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The Christian Church Facing Itself and Facing the World

An Ecumenical Overview of Modern Christian Ecclesiology

BRANDON GALLAHER

Perhaps the major ecclesial, theological, and, indeed, ecumenical event of the twentieth century was Vatican II (1962–1965).¹ It provides a good starting point for any discussion of modern ecclesiology in all Christian churches because, as a council, it consulted widely with other Christian churches in the formulation of its ecclesiological statements as well as in some cases with other religions.² Furthermore, the sorts of issues it raised concerning the place and role of the Church in the modern world are relevant to not only Roman Catholicism but Orthodoxy and Protestantism.³

Vatican II was called by Pope St. John XXIII (1881–1963; pope, 1958–63; canonized in April 2014) to respond positively to modernity. It was hoped that the Council would contribute to solutions for the problems of the modern world through its offering up of the resources of the Christian Gospel on individual issues (e.g., human rights, the arms race, ecumenism, non-Christian religions, and religious freedom). Such a positive theological encounter and dialogue with modernity required the Catholic Church carefully bringing itself up to date in certain areas and the rearticulation of Christian teaching for a new age so that the relevance of the Christian message would become more apparent and presented more effectively in all areas of human activity in the world.⁴ The Christian Church in the mid-twentieth century found itself in a world that, even then, was beginning to be acknowledged as a world that was “post-Christendom.” The Church no longer could be taken to provide the cultural framework for the Western world’s social life. As the great French Catholic theologian—himself a Council expert or *peritus* (he drafted more of its documents than any other person)—Yves Congar (1904–95) put it, the Church no longer carries “the world within herself like a pregnant mother.”⁵ What was required, he argued, was a “new style for her presence in the world” and in this

overview of modern ecclesiology we shall view various attempts to reenvision the place and vocation of the Church in the modern world not only in Roman Catholicism but also in Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism.⁶

Beginning with a discussion of Vatican II, despite it being a Roman Catholic ecumenical council, is helpful to unpack the continuities and sharp changes in modern ecclesiology in all Christian traditions not only because it was an ecumenical event but also because it was, as Karl Rahner (1904–84), another council theologian, observed, “in all of its sixteen constitutions, decrees and explanations it has been concerned with the Church . . . a Council of the Church about the Church, a Council in which all the themes discussed were ecclesiological ones; which concentrated upon ecclesiology as no previous Council had ever done.”⁷ Thus, since Vatican II was a council dedicated to the Church, we find many helpful ideas as well as distinctions that can illumine not only Catholic ecclesiology but also its Protestant and Orthodox counterparts. And here we want to turn to the first of these distinctions that shall provide the framework for our discussion. Cardinal Léon-Josef Suenens (1904–96) of Belgium, in a famous speech during the first session of the Council in December 1962, argued that the Council should be dedicated to the Church and produce one constitution on the Church that would look at the Church *ad intra* (looking inward) and *ad extra* (looking outward). In the first case, the Church’s nature, structure, and missionary activity should be investigated. In the second case, one needed to look at the relationship of the Church to the world beyond it in dialogue with it showing interest, *inter alia*, in the human person, demography, social justice, the third world, hunger, preaching to the poor, and peace and war. Dialogue, for Suenens, was with both the faithful and the brothers “who are not yet visibly united with us,” by which presumably he meant separated Christians, but, given Vatican II’s later interest in dialoguing with other religions including Islam, this ambiguity is important.⁸

We shall do likewise in this exploration as a means of understanding the tension between continuity and reform in the Church. First we shall look at ecclesiology *ad intra* with what is, arguably, the most important modern current in ecclesiology, often called “communion ecclesiology,” which proposes that the Church as the Body of Christ is a divine-human organism or “mystical Body” that comes to be through an event of communion focused on the celebration of the sacraments and, above all, the Eucharist. From there we shall turn to ecclesiology *ad extra* with Latin American liberation theology and, more briefly, an examination of the various “liberation” or “contextual” theologies it

spawned, especially feminism and black theology. These theologies are understood as Christian responses not only to injustice but to a world where the status quo of Christendom is no longer taken for granted.

But before we turn to this program, let us look briefly at another helpful distinction for understanding modern ecclesiology that is taken from Vatican II—that is, the distinction between theology as *ressourcement* (“re-sourcing” or “renewal through return to the sources”) and *aggiornamento* (“updating”). I hope this distinction will help us further in grasping the tension in the Church between the ideal of continuity and the need to reform the Church in order to keep it vital. Here it is said that the Council was concerned with *ressourcement* or a return to the key sources of the Christian tradition beginning with the Bible where the Christian Gospel is proclaimed definitively going through to the Christian Fathers who interpreted the Gospel Word with authority and finding its final expression and outworking in the Christian life in the liturgical tradition of worship.⁹ It was believed that such a return to the basics of the Christian faith would result in a renewal of both theology and the Church more broadly. This French neologism is often applied to the loose-knit “school” of French theologians—figures like Congar, Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), and Jean Daniélou (1905–74)—who were called the “*la nouvelle théologie*” by their opponents. Many of these men would end up being *periti* (theological experts) during Vatican II and would play key roles in the drafting of its various statements. In the decades prior to the Council, these theologians looked to the resources of the Church’s past, especially the Christian Fathers and schoolmen (e.g., Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, Aquinas, and Bonaventure), in order to speak to its present situation in the modern world. They hoped that through drinking from the sources of Christian tradition the Church and its theology would be spiritually revived in the wake of the stale rationalism and authoritarianism of the Catholic scholastic manual tradition that had been ascendant since the eighteenth century.

Vatican II, as well as the various forms of liberation theology it later inspired, was responding to a situation where the Catholic Church since at least the early nineteenth century had become arguably stagnant and reactionary. It was caught up in a rather defensive response to a modern philosophy shaped by the legacy of Descartes and especially Kant. The Church as an institution became violently opposed to (and ultimately officially condemned) the rather loose-knit movement of Catholic Modernism and its use of historical-criticism for the Bible and promotion of doctrinal development.¹⁰ To the Enlightenment ideal of

obtaining eternal and universal knowledge through a form of reasoning that was itself not weighed down by historical contingencies, the Church, beginning roughly in the 1850s, responded with Neo-Scholasticism or Neo-Scholastic (or sometimes, Roman) theology, which was later referred to as “thomism of the strict observance.”¹¹ Neo-Scholasticism as a “school” was primarily situated in Rome (though other centers included, for example, Mainz and Louvain) as it early on became the “official” Vatican/Church theology for several generations until it came to a rather quick demise following Vatican II, given that it was in many ways completely at odds with the spirit of openness to the world of that Council. Major early figures of Neo-Scholasticism in Rome included the Italian philosopher and scourge of Modernism Matteo Liberatore (1810–92); the German Jesuit theologian and philosopher Joseph Kleutgen (1811–83), who was a key figure in the articulation of the doctrine of papal infallibility of Vatican I (1869–70) as a drafter of *Pastor aeternus* (1870); and the Italian Dominican Tommaso Maria Zigliara (1833–93), who was the leading nineteenth-century Dominican of Aristotelian Scholasticism, a major architect of the Thomistic Revival, and author of an extremely popular antimodernist textbook, *Summa philosophica* (1876). Later figures, also based in Rome, include the Italian Jesuit Guido Mattiussi (1852–1925), who was an ardent opponent of what he believed was the “subjectivism” of Kant and Kantianism; the French Dominican Édouard Hugon (1867–1929), who wrote a widely circulated manual of scholastic philosophy; and, perhaps the best-known Neo-Scholastic thinker today, the French Dominican Scholastic Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877–1964).¹² Garrigou-Lagrange, author of countless commentaries on Aquinas as well as numerous Neo-Scholastic tomes on everything from God and Mary to predestination and grace, was the doctoral supervisor of both Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990), who would later be a key proponent in the historical study of Aquinas and opponent of Neo-Scholasticism (silenced for a period by Garrigou-Lagrange himself¹³) and then subsequently teacher of Congar and finally a key peritus at Vatican II; and Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005), that is, the future Pope St. John Paul II (pope, 1978–2005; canonized in April 2014), who wrote a doctorate under Garrigou-Lagrange on St. John of the Cross (1542–91).

Neo-Scholasticism was, arguably, less concerned with the propounding of the theology of Aquinas as such than with the putting forth of a counter-Enlightenment scholastic teaching that (at least initially) attempted to synthesize somewhat unstably the nominalist-tinged theology of a figure like the great

Spanish Jesuit scholastic Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) and the counter-Reformation Thomistic philosophy of Thomas Cajetan (1469–1534), known as the opponent of Martin Luther (1483–1546), producing an ahistorical rational systematization of Christian teaching that emphasized the immutability, infallibility, and objectivity of the Church’s teaching and the necessity of achieving a correct balance of faith and reason. The Church’s authoritative teaching or magisterium was expressed as a system of positive truths. It was designed to hold together as a sort of intricate clockwork mechanism that was rationally defensible in a syllogistic sense. This Neo-Scholastic version of the magisterium was supposed to be a sort of perennial theology existing in a pure, timeless world of truths that were themselves rationally provable beyond the flux of individual experience (modern philosophy was attacked as capitulating to subjectivism), historical events, the experience of particular communities and really any knowledge that might be achieved through empirical methods. This made those defending Neo-Scholasticism suspicious not only of most scientific developments but also of the application of these methods to the study of the development of doctrine and the evolution of the Bible as a text of texts. Neo-Scholasticism, which was expressed in rational manuals for the clergy (hence, talk of “manual theology” in reference to this theology by its opponents), was given official Church blessing by a long series of popes.

Neo-Scholasticism was enthroned, as it were, as the Church’s official “school” of theology in the 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (itself drafted by both Zigliara and Kleutgen¹⁴) of Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903; pope, 1878–1903) that encouraged the development of a “Christian philosophy” to counter “secular philosophy” and the nascent Catholic Modernist movement with its appeal to Enlightenment ideals and drawing on the thought of such diverse figures as Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. The Enlightenment, it had been argued rather reductively by the Church establishment for decades prior to *Aeterni Patris*, emphasized universal human rights, the inviolability and freedom of the human conscience, the self-determination of particular nations and peoples with a unique ethnos, and the power of apparently irrefutable scientific discoveries. Thus, Blessed Pope Pius IX (1792–1878; pope, 1846–78; beatified, 2000), for example, condemned key elements of liberal democracy in his encyclical *Quanta cura* (1864), including what he called political “naturalism,” or the teaching that civil society should be governed without any particular attention to religion, whether true or false; that all men had a right to free speech and liberty of conscience; and communism and socialism, or the teaching that domestic

society or the family borrows its whole reason for being from civil law alone and that the rights of parents over their children (for education and care) only emanate from civil law.¹⁵ More famously, as an appendix to *Quanta cura*, Pius IX also promulgated his now infamous *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), which was a list of condemned propositions or “modern errors” ranging from pantheism, naturalism, and absolute rationalism to sundry errors concerning the limitation of the civil power of the pope (essentially further hemming in his civil power in the then much diminished Papal States) and those concerning “modern liberalism” (e.g., that it is no longer expedient that Catholicism be the only religion of the state to the exclusion of all other cults whatsoever).¹⁶ The Church further responded to what it regarded as the threats of the modern age at Vatican I in 1870 with the affirmation in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Pastor aeternus* (drafted by Kleutgen along with the Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei filius*), that it alone was the bastion of infallible truth and unerring teachings expressed in particular carefully delimited momentous positive statements by the pope that were deemed infallible and did not require the consensus of the Church.¹⁷

All of this rather reactionary culture was one where the “Church” as the “Body of Christ” gradually became indistinguishable from the hierarchy, above all the papacy, and its official teaching or magisterium. The Church’s divinization of its own authority, reactionary critique of Modernism, and elevation of one theological school as its official spokesmen culminated in a series of ecclesiastical actions in the early twentieth century that in their excessive overreaching of ecclesial power and centralization could not but lead to a “backlash” of sorts. This backlash came with Vatican II’s openness and embrace of the modern world as well as the strong emphasis on conciliarity and the fact that the Church was not only characterized by papal authority and hierarchy but was above all a “holy People of God” that included the laity. In 1907 Pope St. Pius X (1835–1914; pope, 1903–14; canonized in 1954) officially condemned Catholic Modernism’s use of historical-criticism for the Bible and advocacy of doctrinal development, thus putting an official stamp on the disapproval of the Church of reform movements keen on dialoguing with modernity.¹⁸ In the next seven years Neo-Scholasticism “locked-in,” as it were, its ascendancy. This included the introduction in 1910 of an antimodernist clerical oath (with the threat of excommunication) required of all bishops, priests, and teachers, which was not abolished until Venerable Pope Paul VI (1897–1978; pope, 1963–68; declared “venerable” or a person “heroic in virtue” by Pope Benedict XVI in December

2012; and he is to be beatified by Pope Francis in October 2014) did so several years after the close of Vatican II in 1967.¹⁹ Clerical education, by canon law, required candidates to attend Latin lectures in philosophy for three years given by professors propounding the method, doctrine, and principles of Aquinas following the Neo-Scholastic interpretation. Students were then required to undergo official examinations (also in Latin) before sitting through a further four years of theology instruction, also in Latin and following Neo-Scholastic principles.²⁰ These philosophy examinations, beginning in 1914, were required by decree to be framed after the “Twenty-Four Thomistic Theses” (drafted by Mattiussi and Hugon) that aimed to instill in the pupil the true Church teaching on ontology, cosmology, psychology, and theodicy.²¹ The effect on students was more often than not less than salutary, and the great Roman Catholic systematic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–88), who suffered through these mandatory lectures on philosophy as a Jesuit novice, described himself at the time as “languishing in the desert of neo-scholasticism.”²² The wave of Roman Neo-Scholastic antimodernism paralyzed the Catholic Church well into the 1960s, and, indeed, many of the key figures at Vatican II (e.g., Chenu, Congar, de Lubac, and Rahner) were at different times under censure or investigation by the “doctrinal watch-dog,” the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office (from 1985, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [CDF]) of the Roman Curia.²³ Indeed, rather humorously, Rahner was under investigation by the Holy Office right up until shortly after he was called as a *peritus* for the forthcoming Second Vatican Council, at which point the investigation was suddenly dropped!²⁴

Returning to our main subject, *ressourcement* as an idea also can broadly be applied to the Orthodox theological movement in the twentieth century—including Myrrha Lot-Borodine (1882–1957), Georges Florovsky (1893–1979), Vladimir Lossky (1903–58), and John Zizioulas (b. 1931)—called “neo-patristic synthesis” (a phrase of Georges Florovsky) that wished to return to the Eastern patristic and liturgical sources of Orthodox tradition in order to renew the Orthodox Church and its theology by returning to a tradition that was not distorted by successive waves of Westernization in the Christian East.²⁵ And let us go further and venture that it can be applied to the work of Karl Barth (1906–68) and the broad-based movement of Protestant “Neo-Orthodoxy” with its break with the nineteenth-century Protestant Liberal collapse of culture and Christianity.²⁶ This cultural collapse can be seen, for example, in the German theological establishment’s support of the Kaiser and the Fatherland in

World War I in the 1914 “Manifesto of the 93” German intellectuals, which “betrayal” led Barth to his decisive critique of German liberal Protestantism. Neo-Orthodoxy emphasized (in contrast to the culturally determined “religion” of liberal Protestantism), among other things, the transcendence of God while simultaneously upholding the existential nature of faith, that the event of divine revelation was given in the Word of God, Jesus Christ, as proclaimed in scripture, and that there needed to be a renewed attention to the magisterial Reformers, especially Calvin and Luther. In order to articulate the nature and structure of the Church in the context of the new challenges of modernity and to enter into dialogue with the world in regard to all aspects of human life, Christian theologians of all churches in the twentieth century drank deeply of the wellsprings of Christian tradition as they believed that only through such a re-sourcing could theology properly articulate this new moment for the Church.

But this brings us to the idea of *aggiornamento*, which is an Italian term including in it the term *giorno*, or “day,” and meaning “updating,” “revision,” “renovation,” “modernization,” and even “reform.”²⁷ It was a term much favored by John XXIII in reference to his vision for Vatican II.²⁸ He held that since the Church was a dynamic and living divine-human organism, she could adapt, renew, renovate, and even at times perhaps reform some of the changing historical aspects of her life as the modern times necessitated without ceasing to be the self-same Body because her underlying essence remained the same. This is well summed up by the famous quote attributed to “Good Pope John” (as John XXIII is frequently called): “I want to throw open the windows to the Church so that we can see out and people can see in.” In commenting in October 2012 on the fiftieth anniversary of the start of Vatican II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger, b. 1927; pope, 2005–13) observed that Pope John XXIII was right to use the term *aggiornamento* for the growth and development of the Church in Vatican II, despite the objections of some. Pope John’s “true intuition,” Benedict argues, is that Christianity is ever ancient and ever new, and it lives from the eternal today of the God who entered into space and time and is present in all times. It is a tree that is ever new and timely such that with the Church’s updating of itself, as in Vatican II, it does not break with tradition and simply change with the fashion of the times. The “updating” of the Church in Vatican II, therefore, was not an updating that reflected what pleased random Council Fathers and the public opinion of the day, but it had a theological rationale of grounding all ecclesial changes in the eternal life of God: “we must bring the ‘today’ that we live to the standard of the Christian

event, we must bring the ‘today’ of our time to the ‘today’ of God.” Vatican II, as is the case with the Church throughout all history, must speak to the people of today and bring God’s eternal today into the today of the people of our time, but it can only do this and remain self-same by being grounded in God and the tradition of His Church and being guided by Him in living out their faith with purity.²⁹ Concrete examples of this attempt of the Catholic Church to update her own life range from the nearly unprecedented texts from Vatican II encouraging religious freedom, ecumenism, and dialogue with non-Christian religions to the introduction in the decades following the Council of liturgy in the vernacular, the celebration of the mass facing the people, and greater lay participation.³⁰ But, more controversially, some would argue that Protestant churches have renewed and updated the Church’s life by the encouragement of women’s ministries since the rise of the women’s liberation movement in the late 1960s. Going yet further with this same line of thinking, in the late twentieth to early twenty-first centuries, the argument is made that *aggiornamento* can also be seen in the well-publicized attempts by many churches to include the voices and gifts of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) persons within the totality of the witness to the world of the gospel by Christ’s Body.

The Orthodox, arguably, have yet to meet their moment of *aggiornamento*. Much of recent Eastern Orthodox history has been taken up with either de-Westernization or persecution (e.g., the Soviet Union), so there has been little space available for a decisive encounter with modernity. Nevertheless, some theologians would point to (somewhat ambivalent) recent attempts to respond to human rights, secularism, and bioethical issues as examples of Orthodox *aggiornamento*.³¹ Thus, the search for an Eastern Orthodox creative response to a (post-) modernity that yet remains faithful to traditional faith and practice and avoids the temptation (as seen in some churches in the West) to jettison the apparently archaic forms of the past in favor of the “new” and “relevant” forms of this present age of the world is one of the central tasks of contemporary Orthodox theology.

This task may be accomplished sooner rather than later. In March 2014 the primates or leading bishops of the local churches making up the Orthodox Church gathered in Istanbul (historically called “Constantinople” for the Orthodox) for a “synaxis” or major ecclesial gathering. They announced that a “Holy and Great Synod” (i.e., Church Council) would be convened by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople–New Rome for the summer of 2016 in Istanbul/Constantinople. The meeting is to be held in the historic

church Hagia Eirene, which was the site of the Second Ecumenical Council in 381. The Ecumenical Patriarch is traditionally *primus inter pares*, or first among equals of all the leaders of the Orthodox Church. The 2016 Synod/Council would be presided over by the Ecumenical Patriarch and his brother primates of the Other Autocephalous (i.e., self-headed or independent) Churches would be seated on his right and his left.³² This liturgical order is “iconic” and meant to image the Church in the form of Christ surrounded by his disciples. The last time the Orthodox had a Pan-Orthodox council of this scale was in 879–880 (though not deemed “ecumenical” subsequently), and it dealt with the addition of the *filioque* to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed and reinstated Photios I (ca. 810–ca. 893) to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople. The last (Seventh) Ecumenical Council for the Orthodox was in 787 in Nicaea. Some are already, perhaps precipitously, referring to this upcoming event as the “Eighth Ecumenical Council.” This 2016 event has been in the discussion and then planning stage since a pan-Orthodox meeting in Istanbul in 1923 with a particularly active phase of successive meetings in the 1960s. An Inter-Orthodox Preconciliar Commission that is charged with preparing the Council’s agenda has been meeting since the late 1970s with its last major gathering in 2009.³³ Thus, the next Orthodox (Ecumenical) Council is much expected, and there is also much doubt as to whether it will actually come to pass. It is somewhat (as is frequently joked) like the Second Coming of Christ. Indeed, the Primates’ statement of March 2014 said the council would be convened in 2016 “unless something unexpected occurs.”³⁴

It is hoped by some contemporary theologians that this 2016 event will seize the day and respond positively to modernity—somewhat akin to the Roman Catholic Vatican II—putting forward a vision of Orthodoxy that speaks proactively to not only a post-Byzantine order but a post-Christian pluralistic and secular world. This would provide a sure basis for ongoing local adaptations of sundry ancient Orthodox liturgical and sacramental practices according to present modern needs as well as nascent attempts to respond to new developments from bioethical dilemmas to religious pluralism. Indeed, in October 2014 there will be a meeting devoted to just such a vision of the council. Thirty of the leading Orthodox academic theologians, led by professors Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos of Fordham University’s Orthodox Christian Studies Center, will gather in New York to discuss the forthcoming council and their hopes and concerns about it. A second part to this October 2014 meeting is planned for the spring of 2015 with possible episcopal participants. However,

at best—and this is even in doubt, given that all the future council’s decisions will be by the consensus of all the local churches (each of which gets one vote)³⁵—this 2016 council will only respond to the current crisis of disorder in the Orthodox “diaspora” (all those ecclesial territories outside traditional canonical borders of the local churches: for example, the Orthodox churches in North and South America). The present order in the diaspora is a cacophony of overlapping ethnic Orthodox jurisdictions where (contradictory to Orthodox ecclesiology) there is more than one bishop per city and the primacy of Constantinople is routinely contested. But even if a resolution of the disunity of the Orthodox Church was all that was accomplished by this council, this would be an enormous achievement given Orthodoxy’s noncentralized polity, great age, and resistance to change. A more unified Orthodoxy would be an Orthodoxy prepared for the future and ready to face the challenges of change instead of acting like history stopped in 1453 with the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans and the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire. One must, therefore, hope that the Orthodox bishops will listen to the promptings of the Spirit and put the Church’s house in order. Therefore, in each of the major Christian traditions, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy, we see the continual Christian tension between maintaining continuity with tradition and the bedrock of one’s life and a movement toward a response or even a reform of the Body so that it can remain relevant and ever vital to each generation to which the Christian Gospel is proclaimed.

Part I: Ecclesiology *Ad intra*

In order to understand the immensely influential trend of “communion ecclesiology,” our example of an *ecclesiology ad intra*, we must turn to its “father.” While discussing John XXIII’s idea of *aggiornamento*, we brought up the idea of the Church as a divine-human “organism,” a living mystical Body. As a variant of the Biblical image or model of the Church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 12–14), the Church as a divine-human organism is a key metaphor of modern ecclesiology. The roots of the metaphor are patristic and medieval, but it was revived through the re-sourcing theological work of Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838) of the Catholic Tübingen School. In his immensely influential *Unity in the Church or The Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries* (1825), Möhler draws on a wide

number of Church Fathers to articulate through the lens of Romanticism a vision of the living Body of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is the “life-giving and life-forming principle” that animates the Body of Christ as the fullness of all believers in Him who together comprise a spiritual unity. In being filled by the Spirit of Christ, the Church, as the “totality of believers that the Spirit forms, is the unconquerable treasure of the new life principle, ever renewing and rejuvenating herself, the uncreated source of nourishment for all.”³⁶ The Church as a “living organism” is understood as the “external, visible structure of a holy living power, of love, the body of the spirit of believers forming itself from the interior externally.” Thus the divine Spirit here manifests itself as an external divine-human organism living in individual Christians through which it perpetuates true faith and love in God.³⁷ The Church, Möhler would argue later in the more self-consciously “orthodox” and Christocentric *Symbolism* (1843), is—adapting a common counter-Reformation notion—a visible society of men founded by Christ, which expresses outwardly and in a continuing fashion in history the divine Word, which took flesh. It is then both a human reality, an institution in which the spirit of Christ continues to work and His word continues to resound, but it is also a divine reality. It is divine insofar as it is a permanent manifestation of the spirit of Christ. In short, the Church is a divine-human organism through which the incarnation is extended in history: “Thus the visible Church . . . is the Son of God himself everlastingly manifesting himself among men in a human form, perpetually renewed and eternally young—the enduring incarnation of the same, as in Holy Scriptures, even the faithful are called the ‘Body of Christ.’”³⁸

The Spirit rules in that Body by begetting orders, organs, and functions (e.g., the Church hierarchy) for the Body through which the Body expresses itself and preserves an inner unity of life, binding everything together internally and working externally.³⁹ Möhler strongly emphasizes, following 1 Peter 2:9, that all believers have a “priestly dignity” as they all participate in the priestly office of Christ, though this in no way negates the ordained priest who is a “synecdoche of all believers because he expresses their unity.”⁴⁰ But how does the Spirit communicate itself and its unity to believers? While Möhler mostly takes this for granted, and it is not the central focus of his theology in the way that it will be for later communion ecclesiologists building on his thought, he is explicit that it is by the Eucharist that Christ “binds himself to us in a living, real, and substantial way.”⁴¹ The spiritual unity of the Body of Christ, particularly expressed in the Eucharist, has a definite institutional shape as the Body is

an “ecclesiastical organism.”⁴² Thus, Möhler describes successively unity in the bishop, the metropolitan, the total episcopate or college of bishops, and the primate, which for him is the pope.⁴³ The bishop, in heading the Eucharistic community and eventually (as the Church grew larger) the diocese, is the union of believers made visible in a specific place, their love made personal, and “the manifestation and living center point of the Christian disposition striving towards unity.”⁴⁴ But the unity of the Body only ever increases for Möhler, and if the bishop is the center of the diocese, then the metropolitan is the center around which a gathering of bishops in communion come together and their respective gathered communities. What is still needed is a representation of the unity of all the bishops as a “living image,” and here we have the pope or primate of the one Church of all believers understood as “the living center of the living unity of the whole Church.”⁴⁵

Now it cannot be emphasized strongly enough how influential Möhler’s nascent “communion ecclesiology” has been in modern theology.⁴⁶ Alongside the ecclesiology of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), to which we shall later turn, it is, as Roger Haight has argued, the strongest representation of modern ecclesiology.⁴⁷ Though we shall not elaborate this for want of space, communion ecclesiology now forms the common ecclesiology of the official ecumenical movement as expressed in such texts of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches as the now-famous *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (1983)—of which Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jean-Marie Tillard were principle drafters—and, recently, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013).⁴⁸ We shall now trace in Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism some developments of Möhler’s ideas.

In Roman Catholicism, the idea of the Church as a divine-human organism leads quite naturally to seeing the Church as a “sacrament” and the “mystical Body of Christ,” and, after Möhler, we see these themes taken up by individual theologians as well as in official Church statements. Thus we see both themes come together in the early twentieth century in the work of the excommunicated Catholic Modernist writer and Irish Jesuit priest George Tyrrell (1861–1909). Tyrrell held that the Church was the “mystical Body of Christ” animated by the Spirit through which we are brought into direct contact with the “ever present Christ” who is heard in the gospel and touched in the sacraments. Christ, following Möhler, lives on in the Church “not metaphorically but actually,” through which “instrument” the force of His Spirit “is transmitted and

felt”: “The Church is not merely a society or school, but a mystery and sacrament; like the humanity of Christ of which it is an extension.”⁴⁹

Tyrrell was not alone in drawing on Möhler, for we see his influence even more strongly in Congar who, under the direction of Chenu, completed lectoral and doctoral degrees at the Dominican Studium Le Saulchoir, Belgium, on the unity of the Church in Möhler’s theology. Indeed, he began a French translation project of *Unity in the Church*, which he finally published in 1938. For Congar, Möhler’s organicist vision of the unity of the Church becomes a sort of mysticism of Christ’s Body binding us ever closer to Him in faith and charity.⁵⁰ The Church, for Congar, is an organism insofar as it is a Body having different functions where each part is “animated” in view of its own being as it performs its special task to the benefit of the whole. The idea of the Church as an organism is helpful in understanding the respective roles of the faithful and the hierarchy. The whole Body, all believers, is animated by the Spirit, and within it the hierarchical functions of service and those who exercise them are animated and exercised for this purpose.⁵¹ Like Möhler again, Congar emphasized the sacerdotal or priestly character of the laity or the assembled believers, who are the very members comprising the mystical Body or divine-human organism of Christ. They share in Christ’s threefold office of priest, king, and prophet.⁵²

But to speak of the Church in this way is to equate it with the “mystical Body of Christ.”⁵³ From start to finish, for Congar, the actualization of this Body in human beings is a gift of Christ to man by which He prolongs and continues Himself in humanity, recreating that humanity in Himself after the image of God. In union with the Body of Christ, the Christian acts and leads a life whose true principle is Christ. He sees and judges after Christ, whose life and vision becomes his very own. This is the “realization of the Mystical Body, of a life led on Christ’s account” understood as being living members of His Body united in faith and love in Him through which He continues His life in us.⁵⁴ The function of the sacraments, for Congar, is that they realize this mystical union with Christ in His Body—that is, they mediate Christ to us insofar as they are, like the Church itself, “a prolongation of the incarnation of the Word.” The Eucharist is exemplary here, as it is said to take us “deeper still” into “incorporation with Christ.”⁵⁵

Congar’s close colleague and fellow *peritus* at Vatican II, Henri de Lubac, devoted his famous study, *Corpus mysticum* (1949; but finished 1938–39), to looking at the patristic and especially medieval roots lying behind the idea of the “mystical Body.” In particular, de Lubac is concerned with how precisely

the Eucharist is the “mystical principle” by which the ecclesial body becomes in all reality the Body of Christ. The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, is, he says, the “ever-springing source of life” of the one Spirit, which, when it is consumed by Christ’s faithful people, makes them into one single Body. In the famous words of de Lubac, “the Eucharist makes the Church. It makes of it an inner reality. By its hidden power, the members of the body come to unite themselves by becoming more fully members of Christ, and their unity with one another is part and parcel of their unity with the one single Head.”⁵⁶

The Catholic Church begins to make this sort of communion ecclesiology part of its official teaching quite gradually. By the close of World War II, with the papal encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* (1943) of Ven. Pope Pius XII (1876–1958; pope, 1939–58; declared “Venerable” by Pope Benedict XVI in December 2009) (although generally now said to be drafted by the Dutch Jesuit and Curial theologian Sebastian Tromp [1889–1975]), we see the papal elaboration of the “Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church” and which we are told “was first taught us by the Redeemer Himself.”⁵⁷ The Body is now completely collapsed with the institution of the Roman Catholic Church: “this true Church of Jesus Christ—which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church [*hanc veracem Christi Ecclesiam—quae sancta, catholica, apostolica, Romana Ecclesia est*—we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression ‘the Mystical Body of Christ.’”⁵⁸ This would seem to leave all those who are not under the Roman pontiff out in the cold, as there is a direct identity here between Rome and the “mystical Body of the Redeemer,” but Pius XII feels that during a time of war the message of the “divine given unity” of the mystical Body joining all races and peoples is all the more important, and that those outside the walls of the Church “will be forced to admire this fellowship in charity, and with the guidance and assistance of divine grace will long to share in the same union and charity.”⁵⁹ They have, he opines, in this way of admiration of the Church a relationship to her by “unconscious desire and longing,” and he waits for them “with open and outstretched arms to come not to a stranger’s house, but to their own, their father’s home.”⁶⁰

With Vatican II we see the theology of Möhler come fully into the mainstream with the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (1964). Indeed, this document, as well as so many others produced by Vatican II, so completely expressed communion ecclesiology that the 1985 Extraordinary Catholic Synod of Bishops described it as the “central and fundamental idea of the Council’s Document’s.”⁶¹ It is not surprising, then, that we see Möhlerean

ecclesiology at Vatican II as Congar had a hand in drafting large portions of *Lumen Gentium* and Möhler himself was being read during the drafting process, as we know from Congar that Pope Paul VI asked him in the last stages for a copy of *Unity in the Church*.⁶² Without rehashing all the aspects of communion ecclesiology in *Lumen Gentium* we can simply note that it contains all the characteristics of this theology including a belief that the Eucharist makes the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, I, 3), an emphasis (without in any way negating the hierarchy or the Roman pontiff: III) on the holy laity or the Church as the “People of God” (II and IV), who themselves were “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Pet. 2:9 cited at II, 9) (note the contrast with the older vision of the Church as being primarily the pope with *his* bishops and *his* presbyterium), a vision of the hierarchy and the priesthood as ministerial functions of the Eucharistic assembly of the said holy People of God (III), the Church as a sacrament (I, 1), the mystical Body of Christ (1, 8) (although direct talk of the Church as an “organism” is only found in *Gaudium et Spes*, Part II, 5.II.90⁶³) as well as adding a new interesting eschatological vision of the Church (VII). More particularly, *Lumen Gentium* begins with a discussion of the mystery of the Church and quickly identifies the Church with “a sacrament or as a sign and instrument” not merely of creating a unity of believers but “both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race” since the Church is a reality that desires to unfold its nature and mission not only to the faithful but the whole of creation (I, 1). We now take for granted this sort of sacramental language about the Church, but it was controversial in its day. Indeed, Congar tells us that one conservative bishop objected to the Church being spoken of as a sacrament because this sort of language had been used by the condemned (and then long dead) Modernist heretic Tyrrell!⁶⁴ Further on in *Lumen Gentium*, we see the Church identified with the mystical Body. However, unlike earlier in Pius XII’s encyclical, the Church does not exist in a simple identity with the Roman Catholic Church but it is said (in words whose meaning is debated to this day) that it “subsists in the Catholic Church” (*subsistit in Ecclesia catholica*) (I,8).⁶⁵ Later we are told that those who have not received the gospel are related “in various ways” to the People of God. The Jews are related to the Church through the Old Testament, the promises, and the fact that Christ was a Jew. The Muslims are related due to the fact that they acknowledge the Creator as they profess the faith of Abraham and worship with Christians the one God who will judge all on the last day. Providence in its wisdom guides all those not part of the Church to the gospel, and so with

“care and attention” the Church encourages mission following the command of Christ (Mk. 6:16) (*Lumen Gentium*, II, 16).

These sorts of ambiguities, especially that of the meaning of the Roman Church “*subsistit in*” *Una Sancta* or Universal Christian Church, have caused much controversy in subsequent Catholic theology as well as official teaching because they were taken as a theological opportunity of sorts by some theologians interested in thinking about how not only non-Catholic Christians might be a part of the Church in some sense but also those of other faiths (and none⁶⁶) might be included in a fashion.⁶⁷ Rahner is illustrative in this regard, as his famous theology of “anonymous Christianity” straddled the Council and was embellished subsequently.⁶⁸ He argues that, because Christ took flesh, humanity in advance was sanctified by grace and considered as a unity to be “the people of the children of God,” a sort of proto- or ur-Church. With the coming of the Spirit after the Ascension, mankind is organized juridically and socially into the supernatural unity of “the Church” proper.⁶⁹ The world belongs to the Church merely with its heart (*corde*) but does not have the grace of being united to it bodily (*corpore*). This grace is essential for a human being to contribute to the basic sacramental sign, which is the Church, although it powers history forward to the eschaton or last things and is incarnate in history “in full measure and in manifest form” in Christ, though it has “all along been at work at the very roots of human nature as the offering of God to communicate himself to man regardless of whether this offering is accepted or refused.”⁷⁰

A similar attempt to appropriate the communion ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium* for the purposes of a communion with non-Christians is found in the Dominican theologian and ecumenist Jean-Marie Tillard (1927–2000). He argues that the Church is born on Pentecost by a dynamism that recreates the flesh of the world. The Spirit has the power to tear this flesh from the sin and injustice that besets it, as the Spirit knows how to break down the walls that imprison individuals and groups from one another so that It might “bind them together in *communion*. For humanity is truly itself only in communion. This is what saves it.”⁷¹ The Church then is impelled from its origins to become involved in the world’s problems from the very basis of its life in union with Christ through the Spirit. He acknowledges that the Church is the place where the “humanity-that-God-wills” is recreated in the event of loving communion through the Spirit uniting us with Christ.⁷² However, there still exist some who are saved but ignorant of the fact that they are—though we would not call these “anonymous Christians” (following Rahner), because to be a Christian is to

openly confess Jesus Christ as the source of salvation. These people, Tillard argues, belong to the “*communion of grace*.” Moreover, because God acts in creation through His two hands, the Word, and the Spirit (Irenaeus), and in the Resurrection Jesus is made Lord of Creation, we must say that communion is a more universal reality than that manifested within the canonical walls of the Church as an institution. He says that all human beings are invited to communion who are true to their conscience and humble as well as those who worship God and are faithful to their religion or are united spiritually with their own faith. In a world where deferral to the transcendent is denied and mocked, a union happens between believers of different faiths who are alike reviled. Thus, when one experiences the sight of a Muslim making his “prayer ritual” under the sarcastic smiles of observers, then “one feels oneself instinctively affected by this derision. On a profound plane this man at prayer and we become one.”⁷³

Yet Catholicism was not alone in its development of the insights of Möhler. Orthodoxy early on drew creatively on his thought, as can be found especially in the work of the Slavophile Russian poet, philosopher, and theologian Aleksei Khomiakov (1804–60).⁷⁴ Khomiakov characteristically refers to the Church as a “living organism” that is animated by the divine spirit of truth, grace, and “mutual love” as the Savior lives in us, His Body making us an “organic unity in Jesus Christ.”⁷⁵ This inner unity of the Spirit of the Church’s members is made manifest externally in sacramental communion and, in particular, “bodily communion with its Savior” in the Eucharist.⁷⁶ This much is fairly standard fare for communion ecclesiology, but Khomiakov adds a new element, which is that he characterizes the unity of the Church as *sobornost* or catholicity (using the Slavonic word of the Creed *sobornyi* for the Greek *katholikos*: One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church), and this he defines as a “free unanimity” of all in one and one in all (unity in plurality) allowing for the particularity of different peoples but also seeing this particularity as precisely reflecting the catholicity or universality of the Church.⁷⁷ The point is unfortunately couched in some fairly typical nineteenth-century interchurch polemics. He argues that Roman Catholicism or “Romanism,” as he puts it, has merely an external unity that rejects freedom and so is a false unity, while Protestantism has an external freedom that does not bestow unity and so has a false freedom. Orthodoxy, being a sort of *via media*, incarnates the mystery of the unity of Christ and His elect, which is a unity actualized by His human freedom and which is revealed in the Church to be “the real unity and real freedom of the faithful.”⁷⁸ Although this polemical framing is regrettable, the idea is original and will later prove

important in Orthodox theology where the Spirit will become identified with freedom in diversity expressed in worship. Thus, Khomiakov argues, that unity is generated by freedom understood as the “moral law of mutual love and prayer,” which is by the grace of God and not impelled from above as in an institution. In this spiritual free unity, all of the members of the Church from layman to bishop equally cooperate and participate in the “common work” of right praise in the liturgy.⁷⁹ Because Khomiakov argues that the unity of the Church is an interior reality of a free act of mutual love manifested externally in the Eucharist, this makes him agnostic regarding the limits of the Church. He tells us that the “secret bonds” that unite the earthly Church to the rest of humanity are not revealed to us, so one simply cannot condemn severely those outside her visible bounds as this contradicts divine mercy and because Christ is a “law” and “realized idea” imprinted in creation. Therefore, those who love justice, compassion, charity, love, sacrifice, and “all that is truly human, great, and beautiful, all that is worthy of respect, imitation, or adoration—all this represents only different forms of the name of our Savior.”⁸⁰

It is arguable that communion ecclesiology would not have its singular Eucharistic focus if it were not for the work of the seminal Russian émigré historian and theologian Nicholas Afanasiev (1893–1966).⁸¹ Afanasiev’s “Eucharistic ecclesiology” (communion ecclesiology is often referred to in this manner), which has since been developed by the Greek theologian John Zizioulas and has become massively influential, is summarized in a line from Afanasiev’s famous 1960 essay (cited in the debates at Vatican II), “The Church That Presides in Love”: “Where the Eucharist is, there is the fullness of the Church.” What is not often mentioned is the next line, where he says the principle must be reversed, which is that where the fullness of the Church is not, there no Eucharist can be celebrated.⁸² In other words, Church and Eucharist become, as we saw with his younger Catholic contemporaries Congar and de Lubac, two ways of speaking about the Church as the Body of Christ into which we as members are incorporated. Afanasiev argues that Christians are a priestly people of the one high priest, Jesus Christ, who, in gathering together in one assembly in one city, manifest in and around their one bishop the unity and fullness (namely, catholicity) of the Church of God.⁸³ Each local church—in communion with all local churches—is simultaneously fully catholic, universal through the Holy Spirit’s animation of its gratitude to God (*eucharistia*), its diversification by the fullness of the gifts poured out on each person, and as Christ dwells in it through the Eucharist by which the faithful through communication

become members of His Body.⁸⁴ Thus, the “Church of God in Christ” is one although it is made manifest in a multitude of local churches, each of which has the fullness of God because it is a Eucharistic gathering.⁸⁵ All ecclesial ministries or offices (deacon, priest, and bishop), which are understood in terms of “service” (reminiscent of Congar⁸⁶), as well as their order and function originate from the Eucharistic assembly of each local Church.⁸⁷ Following Khomiakov, Catholicity—and, with it, unity—is defined as a realization of the Spirit (“The beginning of the Church lies in the Spirit. Through the Spirit and in the Spirit the Church lives”⁸⁸) and is grounded once again in the Eucharistic assembly so that Afanasiev (controversially) identifies all attempts to erect “universal” ecclesial structures beyond the local assembly and its presbyter-bishop (as the two offices blur in earliest Christianity) with the slow triumph of law over the power of love (*vlast’ liubvi*).⁸⁹ Here Afanasiev was influenced by a Lutheran opposition of law and grace in his reaction to, among other things, Caesaro-papism, Roman Catholic papalist “universal ecclesiology,” and the overlapping jurisdictions of the Russian diaspora in his day.⁹⁰ He nevertheless argued, a fact sometimes forgotten, for Roman “primacy,” which he understood as its “priority” as a local Church that presides over others in love (echoing Ignatius of Antioch).⁹¹

Our last Orthodox figure, John Zizioulas (titular Metropolitan of Pergamon under the Ecumenical Patriarchate), is perhaps the best-known exponent of “communion ecclesiology,” and (arguably) one of the most celebrated living theologians in Christian East and West.⁹² His importance as a thinker comes from emphasizing that ecclesiology must be based on a combination of Trinitarian theology and Christology if it is to be an ecclesiology of communion. These doctrines are “indispensable presuppositions” for a communion ecclesiology. It must be based on Trinitarian theology in that God is a communion (*koinonia*) of persons, relational in His very being, and the Church’s being is likewise relational. It must also be based on Christology in that Christ is the head of His Body, the Church, and He is a corporate Pneumatological or Spiritual Being “born and existing in the *koinonia* of the Spirit.”⁹³ The Church’s identity derives from her relationship with the Triune God insofar as she must reflect His being, which is one of personal communion, as well as enter into communion with Him via continual incorporation and personalization through sacramental participation in His Spiritual Body, the Church.⁹⁴

Moreover, Zizioulas argues, within a vision of ecclesiology drawn from the Greek patristic corpus and Byzantine liturgical tradition, the very structures, ministries, vision of authority, mission, and understanding of Tradition of the

Church must be relational, reflecting the life of God as Trinity. Thus, how the bishop connects with his flock in a ministry of unifying diversity is relational just as the relationship of dioceses on the universal level, which are integrated through the unity of the episcopate, and the ministry of primacy (here he breaks decisively with Afanasiev in that he does not identify primacy as such with juridical power) is relational.⁹⁵ Zizioulas argues that the bishop stands at the head of the community inspired and freely constituted by the Spirit of God, leading it in worship in the Eucharist such that (echoing Ignatius) the bishop is in the people and the people are in the bishop.⁹⁶ He expresses himself in the multitude of the faithful, in one place offering the Eucharist to God in the name of the Church, bringing up the “whole Body of Christ” to the “throne of God.”⁹⁷ The “many” faithful condition the “one” bishop, just as the one bishop does not exist without his particular community.⁹⁸ Catholicity, like Khomiakov and Afanasiev, is understood not as a universality enforced on different communities from above and therefore embracing all the particulars in an organized unity but as the wholeness, fullness, and totality of the particulars in themselves as expressed in the “body of Christ ‘exactly as’ (*hosper*) it is portrayed in the eucharistic community.”⁹⁹ This means that each Eucharistic community is catholic because the “whole Christ” is present and incarnate within it, with the one Catholic Church interpenetrating with the catholic churches in various local places.¹⁰⁰ All pyramidal notions of ecclesiology, Zizioulas opines, found within the Western institutional and excessively Christocentric perspective where Christ institutes the Church disappear in the Greek patristic ecclesiology being outlined, since the one bishop and the many in his church (the lay people and the whole presbyterium) form one being co-constituting the Body through the Spirit, and the bishop in no way possesses the fullness of grace and power without these other ministries.¹⁰¹ This leads Zizioulas to the somewhat surprising claim that, unlike in the West, due to this pneumatological focus on the Church as divine organism and the Eucharist as a corporate event of communion offered up by the community through their bishop, the Eastern Orthodox have no serious problems with clericalism, anti-institutionalism and Pentecostalism.¹⁰²

The Church’s relationship to the world, its “mission,” is also said to be relational in that the world, from society to the natural creation, is lifted up in gratitude and is in this way sanctified, entering into the life of the Church’s communion.¹⁰³ Indeed, it is unclear—and here we are reminded of other writers like Tillard and Khomiakov—for Zizioulas where the limits of the Church “can

be objectively and finally drawn.” The world and the Church interpenetrate in this theology. The world, on the one hand, is God’s good creation and never ceases to belong to Him and to rest and to dwell in Him. The Church, on the other hand, is the community, which through the descent of the Spirit transcends in itself the world and offers that world back to God in the Eucharist.¹⁰⁴

Protestant writers have also contributed to communion ecclesiology.¹⁰⁵ Thus, recently the Oxford Baptist systematic theologian Paul S. Fiddes (b. 1947) has argued that the Church is constituted by the presence of Christ and that this is understood as the “gathered congregation” that Baptists believed is reflected in Matthew 18:20: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, in the Reformation tradition the Church is the People of God, the new covenant community brought into being through the blood of the new covenant in the cross of Christ. The Baptists added to this idea the notion that the gathered congregation—in which Christ is “presenced” and which is constituted in this way—covenanted themselves with each other so that their union with God is a union with each other. Indeed, Christ gathers them together as His Body, and they respond to His appointment by becoming one with God in Him and with each other so that “they are not just *drawing* together, but *being drawn* together.”¹⁰⁷ This movement of loving covenanting communion with God and with one another is the Church, and its foundation is found in God as Trinity. Building creatively on Barth’s thought, Fiddes wants to see the relationships of the Trinity as a sort of covenant. The covenant of God with Jesus Christ as the representative human son is identified with the eternal generation of Him by the Father so that God (following Barth) decided to be God a “second time” by binding Himself to be a particular sort of God for us in Christ in a “double covenant of love.” Now the covenant of the members of the Church with Christ and with one other “is bound up with that ‘covenant’ in God’s own communion of life in which God freely determines to be God” so that we participate in God’s Being, which is an “inner covenant making”: “Church is what happens when these vectors intersect, and God in humility opens God’s own self to the richness of the intercourse.”¹⁰⁸

Where this interweaving of covenants takes form is in the gathered community’s worship. The Church can be understood as a “Eucharistic community” if the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper is said to be a central means (though not the only means: e.g., baptism) by which He becomes more deeply present—we might say, united—to the fellowship of believers insofar as Christ uses it “to presence himself.”¹⁰⁹ The sharing in the Lord’s Supper, then, deepens not just

the relationship of Christ with the believer but also the presence of Christ in his “gathered people” so that there is in the gathering a communion or fellowship with Christ and with one another and this is tied to the presence of Christ in the elements.¹¹⁰ In bread, wine, and, indeed, water (for baptism) the story of Jesus is recalled and He is brought into the present. To be sure, He embodies Himself sacramentally in the Church as He has so promised, and we can regularly be expected to meet Him there; so the Church thereby becomes a gateway into the dance of God’s self-covenanting life. This does not mean that God cannot embody Himself in the world, although this need not negate the Church’s unique Body. The sacramental understanding of the Church as communion needs to go beyond the believers’ bodies into the whole body of the world. From the focus on the Lord’s Table we can see God’s presence at all tables and in creation, which He continually sustains. We also can see His presence in the broken bodies of prisoners, the thirsty, and the hungry since all bodies can embody Christ and in this way become gateways to the dance of God’s life allowing everyone to enter into communion with God and His Church:¹¹¹ “All bodies in the world have the potential to be sacramental, awakening us to the presence of the creative and redemptive God, becoming doorways into the flowing relationships that we call Father, Son and Holy Spirit, entrances into the dance of their *perichoresis* of love.”¹¹²

Part II: Ecclesiology *Ad extra*

We now can turn to Latin American liberation theology as well as, more briefly, the various forms of liberation or contextual ecclesiologies that it has produced as examples of ecclesiology *ad extra* or ecclesiologies where the Church is turned in response toward a world that no longer is simply an extension of its boundaries as was the case with Christianity in the past, where Church and Christian civilization or empire overlapped.¹¹³ The ground for liberation theology was prepared for it through two intellectual streams: the ecclesiology of Schleiermacher; and Vatican II’s critical affirmation of aspects of modernity as well as its restatement of Catholic social teaching and its (to use the famous phrase) “preferential option for the poor” by which is meant privileging outreach to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, widows, orphans, prisoners (Matt. 25:40) and any who suffer injustice because of inequities or systematic evil in society where those in power lord it over those who are disempowered, ignoring their inherent dignity as children of God made in His image.

Friedrich Schleiermacher's monumental systematization of Christian theology, *On the Christian Faith* (1821¹¹⁴) is a religion or theology founded, as Brian Gerrish puts it, "within the limits of piety alone," echoing Kant's famous work *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone* (1793).¹¹⁵ If Kant denied access to God through pure (as opposed to practical) reason, then that access, Schleiermacher argued, could be obtained through religion/piety (*Frömmigkeit*) as a modification of feeling. Schleiermacher felt there was a universal feeling of absolute dependence on God as the source of all life and being that was an immediate self-consciousness of God understood as the foundation of all knowing and doing—that is, the "consciousness of being absolutely dependent."¹¹⁶ God, therefore, is given to us directly in primordial human experience, this feeling of absolute dependence, as almost a sort of intuitive form of divine revelation, the co-existing of God in self-consciousness.¹¹⁷ Yet the consciousness or feeling never appeared in a general form but was always specific to a particular community. All religions and the communities that embody them, he argued, are accompanied by a unique modification of the feeling of absolute dependence in immediate self-consciousness as a particular form of God-consciousness running the gamut from idolatry as the "lowest" form of religious development to Christianity as the "highest," most fully developed form of self-consciousness having "exclusive superiority" over all other religions.¹¹⁸ In short, piety, he asserts, is "an essential element of human nature."¹¹⁹

The Christian form of the feeling/self-consciousness of absolute dependence is (showing Schleiermacher's Pietist roots) focused on redemption in Christ. Christian theology can only find its bearings as a discipline insofar as it translates into words the feelings particular to Christianity, which have exclusively to do with the redemptive self-proclamation of Christ.¹²⁰ In fact, all dogmatic statements incorporated into Christian doctrines "are accounts of the Christian religious affections set forth in speech."¹²¹ Christianity is primarily a soteriological faith: "only through Jesus, and thus only in Christianity, has redemption become the central point of religion."¹²² One cannot, therefore, be conscious of God as a Christian without being conscious of redemption in Christ and vice versa.¹²³ Yet Christ as the Redeemer—and his "redeeming influence" is the primary element of Christian consciousness/religion¹²⁴—redeems us not on the cross but through a communion/fellowship of believers in Christ. Thus it is by the Church alone, as those who share Christian self-consciousness, that one encounters the Redeemer's "unclouded blessedness" and so is saved in this

place of “attained perfection, or of the good.”¹²⁵ What defines Jesus is his “God-consciousness” in that he was perfectly absolutely dependent on God and so required no need for redemption.¹²⁶ This power manifested in Christ can be granted to us (who have need for redemption) through our faith in him (which satisfies our need for redemption) by which we obtain the right “impression,” which begins saving “faith in God”¹²⁷

But, it may be asked, are there not different Christian communities? Schleiermacher argued that each of these communities—Catholic and Protestant¹²⁸—had a slightly different modification of the Christian version focused on redemption of the universal feeling/self-conscious of absolute dependence on God.¹²⁹ The Christian sense of God was always specific to the community of one time and place in which, as Fiddes puts it, “the Redeemer was present to shape and purify this experience.”¹³⁰ There is no one unchanging essence of the Church (or of theology for that matter), but there are only particular expressions of the general concepts that are in constant flux as the community and its members experience changes. As long as the different communities, Protestant and Roman Catholic, have differences in their respective modifications of the feeling/self-consciousness of absolute dependence on God, there will be different theologies that reflect that unique experience.¹³¹ It should be clear from this account that Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology, with its emphasis on the particular experiential character of churches and their theology, is tailor-made for a vision of the Church that wants to express the particular experience of one group, whether that be his own Reform Lutheran Prussian Union Church (created by King Frederick William III of Prussia in 1817 as his state church) or the base or basic church communities of the oppressed and poor of Brazil of the late 1970s, whose experience the controversial Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff (b. 1938) (to whom we shall return shortly) witnesses, or, to take a contemporary example, the Metropolitan Community Church, which is an American-founded Protestant denomination of 222 churches in 40 countries with a specific ministry to LGBT families and communities.¹³²

Yet Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology is not the only foundation of the various liberation ecclesiologies that have grown up in the last forty-five years. Vatican II and subsequent papal documents were clearly the inspiration for many developments, particularly of Latin American liberation theology, in emphasizing the work for justice and equality as (what would eventually be described as) “constitutive” aspects of the Christian Gospel. Thus, the 1965 Pastoral Constitution of the Church, *Gaudium et Spes*, famously opens with its affirmation of

the Church's solidarity with modern man, especially the poor, in all aspects of his life: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." Nothing human, *Gaudium et Spes* continues, is alien to the Church and does not bring about compassion in it as the Church is a "community composed of men" who are united in Christ led by the Spirit to the Kingdom of the Father toward a salvation that is for all men and so it is bound up intimately with humanity and its history. The Council says that having considered the "mystery of the Church," it now turns toward not only Christians but also the "whole of humanity" so that it can explain to all how it views the presence and activity of the Church in the world today.¹³³ The Church, like Christ, it said, is called to witness to the truth in the world, to rescue and not sit in judgment, to serve and not be served. But such a task requires the Church to scrutinize "the signs of the times . . . interpreting them in the light of the Gospel."¹³⁴ The Church speaks for the People of God, Christ's Body, in affirming its "solidarity, as well its respect and love for the entire human family" and expresses this in its engagement with it in dialogue on the world's various problems.¹³⁵ Indeed, "dialogue" might be taken as one of the main themes of the document, from dialogue with atheism to dialogue concerning socioeconomic disputes.¹³⁶ Here follows the Council's longest document with pastoral reflections and direction on subjects existential (e.g., death, atheism), social and ethical (e.g., human rights, common good), and practical and political (e.g., unions, private property, war, and peace).

In particular, the document affirms that authentic human freedom is an "exceptional sign of the divine image within man."¹³⁷ It therefore affirms the common good of society, understood as the sum of those conditions of social life that allow social groups and their individuals sure access to their own fulfillment, which includes respecting man's universal and inviolable human rights and duties that are necessary for him to lead a truly human life, including food, clothing, shelter, the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, education, employment, religious, and so on.¹³⁸ The Church is said to proclaim the rights of man by virtue of the gospel and supports contemporary movements that work toward their defense.¹³⁹ Far from discouraging the improvement of the social order, the Church urges its constant "improvement" and says that it should be "founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance."¹⁴⁰ There is a palpable sense in *Gaudium et Spes* that although working toward a more

just and equitable society is not strictly identical to the eschatological “consummation of the earth,” the “growth of Christ’s Kingdom,” neither is it irrelevant, and it is of “vital concern” to the Kingdom of God to the extent that it encourages the better ordering of human society. (This passage will in the years following Vatican II be cited repeatedly by liberation theologians.) The Kingdom of God is “eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace,” and it is present on earth in a mystery, but when Christ returns it will come to full flower.¹⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Church acts as a sort of leaven and soul for human society as it is renewed and transformed into God’s family, which impels it to support the causes of justice such as the right to freely found unions and generally a more just economic and labor situation for all men, which means that individuals and governments are morally obliged to feed the hungry, relieve poverty, and share their goods with one another.¹⁴² In this way their life is animated by the “spirit of the beatitudes, notably with a spirit of poverty . . . perfecting the work of justice under the inspiration of charity.”¹⁴³ As *Lumen Gentium* tells us, the Church is called to carry out her mission like Christ, “in poverty and persecution.”¹⁴⁴

This strong emphasis on justice for all and what would later be called the “preferential option for the poor” was backed up by official teaching throughout the pontificate of Paul VI in the late 1960s through the 1970s. Thus, in Paul VI’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (1967) (a text very popular with liberation theologians), there is an explicit program to encourage the “People of God” that their mission includes furthering the progress of poorer nations, international social justice, and helping less developed nations help themselves.¹⁴⁵ This is the classic Catholic “social gospel” in its full flower with, among other things, a critique of colonialism, a plea for an equitable distribution of goods, especially private property, an attack on a cold-blooded form of capitalism or “liberalism,” an advocating of aid to developing nations, and encouragement of equity in trade relations. Wealthier nations are said to have a threefold moral obligation flowing from the “human and supernatural brotherhood of man” that includes “mutual solidarity” in aiding the poorer nations, “social justice” in rectifying inequitable trading relations, and “universal charity” in building up a more “humane world community.”¹⁴⁶ This emphasis on the gospel imperative to work for justice and to, as it were, make the Church’s presence ever more realized in the world was further backed up by the 1971 international Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops (the second of its meetings after being established by Paul VI during Vatican II¹⁴⁷) that, probably for the first time in Roman Catholic

magisterial teaching, describes social justice as a “constitutive” aspect of the Christian Gospel: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.”¹⁴⁸

It is out of this post-Vatican II “social gospel” context as well as a long tradition of native ecclesial co-struggling with the poor (e.g., Bartolomé de las Casas [1484–1586]) that Latin American liberation theology arose. In particular, two episcopal assemblies of the Latin American Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano* [CELAM¹⁴⁹]) that met to receive and enact Vatican II’s teaching were key to its development: Medellín, Columbia (1968), and Puebla, Mexico (1969).¹⁵⁰ At Medellín, the bishops, citing *Gaudium et Spes* and *Populorum Progressio* in particular, pledged to unite themselves with their people (“fraternal solidarity”¹⁵¹) who they regularly identify as the “People of God,” to contribute to their advancement and to look for a plan of God for Latin America in the (echoing *Gaudium et Spes*) “signs of the times” and “permeate all the process of change with the values of the Gospel.”¹⁵² Following a common emphasis in liberation theology on praxis, we are told that it is not enough to theologially reflect on the gospel; evangelical “action is required” as the present was the “time for action,” bringing creativity and imagination to bear with the Spirit for new solutions to problems because Latin America was on the threshold of a “new epoch” full of zeal for “full emancipation, of liberation from every servitude, of personal maturity and of collective integration.”¹⁵³ Particularly crucial in this new age was a message of liberation, solidarity, and justice. This is simply repeating the Gospel of Christ who was sent by His Father to liberate all men from the slavery to which sin has subjected them, including hunger, misery oppression, and ignorance, which are the injustice and hatred born of selfishness.¹⁵⁴ The justice the Church called for was primarily economic and political liberation. It even made a particular plea to businessmen and politicians that social and economic change in Latin America be humanized.¹⁵⁵

In a famous section, “Poverty of the Church,” the bishops called for the Church to embrace spiritual and material poverty in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, following Christ Himself, who, being rich, became poor so through His poverty we might be enriched (2 Cor. 8:9). Christ’s mission, it is

said, centered “on advising the poor of their liberation and He founded His Church as the sign of that poverty among men.” We are told the “poor Church” denounces the unjust lack of this world’s goods and the sin that begets it; preaches and lives in spiritual poverty as an attitude of solidarity with the poor and “spiritual childhood and openness to the Lord”; and is bound to material poverty—a poverty that is a “constant factor in the history of salvation.” The poverty of the Church is a sign of the “inestimable value of the poor in the eyes of God” and the obligation of solidarity with all those who suffer like them. Their struggles, the bishops say, are the Church’s struggles.¹⁵⁶ More than a decade later, despite considerable conservative backlash against this ecclesiology of the “poor Church,” the bishops met again at Puebla (1979) and reiterated this same theology, speaking famously of “a preferential option for the poor” as the keystone of the Church’s message in Latin America.¹⁵⁷ This basic idea of Catholic social teaching popularized by liberation theology—“the preferential option for the poor”—appears to be one of the central themes of the new pontificate Pope Francis (b. 1936; elected pope March 13, 2013) and seems to reflect the fact that Francis is Latin American as well as a Jesuit (the Jesuits often being proponents of liberation theology).¹⁵⁸

One of the intellectual architects of Medellín was the Peruvian Dominican theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez (b. 1928), who served as a *peritus* to the Latin American bishops. He is the author of the study that gave the theological movement of liberation theology its name: *A Theology of Liberation* (1971). For Gutiérrez, the Church, as the People of God, not only evangelizes the world but also allows itself to be inhabited and evangelized by that world in which Christ and the Spirit dwell. The Church is not, then, a “nonworld” but simply that part of humanity attentive to the Word who is everywhere present, as we saw earlier with Rahner. As the People of God, the Church dwells in creation and is orientated to the Kingdom promised by Christ and actively works toward it in its liberating praxis.¹⁵⁹

The emphasis on liberating praxis is a hallmark of Gutiérrez’s theological methodology, which is famously influenced (via various European theologians like Jürgen Moltmann [b. 1926] and Johannes B. Metz [b. 1928]¹⁶⁰) by Marxist thinking. He argues that liberation theology reflects with a view to liberating action, “which transforms the present,” but it does not do this from an armchair but instead throws itself into the midst of action where God is liberating the poor and the oppressed and throws one’s lot in with Him and so sinks its

roots “where the pulse of history is beating at this moment” and then subsequently illumines history with the very Word of God, who has likewise committed Himself to the present moment to carry it forward to its fulfillment in the Kingdom. (One is reminded of Marx’s witticism: “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point however is to *change* it.”¹⁶¹) The theology of liberation, therefore, reflects critically on historical praxis in the midst of the battle as if it were of the liberating transformation of the history of mankind and of the Church as that part of humanity that confesses Christ.¹⁶² Truth, then, gives itself not in contemplation but through liberating activity and solidarity with the strugglers. One must reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith from the foundation of one’s commitment to abolish injustice and build a new society (a sort of beginning of the eschatological Kingdom), and one’s reflection, theology, is verified as true by one’s practice of commitment and “by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors.”¹⁶³ Thus the Church—and Gutiérrez privileges its identity as the “People of God”—is those people who come to the awareness of the need to commit themselves to a “break with the status quo” or “social revolution,” which seems to be identified with a class struggle against capitalism.¹⁶⁴ The long hand of Schleiermacher is evident here because the Church becomes identified with a particular self-consciousness of being engaged with God in liberating the poor, which is reflected in its activity and its distinct theology. It is not surprising, then, that Gutiérrez’s theology attracted the attention of an increasingly more conservative Vatican under Pope John Paul II with the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith led by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI). The CDF produced a document in 1984 querying many aspects of liberation theology, especially its “Marxist analysis” of history and theology, and subsequently investigated and even put under censure some of the theologians, including the Brazilian theologian and ex-Franciscan priest Leonardo Boff, the Indian Jesuit theologian Sebastian Kappen (1924–93), and the Sri Lankan theologian and priest Tissa Balasuriya (1924–2013).¹⁶⁵

With Leonardo Boff’s liberation ecclesiology we see a full return to the Schleiermacherian emphasis on the experience of the community as determining its practices and theology, although in this case praxis creates a new ecclesial self-consciousness and accompanying expressive theology.¹⁶⁶ Boff, like Gutiérrez, sees the Church as the People of God.¹⁶⁷ However, he takes this idea one step further by seizing on and developing an idea mentioned by the Medellín

Bishop's Conference, which is that there exists a base community or basic Church whose essential element is its leaders (who can be priests, deacons, religious, or laypeople), which forms the ecclesiastical nucleus of the Church proper.¹⁶⁸ He identified this reality with the "church-of-the-people" or "Church from the Poor" who were involved with the struggle for liberation from the oppressors, both capitalists and military, a struggle that had its analogue in the Christian faith's seeking of ultimate liberation and freedom of the children of God.¹⁶⁹ This struggle of base communities creates a new way of being the Church and of living the Christian faith with the organizing of the Body around the Word, the sacraments (when possible), and around new ministries led by laypeople, though not necessarily negating clerical orders. The power in the community and its exercises of the sacraments is redistributed without centralization and domination, creating a "true democracy of the people" so that everything belongs to the people: "A true 'ecclesio-genesis' is in progress throughout the world, a Church being born from the faith of the poor."¹⁷⁰ This Church *of* and *with* the poor (instead of officialdom's Church *for* the poor¹⁷¹) has given a new opportunity for a "new experience of the life of faith," allowing the Church to become completely rethought from the ground up in light of the priority of the Church as a community and sign of liberation.¹⁷² The Church is "reinvented" or "born at the grassroots, beginning to be born at the heart of God's people" so that the experiments by the community gradually confirm their growing self-consciousness and theory of their praxis giving them confidence as a new institution of the "viability of a new way of being church in the world today."¹⁷³ Unsurprisingly, although Boff does not reject the traditional offices of bishop, priest, and deacon, he is also in favor of lay celebration of the Eucharist and of women's ordination.¹⁷⁴ Equally unsurprising, he was, due to these controversial opinions and his vision of a dynamic church whose evolving self-consciousness resulted in an evolving set of practices and an evolving ecclesiology, silenced for one year by the CDF in 1985 and not allowed to teach, write, or make public appearances. Under pressure, he eventually left the Franciscan Order and the priesthood in 1992 to write free from magisterial censure and has since married and started a family.

The witness of liberation theology did not go unnoticed in the wider world, and out of its unique emphasis on the revelatory experience of God of the community and the call for gospel action toward effecting justice in society comes a whole series of liberation or contextual theologies reflecting the civil rights movement in the United States of the 1960s onward, the first wave of the

feminist movement in the 1970s, the disintegration of colonialism in Asia and Africa after World War II, and the struggle for equal rights by LGBT persons. African American theologians in the United States who were even then participating in the civil rights movement tried to find a theological articulation that might express how the Christian Gospel spoke to the reality of what the American Methodist theologian James H. Cone (b. 1938) referred to, in his classic *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), as “black suffering” at the hands of institutionalized regime in a “white racist society,” of “white racism” and “white oppression.”¹⁷⁵ Like their Latin American counterparts, African American theologians saw Christian theology—for them “black theology”—as a theology of liberation that studied the Being of God in the world “in light of the existential situation of the oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ.”¹⁷⁶ The language used for the black struggle or “Black Revolution” was one of “revolution in America” as it was felt that “the killing and the caging of black leaders has already begun.”¹⁷⁷ It must be remembered that while Cone was writing his book, Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–68) had been assassinated in 1968; there was the rise of the black power movement from 1966 onward (e.g., Malcolm X [1925–65]), and the Black Panther Party (1966–82); and there had been race riots in Harlem, New York (1964), and Watts, Los Angeles (1965), and uprisings all over the United States in 1968 following King’s assassination.

If God in Christ is conceived in Latin American liberation theology as “poor” and fully identifying with the poor Church, then in black theology God is said to be black. God is a God who is so identified with the oppressed that He makes their experience completely His own. Any other God is said to be a God of racism who is not participating in the liberation of the oppressed from the land.¹⁷⁸ Since the black community is an oppressed community because of its blackness, the Christological importance of Jesus is said to be in His blackness. If Christ is not black like the community He liberates, then the resurrection has no significance for that community: “if he cannot be what we are, we cannot be who he is. Our being with him is dependent on his being with us in the oppressed black condition, revealing to us what is necessary for liberation.”¹⁷⁹ Of course, Christ was not literally black but was persecuted and oppressed like the African Americans, so his literal color is not the point. Cone says Christ was not white in any sense of the word but might even be called (following another writer) a “black Jew” or “Black Messiah.”¹⁸⁰ The Church, for this sort of theology, is defined wholly by the extent to which it participates in the historical

liberation of God of His oppressed people.¹⁸¹ Salvation is understood in concrete earthly terms as liberation from the injustice inflicted on those who are helpless and poor, which for the black church communities is expressed in the ghetto, so that preaching the gospel is proclaiming to blacks that they do not have to suffer “ghetto-existence.”¹⁸² The Church is the place where wounds are being healed and chains are being struck off.¹⁸³

This emphasis on the liberation of minority communities from oppression was applied internationally, and we see the growth during the last forty years of unique ecclesiologies, especially in the African and Asian contexts, that reject the oppression of Western (mostly white European) colonialism.¹⁸⁴ These latter ecclesiologies often attempt to integrate elements of traditional religion and culture into their perspectives, from reverence for ancestors to respect for creation; they are ecclesiologies of the post-Western mission context and are often dealing with a Christianity that negated their experience, language, and culture; they reflect the fact that Christianity is but one of the religions in their locality and sometimes of recent provenance (though this is not necessarily the case: e.g., Ethiopia and India both have Christian communities dating back over a millennium); and they often will reflect the rise of Pentecostalism in world Christianity.

It is in this context that we begin to see theologians thinking together interreligious dialogue and ecclesiology.¹⁸⁵ In the last decade we have seen the emergence of what might be called ecclesiologies of interreligious reflection. These have mostly emerged within the ecumenical movement, especially the World Council of Churches (WCC). In particular, one should note the short WCC discussion paper, “Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding” (2005), which was prepared for the May 2005 Athens meeting of the Conference on World, Mission, and Evangelism and was the result of the work of three groups in the WCC: Faith and Order, Interreligious Relations; and Mission and Evangelism. This paper takes God’s “hospitality” to all of creation as its premise and concludes that Christians faced with religious plurality cannot claim salvation uniquely to themselves as if they determined who were saved, for it belongs solely to God, and His providence determines who is saved. Christians only witness to God’s offer of hospitality as the “host” of salvation as at an eschatological banquet where mysteriously and humbly He also includes Himself as the “stranger” who is a “guest.”¹⁸⁶ At the Ninth Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in February 2006, interreligious dialogue and Christian self-identity was a plenary theme for discussion, and Rowan Williams, then Archbishop of Canterbury, gave the address on this subject.¹⁸⁷

These discussions continue. The WCC, led by Clare Amos (Programme Executive in Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation for the WCC), drafted a discussion paper for its Tenth Assembly in Busan, South Korea, in November 2013, on the theme of “Christian self-understanding in the context of religious plurality.” With the title, “Who Do We Say that We Are?—Christian Identity in a Multireligious World,” this paper is the product of nearly a decade of discussions of various working parties of Christian theologians (including two consultations in 2013 in Switzerland and Kenya) and individual dialogues with particular religious traditions. It is far more explicitly an ecclesiology in light of interreligious encounter than past efforts of the WCC. As its starting point and framework, it takes the doctrine of the Trinity as well as the idea of Christians being graciously reevangelized by their religious neighbors. The document returns repeatedly in different ways to the tension between the uniqueness (sometimes “specificity” or “particularity”) and universality of God in Jesus Christ, which the Christian Church proclaims in its gospel and the necessity of encountering the religious Other in order that one’s identity can both be tested and enlarged. Indeed, this tension is presupposed by the idea of reevangelization by the religious Other where it is assumed that the truth of God is expressed with fullness in Christ, but at the same time one is impelled to turn to other religions so that we might encounter the gospel anew, hearing in the religious other a new voice of the Word or attaining through such an encounter a fresh insight into our own faith via another “faith.”¹⁸⁸ The paper was approved by the Central Committee of the WCC in July 2014 and in a slightly revised form is being sent together with an accompanying study guide to member churches and ecumenical partners for further study, reflection, and discussions.

It was only a matter of time before the situation of identifying Christianity and a community with liberation became a reality for women in America and Europe, who in the late 1960s to early 1970s began fighting for equal civil rights with men. Thus we see in the work of the American Roman Catholic feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Reuther (b. 1936) the same common theme of liberation and struggle against oppression defining the Church’s self-consciousness and teaching, but this time the evil faced is not poverty and political oppression or institutionalized racism but the “sin” of patriarchy. The Church in this light becomes a liberation community defined by its liberation from “sexism,” which is understood as the ideologies, roles of patriarchy, and social structures enslaved to the same systematic sin. In joining a “feminist

liberation Church,” one enters a community that puts the struggle against patriarchy and the liberation of woman at the heart of its commitment, self-consciousness, practices, and teaching.¹⁸⁹

More controversially, liberation theology has been embraced by LGBT Christians. In the wake of the famous Stonewall Riots in New York City in June 1969, there arose the gay rights or gay liberation movement with LGBT persons working for equal civil rights in the United States. Through the influence of this movement in the 1970s and the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, we have seen a Christian response to the pervasive “homophobia” of Western societies with the growth of queer (i.e., gay) theology and, in a few instances, tentative visions of the Church coming from LGBT perspectives. These ecclesiologies embrace gay Christian identity and mark out the Church as a body that is under a direct call by God to be “queer” in a world that enforces a culturally constructed sexual identity of heterosexuality as the “norm” (“heteronormativity”). The Church is seen as the place where these identities are parodied and subverted and a new inclusive Christian identity is given in baptism.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion

We have arrived at the end of our overview of modern Christian ecclesiology. It has been viewed as simultaneously an internal (*ad intra*) and external discussion (*ad extra*) of who or what the Christian Church is and on how it might, in the spirit of Vatican II, face a world that no longer is simply an extension of its own cultural and religious patrimony, a culture that is post-Christendom and also post-Christian. If Christian theology is to flourish in the new millennium, then it certainly cannot ignore the fact of pluralism, an interreligious world or the increasing ecclesiological attention to the Christian experience of minority groups and non-Western cultures. However, taken to an extreme, these visions of particular groups and how they interpret the community of the Crucified and Resurrected One, Jesus Christ, can easily degenerate into a “wilderness of mirrors” where the unity of the Body as found in the face of its one Head, Christ—“one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of us all” (Eph. 4:5–6)—can never be seen among the endless proliferation of icons of Christ produced to express the unique experience of different Christian communities.¹⁹¹ More troubling still, the existence of so many ecclesiologies points to their origin in myriad different visions of Jesus, which further points to multiple

versions of the one God so that one must ask oneself whether Christians really do worship the same God.

On the other extreme, communion ecclesiology can degenerate into a self-referential life, a mystic communion of light and grace for the initiated that is consummated in the Eucharist. Such a theology has no reference to the irreducible particularity of the world and other faiths, other than as territory to be annexed for mission until the Church and God is all in all. More scandalously, if “the Eucharist makes the Church” (Henri de Lubac¹⁹²) then how can the Body of Christ claim to be united with its one Head when it manifestly is divided into multiple sniping (even warring) factions? Once again, do these multiple bodies truly worship the same God if they cannot even break bread together? Where indeed is the Body of Christ—the Church—located? Here the two churches with the most universal self-understandings—Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy—also have the most developed ecclesiologies of communion where each asserts its identity as the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and creates elaborate canonical fences around the sacraments to prevent intercommunion with one another, thus bolstering their privileged self-identity, sacralized self-isolation, and, quite frankly, complete irrelevance to the present age. Most of the Protestant churches and the Anglican Communion, in contrast, practice an open communion where all are invited to the Lord’s Table, which, at its extremes, makes communion a celebration not of unity but difference itself. It is as if the Church, in some versions of this sort of ecclesiology, suffering as it does from a lust for relevance, is a Christoform version of contemporary multicultural civil society, an ecclesiological “mosaic” representing everything and therefore signifying nothing in particular, but always faithfully citing Galatians 3:28 as a mantra.¹⁹³

In between these two ecclesiological extremes, contemporary theology needs to steer. On the one hand, it must be aware that it can only be itself, and be one and come to know Jesus Christ as its Body and Head when He leads them in remembering His saving words in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. Yet these words will and should be received differently in each context and according to the diverse calls and gifts of each community. The limits of interpretation of Christ’s words will inevitably be the limits of communion, but these limits need to be negotiated with charity and the assumption that the other party is not willfully distorting the icon of Christ. In contrast, this self-awareness of union in Christ must take in the reality beyond the Church’s doors and come into intimate participation with the world the Church

believes Jesus has come to unite with in all its difference and particularity. But a union and communion of the Church and the world with no limits becomes meaningless, an abstract universal, so it is just as crucial to realize there are bounds to the Christian Church as it is to be charitable about acknowledging the legitimacy of the interpretation of the Word of God of other Christians and so accepting them in unity. There is no easy and final harmonization of these ecclesiological tensions short of the eschaton, as Christian unity and the Christian Church are not only a divine gift but a created desire for the inconceivable, and where there is desire, there will be difference.

Notes

1. Vatican II was the twenty-first Ecumenical Council by Roman Catholic reckoning. Most of the major Roman Catholic theologians of the twentieth century were official or unofficial *periti* (theological experts) during Vatican II and were responsible for drafting the council documents and written communications and assisting the bishops or council fathers, including Gregory Baum, Louis Bouyer, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Yves Congar, Jean Daniélou, Aloys Grillmeier, Bernhard Häring, Josef A. Jungmann, Hans Küng, Henri de Lubac, Gérard Philips, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), and Edward Schillebeeckx. For a history of the council, see Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak, eds., *History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995–2006). See also Herbert Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder & Herder; London: Burns & Oates, 1966–67). For an overview, see Joseph Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican II for Ecclesiology,” in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.*, ed. Peter C. Phan, 68–92 (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazer, 2000); and Richard Lennan, “Roman Catholic Ecclesiology,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, eds. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, 234–50 (New York: Routledge, 2008).

2. As witness to this, see Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council*, trans. Mary John Ronayne and Mary Cecily Boulding, ed. Denis Minns (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2012), 329ff., 352–53, 382–83, 422–24, 559–60, 585–86, 610–12, 629, 675, 727–29, and 771. On Vatican II and other religions, see *ibid.*, 754–57 and commentary at Gavin D’Costa, *Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

3. The official ecumenical observers to Vatican II included Jesse Bader, Gerrit Berkouwer, Vitaly Borovoy, Robert McAfee Brown, Fred Corson, Oscar Cullmann, Paul Evdokimov, Georges Florovsky, Frederick Grant, Douglas Horton, Ramban Zakka B. Iwas, George Lindbeck, John Moorman, Nikos Nissiotis, Albert Outler, Bernard Pawley, Edmund Schlink, Alexander Schmemmann, Kristin Skydsgaard, Richard Ullmann, Paul Verghese, and Lukas Vischer. Karl Barth was invited to the last session as an observer but could not attend due to ill health; later in September 1966 he made a visit after having studied the council documents in preparation for a seminar at Basel (in the winter semester of 1966–1967) on the Vatican II Constitution on Revelation (*Dei Verbum*) and produced a study (*Ad Limina Apostolorum: An Appraisal of Vatican II*, trans. Keith R. Crim [Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 1969]).

4. Pope John XXIII, "Pope John Convoles the Council: *Humanae salutis*," December 25, 1961; and "Pope John's Opening Speech to the Council," October 11, 1962," in *The Documents of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963–1965, Translated from the Latin*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1966), 703–9, 710–19. See also Pope John XXIII, "Pope's [Radio] Address to the Whole World before Council Opens," September 11, 1962, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://conciliaria.com/2012/09/popes-address-to-world-month-before-council-opens/>.

5. Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. and ed. Paul Philibert (1968; repr., Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 58.

6. Yves Congar, *Power and Poverty in the Church*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 136.

7. Karl Rahner, "The New Image of the Church," [1966] in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 10, *Writings of 1965–67*, Part 2, trans. David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 3–4.

8. See "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*) 3, in *The Documents of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963–1965, Translated from the Latin*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1966), 663; and Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council* (December 4, 1962), 233. See also, *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, Vol. 1, *Periodus Prima, Part IV: Congregationes Generales XXXI–XXXVI* (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1971), 222–27. For the history leading up to this speech, see Léon-Josef Suenens, "A Plan for the Whole Council," in *Vatican II Revisited by Those Who Were There*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1986), 88–105, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/suenens-plan1.pdf>.

9. For an overview (and the interconnection of *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*), see Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "Ressourcement Theology, Aggiornamento, and the Hermeneutics of Tradition," *Communio* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 530–55; see also Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, eds., with Patricia Kelly, *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

10. See A. R. Vidler, *A Variety of Catholic Modernists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Bernard Reardon, ed., *Roman Catholic Modernism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1970); Robert D. Haight, "Then *Unfolding of Modernism in France: Blondel, Laberthonnière, Le Roy*," *Theological Studies* 35, no. 4 (1974): 632–66; Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); and Darrell Jodock, ed., *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). In England, Catholic Modernists included Edmund Bishop (1846–1917), Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1940), and George Tyrrell (1861–1909). In France, among modernist figures are generally said to be Archbishop Eudoxe-Irénée Mignot (1842–1918), Alfred Loisy (1857–1940), Lucien Laberthonnière (1860–1932), Maurice Blondel (1861–1949), and Edouard Le Roy (1870–1954). Lastly, in Italy one counts such writers as Antonio Fogazzaro (1842–1911) and Romolo Murri (1870–1944).

11. See Ralph Del Colle, "Neo-Scholasticism," in *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth-Century Theology*, ed. David Fergusson, 375–94 (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians: From Neoscholasticism to Nuptial Mysticism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 1–16; Fergus Kerr, "A Different World: Neoscholasticism and Its Discontents," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 2 (April

2006): 128–48; Detlef Peitz, *Die Anfänge der Neuscholastik in Italien und Deutschland* (Bonn: Nova et Vetera, 2006); Thomas F. O'Meara, *Church and Culture. German Catholic Theology, 1860–1914* (London: Notre Dame Press, 1992); Gerald A. McCool, *Nineteenth Century Scholasticism: The Search for a Unitary Method*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989); Thomas J. A. Hartley, *Thomistic Revival and the Modernist Era* (Toronto: Institute of Christian Thought, University of St Michael's College, 1971); and Maurice de Wulf, *An Introduction to Scholastic Philosophy: Medieval and Modern: Scholasticism Old and New* (1907; repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003).

12. See Kerr, "A Different World," 138. See also Richard A. Peddicord, *Sacred Monster of Thomism: Life and Legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange* (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2004); and Aidan Nichols, *Reason with Piety: Garrigou-Lagrange in the Service of Catholic Thought* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2008).

13. Kerr, "A Different World," 141–42.

14. Pope Leo XIII, "Aeterni Patris," in *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edition, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), 610–12 (§§3135–40). For English translation, see "Aeterni Patris: Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII: On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy," accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris_en.html.

15. Pope Pius IX, "Quanta cura," in *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edition, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), 574–76 (§§2890–2896); for English translation, see "Quanta cura (Condemning Current Errors)—Pope Pius IX—Encyclical Promulgated on 8 December 1864," accessed September 25, 2013, www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P9QUANTA.HTM.

16. Pope Pius IX, "Syllabus of Errors," in *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edition, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), 576–84 (§§2901–80); for English translation, "The Syllabus: Pope Pius IX," September 25, 2013, www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P9SYLL.HTM.

17. "Pastor aeternus," in *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum De Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edition, ed. Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), 599–601 (§§3065–75). English: "Vatican Council I: *Pastor aeternus*," accessed September 25, 2013, www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/papae1.htm.

18. See Pope Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*: Encyclical of Pope Pius X on the Doctrines of the Modernists, September 8, 1907, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_19070908_pascendi-dominici-gregis_en.html; see also Pope Pius X, *Lamentabili Sane Exitu*: Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists, July 3, 1907, www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10lamen.htm.

19. Pope Pius X, "*Sacrorum Antistitum*," September 1, 1910 (*Motu Proprio* requiring and containing anti-modernist oath), www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm; see also Kerr, "A Different World," 134–36.

20. For personal accounts of this sort of clerical education prior to Vatican II, see Stephen Casey, *The Greater Glory: Thirty-Seven Years with the Jesuits* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 116–72; see also Hans Küng (who underwent the full seven-year formation in Neo-Scholasticism in Rome after World War II), *My Struggle for Freedom: Memoirs*, trans. John Bowden (London: Continuum, 2003), 42–114.

21. See “The Twenty-Four Fundamental Theses of Official Catholic Philosophy,” accessed September 25, 2013, www.u.arizona.edu/~aversa/scholastic/24Thomisticpart2.htm; see also Kerr, “A Different World,” 131ff.

22. Hans Urs Von Balthasar, “In Retrospect” (1965) in *My Work in Retrospect*, trans. Kenneth Batinovich and Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 89.

23. For a broad overview of modern Catholic theology, see Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*.

24. See William V. Dych, *Karl Rahner* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 11–12; and Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians*, 89.

25. On neo-patristic synthesis, see Matthew Baker, “Neopatristic Synthesis and Ecumenism: Towards the ‘Reintegration’ of Christian Tradition,” in *Eastern Orthodox Encounters of Identity and Otherness: Values, Self-Reflection, Dialogue*, ed. Andrii Krawchuk and Thomas Bremer, 235–60 (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013); Brandon Gallaher, “Georges Florovsky,” in *Key Theological Thinkers: From Modern to Postmodern*, ed. Staale Johannes Kristiansen and Svein Rise, 353–70 (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2013), Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Paul Ladouceur, “Treasures New and Old: Landmarks of Orthodox Neopatristic Theology,” *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2012): 191–227; and Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism, and Divine-Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

26. Major figures of Protestant Neo-Orthodoxy included Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–45), Emil Brunner (1889–1966), Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971), H. Richard Niebuhr (1894–1962), and even Paul Tillich (1886–1965). See Douglas John Hall, *Remembered Voices: Reclaiming the Legacy of “Neo-Orthodoxy”* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

27. For discussion, see Christopher Butler, “The Aggiornamento of Vatican II,” in *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal*, ed. John H. Miller, 3–13 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966); John W. O’Malley, “Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II’s Aggiornamento,” *Theological Studies* 32, no. 4 (December 1971): 573–60; and Giuseppe Alberigo, “Réforme ou ‘aggiornamento’ de l’Eglise?” in *Communion et réunion: Mélanges Jean-Marie Roger Tillard*, ed. G. R. Evans and M. Gourgues (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 323–32.

28. For example, “Pope Speaks of Unity and the Council,” *Criterion* (Indianapolis, Indiana) 1, no. 40 (July 7, 1961): 1, accessed September 25, 2013, www.archindy.org/criterion/files/1961/pdfs/19610707.pdf.

29. Pope Benedict XVI, “Meeting with Bishops Who Participated in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Presidents of Episcopal Conferences—Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, Clementine Hall, Friday,” October 12, 2012, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121012_vescovi-concilio_en.html.

30. See its “Declaration on Religious Freedom” (*Dignitatis humanae*), “Decree on Ecumenism” (*Unitatis redintegratio*), “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” (*Nostra aetate*) in *The Documents of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963–1965, Translated from the Latin*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, 675–96, 341–66, and 660–68 (Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1966); and see commentary at Gavin D’Costa, *Vatican II: Catholic Doctrines on Jews and Muslims* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” in *The Documents*

of Vatican II: All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963–1965, Translated from the Latin, ed. W. Abbott, 137–78 (Piscataway, NJ: New Century, 1966).

31. See Assaad E. Kattan and Fadi A. Georgi, eds., *Thinking Modernity: Towards a Reconfiguration of the Relationship between Orthodox Theology and Modern Culture*, Balamand Theological Conferences 1 (Tripoli, Lebanon: St John of Damascus Institute of Theology; Münster: University of Blamand/Center for Religious Studies, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 2010); Kristina Stoeckl, “European Integration and Russian Orthodoxy: Two Multiple Modernities Perspectives,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 14, no. 2 (May 2011): 217–33; Pantelis Kalaitzidis, *Orthodoxy and Political Theology* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2012); and Aristotle Papanikolaou, *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2012).

32. “Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches (Phanar, March 6–9, 2014),” 6, accessed September 23, 2014, <http://www.patriarchate.org/documents/synaxis-2014-message>.

33. For the history of the preparation for the Orthodox “Great and Holy Council,” see the work of John Erickson: “Overview of History and Difficulties in Preparing for the Council,” in *Orthodox Christianity at the Crossroad: A Great Council of the Church—When and Why*, ed. George E. Matsoukas (New York: Universe, 2009), 19–39; “Episcopal Assemblies and the OCA: A Way Forward?,” Orthodox Church in America—Diocese of the West Conference Presentation, October 20, 2010 (manuscript); “Autocephaly and Autonomy,” Conference Presentation at “The Forthcoming Council of the Orthodox Church: Understanding the Challenges,” Institut Saint-Serge, Paris, October 18–20, 2012 (manuscript, published French translation: “Autocéphalie et autonomie,” *Contacts: Revue française de l’orthodoxie*, No. 243 [Juillet–Septembre 2013], 391–412). I am indebted to Professor Erickson for his guidance on this issue and for sharing his work with me.

34. “Message of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches (Phanar, March 6–9, 2014),” 6.

35. See Cyril Hovorun, “The Fragile Promise of the Pan-Orthodox Council,” *Catholic World Report*, March 14, 2014, accessed September 23, 2014, http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/3001/The_Fragile_Promise_of_the_PanOrthodox_Council.aspx.

36. Johann Adam Möhler, *Unity in the Church or The Principle of Catholicism Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries*, trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 82–84; original: *Die Einheit in der Kirche; oder das Prinzip des Katholicismus, dargestellt im geiste der kirchenväter der drei ersten jahrhunderte*, ed. Rupert Geiselmann (1825; repr., Köln/Olten: Hegner, 1957).

37. Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 209–12; see also 166ff.

38. See chapter 5 (§36), in Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: or, Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed., trans. James Burton Robinson (London: Charles Dolan, 1847), 258–59; original: *Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen gegensätze der Katholiken und protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen bekenntnisschriften*, sixth edition (Mainz/Wien: Florian Kupferberg, 1843), 332–33 (rev.).

39. Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 212.

40. *Ibid.*, 224, 323; see also 311ff.

41. *Ibid.*, 69; see also, 82.

42. *Ibid.*, 255.

43. *Ibid.*, 209–62.

44. *Ibid.*, 218.

45. *Ibid.*, 255–56.

46. See Michael H. Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation: Johann Adam Möhler and the Beginnings of Modern Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1997); Donald J. Dietrich and Michael J. Himes, ed., *The Legacy of the Tübingen School: The Relevance of Nineteenth-Century Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Dennis M. Doyle, "Möhler, Schleiermacher, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies*, 57, no. 3 (1996): 467–80; Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (NY: Orbis, 2000); and Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 41–52.

47. Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History*, Vol. 2, *Comparative Ecclesiology* (London: Continuum, 2005), 292. Haight's volume is the standard recent study of modern ecclesiology. For an overview, see Nicholas M. Healey, "The Church in Modern Theology," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, 106–26 (New York: Routledge, 2008).

48. "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (Faith and Order Paper no. 111, the 'Lima Text')," World Council of Churches, accessed September 25, 2013, www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text; and "The Church: Towards a Common Vision (Faith and Order Paper no. 214)," World Council of Churches, accessed September 25, 2013, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision>. See also Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann, eds., *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Faith and Order Paper no. 166* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1994); Nicholas Sagovsky, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins and the Practice of Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Lorelei F. Fuchs, *Koinonia and the Quest for an Ecumenical Ecclesiology: From Foundations through Dialogue to Symbolic Competence for Communionality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

49. George Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 2nd impress. (London: Longmans, Green, 1910), 274–75.

50. Yves Congar, "The Mystical Body of Christ" (1937) in *The Mystery of the Church*, trans. A. V. Littledale (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1960), 118ff.; see also Dennis M. Doyle, "Journet, Congar, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology," *Theological Studies* 58, no. 3 (September 1997): 461–79; and Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology*, 265–86. The standard study is Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004).

51. Yves Congar, "The Church and Pentecost" (1956) in *The Mystery of the Church*, trans. A. V. Littledale (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1960), 36–37; see also the appendix, 54–57, which has two long selections from Möhler's *Symbolism* (1843) and *Unity in the Church* (1825).

52. See Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of the Laity*, trans. Donald Attwater (1953; repr., London: Bloomsbury, 1957).

53. Congar, "The Church and Pentecost," 36.

54. Congar, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 124–27.

55. Congar, "The Mystical Body of Christ," 129–32.

56. Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages: A Historical Survey*, trans. Gemma Simmonds with Richard Price and Christopher Stephens, eds. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (Notre Dame, IN: University of

Notre Dame Press, 2007), 88; see also 248–51. See also Dennis M. Doyle, “Henri de Lubac and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology,” *Theological Studies* 60, no. 2 (June 1999): 209–27.

57. Pope Pius XII, “Mystici Corporis Christi: Encyclical of Pope Pius XII on the Mystical Body of Christ,” June 29, 1943, 1, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html; original Latin, www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_19430629_mystici-corporis-christi_lt.html.

58. *Ibid.*, 13.

59. *Ibid.*, 103, 5.

60. *Ibid.*, 103.

61. “The Church, in the Word of God, Celebrates the Mysteries of the Christ for the Salvation of the World. Second Extraordinary Synod—The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod,” 2.C.1, accessed September 25, 2013, www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/SYN_FINAL.HTM.

62. Congar, *My Journal of the Council* (October 24, 1964), 642.

63. “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World—*Gaudium et Spes*, December 7, 1965, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html; and *The Documents of Vatican II*, 199–308.

64. Congar, *My Journal of the Council* (October 1, 1963), 328.

65. “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church—*Lumen Gentium*, November 21, 1964, accessed September 25, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html; original Latin, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/v2lumlat.htm>. also *The Documents of Vatican II*, 14–96.

66. See Stephen Bullivant, *The Salvation of Atheists and Catholic Dogmatic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Stephen Bullivant, *Faith and Unbelief* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2013).

67. On the meaning of the Roman Church “*subsistit in*” *Una Sancta* or Universal Christian Church, see “Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith—Declaration ‘Dominus Iesus’: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church,” June 16, 2000, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html; and “Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: Responses to Some Questions regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church,” June 29, 2007, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070629_responsa-quaestiones_en.html. For a more traditional communion ecclesiology with a strong emphasis on papal primacy, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (1991; repr., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996).

68. See Karl Rahner, “Anonymous Christians,” in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 6, *Concerning Vatican Council II*, trans. Karl-H. Kruger and Boniface Kruger, 390–98 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969); Rahner, “Church, Churches and Religions,” *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 10, *Writings of 1965–67* 2, trans. David Bourke, 30–49 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973); Rahner, “Anonymous Christianity and the Missionary Task of the Church,” *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 12, *Confrontations II*, trans. David Bourke, 161–78 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974); Rahner, “Observations on the Problem of the

'Anonymous Christian,') *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 14, *Ecclesiology, Questions in the Church, the Church in the World*, trans. David Bourke, 280–94 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976); Rahner, "Anonymous and Explicit Faith" and "The One Christ and the Universality of Salvation," in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 16, *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*, trans. David Morland, 52–59, 199–224, respectively (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979).

69. Karl Rahner, "Membership of the Church according to the Teaching of Pius XII's Encyclical 'Mystici Corporis Christi,'" in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 2, *Man in the Church*, trans. Karl-H Kruger, 1–88 (Baltimore: Helicon Press; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 82–83. See also Richard Lennan, *The Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

70. Rahner, "New Image of the Church," 19.

71. Jean-Marie Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. De Peaux (1987; repr., Colleville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 12.

72. Rahner, "New Image of the Church," 18.

73. *Ibid.*, 34–35.

74. See Yves Congar, "La pensée de Möhler et l'Écclésiologie orthodoxe," *Irénikon* 12, no. 4 (July–August 1935): 320–29; Serge Bolshakoff, *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Church in the Works of Khomyakov and Moehler* (London: SPCK, 1946); and Joseph Fameree, "Orthodox Influence on the Roman Catholic Theologian Yves Congar, OP: A Sketch," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): 409–16.

75. Aleksei Khomiakov, "Some Remarks by an Orthodox Christian concerning the Western Communions, on the Occasion of a Letter Published by the Archbishop of Paris," in *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader*, trans. and ed. Boris Jakim and Robert Bird (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), 74, 84, 86; see also 79, 81, 89, 110, 126 and 171; original, A. S. Khomiakov, *L'Église latine et le Protestantisme au point de vue de L'Église d'Orient: Recueil d'articles sur des questions religieuses, écrits à différentes époques et à diverses occasions par A. S. Khomiakov* (Vevey, Switzerland: Xenia), 111–64.

76. Khomiakov, "The Church Is One," in *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader*, trans. and ed. Boris Jakim and Robert Bird (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), 39, 44–45, 46–47, 90 (original, "Tserkov odna" in A. S. Khomiakov: *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh, Tom 2: Raboty po bogosloviu* [Moscow: Medium, 1994], 5–23); see also "Some Remarks by an Orthodox Christian [etc.]," 92.

77. Khomiakov, "Letter to the Editor of *L'Union Chrétienne* on the Occasion of a Discourse of Father Gagarin, Jesuit," in *On Spiritual Unity: A Slavophile Reader*, trans. and ed. Boris Jakim and Robert Bird (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Books, 1998), 139; original, *L'Église latine et le Protestantisme*, 273–80.

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80. *Ibid.*, 121–22.

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83. See Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Church of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Vitaly Permiakov, ed. Michael Plekon (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2007); original, *Tserkov’ Dukha Svyatogo* (Paris: YMCA, 1971).

84. Afanasiev, *Church of the Holy Spirit*, 75.

85. Nicholas Afanasiev, *The Lord’s Supper by Fr. Nicholas Afanasieff*, trans. and intro. by Fr. Michael J. Lewis (unpublished MDiv thesis, St Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood, NY, May 1988), 32; original, *Trapeza Gospodnia, L’Orthodoxie et l’actualité*, Nr. 2/3 (Paris: Orthodox Theological Institute, 1960); and Afanasiev, *Church of the Holy Spirit*, 87–88.

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87. Afanasiev, *Church of the Holy Spirit*, 16, 34, 136.

88. *Ibid.*, 4–5.

89. *Ibid.*, 255–75.

90. On universal ecclesiology, see Afanasiev, “Church That Presides in Love,” 58.

91. *Ibid.*, 110.

92. On “communion ecclesiology,” see Douglas Knight, ed., *The Theology of John Zizioulas: Personhood and the Church* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 95–102.

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103. *Ibid.*, 57–58.

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111. *Ibid.*, 173–74, 190–91.

112. *Ibid.*, 174. For an earlier statement of Fiddes's Trinitarian theology, see his *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000). See also his recent major work, *Seeing the World and Knowing God: Hebrew Wisdom and Christian Doctrine in a Late-Modern Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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117. *Ibid.*, 1:17 (§4.4); 1:126 (§30.1).

118. *Ibid.*, 1:33 (§7.2).

119. *Ibid.*, 1:26 (§6.1).

120. *Ibid.*, 1:92 (§19, post.).

121. *Ibid.*, 1:76 (§15).

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123. *Ibid.*, 1:261 (§62.3).

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125. *Ibid.*, 2:431–38 (§101); 2:527 (§113). See also Christoph Dinkel, *Kirche gestalten: Schleiermachers Theorie des Kirchenregiments* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); and Adele Weirich, *Die Kirche in der Glaubenslehre Friedrich Schleiermachers* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990).

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129. *Ibid.*, 1:101ff (§23).

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131. *Ibid.*, 5.

132. Leonardo Boff, *EcclesioGenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, trans. Robert R. Barr (1977; repr., London: Collins, 1987), 34ff. See also the Metropolitan Community Churches website: <http://mccchurch.org>, accessed September 25, 2013.

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134. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

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136. *Ibid.*, 21, 68.

137. *Ibid.*, 17.

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139. *Ibid.*, 41.

140. *Ibid.*, 26.

141. *Ibid.*, 39.

142. *Ibid.*, 68, 69.

143. *Ibid.*, 72.

144. *Lumen Gentium*, 8.

145. Pope Paul VI, “*Populorum progressio*: Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, On the Development of Peoples,” March 26, 1967, 5, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html, Compare Pope Paul VI, “*Octogesima Adveniens*: Apostolic Letter of Paul VI,” May 14, 1971, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens_en.html. Also see Pope Paul VI, “*Evangelii nuntiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation of His Holiness Pope Paul VI,” December 8, 1975, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html. More recently, see the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace’s *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, June 29, 2004, accessed September 25, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html; and Pope Benedict XVI, “Encyclical Letter, *Spe Salvi* of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI,” accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html.

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151. Second General Conference, *Church in the Present-Day Transformation*, 19–20.

152. On the “People of God,” see, for example, 41. See also *ibid.*, 19–20.

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154. *Ibid.*, 33.

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156. *Ibid.*, 174–76.

157. Third General Conference, *Puebla*, 178–81.

158. See Pope Francis, “Audience to Representatives of the Communications Media: Address of the Holy Father Pope Francis, Paul VI Audience Hall, Saturday,” March 16, 2013, accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130316_rappresentanti-media_en.html; and “Address of Pope Francis to the Students of the Jesuit Schools of Italy and Albania, Paul VI Audience Hall, Friday, 7 June 2013,” accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/june/documents/papa-francesco_20130607_scuole-gesuiti_en.html; and Antonio Spadaro, “A Big Heart Open to God: The exclusive interview with Pope Francis,” September 30, 2013, accessed September 4, 2014, <http://americamagazine.org/pope-interview> (“Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor”). Note in the last two pieces cited the reference by Pope Francis to the same letter of Pedro Arrupe (1907–91), a famous former superior general of the Jesuits (1965–83), concerning the need to experience poverty to relieve it. Arrupe is often credited with coining the expression “the preferential option for the poor.”

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160. See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1967), based on the 5th German-language ed., 1965; and Johannes B. Metz, *Theology of the World*, trans. William Glen-Doepel (London: Burns & Oates, 1969).

161. Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” (1845), XI in *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism*, ed. Emile Burns (New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 192–95.

162. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 15.

163. *Ibid.*, 307.

164. *Ibid.*, 102, 137–38.

165. “Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—Instruction on Certain Aspects of the ‘Theology of Liberation,’” accessed September 25, 2013, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html. See also the earlier document of the CDF: “Ten Observations on the Theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez (3/83),” in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. A. J. Hennesly, 348–50 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis: 1990). See also Sebastian Kappen, *Jesus and Freedom* (Maryknoll, NY:

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168. Boff, *Ecclesiology*, 15.

169. *Ibid.*, 12; and Boff, *Church, Charism and Power*, 7, 8.

170. *Ibid.*, 9.

171. *Ibid.*, 10.

172. *Ibid.*, 134.

173. Boff, *Ecclesiology*, 23, 33.

174. *Ibid.*, 61ff.; and *ibid.*, 76ff.

175. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1970), 22, 24–25. Cf. Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 204–34; Diana L. Hayes, *And Still We Rise: An Introduction to Black Liberation Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996); Robert Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (London: SPCK, 2000); and Anthony Reddie, “Black Ecclesiologies,” in *Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (Oxford: Routledge Press, 2007), 443–60.

176. Cone, *Black Theology of Liberation*, 17.

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178. *Ibid.*, 120–21, 116.

179. *Ibid.*, 213.

180. *Ibid.*, 218.

181. *Ibid.*, 230.

182. *Ibid.*, 227, 226, 233, 231.

183. *Ibid.*, 237.

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