincial churches and the wider communion. Reference is not made to the behaviour of some Anglican parishes in England who refuse to make appropriate diocesan subscriptions when they disagree with key diocesan decisions, nor to the question of alternative episcopal oversight for parishes that will not accept women clergy, but Anglicans are reminded that ‘a catholic instinct for unity and participation in a greater whole is a deeply embedded value’ and that they must in schismatic situations ‘ask what

²³ *Walking*, 94.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

ecclesial learning can be explored in relation to Roman Catholic universal identity.²⁵

At the universal level, both Roman Catholic and Anglican instruments of unity are considered. The current functions of the Pope are clearly set out. Both churches are reminded that the exercise of his authority was discussed by ARCIC II in *The Gift of Authority* and that many Anglicans already 'recognise the gift that a Petrine ministry, exercised in fidelity to Scripture and Tradition and in service to the Church Universal can be.'²⁶ The concurrent collegiality of bishops and the nature of their teaching is also addressed with the comment that when John Paul II invoked it in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*²⁷, he was unable to adduce any act making explicit the consent of the bishops to this supposedly binding teaching. Clearly the size of the current Catholic episcopate (about 5000) would make this far more difficult than when Pius IX invoked such episcopal unanimity in support of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.²⁸ The question of the Curia, ideally the servant of the whole episcopate as well as the Pope, is addressed and the point made that if consultation and exchange are inadequate and regional and local authority not respected, then the exercise of this ministry can appear over-centralising rather than genuinely universal and decision making 'too remote from pastoral reality in the individual local churches'.²⁹

It is recorded that Pope Francis has himself noted 'a tendency of bishops to defer too readily to Rome rather than to exercise their own authority'.³⁰ One may also add in this context that, in his encyclicals, Francis often cites the teaching of particular national bishops' conferences, a sign that he values their teaching and encourages them to come forward with material that may be of great help to others.

The position of the Archbishop of Canterbury within the Anglican Communion is very different. He convokes the Lambeth Conferences and is widely revered as the senior bishop in the Communion and

²⁵ Ibid.,101.

²⁶ Ibid., 133.

²⁷ Ibid., 137.

²⁸ Moreover, Pius said that he had consulted the bishops specifically as to the faith of their local churches, an appeal to the *sensus fidelium* as well as to their own teaching.

²⁹ *Walking*, 143.

³⁰ Ibid.,143.

primus inter pares, though he has no direct authority outside of his own province. He has, particularly since the mid-twentieth century, exercised a pastoral role in visiting as widely as possible across the Communion but such counsel as he may give is persuasive rather than absolute. Recent years have seen the setting up of the Anglican Communion Office, which encourages interchange between provinces and sponsors dialogue with other communions but has no authority as such over the provinces. There have also been some meetings between Anglican Primates to explore ways of coping with current difficulties. The Commission argue that clearer definitions of the role, competencies and relationships of these various global Anglican organs could give the Communion more cohesion.³¹

The Commission argues that, despite Anglican hesitation over modifying provincial autonomy, 'there is a desire for worldwide identity and commitment that requires deeper expression'.³² The Commission acknowledge what they call the *affective* role of Anglican provincial synods in promoting internal fellowship, but feel they could be more *effective*³³ in promoting internal unity. The Commission suggest various ways in which identity could be strengthened, such as commitment to the use of at least one common modern Eucharistic prayer, an approved common catechism and a formal reception of *The Principles of Canon Law Common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion*. Finally, they suggest that the enlargement of the course for new bishops held annually at Canterbury could be strengthened. Pilgrimage to Canterbury and dialogue of bishops with him, perhaps in small groups, could also give the Communion more cohesion.

For Roman Catholics, it is suggested that the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury in summarising discussions at meetings with a view to articulating consensus might provide a model for a more transparent reporting of processes of discernment on contentious matters within their own communion. Pope Francis has recently encouraged bishops to speak more boldly.³⁴

In paragraph 149, the Commission remind the two communions of the value of the principle of re-reception, as mooted in *The Gift of*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 148.

³² *Ibid.*, 145.

³³ *Ibid.*, 80. 123.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

Authority. They argue it is necessary to be attentive to what other Christian communities have to say, 'recognising the presence of the Spirit in other Christians, their churches, and their communities'. This valuably reminds us that no two Christian communions are ever isolated from the others. They always need to remember that, in dialogue, they can say things that will be of great help to other communions and dialogue partnerships; similarly, they can always find things from other dialogues that may be of help in their own situation and relationship.

In their Conclusion, the Commission quote from John Paul II's ecumenical encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* where he states that 'Christian Unity is possible, provided that we are humbly conscious of having sinned against unity and are convinced of our need for conversion.' Dialogue always needs to be a dialogue of consciences.³⁵ Archbishop Welby warns that dialogue is not always necessarily fruitful. 'Dialogue can be an opiate, or it can be a stimulant, confronting us with the need for repentance and change'.³⁶ The Commission follow this up with a relevant statement from their own immediate context.

'For Anglicans and Catholics their respective confessional identities-cherishing the role of the local and regional church (Anglican) and placing high priority on the need for ecclesial unity and coherence (Roman Catholic) are valued as gifts of grace and providence. Nevertheless, these identities themselves are not unaffected by sin, as can be seen when the desire for autonomy becomes one of outright independence and when the concern for ecclesial unity and coherence becomes excessive centralised power. Hence there is need for repentance and reform of our instruments of communion in this respect.'³⁷

The Commission identify, as the two key points they wish to make, that the Roman Catholic Church can learn 'from the culture of open and frank debate that exists at all levels in the Anglican Communion, evidenced by the indaba process, for example' and that receptive learning for Anglicans begins with 'an appreciation of the depth of commitment to the unity of the universal church', lived out in the Roman Catholic communion. They commend their work to the study

³⁵ *Ut Unum Sint*, 34.

³⁶ *Walking*, 155.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.

of *IARCCUM*, the joint organisation for unity and mission set up in 2001.³⁸

Conclusion to this section

ARCIC III has taken on a task subtly different from that of most dialogues including its immediate predecessors, ARCIC I and II. Most dialogues have been concerned with doctrine and spirituality; this one has concentrated on practical issues of church governance and the relationships involved in all their messiness. It calls the two communions to work towards a reconciled and balanced approach, which works for an orderly system of relationships in which there is free and frank exchange at every level from the most local to the universal, giving everyone, ordinary clergy and layfolk as well as church leaders, the chance to have their say. Such an approach would let them progress in communion, recognising three major sources of input, that of Pope and bishops, that of theologians and that of the ordinary faithful expressing the faith that is with them through the anointing of the Spirit. This may sound over-idealised to some but is surely possible if we believe in Christ's promise that the Spirit will lead the Church into all truth (John 16:13).

A similar dialogue needs to take place between all dialogue partnerships where the goal is full communion in faith, mission and sacramental life. It will certainly be needed at some point in MRCIC; elements of such a parallel dialogue may occur in the present *quinquennium* which, as I understand it, is devoted to the theme of reconciliation.³⁹ In many respects both Methodists and Lutherans, to take only two examples, have similar problems of cohesion to those that beset the Anglican Communion. World Methodism grew from its roots in the two original connexions, in Britain and USA, partly by Methodists settling overseas and partly by overseas missions. The result is many autonomous connexions, loosely linked in an affective body, to use the phrase adopted in ARCIC III, the World Methodist Council, but one that has no direct authority as such over them. The Council drew up a *Statement of Wesleyan Essentials* in 1996 and it sponsors bilateral

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 157-159. *The International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Co-operation in Unity and Mission*, which encourages co-operation in many mutually allowable ways between the two communions.

³⁹ MRCIC, the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission. It reports every five years to the Vatican and the World Methodist Council.

international dialogues. Some, like Robert Gribben, an Australian Methodist and now minister in the Uniting Church in Australia, have queried whether it should have more power to create greater cohesion.⁴⁰ Certainly, Methodist churches across the world can differ not only in ethos but judgements on ecumenical issues as will be abundantly clear to any reader of *Churches Respond to BEM*.⁴¹

Lutherans also display wide variation and some of the same difficult ethical issues also cause controversy amongst them. The LWF has published an excellent recent statement of their ecumenical principles but they also need to think about issues of cohesion, helped where possible by ecumenical partners.⁴²

For both partners in ARCIC, some key purely theological issues will remain however much progress is made towards the balance recommended in *Walking Together on the Way*. There is the issue of Anglican 'comprehensiveness' and the need to face how far the current strong schools of Anglican churchmanship, evangelical, liberal and catholic could flourish within Anglican-Roman Catholic reconciliation. Can the common Nicene faith allow the setting of much wider parameters of the acceptable in such things as styles of worship and varying approaches to sacramental theology? There is much there still to debate; however, it is also true that much also will need to be done towards an effective reception of this valuable document.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the cohesion of the two communions immediately involved would benefit from the implementation of the suggestions made. They would live themselves internally in a more fully reconciled and, in a sense, *representative* diversity than is currently the case.⁴³ There are, in particular, welcome signs that the thinking and acts of Pope Francis are in tune with the ARCIC suggestions. A recent apostolic constitution states that bishops must consult with the laity on 'questions to be dealt with in the synodal assembly'.⁴⁴ One may add that more formal lay association with Roman Catholic processes at all levels will help relationships with all

⁴⁰ In a paper presented at the Oxford Institute of Methodist studies in 2013.

⁴¹ Thurian, M. (ed.), *Churches Respond to BEM*, (1986) vol. 2, 177-254.

⁴² The statement is available on the LWF website. I have recently given an account and critique of it in *Ecumenical Trends* (September 2017), 5-10.

⁴³ I use the term in terms of inclusivity of layfolk and ordained ministers in acts of deliberation and governance.

⁴⁴ *Episcopalis Communio*, mentioned in *The Tablet*, 22.9.2018.

ecumenical partners, not simply Anglican and Protestants who have long insisted layfolk should be so involved, but also the Orthodox who have long insisted that it is the entire people of God who are the guardians of the faith.⁴⁵

Faith Working through Love – The Baptist-Methodist Dialogue

Where Baptists and Methodists are concerned, there are no barriers in terms of mutual recognition of ministries nor are there, in most cases, any in terms of mutual Eucharistic hospitality and sharing.⁴⁶ Both churches regard the shape of the ministry of word and sacrament as variable and not as depending on an unbroken succession of ministers dating back to apostolic times. That conviction has not, however, prevented Baptists in North India and Methodists in both North and South India from entering into unions with Anglicans and accepting entry into the heritage of the episcopal succession.

There are thus no issues of mutual recognition as such.⁴⁷ However, there are at stake different views on baptism, whether it can be properly administered to infants who cannot be said to have come to conscious faith or whether it can only be administered to believers, including in some case younger children if they are felt to manifest sufficient faith.⁴⁸ There are also differences of emphasis in church structure and ecclesiology, which could receive more attention than is the case in this report, and the doctrine of justification/sanctification. It is to address these issues and to enable Baptists and Methodists to be both better informed about each other and more appreciative of each other's gifts that the dialogue was initiated. It is stressed in this dialogue that both churches seek to nurture 'bible Christians' and to spread the faith, both having a strong missionary tradition.⁴⁹ Stress is placed on accounts of

⁴⁵ As stressed by the Orthodox patriarchs in a response to Pius IX in 1848.

⁴⁶ The occasional exceptions are mentioned immediately below.

⁴⁷ There are slight exceptions to this in the sense that some 'strict' Baptist churches only admit those baptised as believers to holy communion and thus would exclude Methodists and other members of paedo-Baptist churches unless they had subsequently received believers' baptism. Most Baptists, however, practice 'open' communion and would welcome believing members of any other church to the Table.

⁴⁸ *Faith*, 90.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 24. 27.

situations where members of the two churches have co-operated in mission and in service of the poor and oppressed and such co-operation is commended. At the end of each main section is appended a story relating to action by one or both of the communions on matters important to both. Both churches also draw on the rich tradition of English hymnody and at the end of each section a hymn, well known in both traditions, is used illustratively.

The Preface stresses that though both communions normally have no difficulty in recognising each other's members as true Christians and each other's churches as belonging to the 'the rich diversity of the one Church', there do remain problems over full recognition of each other's practices of baptism. These are explored further in the third section of the report.

The Introduction gives an account of the main stages of preparation of the Report and identifies four key aims, which are to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of each other, the mutual exchange of gifts for the enrichment and renewal of both communions, to encourage fuller fellowship and co-operation whilst, at the same time, overcoming any barriers. It recorded the way in which through the very process of the dialogue, the participants from both traditions had come to a deeper appreciation and understanding of each other.

The Report ends with eleven key recommendations, followed by a set of prayers to be used by Methodists and Baptists together. First, they thank God for each other's particular witness. Thus the Baptists say,

'We thank you for the Methodists'.

The Methodists duly reciprocate with thanks for the Baptists.

Then they both confess their sins. Finally, they pray for Christians of the other major traditions, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. The prayers conclude,

'Help us to love one another that the world may believe. In all things, may our faith be active in love'.⁵⁰

The Main Sections

The first main chapter deals, in turn, with the heritage of the two traditions. It stresses their common origins in puritan and pietistic emphases and activities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

⁵⁰ Ibid., 38-9.

and their common ongoing commitment to evangelism and active discipleship, the 'faith working through love' of the title of the Report.

It is stressed that the Baptists of today around the world trace their origins to the early seventeenth century English dissenters who practiced believers' baptism.⁵¹ Their distinctive features are then analysed in terms of the four creedal phrases, the unity being under the Lordship of Christ as defined in Ephesians 4:1-6, the holiness 'being animated by the Holy Spirit and joined in vital union with their holy Head, Jesus Christ', the catholicity being inclusivity in terms of nations and the apostolicity being defined in terms of 'the normative authority of the apostolic witness, not that of an unbroken succession of ministers.'⁵²

Five key principles of Baptist churchmanship are the primacy of the local church ('the gathered church' is a term often used more widely within the independent tradition), baptismal immersion, congregational church government, separation of church and state (one may add that Baptists would have no desire for state patronage even if offered to them) and the priesthood of all believers, the term interestingly defined as 'a form of corporate episcopate' which is compatible with 'an ordered ministry of leaders'. In all aspects of ministry the Church stands 'under the word of God'.⁵³

Baptists have differed amongst themselves over the doctrine of predestination, over whether there should be open or closed communion, over the ordination of women and over charismatic gifts.⁵⁴ Usually, they have been happy to associate with other Baptist congregations, though they do not usually call these unions 'churches',

⁵¹ They are to be distinguished from the Continental Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, whose modern descendants are the Mennonites. It is important also to stress that the Baptist emphasis on believers' baptism is shared by some other evangelical and Pentecostal traditions; it is not confined to those calling themselves Baptists.

⁵² *Faith*, 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 10. One may add that, traditionally, authority is hands of the regular Church Meeting of all members. Most Baptist churches have deacons with some residual duties for any poorer members plus general administrative duties and a role in distributing the elements at holy communion. Some Baptist churches also have elders with pastoral and governing roles.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 11. Echoed in the 1990's British Baptist Union statement of *Core Principles*.

reserving the term 'church' solely to the local congregation and the Church Universal.⁵⁵ The Baptist World Alliance encourages fellowship across the globe. It has issued some theological statements, such as the Seoul Covenant of 1990 with its statement, 'we aim to build communities that will be effective signs of God's Kingdom in the world'.⁵⁶

The account of the origins of Methodism naturally notes the key innovating role of the Wesley brothers in the Revival and their determination to develop a discipleship movement that combined 'vital piety' and social action; it very properly notes that, in more recent years, there has been an attempt to recover the rich sacramental practice and spirituality which also characterised the early revival. It notes that not simply were there varying Anglican and Puritan/pietist influences on the movement, but that there were also influences from the Roman Catholic tradition and that of the early Church as received by the Wesleys.⁵⁷

Whereas Baptists were primarily concerned to stress the authority of the Word of God, Methodists have also stressed that, in interpreting Scripture, use should be made of reason, Tradition and experience; one may add that the exact relationship of the four sources has been the subject of some controversy in recent times, though it is generally accepted that Scripture has the primacy.⁵⁸

The section ends with reviewing some commonalities between the two traditions. Both have seen the fulfilment of Christ's Great Commission in missionary endeavour (Matt. 28:19-20) as basic from the beginning. Both have tended to fragment with internal schisms; 'we acknowledge that we have not always been faithful to Our Lord's call to unity'. Preaching, hymn singing and formation of disciples have been common to both. Concern for education, health and social welfare have featured in both traditions alongside concern for the poor and neglected.

The second section looks at the three key questions of Church, Authority and Salvation. Unsurprisingly, in a summary of only seven

⁵⁵ These unions provide certain common services, such as theological seminaries and co-ordinated advice on social witness; they have, however, no authority to compel the member churches to use them.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12,13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14,15.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

pages, it is unable to resolve all the tensions between the respective Baptist and Methodist approaches to these issues though it makes a valiant, if at times slightly forced attempt to do so, particularly in the ecclesiological statement.

This begins by affirming convictions which would be held throughout the contemporary *oikoumene*, viz that the Church is the gift of the triune God, grounded in the communion of the Trinity. Both churches claim and cherish their place within the one holy catholic church.⁵⁹ Both believe, in common with other Protestants that the one Church is visible wherever the word of God and the gospel sacraments are administered.⁶⁰ Both stress the presence of Christ through the Spirit in each local congregation and the importance of the way in which the members 'watch over each other in faith and love.'⁶¹

The key tension in ecclesiology is in polity, between Baptist congregational polity and Methodist Connexionalism. It is stressed that the former is modified in most cases by the associational principle which, I may add, has been stressed by British Baptists since the early days of persecution.⁶² However, there is an essential difference. Apart from small bodies of Independent Methodists, the vast majority of Methodists accept the ultimate authority of their respective conferences which deal with such vital matters as the discipline and stationing of ministers on the grounds that the overall needs of the mission under each Conference are one and that the Conference concerned must make decisions that reflect its understanding of the exigencies of the time and place. For Baptists, the calling of a minister is a responsibility for the local congregation which may indeed call anyone as minister. The national Baptist Union may maintain ministerial training colleges and indeed lists of recommended recognised pastors, but final decisions are for the local church, not, as for example in British Methodism, for the stationing committee of the Conference. There is here a clear ecclesiological difference. It is not one that prevents Methodist recognition of Baptist congregations as true local churches or of the authenticity of their preaching of the word and

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 45. For a detailed account of early, late seventeenth century Baptist associationalism, see Fiddes P. *Tracks and Traces. Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (2003).

celebration of the sacraments. However, the difference is reflected in the *sensus fidelium* of Methodists, who are deeply aware of their belonging to the wider unity of the Connexion concerned, this being particularly the case with local preachers who always serve the wider fellowship of the circuit, defined in CPD as the primary location of the local church.⁶³

It needs to be stressed in any future dialogue that the Connexional Principle does not imply rigidly unalterable rules, but that changes can be and frequently have been made within every Conference jurisdiction over the years. Certainly, the degree of consultation with local congregations and circuits has been improved enormously since the late nineteenth century in British Methodism.⁶⁴

It is agreed by the Commission that Methodists and Baptists share much in common mission and in sharing in the Eucharist. It is not yet clear how far further rapprochement in ecclesiology might be achieved. I would suggest that looking at the history of the formation both of the Church of South India and of the United Reformed Church might help; in both cases churches with a heritage of independent polity came into wider unions involving a dilution but not complete elimination of congregational autonomy.

The sub-section on Scripture and Authority notes that Christ is both the source and model of all authority which must always be cruciform. It notes the common stress in both traditions on the priesthood of all believers and also a common suspicion of hierarchical authority; one may add that in the case of Methodism this sprung to some extent from inappropriately heavy authority being exercised over local congregations and lay leaders by the travelling preachers. It is stressed that pastoral care and discipling in both traditions are not the monopoly of ministers but are also exercised by layfolk.

⁶³ *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the (British) Methodist Church*, defines the circuit as 'the primary unit in which local churches express their interconnexion in the Body of Christ, for purposes of mission, mutual encouragement and help'.

⁶⁴ It should be noted that the Methodist sense of being 'one people the world over' is not fully reflected in a world conference even though the World Methodist Council acts as a valuable forum for exchange of views and also sponsors dialogues with other communions. It has, however, no direct authority over the many conferences.

The Scriptures are the final rule of faith and practice but both traditions believe in *sola scriptura* in the sense of *suprema scriptura not nuda scriptura*, that is by scripture unexamined in terms of its context and wider meaning. Paragraph 51 states 'we are grateful for those engaged un scholarly and devotional study of scripture, through which our faith has been strengthened'. The so called Wesleyan Quadrilateral is mentioned as an important aid to many Methodists in reading the Bible⁶⁵; it certainly can be shown to have been practiced by the Wesley despite his averring that he was a man of one book. Both traditions affirm the ancient ecumenical creeds as normative and as faithful to the apostolic tradition.⁶⁶

The last sub-section deals with justification and sanctification. Both traditions accept the Reformation tradition that 'in accordance with the Scriptures, we believe human beings are justified by God's grace in Christ received freely by faith alone'. The statement of the Joint Declaration on Justification of 1999 'expresses well our shared understanding'.⁶⁷ Less agreement exists on the *exact* extent of sanctification achievable in this life.⁶⁸ It is agreed that it is 'God's continuous work in the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit', but Methodists go on to speak of salvation as 'the renewal of the image of God' and to stress, in contrast to the Baptist stress on the *imputation* of righteousness, the *impartation* of righteousness, the divine gift by which we grow in holiness even to the point of perfect holiness.⁶⁹

Wesley, and, indeed, later Methodists have been keen to stress that Christian holiness is not incompatible with ignorance and unavoidable error. It is not, a Wesley termed it, 'Adamic perfection', in other words the total perfection in knowledge and understanding that he and others in the western Augustinian tradition believed had been lost at the Fall. Much remains to be discussed on this subject, perhaps in a further dialogue. There is a sense in which, perhaps, pace the very proper Methodist stress on the search for the greatest possible holiness in this

⁶⁵ *Faith*, 52.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁶⁷ *Joint Declaration on Justification* (1999), 15.

⁶⁸ *Faith*, 62: 'Baptists see the fullness of salvation purely in eschatological terms, looking to resurrection and glorification rather than any state achievable in this life'.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 63,64.

life, the Baptists are correct in insisting that salvation is not totally complete until the final restoration of all things in which Christ hands over the kingdom to the Father and God is finally all in all together with His redeemed and perfected creation (1 Cor. 15:28). Only at that point will all the faithful be able to rejoice that the Father's great plan of salvation, reconciling all things in Christ, is complete (Eph. 1:10).

The third section deals with the best known divergence between the two traditions, that over infant baptism which Methodists accept as a custom that developed early in the Church and which is justifiable in terms of their understanding of prevenient grace.⁷⁰

The Commission are anxious to refute myths that have grown up, in particular that Baptists only baptise adults and Methodists only infants. Baptists will baptise children whom they believe to have reached faith and Methodists will, of course, baptise adults so have not previously received baptism.⁷¹ Both churches agree that baptism is unrepeatable, Baptists arguing that when they baptise as believers those who have previously been christened as infants, it is because that previous 'baptism' was not fully authentically scriptural in their understanding.⁷² Baptists and Methodists both agree that, despite this difference, they can acknowledge that in both communions 'true disciples are made'.⁷³

Paragraphs 90-92 indicate changing patterns in both communions. In Jamaica, some Methodists call for a child blessing, analogous, one might add, to Baptist dedication of infants and leave baptism to a time when a child can make a clear commitment. In some Baptist congregations in USA children as young as five can be baptised, 'a trend blurring the line between infants and believers'. By contrast, some of the Wesleyan-Holiness movement churches make provision both for infant baptism and for infant dedication.

Despite the basic difference over infant baptism, Baptists and Methodists are agreed on several important relevant matters. Two have already been indicated above. Another is the importance of catechesis always being linked with baptism, as is suggested in the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 19-20), or being given at an appropriate post-

⁷⁰ And in terms of a lively confidence that God will do for their children what his grace has done for them. Cf. C. Wesley, 'joyful that we ourselves are thine, thine let our children be'.

⁷¹ *Faith*, 67.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 69.

baptismal stage and the affirmation both of the importance of divine initiative and human response in the sacrament.⁷⁴ The Commission affirm their gratitude for the statement on baptism in the *BEM* process that, 'while the possibility exists that infant baptism was also practiced in the apostolic age, baptism upon profession of faith is the most clearly attested practice in the NT documents'.⁷⁵ They also note the promising work done, particularly by Baptists and Anglicans in Britain, on the possible recognition of alternative patterns of Christian initiation, one beginning with infant baptism, the other with infant dedication, but both involving teaching and growth in faith with confirmation or believers' baptism (possibly accompanied by a 'laying on of hands' coming as the culmination of the process. Both communions accept that growth in discipleship continues throughout the faithfully lived Christian life.⁷⁶

It is in this context that one might have expected some attention to be given to baptism as sacramental entrance into the paschal mystery, from the human side a commitment to enter into the pattern of total dedication to the Father's will, from the divine side a joyful acceptance of one who desires to be one with the eternally Beloved Son in his obedience and one with Him in ultimate glory and eternal life. It is strange to see Romans 6 ignored in what is otherwise a well-crafted section of this dialogue. The dialogue partners might have done well to look at the work of the Methodist- Roman Catholic dialogue on baptism in this particular respect.⁷⁷

Finally, we should note the reference to those situations where there has been advance towards accepting forms of alternative initiation, particularly in North India and in Sweden.⁷⁸ We note the existence of LEPs in Britain, where there are similar local arrangements, and the agreement of the Baptist Union there that its ministers may baptise infants if they can do so in good conscience. Baptist churches in Britain

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 67.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 73-77. For the work done by Anglicans and Baptists, see *Pushing at the Boundaries of Unity. Conversations between Anglicans and Baptists*, (1992-2005).

⁷⁷ *Encountering Christ the Saviour-Church and Sacraments* (2011), 9-15.

⁷⁸ *Faith*, 87-88.

vary as to whether they will accept into membership people who were baptised as infants and now wish to join a Baptist church.⁷⁹

The fourth section deals with worship, witness and mission. It contains some beautiful reflections, particularly on the Eucharist. It is agreed that worship is the central act of the Church, inspiring and empowering witness, mission and service.⁸⁰ Stress is placed on the role of hymnody in both traditions, alike in worship and in catechesis.⁸¹ Preaching and the celebration of the sacraments are central. It is stressed that both liturgical and extempore prayer have a part in Methodist and Baptist worship, though, surely, liturgical worship is more prominent in Methodism, which has always cherished both traditions within worship, even if revivalistic forms of worship became much commoner in the nineteenth century and, in some cases, charismatic worship in the late twentieth.⁸²

A sub-section deals with the question of sacraments and ordinances, also a subject of the recent WCC Faith and Order document, *The Church Towards a Common Vision*. It seeks to reconcile a traditional Baptist stress on the Lord's Supper as simply requiring obedience with the more sacramental Methodist stress on meeting with the Risen Lord. It argues that 'the Supper is both instrumental (used by God to establish a new reality) and expressive (manifesting an already existing reality) ... The Supper express and realises the communion of the people of God with Christ and each other'.⁸³ Here we see both reconciliation of the standpoints of the two partners and learning from others as manifested in the following paragraph with the statement that more regular practice may be appropriate today.

Mission is defined holistically in terms of evangelism, nurture of Christians in faithful discipleship, responding in service to human need, care for God's creation and working for justice and peace.⁸⁴ Mention is made of the way in which missions of both churches have contributed powerfully to education and other forms of empowerment.⁸⁵ Two paragraphs refer respectively to the deaconess

⁷⁹ Ibid., 87-89.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 93.

⁸¹ Ibid., 95.

⁸² Ibid., 96.

⁸³ Ibid., 98.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 102.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 105.

movement in both churches and other forms of witness and service by laywomen.⁸⁶ The section concludes with an account of shared Baptist-Methodist ministry amongst the homeless at Ashland in Ohio.

The Report concludes with eleven recommendations to both communions.⁸⁷ Three show the interconnected relevance of all ecumenical work. The very first recommends that the two communions should always follow the Lund principle, that they should never do separately those things that they can, in good conscience, do together. The Commissions state how useful they found the Joint Declaration on Justification in their work and recommend that the BWA responds to the text. They also advocate mutual reception of each other's gifts. On the tricky issue of baptism, they make four recommendations; first, that they stress how baptism unites, despite differences in practice. All Methodists and Baptists should rejoice in their baptism regularly. They commend the work done ecumenically in *BEM* and the Anglican-Baptist conversations on it. They recommend careful consideration of the proposed two patterns of Christian initiation and careful consideration of modern scholarly work on baptism and 'the way in which it challenges stereotypes and easy assumptions. Finally, they state that though it was impossible to get full agreement on everything in the dialogue, it was good to recognise that there are no insurmountable barriers to unity in mission and witness.

Conclusion

It is devoutly to be hoped that this report and its user friendly *Study Guide* will be well used in both communions, particularly in those places where Baptist and Methodist congregations witness and serve within the same community, as is frequently the case in many parts of both the USA and Britain. It is to be hoped that the study of the main report will feature in the ministerial training agenda in both communions and also in lay training schemes since local lay leaders can and do play key roles in local ecumenical co-operation, my friend John Pope, of Carshalton Beeches Free Church (Baptist), being such an example in South London.

The first section of the Report on the heritage of the two churches provides enough information to stimulate interest amongst Methodists

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 106-7.

⁸⁷ *Faith*, 35-7.

and Baptists in each other's Christian discipleship. The Report and the *Study Guide* both indicate ample resources for further study. In several places, the Report stresses ways in which both have benefited from the witness of the wider *oikoumene*. In an age of receptive ecumenism, it behoves both to learn not simply from each other but also from the other communions, with some of which, notably the Roman Catholic Church, with which both are already in dialogue.

The two good, if rather different dialogues, surveyed in this article hold out much promise for the whole of the dialogue relationships, so warmly commended by John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint*.

LUTHERANS AND REFORMED: TOWARDS ECCLESIAL COMMUNION?¹

Stephen G. Brown*

In July 2017, the year marking the 500th anniversary of Luther's Reformation, World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Lutheran World Federation signed the 'Wittenberg Witness', a statement affirming their commitment to cooperation and joint witness. This article reviews the almost five decades of dialogue at regional and international level between Lutherans and Reformed that preceded the 2017 anniversary, and especially its most recent expression, the 2014 report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission of the LWF and WCRC, Communion: On Being the Church (COBC), which provided the basis for the statements in the 'Wittenberg Witness'. However, while both COBC and the 'Wittenberg Witness' underlined the areas of common understanding and witness shared by the WCRC and the LWF, they missed the opportunity offered by the 2017 anniversary for a formal reception of the affirmation that Reformed and Lutherans are now 'in communion' and the implications of this for pulpit and table fellowship between their member churches.

One of the main features of the 2017 Reformation anniversary was its ecumenical character. The Reformation year began with the first global joint Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of the anniversary in October 2016 at Lund cathedral in Sweden, where Pope Francis joined leaders of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in lamenting past divisions and conflicts, and pledging to deepen their common fellowship and service.

¹ An earlier version of this article appeared in French, 'Communion: Être Église'. Rapport de la commission mixte luthéro-réformée 2014, in *Istina* 59/4, 2014, p. 387-398.

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While much of the ecumenical focus in the Reformation year was on Lutherans and Catholics, a service in Wittenberg in July 2017 marked the adherence of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, originally signed by the Roman Catholic Church and the LWF in 1999, dealing with the one of the key issues at stake between Catholics and Lutherans at the time of the Reformation. At the same time, the WCRC and the LWF signed the 'Wittenberg Witness,' a statement affirming their commitment to cooperation. The Wittenberg Witness followed decades of theological dialogue between the LWF and WCRC member churches around the world. In seven paragraphs, the statement offered gratitude for the unity the churches already have in Christ, celebrates what they have in common, lamented the still dividing issues, acknowledged God's call to continuous reform, called for a 'renewed imagination of what being the church in communion' means today, expressed the common call of churches to witness in the world, and prayed for the Holy Spirit to offer courage and imagination to live out the call to unity.²

This article reviews the almost five decades of dialogue at regional and international level between Lutherans and Reformed that preceded the 2017 anniversary, and especially its most recent expression, the 2014 report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission of the LWF and WCRC, *Communion: On Being the Church* (COBC).³ This report explicitly refers to having been prepared in advance of the 2017 Reformation anniversary, and provides the basis for the statements in the 'Wittenberg Witness,' especially in its statement of the need for 'renewed theological imagination about what it means to be church and how to live together as church in ways that manifest our unity' (§62). The central section of COBC deals with 'communion and ministry', especially the ministry of oversight (*episkopé*), a common understanding of the Gospel, and the role of confessional writings, on

² See 'LWF and WCRC sign the Wittenberg Witness, as WCRC joins JDDJ,' 5 July 2017, <http://wcrch.ch/news/lwf-and-wcrc-sign-the-wittenberg-witness-as-wcrc-joins-jddj>. The text of the Wittenberg Witness can be found in *Ecumenical Review* 69:4 (December 2017), 594–96.

³ *Communion: On Being the Church, Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006–2012* (Geneva: LWF/WCRC, 2014), 19–21.

the basis of which the remaining differences are not seen as church-dividing. On the basis of these theological foundations, the report states that Lutherans and Reformed are 'in communion'. Nevertheless, the recommendations appended to the report fail to deal with the significance of this affirmation for the relationship between the two world communions, nor for the relationship between their respective member churches. While the 'Wittenberg Witness' includes a commitment to 'explore new forms of life together that will more fully express the communion we already have in Christ,' it missed the opportunity offered by the 2017 anniversary for a formal reception of the affirmation that Reformed and Lutherans are now 'in communion' and the implications of this for pulpit and table fellowship between their member churches.

Overcoming historical divisions between Lutherans and Reformed

It is often forgotten or overlooked that at the time of the four hundred fiftieth Reformation anniversary in 1967, there was, at least officially, no pulpit and table fellowship between Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe, still separated by doctrinal condemnations from the Reformation era. Only in 1973 did the Leuenberg Agreement institute *Kirchengemeinschaft* – 'church fellowship', 'ecclesial communion' or 'church communion' – between Lutheran, Reformed and United (Luthero-Reformed) churches in Europe, as well as several related churches in Latin America, leading to the creation of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) in 2003 (including the European Methodist Council since 1997). The 'doctrinal condemnations expressed in the confessional documents', the Leuenberg Agreement stated, 'no longer apply to the contemporary doctrinal position of the assenting churches', while the assenting churches 'accord each other table and pulpit fellowship; this includes the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide for intercelebration.'⁴

The Leuenberg Agreement was followed by other regional and national agreements between Lutheran and Reformed churches. In 1997, three churches from a Reformed tradition in the United States – the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ – entered into a full communion

⁴ <http://www.leuenberg.net/leuenberg-agreement>

agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the first full communion agreement entered into by a Lutheran church in the USA. The Amman Declaration of 2006 instituted agreement on full mutual recognition of Lutheran and Reformed churches in the Middle East and North Africa.⁵

Outside the historic United (Luthero-Reformed) churches in Germany, united churches gathering Lutheran and Reformed traditions have existed for many years in places such as Argentina (Church of the River Plate), the Czech Republic (Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren) and Ethiopia (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesu). In recent years, united churches have been founded in the Netherlands (Protestant Church in the Netherlands) and in France (the United Protestant Church of France and the Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine). In Germany, unions between Lutheran and United regional churches have taken place in Central Germany and Northern Germany.⁶ Moreover, Lutheran and Reformed churches in Germany (through the Meissen Agreement) and France (through the Reuilly Common Statement) have taken part *together* in declarations of fellowship with Anglican churches.⁷

International bilateral dialogue between Lutherans and Reformed

As Lukas Vischer has noted, formal bilateral dialogue between Lutherans and Reformed came about only relatively late compared to

⁵ <http://fmeec.com/file/2006%20Amman%20Declaration%20ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁶ See the surveys in *Called to Communion and Common Witness: Report of the Joint Working Group between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches: Report of the Joint Working Group between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1999-2001)* (Geneva: LWF/WARC, 2002), 9-16, and in *Communion: On Being the Church, Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006-2012* (Geneva: LWF/WCRC, 2014), 19-21.

⁷ On Meissen and Reuilly see Franck Lemaître, *Anglicans et Luthériens en Europe: Enjeux théologiques d'un rapprochement ecclésial* (Fribourg: Institut d'études oecuméniques de l'Université de Fribourg, 2011), 137-400; on Porvoo see 141-51. Full interchangeability of ministries is not yet possible, however, due to differing understandings of *episkopé* (oversight) and the place of the historic succession (unlike the Porvoo Communion of Anglican churches in Britain and Ireland, and Lutheran churches in the Nordic and Baltic region).

other bilateral dialogues,⁸ and was inspired by the developments in Europe and in North America. Despite the ‘breakthrough’⁹ of Leuenberg, it quickly became clear, however, that ‘the Leuenberg agreement could not without further ado simply be applied to other areas of the world.’¹⁰ Formal bilateral theological discussions at a global level between Lutherans and Reformed began only in the 1980s, of which the report, *Towards Church Fellowship* (TCF) was the result in 1989.¹¹ One emphasis of TCF, which continued in later bilateral documents was the contextual review of Lutheran and Reformed relations in different parts of the world. Its central focus, however, was an examination of the central issues going back to the sixteenth century that divided Lutherans and Reformed on Word and sacrament, church and ministry, and witness and service to the world. It concluded that ‘the condemnations previously expressed are no longer applicable to our partner churches’ (§62) given the ‘common understanding of Word and sacrament’ (§62). As far as the understanding of the church was concerned, differences in polity, worship and mission ‘do not compromise our fundamental agreement in the Gospel’ (§65). On ministry, the report was more circumspect, noting differences between Lutherans and Reformed, especially on the issue of *episkopé* (oversight), which Lutherans have traditionally understood as a distinct office while Reformed have emphasised the oversight in a body such as a presbytery (§67). Nevertheless, studies had shown that ‘such differences pertain both to form and structure and to legitimate differences in theological interpretation, but do not challenge our common understanding of the Gospel’ (§67). As a result, the report concluded that ‘nothing stands in the way of church fellowship’ and urged member churches of the two world bodies ‘declare full communion with one another’ (§79).

A second bilateral report, *Called to Communion and Common Witness* (CCCW) was published in 2002 and emerged from a different context, namely the possibility of further structural cooperation between the

⁸ Lukas Vischer, Historical Overview, *Growth in Agreement II*, 230.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 230.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹¹ ‘Towards Church Fellowship,’ in *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* ed. Jeffrey Gros, Harding Mayer and William G. Rusch (Geneva: WCC Publications/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 233–47.

LWF and the WARC.¹² One of the main issues it discussed was the possibility of joint or simultaneous global assemblies, both to symbolise the common heritage of the churches of the Reformation, and as a contribution to rationalising overlapping international church structures.¹³ Another issue was the place of the German United regional churches in the two world families (§5). Like TCF, CCCW included a review of developments in different parts of the world (§§6-16). Though it touched on the ecclesiological and theological issues at stake in the dialogue, it stated that there was ‘no need for a new international dialogue on the classical differences which in the past kept Lutheran and Reformed churches apart’ (§26). Instead, the challenge to the two world bodies was ‘not to discuss whether communion is possible but to help churches in our families to move towards declarations of communion, to invite churches that are not yet in altar and pulpit fellowship to move towards it, and to consider ways in which, at the world level, the two communions may intensify their common life and witness’ (§26). To advance common life and witness between the LWF and WARC, the report’s recommendations focussed mainly on organisational cooperation: identifying distinct areas where Lutherans and Reformed could work together; scheduling joint meetings of governing bodies; and, as the most far-reaching recommendation, making possible the holding of the LWF and WARC assemblies at the end of the 1990s ‘at the same time and in the same place’ (recommendation 8) – a recommendation, which, in the end, proved impossible to implement, partly because of the decision to hold a ‘Uniting General Council’ in 2010 between WARC and the Reformed Ecumenical Council in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches.¹⁴

¹² *Communion: On Being the Church, Report of the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), 2006–2012* (Geneva: LWF/WCRC, 2014).

¹³ For an overview of this discussion see Stephen Brown, ‘Towards a Common Global Ecumenical Assembly?’ *Ecumenical Review* 58:3-4 (2006), 226–33.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 247–48. Despite a clear proposal from WARC to the LWF to hold their 2010 assemblies in parallel, the LWF Council in 2005 decided to accept an invitation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg to hold its assembly in Stuttgart. The Uniting General Council of WARC and REC was held

Notwithstanding its reference to the ‘two communions’ (LWF and WARC), CCCW noted that while the LWF ‘defines itself explicitly as a *communion of churches* and has declared altar and pulpit fellowship a binding condition for membership’, WARC ‘provides for its member churches a *theological and ethical forum*’ (§31, emphasis added). This issue of the status of the respective world groupings would undergo a shift with the creation of the WCRC in 2010, which would also offer a new emphasis on the *ecclesial* nature of the WCRC.¹⁵

Communion: On Being the Church

The theological and ecclesiological issues at stake in the relationship between the two global bodies – rather than organisational cooperation – came to the fore in the third bilateral report, *Communion: On Being the Church* (COBC), published in 2014, and which notes that it was prepared ‘as our two communions prepare to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation’ (§2). It begins with an introductory section (§§1-18) which underlines the commitment of both Martin Luther and John Calvin to the visible unity of the church: ‘Neither intended the founding of a “new church”; both regarded division in the church as scandalous’ (§6), though Luther’s understanding of the church was not the same as the Roman church (§9) and it gradually became clear that a schism in the church could not be avoided (§11).

In its second section, the report then moves on to a contextual review of the situation of member churches in Latin America, Indonesia, Africa, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, and North America: ‘Lutherans and Reformed have various ways of living together; one model cannot be applied to all contexts’ (§21). The commission’s work thus needed to be attentive to the local contexts as well as the global context. By highlighting the various possibilities of relationship, the report states that the commission hoped to ‘enlarge our sense of what is possible and stir the “ecclesial imagination” of our churches to consider new expressions of unity’ (§39). It then moves on to formal agreements between Lutherans and Reformed and structural expressions of unity at local, regional, national and global levels, within

in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 17-27 June 2010, while the LWF Assembly followed less than a month later in Stuttgart, Germany, from 20-27 July 2010.

¹⁵ See Douwe Visser, *From Alliance and Council to Communion, Reformed World* 64:1 (2014), 22-33.

ecumenical groupings, in theological education and in sharing in mission together (§45-55) where ‘communion is best expressed in shared work for justice’ (§53).

Nevertheless, ‘communion has its basis in shared theological understandings’ (§55) and at the heart of the report are three sections on what it means to be in communion: ‘Communion: On being the church’ (§§56-99), ‘Being one church’ (§§100-122), and ‘Our confession is one’ (§§123-154).

“Communion: On Being the Church”

This section begins by grounding the dialogue in the statement of *Towards Church Fellowship* that ‘as Lutheran and Reformed churches we affirm that full agreement in the right teaching/preaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments is necessary and sufficient for the true unity of the church’.¹⁶ On the basis of this statement, the 2014 report goes on to elaborate what it means ‘being the body of Christ’, as a ‘Creation of the Word (*creatura verbi*)’ (§58-64), and the issue of the Church and justification (§65-70). It then proceeds to expound the characteristics of ‘Being in communion’, around the ‘reality of the church’ (§71-73), the ‘marks of the church’ (§74-79), and the ‘witness and service of the church’ (§80-83). The final section of this chapter moves on to the issue of ‘Communion and ministry’. Given differences between Lutherans and Reformed about the role of episcopal oversight and the office of bishop, this is a particularly important section. Even within the Lutheran tradition, while some Lutheran churches recognise the historic succession and episcopal order, others, have bishops who serve as the spiritual leaders of their churches but without the historic episcopal succession. According to the report, while the threefold pattern of the ordained office (bishop, presbyter and deacon) ‘cannot claim to be the only one established in Scripture’, the large majority of churches ‘have maintained it in one form or another’ (§94).

In this context the way in which *Communion: On being the church* deals with the issue of *episkopé* (oversight) is significant. The report underlines that the ordained ministry, resting on Christ’s particular commission, is necessary for the church and ‘stands together with the whole congregation under the Word of God in Christ’s service’ (§87). It

¹⁶ *Towards Church Fellowship*, 26.

then proceeds to set out the ordained ministry as the ministry of the Word (§88), the sacrament (§89) and the ministry of *episkopé*, 'which is inseparable from the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the sacrament' (90). While Reformed churches have traditionally referred to the ministry of Word and sacrament, this link with the ministry of *episkopé* echoes the results of the Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogue, *Towards a Common Understanding of the Church: Second Phase, 1984-1990*, which referred (§132) to the 'ministry of Word, sacrament and oversight given by Christ to the church to be carried out by some of its members for the good of all'¹⁷.

Ordination is the act whereby men and women 'are authorised to carry out the ministry of Word, sacrament and *episkopé*' (§91), such authorization being 'singular, non-recurring and irrevocable' (§92), 'valid in the church catholic' and thus 'recognized in all our local churches' (§93). As far as the ministry of oversight (*episkopé*) is concerned, this is exercised at local, regional and universal levels (§95); in 'all our churches, this ministry is simultaneously carried out personally, collegially and communally' (§96). While the Lutheran tradition 'highlights the personal office of the bishop . . . the Reformed tradition is committed to a presbyterial-synodical order'. Nevertheless, 'all our churches' regard the 'service of *episkopé* as serving the unity of the church' (§97) and 'our churches agree that differences in their understanding of *episkopé* are not church dividing' (§98). The '*reciprocal acknowledgment of the ministry and ordination is not impeded, because we mutually recognize in one another the true proclamation of the Word and celebration of the sacraments*' (§99, emphasis added).

This might have wider ecumenical relevance, since the approach of COBC, where the ministry of *episkopé* is integrally linked with the ministry of Word and sacrament, might offer a methodology that can contribute to other bilateral dialogues, including those with Anglicans that involve Lutherans and Reformed such as Meissen and Reuilly. As Franck Lemaître notes in his comprehensive study *Anglicans et Luthériens en Europe*, there is a need to 'relaunch the dialogue between

¹⁷ *Growth in Agreement II*, 810. This formulation has also been picked up in the Faith and Order convergence text, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 2013), 20.

Anglicans and Reformed'¹⁸, but this needs to take account of the relationship that exists between Lutherans and Reformed, and for this *Communion: On being the Church* may provide a basis, as well as offering new perspectives for dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church.

“Being One Church”

According to *Communion: On being the church*, the unity of the church is ‘God’s gift to the churches’ and not the churches’ work (§100). The unity of the church ‘knows no other criteria or conditions than fellowship in Word and sacrament. When this communion is given, the unity of the church is given’ (§102). This understanding ‘binds together congregations within each confessional tradition stemming from the Reformation’ (§103) and ‘applies also to the communion of churches of diverse confessional traditions’ (§104). If ‘*unity in Word and sacrament is given, churches are no longer divided*’ (§104, emphasis added).

Churches previously divided can declare church communion if there is ‘consensus on the common understanding of the Gospel’ (§114). Through this declaration they ‘mutually recognize each other as true expressions of the one church of Jesus Christ’ (§115), confirm their consensus on the understanding of the Gospel, grant one another pulpit and table fellowship, recognize each other’s ministry, acknowledge each other’s ordination, provide for the orderly exchange of ministers, and commit themselves to common witness and service in the world (§116). Once declared, church communion requires implementation in spiritual and worship life (*leiturgia*), witness (*martyria*) and service (*diakonia*) in the world (§119). In so doing, the church ‘acts as a sign of the in-breaking kingdom of God’ (§120).

“Our Confession is One”

This section begins with the assertion that as ‘Lutheran and Reformed churches, we have reached a consensus on our common understanding of the Gospel’ (§123). This is then spelled out in the subsequent sections on the authority of Holy Scripture (§§124-130), the authority of the confessions (§§131-136), the authority of confessional writings (§§137-144), the confessional writings of the churches (§§145-151), and on confessing Christ together (§154). Where the report touches on the authority of the confessions it implicitly is dealing with differences

¹⁸ F. Lemaître, *Anglicans et Luthériens*, 314.

between Reformed and Lutherans by distinguishing between confessional acts and confessional writings. A confessional act of the church 'responds to a specific call to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ collectively' (§133), whereas a confessional writing 'formally relates the confessional act of the church to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By doing so, the confessional writing itself becomes a constituent of the confessional act of the church' (§134). The confession 'is the congruence of a confessional act and a confessional writing of the church in a given context' (§136).

It is with the issue of confessional writings that the different approaches of Lutherans and Reformed become most pronounced. While LWF member churches 'understand those confessional writings that form an integral part of their tradition as binding doctrinal references or constitutional relevance' (§143), WCRC member churches understand the confessional writings of their own tradition as 'guidelines and standards for truthful interpretation and accurate contemporary adoption of Holy Scripture' (§144). Both traditions see the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed as being an integral part of the confessional writings of their churches (§146). LWF member churches, however, 'regard the Confessions of the Lutheran Church ... as pure expositions of the Word of God' (§146). Member churches of the WCRC, on the other hand 'do not share an explicit corpus of confessional writings' (§147) and in general 'different confessional writings form part of the respective tradition of Reformed and Lutheran churches' (§148). While such diversity of confessional writings 'legitimately reflects the contextual nature of the confessions' (§148), it also results, 'to some extent ... from doctrinal disagreement between Lutheran and Reformed churches [and if] touching upon fundamental issues ... may be regarded as doctrinal inconsistency which may weaken the common witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ' (§150).

Nevertheless, '[o]ver the course of the last few decades, Reformed and Lutherans have been able to reconcile all doctrinal inconsistencies relevant to the common witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The fact that a diversity of confessional writings today still exists is thus no longer evidence of a doctrinal disagreement relevant to the common witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ between Lutheran and Reformed churches' (§151, emphasis added). The Lutheran and Reformed confessional writings mentioned in the document 'today exist in dogmatically reconciled, hence legitimate, diversity' (§151) and as a

‘common heritage’ (§153). Lutherans and Reformed share an understanding of confessional writings ‘which is contextual by nature’ and ‘are therefore united, not divided, by such legitimate diversity of confessional writings’ (§153). They are thus ‘united in confessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ’, united in a ‘common heritage of confessional acts and confessional writings’ (§154).

Future steps

Communion: On being the Church is elaborated according to the perspective of ‘reconciled diversity’, since the unity effected by the Holy Spirit is ‘not a uniformity but, rather, a reconciled diversity of churches of various backgrounds, histories, spiritualities, theological approaches and distinct forms of church life’ (§112). Bilateral theological dialogues are necessary to discern together ‘whether distinctive church forms and teachings can be regarded as legitimate diversity within the declared church communion’ (§113). On the basis of this approach, *Communion: On being the Church*, takes further the results of *Towards Church Fellowship*, declaring that differences in the understanding of *episkopé* between Lutherans and Reformed are not church dividing (§98), that a consensus has been reached on the common understanding of the Gospel (§128), that Lutherans and Reformed have reconciled all doctrinal differences relevant to the common witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (§151), that the diversity of confessional writings is no longer evidence of doctrinal disagreement relevant to the common witness of the Gospel (§151), that Lutheran and Reformed confessional writings exist in dogmatically reconciled and therefore legitimate diversity (§152) and that Lutherans and Reformed are united in confessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ (§154). On the basis of these theological foundations, *Communion: On being the church* affirms that ‘we [Lutherans and Reformed] are in communion’. This goes further than *Towards Church Fellowship* which stated that that ‘nothing stands in the way of church fellowship’. Advances have been achieved both on the differing understandings of the place of confessional writings in the life of the church, and on the role of *episkopé*, and the remaining differences are not church dividing.

However, the recommendations (§135) that conclude *Communion: On being the Church* account for just over one page of the 46-page document. Moreover, in contrast to the theological affirmations, the recommendations hardly take further, and in some cases even fail to

attain, those already set out in the 1989 and 2002 reports. In 1989, *Towards church fellowship* urged members of the two groupings 'to declare full communion with one another', including the establishment of full pulpit and altar/table fellowship, and the necessary mutual recognition of ministers ordained for Word and sacrament. COBC, by contrast, calls on churches to follow the Lund Principle of only working separately where there is a compelling reason so to do. While this is an important injunction, it lacks the ecclesial imperative of 1989. Although *Communion – on being the church* states that Lutherans and Reformed are 'in' communion, it fails to spell out the ecclesial consequences of this for full communion and mutual recognition between LWF and WCRC member churches, and whether, and if so which, steps are needed for this communion and recognition to be demonstrated in practice.

In the 2017 'Wittenberg Witness', the WCRC and the LWF 'rejoice that there is no longer any need for our separation' and that 'our differences are not church dividing.' While the joint statement gives thanks 'for the examples of those Lutheran and Reformed churches that have already declared church communion and now bear common witness together by sharing in worship, witness, and work for the world', it stops short of declaring church communion between the WCRC and the LWF as global communions and their member churches. As such the 2017 anniversary leaves Lutherans and Reformed with unfinished business.

JOHN CALVIN AND THE ANABAPTISTS

Annie Noblesse-Rocher*

John Calvin had first-hand knowledge of the Anabaptists in Strasbourg and Geneva. His relationship with them was stormy, as shown by the Registers of the Association of Genevan Pastors, as far back as 1537. Calvin's stay in Strasbourg (1538-40) along with his theological intimacy with Martin Bucer, and through him with Huldreich Zwingli, strongly influenced his suspicion of the 'nebulous Anabaptist'. He remained very Strasbourgian in his relationship with the radical reformers: his knowledge of the Alsatian public debates between the magisterial Reformers and these dissidents, enabled him to put together the elements of a dossier to use in later confrontations. In particular, the issue of vows – in Zwingli's 1527 Treatise against the Anabaptists, Bucer's Commentary on Sophonie of 1528, and finally Calvin's own Treatise against the Anabaptists – is argued by the three reformers with great precision, biblically and theologically, regarding its political and ecclesial implications.

French humanism of the early sixteenth century formed John Calvin and left an indelible mark on his theology and writings. Other influences included his close friendship with the family of Guillaume Budé; his studies with humanists, such as Mathurin Cordier; his first teacher, Pierre de l'Estoile, a jurist at the Faculty of Law in Orleans; Alciat, professor at Bourges; his intellectual closeness to the German, Melchior Wolmar; his friendship with the jurist, François Daniel. Through these people, the Reformer received the mark of a humanism

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that showed a preference for ancient sources and studies concerning them, particularly philology.¹ Rhetoric, especially the *ars oratoria* of Quintilian, was one of the marks of the humanist legacy on the exegesis and theology of John Calvin.²

Calvin saw himself as a humanist and he indicated his belonging to this movement by the choice of his first work, a commentary on Seneca's *De clementia*.³ Calvin worked during the winter of 1531-2 on this book,⁴ which was published on 4 April 1534. After his conversion in 1534 he considered humanism as a part of his journey and preparation for the evangelical life, rather than a goal in itself.⁵ By contrast with the renaissance ideal which promotes the dignity of man, Calvin proposed the idea of the irremediable fall of man, his corruption by sin and his alienation from God. Certainly, in his method of working and in the form of his reflection (and his books), he remained a humanist; however, for him, the centre had moved. He could no longer be satisfied by Erasmian humanism. This only had a minor influence on an area as important for him as biblical exegesis.⁶

For John Calvin, the years 1534 to 1535, following his conversion and until his final return to Geneva (1541) were years of confrontation and

¹ The literature on Calvin and humanism is very substantial. I refer to the long published, but still relevant, work of François Wendel, *Calvin et l'humanisme*, Paris 1976 and to the work of Olivier Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique de la Parole. Étude de rhétorique réformée*, Paris 1992; see also *Calvin et ses contemporains*, edited by Olivier Millet (Geneva: Droz, 1998).

² O Millet, 'Réforme protestante et rhétorique' in *Histoire de la rhétorique dans l'Europe moderne (1450-1950)*, published under the direction of Marc Fumaroli, Paris 1, 265-271.

³ Seneca, book two *De clementia*, with notes by John Calvin, Paris and Lyons 1532 is a philological commentary on the work of Seneca, edited as part of the Opera published by Erasmus at Basel in 1529. Cf. *Bibliotheca calviniana*, 32/1, 31.

⁴ It cannot be excluded, though it cannot be proved, that Calvin's ambition was to motivate Francis I to show mercy to his evangelical colleagues, just as Seneca had appealed to Nero. A more realistic hypothesis is that he was responding to the appeal of Erasmus that a work of this time would be produced, as he had planned to do.

⁵ Cf. François Wendel, *Calvin. Source et évolution de sa pensée religieuse* (Geneva, 1985), 12-3; id., *Calvin et l'humanisme* (Paris: PUF, 1976), passim.

⁶ Cf. Irena Backus, 'L'influence de l'exégèse d'Érasme sur le milieu calvinien de Genève', in *Érasme et les théologiens réformés* (Brussels, 2005), 129-55.

conflict with a vast, infinitely variable movement,⁷ the Anabaptist movement,⁸ which appeared at the very moment when Calvin, full of his humanist culture, began to take a radical turn in his spiritual life. He wrote his first religious treatise on the survival (or not) of the soul after death - which can be translated as *The souls of the faithful who died with faith in Christ live in Christ and do not sleep*⁹ - as a polemical work in opposition to Anabaptist doctrine. It will be published in 1544 under the title, *Psychopannychia* (On the sleep of the soul). Ten years later in 1544, Calvin is an accomplished author: his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* appeared in three editions (1536, 1539 and 1541). He is the reformer of Geneva and gave his city the *Ecclesiastical ordinances*; his international reputation will be assured following the controversy with Jacques Sadolet (1539). In 1544 he raises his voice again against the Anabaptists to protect the faithful against the *errors of the common Anabaptist sect*.¹⁰

Was humanism a help to Calvin in these polemics? Did he recall that a Jean Pic de la Mirandole placed the dignity of man above everything?¹¹ Was the old rhetoric, dear to the humanists, of any assistance? These are the questions, to which we will modestly try to respond, keeping in mind the context in which two Calvin treatises were written, reflecting particularly on the one written in 1544, *the 'Brieve Instruction'*.

⁷ Since the foundational work of George Hunston Williams (*The Radical Reformation*, Kirksville-Missouri, Sixteenth Century Journal Inc., 1992, 1241), historians define the adherents of Anabaptism as 'radical reformers' (to distinguish them from the Magisterial Reformation, as the 'left wing of the Reformation', as 'dissidents' or better, as non-conformists (in the sense of not conforming to a religious norm). With James Kittelson, author of a fine work on Capiton (*Wolfgang Capiton: From humanist to Reformer* [Leiden: Brill, 1975]), under the generic term of Anabaptist, one must include certainly pious 'non-conformists' of religious opinion, readers of Scripture, but who were inclined to certain religious views different from those of the Magisterial Reformation.

⁸ On this term, cf. Williams, 1241.

⁹ John Calvin, *Vivere apud Christum non dormire animis sanctos, qui in fide Christi, assertion*, Strasburg 1542.

¹⁰ For these two treatises, cf. Bibliotheca calviniana, *Les œuvres de Jean Calvin publiées au 16^e siècle. I Écrits théologiques, littéraires et juridiques, 1532-1534*, éd. Par R. Peter et J-F Gilmont (Geneva: Droz), 113-4.

¹¹ Cf. Jean Pic de la Mirandole, *Œuvres philosophiques*, Latin text, translated and annotated by Olivier Boulnois and Giuseppe Rognon (Paris: PUF, 1993).

The Anabaptist nebula

Following James M Kittleson,¹² the generic term ‘Anabaptist’ can be understood to include non-conformists (in the sense of not conforming to a majority religious norm), favouring certain theological options different from those of the traditional or magisterial Reformation. Since the masterful work of George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, these non-conformists are also called ‘radical reformers’ or ‘the left wing of the Reformation’ or ‘dissidents’. In the first three decades of the sixteenth century, this infinitely variable movement took its place between the traditional Church and the magisterial Reformation. The denunciation of the old abuses of the Church, the rejection of infant baptism, the necessity of adult confessing-faith in baptismal candidates, the experience of spiritual regeneration, as a separation from the secular world, and the refusal to accept the Christian validity of magistrates (that is, the government of the city) constituted the common basis of the convictions of these evangelical communities. Marked by the mysticism of the late Middle Ages through *Theologia Deutsch*, read in the two translations of Martin Luther in 1516 and 1518, in the writings of Tauler, and through the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas a Kempis, these radicals arose from the radicalisation of the Zwinglian Reformation, sometimes associated with apocalyptic and millenarian movements.¹³

It is possible to identify seven typical strands of this movement:

- The supporters of the prophet of Zwinckau, Thomas Müntzer;
- The so-called ‘Swiss brothers’, Zwinglian radicals, such as Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Denk, Conrad Grebel and Michael Sattler, to some extent;

¹² James M Kittleson, *Wolfgang Capito: from Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

¹³ Millenarianism is the conviction that Christ will return to establish a glorious kingdom of peace on this earth for a thousand years. The term comes from the reference in Apocalypse 20: 2-5 to a period of a thousand years, during which Satan is bound and the souls of the martyrs reign with Christ. Some of the first Fathers of the Church were devotees of millenarianism; however, the movement ended under the influence of Augustine, as it was accepted that the thousand years is not to be taken literally, but as the period between the Ascension of Christ and his second coming.

- The Hutterites of Moravia;
- Supporters of the 'Docetist', Melchior Hoffman;
- The Anabaptists of Munster (1533-1535);
- The disciples of Menno Simon;
- Spiritual visionaries, supporters of David Joris.¹⁴

The first contacts of Calvin with Anabaptism

From 1534 Calvin began to compose a series of letters and treatises against the supporters of the Radical Reformation,¹⁵ with whom he had been in regular contact in Paris, Orleans, Strasbourg and Geneva.¹⁶

The scandal of the Cordeliers of Orleans

A first controversy, concerning the sleep of the soul after death, caught the attention of the Reformer, through the 'scandal of the Cordeliers' of Orleans'.

This account comes from the hand of Charles de Jonvillers, Calvin's secretary, in *The spirit of the Cordeliers*:¹⁷

Madame Louyse de Mareau, wife of François de Saint-Mesmin, squire, from la Cloye, provost of Orleans, died in 1533 leaving instructions that she be buried without funeral ceremonial at the convent of the Cordeliers, the burial place of her husband's family, where they had made donations.

The Cordeliers, suspecting Louyse of being 'Lutheran' as she wanted so little funeral ceremonial, wanted to take revenge on her. Believing her to be damned, they got one of their novices to hide in the vault of the church, where there was a little opening through which the novice could listen and see; pretending to be the spirit of the provost of Orleans, the novice responded to questions, banging on a wooden bench or table, making noises when Matins was being prayed at midnight. The soul of the deceased was asked to strike six times if it

¹⁴ It is not possible, within the restricted framework of this study to develop the particular feature of each of these currents, which are well described in the work of Willem Balke and in that of George Hunston Williams. Cf. Willem, *Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals*, translated from the Dutch by W Heyner (Grand Rapids: 1981), 2 and George Hunston Williams.

¹⁵ Cf. Williams, .898-900.

¹⁶ Cf. Williams, 23-313.

¹⁷ *Corpus reformatorum Opera Calvini*, vol. X, pars posterior, col. 39 ff et Paul de Félice, *La Tragédie des Cordeliers d'Orléans*.

was filled with an evil spirit; and six blows were heard. The lady was declared damned as a heretical Lutheran, too attached to 'pomp and worldly glory' and having taken too much pleasure in her appearance.

The Cordeliers had organised this masquerade with a pastoral purpose: the doctrine of the vigil or death of the soul after death had been condemned at the Lateran Council V (1513). Where 'the old heresy' risked reoccurring, the aim was to bring back the correct doctrine. The Constitution *Apostolici regiminis* on the immortality of the soul (19 December 1513, session 8) reaffirmed the immortality of the soul after death, in opposition to the Averroes-inspired re-reading by some Paduan philosophers (or a Cajetan!) of Aristotle's *De anima*:

Leo, bishop, servant of the servants of God, in order that the memory be maintained for ever, with the approval of the Holy Council [...] the old enemy of the human race (Matt. 13: 25-29), dared to sow in the field of the Lord some extremely pernicious errors, which had been rejected by the faithful, concerning the nature of the rational soul (that it is mortal or unique in all men).¹⁸

At the same time, Calvin was asked by some friends to react against 'a form of Anabaptist quietism'. Antoine Poquet d'Enghein, a protégé of Marguerite de Navarre, questioned the immortality of the soul in his preaching. Calvin undertook the first version of what would become *Psychopannychia*, which was reworked into a new order in the following year in Basel. Was it necessary to publish a reply which risked giving publicity to certain troublesome ideas? Capiton in Strasbourg feared it was.¹⁹ The work would appear in 1542.

Personal contacts

Several years later, John Calvin came into contact with the Anabaptists in Geneva and Strasbourg. The minutes of the *Council of Geneva* for 1537-1539 record a series of decisions relating to Anabaptists. The main event was a debate on 9 March 1537 when two Anabaptists asked for a debate with the pastors of Geneva:

¹⁸ O. de la Brosse, J Lecler, H Holstein, C Lefebvre, *Latran V* (Paris: Editions de l'Orante, 1975), 421.

¹⁹ P. A. Herminjard, *Correspondance des Réformateurs de langue française*, vol. III.

9 March 1537 (katabaptist) Herman de Gerbihan and Andry, from Anglen in Brabant, say they want to debate with the preachers. It was agreed they should put their points in writing.²⁰

13 March, the Council of Two-hundred advises that the articles had been read, certainly those of Schleithem, and it was thought that a public debate would be too dangerous.

The situation of the katabaptists and their articles was discussed. Since it was felt that a public debate would be dangerous for some tender souls, it was resolved that tomorrow the affair of the elders be discussed in the Council of the Two Hundred, but not their articles.

On 16 March a debate took place with two Anabaptists at Riva monastery, the minute book records, and a long account of it was made on 18 March:

This is a report of the debate. Since this matter creates varied reactions and is more likely to shake faith than to strengthen it, it is agreed that the debate should come to an end. There is no permission to publish anything without our seal; it is determined that all written materials be removed from the Town Hall. It is decreed that the parties leave our city and our territories. Master Guilleaulme [Farel] should be told not to engage in any dispute without our approval, nor any katabaptists or their followers. Then the said Herman and Angry Benoit were summoned and were told that we wished to hear from them; and having heard their propositions, which cannot be considered true to Scripture, the same were declared erroneous; then they were asked if they wished to retract and return to God, asking his pardon. They replied that they answered to the will of God, and would by no means retract.

Herman and Andry, having refused to retract their views, asked to be shown the 'Platina', that is, *Les vies de souverains pontifes* (The lives of the sovereign pontiffs) from the Vatican Library, Barthélémy de Sacchi 'to see the origins of baptism'. The appeal to the 'brothers' was refused them, as they are out of line with our Church [...] since they do not wish to pray with us.

On 19 March 1537 it was proposed that the Anabaptists be 'perpetually banished' from Geneva.

Sometimes the pressure was so intense that the Anabaptists had to give way. Janne, wife of Claude Pignard, 'detained for holding the articles of the katabaptists', was questioned concerning her agreement to have her child baptized, if she had one. She said, 'yes', was freed and

²⁰ RCG, 1537, vol. II, 101.

was forbidden to hold to the articles of the Anabaptists, under pain of being arrested again and banished.

On 11 September 1537 Pierre Guyder, a hosier, having raised an issue concerning baptism, 'is now resolved to live like us'.

On 23 April 1537 the Great Council decided that Calvin and Farel should leave the city within three days (they refuse to celebrate the [Lord's] Supper in the Berne manner, with unleavened bread), the question of the presence of Anabaptists continued. The minute book of the Council of Geneva mentions the case of Jeanne, known as the La Gibessiere, the wife of Claude Picard who was banished for his faith; he returned to the city without authorization; his wife will also have to leave until her husband presents a petition for mercy. On 7th October of the same year: 'A Morge! it is accepted that there will be both Anabaptists and heretics in the city. It is important to know which is which, for the sake of the administration of justice'.²¹

Calvin may have been in contact with supporters of Melchior Hoffman during his stay in Strasbourg, as is suggested in the chapter of the second edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* on flesh and the spirit,²² which is critical of the theology of Melchior.²³ In Strasbourg Calvin asked the authorities to allow him to debate with French-speaking Anabaptists at the synod of 1539; he succeeded in convincing Jean Stordeur and Herman de Gerbehaye to renounce their faith and to re-join the magisterial Reformation.²⁴ In the capital city of Alsace [Strasbourg], the Reformer made the acquaintance of the Bohemian Brethren, inspired by Hussites, who had sent one of their young representatives, Matthias Cervenka, with a letter intended for Bucer (16 June 1540), a confession of faith and an apologia. Sources of the Bohemian Brethren, in their account of their dealings of the men from Strasbourg (including Calvin), with Matthias Cervenka record that there were moments of conviviality, such as the debates on theology and their assessment of the Waldensians.²⁵

Calvin was certainly in contact with the writings of Bucer (or roman writings) intended to counter Anabaptist influence, which only reached

²¹ *Registres du Conseil de Genève à l'époque de Calais*, op.cit., cf. note 22, 433.

²² IRC 1536 and IRC 1539.

²³ Williams, op. cit., 916.

²⁴ Williams, op. cit., 915.

²⁵ Cf. A.Gindely, *Quellen zur Geschichte den Böhmischen Brüder* (Vienna, 1859), 68-70. E. Doumergue, vol. II, 406.

its high-point when it arrived in the capital of Alsace: the *Getrewe Warnung der Prediger des Evangelii* of Martin Bucer, his principal treatise against the Anabaptists Jacob Kautz and Hans Denk, which appeared on 2 July 1527, the *Quid de baptisate ... (1533) of the Strasbourg Reformer*, which arose from his correspondence with Bernt Rothmann, then in 1534 the *Bericht aus der heyligen geschrift* aimed against the Anabaptists of Münster.

From 1526 the strategy of the Strasbourg Reformer and the Alsace preachers became clear: it was appropriate to lead public disputes against the Anabaptists and to produce refutations of their writings. Bucer's commentary on Zephaniah, *Tzephaniah epitomographus* (1528) was one of these writings.

A letter of 13 August 1527 from Bucer to Zwingli sets out the essential points of the debate that took place between Hans Denk and the Strasbourg Reformer. 'I would like you to note when you write about the Anabaptists: as regards the ideas of Denck – who for them is nothing less than a pope – it comes back to free will; he regards sins as an empty belief, that is, nothing. He teaches that people achieve justification by their own resources ... He professes only the example of the life of Christ [...] For him, this Word is, according to Deuteronomy, 'near to you, in your mouth'. He says that this law is written on our hearts [2 Cor. 3:2].

Bucer sends documentation to his friend, Zwingli. He sets out for him certain points of the teaching of Hans Denk, which was defended feebly by the Anabaptist on the occasion of their debate on 22 November 1526: Denk does not confess justification by faith alone; he defends the idea of human free will and makes sins an '*opinio*'. This last point will be mentioned in the *Tzephaniah epitomographus*: Hans Denck rejected the doctrine of predestination and election, and defended the existence in Man of a free will, in a mystic-tropological sense, similar to the 'Gelassenheit' of the Rhineland mystics who made him a 'spiritualist' Anabaptist. Hans Denk used his time in Strasbourg to develop a sense of universal salvation, which was bound to put him in conflict with the 'election' of Bucer. Origen's idea of universal salvation inspired the position of Denck, not directly but influenced by the German mysticism of the fifteenth century. The theology of Origen seemed to be a *topos* of Anabaptist preaching. Clement Ziegler, the preacher to the Marshlanders, quotes Origen as an interpreter of his key reference text, Mark 16:15-16 in his *Ausführung über das Abendmahl und die Taufe*

(April-August 1524). 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptised will be saved' in Mark 16 [...] Origen has a reflection [on this]: 'this shows that if God on the Last Day, saves all creatures, he saves the devil also'. Bucer comments on these references from Origen in his *Tzephaniish epitomographus*: Distinction of punishment on the condemned and the elect. Finally, those of this kind (Anabaptists) all truly sin against the Holy Spirit since this sin, on the affirmation of Christ, can never be forgiven; their evil will never end, although certain Anabaptists believe the opposite and force themselves to recover the teaching of Origen [...] This is why the prophet proposed the model of the condemned among the Philistines, to whom [other than devastation], nothing good is promised'.

The double denunciation in the 'Brieve Instruction'

Two years after the publication of the *Psychopannychia* at Strasbourg in 1542, Calvin completed his 'Brieve Instruction' (1544), his main treatise against the Anabaptists. His polemical intention was explicit: 'to write against the false opinions and errors of the Anabaptists would be too much; it is an abyss from which I could not escape, since this vermin differs from all the other heretical sects, inasmuch as it has not simply erred on certain points but has created a sea of foolish dreams [...] It comes down in the end to two main sects: one, although full of evil and pernicious errors, still contains a grand simplicity, having received the holy scripture, like us. The other is an incomparable labyrinth of dreams so absurd it is a wonder that creatures with human features can be so deprived of sense and reason as to allow themselves to be deceived and to fall into fantasies that are more than brutal. This sect calls themselves libertines. They regard the holy word of God as fables, except when it suits them and when they can use it to serve their diabolic opinions'.

The 'Brieve Instruction' denounced a second 'sect', which included in 1530-1540 spiritual libertines. In 1545 Calvin devotes to them a work of refutation, a twin volume of the 'Brieve Instruction': 'Against the fantastic sect of the libertines, who call themselves the spirituals' (1545). The term 'sect' used to refer to these spiritual libertines seems to us today rather woolly. The first known 'libertine' is one Coppin in Lille towards 1529, but the person who will become head of the movement is

a dressmaker from Picardy, Thierry Quintin from Hainault, who preached in Tournai from 1534, along with Antoine Pocquet.²⁶

The 'Palinods de Rouen', a collection of poems in honour of the Virgin Mary written by professional poets, canons, magistrates, authors of royal songs and Rondo ballads, included works by spiritual libertines. One, Pierre du Val, composed a *Théâtre mystique* (*Mystical theatre*) composed of several elements: a dialogue on contempt for death, a poetic drama for three persons and a morality play for six personages (including Love, the Law of Rigour, the Law of Grace, the Virgin). The following poem, from *Rien sans l'esprit* (Nothing without the Spirit) is the most representative of this strain of writing, according a preponderant place in the life of the faithful to the Spirit:

What is the Spirit? It is a gentle wind from heaven,
Which the soul in faith inspires with charity.
What is the flesh? A mortal pest
Which by error corrupts the soul and body
Or takes from the Spirit its reign and empire.
Reason is its foundation,
And gives nourishment to the faithful heart.
And the flesh is what? Mortal food;
But by virtue of the eternal sacrament,
The Spirit of love nourishes the faithful heart.

In 1544, the Reformer was urged by his friends to respond to the 'radicals' and the Anabaptist charter, the *Brüderliche Vereinigung*,²⁷ which (at least in its shaping) was inspired by the Anabaptist leader, Michael Sattler.²⁸

²⁶ Calvin will write other treatises against the libertines, such as *Une epistre de la mesme matiere*, against a certain Cordelier supporter of the sect who was a prisoner in Rouen, published in 1547; also *la Response* to a certain Dutchman who, under the pretence of making all Christians spiritual, allows them to pollute their bodies with all sorts of idolatries, edited in 1562: the subject of the polemic is whether it is necessary or not to publicly confess the reformed faith at the risk of martyrdom. In this work, Calvin replies to the attacks of Dirk Coomhert in a Dutch work entitled *Verschooninghe van de roomsche afgoderye* written in 1560.

²⁷ *Brüderliche Vereinigung*, H. Fast (hrsgs.), in: *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer in der Schweiz*, vol. II, (Ostschweiz-Zürich, 1974), 26-36.

²⁸ Born near Fribourg-in-Brisgau, Michael Sattler (1490?-1527) entered the Benedictine Order before turning to Luther, influenced by his writings. He remained close to the Anabaptists and embraced the most radical concept of

In February of that year at Schleithem, north of Schaffouse, an Anabaptist synod was held, which produced the 'Seven articles' (the so-called Schleithem articles) in the form of a confession of faith. The Anabaptist movement needed unity and stability, and the Brüderliche Vereinigung was a response to this need. The danger of a splintering of the movement with a core of spiritualists seems to have motivated this charter of unity, which begins as follows: 'Among us have entered false brethren who have caused us much annoyance. Some have distanced themselves from the faith, as they thought to reclaim the liberty of the Spirit and of Christ, and to use it. They have turned away from the truth and have given themselves over to seeking luxury and the freedom of the flesh, thinking that faith and love permitted everything'.²⁹

In March 1527 John Oecolampade, the Reformer of Basel, had a copy that he got in Berne. He sent it to Hulreich Zwingli in Zurich, who printed during this same year (1527) a treatise refuting it, entitled *Contra strophas catabaptistarum*, which can be translated, maintaining the ambivalent and ironic meaning of *strophas*, as *The treatise against the antiphonaries of the catabaptists*.³⁰ Was this treatise read by Calvin? There is no evidence to prove or disprove it; however Martin Bucer provided the resources for the chapter on oaths in his *Tzephaniah epitomographus (commentary on Zephaniah 1528)*; through this indirect route, it came to Calvin during his stay in Strasbourg.

On 23 February 1544, Guillaume Farel sent Calvin a work that was being distributed in the County of Neuchâtel. Was it a French

the Reformation, having himself re-baptised with a profession of faith. He engaged in theological debates with Zwingli, Bucer and Capiton; he died a martyr, burnt at the stake in Rottenburg. He was the final editor of the '27 articles', which influenced the life and faith of Mennonites. Cf. Claude Baecher, *L'affaire Sattler* (Méry-sur-Oise-Montbéliard: Sator-Éditions Mennonites, 1990).

²⁹ *Das Schkeitheimer Bekenntnis*, p. 66. Who were the 'false brethren'? Spiritualists? Undoubtedly ... McLaughlin presented a generalised typology including particularly the 'Radical Platonic Spiritualists', such as Caspar Schwendkfeld, Valentin Weigel, Sebastian Franck, Durk Volkertszoon Coomhert, but also personalities like Hans Denck, Ludwig Hätzer that got into debate with Martin Bucer, in 1526, on the question of free will, Jacob Kautz, Johannes Bunderlin: most of them rejected the link made by Martin Luther between Word and Spirit, giving primacy to the latter, and practising an allegorizing exegesis in the tradition of Origen.

³⁰ Strangely, the first translation into Dutch dates only from 1560.

translation (now lost) of a volume by Balthasar Hubmaier, *Du Baptême des croyants (Vom dem christlichen Taufft der gläubigen*, Nüremberg 1525), printed in 1,500 copies in German-speaking Switzerland.³¹ Or a copy of the *Brüderliche Vereinigung*, as Willelm Balke thinks? In any case, Farel denounced the impact of this dangerous work: 'This is why the brethren think it necessary to respond to it, not that the work is worthy of it but because of simple-minded people who have some fear of God. They ask you, in the name of the Lord, to take on this work and not to refuse to undertake it because the authors are so light-weight. We all know that you are overburdened and that you have other subjects to deal with, not only for the sake of people today but also for posterity, particularly in the explanation of the Scriptures'.³²

The relationship of Guillaume Farel to the Anabaptists was ambiguous. Since the 1540's, he had been confronted by the Anabaptists of Neuchâtel and an episode, which became notorious, appears to have led him to detach himself from this strand, from which until then he had not distanced himself. In 1543 people attending a reformed baptism asked the minister to justify what he was doing, since the Scriptures did not refer explicitly to the practice of infant baptism.³³ Guillaume had been aware of the Anabaptist theses on baptism; the revision of the chapter of his *Sommaire* in 1542 shows that he was not afraid of being suspected of sympathy towards those whom he would soon begin to attack, with the help of Calvin.

Farel had undoubtedly considered writing a treatise of reputation himself; he had a clear idea of the structure of such a work, since he advises Calvin to have two sections: one would be a French translation of the *Psychopannychia*; the second would be a response to the *Articles de Schleithem*.³⁴ And also the 'Brieve Instruction' of Calvin.

Worried by the distribution of this translation, Calvin accepted the charge: he did not reply to the treatise of Hubmaier, but to the *Brüderliche Vereinigung*. Undoubtedly he thought that was the text that was probably received by the Anabaptist communities. Calvin obtained the French translation of the *Brüderliche Vereinigung*, which was being

³¹ *Bibliotheca Calviniana*, 32/1.

³² Heminjard, vol. IX, pp. 173-4; *Bibliotheca calviniana*.

³³ Guillaume Farel, *Breve declaration*, 1544, 537-538.

³⁴ For the letter of Farel to Calvin on 23 February 1544, cf. Herminjard, 9, 173-5.

distributed by Pierre Pelot from Le Pelloux, an Anabaptist from Neuchâtel.

Calvin defends a classic idea, close to that of the traditional Church: the soul rests after death until the final judgement.

In 1538 in Metz, the issue of the rest of the soul was discussed again; two Anabaptists, promoters of their doctrine, were drowned, a third was exiled; one of them was a barber who was close to Dutch Anabaptists, relatives of Herman de Gerberhaye; one was a native of Mouzon, near Sedan; another was from Montihéry, south of Paris. All three had preached the sleep of the soul. Bucer urged Calvin to publish his *Psychopannychia*.

The question of oaths

The question of oaths was one of the big issues debated in *In cataptistarum strophas elenchus* of Huldrich Zwingli and in the *Tzephania epitomographus* of Bucer.

These are the texts in summary:

Article 7 of Schleithem

Zum sibenden sind wir vereingt worden von dem eid also; der eid ist ein befestigung under denen, die do zanken oder verheissen, und im gesatz geheissen worden, das er solte geschechen by dem namen gottes alein warhaftig und nit falsch. Christus, der die volkumenheit des gesatz lert, der verbut den synen alles schhweren, weder recht noch falsch, weder by dem himmel noch by dem erterich noch by Jerusalem noch by unseren haupt, und das um der ursach willen, wie er hernarch sqpricht: Dan ir mögen nit ein har wiss oder Schwarz machen; Sechend zu, darum ist alles schweren verboten. Da wir mögen nut erstaten, das in dem schweren verheissen wirt, diewil wir das allerminst an uns nit mögen enderen (Brüderliche Vereinigung, art. 7; 33, Matt. 5:33-38; Lévi. 19: 12).

This text was translated into Latin by Zwingli (translated into French by the author): 'We agree on this point and we declare: to swear is to confirm a decision taken between parties in litigation or in negotiation. In the [divine] Law, this commandment to swear must be done before the throne of God, so that it will not be false. But Christ teaches that the perfection of the Law forbids his disciples to swear, so that they do not swear in the wrong or by something, by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem or by their own heads (Matt. 5:34-5); hence the word: 'Do not swear by your head, for you cannot turn white or black a single hair (Matt. 5:36). Pay good attention: every form of oath is henceforth forbidden, since we cannot accomplish anything that we promise, since

we cannot change anything, white or black hairs [...] Some object: 'certainly in the New Testament a vow does not exist so that we can engage with God by an oath, but in the Old Testament it does exist'. To which we reply: read the Scripture carefully. A person who swears by the temple or the heavens, swears by the throne of God and the one who is seated there (Matt. 23:22). You see: to swear by the heavens is forbidden, because it is the throne of God; it is even more serious to swear by God himself! Oh, how foolish and blind you are: which is the greater, the seat or the person who sits on it? Foolish and blind: yes, there are those who say: if it is wrong to swear, then take as a witness the name of God to speak the truth, like Peter and Paul, those who swear commit sin (Rom. 1:9) [...] We reply that Peter and Paul took the name of God as their witness, as God had made a promise to Abraham by an oath. The apostles themselves have promised nothing; there is a difference between taking as a witness (*testari*) and swearing (*jurare*). The person who swears promises things to come. Christ, who was promised in advance to the old man Abraham, we welcome after a long period of waiting. A person who takes someone as a witness (*testari*) does so in the present, whether it is good or bad. It is in this sense that Simeon takes Mary as a witness in relation to Christ: behold, this child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed (Luke 2:34). In this sense, Christ has taught us: Let your word be Yes, Yes or No, No: anything more than this comes from the evil one (Matt. 5:37). Christ is, in simplicity, Yes or No, and those who search for him with simplicity find him. Amen' (Huldreich Zwingli, *Sämtliche Werke: In catabaptistarum strophas Elenchus*, W Köhler (hrsgs.), Bd VI/I, [Zürich: Vg Berichthaus, 1961], CR 93/1, 142-55).

Huldreich Zwingli, Epilogue sur les antiphonaries des catabaptistes [Epilogue on the antiphonaries of the catabaptists]

'Who taught you such a definition of an oath? The essence of an oath, whether you are unaware of it or in malice pass over it in silence [...] You only invoke the use of an oath but of its nature and form you say nothing. If you only were said that openly, but what you teach your contemporaries is a huge horror. But let's come to the facts: to take an oath is to appeal to God as a witness (*contestatio*) when it is a matter of settling a question or taking a decision. This is not our definition; it belongs to the one by whom we swear: if a person undertakes to look after a donkey, a bullock, a lamb or any animal and the animal breaks a

limb or is taken away without anyone having seen it, an oath (in the name of the Eternal One) will intervene between the parties and the person who was looking after the animal will declare that he did not raise his hand against the goods of his neighbour; the owner of the animal will accept his oath and no restitution shall be made (Ex. 22: 9-10). You see: to take an oath involves taking God as a witness; the text speaks of taking an oath before the Lord or God, that is to say the *Tetragrammaton*. This appeal to a witness is nothing other than a prayer to God. This text of Exodus is decisive in settling the issue of an oath, but in Genesis 21: 22-24, 27 we have the words of Abimelek to Abraham: Abimelek accompanied by Phicol, the head of his army, came to speak in this terms to Abraham: "God is with you in all that you do; now therefore swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or of my posterity" (...). Abraham said, "I swear it". And shortly afterwards, they swore to one another; Abraham swears that he will not engage in any deceit ... That is an oath.'

And then we come to the text of Exodus 20:7: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God" and our interpreter Jerome adds "in vain". In Leviticus 19:12 you will find, "And you shall not swear falsely by my name". The Septuagint interpret this: "You shall not swear by my name to do evil or make a forgery". The Latin translation proposes, "You shall not perjure yourself by my name". It was forbidden to the ancients to authorise the taking of God's name in vain, so that, as the passage from Leviticus shows, they cannot swear a lie'.

'I will summarise my advice thus: I do not think that one should demand that a person take an oath or that one can demand it without burdening the person's conscience, or if the salvation of the person is seriously compromised or if, in all things where we would be called to swear, the name of God be blasphemed. Therefore, we think it is no harm, at this point in the debate, as long as the nonsense of the Anabaptists is refuted'. (Huldreich Zwingli's sämtliche Werke, *In catapbaptistarum strophas Elenchus*, W Köhler (hrsgs), Bd VI/I [Zürich: Vg Berichthaus, 1961], CR 93/1, 142-55).

Martin Bucer

Letter of 26 September 1528 to Huldrych Zwingli: 'Grace and peace. I thank you very much for your reply [...]

'I send you by return Tzephaniah, commented upon after my fashion. Shortly before the end, I have dealt with the fulfilment of the prophetic

promises: I would like you get a brother to read them and send me your opinion. I appear to oppose totally the analogy of faith [to favour an allegorical interpretation], those things that Cellarius has written about the intermediary coming of Christ and the earthly happiness of the Church, which will happen before the final appearing of Christ, and I regret that Capiton approves them in such a way. However, it pleases the Lord that we would also like the brethren to think otherwise. Yes, as always, a true friendship in the Lord holds us and keeps us in agreement, even if he [Capiton] approves what I cannot approve, just as he cannot approve all my positions. The hypocrisy of Cellarius and the Anabaptists has damaged us with this man' (BCor III, no. 213, 213-19).

Commentary on Zephaniah 1:5 ('those who bow down on the roofs to the host of heavens; those who bow down and swear to the Tetragrammaton'):

'Here the prophet enumerates those who, among the nations had deserved to perish by reason of their impiety, the Lord permits them to implore and to swear; even concerning hypocrites and evil-doers. Rabbi Schlomoh (Rashi) thinks that this means, 'they swore by their king' (*Biblia Rabbinica*, Strasbourg 1525). This kind of impiety has existed at all times, it has to be admitted; in our time, these adorers of material gods find expression in those who give themselves to ceremonies and exercises of piety. 'To swear by their king' also means to place their trust in themselves and to give honour to strange gods. This is why God asks his people to pray in his name (5 Moses 6-10 and Jeremiah 5) and not to swear by foreign gods. Certainly Isaiah 65 and Jeremiah 4, as in Psalms 63: 12 'the King will rejoice in God; all who swear by him will glory in him' foretell that 'he who swears by God will be glorified'. From all this, we must conclude that to swear by God is an act of piety, a pure and excellent thing, even though Christ himself has said: 'but I tell you not to swear'. That does not mean that it is necessary to reject every oath as the Anabaptists dictate and imprison many consciences ...' (Martini Bucerii Tzephaniah epitomographus [Argentori, 1528]).

'We have come to this agreement relating to an oath, that it is a confirmation to be made only in the name of God, concerning the truth and not a lie, in accordance with the commandment of the Law. But for Christians, all oaths are forbidden by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 5: 33-37)' (Ioannes Calvini, *Scripta didactica et polemica*, vol. II, *Brieve instruction to arm the faithful against the errors in the common sect of the Anabaptists*, edidit Mirjam van Veen [Geneva: Droz, 2007], 83.)

The term 'catabaptist' is a play on words: 'cata' should be understood to mean 'against'. Zwingli plans on the preposition meaning 'against',

in German 'wider'. The 'wiedertäufer' (those who baptize a second time) become 'widertäufer' (those opposed to baptism). This play on words is explained by Zwingli himself in his treatise against the Anabaptists. It is borrowed from Gregory Nazianzen and is quoted from Oecolampade, dated 13 October 1525.

Zwingli produced his treatise against the Anabaptists on 4 September 1527. Basel, Zurich, Berne Appenzell had seen their Anabaptist communities grow, and the Swiss Reformers worried about possible links with the heads of the Peasant movement. Debates had taken place between Swiss Reformers and the Anabaptist leaders, such as Balthasar Hubmaier in January 1526, and this debate is one of the sources of the treatise of Zwingli.

The structure of the *Elenchus* is as follows: a very long *disputatio* and a collection of debates with unnamed Anabaptists. The essence of the treatise deals with the question of baptism and its theological meaning: the baptism of children and free will (articles 1 and 2), baptism and the Supper (article 3), the conduct of communities (article 5) and the reign of Christ (article 6). Finally, article 7 deals with the question of the oath. As will be the case with Bucer, Zwingli, at the core of his argumentation, interprets the text of Matthew 5:33-34 ('You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord". But I say to you, do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black". Matthew 5:33 has been wrongly interpreted, the Reformer thinks, by the Anabaptists. Christ did not forbid people to swear (*jurare*) but to swear in the name of someone (*deierare*). This ban concerns the banal, daily word, not the oath made in court or at the senate.

For Zwingli, there is a difference between 'schwören' (to take an oath) and 'testieren' (to attest). Did Abraham not swear to Abimelek that he would not betray him? It was an oath 'sub fide' and not 'sub lege' (Gen. 21:24). Relying on Genesis 22: 10 ('an oath in the name of the Lord will be made between two adversaries'), Zwingli defines an oath as an act of piety, a 'devotio'. In fact, continues the Reformer, the Lord and He alone knows what is in the human heart (I Kings 8:39); he is the guarantor of the oath made in his name.

This idea probably inspired Bucer. In fact, the *Tzephaniah epitomographus* speaks of 'a pious use of the oath'. Without plagiarising

the treatise of Zwingli, he keeps the central idea that of the oath as an act of piety, just like the difference between 'schwören' and 'testieren'. Christ does not condemn the oath ('iuramentum') since he himself gives witness ('testem' 'invocare') to his Father.

A note in the margin highlights the *excursus*: 'the passage on the oath is explained. Matthew 5'. Bucer, like Zwingli, makes an interpretation of the same Gospel text but in a completely different way. Shortly before, in relation to Zephaniah 1:5, 'those who bow down on the roofs to the host of the heavens; those who bow down and swear by Milcom', Bucer refers to 'the pious use of the oath'. After citing Isaiah 65 (16) and Jeremiah 4 (2), he goes on: 'we must conclude that to swear by the name of God is a work of piety (a piety), certainly pure and excellent, indeed Christian and, Christ, when he said, 'But I tell you: do not swear' in no way wished to reject every kind of oath, which the Anabaptists now make into a dogma and for the glory of God [...] How often the Lord himself takes his Father as a witness, and Paul also for God? It is not the oath that Christ forbids but the practice of swearing in vain and for nothing'.

Suspended between these two sources, John Calvin in turn picks up this question in 1544.

In conclusion

His humanist background did not prepare Calvin to confront the proponents of Anabaptism. He discovered Anabaptist nebula in Strasbourg, where he realized both the devotion of these Christians formerly called 'radicals' and also the danger they represented for his conception of the Reformation. According to Calvin, the diversity of the movement, with its radicals on the margins, threatened the credibility of a Reformation over which he wanted to maintain absolute control. Confrontation with the Roman Church presupposed mastery of Reformed theology and its expressions. Bucer and Zwingli did not bring reassurance on this point and gave Calvin arguments and motivation for a hostility which never disappeared.

THE ARMENIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

John Whooley*

It is often believed that the Armenian Catholic Church came into existence in 1742, but the history of Armenian Catholicism would seem to be more complex. Later, during the nineteenth century, a struggle began between two opposing ecclesiologies, that of Rome and that understood by Armenian tradition: the former expected the laity to be less involved in the affairs of the Church, whereas the latter wished to maintain the contrary. Schism ensued. The Great War brought devastation and a growing Diaspora. Unexpectedly, the Second Vatican Council implied a reassessment of the role of the Eastern Catholic Churches, including the Armenian.

On Sunday, 12 April 2015, Pope Francis celebrated Mass in St Peter's, Rome, to mark the centenary of the Armenian Genocide that had taken place within the territories of the then Ottoman Empire. With him at the altar was the Armenian Catholic Patriarch, Nerses Bedros XIX Tarmouni. Present in the congregation were the two Armenian Apostolic Catholicoses, Karekin II of Etchmiadzin, Armenia, and Aram I of Antelias, Lebanon, along with many Armenian clergy and faithful, both Catholic and Apostolic. In addition, the Pope, with the agreement of the Apostolic Church, declared that St Gregory of Narek (951-1003), a spiritual thinker and writer in the Apostolic tradition, was to be recognized henceforth as one of the Doctors of the Universal Church.

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This remarkable event illustrates how relations between the Armenian Apostolic and Roman Churches have now become much more cordial, despite a long history of frequent misunderstandings and hostility, the latter largely felt by the Apostolic Church, reacting against what were seen to be unnecessary and painful encroachments on its independence. Its christological position, along with certain other Churches¹ had become contrary to that held by both the Roman and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Council of Chalcedon (451) being the cause of this division.²

What then of Armenian Catholics in this dispute? It is often taken for granted that the formal separation from the Armenian Apostolic Church took place in 1742, thereby creating the Armenian Catholic Church some 1300 years after Chalcedon. It was in that year that Pope Benedict XIV (r.1740-1758) recognized Abraham Ardzivian – who had come to Rome for that very purpose – as Catholicos-Patriarch of Cilicia for Armenian Catholics. Ardzivian had recently been elected Catholicos in Aleppo, where many were sympathetic to Catholicism, as was clearly Ardzivian himself. The establishment of this Armenian Catholic Catholicosate, which was to have its official centre in the monastery of Bzommar in the Lebanon, was seen as a challenge to the Armenian Apostolic Church. The new catholicosate, though, had no legal standing in the eyes of the Sublime Porte.

There is evidence that not all Armenians had in fact accepted the rejection of the decisions of Chalcedon; that, indeed, attachment to Chalcedon had always been maintained by at least a minority of the Armenian ‘nation’ and had thus never been in schism with either the Greek or Roman Churches.³ In a sense, the 1742 event could be seen as

¹ Now generally termed, the Oriental Orthodox: Armenian, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Malankarese.

² The question in dispute was whether Christ’s Person was composed of two particular realities or of only one: either two coexisting natures, divine and human (dyophysite), or one nature comprising the divine and human inextricably mingled (miaphysite). The Council had declared for the former, thus alienating those who adhered to or were to adhere to the latter formula, the Armenian Church among them. The long-used and misleading term ‘monophysite’ is no longer thought appropriate as a description applied to the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

³ Cf. Amadouni, ‘The Armenian Church and its Future’, *Armenian Nation and the Armenian Catholic Church* (Los Angeles: Special Publication of “Flame”

a final recognition of this Chalcedonian strand within the theological sensibility of the 'nation'. Consequently, the Armenian Catholic Church finds the term 'uniate' as applied to itself as doubly unacceptable: not only for its generally pejorative application, but also, from their point of view, for its historical inaccuracy: the claim that all Armenians have been miaphysite. The contrary claim is said to be particularly rooted in the circumstances surrounding the baptism of King Trdat III by St Gregory the Illuminator in 301 and how by this ceremony the ancient Kingdom of Armenia came to be the first state to declare itself as Christian. St Gregory had then travelled to Caesarea in Cappadocia to be consecrated bishop by its Metropolitan, Leontius. Even before this key event, there had been in the region, at the very beginning of the Christian enterprise, the activity of the Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus. During these earlier centuries, all orthodox Christians understood themselves as being in union with one another, though not necessarily in a formal manner. A closer examination of this period prior to Chalcedon as well as a more balanced and sensitive study of the terms used in the formulae of various theological statements, helped in more recent times to dissipate the former bitterness of polemical exchange.

The Hamidian massacres of the 1890s in Anatolia as well as those perpetrated in Cilicia in 1909, to be followed by the overwhelming and terrible losses of the Genocide begun in 1915 -- which again affected all Armenians, Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant -- have triggered attempts to come to terms with those losses and to seek justice and official recognition of what had taken place. Armenian diaspora communities, largely consequent upon the flight of survivors of the *Medz Yeghem* ('Great Calamity'), face, despite constant vigilance, the ever-present threat of assimilation and loss of Armenian identity. As a result of the problems attached to these events and developments, those Armenians who are more consciously aware of their specific

Periodical, 1994), 30-70. There had been Armenian bishops at Chalcedon from the area of Armenia then under Byzantine control. However, bishops from areas under the Persian Sasanian Empire necessarily could not attend. In addition, at that very time, Armenians were under severe pressure to adopt Mazdaism by Yazdigerd II (438-457). Despite their defeat at the Battle of Avarayr, the very year of Chalcedon, the Armenians managed to remain faithful to their Christian beliefs. It was at the Second Council of Dvin in 551 that the Armenian Church formally rejected the decisions of the Council.

Christian identity have been open to reconciliation, and, if possible, communion with other Churches of like tradition, especially the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Churches. The latter, too, have become willing to seek closer ties and possible future communion with each other and with the Oriental Orthodox Churches in general, including the Armenian Apostolic Church. From the Roman point of view, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and its adoption of an altogether new approach to ecumenical relations has altered matters considerably, with a far greater sympathy in language and approach to those not in union with her.

What then of the Armenian Catholic Church? It is one of the twenty-three Eastern Catholic Churches that are in full communion with the Church of Rome, Churches that are termed *sui iuris*, indicating that they are, or should be, semi-autonomous, keeping their own liturgical languages and traditions.⁴ However, a certain latinization may have occurred over the centuries, whereby usages of the Western rite have been introduced through the influence, direct or indirect, of missionaries working in those areas where the indigenous churches were functioning. This was often due to the then not uncommon view that the Latin rite was superior to all others, as it was that used by the Roman Church and by the pope himself, acting as the Vicar of Christ. There were also social reasons for the adoption of the Latin rite, or a tendency to introduce elements of it into traditional liturgies and popular devotions. In more recent times, there have been attempts to remove such influences, so that the liturgies concerned would once again reflect more closely those of the 'Mother Churches' from which some of these eastern Christians had decided to separate themselves.⁵

Dominicans and the 'Fratres Unitores'

A striking example of such latinization, and one that specifically concerned Armenians, was the activity of the Dominican Order in the

⁴ Since 1990, they are guided by the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*.

⁵ Cf. The Instruction, issued by the Congregation of the Oriental Churches in 1996, *Pour l'application des Prescriptions liturgiques du Code des Canons des Églises Orientales*. The Popes themselves often insisted that the ancient liturgies should be protected from Latin influences, in particular Benedict XIV: *Allatae sunt* (26 July 1755), his ruling against Catholic missionaries encouraging the adoption of the Latin rite. Cf. also Pius IX: Apostolic Letter *In suprema* (6 January 1848); Leo XIII, Encyclical *Orientalium dignitas* (30 November 1894).

heartlands of Greater Armenia. Whilst the Franciscans, also founded in the early thirteenth century, were engaged in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia,⁶ the Dominicans had been assigned to work in Persian territory, work that met great success. Among a number of matters, the Order encouraged the formation of the '*Fratres Unitores*', consisting of Armenian monks, who, along with their successors, adopted a form of the Dominican rule. These, having been impressed by Dominican erudition, had come into union with Rome, believing such a connection to be the best way to reinvigorate the Armenian Church which had by then suffered constant crises and difficulties from various invading forces. It was thought best, for example, to translate the Latin Mass into Armenian and use that rather than maintaining the traditional liturgy. In addition, the translation of western theological and spiritual works into Armenian was seen as an important contribution towards attracting their fellow Christians into the safe arms of Rome.⁷

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia

A form of union between the Catholic Church and the Armenian was indeed achieved in the Cilician kingdom, encouraged by the latter's important economic ties with a number of Italian maritime republics. There was also, however, local opposition to such Latin influence taking hold within both Church and Court.⁸ Such opposition was to be found not only within the Kingdom itself, but also further afield. Important isolated monastic communities in Greater Armenia, as well as from the Armenian community in Jerusalem that was at the time under the rule of the Muslim Mamluks of Egypt, voiced serious concerns. Church and faithful were being seen as in serious danger of losing their ancient faith and thereby, even identity. In the event, the Mamluks were to destroy the kingdom in 1375.

Certain major developments now occurred that finally led to that formal establishment of the Catholic catholicosate in 1742. The shock of the Reformation triggered its Catholic counterpart, buttressed by the

⁶ Formally established in 1198 with the crowning of Levon I.

⁷ Cf. C.A. Frazee, 'The Catholic Missions in Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan', *Diakonia*, Vol.9 (1974), para.3, 251-260. From the same author, cf. *Catholics and Sultans. The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923* (London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁸ King Hetum II (1266-1307) occupied the throne three times, abdicating twice in order personally to follow the Rule of the Franciscan Order.

decisions of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). One result was the creation of a number of endeavours, not only to recover lost faithful within Europe, but also to bring into the Roman fold those Eastern Christians that would benefit, it was believed, from union with the Holy See. This was partly due to interpreting in its most narrow sense the belief that '*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*' (Outside the Church, there is no salvation),⁹ and partly to the need, it was felt, to strengthen these Eastern Christians in their struggle to survive the pressures brought upon them by unpredictable non-Christian governments. There had also been the ultimate failure of the Council of Florence (1438-1445) where unions had been declared but which then proved ephemeral.¹⁰ The fall of Constantinople in 1453 was yet another blow for the Christian world, and for the next two centuries the Ottomans, from their new capital, were to continue what could be termed as the long-lasting 'Crescenter' campaign, a campaign that would only be seriously weakened with the failure to capture Vienna in 1683 and the humiliation inflicted on the Ottomans by the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699).

Among those endeavours was the formation of the Society of Jesus, approved by Pope Paul III in 1540, which, with a thoroughly focused approach to the missionary problems at hand, reached territories not only in what is termed the Near East, or West Asia, where resided most of the Eastern Christians, and for our particular purpose, the Armenian communities, but also in the New World, Africa, and the Far East. Protected by diplomatic arrangements between France and the Sultan,¹¹

⁹ Even before this period, in the letter *Super quibusdam* of Pope Clement VI (1342-1352) to the Catholicos of Armenia, Mekhitar I, (20 September 1351), we find the following: 'In the second place, we ask whether you and the Armenians obedient to you believe that no man of the wayfarers outside of the faith of this Church, and outside the obedience of the Pope of Rome, can finally be saved... In the ninth place, if you have believed and do believe that all who have raised themselves against the faith of the Roman Church and have died in final impenitence have been damned and have descended to the eternal punishments of hell.'

¹⁰ A decree of reunion with the Armenian Apostolic Church, *Exultate Deo*, was proclaimed at the Council on 22 November 1439. Although it had no immediate results, the document provided the doctrinal basis for the papal decision of 1742.

¹¹ Generally known as 'capitulations', the first being in 1535.

Jesuit missionaries were able to work among Armenians and other Christian communities and with some success, according to the understanding of the time. Other new religious Orders, too, were in the field: the Capuchins whose influence was much due to one of its members, Joseph Leclerc du Tramblay (1577-1638), the confidant of Cardinal Richelieu; the Theatines founded in 1524, one of whose members, Clement Galano, had a very particular connection with Armenians;¹² the Carmelites, equally established in age as the Dominicans and Franciscans, had a presence in Ottoman lands, but also in New Julfa, the important Armenian settlement in Persia.¹³

Under the protection of France, the activities of these Orders and Congregations amongst adherents of the various Eastern Christian communities began to bear fruit. It would seem that this was particularly the case with Armenians, and above all in Constantinople. However, those converted or sympathetic to this phenomenon were still by Ottoman law members of their 'millet' or 'nation' and thus subject to the Apostolic Patriarch of the city. Some patriarchs were tolerant of this development, but others distinctly hostile. The latter could legally bring more than mere discomfort to those of his official flock who were toying with Roman ways. Accusations of being 'Franks' could be flung against these Ottoman subjects; inevitably, government suspicion came into play. Despite difficulties, numbers still increased, even including some notable Amira families.¹⁴ A request was finally made for an Armenian bishop to care for them, and this was eventually provided in 1758, with the appointment of an Armenian Ritual Vicar, though under the supervision of the Latin Patriarchal Vicar of the city. It was not till 1830 that Sultan Mahmoud II (1808-1839), under French and Austrian pressure, finally agreed to create a 'millet' for Armenian

¹² His important work, *Conciliatio Ecclesiae Armenae cum Romana*, was published in Rome in three volumes between 1651 and 1690.

¹³ Cf. *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries*, Vol. 1-2, London, 1939. Also, Vazken S. Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1998. University of Pennsylvania, Armenian Texts and Studies, N° 14. Series Editor, Michael E. Stone).

¹⁴ Cf. P. Carmont, *The Amiras. Lords of Ottoman Armenia* (Paperback, 12 January 2012).

Catholics with their own primatial see in Constantinople.¹⁵ As a consequence, they could now act with comparative freedom, being allowed to build churches and schools.

Though the foundation of a seminary for Armenian Catholic students in Rome had been decreed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1584, this plan had not proved successful.¹⁶ Instead Armenian candidates for the priesthood were to be placed in the *Urbanum*, a college founded in 1627 by Pope Urban VIII (r.1623-1644), following on from his predecessor, Gregory XV, who had established the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1622. The latter was to supervise missionary work in all lands beyond those controlled by Spain and Portugal, thus including the Ottoman Empire. These students came often to be seen by others as too 'Roman' in their outlook and preferences, wishing, when ordained and working among their fellow Armenians, to impose views that tended to exclude any divergence from the Roman position.

Mkhitarists and Antonians

Some Armenian Catholic clergy, on the other hand, were more inclined to take into respectful account the ancient traditions of the 'Mother Church', the Apostolic Church. There were two groups of these: first, the Mkhitarists founded in the early eighteenth century, who were eventually to establish two important monasteries in Venice and Vienna;¹⁷ secondly, the Antonians, founded also at the same period by four brothers, the Mouradians, originally from Aleppo, with their main centre at Kreim in the Lebanon.¹⁸ Both also had their own places for the training of prospective candidates for their communities. Another

¹⁵ The 'Katolik Milleti' was not confined to Armenian Catholics alone; also within the 'millet' were Maronites, Melkites, as well as Syrian and Chaldean Catholics. This was not according to the wish of the Holy See, but the decision of the Sublime Porte. The Armenian 'patrik', however, was responsible for the conduct of all within the new 'millet'. (Cf. Tcholakian, *L'Église Arménienne Catholique en Turquie*, [Istanbul: Ohan Matbaacilik Ltd. Şti., 1998]).

¹⁶ It was not until 1883 that an Armenian College was finally established in Rome by Pope Leo XIII.

¹⁷ Concerning the Mkhitarists, cf. K. Bardakjian, *The Mkhitarist Contributions to Armenian Culture and Scholarship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 1976).

¹⁸ Concerning the Antonians, cf. F. Tourné, 'Antonins Arméniens', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, III (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1924), col. 867-870.

seminary was conducted by the Catholic Patriarchs at Bzommar, whose graduates usually became members of the Patriarchal clergy, sent out to minister to their fellow Armenians, mostly in central and eastern Anatolia.¹⁹ A seminary was also functioning in Lvov, at that time in Poland, founded in 1664 by Clement Galano under the auspices of Propaganda Fide.²⁰ After the region came under Austrian control at the time of the First Partition of Poland (1772), the college was to be suppressed by Emperor Joseph II (1780-1790) in 1784.²¹

For most Armenians, including prelates and faithful of the Apostolic Church, the most important and influential of these Armenian Catholic enterprises was that of the Mkhitarists. Following the inspiration of their founder, Mkhitar of Sebastia (1676-1749), they salvaged a great number of endangered manuscripts as well as producing important dictionaries and grammars, establishing printing presses that produced works of science and literature, with translations of the literary creations of many languages into Armenian, and vice versa. There were also important publications dealing with matters historical and philological.²² They founded schools and missions both within and without Ottoman territories: two of the most important schools were those of the Raphael-Moorat in Venice, and the Samuel-Moorat in Sèvres, near Paris. It was in many ways a successful attempt to help in rescuing from the threat of virtual oblivion much of Armenian culture, due to the adverse conditions brought about by invasions, war and subjection to other and alien polities that had taken control of their homelands.

Another important factor to bear in mind was their hesitation regarding the 1742 event. It would seem that they saw in the creation of a separate hierarchy, too great a demarcation; that it thus made the possibility of reconciliation between Rome and the Apostolic Church more difficult; instead, their position tried to emphasise that the two Churches had much in common and that to respect the traditions of the 'Mother Church' was not necessarily a threat to the claims of the

¹⁹ Cf. M. Terzian, *L'Institut Patriarcal de Bzommar* (Bzommar, Lebanon, 1983).

²⁰ Cf. G. Petrowicz, *La Chiesa Armena in Polonia e nei Paesi Limitrofi Parte terza 1686-1954* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto di Studi Ecclesiastici, 1988), 77-78.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 192-195.

²² Two important publications are still appearing today: in Venice since 1843, *Bazmaveb* ('Review'); in Vienna since 1887, *Handes Amsorya* ('Monthly Review').

Papacy, though the latter may have been expressed in too authoritative a manner. Inspiration for this point of view was taken from the works of Nerses Snorhali and Nerses Labronatsi, both of twelfth century Cilicia and who have been described as ecumenists '*avant-la-lettre*'.²³

The 'Katolik Milleti' and 'Tanzimat'

The establishment of the 'Katolik Milleti' began a period of great optimism and creativity for the Armenian Catholic Church in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Constantinople. There was also now in operation a 'National Assembly' whose members consisted of well-to-do lay persons of the Armenian Catholic community.²⁴ However, serious problems began to arise thereafter.²⁵ The period known as the 'Tanzimat' (Reorganization), initiated in 1839 with the proclamation by Sultan Abdul Mejid (1839-1861) of the edict '*Hatt-ı Sherif Gülhane*' (Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber) which was to be followed by a further edict, the '*Hatt-ı Hümayun*' (The Imperial Rescript) of 1856, was meant to be an attempt to 'modernize' the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan, and indeed his two predecessors (Selim III and Mahmoud II)

²³ Cf. L. Zekiyan, 'The Religious Quarrels of the 14th Century Preluding to the Subsequent Divisions and Ecclesiological Status of the Armenian Church', *Studi sull'Oriente Cristiano*, I (Roma: Accademia Angelico Costantiniana di Lettere Arti e Scienze, 1997), 164-180: 'They distinguish themselves as two solitary peaks amid all Medieval Christianity for their ecumenicity *avant-la-lettre* both in practice and theory overwhelming the limits of time and country.' Fr Zekiyan is now the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Istanbul.

²⁴ It first met between 15 and 27 February 1830 to elect the community's religious leader; it consisted of 90 lay persons of note and six priests residing in the city at that time (Cf. Tcholakian, .24).

²⁵ Cf. M.E. Dulaurier, 'Les Arméniens en Autriche, en Russie et en Turquie. La société arménienne au XIX^e siècle. Sa situation politique, religieuse et littéraire', in *Revue des deux Mondes*, A. XXIV (1854), Tome 6, 209-265: 'Les catholiques eux-mêmes se sont scindés en deux partis, les uns attachés à leur liturgie et à leurs rites particuliers, les autres dévoués à la liturgie et au rite latins. Le bruit des querelles de ces deux partis retentissait naguère jusque dans les journaux européens, et le Saint-Siège, pour y mettre un terme, s'est vu forcé de condamner deux des brochures lancées de part et d'autre, comme écrits calomnieux au premier chef ... Espérons que le bref que vient d'adresser le souverain pontife à la nation arménienne ramènera définitivement la paix et l'union parmi les catholiques, et que cet appel à la conciliation sera entendu en Orient' (233) : Décrets de la congrégation de l'index des 5 et 6 septembre 1853.

had realized, and with the encouragement of the European Powers, that change was necessary if the empire was to survive and act as a bulwark opposing Russian expansion. It also had particular application to the non-Muslim elements of the population: that they be given equality with that of the favoured Muslim majority. The betterment of the Christian subjects of the Porte would also remove the excuse for Russian interference in the affairs of the Empire.²⁶

Steps towards Schism

The reorganisation of 1839 also meant that there should be in the function of the Armenian instruments of power granted by the Ottoman state and exercised through the 'millet' system, a fairer distribution in the operation of that power. This would entail the creation of a constitution which would grant members of the '*esnafs*' (guilds) involvement for the first time in the decisions of the Patriarchate, thus challenging the inherited influence of the Amira class which had up to then controlled, for example, the election and dismissal of Patriarchs. This was also to be demanded of the Armenian Catholic community. However, the involvement of the laity in the election of patriarchs and other prelates was not seen with a friendly eye by Rome. With the Constitution *Reversurus* (12 July 1867), Pius IX (r. 1846-1878) ensured the election of bishops be excluded from the traditional participation of the laity in matters ecclesiastic. This necessarily caused heated debate and finally schism, as it was seen as a direct attack on Armenian custom, as well as an indirect criticism of the Ottoman state's policy in this matter. In addition, the Pope decided to unite the two sees: that of the patriarchate erected in 1742 and that of the metropolitan see of Constantinople established in 1830, as a consequence of which the patriarchate moved its seat to the capital.

To solve the dispute that had arisen, the new patriarch, Andon Bedros IX Hassoun (1809-1884), summoned a synod to convene in Constantinople in July 1869. However, it failed to achieve reconciliation and was prorogued as the patriarch had to depart for Rome to help prepare for the Vatican Council convened by the Pope. The Council

²⁶ This reform movement culminated with the State Constitution of 1876 (*Kanûn-ı Esâsî*), though it was only in force for two years before being suspended by Sultan Abdul Hamid II; it is known as the First Constitutional Era. The Second was not inaugurated till the Sultan's deposition in 1909 at the hands of the Young Turks.

opened on 8 December of that year and closed prematurely on 20 October 1870, due to political circumstances beyond papal control. Its most controversial decision concerned the infallibility of the Pope, a decision formulated in the 'First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ': *Pastor aeternus* (18 July 1870). The only Oriental patriarch to vote for the definition had been Hassoun, thus confirming his enemies' opinion of him as being too subservient to the papacy; the other Oriental religious leaders had left Rome before the final vote.

Whilst the Council was in progress, Kasanjian, Abbot-General of the Antonians - who had been a leader of the movement against Hassoun in Constantinople - was ordered to place himself on retreat in his monastery, hard by St Peter's, this being seen as a form of 'house arrest'. However, he 'escaped', returning to the Ottoman capital where he declared the deposition of Hassoun.²⁷ A number of disaffected bishops, clergy and laity now chose for themselves Hagop Kupelian as their new patriarch, who was to lead a new Church established on 3 April 1870, and this with the approval of the Sublime Porte. Their main grievance was that whilst among the Apostolic faithful greater participation by the laity was being upheld by its new Constitution, ratified by the Sublime Porte in 1863, for Armenian Catholics, no lay participation at all was now supposed to be the order of the day. Thus, the accusation by the Apostolic Church that Rome's intention was for Armenians to be latinized and thus finally to lose their identity seemed to be justified.²⁸

Hassoun returned to Constantinople but the situation became intolerable after Pius IX excommunicated the schismatics on 14 June 1872, resulting in the expulsion of Hassoun by the Sublime Porte the following month. The French government, however, persuaded the Sultan to recognize those Armenians faithful to Rome as belonging to a separate Church, and so, in 1876, Hassoun was permitted to return from his refuge in Rome. With the election of Leo XIII in 1878, circumstances changed and on 18 April 1879, the schismatics were largely reconciled, a decision aided by the withdrawal of government support. To facilitate matters, Hassoun was recalled to Rome where he

²⁷ He was very active as a pastoral leader, establishing six new dioceses in the primatial province within Ottoman domains as well as one in Persia. He also founded the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in 1847, still active today in Armenia, Turkey, Lebanon, USA, France, and Syria.

²⁸ Cf. Maximos IV Sayegh (ed.). 'Against Latinization.' Section 4, *The Eastern Churches and Catholic Unity*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), 161-192.

was created cardinal in 1880;²⁹ he never returned to Turkey. Resigning the patriarchate in June, 1881, he was succeeded by Stepan Bedros X Azarian (1826-1899), a member of one of the most prominent Armenian Catholic families of Constantinople.³⁰

Ormanian: an embarrassing loss

However, others remained unreconciled, the most notable being Malachia Ormanian (1841-1918). Originally an illustrious member of the Antonian order, he changed his allegiance for the Apostolic Church on 29 October 1879. It was a natural choice, for as a clergyman he would otherwise have remained in isolation; his criticism of Rome was well known and his sympathy for the Apostolic Church had been growing. His decision was also probably consequent to the reconciliation of the schismatic Church with Rome. The Antonian Order virtually collapsed shortly thereafter, as most members followed suit. A number of Mkhitarists also quitted for the Apostolic Church, whilst a few of the Bzommar clergy also seceded. Ormanian was later elected Apostolic Patriarch of Constantinople in 1886, after a distinguished career as head of the Armenian Theological Seminary at Armash, near Izmit.³¹

The Rome Synod of 1911

After this turbulent period, in 1888, the Armenian Catholic Church held a council at Chalcedon (modern-day Kadikoy), summoned by Patriarch Azarian for the purpose of finally drawing up a Constitution for the community. To the displeasure of Azarian, the council resisted the move to suppress lay prerogatives; furthermore, the Ottoman government ratified its decisions. Whilst the Holy See was also displeased, it did not think fit to intervene, as, in the past, interventions in Armenian matters had proved disastrous. However, the Synod that was held in Rome in 1911 was to cause further problems, as the choice

²⁹ The first Armenian granted that honour and the first prelate of an Oriental rite since 1439 when Bessarion was so honoured.

³⁰ It is said that his friendship with the Sultan, which was often criticized, may have helped safeguard a number of Armenian Catholics in Anatolia during the events of 1894-1896.

³¹ Though continually critical of Rome, he still expressed admiration for the accomplishments of the Mkhitarists, cf. M. Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia. Her History, Doctrine, Rule, Discipline, Liturgy, Literature, and Existing Condition* (London: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1912), 68.

of location irritated the Sublime Porte, war having been declared against Italy after the latter had invaded territory in what is now Libya. Some bishops had arrived already in Rome, but others were prevented from attending due to government orders. Later, however, this obstacle was overcome due to French influence.³²

The main matter that was to anger many Armenian Catholics in Turkey was the decision by Pius X (1903-1914) during the Synod to appoint new bishops without any concern for the opinions of the Assembly. Another factor that would cause tension was the decision to impose once and for all the use of the Gregorian calendar, which some Armenian Catholics had already accepted, but others were hostile to any such change.³³ The then current patriarch, Bedros Terzian XIII (1910-1931), on his return from Rome, received much abuse, to such an extent he felt obliged to leave the country; he remained in Rome till his death. The bishop of Trebizond, Mgr Jean Naslian, acted as 'Vicar' on the patriarch's behalf, fulfilling this duty during the period of the Great War with its horrifying consequences for the Christian minorities in Anatolia. Great loss was suffered by the Armenian Protestant, Catholic and Apostolic constituencies alike, the latter, being by far the largest, suffered the most. There was also enormous material loss, not only by the Churches as institutions, but also by the laity, in terms of moveable and immovable property. Furthermore, the refugees had to settle or be resettled outside their traditional homelands, and meet new challenges in various countries, many in the Middle East, others in Greece, France, the United States, Argentina and elsewhere. Church leaders were faced with the problem of how to aid their fellow nationals in these new and often desperate circumstances, with the additional concern for those who had experienced or witnessed atrocities.

Aftermath of the Genocide: the Rome Synod of 1928

For the Armenian Catholic Church, a further Synod was convened in Rome in 1928, with members fewer in number than for the previous gathering, as, in the meanwhile, some bishops had perished along with

³² France was ambiguous in its relations with the Church: anti-Church laws were operative in France itself, whilst *outré-mer* the Church was supported as a conduit for French culture and influence.

³³ Earlier, the question of changing the calendar had also created disturbances in Poland and in Livorno, Italy.

their faithful.³⁴ It was decided to return the patriarchate to Lebanon and to restore the Archdiocese of Constantinople (now formally termed Istanbul by the Turkish Republic). Likewise, in the same year, the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception moved their Mother House from Istanbul to Rome. Two other sisterhoods, diocesan in nature, had not survived the calamity. On the whole, the period between the World Wars was one of attempted consolidation, of recovery from trauma and exhaustion. The welcome surprise and hopes that greeted the inauguration of the Republic of Armenia in 1918 – the first Armenian independent state since 1375 – were soon to be ruined by Soviet intervention in 1920, a situation that remained in force till 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union. In the meantime, the small Armenian Catholic population, mostly located in the north-western part of the republic was suppressed. In neighbouring Georgia, and elsewhere, suppression had also been the order of the day.

Cardinal Agagianian

In 1895 a future figure of no small importance was born in the city of Akhaltsike, Georgia; at an early age, he was taken to be educated in Rome and later at the *Collegio Urbanum*. This was Agagianian who was to be elected patriarch of the Armenian Catholics in 1937 as Krikor Bedros XV and who was to become a key figure in the life of the Church, not only within Armenian Catholic circles, but also within the wider Church. This was furthered by his receiving the Red Hat in 1946. His duties with Propaganda Fide, of which he eventually became Prefect, brought him notice through his travels: a virtually unknown portion of the Catholic Church, indeed of the Armenian world, now became a little more familiar to the wider international community. He was regarded as being the most liberal in thought among members of the Curia, yet cautious in expression; he was known as an enthusiast for raising the profile of indigenous clergy in the mission fields for which he was responsible. He also established exarchates in Greece and France for the Armenian Catholic faithful there.

³⁴ One of the prelates who fell victim in 1915 was Ignatius Maloyan, Bishop of Mardin, who was beatified by John-Paul II in 2001.

Destruction of the Armenian Catholic Community in Ukraine

The Armenian Catholic Church was to suffer a further blow: the Second World War was to cause the complete destruction of its community centered in Lvov. Though its origins are a matter of controversy with the attachment to Rome of Archbishop Torosovich in the 1630s and a consequent split between pro-Rome and pro-Etchmiadzin factions, it had survived and flourished. Polish cultural influence was strong and became even more so when the region became part of the Poland that had re-emerged as an independent political entity in 1918. The invasion, first of Soviet troops, as agreed by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (23 August 1939), then the later invasion by German forces and then, still later, the return of Soviet troops ensured much suffering in the devastated region. In addition, ultra-nationalist Ukrainian partisans caused death and havoc among Polish communities who fled the area into Poland proper. With these refugees went many of the Armenians of Lvov and other cities of the region. With the final imposition of Soviet rule, the diocese was suppressed, its cathedral in Lvov as well as the various parishes around the region closed and the clergy dispersed, deported or executed.

Armenian Catholics in Communist Poland and Today

Those clergy and laity who then found themselves in what became the communist Polish Republic now experienced difficulties as regards religious practice, though this began to ease as the state had had to accommodate itself somewhat to the influence of the local Catholic Church. It was only after the collapse of the soviet system that reorganization was able to be accomplished. For the purpose of the Armenian Catholic constituency, Poland was divided territorially into three sections: the north, centred in Gdansk; the centre, with its point of reference being Warsaw; and the south, centred in Gliwice. The priests that serve these three parishes are under the Polish Ordinariate of the Faithful of Eastern Rites, the Ordinary being Cardinal Nycz, Primate of Poland. With the independence of Ukraine, the cathedral in Lvov was granted to the Apostolic Church, the original proprietors, there being now virtually no Armenian Catholics in the city.

Agagianian and the Second Vatican Council

With the death of Pius XII in 1958, there was some speculation that Agagianian would be elected as his successor, thus bringing to the papacy a prelate who would surely, it was thought, bring the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches closer to Rome. However, that was not to be, and John XXIII, the new pontiff, was to summon the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) which did indeed lead to new approaches to many matters, not least to the question of ecumenism. Being closely involved in the preparations for the Council, the cardinal had decided to resign as patriarch, being replaced by Ignatius Bedros XVI Batanian (1962- 1976). With the death of Pope John in the midst of the proceedings of the Council, there was once again speculation that the former patriarch would be selected. Again, this was not to be; the new pope, Paul VI, in wishing to bring greater efficiency to the management of the Council, appointed four cardinals as 'moderators', one of them being Agagianian. However, it was noticeable that, unlike his three colleagues, he never spoke publicly to the assembled prelates. It was generally understood that Patriarch Batanian and the Armenian bishops attending were of one mind with their cardinal. It soon became clear to the assembly, through a particular address made by the Patriarch in defence of the well-known conservatism of the Roman Curia, that the Armenians were beholden to the 'old school' – after all, they had had to rely on Rome for much-needed support after the trauma they had experienced. Its prelates, therefore, and understandably so, were reluctant to challenge eminent curial figures. But the tide had turned, and that challenge mounted inexorably, leading to quite extraordinary changes in policies. The new ecumenism seemed to bring into doubt the very role and purpose of the Eastern Catholic Churches which in the eyes of Rome had apparently been quite transparent till then. Were they now to be seen as an encumbrance and no longer as an invitation to reunion, no longer as a 'bridge' between Eastern and Western Christian traditions? This is still perhaps a worrying question and brings unease in certain quarters.

Warming Relations between Rome and the Armenian Apostolic Church

The presence of Armenian Apostolic delegates at the Council, from both Etchmiadzin and Antelias, along with many other delegates, both Orthodox and Protestant, was a foretaste of things to come. Pope Paul's

visit to Jerusalem in 1964 to meet the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras was also the occasion for him to meet the Armenian patriarch of the city, Yeghishe Derderian (1960-1990). This was to be the first of many such papal encounters with the leaders of the two catholicosates and with the two patriarchates of the Armenian Apostolic Church. These encounters have borne fruit in various ways, perhaps the most consequential being the regular yearly meetings formally begun in 2004.³⁵ Apart from delegates representing the Roman Church and those of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, there are also, importantly, delegates from the various Catholic 'off-shoots' from the Oriental Orthodox Churches, a development unthinkable just a few years before when any contact with 'the uniates' would have been seen as betrayal.³⁶ The question of restoring communion between all these is of import,³⁷ not only because it was Christ's specific wish, but practically, as the present disfigured Christian witness to the dominant Muslim context is a source of shame and ridicule. Furthermore, the rapidly decreasing numerical presence of Christians due to warfare and turmoil, as well as Islamic extremism shown by some, threatens the very existence of the Christian Church in lands where that Church first flourished. There are now often more adherents of these various Christian traditions in the Diaspora than in their original homelands.

The Ordinariate for Catholics of Armenian Rite in Eastern Europe

The establishment in 1991 of the Ordinariate of the Armenian Catholic Church of Armenia, Georgia, Russia and Eastern Europe, based in Gyumri, Armenia, has led to the gradual realization that there exists far more Armenian Catholics in former Imperial and Soviet Russian

³⁵Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. 'Meetings and Documents concerning the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches', cf. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/anc-orient-ch-docs/rc

³⁶ It is understood that the Russian Orthodox Church in particular is still of this opinion.

³⁷ We may note that one of the two topics of the Seventh Meeting (2010) was 'the ways in which the churches expressed their communion with one another in the first five centuries...'

territories than had previously been thought.³⁸ It follows that there is now a major problem facing the Church: the need for Russian or Eastern Armenian-speaking priests to meet the spiritual needs of this new field for pastoral care. The collapse of the Soviet Union had come as an almost total surprise; up to that moment, there had been no expectation that training in the Russian language would be a necessary requirement. There is a further difficulty in that working cheek-by-jowl with Apostolic clergy in certain situations could raise tensions, despite official good will on both sides.

The Present Situation

What then is the present condition of the Armenian Catholic Church? Its parishes may be found in Armenia, Argentina, Uruguay, France, Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Poland, Australia, Iran, Egypt, Russia, United States, Canada, Syria, Iraq and Sweden. The present Catholicos-Patriarch of Cilicia, Krikor Bedros XX Gabroyan, had formerly been bishop in France where there are five parishes, apart from that of the cathedral of Sainte-Croix-de-Paris (2015: 30,000; 2017: 35,000); his own Archeparchy of Beirut having approximately 12,500 (2017). Due to the continuing effects of war as well as the recent activities of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, difficulties have been met in collecting statistics for those areas : the Archeparchy of Aleppo, Syria, 10,000 (2017), having declined from a highpoint of 17,500 in 2010; the Eparchy of Kamichlie, also in Syria, 3000 (2017); the capital, Damascus, -a Patriarchal Exarchate- 4,500 (2017) rising from 4,000 in 2010; the Eparchy of Ispahan, Iran, 150, having dropped from 8,000 in 2010; the Eparchy of Iskenderiya (Alexandria), Egypt, 6,500 (2017), having risen from 1,500 (1990); the Archeparchy of Baghdad, Iraq, 2,400 in 2017, having risen from 1,600 in 2010; the Patriarchal Exarchate of Amman and Jerusalem, 500 (2017), from 800 (2010). Turning further afield: the Ordinariate for Greece (Athens), 200 (2017) down from 650 (1990); the Ordinariate for Romania (Gherla), 1,000 in 2000, but, in 2017, 626; the Archeparchy of Istanbul, 3,100 (2015) (2,500: 2017); the Eparchy of

³⁸ This change is reflected in the following figures taken from editions of the *Annuario Pontificio* (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana), figures which give the total world numbers for the Armenian Catholic Church: 1990: 142,853; 1995: 296,250; 2000: 362,047; 2004: 368,923; 2005: 368,101; 2007: 375,182; 2008: 539,806; 2017: 757, 726. Considerable increases are noticeable in certain years and almost all associated with the Ordinariate for Eastern Europe.

Buenos Aires, established in 1990, has approximately 16,350 (2017); the Apostolic Exarchate for Latin America and Mexico, 12,000; the Eparchy of Our Lady of Narek, based in Glendale, California, covers both the United States and Canada; it has eight parishes and three missions with 45,000 parishioners. Apart from local publications of these various jurisdictions, *Avedik* ('Good News') is the official organ of the Church.

Conclusion

Though for some there is still perhaps question as to the wisdom in establishing a separate Catholicosate for Armenian Catholics in 1742, it should be borne in mind that, particularly in the seventeenth century, a great deal of confusion and even danger was evident in the lives of Armenian Catholics in general, especially as the majority of them officially owed allegiance to the Apostolic Patriarch in the capital. Though there were Armenian Catholic bishops to be found, for example, in Lvov and Rome at that time, yet it was probably felt that an anchor was needed not only for the Armenian Catholic constituency, but also for the Holy See itself. This would provide some firm centre for consultation when problems arose. Though in the Ottoman Empire no legal recognition was given, yet the Catholicosate was able to function. In time, the creation of the 'Katolik Milleti' gave considerable freedom to act independently to them. This was to be strengthened by the union effected between the two sometimes conflicting Armenian Catholic constituencies of Constantinople and Bzommer by *Reversurus* in 1867. However, the same document was to heighten serious differences between two ecclesiological interpretations. The tradition that the laity and lower clergy participate in ecclesiastical matters was being challenged by Rome and by those who agreed that this was an intrusion in matters best left to prelates. Schism ensued and tensions were to continue till the eve of the Great War.

Apart from atrocities before that conflict, the genocidal policies pursued during it left most Armenians in no state for much conflict among themselves. The Armenian Catholic Church, perhaps ten percent of the whole, had to rely for succour on Rome and was thus generally quiescent during the Second Vatican Council. Since that time, the uncertain and bellicose mood in the Middle East has caused many Armenians, mostly descendants of survivors of the events in Turkey, to move again to safer places. Concurrently, the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union was to present more problems: how to cater for not

only those Armenian Catholics to be found in Armenia and Georgia itself, but all those who now began to resurface elsewhere after decades of Soviet oppression. Thus, not only is the situation of decreasing numbers of Armenian Catholics in Syria and adjacent states, together with their lack of stable environment, a cause for concern, but, also the consequent increase in their numbers now living in contexts in which it is difficult to resist the temptation to assimilate, especially for the younger generations, whose attachment to tradition, language and liturgy often holds less importance than it did for their forbears.

GERMAN BISHOPS' GUIDELINES ON EUCHARISTIC SHARING IN INTERCHURCH FAMILIES 2018: WHAT'S NEW?

Ruth Reardon*

The German Bishops' document on Eucharistic sharing in interdenominational marriages shows both pastoral understanding of the deep desire of some interchurch couples to share communion, and a strong ecumenical perspective. It does not suggest that the need to share communion is limited to special occasions. The need of parents to give a shared witness to their children is recognised. There is a stress on faith and on conscience. The bishops propose a method to help couples discern whether they have a real need of eucharistic sharing, and whether the Protestant partner shares the eucharistic faith of the Catholic Church: a 'spiritual conversation' based on the Easter Day conversation of Jesus with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, and the advice given by Ignatius of Loyola when an important decision is to be taken.

At the press conference following the plenary assembly of the German Bishops' Conference in February 2018 its President, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, announced that the bishops had prepared pastoral guidelines for the admission of non-Catholic partners in interdenominational marriages to communion, in individual cases and after careful pastoral discernment of their need, provided those partners affirmed Catholic eucharistic faith. The proposed handout for the guidance of Catholic pastors was approved by a large majority of the bishops, but was still open to changes in the text (which was not itself published).

When seven German bishops who opposed the proposal wrote to the Vatican in March asking for clarification as to whether the question of admission to communion for Protestant spouses could be decided at the level of an episcopal conference, or whether a decision at the level of the universal Church would be required, the whole question

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attracted international speculation and debate. Pope Francis asked some of the German bishops to come to Rome for a meeting with several heads of dicasteries and curial officials, notably from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts. This meeting took place on 3 May, and Pope Francis asked the German bishops to come to as unanimous a position as possible. However a letter a few weeks later from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, acting with the approval of Pope Francis, informed them that the questions raised at the Rome meeting must be studied further at world level.¹

In June Pope Francis and Cardinal Marx discussed the question further, and Pope Francis spoke of it in a press conference he gave on the plane when returning from his visit to the World Council of Churches in Geneva on 21 June. He referred to the desire of the German bishops to be faithful to what the Code of Canon Law said about admission to communion in special cases, and to the seriousness with which they had made their study. The difficulty was not so much the content of the document, but how it relates to the universal Church, and whether responsibility for decisions lies with the diocesan bishop or with an episcopal conference. A week later, on 27 June, following a meeting of the Permanent Council of the German Bishops' Conference, the original text of the proposed guidelines was published on the German Bishops' website, together with a statement by the Permanent Council. This made it clear that the document, published as *Orientierungshilfe: Mit Christus gehen – Der Einheit auf der Spur: Konfessionsverbindende Ehen und gemeinsame Teilnahme an der Eucharistie*, was not an authoritative Conference document, since it relates to a dimension of the universal Church, but was published as an orientation text to help individual bishops as they undertake their responsibilities. The statement of the Permanent Council was given in English translation on the website. A few weeks later the full text of *Mit Christus gehen* was published there in English translation, under the title *Aid to Orientation: Walking with Christ – Tracing Unity: Interdenominational marriages and sharing in the Eucharist*. We are concerned here with what is new in *Walking with Christ*, compared

¹ The process was described in *One in Christ* 52, 1, 2018, 149-57.

with earlier guidelines following the provisions of the 1993 *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*.

A pastoral approach

Walking with Christ builds on past approaches to eucharistic sharing in interchurch families, but it goes further, in the perspective of *Amoris Laetitia*, in its application to particular couples. At the level of an episcopal conference (albeit with a dissenting minority) it has gone beyond the perspective of pastoral care expressed in terms of norms to that of the ‘pastoral understanding’ that the Edmonton international conference of English-speaking interchurch families appealed for in 2001: ‘Pastoral understanding goes much further than pastoral care; it is a two-way process. It implies dialogue, and respect for the conscientious convictions and actions of couples and families in situations where their loyalty to their marriage bond, to their “domestic church”, must sometimes necessarily be held in tension with their loyalty to their wider church communities.’²

It is clear that the German bishops have listened to interchurch spouses, and to pastors who work with them, and have recognised that some couples have a spiritual need and great desire for on-going eucharistic sharing, in order to express and deepen their marriage bond and their witness to their children of the reconciling love of God in Christ. They have understood that in terms of the existing norms they could go a long way in responding to those needs, and they have *wanted* to do all they could to welcome spouses to receive communion together. ‘Interdenominational married couples and families are very close to our heart’, they said when they published the German text in June. They have *rejoiced* to find a way forward, and ‘expressly welcome’ the Protestant spouses who decide to follow this way (58), whether the couple had not so far received communion together, because they saw the rules as forbidding it, or whether they had already been doing so for a long time. The bishops stress that they are inviting couples to follow their own consciences (54).

In Germany, a number of individual bishops have decided to apply the guidelines in their own dioceses, while others are awaiting further discussions. We are not concerned here with the question of whether it is an episcopal conference or a local bishop who is authorised to give

² *Interchurch Families*, 10, 1, January 2002, 1.

guidance on these lines (this will be studied further at a global level), but with the content of the document, especially in relation to the lived experience of interchurch families.

The English translation offered on the German Bishops' website is used here. When referring to the text therefore the term 'interdenominational marriages' is used; this is a term which the English would normally use themselves, if needing an alternative to the long-established but questionable 'interchurch marriages', while they would think of marriages which involved Lutheran and Reformed Christians as 'interconfessional'. The German bishops when writing in their own language have chosen to use the preferred term of German couples: *Konfessionsverbindende Ehen*. This is difficult to translate into English but evocative in terms of the couples' understanding of their ecumenical vocation: 'confessions-uniting marriages'. This term was deliberately chosen by German and Austrian interchurch families in preference to the older 'confessions-dividing marriages'. It is a sign of respect that the German bishops have decided to use terminology that couples themselves have chosen to express their self-understanding.

Rome has always continued to use the term 'mixed marriages' for marriages between Christians. One of the questions that the Interchurch Families International Network's response to the 2015 Synod on the Family raised was whether, now that 'interreligious marriages' was being used to describe marriages of Catholics with partners of other faiths, something analogous could be used for mixed Christian marriages. The English title that the Holy See Press Office gave to the German document on 3 May was: 'Walking with Christ in the footsteps of Unity: Mixed Marriages and Common Participation in the Eucharist'.

Not a new question: what are the parameters so far?

Ever since mixed marriage couples came together in groups with Catholic priests and other ministers, to encourage one another and to assess their position in the light of the new situation created by the convocation of the Second Vatican Council, the question of eucharistic sharing has been raised.

In England, for example, the first national meeting of mixed marriage couples took place fifty years ago at Spode House in November 1968. The couples drew up a statement that was distributed to the press and sent to the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Mixed Marriages,

which was due to meet at Pineta Sacchetti a few days later. The final point of the statement (no 5) read: 'Mixed married couples are very conscious that doctrinal agreements between churches are not the only way in which we can progress in Christian unity. These are important, but they can only be an attempt to formulate lived Christian experience as divided Christians are drawn together into that communion of love with which the Father loves the Son, with which Christ loves the church. Marriage between baptised Christians is a sign of the close union of love between Christ and his church. It is not surprising therefore that it should be given to some mixed marriage couples and families to experience the reality of Christian unity in a way which has not yet been experienced by all the members of their churches. The question must be raised of this lived experience to eucharistic communion.'³

There were several things to encourage them. First of all, the Second Vatican Council had approached the question of sacramental sharing in a new way. It set it in the context of the growing unity of all Christians, since the Catholic Church had now committed itself to full participation in the ecumenical movement. The conciliar Decree on Ecumenism (n 8) stated that eucharistic sharing is not a means to be used 'indiscriminately' to restore Christian unity. It set down two principles: eucharistic communion signifies the unity of the church, so it is generally ruled out between divided Christians: it is also a means of grace, so it is sometimes to be commended. Practical decisions on what is to be done are left to the local bishop, unless the bishops' conference or the Holy See has decided otherwise. Might not therefore eucharistic sharing be recognised as a means of grace to help interchurch couples to grow in mutual love, to witness more effectively to their children the reconciling love of God in Christ, and by their lived experience of unity to call all Christians to respond more fully to their call to be one in the unity for which Jesus had prayed?

Secondly, in 1967 the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity had issued a *Directory for the Application of the Decisions of the Second Vatican Council Concerning Ecumenical Matters, Part 1*; this began the process of spelling out the conditions under which separated Christians

³ *Sharing Communion: an appeal to the Churches by interchurch families*, ed Ruth Reardon and Melanie Finch, with an introduction by Martin Reardon and conclusions by John Coventry SJ (London: Collins, 1983), 109.

in the west could be admitted to Catholic communion. A separated Christian could be permitted such access in danger of death or in urgent need (during persecution, in prison) if he had no access to his own minister and spontaneously asked for Catholic communion, so long as his eucharistic faith was in harmony with that of the Catholic Church, and he was rightly disposed. Other cases of urgent need were to be judged by the diocesan bishop or the episcopal conference. A Catholic in similar circumstances should only ask for the Eucharist from a minister who had been validly ordained. This seemed to give wide discretion to local bishops and episcopal conferences to recognise the 'adequate reasons' and 'urgent need' for admission to communion in the Catholic Church referred to in the Ecumenical Directory.

Thirdly, there were already concrete cases where these concepts had been applied to interchurch families. In the spring of 1968 the Dutch bishops issued their Provisional Directives on Mixed Marriages, which included the statement that if a baptised non-Catholic partner asked to receive communion at a nuptial mass, they would be prepared to grant this on request, provided the partner could unite himself with the faith of the Catholic Church which is given living expression in the Eucharistic celebration, and had access to the communion service of his own church.⁴

Even before this, there was a known case in 1966 of an American Presbyterian bride receiving communion together with her Catholic husband at their nuptial mass in Assisi, with the authorisation of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.⁵ And at Spode 1968 itself, participants were delighted and amazed to have with them an Anglican husband who had recently been married in his Italian bride's home parish, and who had received communion with her at the wedding mass. However, things did not progress as quickly as they had hoped.

The 'urgent need' of 1967 had become 'serious spiritual need' in 1972, in the *Instruction concerning Particular Cases when other Christians may be admitted to Eucharistic Communion in the Catholic Church*, issued by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on the authority of Pope Paul VI. Defined as 'a need for an increase in spiritual life and a need for a deeper involvement in the mystery of the church and its unity', this seemed a good description of their own need to a number of

⁴ *One in Christ* 4,3,1968, 312-13.

⁵ *Tablet* 10/12/ 1966, 1400.

interchurch families who experienced themselves as 'domestic churches'. It would obviously be only certain 'particular cases' who would experience that need. However, another clause was added: the Christian who asked for admission must be unable to have recourse to his own minister 'for a prolonged period'. This seemed to rule out interchurch spouses, and it was a relief to couples that it was dropped in the Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1983. What was required was grave necessity, an inability to approach their own minister, a free request and proper dispositions (c 844). Ten years later, the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, issued by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 1993 on the authority of Pope St John Paul II, explicitly identified mixed Christian marriages (those who 'shared the sacraments of baptism and marriage') as in possible need of eucharistic sharing. In the years that followed, a number of episcopal guidelines for eucharistic sharing in interchurch families were issued in different countries. The German bishops (apart from the dissenting minority) have made it quite clear that they believe *Walking with Christ* keeps within the parameters of the global norms decided by the Catholic Church.

A strong ecumenical perspective

The German bishops' text is set firmly within the context of progress in Christian unity. This is clear from the sub-title: 'tracing unity', 'tracking unity', 'in the footsteps of unity'. Their guidelines are proposed as a concrete step towards Christian unity, as an act of solidarity with the German Protestant churches. At the beginning of their text they recall the commemoration of the 500 years of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden, in October 2016, when Pope Francis and the President of the Lutheran World Federation said in their Joint Statement: 'We share the pain of those who share their whole lives, but cannot share God's redeeming presence at the eucharistic table. We acknowledge our joint pastoral responsibility to respond to the spiritual thirst and hunger of our people to be one in Christ.' In Germany, say the bishops, it is particularly important to take seriously the commitment of the Lund Joint Declaration, since Germany has about as many Catholic as Protestant Christians, and ecumenical relations at local level have developed very well, and gained in depth through the year of Reformation commemoration 2017. The bishops feel a solidarity with

all the members of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany and judge that this is the time to take an important step forward (1)

They realise that there are many interdenominational couples in Germany who express an intense longing to receive communion together. In a Joint Statement with the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), *Healing of Memories: Witnessing to Jesus Christ. A Joint Statement on the Year 2017*, they recalled the suffering of those who, although they are spouses in an interdenominational marriage, according to Catholic teaching 'are usually not allowed to approach the Lord's table together'. 'We stated', say the Catholic bishops, 'that Holy Communion cannot simply be reduced to a means to an end'. However, in particular cases where there is a personal relationship with Christ and a life led in solidarity with the Catholic Church, pastoral support may be given. At the ecumenical penance and reconciliation service held together with the EKD in March 2017, the bishops declared publicly that 'trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we undertake to provide marriages that unite the denominations with every support to strengthen their shared faith and promote the religious upbringing of their children'. *Walking with Christ* takes a step towards fulfilling this commitment.

The German bishops thus made it clear that their decision had matured in consultation with the EKD, and their common search for how the churches could move forward on the road to unity. They recognised that it was possible to move ahead where some interchurch couples were concerned, precisely because their life commitment to one another in marriage was actually a force that was drawing their churches closer together. As that early statement at Spode 1968 had said, it had been 'given to some mixed marriage couples and families to experience the reality of Christian unity in a way which has not yet been experienced by all members of their churches'. It was important that the EKD did not think of the Catholic bishops' move as proselytising (especially since the bishops stated that they could not authorise reciprocal sharing), and consultation was certainly in line with the norms of the Code of Canon Law and the 1993 *Directory*, which stated that 'the diocesan bishop or the episcopal conference is not to establish general norms except after consultation with the competent authority, at least at the local level, of the non-Catholic Church or community

concerned.⁶ It was in fact unusual; no other guidelines on eucharistic sharing in interchurch families had been so explicit about ecumenical discussions with other churches beforehand.

A pastoral problem: ‘cases of need’? or ‘occasions of need’?

In formulating their pastoral guidelines, the German bishops were determined to be faithful to both the statements made in the Decree on Ecumenism: the norm is to restrict admission to communion to Catholics; however, there are commendable exceptions to this practice. They had to make it clear that they were not giving a blanket approval for the admission of all mixed marriage spouses, but were welcoming those who deeply desired it and lived faithful lives in solidarity with the Catholic Church. It was not just a matter of ticking boxes, checking whether a list of canonical criteria was fulfilled.

Other bishops and bishops’ conferences had faced the problem before them, especially in areas where there are large numbers of mixed marriages. How could admission be limited to avoid a ‘free-for-all’ in a way that would undermine the Catholic witness to the close link between ecclesial and eucharistic communion? The French Episcopal Conference was the first to lay down guidelines on eucharistic sharing, through their Commission on Christian Unity. They did this in 1983, as soon as the Code of Canon Law had dropped the condition that, in order to admit to Catholic communion, the relevant non-Catholic minister should not be available ‘for a prolonged period’. They identified the need as a proven spiritual desire, where there are continuing bonds of fraternal communion with Catholics, as lived in certain *foyers mixtes* and in some long-lasting ecumenical groups.⁷ The stress here was on the permanent nature of the living bonds established with the Catholic Church. Decisions on admission would be taken locally, and communicated to the bishop or his ecumenical officers.

Other guidelines appeared after the 1993 *Directory* had identified, at world level, those who shared the sacraments of baptism and marriage as in possible need of eucharistic sharing. The first came from the

⁶ Can.844; followed by the *Directory* 130.

⁷ Comparative information on guidelines issued by diocesan bishops and episcopal conferences was collected in a pack on ‘Sharing Communion’ by the British Association of Interchurch Families (1999), and there is a good deal of further information in a section of the interchurch families’ international web-site www.interchurchrfamilies.org

diocese of Brisbane, Australia, in 1995. This made a distinction between cases of spiritual need for occasional admission (for example, a partner at a nuptial mass, a parent at baptism, confirmation and first communion, the family at a funeral), and spiritual need for regular admission. This latter was explained as referring to couples where each partner lives devotedly within the traditions of his/her church, makes a significant contribution to the ecumenical movement, and where the spouses can experience serious spiritual need each time they are with the family at mass. There was a recognition here that couples are very different: some will be together at mass in an on-going way, while other partners will only be there with their family on special occasions. Similar guidelines followed in a number of other Australian dioceses.

The Southern African Bishops' Conference in the first draft of their Directory on Ecumenism (1998) picked up the phrase 'whenever they are together at a Eucharistic celebration'. The final version (2003) said that a spiritual need can arise when spouses are attending a Eucharistic celebration for a special feast or event or when accompanying their partners at Sunday mass.

The German Bishops' Ecumenical Commission issued guidelines in 1997, but not all the German bishops agreed with them, and they were not authorised by the episcopal conference. So far as the spiritual need of the couple was concerned, the guidelines suggested that separation of married partners at the Lord's table might lead to serious risk to the spiritual life and faith of one or both partners. It might endanger the bond created in life and faith through marriage, and might lead to indifference to the sacrament and distancing from family worship and so from life in the Church. The need was to be ascertained in pastoral dialogue with the couple; in some cases, 'full sharing in the Eucharist' would be granted to the Protestant partner. Similar guidelines were soon published by the Archbishop of Vienna, and later by the Czech bishops.

In 1998 the three episcopal conferences of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland issued their guidelines in *One Bread One Body*. These differed from previous documents in ruling out the possibility of on-going eucharistic sharing in exceptional cases of need. Their option was to restrict admission drastically by suggesting 'unique occasions' for joy or sorrow in family life for which admission could be requested by a non-Catholic partner or parent from the bishop or his delegate: unrepeatable one-off occasions such as baptism, confirmation, first

communion, marriage, ordination, death. The policy of approving certain occasions on which admission to communion could be requested was followed in a few dioceses in the United States, sometimes expanding the list of special occasions, for example to wedding anniversaries and major feasts – Easter, Pentecost, Christmas – and retreats and workshops; there was no national agreement on this. In Canada the Bishops' Ecumenical Commission suggested guidelines and circulated them to the dioceses, who then decided whether or not to adopt them or to adapt them.

Interchurch couples in Britain and Ireland were glad that their bishops had recognised the *possibility* of admitting the other Christian partner in an interchurch marriage to communion in the Catholic Church, and it was a welcome step forward in places where permission had routinely been refused on the occasions mentioned. However, in other places, practice had already moved on, and some couples who went to their parish priest in distress got the answer that 'of course, it doesn't apply to *you*'. Others again felt they had to cease what had become an established practice. The situation on the ground was very patchy – as, indeed, it is clear it has become in Germany.

Certainly the restriction of admission to a few 'unique occasions' seemed lacking in pastoral understanding to many couples and families who were often together at mass, and believed that eucharistic sharing was very important in view of their marriage commitment to grow together in love with their children in their domestic church. They hoped that there would be further development before too long – but *One Bread One Body* was published twenty years ago, and there has been no official movement in Britain and Ireland since then.

The first thing that interchurch families in England will be likely to notice about the German Bishops' guidelines, therefore, is that the focus is on the need of particular couples and families to share communion, without any mention of certain occasions when this could be permitted. While they were careful to stay within global Catholic guidelines, the approach of the German bishops is not juridical or restrictive. Rather, their tone is warm and welcoming. They clearly want to do all they can to support the marriages and family life of the interdenominational couples in their care.

A stress on the needs of the couple and family

There are other ways in which the German proposals show new emphases in their pastoral concern for interchurch couples and families. Unlike other guidelines, their earlier 1997 guidelines had expressed their concern that if eucharistic sharing were refused the pressure on the marriage might be too great, endangering the marriage bond and distancing the partners from the life of the Church. Twenty years later they repeat this concern that if the couple's 'grave spiritual need' is not remedied, 'the marriage that is founded on Christ's love of the church may even be jeopardised (cf. Eph. 5:32); providing this help is a pastoral ministry that strengthens the bond of marriage and supports the salvation of people.' (18) They stress the need of the couple rather than that of the individual Protestant spouse. This is certainly true to the experience of most interchurch couples who desire to receive communion together; it is as a couple – the 'one body' of their domestic church – that they experience their need and present themselves. The need is that of the 'one coupled person' to receive communion, for the sake of their marriage and family life.

That is why some of the comments on the German bishops' proposals, doubting the real need of interdenominational couples for eucharistic sharing, seem so wide of the mark to interchurch families themselves. Some critics have dismissed their desire as mere psychological inclination, others as no more than the pain that we all feel because Christians are divided. This ignores the particular ecclesial element present when interdenominational partners experience themselves as domestic church. But the German bishops quote *Amoris Laetitia*: 'The Eucharist offers the spouses the strength and incentive needed to live the marriage covenant each day as a domestic church' (318), and apply this to the need to deepen conjugal communion in interdenominational marriages: 'the church must do all it can' (30). Married couples need to *know* and to *feel* that 'church-dividing obstacles do not break the bond of their marriage' (27).

Cardinal Arrinze, speaking at Buckfast Abbey in May 2018, said with reference to the German proposals: 'If Protestants wish to receive communion in the Catholic Church they should become Catholics.'⁸ There are probably many interchurch spouses who would be delighted to become Catholics – indeed, who feel a real sense of belonging to the

⁸ *Tablet*, 2/6/ 2018.

Catholic Church already – if they were not required to give up their existing denominational attachment. As a couple they have taken on a larger identity than they had as separated individuals. It is not yet possible to express this canonically, but it is possible to admit them to Catholic eucharistic communion, while respecting their existing allegiance. The German bishops are doing all they can, having recognised the spiritual need and desire of some interdenominational families. As they say, ‘We are encouraged by the spirit of ecumenism’, and it is in faithfulness to the real progress made on the ecumenical journey that ‘We wish to provide interdenominational marriages with pastoral support.’⁹ They appreciate the ‘deep hurt’ that may result when spouses ‘joined together in the sacrament of love are seeking the unity promised in Christ but are unable to share in the Eucharist’ (30)

The German bishops stress, not only the need of the couple to strengthening their marital bond by eucharistic sharing, but also acknowledge their need as parents in witnessing to and teaching their children. ‘Both spouses have a high degree of responsibility for each other and for the faith of their children’ (24), and it may be in this context that they experience a great need to share communion. Certainly couples have asked for many years how they can witness fully to their children what they believe and experience as the reconciling power of Christ while they are separated at the sacrament of love and unity?

This has been a strong motivating factor for interchurch families ever since they began to come together in groups and associations following the Second Vatican Council. Before the Council they might have decided that they could not marry one another. A parent has a greater degree of responsibility for a child’s faith than for that of a spouse. Adults who know something of the reasons for the historical divisions between Christians may be able to be together at the Eucharist without sharing communion, but can children be expected to understand? Similar stories come from different countries of some children who have shown that they find it incomprehensible: they have spontaneously broken the host they have been given and carried back half to give to the parent who has been missed out. For many couples it is the First Communion of a child that has been the crisis point in determining that they must find a way to share communion together –

⁹ Headings in the first section of *Walking with Christ*.

and not just at the celebration itself, but in their ongoing life together, unofficially if official sharing is not possible in their situation.

If a couple share Catholic eucharistic faith and after discussion with one another recognise in themselves a real need to receive communion together, the bishops wish them to do so in order to deepen their bond with Christ, their bond with one another and communion within the family. The bishops suggest that this should be done 'if possible with the children and parents as well' (32). It affects the whole family, so all should discuss it. Obviously this depends upon the age of the children, who are 'involved as their age and their faith dictate' (53).

The German bishops seem to understand the *urgency* of the need that is experienced by interdenominational families, which leads them to seek unofficial sharing. They 'are not suggesting that anyone has been irresponsible' (7), but they would like everyone to be ready to examine themselves, and to bring their decisions out into the open, in a way that will strengthen the faith and unity of marriage. They speak of the 'deep pain' of exclusion, and the pastoral care needed 'both for the salvation of the individuals concerned and for the flourishing of an entire marriage and family' (25).

A stress on faith

There is a constant stress on the *faith* of the couple and family in the German bishops' text. They point out that an interdenominational marriage, sacramentally united, already partially realises the church communion to which the churches are committed. It is 'a marriage of this kind that is lived in faith that is a "house-church" in intrinsic communion with the Eucharist'. ... Eucharistic communion and ecclesial communion are most closely connected. Marriage is a blessed form of life that realises communion with Christ in communion between the spouses and with the whole church. ... Faith bestowed by the Holy Spirit breathes life into the conjugal communion. This "house-church" must of course be lived in this way: entering more deeply into faith, and in communion with the whole church' (52).

At the same time the bishops are not seeking to judge couples: 'Only God knows what faith the spouses share; the church hopes that it will grow within their marriage, and intends to nurture this growth.' (5) 'Nurturing growth in faith is therefore a major task. Where conditions are conducive, Eucharistic communion is both an important expression and a strong driver of this growth' (13). The German bishops are content

to allow couples and families to decide whether they profoundly want to grow in faith through eucharistic sharing. 'We believe in a conscientious decision by the spouses in an interdenominational marriage for whom the shared life of faith and the religious upbringing of their children are concerns of the heart. We also believe in pastoral care for married couples that deepens faith' (33).

A section on Catholic eucharistic faith is included in *Walking with Christ*, since the question of whether they share the Catholic Church's eucharistic belief faces anyone who wants to share in communion (35). The bishops are appreciative of the way ecumenical dialogues have helped Catholics and Protestants to focus less on differences and more on how much they already share. They explain that three dimensions of the Eucharist are especially important for the Catholic Church: communion with Jesus Christ, communion with each other in the whole Church, and communion with the world. All three dimensions are articulated in the Word of God and in the Eucharistic Prayers, and form a unity. The bishops thus propose this liturgical framework in working out their exposition of Catholic eucharistic faith, as well as referring enquirers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Catechism for Adults* which they had issued as a Bishops' Conference (35-36).

In offering their testimony to Catholic eucharistic faith in a liturgical context they cover all the necessary ground in a way that would satisfy best a Christian spouse who desires to share communion with his or her partner in the Catholic Church. It is not a tick-the-box list of beliefs, but it tries to convey an understanding of the Eucharist as a celebration of the transformation of the whole of life. One of the seven dissenting bishops, the Bishop of Bamberg, took a different approach, saying, after the publication of the guidelines, that he would apply them in his diocese 'on occasions', provided the Protestant spouse would accept the Catholic profession of faith, the seven sacraments, the Church's understanding of the Eucharist, and the Church's hierarchy under the Pope. This is very different from the way in which the majority of the bishops approached the question of the eucharistic faith necessary for participation in the eucharistic celebration.

A stress on conscience

The German bishops emphasize that a decision is to be made by interdenominational spouses according to their consciences. In this

they believe they are following the example given by Pope Francis when he spoke to a Lutheran wife in Rome in 2015: 'Speak with the Lord and go forward.'¹⁰ They quote Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia*: 'We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them' (AL 37). 'This paper', they state, provides orientation on how in particular cases a path can be opened based on responsible personal decisions and recognised by the Church for Protestant wives and Protestant husbands living in interdenominational marriages to participate fully in the Eucharist' (8).

The bishops invite interdenominational couples to come to a decision according to their own consciences (54) and they do not condemn those who have already acted according to their consciences in receiving communion even before this was officially permitted. They trust the consciences of couples who are serious about their shared life of faith and the religious upbringing of their children (33).

In spelling out the method they have chosen to help such couples to express a conscientious decision that can be accepted by the Catholic Church, they have gone into much greater detail than any previous episcopal guidelines.

The method: a 'spiritual conversation'

The German bishops' invitation is to 'all interdenominational married couples to seek a conversation with their pastor/priest, or another individual appointed to provide pastoral care, to come to a decision which follows their own consciences as well as preserves the unity of the church' (54) The invitation is to *all*, whatever their previous situation, with a stress on the bishops' desire that they should follow their own consciences. The bishops want to promote freedom of conscience, responsibility in faith, and peace in the church. They declare that: 'All those in interdenominational marriages who, after having carefully examined their consciences in a spiritual conversation with their pastor/priest or another individual appointed to provide pastoral care, conclude that they affirm the faith of the Catholic Church, and must end a situation of "grave spiritual need" by satisfying their longing for the Eucharist, may join the Lord's Table in order to receive Holy Communion' (56).

¹⁰ *Amoris Laetitia*: Comments from an Interchurch Family Perspective, *One in Christ* 50, 1, 82-85.

The bishops explain that the Easter Day conversation of Jesus with two of his disciples on the way to Emmaus from Jerusalem, as St Luke tells it, is a model for the kind of spiritual conversation to which they are inviting interdenominational couples. He follows them, accompanies them, listens to their explanation of why they are so sad. He opens the scriptures to them, helping them to understand the saving significance of his own suffering, so that their hearts burned as they listened to him. And then they recognise who he is as he blesses the bread and breaks it for them at the evening meal. They return to Jerusalem and share their faith in Christ with the entire early church (31).

A church that can give this kind of experience to interchurch families is showing itself to be a truly pastoral church. Many couples have indeed had this kind of experience at different points in their lives. On one such occasion a young English Catholic and her Methodist husband went on holiday to France. 'We shall be able to receive communion together there', she said happily. Before mass they approached the parish priest, who looked shocked and said no, it couldn't happen. The Catholic wife burst into tears, and the priest was upset when he realised what a serious matter it was for the couple. 'Come and see me this afternoon', he said. When they arrived they found that the priest had asked two or three parishioners who spoke English to help him in the conversation. They asked the Methodist why he wanted to receive communion so much, and what he believed about the Eucharist. It was a good talk, in a mixture of French and English. Later the couple received a phone call from the priest: the Methodist husband would be very welcome to receive communion, and the following Sunday he made this very clear. He asked the Catholic wife to be one of the special ministers of communion, so the Methodist had the joy of receiving the chalice from his wife.

The German bishops are trying to lift this kind of experience, which many couples have received on a parish level, to the level of a whole diocese where the bishop judges that this is appropriate. It will not be easy for some pastors to undertake this kind of spiritual conversation, which 'in all cases needs wise and sensitive pastoral care' (34). There are too many stories of couples who are brusquely dismissed with the comment that 'you can't receive because you don't believe in transubstantiation'. The German bishops have in fact explained this term in their section on eucharistic belief (41), and they indicate that

they are prepared to undertake an educational programme, which they foresee as a necessary part of the process they are proposing. 'We bishops, who are responsible for a pastorally correct practice of administering Holy Communion (cf. canon 844), must promote continuous training in this field for those who as pastoral ministers are required to hold conversations in faith and accompany married couples on the way of discernment "according to the teaching of the church and the guidelines of the bishop" (AL 300)' (34). They are not treating the question of a 'spiritual conversation' lightly.

At the end of their document the bishops append a practical section: 'Annexe: Guidance on holding a conversation'. There are no fixed rules, but an open mind, discretion, a relationship of trust, an awareness of the motives for coming to a particular decision and the effects it will have, prayer, inner freedom, mutual respect and humility, love of the church and her teachings, love of the celebration of the Eucharist are all necessary if the conversation is to serve freedom of conscience, true faith and church unity.

The bishops base their proposal for a 'spiritual conversation' on the advice given by Ignatius of Loyola when an important decision is to be taken; the conversation is with Christ himself, who will show the way forward (*Spiritual Exercises* 15), and the attitude must be a search for whatever is most conducive to communion with God (23).

On the question of eucharistic belief, the bishops quote the orientation offered by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of Vienna: 'Whoever can say Amen to the Eucharistic Prayer with an honest heart, can also receive the fruit of this Eucharistic Prayer, Holy Communion, with an honest heart.' They advise using this liturgical approach when discussing what the church believes she is doing when celebrating the Eucharist, adding that 'the conversation is not an exam; its purpose is to clarify the personal situation of the individuals concerned'. As they did in the earlier section of their report, they use the liturgical texts to highlight the three aspects of communion into which we are led: communion with Jesus Christ, communion with each other and the whole church, and communion with the whole world.

The outcome of the conversation is no foregone conclusion; some may decide they are not ready to receive communion. If this is the case, the bishops ask them to continue on the journey, finding other ways of being with the community at mass. Asking for a blessing is already an expression of faith, saying that the Catholic Church is also a blessing for

me, although I do not share Catholic belief or have a deep longing to receive communion, but I would like to be blessed, so that I may be a blessing for others. This may be an appropriate and faith-nurturing way to develop a more intimate communion with the body of Christ. But where a decision to receive communion is made, it will be a joy to administer and to receive, in communion with the whole church.

Open acceptance by the Church

There is a really striking insistence that when a conscientious decision to receive communion has been agreed upon in the course of the kind of ‘spiritual conversation’ proposed, the interdenominational spouse should be openly accepted by the community, led by the bishop. It would be a public recognition, both for those who had longed to share communion for a considerable time, and for those who had already been sharing unofficially. This open, official recognition is something many interchurch families have longed for, feeling that it would liberate them to give a more visible witness to Christian unity, both to their children and to others around them. It was one of the requests that the international network of interchurch families put to the 2015 Synod of Bishops.¹¹

There is a great sense of welcome in these guidelines. Interdenominational marriages are not condemned. The denominational schism of the church of Jesus Christ ‘is no fault of the spouses concerned’, but ‘often a cause of particular pain to them’ (24). The bishops are very conscious of the risk that spouses may feel excluded, and in danger of losing touch with the church (25). They do not want anyone to go away; even if a decision is made against receiving Holy Communion, there are other ways for believers to participate: celebrating the Word of God, praying together, ‘spiritual communion’, receiving a personal blessing – all are ‘important signs of an ecclesial communion that is not yet complete’. Couples who choose this way are to be respected and encouraged; the bishops see in it a strong sign of ecumenical community (26).

Nobody is forced to choose this way against their conscience, however. It is for the couple to decide whether their need and the faith of the non-Catholic partner makes eucharistic sharing the right and

¹¹ ‘Response to the 2015 Synod on the Family from the Interchurch Families International Network’, *One in Christ* 49, 1, 2015, 241-60, cf. section 9, 157-59.

necessary path for them. A spouse who chooses this way is then receiving the same body of Christ as everyone else; it is the same grace, the same covenant, the same Eucharist, the same table. But at the same time spouses who receive in this way are recognised as Christians who owe allegiance to another church or ecclesial community. Their links through marriage and faith are sufficiently close for them to be admitted to Catholic communion, but still in an exceptional way. The churches share a real but incomplete communion; in their case as spouses it is more fully realised. They are an open reminder to all that there is a further path to travel. So the interdenominational couple becomes both a '*symbol and an impetus* in the search for full Christian communion' (57). Their marriage and family life will be strengthened. Then it will be a 'source of joy'¹² for the Catholic Church to administer the sacrament to them. The German bishops 'wish to share in this joy, and expressly welcome all those who follow this path' (58).

¹² *Ut Unum Sint*, 46; *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 46.

BOOK REVIEWS

Jeremy Pilch: *Breathing the Spirit with Both Lungs: Deification in the Work of Vladimir Solov'ev*. Leuven: Peeters, Eastern Christian Studies Vol. 25 2018, 249 pages. ISBN-10: 9042934255. ISBN-13: 978-9042934252. *Breathing the Spirit with Both Lungs: Deification in the Work of Vladimir Solov'ev* provides the reader with an important and interesting examination of the theme of deification in the writings of the Russian pre-Revolution philosopher and thinker Vladimir Sergeevich Solov'ev (1853-1900). Solov'ev's writings contributed significantly to the Russian spiritual renaissance at the beginning of the twentieth century and were a major influence on the Russian Orthodox philosopher of religion, Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944), and French Orthodox thinker and theologian, Olivier Clément (1921-2009). Solov'ev's last book, a fictional work cited by Clément, was translated and published in France in 1984¹ as *Three conversations on War, Progress, and the End of History*, a work that deeply moved Saint John Paul II.²

A major focus of *Deification in the Work of Vladimir Solov'ev* is that 'the Church must breathe with her two lungs!'³ Solov'ev recognises it is the primacy of grace that prompts a human response to God that can bring about transformation and uses western theological concepts in expressing his teaching. His distinctive theological contribution on deification, often expressed by him as 'Godmanhood' or 'Divine Humanity', is recognised by author Jeremy Pilch, to have the potential to bring about a spiritual renewal of the Christian Churches and contribute to Christian unity in our time.

¹ Olivier Clément, *Un Respect Tête*, (Paris: Nouvelle Cité, 1989). 115, also Clément's footnote 1, 121: V. Soloviev, *Trois Entretien*, trans. French (Paris: 1984), 212; See also Gio Piovesana e Michelina Tenace, *L'Anticristo: con la traduzione del saggio di Solov'ev* (Rome: Centro Aletti, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1995).

² Giacomo Cardinal Biffi delivered a Lenten meditation to John Paul II in 2000, and later to Pope Benedict XVI and the Roman curia on the subject of Soloviev's Antichrist. Pope Benedict XVI's book *Jesus of Nazareth*, mentions the fascinating story of the Antichrist by Soloviev on 30 - 41.

³ John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint: Commitment to Ecumenism*, (London: CTS, 1995), 62.

Olivier Clément⁴ wrote in 2008, ‘This unity is not something to be made, it is there to be discovered!’... ‘A Christian rooted in his own Church can breathe with the “two lungs” of Eastern and Western Christianity.’ Not only ‘can’, but Clément insists, ‘must’ breathe with both lungs, because each carries within it the other.⁵ This metaphor of the two lungs, often used by John Paul II, originated from the Russian émigré philosopher and poet Viatcheslav Ivanov who took refuge in Rome after the Bolshevik Revolution.⁶

Jeremy Pilch’s book is a mine of important research information as well as compelling reading, which will be enjoyed by the general reader and scholar alike. Chapter One lays the foundation with a focus on Soloviev, Deification and the Early Church Fathers and Councils; Chapter Two examines the theological roots of Soloviev’s use of the term Godmanhood, his lectures on Divine Humanity, connections with the thought of Saint Maximus the Confessor, the crisis of western philosophy and the disappearance of Deification from religious consciousness in the West; Chapter Three reflects on deification in Solov’ev’s seminal work *The Spiritual Foundation of Life*; Chapter Four presents an analysis of Solov’ev’s ‘magnum opus’ on moral philosophy: *The Justification of the Good*. This work, which was written in 1897 just three years before his premature death at the age of forty-seven, expands on themes of moral and social deification that situate Solov’ev’s thought in a distinct continuity with Greek Patristic tradition.

This is an important and well-written book which you will enjoy reading.

† Stefanie Hugh-Donovan

⁴ See Stefanie Hugh-Donovan, ‘An Eastern Orthodox Reflection on Papal Primacy: Olivier Clément’s Response to *Ut Unum Sint* and the Ecclesial Legacy of Patriarch Athenagoras I, *The Downside Review* Volume: 134: 3, 70-87; PhD Thesis: S Hugh-Donovan, *Olivier Clément: French Thinker and Theologian of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Dialogue with Western Catholic Thought on Ecclesiology, Theology and the Identity of Europe*.

⁵ *Petite boussole spirituelle pour notre temps* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

⁶ See S. Hugh-Donovan, ‘An Eastern Orthodox Reflection’; Viatcheslav Ivanov, 1866-1949.

The Armenian Church: An introduction to Armenian Christianity: Aram I (Catholicos of Cilicia) Ant'elias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia, 2016. ISBN 978-9953-0-3710-3.

Aram I Keshishian, Armenian Catholicos of the See of Cilicia, is an internationally recognised ecumenical church leader. He served for two terms (1991-2005) as Moderator of the WCC (World Council of Churches) and two terms (2006-2016) as president of the Middle East Council. His many publications include *The Challenge to be a Church in a Changing World* (1997), *The Christian Witness at the Crossroads in the Middle East* (2004) and *L'Église face aux grands Défis* (2001) which contains the reports he presented in his capacity as chairman of the WCC.

According to the author, the purpose of *The Armenian Church* is not to present an all-encompassing history, theology, or mission of the Armenian Church but rather to highlight those specific features of the Church that ensure its identity and spell out its particular mission in the life of the Armenian people. Under thirteen separate headings, each focussing on a characteristic aspect of the Armenian Church, he provides an overview of the Armenian Church's history, faith, and witness, and sets out a vision for its future.

What attracted this reviewer to the volume was to read what His Holiness had to say on *Two Catholicosates within One Church* (pp. 73-75). The origins of this 'schism' in the Armenian Church, although expressed in ecclesiastical language with references to theological precedent, were essentially political in origin; they go back to 13th December 1922, when Armenia became a constituent part of the USSR. The Armenian Revolutionary Party (*Dashnak*) were unhappy with the situation in the communist-dominated Mother Church at Ejmiadsin (*Descent of the Only Begotten Son*), whose head, Catholicos Khoren Mouradbekian, was murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1938. A few years earlier, while processing through the congregation in the Church of the Holy Cross, New York, on 24th December 1933, the primate of the diocese of North America, Archbishop Ghevond Durian, had been murdered by a group of Dashnak assailants for his support of Soviet Armenia.

In 303 AD, the Armenian Catholicate was founded in Holy Ejmiadsin in the city of Vagharshapat (now Ejmiadsin). Its ecclesiastical jurisdiction spread over all the dioceses in Great and Minor Armenia, which numbered 13 bishoprics. The title of the Catholicos, '*Catholicos*

of *Great Armenia*' was conceived, at that time, as a geographical definition, but, as the only and longest surviving institution of the Armenian nation, it adapted itself to the exigencies of the political turmoil and instability, and followed the migratory habits of a majority of its spiritual flock. Following the division of Armenia between Persia and Byzantium in 387 and 391 respectively, the seat of the Catholicate moved to wherever the political centre of the nation was located. When the Armenian Cilician Kingdom ceased to function in 1375, a religious national council convened in Holy Ejmiadsin and took the decision to transfer the See to its place of origin in Vagharshapat. By political necessity, thirteen regional errant Catholicoi emerged, from 1113 to 1895, all recognising the legal apostolic primacy and jurisdiction of the Catholicos of All Armenians in Ejmiadsin, including the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem (638) and of Constantinople (1461).

In 1309, Pope Clement V moved the papal court to Avignon because of the persistently dangerous situation in the city of Rome and, in 1378, Pope Gregory XI transferred the papacy back to Rome. The French cardinals rejected the move and elected rival popes at Avignon, thus instigating the Great Schism which lasted until 1417. However, it is worth stressing that the rival popes never questioned the primacy of the See of St. Peter.

On 5th March 1946, Winston Churchill, on an historic visit to the United States, delivered his 'Iron curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri, in which he warned western democracies against the dangers of the spread of Soviet Communism. On 12th March 1947, U. S. President Harry S. Truman announced his resolution to resist communist aggression around the world and this became the pivot of American foreign policy. The 'cold war' intensified, widening the fissures that already existed between the worldwide Armenian diaspora and its Soviet-dominated homeland.

When Archbishop Garegin Hovsep'eants' (1943), a member of the Brotherhood of Holy Ejmiadsin, was elected Catholicos of the See of Cilicia, none of the parties raised any objections to his candidature since there was, at the time, a united Armenian front. However, when he died in 1952 the situation changed: 'the cold war had sunk its icy blade into the Armenian community.' Moves which had been afoot in 1945-46, to re-unite the parts of the Church which had been virtually separated following the murder of Archbishop Ghevond Durian in 1933, came to an abrupt end. The Dashnak party were preparing to defeat the

Catholicos in the election which followed and widen the gulf that had developed between the two jurisdictions, mostly in the Middle East and the United State, under the dictates and manipulation of the Dashnak Party in Syria and Lebanon. In their single-minded resolve to participate in the ongoing world-wide political struggle between the Soviet Union, of which the Republic of Soviet Armenia was a member, and the western world, led by the United States of America, the leaders of the Dashnak Party literally hijacked a branch of the hierarchy of the Armenian Church in the diaspora, thus sundering the integrity of the only traditionally unifying centuries-old institution. By promoting the misguided notion that the Catholicos of All Armenians was a 'tool and agent' of the communists, the Dashnak Party succeeded in dividing the loyalties and sense of unity among sections of the Armenian communities in the diaspora.

In 1950, at the request of Catholicos Georg VI Tchorekchian (1945-1954), two delegates, Archbishop Ruben Drambian and Professor Ashot Abrahamian, representing Holy Ejmiadsin, were sent to attend the election of the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. In his letter to the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Catholicos emphasises the importance of this visit: 'This will also provide the opportunity for them to meet Garegin I, Catholicos of Cilicia, and know from him about the divisive activities of the political parties and their supporters against the Armenian Church, and to be aware of their unforgivable methods so that we can prepare the required counter actions.' (Garegin I Hovsep'eants', *P'astat'ght'eri* [Documents], Holy Ejmiadsin, vol I. p. 624). Several years earlier, in 1938, Garegin Hovsep'eants, writing to the Spiritual Council in Ejmiadsin on the prevailing atmosphere in California and the Eastern Diocese of America following the murder of the Primate, recommended that some 'presence in the diaspora is doubly important, both morally and financially, until the election of the new primate takes place. Without the presence of a candidate from Holy Ejmiadsin we are bound to lose a lot from the point of view of the entire nation and Holy Ejmiadsin during this period of vacancy'. He draws this conclusion: 'We must have in front of our minds that the Dashnak media, in particular, through disinformation and exaggerated rowdiness, are sowing the seeds of enmity in the minds of the faithful to confuse them and reduce and cut their ties as much as possible from the Armenian government and Ejmiadsin. My presence here will act as a dike against such tendencies' (Ibid., p. 540).

As early as 1925, Archbishops Khoren Mouradbekian (Catholicos from 1932-1938) and Garegin Hovsep'eants', in a report to His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians, Georg V Sureneants (1911-1930), informed His Holiness that in their meeting with the first commissar of the Armenian Communist Party, Aramayis Erznkian (1878-1937), the minister had complained that some primates of Holy Ejmiadsin in the diaspora, particularly in Tabriz, America and Europe, were co-operating and collaborating with representatives of the Dashnak Party in their anti-Armenian activities. 'It is our wish,' he said, 'that the Church, through its representatives, adopt a neutral stance in the political orientation of the diaspora'. Among the few names directly mentioned are Bishop Grigoris Palak'ian (Europe), Tirayr Ter Movsessian (America) and Nerses Ter Melik'-Tangian (Tabriz) (Ibid., pp. 399-400).

The schism in the Armenian Church was aggravated with the election in 1956 of Catholicos Zareh I Paysalian (20th February 1956) and his consecration by three bishops in attendance, two Armenian and one Syrian, which Holy Ejmiadsin, quite understandably, declared 'defective and un-canonical'. On 23th February 1963, Catholicos Khoren I Paroyan succeeded Catholicos Zareh, who upon his election declared himself 'Catholicos of All Armenians in the Great House of Cilicia in the Diaspora', an incongruous and fallacious claim with no historical legitimacy and canonical precedence, placing himself as the equal of the Catholicos of All Armenians. In a short period of time, under duress and against the will of the communities, the dioceses of Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece and Kuwait were forced to transfer their allegiance to Ant'elias and, under intense political pressure, to create parallel prelaties in the United States, Canada and France. Since his elevation in 1994, Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia, has actively encouraged the encroachment of the temporal jurisdiction of the Catholicos of All Armenians, ignoring the reality of the demise of the Soviet Union and the independence of the state of Armenia.

In the section entitled 'Hierarchy and Decision-making', the author gives a unique and conflicting account of the emergence of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. On the one hand he attributes it to the 'growing tension caused by the openness of the Cilician clergy and the conservatism of the clergy of Armenia' and on the other hand to the fact that 'much of the diaspora was virulently anti-Soviet'. According to Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan (1904-1989), 'the Cilician catholicate is a schism (*herdzouads*) and its existence should

not be legitimised' (Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, *Vaveragrer [Documents]*, Ejmiadsin, Bk. 12, p.417), when, after the demise of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, the Catholicosate was transferred to its place of origin in Vagharshapat. It is worth noting that the term used is 'transfer or return' (*P'okhadrut'iwn*), the anniversary of which is marked on the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord. This term is employed for very important ecclesiological reasons. The movement of the See from one location to another does not affect in any degree, the standing, jurisdiction or authority of the incumbent Catholicos. The Catholicos is not the Catholicos *of* Ejmiadsin but *in* Ejmiadsin. The site itself is entirely secondary, but the unity of the jurisdiction of the first minister of the Church is primary. Some cities have sacred associations attached to them: Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and rose in Jerusalem: the Apostles Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome: Ejmiadsin is the site where the 'Only begotten Son of God' descended: the Patriarch of Antioch now resides in Damascus, but calls himself Patriarch of Antioch: the Pope of the Coptic Church resides in Cairo but retains the title of Patriarch of Alexandria: the Pope of Rome, while in exile in Avignon, continued to call himself the Bishop of Rome, and the Armenian Catholicos, while in Cilicia, retained the title 'Bishop of Vagharshapat'. A See or a city acquires a certain sacredness and becomes a symbol of the identity and continuity of the Church. The reason for the transfer was the threat imposed by the repeated attacks of the Mamluks and the threat imposed by the Latinisation of the Armenian Church. The desire to transfer the Holy See to Armenia, proper, was not prompted only by the 'conservative' clergy back in Armenia but also by such famous Catholicos in Cilicia as St Grigor III Pahlavuni (r.1113-1166) and his successor Nerses IV Klayets'i, known as *Shnorhali* (r.1166-1173), who called himself 'Catholicos of All Armenians', replacing the title, 'Catholicos of Great Armenia' (*'Kat'oghikos Hayots' Medsats'*).

In its ecclesiology, the Armenian Church follows the Apostolic Canons and the canons of the first three ecumenical councils. The Apostolic credentials of the Armenian Church are based on the teachings of the Apostles Saint Bartholomew and St Thaddeus. Apostolic authority and jurisdiction is not transferable and hence it is confusing to say 'The two Catholicos are equal in rank and possess the same ecclesial authority, responsibilities, rights, and privileges within the Armenian Church' (p. 74). There cannot be plurality of

Catholicosate in different locations. Canon 2 of the Council of Constantinople clearly states: 'Let the bishops refrain from interfering in churches outside the limits of a diocese and from causing trouble in the churches... If they are not invited, let the bishops refrain from going outside a diocese for an ordination or for any other ecclesiastical act.' (Archbishop Peter L'Huillier, *Kanonanagirk' Hayots'*, vol. I., p.274. *The Church of the Ancient Councils* New York 1996, p. 115). This ecclesiology involves catholicity, the realisation of which is linked indissolubly with primacy. The primacy should be assumed in the spirit of the thirty-fourth Apostolic canon: 'The bishops of each local church should recognise the one in their midst who is first and consider him as their head, while undertaking nothing exceptional without his knowledge. Each of them should occupy himself only with the concerns of his own diocese and of dependent lands. Thus concord shall prevail and God shall be glorified – Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Book of Canon Law *Kanonanagirk' Hayots'*, vol. I, pp. 83-84).

The present Catholicos and author of this volume, latching on to a false and irrelevant premise, has assiduously avoided the challenge he set himself when he became Catholicos of the Great See of Cilicia. These were the words of his sermon given at his consecration ceremony on 1st July 1995: 'Unity is a gift of God; it is also a call. Let us not lose this golden opportunity for the sake of our church and people. Let us respond to this call of God in courage, in humility and in faithfulness to our forefathers and our common goal' (*The Challenge to be a Church in a Challenging World*, New York 1997, p. 13). Catholicos Aram I, like his predecessor, has devoted considerable effort within the WCC for the cause of unity among churches and it is ironic that the schism in the Armenian Church which was a result of the 'cold war' still remains, a symbol of the era of the 'cold war'.

Dr.Vrej Nersessian