

CENTRO PRO UNIONE

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"UT OMNES UNUM SINT"



50th Anniversary

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Centro Pro Unione

A Ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement



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Centro Pro Unione Bulletin

A semi-annual publication about the activities of the Centro Pro Unione

The Centro Pro Unione in Rome, founded and directed by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement, - www.atonementfriars.org - is an ecumenical research and action center.

Its purpose is to give space for dialogue, to be a place for study, research and formation in ecumenism: theological, pastoral, social and spiritual.

The Bulletin has been published since 1968 and is released in Spring and Fall.

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Letter from the Director

This issue of the *Bulletin – Centro Pro Unione* is particularly rich in its contents. Several key events occurred that the Centro Pro Unione was happy to celebrate and commemorate.

In the lead article, Rabbi Jack Bemporad opens up a discussion which we asked him to consider for those who are involved in interreligious dialogue among the Abrahamic religions. The article begins with dealing with the complicated question of Monotheism before looking at the question of Biblical Monotheism. The author makes the point that what is truly the most essential element in Biblical Monotheism is that it embodied an Ethical Monotheism. What actually is the Monotheism of the Bible as well as the Monotheism that is found in Christianity and Islam is an ethical Monotheism. The reader is invited to follow Rabbi Bemporad's reasoning to arrive at his conclusion that the attributes that God Himself proclaims to be paramount are moral attributes, which are the essence of ethical Monotheism. So to comprehend Monotheism as merely the worship of one God is to miss the point entirely. Unless we understand Monotheism as portrayed biblically, in the Abrahamic tradition, as ethical Monotheism, and at the same time understand and accept the kind of imperative that it gives us as human beings, we won't understand Monotheism at all.

The Centro celebrated the 50th anniversary of the international dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Catholic Church in October of 2017. Two members of the dialogue commission Gillian Kingston (Methodist) and Clare Watkins (Catholic) share their experiences of this dialogue and what their hopes are for the future of arriving at full, visible communion between our two churches.

The 20th annual Paul Wattson and Lurana White lecture in December was given by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia. In his lecture he offers an objective, critical evaluation of the impact of the Holy and Great Council in Crete on Catholic/Orthodox relations. Bishop Kallistos opens his presentation by considering the historical event as a "miracle in history" considering all of the obstacles that had to be overcome. Following on this observation he lays out the plan of the council and a critical evaluation of success and failure of its various agenda elements. Since he was present at the great

assembly we have a first hand witness to the light and shadows of the historic meeting.

The last of the articles in this issue is the text of the Hungarian Evangelical Reformed Bishop Károly Fekete who spoke on the shared Trinitarian faith that we hold. On the 500th anniversary of the Reformation the Hungarian Reformed church celebrates its 450th anniversary of foundation. Bishop Fekete shares with our readers a part of the history with its struggles and successes which he attributes to the adherence to the fundamental Trinitarian faith.

Dr. Loredana Nepi has prepared the annual up date of the bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues for 2017.

What can we look forward to in the coming issue? A series of lectures celebrating our 50th anniversary of foundation. A series of interreligious lectures co-sponsored with the John Paul II Institute for Interreligious Dialogue: Prof. Israel Knohl on "Genesis 49:10 a Messianic Prophecy?"; Prof. Marshall J. Breger will speak on "The Place of the Land of Israel in Jewish Thought" and Rabbi Jack Bemporad will explore "The Philosophy of the Midrash". The Week of Prayer lecture given by Msgr. Paul McPartlan's conference "Chieti and the Trajectory of Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue". Also included is the presentation of the Report from the Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue in Finland: *Communion in Growth. Declaration on the Church, Eucharist, and Ministry*. The 21st annual lecture in honor of our Founders will be a commemoration of the 800th anniversary of Francis of Assisi's encounter with the Sultan which will jointly be presented by Fr. Michael Calabria, ofm and a Muslim expert.

Our keynote anniversary lecture will be given by Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the WCC. This lecture also celebrates the WCC's foundation 1948-2018.

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James F. Puglisi, SA
Director Centro Pro Unione

Monotheism and All That It Implies

Rabbi Jack Bemporad - Director, The Center for Interreligious Understanding
Teaneck, New Jersey, USA

▶ (Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 25 May 2017) ◀



Note: all Biblical quotes are taken from the Holy Bible, *Revised Standard Version*, Oxford University Press, New York, Copyright 2002.

The study of Monotheism is complicated. In fact, it is difficult. It's difficult because when we are trying to figure out what Monotheism is, there is a whole question regarding how Monotheism relates to Gnosticism and Gnostic dualism. How is it distinguished from Pantheism? What is the relationship between Monotheism and the Pagan deities? And it's a vast, vast subject. In its full development, as it encounters Greek philosophy, there is the connection with Platonism and Aristotelianism and Stoicism, wherein a series of reconciliationist systems emerge in Medieval philosophy, which strive to integrate Greek philosophy and Scripture.

And so to understand Monotheism, in its full-blown sense, one must also understand how certain Greek ideas, primarily the *Timaeus* of Plato and the physics and metaphysics of Aristotle, contribute to this development.

Now there are a number of theories as to the origin of Biblical Monotheism. You notice I haven't begun with a definition; one can't really begin with a definition because it's too difficult, so I will try to define it later. There are some theories that have been completely discarded in most scholarly circles, proposing a primitive Monotheism, out of which a variety of religions emerged and then a later reintegration of these various religions into a new and different Monotheism. But a basic theory that has been followed in Biblical critical circles is a theory that roughly evolves through three stages. In the first stage the Israelites were followers and worshipers of



▶ Rabbi Jack Bemporad, Conference speaker

YHVH,(Yahveh). *Yahveh* was their God, in the same way the other gods of the surrounding peoples had their particular gods. Thus Chemosh was the god of Moab and Milkom the god of Ammon (Numbers 21:29).

Then the Israelites reached the second stage in which they came to the conclusion that their God was greater than the other gods. This is seen clearly in Exodus, Chapter 15 verse 11, where it states:

“Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?”

(for which gods, in this instance, refers to idols.)

“Who is like thee, majestic in holiness, terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”

The Hebrew of “Who is like you,” is *'me chamochah bah aylim'*. Now *'chamochd'* in Hebrew does not mean 'like you'. It means 'who is as

you, or equal to you?' And here it is clear that it means 'who is equal to you among the gods?' In other words, the second stage would be, 'you are incomparably greater than all the others'. (In the same way, incidentally, one would have to say that in Leviticus 19:18, the correct translation is “you shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against any sons of your own people; but you shall love your neighbor...” And the common translation of the next words is, of course, “as yourself.” But that is not correct. You shall love your neighbor “because he is equal to you.” And if you have any question about that, in the very same chapter, in verses 33-34 it says:

“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong; the stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him [not as yourself];

for he is equal to you; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

So in the first stage there is Yahveh, one God, although like all the other Gods. The second stage God, Yahveh, transcends all the other gods and is greater than all the other gods. Then, in the third stage God is the *only* God. So in Isaiah 46 verse 9 it says,

“...remember former things of old; for I am God and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me.”

But here again it’s not like me, but equal to me, because otherwise, it doesn’t have the force of meaning.

So the point is that what we have are basically three stages. The first is Yahveh the God of Israel. Second, Yahveh is stronger than all the other deities and third, that God, Yahveh, is the only God.

Now the Bible spends a great deal of time trying to illustrate in what sense God is the only God, that God is one and also unique, as will be explained later. So, for example, Deuteronomy 4 verse 10 refers to:

“...how on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, ‘Gather the people to me that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children so.’

“And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain burned with fire to the heart heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud and gloom. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. And He declared to you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, that is the ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tablets of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances...”

The important point here in Deuteronomy is that God is not in any way a material, physical entity. So what one gets, finally, is this sense that there is ‘none else’. This becomes very clear in Isaiah 40, a most magnificent statement, quoted in some length, because it is so important. I believe one should experience the grandeur of Isaiah.

Isaiah says,

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span,

enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counselor instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed his the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket...” (Isaiah 40:12)

A drop from a bucket; all of the nations like one drop of water! These words transmit the total



▶ Participants at the lecture

transcendence of God. Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are counted as dust on the scales. In other words, they don’t count. “...he takes up the isles like fine dust. Lebanon would not suffice for fuel...” and so forth. The purpose of all these beautiful words is to underscore the question, “Whom would you then liken to God?” Or, “What likeness compares with Him?” The only possible answer is that there is nothing that compares to or is equal to God. And then, in Isaiah 40 verse 21-23, again, the concept is hammered home:

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to dwell in? Who brings princes to naught and who makes the rulers of the earth as nothing?”

This is the greatness of Isaiah, the beauty, the poetry of it. What Isaiah does in poetic terms, in poetic categories, is essentially what the traditions within



▶ A Russell Berrie Fellow asks a question

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam later translated into metaphysical categories. What is important to keep in mind is that the preparation of this foundation was critical to the Bible, which states, “You saw no form,” that everything in creation is as nothing compared to the reality of the one unique God who created the world. It therefore can then become axiomatic that the origin of Monotheism is something unique and unparalleled, viewing human beings as made in the Divine image. And had this not been clearly expressed in the Hebrew Bible, it would have been almost impossible to come to a later metaphysical characterization of God as one and unique, creator, and revealer, and redeemer.

While this paper has enumerated the evolution of the conceptualization of God, those that claim that it was a natural development miss what is truly the most essential element in Biblical Monotheism; that is, it embodied an Ethical Monotheism.

What actually is the Monotheism of the Bible as well as the Monotheism that we find in Christianity and Islam, is what I would have to characterize as ethical Monotheism. It is not a monism, because it is actually ethical, and this underscores the problems with the other deities. Why is it that the God of Israel is superior to and greater than the other deities and leads, finally, to their rejection as deities?

An analysis of Psalm 82, (verses 2-4) brings out the ethical dimension clearly:

“God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment; “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

So how does the God of Israel judge these gods? What is the problem with them? The problem with the

other gods is they don't care about the widow, the weak, the orphan, the lowly, the destitute, the needy. And then it continues (6-7) :

“They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

“I say 'You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like men and fall like any prince.'”

In other words, what is the problem with these “gods”? The problem with these gods, according to Psalm 82, is that they are unethical, and it's intolerable from a Biblical point of view that God could be unethical. The Bible teaches that God is concerned for the needy, the poor, the orphaned, the widow, and so forth. And that's why Psalm 82 concludes:

“Arise O God, judge the earth; for to thee belong all the nations!”

Jewish thinkers have distanced themselves from this evolutionary process, from monolatry to Monotheism, pointing out that such a God seems so well fitted to the Greek concept of being, and that its connection to repentance, to messianism and especially its rejection of Pagan deities is *sui generis*. For example, Leo Baeck, in *God and Man in Judaism* says that the Pagan gods, “Are moral only insofar as their behavior is not immoral. Morality is not essential to their divinity.”¹ And Yehezkel Kaufmann in his *Religion of Israel* claims that “Israelite religion was an original creation of the people of Israel. It was absolutely different from anything the Pagan world ever knew; its Monotheistic world view had no antecedents in Paganism”.²

There is, of course, further evidence in the Bible of the concept of Monotheism. What do we know about God in the first Chapter of Genesis? We don't know very much about God at all. The one thing that we do know is that He creates the world. The other thing we know is that all the various deities of the surrounding peoples are no longer deities, but demythologized parts of God's creation. For example the Bible says:

“*tohu va'vohu*; and the earth was unformed and void.”

Well, '*tohu va'vohoo*', chaos and disorder, were gods in the Pagan world. Light and darkness were the Zoroastrian gods of light and darkness, respectively, and in the same way, the sun, moon, and stars were deities.

1 Leo BAECK, *God and Man in Judaism* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958) p. 26.

2 Yehezkel KAUFMANN, *Religion of Israel: From It's Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile* (New York: Schocken Books, University of Chicago Press, 1960) p. 2.

The text doesn't even give them credit by naming them 'sun', 'moon' and 'stars'; it says:

"...the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also." 1:16

So the heavenly bodies are created on the fourth day as part of nature, (they do not exist as gods with powers), while the great sea monsters (also gods in the ancient world) are created on the fifth day, with all the other sea animals.³

On the sixth day, God creates human beings in the Divine image. One must ask what does 'God created human beings in the divine image' actually mean? When the Bible speaks of man, it's not enough to think simply of man as a living being, we must see man also as a being with self-consciousness, a consciousness that is not otherwise found in nature (at least, to date we have no evidence of it), because it is particularly a knowledge of good and evil.

This consciousness is not just a cognitive knowledge that is strictly theoretical; it is also practical knowledge to do with good and evil. And in fact, the very nature of man is determined by this knowledge. So, according to the Bible, human beings are therefore primarily ethical beings, and the creation of man is necessarily the creation of a spiritual being.

This is buttressed by numerous passages in the Bible. For example, the Prophet Zechariah says:

"Thus says the Lord who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and who formed the spirit of man within him." (12:1)

In the book of Job (33:4):

"The spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."

And in 32:8 it says:

"But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand."

3 The great Biblical scholar, Umberto Cassuto, in his *Commentary on Genesis*, wrote about the parallelism of the first three days and the second three days, days 4-6. So light and darkness were created on the first day, and then the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day; heavens and seas on the second day, birds and fish on the fifth day; the land and vegetation on the third day, the animals and human beings on the sixth day. And each creation increases the potentiality to act. The sun, the moon and stars circle in their heavens on day four, but it is animals and human beings that can change their position on day six. And finally, it's human beings that not only can act on their own behalf, but mold and affect the land and influence the other creatures as well, Umberto CASSUTO, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part One From Adam to Noah (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1961) p. 15.

So what is it about human beings that makes us different, that makes us able to understand? That makes us spiritual beings? It is, from a Monotheistic point of view, a spirit that God *puts* into human beings. In fact, in Numbers, Joshua warns Moses that Eldad and Medad were prophesying; Moses responds, in Numbers 11:29, saying:

"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets..."

And in Isaiah, Chapter 11 verse 9 you find:

"They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

And Jeremiah (31:34) says:

"No longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

In addition, Joel says beautifully (2:27-29):

"You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel,

And that I, the Lord, am your God and there is none else. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days I will pour out my spirit."

Prior to Monotheism, each people had their own god, who fought and battled with the other gods, and each set of gods represented a different people. But, on the contrary, the concept of Monotheism implies the concept of humanity, as Hermann Cohen overwhelmingly demonstrates in his book, *Religion of Reason - Out of the Sources of Judaism*.⁴ So that one God doesn't just mean 'not many gods but one god'; it means not many peoples, but one humanity.

We can examine the implications of this concept further by examining the central prayer in Judaism, the *Shemah*. It states:

"Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

First, saying that God is 'one' implies that God is

4 Hermann COHEN, *Religion of Reason - Out of the Sources of Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999).

unique. What does unique mean? It means that no other reality is like God and that everything else is contingent. The medieval philosophical tradition viewed such affirmations as claiming that God is necessary. This means that saying something is contingent implied that at one time it didn't exist, and then it came to be as a possibility, and then became an actuality. So if one takes any finite, contingent thing, one would have to say that there was a time when it was a possibility, which then became



▶ Fr. Puglisi and Rabbi Bemporad

actualized, but it was actualized by something else that brought it into being. That is simply a logical progression.

Therefore, those who ask “If God caused, or created the world, then who caused God, or who created God?” They are inferring that God is one contingent being in a series of contingent beings, which means that God was possible, and then was actualized by a reality that was prior. But this line of reasoning is inapplicable to the concept of God. Why? Because God is not a contingent being that becomes actual from a state of potentiality; on the contrary, God is the ground for all possibility and all actuality. Now if God is the ground of all possibility and all actuality, God in no sense can simply be one possible being among possible beings, or one actual being among actual beings. Indeed, God is unique and therefore is the ground of all possibility and all actuality, and thus excludes comparison with any other being.

God's being thus implies God's uniqueness. There are no other Gods. When the Bible declares, in the 10 Commandments “You shall have no other Gods before me,” (Exodus 20:3) it not only means, as Cassuto points out, that when one turns to other beings that are falsely viewed as gods, one does it in the presence of the one unique God.⁵ Cassuto interprets correctly:

“any place that you turn to another God, I am there.”

5 Umberto CASSUTO, *A Commentary...*, op. cit., p. 241.

What “Thou shall have no other Gods before me,” means is that if you turn to another god, it's not that this other god now is in God's sphere, and the one God is relegated to the lesser's sphere, and is absent. No! God is the God of everything, and therefore, whenever people turn to another god, God asserts, so to speak, ‘You're doing it in My presence’. You're doing it in the presence of the one unique God. Thus, idolatry is akin to adultery because it is sharing the worship of the one God with the worship of other realities that we falsely consider to also be divine. But God is exclusive. The worship of God excludes the worship of anything else as equal to God.

So, when the Bible refers to God as an ‘*El kana*’, it becomes obvious that ‘*kana*’ means exclusive –not jealous– God. Thus, Brown–Driver– Briggs defines ‘*kana*’ as demanding exclusive service,⁶ which Cassuto interprets as parallel to an exclusive marriage relationship.⁷ Thus, Biblically, idolatry is akin to adultery. In other words, it means that if you really worship God, if you really understand what God is, it excludes the possibility of worshipping any other God.

Now, there's an interesting passage in the *Mekilta* that imparts a sense of early Rabbinic Judaism, Rabbinic dialogues, and Rabbinic exchanges with respect to the Biblical phrase usually translated as “a jealous God.”

“A certain philosopher asked R. Gamaliel, It is written in your Torah, ‘For I the Lord am a jealous God’. But is there any power in the idol that it should arouse jealousy? A hero is jealous of another hero, a wise man is jealous of another wise man, a rich man is jealous of another rich man, but has the idol any power that one should be jealous of it? R. Gamaliel said to him, Suppose a man would call his dog by the name of his father, so that when taking a vow he would vow; ‘By the life of this dog’. Against whom would the father be incensed? Against the son or the dog? Said the philosopher to him, Some idols are worthwhile. ‘What makes you think so?’ asked R. Gamaliel. Said the philosopher: There raged a fire in a certain province but the temple of the idol was saved. Was it not because the idol could take care of itself?”⁸

In other words, since the house of the idol was saved, it must mean the idol had enough power to protect the house.

6 Francis BROWN, S. R. DRIVER, Charles A. BRIGGS, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: Coded with Strong's Concordance Numbers* (Oxford: University Press, 1980) p. 888.

7 Umberto CASSUTO, *A Commentary...*, op. cit., p. 242.

8 Jacob Z. LAUTERBACH, *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1949) II, pp. 244-246.

“Said R. Gamaliel to him,When a king of flesh and blood goes to war, against whom does he wage war, against the living or against the dead? The philosopher then said: ‘Indeed, only against the living’”.

What R. Gamaliel is pointing out is, what is the point of having a battle against the dead? The house of idols is a house of the dead.



▶ Fr. Giovanni Cereti and Rabbi Jack

“Then he [the philosopher] said again: But if there is no usefulness in any of them, why does He not annihilate them?”

I think that’s not a bad question. In other words, why doesn’t God do away with idols if they have no power, and they have no use? All it means is that people falsely believe in them. This is the response:

“Said R. Gamaliel to him: ‘but is it only one object that you worship? Behold, you worship the sun, the moon, the stars and the planets, the mountains and the hills, the springs and the glens and even human beings. Shall He destroy his world because of fools?’”

The philosopher also said to him:

“Since it causes the wicked to stumble, why does God not remove it from the world? –But R. Gamaliel continued saying: Because of fools? If so, then since they also worship human beings: ‘Shall I cut off man from off the face of the earth?’”

In those days the Caesars, beginning with Octavian, proclaimed themselves to be dieties. And they insisted on being worshipped and having sacrifices made to them. During the Maccabean struggle, Antiochus of Syria proclaimed himself Epiphanes, God manifest.

If we were to try to capture the nature of

Monotheism in its Biblical and then Rabbinic meaning, we would have to revise the simple linear development from Monolatry to Monotheism, while taking into consideration a number of elements which were unique in the Bible and made Monotheism’s development something unparalleled elsewhere.

First, as shown earlier, the Bible demonstrates that God is a spiritual, creator God. As long as the gods were forces in nature, (as was true with all pre-Biblical religion), each deity had a certain domain and was characterized by arbitrariness and conflict. There were battles between gods, and nature was seen in constant strife. But one must ask why it is so important for us to understand that the world was created by God? And why is creation so important?

Creation is important because without the concept of creation, we fall into the trap of Pantheism, and the identification of God with the physical world. But the importance of creation is even more than that. (Whitehead, one of the greatest philosophers of our time, in his *Science of the Modern World*, echoed the widely held belief that without the Biblical view of a created, orderly world, we could not have had science. In fact, he says that it’s not that there is a world that happens to have an order, no order, no world.)

Creation becomes significant because, logically, there has to be some reality that is the ground for all of the order in the world. This revolutionary view, which was initiated by the prophets, made it possible to see nature as the creation of God as an orderly cosmos, and not chaos. And, perhaps, even more important, since God created nature, God is not a force **of** nature, but a spiritual being who transcends nature.

Another consequence of Monotheism, also previously demonstrated, is that human beings are made in and for the image of God. Humans have a spirit, or spark of the Divine, and hence must be treated with respect and as ends in themselves, and not simply as means to an end or objects of use. And since God is a spiritual being, then human beings made in the Divine image are also spiritual and transcend physical nature. Why is this important? Because without the concept that man is not simply a physical being, but also has a soul or a spirit, the entire foundation for immortality vanishes.

In Psalm 51, right after the prophet Nathan confronts David about Bathsheva and Uriah the Hittite, David implores, God:

“...take not thy holy Spirit from me.” (Verse 11)

Since God is a spiritual, creative being transcending nature, so human beings made in the Divine image also transcend physical nature and have a spiritual quality that manifests itself especially in ethical action. As a result of this revolutionary concept of human nature, as an ethical, spiritual reality, history became possible. In fact, in the

ancient world, the Bible was the first book that actually viewed society as a historical, and not just a cyclical reality.

History became the means through which human values and goals could be realized, not immediately, perhaps not in one lifetime, but over time and generations. So historical progression also becomes a consequence of Monotheism. God creates the natural order, creates human beings in the Divine image, and they create social order and history. But history is only history within the context of an ideal goal, because an ideal goal breaks the repetitive, cyclical nature of the Pagan world.

And just as Monotheism affirmed one God and one cosmos, it also affirmed the ideal goal, which history would realize as a society of justice and peace. Thus, Monotheism introduced the Messianic ideal. The idea of the Messiah demands a recognition of humanity, of one humankind which is only possible with Monotheism. It is only Monotheism which could produce the concept—found nowhere else in the ancient world—of a time without war:

“...and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn [be accustomed to] war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4)



▶ Br. Giovanni, nsa, Fr. Charles, sa and Br. Gregorio, nsa

Yehezkel Kaufmann, commenting on Isaiah’s prophesy, states, “Murder is a crime, war is not. But there will come a time, with the full realization of humanity, that war itself will be a crime.” This state of peace is clearly described by the prophet Micah when he said, “let each man sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and no one shall make him afraid.”⁹

9 Yehezkel KAUFMANN, *Religion of Israel*,... op. cit., p. 388.

And so peace gives human beings their tasks and responsibility for the world. It is a threefold responsibility: First for themselves, in the sense that the Divine within us must be tended and realized, and employed to curb all self-centered action at the expense of others. The second task is for others, who were also made in the Divine image; the Bible was the first book to indicate that all human beings have a claim on us and that in the sight of God we are spiritually equal. And the third is to live according to God’s will as embodied in ethics. Thus the ideal of a just society for all is a basic affirmation of Monotheism.

And finally, what is actually foundational for Monotheism, and I’ve saved this for last, is that it makes it possible to love God. Because one can’t love a god who is a tyrant, that is a destructive entity, that is only power.

It’s interesting that a tyrannical, capricious god is not the Biblical view. In Exodus 33:18, Moses asks, “I pray thee, show me thy glory.” In Hebrew, “glory” is the word “*kavod*,” which is a very difficult word to translate because *kavod* actually means weight, power, or significance. God replies to Moses (33:20) in effect, “You really can’t know what my essence is, but I can tell you what my attributes are.”

Now you would think God would say my attributes are omnipotence, omniscience, power, and might, the traditional Greek and Pagan attributes. Of course, that is not what the text says. It says (34:6-7):

“*rachoom*, (which means merciful or compassionate, coming from the Hebrew word *rechem*, which means womb, a very feminine word), *chanoon* (gracious), *erech apayeem*, (slow to anger, or patient), *v’rav chesed v’emet* (full of steadfast love and truth)...keeping steadfast love for thousands [of generations] forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”

In other words, the attributes that God Himself proclaims to be paramount are moral attributes, which are the essence of ethical Monotheism. So to comprehend Monotheism as merely the worship of one god is to miss the point entirely. Unless we understand Monotheism as portrayed biblically, in the Abrahamic tradition, as ethical Monotheism, and at the same time understand and accept the kind of imperative that it gives us as human beings, we won’t understand Monotheism at all.

In Appreciation of 50 Years of the Methodist/Roman Catholic International Commission

Gillian Kingston - Vice-President, World Methodist Council,
Member of the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission 1986-2006

▶ (Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 19 October 2017)



Introduction

John Wesley, in his *Letter to a Roman Catholic* written in Dublin in 1749, comments that...

You have heard ten thousand stories of us, who are commonly called Protestants, of which, if you believe only one in a thousand, you must think very hardly of us. But this is quite contrary to our Lord's rule, 'Judge not that ye be not judged'; and has many ill consequences, particularly this - it inclines us to think hardly of you. Hence we are on both sides less willing to help each other, and more ready to hurt each other.¹

Perceptions on the off-shore islands of Europe did not improve at any great speed, and, some 25 years later (1765), he was writing dryly,

It is not easy to reckon up the various accounts which have been given of the people called Methodists; very many of them as far remote from truth as that given by the good gentleman in Ireland: "Methodists! Ay, they are the people who place all religion in wearing long beards".²

These comments of the founding father of 'the people called Methodist' indicate something of the distorted views Catholics and Methodists have held of each other

1 *A Letter to a Roman Catholic* (July 18, 1749), *Wesley's Works* vol. 10 (London: Mason, 1830).

2 John WESLEY, *A Short History of Methodism* (ca. 1765) *Wesley's Works* vol. 8 (London: Mason, 1830).



▶ Gillian Kingston, conference lecturer

historically.

One of the great achievements of fifty years of new relationships in the wake of Vatican II and 'cemented' by the work of many International Commissions is that such views have, to a significant extent, disappeared. Today, in most places, Catholics and Methodists, regard each other as fellow pilgrims on that journey towards 'full communion in faith, mission and sacramental life'.³

3 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Towards a Statement on the Church* (Nairobi 1986) §70, in J. GROS, H. MEYER, W.G. RUSCH, (eds.), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Faith and Order Paper 187 (Geneva/Grand Rapids: WCC/Eerdmans, 2000). Hereafter cited GiA.

That, however, should not be taken for granted. For some Methodists and Catholics, the mere fact that this Commission exists and has flourished for fifty years seems little sort of a miracle. There are those of us from countries where relationships between Methodists (and others of the Protestant tradition) and Roman Catholics have been fraught by historico-political factors which have little, if anything, to do with theology. There are others of us for whom the divisions imported by European colonial powers have little enough to do with a common faith in Jesus Christ. And, in today's rapidly secularizing world, still others may think, even if they do not always say so, 'What's the big deal?'

But there can be little doubt that 'the winds of change' which blew through the Vatican in the nineteen-sixties blew strongly in other places too – and we thank God for that.

Receiving the Reports – or not?

We gather, therefore, to reflect on and to thank God for the faithful and persistent work of those who have brought us to this time and place in our relationship with each other as world communions. And there is much for which to be thankful.

That said, we need to be realistic as we reflect on how this has come about; we are bound to ask ourselves probing questions as to the extent to which the work of the Commission been communicated to either pulpit or pew, in theological colleges or among local churches; to what extent can the warmth in relationship between our two churches in many places be attributed to the work, outstanding work, of successive Commission teams? How widely are the achievements of the Commission recognised?

There have been ten reports, issued a five-yearly intervals and named, colloquially, for the venue of the quinquennial World Methodist Council and Conference; there has also been an invaluable summary report, *Together in Holiness* (2011) which focuses on the first forty years work.

Denver	1971	-----
Dublin	1976	-----
Honolulu	1981	Towards a Statement on the Holy Spirit
Nairobi	1986	Towards a Statement on the Church
Singapore	1991	The Apostolic Tradition
Rio	1996	The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith
Brighton	2001	Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Methodists and Catholics
Seoul	2006	The Grace given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists further reflect on the Church
Durban	2011	Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments
Houston	2016	The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory



▶ The Most Reverend Bernard Ntahoturi, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, gathering with other attendees during the Conference.

The initial reports – *Denver 1971* and *Dublin 1976* – are sometimes regarded as somewhat exploratory and less focussed than succeeding reports. This is to do them a injustice. These reports have provided a firm basis from which to work and a clear vision for the task before the Commission.

The early commissioners, if we may so call them, were realistic men.⁴ 'Why are we here?' The co-chairs asked at the first meeting, and observed that the answer was in response to 'the Holy Spirit seizing the kairos, the Lord's moment, for full and frank discussion'.⁵

Several factors contributed to the promotion of a rich and ongoing relationship:

1) It was noted at the outset that this Commission has the singular advantage of having no history of formal separation between the two Churches and so none of the historical, emotional and other problems consequent on a history of schism.⁶ The value of this should not be underestimated!

4 The first woman appointed to the Methodist team was Sister Cynthia A. Clare from Jamaica in 1982; and to the Roman Catholic team Sister Mary Charles Murray from England in 1986.

5 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Denver Report* (1971), §2 in H. MEYER and L. VISCHER (eds.), *Growth in Agreement* (New York/Geneva: WCC, 1984).

6 *Ibid.*, §6.

2) It was further noted that the notion of holiness, personal sanctification, growth in holiness through daily life in Christ, was central in both traditions. *'For both, holiness is rooted in theology and in disciplined life'*.⁷

3) The *Denver Report*, at several points in the text, refers to practical steps towards bringing local churches together, a feature also of more recent reports such as *'The Grace Given You in Christ'* (Seoul 2006). This is not and has never been about 'talk, talk, talk'; it has been about 'walk, walk, walk'!

However, and all-too-presciently, the *Denver Report* urges from the very beginning of the dialogue the vital importance of reception at local level if the dialogue is to be truly meaningful and productive.

*'We believe,' say the Denver writers, that our present desires for greater unity between the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches can be greatly helped and accelerated if means are available for local Churches to be kept informed of the results of dialogue between theologians on matters which at present concern us...'*⁸

The writers raise what they refer to as 'the vital matter of communication.'

*Given the nature and mandate of the Joint Commission, it cannot be expected that the general public will share fully in all phases of the consultation. On the other, it is not easy to see how the serious planning of the education of our Churches at lay, ministerial and local level is to begin, or how our Churches are to be convinced that their spokesmen are doing anything, if there is no better communication than in the conventional press release.*⁹

[The more things change, the more they remain the same!]

The *Dublin Report* (1976) also highlights the importance of reception: referring to an earlier document, 'A Call to Action', the Commission noted the need for 'serious planning of the education of our churches' and the connected 'vital question of communication', observing that

7 *Ibid.*, §7.

8 *Ibid.* §78a.

9 *Ibid.* §121.

we do not want merely to accumulate paper in our files, but we want to stimulate one another to common action, so that the world which is starving for lack of good news may not through our unnecessary divisions be prevented from receiving the food of the Gospel.¹⁰

Thus, from the outset, this dialogue has noted the vital importance of common action and communication.



▶ The director with two participants

Whereas common action has become commonplace in many regions and countries, the issue of communication for this and other dialogues remains a glass ceiling through which it has proved difficult to penetrate.

As the present Methodist co-chair has written somewhat wryly...

*A more thorough assessment of the dialogue's achievements is hampered by its indifferent reception among Methodists and Roman Catholics at every level of church life. This a salutary reminder that there are limits to what a theological dialogue can achieve on its own.*¹¹

The World Methodist Council receives each report, usually 'with joy', but one is left wondering how many have

10 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Dublin Report* (1976), §25 in *Growth...*, *op. cit.*,

11 D. M. CHAPMAN, *In Search of the Catholic Spirit: Methodists and Roman Catholics in Dialogue* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2004) 167.

read the report presented to them and how many return to their sending churches to commend and advocate for the work. The formal reception by the Roman Catholic Church has been by way of a scholarly review.

Might we not commit ourselves to doing better, we ask ourselves on the occasion of this fiftieth anniversary celebration?

Achievements

In terms of the achievements of the Dialogue over the last fifty years, three areas merit particular attention:

1) While the Denver and Dublin Reports identified authority, eucharist and ministry among issues clearly needing reflection and study, uniquely the commissioners 'reflected seriously on **the problems and challenges which Catholics and Methodists alike confront in the world today**. We have found unity in thought and feeling in understanding and interpreting the contemporary situation'.¹²

A singular feature of the body of documentation before us is the recurring emphasis on how we, as followers of Jesus Christ, live as Christians in the contemporary world.

Doctrine may indeed divide, but action may serve to unify (*pace* WCC!).

The *Denver Report* devotes a whole section to

reflection on 'Christianity and the Contemporary World'¹³ identifying significant areas of agreement between the two parties.

The synthesis report, *Together in Holiness*, drawing on the reports from Dublin, Seoul and Rio, notes that

*Social concern is a fruit of faith. As an essential aspect of our calling, Catholics and Methodists are committed to serve the poor and oppressed of our time, and they understand the Church as an instrument in bringing in God's peace and justice to all God's people. As Christ reached out to touch and restore the lives of the outcasts of his society, so the Church is called to reach out in his name to touch and transform the lives of untouchables and marginalised of our world. The service of charity is an essential part of the Church's mission. Having experienced the loving mercy of God, the Church feels bound to denounce injustice and oppression, to work for peace, and to articulate the ethical consequences of God's love for humankind.*¹⁴

Put more colloquially, as Methodists and Catholics, we must not be so heavenly-minded that we are of no earthly use!

2) **Spirituality and holiness** – of this commission, it has been said that it has been 'not just an intellectual exercise, but a spiritual encounter'.

A strong common emphasis on holiness was noted early in the dialogue, with the Denver report devoting a whole section to spirituality.¹⁵ And, indeed, the first specific theme in the body of documentation is, though tentative, *Towards a Statement on the Holy Spirit* (Honolulu 1981)

This has been followed by the much more recent *The Call to Holiness* (Houston 2016).

The call to holiness is, of course, not unrelated to living as Christians in the contemporary world. Decrying a contemplation that 'consists in a cessation from all works,' John Wesley declared robustly...

¹³ *Ibid.* §§26-50.

¹⁴ INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Synthesis: Together in Holiness. 40 Years of Methodist and Roman Catholic Dialogue* (Lake Junaluska, NC: World Methodist Council, 2010), §178.

¹⁵ Denver Report 1971, §§51-61.



▶ Fr. Puglisi introduces speakers Gillian Kingston and Clare Watkins

5, Directly opposite to this is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. 'Holy solitaries' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel that holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness, but social holiness. 'Faith working by love' is the length and breath and depth and height of Christian perfection. 'This commandment have we from Christ, that he who loves God, love his brother also' and that we manifest our love 'by doing good unto all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith.' And in truth, whosoever love his brethren, not in word only, but as Christ loved him, cannot but be 'zealous of good works.' ...and in all possibilities he is, like his Master 'going about doing good.'

Holiness and faithful living are vitally connected – a gift this Commission offers to the wider communities. It is not without significance that the 2011 summary report precisely indicates this in its title: *Together in Holiness*.

3) There has been a clear willingness to return, in maturing reflection, to themes handled at an earlier stage in the life of the Commission.

This indicates something of the growth in trust and in mutual understanding between the dialogues teams, and built on over fifty years.

Similar to the manner in which the Honolulu Report, *Towards a Statement on the Holy Spirit* (1981), has been followed up by the Houston Report, *The Call to Holiness* (2011), there has been a group of reports focussing on the meaning of being church together.

- *Towards a Statement on the Church* (1986)

- *The Grace given you in Christ: Catholics and Methodists further reflect on the Church* (2006)

- *Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments* (2011)

Intervening reports, *The Apostolic Tradition* (Singapore 1991), *The Word of Life: a Statement on Revelation and Faith* (Rio 1996) and *Speaking the Truth in Love* (Brighton 2001) have explored many of the issues, ministry, eucharist and teaching authority among them, which will need further reflection.

Arguably, what it means to be 'Church,' the Body of Christ, is the most pressing issue facing the dialogue commissions in the twenty-first century. What does it mean, in faith and practice, to be Church?

Writing in 2003, the present Methodist co-Chair argued that

*Perhaps the most basic question for the Joint Commission to address is that of how Methodists and Catholics can together revisit the undivided history of the Church to find sources, methods and norms for an ecclesiology that will enable subsequent differences to be overcome.*¹⁶

Interestingly and relevantly, the Nairobi (1986) document had noted that

*As we reflect on a reunited Church, we cannot expect an ecclesiology shaped in a time of division to be entirely satisfactory.*¹⁷

A coming-together on the issue of ecclesiology would facilitate witness and mission in a world which is seeing, simultaneously, a rise in religious fundamentalism across the world faiths together with a rise, particularly in the west, of secularisation.

That may sound sweeping, perhaps to a meaningless degree, but it is the lived experience of many.



▶ The Centro had a "full house" for the event

¹⁶ *The Nature and Identity of the Church in Methodist-Catholic Dialogue 2003*, a paper presented during the 2001-2006 series.

¹⁷ INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Towards a Statement on the Church: Report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, 1982-1986* (Fourth Series), (Nairobi 1986), §22 in J. GROS, et al. GiA II.

To conclude

The final paragraph of the 1971 Denver Report reads...

Measured against our age-old estrangements, our progress in ecumenical experience in the past three (fifty) years has been swift and surely led by the Spirit. For this we give heart-felt thanks to God and from it we take hope and courage. But measured against the exigencies of our Churches and the challenges of our times, it leaves us aware of the distance that still lies between us and our professed goals. We know too well that the latter stages of the ecumenical dialogue are more formidable than the early ones, requiring of us redoubled efforts and devotion, not merely to the work we have to do together, the joint witness to great Christian values that we must give and widely promote in our Churches, but to the tasks of educating our people and communicating to them something of the joys and inspiration that have been vouchsafed to us. As we look to the future, therefore, we renew our commitments and reaffirm our confidence in God's providential leading, in which we have already been so richly blessed.¹⁸

18 Denver Report, §131.

As one political party in Ireland says, Much done; much to be done!

Let the last word be with Mr Wesley...

17. In the name, then, and in the strength of God, let us resolve first, not to hurt one another; to do nothing unkind or unfriendly to each other, nothing which we would not have done to ourselves...

Let us resolve secondly, God being our helper, to speak nothing harsh or unkind of each other. The sure way to avoid this is to say all the good we can both of and to one another...

Let us, thirdly, resolve to harbor no unkind thought, no unfriendly temper, towards each other...

Let us, fourthly, endeavor to help each other on in whatever we are agreed leads to the kingdom. So far as we can, let us always rejoice to strengthen each other's hands in God.¹⁹

19 A Letter to a Roman Catholic.

Celebrating 50 Years of Methodist-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
Our Growing Together Observations from a Catholic Member of the Commission

Clare Watkins - Lecturer in Ministerial Theology,
University of Roehampton, London

(Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 19 October 2017)



▶ Clare Watkins, Conference lecturer

I have spent some time considering how best to use the fifteen minutes or so that I have been allotted for this gathering; fifty years of ecumenical conversations which has borne fruit in ten reports, have given us a great deal to which we should witness and much to name in terms of both challenge and gift! In the end, I have thought it best to treat this short presentation as a kind of conversation starter - some observations on the dialogue which seem to me especially helpful or important for engaging our thoughts and emotions with this important work. These observations will be both about the content of our dialogue's work, and - perhaps as, or even more, significant - our process and methods. From a content point of view I want to draw attention to two persistent themes with which we have worked over the fifty years: one in which the energy is around convergence in the

main; and a second in which there has been more of a dynamism fuelled by exploring our divergences. Once I have - very briefly - introduced these themes, I will draw attention to some key, and particular, characteristics of this dialogue, into terms of the ways in which we have worked, reported and sought to engage a wider audience.

1. Two themes: holiness and church

The first key theme for me would be that of holiness. From the very first report it was observed that 'a central place is held in both traditions by the call to personal sanctification, growth in holiness through daily life

in Christ.'¹ One of the beautiful things that, as a Catholic, I have learnt to appreciate in the Methodist tradition is this commitment to holiness, borne out of the Wesleyan call to a true conversion of heart, and change of life. We have been able to recognise together that we "find a common ground for agreement in the universal call to holiness, and share a wide, deep and rich heritage of Christian spirituality."² Nor should this be considered as some nice, warm-and-fuzzy spiritual connection. Rather, as many reports, and notably our most recent³ make clear, this common sense of sanctity is expressed in concrete ways, many of which we share. For the individual

1 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, Denver Report (1971), §7 in H. MEYER and L. VISCHER (eds.), *Growth in Agreement* (New York/Geneva: WCC, 1984). Hereafter cited GiA.

2 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, Denver Report (1971), §52 in H. MEYER and L. VISCHER (eds.), *Growth in Agreement* (New York/Geneva: WCC, 1984).

3 INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory: Report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, 2012-2016 (Tenth Series)*, (Houston 2016), §22 in T. BEST, *et al.* *GiA IV/2*.

Christian there is the call to worship,⁴ conversion of heart, and the living of the baptismal vocation (for this latter see Durban 2011 Encountering Christ the Saviour); but we also share a profound sense of 'social holiness'. This commitment finds expression both in the shared understanding that holiness is something for which we are formed and in which we are accompanied through church fellowship; and in the commitment both traditions have towards the "social concern [which] is a fruit of faith."⁵ As John Wesley so ably puts it: "The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social religion; no holiness but social holiness."⁶ Such a profound connection, which finds expression in our meetings, as I will explore later, "gives particular hope for the future of Roman Catholic/Methodist relations."⁷

I want to suggest that this great blessing of beginning our work together in this shared vision of holiness as the Christian vocation has a significant impact on the ways in which Catholics and Methodists work together towards unity. It was recognised from the very start of our dialogue that ours were conversations between partners who have no history of a formal separation between them - an historical reality which is named a 'singular advantage' in our first report.⁸ (Denver 6) But this important point needs to be strengthened by the positive observations concerning the rooting of this dialogue in a tangible spirituality of the call to holiness - both individual and social, which is to say personal. The effects of this, and the ways in which it is embodied in our meetings, can be seen in the way

4 INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Catholics and Methodists: Report of the Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council, 1997-2001 (Seventh Series)*, (Brighton 2001), §26 in J. GROS, *et al. GiA III*.

5 JOINT COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL, *Dublin Report* (1976), in H. MEYER and L. VISCHER (eds.), *Growth in Agreement* (New York/Geneva: WCC, 1984).

6 Quoted in *The Call to Holiness...*, op. cit., §19.

7 Denver Report, §56.

8 Denver Report, §6.

that some particularly thorny issues have been treated. This leads me to my second theme - the church.

If holiness can be recognised as a place of strong convergence between our churches, it is fair to say that it is ecclesiological questions which have emerged as the clearest places of divergence. This is not unusual in Catholic bilateral of course! So, questions of authority in the church, the nature of ministry, and the particular place of the Petrine ministry - all these continue to be real and significant sticking points in our work towards unity. These dividing matters are, at their heart, questions of ecclesiology and the closely related theme of sacrament; they concern, among other things, the relative value given to ecclesial structures and traditions, and the vexed questions around the ecclesial mediation of grace through such structures and traditions. At the heart of this lies what is, perhaps, the ecumenical question for Catholics in ecumenism, as to how the historical reality which is our church is to be understood in relation to the Body of Christ, the communion of all the baptised.

Whilst I don't think that the Methodist-Roman Catholic Commission is going to overcome these sticking



▶ Archdeacon Jonathan Boardman, chaplain at All Saints' Anglican Church in Rome makes an observation

points any time soon (though I may be wrong) I do think that - through approaching these much discussed questions through the lens of the universal call to holiness, we have been able to progress our shared ecclesiological and sacramental thinking in some important ways. For example, we have shaped together a common ecclesiology based on the church as mystery which refers us back, always, to the heart of the Christian life which is the Trinity: "The mystery of the church is grounded in the mystery of the Holy Trinity..." (Seoul 51) Not only does this open up our language of church to that of koinonia -

in keeping with a number of other dialogues and the WCC texts on Church - but it particularly stresses a participation in the life of the Trinity through a strong sense of 'life in the Spirit'. It is the Holy Spirit which brings the community of the faithful into existence. (Singapore 62) This shared sense of charism and divine grace as constitutive of the social holiness of all Christians allows us to say clearly together, as a defining ecclesiological principle, that "the call to holiness and the call to be church belong together." (Seoul 56)

This ecclesiological starting place has, I would argue, allowed us to see - to discern - more beautifully and clearly in the other those graces of the mystery of the church which together bind us as members of Christ's body. For example, the Methodist ecclesiological commitment to 'connexion' has enabled Catholics to re-understand our own implicit, connectional living of church, as we affirm together: "Methodists and Catholics have an essentially connectional; understanding of Christ's call to discipleship, to holiness and to mission, always as God's gift and rooted in the invisible koinonia that is the life of the Trinity. From the first call of Jesus to the apostles, to be called is to be gathered - into local communities (churches) and into one single communion (the Church)". (Seoul 60) This quote illustrates well that journey from the call to holiness rooted in life in the Spirit, to the beginnings of our shared sense of church. We also see here another major uniting theme, closely related to holiness: mission. For both Methodists and Catholics to be holy, to be church, is to be missionary - co-operating with God's grace, empowered by the Spirit, to share the Gospel with the whole world.

2. Some reflections on methods and approaches

Much more could be said about the various ecclesiological questions with which our different reports have been concerned. However, I have decided to leave these to our wider discussion later, so as to be able to touch a few characteristics of our dialogue which strike me as especially important. These characteristics are not always entirely unique to us; but they do indicate something of the 'culture' or 'spirit' of our conversations. Ecumenism seems to me as much about these questions of process, culture and method as about the conclusions and theological insights of reports. It is in these processes that a spirituality for ecumenical conversation and practice is shaped. Too often it is not effectively shared, but remains the experience of those of us privileged to be directly involved.

Like all the major bilateral dialogue groups our conversations are held in meetings, which require us to leave our own places and spend a week or so at a time together in somewhere else, somewhere other. Yes, of course, we pray, and eat, and laugh and talk together; we are also often jet lagged, a little unwell, and - from time to time - irritable through tiredness, and the longing of our own beds! I say this, because I want to draw attention, in particular, to the ways in which ecumenical dialogue is embodied - in real conversations, prayers, and relationships.

This embodiment - a spirituality of sticking with each other, as well as 'being in fellowship' - has increasingly pushed to find expression in our reports. One example of this is the way in which, since 2006, our reports have been framed by a biblical reflection, drawn from the real and prayerful engagement we have had as a group of the five years of working on a report. In these texts we seek to share the ways in which our conversations are deeply rooted in a shared spirituality, a shared life of prayer. It is this same instinct which has seen the reports increasingly striving to find ways to enable readers to engage - not just with the words of the report itself - but with the heart of the matter. So, in *The Grace given You in Christ* (2006), the report ends with a series of principals for co-operation and practical proposals in an effort to further embody the theology the commission felt it had encountered and sought to describe. And in our most recent report (*The Call to Holiness* 2016), stories of holy men and women, from both out churches, are told, drawing the reader in to the deep sense of holiness as something lived, something real and practical.



▶ Donna Orsuto (right), Director of the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas discusses with some participants

Perhaps, as a Catholic participant, it is this last point - the place of the practical - which keeps calling me back to fresh and refreshing questioning of our work. Early in the dialogue's history it was observed, "A Methodist ideal is expressed in the phrase 'a theology that can be sung'" (Denver 1971) Frequently in our conversations I am struck how often a doctrine, or detailed piece of theology from the Catholic 'side' of things is most aptly met by some practice within Methodism: this might be the hymns sung - as in the remarkable reflections of our 2011 report on sacrifice and Eucharist; but it might also be to do with how Methodist practices around, for example, ordained ministers, speak of something permanent, and not merely functional with which the difficult Catholic language of 'ontology' can none the less find a resonance. So too, in the lived instincts of Methodists concerning worship and the powerful experience of grace in the life of the Christian

and the church, we have found grounds for speaking together of the church using "concepts associated with sacramentality" (Seoul 77) - a language characteristic of Roman Catholic ecclesiology since Vatican II, and often a stumbling block in ecumenical conversations.

Conclusion

You will appreciate how difficult has been to give some account of the Methodist Roman Catholic dialogue in so short a time. But it is, in any case, hardly right that a dialogue made up of so many voices over the years, from minds and experiences better than my own, could be adequately given expression, by any one voice even with a great deal more time! It is, always, about conversation - which is what we must turn to now. I hope, at least, I have opened a few little ways in to that much more important thing - our speaking to each other, the truth, in love.



Catholic-Orthodox Relations Following the Holy and Great Council in Crete (2016)

Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia

(Conference given at the Centro Pro Unione, Thursday, 14 December 2017)



'A miracle in history'

Fifty years ago a great pioneer in the cause of Christian reconciliation, the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, in a conversation with the French Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément, stated with emphasis, "Today union is the *anankē*", our necessary task, our unavoidable vocation, our destiny. Then he added, "Union will be a miracle – but a miracle in history".¹

"*Union will be a miracle*": the restoration of unity between the divided members of the Christian world will not come about simply through our human efforts. It will be a gift from God, the work of the Holy Spirit. In the words of Karl Barth, "The union of the Churches is not a manufactured article; one discovers and finds it through obedience to Christ, in whom unity is already accomplished".²

Yet Patriarch Athenagoras goes on to qualify this affirmation by adding, "a miracle in *history*". While reunion will indeed be a divine miracle, we on our human side are called to work, with God's help, "in history", striving to remove the human impediments that obstruct the full accomplishment of that miracle. St. Augustine of Hippo stated, *qui fecit te sine te, non te iustificat sine te*,³ "he who created you without your active involvement, does not make you righteous without your active involvement". His words



▶ Metropolitan Kallistos, Conference lecturer

can be applied to Christian reunion: God will not grant us the restoration of unity if we on our side do not play our part. As the *Homilies* of Macarius insist, "Human free will is an essential condition, for without it God does nothing".⁴

"*A miracle in history*". So far as recent history is concerned, two major events occurred in 2016: the convening of the Holy and Great Council in Crete during 18-27 June; and the fourteenth plenary session of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church in Chieti during 16-21 September, at which an Agreed Statement on Synodality and Primacy was adopted. How far have these two

meetings contributed to Orthodox-Catholic *rapprochement*?

The Council of Crete

First let me say something more generally about the meeting in Crete. The most striking and significant fact about the Holy and Great Council was that it actually took place. This may seem a somewhat feeble and even tautologous commendation. But when we reflect on the tortuous and protracted preparation that preceded the Cretan Council, we shall see that this is not so.

On 25 January 1959 Pope John XXIII, to the surprise of almost everyone in the Catholic Church, announced the summoning of an Ecumenical Council. In less than four years, on 11 October 1962, the Council actually began.

This is not the way that things happen in the Orthodox Church. As long ago as 1902 the Ecumenical

1 Olivier CLÉMENT, *Dialogues avec le patriarche Athénagoras* (Paris: Fayard, 1969) pp. 303, 307.

2 Quoted in Geoffrey CURTIS, *Paul Couturier and Unity in Christ* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964) p. 86.

3 *Sermon* 169, II, 13.

4 PSEUDO-MACARIUS, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and The Great Letter*, Hom. 37, 10 (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992) p. 210.



► Our Director and Associate director offer a welcome tea to the Metropolitan Kallistos before his speech

Patriarch Joachim III sent an Encyclical Letter to all the Orthodox Churches, calling for closer contacts and cooperation between them. This received a favourable reception. In particular the Russian Church in its reply in 1903 emphasized the need for "special assemblies of Orthodox bishops", drawn from all the various Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches, to confer face to face and "mouth to mouth" on issues of shared concern.⁵

Here we have the seed that led eventually to the Holy and Great Council of 2016; but it was a long time before this seed bore fruit. In 1923 the Ecumenical Patriarch Meletios IV Metaxakis convened a Pan-Orthodox Conference at Constantinople; but a number of Orthodox Churches refused or were unable to attend, and several decisions of this Conference proved deeply divisive, in particular the adoption of the New Calendar. After this, in 1930 an Inter-Orthodox Commission met at the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, with the task of preparing for what was termed the "Prosynod", which in its turn was intended to lead to a full Pan-Orthodox Synod. But in the event the Prosynod never actually met; still less did the Synod itself materialize.

In 1961 Patriarch Athenagoras revived the idea of a Holy and Great Council when he convened the first Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes. Here a comprehensive

5 For Joachim III's 1902 Encyclical, see Constantin G. PATELOS (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement: Documents and Statements 1902-1975* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1978) pp. 27-33; for the Russian reply, see Athelstan RILEY (ed.), *Birkbeck and the Russian Church* (London/New York: SPCK/Macmillan, 1917) pp. 247-57, especially p. 248.

list of topics was drawn up, to be discussed at the eventual Council. Preparations for the Council were made at subsequent conferences in Rhodes and Chambésy (Switzerland). Even so, a further fifty-five years were to elapse before the Holy and Great Council met at long last in Crete in 2016. It was as if we were sitting in an old - fashioned aeroplane on the airport runway. The engines keep revving up, the propellers begin to whirl round, but the aeroplane itself never takes off. That is why the very fact that at long last the Council actually met was in itself an event of major significance.

Unfortunately the Crete Council was far from being pan-Orthodox. Of the fourteen Churches that comprise the world-wide Orthodox Church, only ten attended. The Churches of Antioch, Georgia, Bulgaria and Russia were absent. At one point it seemed

possible that the Church of Serbia would also fail to participate, but in the end they took part. The absence of the Church of Russia was particularly damaging; it was also surprising, for until the last moment the Patriarchate of Moscow had played an active and positive role in the preparations. The OCA (Orthodox Church in America), recognized as autocephalous by Moscow but not by Constantinople, was not invited.

Before the meeting of the Crete Council, some Orthodox wondered whether it might not prove to be the Eighth Ecumenical Council. In retrospect no one today takes that view. In fact, the Crete Council adopted a significantly different procedure from the ancient Ecumenical Councils. At the Ecumenical Councils in principle (perhaps not in practice) all bishops of the Christian world were invited, on the grounds that from a charismatic and sacramental standpoint all bishops have been consecrated in the same way, all are therefore spiritually equal, and all alike are guardians and witnesses to the true faith Holy Tradition. Furthermore, at the Ecumenical Councils such as Nicaea I (325), each bishop voted individually and decisions were reached by majority vote (two bishops at Nicaea I refused to sign, even though the Emperor Constantine warned them that anyone who refused would be deposed and exiled). This was the pattern followed by the Roman Catholic Church at Vatican I and Vatican II; all bishops were invited, and resolutions were adopted by majority vote. The majority was always very large, but there was also a dissenting minority (the dissenters, however, were not deposed and exiled).

The procedure at Crete was different. Its guiding inspiration was not sacramental but bureaucratic and administrative. It was decided that not all bishops should be invited but only twenty-four from each Patriarchate or

Autocephalous Church. Also it was specified that decisions were to be adopted not by majority vote but by consensus. I take this to mean that, while resolutions might be adopted by no more than a majority vote *within* each delegation of twenty-four bishops, resolutions would be endorsed only if they were accepted by a majority in *all* the delegations. Otherwise a single dissenting bishop could have paralysed the proceedings of the entire conference.

It is easy to understand why these procedural measures were endorsed at Crete. Had all bishops been invited, and had voting been by individual bishops, the Church of Russia with its large hierarchy would have enjoyed an overwhelming influence. Again, had the voting by delegations been by majority vote, the Greeks, with five delegations, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cyprus and Greece, would have exercised a predominant influence, at the expense of the Russians and Romanians.

Had all twenty-four delegates from all the fourteen Orthodox Churches attended, there would have been 336 bishops at Crete. In actuality the number was not much more than 150. In any event, apart from the abstention of certain Churches, not all the various Orthodox Churches have as many as 24 bishops. This is the case, for example, with the Churches of Cyprus, Albania, Poland, and of the Czech lands with Slovakia.

Following a decision reached by the Pan-Orthodox Conference meeting as far back as 1976 –forty years ago!– six topics were to be discussed at Crete, and on all of these there were preliminary papers submitted to the Council:

- 1) "The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the Contemporary World. The Contribution of the Orthodox Church to the Establishment of Peace, Justice and Freedom, of Brotherhood and Love between Peoples, and the Removal of Sexual and other forms of Discrimination"
- 2) "The Orthodox Diaspora"
- 3) "Autonomy in the Orthodox Church and the Manner of its proclamation"
- 4) "The Mystery of Marriage and its Impediments"
- 5) "The Importance of Fasting and its Observance Today"
- 6) "Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World".

Several comments spring immediately to mind. First, these six topics were surely too many to be considered in depth at a meeting that lasted for little more than a week. It will be remembered that the Council of Trent lasted sixteen years, while Vatican II extended over four years, with the sessions amounting

altogether to an aggregate of nine months. Because of the short time and the variety of topics, the Crete Council lacked a clear focus.

Secondly, not all the six topics are of equal importance. The first, on "The Mission of the Church", is extremely general. The Crete Council made a number of worthy observations, but said little that was exciting or unexpected. Again, do we need a Holy and Great Council to pronounce on the question of fasting? Crete said several wise things in favour of fasting, and observed that the rules need to be adapted to local conditions (without specifying how). Its resolution on the subject might serve as an edifying homily to be read in a parish church, but it lacked the striking and creative impact that we might have expected from the pronouncement of a conciliar assembly.

Furthermore, why consider autonomy and not autocephaly? The Ecumenical Councils were summoned to consider issues of burning importance to the total body of believers throughout the Christian world. Can that really be said about the proclamation of autonomy? Do I find, at the end of the Sunday Liturgy in my parish at Oxford, that the parishioners gather round me in distress exclaiming, "Father we could not sleep a wink last night: we are all so worried about the proclamation of autonomy!". At least as regards autocephaly, there are major difficulties that merit discussion: for example, the disagreement about the autocephaly of the OCA, a matter already mentioned, that has been pending since 1970; and the chaotic situation in the Ukraine, where there are no less than three conflicting jurisdictions, two of them claiming to be autocephalous. But nothing was said at Crete about either of these questions; perhaps wisely. While recognising that the list of topics at Crete, because they might have proved too difficult to handle, was too long, we may also



▶ Rev. Tony Currer (right), from Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity next to his colleague Rev. Andrzej Choromanski gives his point of view on questions and answers after the Metropolitan address

note certain omissions. For example, the disagreement over the Calendar was not included. Probably, this was a prudent exclusion, for it was unlikely that any Holy and Great Council at this moment in time could have provided a solution. Those Orthodox Churches that have been following the New Calendar for nearly a century are unlikely to revert to the Old; while, if a highly conservative Church such as that of Russia were to adopt the New Calendar, the result would probably be a schism.

Another matter not discussed at Crete was the ordination of women priests. Even through the Orthodox Church at present has no intention whatever of ordaining women, it would have been useful if the Holy and Great Council could have offered an assessment from the Orthodox point of view concerning the current debate prevailing in Western Christendom. What for us Orthodox are the *theological* (as distinct from cultural) reasons that make it impossible for women to be ordained? It is not enough to appeal to Tradition and to assert it has never been done in the past (except by some Gnostic groups). We need to say why it has never been done.

Yet let me not be unduly gloomy about the choice of six topics at Crete. On the subject of marriage the Council had some helpful things to say. In the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, questions of marriage and divorce will certainly arise at some stage. One point in particular stuck me. In the preliminary paper on marriage, it was stated that in the case of a mixed marriage the children should be brought up Orthodox. In the eventual text adopted at Crete this stipulation was omitted. Surely this was a helpful decision. It means that in effect this delicate and sensitive issue is left to the conscience of the parents.

Regrettably, however, Crete said nothing about the procedure to be followed in regard to the blessing of a mixed marriage. Here there is a wide variation in practice between the different Orthodox Churches. Georgia, for instance, altogether forbids mixed marriages; other Churches insist that there has to be only a single ceremony, blessed by an Orthodox priest; other Churches allow two separate ceremonies, in the respective traditions of the two partners; Antioch permits a single ceremony, with clergy from the two Churches officiating together. Crete did nothing to regularize this confusing situation. Also there was only a brief and passing reference to what is becoming a burning issue on the Christian West: the blessing of same-sex unions (not as yet among Roman Catholics!). what are the theological reasons why such unions are not allowed in the Orthodox Church? The Crete



▶ The Metropolitan and a well-wisher

Council shed no light on this vexed matter.

Among the six topics reviewed at Crete, however, two are indeed of major importance: the Diaspora (so called), and Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World. Sadly Crete did not shed much light on either theme. As regards the Diaspora (so called), the Holy and Great Council repeated the familiar and accepted Orthodox position, affirmed at the Council of Nicaea (325), that there ought to be only one bishop in each city; but it did not offer any suggestions how the existing situation of multiple overlapping jurisdictions might be overcome or at least mitigated. It is true that Crete endorsed the decision taken at the Chambésy conference in 2009, that Pan-Orthodox Episcopal Assemblies should be set up in each country or group of countries in the West. But here Crete merely confirmed the *status quo*, without proposing anything new. It did not indicate how these Episcopal Assemblies might be strengthened. At present they are merely consultative; could they not be enabled to take substantive decisions?

In the resolution regarding Orthodox relations with the non-Orthodox, the Holy and Great Council expressed approval of the current bilateral dialogues that are in progress, including the theological discussions between Orthodox and Roman Catholics. Also it expressed approval of the existing participation by the Orthodox in the World Council of Churches. The two Orthodox Churches that do not belong to the WCC, those of Georgia and Bulgaria, were (as we have seen) absent from Crete; and, as the French say: *Les absents ont toujours tort*, "The absent are always in the wrong".

Thus far, on the question of Christian unity, the Crete Council was positive in its attitude, but it did not

propose anything new. Nothing, for instance, was said about the manner of receiving converts into the Orthodox Church. Here the existing practice varies widely. Since the middle of the eighteenth century the Church of Russia has received Roman Catholic converts simply by absolution and confession of faith, without requiring chrismation or (still less) rebaptism. On the other hand the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), which has been in full communion with the Moscow Patriarchate since 2007, requires as a normal practice that converts, including Roman Catholics, should be rebaptized; and a similar practice is to be found in other parts of the Orthodox world, notably on Mount Athos. Where rebaptism is required, it is not said to be "conditional".

Now this is surely a matter of serious doctrinal significance. It involves the question: Do non-Orthodox Churches possess valid sacraments? Within Orthodoxy there are some, within in both the Greek and the Slav Churches, who maintain that outside the visible limits of the Orthodox Church there are no valid sacramental mysteries. This is not, however, the universal opinion in Orthodoxy; and for myself I find it literally incredible that the Pope should be considered not merely a layman but an unbaptized pagan. I recall how the Duke of Wellington was once accosted in the street by someone who said, "Mr. Jones, I believe"; to which the illustrious Duke retorted, "If you believe that you will believe anything". I would say the same to anyone who told me that the Pope is unbaptized. Of course much depends on what is meant by the term "valid". I had hoped that Crete would decree that all converts who are already baptized should be received, neither by rebaptism nor yet by simple profession of faith, but by chrismation. But unfortunately on this matter the Cretan delegates remained, in the words of the Akathistos Hymn, "dumb as fishes". The matter was not discussed.

The majority of the bishop in the Serbian delegation did not sign the statement on relations with other Churches; so, according to the principle of consensus, it cannot be regarded as having been adopted by the Council.

So how are we to access the significance of the Crete Council? More particularly, has it advanced Catholic-Orthodox *rapprochement*? Here the answer has to be in the negative: it has not created new obstacles, but it has not solved any difficulties. More generally, it has to be said that the Holy and Great Council of 2016 was not a disaster, yet neither was it a new Pentecost. It lacked the excitement and visionary élan of Vatican II. The preliminary papers submitted to it were strongly conservative, and did not open up fresh vistas. The amendments made in them at Crete were relatively minor, and on the whole they merely reinforced the conservative spirit of the original texts. In any case, an assemblage of some 150 persons is not well suited to be an efficient body for the formulation of detailed amendments. Few of the speeches dealt with fundamental issues.

Most seriously of all, there was among the delegates at Crete a spirit of complacency, a lack of generous self-criticism. Thus in the document on Relations with other Churches, it is claimed, "The Orthodox Church, thanks to the ecumenical and loving spirit that distinguishes her, has always worked for the restoration of Christian unity" (§ 4). "Really?", I observed to myself at this point, "Always?" Again, it is asserted of the Orthodox Church, "Her unity can never be perturbed" (§ 6). Admittedly, this is said with reference to the fundamental essence of the Church; but as regards the actual life of the Church, such an assertion is scarcely realistic.

Returning from Crete, I could not help recalling the words of Horace, *Parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*, "Mountains will be in labour, the birth will be a laughable little mouse". I asked myself: After such a lengthy preparation, what have we actually achieved? Yet then I reflected: Am I not being somewhat over-critical? The Holy and Great Council held at Crete in 2016 ought not to be seen as an isolated happening, a one-off event, but rather as the beginning of a process, the first in a series of such meetings. At Crete Patriarch Daniel of Romania suggested that there should be a Holy and Great Council every seven years, and he offered, on behalf of the Romanian Church, to be the host at the next such gathering. This is of course an important point, for Holy and Great Councils are expensive occasions. At the ancient Ecumenical Councils it was the Emperor who met the cost of the meeting, together



▶ A group of participants in the Conference

with the travel expenses of the participants. But sadly today there is no Christian Emperor.

What the Crete Council has indeed achieved is to reaffirm the synodical spirit of Orthodoxy, its conciliar inspiration.

This is certainly significant and encouraging. But it needs to be followed up and carried into practical effect. Unfortunately, the Crete Council dispersed without making any clear decision about when and where the next Holy and Great Council would be held; and no continuation committee was set up.

Of course the participants at Crete were only delegates and not plenipotentiaries. The different Churches will need time to review and evaluate the decisions of Crete, as the Church of Russia has been doing in recent months. But let us work even now towards a further Council, which we hope will be fully pan-Orthodox. Preparations for the Crete event, as we have seen, lasted 114 years, from 1902 to 2016. Shall we have to wait another 114 years before there is a sequel?

Chieti

It is time to turn to the other major occurrence in Orthodox Church life during the year 2016, the Orthodox-Catholic meeting at Chieti. Reluctantly we have concluded that the Crete Council did little to further Catholic-Orthodox relations. Should the same be said of Chieti? For myself, I am happy to say emphatically "no". Unlike Crete, Chieti did indeed represent a positive step in advance. After a series of disappointments, the Catholic - Orthodox dialogue has at last adopted a new agreed statement. It will be recalled that the lengthy and closely argued Ravenna document, tabled in 2007, has not been accepted by the Russian Church, and so it has been demoted from the level of an Agreed Statement to the inferior status of a "working paper". Subsequent draft Statements on the place of the Bishop of Rome during the first millennium and on Primacy within the Church have also been set aside, due to objections from various delegates. So it is a refreshing change that at Chieti an Agreed Statement, not just a "working paper", was adopted by all the delegates who were present, both Orthodox and Catholic. Bulgaria, which was not present, has since rejected the Chieti document.

The Chieti Statement, dated 21 September 2016, bears the somewhat cumbersome title, "Synodality and Primacy during the First Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church". It is at once noticeable that certain words are absent, from the Chieti text, in particular the terms "power" and "jurisdiction". Chieti prefers to employ such words



Some students with Fr. Puglisi and Metropolitan Kallistos

as "communion" (*koinonia*), "service" (*diakonia*), and "interdependence".

Following St. Maximus the Confessor, it speaks positively of the Church as "an *eikon* of the Holy Trinity" (§ 1), and it stresses the integral connection between the Church and the Eucharist (§§ 8 and 17). Here may be discerned the constructive influence of Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon. Chieti also emphasizes that the guiding principle in the understanding of primacy at every level has to be the radical reversal of values that prevails within the Church, as compared with the secular world; and here it quotes the unambiguous declaration of Christ: "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (*Mark* 9: 35). The perspective has to be reversed, the pyramid stood upon its head: the last shall be first.

Another vitally important point made by Chieti is this: "The history of the Church in the first millennium is decisive" (§ 7). In other words, Rome should not demand from the Orthodox a *greater* priority than it possessed in the early centuries when there was Eucharistic communion between East and West, but the Orthodox for their part should not ascribe to Rome a *lesser* status than they acknowledged in the same period.

On the question of synodality and primacy, Chieti –following Ravenna in 2007– ascribes to the see of Rome a universal primacy, not merely a regional primacy limited to the West. Thus the section on "The Church at the Universal Level" begins: "Between the fourth and the seventh centuries, the order (*taxis*) of the five patriarchal sees came to be recognised, based on and sanctioned by the ecumenical councils, with the see of Rome occupying first place, exercising a primacy of honour (*presbeia tes times*)" (§ 15). It is further stated that during the first millennium "a number of appeals were made to the bishop

of Rome also from the East in disciplinary matters, such as the deposition of a bishop" (§ 19). Here it is noted that such appeals were regulated by the canons of the Synod of Sardica (343), and that these canons were accepted at the Council in Trullo (692) –which for the Orthodox possesses ecumenical authority– and at the Photian Council in 861. But then an important qualifying clause is added: "Appeals to the bishop of Rome from the East expressed the communion of the Church, but the bishop of Rome *did not exercise canonical authority over the churches of the East*" (§ 19: my italics). This refers to the first millennium; but, as already noted, the first millennium is to be regarded as decisive for church relations in the present day.

It is noteworthy that this qualifying clause was adopted unanimously, not only by the Orthodox delegates but also by the Roman Catholics. This is most important for the future of the dialogue. It is not clear, however, how far this statement can be reconciled with the affirmation

Now the Chieti Agreed Statement is concerned, as its title indicates, solely with the first millennium. This means that the decrees of Florence and of Vatican I have not as yet been taken into consideration, but are to be examined at later sessions of the dialogue. Our pilgrimage is by no means complete; yet Chieti does indeed constitute a significant step forward in the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Orthodox and Catholics at Chieti were no more than delegates. Their Agreed Statement has to be evaluated by the authorities whom they represent. Will the Holy Office at Rome be content to say, in agreement with Chieti, that the Bishop of Rome did not exercise canonical authority over the Churches of the East in the first millennium; and, moreover, that taking the first millennium as our guideline, it should not claim to exercise such authority today?

Festina lente



▶ Metropolitan Kallistos with Orthodox students

of the Council of Florence (1439), that the Bishop of Rome possesses "the full power of tending, ruling, and governing the whole Church" (*Decree of Union*, § 14). Still less does the Chieti statement seem to agree with the claims made by Vatican I: "We teach and declare that, according to the Gospel evidence, a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church of God was immediately and directly promised to the Apostle Peter and conferred on him by Christ the Lord Whoever succeeds to the chair of Peter obtains, by the institution of Christ Himself, the primacy of Peter over the whole Church Wherefore we teach and declare that, by divine ordinance, the Roman Church possesses a pre-eminence of ordinary power over every other Church, and that this jurisdictional power of the Roman pontiff is both episcopal and immediate" (*First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ*, §§ 1, 2, 3).

A leading worker for Christian reunion in the first half of the twentieth century, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov used to say: "Unity is simultaneously something given and something we must attain to".⁶ It is both present possession and future hope, both gift and task. We are to hold in balance the "already" and the "not yet". This applies especially to Catholic-Orthodox relations. On either side we are rightly conscious of how much we already share in common. We have the same faith in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is both fully God and fully man; we have the same belief in the Holy Trinity (despite the question of the *Filioque*); we have the same love for the Holy Virgin (although not in full agreement concerning the Immaculate Conception); and we have the same sense of our continuing communion

with the faithful departed for whom we intercede (even though the Orthodox do not use the term "Purgatory"). But there is also the "not yet": despite the progress achieved at Chieti, we do not yet share to the full the same understanding of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome in the world-wide communion of the Churches. That is the basic *impedimentum dirimens*. Yet even here we are not so far apart as we once were.

If sometimes we feel discouraged by the slow progress in Orthodox-Catholic reconciliation, let us call

6 Sergius Nicolaevich BULGAKOV, "By Jacob's Well", in James PAIN and Nicolas ZERNOV (edd.), *A Bulgakov Anthology* (London: SPCK, 1976) p. 101; originally published in *Journal of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius*, 22 1933, p. 8

to mind the wise words of one deeply committed to the quest for unity, Fr. Georges Florovsky: "The highest and most promising 'ecumenical virtue' is patience".⁷ To that I wish to add: an *impatient patience*. For reunion, as Patriarch Athenagoras insisted, is "our *anankē*."

Let me end with a prayer composed by Fr. Bulgakov; and let us note how he speaks not only about the need for patience but equally about the need for daring; not only about humility but about firmness:

*O Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour,
Thou hast promised to abide with us always.
Thou dost call all Christians
to draw near and partake of Thy Body and Blood.*

7 Georges FLOROVSKY, "The Problem of Ecumenical Encounter", in A. H. ARMSTRONG and E. J. B. FRY (edd.), *Rediscovering Eastern Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of Dom Bede Winslow* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963) p. 76; not included by Richard S. HAUGH (ed.), *The Collected Works*.

*But our sin has divided us
and we have no power to partake of Thy Holy Eucharist
together.*

*We confess this our sin and we pray Thee, forgive us
and help us to serve the ways of reconciliation according to
Thy will.*

*Kindle our hearts with the fire of Thy Holy Spirit,
give us the spirit of wisdom and of faith,
of daring and of patience,
of humility and of firmness,
of love and of repentance,
through the prayers of the most blessed Mother of God
and of all the saints. Amen.*⁸

8 This is an abbreviated version (slightly adapted by myself) of a much longer prayer by Fr. Bulgakov in *Sobornost'*, *The Journal of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius*, New Series, No. 3 September, 1935, p. 2. This abbreviated version is often used at celebrations of the Divine Liturgy organized by the Fellowship.

Protestantisches Zeugnis in Ungarn - Unser gemeinsamer trinitarischer Glaube

Bischof Dr. Károly Fekete
Debrecen, Ungarn

(Konferenz im Centro Pro Unione, Freitag, 10. November 2017)



► Bischof Dr. Károly Fekete

Exzellenzen, meine Damen und Herren, Schwestern und Brüder,

Es ist eine große Freude und eine große Ehre für mich, dass ich als ungarischer evangelisch-reformierter Bischof jetzt hier im Centro Pro Unione stehen kann. Ich danke Ihnen sehr für die Einladung und ich nehme die Gelegenheit wahr, Sie zum 50. Jahrestag der Gründung dieses Instituts zu beglückwünschen. Ich wünsche Gottes reichlichen Segen für Ihren wichtigen Dienst, Brücken zwischen verschiedenen christlichen Kirchen zu bauen.

Meine Damen und Herren,

Aus dem Fenster meines Zimmers in Debrecen, Ungarn sehe ich jeden Tag ein Denkmal. Die einfache Säule erinnert an jene evangelischen Pfarrer, die im 17. Jahrhundert für den Glauben verfolgt wurden. Sie wurden zu Gefängnis und

Zwangsarbeit verurteilt, weil sie ihren Glauben an die Heilige Dreifaltigkeit anders bekundeten als die damalige römisch-katholische Kirche. Dieses Denkmal erinnert uns an eine traurige und traumatische Vergangenheit des Konflikts zwischen unseren Kirchen. Aber diese Steinsäule hat auch eine andere Botschaft: Am Fuße des Denkmals befindet sich ein Bronzekranz, der am Stein befestigt ist. Es erinnert an etwas anderes: Am 18. August 1991 besuchte Papst Johannes Paul II unsere Stadt und, nach einem ökumenischen Gebet in der Reformierten Großkirche zu Debrecen –meine Bischofssitz– er ging zum Denkmal und legte dort einen Kranz nieder. Der Bronzekranz erinnert uns an diesen kräftigen Akt der Versöhnung durch den höchsten Repräsentanten der globalen römisch-katholischen Kirche. Mit diesem Akt verwandelt sich das Monument: Es erinnert uns nicht an einen tragischen Konflikt mehr, aber

es ist ein Zeichen der Hoffnung auf unserem Weg zu einer wachsenden Gemeinschaft zwischen unseren Kirchen.

„Vom Konflikt zur Kommunion“ — so lautet der Titel des Dokuments, das als Vorbereitung auf den 500. Jahrestag des Beginns der protestantischen Reformation veröffentlicht wurde. Dieses Dokument enthält die Ermutigungserklärungen für die Einheit, die letztes Jahr am 31. Oktober 2016 in Lund, Schweden, gelesen wurden, als Papst Franziskus am Gedenkgottesdienst für die Reformation teilnahm. Das sind wichtige Zeichen der Hoffnung auf unserem gemeinsamen Weg zur wahren christlichen Einheit. Und am 5. Juli 2017 unterzeichnete die Weltgemeinschaft der reformierten Kirchen in Wittenberg, Deutschland, in der Stadt, in der Martin Luther gearbeitet und gebetet hat, die Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre. Das ist ein weiteres wichtiges Zeichen der Hoffnung für uns. Und die Tatsache, dass ein reformierter, protestantischer Bischof von Debrecen, Ungarn, im 500. Jahr der Reformation zu einem römisch-katholischen Institut in Rom eingeladen wird, ist ein Zeichen der Hoffnung für uns, auch für uns: Wir wandeln zusammen, wie Schwestern und Brüder, auf dem Weg zu einer wachsenden Gemeinschaft.

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder!

Die ungarisch-sprechende evangelisch-reformierte Kirche lebt heute in einem Spannungsfeld von Tradition und Mission. Unsere Kirche kann auf eine reiche Tradition bis in die Reformationszeit im 16. Jahrhundert zurückblicken. Anlässlich des 500-Jahr-Jubiläums des Beginns der Reformation sprechen wir

viel über unsere gesegnete Vergangenheit. Mit vielen Erinnerungsfesten und Konferenzen sowie durch zahlreiche Ausstellungen und Kunstwerke denken wir über die 500 Jahre Reformation nach. Wir, Reformierte in Ungarn haben auch ein eigenes Datum, um uns zu erinnern: vor 450 Jahren hat die Synode zu Debrecen, in 1567 die „Nach dem Evangelium reformierte Kirche Ungarns“ ins Leben gerufen. So erleben wir in 2017 ein doppeltes Erinnerungsjahr. Als Motto zu unserem Gedenkjahr in unserer Diözese „Jenseits der Theiß“ haben wir daher „Seit 500 Jahre Reformation - seit 450 Jahre ungarische Reformierte Kirche“ gewählt. Dieses Motto nimmt nicht nur die Vergangenheit in den Blick, vielmehr verbindet es – auch grammatisch – die Reformationszeit mit der heutigen Zeit. Die Herausforderung des Reformationsgedenkjahrs liegt gerade in dieser Verbindung: Inwieweit können wir in der kirchlichen Praxis des Kirchenlebens das „*ecclesia reformata semper reformari debet*“ heute realisieren - dass die Reformation der Kirche keine vollendete, geschlossene Geschichte, sondern offen in Richtung der Zukunft ist. Diese Herausforderung lässt sich auch mit dem genannten Spannungsfeld zwischen Tradition und Mission umschreiben. Es ist unsere Aufgabe, die Reformation in einer Weise zu erinnern, die uns nicht in die Vergangenheit zurückleitet, sondern uns vielmehr hilft, uns konstant zu erneuern, um unsere Mission besser erfüllen zu können.

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Auf dem Siegel des ungarischen evangelisch-reformierten Diözese Jenseits der Theiß, in einer Kirche, die in der Kirchengebäude und in der Liturgie keine Bilder benutzt, steht, überraschend genug, ein Bild von der Taufe Jesu. Auf diesem Bild sind die Attribute des himmlischen Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes gezeichnet. Jeder einzelne offizielle Gebrauch des Siegels erinnert uns an den einen und wahren Gott, die Heilige Dreieinigkeit.

Die Ursprünge des heutigen Siegels gehen zurück nach Wittenberg und zu Péter Melius Juhász, dem ersten reformierten Bischof unserer Stadt Debrecen, der dort studierte. Es beweist, dass die ungarische Reformation mit der Reformation Europas synchronisch entwickelte und ein integraler Bestandteil davon war.

Auf der Universität zu Wittenberg, im 16. Jahrhundert war jedes Mitglied des Coetus, der Studentengemeinschaft, verpflichtet, einen Eid (*Formel Iuramenti*) abzulegen, der die antitrinitäre Lehre verleugnete und sich der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit verpflichtete. Darum wurde der Reformator Melius zu einer hervorragenden Gestalt des Kampfes gegen den Antitrinitarismus. Es ist keine Überraschung, dass das Buch von Melius: „*Die Übersetzung des Buches von Hiob*“ ein Holzschnitt der Drucker Raphael Hoffhalter enthielt, dass die Taufe Christi darstellte. Melius selbst, in dem Glaubensbekenntnis von Debrecen, im Jahre 1567, vor 450 Jahren, lehrt, dass der Vater in der Schöpfung offenbart wird, der Sohn wird in Form eines Mannes und der Heiligen Geist im Bild der Taube wurde offenbart: „*Dies ist mein lieber Sohn, an dem*

ich Wohlgefallen habe; den sollt ihr hören!“ (Mt 3,17; 17, 5c).

Daraufhin wurde Debrecen zum Bollwerk des Glaubens an den Heiligen Dreieinigkeit. Die Streitigkeiten von Melius hielten unsere Kirche im *Mainstream* der christlichen Tradition. Das Symbol unseres Kirchenbezirks bezieht sich auf die beiden Säulen unserer reformierten Identität: Den Glauben an die Heiligen Dreieinigkeit zu bekennen und das Wort Gottes in den Mittelpunkt



► Fassade des Palazzo Doria (Collegio Innocenziano) Sitz des Centro pro Unione seit 1967

unseres individuellen Lebens und in die Mitte des Lebens der Kirche zu stellen.

Das ist eine Botschaft, die auch heute, 500 Jahre nach der Reformation unser Leben prägt. Gott schließt unsere menschliche Lebensgeschichte in seine Geschichte ein. Unser Leben ist in die Geschichte von Christus eingebettet: So als der Heidelberger Katechismus, ein Symbol von unsere gemeinsame Erbe es formuliert: „*Ich mit Leib und Seele, im Leben und im Sterben nicht mir, sondern meinem getreuen Heiland Jesus Christus gehöre...*“, der „aus

dem ganzen Menschengeschlecht sich eine auserwählte Gemeinde zum ewigen Leben durch seinen Geist und Wort in Einigkeit des wahren Glaubens von Anbeginn der Welt bis ans Ende versammelt, schützt und erhält" (Heidelberger Katechismus 1; 54)

Diese wurde der einzige Trost für die ungarische Nation, welche brach nach der Schlacht von Mohács (1526) zusammen und kämpfte um das Überleben am Rande des Lebens und des Todes.

Nachdem Ungarn in drei Teile zerrissen worden war in der 16. Jahrhundert, und teilweise unter türkischer Besatzung fiel, hat der ungarische Protestantismus, ein natürlicher Bestandteil des Christentum Europas, einen besonderen Charakter erworben. Während wir Luthers ewige menschliche Frage teilten: *"Wie kann ich einen barmherzigen Gott finden?"*, mussten wir auch nach einer Antwort auf eine andere Frage suchen: *"Warum erlaubte Gott den Zusammenbruch unserer Nation?"* Verantwortung für und Solidarität mit der Gemeinschaft, neben die Suche nach der individuellen Heil, wurde ein besonderes Merkmal der ungarischen reformierten Kirche. Das hielt den Wunsch nach der Religionsfreiheit und nach der nationalen Unabhängigkeit in unserem Herzen lebendig. Deshalb ist die reformierte Großkirche von Debrecen, mein Bischofssitz, auch ein nationales Denkmal, weil die emblematischen, historischen Ereignisse des Strebens nach nationaler Unabhängigkeit im 19. Jahrhundert dort stattfanden. In der ungarischen reformierten Geschichte sind individuelle Heil und Solidarität mit der Gemeinschaft miteinander verbunden.

Die ungarische reformierte Kirche entwickelte sich im Kontext des westlichen Christentums, aber vier besondere Elemente wurden charakteristisch für sie:



▶ Von links nach rechts: Dr. Mark Aurél Erszegi, Fr. J. Puglisi, sa, Bischof Károly Fekete, HE Eduard Habsburg Lotharingiai (Botschafter von Ungarn beim Heiligen Stuhl)

Die erste: Das biblische, reformierte Spiritualität, die frei von Über-enthusiasmus ist.

Die zweite: soziale Verantwortung im alltäglichen Leben im Dreieck der Kirche, Schule und Diakonie.

Die dritte: eine lebendige Beziehung zu den theologischen und säkularen Wissenschaften.

Das vierte Merkmal ist der treue Dienst der breiteren Gemeinschaft. Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg war ein großer Teil der ungarischen Reformierten Kirche zu einer doppelten: religiösen und ethnischen Minderheit geworden. Es ist heute unserer kontextuellen Herausforderung um unsere nationale, kulturelle, sprachliche Identität so wie unsere Glaubensbekenntnis, auch in Minderheitssituationen und auch in der Diaspora zu bewahren.

Die Geschichte der europäischen Reformation wurde auch in unsere ungarische Stadt Debrecen geschrieben. Debrecen und die ungarische reformierte Kirche wurde auch in die Geschichte in die Geschichte des Weltchristentums aufgenommen. Wir sind heute ein integrierter Teil dieser Geschichte. Wir glauben, dass Gott die Fäden unseres Lebens in seine Geschichte, in die Geschichte von Christus hineinwebt. Wir glauben, dass die Geschichte von diejenigen die die fünf Jahrhunderte der "nach dem Evangelium reformierten Kirche" erinnern, von und mit der Christusgeschichte zusammengewebt wurden.

Haute laden wir unsere eigenen Gemeinden, unsere Schwesterkirchen in Debrecen, in Ungarn, im Karpatenbecken, in Europa und auf der ganzen Welt ein, um unsere Geschichten mit einander zu teilen und sie auszutauschen.

Nur so können wir mit einander und mit der Geschichte Christi in eine echte Solidarität eintreten. Das Gedenkjahr gibt uns die Möglichkeit, an einander zu erzählen, was wir auf dem Weg in Nachfolge Christi erlebt haben. Und es gibt für uns auch eine besondere Gelegenheit, um Zeugnis zu geben darüber wie wir die Realität der Christusgeschichte in unserem Leben entdeckt haben, auch inmitten schweren historischer Traumata. Unsere Erneuerung wird gedient, wenn wir die Erfahrungen unserer unmittelbaren Vergangenheit teilen können.

Die Mitte des 20. Jahrhunderts war ein Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der westlichen Kultur, in der Geschichte des Christentums und in

der Geschichte der ungarischen reformierten Kirche. Die Tragödien der beiden Weltkriege forderten den Glauben an die Christus-Qualität der "christlichen" Zivilisation grundsätzlich heraus. Aber, nach den Zweiten Weltkrieg, die ungarische reformierte Kirche wurde gezwungen, unter der Kuppel des sowjetischen Weltreiches zu leben, die auf einer atheistischen Ideologie gebaut wurde. Und während das westliche Christentum dem Westen Anstrengungen unternahm, die Erfahrungen und Konsequenzen des Holocaust und des Erbes des auflösenden Kolonialismus zu bewältigen und sie theologisch zu reflektieren, haben wir, hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang, im Grunde genommen separiert von unseren westlichen Schwestern und Brüdern, für eine Art von Vegetation verurteilt, in einer unterdrückten, geschlossenen Welt, belastet von Kompromissen und Verrat.

Ja, wir haben nicht gemeinsam mit unseren Schwestern und Brüdern im Westen und im globalen Süden die Wege der theologische und akademische Reflexion gegangen. Wir haben die Phänomene des Säkularismus und des praktischen Materialismus nicht besprochen, die jetzt auch an den Türen von unserer Kirche klopfen. Und heute werden wir immer noch durch die Existenz eines inneren, mentalen Eisernen Vorhangs herausgefordert, der auch den Abbau des politischen Eisernen Vorhangs überlebt hat. Partikularismus ist eine Versuchung für uns. Auch wir müssen jetzt, am Anfang der 21. Jahrhundert, auf die Gefahren der Vergötterung von materiellen Gütern reflektieren, die unser Leben mit einer Trias des Reichtums, der Macht und das Gewalt untergraben. Und das können und sollen wir nicht allein tun: dafür brauchen wir auch die Erfahrungen von unseren Schwestern und Brüdern in der Welt.

Wir haben uns immer als ein Teil des Weltchristentums angesehen, aber vierzig Jahre Isolation machten uns in der Tat anders. Als der Kommunismus fiel, waren wir ein bisschen wie die, die nach einer langen Zeit des Winterschlafs aufwachen. Wir kehrten als Vollrechtsmitglied und Partner der großen Gemeinschaft des Weltchristentums zurück, aber wir fühlten uns, als kämen wir in eine andere Welt. Und unsere Schwestern und Brüder aus dem Westen und aus dem Osten sahen uns an, als wir Zeitreisenden aus der Vergangenheit wären.

Wir danken Gott, dass es auch der Teil unserer Geschichte ist, dass wir mehrere Grundwertes des christlichen Lebens in unseren ungarischen Protestantismus bewahrt haben: die biblische Frömmigkeit, die Gesangskultur, die Liebe zur Gemeinde und Kirche, eine theologische

Ausbildung die sich auf den Dienst der Gemeinden konzentriert, und das Lokalpatriotismus.

Das 500. Jahr der Reformation und das 450. Jahr der ungarischen Reformierten Kirche bieten die Möglichkeit für uns nicht nur ein formaler Teilnehmer der Geschichte des Weltchristentums im 21. Jahrhundert zu sein, sondern um zu beginnen einander kennen zu lernen und einander besser zu verstehen.



► Bischof Károly Fekete und zwei Teilnehmer

Heute aber dürfen wir auch dankbar und gemeinsam bekennen: wir sind durch Gott befreit zur Erneuerung. Nach den historischen Ungewissheiten unserer unmittelbaren Vergangenheit und unter die Unsicherheiten des Lebens unserer Tage, bedroht durch Terrorismus, Extremismus und Klimawandel, es ist existentiell, in diesem Glauben gestärkt zu werden: der barmherzige Gott kann auch heute gefunden werden. Es gibt Gnade, als wir mit unserer schwierigen Vergangenheit, mit unterbrochener kirchlicher Kontinuität und mit den zerbröckelnden Strukturen der Volkskirche konfrontiert werden. Das echte Jahr des Jubiläums wird nicht durch uns organisiert, sondern es wird an uns von Gott als Geschenk gegeben. Es gibt ein geliebte Sohn, unser Herr Jesus Christus, durch den wir Barmherzigkeit finden und dem wir zuhören können "So gibt es nun keine Verdammnis für die, die in Christus Jesus sind. Denn das Gesetz des Geistes, der lebendig macht in Christus Jesus, hat dich frei gemacht von dem Gesetz der Sünde und des Todes." (Rom 8, 1-2) Wer auch immer Hört dies in der Kirche, in den Gemeinden, wird für die absolutio befreit, für die Erfahrung der Wirklichkeit der Gnadenerklärung. Die *absolutio* ist die Wiederherstellung der Gesundheit des geistigen Lebens. Und das brauchen wir über alles. Wir dienen Mitglieder unserer Gemeinden

in Europa, die durch Schwierigkeiten betroffen sind, frustriert und versucht sind, deren Schicksal sie in Zweifel und Leiden geführt hat. Oder sie haben den Bund mit Gott gebrochen, und sie können nicht mehr in Freude leben, weil sie nicht mehr wagen an die Verheißungen Gottes zu vertrauen. Aber: das christliche Leben befreit uns nicht von der Wirklichkeit, sondern es befreit uns *dafür*. Unser Leben ist nicht aus dem Bund geschlossen, weil unser Bund mit Gott läuft nie ab: Gott bleibt auch in der Zeit unserer Untreue treu. Die *absolutio* bedeutet die Annullierung unserer Schulden. Es ist der Trost, es ist ein feierliche Mahlzeit, welche der Vater dem verlorenen Sohn gibt. Der verwundete, betroffene, gebrochene und verletzte Mensch ist der Ehrengast am Tafel Gottes: jemand, den Gott statt der Verurteilung mit dem Leben ehren will. Ich wünsche von ganzem Herzen, dass der Herr der Gnade auch dieses Gedenkjahr der Reformation benutzen würde, um uns die geistige Erneuerung zu geben in unserem Zeugnis von der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit, die wir so fervent verlangen!

Wir, ungarische Protestanten möchten in der brüderlichen und schwesterlichen Gemeinschaft des Weltchristentums mit einem erneuerten und befreiten Geist präsent sein. Wir sind bereit, unsere Schwester und Brüder in der Weltkirche zu verstehen und von ihnen zu lernen. Und wir sind bereit, die Erfahrungen unserer Pilgerreise anzubieten, unsere Zeugnis darüber wie Gott uns bis heute geführt hat.



▶ Teresa Francesca Rossi Teresa fragt den Bischof eine Frage

Liebe Schwester und Brüder,

Am 22. Mai 2009 wurde in unseren Stadt Debrecen die Verfassung der Ungarischen Reformierten Kirche von der Ungarische Reformierte Konstituierenden Synode angenommen. Diese Entscheidung deklariert die kirchenverfassungsrechtliche Einheit der ungarischen reformierten Teilkirchen des Karpatenbeckens. Die Verfassung ist von den Vertretern der reformierten Kirchendistrikte aus Ungarn und den Vertretern der ungarischen reformierten Teilkirchen aus Siebenbürgen (Rumänien), aus Serbien und aus Transkarpatien (Ukraine) unterzeichnet worden. Auch die Ungarische Reformierte Kirche in den USA schloss sich der Gemeinschaft an. Auch die Reformierte Christliche Kirche in der Slowakei und die Reformierte Calvinistische Christliche Kirche in Kroatien traten später bei. Wir arbeiten auch mit der westlichen ungarischen reformierten Diasporagemeinschaft zusammen. An 25 Juni 2017 tagte diese Synode wieder in Debrecen und wir erinnerten das 500. Jubiläum der Reformation und die 450. Jubiläum des Entstehens unserer Kirche. Wir haben auch eine merkwürdige Entscheidung genommen: Unsere Synode hat die Neuübersetzung des aus der 16. Jahrhundert stammenden reformierten Glaubensbekenntnisses des *Confessio Helvetica Posterior* neu adoptiert. Damit wird die Ungarische Reformierte Kirche das Inhalt des zwei reformatorischen Bekenntnisses, das Heidelberger Katechismus und die Zweite Helvetische Glaubensbekenntnis wieder als ihre offizielle Lehre deklarieren. Wir wissen genau, dass wir den kirchlichen Leben von vor 500 Jahr nicht kopieren können und sollen. Aber wir, als Kirche, möchten lehren von dem Erbe der Reformation, und diese heute, in ökumenischen Geist, als ein Kompass zu gebrauchen als wir die Wege von eine authentische Nachfolge Christi in dem 21. Jahrhundert suchen.

Liebe Schwester und Brüder!

Wir, ungarische Reformierten verstehen uns als eine Kirche in sieben Ländern:

Infolge des nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg geschlossenen Friedensvertrags von Trianon (Versailles) verlor Ungarn zwei Drittel seines Staatsgebietes und die Hälfte seiner Einwohner. Die ungarisch-stämmige Bevölkerung mit ihren mehreren Millionen Angehörigen stellt heute in den diversen Nachfolgestaaten die größte ethnische Minderheit Mitteleuropas dar. Ein wesentlicher Unterschied zur Diaspora, die infolge von Auswanderung entsteht, ist, dass im ungarischen Fall ein Teil des Volks nicht aufgrund seiner eigenen und freien Entscheidung unter die Obrigkeit eines anderen Staates gelangte, sondern infolge der politischen Entscheidung der siegreichen Großmächte.

Das seit der Reformationszeit bestehende Zusammenhörigkeitsgefühl der reformierten Kirchen in Ungarn wurde durch die Zerstückelung des Landes nach

dem Ersten Weltkrieg zerstört. Da sich sowohl ganze Kirchenteile als auch einzelne Gemeinden plötzlich außerhalb der Grenzen Ungarns befanden, wurde es notwendig, die Kirchenstrukturen neu zu gestalten. Dies wurde aber von den neuen Heimatstaaten nur mit großen Schwierigkeiten anerkannt. Vielerorts konfiszierte der Staat die Besitztümer der Kirche und schaffte zum Teil auch den Religionsunterricht ab. Und doch können wir heute sagen, dass die Kirchen trotz der schweren Unterdrückung in der Zwischenkriegszeit eine geistige Erneuerung und spirituelle Erweckung erfuhren.

Heutzutage leben in sieben Ländern Mitteleuropas ungarische Reformierte: die wenigsten in Österreich und Slowenien mit einigen Gemeinden, die meisten in Rumänien. Das Schicksal der Reformierten in Rumänien nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ist aufgrund der kommunistischen Diktatur mit demjenigen der Reformierten in Ungarn vergleichbar. In Rumänien jedoch war die Unterdrückung seitens der kommunistischen Machthaber durch den doppelten – sprachlichen und religiösen – Minderheitssituation häufig noch gravierender.

Die heute 1196 Pfarrgemeinden der Reformierten Kirche in Ungarn sind 27 Kirchenkreisen (Dekanate) zugeordnet. Seit dem politischen Umbruch von 1989/90 kann sich das kirchliche Leben wieder frei entfalten. Die Anzahl von Veranstaltungen (Konferenzen, Ferienlager, Treffen und Festivals), welche die Beziehungen zwischen den einzelnen Gemeinden stärken, hat deutlich zugenommen. Außerdem werden die Kontakte mit den Schwestergemeinden in und außerhalb des Landes ausgebaut. Das kirchliche Leben darf nun auch wieder außerhalb der Kirchenmauern stattfinden. Derzeit unterhält die Reformierte Kirche in Ungarn zahlreiche diakonische Einrichtungen, darunter ein Kinderkrankenhaus, und Bildungsinstitutionen sowie mehrere Konferenzzentren. In vier Städten (Debrecen, Budapest, Sárospatak, Pápa) gibt es theologische Universitäten und Akademien für die Pfarrausbildung. Die institutionelle Arbeit der Kirche wird durch Jugend- und Zivilorganisationen ergänzt. Diese Vereine vertreten und koordinieren die Arbeit der Pfarrer, Presbyter, Lehrer, Kirchenmusiker und der in verschiedenen Missionsbereichen und Arbeitsfeldern tätigen kirchlichen Mitarbeiter.

Die Reformierte Kirche in Transkarpatien gehörte bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg zur Tschechoslowakei. Danach fiel das Gebiet an die Sowjetunion und nach deren Zerfall

an die Ukraine. Das Los dieser Kirche war schwerer als das aller anderen Teilkirchen. Mehr als ein Drittel der Pfarrer war bereits zu Kriegsende geflüchtet, viele wurden nach 1945 jahrelang eingekerkert oder nach Sibirien verschleppt. Die Frage war nicht, wie die Kirche in der Unterdrückung leben kann, sondern ob sie überhaupt überleben kann. Die russische Herrschaft im 20. Jahrhundert mit ihrer orthodoxen Kulturtradition kannte den Protestantismus fast gar nicht, und es war daher fraglich, ob die Reformierte



► Bischof Károly Fekete

Kirche in Transkarpatien jemals einen rechtlichen Status erhalten würde. Sie musste darauf bis 1990 warten. Nach dem Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion hat die ungarische Reformierte Kirche in Transkarpatien eine Erweckung des kirchlichen Lebens erfahren: Neue Kirchen wurden gebaut, die Kirche ist sehr aktiv in dem Dienst unter den Roma und hat eine vielfältige diakonische Arbeit aufgebaut. Der bewaffnete Konflikt zwischen der Ukraine und Russland seit 2014 hat die ungarische Minderheitenkirche in der Seelsorge und im sozial-diakonischen Bereich vor neue Herausforderungen gestellt: sie muss ihre Mission angesichts einer komplexen sozialen Krise erfüllen.

Die heutige Reformierte Christliche Kirche in der Slowakei erlebte den schwierigsten Abschnitt ihrer Geschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Aufgrund von Zwangsumsiedlungen und sonstiger Maßnahmen mussten hunderttausende Ungarn ihr Zuhause in der Slowakei verlassen. Das öffentliche Leben in der Slowakei ist leider auch heute noch nicht ganz frei von Maßnahmen zu Lasten der ethnischen Minderheiten. In der Reformierten Kirche gibt es ungarische und slowakische Kirchenkreise; dabei ist es eine große Herausforderung, im kirchlichen Leben Wege zur Versöhnung in Gerechtigkeit zu finden.

Für die ungarischen Reformierten auf dem Gebiet des ehemaligen Jugoslawien (Serbien, Kroatien, Slowenien) brachte sowohl der Zweite Weltkrieg als auch der Zerfall Jugoslawiens in den 1990er Jahren hohe Blutverluste mit sich. Das sozialistische Regime gewährte den Kirchen zwar verhältnismäßig größere Freiheiten, jedoch litt der kirchliche Alltag unter fehlenden Institutionen (z. B. eigene Pfarrausbildung) und dem aufkommenden Nationalismus. Mit dem Zerfall Jugoslawiens brach auch die Reformierte Kirche in mehrere Teile auseinander.

Die bevölkerungsreichste ungarische reformierte Gemeinschaft außerhalb Ungarns lebt heute innerhalb der Reformierten Kirche in Rumänien. Die Arbeit ihrer beiden Kirchendistrikte wird in einer gemeinsamen Synode abgestimmt, und auch die Pfarrerausbildung erfolgt für beide Distrikte gemeinsam am Protestantisch-Theologischen Institut in Klausenburg (Cluj Napoca, ung.: Kolozsvár). Mit der Machtübernahme der Kommunisten begann eine der schwersten Christenverfolgungen in der modernen Geschichte Rumäniens. In den 1950er Jahren wurden zahlreiche Pfarrer der reformierten Kirche und anderer Minderheitenkirchen inhaftiert. Eine wichtige Frage bis heute ist die Rückgabe der unrechtmäßig konfiszierten Kirchengüter; die „Re-Nationalisierung“ des protestantischen Székely-Mikó-Kollegiums zu Sepsiszentgyörgy (rum. Sfântu Gheorghe) ist leider ein alarmierendes Signal für die Zukunft, so wie die Schließung des römisch-katholischen Gymnasiums in Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures. Da fast alle Mitglieder der reformierten Kirche der ethnischen ungarischen Minderheit angehören, sind sie von der Umsetzung der Minderheitenrechte direkt betroffen. Die Gemeindefarbeit ist heute nicht mehr nur innerhalb der Kirchenmauern möglich. Auch in Rumänien sind kirchliche diakonische, missionarische und Bildungseinrichtungen ausgebaut, bzw. neu zum Leben erweckt worden.

Seit den 1990er Jahren wurden mehrere Organisationen gegründet, um die Zusammenarbeit

zwischen den ungarischen reformierten Gemeinschaften in den Ländern der Region zu fördern. 2004 wurde als neue Form der Zusammenarbeit ein Generalkonvent ins Leben gerufen, ein beratendes und empfehlendes Organ, bestehend aus den gewählten, aktiven Präsidien aller ungarisch reformierten Kirchendistrikte und Kirchenkreise des Karpatenbeckens. In 2009 haben wir eine einheitliche Ungarische Reformierte Kirche neu ins Leben gerufen. Erklärtes Ziel war, die Einheit und Solidarität der ungarischen reformierten Glaubensgeschwister zu stärken und eine einheitliche Liturgie und ein einheitliches Kirchenrecht sowie eine inhaltliche und strukturelle Vereinheitlichung der Pfarrerausbildung und des Theologiestudiums vorzubereiten.

Die ungarischen Reformierten haben das Reformationsgedenkjahr mit vielen Veranstaltungen begangen. Debrecen – wie Rom! – ist Teil des Netzwerks der Reformationsstädte Europas. Am 31. Januar 2017 wurde in Debrecen die festliche Eröffnung des ungarischen reformierten Reformationsjubiläums stattgefunden und die Stadt eine Station des europäischen Stationswegs der Reformation war. Die mobile Ausstellung kam – via



▶ Dr. Mark Aurél Erszegi und einige der Mitglieder der ungarischen Botschaft bei der Vorlesung



Hermannstadt– gerade aus Rom nach Debrecen. Die Evangelisch-Lutherische und die Reformierte Kirchen in Ungarn haben im Oktober eine gemeinsame Synode gehalten und am 31. Oktober 2017 ist es eine öffentliche Gedenkveranstaltung in einer Sportarena in Budapest gegeben. Neben einer großartigen Ausstellung über die Reformation in Ungarn im Nationalmuseum in Budapest sind auch zahlreiche regionale und lokale Ausstellungen, Theaterspiele und Konzerte organisiert.

Aber unser Kirchendistrikt Jenseits der Theiß wird sich auch auf die heutigen Auswirkungen der Reformation konzentrieren. Wir hoffen, dass unsere lokalen Gemeinden dank ihrer reichen Tradition mit wachsendem Enthusiasmus nach Wegen zu einer besseren Erfüllung ihrer Mission suchen werden. Um die Gemeinden zu unterstützen und zu inspirieren, eine festlich gebundene, unique Ausgabe der Bibel „besucht“ alle unsere Kirchengemeinden, so dass die ganze Heilige Schrift an allen 365 Tagen des Gedenkjahrs in unserer Diözese gelesen wird. Wir haben auch ein Missionsprogramm mit dem Titel „Verkündige das Wort!“ gestartet. 2017 haben unsere Dekanaten sich mit den Themen „*Theokratie und Christokratie*“ (Die Herrschaft Gottes und Christi), „*Coram Deo*“ (Vor dem Angesicht Gottes) und „*Testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*“ (Das innere Zeugnis des Heiligen Geistes) beschäftigt.

Ungarische Reformierte Christen zu sein in Mitteleuropa ist eine besondere Gabe Gottes, aber es ist auch eine Aufgabe: um neue Wege zur Erfüllung unserer Mission zu finden, inspiriert vor allem durch die Botschaft der Heiligen Schrift.

Liebe Schwester und Brüder!

„Ut unum sint“ – „Damit sie eins sind“ – Unser Herr Jesus Christus betete für die Einheit seiner Jünger, bevor er zum Kreuz ging, um die Mission der Errettung der Menschheit zu erfüllen. Wir alle glauben, dass der Vater auf das Gebet des Sohnes gehört hat. Wir glauben auch, dass der Heilige Geist der Eine ist, der Einheit in der Kirche

schafft. 500 Jahre nach der Reformation, mehr als 50 Jahre nach dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil und nach „Unitatis redintegratio“ und im Geiste der Enzyklika „Ut unum sint“ erinnern wir uns dankbar an die Worte von Papst Johannes Paul II. In Debrecen sagte er 1991 folgendes:

„In dieser Zeit des Wandels ist die Bereitschaft der christlichen Gemeinschaften, bei der Wiederherstellung Europas an ihren christlichen Grundlagen zusammenzuarbeiten, von besonderem Wert. Die Aufgabe vor Ungarn und vor Europa ist jedoch größer als alles, was unsere materiellen und kulturellen Ressourcen allein leisten können. Das Gebet ist lebenswichtig. Unser Heiland hat versprochen, dass dort, wo zwei oder drei in seinem Namen versammelt sind, er unter ihnen ist (vgl. Mt 18,19-20). Wenn nicht nur zwei oder drei, sondern Tausende von Gläubigen, die zu lange getrennt wurden, in gegenseitiger Liebe und gemeinsamer Anrufung vereint sind, wird Christus sicherlich ihre Bemühungen segnen. Wenn wir dann noch geteilt sind, können wir lernen, gemeinsam für unsere eigene ständige Bekehrung und für die Bekehrung unserer nichtgläubigen Brüder und Schwestern zu beten, die Gott noch nicht kennen, aber nach der Wahrheit suchen, wird sich unser himmlischer Vater nicht weigern uns seinen Geist, seine Vergebung und seine Gnade zu geben (vgl. Lk 11,9-13).“

Das Motto unseres reformierten Kollegiums von Debrecen lautet: *Orando et laborando*, mit Gebet und Arbeit. Lasst uns den Ermahnungen des Papstes Johannes Paul II, aber, vor allem, dem Beispiel unseres Herrn Jesus Christus folgen: Lasst uns gemeinsam beten und zusammen arbeiten für die wachsende Einheit unserer Kirchen. Dann können wir gemeinsam ein Zeugnis geben von der Heiligen Dreieinigkeit, für die Stärkung der christlichen Grundlagen Europas – und zur Ehre Gottes.

Ich danke Ihnen nochmals für Ihre freundliche Einladung. Möge Gott uns segnen! *Soli Deo gloria*.

A Bibliography of Interchurch and Interconfessional Theological Dialogues

Thirty-third Supplement - 2018

LIST OF DIALOGUES

- A-B:** Anglican-Baptist International Forum
A-B / eng: Informal Conversations between the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Church of England
A-D / aus: Anglican Church of Australia-Churches of Christ Conversations
A-L: Anglican-Lutheran International Commission
A-L / africa: All Africa Anglican-Lutheran Commission
A-L / aus: Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Australia
A-L / can: Canadian Lutheran Anglican Dialogue
A-L / eng-g: Representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and of the Church of England
A-L / eng-nordic regions: Representatives of the Nordic countries and of the Church of England
A-L / eur: Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission
A-L / usa: Episcopal-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
A-L-R / eng-f: Official Dialogue between the Church of England and the Lutheran-Reformed Permanent Council in France
A-M: Anglican-Methodist International Commission
A-M / eng: Anglican-Methodist Conversation in Great Britain
A-M / ire: Church of Ireland / Methodist Church of Ireland Covenant Council
A-M / usa: United Methodist-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue
A-M-R / eng: Informal Conversations between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church
A-Mo: Anglican-Moravian Conversations
A-Mo / usa: Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue in the USA
A-O: Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Commission
A-O / usa: Anglican-Orthodox Theological Consultation in the USA
A-OC: Anglican-Old Catholic Theological Conversations
A-OC / na: Anglican-Old Catholic North American Working Group
A-OO: Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue
A-OO / copt: Anglican-Coptic Relations
A-Pe / eng: Anglican-Pentecostal Consultation
A-R: Anglican-Reformed International Commission
A-R / eng-scot: Church of England-Church of Scotland Joint Study Group
A-R / usa: Presbyterian-Episcopal Bilateral Dialogue
A-RC: Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
A-RC: International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)
A-RC / aus: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission of Australia
A-RC / b: Belgian Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / br: Brazilian Anglican-Roman Catholic National Commission
A-RC / can: Canadian Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission
A-RC / eng: English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee
A-RC / eur: Anglican-Roman Catholic Working Group in Western Europe
A-RC / f: Anglican-Catholic Joint Working Group in France
A-RC / nz: Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission in Aotearoa New Zealand (ARCCANZ)
A-RC / usa: Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
A-U / aus: Conversations between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
AC-CC: Joint Commission for Unity between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church

Abbreviations for Confessional Families Churches and Councils

A	Anglican
AC	Assyrian Church of the East
AIC	African Instituted Churches
B	Baptist
CC	Chaldean Catholic Church
CEC	Conference of European Churches
CCEE	Council of European Episcopal Conferences
CP	Constantinople Patriarchate
CPCE	Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (formerly <i>Leuenberg Church Fellowship</i>)
D	Disciples of Christ
DOMBES	Groupe des Dombes
E	Evangelicals
FC	Free Churches
FO	Faith and Order
L	Lutheran (includes German 'Evangelische')
M	Methodist
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
Mn	Mennonite
Mo	Moravian
NCC	New Charismatic Churches
O	Eastern Orthodox (<i>Byzantine</i>)
OC	Old Catholic (includes <i>Polish National</i>)
OO	Oriental Orthodox (Non-Chalcedonian)
Pe	Pentecostal
R	Reformed
RC	Roman Catholic
SA	Salvation Army
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
U	United Churches
W	Waldensian
WCC	World Council of Churches

- AC-O / rus:** Bilateral Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
AC-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Coptic Orthodox Church
AC-OO / syr: Bilateral Commission between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church
AC-RC: Mixed Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East
AIC-R: Dialogue between the African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
B-CPCE / eur: Dialogue between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the European Baptist Federation
B-L: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue
B-L / g: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Germany
B-L / n: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in Norway
B-L / sf: Baptist-Lutheran Conversation in Finland
B-L / usa: Baptist-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
B-M: Baptist-Methodist International Dialogue
B-M-W / italy: Baptist-Methodist-Waldensian Relations in Italy
B-Mn: Baptist-Mennonite Theological Conversations
B-O: Baptist-Orthodox Preparatory Dialogue
B-O / georgia: Dialogue between the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Georgia
B-R: Baptist-Reformed Dialogue
B-RC: Baptist-Roman Catholic International Conversations
B-RC / f: Baptist-Catholic Joint Committee in France
B-RC / usa (ab): American Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
B-RC / usa (sb): Southern Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue
CEC-CCEE: Joint Committee of Conference of European Churches and Council of European Episcopal Conferences
CPCE-RC: Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - Roman Catholic Church Consultation
D-L / usa: Disciples of Christ-Lutheran Dialogue in the USA
D-O / rus: Disciples of Christ-Russian Orthodox Dialogue
D-R: Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue
D-RC: Disciples of Christ-Roman Catholic International Commission for Dialogue
D-U / aus: Conversations between the Churches of Christ in Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
D-U / usa: Disciples of Christ-United Church of Christ Dialogue in the USA
DOMBES: Dialogues des Dombes
E-RC: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission
E-RC / can: Canadian Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue
E-RC / f: Evangelical-Roman Catholic Conversations in France
E-SDA: Theological Dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
FC-O / g: Free Churches-Orthodox Dialogue in Germany
FO: Faith and Order conferences, consultations, studies
L-M: International Lutheran-Methodist Joint Commission
L-M / n: Conversation between the Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway
L-M / s: Dialogue between the United Methodist Church in Sweden and Church of Sweden
L-M / sf: Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue in Finland
L-M / usa: US Lutheran-United Methodist Dialogue
L-Mn: Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission
L-Mn / f: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in France
L-Mn / g: Theological Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany (AMG)
L-Mn / usa: Lutheran-Mennonite Dialogue in the USA
L-Mn-RC: Lutheran-Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue Commission
L-Mo / usa: Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue in the USA
L-O: Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission
L-O / g: Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church in Germany and the Evangelical Church in Germany
L-O / g-cp: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Ecumenical Patriarchate
L-O / g-rom: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church
L-O / g-rus: Theological Dialogue between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Russian Orthodox Church
L-O / sf: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church
L-O / sf-rus: Theological Discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

- L-O / usa:** Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in the USA
L-O-R / f: Dialogue between Representatives of the Inter-Orthodox Bishops' Committee in France and the Protestant Federation of France
L-O-R / na: Lutheran-Orthodox-Reformed Theological Conversations in North America
L-OC / g: Dialogue between the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) and the Old Catholic Church in Germany
L-OC / s: Commission for Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht
L-OO / copt: Theological Dialogue between the Coptic Evangelical Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
L-OO / copt-s: Coptic Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogue in Sweden
L-OO / g: Consultations between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Evangelical Church in Germany
L-OO / india: Dialogue between the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East and the Lutheran Churches in India
L-Pe: Lutheran-Pentecostal Conversations
L-Pe / sf: Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue in Finland
L-Pe-R / f: Pentecostal-Protestant Dialogue in France
L-R: Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission
L-R / arg: Dialogue between the Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata and the Evangelical Congregational Church of Argentina
L-R / aus: Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Reformed Churches of Australia
L-R / can: Canadian Lutheran-Reformed Conversations
L-R / f: Fédération Protestante de France
L-R / usa: Lutheran-Reformed Committee for Theological Conversations in the USA
L-R-RC: Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue
L-R-RC / f: Catholic-Protestant Joint Working Group in France
L-R-SDA / f: Protestant-Seventh-day Adventist Dialogue in France
L-R-U / eur: Leuenberg Church Fellowship
L-RC: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity
L-RC / arg: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Argentina
L-RC / aus: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Australia
L-RC / br: National Roman Catholic-Lutheran Commission in Brazil
L-RC / can: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Canada
L-RC / g: Joint Commission of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Episcopal Conference (DB)
L-RC / india: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in India
L-RC / jap: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Japan
L-RC / n: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Discussion Group in Norway
L-RC / s: Official Working Group of Dialogue between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm
L-RC / sf: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Relations in Finland
L-RC / usa: Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue in the USA
L-SDA: Lutheran-Seventh-day Adventist Consultations
L-U / aus: Theological Dialogue between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
M-O: Methodist-Orthodox Commission
M-Pe-W / italy: Methodist-Pentecostal-Waldensian Dialogue in Italy
M-R: Methodist-Reformed Dialogue
M-RC: Joint Commission between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council
M-RC / eng: English Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee
M-RC / usa: Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Methodist Church in the USA
M-SA: International Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the World Methodist Council
Mn-R: Mennonite World Conference and World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Mn-R / nl: Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue in the Netherlands
Mn-RC: Mennonite-Catholic International Dialogue
Mn-RC / latin america: Mennonite-Catholic Dialogue in Latin America
Mn-SDA: Mennonite-Seventh-day Adventist Theological Conversations
NCC-RC: New Charismatic Churches-Roman Catholic Preliminary Conversations
O-OC: Joint (Mixed) Orthodox-Old Catholic Theological Commission
O-OO: Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-OO / rus: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
O-OO / rus-armenia: Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Armenian Apostolic Church
O-OO / rus-copt: Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church

- O-R:** Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue
- O-R / ch:** Protestant-Orthodox Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
- O-R / na:** Orthodox-Reformed Conversations in North America
- O-R / rus:** Dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church
- O-RC:** Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church
- O-RC / can:** Canadian Orthodox and Catholic Bishops' Dialogue
- O-RC / ch:** Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- O-RC / eng:** Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England
- O-RC / f:** Joint Catholic-Orthodox Committee in France
- O-RC / g:** Greek Orthodox-Roman Catholic Joint Commission in Germany
- O-RC / pol:** Russian Orthodox Church-Catholic Church in Poland Working Group
- O-RC / rom:** Joint Commission for Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)
- O-RC / rus:** Theological Conversations between Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church
- O-RC / rus-g:** Theological Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Episcopal Conference
- O-RC / usa:** North American Catholic-Orthodox Theological Consultation
- O-U / aus:** Theological Dialogue between the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia
- OC-R / india:** Old Catholic Church-Malankara Mar Thomas Syrian Church Theological Consultation
- OC-R-RC / ch:** Old Catholic-Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue in Switzerland
- OC-RC:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Conversations
- OC-RC / ch:** Dialogue Commission of the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches in Switzerland
- OC-RC / g:** Dialogue between the Old Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany
- OC-RC / na:** Polish National Catholic-Roman Catholic Dialogue
- OC-RC / nl:** Old Catholic-Roman Catholic Study Commission in the Netherlands
- OC-RC / pol:** Joint Commission of the Polish Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland
- OO-R:** Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Theological Dialogue
- OO-RC:** International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches
- OO-RC / armenia:** Armenian Apostolic Church-Catholic Church Joint Commission
- OO-RC / copt:** International Joint Commission between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church
- OO-RC / eritrea:** Eritrean Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
- OO-RC / ethiop:** Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Catholic Church Relations
- OO-RC / india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
- OO-RC / syr-india:** Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
- OO-RC / usa:** Official Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Consultation
- Pe-R:** Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue
- Pe-RC:** Pentecostal-Roman Catholic International Dialogue
- Pe-WCC:** Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals
- R-RC:** Reformed-Roman Catholic Joint Study Commission
- R-RC / a:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Austria
- R-RC / b:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Belgium
- R-RC / ch:** Protestant/Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission in Switzerland
- R-RC / nl:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in the Netherlands
- R-RC / scot:** Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland
- R-RC / usa:** Roman Catholic-Presbyterian Reformed Consultation in the USA
- R-SDA:** International Theological Dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- R-SDA / usa:** Presbyterian Church (USA)-Seventh-day Adventist Church Dialogue
- RC-SA:** Salvation Army - Catholic Informal Conversation
- RC-SDA:** Conversations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roman Catholic Church
- RC-U / aus:** Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church and the Uniting Church in Australia
- RC-U / can:** Roman Catholic-United Church Dialogue Group in Canada
- RC-W / italy:** Roman Catholic-Waldensian Relations in Italy
- RC-WCC:** Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches
- SA-SDA:** Theological Dialogue between the Salvation Army and the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- SDA-WCC:** Seventh-day Adventist Church-World Council of Churches Conversations
- WCC:** World Council of Churches - assemblies, convocations, relations

PERIODICALS SURVEYED

- A** ▶ Acta Apostolicae Sedis, AFER-African Ecclesial Review, American Baptist Quarterly, Amicizia ebraico-cristiana, Angelicum, Anglican Theological Review, Annales theologici, Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia, Apulia Theologica
- B** ▶ Bausteine für die Einheit der Christen, Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology
- C** ▶ Calvin Theological Journal, Catholica, CEC Newsletter, Centro - News from the Anglican Centre in Rome, Centro Pro Unione Bulletin, Chemins de dialogue, Chrétiens en Marche, Der christliche Osten, Una città per il dialogo, Concilium, Confronti, Contacts, Courier, Current Dialogue
- D/E** ▶ Diálogo ecuménico, La Documentation catholique, Eastern Churches Journal, Ecclesia Mater, Ecclesiology, The Ecumenical Review, Ecumenical Trends, The Ecumenist, Ecumenismo Quotidiano, Ekklesia, Encounter, Exchange
- F/I** ▶ Forum Letter, Global Christian Forum Newsletter, The Greek Orthodox Theological Review, Gregorianum, Herder Korrespondenz, Information Service & Service d'Information, International Bulletin of Missionary Research, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, International Review of Mission, Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift, Irénikon, Istina
- J/K** ▶ Journal of Anglican Studies, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association, Kerygma und Dogma
- L** ▶ LibreSens, The Living Church, Lutheran Forum, Lutheran Quarterly
- M/N** ▶ MD-Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim, Nicolaus
- O** ▶ O Odigos, Odos, Ökumenische Rundschau, Oikumene, One in Christ, Oriente cristiano, Origins, Orthodoxes Forum, L'Osservatore Romano, L'Osservatore Romano (weekly English), Ostkirchliche Studien
- P/Q** ▶ Pastoral Ecuménica, Pneuma, Positions luthériennes, Proche-Orient Chrétien, Pro Dialogo, Pro Ecclesia, Protestantesimo, Qîqajôn di Bose
- R** ▶ Reformed World, Il Regno, Reseptio, Review of Ecumenical Studies, Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo
- S** ▶ SEIA Newsletter on the Eastern Churches and Ecumenism, Sobornost, St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, Studi di Teologia, Studi Ecumenici, Studia i dokumenty ecumeniczne, Studia Oecumenica, Studia Liturgica, Studies in Interreligious Dialogue
- T** ▶ The Tablet, Texte aus der VELKD, Theological Studies
- U/V** ▶ Una Sancta, Unité des Chrétiens, Veritas in caritate: informazioni dall'ecumenismo in Italia, Vita e pensiero
- W/Z** ▶ The Window, Worship, Zeitzeichen

KEY TO SUB-HEADING

INFORMATION: facts, communiqués, surveys, brief reports

REFLECTION AND REACTIONS: essays, responses, commentaries, theological papers

TEXTS AND PAPERS: documents, reports, statements, official responses

KEY TO READING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY

For periodical entries:

the first number refers to the volume and the second refers to the issue followed by the year and page numbers, thus: *Christian Orient* 16, 4 (1995) 180-191 = pages 180-191 in volume 16, issue no. 4 in 1995 of *Christian Orient*.

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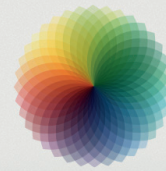
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Gathering / Unity

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Logotype Study - 50th Anniversary

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Logotype Study - 50th Anniversary



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