

# Keeping mission and unity together : impulses from Roman Catholic ecclesiology and from multilateral and bilateral dialogue processes

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## **Keeping Mission and Unity together: Impulses from Roman Catholic Ecclesiology and from Multilateral and Bilateral Dialogue Processes**

*Peter De Mey*

The core of this article will consist in an analysis of the attention (or the partial lack thereof) for the link between unity and mission in three ecumenical dialogues, the *Faith & Order* dialogue process on *The Nature and Mission of the Church* and two bilateral dialogues with Roman Catholic participation: the Anglican-Roman Catholic one – with special attention to the 2007 document *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* – and the Orthodox-Roman Catholic one. I start however with looking back at the ecclesiological tradition of my own Church. In anticipation of the upcoming celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council I will ask whether this Council has managed in its major documents to keep the concerns of mission and unity together.

### **1. Keeping mission and unity together in the Roman Catholic Church**

#### *1.1 Looking back at the documents of Vatican II in anticipation of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary*

Within the Roman Catholic Church the interpretation of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council still is of the utmost importance, not only for the theologians but also for the highest instances within the Roman Catholic Church. In 2007 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith thought it necessary to intervene in the debate between scholars who emphasise the discontinuity between the teaching of this *aggiornamento* Council and preconciliar theology and scholars who defend the continuity between the First and Second Vatican Council or between *Mystici Corporis* and *Lumen Gentium*. It did so by publishing a rather badly received doctrinal document which mainly focused on the interpretation of the famous line in LG 8 which states that the ‘unique church of Christ ... subsists in the catholic church.’<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. the English translation on the Vatican website:  
[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_)

In the following section I will turn to the first two chapters of *Lumen Gentium* (LG) in order to indicate that equal attention is paid in these chapters to the mission of the Church and to dialogical relations with other churches, religions, and in fact the whole world.

### *1.2 Mission and unity in the opening chapters of Lumen Gentium*

In fact it belongs to the core of the renewed ecclesiology of *Lumen Gentium* that in its opening paragraph the Church has been defined by reference to its sacramental mission. I know that many Protestant theologians continue to have their reservations with the way Roman Catholics understand the Church ‘as a sacrament’. The Council fathers spoke about Church as sacrament, however, on the one hand, to indicate that the Church is more than a human association but answers God’s call and, second, to indicate that without reference to Christ the Church acts in vain. In LG 1 the Church receives the twofold mission to be ‘in Christ as a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity.’<sup>2</sup> The centrality of the theme of mission also appears from the more prosaic description of the table of contents of *Lumen Gentium* one line further: ‘the council ... intends to declare with greater clarity to the faithful and the entire human race the nature of the church and its universal mission.’

After two paragraphs which include references to the fact that both the Son and the Holy Spirit have been ‘sent by the Father’, LG 5 describes both the intimate relationship and the necessary distance between the Church and the kingdom of God. The word ‘mission’ occurs here for the second time in *Lumen Gentium*:

When, therefore, the church ... receives the mission of announcing the kingdom of Christ and of God and of inaugurating it among all peoples, it has

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con\_cfaith\_doc\_20070629\_responsa-quaestiones\_en.html. Cf. PETER DE MEY, ‘Eine katholische Reaktion auf “Antworten auf Fragen zu einigen Aspekten der Lehre von der Kirche” der römisch-katholischen Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre,’ *Ökumenische Rundschau* 56 (2007), pp. 567–571.

<sup>2</sup> In *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) the reference to this definition of the Church serves as a justification of the claim that, according to Roman Catholic ecclesiology, being ecumenically engaged is not in contradiction with the missionary endeavour of the Church. Cf. GS 42: ‘The encouraging of unity is in accord with the church’s central mission since it is “a sacrament, or sign and instrument, in Christ of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race”.’

formed the seed and the beginning of the kingdom on earth. Meanwhile as it gradually grows, it aspires after the completion of the kingdom, and hopes and desires with all its strength to be joined with its king in glory.

In the final paragraph of chapter 1 the word ‘mission’ occurs another time, when the important wisdom is conveyed that ‘the church, though it needs human resources to carry out its mission, is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to spread humility and self-denial also through its own example.’ (LG 8)

The second chapter of *Lumen Gentium* starts with a theological reflection on the notion of ‘people of God’. The people of God is described as a ‘messianic people’ (LG 9), a ‘priestly community’ (LG 10–11) and a people which ‘has a share, too, in the prophetic role of Christ.’ (LG 12) The counterpart of this sharing in the threefold office of Christ – with its peculiar characteristics when it pertains to bishops<sup>3</sup> (LG 25–27), priests (LG 28), deacons (LG 29) and lay faithful (LG 34–36) – is a particular ‘mission’, as LG 9 highlights: ‘It [this messianic people] has been set up by Christ as a communion of life, love and truth; by him too it is taken up as the instrument of salvation for all, and sent as a mission to the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (see Mt 5,13–16).’

It can be deplored that *Lumen Gentium* doesn’t offer a systematic account of the four so-called *notae ecclesiae*. LG 8 contains a solemn enumeration of them: ‘This is the unique church of Christ, which in the creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic.’ The same paragraph also contains an important reflection on the relationship between sinfulness and holiness in the church. Scattered reflections on the church’s apostolicity are found in chapter 3, but LG 13 explicitly deals with the church’s catholicity.

In this paragraph, and especially when paying attention to the history of its drafting, one can see that the Council fathers have deepened their understanding of catholicity in the course of the Council. In fact, until the revision of the text in the Spring of 1964, we were offered a merely quantitative understanding of catholicity, pertaining to the extension of the Church in time and place. The people of God, we are told, ‘is to be spread throughout the whole world and through every age to fulfil the design of

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<sup>3</sup> See a.o. PETER DE MEY, ‘The Bishops’ Participation in the Threefold Office of Christ: Reconsidering LG 25–27 in the Light of Reflections on Episcopacy in Other Christian Churches and their Ecumenical Dialogues,’ *The Jurist* 69 (2009), pp. 31–58.

the will of God.’ (LG 13) At the very end of this section, however, we are told that this characteristic of the Church is better not called ‘catholicity’, but ‘universality’:

This note of universality (*hic universalitatis character*), which adorns the people of God, is a gift of the Lord himself by which the catholic church effectively and continually tries to recapitulate the whole of humanity, with all its riches, under Christ the head in the unity of the Spirit.

The paragraph pursues – but this is an insight which has only been added to the text in the final draft – with giving a definition of the catholicity of the Church, and, therefore, now, the technical term ‘catholicitas’ is being used. The catholicity of the Church is the communion between her constitutive parts, which all are characterized by a variety of indispensable gifts. This communion is enriching both for the parts that are involved in it and for the universal Church.

By virtue of this catholicity (*vi huius catholicitate*), the individual parts (*singulae partes*) bring their own gifts to the other parts and to the whole church, in such a way that the whole and individual parts grow greater through the mutual communication (*communicantibus*) of all and their united efforts towards fullness in unity (*ad plenitudinem in unitate conspirantibus*).

The examples make it clear that the Council has now discovered that the Church can be called ‘catholic’ and still give ample room to diversity. Reference is made to the fact that the people of God is constituted of ‘diverse peoples’, to the existence of ‘different orders’ in the Church, and, finally, there is the awareness that the Roman Catholic Church is actually a communion of churches, with legitimate differences.

The discovery of the legitimate diversity within the Catholic Church now paves the way for the Council to describe how inclusive the term ‘people of God’ ought to become. It not only includes ‘the catholic faithful’ (LG 14), but the Catholic Church is also ‘joined to those who, though baptised and so honoured with the Christian name, do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve the unity of communion under the successor of Peter.’ (LG 15) *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR) will turn this in a positive way: ‘For those who believe in Christ and have been truly baptised are in some kind of communion with the catholic church, even though this communion is imperfect.’ (UR 3) LG 16, finally, speaks about people from other religions and non-believers by first emphasizing their

relatedness to the people of God. 'Finally, those who have not yet accepted the gospel are related to the people of God in various ways.'

The concluding paragraph of chapter 2 (LG 17) returns to the theme of mission and may at first instance seem a rather strange sequel of the paragraphs describing the relationship with non-Catholics in more dialogical terms. This paragraph had been inserted upon deliberate request of many Council fathers who, in this era of ecumenism, were asking for a theological foundation of the missionary work of the Church. As Peter Hünermann highlights in his commentary, there is, however, no opposition between mission and unity. What had been articulated in the previous paragraphs on the possibility of salvation for non-Christians, needs to be revealed to them through the work of the missionaries.<sup>4</sup>

*1.3 Is there attention to missionary concerns in the 'Decree on Ecumenism' and for ecumenical concerns in the 'Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church'?*

The Decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, promulgated on the same day as *Lumen Gentium*, logically starts with an exposition of the 'Catholic principles of ecumenism', since one better enters into dialogue on the basis of a clear identity, in order to avoid 'false irenicism.'

The final and longest paragraph of the first chapter of *Unitatis Redintegratio* explains how Catholic believers can cooperate in the ecumenical movement and calls them to ecumenical action. Interestingly enough, one of the subsections recalls the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* on catholicity. By making more room for legitimate diversity within the Catholic Church, catholics prepare the way towards Christian unity.

All in the church must preserve unity in essentials. But let all, according to the gifts they have received, maintain a proper freedom in their various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in their different liturgical rites, and even in their theological elaborations of revealed truth. In all things let charity pre-

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<sup>4</sup> PETER HÜNERMANN, 'Theologischer Kommentar zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche LUMEN GENTIUM,' in HERDERS THEOLOGISCHER KOMMENTAR ZUM ZWEITEN VATIKANISCHEN KONZIL, ed. PETER HÜNERMANN and JOCHEN HILBERATH (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), vol. 2, p. 400: 'Hier handelt es sich nicht um eine Zurücknahme der zuvor zugestandenen Heilsmöglichkeiten für Gottesgläubige und Atheisten, sondern um die Art und Weise, wie diese Grundüberzeugung vom Heilshandeln Gottes durch das Volk Gottes geschichtlich zu leben und zu vollziehen ist.'

vail. If they are true to this course of action, they will be giving even better expression to the authentic catholicity and apostolicity of the church (*catholicitatem et apostolicitatem ecclesiae*).

The last subsection of UR 4 expresses the Catholic conviction that it has, as a result of the divisions among the Christians, not only become impossible for the other Churches but even difficult for the Catholic Church to achieve 'the fullness of catholicity'.

Nevertheless, the divisions among Christians prevent the church from realizing in practice the fullness of catholicity (*plenitudinem catholicitatis*) proper to her, in those of her sons and daughters who, though attached to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her. Furthermore, the church herself finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity (*plenitudinem catholicitatem*) in all its bearing. (UR 4)

The Decree on Ecumenism contains three remarks which indicate that there is no complete separation between the concerns of unity and the concerns of mission. (1) Already in the opening paragraph the Council indicates in strong words that the existence of divided Churches damages the credibility of the Christian proclamation: 'Such division is clearly contrary to Christ's will. It is a scandal to the world and damages the sacred cause of preaching the gospel to every creature.' (UR 1) (2) In the chapter on 'The practice of ecumenism' the paragraph which is pleading for theological education 'with a due regard for the ecumenical point of view' (UR 10) pays special attention to the work of missionaries: 'Catholics engaged in missionary work in the same territories as other Christians ought, particularly in these times, to know the problems and the benefits in their apostolate which derive from the ecumenical movement.' (UR 10) (3) The Decree on Ecumenism, however, felt it also necessary to spend a few lines of the opening chapter to the pastoral work of preparing 'individuals wishing for full catholic communion' towards their reconciliation with the Catholic Church. The Council doesn't even use the habitual term 'the work of conversion' and clearly wishes to distinguish this work from 'ecumenical action', but at the same time it remains convinced that 'each proceeds from the marvelous providence of God.'<sup>5</sup> (UR 4)

The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes* (AG), a relatively long conciliar document which was only promulgated in 1965,

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<sup>5</sup> When one observes the proportion of the attention of *Unitatis Redintegratio* to both ecumenism and conversion, it seems a rather weak argument to try to justify the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus* by stating that it should not have any

in turn contains two explicit references to the goal of promoting the restoration of unity and even contains a direct reference to *Unitatis Redintegratio* in footnote. In AG 6 the reader is reminded of the distinction between missionary and ecumenical work but also of the points of contact, since the proclamation of the Gospel suffers from the lack of unity:

Missionary activity among the nations differs from both the necessary pastoral care of the faithful and from the attempts that need to be made to restore unity among Christians. Nevertheless, these two activities are very closely bound up with the missionary zeal of the church: for the division among Christians damages the holy work of preaching the gospel to every creature and is a barrier for many in their approach to the faith. (AG 6)

When chapter 2 describes the ‘missionary work itself’, it pays attention in the third subsection to aspects related to the formation of a Christian community and much attention goes thereby to the exigency to do this in an ‘ecumenical spirit.’

This is not to say that there are no tensions in this lengthy document. Apparently two different paradigms of mission were quite influential at the time of the Council and have been able to exercise their influence in the composition of the decree. A hierarchical view on mission can be found in AG 5–6<sup>6</sup> whereas the already mentioned section on the formation of the Christian community pays special attention to the important contribution of the laity. I also deplore that the important decision of LG 13 to reserve the term ‘universality’ for the universal proclamation of the Gospel and the term ‘catholicity’ to the many legitimate forms of unity in di-

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impact on Roman Catholic-Anglican ecumenical relations since it doesn’t deal with ecumenism but with conversion.

Cf. [http://www.ncregister.com/blog/cardinal\\_kasper\\_on\\_ian Anglicanorum\\_coetibus\\_i/](http://www.ncregister.com/blog/cardinal_kasper_on_ian Anglicanorum_coetibus_i/) referring to an article of Cardinal Walter Kasper in the *Osservatore Romano* of 15/11/2009.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. AG 5: ‘From this stems the church’s duty of spreading the faith and salvation of Christ in virtue of his express command which the episcopal order, assisted by the priests, together with the successor of Peter and supreme pastor of the church, have inherited from the apostles.’ AG 6 goes on in the same mood: ‘This task which the episcopal order, under the leadership of the successor of Peter, must fulfil, with the prayers and cooperation of the entire church, is one and the same in every place and in every situation, even though because of circumstances it may not always be carried out in the same way.’ See also PETER HÜNERMANN, ‘Theologischer Kommentar zum Dekret über die Missionstätigkeit der Kirche,’ in *Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, ed. PETER HÜNERMANN and JOCHEN HILBERATH (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), vol. 4, pp. 219–336.



versity within the Catholic Church has not been received by the drafters of this decree, who mostly use the terms ‘catholicity’ and ‘catholic unity’ in the old way.

## 2. Keeping mission and unity together in the ecumenical dialogues

The constraints of this presentation urge me to make a selection among the dialogues which treat this theme. Among the dialogues with active Roman Catholic participation one can difficultly ignore the ongoing reflection within *Faith & Order on The Nature and Mission of the Church*. Apart from that dialogue at multilateral level I will comment upon two bilateral dialogues, the Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue – among other reasons because one of the dialogue partners is directly involved in this conference and because a special commission has been established to pay specific attention to the relation between unity and mission –, and the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue because, apart from the national dialogue in the U.S.A., it has remained quite silent on this issue.

### 2.1 *The Nature and Mission of the Church*

The ongoing reflection on ecclesiology within the *Faith & Order* movement, which was asked for during the Fifth World Conference (Santiago de Compostela, 1993), resulted in 1998 in a working paper entitled *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, followed by a second draft in 2005 entitled *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*.<sup>7</sup> This is the first document which I treat during this conference because both churches present in this conference participate in the work of Faith & Order.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper, II, 198 (Geneva: WCC, 2005). In the meantime this endeavour to keep the ecumenical reflection on the ‘nature’ and the ‘mission’ of the Church together has also been fully received in Roman Catholic accounts on the results of four decades of ecumenical dialogue. In *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London-New York: Continuum, 2009), a book which Cardinal Kasper published in name of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity shortly before his retirement, the Cardinal decided to structure the chapter on ‘The Church’ in three subsections: ‘Common perspectives on the nature and mission of the Church’, ‘Source [sic] of authority in the Church’ and ‘The ministry in the Church’.

The change of title is the result of the repeated suggestion in different reactions to the first draft ‘to strengthen the text’s emphasis on mission’ (§ 7). The document contains many interesting aspects which would all deserve to be highlighted.<sup>8</sup> In this paper, however, I prefer to indicate how Faith and Order in its reflections on ecclesiology has given ample attention to the issues related to the mission of the Church. This is not limited to the chapter dealing with ‘The Church in History’ or to the brief concluding chapter ‘In and for the world’, but reflections on mission are found throughout the document. The part of the opening chapter ‘The Church of the Triune God’ dealing with ‘The mission of the Church’ contains an interesting definition of mission appealing to the same notions which characterise the Church itself:

Mission thus belongs to the very being of the Church. This is a central implication of affirming the apostolicity of the Church, which is inseparable from the other three attributes of the Church – unity, holiness and catholicity. All four attributes relate both to the nature of God’s own being and to the practical demands of authentic mission. If in the life of the Church, any of them is impaired, the Church’s mission is compromised. (§ 35)

Since this document has been written on behalf of Christians from each continent, it cannot discuss in a detailed way problems which are exclusively connected to one specific context. Being a European reader I was

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<sup>8</sup> In my opinion it is an interesting evolution that the Roman Catholic participants in the dialogue were willing to embrace the notion of the Church as *creatura Verbi*, a notion which is more identified with the Reformed understanding of the Church, in a section on the Church as ‘Creation of the Word and of the Holy Spirit’ (§§ 9–13). This is an important sign of ecumenical reception. Cf. PETER DE MEY, ‘The Church as “Creation of the Word and of the Holy Spirit” in Ecumenical Documents on the Church: An Exercise in Receptive Ecumenism,’ *Receiving ‘The Nature and Mission of the Church’: Ecclesial Reality and Ecumenical Horizons for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. MICHAEL A. FAHEY and PAUL COLLINS (New York: Continuum, 2008), pp. 42–54. This has also been appreciated in the mentioned book by Cardinal Kasper, on the occasion of similar evolutions in the bilateral dialogues with the mainstream Protestant churches. Cf. *Harvesting the Fruits*, p. 71: ‘The use of sacramental language in all four dialogues and its compatibility and complementarity with the original Reformation view of the Church as *creatura verbi* can be seen as an important ecumenical breakthrough; this achievement of the dialogues provides a solid common basis and can have far-reaching consequences for the further dialogues – a result confirmed by the increasingly common understanding of the Church as communion.’

pleased to see how the challenges for the proclamation of the Christian faith in a pluralistic context have been adequately described.

One particularly striking experience of human weakness and failure that has afflicted the Christian community in via is the sometimes widespread discrepancy between membership in the Church, on the one hand, and vibrant profession and practice of the Christian faith, on the other. Many of our communities face the challenge that some of their members seem to ‘belong without believing’, while other individuals opt out of Church membership, claiming that they can, with greater authenticity, ‘believe without belonging’. The challenge of living our faith as believing communities in such a way that all those who belong are seriously committed Christians, and all who sincerely believe want to belong, is a challenge that we share; it crosses the lines which divide us.’ (§ 51)

The British sociologist Grace Davie, who coined this terminology, is of the opinion that believing without belonging is mostly a challenge for Catholic communities, whereas belonging without believing is a challenge for Protestant communities, especially in Scandinavian countries.<sup>9</sup>

The task for Christians is obvious: ‘They are to address those who have not heard, as well as those who are no longer living according to the Gospel, the Good News of the Reign of God.’ (§ 35) For European Christians the following recommendation is perhaps rather a challenge than that it constitutes a concrete reality, even if especially young Christians sometimes leave their ecclesial communities for experiencing a lack of authenticity:

Because the servanthood of Christ entails suffering it is evident (as expressed in the New Testament writings) that the witness (*martyria*) of the Church will entail – for both individuals and for the community – the way of the cross, even to the point of martyrdom. (§ 39)

When discussing the Eucharist, much attention obviously goes to the theological divergences which still exist among the Christian churches, but it is interesting to see that, with a reference to 1 Cor 10–11, attention for ‘the moral implications of the celebration’ is introduced as a basic consensus among the churches (§ 80):

Because the Lord’s Supper is the Sacrament which builds up community, all kinds of injustice, racism, estrangement, and lack of freedom are radically

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<sup>9</sup> See e.g. GRACE DAVIE, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

challenged when we share in the body and blood of Christ. ... The Eucharist, therefore, obliges us also to participate actively in the ongoing restoration of the world's situation and the human condition. God's judgement demands that our behaviour be consistent with the reconciling presence of God in human history. (§ 81)

Roman Catholic studies on the Eucharist do not always pay so much attention to this aspect.<sup>10</sup> In the same way Roman Catholic studies on both the common priesthood of all believers and the ordained priesthood will rarely insist that both categories of people are to testify to their faith in a more than merely verbal manner. As far as the 'Ministry of all the faithful' is concerned, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* speaks about 'the Church's potentially costly witness to justice' (§ 84) and the section on the 'Ministry of the ordained' equally pays attention to the fact that the ordained also have to testify through their life:

Essential to its testimony are not merely its words, but the love of its members for one another, the quality of their service to those in need, a just and disciplined life and a fair exercise of power and authority. (§ 88)

As can be read in many other ecumenical texts also our document lays emphasis on the fact that the divisions among the churches endangers a powerful evangelical witness. 'Effective mission is thwarted by the scandal of division.' (§ 57) 'The integrity of the Church as God's instrument is at stake in witness through proclamation, and concrete actions in union with all people of goodwill, for the sake of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.' (§ 47)

The most concrete chapter of the document is the final one, entitled 'In and for the world'. I limit myself to quoting one example:

Precisely because of their faith, Christian communities may not stand idly by in the face of major calamities affecting human health, such as famine and starvation, natural disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. ... Each context will provide its own clues to discern what is the appropriate Christian outreach in any particular circumstance. Even now, divided Christian communi-

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<sup>10</sup> American Roman Catholic theologian William Cavanaugh pleads in many of his publications for a close connection between Eucharist and life. See e.g. his article 'Dying for the Eucharist or Being Killed by It? Romero's Challenge to First-World Christians', *Theology Today* 58 (2001), pp. 177–189. I pay specific attention to Cavanaugh's views in PETER DE MEY, 'Is the Connection of "Catholicity" and "Globalization" Fruitful? An Assessment of Recent Reflections on the Notion of Catholicity', *Bulletin ET. Journal for Theology in Europe* 13 (2002), pp. 169–181.

ties can and sometimes have carried out this discernment together and have acted together to bring relief to suffering human beings and to help create a society more in keeping with their dignity and with the will of their loving Father in heaven.<sup>11</sup> (§ 112)

If one really wants to make progress in developing a common witness among the Christian churches, then the elaboration of structures of commonly exercised forms of authority and episcopacy (*episkopè*) will also be necessary. The *Nature and Mission of the Church* hints at this in § 98:

Because of the separation of the churches, there has been relatively little collegial exercise of oversight or witness within society on the part of the ministers of our divided communities. The ecumenical movement can serve as a stimulus and invitation to church leaders to explore the possibility of working together in appropriate ways on behalf of their own communities and as an expression of their care for all the churches (cf. 2 Cor 11,28), and in common witness before society.

## *2.2 Towards a new stage of common witness between Anglicans and Roman Catholics*

The interest in making the growing communion among churches also visible in their cooperation in mission is not only found in the recent work of Faith Order but in the bilateral dialogues as well. Because of the setting of this Anglican-Old Catholic theological conference I decided to focus in

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<sup>11</sup> It is therefore a bit strange to read the following critique of the document in WOLFGANG VONDEY, 'Pentecostal Perspectives on *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. Challenges and Opportunities for Ecumenical Transformation', in *Receiving 'The Nature and Mission of the Church'*, ed. PAUL M. COLLINS and MICHAEL A. FAHEY (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 55–68, at p. 60: 'NMC neglects to point out not only what kind of concrete actions belong to the nature and mission of the Church and thus form "the practical demands of authentic mission" but also how these actions are made possible and how these demands can be met in the Church.' Other criticisms mentioned pertain to the fact that 'NMC speaks of proclamation primarily as a verbal process' and that 'NMC says surprisingly little about the role of praise, worship or spiritual warfare in mission.' On a more fundamental level Vondey deplores that 'no distinction is made between evangelization and service, on a missiological level, and between evangelization and mission, on the ecclesiological level.' (p. 59) Still, he too believes 'that the change in terms from "purpose" to "mission" is a fortuitous one,' because 'the new title of the document implies that the mission of the Church is intrinsically connected with its nature as the Church.' (p. 58)

first instance on an Anglican-Roman Catholic agreed statement from 2007, *Growing together in Unity and Mission*.<sup>12</sup>

This document was not the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) but of a special commission of bishops, the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Inspired by the process leading towards the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999), in 2000 a group of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops – selected in pairs from similar geographical areas – had been invited to Missisauga, near Toronto, to work on a similar project. The commission which was established at this meeting, gave itself the following tasks, as reported in the communiqué *Communion in Mission*:

This commission will oversee the preparation of the joint declaration of agreement, and promote and monitor the reception of ARCIC agreements, as well as facilitate the development of strategies for translating the degree of spiritual communion that has been achieved into visible and practical outcomes. (§ 12)

One sensed that the time had come for a ‘new stage on our journey’ (§ 13).

We have come to a clear sense that we have moved much closer to the goal of full visible communion than we had at first dared to believe. A sense of mutual interdependence in the body of Christ has been reached, in which the churches of the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church are able to bring shared gifts to their joint mission in the world. (§ 6)

Both the reference to stages of unity and the desire to elaborate concrete visible steps on the way towards ‘full, organic unity’ are an implicit reference to the 1968 *Malta Report*.<sup>13</sup> But, also towards the end of *The Gift of Authority* (1999) the ARCIC commission had expressed similar views:

In the light of our agreement the Commission believes our two communions should make more visible the *koinonia* we already have. Theological dialogue

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<sup>12</sup> International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission: Building on 40 Years of Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue* (London: SPCK, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The significance of the Missisauga meeting and its link with ‘The Malta vision of steps and stages’ has been well described in MARY TANNER, ‘From Vatican II to Missisauga – Lessons in Receptive Ecumenical Learning from the Anglican-Roman Catholic Bilateral Dialogue Process’, in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism*, ed. PAUL MURRAY (Oxford: OUP, 2008), pp. 258–270.

must continue at all levels in the churches, but is not of itself sufficient. For the sake of *koinonia* and a united Christian witness to the world, Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops should find ways of cooperating and developing relationships of mutual accountability in their exercise of oversight.<sup>14</sup> At this new stage we have not only to do together whatever we can, but also to be together all that our existing *koinonia* allows. (§ 59)

Because of the decision of the province of New Hampshire in 2003 to elect an openly homosexual priest as bishop, the activities of IARCCUM had been suspended. The initiative of the archbishop of Canterbury to invite the president of the Pontifical Commission for the Promotion of Christian Unity to set up a subcommission of IARCCUM to prepare a report to help its sister Church to deal with this difficulty was welcomed in Rome as a sign of effective ecumenical partnership and, therefore, the work of IARCCUM could be reassumed.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the difficulties in Anglican-Roman relations related to sexual ethics and the ordination of women to the episcopate, the initial scope of the document had to be redefined, without giving up however the intention to start giving better expression to the link between unity and mission:

This present context, which adds to existing differences between our two Communion, is not the appropriate time to enter the new formal stage of relationship envisaged by the bishops at Missisauga. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that the progress towards agreement in faith achieved through

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<sup>14</sup> See for a critical remark PAUL W. THOMAS, 'The Gift of Authority: Reflections on the Agreed Statement "Authority in the Church III" by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (1999)', *Theology* (2002), pp. 33–44, at p. 41: 'From an Anglican perspective I feel bound to ask why renewed collegiality between the bishops of the two Communion is sufficient to express "all that our existing *koinonia* allows", when in *Lumen Gentium* it was *all* the faithful who participate in that *koinonia*?'

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also DONALD BOLEN, 'Receptive Ecumenism and Recent Initiatives in the Catholic Church's Dialogues with the Anglican Communion and the World Methodist Council', in *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, pp. 27–284, at p. 282: 'The Anglican Communion's decision to engage the Catholic Church and other dialogue partners in their discernment process was an indication of the importance given to ecumenical relations, and has allowed dialogue partners to accompany the discernment process – through prayer, but also through dialogue about matters at the heart of the present discussions. Consultation with ecumenical dialogue partners prior to making decisions which will significantly affect our relations remains something of a long-term goal for all churches in the ecumenical movement.'

the theological dialogue has been substantial, but that in the past four decades we have only just begun to give tangible expression to the incontrovertible elements of shared faith. Even in a time of uncertainty, the mission given us by Christ obliges and compels us to seek to engage more deeply and widely in a partnership in mission, coupled with common witness and joint prayer. (§ 7)

The first and longest part of the document consists in harvesting the fruits of 40 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue on ‘The faith we hold in common.’<sup>16</sup> For our topic it is worth mentioning that the Church is being defined in this part as ‘a communion in mission.’ (§ 17) The box in the section on ‘Discipleship and Holiness’ indicates that the ‘anthropological and biblical hermeneutical questions’ related to ‘the discussions on human sexuality within the Anglican Communion’ (§ 86) need to be addressed in the future and this has indeed become one of two interrelated themes entrusted to ARCIC III.<sup>17</sup> The same box however also values the importance of common moral teaching:

We agree that we must act together, wherever possible, to prevent the integrity of Christian witness in the world from being further compromised. It is a matter of urgency that we take counsel, decide together, and act together in moral teaching, in order to guide and assist Christ’s disciples in the way of holiness and to witness credibly and effectively to God’s love and justice to the world. (§ 87)

In the conclusion to this first part the Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops repeat their conviction of the interrelatedness of faith and mission:

The Commission has become more profoundly aware of how intimately connected are understanding and cooperation, faith and mission. It is our conviction that, as we grow towards full, ecclesial communion and respond afresh

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<sup>16</sup> I commented upon the way this agreed statement introduces the office of the bishop in: PETER DE MEY, ‘The Bishop’s Participation in the Threefold *munera*: Comparing the Appeal to the Pattern of the *tria munera* at Vatican II and in the Ecumenical Dialogues’, *The Jurist* 69 (2009), pp. 31–58, at pp. 50–53.

<sup>17</sup> The members of ARCIC III received the task to reflect in one document on two interrelated issues, on how the Church can both at local and universal level be understood as communion and ‘how in communion the local and universal church come to discern right ethical teaching.’ Cf. ‘Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue Opens New Phase’ (Communiqué from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, published at zenit.org 03/02/2011).



to the common mission entrusted to his Church by our Lord, the remaining Church-dividing issues will be resolved more effectively.<sup>18</sup> (§ 94)

The introduction to part II – ‘Towards Unity and Common Mission’ – self-confidently repeats the profound conviction of the authors of the need to translate into practice what is believed in common:

Genuine faith is more than assent: it is expressed in action. As Anglicans and Roman Catholics seek to overcome the remaining obstacles to full visible unity, we, the bishops of IARCUM, recognise that the extent of common faith described in this statement compels us to live and witness together more fully here and now. (§ 96)

I only recall a few of the practical examples and suggestions made in part II regarding four fields of action. As to the liturgical life of the Church, the suggestion is made ‘to pray for the local bishop of the other church as well as for their own bishop.’<sup>19</sup> (§ 103) In the next section the bishops are encouraged to take care of a more profound reception of ecumenical documents. Section three contains a few remarkable suggestions in view of ‘co-operation in ministry’, especially when it pertains to bishops. Next to the plea to organize ‘jointly sponsored workshops for newly ordained bishops’ (§ 112) ‘consideration should be given to the association of Anglican bishops with Roman Catholic bishops in their *ad limina* visits to Rome.’<sup>20</sup> (§ 111) Suggestions regarding a fourth area, that of developing

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<sup>18</sup> The official commentary of the Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop of Westminster and now the Catholic co-chair of ARCIC III, Bernard Longley, asks for a careful reading of this paragraph: ‘This is a hope-filled but prudent assessment of the value of what is to be proposed in Part Two. GTUM does not claim that witnessing and engaging together in mission will lead to more speedy resolution of differences but emphasises the effectiveness and by implication the thoroughness of what is envisaged.’ Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20070615\\_bishop-longley\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070615_bishop-longley_en.html).

<sup>19</sup> Bishop Longley points to an important restriction mentioned in the Ecumenical Directory, § 121: ‘Public prayer for other Christians, living or dead, and for the needs and intentions of other Churches or ecclesial Communities and their spiritual heads may be offered during the litanies and other invocations of a liturgical service, but not during the Eucharistic Anaphora. Ancient Christian liturgical and ecclesiological tradition permits the specific mention in the Eucharistic Anaphora only of the names of persons who are in full communion with the Church celebrating the Eucharist.’

<sup>20</sup> This plea was already mentioned in *The Gift of Authority*: ‘Serious consideration also be given to the association of Anglican bishops with Roman Catholic bishops in their *ad limina* visits to Rome.’ Bishop Longley asks, however, also to consider

common efforts to engage with the world, are, among others, to develop 'joint Anglican/Roman Catholic church schools, shared teacher training programmes and contemporary religious education curricula for use in our schools.' (§ 122)

*Growing together in Unity and Mission* remains one of the most powerful attempts in the recent history of the ecumenical movement to translate highly specialistic ecumenical agreements into joint ecumenical practice. Is it because of the repeated warning at the outset of the document, that we do not have to consider this agreed statement as a decisive new step in our ecumenical relations, that till now the document even has not largely been received in the form of commentaries? Another profound caveat is found in the official Catholic commentary by the auxiliary bishop of Westminster Bernard Longley:

Yet there is an inherent tension built into GTUM precisely in the text's central link between unity and mission. As the text acknowledges, like the work of ARCIC upon which it builds, the agreements and convergences set forth in Part One of GTUM are in various ways contingent on a positive reception of Part One. Since the first part of GTUM is lacking authoritative approval<sup>21</sup>, it is clear that the practical suggestions of the second part will need to be examined in the light of present Catholic teaching and policy.

### *2.3 Obstacles for a more intensive Orthodox-Roman Catholic cooperation in communion and mission*

It may be a reason of surprise that in the agreed statements which are the result of the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Church which she considers as her closest sister, the Orthodox Church, almost no

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the following aspect: 'When a national or regional group of bishops comes together with Peter's successor, there is a strong experience and expression of communion, which is qualitatively different from the experience of an ecumenical gathering of bishops whose churches share a partial communion.' Cf. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20070615\\_bishop-longley\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/angl-comm-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20070615_bishop-longley_en.html).

<sup>21</sup> But what if the future of *Growing Together in Unity and Mission* is not entirely different from that of ARCIC II? Cf. TANNER, 'From Vatican II to Missisauga', p. 265: 'The work of ARCIC II has gone largely unrecognized in both Communion. There never was the same official encouragement to study, nor a request for response which had accompanied the work of the first Commission, nor a dialogical process between theologians and the wider church.'

recommendations are found to take common initiatives in the field of mission. This is not to deny of course that great progress has been made towards further convergence in the field of ecclesiology and currently the dialogue goes on to discuss aspects of the relation between primacy and conciliarity at the level of the universal Church. One can wonder whether there is no correlation between the not fully resolved 'problem of unity' and the absence of concrete plans towards further collaboration in the field of mission – at least as far as the international dialogue is concerned.

I have the impression that the agreed statements of the international dialogue dealing with ecclesiology – and thus, all agreed statements except the Balamand statement which will be discussed separately – remain very much focused on the ecclesiological topic under discussion, and never dare to dream together about what the implications of their study could be for further ecumenical relations of both dialogue partners. The texts moreover seem to have been written in such a way that both churches can recognize their own ecclesiological convictions therein, but one should not read the texts as a description of how the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church together think about a unified Church.

An example will make this clear. The so-called Munich statement on *The Mystery of the Church and of the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982) states that the bishops who are in charge 'of the local churches' 'form a college' which stands in a particular relation 'to the college of the apostles.' The document continues:

This means not only that they should be united among themselves by faith, charity, mission, reconciliation, but that they have in common the same responsibility and the same service to the church. (III.4)

For Roman Catholics this is in line with the deplorable tendency of the postconciliar magisterium to understand the universal college of bishops as the only possessors of an 'effective' collegiality whereas intermediary levels of decision-making are only characterized by an 'affective' collegiality. Orthodox can apply the same statement to the way they think of worldwide relations of communion among bishops. For them this line in no way applies to some form of joint episcopacy with the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church because the paragraph implies precisely that unity in faith – or in doctrine – is a requirement for joint mission.

The most recently agreed statement,<sup>22</sup> the Ravenna document entitled *Ecclesiological and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church. Ecclesial Communion, Conciliarity and Authority* (2007), describes how at all levels of Church life, local, regional and universal, authority is exercised by the one exercising primacy but in respect for the entire community. There is substantial interest in the theme of mission in the document, especially when the local and the regional level are thematised, but once again there is reason to wonder whether the statements are not primordially mirroring the situation of each of the dialogue partners, each taking care of the missionary needs of their own flock in isolation of each other.

Each local Church has as its mission to be, by the grace of God, a place where God is served and honoured, where the Gospel is announced, where the sacraments are celebrated, where the faithful strive to alleviate the world's misery, and where each believer can find salvation.<sup>23</sup> (§ 19)

Each bishop is responsible for the whole Church together with all his colleagues in one and the same apostolic mission. (§ 27)

The opening line of the Ravenna document is an exception to this general observation because of its recognition of the significance of the new start for the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue in view of the challenges of secularization, globalization and interreligious dialogue affecting both communities and because of its openness towards joint efforts in the field of unity and mission, at least in the mode of prayer:

We are conscious that our dialogue is restarting in a world that has changed profoundly in recent times. The processes of secularization and globalization,

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<sup>22</sup> The fact that the delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate had left the 2007 Ravenna meeting right from the outset because of a conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning the Estonian delegation, did have no impact on the validity of the conclusions of the meeting, even if the moral authority of the meeting was weakened due to the absence of the local Church with the largest Orthodox population. See for a critical account of the Ravenna document, with particular attention to the tensions among the Orthodox, EVA MARIA SYNEK, "Konziliarität und Autorität in der Kirche". *Orthodox-Katholischer Dialog: das so genannte Ravennadokument*, *Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion* 55 (2008), pp. 55–78.

<sup>23</sup> See also PETER DE MEY, 'An Investigation of the Willingness to Develop a Eucharistic Ecclesiology in Roman Catholic Magisterial Teaching on the Church and in the Orthodox-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue', *Bulletin ET. Journal for Theology in Europe* 19 (2008), pp. 79–99.

and the challenge posed by new encounters between Christians and believers of other religions, require that the disciples of Christ give witness to their faith, love and hope with a new urgency. May the Spirit of the risen Lord empower our hearts and minds to bear the fruits of unity in the relationship between our Churches, so that together we may serve the unity and peace of the whole human family. (§ 1)

The agreed Orthodox-Roman Catholic statement with the strongest attention for the theme of mission and unity, however, was the 1993 so-called Balamand statement. After the collapse of the communist regime especially in the western part of Ukraine and in certain areas of Romania the Greek-Catholic Church proved to be much stronger than the Orthodox majority had expected. The relations between both churches soon became extremely loaded because of fierce disputes around the property rights of Church buildings. For many Orthodox, who consider their country as their 'canonical territory', even the existence of a Church which shares the same faith and celebrates the same liturgy, while accepting the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, is a problem. It was unthinkable that the Orthodox-Roman Catholic international dialogue could stick to its ecclesiological agenda and disregard this burning issue. For the Orthodox the 'problem' of uniatism first had to be solved in an acceptable way.

After three years of preparation and in the absence of six of fifteen Orthodox churches, the international commission during its 1993 meeting in Balamand, Lebanon, released a statement entitled *Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion*. In this statement uniatism was rejected as an ecclesiological method in favour of the ecclesiology of sister churches and the document also contained a clear condemnation of proselytism, but at the same time it is stated that the Oriental Catholic Churches deserve further pastoral care and support from Rome.<sup>24</sup> Far from expressing the need for joint missiological efforts, the agreed statement dedicates all

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<sup>24</sup> A few important essays on Balamand: WACLAW HRYNIEWICZ, 'Uniatismus einst und jetzt. Reflexionen zum Dokument von Balamand (1993)', *Ostkirchliche Studien* 43 (1994), pp. 328–339; JOHN H. ERICKSON, 'Concerning the Balamand Statement', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 42 (1997), pp. 25–44; MIRCEA BASARAB, 'Die Problematik der unierten Kirche aus orthodoxer Sicht', *Orthodoxes Forum* 12 (1998), pp. 21–50; BENOÎT BOURGINE, 'La réception de la Déclaration de Balamand', *Irenikon* 74 (2001), pp. 538–560. An important collection of articles is found in Comité mixte Catholique-Orthodoxe en France, *Les enjeux de l'uniatisme : dans le sillage de Balamand* (Paris : Cerf, 2004).

its energy in condemning proselytising forms of mission by one of the dialogue partners.

In the decades which followed these unions, missionary activity tended to include among its priorities the effort to convert other Christians, individually or in groups, so as 'to bring them back' to one's own Church. (§ 10)

Because of the way in which Catholics and Orthodox once again consider each other in their relationship to the mystery of the Church and discover each other once again as sister Churches, this form of 'missionary apostolate' described above, and which has been called 'uniatism,' can no longer be accepted either as a method to be followed nor as a model of the unity our Churches are seeking. (§ 12)

In the second part of the document a number of 'practical rules' seem to be given, once again not to stimulate but rather to avoid joint missionary efforts:

[T]he necessary respect for Christian freedom – one of the most precious gifts received from Christ – should not become an occasion for undertaking a pastoral project which may also involve the faithful of other Churches, without previous consultation with the pastors of these Churches. (§ 25)

Those in charge of the communities concerned should create joint local commissions or make effective those which already exist, for finding solutions to concrete problems and seeing that these solutions are applied in truth and love, in justice and peace. (§ 26)

I am able to end my analysis of the Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue and its attention for the interplay of unity and mission on a positive note though, thanks to the work of the U.S. Orthodox-Roman Catholic Theological Consultation and we know from other dialogues as well that regional dialogues sometimes have been able to exercise an influence on the international dialogue. Already their response to the Balamand statement, published in 1994, contained the request that 'the document's forceful treatment of proselytization needs to be balanced by a proper understanding of mission.'<sup>25</sup> (§ 12) The way forward for the Orthodox-Roman Catho-

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<sup>25</sup> A similar idea is found in the 2009 agreed statement of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches entitled *Nature, Constitution and Mission of the Church*: 'It is not enough to denounce proselytism. The pastors and faithful members of our Churches

lic dialogue is shown in the most recent agreed statement *Steps Towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future* (2010).<sup>26</sup> To intensify the steps towards unity is ‘a matter of urgency’, thus the documents realises:

In light of the divine gifts that we share, it seems all the more urgent to us that our Churches grow closer together, in ways that the men and women of our time can see. The fact that our two Christian families have been separated in some central points of theology and Church discipline for almost a thousand years, and as a result no longer share in the communion that bound us together during the first millennium, is not only a violation of the will of God but is also a serious impediment to effective Christian engagement in the world, and to the effective realization of our common mission to preach the Gospel. ... As our largely secular world reaches constantly for new technical means of communication, and for mutual understanding within all its cultural and political diversity, it is urgent that Orthodox and Catholic Christians find an effective way to realize our common tradition of faith together, and to present the world with a unified testimony to the Lordship of Jesus. (§ 5)

Thereafter, an attempt is given to describe the main features of a structure of worldwide ecclesial communion between both churches. (§ 6) They would include: (1) ‘the recognition of our fundamental agreement on central Christian dogmas, ... despite variations in our theological and liturgical traditions’; (2) ‘a common confession of faith’; (3) the acceptance of

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need to continue to prepare themselves for genuine common Christian witness through common prayer, shared religious education, respect for one another in religious discourse, coordinated pastoral activities and a common service (*diakonia*) in humanitarian and social matters.’ (§ 66) This document contains a few other statements urging both churches to make work of joint efforts in the field of mission: ‘Where full communion is still unattainable for historical or canonical reasons, advanced convergence in matters of faith should allow further theological and pastoral agreements to be made between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, particularly in answering to the urgent needs of their communities, where they live together’ (§ 27) and: ‘The ecumenical commitment essentially belongs to the mission of the whole Church, including all her members. The fact that the Good News of reconciliation is preached by Christians who are still divided among themselves weakens their witness. Working for Christian unity is urgent, so that our Christian witness and missionary activity can be more effective. Moreover, efforts towards unity are themselves a sign of the work of reconciliation that God is bringing about in our midst. Christians should therefore persevere in finding new ways and means of closer cooperation in carrying out their common mission of evangelisation, as circumstances of time, place and culture permit.’ (§ 62)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.scoba.us/articles/towards-a-unified-church.html>.

diversity in traditions and practices; (4) ‘liturgical sharing’; (5) a Church order based on the principles of synodality and conciliarity; (6) common missionary efforts; (7) a more wider application of the principle of subsidiarity; (8) and the last feature deals with ‘renewal and reform’<sup>27</sup> and contains the following beautiful line:

By making their catholicity concrete through full communion, the Catholic and Orthodox churches would be realizing this life of reform in a new, undreamed-of-way, and would be committing themselves to continual renewal and growth – but now together.

The statement also suggests a number of ‘preparatory steps’ ‘to prepare for an eventual restoration of full communion within a reunited Church formed from the Orthodox and Catholic traditions.’

- a) Delegations of Orthodox and Catholic bishops in a nation or region could begin to gather regularly for consultation on pastoral issues. Patriarchs and representatives of the autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox Churches could also meet with the Pope and leading Catholic bishops and curial officials on a regular basis for consultation and planning;
- b) The Pope and the Orthodox primates could invite all the faithful under their jurisdiction to recognize each other’s Churches as ‘sister Churches’ that fully realize the Apostolic faith in doctrine, sacraments and ecclesial life, despite the historically different forms in which our liturgy is celebrated, our doctrine taught, and our community life structured;
- c) Special liturgical services and activities of common prayer and social ministry, involving lay people of both communions, could be organized as a way of drawing Orthodox and Catholic Christians into a deeper practical awareness of their common faith and dependence on God;
- d) Ultimately, new structures of authority, in which the relationships of local and regional primates are concretely regulated, would need to be instituted by common consultation, perhaps by an ecumenical council. (§ 8)

In the last paragraph of the document, entitled ‘One body’, the deepest motivation for this visionary text is given:

Conscience holds us back from celebrating our unity as complete in sacramental terms, until it is complete in faith, Church structure, and common action; but conscience also calls us to move beyond complacency in our divisions, in the power of the Spirit and in longing for the fullness of Christ’s life-giving presence in our midst. (§ 10)

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. PETER DE MEY, ‘Church Renewal and Reform in the Documents of Vatican II: History, Theology, Terminology’, *The Jurist* 71 (2011), pp. 369–400.



## Conclusion

A Roman Catholic ecclesialogist is able to find strong support for his plea to keep the concerns of mission and unity together in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. After having made a more lengthy analysis of the attention for both aspects in the opening chapters of *Lumen Gentium* I also commented upon a few interesting passages in both *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the decree on ecumenism, and *Ad Gentes*, the decree on mission.

A concern not to neglect the attention to mission in documents focusing on ecclesiology is also the hallmark of recent ecumenical dialogue statements. It has been easy to defend this thesis as far as the *Faith & Order* statement on *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2005) and the IARCCUM document *Growing together in Unity and Mission* (2007) are concerned. I also wanted to find out the reason why so few explicit statements on the necessity to engage in common witness are found in the work of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. The crisis related to the so-called ‘problem of Uniatism’ made the so-called Balamand Document (1993) negatively focus on the danger of proselytism rather than making concrete plans for missionary cooperation. Luckily the latest dialogue statement, the so-called Ravenna document (2007), and especially the latest fruit of the U.S. Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, *Steps Towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future* (2010) show that this dialogue is now also becoming convinced of the need to be engaged in common witness.

I want to dedicate the final words of this contribution to the result of the first round of dialogue at international level between the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholic Church (2004–2009), *Kirche und Kirchengemeinschaft*.<sup>28</sup> The first five paragraphs of the document present a common understanding on the Church before the first steps are made towards a differentiated consensus on the way towards full communion. According to this document, the Church is essentially characterized by *martyria*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia*. The point of departure for this three-fold mission of the Church however is the Eucharist, ‘in which God unites the baptized ever again to communion and sends them to serve the

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<sup>28</sup> *Kirche und Kirchengemeinschaft. Bericht der Internationalen Römisch-Katholisch-Alt-katholischen Dialogkommission* (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2009; second edition 2010).

people.’<sup>29</sup> (§ 13) It is understandable that in such a eucharistic ecclesiology as developed by both dialogue partners attention is also paid to the interplay of unity and mission. This insight is repeated in an important reflection on the ministries which God offered to his Church: ‘It is part of their mission to be an expression of and to maintain the unity of the Church and her remaining in the truth. This takes place in a continuous process of universal mission and inculturation of the Gospel.’<sup>30</sup> (§ 20) Thus, even if the *Kirche und Kirchengemeinschaft* statement did not intend to make of the relation between mission and unity its central focus, it assumed a similar position as the one discovered in the other dialogues.

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### *Deutsche Zusammenfassung*

Dieser Artikel bietet eine neue Interpretation des einleitenden Kapitels von «Lumen Gentium» an, um zu zeigen, dass die Konzilsväter dem Anliegen folgten, die Konzepte von Mission und Einheit zusammenzuhalten. Das Anliegen, auch in

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, § 13. (I quote from the forthcoming English translation *Church and Ecclesial Communion*): ‘The fundamental enactments of the church as the realm of life and salvation opened up by God in sending Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are *martyria*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia*. These in turn are centred in the celebration of the eucharist, in which God again and again unites the baptised in renewed communion and sends them out into service of mankind.’ [emphasis added]

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, § 20: ‘Among the gifts which God has given the church on its journey through the ages for the maintenance of its integrity as the realm of life and salvation created in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, we number a variety of offices and ministries. It is part of their mission to give expression to and preserve the unity of the church and its maintenance in the one truth in a constant process of world-wide mission and enculturation of the Gospel.’

Dokumenten mit dem Schwerpunkt Ekklesiologie das Thema der Mission nicht zu vernachlässigen, ist das Markenzeichen jüngster ökumenischer Dialogtexte, wie etwa des Dokuments der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung «Wesen und Auftrag der Kirche» (2005) und des IARCCUM-Dokuments «Growing together in Unity and Mission» (2007). In der Arbeit der Gemischten Internationalen Kommission für den Theologischen Dialog zwischen der Römisch-katholischen Kirche und der Orthodoxen Kirche ist der Appell, sich für ein gemeinsames Zeugnis zu engagieren, jedoch eher gering. Die Krise, die im Zusammenhang mit dem Problem des Uniatismus steht, bewirkte, dass das sogenannte Balamand-Dokument (1993) seinen Fokus in einem negativen Sinne auf die Gefahr des Proselytismus legte, anstatt sich auf konkrete Pläne für die missionarische Zusammenarbeit zu konzentrieren. Glücklicherweise vermitteln der letztgenannte Dialogtext, das sogenannte Ravenna-Dokument (2007), und vor allem die neuste Arbeit der Orthodox – Römisch-katholisch theologischen Konsultation in Nordamerika, «Steps Towards a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future» (2010), ein anderes Bild.

*Keywords:* missiology – ecumenism – Vatican II – ecclesiology – Faith & Order.