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EDITORIAL

This issue has been produced in the very special context of a pandemic. However, this difficult time appears to have led to greater solidarity among the churches as attested almost everywhere. But perhaps it is too early to identify what is really specific and we need to step back.

The contributions of the present issue stress the importance of context in approaching dialogues with other churches and demonstrate the richness of a local perspective alongside the more universal one. Reflections on sociological or philosophical concepts such as those of 'place' and 'topophilia' or 'person' and 'personalism', confirm the conviction that we cannot remain at the level of abstraction and have to prefer, even when it is a question of formulations, terms that connote the diversity of situations rather than terms that point to essentialism. In brief, we must choose an existential hermeneutics rather an essentialist one.

And, we must not forget, as one of the authors tells us, that ecumenism is 'only a tool, destined to disappear once there is true unity of Christians. Could we also wish that the word "ecumenism" be forgotten? Indeed, the goal of ecumenical dialogue is not to last forever or establish itself as a parallel Church, but to lead to the unity of Christ's disciples, so desired by the Lord.'

THE PLACE OF THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH

Andrew Pierce*

How might the ecumenical movement cultivate greater focus, energy and enthusiasm for its project to make visible the unity in diversity of God's oikoumene? Initially written in answer to that question, this paper begins by observing some challenges posed to the ecumenical movement by prioritising the agency of churches. In the critical dialectic between institution and charism, the agency exercised by churches and ecumenical instruments operates with institutional advantage. Yet the ecumenical movement is indebted to liminality as much as to institutional fidelity. How, then, might liminal experience inform ecumenical agency? One way in which ecumenical agency might be diversified—positively and creatively—builds on current developments in the philosophy and theology of place. Anthropologically, place shapes identity; people identify themselves as 'belonging' somewhere, or as being displaced from somewhere else. How might ecclesiology—ecumenical ecclesiology in particular—develop insights from discourse on place so as to strengthen our understanding of participation in the experience of ecumenical belonging?

At the 2018 Annual Meeting of the European Academy of Religion, the Ecclesiological Investigations International Research Network sponsored a panel addressing 'The Future of Ecumenism'. The brief for panelists noted that the ecumenical movement appears to many of its supporters to be in the doldrums, exhibiting a loss of excitement, energy and focus in its traditional activities. Is this to be explained simply and patiently as the ecumenical manifestation of an inevitable routinization of charism?

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One can certainly supply soundbite quotations in support of such a case: at his enthronement in 1942—in the course of worldwide conflict—Archbishop William Temple famously called the ecumenical movement ‘the great new fact of our era’. Yet, by the end of the twentieth century, a no-less prophetic archbishop, Trevor Huddleston, called ecumenism ‘the great yawn of our time’. But is a narrative of ecumenical decline simply a result of institutional entropy and exhaustion? Or, are there other dimensions—perhaps more theologically and ecclesiologicaly potent ones—that need to be discerned in the frustrated vision of an ecumenical movement struggling to move?

This paper begins with a question about ecumenical agency. Who does ecumenism? The standard answer to this question is that churches are the principal agents in the ecumenical movement. There are important historically descriptive and theologically normative reasons why this should be so. But perhaps there is also room to challenge the extent to which the affirmation of ecclesial agency effectively occludes other legitimate exercise of ecumenical agency. Put bluntly and ungrammatically, if we are being ecumenical, then who is ‘we’?¹

The second part of the paper connects the question of ‘who’ with that of ‘where’. There are interesting stirrings in theological engagement with place—questions about ‘who we are’ and ‘where we are’ appear increasingly inseparable. In addition to the epistemological and anthropological impact of place, there is also an unavoidable ecclesiological impact from the ways in which ‘we’ characterize ourselves as belonging together *somewhere*.² Not only are place and identity to be connected; they are to be connected with great care and subject to criticism. Currently, the connection of place and identity is being massaged in dangerous ways by nationalist and populist movements. More critical and hopeful construals of placement may ensure a meaningful ecumenical contribution from advocates of at once

¹ This response to any affirmation made on behalf of the first person plural owes much to the work of the late Denis Carroll, a theologian who drew insistent attention to the inelegant but politically and ecumenically fraught question: ‘Who is “we”?’

² For a magisterial survey of place from a theological perspective, see Sarah Morice-Brubaker, *The Place of the Spirit: Toward a Trinitarian Theology of Location* (James Clarke & Co.: Cambridge, 2014 [original publication date: 2013]), 1-34.

grounded yet cosmopolitan visions of catholicity.³ The paper subdivides these reflections on place in relation to ecumenical experience, philosophy and theology.

1. Ecumenical Agency

One way of accounting for much current ecumenical fatigue may be the way in which agency in the ecumenical movement is attributed to, and exercised solely by, 'the churches'. Arguably the key ecumenical activity lies in the vulnerable arena of dialogue, in which partners encounter the reality of one another and learn to challenge—together—self-interested misrepresentations of both identity and otherness that have become habitual and ingrained, in some cases over centuries. There is a certain inevitability to the prominence of ecclesial agency in both ecumenical dialogue and its reception: defining disagreements addressed by the ecumenical movement are those that breach communion between churches, and it is precisely as inter-ecclesial issues that they are addressed in order to qualify as ecumenical. The principal structured dialogues take place either bilaterally or multilaterally; in either case, the agency of churches or of 'communities' of churches is to the fore. In the allied process of ecumenical reception, the fruits of dialogue enter into the lives of the churches; therefore, as a structured process, it too runs along existing ecclesial rails.

Whilst both ecumenical theory and practice agree on the priority of ecclesial agency, this is not necessarily exercised monolithically. In the *modus operandi* of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, the commissioners are not required to act simply as spokespersons for their churches, but rather to form a single ecumenical think-tank with wide-ranging theological expertise. And, in a less structured way, there may be informal recognition accorded to the agency of individual theologians in interpreting how a particular tradition understands itself.

The insistence that ecclesial agency belongs primarily—perhaps, even, uniquely—to the churches, is not without difficulties. Whilst it is important that churches acknowledge their wider ecumenical responsibilities and find ways in which to challenge any tendency on

³ The notion of 'implacement' is developed in the important work of Edward S. Casey. See in particular his *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (second edition, Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2009 [original publication date: 2013]), 3-21.

their own part to retreat into self-interested, sanctified self-interest, the exercise of ecclesial agency draws attention to some of its limits. All churches operate, both explicitly and implicitly, according to their own distinctive, traditioned, hermeneutical filters, which can curtail as much as encourage more liminal paths of discipleship.⁴

The exercise of ecclesial agency is a complex and multi-layered reality in many churches, and, like all expressions of life in community, this reality includes tension between institution and charism. Excessive focus on ecclesial ecumenical agency tends to favour the institutional structures of both the churches and of the emerging ecumenical culture, with the result that it may prove more difficult to recognize if or when more liminal undertakings are articulating the matters on which today's churches stand and/or fall.

Perhaps the inevitable preferential option for institutional agency helps create a climate in which ecumenical excitement, energy and focus struggle to be identified with personal paths in ecumenical discipleship? A key aspect of modernity is its pluralizing of choice and its associated emphasis on the human person as an individual with rights and responsibilities in her/his exercise of choice, which includes both a choice to belong and the extent to which to belong.

Against a theological and ecclesiological background in which the language of communion—*communio* and *koinonia*—appears to have transitioned successfully from an ecclesial model to the ecumenical paradigm, important questions concerning subsidiarity arise. How are we to locate the reality of communion amidst the diverse expressions of believing and belonging? How might we rectify a situation in which the ecumenical lives of individual Christian women, men and children lack both appropriate agency (at an existential level) and recognition of their agency (inecumenical ecclesiological theory)? How might ecumenical theology engage with distinctively regional-yet-ecumenical experience, so as to honour a liminal level between church and communion of churches? And how might ecumenical theology—understood as a critical, self-critical reflection on Christianities' self-

⁴ See Harding Meyer, *That All May be One* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999), which provides an excellent example of the hermeneutical problem. Multi-confessional and trans-confessional commitment to 'unity' may be both evidenced, and at the same time undercut, by the very tradition-specific nature of such affirmations.

understandings—include amongst its tasks not only the articulation or demonstration of consensus, but also the creative staging of ecumenical conflict?

Therefore, although the privileged agency of churches in the ecumenical movement can be both understood and appreciated, its exercise of an effective monopoly on ecumenical agency poses significant risks that need to be addressed. Without a critical ecclesiology, as Jürgen Moltmann has warned, the operational ecclesiologies pervading the churches are reduced to expressing simply the ideology of the ecclesial *status quo*: ‘If theology were to lose its freedom to criticize, it would turn into the ideology of the church in its existing form.’⁵ This remark is pregnant with important consequences. Were ecclesiology to be reduced simply to *us* saying how *we* do *our* things, the result would be tragic loss of ecclesiological normativity. And, for specifically ecumenical ecclesiology, the lack of liminality—of inbetweenness—would entail the loss of ecumenical vision.

2. Ecumenical Place/s

How might ecumenical theology resist the routinization of ecumenical charism and acknowledge a more diversified ecumenical agency? One answer arises in the current expansion of philosophical and theological concern with place, which offers suggestive ways of thematizing shared senses of belonging, even when and where deeply traditioned narrations of identity emphasize difference as non-belonging within an ideological system. The turn to place asks us to specify not only the nature of the human person, with her/his possibilities and limitations—the very issue on which the Western church both stood and fell—but probes the ways in which where we are shapes who we are. Like all anthropology, this may be developed in an ecclesiological direction, since the formative impact of place is as true of churches as of believers.

Obvious as the importance of place is, various types of blinkers have been effective in keeping the dynamic interactions of nature, grace and place out of the theological spotlight. As a result, theological engagement with place commences with suspicion, tracing the ways in which place been disregarded. It is curious that place—despite being

⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (SCM Press: London, 1977 [original publication date: 1975]), 7.

literally unavoidable—frequently manages to perform a theological disappearing act.

In ecumenical theology, perhaps the most striking example of hiding in plain sight is the report of the section on ‘Unity,’ from the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961. The statement is one of the great treasures of ecumenical ecclesiology:

We believe that the unity which is both God’s will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.⁶

Ecumenicity, in short, is experienced in specific places.

Its objective thus stated, the rest of the section Report spells out its implications. Aside from its ambitious, monopoly-defying vision of the active participation by ‘all’ in unity, the list of characteristics provided in the New Delhi statement will be familiar to those who know something of the agenda pursued by Faith and Order over the past ninety years. What has been left undeveloped, however, is at the very start of the quotation, in its reference to unity becoming visible ‘in each place’.

‘Place’ has not been an explicitly thematized feature of ecumenical theology, despite its prominent role in this important text. Indeed, its thematically undeveloped character is underscored in the opening chapter of *The New Delhi Report*, which narrates the Assembly’s proceedings. The opening page describes New Delhi: its sunshine, the great tent or *Shamiana* and the *Vigyan Bhavan*—or ‘house of learning’, the rather hopeful name for the conference hall. But after page 1, the place that is New Delhi and the places from which participants came, simply drop out of view: ‘If the setting was characteristically Asian, the occasion was manifestly ecumenical.’⁷

⁶ *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (SCM Press: London, 1962), 116.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

This contrast between specific place and ecumenicity effectively undoes the important connection drawn by the New Delhi statement on unity: it relegates concrete context to the realms of the parochial, whereas *real* ecumenism, we are given to understand, has significantly bigger fish to fry. New Delhi simply provided a colourful location—or ‘setting’. This betrays the true significance of place in identity, by settling for ‘situation’ rather than opting to explore the possible significance of ‘implacement’.

The New Delhi Report thus leaves us with a sharply curtailed ecumenical acknowledgement of place. On the one hand, treated as a concrete reality, the celebration by the Assembly of its *sitz im leben* is confined to a single page. At a more abstract level, the *Report* affirms the unity of all ‘in one place—a phrase that cries out for concrete engagement. The placial aspect of unity, however, remains as yet undeveloped.

3. Philosophical Place

As a philosophical theme, the recovery of place blends modern phenomenology with a distinctively post-modern suspicion of space. Many moderns focused on space—and were, like Pascal, frankly terrified by its immensity. But human beings inhabit specific places, we do not live in space. Reacting against the transcendental grid of modern TimeSpace, postmodern concerns with particularity and difference have provoked a re-evaluation of place as being, amongst other things, a constitutive element in human identity. We understand ourselves with reference to place/s—in some we belong, in others we experience fear and alienation, in others we simply pass through, disengaged. To be an animal is to move, and to move is to go from one place to another. Yet our discourse has tended to be almost exclusively temperocentric; we have considered ourselves as time beings, rather than placed beings.

One of the earliest interpreters of the ‘placedness’ of human being was Martin Heidegger, whose important essay ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’ was produced for a conference on housing in 1951. Here, Heidegger drew attention to the intimate connection of the terms ‘building’ and ‘dwelling’, a connection that a more instrumental age had separated, to its cost. Or, to quote Heidegger’s 3 points:

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.

3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things and the building that erects buildings.⁸

And again, to emphasize the connection:

We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*.⁹

This Heideggerian *perichoresis* of dwelling, thinking, building—and the extent to which dwelling can *be dwelling* only in meditative dialogue with the place where we dwell, since by nature we are place dwellers—has since been developed by a range of other authors. One of their major concerns—obviously—is with balancing Heidegger’s profound insight into who/where we are, with an awareness that such a worldview may be directed along pathways of a lethal fatalism. Recovering the vital philosophical importance of a sense of place, is not necessarily a license for racism and xenophobia. The current global combination of resurgent nationalism with massive human displacement indicates that our capacity for joined-up building, dwelling and thinking remains dangerously under-developed.

4. Theological Place

Veteran humanist geographer Yi-Fu Tuan coined the term ‘topophilia’ to name the affective dimensions of the connection between human subjects and their environments, between person and place.¹⁰ To no little extent, Christian theology—especially in the West—has been rather more topophobic, both in theory and practice. And it may be worth exploring why this is the case.

The conciliar process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation highlighted how the Western Church had effectively decapitated the single cosmic drama of creation and redemption. Excessive Augustinian pessimism—available in both Catholic and Protestant flavours—led to a reading of Christian tradition in which creation appeared as a minor opening act. Once it ‘fell’, and readers had reached the end of Genesis

⁸ ‘Building Dwelling Thinking,’ in David Farrell Krell, Ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, (1978) (Routledge: London and New York, 2011), 239-55, 245.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 246.

¹⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1990 [original publication date: 1974]).

3, the theme of redemption dominated. Sixteenth century debates over justification wove the priority of redemption into every other doctrinal theme in dispute, impacting throughout the whole gamut of ecclesial experience including visual art, common prayer, architecture, and music.

Judaism, Islam and Christianity, however, would have radically unfamiliar sacred texts were they to expunge references to place and places. In the much-quoted *mot* of the Hebrew scholar Jon D. Levenson, 'Geography is simply a visible form of theology'. Yet, for something visible, geography as theology has struggled to attract the audience's attention. In his Gifford Lectures during the 1980s, Jürgen Moltmann drew attention to the gnostic tendencies embedded in expanding the territory of redemption at the expense of the place of creation.¹¹ Such an expansion may even make itself sound doctrinally correct, but it is difficult to find better conditions under which topophobia can thrive.

If aspects of the Christian tradition permit gnostic topophobia to fly under the radar of theological orthodoxy, there is also evidence of resistance to the disregard of place. Feminist, womanist and eco-feminist theologies have helpfully deconstructed the limited visions behind the patriarchal constructions of transcendence. Grace Jantzen and Sallie McFague, for example, have each explored the possibilities of naming the world God's body—and, as a result, place becomes part of the divine anatomy and revelation gains somatic resonance.¹² There is an important ecclesiological consequence to a reassertion of divine immanence, since an unbalanced stress on divine transcendence appears to share elective affinities with authoritarian hierarchical church structures.

Biblical interpreters, too, criticized the implicit gnosticism of the redemption-trumps-creation storyline that dominated a great deal of early and mid-twentieth century biblical theology. Claus Westermann's commentary on Genesis, for example, firmly challenged the prevailing notion that the doctrine of creation (and with it the stories in Genesis 1-3) was primarily to be seen as an implication of the primal experience

¹¹ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (SCM Press: London, 1985).

¹² Grace M. Jantzen, *God's World, God's Body* (Darton, Longman and Todd: London, 1984); Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (SCM Press: London, 1993).

of Israel's redemption in an exodus from Egypt.¹³ It was legitimate, therefore, to begin reading where it said 'in the beginning'.

Moreover, excessively confrontational interpretations of 'nature versus grace' have themselves been challenged *precisely* for the adequacy of their grasp of grace. For example, Karl Barth's harnessing of a 'biblical' notion of revelation in order to savage the very notion of natural theology was itself trounced by another Reformed theologian, James Barr.¹⁴ Barth could call himself biblical, according to Barr, *but* Barth's Bible would then have to omit the wisdom material, much of the Jesus tradition, and Paul.

5. Conclusion

This paper has criticized the monopoly on ecumenical agency exercised by the churches, and has drawn attention to recent philosophical and theological re-framing of human identity in relation to place as one way in which a shared sense of belonging might gain greater ecclesiological traction. People with different identities often articulate a shared belonging to what they see as the 'same' place. This insight may be developed to help ground the ecumenical discourse of *koinonia/communio*.

To a gnostic topophobe, the church is fundamentally an escape pod from a world created out of malice or incompetence. Incarnation and escape are mutually incompatible. A more topophilic ecclesiology understands that the church is called to dwell. An ecumenically topophilic ecclesiology holds to a vision of dwelling together 'in each place'.

A more participative understanding of ecumenical agency is needed if the movement is, in fact, to move—both globally and locally. In addition to the reasonably-well-trodden paths of existing theologizing, it may be possible to enlarge ecumenical vision by attending to the ways in which we—despite our differences—relate to 'our place' and 'our places;' and to explore how sharing place with other and different people is of fundamental ecclesiological significance.

¹³ Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11, Genesis 12-36, Genesis 37-50* (SPCK: London, 1986).

¹⁴ See Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, *Natural Theology: Comprising 'Nature and Grace' by Prof Dr Emil Brunner and the reply 'No!' by Dr Karl Barth - 1946* (Wipf and Stock: Eugene-OR., 2002); James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1992).

The ecumenical challenge is to build, dwell and think places that are more explicitly, evidently, and hospitably shared amongst the 'all' that are in 'one place', and share-able with the others who will undoubtedly come to be implaced here, thereby belonging together with 'us', in just one of the many dwelling places of the whole inhabited earth.

EMMANUEL MOUNIER: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE

Ivan Karageorgiev*

How can we deny the importance of interpersonal relationships for ecumenical dialogue, without substituting one for the other? How can we approach the 'otherness' of the other person when it is not directly related to dogmatic questions? Does a distrust or a fear of this alterity—or more precisely of these personal, historical, cultural, sociological alterities—not distort our approach, prevent us from meeting the other, and ultimately understanding their inner thoughts? The French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), having refuted Jean-Paul Sartre's famous sentence 'hell is other people', can help us not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in ecumenical dialogue. It may help us to avoid slipping into a kind of dogmatic relativism, based on a false type of interpersonal relationships (the author himself deals with the question of hypocrisy), and instead help to build dialogue on authentic interpersonal relationships. Have we really appreciated the importance of this in ecumenical dialogue?¹.

Is it possible to imagine a dialogue lacking authentic interpersonal relations? Unfortunately, the answer is far from negative. Indeed, a dialogue in which we listen to the other side only to the extent that they reflect our point of view, is often considered easier.

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¹ Translated from French by Jane Trott and John Bolger.

We are often tempted to accept others 'as long as they are somehow like us'. Radical otherness is anathema. 'Otherness in itself is a threat'² notes Orthodox theologian Jean Zizioulas. This observation is equally true of ecumenical dialogues, precisely because we ourselves can feel our otherness not only threatened, but even sometimes completely annihilated.

The objective of this document is to explore and deepen these observations and the idea of 'personal alterity' from a philosophical point of view,³ through the eyes of the French philosopher and member of the Roman Catholic Church, Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950). Certainly, in writing his best-known work *Personnalisme*,⁴ which will be the text mainly studied here, the author had not envisaged ecumenical dialogue, but rather interpersonal relationships in society. Therefore using this approach may seem unusual. Yet, how often in ecumenical dialogue itself do we come up against cultural, sociological, historical and ultimately personal otherness—so vital in all the other parameters of dialogue—which needs to be faced before we can tackle actual dogmatic questions.

In order to take these issues further, we need to establish a framework for healthy and genuine interpersonal relationships and take the time to do so. Leaving aside this step can seriously undermine ecumenical dialogue to the point of trivialising it. Indeed, if we do not manage to respect the 'other' as having their own true 'otherness', how will we best know, in depth, the tradition to which they belong? We must not risk 'objectifying the other' and focusing only on their message, as communication, if not ultimately rooted in real life is not a real conversation. Basically, do we want to hear a theological opinion conveyed by a spokesperson, or by an authentic individual who expresses their theology to us through their life and their existence? This is a rhetorical question. Should we rather create time in our frantic society for this purpose or, do we think like Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,

² Jean Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in personhood and the Church* (T&T Clark: New York, 2006), 2.

³ For an evaluation of this approach from an Orthodox point of view see: Ivan Karageorgiev, 'L'altérité selon Emmanuel Mounier et la notion orthodoxe de la personne humaine', in *Contacts* (n° 242, 2013), 191-215.

⁴ Emmanuel Mounier, *Œuvres*, t.III, *Le Personnalisme* (Paris, 1962). Future references as *Personnalisme*.

that we should ‘tame’ them, staying by their side, and merely observing them kindly?

However, one thing is certain: authentic ecumenical dialogue is impossible without authentic interpersonal relationships. Of course, the one should not be reduced to the other and we should remember that this is all about following the call of the Lord and letting Him act for us. We should also remember that each side in the ecumenical dialogue is more or less consciously influenced by their own relationship with their environment and society. Hence the reason for presenting some observations by Emmanuel Mounier, since the questions he considers are by no means limited to his own time, and because his approach is without doubt inspired by Christian principles.

To try and apply his views directly and indiscriminately to ecumenical dialogue would be to distort them and their scope. However, we can let ourselves be challenged by these reflections and then potentially revisit or reassess them later in relation to our experiences. Existential hermeneutics could help us in our relationships with others, including in ecumenical dialogues as the two are inseparable. Our first proposition is to try to deepen the complex but vital tension between the individual and the person before presenting Mounier’s social approach to the human person.

1. The individualistic approach

Mounier’s subtlety in the matter resides in this fact that the mere individual is not a person, although the person is not total negation of the individual, but rather establishes itself in a constant struggle against the individual, which nonetheless remains fundamental for the formation of the person—a position doubtless not unrelated to that of Thomas Aquinas who locates the individual in the definition of the person to signify the ‘mode of individual being’ as singular reality.⁵

1.1 The concrete individual as foundation for the person

Before criticising individualism and the self-contained individual, it is worth pointing out that which is unique to Mounier’s thoughts: the refusal to consider the person without the individual. Could we conclude from here that, from Mounier’s perspective, the individual and the person are two indispensable poles enabling the existence of a personal being? Isn’t this human being then always in tension between

⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia* (Quaestiones disputatae), q. 9, a.2, 5.

these two realities, between these two ways of personal being? The two ways of being are expressed by two opposing trends: individualism and personalism. If we imagine a line on which, at one end, there would be the individual and, at the other end, the person, where a personal being is situated on that line will decide his destination. Indeed, the position along this line would determine whether he will lean towards individualism or personalism, remembering that he can never leave the continuum entirely, that he can never be uniquely personal without being individual, and vice versa.⁶ This is why Mounier defines individualism and personalism as two ways of being for an individual: 'the first concern of individualism is to focus the individual on himself, whereas the first concern of personalism is to de-centre the individual by situating him in the open perspectives of the person.'⁷ There is no question of introducing a dichotomy into the human being, but rather of looking at the individual and the human person just from the point of view of phenomenology.⁸ This phenomenological distinction will allow us to approach the dynamic tension within the human being.

For Mounier, the fact of being individual or person does not depend on some innate quality of human nature or on traits of character, but, above all, on the freedom of each person to choose one of the two paths, or put another way, one of the two directions of the same path. This is why Mounier can't conceive the person without the individual.⁹ While contrasting the two possible pathways, he refuses to completely oppose the person with the individual, thus avoiding introducing a kind of dichotomy into the human being: 'To distinguish between them, one sometimes opposes person and individual. There is then a risk of cutting the person from his concrete attachments' for 'the movement

⁶ The second aspect being more complex, for this is true only with respect to a human being. For there are human beings who live solely as individuals (that is, occupied *solely* with themselves). They have the potential to become persons, if they wish. There is no human being for whom it is impossible to become a person, though not without willing it and working to that end.

⁷ *Personnalisme*, 452.

⁸ 'We have observed that the distinction between the two terms, individual and person, is phenomenological in nature, that is, of aspects which can be described but not isolated.' Vu Duy Tu, *L'individualisme, Collectivisme, Personnalisme dans l'œuvre d'Emmanuel Mounier; De la personne à la communauté humaine*, (photocopied thesis: Bonn, 1962), 22.

⁹ That is, personalism and individualism.

of withdrawal, by which the “individual” is constituted, is also part of what makes us who we are.’¹⁰ Indeed, how could we distinguish one person from another if we were to ignore their individual characteristics, their particularities? But if we call them peculiarities, it is obvious that they will differ from those of others, otherwise they would not be peculiarities but generalities. ‘However, if we stay simply and solely at the individual level we risk not seeing beyond ourselves and making impossible true communion between persons,’ which is why ‘the person grows only by incessantly purifying the individual within him. It does not achieve this by paying attention to itself, but on the contrary, by making itself *available* [...] and thereby more transparent to both itself and to others. Everything then happens as if, no longer “occupied with self”, “full of self”, it is then and only then capable of the other’¹¹. For Mounier, therefore, the individual is inherent to the person, but still called to purify itself ‘incessantly’¹² in order to be able to truly communicate with other persons.

By focusing on oneself, one is more likely to get lost than to find oneself. Mounier, therefore, proposes the opposite path, namely that of focusing on the other. But to focus you first must be able to truly see the other. However, we cannot see the other if we do not become available for the other, an availability achieved through the purification of ourselves. This purification of the individual is not the complete evacuation of the individual or a denial of their ‘concrete attachments’. It cannot be reduced to conformism—which does not make sense especially in the Mounierist philosophy—the individual needs to apprentice himself, with his own particular character, to a way of life which is considerate of the personnel characteristics of others. We can certainly better understand Mounier's teaching on the individual through the thoughts of one of his masters, Jacques Chevalier, for whom ‘the individual really does not find himself, he is really not in control of himself, he does not fully realise his destiny [...] unless he renounces and loses himself in the service’¹⁷ of others, in submission to purposes which go beyond himself, through incorporation with beings

¹⁰ *Personnalisme*, 452.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Thus for our philosopher the personalisation of the individual is not accomplished once and for all, but is rather a lifelong vocation.

according to that moral order which begins in time and ceases never. But these beings are more than simply¹³ individuals: they are persons.¹⁴

1.2 *The individual as negation of the person*

After having considered the correct place of the individual in relation to the personal life of the human being, we will turn now to the criticism that Mounier addresses to those individuals who refuse to become persons, remaining rigidly egocentric. We will see that Mounier also gives a definition of the individual which is quite opposite to what we have just described. What allows us to avoid confusion between the two is that in the first case we see the individual as being constructive for the human person, while in the second case we are faced with an individual who is an obstacle to the fulfilment of the human person. In other words, it is not the individual who is good or bad *per se*, but rather it is the use which we make of those natural elements which make up the individual, that determines our life's outcome.

‘The true development of the person implies as a precondition the disappropriation of one's self and goods, to depolarise egocentricity. The person only finds himself by losing himself.’¹⁵ If the person wants to live *only* for himself, he will not live authentically, not for others or for himself, because he needs to give himself to others in order to live an authentically personal life.¹⁶ Thus, we return to the first definition of the individual, which is contained within individualism: ‘individualism¹⁷ is a system of manners, feelings, ideas and institutions

¹³ The use of ‘simply’ reinforces the fact that for Chevalier, as for his disciple Mounier, the person still remains an individual, certainly not simple, but still an individual.

¹⁴ Thus Chevalier concluded his course on ‘False and True individualism’ given at the 1923 Grenoble *Semaine Sociale*, reproduced in Jacques Chevalier, *La vie morale et l'au-delà* (Flammarion: Paris, 1938), 83.

¹⁵ *Personnalisme*, 467.

¹⁶ The reverse danger is that the giver may become an egotist. If the gift is not disinterested, the person may live with others, giving himself to others, but only looking to profit himself, seeking the esteem and recognition of others.

¹⁷ Let us note in passing that in this passage Mounier is dealing with individualism and not with the individual as such, that is, with the various excesses of individualism.

which organise the individual, with respect to its attitudes of isolation and self-preservation.’¹⁸

In the same quotation, Mounier defines the individualistic man, that is, the individual who has chosen individualism as his path, as ‘an abstract man, without attachments’ whereas, in the first definition he says the obverse, that the person is inconceivable without the individual, which provides his ‘concrete attachments’.¹⁹ Thus, according to Mounier, we can distinguish between the individual, indispensable for the fulfilment of the person, and the pseudo-individual who prevents that fulfilment, and from whom man must free himself precisely in order to become person.

However, the individual as negation of person takes refuge in its concrete attachments and, what is most curious, then ends up losing them, becoming, as Mounier states, an ‘abstract, unattached’ being. By dint of wanting to be himself, he ends up losing his identity and by dint of focusing on the ‘frontiers’ of his being he forgets what he is made of, and these frontiers become artificial.²⁰ The individual on whom the person is based, whilst not denying his attachments is not defined by them, in the same way that a country maintains its borders whilst not being limited to them.

The distinction between the individual and the pseudo-individual is not always obvious. Indeed, human thinking often confuses this false individual, self-centred and self-contained, with the human person: ‘The first notion that comes to mind when trying to discern a definition of the person is that of the individual; the individual we encounter in “the multiplicity of changing impressions of imprecise images”. In other words, there are “personalities” that initially appear clear to me and then these images disperse and scatter.’²¹ There is a danger of

¹⁸ *Personnalisme*, 452.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The ‘frontier’ image does not figure in Mounier’s writing, but we do not think it incompatible with his conception of the human individual. For if we concentrate on the frontier between two countries which we don’t know, the frontier itself will tell us little of the real spirit of the two countries. But if we do know them, the frontier can express a sense of separation or transition. In this perspective, for the individual to fulfil his destiny it must know its own territory, while not being ignorant of the territories of others.

²¹ Alves Ramos, *Les éléments psychologiques et philosophiques de la notion de personne dans l’œuvre d’Emmanuel Mounier: Jalons pour une philosophie de*

objectifying the person and replacing it with personality, which may be the role or place that the person occupies in society, which for Mounier does not matter much, and does not help our notion of person. Person cannot be reduced to pure objectivity, because in that case it would be replaced by personality, but at the same time it cannot be totally cut off from the realm of objectivity, for then it could become like a ghost, without any concrete attachments. This is why Mounier has fought against the objectification of the person, which is one of the major concerns in his theory of personalism: ‘the person is not an object that we can isolate and inspect, but a focal point re-orientating the objective universe, so that our task is to analyse that universe which the person builds up, to shed light on the various structures, while never forgetting that these are all only different facets of the same reality.’²²

If we adopt an objectivist classification which ignores the connections that man weaves with his surroundings and with the world, and if we consider that men are only what they do, all people become easily interchangeable, and this is contrary to the very definition of person.²³ At the start Mounier uses the individual as what constitutes the person, but later, he defines the individual as the negation of the person or rather as the opposite pole of the person.

The individual for Mounier is at once ‘divisive’, ‘avaricious’, ‘possessive’; whereas on the other hand, ‘the person is in control and free to choose, it is generosity. It is in a position diametrically opposed

l'éducation, Doctoral thesis, photocopied (Paris, 1970), 15. Here's how Mounier defines the individual as hostile to the person: ‘this dispersion, this dissolution of my person in matter, this resurgence in myself of the disordered and impersonal multiplicity of the material world, objects, forces and influences in which I exist, that is first and foremost what we call individual.’ *Personnalisme*, 525.

²² *Personnalisme*, 438.

²³ For Mounier the person cannot be replicated—a description that applies to every human being. For him, there are no exceptional persons, each person being unique. ‘To define a personalist position it is enough to think that every person has a significance, in that their place in the universe of persons cannot be usurped by any other person. Such is the sublime grandeur of the person, which gives him the dignity worthy of a universe—but also his humility, for every other person is his equal in their dignity, and persons are more numerous than the stars. There is of course no question here of those pseudo professional “vocations” which too often merely ape temperament or the prevailing milieu.’ *Personnalisme*, 468.

to individual.’²⁴ The person, though, cannot be formed without the individual. It is the polar opposite of the individual; however, the individual must be present otherwise there would be no *other* pole. So Mounier introduces us to man in constant tension between the individual and the person, which is why the purification of the individual must be unceasing, a process that will accompany us throughout our lives.

By opposing person, an individual is not a true individual, or more accurately does not behave as such.²⁵ Thus, we enter either into a real and authentic world, or into a world of hypocrisy, created by individuals who are not worthy of the name because they have lost their own identities: ‘Due to this deep separatism, cultural life develops a game of masks which gradually become more fixed until they are no longer distinguishable from the face of the wearer; these masks are double-sided and begin to fool not only others but themselves. They become a refuge of pretence, avoiding that place of truth to which we gain access through encounter with the other, and through interior clarity.’²⁶ In this passage Mounier contrasts those individuals who behave in ways which build up their personal lives with individuals who play the hypocrite, thinking to deceive others, and in so doing deceive themselves, which is still more serious. It is a good step towards understanding the dynamics of the human being. However, this is not to leave out society, and a social account of the human person.

2. The social Approach.

The existence of person, according to Mounier cannot be considered outside of society. For him ‘person is an inside that needs the outside’²⁷, this ‘outside’ is precisely human society. However, the human person cannot be reduced only to an element of the human community,²⁸ it is

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 525.

²⁵ An individual’s authenticity or otherwise does not depend on an innate quality of human nature, which would be a form of predestination. It is down to human freedom whether an individual is either going to take his proper place in the construction of the human person, or lose himself by shutting himself away in himself.

²⁶ *Personnalisme*, 452.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 469.

²⁸ There is a not inconsiderable risk of reducing the human person to a mere part of society, of dissolving him into society. This is in particular one of the

not simply a cell within the human community and yet it is the human community that helps the person to become what he is, or what he should be.

In this section we will try to see person in the social context, which very often appears quite hostile to him. We will proceed in two stages, first we will approach this hostility through the dialogue that Mounier establishes with Jean-Paul Sartre, and secondly we will try to break the impasse in which Sartre puts it, by trying to approach Mounier's response, a response that is based on the gift of oneself to others and on love as the foundation of existence.

2.1 Freedom from the Other or Freedom for the Other

We live in a society where freedom from the other is much more desired and sought after than freedom for the other.²⁹ That is why in our conception of modern society we cannot ignore a philosophy as important as that of Jean-Paul Sartre, for although Mounier rejects the latter's view of society and of humanity as an irreducible solitude,³⁰ we have to admit that a large part of our society is more likely to understand, and to live out, the philosophy of Sartre than of Mounier.

Today's society is inclined to seek freedom in distancing itself from the other, in avoiding the other, rather than freedom as a gratuitous gift to the other, that is, freedom for the other. In Sartre's view, 'love is a shared infection, a hell' in which 'each partner is of necessity either tyrant or slave'³¹. It is important to recognise that in arriving at these

problems in the ecclesiology (especially as regards the concept of *sobornost*) of Khomiakov, a Russian philosopher and theologian of the nineteenth century slavophile tendency. See Basile Zenkovsky, *Histoire de la philosophie russe*, vol. I, pp. 202-230, trans. Constantin Andronikoff (Gallimard: Paris, 1953).

²⁹ Constantin Delikonstantis explains this anomaly of our time as follows: 'We even have the impression today that the more people become conscious of anthropological freedom—"freedom from ..."—the more they confuse it with their positive freedom—"freedom to ..."; and in this way they become shut up in mazes with no way out.' *L'ethos de la liberté. Apories philosophiques et réponses théologiques* (Demos: Athens, 1997), 14.

³⁰ The human being as irreducible solitude is the principle thesis of Sartre's key work, *L'être et le Néant: essai d'ontologie phénoménologique* (Gallimard: Paris, 1979). Unfortunately the setting of the present essay does not permit an in-depth look at Sartre's thought, which we will examine principally through the eyes of Mounier, as his reader.

³¹ *Personnalisme*, 451.

disquieting positions Sartre follows a logic which is quite coherent, if we accept his premises. In brief: the other is a subject who sees me as an object. He is therefore a subject who objectifies me, constructs me, who steals my universe and disfigures me, for he sees me not as a subject but as an object among other objects. What does this mean? For example: in seeing the other as object we do not see his body, but we see 'a body', in other words we do not see the other's body, but a body-object. As Mounier says: 'this body is a body—separated in this way from any relationship, it is not the body of *the other*, it does not present me with the other.'³² In this way the other makes an object of me; transforms me, who am a subject, into an object. The only way out of this impasse is for me, in my turn, to make the other into an object. The best form of defence is an attack which overcomes the other and transforms him into an object; for if I do not as it were freeze him into his universe by turning him into an object, it is he who will turn me into an object. In Sartre's vision it's a vicious circle which can only be broken through retaliation, by which 'in my turn, I freeze the other into an object'³³, doing to the other what he has done to me, turning into an object what should have been a subject. For Mounier, in this logic 'what happens is that two proprietors are quarrelling over goods, rather than two existences exchanging a superfluity'³⁴. The impasse of this relationship lies in the fact that two subjects each wish to possess the other as object, while each wishes to be a subject.³⁵ Consequently, the process being methodically self-contradictory, it naturally cannot achieve its purpose. And so we have the famous sayings: 'My original Fall, is the existence of the other [...] Hell is other people.'³⁶ This is love conceived according to the master-slave relationship,³⁷ in a logic of

³² *Œuvres*, vol.III, *Introductions aux Existentialismes*, 131.

³³ *Ibid.*, 133.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁵ The process is not simple, for each wishes to possess the other as object, but not as a true object, which is inanimate, but as an animated object, or an objectified subject.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁷ At least according to Mounier, 'the ways of camaraderie, of friendship and love seem lost in this great failure of human fraternity. Heidegger and Sartre have made this into a philosophy. For them, communication remains blocked by the need to possess, to obtain submission. Each partner is of necessity either tyrant or slave. The other's look robs me of my universe, his presence freezes

exchange, or rather, manipulation. Love as conceived by Sartre is not free, it is rather the means by which the other extends his influence over me;³⁸ he is obliged to be a tyrant, otherwise he automatically becomes a slave. 'The world of other people is no garden of delights', for it presents us with a different world, an inescapable alterity, a proof that we are not the only ones to exist, that there are others who have the right to exist and who exercise that right no less than we do, but differently. Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy is very complex, and we have only touched on certain features; features which will enable us to appreciate the advances made by Mounier.

Let us begin by underlining the fact that Mounier's refutation is by no means self-evident. 'It is pointless to protest against this picture.'³⁹ In fact, no human relationship, however authentic, is immune to the danger of slipping into this deviation.⁴⁰ However, Mounier insists that human society is indispensable for the existence of the human person, let alone its development. In other words, the other is not seen as an obstacle to overcome or a liberty to conquer, but as the *sine qua non* without which the person could not be what he is. Mounier goes a long way in this direction by putting an equation sign between personalism and community: 'these truths are personalism pure and simple; so much so that describing the civilisation they propose as *personalist and communitarian* is a tautology.'⁴¹ If someone lives an authentic life in community, based on respect for the other, then he is a person, and vice versa.⁴² Mounier goes on to insist on the fact that 'these truths [...], in

my freedom, his purpose impedes me. Love is a mutual infection, a hell.' *Personnalisme*, 451.

³⁸ Questions about love and the other are in fact more nuanced in Sartre; I regret being unable to give them here the discussion they deserve.

³⁹ That is, Sartre's depiction. *Personnalisme*, 451.

⁴⁰ Can we imagine a human love incapable of deviating from its vocation? The answer must be in the negative considering that love which is not based on freedom is merely a synonym for tyranny.

⁴¹ *Personnalisme*, 453.

⁴² This does not however mean that community can replace person, or vice versa; that means that person cannot be replaced by community, or community by person, for community cannot be constituted by one person alone.

the face of obstinate individualism and idealism,⁴³ show that the subject is not nourished by “autodigestion”, that we only possess what we give, or that to which we give ourselves,⁴⁴ that we do not make our own salvation by ourselves, either socially or spiritually.⁴⁵ The human logic of possession is reversed. More coherent, at least at first glance, would be Sartre’s scheme of things: we possess a human being by dominating him; we dominate him when we deprive him of the possibility of dominating ourselves. Mounier however proposes the opposite approach: we do not turn to the other in tyranny, but by giving;⁴⁶ instead of tyrannising others, we become their servants. As true servants, we are not tyrannised by others, rather it is we who possess

⁴³ In which we are interested in the other, not in himself, but to the extent that he is interested in us. Thus we see the full force of the term ‘autodigestion’. Or perhaps more exactly, ‘autodigestion through the other’?

⁴⁴ It is important to note the present tense of the verb, for the act of giving is an unceasing movement, we cannot give once and then wait for the accrued interest—this is not Mounier’s view. We possess that to which we give ourselves, and we possess it to the extent that we give ourselves to this reality (which can also be a person, though Mounier does not state this explicitly, while saying that we cannot save ourselves by ourselves. This leads us to suppose that ‘that to which one gives oneself’ may not only be art or music or nature, but also a personal being). Thus, if we cease to give ourselves then we automatically lose possession of the reality to which we no longer wish to give ourselves. We possess it to the degree in which we invest ourselves in that reality, by giving ourselves. For example, to know God and to be able to have communion with him we have to give him nothing less than ourselves. That is why God does not wish for sacrifice but for a broken heart (cf. Ps. 51 (50): 18. This is why the pure in heart will see God (cf. Mt. 5:8), that is, those who have entrusted and given themselves completely to God, for that is the only way in which they be pure and escape sin.

⁴⁵ *Personnalisme*, 453.

⁴⁶ For Mounier this order of things is not just valid for the human community, but also for nature: man ‘is not created to possess things, and so subdue them by his power instinct, but first of all, says Genesis, to name them, that is to initiate an intimate dialogue with them, and then to orient them, and himself, to God. His relations with them are not those of master and slave, but, in origin and by destiny, of brotherhood. [...] Nature is not the property of man, but a kind of natural sacrament which inclines man to God. Before being seen by man, Nature is already full of God; and man has not to submit Nature to his power of organisation, as he does to nothingness and to mere chance; his first gesture is to greet, to welcome.’ *Oeuvres*, vol. III, *Feu la chrétienté*, 589.

them. However, this possession is radically different from Sartrean possession. Indeed we have seen that for Mounier possession does not preclude human freedom, it is on the contrary an act rooted in freedom.⁴⁷ Now possession gained while respecting freedom is not tyranny, but love. This is the basis for Mounier's ontology: 'to be is to love.'⁴⁸ It is not of course a question of just any kind of love, for we might love ourselves while forgetting to love the other, which would mean the negation of real love, and therefore the negation of personalism. If for Mounier 'person is not being, it is a movement of being towards being, its consistency lying in the being that is its goal'⁴⁹, we understand that it concerns a love for the other as other.⁵⁰ Thus the possession envisaged by Mounier is the gift of love within the human community. Indeed, without this love we cannot speak of a real dialogue, without which neither the human community or the human person can exist: 'Just as the philosopher who shuts himself up in ideas will never find a door to being, so he who shuts himself up in himself will never find the way to others. When communication becomes weakened or corrupted, I become profoundly lost to myself; all our follies arise from a failure to relate to others—*alter* becomes *alienus*, and I become in my turn a stranger to myself, alienated. One could almost say that I exist to the extent that I exist for others and that ultimately, to be is to love.'⁵¹ It is important to note here that Mounier unlike Sartre locates the reason for disequilibrium not in the other but in ourselves: it is not only the other who steals my freedom and my world, but also myself, owing to the fact that I do not know how to welcome the other.⁵² However the other may refuse to respond to my call which may interrupt communication; or the other may be very different from me and here also communication becomes problematic. Mounier does not seem to deal with this first objection, and his silence

⁴⁷ As opposed to the possession/domination of Sartre which presupposes the abolition of freedom.

⁴⁸ *Personnalisme*, 453.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 486.

⁵⁰ And not in so far as the other resembles me.

⁵¹ *Personnalisme*, 453.

⁵² 'The other looking at me is not the only thing that can freeze me into an object. If I shut myself up in egocentricity, if I make myself my own property, I nurture within myself an opacity which is the source of the opacity that I then manifest towards others.' *Œuvres*, vol. III, *Introductions* ..., 137.

raises a problem in respect of 'being as love', for we are faced with a dilemma should we meet with a refusal on the part of the other to engage in dialogue—a refusal which may have any number of causes, but which we have to respect if we are to respect the other person. In respecting the other and his refusal we must also respect an impossibility of communication which inhibits us from becoming ourselves. However, our author responds to our second question by inviting us to distinguish between love and sympathy, that is, between loving someone for what they are, and loving someone for their resemblance to ourselves.

2.2. *Sympathy or love*⁵³

If we do not accept the other as other, but only as a more or less successful copy of our own ego, we live neither a genuine personal nor community life. The difference between sympathy and love is fundamental; sympathy is one sort of reality, but love is something quite different.⁵⁴ Mounier, no doubt relying on Max Scheler's⁵⁵ conception of sympathy, defined it as 'chosen affinities, where we continue to look for goodness which we can take in and understand, a resonance of ourselves in someone like ourselves'⁵⁶.

In the case of sympathy, we only 'love' or rather, appreciate, the other in the way in which they may resemble us. We might even say that we love how our ego is reflected by the other or, that we no longer love the other *as* another, but ultimately, we are only loving ourselves, making the other a mere mirror of ourselves. This is the reason why, according to Mounier, 'the other diminishes those around him' so that they become 'only a mirror for him. This kind of instinct takes over to deny and impoverish the humanity around us'⁵⁷. Love, on the other hand, is an approach based precisely on that which sympathy rejects: the alterity of the other. 'Love is a new form of being' addressing 'the subject beyond nature, desiring the other's fulfilment and freedom, whatever

⁵³ But in order to exercise authentic love we are not bound to seek out people whom we find particularly unsympathetic. To begin to truly love someone, it is enough that we transcend the sympathy which we have for them.

⁵⁴ It is quite obvious that human communication is unachievable in the absence of love, that is, if replaced by hate or indifference, so we will not dwell on this.

⁵⁵ See Max Scheler, *Nature et formes de la sympathie* (Payot: Paris, 1927).

⁵⁶ *Personnalisme*, 455.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 451-452.

his gifts or faults, which no longer matter: love may be blind, but it is an exceptionally lucid blindness'⁵⁸. If in sympathy what counts for us are the gifts of the other that we would like to assimilate, in love what counts is the man apart from any gifts or disgraces.⁵⁹ For Mounier, this is where the most precious part of the human person is to be found: the man behind the honours and titles, which sometimes prevent us from seeing the person hidden behind the façade.⁶⁰

We have spent time on the distinction between love and sympathy, because on this distinction will depend whether we will approach the other as a different being or a being foreign to us. The danger is to confuse sympathy with love,⁶¹ for then we risk turning *alter* into *alienus*, seeing difference as foreignness. In love, difference is not perceived as foreignness, because we do not wish to shape the other in our own image, but we respect them as being different from ourselves. In 'sympathy', we will try everything we can to make the other to be exactly like ourselves; in 'love' we do nothing of the sort, since we love the other. In this case we try to establish a true communion with the person before us, a communion based on human freedom, a freedom that flourishes not in rejection of the other, but in acceptance of the other. This genuine acceptance of the other is indeed love: 'by freeing the one to whom one reaches out, the one reaching out is also freed and confirmed. The act of love is man's strongest certainty, the irrefutable existential *cogito*: I love, therefore there is being, and life has value (is worth living). This is confirmed not only in the act of loving, but by the being which is offered to me in the other.'⁶² Could we say therefore

⁵⁸ Ibid. 455.

⁵⁹ For example, a drunk may be surrounded by love and not at all by sympathy (unless we are alcoholics), for his 'disgraces' are much more important than his gifts. Nevertheless, he can and must be surrounded by love for 'a man, however different, however degraded, remains someone whom we must allow to pursue a human life.' Ibid., 460.

⁶⁰ Mounier insists that a man's riches do not reside in his professional career or artistic achievements; in his eyes the riches of a human person consist in 'what remains when the person is stripped of all having—what remains at the hour of death.' Ibid., 467.

⁶¹ This does not at all mean that we cannot have sympathy for someone we love, but rather that we have to go beyond our sympathy, or rather, root it in love, for without that foundation it remains a fragile feeling.

⁶² Ibid., 455.

following Mounier, 'I love therefore they are' or more precisely 'I love therefore we are', for if others exists in a real way for us, then this means that we also exist? Indeed, in Mounier's vision we find our true humanity through each other. In Mounier's idea of human existence someone can exist in an authentic way for us, only to the extent that we love them. Otherwise we would not have access to their true being, but only to the caricature which we make of them.

Thus, we see that a social view of the human person is only really possible through love: 'Love is what holds community together. It is not an add-on or a luxury, and without it, a person does not exist. We could go further by saying: without love, people cannot become themselves. The more that others are strangers to me, the more I am a stranger to myself.'⁶³ For Mounier the first step in personal life is the movement towards others. He gives us the example of the children, who first discover themselves through others by identifying the eyes of their mother or their dolls, before identifying them on their own body; they learn who they are by seeing how others look at them.⁶⁴ The difference with our starting point is considerable: others are no longer what prevents me from being, they are in fact the ones through whom I am, and through whom I know myself as I am.

We have come a long way from Sartre's concept for whom 'hell is other people' and we have arrived, with Mounier, at his conception of being as love for others. This long journey represents the embodiment of the human person within society—a journey not achieved without a considerable effort on the part of the person and without a certain self-discipline in its personal life.

2.3. *Hypocrisy*

In order to live a full community life, it must be assumed that the human person gives of his whole self. That is, he transcends himself so as to become available for the other, yet in so doing he does not cease to be what he is, but transcends himself precisely to become what he is. Thus, the effort to establish a dialogue does not aim at depersonalisation, but rather the growth of the person. This last is possible in a sincere dialogue, but not in one which is hypocritical. Here is how Mounier illustrates this approach: 'To be all things to all without

⁶³ *Œuvres*, vol. I, *Révolution personaliste et communautaire* (Cerf: Paris, 1939), 193.

⁶⁴ *Œuvres*, vol. II, *Traité de caractère* (Seuil: Paris, 1946), 496.

ceasing to be, to be myself: for there is a way of understanding everything which amounts to loving nothing, of ceasing to be, being dissolved in the other, rather than understanding the other.⁶⁵ Hypocrisy may seem to make dialogue more fluid, but in reality, it disfigures it, destroying it and turning it into a monologue. The one who makes the mistake of adopting this approach does not so much deceive the other—who will eventually understand what is happening—but rather himself. If I am hypocritical, I think I can deceive others and lie to them, while really lying to myself. By lying to myself I don't know who I am anymore, because I'm starting to believe my own lies. Hypocrisy leads us to a dead end in social relations with others, where individuals become interchangeable. This substitution of one for another is not the fruit of love for the other. It is instead the product of the lack of foundation of our personal being and of a self-love that aims to use the other for our own ends.

However, a true relationship with others does not presuppose the obliteration of ourselves as persons. For Mounier, 'personal life is a succession of affirmation and denial of self'⁶⁶. So, we are faced with a circle that continues to revolve as long as personal life continues: affirmation is followed by self-denial. However, self-denial should not be confused with becoming dissolved in the other, but rather with the renunciation of our ego, which sometimes thinks only of itself, so enclosing us within ourselves that we are not allowed to become ourselves.

So, man must preserve his identity not only *vis-à-vis* others, but also *vis-à-vis* himself, that is, *vis-à-vis* that ego which prevents us from becoming ourselves.⁶⁷ 'To exist is to say yes, it is to accept, to join in.

⁶⁵ *Personnalisme*, 454.

⁶⁶ He continues: 'This fundamental rhythm is to be found in all its operations. It is strengthened in an unceasing work of assimilating external influences. It develops by developing them. As we have seen, pure subjectivity is inconceivable for man. It is for the human person a basic need to have at its disposal an objective field with which to develop a close relationship, as it does with persons, over time and periodically. To affirm oneself is to give oneself to that field.' *Ibid.*, 466.

⁶⁷ 'There is something in the individual that is *below* society, and something that is *above* it. The first element, which is our selfish self, must be sacrificed to society, or more precisely to our neighbour, because, society represents and embodies a principle which is more important than the individual, the principle

But if I always accept, and never refuse, I stagnate.⁶⁸ According to this logic, affirmation and denial are not contradictory in personal life. Indeed, it is the same attitude turned in two different directions: an attitude that aims at the fulfilment of the person as such and which then preserves it either from constantly appeasing the other (by affirmation) or from remaining within itself (by denial).

In Overture

Is it possible—while avoiding simplistic comparisons between, for example, personal identity and ecclesial identity, or between personal alterity and ecclesial alterity⁶⁹—to draw inspiration from the guidelines of Emmanuel Mounier, in one way or another, for our interpersonal relations, including in the course of ecumenical dialogues? The former set the tone for the latter. For if confessional and dogmatic alterity is presented in a climate of profound mutual respect, not only will the dialogue be more constructive and sincere; in addition, those other alterities tied to culture, history and sociology may be presented to the other not as obstacles, but as riches. Now, if we approach others with the fear that they will engulf us, we will either flee the dialogue, or accept it without really wanting to understand them, or indeed reveal ourselves within it. The dialogue then descends, more or less unconsciously, into a hypocritical game. ... Shouldn't we, instead, resist the *dia-volos*, the divider, who by playing on our fears, separates us not only from others but also, through sin, from God and ourselves, from our true being?

Should we not then try to open ourselves more to this Other, who is Christ, in order to be better able to welcome all others and ultimately let Him accomplish His work in us, for which ecumenism is only a tool,

from which it derives its authority and value. But the second element, which is bliss and virtue, cannot in any way be sacrificed to society: society, on the contrary, has the ultimate purpose of guaranteeing its existence in all its members, so that the person can be rightly regarded as the end of society. End in itself? Ultimate goal? No. The unique and supreme end is truth.' Cf. the course on 'False and True individualism' given at the 1923 Grenoble *Semaine Sociale*, reproduced in Jacques Chevalier, *La vie morale et l'au-delà*, op.cit., 82.

⁶⁸ *Personnalisme*, 471.

⁶⁹ The former being the fruit of our individual journey, while the latter are the fruit of an entire Christian community, carried forward from one generation to the next throughout history.

destined to disappear once there is true unity of Christians. Mounier's dream is 'that the word personalism will one day be forgotten'⁷⁰. Could we also wish 'that the word ecumenism be forgotten'? Indeed, the goal of ecumenical dialogue is not to last forever or establish itself as a parallel Church, but instead lead to the unity of Christ's disciples, so desired by the Lord.

Once this is retrieved, ecumenism will become superfluous. Its success will coincide with its demise into Christian unity. A utopia or a question of faith? Or a methodological paradigm that allows us to travel towards, and with, the One Who is 'the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6) and 'to hope against all hope' (cf. Rom. 4:18), even if certain personal and private alterities now seem irreconcilable to us?

⁷⁰ This is how Mounier concludes *Personnalisme*, his synthesis on the human person: "The positions sketched in these few pages are open for discussion and subject to revision. They enjoy the freedom of not having been thought out by the application of a received ideology, but of having been gradually developed alongside the human condition of our time. That they may further this progressive discovery would be the wish of every "personalist", and that the word personalism one day be forgotten, when it will no longer be necessary to draw attention to what ought to be man's common assumption', p. 524.

A NEW ECUMENICAL TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY OF THE *JOINT DECLARATION ON THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION* INTO FRENCH¹

Brigitte Cholvy*

On the occasion of the publication in February 2020, of a new ecumenical translation with commentary into French of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, one of the authors reports back on the experience of this ecumenical work which aims to discover or rediscover the riches of the JDDJ text, its method, and its theological potential. This reflection is part of the ongoing process of reception of the JDDJ².

At the time of the first publication in French of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ)* signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church on 31 October 1999, Mgr Joseph Doré, the then Archbishop of Strasbourg, and Pastor Marc Lienhard, President of the Board of the Alsace-Lorraine Protestant Church of the Augsburg Confession, urged their communities ‘to continue—or undertake—to work on the *JDDJ* in the various Catholic-Protestant circles’, work which should prove ‘stimulating and enriching’³.

This is what we have sought to do, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the signing, and in the framework of the Superior Institute of Ecumenical Studies (ISEO), under the auspices of the Faculty of Theology—the *Theologicum*—of the Catholic Institute of

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¹ *Déclaration commune sur la doctrine de la justification. Nouvelle traduction oecuménique et commentaires*, trans. and commentaries by Brigitte Cholvy, Frédéric Chavel, Michel Stavrou (Salvator: Paris, 2020), 200 pages. Page references in the present article are to this edition.

² Article translated from French by John Bolger.

³ *La doctrine de la justification. Déclaration communion* (Consortium d’éditeurs: Paris, 2000), 13.

Paris (ICP), of the Protestant Institute of Theology (IPT), and of the Saint-Serge Institute of Orthodox Theology (ITO). Thus, the annual colloquium of the three faculties was dedicated to this theme,⁴ and was preceded by a research seminar on the *JDDJ* held during the winter of 2018-2019. The seminar brought together twenty or so students, mostly doing their masters and largely specialising in ecumenical studies, and was led by three members of the different institutes: Frédéric Chavel, professor at the Protestant Institute of Theology of Paris, Michel Stavrou, professor at the Saint-Serge Institute of Orthodox Theology of Paris, and the author of the present article, Brigitte Cholvy, professor at the *Theologicum* of the Catholic Institute of Paris.

The seminar made possible an exhaustive study of the text, its various documents, sources and theological issues, as well as its reception by other Churches and Church communions.⁵ It also provided an opportunity to assess the importance of the two traditions' respective histories, through re-reading the Council of Trent's *Decree on Justification* and revisiting the positions adopted by Luther. Finally, thanks to the presence of an Orthodox member of faculty, we had the benefit of a view from the outside of the history of the Western Church, so profiting from the varied contributions of the Church Fathers, and thereby seeing the Augustinian tradition—which is in fact the Western approach—through other eyes.

1. The need for a new French translation

The need for a new French translation, based on the available original German and English texts, soon became apparent. Indeed, until now we have had two French translations at our disposal: one available on the Vatican website,⁶ which for the Roman Catholic Church is the official translation, and the other on the website of the Lutheran World Federation⁷ and published following the document's publication (see note 3, above). However, we observed that there were differences

⁴ *Églises en chantier. Justice et justification au coeur de nos pratiques*, Acts of the faculty colloquium held at the ICP, 12-14 Mar (Cerf: Paris, 2019).

⁵ This is the first time that all the texts, declarations and official instances related to the *JDDJ* have been brought together in a French edition.

⁶ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_fr.html

⁷ https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2019/documents/jddj_french.pdf

between these two translations as well as occasionally significant deviations from the German and English versions. Thus, it soon became clear that a fresh translation was needed, and was already begun in the course of the student seminar.

The present publication presents a new translation of the *JDDJ* and its associated documents: the Official Common Statement, Annex, and Sources. This new translation is based in the first place on the English version, and takes into account the German version, when this seems necessary. The options underlying this translation are set out at different stages, as they become relevant: explicitly in the footnotes; in a chapter dealing with the general rules of translation; and finally in the 'Textual and Theological' notes which make up part three of the work. Beginning with textual remarks, and translation issues, these notes put forward theological commentaries which explore the riches of the *JDDJ* material.

We have adopted and applied three general rules for this translation:

- Firstly, the multilingual context, of German, English and French, obliged us to define our method. Although the original authors of the text had been either German language or German speaking, the subsequent work was frequently conducted in English so as to facilitate communication, especially with Anglo-Saxon partners. Furthermore, in the next phase, it was the text in English which formed the basis of agreement and reception of the *JDDJ* by the other Churches, the World Methodist Council, the Anglican Communion, and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. This is why, while considering both German and English versions as originals in their own right, we took the English version as the basic text, referring to the German version whenever this seemed pertinent, in particular when the German revealed a dimension which the English text might have neglected.

Let us take an example where the German version provides a corrective to the English, namely, in the heading to section 4.3 of *JDDJ*. In English, the section is titled *Justification by Faith and through Grace*, whereas in German we find *Rechtfertigung durch Glauben und aus Gnade*. Clearly, we kept to the German version. While there may be a reason for inverting the terms 'faith' and 'grace' in both English and German versions, in relation to Romans 3: 23-25, the inversion of the prepositions, as found

solely in the English text, is problematic. The respective usages of the prepositions *by* (*aus* in German, *par* in French) and *through* (*durch* in German, *au moyen de* in French), points up the distinction between *means* and *end*, a distinction which must not be lost! For, those who are justified are justified 'by grace', and this grace works 'through faith'.

- Next, our second general rule of translation. So as not to dilute any nuances, strictness has been preferred, sometimes to the detriment of stylistic elegance and even of the distinctive genius of the French language, particularly for terms with special theological resonance. The basic principle is that any word has a unique translation. For example, when closely related terms are used variously in the course of a text, then we chose to respect their particular nuances and various usages. An obvious example is provided by all those words which cluster round the idea of declaring, proclaiming, saying, attesting, confirming, underlining, confessing, etc. At first glance one might say that their meanings are all equivalent. But in fact it is important to maintain their particular nuances, in order not to lose those instances where the statement has a particular weight. Thus, for example, the verb 'to hold' occurs four times in JDDJ, at 1, 15, 30 and 39. Each time it is a matter of holding firmly a position of faith. At number 1, it concerns the Lutheran position with respect to the 'first and chief article' by which one stands or falls; at number 15, at the heart of the Declaration, it concerns the Trinitarian foundation; at number 30, it relates to the Catholic conception of baptism as taking away sin; and at number 39 it is the Lutheran concept of the preservation of grace and of growth in grace and faith. Given the positioning and content of these four occurrences, the verb 'to hold' has to be translated identically and given its full weight, for it indicates a 'holding for a truth of faith' which appears elsewhere, as much in conciliar texts as in the Smalcald Articles.
- Lastly, our third rule of translation. To retain the dynamic and often concrete mode of expression, and in contrast to previous French versions, we chose as far as possible to respect the short sentences, verb tenses and turns of phrases implying work in progress, and to avoid adding words or making generalisations

which, while not being wrong, would give the text an abstract feel.

For example, in *JDDJ* 27, we chose to keep as close as possible to the happy expression, ‘God’s unfathomable grace’, translating it as *l’insondable grâce de Dieu*, rather than as *la gratuité de la grâce*, which is correct, but somewhat abstract! And a last example, to demonstrate our approach: in *JDDJ* 23 the English has a play on words, ‘the renewal of the Christian’s life’ being echoed in ‘the life-renewing effects of grace in human beings’, which we translated as *renouvellement de la vie du chrétien* and *effets renouvelants et vivifiants de la grâce dans les êtres humains*

2. The aim: to compile a complete dossier and present theological analyses

In addition to a translation of the *JDDJ* and its complementary documents, along with a critical apparatus regarding translation, this work includes an editorial task of presenting in French the texts of agreement and association with the *JDDJ* which have been signed by other Churches during the twenty years since its original signing.⁸ It was on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany, that the official representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and of the Roman Catholic Church—respectively, Bishop Christian Krause, the then president of the Federation, and Cardinal Edward Cassidy, then president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity—signed the *JDDJ*; since when, several important events have taken place regarding its reception.

In 2006 the World Methodist Council published its Statement of Association, and on 23 July 2006 in Seoul, South Korea, the Official Common Affirmation was signed by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Methodist Council. The Anglican Communion, in its Consultative

⁸ These additional texts may be found in English in *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, 20th Anniversary Edition. Including statements from the World Methodist Council, the Anglican Consultative Council and the World Communion of Reformed Churches* (The Lutheran World Federation: Geneva, 2019).

https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2019/documents/190603-joint_declaration_on_the_doctrine_of_justification_20_anniversary_edition-en.pdf.pdf

Council, voted to recognise the *JDDJ* at its meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, in October 2016 (resolution 16.17), and liturgically received the *JDDJ* in the course of a special service at Westminster Abbey on 31 October 2017. Finally, during 2017, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, insisting especially on the link between justification and justice, joined its Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist partners in signing an Association Agreement on 5 July 2017 in Wittenberg, Germany.

The authors also chose to include, alongside these three acts of reception by Churches or communions of Churches, the most recent joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic document. Thus five hundred years after the publication of Luther's ninety-five theses fixed to the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany, and by way of inaugurating the anniversary of the start of the Reformation, a joint celebration brought Lutherans and Catholics together for the first time on 31 October 2016 in Lund cathedral in Sweden, the ceremonies being co-presided by Mgr Younan, President of the World Lutheran Federation and Pope Francis. The joint declaration signed on this occasion expressing the renewed commitment of both parties is also included in this work. Some of the collected documents are presented in new translations. They are brought to the attention of a francophone readership so that this work constitutes, at its time of publication, a complete dossier, thus providing a good study resource for anyone wishing to examine the extent of the ecumenical advances which it documents.

Lastly, the work contains a third section of around one hundred pages comprising twenty or so textual and theological entries which, as its title suggests, is meant to provide 'study notes'. Some of the topics treated are what one might expect: grace, law, justification, *simul justus et peccator*, concupiscence, differentiated consensus, sin(s), works, etc.; but others, less so, such as instruction, history, human, Word and Sacrament, *solus*, Church(es), etc. We should note that these entries, like the translations, are collaborative. If differentiated consensus is the ecumenical approach, then it was the approach followed in producing these notes. A task as inspiring as it was arduous!

This work of translation, editing and commenting, pursued as a joint enterprise, enabled us to discover a number of major elements in the *JDDJ* and to appreciate its vitality—whereas one might easily have assumed that it was about debates belonging to another world, and of little relevance today. In the following paragraphs I will present four discoveries, which simply express my personal point of view, and are to

be enriched by each of the other co-authors. These discoveries are of course so many works in progress which await us.

First discovery: a method with great potential

The first lesson to be learnt from this work concerns the method of 'differentiated consensus'. We know that chapter 4 of the *JDDJ*, in the words of its heading, is about 'Explicating the Common Understanding of Justification' which it does under seven points, each point comprising three paragraphs. The first of these (respectively *JDDJ* 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34 and 37) sets out the common confession while the other two explain how the different traditions understand the matter. Some people who are somewhat sceptical about the method and its results read these two latter paragraphs by opposing them point by point, even setting one or other of their expressions in opposition to the common confession. However, such a reading does not conform to the *JDDJ*'s basic intention. Other people moreover, and they are numerous, in conformity with *JDDJ* 5,⁹ consider that this method makes it possible to formulate convergences on the fundamental truths of faith *and* to express differences which do not threaten the consensus achieved on the truths held in common. The merit of this approach, and it is considerable, is that mutual condemnations do not apply to the proposed formulas (see the *Communiqué Officiel, Annex*, and *JDDJ* 1. 5, 7, 13, and 41).

A 'weak' way of understanding this is, as some currently explain the term, that a theological consensus leads one to recognise that it's a matter of the same belief being explained in different terms and that the consensus permits these differences, in so far as they are about subsidiary convictions or truths. However, another approach does not just speak of 'differentiated consensus' but of 'differentiating consensus',¹⁰ thereby putting the accent on the differences which

⁹ *JDDJ* 5: 'The Declaration ... does not cover all that either church teaches about justification; it does encompass a consensus on basic truths of the doctrine of justification and shows that the remaining differences in its explication are no longer the occasion for doctrinal condemnations.'

¹⁰ One of the often quoted sources for this expression is Theodor Dieter (cf. 'La Déclaration commune sur la justification a dix ans: un bilan luthérien', *Positions luthériennes*, 2010/1, 28). It is also defended by André Birmelé. Thus in the case of either one of these theologians, the expression originates in the Strasbourg *Centre d'Études oecuméniques*.

remain. Thus Martin Junge understands differentiating consensus as a method which ‘aims to receive the alterity of the other as a gift or, failing that, as questioning and challenging one’s own identity and manner of being Church’¹¹.

Similarly, Didier Berthet remarks on

[t]he paradoxical dynamic of differentiated consensus. This novel method links up, on the one hand, that which we can profess in common and which is essential, and on the other, the particular emphases proper to one or other confession, which are by no means secondary but rather ‘specifying’ [...]. Thus the method of consensus, because it liberates us from the dead-ends of *non possumus* and from the fear of separation, frees us still more to proclaim each one’s doctrinal charism. And we strongly believe that the charism of one is a gift for the other. [It is] the action of the Holy Spirit, in a reciprocal and paradoxical dynamic, which both creates communion and affirms personal difference.¹²

The richness of this procedure is clear to see: an exchange of gifts in which communion and personalisation grow together. And it seems to us that *JDDJ* 14 and 40 go further. *JDDJ* 40 makes it clear that ‘the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification [...] are acceptable [...] and are] open to one another’, and *JDDJ* 14 observes that ‘the differing explications in particular statements are compatible with it [i.e. consensus]’. One may then ask if these three adjectives (‘acceptable’, ‘open’, ‘compatible’) do not indicate a step forward. Diversity is not only set down (‘acceptable’) alongside agreement, as a source of respective gifts and of better mutual recognition (‘open to one another’); furthermore, this diversity is also reconciled (cf. the *Official Common Statement*) and forms part of the agreement. In other words, the remaining differences not only do not compromise the consensus which has been achieved, but moreover illuminate it and are in coherence with it. Hence the position developed in our work:

The consensus reached is [...] differentiated to the extent that each tradition does not erase its own emphases and particular concerns, but rather reformulates them, explaining their systematic coherence in such a way that they are compatible with the consensus reached. [There is thus] a further benefit such that each partner loses nothing of their

¹¹ Martin Junge, ‘Introduction’, *Églises en chantier*, 19.

¹² Didier Berthet, ‘Conclusion du colloque’, *Églises en chantier*, 256.

traditional way of thinking, maintains the integrity of its approach, and formulates its own position without contradicting either the consensus reached, or its partner's own emphases and particular concerns, which have their own coherence. [...Thus] the expression proper to each partner is compatible, in its coherence, with the previous stated consensus. [...] The crucial point is that the differences which subsist, dealt with in this way, by no means weaken the consensus, but rather serve to reinforce it, since it maintains the truth of the differences (cf. p.136).

The remaining differences do not threaten the consensus achieved, so are not divisive (thus do not give rise to condemnation); not only that, they are not 'contradictory',¹³ while still avoiding a slide into syncretism. The task of reading *JDDJ* must go this far: that the paragraphs pertaining to one tradition are to be read and understood as not contradicting those of the other tradition! This way of proceeding has been the motive force underlying our task of composing together the textual and theological notes of our work. That being so, we may discern the same dynamic at work in the course of *JDDJ*'s reception by the World Methodist Council in 2006 and by the World Communion of Reformed Churches in 2017—that is, a text of 'Association' proper to each Church communion, in which their particular concerns were presented,¹⁴ followed by the signing of the Joint Declaration, between the original signatories on 23 July 2006, and between the three partners and the World Communion on 5 July 2017, thus ratifying the reception of both the *JDDJ* and its documents. One may consider that these 'Association' texts, while composed by individual partners, give a particular status to the special concerns of each.¹⁵ We must therefore

¹³ Michel Fedou, 'Texte, contexte et réception', *Églises en chantier*, 52.

¹⁴ The *Methodist Statement of Association* picks up the seven points of *JDDJ* chapter 4 with reference to the characteristic themes of the theology of John Wesley. The *WCRC Statement of Association* focuses on the links between justification and justice.

¹⁵ Paragraph 2 of the *Seoul Common Affirmation*, and of the *Wittenberg Common Affirmation*, clarify this mutual recognition. For the first, Roman Catholics and Lutherans 'join together to welcome the Common Affirmation of the World Methodist Council and its Church members', while the latter 'declare that the common understanding of justification as it is outlined in *JDDJ* corresponds to Methodist doctrine' (p. 90). For the second, the three signatories of the *JDDJ*, Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Methodists, 'welcome

ask ourselves how today we integrate the content of the Methodist and Reformed Affirmations into our reflections together and so into the consensus.

As regards the Anglican Communion, we know that there has been no document signed by all. In the *Resolution* agreed at Lusaka on 19 April 2016, the Anglican Consultative Council refers to two texts: the 1983 Helsinki Report signed by Lutherans and Anglicans, and the ARCIC text of 1986, *Salvation and the Church*;¹⁶ and ‘welcomes and affirms the substance of *JDDJ*’. But it is above all in the context of the celebration of 31 October 2017 at Westminster Abbey,¹⁷ which brought together official representatives of the Churches or Church Communion, that the Anglican Communion committed itself in declaring its ‘appreciation’ and ‘affirmation’ of the *JDDJ*. Perhaps this points to another way of doing things, that is, in a liturgical setting and by different means, ‘acknowledging’ the truth of the *JDDJ* before Lutherans and Roman Catholics, and in the presence of valid ‘witnesses’, namely Methodists and Reformed.

Second discovery: the importance of the Annex, sometimes underestimated

From a Roman Catholic standpoint, the official reception of the *JDDJ* by Churches and Church Communion, following their respective procedures, has endowed this text with a unique status, compared to other works and bipartisan agreements. So from the Catholic side the *JDDJ* today belongs to the magisterium of the Church¹⁸ and, along with

the *Affirmation* of the WCRC’ in which it is said: ‘We affirm our doctrinal agreement with the common statements on the doctrine of justification as it is expressed in the *JDDJ*’ (p. 108).

¹⁶ This text belongs to the second phase of the Anglican-Roman Catholic bilateral dialogue, ARCIC II. For the Catholic tradition, the status of the *JDDJ* is determined by its not having been ratified or signed by the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁷ In our book we laid particular emphasis on the sermon of Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Church of England, by virtue of his references to the Capuchin Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, preacher to the papal household. Today it seems to me that we should also pay close attention to the exact terms used in the course of the celebration to express Anglican commitment.

¹⁸ In this context, see its publication in the most recent editions of *Denzinger* (2009 and following).

other Catholic commentators,¹⁹ I believe that this text constitutes a decisive moment in the Catholic reception of the Council of Trent's *Decree on Justification*. Hence its importance! The content of this agreement belongs to the Roman Catholic Church's tradition of the doctrine of salvation, and is held in common with five Churches and Church Communion. So when as teachers we read and comment on the *JDDJ* in class—in my case for example, in my courses and seminars on Christian anthropology—as soon as we are concerned with soteriological topics, in particular the question of the relationship between grace and nature, then the particular contributions of this text occupy an important place, being careful to read them not just as a hermeneutic of Trent, or as a historiography of other traditions, but rather as globally compatible, while respecting their own coherence, with Catholic teaching.

Now our usual thinking about *JDDJ*, and the explicit attention we pay it, is almost invariably limited to the Declaration and its forty-four paragraphs. In fact, this Declaration which ties the doctrine of salvation of the signatory Churches to the differentiated consensus which has been achieved, does not work without the Annex. The Official Common Statement is clear on this when in paragraph 2 it points out, with respect to the questions raised by both partners during 1998, that 'the annexed statement (called "Annex") *further substantiates* the consensus reached in the Joint Declaration'²⁰. It is therefore the whole comprising these two documents which constitutes what one should refer to as the *JDDJ*. In recognition of the importance of the Annex, in publishing the official Lutheran-Catholic documents, we reversed the order adopted in previous publications. Thus, first comes the Official Common Statement, then the Annex, followed by the Joint Declaration, and lastly the Sources which is a working paper and properly speaking does not belong to the official documents.

Analysing the content of the Annex, and incorporating what it contributes into our interpretation of the *JDDJ*, becomes absolutely essential in order to appreciate how it 'further substantiates' the

¹⁹ Cf. Hervé Legrand, 'Le consensus différencié sur la doctrine de la Justification (Augsbourg 1999). Quelques remarques sur la nouveauté d'une méthode', *NRT* (124/1, janv.-mars 2002), 30-56, who considers that the Catholic Church, by virtue of its signing, renders the *JDDJ* 'the authentic interpretation of the *Decree on Justification* of the Council of Trent'.

²⁰ My underlining.

agreement reached by consensus. This is why the Annex demands careful study if we are to appreciate its 'steps forward' with respect to the Declaration. For a cursory reading of the Annex could give the opposite impression, namely, that it constitutes a step backward compared to the Declaration. To avoid this mistake, our translating and editing was at pains to take note of the Annex's advances and to examine their extent.

A brief reminder of why the Annex was drawn up is necessary to understand this 'further substantiation'²¹. After the 1995 version had been delivered and it had gone through the respective consultation processes of the Lutheran Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, numerous modifications were demanded and appended to the text. The new version, although voted through by the Lutheran World Federation, still raised many criticisms in a number of areas, and the Roman Catholic Church still had many reservations.²² Thus 1998 could have been the year of stalemate. However, at the demand of Pope John Paul II, the text which came to be called the Annex was drawn up in the course of an 'intense exchange', following a meeting between the Lutheran Bishop Hanselmann and Cardinal Ratzinger, then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Having succeeded in 'clarifying what the *JDDJ* meant to say', it was 'thanks to the Annex that the *JDDJ* could be signed at Augsburg during a liturgical celebration'²³. In making it possible to overcome the final objections and in bringing the necessary clarifications, 'the Annex is not a correction of the *JDDJ*, but should rather be seen as its signature' (p. 33).

On the basis of these difficulties and knotty ancient controversies, the Annex establishes more of a dialectic between the various elements, which one might see as merely juxtaposed in the *JDDJ*. Broadly speaking, we have noted developments over the years regarding the

²¹ Cf. Theodor Dieter, 'Déclaration commune à propos de la doctrine de la justification. Genèse et méthodologie', *Églises en chantier*, 37-48.

²² Theodor Dieter, *ibid.*, 46: the Catholics 'could not guarantee that any of the canons of the Council of Trent could be applied to the *JDDJ*, whereas this was the whole point of the Declaration'. Dieter explains (pp. 46-47) that it was the addition of traditional Lutheran expressions, demanded by the Lutheran Churches, which was problematic for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith: thus the expression 'mere passive' in *JDDJ* 21, and in *JDDJ* 29 the double use of the same adverb in 'totally righteous ... totally sinners'.

²³ *Ibid.*, 47 for the three quotations.

Sources, the Declaration, and lastly the Annex to the Official Common Statement. One might mention, by way of example, developments of the ideas of sin, concupiscence, grace, works and criterion.

Annex 2A returns to the subject of sin and explains the agreement reached on *simul justus et peccator*. In reading *JDDJ* 28, the authors of the Annex judge that the phrase must be understood as a description which is ‘profoundly existential [so that] all may grasp this reality which leads to repentance and conversion’ (our p. 194). The initial ‘simultaneity’ is to be found with God and links the pardoning of sin with liberation from the power of sin (understood as both acts and state), which leads man to be ‘made righteous ... and to [receive] the gift of new life in Christ’. The justified are ‘called [to be] children of God ... The justified do not remain sinners’. But at the same time, an honest look at how people really live and at the life of the world, at how we pray and celebrate, reveals the present power of sin. In pursuing this reflection, we find in Annex 2B a welcome clarification of the meaning which each tradition attaches to the idea of concupiscence. How this paragraph proceeds is a good illustration of how the Annex strives to achieve real mutual understanding. The text starts from the traditional Catholic doctrine of concupiscence as evil desire and inclination, while acknowledging that this ‘inclination’, rather than desire in general, can be ‘the opening through which sin attacks’. In so doing, it is possible to integrate the Lutheran notion of concupiscence as something ‘the entire human being carries’. But this Lutheran sense is nuanced as soon as what the human being carries is said to be a ‘tendency’—a term newly introduced in the Annex, replacing the idea of ‘inclination’ which is used exclusively in *JDDJ* 30, thus also enabling a rapprochement with Catholic terminology. Note, however, that this dialectic does nothing to mask the tragic nature of humanity’s condition, or of its calling (cf. our p. 131).

Furthermore, in paragraphs 2C and 2D, the Annex returns to the dialectical relationship between prevenient grace, faith and works. The primacy of grace, as gift of God, is confirmed in various ways, in the first place as fellowship²⁴ with Christ. The causal connection between grace and faith, which can sometimes seem attenuated in Catholic tradition,

²⁴ We translated this into French as ‘*communion*’, which is not to be found in *JDDJ*. Its use has the effect of uncoupling grace and sin, and of creating another link between grace and communion.

is clearly explicated by a reference to St Thomas Aquinas who states clearly that ‘grace creates faith’, as much prevenient faith as faith that perseveres. But at the same time human action, human responsibility, and indeed human cooperation are required, by way of the realistic putting faith to work, through the action of the Holy Spirit.²⁵ On this point, and going beyond the text of the Annex, one may consider that the Oriental tradition could be particularly illuminating, in particular through the idea of ‘synergy’ between divine grace and human freedom which have to agree; for it is true that ‘man can do nothing without Christ (John 15:5), it is also true that God wishes to do nothing without man’ (p. 139).

The question of the place of works is taken up again in Annex 2E. Two statements are made, by way of biblical references: on one hand, justification is unconditional and opens into life with God; on the other, works and judgement are closely linked. So as not to see these two statements as simply contradictory, the Annex relies on a passage from the *Formula of Concord (Solida Declaratio IV, 38)* to understand the importance of human ‘good works’, namely, ‘a Christian life lived in faith, hope and love’ (*JDDJ 37*). They are thus obligatory as a response to the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ; they are not truly merits, but gifts, making ‘growth in grace’ (cf. *JDDJ 38* and *39*) possible for all, and have to do with a ‘reward’ of which eternal life is the concrete symbol. Here again the task is to speak of ‘works’, an eminently Catholic concern, using the Bible and a Lutheran reference.

Finally, Annex 3 picks up the idea of ‘criterion’ used in *JDDJ 18* to qualify the role and place of the doctrine of justification. Annex 3, following certain Sources which the Declaration has not retained,²⁶ uses the expressions ‘touchstone’ and ‘measure’, which broadens the treatment and avoids narrowing the discussion to the one word ‘criterion’. Further, the Annex in seeking to clarify things recasts what the *JDDJ* designates as the ‘indispensable criterion’ of orientation to Christ by means of a double affirmation, namely, its uniqueness, for

²⁵ To back up this affirmation, the Annex joins up Phil. 2:12 and *The Formula of Concord, SD 64ff*. In this way the term ‘cooperation’ is brought in through a biblical, and also Protestant approach.

²⁶ *JDDJ 1* speaks of the ‘first and chief article’ and the ‘ruler and judge’ referring to the Smalcald Articles and the writings of Luther. The term ‘criterion’ is to be found in *JDDJ 18*.

nothing ‘may contradict this criterion’, and its context, as embedded in ‘the Church’s fundamental Trinitarian confession of faith’ (Annex 3).

One may only regret that none of the reception texts alludes, directly or indirectly, to the ‘steps forward’ achieved by the Annex. This must raise a question regarding the status of the Annex in the process of reception, and the five Churches and Church Communion probably have work to do in this respect. Similarly, the positioning of the Methodist and Reformed Statements of Association, along with the two texts referred to by the Anglican Communion, also deserves attention within the agreement as a whole, while still taking care to observe the respective status of these texts compared to the *JDDJ* and its Annex.²⁷

Third discovery: at the heart of the JDDJ, questions to be addressed

Even a cursory comparison of the language of the *JDDJ* to that of the Sources—which are so important for assessing the work preparatory to the Declaration, and the long history of the Lutheran Catholic Dialogue—reveals that the *JDDJ* found a new way of speaking, whereas the Sources adopted a more classical language,²⁸ sometimes making do with approximations which the *JDDJ* and its Annex went on to clarify. So in the course of translating, of examining the reception documents, and of preparing the theological commentaries, we frequently came to admire the theological exactness of the *JDDJ*. While acknowledging and appreciating its new and dynamic approach, the authors of the present work have at the same time identified certain weak points, in the shape of questions, and specific areas of work and research to be undertaken.

A first question concerns the scriptural foundations of *JDDJ*. The presentation of the biblical message, set out in *JDDJ* 8 to 11, in fact focuses all references on the Epistle to the Romans, finding in it the themes of pardon for sin (Rom. 3: 23-5), liberation from the power of sin and death (Rom. 5: 12-21), of acceptance into communion with God (Rom. 5: 1f), of union with Christ and with his death and resurrection

²⁷ The texts referred to in the Anglican Resolution predate the *JDDJ*, so have more the status of ‘sources’, while the two Statements of Association, although drawn up by a single partner—as opposed to chapter 4 of the *JDDJ* and the Annex—were composed on the basis of the Declaration.

²⁸ One example: Section 4.4 of the Sources, in quoting from *USA* no. 102, speaks of ‘original sin’, whereas *JDDJ* speaks of ‘the power of sin’ without directly using the term ‘original sin’, except in a note referring to the *Decree on Original Sin* of the Council of Trent, no. 5, of June, 1546 (cf. *JDDJ* 30).

(Rom. 6: 5), and of receiving the Holy Spirit in baptism and of incorporation into the one Body (Rom. 8: 1f, 9f). The definition proposed in *JDDJ* 15 and repeated in Annex 2 relies on the Pauline formula 'by grace through faith' of Romans 3: 23-5 and Ephesians 2: 8, considered as the key formula in the biblical basis for reflecting on the good news of justification.

However, this scriptural basis goes unexamined, whereas it is clearly questionable. Thus,

we must here point out two areas of weakness in the *JDDJ*'s biblical argumentation. Firstly, one notes a focusing on references to Romans, to the point of eclipsing other references. Furthermore, the way it is read relies heavily on a tradition of sixteenth century interpretations, based on an Augustinian tradition. But contemporary exegesis, with the 'new perspective on Paul' initiated by E.P. Sanders, has opened up other possible interpretations of the texts and of the Epistle to the Romans which merit consideration. In this context the approach of the *JDDJ* seems to accept a funnelling process: of the variety of biblical texts to Romans, from Romans to an Augustinian reading, thence to a theology of the sixteenth century, and finally down to us. And this is open to question and requires clarification (p. 171).

A second question concerns the relationship of grace and faith. Without going over again the confusion we noted above, over the disparity between the English and German versions of the heading of 4.3, we gave some thought to the reasons for inverting the terms 'faith' and 'grace', in this implied reference to Romans 3:

This is understandable to the extent that the object of this section 4.3 is to deal with justification through faith. Thus the heading might just as well have been [simply], 'Justification through faith'. But so as to avoid this faith being understood without reference to the grace of God which is its source, the editors [of the *JDDJ*] have taken the precaution of stating that what is given through faith belongs fundamentally to the realm of what is given 'by grace'. In sum, it must be understood that, as in Romans 3, the 'by' is the essential foundation for the 'through' (see p. 156).

In this perspective, the structure of the *JDDJ* is careful not to situate grace and faith at the same level, and first of all establishes the pardoning and justifying act of God (cf. section 4.2) before dealing with the means, which is faith, always by grace (section 4.3). To reflect on the relation between grace and faith is in fact to raise 'the question of God's sovereignty' (our p.203) and his grace. The proclamation of the

absolute grace of God, independent of any personal effort, liberates from sin and from the condition of sinner, and calls in response for a confidence which is equally radical. This is how Martin Luther saw things; as also did the fathers of the Council of Trent (cf. *Decree on Justification*, 1547):

In adults, the beginning of justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God that is to say, from His vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their part, they are called (*Decree*, 5).

But, as most historians recognise today,²⁹ this was not the main emphasis of Tridentinism, and thus of Catholic pastoral practice in modern times. Since then, Catholic theology of the twentieth century has managed to overcome these post-Tridentine ambiguities, and even errors, thanks in particular to a careful and committed reading of Protestant theologians, in the first rank of which must be counted Karl Barth, discovered by Catholic theologians as early as the 1950s and 60s.

Fourth discovery: an anthropology free from essentialism

Thus the *JDDJ* does much more than look back to past categories or deal with an ancient debate that no one understands any more! It raises questions which are crucial for our time. One of these, and this is our last point, is a clear and fundamental option as regards its underlying anthropology. The editorial and conceptual drive of the *JDDJ* as a whole demonstrates an unambiguous refusal, expressed on numerous occasions, to essentialise the anthropological question.

Numerous examples are given in our book. I will just refer to the one which seems to me the most significant, concerning the use of singulars and plurals in designating human beings. In French, it is usual to speak of ‘the’ Christian, ‘the’ believer, ‘the’ sinner, ‘the’ [sing.] justified—one might say it belongs to the genius of the French language. But this habit, interesting though it may be, of universalising a statement frequently risks making it abstract, and foregrounding an essentialist way of thinking. In contrast, using plural forms emphasises the concrete reality of what is proposed.

Thus in *JDDJ* the expression ‘sinner’ is normally in the plural and only four times in the singular, with only one appearance in the written text,

²⁹ John W. O’Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Belknap Press: Harvard, 2013), 307.

as opposed to in quotation.³⁰ To speak of ‘sinners’ rather than ‘the sinner’ constitutes an option, certainly stylistic, but with theological import. It signifies ‘a theology of sin which is collective rather than individual’ (our p. 23). The same can be said of the expression ‘the justified’. In examining the context in which this substantive is used, it is clear that in every case, in the body of the text as in the Annex, it must be translated by a plural: in French, *‘les justifiés’* and not by the singular, *le justifié*. Only the heading of section 4.4 necessitates a translation in the singular³¹ which then influences the translation of the heading of section 4.7 (cf. our pp. 23-4). The headings therefore do not entirely reflect the tone of the text, which itself indicates that ‘Christian life is first and foremost set in a personal, collective register, and hence ecclesial; it has no presupposed theory of human nature’ (p. 23).

Conclusion

While aware that it does not quite measure up to considerations of Church, sacraments and ministries, as proper concerns for future dialogue (cf. *JDDJ* 43), we still felt it important not to skip over questions relating to Christian anthropology (doctrine of creation, sin, relation between grace and freedom, human nature, etc.), which should be looked at in the course of further ecumenical reflection, which itself could make more use of Eastern contributions. Such an excursus could perhaps provide a foundation for reconsidering questions which are clearly essential for the unity of Christians, with renewed resources.

All the reflections presented here, by way of reporting on the experience of producing a new translation, with commentary, of the *JDDJ*, open up enormous areas of work. Thanks to the agreement

³⁰ There are 10 plural occurrences: *JDDJ* 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29 (twice), 32; and 4 in the singular: *JDDJ* 10 (quotation), 23, heading of 4.4, 29 (quotation).

³¹ The heading of section 4.4 is symptomatic of the situation created by having two originals. Previous French versions had the heading *L'être pécheur du justifié*, where the German had *Das Sündersein des Gerechtfertigten* and the English *The Justified as Sinner*. In our Translators' Note 8, p. 58, the translators explain their analysis and thus their translation: ‘since they have to split up a German compound noun [which actually contains the word *Sein*, though it lacks any ontological implication], the [previous French translations] slip from a situational context into an essentialist framework. The English heading avoids this difficulty, likewise the new French translation we propose: *Le justifié en tant que pécheur*.

reached in the *JDDJ* and its reception on the matter of the doctrine of justification, these important areas of study are brought within reach, as horizons and roads to travel together. This at least is our fervent hope, in completing this work!

THE CALL TO HOLINESS: FROM GLORY TO GLORY. THE SAINTS BELOW AND THE SAINTS ABOVE

Ernest Falardeau and Phil Hardt*

*This overview of *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory*, the tenth report by the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church (Houston, Texas, USA in 2016) focuses on chapters three and four on the saints below and the saints above. It is a theological and ecumenical locus as well as a pastoral and spiritual reflection for the laity.*

Introduction

Since January 1967, Methodists and Catholics have been engaged in an international dialogue on various questions which are shared and divide the two Christian communions. After the breakthrough on the question of justification by faith between the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church on 31 October 1999, the Methodists joined the other two communions in affirming their consensus with the *Joint Declaration on Doctrine of Justification* by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church in 2006 with appropriate indications of points of divergence. The present convergence document is one that is at the heart of the Christian faith, namely the universal call to holiness. This doctrine was particularly underscored by the Second Vatican Council's dogmatic affirmation on the nature and

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mission of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*¹. It is a doctrine very dear to Methodists and the spirituality which they professed even as members of the Anglican Communion.

*The Call To Holiness: From Glory to Glory*² is the tenth such report which appears periodically after a few years of dialogue on a specific topic considered to be crucial on the road to full communion between Methodists and Catholics. The status of the document is that it is the work of the international commission on behalf of the parent churches and is a convergence rather than a consensus between the two participants. Convergence designates a core of consensus, with some divergence which is considered not to be church dividing but obstacles needing further study leading to consensus.

Content

The Call to Holiness begins with a preface by the co-chairs of the international commission which describes the studies that have preceded it and the gist of the topic treated by each of the documents over the years, which are named and dated by the place and year that the document was officially released for study and evaluation by the participant churches and their theologians. When the documents have been officially agreed upon, they become part of the official teaching of the churches.

The Call to Holiness has five chapters and an introduction describing the titles and content of each of these chapters. Chapter one is entitled 'The Mystery of Being Human: Created by God and Recreated in Christ for being in Communion with God'. Chapter two is 'God's Work of Recreating Human Kind'. Chapter three is 'God's Holy People: The Saints Below'. Chapter four is 'God's Holy People: The Saints Above' (in paragraph 160, 'Mary: Life and Sign of Grace and Holiness' is discussed). Chapter five is 'Growing in Holiness Together: Openings for Common Witness, Devotion and Service'. An Appendix, indicated as 'Resources for Prayer and Meditation', is added to assist joint efforts to pray and

¹ Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 5: The Call to Holiness. See also Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*: Apostolic Exhortation On the Call to Holiness in Today's World, 2018.

² *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory*. The Report of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the World Council Methodist and the Roman Catholic Church (TX, Houston, August 2016. Vatican Cita: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018).

reflect on the prayers and lives of Christians who have lived holy lives as Methodists and Catholics.

Issues

The document indicates that several key issues underlie the question of holiness and grace in the Christian life. Christian anthropology is the focus of the first and second chapters. What does it mean to be a human being, and what does the Christian faith contribute to human and spiritual maturity *in Christ*? The whole question of grace and sin is raised, freedom of conscience and faith are also discussed. Chapter two focuses on salvation (soteriology). Both Methodists and Catholics believe that we are not saved only as individual persons. We are, by our baptism, members of the body of Christ which is the Church. Hence ecclesiology, described in chapter three, discusses how the Christian becomes a disciple of Jesus and lives in communion with other Christians. As the document states early on, holiness and unity are cognate realities and two sides of the same coin. Eschatology, treated in chapter four, is given an extended discussion. While admitting that we do not know a great deal about the afterlife, it is the goal of Christian living and of our human maturation. In chapter five, the 'connectedness' of Christians in witness,³ devotion and service are emphasized as nurturing and of great importance to the expression of the Christian life and its reality.

1. The Saints Below: A Methodist Perspective

The very first gathering of the Catholic Church-World Methodist Church International Theological Commission, just after Vatican II, discovered that the most unifying aspect between the two communions was their common emphasis on holiness. Now, fifty years later, their joint report has been exclusively devoted to that topic! Chapter three, entitled 'The Saints Below', examines three ways in which the Church 'nurtures holiness' in its members: through sacraments and rites, devotional life, and ministry at the time of death. Despite its relatively

³ From its inception, Methodism described itself as a 'connection' centered in the regional 'conference' (i.e. diocese). This connection not only included the annual conference meeting of preachers but also various expressions of ministry and spiritual life on the local church and circuit levels. Cf. Russell E. Richey. *The Conference in America: a History* (Abington Press: Nashville, 1996),

short existence (1739-present), Methodists are able to show convergence in these areas because of two significant factors: early Wesleyan emphases and a more recent renewed interest in spirituality.

John Wesley: Frequent Communion and Weekly Confession of Sins

Early Methodist practice reveals a close convergence with Catholic understandings of the Eucharist and penance. First, Wesley was insistent on the frequent reception of communion. For example, it is estimated that Wesley himself received communion twice a week on the average. Of course, as an Anglican priest (in a mostly traveling ministry) in good standing, he could also preside at the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy if asked. Moreover, Wesley published his sermon entitled, *The Means of Grace*, which mentioned communion as a primary means of grace.⁴ Another published sermon, *The Duty of Constant Communion*, urged frequent reception of the sacrament and refuted various objections to the practice.⁵ In an introduction to this sermon, the noted Wesley scholar, Albert Outler, has written: 'Like Richard Hooker and Jeremy Taylor and Daniel Brevint before them, the Wesleys conceived of sacramental grace as God's love in action in the lives of faithful men at worship. The Lord's Supper is the paradigm of all "the means of grace" —the chief actual means of actual grace and, as such, literally indispensable in the Christian life.'⁶ Finally, both John and Charles wrote numerous Eucharistic hymns such as 'O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread', 'Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast', and 'O the Depth of Love Divine', some of which speak unambiguously of eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

As a result, Methodist historians have referred to the Methodist movement as both an 'evangelical' and 'sacramental' revival. Unfortunately, the sacramental understandings were largely lost or deliberately ignored in early American Methodism (from the 1770s onward) due to the shortage of preachers and the challenge of evangelizing the country as it moved westward. Yet, the 'liturgical movement' of the past hundred years has moved present-day

⁴ John Wesley, *The Means of Grace*, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 1, ed. Albert C. Outler (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1984), 376-397.

⁵ John Wesley, *The Constant Communion*, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol.1 ed. Albert C. Outler (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1986), 427-439.

⁶ Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1964), 333.

Methodism in a more liturgical and sacramental direction including, in some local churches, the practice of weekly communion!

Wesley strongly emphasized the need to be accountable for one's actions and to confess one's sins to others. For example, numerous entries in his diary indicated that he used an 'examination of conscience'. Moreover, Wesley instituted the 'band meeting' (either all men or all women) in which the members would answer a number of required questions such as 'What sins have you committed since we last met?' and 'What temptations have you had?' In addition, each member had to be willing to receive admonishment or encouragement from the other members. Although early Methodism required attendance at the week class meeting (see below), band membership was voluntary and the total number of bands was much smaller. Wesley based the band meeting from the passage in James chapter five: 'Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.' It should come as no surprise, then, that this practice (and others) caused Wesley to be called a 'papist'! Finally, Wesley also instituted the weekly class meeting in 1742 which served as a catechumenate but also included an element of accountability since each member was asked: 'How is it with your soul?' Early Methodism also imposed a rather strong penance: members who walked disorderly (a favorite phrase of early Methodists) and did not attend class meeting were often excluded from the community; they could be readmitted if repentance followed.

Renewed Interest in Spirituality

The second reason for this close convergence between Methodists and Catholics has occurred because of renewed Methodist emphasis on spiritual disciplines. To be sure, the journals and diaries of Wesley and other early Methodists clearly indicate lives devoted to prayer, Scripture reading, and the regular sharing of Christian experience. Yet, the resurgence of interest in the spiritual disciplines seems to have more deeply cemented the connection to long-established Catholic spiritual practices. This is illustrated in the increased number of materials for both personal and group Bible study and reflection. In addition to *The Upper Room* (published now for over seventy-five years!), other daily devotions include *Disciplines: 2020* (which is published annually), Advent and Lenten devotional booklets, and Advent and Lenten lectionary study books. Moreover, over thirty years ago, the United Methodist Church (hereafter, UMC) started an

'Academy for Spiritual Formation' which has trained spiritual directors and helped numerous laity deepen their walk with Christ. Again, in an effort to combat Biblical illiteracy, the UMC developed *Disciple* Bible studies which now cover the entire Bible in thirty-four-week courses. Short-term *Disciple* Bible studies are also now available. The early Methodist class meeting (see above) has also been 'recovered' and other small sharing groups such as 'Covenant Discipleship Groups' have been started to assist people in growing in holiness. The covenant discipleship groups require participants to write a covenant on what they plan to do each week in terms of personal piety, worship, and service. This 'rule' seems to somewhat resemble Catholic associations such as the 'third order Franciscans'. Finally, retreat weekends such as 'Walk to Emmaus' are helping people to 'encounter' Christ for the first time and to maintain contact through the periodic 'reunion meeting'.

In sum, both the early Wesleyan emphases and the renewal of an intense spiritual life have contributed to this unity. This deepening convergence which the chapter views through the lens of sacraments, devotions, and ministry to the dying wonderfully confirms that initial insight that it is indeed 'holiness' that most closely unites the two communions.

2. The Saints Above

From Glory to Glory chapter four discusses the doctrine concerning the 'saints above' who have died and are 'with the Lord' awaiting the resurrection of the dead, body and soul (137). The first statement is that the culture of scientific thought for many people makes it difficult to understand the Christian mysteries that follow death. Hence, it is better to keep silent than to speak. However, the richness of God's revelation in the Scriptures provides the foundation for Christian teaching about the resurrection and eternal life (138).

Pilgrims Toward Eternal Life

Friends and followers of Christ, Christians journey together as pilgrims toward the promise of eternal life with the saints 'standing before the throne' (Rev. 7:9, see 139). There are many things relating to 'last things' which Christians explore because 'faith seeks understanding' (140).

Together Catholics and Methodists profess the ecumenical creeds concerning the resurrection of the body and eternal life (141). They also affirm that there is a communion between saints below and saints

above. Like a family, where bonds of love continue to exist between the living and the departed, so it is with those who are 'in Christ' (142-143).

All Baptized in One Communion

All the baptized, living and dead, make up the communion of saints. Death brings people to the ultimate limits of human experience imposing a finality immersed in mystery. Human life is a life unto death; the rituals of dying are followed by rituals of death. Christian teaching holds intension and continuity of personal identity from this world to the next, and the discontinuity between life on earth and in heaven.

Catholics and Methodist together believe God wills the salvation of all people also believing that it is attained exclusively through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Both Catholics and Methodists affirm their trust in the mercy of God regarding infants and others who die without receiving the sacrament of baptism believing that they too, share the promise of eternal life. The Apostle's Creed affirms that Christ 'will come to judge the living and the dead'. They also affirm individual judgment (150). God's mercy is limitless, but neither Catholics nor Methodists believe in universalism.

Catholics believe in purgatory. Methodists like the sixteenth-century Reformers do not. In recent times Catholic teaching has been refined and Pope Benedict XVI has written on the subject of prayer for the departed. Methodists and Catholics honor the saints above as witnesses of holiness. Some differences exist between Catholics and Methodists about the relationship between the saints below and the saints above. Catholics have a more detailed teaching on this relationship.

Mother of Jesus and of the Church

Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of the Church, is treated in Chapter three of our document and the section in chapter four is more devoted to the question of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin (160-164). The fourth chapter ends with 'Awaiting the Lord's Return', when Jesus Christ will be all in all.

Conclusion

The universal call to holiness is at the heart of our hope for eternal life and our salvation in Christ with God. Catholics and Methodists believe God wills the salvation of all people. It is attained exclusively through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). There is obviously much more about what we

believe together than our differences and the desire to dialogue so that we can better understand our differences and how we can move toward greater Christian unity.

A WIDER ROLE FOR THE PETRINE MINISTRY?

David Carter*

*This article picks up the suggestion, made by Pope John Paul II in 1995 in *Ut Unum Sint*, that it might be possible for Roman Catholics and ecumenical partners in dialogue to find a new way of exercising the petrine ministry, which is 'open to a new situation'. The writer, a Methodist, suggests that the present pontificate of Pope Francis provides such an opportunity in the light both of the need for a world spokesman for the Christian planet on urgent contemporary issues and Francis' strongly affirmative attitude towards the whole range of partners, Orthodox, Protestant and charismatic. Recent work in three key international dialogues and Francis' endorsement of synodality, plus the recent work of the International Theological commission, all seem to point hopefully in this direction.*

In this article, I hope to look at the possibility of the adaptation of the petrine ministry, as presently exercised, in a way that takes full account of the offer of dialogue on such a possibility, as suggested by the late Pope John Paul II in his ecumenical encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*. There, he called upon the church leaders and theologians from communities with which the Roman Catholic Church already shared 'real but imperfect communion' to 'engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject', to wit, his ministry of service to unity.¹

Pope John Paul spoke of 'finding a way of exercising the primacy, which while in no way renouncing what is proper to its mission, is none the less open to a new situation'². That there is a new global situation,

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¹ *Ut Unum Sint* 95-96.

² *Ibid.*

which urgently requires a Christian leader of the highest calibre to stand up before all Christians and their pastors and solemnly declare the whole counsel of God for the welfare of the world that His Son died to save, is even more abundantly clear on 2020 than it was in 1995. What is needed is someone who can speak as we see Peter speaking in his first few sermons, as recorded in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

I am convinced that there is already a very real sense in which Pope Francis is fulfilling such a function, to the recognition of many Christians of other churches, even if not with any officially ascribed authority from their churches. Pope Francis spells out the basics of Christian discipleship, tailored clearly to our exact historical circumstances in a world the stability of which is threatened by economic injustice, environmental threats (I write towards the end of one of the wettest winters ever in Britain) and spiritual hunger and debility. In paragraph 65 in *Laudato Si*, he puts it in a nutshell. Each Christian must attend prayerfully and obediently to three relationships: first with the Lord; secondly with his or her human neighbours; last (but most certainly not least) to his or her relationship and responsibility towards the rest of God's creation.

I write as a Methodist, who has long been engaged in theological dialogue, particularly with Roman Catholics. I am convinced that there is a deep consonance between the Methodist and Catholic traditions, which already existed long before it was much recognised in either tradition. We have long shared a strong missionary tradition and a deep commitment to the doctrine and practice of holiness in the belief that all Christians are called to 'press on to full salvation'³. We have also stressed the essential interconnectedness of the Church at every level. What Methodists call, at the level of communion and interchange, *connexionalism*, Catholics call *Church as communion*. We can each trace the modern roots of our developing understanding of Church as communion: Catholics back to Mohler, Newman and the ressourcement that led to Vatican II; Methodists back to the experience of the first converts in their class meetings, to the watching over each other and the connexion in faith and love that so characterised early Methodism and which is still central even today. Behind both, of course, stands the New Testament witness to the common life in the

³ The traditional Wesleyan expression.

body of Christ.⁴ At the modern fountain head of each tradition stand, respectively, the work of Johann Adam Mohler, 'Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism' and Charles Wesley's 'hymns for the society meeting and parting'⁵.

In 1873, the eminent Victorian Methodist ecclesiologist, Benjamin Gregory, wrote his greatest work, *The Holy Catholic Church*. In it he cited a petrine text, Acts 9:32, which I have not actually seen used by Catholics. It describes Peter as going 'here and there among all the believers'⁶. Gregory interprets this as Peter's exercising of an 'itinerant superintendency' of encouragement at a time when, of course, the Church was still purely Jewish and confined to the Holy Land. Some may see this as reading back later Methodist practice into apostolic times but the fact that Peter, at this early stage, saw travel, throughout the existing Christian communities as important in his leadership, would seem to contain in miniature a practice and concern not unrelated to that of pontiffs since Paul VI, all of whom have seen travelling throughout the churches as part of their ministry. Gregory also speaks of the visit of Peter and John to churches founded in Samaria by the first refugees from Jerusalem, 'losing no time in recognising and connecting them' to the mother church in Jerusalem.⁷

It is extremely doubtful, given the circumstances of the time, that Gregory would have related his insight to the papacy of his contemporary Pio Nono; moreover, most Methodists, almost up to the time of Vatican II, assumed that the Roman Catholic Church was in serious error on many key points of doctrine.⁸ However, the insight of Gregory into the earliest personal ministry of unity remained for rediscovery and use in the very different context of John Paul II's appeal for dialogue.⁹

⁴ Particularly brilliantly described by the Anglican author, Lionel Thornton, in his *Common Life in the Body of Christ* (1941).

⁵ Mohler, J.A. (1825, 1996). *Wesley's Hymns* (1877), esp. nos. 478-539.

⁶ NRSV translation. B. Gregory, *The Holy Catholic Church* (1873), 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸ See e.g. paragraphs 20-25 of *The Grace Given You in Christ* (Methodist-Catholic dialogue report, 2006) entitled 'Early Methodist views of the Roman Catholic Church'.

⁹ And, indeed, was so used in response to it by Geoffrey Wainwright, world Methodism's leading ecumenist by the 1990's. See e.g. his essay 'The Gift Which He on one bestows, We All Delight to Prove. A possible Methodist approach to

John Paul II's appeal did not come out of the blue, but out of a recognition in three key international bilateral dialogues that the question of the papacy and a universal personal ministry of unity could not and should not be avoided. The Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, initiated in 1966, was by the seventies exploring the subject and showing that the attitude of Luther, and even more of Melanchthon, had not been as hostile to the papacy as usually assumed in popular Catholic and Protestant thinking.¹⁰ ARCIC, the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, had accepted that the Bishop of Rome was the only credible candidate for such a ministry should its scope be agreed by both communions. MRCIC, the Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue, accepted in 1986 that 'whatever is properly required for the unity of the whole of Christ's church must by that very fact be God's will for his church. A universal primacy might well serve as focus of and ministry for the unity of the whole of the church'¹¹.

John Paul II's proposal aroused initial enthusiasm and various provisional responses were made from a variety of traditions and churches. Various colloquia for considering these were held, for example, by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. In its 1999 report, *The Gift of Authority*, ARCIC made the suggestion that, even before the restoration of full communion, Anglicans might be open to a recovery and re-reception under certain clear conditions of the exercise of universal primacy by the Bishop of Rome.¹²

By this time, however, the overall ecumenical climate was less favourable. Partly, this was due to other aspects of Pope John Paul II's pontificate which had seemed to many Protestants in particular as more authoritarian. *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, reinforcing earlier teaching that the Catholic Church did not see herself as able to admit women to holy orders, seemed to set up an irremovable obstacle. It also obscured the fact that John Paul II was not the simple reactionary that many members of other communions thought him to be—much of his teaching at the turn of the millennium relates to the need to be able to

a Ministry of Primacy in the circulation of truth and Love' in J. Puglisi (ed), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church* (1999), 59-82.

¹⁰ A very good study of the progress of this dialogue on the papacy is to be found in S.K. Wood and T.J. Wengert, *A Shared Spiritual Journey. Lutherans and Catholics Travelling toward Unity* (2016), 3-33 and 197-208.

¹¹ *Towards a Statement on the Church* (1986), paragraph 58.

¹² *The Gift of Authority* (1999), paragraph 60.

discern and welcome fruitful new developments in styles of witness, service and spirituality.¹³

Quite apart from this, there was a concern amongst many Catholic ecumenists, such as Cardinal Kasper, as to whether most continental Protestants really shared the same vision of unity as Catholics.¹⁴ The welcome given by Anglicans to the last two reports of ARCIC II, in 1999 and 2005, was less positive than it had been to the earlier reports. ARCIC was, in fact, suspended for a few years.

The dawn of a more promising era ecumenically

However, by 2010, there were signs of an ecumenical thaw. Some of the credit for this was due to Pope Benedict, who made a very successful visit to Britain in 2010. More importantly perhaps, there was a decided improvement in Lutheran-Catholic relationships as a result of the very positive way in which Benedict spoke of Luther as a man of deep spiritual sensitivity and seriousness. Benedict had also spoken much earlier of 'the life-giving value of the Lutheran Lord's Supper' in such a way as to suggest a more positive evaluation of the sacramental life than even Vatican II had been able to give.¹⁵ Lutherans and Catholics, particularly in Germany, became determined to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's famous ninety-nine theses of 1517 in a way that would contrast with the recriminations that had characterised the previous centenaries of the event and pledge the two communions to a positive and mutually respectful relationship.¹⁶

¹³ At this time Rev. Bernard Longley (now Archbishop Bernard) asked me to contribute a short chapter to a handbook issued by CTS on the teaching of John Paul II. I dealt with the ecumenical side of his teaching in such statements as *Novo Millennio Ineunte* and was impressed by the openness of much of it. See 'The Ecumenical Teaching of John Paul II' in *The Wisdom of John Paul II* (CTS, 2001), 101-113.

¹⁴ See e.g. his *That they may all be One* (2004), 23 where he makes a distinction between those reformers who wanted to renew the Church whilst maintaining continuity with traditional structures and those who wanted a different and more local and community centred approach.

¹⁵ As Cardinal Ratzinger in 1993, in an exchange with the then Lutheran Bishop in Bavaria.

¹⁶ See 'From Conflict to Common Lutheran-Catholic commemoration of the Reformation' (2014), document of the international Lutheran-Catholic Commission; paragraph 30 specifically cites Benedict XVI's commendation of Luther's serious intent. Chapter 6 lists five ecumenical imperatives, including

The famous *Joint Declaration on Justification* which the Vatican and LWF had signed in 1999 began to bear wider fruit. As far back as 2006, the World Methodist Council had associated itself with the Declaration recognising that Methodists now saw Catholic teaching on the subject in a very different light from that of John Wesley who had declared the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, ‘the grand doctrine that drove popery from these lands two centuries since’¹⁷.

In 2019, the developing consensus between the ecumenically engaged Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church on the doctrine of justification received a further boost when both the Anglican Communion and the World Alliance of Reformed churches joined the three previous denominational signatories in accepting the Joint Declaration and affirming,

Together, we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.¹⁸

Almost simultaneously, the international Baptist-Methodist dialogue team commended the signing of the document to the attention of the Baptist World Alliance.¹⁹ It is also recognised by all partners that, though the old justification dispute has now been laid to rest, issues of ecclesiology remain, though even here, progress towards a degree of convergence has been registered in the multilateral dialogue on the Church originated by the Faith and Order division of the WCC in the late eighties. In 2012, it issued its final report, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, registering, in particular, wide agreement on the trinitarian basis of ecclesiology and the widespread understanding of Church as communion/*koinonia*. In October 2019, the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity issued its response to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, a response that was strongly appreciative of the degree of consensus reached, particularly on the two points just

that ‘Lutherans and Catholics should seek to be transformed by the encounter with each other’.

¹⁷ Sermon no. 1, in the standard collection of 44 Wesley sermons, study of which is required of all (British) Methodist preachers.

¹⁸ *Notre Dame Consultation Statement*, issued March 2019, available by googling the name.

¹⁹ One of the eleven propositions agreed at the end of the Report, ‘*Faith Working through Love*’ (2018), see also my article in *One in Christ* (2018), 259-284.

registered in this paragraph, whilst calling for further progress on others.²⁰

The Advent of Francis

From almost the moment of his election in 2013, Francis brought both the weight of his office and a particularly engaging personal style to the enhancement of ecumenical confidence.

From his previous experience, first as auxiliary bishop in one of the poorest areas of Buenos Aires, Francis brought a profound experience of the needs, physical and spiritual, of the poor and marginalised. Then, from his role as Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, a wider experience of the context of the churches in Latin America and the two thirds world. He also brought invaluable experience ecumenically in the links that he had begun to forge with Pentecostals, with whom earlier Catholic relationships had been poor. Determined to change the situation, Jorge Bergoglio had attended Pentecostal rallies, had offered to pray for Pentecostal pastors and had invited them to pray with and for him. His enthusiasm for charismatics, both Catholic and Pentecostal, has been an abiding feature of his pontificate in which both he and his Pentecostal brethren have been able to be at one in their common devotion to the Holy Spirit and belief in His transformative power in evangelisation.²¹

Already, Bergoglio had struck a chord with Protestants more widely than previous pontiffs. His election was acclaimed by an evangelical Anglican bishop of the Church of the Southern Cone, who said, 'this man is Christ centred and Spirit filled'²².

²⁰ *Catholic Response to 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision'* 10, states that 'the first chapter' (God's Mission and the Unity of the Church) 'stands for the remarkable level of convergence that can almost be regarded as a consensus... a strong framework for the content of the whole document'.

²¹ See for example his address to charismatics on the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic charismatic movement, as cited by him at an audience for the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity on 28.9.2018.

²² Archbishop Venables of the (Anglican) Church of the Southern Cone. P. Vallely, *Pope Francis, Untying the Knots* (2015), 94. He describes Francis as 'admirably comprehensive in those he included as he reaches outwards-he embraced everyone, from other Christian denominations, believers in other faiths, to those who were none of these'.

Much of Francis' understanding of the necessary agenda for the Church is set out clearly in his early apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*). This document struck a particular chord with me as a Methodist. I could see the new pontiff wanting to do for the world what John Wesley had tried to do for England in the eighteenth century: to preach plain scriptural Christianity; to bring good news to the poor; to commend, as some of his earliest words to the world Church, the joy of faithful Christian discipleship, lived out in witness and service by ordinary missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.²³

From the beginning, Francis has been preoccupied with Christian basics. It is instructive that he addresses the situation in the parish as the most basic unit experienced by ordinary lay Christians in worship, service and mutual encouragement in faith and love. He does this *before* looking at the responsibilities of the local church (defined theologically as diocese) and its bishop.²⁴ Chapter two addresses the crisis of communal commitment, which, one may add, is perhaps even more severe now than in 2013, partly as a result of increased social isolation and reliance on social media rather than live human contact. Chapter three deals with the proclamation of the Gospel, insisting that it is a *whole church* job in each parish. *All* are called to be missionary disciples in word and in deeds testifying to their faith.²⁵ Popular piety is not to be despised, a point relevant to intellectuals and aesthetes in all Christian traditions who may be inclined to overlook its importance. It is the product of genuinely local inculturation and adapted to the spirit and ethos of each distinct community.²⁶ Finally, excellent advice on preaching, and preparation for it, is given in a manner equally commendable to those called to preach in every Christian tradition.²⁷

Chapter four, dealing with the social dimension of evangelisation, insists that 'the kingdom, already present and growing in our midst, engages us at every level of our being and is directed, to quote Paul VI, to "all men and the whole man"'. The key priorities are the inclusion of the poor, and the dignity of each human person, and the pursuit of the

²³ *Evangelii Gaudium* 2-8, where, quoting Zephaniah, he exalts in God's rejoicing over his people.

²⁴ *EG* 28,30. Francis admits much remains to be done to make parishes 'more completely mission orientated'.

²⁵ *EG* 119-121.

²⁶ *EG* 122-126.

²⁷ *EG* 135-159.

common good, 'concerns which ought to shape all economic policies'. In this context, Francis calls for people of spirit: doctors, nurses, teachers and businessmen, who see their work and calling as a genuine vocation, designed to do far more for those in need than just for the benefit of the professional concerned. Such teaching tallies very closely with that of most Protestant churches.²⁸

Finally, in chapter five, Francis refers to his call for 'spirit filled evangelisers', reiterating yet again his great faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to raise up such people, a faith that links him so closely with so many Christians of the other traditions. Reading Francis' exhortations and encyclicals is a spiritual experience, profitable to all Christians, thus giving flesh to the ARCIC suggestion of 1999 that, even in advance of the restoration of full unity, both churches might benefit from the authoritative teaching of the Bishop of Rome.²⁹

I will not comment in detail on *Laudato Si*, significant though it is, save to say that here, on the environment, Francis' position has the additional support of people of good faith from other religions and even of no faith commitment *per se*, such as David Attenborough. Here Francis is spokesman on an even wider level.

One final point can be noted: the tremendous extent to which Francis quotes his brother bishops, usually in terms of teaching given by them corporately in the context of their particular bishops' conferences.³⁰ This is a pointer to the fact that Francis sees his role as being as much about *listening* and *learning* on his part as about providing *leadership* and *guidance*. Francis' stress on listening and learning as well as leading and guiding sets an example for all Christian leaders at any level in any church; moreover, it is wisdom also for leaders in secular life.

All this becomes even clearer as we look at his increasing stress on the importance of *synodality* as something that God requires of his Church for the twenty first century global context; moreover, it is about

²⁸ One may instance here the teaching of the *Joint Public Issues Team* of three English free churches and the Church of Scotland. Such teaching tallies carefully with earlier Catholic teaching from the time of Leo XIII and the British Methodist Conference statements on social questions, particularly those of 1934 and 1949.

²⁹ Key issues and advances that need to be made in both communions are delicately explored in *The Gift of Authority* 52, 56-63.

³⁰ Very apparent when one glances quickly through the references to *Evangelii Gaudium*.

synodality at all levels, including the most local, in the parishes and amongst the laity, who are not simply called to be missionary disciples but who also participate in the *sensus fidei* as the spiritual instinct for whatever is Christianly appropriate in belief, witness and service within their many varying contexts. Moreover, amongst lay people are to be found a huge range of gifts and charisms, all of them gifts of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the entire body. These points were to receive strong and detailed theological underpinning in a major report of the International Theological Commission in 2018.³¹

Francis' ecumenical engagement

This has won widespread acclaim, though it has not been without rebuffs and sticking points. Thus, Francis found that on a visit to Bulgaria, the Orthodox were unable to join him in prayer; that he had to meet Patriarch Kiril of Moscow on neutral ground in Cuba in 2016 and that he received a rebuff from the Italian Evangelical Alliance, which persisted in claiming that there was an unbridgeable gap between catholic and evangelical faith.³²

Francis' treatment of ecumenical visitors to Rome has been even handed, whether dealing with Orthodox of both varieties, Anglicans and classical Protestants, Pentecostals and 'new' churches. Though he duly respects the inherited teaching of the magisterium which differentiates between the Orthodox *churches* and the other Christian *communities*, in practice, he loves all vibrant Christian communities, whether they quite qualify as 'churches' under the principles previously laid down.³³ No doubt this is because of his immense confidence in the unlimited reach of the Holy Spirit, distributing His gifts. He has great faith in 'the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, from which we can learn so much from each other'. He believes that 'through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness'³⁴.

³¹ As discussed below in the section on synodality.

³² Cited in M. Brauer, 'Pope Francis and Ecumenism', *Ecumenical Review*, March 2017, 6.

³³ As Professor Faggioli puts it in his article, 'Ecumenism in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in the context of Francis' Pontificate' in *Perspective Teologia* (January-April 2016), 7, 25.

³⁴ *EG* 246.

We may note that, in this, he follows the instinct of a predecessor, John Paul II, who stated in *Ut Unum Sint* that, 'despite the objective sin of schism, there had resulted from the earlier splits in the unity of the Church a rich embellishment of the *koinonia*'³⁵.

Francis has great faith in the way in which through 'journeying alongside each other', we can learn with and from our fellow Christians. He stresses the Emmaus-like quality of such journeying as, bit by bit, 'we come to realise with whom we have been travelling. Mutual trust is fundamental'³⁶ as 'we put aside all suspicion and mistrust, and turn our gaze to what we are seeking, the radiant peace of God's face'. He stresses that 'both the Lord and the world call us to unity... the Lord asks us for unity; our world torn about by too many divisions that affect the most vulnerable, begs for unity'³⁷. Francis' three great concerns, for peace, justice (especially for the poor) and unity of Church and humankind all come together in a symphony that knows no human limits. He rejoices in unity shown in situations previously so characterised by hostility and opposition. Thus, in 2018, addressing charismatics, he stressed that the Spirit had 'enabled Catholics and Pentecostals to show their gifts and charisms, bestowed by the same Spirit in a symphony of praise to the Lord Jesus, renewing their commitment to fulfil the missionary mandate to the extreme ends of the world'³⁸. To him, it is fundamental that we learn humbly from each other³⁹ and that we never belittle others' gifts lest we lose grace ourselves.⁴⁰

Francis is also impressed by the witness of the martyrs who come from all churches and Christian communities. He stresses the fact that they are persecuted simply because they are Christians. The enemy does not ask whether they are Orthodox, Protestants or whatever.⁴¹ Francis sees

³⁵ *Ut Unum Sint* 85.

³⁶ Francis places great stress on the Emmaus experience, even arguing that 'the entire destiny of the Church is contained in it. The Church listens to everyone's stories, to offer the Word of Life, a life that is faithful to the end'. *Francis at General Audience*, 24.5.2017.

³⁷ Francis on a visit to Rumania, 21.6.2019.

³⁸ At the 50th anniversary of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. Cited at his audience with the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, 28.9.2018.

³⁹ Francis at end of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 2017.

⁴⁰ *Bulletin of PCPCU*, 29.11.2015.

⁴¹ Francis added, in 2016, that 'if the enemy unites us in death, how can we separate ourselves in life'. *PCPCU Bulletin* (2016), 42.

joint prayer as vital: in response to the question, ‘Can a Catholic pray with an Orthodox, a Lutheran, a Pentecostal?’, the reply is not simply a ‘may’, but a ‘must’. Such prayer should happen as frequently as possible amongst all the baptised.⁴²

Francis’ faith in the value of true dialogue extends out even to the enquirers after truth and people of other religions. In a meeting with young people in 2018, he said:

We do not make this journey as peacemakers with believers alone, but with everyone. Everyone has something to say to us and we have something to say to everyone. You, young people, should know this. When a Christian community is truly listening, it does not proselytise... Fear drives us to proselytise, but fraternity is something else, an open heart and a fraternal embrace.⁴³

Professor Faggioli argues that Francis’ ecumenism marks an important step forward from that of his predecessors in the papal chair. ‘Overall, Francis ecclesiology is non-ecclesiocentric, and in this sense is a step forward from the mixed ecclesiologies of Vatican II where institutional ecclesiology had the last word over ecumenical ecclesiology.’⁴⁴

Francis never seems to lose momentum in developing relationships further. He never fails to find something positive to say in respect of some aspect or other of the community whose representatives he is welcoming in Rome or visiting abroad. In 2018, for the first time, he met a delegation from the African Independent churches.⁴⁵ Perhaps his two greatest impacts have been on Lutheran-Catholic and Catholic-Pentecostal relationships.

In the first, he built on the work of both the Joint Declaration of 1999 (in the pontificate of John Paul II) and the olive branches extended by Benedict, both in his praise of Luther for his struggle with sin and in his affirmation of the value of the Lutheran Lord’s Supper.⁴⁶ An

⁴² Francis, as cited in Bulletin of the PCPCU, 29-5-2015. He also gave a very warm welcome to Archbishop Welby’s prayer initiative, ‘Thy Kingdom come’. *Anglican Communion News Service*, 29.5. 2019.

⁴³ *PCPCU Bulletin* (2018), 50-1.

⁴⁴ Cited in an abstract to Faggioli’s article ‘Ecumenism in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in the context of Francis’ pontificate’, *Teologia* (January-April 2016), 17-35. See especially p. 25. Note also p.21, where Francis is cited as stating that the Church *cannot fulfil her catholicity* without those at present separated from her.

⁴⁵ *PCPCU Bulletin* (2018), 6-7.

⁴⁶ Mentioned above. See note 14.

unattributed article in the Italian periodical *Sedos* argues that Francis made a key difference to the wider reception of the earlier dialogue which had, itself, done so much to put Luther and the years 1517-1555 in a new and more positive light. At the Lund meeting of 2016, commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, he said this:

The Reformation has helped to place the Holy Scriptures at the centre of the Church. The spiritual experience of Martin Luther challenges us to remember that, apart from God, we can do nothing...With the concept of 'by grace alone', he reminds us that God always takes the initiative, prior to any human response, even as he seeks to awaken that response. The Doctrine of Justification thus expresses the essence of human existence before God.

At the same meeting, he and Bishop Younan, then president of the LWF, agreed to commit themselves to end the pain of division at the Lord's Table and to work for justice, peace and reconciliation in the world.⁴⁷

His steps in Catholic-Pentecostal relationships may prove finally even more fruitful. In 2014, he attended a Pentecostal rally at Caserta, Italy, where he was greeted by his friend, the lead Pastor Giovanni Traettino, with the words: 'Pope Francis, many of us believe that the Holy Spirit was behind your election as Bishop of Rome.'⁴⁸ Francis, in turn, spoke of his joy at being with his brother, who had first come to meet him in Argentina. The Pentecostal communities across the world now number about six hundred million faithful, thus dwarfing all other Christian communities with the sole exception of the Roman Catholic Church. Potentially, this could be the most important bilateral ecumenical relationship of all, though it still has a long way to go and mutual distrust has not entirely been dissipated or overcome. There has, of course, been a dialogue since 1972, though one far from noticed, let alone received by all Pentecostals.⁴⁹ It is an irony, but one no doubt inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the most organised church in Christendom and the most varied and diffuse of all major Christian traditions should be finding each other through the work of such inspired leaders as Francis and Traettino, mutually inspired in seeing

⁴⁷ Report in journal *Sedos*, p. 13 (no author attribution), accessed 27.7.2019.

⁴⁸ *Bulletin of PCPCU* (2014/2), 3-6.

⁴⁹ See the chapters by Cecil Robeck and Ralph del Colle in J.A. Rodano (ed). *A Century of Ecumenism* (2012), 163-217.

the same Holy Spirit at work in each other and in their common devotion to mission.⁵⁰

Francis and Synodality

Pope Francis regards synodality, the process of mutual consultation, learning and listening throughout the whole of the Church, lay folk as well as clergy, as ‘precisely the path that God expects of the Church in the third millennium’⁵¹. Synodality has been implied in all his actions and statements as pontiff. Early on, he requested the International Theological Commission to produce a document giving appropriate historical and theological underpinning to the concept as a legitimate and faithful development within the Tradition. The Commission duly obliged, noting that though the expression synodality had not been specifically mentioned in Vatican II, it was consonant with what Vatican II had said about Church as communion and the active discipleship and responsibility of the laity.⁵²

A synod means, literally, a gathering together for journeying together, a gathering and journeying that must involve the whole people of God, of whom the vast majority are lay, all called, as Francis repeatedly states, to be missionary disciples, a function in accordance with their status as the baptised. The Theological Commission writes:

Synodality is established to energise the life and evangelising mission of the Church, in union with and under the guidance of the Lord Jesus. Its renewal is expressed first and foremost in response to God’s gracious call to live as his people, who journey through history to the fulfilment of the Kingdom.⁵³

⁵⁰ I have given a fuller account of Francis’ contribution to ecumenism in my article ‘The Ecumenism of Pope Francis’, *Ecumenical Trends*, January-February (2020), 4-11.

⁵¹ Cited in the 2018 document of the *International Theological Commission on Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, para. 1. On 29 November 2019, he added that this was ‘an issue close to my heart, a style, a walking together, and this is what the Lord expects of his Church’.

⁵² *Synodality* 6. Its consonance can be referenced in the thinking of Vatican II, for example, in *Gaudium et Spes* 44, which asserts: ‘it is the entire people of God, especially the pastors and theologians to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age and judge them in the light of the divine word’, a real pointer to true synodality.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 103.

Elements in this holistic and eschatologically focussed response include 'practice of the spirituality of communion, listening, dialogue and communal discernment..., prophetic *diakonia* in building a social ethos, based on fraternity, solidarity and inclusion'⁵⁴.

The International Theological Commission give a careful review of historical developments leading to the present stress on synodality. They stress that the original Council of Jerusalem, held to consider the then tricky question of whether Gentiles could be admitted to the Church and, if so, under what conditions, was a genuinely synodical occasion in which the apostles and elders took the lead under the supervision of St James.⁵⁵ The whole Church, however ratified the decision and agreed to the sending of emissaries to take the news to Antioch and to Paul and Barnabas.

The development of synodical meetings between bishops of local churches was developed in the fourth century with appropriate canons being framed to fit in with the growing tendency to work in unity with neighbouring dioceses with one senior bishop being chosen as the patriarchal leader, who, however, was always to act in consultation with his brethren. Universal councils followed, with Pope Leo the Great of Rome taking a particularly decisive role at Chalcedon in 451.⁵⁶

The strong measures taken by bishops of Rome from Gregory VII (1073-1085) onwards tended to weaken synodality and the independence of local churches, necessary as those measures were to controlling abuses in the church by powerful lay magnates and kings.⁵⁷ Papal power was to further increase in reaction to the divisions of the Reformation and the threat, as perceived by nineteenth century popes, of liberal and secular thinking. Vatican II, however, saw the beginning of a readjustment of understanding of the relationship between the Pope and the college of bishops, with both sharing responsibility for the whole Church. The understanding of the importance of the local church (defined as diocese) and its particular traditions became greatly

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-9.

⁵⁵ *Acts 15*. The Theological Commission in their comment (para. 21) states 'the decision is taken by James but the question is presented to the *whole* Church... by all listening to the Spirit... initially divergent opinions move towards consensus'.

⁵⁶ Acclaimed by the fathers present, 'Peter has spoken through Leo'.

⁵⁷ *Synodality* 32 adds the nuance 'if not properly understood'.

enhanced and greatly influenced by improved relations with the Orthodox and interest in their practice of synodality.

The pontificate of Francis sees the development by Francis and others of an understanding that gives due weight to the laity, who have their own particular gifts and charisms which are given by the Holy Spirit for the common enrichment of the whole people of God.⁵⁸ The faithful enjoy the *sensus fidei*, the instinct for the faith and what is Christianly appropriate in daily discipleship. To that extent, they share in the infallibility and indefectibility of the Church since the *sensus fidei* (as, of course, previously recognised, well before Vatican II, by Newman) is a source of teaching alongside that of the Magisterium of both the popes and the episcopal college.⁵⁹

Francis stresses the need for continuing listening, receiving and learning at all levels. Both he and the Theological Commission stress the *conspiratio* of all the sources of authority in the Church, Pope, college of bishops and *sensus fidei* of the people. They cite the teaching of Cyprian that a bishop should always consult his presbyters and deacons before making key decisions. They also refer to the ancient principle of Roman law that what affects all should receive the consent of all concerned.⁶⁰ The Commission begins the fourth chapter of its report, on synodal renewal, stressing that it ‘joyfully welcomes and promotes the grace in which all the baptised are qualified and called to be missionary disciples’. The great challenge is to intensify ‘collaboration in evangelical witness based on everybody’s gifts and roles’. It is important to avoid ‘excessive clericalism which keeps them (i.e. the laity) away from decision making’. The laity are vital because they are the vast majority of the entire people of God.⁶¹

Additionally, the Commission recognises the ecumenical implications for united mission and service. There should be ‘openness to other churches and ecclesial communities in irreversible commitment to journeying together towards complete unity in the reconciled diversity of their respective traditions’. It even goes beyond

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 which talks of the sheer variety of gifts bestowed on the faithful as a sign of the *exousia* (authority) of the Lord in his Church. Paragraph 55 speaks of the faithful as *synodoi* (fellow pilgrims), all meant to receive the charisms given for the common good’.

⁵⁹ *Synodality* 56.

⁶⁰ *Synodality* 25.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

this in recommending ‘social *diakonia* and constructive dialogue with men and women of different religious convictions in order to bring about a culture of dialogue’⁶².

The Commission notes that there is increasing agreement within the entire *oikoumene* that the Church is synodal throughout at every level, in a manner reflecting the very communion within the Trinity, on which it is based.⁶³ It notes that ‘ecumenical commitment marks out a journey involving the whole people of God. It demands openness to each other in order to demolish the walls of indifference that have separated Christians for generations’.

Paragraph 116 establishes five key guidelines relating to the furtherance of true synodality. The first recommends its implementation within the local church at every level, reflecting the circularity of the relationship between the ministry of the pastors and the participation and responsibility of the laity. The second proposes ensuring the integration of the exercise of collegiality of the pastors with the synodality of the whole of the people of God as a lived demonstration of the communion in each local church. The third proposes that the exercise of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome within the communion of the local churches, should be in synergy with the collegial ministry of bishops and the synodal journey of the whole Church. The fourth calls for openness towards other churches and ecclesial communities in irrevocable commitment to ‘complete unity in the reconciled diversity of their respective traditions’. The last proposes an even greater commitment to the promotion of a wider dialogue of human encounter.

Paragraph 118 makes an important link between the secular ‘growing awareness of the interdependence of peoples’, inducing a sense of the world as ‘our common home’ and the Church’s need ‘to demonstrate her catholicity in the way in which she works and lives, acting as a catalyst of unity in diversity and of communion in freedom’. It argues that this is a significant contribution that the people of God can make to the promotion of a culture of solidarity, respect and dialogue, of inclusion and integration, of gratitude and gift’. Paragraph 119 reinforces this with the reminder that ‘it is an important obligation of

⁶² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁶³ Paragraph 53 of the document of the WCC Faith and Order Division, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, is cited.

the people of God to hear the cry of the poor of the earth and to draw attention to the privileged place of the poor'.

This magnificent vision represents a particularly outstanding contribution by the International Theological Commission to the entire *oikoumene*. It is a message of hope and promise that fulfils the expectations roused by both the Decree on Unity and the Decree *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II.

Two important caveats remain to be made. The first is a clarification, lest there be any misunderstanding on the part of Protestants that Catholic views on Church government have now come much closer to theirs. The Commission are quite clear that though the laity are to be consulted on decisions at all levels in the Church, it is not theirs to make decisions that would then bind the individual diocesan bishop, the episcopal college or the Pope.⁶⁴ The role of the bishop in decision taking is fundamental at the level of the diocese as local church, as is the role of the national conferences of bishops at the relevant levels, and that of the entire college of bishops at the universal level, and this last always in communion with the Bishop of Rome. The Commission do recommend that canon law should be adjusted to require priests to have a parish council. At the moment whether such a council exists is at the discretion of parish priests.⁶⁵ The second point to make is that any process of acting on creating an institutional structure for consulting the laity is likely to take a long time. Francis has indicated that the next step is likely to involve a synod of bishops to discuss synodality further.

A misunderstanding on the part of the Commission is recorded in paragraph 36. The Commission alleges that the Reformation churches see the choice of ministers in Protestant churches, and their resultant authority as ministers, as stemming from their choice by the people. This is true of the radical Reformation churches, such as the Baptists and Congregationalists, but not true of the magisterial Reformation or, indeed, of Methodism, which, until the 1870's, in its two foundational

⁶⁴ This is stressed in *Synodality* 69 which makes a clear distinction between *decision making*, which is a job for the entire people and their ministers discerning together, and *decision taking*, which is in the competence of the bishop or bishops involved. Paragraph 67 also stresses that the authority of the pastors is 'not a delegated and representative function of the people but a special gift for upbuilding the entire people'.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.

branches, vested ultimate authority in the ministers or travelling preachers in conference, who ‘watch over the Connexion and each other in faith and love’, in a way similar to that in which Catholic bishops watch over their individual dioceses, but also have a common responsibility along with the Pope for the welfare on the whole Church. It is true that Luther did believe that, in emergency circumstances, the people should elect new ministers, but Lutherans, and Methodists later, believed in the authority and divine institution of the pastoral office.⁶⁶

Both Protestants and Anglicans have constitutional structures at more local and national/provincial levels which involve elected lay representatives. The Commission praises the Anglican balance, with provincial churches being ‘episcopally led and synodically governed’⁶⁷. It is to be noted also that, in the Church of England, changes in liturgy and doctrine must be approved by the House of Bishops and cannot occur purely by majority support in the houses of laity and clergy.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that a move to far greater consultation with the laity will meet with Anglican, Protestant and, in many cases, Orthodox approval. The position of the petrine ministry will remain complex, particularly with regard to the doctrine of papal infallibility and the whole question of the infallibility and indefectibility of the Church.⁶⁸ The relationship between the two will require further serious theological attention. The dicta of Pope Francis himself and the work of the International Commission on synodality establish a springboard for further rapprochement between the Roman Catholic Church and the other churches.

⁶⁶ Albeit that they believed and still believe that this pastoral office can be exercised in differing structures. Thus Methodists in the USA generally have a separate episcopal order, British Methodism has presbyters but no separate episcopate. Some Lutheran churches have an episcopate in historic succession, others don’t. Increasingly, from the 1870’s, lay folk have had a co-ordinate role with ministers in Methodist conferences, it being believed that they have valuable, even necessary, insights to offer as the whole people of God.

⁶⁷ *Synodality* 36.

⁶⁸ *Infallibility* remains a problem for most Protestants, as evidenced in Anglican article 19 which asserts that ‘so also has the Church of Rome erred’ (1571). The final *indefectibility* of the Church is a different matter, cf. C. Wesley in the hymn *Great is our redeeming Lord*, which has appeared in every standard British Methodist hymnbook since 1780, containing the lines, ‘fortified by power divine, the Church can never fail’.

It is greatly to be hoped that wider consultation with the entire community of the baptised will greatly contribute to the mission of the Roman Catholic Church, enabling it to avoid any want of trust between pastors and people which the Wesleyan Methodist pre-ecumenical pioneer described as the 'greatest evil that can befall any church'⁶⁹.

So-what next?

There can be little doubt that the style of Pope Francis' pontificate would greatly facilitate any re-launching of the late Pope John Paul II's appeal for a patient and fraternal dialogue on the potential value of the petrine ministry for the whole Christian Church. The present pontiff is insistent that this is a ministry not *above* the Church, but *within* it, in solidarity with his brother bishops and the entire people of God, the latter potentially including all baptised Christians of other traditions from whom much is to be fruitfully learned and whose patrimony is part of that *rich embellishment* of the common Tradition, to which John Paul II alluded in *Ut Unum Sint*⁷⁰.

I would suggest that there are five key ways in which a petrine ministry 'open to a new situation' of closer rapprochement between the various communions, might serve the needs of all the potential partners concerned.

The first, and probably the most urgently needed in the current world situation is for a universally recognised spokesman for all the Christian world in two contexts: in inter-faith relationships and in witness to Christian principles of peace and social justice to the secular powers. This would help leaders of other religious communities, who would be able to interact with an established interlocutor, able to highlight the key Christian basics, most particularly relating to the person and work of Christ. It would also make secular rulers aware of the common vocation of all Christians, as part of their common discipleship of Christ, to work for the common good in just social relationships across the world.

Next, a petrine minister 'open to a new situation' would encourage mutual respect and learning between churches of all traditions at all levels. He would fulfil the hope of Nicholas Lash that the whole Church

⁶⁹W. J. Shrewsbury, *An essay on the Scriptural Character of the Wesleyan Methodist Economy* (1840), 54. Shrewsbury was writing at the time of internal schisms from the main connexion.

⁷⁰ Paragraph 85.

should always be *simultaneously* a *teaching* and a *learning* Church. It is worth noting in this context that a gradual development towards such a state began under Leo XIII with his decree *Orientalium Dignitas* (1895), designed to encourage more respect for the Eastern churches amongst Latin rite Christians. The petrine minister would stand as the key encourager and facilitator of receptive ecumenism throughout the churches. Some years ago, it was suggested that Anglican bishops might sometimes accompany their neighbouring Catholic bishops on their *ad limina* visits to Rome. Such visits, on a wider scale and including leaders from other communions, would be instructive for all, popes and their visitors, and would give the petrine minister even wider insights than he already receives from his Catholic brethren. In particular, each pope would be able, in communion, to live out advice originally given by John Paul II at the millennium.

Preparing ourselves for the sacrifice of unity means changing our viewpoint, broadening our horizons, knowing how to recognise the action of the Holy Spirit, who is at work in our brethren, discovering new dimensions of holiness and opening ourselves to fresh aspects of Christian commitment.⁷¹

Thirdly, a universal primate could act as a final arbitrator in disputes between churches of particular communions. No leading minister in the other major current communions has such authority. Patriarchs of Constantinople and archbishops of Canterbury are *primus inter pares*, they have considerable moral authority and try their best to be conciliators but cannot easily effect reconciliations, as has been painfully shown in the Anglican Communion in respect of differences over the ordination of women and issues of sexuality. The holding of the Lambeth Conference in 2008 saw refusals to attend on the part of considerable numbers of African and other bishops, protesting against the 'unbiblical' attitudes of many Anglicans in North America and Britain, particularly over sexual relationships.

Bishops of Rome have been acting in settlement of disputes since the Council of Sardica in 343, a council which, however, has been differently interpreted in East and West.⁷²

⁷¹ Cited in *The Wisdom of John Paul II-A Summary* (Catholic Truth Society, 2001), 103.

⁷² For a good account, see p. McPartlan, *A Service of Love. Papal Primacy, the Eucharist and Church Unity* (2013), 59-64.

Churches within the Lutheran World Federation experience similar tensions to those experienced by Anglicans. The United Methodist Church, a global church since it includes many overseas conferences as well as the numerically dominant one in the States, is currently undergoing a process that one can only call a schism by agreement as a result of disputes over whether ministers in same sex partnerships should be allowed to exercise ministry.⁷³ There are also occasional territorial disputes, as when the Methodist Conference of Southern Africa found that a black-led US Methodist Church was proposing a mission within their area about which it had not consulted their Conference. In such situations, the mediating advice of a universal primate might prove of great help.

A fourth service that a universal primate might render is that of reminding individual churches, and even, in extremis, particular theologians, of the need for balance in the presentation of Christian teaching and practice. The Church, as a community of fallible human beings, is liable at times, to forget, or at least under-emphasise, certain aspects of the wholeness of Christian truth and practice. Sometimes, as noted by ARCIC, it is necessary to rediscover and re-receive forgotten aspects of the Tradition.⁷⁴ Benedict XVI stressed this when he commended Luther for his deep sense of the seriousness of sin, a sense that he felt had been largely lost in the contemporary Church.

Finally, the Universal primate would benefit the world as well as the Church by continuing the great teaching ministry of the pontiffs since Vatican II. He can say things that will resonate with those of other faiths and even of no faith as consistent with their own heritages and moral sensitivity. A future petrine minister might suitably issue an encyclical on the Trinity, in order to show our Abrahamic sisters and brothers that the oneness of the one true God is not thereby compromised, but rather made more glorious through the eternal mutual indwelling of the three persons.⁷⁵

These things constitute a vision of a reality that I long to see come into existence. However, I must end on a note of realistic caution. There is much theological work to be done in all the dialogues, particularly on

⁷³ As related in the (British) *Methodist Recorder*, 17.1.2020.

⁷⁴ As in *The Gift of Authority* 25.

⁷⁵ I believe Archbishop Rowan Williams has already tried to do this in a meeting with senior Islamic scholars.

reconciling the teaching of Vatican I on petrine ministry with that of Vatican II and the subsequent bilateral and multilateral dialogues. There is also the need for much fuller grassroots reception in all our churches. Not all my fellow Methodists, for example, will necessarily see things quite as I have put them, nor, by a similar token, will all Lutherans have as advanced an appreciation of the petrine ministry as characterises the Finnish Lutheran-Catholic dialogue of 2016⁷⁶

It is right that we ‘dream dreams and see visions’, as promised to Joel and as fulfilled by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. However, the same Spirit demands that we show persistence and fidelity in prayer and hard work if dreams are to come true! Many questions yet remain to be resolved and will require further patient fraternal dialogue.

⁷⁶ The Finnish Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue report of 2016 deals with *Church, Ministry, Eucharist*. It treats the petrine ministry in paragraphs 348-355 agreeing, in paragraph 349 that ‘when a Lutheran-Catholic differentiated consensus on the theological and practical renewal of this ministry is achieved, the Petrine office of the Bishop of Rome can function as a visible sign and instrument of the Church’s Unity’.

GEOFFREY WAINWRIGHT IN DEEP APPRECIATION

David Carter*

*This article surveys the work and achievement of the Revd Professor Geoffrey Wainwright, the leading ecumenist and liturgist in the Methodist tradition, who died in March. It gives an account of his early formation through the tuition of Raymond George, a pioneering Methodist liturgist and ecumenist, his doctoral studies at Geneva and involvement with the Faith and Order Movement of the WCC. It highlights his deep loyalty to his own tradition and his openness to the insights of other traditions, mentioning in particular his key works, *Eucharist and Eschatology* and *Doxology*. It stresses his contribution to ecumenical dialogue, both bilateral and multilateral, particularly his long service to the international Methodist Roman Catholic dialogue.*

Geoffrey Wainwright, who died aged 79 on 17 March 2020, was the leading scholar within Methodism world on both liturgy and ecumenics. For him, they could never be separated. He saw the Ecumenical and Liturgical Movements as being inextricably linked, each feeding and supporting the other. His book of essays, *Worship with One Accord*, (1997) testifies particularly eloquently to this conviction. Of the assembly for worship, he asserts:

The Church's worship assembly is an expression and a school of faith; its liturgical celebration enacts in ritual mode, the love toward God and neighbour in which true religion consists. Liturgy provides a test case for 'faith and order', 'life and work', 'mission and evangelism', in other words for all aspects of its three key tasks, *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *martyria*. Worship practices should both reflect the existing degree of unity and further it.¹

In the above mentioned book, and in many others, Wainwright describes the mutually enhancing influence of the Ecumenical and Liturgical Movements on each other, identifying, for example, the great

* David Carter, see above p. 60.

¹ G. Wainwright, *Worship with One Accord* (1997), vii,viii.

influence of the work of the Anglican liturgist, Gregory Dix, on both Roman Catholic and Lutheran liturgists as they sought to recover the unifying common elements of the patristic Eucharistic tradition and employ them in the liturgical renewal of the late twentieth century.² He mentions the close consultation with observers from other traditions that influenced and benefited the post Vatican II Council as it worked on liturgical change for the Roman Catholic Church.³

In carrying out his own work as ecumenist and liturgist, Wainwright was intensely loyal, both to his own tradition and to the widest possible range of other Christian traditions from whose liturgies he himself, was to derive so much richness and inspiration. His knowledge of the hymnody of Charles Wesley, still so influential in the British Methodism of his post-World War II childhood, was considerable and was used to illustrate many key points, both theologically and liturgically.⁴ Wainwright regarded singing as one of the greatest elements in praise and one which ‘most readily allows for communal expression’⁵. At the same time, Wainwright’s knowledge, from his student days, of the liturgies of other churches was profound, including those of the Orthodox churches, both Byzantine and Oriental. Most Methodists, at this time, would have had little knowledge or consciousness of these liturgies. In his developing work, Wainwright fulfilled all that was best in his own Methodist tradition, whilst, enabled by the developments that had taken place in the Ecumenical Movement, being able to have a broader vision and to achieve greater distinction than his predecessors, whom he nevertheless deeply honoured.

In a significant work, published in 1840, the Wesleyan minister, William Shrewsbury, had reminded the Methodist people of an earlier appeal of their Conference in 1820 to ‘ever maintain the kind and catholic spirit of primitive Methodism towards all denominations of Christians holding the Head’ and of the need to speak affirmatively of others, even where such kindness was not reciprocated. He reminded the Methodists that they were ‘the debtors of all’ in the reception of so

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ His knowledge extended far beyond the 300 or so hymns still in the 1933 (British) *Methodist Hymn Book* to many others.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.21. He cites also Isaac Watts with his call to ‘make this duty (i.e. of worship) our delight’.

many spiritual riches from others, particularly Anglicans, Puritan divines and continental pietists.⁶ Wesley had mediated these riches to his preachers⁷ and Wainwright, a son in the gospel of Mr Wesley, and also a preacher, was to mediate, in almost everything he wrote, further riches to the Methodist people from the global *oikoumene*.

In this essay, I will first give a fuller account of Wainwright's background and formation, then proceed to look at his particular achievement in writing, and finally, deal with his distinguished contribution both to multilateral dialogue through his work with the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and to bilateral Methodist dialogue with other communions.

Wainwright's formation

Wainwright was a Yorkshire man, brought up in England's biggest county, where Methodism was traditionally strong and where people had a strong sense of regional pride and character. Yorkshire people are famous for being plain spoken, 'calling a spade a spade', to use an old expression. Forthrightness and clarity in expression were virtues that Geoffrey Wainwright respected in others and practised for himself, particularly when he felt that the purity of the Trinitarian faith, as systematised and expounded by the Cappadocian fathers, was being impugned by any advanced liberal and dubious re-interpretations.

In the late eighties, I was present at a meeting of the British Methodist Faith and Order Committee. It was at a time when feminists and some others were challenging patriarchal language and concepts in worship and preaching. We were discussing the admissibility, or otherwise, of using the terms *Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer*, alongside or even as alternatives, to the traditional *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*. Geoffrey, still technically a member of the committee, sent us a magisterial note warning us to do no such thing since we would then be departing from the Apostolic Tradition.

The deepest bedrock of his theological stance was devotion to the triune God as revealed in Christ and in the sending of the Spirit. More

⁶ W. J. Shrewsbury, *A Scriptural Account of the Wesleyan Methodist Economy* (1840), 89-90.

⁷ In his *Christian Library*, a compilation of writings from these sources, plus also some contemporary Roman catholic spiritual writers, which he compiled for the edification and education of his preachers.

than once, he quoted his favourite summary of the ultimate Christian hope, from Wesley's sermon, 'On the New Creation'.

And to crown all, there will be a deep, an uninterrupted union with God, a constant communion with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, through the Spirit; a continual enjoyment of the Three-one God and of all creatures in him.⁸

For Wainwright, the doctrine of the Trinity was above all doxological. Following Wesley closely, he saw it as encompassing, first, God's approach to us, then our response to him in worship and in life. The Father, in accordance with his eternal counsel, sends the incarnate Son, who reveals his fatherly love and carries out his mission, culminating in the paschal events in which the Son first gives himself up to death and is then raised by the Father in the power of the Spirit, who, forty days later is poured out upon the infant Church.⁹ The Church thenceforth, worships the Father, through the mediation of the Son, in the power of the Spirit.

Wainwright was insistent that, though the final systematisation of the doctrine was not achieved until the fourth century, it nevertheless reflected Jesus' own witness and practice in experiencing and addressing the Father as 'Abba', in sharing this address with the disciples, and in his giving them the model prayer. This is at the most basic root of the entire Christian tradition.¹⁰

Wainwright's earliest exposure to such a tradition came from his childhood in a Yorkshire village Methodist chapel where, as he himself testifies, he learnt to sing his faith through the words of Charles Wesley. It was such hymns that were the liturgy of the ordinary Methodists of the time and the source of their understanding of the saving work of the Trinity.¹¹

The late Canon Donald Allchin, an Anglican expert on both Methodism and Orthodoxy, used to point out that a feature

⁸ E.g. in his *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), 273.

⁹ See 'Why was Wesley a "Trinitarian"' in his *Methodists in Dialog*, *ibid.*, 261-274.

¹⁰ See his particularly powerful statement of the doctrine in *Worship with One Accord*, *op cit*, 237-250, esp. 246: 'the trinitarian name of God is given to us with Jesus' address to "Abba, Father", his self-understanding and career as "the Son", and his promise of the Holy Spirit.'

¹¹ A good example is the trinitarian hymn of praise, 'Father of everlasting grace', which he also cites on p.246.

characterising all three traditions was their liturgical style of theologising, looking to liturgy and worship as key sources of authority, in contrast both to the scholastic approach of Rome, from the high Middle Ages until the middle of the twentieth century, and the magisterial tradition of the continental Reformers. Orthodox as well as Methodists, look to hymns: St Symeon the New Theologian, being one of only three of the Early Fathers styled ‘theologian’ by the Orthodox.¹² Moreover, one may add, that when due account is taken of the enormous differences between the poetic tradition of tenth century Byzantium and that of eighteenth century England, there is an uncannily similar serendipity in the ability of both the most prolific hymnographer of the western church and his illustrious eastern predecessor, in the happy combination of fervent personal devotion and sober theology which characterises the verse of both. Wainwright’s work was to exemplify the approach outlined by Allchin, using, on a scale previously unmatched by British Methodist scholars, the riches of Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox liturgies.¹³

Geoffrey Wainwright went from an ancient foundation grammar school to Caius College, Cambridge, where, as an undergraduate, he read Modern languages, followed by Theology, thus equipping himself not simply to read key French and German sources in liturgical studies and ecumenism, but also to write in both those languages—and also in Italian.

At this stage, he experienced a call to ordained ministry, and, being accepted by the British Methodist authorities, proceeded to Headingley College, Leeds. In the light of his future career, he made the right choice for him out of the six colleges then available, since it was there that he was to come under the direct influence of the principal, the Revd Raymond George, who was also modern British Methodism’s pioneer liturgical scholar as well as being a competent systematic theologian.¹⁴

¹² A.A. Allchin (ed.), *We Belong to one Another. Methodist, Anglican and Orthodox Essays* (1965).

¹³ I should in all fairness, acknowledge the early work of Brian Frost, a British Methodist layman, in this sphere. He contributed to the Allchin volume, referenced above and later produced *Living in Tension Between East and West* (1984), a pioneering work on the spirituality and traditions of Orthodoxy and Methodism. Americans would also expect the pioneering work of Albert Outler (1908-1989) to be mentioned.

¹⁴ A. Raymond George (1912-1998).

At the same time, Wainwright was to meet a fellow student, the late David Tripp, whose abilities and interests in liturgy and ecumenical theology matched his own. Both were to produce, early on, a significant, liturgical study: Wainwright, his first book, *Christian Initiation*, and Tripp, *The Renewal of the Covenant in the Methodist Tradition*.¹⁵

Many years ago, a student contemporary of Wainwright and Tripp told me how delighted Raymond George had been to have two students in the same year of such ability; students who would certainly be competent to carry on the ecumenical and liturgical work in which he himself had been prominent since the early 1950's. In 2003, Geoffrey Wainwright was to pay Raymond George the posthumous tribute of editing his papers and preparing a biography from them. He detailed his work in ministerial training, his revision of the Methodist Service Book of 1975 and his ecumenical dialogues with Roman Catholics, both in England and at the international level.¹⁶

The final stage in Wainwright's formation was his initial involvement with the World Council of Churches. First, Wainwright was nominated by George as a youth delegate to a meeting of the Faith and Order Commission at Aarhus in Denmark. Later, immediately after ordination in 1966, he was to spend time at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, commencing work on a doctorate. There, he was to come under the rich influence of ecumenists and liturgists from a whole variety of traditions, amongst whom he particularly valued the teaching and insights of an

¹⁵ Published respectively in 1965 and 1969. Tripp, subsequently, did not reach quite the heights that Wainwright did. I, personally, knew Tripp well as we were brought up as teenagers in the same Methodist church in North London, where both he and the then minister, Revd W. Fletcher Fleet, opened my eyes to the importance of liturgy, the significance of the eastern churches (which Fleet had first explored during leaves from padres' duties with the eighth army in World War II). Like Tripp and Wainwright, Fleet was a brilliant linguist, both in terms of modern languages and Oriental biblical languages, also the translator of Jean-Jacques von Allmen's *Theology of Christian Worship*.

¹⁶ G. Wainwright (ed.), *Memoirs Methodist and Ecumenical of A. Raymond George (1912-1998)* (2003).

Orthodox, Nikos Nissiotis (1924-1986), who directed his studies, and of a reformed pastor, F. J. Leenhardt.¹⁷

Between the ending of his training at Headingley and ordination, he was a 'probationer' minister in a pioneering Local Ecumenical Partnership in Liverpool. This entailed sharing accommodation with Anglican colleagues, lay and ministerial, in a building where worship and other aspects of congregational church life were also shared.¹⁸ This was another formative influence, though Wainwright's future career was to be in teaching. His first appointment was to the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Yaounde in Cameroon, one that gave him his first experience of church in the third world and thus of the problems of inculturation in societies radically different from those of the Anglophone world. During this period, he completed his doctorate on the eschatological orientation of the Eucharist. It was almost immediately published under the title *Eucharist and Eschatology* (1971) and established his scholarly reputation.

Brief outline of Wainwright's career

In 1973, Wainwright returned to England. He was then appointed as a tutor at Queen's College, Birmingham, another ecumenical venture since it represented the union of an Anglican college of that name with a former Methodist College, Handsworth. The resultant united institution was to train Anglican and Methodist ordinands as well as some from the United Reformed Church.

In 1978, Wainwright was appointed to the staff of the prestigious Union Theological Seminary in New York. He stayed there for five years but felt increasingly uneasy with its advanced liberal theology which he felt undermined the core Tradition of the Church, a tradition 'catholic, orthodox and evangelical'. He moved to Duke University, one of the most prestigious Methodist universities in the United States, where he stayed for the rest of his teaching career, becoming for many students what Raymond George and Nikos Nissiotis had once been for himself.

¹⁷ Author of a pioneering ecumenically reconciliatory book, *Two Biblical Faiths* (1964), in which he charts the biblical roots both of the Catholic ritual sacramental style and the more prophetic Protestant style.

¹⁸ Local Ecumenical Partnerships were instituted from 1964 onwards as an experiment in local unity in anticipation of further moves by the Church of England and free church partners towards fuller organic unity.

Between 1974 and 1991, much of his energy was absorbed in work for the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. By 1974, that body had already drafted a provisional document on two of the long-term thorniest issues at stake in the Ecumenical Movement: ordained ministry and the two major sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. This document was circulated to the member churches in order to test their reactions and identify what further work was necessary before a more definitive text could be offered for their consideration. Wainwright was appointed to a small group who would examine the responses and work, in the light of them, on the final text.

His other developing strand of work was in inter-confessional dialogue, particularly with Roman Catholics. He was appointed to be Methodist co-chair of the International Dialogue Commission in 1986, co-chairing the next quinquennia of discussions and reports. More will be said about his contribution to both bilateral and multilateral dialogue later in this article.

Wainwright's Theological output

The impressiveness of this was recognised when, at the relatively early age of sixty, and considerably before retirement, Wainwright received a festschrift, adorned with messages from high ranking church leaders, including the then Patriarch of Constantinople and the then Archbishop of Canterbury. His friend and fellow student, David Tripp contributed an initial tribute and a later contribution.¹⁹ Tripp stressed the value of his contemporary's ministry and described him as 'a charitable yet critical interpreter between traditions and as an interpreter of each'. He also stressed the extent to which Wainwright challenged the Methodist people to learn from other traditions.

At this stage, Wainwright already had two hundred and three publications to his credit and he was to continue to publish for over ten years. Much of his work consisted of contributions to dialogues, work undertaken with the World Council's Faith and Order division, or accounts subsequently written, of key processes which it had

¹⁹ 'Geoffrey Wainwright, 'Teacher, Scholar and Churchman', pp. 3-7 and 'Presbyters' Ordination Vows in the Wesleyan family of Churches', pp. 106-115 in *Ecumenical Theology in Worship, Doctrine and Life. Essays Presented to Geoffrey Wainwright on his Sixtieth Birthday* (1999).

initiated.²⁰ He also delivered special and commemorative lectures on key ecumenical occasions, such as the academic paper he presented on the fortieth anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II.²¹ Twice Wainwright presented papers at the invitation of the Centro Pro Unione in Rome on the possibility of an ecumenically recognised role for the Pope as an acknowledged global Christian spokesperson.²² On occasion, he wrote in the form of dialogues to expound the Methodist viewpoint, sometimes with a hint to his fellow Methodists about emphases in the Methodist tradition that should not be neglected.²³ In other writings he shows a deep appreciation of those whom he revered as doughty champions of Christian orthodoxy and unity. Such were two essays that he wrote in praise of Cardinal Ratzinger, Pope Benedict XVI, and the theological biography of Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, one of the architects of the Church of South India and a man whom Wainwright would always have seen as a revered mentor in his width of appreciation of the whole Christian tradition.²⁴

Wainwright's most important works were the first two major books that established his reputation as an ecumenically committed theologian of the highest class, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (1971) and *Doxology* (1978), in which he addressed the common Great Tradition of the early Church, formulated essentially in and through its response in worship to the revelation through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, of the tri-personal God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

²⁰ For example, his papers on the Baptism, Ministry, Eucharist process in, respectively *Worship with One Accord* (1997), 'The Lima Text in the History of Faith and Order' and his 'Methodists Respond to BEM' in *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), 207-222.

²¹ 'Unitatis Redintegratio in Ecumenical Perspective', in *Embracing Purpose* (2007), 148-161.

²² J. Puglisi (ed.), *Petrine Ministry and the Unity of the Church* (1998), 59-82, and J. Puglisi (ed.), *How can the Petrine Ministry Be a Service to the Unity of the Universal Church?* (2010), 284-309.

²³ Particularly those in his *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), especially chapters 14, 16, 17.

²⁴ On Ratzinger, see his essay in W. Rusch, *The Pontificate of Benedict XVI*, 2009, 47-78 and in his own *Embracing Purpose* (2009), 265-290. On Newbigin, see his *Lesslie Newbigin, A Theological Life* (2000).

Eucharist and Eschatology was hailed by a then veteran Anglican scholar, David Edwards, as a magisterial work.²⁵ Wainwright's aim was to set forth an aspect of the understanding of the Eucharist, a subject previously long neglected in the western church. His intention was to complement and enrich its role as the central act of Christian worship. He sought to set the Eucharist firmly in the context of the revived understanding of eschatology as already outlined by earlier twentieth century theologians and to reveal the rich treatment of this perspective as revealed in so many primitive and eastern liturgies. He insisted that the Lord's Supper had to be seen in the context of the many 'kingdom meals' shared by Jesus with others during his ministry; all were in anticipation of the Kingdom, not only the final one. Wainwright also related these to the eschatological focus of the Lord's prayer, arguing that the earlier Fathers who had interpreted the petition for daily bread as relating to the Eucharist as well as that of ordinary sustenance had a valid point. Indeed, those first Christians who stood so near to the source of both the prayer and the Eucharist might well have taken this relationship for granted.²⁶

Wainwright felt that the retrieval of a joyful sense of eschatological expectation added a dimension that had so long been lacking in western Eucharistic theology and practice as traditional western theologians, Protestant and Catholic, had locked horns over sacrifice and memorial (in the pre-anamnesis, 'bare memorial' sense) and had rather ignored the expectant joy and anticipation that should be part of a full Eucharistic experience.²⁷ By contrast, the eastern churches, the Oriental Orthodox perhaps even more than the Byzantines, had continued to stress it as 'the antepast of heaven', pointing forward to the coming of Christ in glory and the consummation of all things in the New Creation. In his second and third chapters Wainwright makes his point with copious illustrations from patristic sources, early sacramentaries and liturgies. He also points to the rich imagery of many of Charles Wesley's Eucharistic hymns, though here one has to admit

²⁵ His comment on the back cover blurb.

²⁶ *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 32.

²⁷ Wainwright takes rather a dim view of the liturgies of the Reformers, though he does admit that Cranmer's rite of 1552 was 'spot on' in terms of clarity as to what he believed and was commending. He mentions John a Lasco as an exception in commending the supper as a joyful anticipation of the life of heaven.

that this remarkable collection never quite played the part that its author would have wished in the eighteenth century revival. Even less did it have a continuing effect on Methodism despite the efforts of Wainwright and others to commend it.²⁸

At the core of Wainwright's argument about the Eucharist as anticipation of the Kingdom, we find four key points. First, that it is an anticipatory taste of the Kingdom, but not its fullness. Secondly, that 'the Eucharistic meal expresses the structure of the reality that God has chosen to bind himself together with men'. Christ takes the food we need for life and invests it with a further significance, announcing and beginning to 'effect God's good pleasure, not merely to provide necessary sustenance, but also the means to enter into communion with himself, Christ being "food, table fellow and host"'. Thirdly, it expresses the fact that the Kingdom has to do 'with the whole of creation and the whole of man'. Finally, it expresses the fact that the material creation has its greatest value through its spiritual destiny of mediating personal communion between God and man. Eating and drinking have to do with the Kingdom in so far as they express righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).²⁹

One may add that this last statement sums up everything that needs to be said about our enjoyment of God's creation. We may enjoy and use it, and must do so thankfully both to and before God, but also *justly* in sharing faithfully with those in need, and in ways that do not exploit or exhaust it. Wainwright was writing well before the ecological crisis became as severe as it now is, but he clearly had a premonition of it and was, of course, speaking in the prophetic tradition of Isaiah and Micah.³⁰

Wainwright concludes his study by positing seven key conclusions amongst which are the polarity between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. Joy is not yet complete, 'marred by our persistence in sin' (one may add that this is true even for the saints, since they are aware that the sin around them still frustrates the achievement of the pleroma).³¹ Particularly relevant is the sixth conclusion that 'at the Eucharist, the

²⁸ Only a few of the 150 Hymns on the Lord's Supper (1745) have ever appeared in Methodist hymnals from 1780 onwards.

²⁹ *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 58-59.

³⁰ Isaiah 2: 2-4 and Micah 4: 1-4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

future is invading the present to fill the moment with content that is part of God's eternal purpose but which is still future in his dealings with men'. Wainwright stresses that the Eucharist can effect transformative experiences in individuals and communities, incomplete as these may be while awaiting final transformation.

He adds four images that the Eucharist may offer in the interim between the 'already' and the 'not yet'. It is a taste of the Kingdom, a sign of it, an image of it, finally it 'epitomises the divine mystery. To the eyes of faith, it is the revelation of God's design for salvation in Jesus Christ'. In support of his stress on taste, he cites two Charles Wesley hymns.

Yet onward I haste
To the heavenly feast;
That that is the fullness, but this is the taste.³²

And

How glorious is the life above
Which in this ordinance we taste.³³

Wainwright thus showed that the Eucharist, precisely and particularly as the song of a joyful pilgrim Church 'en route' for the final triumph of all God's redeeming plan, is central for Christian hope and worship. In doing this, he rendered a valuable service alike to Methodism and the Universal Church.³⁴

In 1975, British Methodism produced, under the direction of Wainwright's own first teacher in liturgy, Raymond George, a new Eucharistic rite, *The Sunday Service*, which included in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving the threefold affirmation by the people,

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.³⁵

And it concluded with the final general thanksgiving:

³² *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933), no. 406.

³³ *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), no. 101.

³⁴ Charles Wesley's awareness of the eschatological stress on the Eucharist in the eastern tradition seems to have come from the Wesley brothers' close connection, early in life, with some of the non-jurors who had a connection with the Orthodox. F. Hunter, *John Wesley and the coming comprehensive Church* (1968), 9-44 is excellent on these links.

³⁵ *Methodist Service Book* (1975), B13.

We thank you Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all mankind.³⁶

One has to admit, however, that the hope of both Wainwright and his mentor that the Eucharist would become the main Sunday service in at least larger Methodist churches was not realised. Many preferred that the traditional diet of the preaching service should remain the staple on the Lord's Day.³⁷

Wainwright's most significant work of all was his magisterial *Doxology*, published in 1978, a systematic theology looking at the development of the Trinitarian faith in the light of the experience of the Christian people in worship. This essay followed naturally from his earlier work on *Eucharist and Ecclesiology* and his instinct that the living tradition of worship was 'the place where the vision of God's desired future comes most clearly into focus'³⁸. In his conclusion 'Rewards', (i.e. of liturgical theology), he argues:

It is in worship that most believers catch the Christian vision... worship embodies and doctrine subserves the divine kingdom and human salvation... a function of liturgy is, by word and sacrament, image and rite, to evoke the future in which God's kingdom and our salvation will be finally achieved. In its light, we appreciate our inheritance.³⁹

Wainwright clearly felt excited by the common Liturgical Movement of his time which he believed would draw the churches closer to unity. He saw it as 'involving a genuine return to the common Christian tradition, in which the core substance of Christianity will be confirmed by joyful discovery of common elements and common pattern, while the openness of communities to one another is likely to bring both challenge and enrichment'⁴⁰.

Wainwright explored thoroughly the ancient tag *Lex orandi, lex credendi*. He accepted it was capable of a double interpretation, either that what is prayed determines belief, or alternatively, that what is prayed is determined by prior belief. He argues that many of the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, B17.

³⁷ A fact recorded in the British Methodist official response to BEM in 1982.

³⁸ *Doxology*, 3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 442.

essentials of worship can be dated back to Jesus himself. He is pattern for worship (shown in his own practice of prayer and particularly in his gift of the Lord's Prayer), mediator in worship, and recipient of worship, the last two relating to the Resurrection.

Wainwright's mastery of biblical, dogmatic and liturgical theology allowed him to understand the way in which the early Church saw the events of Jesus' Pascha as a new divine deliverance, comparable to the Exodus though even greater, and essential to their life and faith. He insisted on the importance of the image of God in humankind as the key hermeneutic principle, the logos being at work in both. He cites the Pauline teaching on Christ as 'the first born Son' and that of Schillebeeckx on Jesus as 'both the definitive parable of God and the definitive paradigm of humanity'⁴¹. He refers to the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* to explain how Christ can be understood as fully God and yet also as a mediator: the Father remains the 'arche' or source of the godhead and thus Christ relates to Him, both in his humanity and in his divinity, in a filial relationship. Christian worship is directed to the Father as the source of the godhead.⁴² At the same time, Christ mediates actively by taking up our imperfect prayers into his own perfect worship of the Father, a point Wainwright was later to use in the international Roman Catholic-Methodist dialogue.⁴³

Keen as he was to champion the liturgy as a key source of doctrinal development, Wainwright also accepted the need for a magisterium, a need that he felt had been realised as early as the apostolic age when Paul had to restrain developments in the Corinthian church resulting from an over-realised eschatology which took little account of sin and ethical imperfection. He accepted that there could be developments in worship which needed to be 'nipped in the bud'⁴⁴. He also accepted that there is a question of how far any human words in response to God can be relied upon. He cited the teaching of his own guide, Nissiotis, to the effect that the celebration of the Eucharist always depends on an action of the Trinity that has to be the subject of petition. He examined the significance of Luther's denunciation of the Mass as a human work and

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴² *Doxology*, 60.

⁴³ *Encountering Christ, The Saviour. Church and Sacraments* (MRCIC report 2011), 35 for its reference to 'the eternal self-giving of the Son to God the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit'.

⁴⁴ *Doxology*, 247, 253.

countered it by describing it as Christ's self-gift to us. Wainwright argued that a high doctrine of the Incarnation, kenotically understood is the best safeguard against any anthropologically or ecclesiologically conceived triumphalism.⁴⁵

No short summary or critique of this book can do justice to its immense richness and its permanent importance to liturgists, ecumenists and dogmatic theologians alike. We may end our consideration of it by citing a paragraph of direct relevance in our currently dysfunctional and epidemic ridden world.

'We may have a clue here as to why the second Advent and final resurrection are still awaited. The Kingdom will only come when each and all of its beneficiaries have been irreversibly changed into the moral and spiritual likeness of God.' This is Wainwright's personal answer to the Universal cry of 'How long, O Lord?' He echoes Charles Wesley's prayer: 'Finish then thy new Creation.'⁴⁶

Wainwright was also the author of other books of considerable merit. Two that deserve special mention, both published in 1997, are *Worship with One Accord: Where Liturgy and Ecumenism Embrace* and *For Our Salvation. Two Approaches to the Work of Christ*.

In the first, he commences with a chapter in which he commends alike the ecumenical and liturgical achievement of the Church of South India over its first few years.⁴⁷ In his second chapter, in the section 'Worship in the City of God', he reinforces his earlier teaching on the Eucharist as a 'foretaste of the marriage feast of the Lamb', an emphasis he shares with the late Louis Bouyer.⁴⁸ In chapter 12 on 'Eucharist and/as Ethics', he stresses the importance of grateful Christian self-offering to the work of God as removed from any taint of Pelagianism or works righteousness.⁴⁹

Wainwright's *For Our Salvation* looks at the work of Christ through two lenses, one of which he considers predominantly Catholic with its

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 461. The phrase 'pure and spotless let us be', follows immediately after.

⁴⁷ *Worship with One Accord*, 1-19. He notes pages 11-12 the aim of drawing on the ancient liturgies of the Church, particularly those of the indigenous St Thomas churches whilst submitting them to 'the critical insights of the Reformation'.

⁴⁸ *Worship*, 21-25. On Bouyer, see the recent excellent book by B. Lesoing, *Vers la plénitude du Christ* (2017).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

stress on sacramental embodiment, encompassing all the human senses. The other, the traditional Reformed stress on the three offices of Christ, prophet, priest and king, he sees as primarily Protestant, albeit also influencing Roman Catholic theology at, and after, Vatican II. Through the first lens, considered the more Catholic one, Wainwright nevertheless drew attention to a dictum of Calvin, 'it is to our interest that all our senses be exercised in the promises of God, by which they are better confirmed to us'⁵⁰. He also draws attention to the word *dabar*, used often in the Old Testament to refer to completed actions. Wainwright quotes the statement of the United Methodist Church that in the Eucharist, 'God's effectual word is there revealed, proclaimed, heard, seen and tasted'. Later, Wainwright refers to the sense of smell and even finds a biblical justification for the use of incense in worship, citing its use as described in the Old Testament, but above all referring to the nature of the people of God as related in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16.

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God, among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.⁵¹

Perhaps an unprecedented suggestion for a Methodist to make!

Wainwright argues that speaking of Christ 'in terms of the three-fold office (i.e. prophet, priest and king) has the value of uniting doxology and dogma'. He examines each office in terms of its christological, baptismal, soteriological, ministerial and ecclesiological uses. He cites Newman to make the point that the three offices can apply to 'the three principal conditions of mankind, suffering, labouring and teaching that we might know how to suffer, how to labour, how to teach'⁵².

Dialogue

Wainwright made a tremendous contribution to ecumenical dialogue, both multilateral and bilateral. The first particularly absorbed his energy from 1974 to 1991, when he worked with the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, first on the *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* project of the WCC from 1974, then later with the next big project on

⁵⁰ *For Our Salvation*, 13.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 119.

Confessing the Apostolic Faith which produced its report in 1991.⁵³ In the first, he was appointed to the small committee which looked at the provisional responses of member churches of the World Council to the interim Accra report of 1974. This work was carried out with a view to developing, in the light of the responses received to the 1974 draft, a convergent document. It was understood that the 1982 document would be unlikely to receive the complete endorsement of all the member churches, but it was hoped that it would establish a set of affirmations on which they would be able to see consistency with the faith of the Church as they had received it across the ages. Wainwright, together with John Zizioulas and the Roman Catholic George Tavard, were appointed to analyse the final responses. Wainwright was disappointed that some of the more Protestant responses were rather negative, seeing the 1982 document as 'too catholicising'⁵⁴.

Wainwright gives an account of his involvement in both multilateral and bilateral dialogue in *Methodists in Dialog* (1995). He also accompanies it with an explanation of Methodist principles to be commended, laying particular stress on the meaning of Wesley's distinction between doctrines and opinions. The former constituted vital teachings indispensable to any claim to central Christian orthodoxy whereas a variety of opinions could exist legitimately provided that they did not strike at the root of the essence of the apostolic faith; amongst these legitimate differences Wesley included a variety of ecclesiological structures which did not contradict truths essential to salvation.⁵⁵

Wainwright also listed six essential characteristics of the Wesleyan tradition which Methodists should commend to the attention of all, while taking due care themselves not to neglect them. These were: the Scriptures as the primary abiding testimony to the apostolic faith; the commitment to evangelism; the careful distinction (noted above) between doctrine and opinions; the expectation of sanctification as the quest of every Christian; concern for the poor and marginalised (a concern which brings Catholics and Methodists particularly close

⁵³ *Methodists in Dialog* (1995), 16-19, also 189-222.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 207-222 in which he considers the Methodist responses.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, chapter 14 'Doctrine, Opinions and Christian Unity', 231-236.

under the present pontificate) and the importance of frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper.⁵⁶

Wainwright was involved at various times in bi-lateral dialogues with Lutherans, Reformed and Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic dialogue lasted from 1983 to 2011 and during this time, from 1986, he was also the Methodist Co-Chairman. It was during his Methodist chairmanship that the Roman Catholic dialogue, which lasted much longer than the others, made great progress. It dealt with serious ecclesiological and sacramental issues in the last two quinquennia over which Wainwright co-presided. The ecclesiological quinquennium, 2001-2006 revealed the deep consonance of the Catholic ecclesiology of Church as *koinonia* with the Methodist 'connexionalism', even though the embodying structures differed so much. There was also, on the part of members of both churches, as Wainwright acknowledged, a desire to be challenged by one another.⁵⁷ This willingness to be challenged was a consequence of the increasingly close friendship between the members of the two churches within the group. Wainwright chaired the final quinquennium on the sacraments of baptism and eucharist, which also made great progress, particularly with regard to the Eucharist and won the admiration of the veteran Anglican ecumenist, Bishop Christopher Hill, who said that ARCIC would have been greatly helped in its earlier work on the Eucharist had the MRCIC document then been available.⁵⁸

Wainwright also made distinguished contributions to the dialogues with the Reformed and the Lutherans. In the former, he tackled the thorny issue of 'perfect salvation in the teaching of Wesley and Calvin', showing that there was more similarity than had been assumed, not just in the heady conflicts of the eighteenth century, but also up to his own time.⁵⁹ He once admitted to me the difficulty of getting over to the more naive Methodist students, the sheer complexity of New

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 283-284. 'Features to be strengthened in contemporary Methodism if we are to maintain our historical identity and keep on.'

⁵⁷ Wainwright gives a clear account of this particular dialogue in his *Embracing Purpose. Essays on God, the World and the Church* (2007), chapter 10, esp. 200-201.

⁵⁸ See the document *Encountering Christ the Saviour-Church and Sacraments* (2011). I commented on both this and its predecessor of 2006 in *Ecumenical Trends* of February 2007 and October 2011.

⁵⁹ *Methodists in Dialog*, 179-185.

Testament teaching on the availability of salvation. Because of his own rigorous commitment to truth, Wainwright believed that this must continue to be the subject of theological exploration.

Wainwright also took part in valuable preliminary negotiations for an Orthodox-Methodist dialogue which, sadly, did not materialise because of objections from the Russian Orthodox.⁶⁰ Wainwright was insistent that this was a dialogue that Methodism badly needed. It needed 'the body and soul exposure to the richly sacramental practice of Orthodox worship. It needed the witness to the central dogmas of Christology and Trinity. It needed the Orthodox witness to Tradition and the understanding that there could be 'no leaping straight back to the Scriptures'⁶¹.

Finally

Geoffrey Wainwright was unquestionably the greatest Methodist servant of the Ecumenical Movement to date. Methodism itself also owes him a great debt as a liturgist, and should continue to learn from him on both the liturgical and ecumenical fronts. He was indisputably one of the 'greats' of his time, comparable in influence to Dame Mary Tanner, Jean-Marie Tillard, and John Zizioulas and, conceivably, even more fruitful than his own revered teachers, George, Nissiotis and Leenhardt.

One of Wainwright's achievements was to write a full scale theological biography of one of his earlier heroes, Bishop Leslie Newbiggin of the Church of South India. Someday, someone should emulate this achievement and write a similar biography of Geoffrey Wainwright.

Faithful and fruitful servant of Christ. May he rest in peace.

⁶⁰ At the time, the Russian Orthodox were deeply affronted by what they saw as two western assaults on their territory by John Paul II, when he appointed four Latin rite bishops for Russia, and by the United Methodist Church when it appointed a bishop for the small Methodist communities in Latvia and Estonia, then under the USSR. Both churches assured the Orthodox that these appointments were for the pastoral care of existing communities and that there was no intention of proselytising among the Orthodox population.

⁶¹ *Methodists in Dialogue*, 179-185.

CATHOLICS AND EVANGELICALS: DOING IT THE FRENCH WAY

Gordon Margery*

*A Baptist minister looks at the unique contribution of the Groupe national de conversations catholiques-évangéliques (National Catholic-Evangelical Conversation Group) to relations between Catholics and Evangelicals in France. From its discreet beginnings in 1998, the Group has come to epitomise the change from hostility and ignorance to a form of mutual, albeit only partial, recognition. Their short book, *Évangéliser aujourd'hui (Evangelising Today)*, published in 2017, explores three areas where there is, despite differences in vocabulary and in theology, a measure of consensus: evangelism, conversion and salvation. They found no consensus over baptism, the subject of the fourth chapter, but attempted to clear away misunderstandings on both sides. In a wider context, the author points out several areas in which Catholic and Evangelical practices converge and comments on the difficulties Catholics sometimes encounter when they try to engage with Evangelicals¹*

An ecumenical conversion

It was in Rennes that I first became convinced that I needed to develop some kind of relationship with representatives of the Roman Catholic

* Gordon Margery was brought up in England and came to France in 1969 in order to serve French evangelical churches. He saw what it was to start new communities, and felt called to start one in Rennes. He was then invited to be the pastor of a larger multicultural church in the Paris suburbs. He is now officially retired. He taught for many years at the Geneva Bible Institute and now does two courses for the Nogent Bible Institute, near Paris. He was also for several years the president of the Association évangélique d'Églises baptistes de langue française, one of the two historic Baptist denominations in France. Brought up in the Methodist church, he came to a decisive experience of Christ in 1966 through the witness of the Christian Union in Oxford and an evangelical Anglican church there. He was baptised as an adult believer in 1970.

¹ With thanks to father Luc Forestier and pastor Jean-Paul Remppe for their suggestions.

church. Up till then, my understanding of Catholicism had come from studying Luther as part of my German course at Oxford, from reading polemical presentations by American and Northern Irish writers, and from the anecdotes of my Evangelical colleagues. Most of the people from a Catholic background I had met seemed to have no knowledge of the Bible and little desire to follow Christ personally.

The turnabout came as a result of reading yet another newspaper article that treated Evangelical churches as sects. If I could be upset about the caricatures that affected me and my beliefs, I had to make sure that I was not entertaining wrong ideas about Roman Catholics. Jesus said: 'Do to others as you would have them do to you.'²

But in those days, many French evangelicals were extremely suspicious of the ecumenical movement. I needed some kind of relationship that would not involve committing my own local church to something many would have seen as a compromise. That relationship came about through an ecumenical Bible study group that met at the Catholic seminary, under the leadership of the librarian, who came from a Protestant family. Alternating biblical and doctrinal themes, the group enabled me to share with Catholics in a friendly environment. Then, when I came to the Paris region, I started to go to the service held during the week of prayer for Christian unity, still as a private initiative, without committing my local church.

This cautious openness must have been noticed, for in 2007 the rather conservative *Fédération évangélique de France*, to which our churches belonged, asked me to be their representative on a team from the broader-based Evangelical Alliance meeting regularly with delegates from the Catholic Bishops' Conference. At that time, the word 'dialogue' was felt by the Evangelicals to be too official, so the meetings were called *Groupe de conversations évangéliques-catholiques*, or Evangelical-Catholic Conversation Group. The group's name has evolved recently, adding the word *national* to distinguish it from local initiatives and citing the partners in alphabetical order. I have co-chaired the group since 2013.

² Luke 6:31.

The *Groupe national de conversations catholiques-évangéliques*

The group's origins can be traced back to 1996, and to an event organised by Jean Vannier's movement *L'Arche* in favour of mentally handicapped people. It was there that Mgr Gérard Daucourt, then president of the Episcopal Commission for Christian Unity, and Daniel Rivaud, pastor in one of the charismatic denominations, discovered that they had more in common than was generally believed. They had similar views on ethical issues and on the historic doctrines of the creeds. They exchanged letters, met again, and then decided to bring more people on board.

At that time, Evangelicals as a whole were a little-known and despised minority, and they saw Catholicism as their traditional enemy. The general public thought Evangelicals were a new and dangerous sect, like the Moonies, and from a Catholic viewpoint they had no history, no theology, and no identifiable organisation. They were compared to an interstellar dust-cloud.³ The Evangelicals stood in the tradition of the sixteenth century Reformers and accused the Catholics of taking on traditions that were not biblical, obscuring salvation by grace alone, and practising idolatry. The Vatican was compared to the ungodly persecutors of the book of Revelation.

The Episcopal commission for Christian Unity immediately agreed to the setting up of a group and appointed one bishop, four priests and one lay theologian to represent them. But on the Evangelical side things were more complicated. Daniel Rivaud recruited four people on a personal basis, making sure that the main strands of Evangelical conviction were represented: Pentecostals, Charismatics and Baptists, and very quickly the Open Brethren. One man agreed to come only on the understanding that his name would never be mentioned in public. The first meeting took place on 16 June 1998. The group's aim was to achieve better mutual understanding and to exchange on ethical issues. It became rapidly apparent that the priority should be to reach a truer appreciation of what the other side believed and practised.

Recognition of the Group by the Evangelical community came about gradually. One early member was motivated by a purely personal

³ *Une nébuleuse.*

commitment to speak on behalf of classical Evangelicalism. His local church then accepted and recognised what he was doing, followed by his denomination and finally, in 2006, the French Evangelical Alliance, a total process of eight years.

2006 was a landmark. The Group produced a document presenting the history, beliefs and organisation of the Evangelical movement to a Catholic audience. The starting point for the different topics was generally a draft text provided by the Evangelicals and then thoroughly revised by the whole group. Certain things needed to be better explained for a Catholic readership. Any polemical accents were eliminated. The Catholics refrained from commenting on Evangelical doctrines. The result was a remarkably balanced and irenic text published by a very official Catholic publisher, the *Documents Episcopats*, which aims at providing resources for Catholic leaders. It was 48 pages long and in magazine form, and it was entitled *Regard sur le protestantisme évangélique en France* or Looking at Evangelical Protestantism in France. Many discovered through this document that Evangelicals have a history, a coherent corpus of doctrine, and a form of organisation, which, though not structured hierarchically, can nonetheless be identified and appreciated.

The publication of *Regard sur le protestantisme évangélique en France* induced the French Evangelical Alliance to define its own position. They took on responsibility for the group, thus giving it more formal recognition. Then, when the National Council of French Evangelicals⁴ took on the Evangelical Alliance's missions in 2010, the Conversation Group became part of the CNEF's remit.

The CNEF differs from many national Evangelical alliances in that the members can only be denominations comprising at least five local churches. They are organised in four poles, so as to represent in a balanced way the Assemblies of God, the other Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, the non-Charismatic Evangelical denominations, and those denominations that are at the same time members of the *Fédération Protestante de France* (Protestant Federation of France). A fifth pole allows Evangelical voluntary organisations to be represented. This formal structure gives the CNEF a voice that is truly representative.

⁴ Conseil national des évangéliques de France, often referred to as the CNEF.

The Conversation Group meets three times a year, twice for one day in Paris, and once for two days in the provinces. The longer meeting enables us to share with local leaders and to develop friendship within the Group. We alternate between Catholic and Evangelical venues.

Every meeting begins with prayer. In a Catholic setting, we follow the Catholic tradition and use the office of Lauds. In an Evangelical setting, one person chooses a Bible reading and comments on it, before introducing a time of extempore prayer. Prayer, which should unite, can be divisive. We are careful to pray in such a way that all round the table can say 'amen'.

Évangéliser aujourd'hui (Evangelising Today)

After 2006, it took a little while to decide on a new project for the Group. In view of the massive secularisation of French society, many thought that it was vital for Catholics and Evangelicals to unite in evangelism. The Catholic team were strongly motivated by this theme, but the Evangelicals were divided. Some were enthusiastic, some convinced that their constituency would never accept the idea that we should preach the Gospel together. Finally, it was agreed that we should explore four themes that have a bearing on the idea of joint evangelism, without going so far as to promote it formally. *Évangéliser ensemble* (Evangelising Together), with or without a question mark, became *Évangéliser aujourd'hui (Evangelising Today)*.

The four topics chosen were evangelism, conversion, salvation and baptism. Each topic was prepared by a Catholic-Evangelical tandem, then debated and amended by the whole group.

Evangelism was a theme that revealed a wide consensus. We dealt with the history of missions seen from our double perspective and reproduced significant extracts from official Catholic documents and from the Lausanne committee. Evangelicals, we thought, would be surprised and pleased by what they read about the Catholic outlook on Evangelism, and vice versa.

Within a broad consensus, our use of terms differs. For Evangelicals, evangelism is preaching the basic facts of the Gospel, supporting the proclamation with apologetics, and calling on all people to repent of sin and turn to Christ. After that, Evangelicals would speak about discipleship training for those who respond positively to the message and would not call that evangelism. In Jesus' command to the apostles, making disciples among all the nations is followed by baptism and

further instruction in Christ's teaching, and Evangelicals adhere to that, so we cannot say that the church is absent from their philosophy of evangelism, but it is not to the forefront.

The Catholic vocabulary concerning evangelism is more wide-reaching. It includes the initial kerygma, but embraces everything that could be seen as bringing people, the church and society more into line with the teaching of the Gospel. They have no difficulty in using the apostle Paul's language, when he wrote that he wanted to evangelise the Christians of Rome (Rom. 1:15).

In contrast, the Lausanne documents distinguish between preaching the Gospel and attempting to meet the needs of suffering humanity, but affirm that both are necessary. Social and political action flows from Christ's command to love our neighbours as ourselves. It gives credibility to what we say about Christ.

In a similar fashion, the theme of conversion demonstrates a broad consensus, but two different uses of language. The consensus is that everyone is called upon to turn from evil and turn to Christ in faith and in daily commitment but in the Evangelical world, the use of the term 'conversion' is quite narrow. It refers to an initial life-changing encounter with Christ, often called 'the new birth'. It can be a very specific event, as with Paul's conversion on the Damascus road or it can be more of a process, as it was with C.S. Lewis, and as it often is with children. What happens after that initial turning-point is not called 'conversion', but 'sanctification', or 'growth in grace'. Salvation by grace, through faith, must be followed by discipleship and good works or it could be called into doubt.

From a Catholic standpoint, conversion must be daily and it is the standard term for what Evangelicals call repentance or sanctification. So churches can be called to 'conversion'—which is incomprehensible from an Evangelical standpoint, because conversion implies for them that people were not Christians until then.

In practice, the Roman Catholic church in France knows that old-style Christendom is long gone and that a large majority of people will not be brought up within the church. Adult baptisms are more and more common, and so the idea of conversion as a life-changing event is becoming more familiar: it can be called 'initial conversion'. On the other hand, the continuing development of Evangelical churches means that Evangelicals must give more room to children growing into

a fuller understanding of grace and discipleship, which is more in line with the Catholic experience.

Evangelicals who themselves have had a dramatic experience of turning to Christ sometimes claim that Catholics do not believe in conversion. In so doing they are confusing the use of language in two different *milieux* with the underlying spiritual realities. Catholics may have the impression that the Evangelical view of conversion means a quasi-magical idea of salvation that does not change lives. Both caricatures need to be replaced by a recognition that, on this theme at least, Catholics and Evangelicals are pursuing the same objective.

The third topic, salvation, proved to be the most taxing. The very significant *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, produced in 1999 by the World Lutheran Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, was only a small help to the members of the Group, partly because it has not had a great impact on French evangelical churches, and partly because the Evangelical members of the group had to come to terms personally with a Catholic view on grace which was the opposite of all they had hitherto believed to be the case. Five hundred years of history seemed to say that Rome was opposed to the very foundational beliefs of protestant Christianity: salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and is in no way dependent on human merit. Time and again the Catholic partners needed to assert that they held to these three points and that in so doing they represented the official teaching of their church. Time and again, in different ways, the question came to the fore. If the Evangelical partners accepted that what the Catholics were saying was a true account of their church's teaching they would have to revise their own thinking and be prepared to face critics accusing them of betraying their inheritance. But, in the end, everyone was able to say that the accusation of salvation by works was a hoary prejudice, and that in a similar fashion to accuse Evangelicals of believing in a salvation that produces no love, no discipleship, no obedience to Christ was utterly unfair.

It is probable that the various meanings that can be attributed to the word justification will continue to generate misunderstandings. Catholics are focussed mainly on a Christian's progress in love and his perseverance to the end. Evangelicals make a clear distinction between initial justification, or becoming reconciled to God by faith, and the outworking of God's plan as life goes on, which is called sanctification. But the debate is no longer to be conducted over those issues. If the

priority of grace is now widely accepted and understood, a major question remains: how is grace received? Catholics see the church and the sacraments as playing an essential role: they are gifts of grace and mediate grace. Protestants tend to play down such mediation, and stress above all the immediacy of faith, which responds to the preaching of the Word. These are themes which the Catholic-Evangelical Conversation Group has set itself the task of addressing.

Our consensus over salvation, as such, left unexplored several other important areas which need to be treated separately but it certainly was a milestone in the ongoing Catholic-Evangelical dialogue in France.

The fourth and final chapter in *Évangéliser aujourd'hui (Evangelising Today)* deals with baptism. Here, the lines were well-defined and the discussions simpler. Though there are a number of points of agreement, we have to face the fact that Catholics and Evangelicals have very different theologies and practices, especially since in France Evangelical pedobaptists are thin on the ground. From a Catholic point of view, baptism effects a powerful change in the person being baptised, whether a small child or an adult, washes away original sin, brings new birth and confers on them the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁵ For Protestants, on the other hand, baptism is a sign, a symbol, but is not in itself an act by which God's grace is bestowed. Most French Evangelicals would say that baptism follows on from the preaching of the Gospel, to which people must respond in repentance and faith before being baptised. In such a framework, it is not uncommon for people who were baptised in the Catholic or Reformed tradition to be baptised or re-baptised in Baptist and Pentecostal churches.

However, despite such a clear and divisive difference in our theologies, we were able to narrow the gap to a certain extent. The Catholics were keen to repudiate the idea of baptism as something magical. It takes place within a believing community, presupposes that those baptised will be instructed in the faith, and it needs to be received and confirmed in faith in order to bear fruit. The Evangelicals needed to say that when they baptise an adult who comes from the Catholic church they are not claiming that before believers' baptism the person was a pagan. The person has moved on from the church they were born

⁵ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 1262-3, 1267, 1272. For the Council of Trent, baptism is the 'instrumental cause' of justification (*Decree on Justification*, chap. 7, cf. also chap. 4).

into, but need not deny all the positive things they received through their upbringing.

In their conclusion, the Catholic and Evangelical co-presidents recognise that other subjects need to be dealt with, most notably the means by which God's grace is mediated to us. They say that the work so far has helped to dispel prejudices. It is a means of promoting mutual relationships lived out in truth and love. We are not yet at a stage when we can make formal recommendations about joint evangelism.

How is *Évangéliser aujourd'hui* (Evangelising Today) received?

One important aspect of the book is that it was co-edited by the main Evangelical publisher, Excelsis, and by a well-known Catholic firm, Salvator. Even more significantly, it was examined and approved of by the doctrinal commission of the French bishop's conference and by the *Conseil national des évangéliques de France* (CNEF), our equivalent of the Evangelical Alliance. It is not just a position paper produced by some independent thinkers.

This has meant that Catholic parishes and Catholic dioceses have wanted to use the book as a means of better understanding the Evangelical world and sometimes invite members or past members of the Conversation Group to speak to leaders or to a wider public. Since Vatican II, Catholics have been encouraged to reach out to other Christian communities and to learn from them. Locally, of course, ecumenical commitment varies, but the official line is clear.

An example of this use of the book and of the influence of the Conversation Group was a series of meetings organised in March 2020 by the Catholic dioceses of Valence and Viviers, and by local Protestants. The writer was one of the speakers, and Sister Anne-Marie Petitjean, who had recently left the group at the end of her nine-year mandate, was the other. We shared our experiences at public meetings in the two diocesan houses, and spent the best part of a day in workshops with local Christian leaders. The bishop of Viviers, Mgr Jean-Louis Balsa, gave a short opening address on the urgency of evangelism and a team came to record the afternoon round table for a local radio station.

Though more substantial than similar meetings elsewhere, these meetings typified two recurrent problems. Ecumenical meetings seem in some places to attract a mainly older audience on the Catholic side

and not many leaders on the Evangelical side. In Valence and Viviers, ministers came from the main-line United Protestant Church, which recently brought together the Reformed and Lutheran churches in France, but no pastors came from the Evangelical churches.

Why are French Evangelicals difficult to bring on board?

In my public addresses, I attempted to explain why in many parts of France Evangelicals are not always keen to develop good relations with their Catholic counterparts. Apart from the fact that all Christian leaders these days are under pressure and have to choose between conflicting priorities, the following reasons will apply in various ways to different people.

One reason for lukewarmness among Evangelicals is the history we share with all French Protestants: the early martyrs in Meaux, the nine religious wars, the terrible persecution organised by Louis XIV. Our collective memory contains stories of men being sent to row as slaves in the royal galleys, of people being burnt at the stake, of pastors being broken in every bone on the wheel. Whereas Mennonites have engaged in a process of healing memories with Lutherans and Catholics, and produced with them documents that are a testimony to reconciliation, to my knowledge nothing similar has been done between Catholics and Evangelicals.

Theology is also an important factor. The Conversation Group has attempted to deal with some of the problems, and is tackling others. But informed opinion apart, many Evangelicals would accuse the Catholic church of teaching salvation through the merits of good works, when the Bible sees it as a gift of God's grace, received by faith alone. Catholics, they say, worship Mary and call on the saints for help, when the Bible teaches that there is only one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. The mass is seen as a sacrifice for sin, whereas the Bible teaches that Christ offered himself as a perfect sacrifice for sin once and for all. And tradition, as interpreted by the pope and the Church, has added new and false doctrines to what the Bible teaches. The very strong language of the Reformation era is rarely heard today, but the underlying criticisms are still there. How can one enter into a constructive relationship with a system that is so far off the mark?

Eschatology was at one time another powerful incentive to reject ecumenism in any form. With the rebirth of Israel and the reunification of Jerusalem, many Evangelicals were convinced that the prophecy of

Luke 21:24 had been fulfilled and that the return of Christ was imminent. The terrible warnings of the book of Revelation had to be taken seriously. A false religion, seated on the seven hills of Rome, would deceive the world and persecute the people of God. Rome was Babylon the Great, drunk with the blood of the martyrs. The popularity of that interpretation of prophecy has waned. But where it still prevails, inter-church relationships cannot be easy. In some circles, allergy to the very word ecumenism may be such that the two publications of the Conversation Group studiously avoided the term 'ecumenical', using alternative expressions instead.

Members of French evangelical churches come from a variety of backgrounds. Some have come from Evangelical families, some from no religious tradition at all, and some from Catholicism. When that is the case, some people see their Catholic upbringing in a positive light and are grateful for all that helped them come to their current understanding of Christ and the Gospel. But others will say that they did not find salvation in the Catholic church, that they were lied to (!), that they were forbidden to read the Bible and that their family disowned them. If in a given community there are many who feel that way, a pastor will find it difficult to be more open.

Catholics have been working out the implications of Vatican II for over fifty years whereas, in the Evangelical world, there can rarely be an official line which is promoted from the top downwards. In France, we seem to be halfway between the entrenched opposition of the southern Europeans and the very open approach that prevails to the north. The leaders of the main Evangelical denominations that comprise the CNEF support the work of the Conversation Group, though some might express doubts about particular points. Among the middle leadership things are more contrasted. On the one hand we find local churches and Christians that are happy to work with their Catholic counterparts in different ways; on the other hand, there are many who have not had the opportunity to engage in respectful dialogue and who in fact disapprove of it. The work of the Conversation Group needs to be more widely known, and it will be, as our personal experiences filter down to all levels.

Is the Conversation Group representative?

On paper, the Group could hardly be more representative. The Catholic members are appointed by the National Conference of Bishops. The co-

chairman is a bishop, the co-secretary is the Director of the National Service for Christian Unity. There is one lay theologian, one ordained professional theologian, together with diocesan clergy and regular⁶ clergy. The Evangelical members are now appointed by the National *Evangelical Council*,⁷ which is the only body which can claim the allegiance of more than 70% of all Evangelicals in France. They come from Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal denominations: Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, and Free Church.⁸

Sister Anne-Marie Petitjean, a theologian in the Jesuit university in Paris,⁹ was a much appreciated member from 2008 to 2016. But today, the members are all men. Given the make-up of Catholic and Evangelical church leadership, that is unfortunate, but not surprising.

A more important nuance is that the members of the Group are in the nature of the case people who are interested in dialogue and well-disposed towards their opposite numbers. They also have the theological resources to make that dialogue meaningful. The bishops have not sent people who would be suspicious of the ecumenical tendencies of Vatican II or hostile to Evangelicals. The CNEF has not looked to its anti-ecumenical constituency for recruits. We all have to take account of differences of opinion in our respective churches, but the problem is more acute for the Evangelicals, who work on the basis of consensus rather than top-down leadership.

This inherent bias occasionally comes out when we give account of ourselves to our grass-roots. The Catholics have told us: 'Your people are well-disposed, balanced and theologically able. But our students have never met Evangelicals like that and tell us that you are not typical.' Since the publication of *Evangelising Today*, Evangelical pastors have said: 'But this is not true Catholicism. This is not what the priest said at that funeral I went to. I was brought up as a Catholic and I know what Catholicism is really like. You are only dealing with an Evangelical-friendly elite.' Some even suspect the Catholic side of duplicity.

⁶ That is to say men who follow the rule of an order such as the Dominicans.

⁷ Conseil National des Évangéliques de France, generally spoken of as the CNEF. It is part of the European Evangelical Alliance.

⁸ *Union des Églises Évangéliques Libres*, very different from what 'Free Church' would mean in Scotland.

⁹ Centre Sèvres.

We try to ensure that we compare like with like, the best with the best, and to promote that approach as widely as possible.

So how does one define true Catholicism or true Evangelicalism? The Evangelical side has had to get used to the idea that in Catholicism there is a hierarchy by which to evaluate theological statements. Individual theologians cannot be authoritative, nor, surprisingly, can a pope or the Catechism. Our Catholic partners only wanted to quote as authoritative and binding what has been accepted by a Council, particularly Vatican II.

Chapter 4 of *Evangelising Today*, on baptism, can illustrate this point. The chapter takes issue with the idea that Catholic baptism is something magical and stresses the importance of faith, sometimes before and always after. It also asserts that one has to persevere in the grace of baptism to the end. Now, these points rarely come to the fore in funeral services. Even when the deceased showed no signs of faith in Christ, the priest will usually stress the importance of baptism for their salvation. Pope John Paul II even wrote this:

...The person baptised, 'even if they are not fully conscious of the fact, receives a new life; and in the depths of their being, even if they deny it by their acts, they are transferred to a new homeland, a heavenly home on earth as it were, so efficacious is God's action and assured to the fullest extent, so far does it outweigh anything man can do to deny it or oppose it.'¹⁰

When tackled on these two different approaches, a former member of the Group, a Catholic, said: 'What a pope writes is interesting, but it is not binding.' How does an Evangelical cope with that?

Things are similar on the other side of the fence. Our Catholic partners had to cope with the fact that there is no final and authoritative word on anything, only consensus. But the Lausanne Movement,¹¹ founded by highly respected leaders like Billy Graham and John Stott, has produced three major documents that reflect a broad spectrum of informed Evangelical opinion world-wide. The *Lausanne Covenant* of 1974, the *Manilla Manifesto* of 1989, and the *Cape Town Commitment* of 2010 are centred on evangelism and the fundamental

¹⁰ Apostolic Letter of 2nd January 1980, *Patres Ecclesiae*. My translation is from the French, as the Vatican website has no English version. Cf. also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1272.

¹¹ See their very informative website.

convictions that are linked to it. Though they do not deal with the whole range of Christian theology, together they form a corpus which could be compared to documents from Trent or Vatican II. The CNEF, which is the most representative Evangelical body in France, cites as its foundational documents the statement of faith of the Evangelical Alliance, which is quite short, and the three documents from Lausanne. As the Catholic-Evangelical Conversation Group began to meet, the Catholic theologians often said that through these documents they had discovered the high quality of Evangelical theology and that they envied such clear and wide-ranging texts.

Our Catholic partners have had to accept the diversity of the Evangelical movement and the absence of a strong regulatory body equivalent to the papacy. Evangelical members of the Conversation Group have learned to distinguish on the Catholic side between statements that are truly binding and those whose authority is debatable.

A wider perspective

In the course of twenty years the Conversation Group has evolved from its initial aim of promoting mutual understanding to engaging in theological dialogue. But this is not the only way in which Catholic-Evangelical relationships in France are improving. We have moved out of a context of competition into one of emulation.

From an Evangelical perspective I suspect it is too early to talk of an 'exchange of gifts'. The phrase is readily understood in ecumenical circles: it implies recognising that God is at work in other churches, that they may well have developed insights and practices that one's own church could benefit from. Though that approach is readily asserted in Catholic circles, I have not come across it among Evangelicals.

However, to be pragmatic, an exchange of gifts is already going on. Modern Christian music knows no denominational boundaries. We hear of Catholic priests following courses on church-planting at the Evangelical Faculty at Vaux-sur-Seine or even going to Saddleback, Rick Warren's megachurch in California.¹² Evangelicals sign up for post-graduate studies and other courses at Catholic institutions. Pastors go for short times of prayer and reflection to Catholic monasteries.

¹² Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. See Wikipedia or <https://saddleback.com/visit/about/our-church>

Catholics use resources like the Alpha course, which originated in a charismatic Anglican church.

Locally, some Evangelical families send their children to Catholic schools. Some Evangelicals find that the most convenient way to serve others is to help out in Catholic charities like the *Secours catholique* (Caritas). In various places, Catholics have lent their churches to Evangelicals for a wedding or a funeral. Even more generously, they have lent halls and rooms to Evangelical churches that were starting up. The Baptist church in Lagny-sur-Marne was started in a Catholic parish hall. Before the Baptist church in Faremoutiers had a building of its own, the Benedictine Abbey lent a room for the older children of the Sunday School to meet in, and the nuns even went so far as to change the crucifix on the wall for a simple cross.

Joint evangelism, however, is rare. The campaigns of the Charismatic evangelist Carlos Payan drew support from Catholics in Paris and Lille, but were viewed with some hesitation by non-Charismatic Evangelicals. On Easter Sunday, Catholics and Evangelicals have sometimes come together to bear witness to the resurrection.

On the other hand, leaders have expressed their solidarity when a particular tragedy has struck. When Notre-Dame Cathedral was damaged by fire in April 2019, the president of the CNEF wrote to the Bishop's Conference, and other Evangelical leaders did something similar. More recently, when a Pentecostal church in Mulhouse was unjustly accused in high places of being to blame for the explosion of the Covid-19 epidemic in France, local priests assured them of their prayers and a major Catholic magazine came to their support.

Convergence

Though the theological differences between Catholics and Evangelicals remain significant, in practice it is sometimes appropriate to speak of convergence. Firstly, as we have said, the Roman Catholic Church in France knows that it no longer holds a quasi-monopoly and no longer commands the allegiance of a large section of the population. It is still the cultural and historical reference for many, but probably fewer than 10% of the population go to mass at least once a month, and few couples now get their children baptised. Dioceses have had to reorganise to take account of the fact that village churches are deserted, that they have

fewer priests,¹³ and that the median age of priests is 75¹⁴. France gets help from dioceses in Eastern Europe and from Africa, who send priests over, and these priests take a little time to adapt to a culture where the social status of the priest is no longer recognised. All this means that the Catholic Church is not just a minority, but has become a church which has to organise itself and to think of its mission in a similar way to the Evangelicals. Membership is not on the basis of family tradition or geography, but on the basis of a free commitment of faith. Theology might not put it quite that way, but pragmatism should.

Sociologists who have looked at the Evangelical movement in France have confirmed the, by now, standard four-point description first proposed by D.W. Bebbington in 1989: Evangelicals have a particular regard for the inspiration and authority of the Bible; they focus on the atoning work of Christ on the cross; they believe that human beings need to be converted, and that Christians should express their faith in active commitment. For a long time after World War II, it was impossible to be part of an Evangelical church without attending all the meetings and maintaining a high level of giving. Churches could only be gathered churches. Conversion, in the Evangelical sense, was life-changing and costly. That is still generally true, but as Evangelical churches have grown in number and in respectability, so commitment has become less militant. In the Paris region and elsewhere, there has been an influx of people from Africa and the West Indies, where large Evangelical churches are part of the social fabric. Parents are finding it difficult to pass on the faith to their children. And church life is moving away from being a counter-culture which you have to be very brave to join. It has become more welcoming to seekers of all convictions and none, because all need to be made welcome, whatever their background, and then to be brought on to faith in Christ and consistent discipleship. They discover the church before they discover Christ, which is a reversal of how Evangelicals used to envisage evangelism. So, as the Catholic church becomes more of a confessing church, some

¹³ https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prêtres_catholique#Les_prêtres_catholiques_dans_le_monde, consulted 20/04/2020. In 2017, France had 14,786 priests, against 28,694 in 1995.

¹⁴ That is to say, there are as many priests over 75 as under 75 (figures for 2015 from <https://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2015/07/02/01016-20150702ARTFIG00030-le-nombre-de-pretres-ordonnes-en-france-n-a-jamais-ete-aussi-bas.php>, consulted 20/04/2020).

Evangelical churches, despite their continuing insistence on commitment, are showing signs of becoming churches for the multitude.

A second area where de facto convergence can be seen is in the importance given to house groups, sometimes called home groups or simply small groups. In Evangelical circles, the philosophy behind them is that the church does not only meet in large assemblies for worship and teaching, but in small groups where personal relationships count. The account given of the first church in Jerusalem shows both aspects, not just in the mention of homes alongside the Temple, but in the portrayal of fellowship as a central feature of early Christianity. It is impossible to have meaningful fellowship before or after Sunday worship if the congregation is larger than about fifty. But if a dozen people meet in a home, they can read the Bible together, pray about their personal needs, perhaps adopt a missionary and pray for him or her, and find ways of serving together. Properly led, the small group is a place where people know they belong and where their absence will be noticed.

Several years ago a Catholic magazine ran an article about the rising number of adult baptisms at Easter, drawing attention to the fact that a number of these adult converts failed to persevere. Pondering on this I spoke to a Catholic lady who herself had been converted to Christ late in life and who was a catechist for adults, she said: 'Ah, but you (i.e. Evangelists) have small groups.' These newly baptised Catholics had been encouraged and taught and nurtured for something like two years by a catechist and in small groups, but then, after baptism, they could only look for support to the traditional structures of the church, and they fell by the wayside.

In his pastoral letter of September 2019, Mgr Jean-Louis Balsa, bishop of Viviers, gives a sobering description of the state of Christianity in his diocese and pleads eloquently for a church that is not just responding to a smaller and smaller number of people wanting a taste of religion in their lives, but is actively going out to the population to make Christ known. He sees his diocese as an 'experimental laboratory of salvation'¹⁵. And he identifies 'five things that are essential' if the diocese is to become a 'Christian community of missionary disciples'. These are:

¹⁵ Pages 45-52.

- paying regular attention to the Word of God, handed down by the Apostles,¹⁶
- praying and celebrating the sacraments, of which the Eucharist is the source and summit,
- living in a truly fraternal way,
- serving the poor in particular,
- evangelising those God is calling.

The footnote links these five fundamentals to Acts 2:42-47, a passage which Evangelicals regularly appeal to.

A key feature in the bishop's strategy is the setting up of small groups on a geographical basis in the villages, and on a sociological basis elsewhere: in schools, among young people, in charitable organisations, for example. These small groups are invited to live out the five essentials required of Christian communities of missionary disciples. And according to Matthew (18:20), the minimum number of people for a small group is two.

Now, an Evangelical coming across these pages, notices some specifically Catholic emphases with regard to the groups. In particular, they must function in communion with the whole body of Christ, and that means with recognised leaders and a programme set out at diocesan level. There is a form of liturgy, but there is no Eucharist in these groups or distribution of pre-consecrated hosts, to avoid an alternative liturgy which may weaken the unity of the diocese. Though the preoccupation with unity is certainly present in Evangelical churches, such concern for proper order would be less marked. However, the general concept laid down here is remarkably familiar to what is practised by Evangelicals and shows how, in the light of the Biblical example and as a response to modern society, Catholics and Evangelicals can have a common approach.

The Global Christian Forum

I have explored the theological approach to Catholic Evangelical relations epitomised by the *Groupe national de conversations catholiques-évangéliques* and have tried to put it in the wider French context. A further development needs to be recognised. In November

¹⁶ Mgr Balsa sees this as the weakest of the five points in his diocese, p 50.

2018 a French-language version of the *Global Christian Forum* was organised in Lyons. The basic concept, meeting one another simply as Christians and sharing our experience of Christ, is more congenial to many Evangelicals in France than the workings of great institutions. The aim was to have 50% of the participants from churches that have an ecumenical tradition and 50% from the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches that did not. The final result did not quite meet the target as the participants included about 70% of those from churches with an ecumenical tradition and only about 30% of the others. Nevertheless, for most of the two hundred participants, it was a unique experience, based above all on small, carefully chosen groups where Orthodox, Catholics, traditional Protestants, traditional Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics and Copts could talk about their personal walk with God and see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. More such meetings need to be organised in France: the Conversation Group, with its more theological orientation, cannot function alone.

Conclusion

Catholic and Evangelical leaders are often overworked and need to organise their time quite meticulously if they are to meet the demands placed upon them by their calling and by their constituency's expectations. So it is not unusual for Evangelical pastors to ask me if Catholic-Evangelical dialogue is at all useful: they certainly do not see how they can get involved in it, there is a need for venues and they may even see it as eccentric. The quick answer to their question is that it improves public relations, defends common values and is a joint witness to Christ. However, it is not certain that the ecumenical movement in France has made much difference to the number of people actually coming to Christ.

The justification for the work of the Conversation Group and for the kind of practical initiatives we have mentioned has a firmer foundation than self-interest; it is to be found in Christ's command that his disciples should love one another. If the other person is a brother or sister in Christ, if they are trying to walk with Christ to the best of their knowledge and ability, then I must love them. That love means meeting them, trying to understand them, asking them awkward questions, praying for them, praying with them, and doing together with them whatever can be done in the context of each one's particular convictions.

The question to ask is not: Is it useful? The question is: How can we all grow towards maturity in Christ, in truth and in love?¹⁷

¹⁷ The reference is to Ephesians 4:15 and its context.

THE CURRENT ECUMENICAL LANDSCAPE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

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*The Department of Dialogue and Unity of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has a wide spread of work. In addition to informal ecumenical meetings this extends to dialogues with Judaism, other religions and humanists. Specific ecumenical dialogues in England and Wales are with Anglicans, Methodists, the United Reformed Church, Oriental Orthodox, as well as less structured talks with Eastern Orthodox. The Department makes known the work of the international dialogues and liaises with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Receptive ecumenism plays an increasing role, and more ecumenical progress has been made than most people realise. The Catholic Church plays its part as a member of both Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The Department has studied drafts of a proposed leaflet re-working the one issued by the National Board of Catholic Women after the publication of the Bishops' document *One Bread One Body* in 1998.*

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak today—and it's a great pleasure to be back with you again. I'm aiming to give a rough overall impression, though I'll obviously have more to say about those areas in which I'm more directly involved. I'm grateful for the suggestions I've been given, about the sorts of topics that might be of interest. So I'll

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begin with a quick survey of the areas of work that are covered by the Department for Dialogue and Unity.

I'm going to focus mainly on the Department's ecumenical work, of course, but I'll also add a little information on other forms of dialogue, as I think you may also find this of interest

1. The work of the Department of Dialogue and Unity

1.1 Ecumenical Meetings

Most of the dialogues that have taken place, as described in the next section, have been formal. These sorts of dialogues make it possible to address more specific theological issues than is the case with multi-lateral conversations such as take place in *Churches Together*. Our partners in these dialogues included the Anglicans, the Methodists, the URC and the Oriental Orthodox. We also had informal conversations with the Eastern Orthodox, and had a couple of meetings with some Pentecostal church leaders, but the diverse and evolving nature of Pentecostalism makes the process difficult, because there is no single representative of all Pentecostals with whom one could conduct such a conversation.

Apart from these dialogues, we have also had several joint meetings with the Anglican Bishops which have taken various forms. The first one took place in 2006 during our Bishops' Conference week and the following one consisted of a day of recollection at Lambeth Palace. At the last two meetings we've had table groups based on geography, so that we're discussing things with people from a similar context.

There are a lot more Anglican bishops than Catholic ones, so we agreed that we'd only have the Anglican diocesan bishops and not the suffragan (auxiliary) bishops. This makes the numbers more nearly equal. In the more recent meetings we decided it would be better if any Anglican bishops who wanted to come could do so—obviously with a cap on numbers.

We've found that the meetings work best when they're focused on topics in which we all have a practical pastoral interest, whether or not they're directly related to ecumenism. I suppose this is an example of the idea that ecumenism isn't just about doing 'ecumenical things' but doing things ecumenically. Another improvement has been to involve our Anglican-Catholic dialogue group in the planning, which helps improve the continuity and consistency between meetings.

1.2 Other relations

Dialogue with Judaism

This is quite specialised, because of political sensitivities and concerns about anti-Semitism in society. Sister Margaret Shepherd of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion and Archbishop Kevin McDonald, Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark, take a lead. One particular challenge is to explain the special place of the Jewish religion in relation to the Church, as envisaged by Vatican II. Because we are part of the same tradition, Judaism is more than just one of many 'other religions'. There is also the very delicate question of whether the Old Covenant has been superseded by the New, bearing in mind the principle that 'God never takes back his gifts or revokes his choice' (Rom. 11:29).

Dialogue with other religions

Dialogue with other religions has taken place under the leadership of Bishop Patrick McKinney (Nottingham) and in collaboration with Archbishop Kevin and Katerina Smith-Muller (our Bishops' Conference officer for interreligious relations). There have been various local initiatives, in which Bishop Pat is well placed—as Nottingham and Leicester are particularly convenient for engaging with Muslims. We have periodic gatherings of diocesan interfaith officers. In recent years some of these have been held jointly with diocesan ecumenical officers, to explore common issues and to see what are the distinctive features of these different forms of dialogue.

Humanist dialogues

A dialogue with humanism may sound strange, but we see this as part of the important dialogue, in which we're all involved as Christians with the secular society in which we live. The initial challenge was to find a suitable dialogue partner and various possibilities were explored. After a couple of years, we found that Jeremy Rodell and Duncan McPherson were interested in reviving a local dialogue which had lapsed. Jeremy is the 'Dialogue Officer' for Humanists UK, which was previously called the British Humanist Association. They are more open to dialogue than the British Secular Society, which campaigns explicitly against religion. Our aim is to compare our values and be ready to learn from each other, without any expectation of making converts either way! We've had two meetings so far, in a rather nice pub in Fulwell. In the first one we

explored what we each understand by the term 'Secular' and in the second we compared our ideas about 'Freedom of Thought and Expression'.

Courtyard of the Gentiles

Some years ago the Department set up a group to explore possibilities for opening up a conversation with those who do not profess faith in God, but who are in some way 'engaged by the transcendent'. (I'm quoting here, from a definition which we came up with, after a considerable struggle!) The idea is to explore 'the common ground opened up by the contemplation of a work of art, a piece of literature or of music, which is judged by the one who issues the invitation to be a gateway to the numinous'. We've had a couple of events so far, based on the work of an artist whose wife is a member of our group. We also have links with a conference run in Portsmouth diocese, on a similar theme.

Christian-Muslim Forum

The Department isn't formally part of this, but there are informal links through the participation of (originally) Bishop Michael Evans and (currently) myself. The Forum brings together Christians from different denominations and Muslims from different traditions, to promote engagement between the two religions in various ways. We promote a church-mosque twinning programme, which has been gradually building up over the past three or four years. We have a consultative group which meets three or four times a year, each time to reflect on the responses of our various 'constituencies' to a particular issue. For instance, in recent years the government has come out with documents on 'Religious Supplementary Schools' and on 'Integration and Opportunity'—and our consultative group has been very helpful in the process of refining our published responses on these topics. We have also organised or taken part in various 'high level' events, such as a recent one at Lambeth Palace on 'Public Faith and the Challenge of the Spiritual Life', and a visit from the Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar university (recognised by many Muslims as the greatest authority on Islamic Law).

2. Specific dialogues

2.1 Anglican

The English and Welsh Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (EWARC) is the national equivalent of ARCIC and it also relates to IARCCUM (The International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission). The difference is that ARCIC looks at the theological issues and IARCCUM is concerned with what our churches can do together, in terms of life, worship and mission. EWARC is one of several 'ARCs', including (I think) France and Belgium as well as various parts of the English-speaking world. Each has the aim of making ARCIC and IARCCUM better known in our own local churches, and to feed back information in the opposite direction. This is helped by the fact that EWARC's current Catholic Co-Chair, Archbishop Bernard Longley, also has the same role on ARCIC. The membership of EWARC includes bishops, ordained and lay theologians, teachers and pastoral workers, so that it can have the resources to engage both with theology and with practical pastoral concerns. It has been going for about fifty years, adding the 'and Welsh' to its title fairly recently.

Some of the overnight meetings happen in places where significant ecumenical work is going on locally, which gives an opportunity to learn from the particular group and to encourage them in what they're doing. Examples have included local Churches Together groups; meetings with hospital, prison and Forces chaplains; a meeting with a joint Anglican-Catholic secondary school, and meetings that have taken place at ecumenical retreat houses, theological colleges and Gladstone's Library—an ecumenical resource centre. There was also a meeting at Durham with Paul Murray and members of his Receptive Ecumenism project.

Amongst the resources produced by EWARC is a leaflet *Praying for Unity* and a study guide on *The Joy of the Gospel*, written with ecumenical groups in mind. Members have written short papers on their experience of the Eucharist, responding to the question 'How has your experience of spiritual communion with Christians of other churches/denominations affected your own perception of Eucharistic communion?' Other areas of reflection and work have included Interchurch Families and a recent 'Mapping Exercise' of relations between the Church of England and the Catholic Church in English parishes.

I was a member of this dialogue from 2008 until 2017 (we usually serve for a maximum of two five-year terms). I loved being part of such a mixed group, which gave insights from lay pastoral workers as well as clergy, and gave me a chance to learn from excellent lay theologians who knew much more than I did! General ecumenical contacts have let me experience the life of other denominations, in terms of worship, spirituality, mission and culture—but in this dialogue there was an opportunity to reflect more deeply with the help of people who were well able to explain the features of their own tradition and to compare it with others.

There were two challenges in this dialogue that I think we all struggled with. First, there was the obvious difficulty of reaching out to the typical ‘person in the pew’. The problem wasn’t so much in translating the theology into more familiar language (I think that, between us, we were quite good at that) but in finding ways of getting the message ‘out there’.

Secondly, it wasn’t always easy to find the right balance when it came to sharing our own concerns and, at times, frustrations, about aspects of our own denomination. It was important to be honest; the latest ARCIC document is a good example in that it points out our own weaknesses and indicates areas where we need to learn from each other. On the other hand, we did sometimes find that we were getting into too negative a frame of mind and failing to keep a proper sense of proportion!

2.2 Methodist

I’ve never been involved in this dialogue, but I remember being interested and impressed to hear about it at Department meetings and more informally from the late Bishop Michael Evans (East Anglia) who was also a member of the international dialogue. (Following the same naming pattern as ARCIC, it is known as MRCIC, pronounced ‘Murcick’). When I became a bishop this group had just issued their eighth five-yearly report, entitled *The Grace Given You In Christ*.

One thing that particularly struck me about this report was the number of similarities between Methodism in its origins, and the various renewal movements within the Catholic Church, such as the Franciscans, the reforms of monasticism and the post-Reformation renewal movements. Though these were mostly initiated by saints who founded religious orders, they also had an impact on popular

spirituality more generally. I couldn't help wondering whether, if John Wesley had lived five hundred years earlier, Methodism might have become a religious order or a lay movement within the Catholic Church.

I also noted with interest the growth, not only towards a shared understanding of the Church, but also a shared recognition that what you believe about the Church is important! I believe that Pope Francis is right to say that we Catholics should speak more about Jesus and less about the Church (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* 38). Still, I've also been glad to see that Christians on what I'd call the Evangelical end of the spectrum, have come to appreciate that how we think about the Church makes a difference to other areas of our faith.

This reminds me of what I used to say when I taught philosophy. Everyone has a way of looking at life, an attitude to the world—and, in that sense, a philosophy—whether they realise it or not. This affects the way we live and how we relate to other people. Doing philosophy gives you a language to check whether your own assumptions about the world are reasonable. Not doing this, means that there is more likely to be inconsistency and contradiction in your life. In a similar way, when Avery Dulles famously wrote about *Models of the Church*, he gave us a way of articulating attitudes and assumptions which were already influencing us. It's just that previously, we didn't have a suitable language in which to understand them.

Thinking about Methodism reminds me of an experience that showed me early on, how we can make assumptions that turn out to be totally wrong. In my third year as a seminary student, we did a course in liturgy, and I noticed that one of the main reference books was written by a Methodist. I have to admit that, until then, I hadn't realised that the Methodists *had* a liturgy, let alone were writing seminal books on the subject! I was interested to notice, many years later, that the author had become Co-Chair of MRCIC.

2.3 United Reformed Church

This is much more recent than (for example) EWARC and it's only a couple of years ago that I became Co-Chair of its third five-year period. At the beginning of this, we were given a brief review of the previous two periods. In the first, the focus had been on broad theological issues: *The calling of God's people to holiness; Ethics and pastoral practice; Revelation, authority and the transmission of faith; Conscience and*

authority; Receptive Ecumenism and Belonging to the Church. In the second period, taking up the ideas of Receptive Ecumenism, there was a greater emphasis on personal experience, including a very open sharing about the preconceptions that we have, or used to have, about each other. There were also personal reflections on shared struggles and areas of encouragement.

We have had two overnight meetings so far, in the current period. Our aim has been to have a more pastoral orientation than in previous rounds of the dialogue. At our first meeting we reflected on analogies between saints and modern celebrities, giving rise to a leaflet designed to be used for reflection by individuals and by local groups.

Our second meeting was hosted by the ecumenical church in Milton Keynes, Christ the Cornerstone. In a discussion with about twenty of the congregation and two of the clergy, we invited them to reflect on their experience over the years. They were accustomed to having a Catholic Mass on Saturday evening and an ecumenical service on Sunday morning, which could possibly lead to Catholics becoming a sort of 'community within a community'. In practice, it turns out, this isn't as divisive as it sounds. Outside of the services, people weren't particularly conscious of who were Catholics and who belonged to other denominations. Catholics are well represented on the equivalent of a parish council and in the various volunteer roles on which the church depends. There is a strong shared sense of belonging, similar to what you would find in a conventional parish. They are aware that 'Local Ecumenical Partnerships' are somewhat out of fashion and they were beginning to feel a bit side-lined by current trends in ecumenism. For that reason, they were very pleased by the fact that one of the national ecumenical dialogues was interested in them and impressed by what they'd achieved.

2.4 Oriental Orthodox

Many of you will already know that the title 'Oriental Orthodox Churches' refers to those of the Middle East, such as the Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Indian Orthodox Churches. These are distinct from the Churches generally known as Eastern Orthodox, such as those of Greece, Russia and Romania. Another way of describing them is in terms of the ancient division of the Church into areas governed by the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria. Our own Western or Latin Church was based

on Rome, the Eastern Orthodox on Constantinople and the Oriental Orthodox on Antioch and Alexandria. Because of the link with Constantinople, the Oriental Orthodox sometimes refer to the Eastern Orthodox as ‘Byzantines’—though I don’t think this is intended as a compliment!

Theologically, the Oriental Orthodox separated from the Latin and Greek churches over the Council of Chalcedon and the language of ‘person’ and ‘nature’, as applied to Christ and the Trinity, and the way that the Nicene Creed describes Christ as ‘consubstantial with the Father’. This led the Greek and Latin churches to accuse the Oriental Orthodox of the ‘Monophysite’ heresy, but the dispute is now widely recognised as being due to different interpretations of the particular Greek words. A joint declaration signed by Pope Paul VI and the Coptic Pope Shenouda III recognised that both traditions share the same beliefs about Christ and the Trinity, so that these issues no longer need to divide us. You probably remember that Pope John Paul II spoke of his great desire that we would have Full Communion with the Orthodox in his lifetime—and theologically the obstacles are quite small. It seems to me that, because the Orthodox churches are mostly national ones, the practical obstacles tend to be more political than theological—and the Orthodox themselves don’t always agree on various things!

Our dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox started in 2007, arising out of a conversation between Archbishop Kevin McDonald and Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church. The bishops of our Department for Dialogue and Unity and the bishops of the Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches (in Britain) meet twice a year, with the main aim of deepening our understanding of each other’s traditions. For instance, in recent meetings we have reflected, in turn, on our different practices regarding Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation and Marriage. We have also been looking for ways to overcome the lack of knowledge amongst our people regarding each other’s traditions and have tried to encourage shared prayer and witness. As so often in ecumenical work, the main challenge is to find ways of ‘getting the word out’ to the wider Church community.

2.5 Eastern Orthodox

Informal conversations have been going on for the past few years, between us and the Eastern Orthodox. So far, this has not developed into a formal dialogue at the level of bishops—partly (as far as I can

gather) because of differences of opinion amongst the Orthodox. Despite this, the conversations have been quite productive and the information we have been receiving has been a useful guide to the bishops in our own personal relationships with the Orthodox.

Sadly, the picture has been complicated in the past couple of years, due to divisions arising out of the situation in Ukraine. There have been disagreements between different branches of the Orthodox in Ukraine, regarding their relationship with Moscow. When the Ecumenical Patriarch (Constantinople) gave recognition to one of these churches, the Moscow Patriarch excommunicated him, creating a schism between the two.

3. General observations

3.1 Relationship with international dialogues and the Pontifical Council

The general principle we observe in our national dialogues is that we don't try to duplicate the work of the international dialogues. They naturally focus on the theology and take a universal rather than a local perspective. We see our role as finding ways of making the results of the international dialogues accessible to our people, as well as encouraging local engagement between our respective denominations.

The most difficult part is communication; finding ways of letting people know, that in addition to the good practical cooperation taking place over food banks and Street Pastors, progress is also being made ecumenically. There is a good network of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (or equivalent) as well as people engaged in local Churches Together—but we're still only reaching a relatively small constituency.

The Department itself meets all together twice a year, with smaller working groups getting together more often. This means we're all fairly well aware of what is happening in the dialogues and other initiatives in which we may not be directly involved.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity tends to focus on the international dialogues and on the World Council of Churches but although the Catholic Church isn't a member of the WCC, just an observer, I have come to realise that there is a level of what we might call 'background engagement' which is remarkably active. The two *Ad Limina* visits that I've attended have been very encouraging. Most of the Vatican departments, and certainly the Pontifical Council, paid close

attention to the reports we submitted in advance and we were able to enter into a very open and constructive discussion during our meetings. (This contrasts with what I'd heard about earlier *Ad Limina* visits, in which most of the time was usually spent by the department heads lecturing the bishops!)

In my journal I wrote the following, about our meeting with the Pontifical Council:

This went very well and, as for all today's meetings, we found the staff very responsive and ready to listen. Archbishop Bernard Longley took the lead for this meeting, inviting other bishops to speak on particular topics. This included two that were not primarily ecumenical, but which did have an important ecumenical dimension. The first was the recent Eucharistic Congress, in which there was strong ecumenical participation. For the second, we returned again to the topic of the Holy Land, and the important cooperation of the Anglicans, in particular, with the Holy Land Coordination Group. Speaking about this, Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton and chair of the Holy Land Coordination emphasised the role of Bishop Christopher Chessun of the Anglican diocese of Southwark. He has been very active in this group, for a good many years. After each visit, he and Declan go together to report to (and, no doubt, to question) the Foreign Minister back in Britain.

Of the explicitly ecumenical areas of engagement, we highlighted briefly the following: English ARC and the other dialogues; the joint meetings with the Anglican bishops, and the recent document from ARCIC. After about forty minutes, most of the bishops had to leave, to attend another Congregation. I'd signed up for the Laity and Family Life, but we had decided that some of us would remain behind, to continue the discussion at the PCPCU—and I was one of those who volunteered. Actually, with just seven or eight of us remaining, it was easier to engage in the conversation and we felt in the end that this part of the meeting was particularly valuable.

3.2 Increasing role of Receptive Ecumenism

Receptive Ecumenism is a methodology that moves away, on the one hand, from focusing exclusively on doctrine and, on the other hand, from being only interested in shared mission and social outreach. It rejects the assumption that ecumenism is all about letting go of what is distinctive in our traditions, which would, it is assumed, lead to a sort of 'lowest common denominator' in which we're left with something so bland that no one could possibly disagree with it! Although there may be some attitudes and assumptions which we need to abandon, a degree

of ‘letting go’ which is part of growing in understanding, the fundamental insight is that I do not need to become less Catholic in order for my faith to be enriched by the riches that can be found in other Christian traditions.

This approach is finding its way into many of the international dialogues such as ARCIC. In the 2018 document *Walking Together on the Way*, ARCIC III asks what we can learn from each other in terms of the relationship between the local, regional and universal levels of Church. At the same time, the introduction to *Walking Together* points out that Receptive Ecumenism doesn’t just mean a simple borrowing of ideas. Discernment is needed to see how features from one church might need to be adapted for use in a different context.

For instance, Catholics can learn from the experience of Anglicans regarding the instruments of consultation which are open to participation by laity and priests, as well as bishops. This doesn’t necessarily mean that we’d want to imitate every feature of the General Synod, since the way it works is influenced by the particular relationship between Church and State in this country. In a similar way, Anglicans can learn from the structures that support communion between the different levels in the Catholic Church—for instance, the periodic *Ad Limina* visit that the bishops of each country make to Rome, or having at least one Eucharistic Prayer that is universally used. Applying ideas of this sort to the Anglican context could be fruitful, but they would need to be adapted in various ways.

3.3 Greater progress than is sometimes realised

Many Christians are discouraged by the fact that, after decades of ecumenism, our churches remain separated. As a result, it’s often assumed that no progress has been made, but in fact a lot has been achieved over the years—more than is generally recognised.

A prime example of this is the *Joint Declaration on Justification* (1999). Most Christians have never heard of it, yet it resolved the major issue that divided us at the Reformation and has since been adopted by a number of churches other than the Catholic and Lutheran Church. It also provided a model for other dialogues, in terms of its method of seeking a ‘differentiated consensus’. This method was also taken up, for instance’ by ARCIC.

The approach it adopts is to divide a topic (such as ‘Justification’) into a number of propositions. For each of these, you look for a form of

words on which both sides can agree—but it's important that the aim isn't to 'fudge the issue' by using ambiguous words. On the contrary, you then go on to express as clearly as possible how each side understands those words and in what ways their interpretation is different, or at least differently nuanced. Then you are in a position to consider how significant the differences are, and whether they need to be considered as 'church-dividing'.

This, after all, is what happens in an individual denomination. Catholics have different interpretations of various doctrines, but there is usually room within the Church for all of these. It's only when a teacher, such as Hans Kung, appears to have gone too far (in his case, on Papal Infallibility) that the teaching authority of the Church has to ask whether he can still be considered orthodox.

4. Links with CTE and CTBI

I've been attending meetings of Churches Together in England (CTE) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) almost since I was made a bishop, fourteen years ago. I've also been a trustee of CTE for one year and of CTBI for about five.

You'll remember that a major change following the Swanwick Declaration in 1987 was the move from a 'Council of Churches' model to a 'Churches Together' approach. The British Council of Churches (BCC) tended to be seen as an agency, acting on behalf of the churches and speaking for them on occasion. Churches Together (at whatever level) is seen more as a catalyst. The idea is that the work is done by the churches, which Churches Together facilitates. This means that Churches Together can only be effective to the extent that the churches *are* willing to work together and are sufficiently committed to this goal.

Over the years, declining numbers in the major denominations brought the danger that they would go into what we might call 'survival mode' and become more self-absorbed and inward-looking. At the same time, increasing numbers in newer churches meant they were less likely to see a need to work with other churches which they saw as 'on the way out'. Now, over the past five years or so, the picture has become rather different. More Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal churches have joined Churches Together, along with an increasing number of Orthodox churches.

In all this, there is one constant challenge: getting ‘buy-in’ from the churches. It seems to me that it’s easy for church leaders to criticise Churches Together and to say that they’re acting out of an old agenda and are doing things that are not of interest to the churches themselves. In my opinion (for what it’s worth!) it is often the church leaders who have an outdated ‘Council of Churches’ image in their minds. CTE and CTBI are keen to follow the direction set by the churches—but they can’t know what that is, unless the churches themselves engage with Churches Together and give the necessary leadership.

Admittedly, this is complicated by the fact that the churches themselves have different expectations. Large denominations like the Church of England and the Catholic Church have greater resources than many of the smaller Protestant denominations. We have our own people engaged in relations with Government, international contacts, overseas aid and so forth. We don’t want Churches Together to be doing this on our behalf. In contrast, this is precisely what many of the smaller denominations are looking for, because they don’t have the resources to devote to these things. They would quite like Churches Together to act like an old Council of Churches and to speak on their behalf because they don’t have the same media presence as the Church of England or the Catholic Church.

There are two main ways that the churches engage nationally with Churches Together. The main ongoing engagement takes place through bodies like the CTE Enabling Group, which meets twice a year, with representatives from the denominations, such as Canon John O’Toole, until recently the Secretary of the Department for Dialogue and Unity and the Catholic Ecumenical Officer for England and myself—not the really senior leaders, as they wouldn’t have time, but still people who can represent their church’s perspective with a reasonable degree of authority.

Then there are the national church leaders, such as the Cardinal and the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are occasional, informal meetings between them and the General Secretaries of CTE and of CTBI, particularly when there’s some major national or international issue that hits the headlines. This was formalised in the case of CTE, by its having four ‘Presidents’, representing the main strands of Christianity: Anglican, Catholic, Free Church and ‘others’. In recent years, the Pentecostal and Orthodox traditions were separated out of ‘others’ and had their own Presidents, making a total of six. The remaining ‘others’

are still known as the 'Fourth Presidency Group', which brings together the Lutherans, the Quakers, various German-speaking Evangelical churches and the Church of Scotland (in England). When the most recent president retired, it was the turn of the Quakers to propose one of their number to be the next 'Fourth President'. After a name had been proposed and accepted, it emerged that she would soon be entering into a same-sex marriage—which immediately triggered a crisis amongst several of the member churches—particularly at the Pentecostal/Evangelical end of the spectrum, though there were some concerns also amongst the Catholics and Orthodox.

What has happened is that, with the approval of the Enabling Group and of the other five Presidents, we have asked the group to 'refrain from enacting' its presidency for the time being, leaving a metaphorical 'empty chair' to show that we find ourselves in the position where the churches are unable to come to a common mind on this subject. This is not a solution; it just buys us some time in which we can continue to work on this. Part of our response is to have each of the next two Enabling Group meetings working on a *different* controversial issue, which involves analogous ecumenical principles. In this way we hope to explore what it means to work together ecumenically, and what the requirements are.

5. NBCW leaflet and the German Bishops' Guidelines

Many of you will be aware that Canon John O'Toole and I have been working with Janet Ward, representing the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW) and Helen Mayles, who is a member of the Association of Interchurch Families, acting in a consultative capacity, on an update of a leaflet that the NBCW brought out (*May my husband ever receive communion with me?*) after the publication of *One Bread, One Body* (1998). This was intended to be a simple explanation of the circumstances in which non-Catholic Christians might be able to receive Holy Communion in our churches. This update has been discussed several times by the Department and referred to the Bishops' Conference a couple of times. Though it's not intended to be a publication of the Bishops' Conference, it was felt that their approval was needed, since *One Bread, One Body* is a publication of the Conference.

Last November, the leaflet came to the Conference for comments. What we ended up with, it seems to me, was a variety of views about things that needed improvement—not because of any significant difference of opinion, but because each bishop has different assumptions about the context in which this issue is likely to arise.

In the background, I suspect, is a particular difficulty which arose in the context of the controversy about the guidelines issued by the German Bishops' in 2018. The reply from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said that 'The Holy Father has reached the conclusion that the document is not ready for publication'. Three reasons were given:

- a. The question of admission to communion for evangelical Christians in interconfessional marriages is an issue that touches on the faith of the Church and has significance for the universal Church.
- b. This question has effects on ecumenical relations with other Churches and other ecclesial communities that are not to be underestimated.
- c. The issue concerns the law of the Church, above all the interpretation of canon 844 CIC. Since in a few sectors of the Church there are open questions in this regard, the dicasteries of the Holy See concerned have already been instructed to produce a timely clarification of these questions at the level of the universal Church. In particular, it appears opportune to leave to the diocesan bishop the judgment on the existence of 'grave and urgent necessity'.

In case anyone isn't familiar with Canon 844, the most relevant sections are:

If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed.

And

For the cases mentioned [above], the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops is not to issue general norms except after consultation at least

with the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.

The conclusion of all this seems to be that the time is not right for Bishops' Conferences to be proposing updated norms for their particular areas, while the Pontifical Council is considering updated norms (or clarifications of the existing norms) for the universal Church.

It's interesting that both Canon 844 and the text from the CDF are concerned that our ecumenical partners should be consulted. Like me, you will often have heard other Christians expressing dismay at the discipline on which our church insists. You might understandably assume that a relaxation of this discipline would be generally welcomed. I think this is a reasonable assumption, but perhaps it *is* something we should not simply take for granted.

Applying this to the leaflet it seems to me that, although it isn't proposing updated norms, it is explaining the norms of *One Bread, One Body*, which represent a further development (admittedly a small one) from the norms of Canon 844 and of the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism* (1993). The possibility of this connection is something that I've only come to realise, while I was writing this talk. The German Bishops' guidelines and the CDF response weren't ever formally discussed by our Bishops' Conference, so this is just speculation on my part. I'll be interested to ask some of the bishops and see whether they agree with me.

So, where do we stand at the moment? A few weeks ago, John and I met with Janet and Helen, to review our situation. We concluded that we're not in a position to obtain approval from the Bishops' Conference as things stand at the moment—at any rate, not until the Pontifical Council comes up with its own updated norms. The leaflet could be issued, just in the name of the NBCW—but that would mean a reduced circulation, which would work against the aim of making people more aware of the teaching of *One Bread, One Body* which was the object of the exercise.

In the meantime, the leaflet can certainly be improved, and there may be something to be said for asking someone to have a fresh look at it, as the Department did with our document on interreligious dialogue, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger*, to restructure it more coherently. As with that larger document, the leaflet has suffered from multiple editing. Even though certain parts have improved, it doesn't really hang together and could be tidied up considerably.

The next step is to report back to the Department and see what they think. Janet is due to meet Archbishop Bernard Longley, who is our department Chair and very familiar with OBOB and the work that has been done on the leaflet. If he could introduce a discussion at the next meeting, we could see where that led.

MARY AND THE CHURCH

Peter Scherle*

This article was first presented in a forum linked to the author's Lutheran-Reformed Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, Germany. He proposes that it is time for Protestant churches to reassess the role of Mary in the Church and to overcome this Protestant excessive tendency of alienation and neglect of Mary's role—from a Pneumatological Christological perspective. The article examines the potential of a theological hermeneutics of retrieval and affirmation of Mary's proper place—within Protestant churches and in ecumenical dialogue and relationship.

A Protestant Perspective and Ecumenical Consideration

Mary and her theological role in the Church is a *locus classicus* where denominational differences and indeed division manifest themselves. Clearly, for Protestants, whether in their piety or in their theology, Mary does not play any significant role. This is chiefly a consequence of the historical development of denominational identity through differentiation and conflict between Catholics and Protestants.

Pursuing Theology Ecumenically

Mary thus became a badge of identity for the denominations. With Mary, the denominational difference in understanding in regard to grace and justification, reached a particular clarity. For the one side Mary represents the Church in which grace is mediated sacramentally (see the Council of Trent's Constitution *De iustificatione*). For the other side Mary is a symbol of 'justification by faith alone' (see Martin Luther's Commentary on the Magnificat).

In the ecumenical spirit of today, the differing expressions of church teaching and practical piety might be seen, and indeed—so we might

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hope—be approved of, as possible and legitimate understandings of the *truth*. In particular, these theological differences might be understood as language games such as could arise out of a grammar of Christian theology¹.

These differences then need not be such as to divide the Church, if we can see in the other's tradition (teaching and piety), an acceptable way of *embodying* Christian truth. This presupposes a mutual trust that would normally develop through encounter and dialogue. The particular challenge is then to reflect afresh on one's own tradition, not least through the eyes of the other.

With regard to Mary then, Protestants need to admit that their Marian speechlessness cannot be the last word. What that could mean for a Protestant *Mariology* can be briefly sketched here. It quickly becomes clear that Mariology can help us to re-think the inner interconnections of Christian theology (Christology, Pneumatology, God, eschatology, ecclesiology—including the relationship with contemporary Judaism—and anthropology).

Pneumatological Christology as the Context for Mariology

It is obvious and relatively uncontroversial that the Biblical texts which speak of Mary find their context in the Christ-event: the birth of Jesus, his public ministry, his death and his resurrection. Mariology is therefore an element—pneumatologically shaped—of Christology ('conceived by the Holy Spirit'). This means conversely of course that the Christ-event and Christology cannot be conveyed or thought through without Mary ('born of the Virgin Mary').

Here a phenomenon similar to what happens in Christology can be recognised: as the doctrine develops, more and more becomes *known* about Mary, and Mariology blossoms. Arising from the question of who Jesus Christ is, and to what extent the salvation of humanity and of the whole Creation depends on Christ, the meaning of Mary for the Christ-event has long been reflected upon, in particular since the fourth century with its central doctrinal clarifications.

With the dogmatic clarification of the Council of Chalcedon (431), according to which Christ is to be understood as 'true man and true

¹ See John Henry Newman: *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Notre-Dame: London, 1979); George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia, 1984); Dietrich Ritschl: *The Logic of Theology* (London, 1986).

God’—‘without confusion or division’—‘the question about Mary’s role acquired a dogmatic urgency. In Mary, within the presuppositions of the time, God had to have become truly human but by the same token the one who became human through Mary had to be truly God. So Mary had to be, on the one hand, taken seriously as a woman no different from any other. On the other hand, the Jewish woman Mary had to be understood as the *medium* through whom *God acted*. The latter needed to be guaranteed by the designation ‘virgin’, i.e. the point here is not a statement of biological fact (*parthenos*) but rather a theological definition:² God alone is—through the Holy Spirit—the effective cause of the Incarnation. In the words of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: ‘For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became human.’

The term *Theotokos* (God-bearer, *Dei Genitrix*), evidenced from the fourth century in prayers and liturgical formulae, was officially canonised in this sense at the Council of Chalcedon. The Churches of the Reformation held fast to it too, though already Martin Luther insisted that even as the God-bearer, Mary remained fully on the human side of things and had no part in the divine. The Marian dogmas declared in 553 (‘perpetual virginity’), in 1854 (‘immaculate conception’) and in 1950 (‘bodily assumption of Mary into heaven’) which—from a Protestant perspective—draw Mary into the sphere of the divine, therefore met with, and continue to meet with, rejection. That this way of reading these dogmas is not, however, definitive becomes clear in contemporary Roman Catholic theology.³ This allows these declarations, from Mary’s virginity to her assumption, to be interpreted principally as a *participation* in the Christ-event, in the redemption.

This Christological centring fundamentally excludes any adoration of Mary. The Trinitarian God alone is to be ‘adored and glorified’, God’s *Name* alone is to be ‘hallowed’. Trusting in this God who creates new life is the source of the Christian hope that the living and the dead will be held together by God in the *communio sanctorum* and will be changed and healed with all of creation. This holds for Mary too and

² If the Biblical mention of the ‘young woman’ who opens herself up to God with her whole heart is understood not theologically but anthropologically, then it comes down to what today would be called ‘gender’. Mary—and with her all women—would then be ascribed gender-specific roles, which being time-conditioned, became merged variously with the roles of mother, virgin, bride.

³ See e.g., Klaus Vechtel, *Maria. Gott suchen und finden* (Würzburg, 2017).

justifies the desire and hope to share with her in the redemption through Christ and to feel close to her. Turning to Mary in prayer, to hasten redemption however, involves—from a Protestant point of view—the transgressing of a theologically necessary boundary. There is indeed a Protestant hymn (*Evangelisches Gesangbuch*, no. 258) in which we sing after those faithful who have departed, ‘Vergesst uns nicht in seinem Licht... (Forget us not in God’s light...)’. But even so, it would be difficult in Protestant piety to pray or sing, ‘Mary, forget us not.’

The Sole Efficacy of God? Mary as Prototype of Faith

Protestant theology finds itself challenged to reconsider its over-emphasis on the sole efficacy of God (*Alleinwirksamkeit Gottes*). Of course there was rightly the objection that Mary had not *merited*, for example, though a virtuous humility, the grace to become *Mother of God* or to have a role in the redemption. But, given the prevailing theological polemics, Protestant theology was blind to the insight that Mary had indeed ‘played a role’ in the conception and birth. Mary is not simply overcome by the grace of God or the power of the Holy Spirit. She was, rather, fully receptive to this grace: she had opened herself to God’s grace, had actively agreed and given her answer to the word of the promise.

To what extent and in what way one might speak of *cooperation* on Mary’s part in a soteriological sense is a question that has effectively divided the Church. Controversial here, from the Protestant point of view, was not the ‘*solus Christus*’ (as the material principle) nor even the ‘*sola scriptura*’ (as the formal principle) although this was and still is discussed in other theological and indeed ecumenical debates. Controversial in regard to Mary is primarily how the ‘*sola gratia*’ and ‘*sola fide*’ are to be understood. Here there is an ecumenical rapprochement in the recognition that faith itself implies two movements, in the terms used by the Protestant systematic theologian Eberhard Jüngel: ‘*fides adventitia*’ and ‘*fides apprehensiva*’. The grace of God coming to meet us has to be accepted for its efficacy to unfold in our lives. Of this Mary is a good example: God had graciously ‘looked upon’ her and she had accepted the grace allowing her to be called (‘I am the handmaid of the Lord; let what you have said be done to me.’).

She was, in the words of Martin Luther, ‘a cheerful shelter and a willing hostess’⁴.

Mary can in this sense also be considered an exemplary partner in the Covenant. In her it becomes clear that the calling of God’s people, Israel and of the Church of Jesus Christ serves to witness to God’s will of saving all generations and all creation. Mary herself, however—as was maintained by the Second Vatican Council—is not ‘*co-redemptrix*’ but rather a ‘prototype’ of faith and witness—this latter may be understood also to represent a broad ecumenical consensus. The Orthodox Churches, too, reject any and every mediatory role for Mary as *co-redemptrix* or co-founder of the Church.⁵

Mary, the Church and God’s People Israel⁶

Here there emerges a divergence from the more recent attempts at a Marian-based ecclesiology in Roman Catholic theology (for example from Gisbert Greshake) that is arguably not solely occasioned by denominational identity. The thesis that Mary is as a corporate *persona*, representative of Israel and representative of the Church—as Israel’s *replacement*, so it would seem—is built on a presupposition that God makes his dwelling *in, rather than among*, the People of God. It would be fair to say that this concentration of God’s presence in the Church corresponds to a sacramentally representational ecclesiology. In contrast, the teaching on the Church in the Protestant tradition is designed as an ecclesiology of responsive witness. The two ecclesiological traditions differ in regard to their understanding of the *instrumentality* of the Church: is it sacrament or witness? Their respective approaches in turn shape their divergent understandings of Mary.

⁴ *Werkausgabe* 7, 555.

⁵ Cf. Gisbert Greshake, *Maria–Ecclesia: Perspektiven einer marianisch grundierten Theologie und Kirchenpraxis* (Regensburg, 2014), 359.

⁶ The following considerations are occasioned by the Confession of the Evangelical Church in Hessen and Nassau (EKHN), Germany. In 1991, a clause was added to my Church’s ‘Constitution’, harvesting and condensing the fruits of the Christian-Jewish dialogue since the Shoah into a dogmatic insight: ‘Called to conversion out of blindness and guilt, (the EKHN) testifies afresh to God’s definitive choice of the Jews and to his Covenant with them. Commitment to Jesus Christ includes this testimony.’ This commitment is binding on all ordained members of the EKHN and its leadership.

What unites both traditions, however, is the recognised danger of setting Mary adrift from God's people Israel and of claiming her for the Church to such an extent that their ecclesiologies become anti-Jewish. History shows forth the dark consequences of such dichotomy. The representation of *Ecclesia and Synagogue* as two women, one of whom is blind and the other sighted, is one notorious expression of such Marian ecclesiology. In a *bas-relief* in Münster Cathedral Mary, sitting on her throne, stamps with both feet on two other women symbolising respectively Jews and Pagans. Anti-Judaism as the 'left hand of Christology' (Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*) does not spare even Mary. But how can Miriam, the young Jewish girl, live on beside the Mother of God? And how can we talk about the Mother of God without wrenching Miriam away from Judaism?

Precisely these questions compel us to pull Mary back into the centre of theological attention and set her free from both of her ecclesiological captivities. This can best be accomplished in my opinion with the retrieval of the theology of the biblical name. God had made it possible—in the burning bush—for human beings to address God by *Name*, even though the *Name* ('JHWH') remains unpronounceable. The *Name* is the earthly presence of God even though God himself has no place *in* the world ('Why, the heavens and their own heavens cannot contain you' [1 Kgs 8: 27]). This self-differentiation in God who cannot be described as part of our human world and yet who *inhabits* the creation, has solid biblical grounding. God allows *God's Name to dwell in the Temple, among God's chosen people, Israel*. In Mary—the Nativity stories can be read in this sense—the *Name* now becomes 'flesh'. Thus construed from the weave of many biblical texts (e.g., Zeph. 3:14ff; Zeph. 40: 34f; Exod. 25:20), Mary takes the place of the Temple. *God grants His Name to dwell among his people—in Mary* through the Christ conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 49).

In and through Mary, who gives birth to Christ, God's fidelity to God's people Israel is affirmed. Mary is not the 'holy remnant' of God's people Israel henceforth to be replaced by a new people of God. She is and remains 'Mother Miriam' (*Schalom Ben-Chorin*) and only as such can she also be understood as *Mater Ecclesiae*. This, however, means that she cannot be expropriated. She is not simply the Church, for as 'Mother Miriam', she remains separate from the Church. In other words: she stands for God's fidelity to God's Covenant and the hope that

God redeems God's people. Unless that were so, neither would the Church of Jesus Christ have any hope.

Mary and the (New) Creation—An Ecumenical Perspective?

In the end, Mary stands at once for God's covenant fidelity to Creation and to every creature. The so-called Noahite-covenant is embedded in God's Covenant with the whole of Creation (Gen. 9: 8-10). It is said of Christ that 'He came to his own domain' (John 1: 11) and that His resurrection is a *cosmic event*, the advent of the new creation. God has heard the 'sighing' of God's creatures just as previously God had heard the 'groaning' of the children of Israel. Mary's *Fiat* spoken in faith ('Be it done...') answers God's *Fiat* at the beginning ('Let there be...').

In this sense, then, Mary represents the opening up of human life for God's visitation. In Mary, God comes into the world and humanity crowds towards the crib. Mary must also suffer the power of evil (persecution of Herod, Flight into Egypt) and of death (the crucified Son). She is, however, permitted to witness the beginning of this New Creation.

Baptised as we are into Christ (Gal. 3: 26-28) now we too can, and may, live in a similarly Marian way

DEACONESSES IN THE SYRIAC CHURCHES

Sebastian Brock*

After looking at the early evidence for deaconesses in the Syriac tradition, a brief consideration is given to the canons concerning them in both East and West Syriac collections of canons. Turning to the actual ordination services in the different Syriac traditions, the terms used for ordination are discussed, and the main prayers in each of extant ordination services are translated and studied.

Commenting on Romans 16:1, 'I commit to you Phoebe, our sister', the scholarly Syrian Orthodox bishop, Moshe bar Kepha (d. 903), after explaining that she was a deaconess¹ of the church of Cenchreae, goes on to say that Paul 'praises this woman by calling her "sister" and by mentioning her honour, placing her first before all the others, seeing that she was a deaconess'. The special honour accorded to Phoebe by Paul, as understood by bishop Mushe, is also reflected in a famous passage in the *Didascalia*, an early guide to church life preserved only in Latin and Syriac: chapter 9 provides a typology of the different ranks of the clergy, and while the male deacon is seen to be 'in the place of Christ', his female counterpart is stated to be 'in the place of the Holy Spirit'. Although the rank of deaconess has fallen out of use in all the Syriac Churches today, in the past they were very much present, and there are some signs that their diaconate might sometime be revived. In 1987, the Syro-Malabar bishop of Kottayam, Mar Kyriakos Kunnachery, published a booklet entitled *Deaconess in the Church: A pastoral need of the day?*, and much more recently the present Syrian

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¹ The Syriac term (*mshamshanitha*) is simply the feminine form corresponding to the masculine *mshamshana*.

Orthodox Patriarch, Moran Mor Ignatius Afram has indicated that it is a proposal that needs to be studied. As will be seen below, there are several appropriate liturgical services available from the past.

Surprisingly, the earliest reference to a deaconess in the Syriac tradition comes from an inscription from north Syria. Dating from the fourth or fifth century, it reads (in Greek script) 'Zaortha *samastha*', where *samastha* represents Syriac *shamashta*, the shortened form of *mshamshanitha*, 'deaconess'. From the fifth century onwards, literary sources provide quite frequent references to deaconesses. At one point in the Life of Bishop Rabbula of Edessa (d. 435) there is mention of no less than eighteen 'assemblies' of deaconesses, and elsewhere in the Life we learn of a deaconess being appointed over a hostel. Deaconesses turn up in a number of hagiographical texts. Even though such references cannot be always taken as historical evidence, they nevertheless reflect the expectations of the authors of the saints' Lives.

In many of the earlier texts we find mention of 'daughters of the covenant' mentioned alongside deaconesses. The 'sons and daughters of the covenant' constituted a distinctive feature of the early Syriac Church and were evidently individuals who had undertaken certain ascetic vows (the 'covenant') probably at adult baptism, and who either lived together, or singly or with their family. With the arrival in Mesopotamia of Egyptian-style monasticism in the form familiar today, at the end of the fourth century, the 'members of the covenant' tended to merge into either the lower clergy, or into the new monastic life. As will be seen below, the term 'daughters of the covenant' is still employed in some of the liturgical texts relevant to deaconesses.

Several sources, sometimes widely separate in time, suggest that deaconesses could be well-educated women. Thus, in the extensive correspondence of Patriarch Severus of Antioch (d.538), there are several letters addressed to deaconesses: these often concern discussions on biblical exegesis. Deaconesses are also recorded as commissioners or donors of manuscripts. Thus, in 561-562, a deaconess named Magala donated a manuscript containing a large dogmatic florilegium to an unnamed monastery, well over a millennium later, in 1739, the deaconess Maryam commissioned the copying of a manuscript of the Life of Augen, the saint who is credited to have brought Egyptian-style monasticism to Mesopotamia, the homeland of the Syriac Churches. It is evident from a number of sources that abbesses of convents were often deaconesses.

For the roles carried out by deaconesses one needs to turn to the extensive texts produced over the centuries on Canon Law, culminating in the comprehensive thirteenth, and early fourteenth, century codifications of canon law by Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) in the Syrian Orthodox tradition and by 'Abdisho' of Nisibis (d.1318) in that of the Church of the East. In the early third century, the *Didascalia* (chapter 16) informs us that the role of the deaconess was 'to see to the many things needed for the ministry to women'. This general statement is explicated in some anonymous canons of a couple of centuries later. Canon 18 specifies three roles in particular: to assist in the baptism of women; to guard the door of the church (evidently to ensure that those who were not baptised did not stay on for the Anaphoral section of the Liturgy); and to see to the instruction of women. It is interesting to note that this document repeats the *Didascalia's* statement about the deaconess being 'in the likeness of the Holy Spirit'. Probably from the turn of the fifth to sixth century a set of 'Questions of the Eastern Fathers' informs us that at her ordination the bishop 'puts the stole on her shoulder, as it is the case with a (male) deacon'. We are also told that the Superior of a convent is a deaconess, and as such she may distribute the Eucharistic Mysteries.

Perhaps the most interesting of the canonical sources is the set of Canons of John son of Qursos, also known as John, bishop of Tella (d.538).² John, who is a saint in the Syrian Orthodox tradition, has left an extensive set of canons, of which several concern deaconesses, notably the following:

No. 18: she may pour the water and wine into the Chalice.

No. 35: she may place incense into the censer—but may not say aloud the accompanying prayer, although she can offer it silently.

No. 42: she may read the Gospel in gatherings of women.

Other canons (nos. 36, 37 and 40) state that she may wash the sacred vessels, light the candles, and clean the sanctuary.

Most of John's canons are included in the relevant section of Barhebraeus' *Nomocanon* (VII.7). Barhebraeus also quotes the Patriarch Severus as confirming that the custom 'in the East' is for

² Latin translation in P. Hinde, *Disciplina Antiochena antica. Syri*, II, 'Les personnes' (Codificazione Canonica Orientale, Fonti II, xxvi; Vatican, 1951), 337-340; cf. also A.G. Martimort, *Deaconesses: A Historical Study* (San Francisco, 1986), 48-54.

abbesses to be deaconesses, with authority to distribute the Eucharistic Mysteries to those in her charge—provided no priest or deacon is present. Likewise, Severus is quoted as saying ‘Let the ordination (*cheirotonia*) of a deaconess be according to local custom; in the East it is known that the stole is put on her shoulder, as with a male deacon’.

The great scholar and stickler for the canons, bishop Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), in those of his canons quoted by Barhebraeus focuses his attention on the negative aspect of what a deaconess may do. Thus ‘she is not authorized to place a portion of the Holy Body into the consecrated Chalice, as a (male) deacon (is evidently allowed to do)’, the reason being that ‘she did not become a minister of the altar, but of sick women’. This of course does not contradict John of Tella’s canon 18, but rather suggests that Jacob is condemning a practice which went beyond the canon of John and which sometimes occurred in Jacob’s own day. In another canon by Jacob, cited by Barhebraeus, Jacob categorically states that ‘a deaconess has absolutely no authority in the altar space (i.e. sanctuary): she is only authorized just to enter the altar space, to sweep it and to light the candles. However, in a convent of women, when a priest or deacon are not present, let her take the Eucharistic Mysteries—just from the shrine (for the reserved Host; *pardisqa*), and not from the altar—and give them to her sisters and to the small children. And when adult women are being baptised, let her anoint them, and let her visit the women who are sick.’³

For the Church of the East there is less information about deaconesses in texts before the Middle Ages. In the ‘Canons of Marutha’, which are certainly later than Marutha of Maipharqat (d. early fifth century), after whom they are named, canon 41 is entitled ‘On daughters of the covenant and on deaconesses’. This states as follows:

It was the will of the universal Synod (i.e. the Council of Nicaea, 325) that there should not be any churches without the order of Sisters. Great care should be taken that they are practiced in the readings of the Scripture, and especially in the ministry of the Psalms. (Deaconesses) should be chosen from those of the Sisters for whom there is no cause for blame from their youth up; especially in the case of one who approaches old age⁴, around the age of sixty, as the blessed Paul

³ According to the *Testamentum Domini* II.20 (of uncertain date), she can bring Communion to sick women.

⁴ The text has ‘repentance’ (*tybwt*), but the variant reading ‘old age’ (*sybwt*) makes much better sense.

instructed his disciple (cf. I Tim. 5:9). Such women should be made deaconesses to fulfil the rite of the ministry of baptism only.

As the Patriarch Isho'yahb I (d. 595) rather quaintly put it, the role of the deaconess was 'to guide the fingers of the bishop at the baptism of women'—a curtain being discretely provided between the women baptismal candidates and the bishop. In one of the canons (no. 19) of a Synod held in 676, it is stipulated that 'daughters of the covenant are to learn to recite the Psalms and to observe the Offices of the Church'; they are also to play a role in the singing of hymns. 'The most virtuous among them is to be appointed (*tettsim*) deaconess, so as to anoint with holy oil adult women who are being baptised.'

In a manuscript dated 1559⁵ which he copied in Mozambique during the course of a voyage from the Middle East to India, Joseph, who had been consecrated as Metropolitan of India, included the text of the liturgical service for the ordination of deaconesses. He prefaces this with some information about the role of 'a daughter of the covenant who is separated out for the work of the diaconate':

She shall not approach the altar, because she is a woman, —except only for the oil of anointing. This her work: to be praying in her heart at the head of the daughters of the covenant at the time of a (liturgical) service. At the end of a prayer she should say 'Amen'. And she should anoint the women who approach for baptism: she should bring them close, under the hand of the priests, because they have no authority to anoint women—though in our day they do anoint them without the priest setting his eyes on the woman.

The text of the East Syriac ordination of a deaconess follows immediately after this.

The services for the ordination of deaconesses

Before turning to the liturgical texts, it is important to pay attention to the various terms that may be used in Syriac to designate 'ordination'. The three most common terms are *syam ida*, *mettasrhanutha* and *kirotoniya*, the latter being taken over as a loanword from Greek *kheirotonia*. The first term, which literally means 'the placing of the hand', is likely to be the oldest in use, alongside the verb *sam ida* (*lit.* 'to place the hand'); the verb already features in the Syriac Old Testament (Num. 27:18), and the noun in the New Testament (Acts 8:18). The second term derives from the verb *asrah*, which has the sense

⁵ Vatican Syriac 45.

of ‘put forward, designate, appoint’, as well as the more specialised sense of ‘consecrate, ordain’. Neither *kiroṭoniya* nor *mettasrḥanutha* has a background in the Syriac Old Testament, where the term *shumlaya*, literally ‘fulfilment’, is employed in the sense of consecration, the verb being *shamli*. Although there is another term for ‘consecration’, *quddasha* (lit. ‘sanctification’), it is not used of human beings. As will be seen later on, the choice of terms can be significant in the case of modern editions of the service. First, however, it will be helpful to provide a quick guide to the texts of the ordination service in the different Syriac Churches, and translations where available.

(a) Church of the East.

The manuscript copied by Metropolitan Joseph, is one of a small number of sixteenth-century *mettasrḥonutha* manuscripts to contain the East Syriac ordination service for a deaconess, distinct from that for a male deacon. The text (with Latin translation) is to be found in volume III, part 2 of J.S. Assemani’s *Bibliotheca Orientalis*⁶, and in J.A. Assemani’s *Codex Liturgicus XIII*⁷; the title is given as *taksa (= ordo) dasyamida*. Two English translations are available, one by N. McLean in C. Robinson, *The Ministry of Deaconesses*⁸, and the other by me in K. Kunnacherry, *Deaconess in the Church*⁹, and in P.Vazheeparampil (ed.), *Woman in Prism and Focus*¹⁰.

(b) Syrian Orthodox

The most authoritative text is to be found the collection of ordination services in the *Fenqitho d-Kiroṭoniyas* (pp. 110-125), published by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, Damascus, in 2009; there it is described as *ṭekso d-shumloyo*. My English translation of the service is so far unpublished. Two other, somewhat different texts, based on recent manuscripts from Tur ‘Abdin in south-east Turkey, are also known. My English translation of one of these is given in the volume edited by Sister Prasanna Vazheeparampil (p. 213-216); and for the other there is a French translation by A.Jajé O.P., in his *Diaconesses. Les femmes dans*

⁶ Rome (1730), DCCCLII-DCCCLIII.

⁷ Rome (1766), 219-222.

⁸ London, 2nd edition (1914), 222-225.

⁹ Kottayam (1987), 28-29.

¹⁰ Rome (1996), 212.

*l'Église syriaque*¹¹ (pp. 25-248 ; with photos of the manuscript, pp. 111-16); the service is designated as a *tekso d-mettasr̄honutho*.

(c) Maronite

At an influential Synod in 1736, the role of deaconesses was restricted to convents, although allowance was given for the possibility that bishops at a future date might have need of deaconesses outside convents.¹²

The main prayers in the different Syriac services

(a) The service formerly in use in the Church of the East contains two episcopal prayers; these read:¹³

Our good God, full of mercy, rich in His mercies and abounding in His compassion, You Lord, in Your ineffable grace have appointed me as the mediator of Your divine gifts in Your holy Church, so that I may give in Your name talents of spiritual service to the ministers of Your holy Mysteries; and according to the apostolic tradition that has been handed down to us in the ordination (*syamida*) to ministry in the Church, we present before You these Your handmaids to be chosen ministers/deacons in Your holy Church. We all pray on their behalf that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come and perfect and ordain (*shamli*) them for the task of this ministry which they approach, by the grace and mercy of Your Only-Begotten ...

Following this prayer, the Archdeacon intones 'Peace', after which the bishop says a further prayer:

Lord God, powerful, almighty, who has made everything by the might of Your Word, and with Your command You control all who have come into being, for Your bidding (*remzak*) has created them. You have been pleased to grant to men and to women together the gift of the Holy Spirit; do You now, Lord, in mercifulness, choose this feeble servant of Yours for the excellent task of the diaconate, and grant to her that she

¹¹ Domuni Press.

¹² See Phyllis Zagano, 'Women deacons in the Maronite Church', *Theological Studies* 77:3 (2016), 593-602. My thanks to Anthony O'Mahony who kindly did draw my attention to this article and provided me with a copy.

¹³ For the first prayer only the opening words are given, since the same prayer is to be found in the ordination service for male deacons, given by Assemani earlier (p. DCCCVII): it is this text which I have translated, simply adjusting 'servants' to 'handmaids', etc. The rubric for male deacons states that the bishop places his hand on the head of the person being ordained during the prayer; this is not mentioned in the corresponding rubric for deaconesses.

may minister blamelessly before You in this great and exalted ministry, being preserved without harm in all kinds of virtuous conduct; may she admonish and teach modesty along with just and upright works to the members of her family, so that she may be held worthy to receive from You a reward for good works on the great and glorious day of the revelation of Your Only-Begotten. To You and to Him and to the Holy Spirit be glory, honour, thanksgiving and worship, now and always.

The following rubric states that the bishop places his hand on her head, 'not after the manner of an ordination (*syamida*), but simply blessing her'.

(b) Of the three Syrian Orthodox texts, it is that in the official publication of the Patriarchate to which attention will be paid here.¹⁴ In this volume different terms are used in the titles for the services concerning the various ranks of clergy: *rshomo*, in the literal sense 'marking', perhaps best rendered 'designating', for chanters, male and female (*mzamronyotho*) and readers; *shumloyo*, for deaconesses, abbots and abbesses and for a *qashishto*, or consecrated wife of a priest, and for a chorepiscopus; and finally *mettasr̄onutho* for subdeacons, deacons, priests and bishops. It should, however, be noted that this by no means always corresponds with the terminology used *within* each of the services; furthermore, one of the two services for deaconesses from Tur 'Abdin manuscripts is entitled a *mettasr̄onutho*.

The service is considerably longer than its East Syriac counterpart, and a number of prayers are specifically allocated to the bishop, the most important being the four quoted in full below:

The first (p.110), addressed to Christ, begins with temple imagery, reflecting 1 Peter 2:5 (plural; cf. singular in 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:9), and asks that the Shekhina dwell 'in us and perfect (*gmar*)' the woman in question:

Bishop: Hold us worthy, Christ God, to fulfil this pure and mystical ministry; may we be holy temples for You and may Your divine Presence (*shkinto*) dwell in us and perfect this Your handmaid with the wealth of Your divine gifts, so that in joy and gladness, and in purity of soul and body, she may minister before You all the days of her life; and may she raise up praise and thanksgiving to You and to Your Father and to Your Holy Spirit eternally.

¹⁴ Although a detailed comparison of the three texts would be interesting, this is not the place to undertake it. For West Syriac texts I transcribe East Syriac *ā* as *o*.

The second prayer is addressed to the Trinity (p. 113): a paradigm has been established (*sharrar*) with the consecration (*shamli*) of deacons (or ministers), whose ministry is a type of the ministry of angels. Request is made that the Holy Spirit ‘tabernacles over us and over this Your handmaid’, where the rare verb *aggen*, translated ‘tabernacles’, is the same term used in all the Syriac biblical versions of Luke 1:35 to translate Greek *episkiasei*, ‘overshadow’. Its use in Syriac is largely confined to the activity of the Holy Spirit, and it quite often appears in invocations of the Spirit, most notably in the Anaphora of James.¹⁵

Bishop: In Your unstinting grace You have established in the highest heavens supernal churches with ministers of fire and spirit, adorning and making them resplendent with the primordial glorious splendour, and out of Your love for humanity You have confirmed and consecrated deacons/ministers to minister to You in purity, as a type of those who minister to Your Lordship in spiritual fashion, for the glory of Your majesty is without limit. We beseech and supplicate Your goodness that this gift of Your Holy Spirit may tabernacle over us and over this Your handmaid, so that, as befits Your Lordship, she may minister before Your majesty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always, for eternity.

The first part of the third prayer (p. 121), this time addressed to the Father, concerns the role of the priest as mediator of the rite (cf. the first East Syriac prayer), and it is only at the end that God is requested to ‘accept and perfect’ the candidate.

Bishop: O Lord God of the holy hosts, who has allocated to us this Your ministry, who makes wise the minds of human beings, who searches out the innermost hearts, hear us, out of the multitude of Your mercies, purify us from all stain of flesh and of spirit, cause our sins to pass away like a cloud, and our wicked deeds like a storm cloud; fill us with Your power, and by the grace of the Only-Begotten, the Son, and by the working of Your all-holy Spirit, grant us the capacity to be ministers of Your New Testament, so that we may be able to stand before You in a manner worthy of Your holy name, and to serve as priests for Your divine Mysteries. Do not abandon us to become associates with alien sins, but rather, wipe out those that we have; and grant us, Lord, that we do not carry out anything, deviating (from You), but grant us the knowledge to choose those who are worthy, and to offer them to You, (*he raises his voice*) and accept and perfect as deaconess this Your

¹⁵ For the ramifications, see my ‘From Annunciation to Pentecost: the travels of a technical term’, in *Eulogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, S.J.* (Studia Anselmiana 110: Rome, 1993), 71-91.

handmaid present here, who awaits Your heavenly gift; for You are kind and full of mercy to all those who call upon You. Mighty is Your power and that of Your Only-Begotten Son and that of Your all-holy Spirit, now and always, and for ever.

In the fourth prayer (p. 123), which is primarily a blessing, three biblical models are adduced: Miriam, Deborah and Phoebe. Such women 'act in a sacred role' (*kahen*), using a verb which in fact is a denominative of the noun *kohno*, 'priest', and this is the sense that it has in the third prayer ('to serve as priests'), above; frequently, however, the verb is employed with a wider sense (as in this fourth prayer), without any connotations of priesthood. At the end mention is made of women's wider role in the Church:

Bishop: O God who saves those who call upon You, who grants Your grace among women to prophesy, and to be advanced in all good works, who held Miriam, the sister of Moses, above all women, worthy to respond and to act for You in a sacred role, who gave the gift of prophecy to Deborah, who also in Your New Testament chose women to minister to You; do You now, Lord, fill this Your handmaid with blessings, so that she may be a deaconess in the Church, after the norm of Phoebe whom Your Apostle established in Cencreae. Grant to her to reprove in a sincere way those women who are going astray, setting them on the right path, to rebuke with confidence, to receive strangers, to be rich in Your works, to give answer gently and humbly, in a modest way, and to respond to all, to speak and act in Your name.

The first three of these prayers are all to be found in the Service for deacons as well (pp. 150, 153-4, 165), though the precise wording is sometimes different, but not significantly so. Given the content, it is not surprising that the fourth one does not feature there. Also in common with the Service for deacons is the request, in a response to psalm¹⁵⁰, that the candidate be sanctified (*qadesh*, passive; p. 120), though the previous wording is different: for deaconesses it is 'O Good One, who committed to His Apostles authority over height and depth, cause Your Shekhina by Your grace to reside on Your handmaid and may she be sanctified'. Likewise, for both men and women the stole is placed by the bishop on the left shoulder.

Quite apart from the fact that the service for deacons is considerably longer, a notable difference (which happens to correspond to the different titles given to the service) is to be found in the statement concerning the particular church where he/she is to serve: the deaconess is 'designated' (*rsham*, passive; p. 124)), while the deacon is

'ordained' (*ettasrah*; p. 170). On this point, however, it should be noted that in the Tur 'Abdin manuscript published by Fr. Jajé the same term is used at this point for both deacon and deaconess. These kinds of difference no doubt reflect somewhat differing attitudes towards the female diaconate.

By way of conclusion

Deaconesses exist in the sister Oriental Orthodox Churches, the Armenian and the Coptic Orthodox Churches,¹⁶ and in 2017 the Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria revived the female diaconate to meet the present-day needs of the Church in Africa. Earlier this year an important International Symposium on 'Deaconesses: Past, Present and Future' was held in Saloniki (Greece).¹⁷ Like the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church has a long tradition of the female diaconate¹⁸ that has fallen into disuse; in discussions concerning its possible revival, it would be sensible to widen the role for the female diaconate, especially in the context of para-liturgical and non-liturgical activity. What Bishop Kunnanchery wrote in 1987 is just as relevant today:¹⁹

In the present day context of the Church, selected educated, dedicated and mature Catholic women can be of immense help in the apostolate. The restoration of the institution of the deaconess will be a positive contribution to the Church in upholding the dignity of women and in affirming their equality with men in holding responsible positions in the Church.

¹⁶ A. Oghlukian, *The Deaconess in the Armenian Church: a brief survey* (New Rochelle, 1974); H. Tchilingirian, 'Historic ordination of a deaconess in the Tehran diocese of the Armenian Church', *One in Christ* 52:1 (2019), 167-169; C. Chaillot, 'Deaconesses in the Coptic Orthodox Church', *Ecclesia Orans* 35 (2018), 307-325.

¹⁷ 31st Jan-2nd Feb 2020; for some information, see academia.edu/41940677.

¹⁸ See C. Vagaggini, 'L'ordinazione delle diaconesse nella tradizione greca e bizantina' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 40 (1974), 146-189; V. Karras, 'Female deacons in the Byzantine Church', *Church History* 73:2 (2004), 272-316; C. Tkacz, 'Deaconesses and the spiritual equality of women', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 108 (2013), 146-189.

¹⁹ *Deaconess in the Church*, p. 22; cf. also P. Zagano, *Holy Saturday. An Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church* (New York, 2000), for the loan of which I am much indebted to Anthony O'Mahony.

BOOK REVIEW

Brett Salkeld: *Transubstantiation: Theology, History and Christian Unity* (Baker Academic 2019).

The title of this book says it all: Salkeld examines the history and theology behind the word 'transubstantiation' and then sees how the concepts behind word, as properly understood, relate to the theologies of Luther and Calvin and show a way forward in ecumenical dialogue on the Eucharist.

We are all aware of Trent's use of the word 'transubstantiation' in its Decree on the Eucharist of 1551, where, it concluded chapter IV of the Decree, after writing that by the consecration of the bread the whole substance of the bread is changed into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and the whole substance of the wine is changed into the substance of his blood, 'Quia conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta catholica ecclesia transubstantiatio est appellata'. Since then this word has become a touch-stone of Catholic orthodoxy; and for some non-Catholics a clear mis-understanding of how the words of Jesus should be taken.

Salkeld seeks to prove that the protagonists of the Reformation were, in his words, 'talking past each other' and what they were rejecting was not what in fact the opposition held, and thus modern Eucharistic agreement is not surprising. Indeed, as often has been said, nobody holds to 'the real absence' of Jesus in the Eucharist. Modern theologians, of all stripes, share in the common exploration of the underlying meanings of the words in the inspired Word which is the Bible. Here we can repeat a quotation from R.P.C. Hanson, which is used by Salkeld: '...theologians find it easier to agree than any other ecclesiastical group, because ... they know too much to be divided by anything less than the truth.' Salkeld sees this truth behind the eucharistic controversies which were coloured by the misunderstanding of the Thomistic texts. He reminds us that it is often forgotten that Thomas wrote c.1270, about three centuries before the Reformation and Trent. In those three centuries the understanding of his words and philosophical concepts had changed. Salkeld seeks to return to the original philosophical bases of the *Summa*, and also to show how nominalism had shaded the understanding of those terms, losing the crucial reference back to the Augustinian notion of sign.

The book has a good comprehensive section on the history of transubstantiation and the understanding of the Eucharistic mystery, tracing its roots back to the work of Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie, in the ninth century. Unfortunately, in this section of the book only secondary sources are cited. The controversy of the eleventh century Berengar of Tours is given, with the text of his oaths rigorously examined and found wanting in subtlety and clarity. The appearance of the word 'transubstantiation' in Lateran IV is noted. [Const. 1—on the Catholic Faith.] Also clarified is the crucial theological question to which 'transubstantiation' is the answer: it is not 'How do the bread and wine become the Christ's body and blood?' but, 'What does it mean to say that the bread and the wine Christ's body and blood?' Likewise, St Thomas' use of Aristotelian philosophy is shown as his using philosophy to do theology, transforming Aristotle; not doing philosophy and corrupting Aristotle; philosophy is the tool by which the mystery can be better understood. This is crucial to a major section of the work, illustrating how St Thomas used the term 'transubstantiation' to indicate the sacramental presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. We are taken carefully through Book III, Questions 75–78 of *Summa Theologica*. Salkeld concludes that: "transubstantiation" is a completely sacramental articulation of the real presence that depends on and witnesses to a biblical view of the relationship between God and creation that is shared by Catholic and Protestants alike.' (p. 137) Interestingly, although he later refers to the Vatican's acceptance of the Liturgy of Addai and Mari (p. 243, see the 2017 *Common Statement on Sacramental Life* between the Catholic Church & the Assyrian Church of the East, §IV), he does not refer to St Thomas' insistence on the necessity of the words of institution (S.T. III.78, art1, ad4). In the next two chapters of the book Salkeld shows that this summary is compatible with the theologies of Calvin and Luther. He distinguishes between the earlier and later works of Luther. He suggests that in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Luther was rejecting transubstantiation as determined by the nominalist presuppositions which over the years had transformed what St Thomas meant. In sum, he holds that Luther affirmed the real presence, but rejected the metaphysical speculation. In dealing with the controversy between Luther and Zwingli he puts the division between the two as problems in understanding the import of the words used in describing the ascension of Jesus and in the institution narrative: are they figurative or literal?

He concludes that this is a false dichotomy. He summarises the Catholic position as affirming the change in the elements of bread and wine through the work of God; if the real presence is not denied the words used need not cause concern.

Surprisingly, Salkeld holds that there are similarities between Aquinas' and Calvin's eucharistic theologies, Calvin holding, in essence, that they bread and wine are effective instruments for the distribution of the body and blood of the Lord: sign and reality are distinct, without being separate. (See the quotation from Calvin's, 'Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper', on p. 196.) He suggests that Calvin's attacks on transubstantiation are attacks on mis-understandings: on a physical presence alone, devoid of any sacramental meaning. Once more Salkeld puts the division between theologians as language problems, particularly in common usage: 'substantial' does not mean 'physical', and 'spiritual' does not mean 'subjective'. Likewise, in dealing with reception of the Eucharist by the unworthy, he suggests that St Thomas' distinction that the unworthy reception of the Eucharist is a reception of Christ sacramentally, not spiritually—the sign had not been comprehended, is similar to Calvin's theology.

By carefully examining the Scholastic method of St Thomas Salkeld suggests that both Lutherans and the Reformed might clearly see what they hold in common, and also see what St Thomas, and the Catholic Church really understands by the word transubstantiation. The distinctions between the physical elements and the body and blood of Christ, and the clear notion of sacramental reception of the elements offer clarity in a disputed field. He concludes that what was rejected at the Reformation was a misunderstanding of transubstantiation that the concept 'carefully distinguishes sign and signified in a way that gives the bread and wine a genuine role without denying the primacy of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament' (p.240).

He further notes that transubstantiation is a theological term, not part of the deposit of faith. Thus, he hopes that by having clarity on transubstantiation the work of ecumenism may prosper.

A crucial question can be posed: Salkeld examines carefully all the trees in this particular wood, does he lose sight of the whole? His examination of the terms and the use of terms is exacting and exhaustive, he cites St Thomas, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli appropriately. He refers to the eucharistic agreement between the Churches, and he does maintain his thesis that the ecumenical

agreements are not some sort of ecumenical 'fudge'. But I miss a sense of mystery about the Mysteries which are joyfully celebrated by the Christian churches, calling to mind the saving passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, through the species of bread and wine in each eucharistic celebration.

It is heartening to note that articles from *One in Christ* are frequently cited in this work, which will be a help in the understanding of the various ecumenical dialogues.

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