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Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue On Foundations Laid in 1962–1964

Jared Wicks

In June 1964 Professor George Lindbeck visited Monsignor Johannes Willebrands in the office of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting the Unity of Christians (SPCU). Lindbeck represented the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) as a delegated Observer at the Second Vatican Council. He came to inform Willebrands that he was proposing to the LWF leadership that it undertake theological dialogue with the Catholic Church.¹

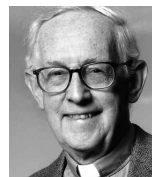
From that starting point there came the Lutheran-Roman Catholic bilateral dialogues, with their many and wide-ranging documents, which reached a highpoint of wide ecumenical relevance in 1999 with the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. The most recent “vital sign” of the dialogue is *From Conflict to Communion*, a creative proposal of ways Lutherans and Catholics can in 2017 commemorate *together* the fifth centenary of the Reformation.²

The Catholic Ecumenical Commitment

The place of the Lindbeck-Willebrands conversation of 1964, the SPCU, was one of the emblematic components of the Second Vatican Council. Pope John XXIII established the Secretariat on June 5, 1960, along with the commissions created to prepare the Council, and it was being ably led by its president Cardinal Augustin Bea and its chief operating officer, called Secretary, Msgr. Willebrands. Sixteen individuals, bishops or senior churchmen, were the Secretariat’s members, ably assisted by twenty consultants. By the time Vatican II opened on October 11, 1962, there had been six SPCU plenary meetings of a few days each, for the preparation of texts, both as ecumenically constructive recommendations forwarded to the preparatory commissions and as drafts on particular topics for deliberation by the Council itself.³

When Vatican II began, it took up first the reform of Catholic worship leading to the promulgation of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* on December 4, 1963. This document states in its opening paragraph the four aims of the Council, namely, to invigorate the Christian lives of Catholics, to adapt to present-day needs aspects of the ecclesial institution which are open to change, “to encourage whatever can promote

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the union of all who believe in Christ,” and to enhance the missionary call of the church to all humankind. Pursuit of the third aim led, on November 21, 1964, to the promulgation of the *Decree on Ecumenism*, which begins, “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.” In its three chapters the Decree states “Catholic Principles of Ecumenism” (nos.⁴ 2–4), describes “The Practice of Ecumenism” which it is making imperative for Catholics (nos. 5–12), and concludes by telling how the Church sees “The Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman Apostolic See” (nos. 13–24). The third chapter speaks to the situation of the Eastern Churches in nos. 14–18, and to that of the Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the West in nos. 19–24.

The ecumenism document is a “decree” giving guidelines and mandates for action. It states doctrinal bases, but in doing this builds on the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, promulgated on the same day in 1964. The Constitution stated briefly in no. 8 that “many elements of sanctification and truth” are found among Christians outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church.⁵ Shortly after, in its chapter on “the People of God,” no. 15 names several of these “elements,” which are among “many reasons for knowing that it [the Catholic Church] is joined to the baptized” of other Christian bodies. They have and cherish Scripture, faith in God and in Christ the Savior, “baptism which unites them to Christ,” and other sacraments which they receive “in their own churches and ecclesial communities.” Section no. 15 also speaks of other Christians’ interior zeal, spiritual benefits, and sanctification, which give rise to true communion in the Holy Spirit.

The ecumenical orientation and mandate given by Vatican II has been received and confirmed by the popes, most strikingly by John Paul II in his encyclical, *Ut unum sint*, of June 15, 1995, where he states that at the Council, “the Catholic Church committed herself *irrevocably* to following the path of the ecumenical venture” (no. 3). He restates major affirmations of the Council, for example, on the “elements of sanctification and truth,” saying, “To the extent that these elements are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them” (no. 10). The elements are not static or passive, for “insofar as they are elements of the Church of Christ, these are by their nature a force for the re-establishment of unity” (no. 49). On these bases, a real but still imperfect communion exists. “Ecumenism is directed precisely to making the partial communion existing between Christians grow towards full communion in truth and charity” (no. 14).

As many will know, the ecumenical commitment just documented represents a notable change in official Catholic attitudes from the outlook before Vatican II. So, the question arises about just *how* such a shift happened. To provide a partial answer, what follows is a work of historical “backgrounding” aiming to identify key moments before and during the Second Vatican Council by which foundations were laid for this new Catholic commitment.

Ecumenical Issues during the Vatican II Preparation: Church Membership

Beginning in late 1960, the Preparatory Theological Commission of the Council devoted considerable energy to drafting what would be a “dogmatic constitution” on the nature of the Church. The need of this was clear, first, as a matter of unfinished business left from the First Vatican Council of 1869–70, where a complete draft *De ecclesia* had been prepared, but when threats of war began looming, only parts of the draft, on the primacy and infallibility of the pope, were discussed, emended, and promulgated before the Council suspended its work. Second, what Vatican I defined left a one-sided account of the Catholic hierarchy and so in 1959–60 many called for the new Council to state a complementary doctrine of the episcopate and the episcopal college. Third, in the decades before the convocation of Vatican II, ecclesiology was a topic of intensive theological reflection, with a focal point being given in the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *The Mystical Body of Christ* (1943).⁶

The ecclesiological draft of the Preparatory Theological Commission comprised eleven chapters, of which two were especially pertinent to ecumenical concerns, namely, Chapter II on who is a “member” of the Church and how membership relates to salvation and Chapter XI on ecumenism itself.⁷

Critical moments came for the Preparatory Theological Commission when the chapters of the draft text on the Church were examined by the Central Preparatory Commission, a body of eighty cardinals, archbishops, and heads of major religious orders, whose task was to evaluate the drafts coming out of the particular commissions.⁸ A positive assessment by the Central Commission would open the way for texts to go to Pope John XXIII for his approval for putting them before the world’s bishops for discussion in the sessions of Vatican II. But when Central Commission members expressed reservations or suggested amendments, the draft went back to its particular commission for correction.

The Theological Commission’s Chapters I–VI of its *De ecclesia* came up for treatment by the Central Commission on May 8, 1962, some weeks after the Central Commission members had received each chapter in a printed booklet. The presenter was Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, President of the Preparatory Theological Commission. Chapter I, on the nature of the “Church militant” on earth, treated the Church as founded by Christ and existing as the body of Christ, before concluding with an affirmation of the identity of the socially organized Roman Catholic Church with the Mystical Body of Christ.

Chapter II then treated Church membership in three paragraphs.⁹ First, it states that the Church is necessary for salvation, in line with the traditional axiom *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. A person cannot be saved who knows that the Catholic Church was founded by God through Christ but then refuses to enter it and persevere there. The same holds for being baptized, which incorporates a person into the Church as a member. But there is also a baptism *of desire* which can fulfill this requirement. For the Church, consequently, there is membership in reality (*reapse*), but also one can be *ordered* to the Church by desire (*voto*), which will be explained. Such a relation is necessary but not sufficient for salvation, since for this, one must also be by grace united to God in faith, hope, and charity.

In its second paragraph, Chapter II went into detail on membership in the Church. While every baptized person is connected with the Church, being a member in reality (*reapse*) rests on conditions which Pius XII had drawn together in his Mystical Body encyclical. The conditions are baptismal regeneration, profession of the Catholic faith, and acknowledgment of the Church's authority, while of course not being expelled from the body for a grievous offense. By these, persons are within the visible Church as members and are united with Christ who rules it by his Vicar on earth. But, as with baptism, there can also be regarding the Church a *votum* (desire), "ordering to the church" in the case of persons ignorant of the Catholic Church being the true and only Church of Christ. This desire can be implicit in wanting to obey Christ's will and intentions or, among non-Christians, it can be implicit in a sincere dedication to fulfilling the will of their God and Creator.¹⁰

In a third paragraph the chapter fulfills, in part, requests made insistently during the drafting process in the *De ecclesia* sub-commission, especially by Fr. Yves Congar, Prof. Michael Schmaus, and Msgr. Gérard Philips.¹¹ The text speaks of those who do not profess the Catholic faith and are not in communion with the pope, and so are not members, but nonetheless are ordered to the Church by desire. Among these non-Catholics, a special place is acknowledged for baptized Christians who believe in Christ as God and Savior. This union is greater with Orthodox Christians who revere the Holy Eucharist and love the Mother of God. But with all other Christians there is a shared faith in Christ, a common participation in prayer and spiritual benefits, and a union in the Holy Spirit who works effectively by gifts and graces not only in the Mystical Body but beyond. The Spirit seeks to incorporate the separated brethren into the body and for this the Church prays incessantly, so that they may share in the abundant helps to salvation enjoyed by Catholics who are *reapse* members. But Catholics must keep in mind that their condition is not by their merit but by a special grace of Christ to which they must respond in thought, word, and deed or be more severely judged.

On May 8, 1962, this text came under heavy fire from influential members of the Central Preparatory Commission. Cardinal Achille Liénart (Lille, France) opposed a central tenet of the draft, namely, the identification of the Catholic Church with the Mystical Body of Christ as one and the same. For Christ's body includes as well those suffering in purgatory and the blessed in heaven. Separated Christians are buried with Christ in baptism so as to rise in him to ongoing supernatural life. Sadly they do not share many supernatural benefits administered by the Church, but the Cardinal will not say they are not adhering to Christ's Mystical Body.¹² Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger (Montreal, Canada) said that the distinction between "members" *reapse* and those "ordered to" the Church by a *votum* is not satisfactory to account for the connection between the Church and non-Catholic Christians on the way to salvation. This is a live topic in theology which has not matured sufficiently for it to be decisively stated by the Council. For other Christians, Léger proposed saying not "ordered to," but "belong to" the Church (*pertinent ad*).¹³ Cardinal Franz König (Vienna, Austria) disagrees with the denial of membership to baptized non-Catholics, since Canon 87 of the *Code of Canon Law* (1917) affirms that by baptism, one becomes "a person in the Church of Christ." Instead of *reapse* on Catholics?

membership, better to say *perfecte*, so that a level of membership can be ascribed to all the baptized, even if in cases the connection is defective.¹⁴

Cardinal Julius Döpfner (Munich, Germany) underscored the immense ecumenical importance of the chapter, which therefore must be carefully reviewed. Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis* laid a basis, but does the encyclical say all that is needed for explaining well Catholic doctrine regarding the separated brethren? Döpfner also appealed to Canon 87's ascribing of being "person in the Church" to baptism, which is certainly "convertible" with being a member of the Church. Other canons, e.g., regarding marriage, refer to baptized non-Catholics in ways implying some kind of membership. Another problem is the text's recourse to "ordering by a *votum*" to the Church, which is also true of pagans in good faith. The third paragraph tries to work around this problem, but does not sufficiently distinguish between the baptized and the non-baptized. Döpfner concluded that Chapter II must be thoroughly revised, so as to answer today's questions both about the Church and salvation and about incorporation as a member of the Church.¹⁵

Cardinal Bea, president of the Unity Secretariat, told the other members of the Central Preparatory Commission that he had to speak at some length on the texts before them, because the Theological Commission had refused to hold joint meetings with the Secretariat. Also, the Commission has not adopted in Chapter II some recommendations forwarded to it in writing by the Secretariat. A first point is that the schema exaggerates the importance of the topic of membership, along with neglect of showing *how* the Church is a means of salvation for all peoples. Then, it speaks of the *votum* of the true Church as possibly present in all non-Catholics, whether pagan, Orthodox, or Protestant. "Speaking in this way," Bea informs his fellow Central Commission members, "greatly offends non-Catholic Christians, because in effect it takes little account of their valid baptism and the status that this confers."¹⁶ Another approach, beginning with God's universal saving will, would work better, but in any case one should avoid the term "member," because in St. Paul's usage this is not referred to the visible church. Also, the New Testament has, beyond body of Christ, other images of the church, such as a vineyard, family, house, and people. One can say of Catholics that they are "in a full and proper sense" members of the Church, but the elements constituting membership are present more widely than only in the Catholic Church, with the effects described in the positive part of the chapter's third paragraph. Baptized other Christians are really our "brethren," even though "separated" and Pope John even calls them "sons."¹⁷

After a few other comments on the chapter, the sixty-five Central Commission members present on May 8 voted. Only seven voted an approval (*placet*), while eight voted to reject the draft of Chapter II (*non placet*). Fifty voted approval with reservations, calling for further work on the text (*placet iuxta modum*). Fifteen said further work should take account, generally, of the comments of the cardinals and bishops who had spoken, but thirty members identified their reservations specifically with the intervention of Bea. Several agreed with other critics of the draft along with Bea, for example, Döpfner and König (twenty-one references each) and/or Liénart and Léger (fourteen

mentions each).¹⁸ Clearly the ecumenical cause made a major advance in this critical handling of the Theological Commission's draft on church membership just five months before Vatican II formally opened. The critics cited above were soon influencing other Vatican II members, with some exercising leadership in sizeable national conferences of bishops and with Cardinal Bea becoming a speaker in the Council to whom great attention was given.

However, the critical interventions of May 8, 1962 on the draft Constitution *De ecclesia* did not take effect immediately, since in the Central Commission votes with reservations counted as approvals of the draft submitted, which gave a fifty-seven to eight vote favorable to the draft. On behalf of the Theological Commission, in fact, Tromp contested many of the criticisms and admitted only the most clearly demanded changes. Consequently, the version of the Constitution *De ecclesia* distributed in November 1962 to the whole Council differed in no substantial way from the earlier text and remained vulnerable to the critical points made in May by members of the Central Preparatory Commission. Catholics are called (*vocantur*) "members in the true and proper sense" (omitting *reapse*), while all others of sincere good will are "ordered to the Church." Among the latter, other Christians have a more dense ordination by baptism, faith in Christ, and the spiritual benefits set out in the practically unrevised third paragraph.

In the Council assemblies December 1–7, 1962, seventy-seven members spoke on the draft Dogmatic Constitution *De ecclesia*, with many, who often spoke for several or many others, unleashing a crescendo of critical points against the draft constitution. But before reviewing the consequences of this development, another part of the text on the Church deserves treatment.

Ecumenical Issues during the Vatican II Preparation: Separated Communities

The Preparatory Theological Commission's draft Constitution on the Church ended with Chapter XI, treating ecumenism. It had evolved through six drafts, with Professor Jan Witte (Dutch Jesuit, Gregorian University) serving as the reporter who composed several revised versions after discussions in the sub-commission *de ecclesia* and the plenary Theological Commission.

The ecumenism chapter developed gradually from late 1961 to comprise eight sections, beginning with an Introduction (no. 1) in which the Council declares its commitment to promoting the unity of all Christians. Number 2 stated the Catholic Church's recognition of the bonds of baptism, confession of Christ, and witness to him before the world, which connect separated Christians, especially those of eastern rites, with herself—although not in full communion.¹⁹ Number 3 is brief on the Church's relation to individual separated Christians, since Chapter II already treated this. Number 4 then explains the Church's relation to the separated communities, about which more is covered below. Number 5 is a Catholic statement on the existing ecumenical movement, which is inspired by God, but which should aim at unity in faith, sacramental communion, and common governance under Christ's Vicar on earth. Number 6 expresses hope that Catholics will be ecumenically active, while striving theologically and pastorally for inner renewal of their own Church to make it known more clearly as

the Father's house. Number 7 speaks to the issue of common worship, giving detailed reasons against and for, but still looking to later practical norms. The final, number 8, admits and even urges social collaboration with other Christians, by which the world will become more humane and by which inner-Christian prejudice may be overcome.

Number 4 on the separated communities, after Witte's two initial versions, gave rise to a sharp clash of positions in the *De ecclesia* sub-commission on November 21, 1961. Professor Heribert Schauf (Aachen, Germany) held that the separated communities of the West had no religious relation to the Catholic Church, for their separation leaves them existing as only natural religious associations. Witte countered that they possess and live from supernatural elements such as God's revelation, Scripture, and sacraments of Christ. Tromp agreed with Schauf, whom he had directed in doctoral studies at the Gregorian. G. Philips argued that the elements remain good and fruitful in spite of the separation, which gives a supernatural character to the separated bodies.²⁰ Their members receive the elements in faith, over which we should rejoice, while lamenting the separation. Monsignor Carlo Colombo (Milan, Italy) asserted that Catholic recognition of the Holy Spirit's influence in stirring non-Catholics to begin and carry on the ecumenical movement in effect acknowledged the work of grace in the communities being discussed. Witte's further arguments, with the interventions of Philips and Colombo for the separated communities' religious character, impressed Tromp who accepted calling them "Christian communities."²¹

After further revision, review by the plenary Theological Commission, and a last revision to gain greater concision and more Catholic emphasis by Tromp, the passage on the "separated Christian communities" was printed in the longer Chapter XI of the draft *De ecclesia* for the Central Preparatory Commission. The final session of the Central Commission was scheduled for June 12–19, 1962, but the number of texts to evaluate made it necessary to hold a further meeting on June 20, at which the Commission reviewed together the Theological Commission's chapter on ecumenism and a draft pastoral decree from the Unity Secretariat *De oecumenismo catholico*.²² Only thirty-eight Central Commission members were present on this added day, but six who had departed gave their votes in writing. Two cardinals had brief remarks to make, Ruffini and Michael Browne, O.P., with both speaking positively about both texts and both mentioning that they could well be combined in one decree, having a doctrinal and pastoral part.²³ In the voting, all the members approved the two texts, with twelve saying they should become one text.²⁴

Because of the Theological Commission's refusal to work jointly with the Unity Secretariat, there was no fusion of *De ecclesia*, Chapter XI with the *De oecumenismo catholico* of the SPCU. In the draft ecclesiology Constitution passed out to the members of the Council, Chapter XI stated that other Christians are moved toward the unity of the Church not only as individuals but in their own communities, which hold and administer "certain elements of the Church," especially Scripture and the sacraments, which unite recipients with Christ and which tend toward Catholic unity. Sadly the elements are received outside the fullness of God's revelation, but the Council does not deny their saving effect and promotion of a Christian spiritual life. All Catholics should by word and example show the separated brethren that the fullness of divine revelation is

held in truth and purity in the Catholic Church alone, so that those now separated may come to possess along with us the full heritage coming from Christ.²⁵

During Period I (1962) of Vatican II, the chapter on ecumenism of *De ecclesia* did not come onto the agenda for specific evaluation, because it had been aside before the Council debated the draft Constitution *De ecclesia* as a whole. After a short debate of November 26–29 on a draft text on the Eastern Catholic Churches in promoting union with the Orthodox, the Council members voted on December 1 for a fusion into one document of the Council's three ecumenical texts, that is, on the Eastern Churches, Chapter XI of *De ecclesia*, and the pastoral text on Catholic ecumenism which will come from the Unity Secretariat.

The rest of the Preparatory Theological Commission's completed draft Constitution was formally discussed in plenary sessions of the Council December 1–7, 1962, during which incisive objections were made, for example, by Cardinals Liénart, Léger, König, Döpfner, and Bea. The criticism gained momentum and became such that no vote was needed to formally register the text's inadequacy. Instead, the draft Constitution came under the general mandate, issued by Pope John XXIII on December 5, that all the Council's commissions should thoroughly revise the existing draft texts to focus them on issues of major importance and orient them to the pastoral and doctrinal renewal which Pope John had called for in his opening discourse of the Council, October 11, 1962.²⁶

***De ecclesia* on a New Basis, with Recognition of Ecclesial elementa in Other Bodies**

Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens (Malines-Brussels, Belgium) participated in the Central Preparatory Commission meetings of May and June 1962 on the chapters of the proposed Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. From the criticisms forcefully expressed by leading Cardinals, Suenens sensed that this key doctrinal text was not prepared in a manner adequate to the Council's aims. Shortly after the Council opened, Suenens asked Msgr. Gérard Philips (Dogma Professor, Louvain) to draft an alternative *De ecclesia* text, doing this privately, but also involving theologians who were serving as experts of other cardinals and bishops.²⁷ Suenens saw that those who would oppose the Preparatory Commission's text ought to have a substitute text ready to give the Council a basis for advancing positively. Philips's initial text was ready in late October when it was reviewed and only slightly amended by Cardinal Bea and theologians of the Unity Secretariat.²⁸

Finally, on November 23, a booklet containing the draft Constitution on the Church was distributed to all the Council members. Philips records that the theologians who had helped in developing his text continued to suggest improvements of his alternative draft, but its future was clouded in uncertainty.

Period I of the Council ended in early December 1962, with the "fall" of the prepared *De ecclesia* and the mandate of John XXIII to revise all the prepared texts in line with the aims he had expressed for the Council. This stirred bishops and theologians around the world to work intently on several new texts which could replace the previous *De ecclesia*. As a result, when the Council's Doctrinal Commission gathered for a working session in February 1963, five alternative texts were on hand which

offered new bases for a Dogmatic Constitution *De ecclesia*.²⁹ These had come from: (1) Archbishop Pietro Parente, of the Roman Curia, a member of the Doctrinal Commission, who reworked in a modest way parts of the earlier text; (2) G. Philips, with a revision of his October work, now beginning “*Lumen gentium cum sit Christus*”; (3) the German bishops’ conference, who approved in early February a theologians’ draft of forty-six paragraphs, beginning “*Lumen gentium cum sit Ecclesia*”; (4) a group of about sixty French bishops; and (5) a group of Latin American bishops, headed by Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez (Santiago, Chile).³⁰

Philips arrived in Rome on February 23 and heard that seven Doctrinal Commission members had been constituted as a *De ecclesia* sub-commission. Cardinal Michael Browne, O.P. would preside, with fellow Cardinals König and Léger as members, along with four bishops, who would each advocate one of the alternative drafts: Parente (for his own text), André Marie Charue (Namur, Belgium, for Philips’s draft), Gabriel Garrone (Toulouse, France, for the French text), and Joseph Schroffer (Eichstadt, Germany, for the German text). Late in the morning of February 26, while Philips was working on refining his text with theologians at the Belgian College, Bishop Charue called to tell him that the seven had chosen his *De ecclesia* text as the basis of further work, while the other alternative drafts would be consulted for particular contributions.³¹ The seven commission members were choosing expert theologians to work on further developing the draft, which led to a remarkable grouping; König chose Karl Rahner, Garrone named Jean Daniélou (soon replaced by Yves Congar), and Schröffer chose the Louvain theologian Gustave Thils who soon gave way to Charles Moeller also of Louvain and very close to Philips. Charue naturally chose Philips who was to preside over the experts’ work of preparing a newly minted *De ecclesia* for the Doctrinal Commission to present to the Council.

The theologians went immediately to work on further developing the Philips text, drawing on what they knew many Council members desired, on the other alternative texts, and on their own considerable theological expertise. Two points deserve mention regarding the text before them in late February 1963, which had grown considerably from Philips’s initial work of four months earlier:

(1) The opening chapter was no longer on “the Church militant” as in the Preparatory Commission’s text, but on “the mystery of the Church”; this then develops biblically from the plan of the Eternal Father and the saving mission of the Son. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the church in which the exalted Christ lives on, nourishing it with the bread of doctrine and the Eucharist. The church is a temple of the indwelling Spirit and the body of Christ by the one bread (1 Cor 10:17), as well as Christ’s beloved spouse.

Philips’s draft first chapter closes with a paragraph on the Church on earth, which is a structured reality with the means of sanctification and is the true Church of Christ confessed in the creed as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. At this point, Philips’ earlier text (*Concilium duce Spiritu Sancto*) had affirmed that the Church, animated, unified, and sanctified by the Spirit, “is on earth an organically constituted society, namely (*nempe*), the Roman Catholic [Church],” which is to lead all persons to the heavenly kingdom for the glory of the Father.³² This was in effect the same as the final statement in Chapter I of the

Preparatory Commission's draft, that is, that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church. But this "*nempê*" phrase, changed in the revised text in late February 1963, was taken as the new starting point. Through amendments which are difficult to trace in detail, the new text (*Lumen gentium quod sit Christus*) affirms that the Church on pilgrimage on earth, "the true mother and teacher of all, constituted in this world as an ordered society, is (*est*) the Catholic Church directed by the Roman Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him, *although* (*licet*) *certain elements of sanctification can be found outside her complete structure.*"³³

The "is" of the Catholic claim remains, but it is now modified in the same sentence by a contrasting or adversative clause. An ecclesial affirmation is made, but it is not asserted in an exclusive manner. Coming upon "is," or the later "subsists in," one might think it to be exclusive, but the added clause corrects this, by affirming the existence of constitutive sanctifying components of the Church of Christ on earth beyond the Catholic Church in bodies separated from it.³⁴

(2) Above, in treating Church membership, we related how Philips dissented from Tromp's construction which entered the preparatory draft on the Church. The latter proposed a twofold main division, that is, of those "really" (*reapse*) members of the Catholic Church and those "ordered to" it by a sincere desire of obeying God.

From the beginning of his new draft text—and remaining in what became Council doctrine—Philips set up a three-fold division among persons in regard to the Church.³⁵ First, Catholics are those who "live within the Church," as really (*reapse...*) belonging, who are described, as Pius XII had done in his encyclical, as accepting all the means of salvation present in the Church, who are baptized, profess the true Catholic faith, acknowledge church authority, and have not been wholly excluded for a grave offense. But Philips avoided the term "member," and adds a note on the controversy over this which makes it better avoided.

The second group comprises non-Catholic Christians, whose union with the Church rests on aspects which earlier were treated as giving density to their relation by desire (*votum*). No such desire appears here, but the text expresses instead the Church's sense of connectedness, grounded in the others' faith in Christ, Son of God and Savior, in the indelible mark of their baptism, and in their acceptance of some, at least, of the sacraments. From this follows communion by the Holy Spirit's work in them, along with the Catholic prayer that they come into the one flock.

A third group has not yet come to the Christian faith and rebirth in Christ, but to them the Church reaches out in prayer and proclamation, while not excluding they can be saved if they sincerely desire, albeit implicitly, what God has in fact established through Christ in his Church.

The treatment of non-Catholic Christians in an intermediate place between Catholics and non-Christians coheres well with the recognition of "elements of sanctification" outside the Catholic Church. The elements are objective bases of the Christian identity of individuals with whom the Catholic Church knows that it is specially connected in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. But the Philips text has left open the theological status and role of the separated churches and communities which transmit the good news of Christ the Savior and the sacraments of new life.

Recognition of the Role of the Separated Communities: the Principle of Ecumenism

The Doctrinal Commission's *De ecclesia* sub-commission received the revised chapters worked out by Philips and his fellow *periti* and made them ready for review, emendation, and approval by the full Commission. By mid-March, 1963, the revised Chapter I on the mystery of the Church and Chapter II on the Church's hierarchical structure, especially the episcopate, were approved by the Doctrinal Commission and on April 22, Pope John XXIII approved them for sending to the Council members. In collaboration with other Council commissions, further chapters were developed in April and May on the laity and on vowed religious, to which the Doctrinal Commission added a chapter on "the call to holiness in the Church." After the pause caused by the death of John XXIII on June 3, 1963, and the election of Paul VI on June 21, the new chapters were sent to the Council members on July 23. At the end of August, the Commission on Coordinating the Work of the Council determined that Period II, scheduled to begin on September 29, would start with discussion of the draft Dogmatic Constitution *De ecclesia*.

When the Council reopened, after a short discussion, a huge majority voted to accept the revised draft text on the Church as a suitable basis of work, and on October 1–4 forty-five Council members spoke on Chapter I, with fifty-two handing in written observations.³⁶ In the Chapter the final numbers 8–10 presented Catholics, non-Catholic Christians, and non-Christians in the manner described just above. The Council discussion of the further chapters of *De ecclesia* continued until October 31, from which came a huge number of further proposals for its development into a revised text.

In late October, the Doctrinal Commission formed seven sub-commissions to review the Council members' oral and written interventions on *De ecclesia*, among which the second, headed by Cardinal Santos (Manila), was given the paragraphs on "the people of God," a new Chapter II of the draft text. By moving up sections from the chapter on the laity into it, this now comprised nos. 9–16, treating non-Catholic Christians in no. 15. In parceling out the work among the sub-commission's *periti*, Prof. Jan Witte became the reporter on no. 15 on "other Christians."

After his study of the Council members' interventions, Witte reported to the sub-commission, first, that several comments added further *elementa* to the grounds of connection of other Christians with the Church, especially the Holy Scriptures taken as the norm of belief and life. Second, a number of proposals had called for recognition of the communities in which other Christians receive baptism and other sacraments.³⁷ This was accepted by the Santos sub-commission, and these revisions entered its revision of no. 15 and remained in Constitution *Lumen gentium* promulgated in 1964. Also the sub-commission had to draft brief explanations of the changes for its report, called a *relatio*. Regarding the communities in which other Christians receive the word and sacraments, Witte suggested this formulation, which was accepted: "The elements enumerated regard not only individuals, but also the communities. In this precise point is located the principle of the ecumenical movement."³⁸

These then are the foundations of the Catholic engagement in ecumenical dialogue with other Christians, in which dialogues with Lutherans have been especially

productive. The Catholic commitment rests on the recognitions made in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* of the Christian substance cherished and transmitted in the churches and communities, which have become the Catholic Church's dialogue partners.

Endnotes

¹ In his appointment book for June 11, 1964, Willebrands recorded the visit of Lindbeck about "further development of the dialogue," and added, "Conversation très intéressante." *Les agendas conciliaires de Mgr. J. Willebrands*, trans. and annotated L. Declerck (Leuven: Maurits Sabbebibliotheek and Peeters, 2009), 131.

² *From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt & Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2013). I listed the previous documents of the dialogue in the Appendix of "Lutheran-Roman Catholic World-Level Dialogue: Selected Remarks," in John A. Radano, ed., *Celebrating a Century of Ecumenism. Exploring the Achievements of International Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 73–76.

³ The SPCU preparatory work of 1960–62 has been abundantly reported by Mauro Velati in *Dialogo e rinnovamento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011), which I presented in "Still More Light on Vatican Council II," *Catholic Historical Review* 98 (2012): 476–502, at 477–89.

⁴ Nos. refers to section numbers.

⁵ With the term "elements" Vatican II adopted a conception of the 1950 Toronto Statement of the World Council of Churches Central Committee regarding what WCC member churches hold regarding the other member churches. They recognize in them "certain elements of the true Church," such as preaching the word of God, holding to Scripture, and administering sacraments. See *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, ed. Michael Kinnamon and Brian Cope (Geneva: WCC Publications & Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 467. Below, I will relate how the term "elements" came to be inserted into Vatican II's Constitution on the Church.

⁶ Examples of this reflection are Romano Guardini, *The Church and the Catholic* (1922; repr. London: Sheed & Ward, 1935); Émile Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938) and *Theology of the Mystical Body* (1936; repr. St. Louis: Herder, 1951); Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (1938; repr. London: Burns and Oates, 1950) and *The Splendor of the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956); Otto Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament* (Frankfurt/M.: Knecht, 1955); and Lucien Cerfaux, *The Church in the Theology of St. Paul*, 2nd ed. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1959).

⁷ The rest of the ecclesiology draft treated the nature of the church militant (Ch. I), the episcopate as the highest grade of ordained ministry (III), bishops in their dioceses (IV), the status of vowed members of religious orders (V), the laity (VI), the magisterium (VII), authority and obedience in the Church (VIII), Church and state (IX), and evangelization of the world (X).

⁸ The Central Commission held seven week-long meetings from mid-1961 to June 1962, which are fully documented in the *Acta et Documenta Concilio Oecumenico Vaticano II Apparando*, Ser. II (Praeparatoria), Vol. II (Acta Commissionis Centralis Praeparatoriae), in four parts.

⁹ In the Theological Commission, Sebastian Tromp, S.J., the Commission's Secretary, had drafted Ch. II, because of his extensive writing on Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*. Tromp composed four drafts of the chapter for discussion by a *De ecclesia* sub-commission, leading each time to considerable revision of the text. In late September 1961, a fifth draft went before a plenary meeting of the Theological Commission's members, who approved it, but also asked for further emendations. Tromp entered these into the sixth version that then came before the Central Preparatory Commission on May 8, 1962, for which we have the record in *Acta et Documenta*, II, Part III: 990–93 (text of Ch. II) and 997–1037 (interventions of the Central Commission members on Ch. II, followed by their votes, that is, either approval, or rejection, or approval with a call for amendment).

¹⁰ The notes to the passage on membership give as sources four references to Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis*, along with citations of other papal documents from 1595, 1749, 1852, and 1960–61 (3 texts from John XXIII).

¹¹ The papers of G. Philips, in the Leuven Theological Faculty's Vatican II Archive, include no. 123, a 12-page Latin exposition for the sub-commission *De ecclesia* by Congar, dated April 2, 1961, on the *nexus* of baptized non-Catholics with the visible Church and the Mystical Body. The connection is sacramental and by Scripture and the worship of God in their "communions." In the text, Congar says he agrees with what Prof. Schmaus called for regarding baptized non-Catholics. The same archive holds no. 119, which is Philips's seven-page Latin "note" of April 7, "De membris Ecclesiae." For him a baptized non-Catholic has a real *ratio pertinendi* (ground of belonging) to the Church, which though is diminished and incomplete, while being not just a *votum* or desire, which can ground a pagan's relation to the Church.

¹² *Acta et Documenta*, II, II, Part III: 998.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1004.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1005–06.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1006–12. In Munich, Cardinal Döpfner regularly sought the advice of Prof. Klaus Mörsdorf, the well-respected canonist of the Theology Faculty of the University of Munich. Döpfner's appeal to canon 87 may rest on Mörsdorf's article, "Der Codex Iuris Canonici und die nicht-katholischen Christen," in *Archiv für katholische Kirchenrecht* 130 (1961), 31–58.

¹⁶ At this point Bea cited, without naming the author, a sharp critique of Pius XII's teaching by Prof. Peter Brunner of Heidelberg, in his essay, "Die abendlandischen Kirchentrennung und das kommende Konzil," in *Erwägungen zum kommenden Konzil* (Würzburg, 1961), 35–50. Stjepan Schmidt identified Brunner as Bea's source, in *Augustin Bea: the Cardinal of Unity* (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992), 366, n. 119.

¹⁷ *Acta et Documenta*, II, II, Part III: 1012–16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1025–37.

¹⁹ Notes to no. 2 explain full ecclesial communion in terms of "eucharistic communion," which presupposes agreement in faith, a common sacramental life, and union in ministry. The Eucharistic focal point of full communion was being proposed, not only by Catholic writers like L. Hertling and G. Bardy, but as well by others, like N. Afanassief, J. Meyendorff, M. Thurian, W. Elert (*Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche* [Berlin, 1954]), and in documents of the World Council of Churches.

²⁰ In his written statement of April 7, 1961, indicated in n. 10, above, Philips concluded that the recognition of many spiritual goods among non-Catholic Christians must apply not only to individuals but as well to their bodies. "Most Protestant confessions profess faith in the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and redemption, while conferring baptism, promoting a spirit of prayer, etc." (p. 6). Congar's account, from the same time, urged calling the separated bodies "communions," as Augustine did regarding the Donatists. They are imperfect actualizations of the Church.

²¹ The successive versions of Ch. XI, *De oecumenismo*, are in the Archive of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome, in the papers of Fr. Jan Witte, S.J. The minutes of the November 21 argument are in the Vatican Secret Archive, Collection *Concilium Vaticanum II*, Box 745, Folder 190.

²² The drafts presented to the Central Commission are in *Acta et Documenta*, II, II, Part IV: 785–92 (SPCU, pastoral decree) and 792–800 (Theological Commission, *De ecclesia*, Ch. XI). The SPCU's pastoral text began with a brief account of the unity of the Church, which is constituted by visible and invisible *elementa*. Some elements can exist and be fruitful outside Catholic unity as means of salvation, although in an incomplete manner. Nonetheless, the separated communities are not deprived of a role in the mystery of salvation. In fact, "The Spirit of Christ does not refuse to use them as means of salvation and to generously pour out on them Himself along with gifts of faith, hope, and charity" (p. 786). The draft decree proposes the exercise of ecumenism by growth in knowledge of separated Christians, prayer for unity, and practical cooperation. Promoting ecumenism also entails renewal within the Church, growing catholicity, and conversion of heart.

²³ *Acta et Documenta*, II, II, Part III: 806–07.

²⁴ The votes are recorded in *Acta et Documenta*, II, II, Part IV: 807–12, with four members suggesting diverse re-wordings of the texts before them.

²⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Acta Synodalia*, I, Part 4: 82–83.

²⁶ The Pope's Dec. 5 "charter" for further work on the Vatican II draft texts is given in *Acta Synodalia*, I, Part 1: 96–98. I treated the overall dynamic of the Council's 1962 Period I in "Vatican II Taking Hold of Its (and Pope John's) Council Goals, September 1962–May 1962," in *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, 19, no. 1 (in the press).

²⁷ I follow the account written by Philips during his retreat in April 1963 and published in *Carnets concludaires de mgr Gérard Philips*, translated from Flemish into French and annotated by Karim Schelkens (Leuven: Maurits Sabbebibliotheek and Peeters, 2006), 83–89. Philips names as his collaborators of October in composing a revised *De ecclesia*, first, three theologians of the Preparatory Commission, Y. Congar, Carlo Colombo, and Joseph Lécuyer, and, second, K. Rahner, J. Ratzinger, O. Semmelroth, L. Cerfaux, and W. Onclin. They worked "on the quiet" since the official text of the Preparatory Commission had not been distributed. Congar's diary gives the initial outline, as shown to him by Philips on Oct. 18, and notes meetings of the theologians assisting Philips. *My Journal of the Council* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 97–98, 122, and 124.

²⁸ An early version of the Philips draft, beginning "Concilium duce Spiritu Sancto," is given by Francisco Gil Hellín in his *Concilio Vaticano II Sinopsis ... Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia Lumen gentium* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 707–715. The alternative text is preceded by a brief statement of its "Intentum" which is do what Pope John's opening discourse had called for, that is, to state the main points of ecclesiological doctrine in a fresh way, based on recent gains from exegesis, patristic studies, and theological reflection, so as to promote a

more intense religious life by Catholics, make Catholic doctrine better understood by non-Catholics, and show the Church as merciful and benevolent toward the whole human family.

²⁹ With the opening of the Council, the Preparatory Commissions ceased their work and were succeeded by Conciliar Commissions of Council members; sixteen of whom were elected on October 16, 1962, and another nine who were appointed by the Pope and announced on Oct. 29. The “Doctrinal Commission” members are listed in *Acta Synodalia*, I, Part I: 225–226 (elected) and 559–560 (appointed).

³⁰ These are given by Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 681–693 (Parente), 694–705 (Philips), 722–760 (German draft), 751–761 (French draft), and 762–845 (Chilean draft).

³¹ Philips, *Carnets conciliaires*, 92–93, relating also that on Sunday, Feb. 24, Abp. Garrone had called together four other sub-commission members (Konig, Léger, Schröffner, and Charue), who agreed on backing Philips’s text as the basis for further work, because of its mediating position between Parente and the German offering.

³² Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 708.

³³ “Haec igitur Ecclesia, vera omnium Mater et Magister, in hoc mundo ut societatis constituta est ordinata, est Ecclesia catholica, a Romano Pontificis et Episcopis in eius communione directa, licet elementa quaedam sanctificationis extra totalem compaginem inventiri possint.” Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 697 (italics added). If we ask *with whom* the added clause originated, the answer would be, probably Gustave Thils, for he was at the Belgian College among the theologians working on Philips’s text on February 26. Thils, an SPCU collaborator, knew well the Secretariat’s draft decree on Catholic ecumenism (n. 21, above) and Thils had written *Histoire doctrinale du mouvement œcuménique*, originally published in 1955, but about to come out in a new edition (Paris: Desclée & Louvain: Warny, 1963), in which he treats the ecumenical value of the notion “elements of the church” on pp. 247–259. On this topic, see Catherine Clifford’s recent study, “*Elementa ecclesiae*. A Basis for Vatican II’s Recognition of the Ecclesial Character of Non-Catholic Christian Communities,” in *La théologie catholique entre intransigeance et renouveau. La réception des mouvements préconciliaires à Vatican II*, eds. Gilles Routhier, Philippe J. Roy and Karim Schelkens (Louvain-la Neuve: Collège Érasme & Leuven: Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2011), 249–269.

³⁴ As the draft Constitution developed, the main verb *est* in this sentence was first changed to *adest* in by the sub-commission which revised Chapter I in the light of Council interventions made in October 1963. Then, *subsistit in* came to replace *adest in* in the draft presented for voting in 1964 and in the final text of *Lumen gentium*. But *subsistit in* remains elusive as to its precise import. It entered the text at the Chapter I sub-commission meeting of November 26, 1963, when Tromp proposed it, but the sub-commission members accepted it with practically no discussion of its significance in this context. The *relatio* accompanying the revised text, to explain the changes introduced, said that *subsistit in* cohered better than *est* with the *licet* clause affirming that ecclesial elements are also present elsewhere, which underscores the importance of the *licet* clause (Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 64). Alexandria von Teuffenbach has reconstructed the insertion of *subsistit in* from several partial records of the Nov. 26 meeting in *Die Bedeutung des subsistit in* (LG 8). *Zum Selbstverständnis der katholischen Kirche* (Munich: Herbert Utz, 2002), 378–388.

³⁵ Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 709–710.

³⁶ Of the speakers, thirteen spoke on behalf of others, e.g., Bp. H. Volk for 66 German and Scandinavian bishops, Card. De Barios Camara, for 53 Brazilian bishops, Bp. Grauls for 55 bishops of Burundi and Ruanda, Abp. J. Heenan for the bishops of England and Scotland and Bp. van den Burgt for 31 bishops of Indonesia. Among the written comments, five were from bishops grouped in episcopal conferences.

³⁷ Those making this proposal included Abbot Christopher Butler, O.S.B. (Downside Abbey, England) speaking on Oct. 2 (*Acta Synodalia*, II, Part I: 462); Bp. Gerard Van Velsen (Kronstad, South Africa), on Oct. 3 (*Acta Synodalia*, II, Part II: 57–58); Bp. Vladimir Malanczuk, C.Ss.R. (Ukrainian bishop in France), in a written comment (*Acta Synodalia*, II, Part 2: 178); Bp. José Pont y Gol (Sergove, Spain), also written (*Acta Synodalia*, II, Part 3: 525–527); and Bp. Maurice Baudoux (St. Boniface, Canada), speaking on Oct. 4 (*Acta Synodalia*, II, Part I: 70–71).

³⁸ This was printed in the booklet of the revised text of *De ecclesia* on which the Council members voted in Sept. 1964. My information comes from Gil Hellín, *Synopsis*, 124, as well as the minutes of the Santos sub-commission in the Vatican Secret Archive, Collection *Concilium Vaticanum II*, Box 766, Folder 306.