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A Case Study in Ecumenical Methodology: Survey and Evaluation of Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic/Protestant Solutions for Achieving Doctrinal Consensus Concerning the Marian Dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and Bodily Assumption

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A CASE STUDY IN ECUMENICAL METHODOLOGY: SURVEY AND EVALUATION

OF POST-VATICAN II ROMAN CATHOLIC/PROTESTANT SOLUTIONS FOR

ACHIEVING DOCTRINAL CONSENSUS CONCERNING THE

MARIAN DOGMAS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
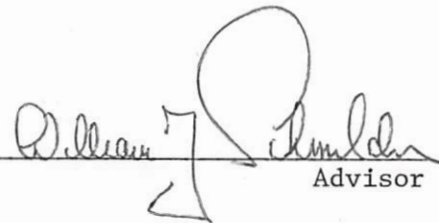
AND BODILY ASSUMPTION

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology
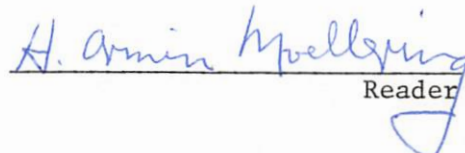
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by

Terence R. Groth

May 1983

Approved by: _____
Advisor

_____
Reader

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CHAPTER I

PROLEGOMENA

Rationale for the Study

The Second Vatican Council has been viewed by both Roman

Catholics and Protestants as a turning point in the history of Roman

Catholic/Protestant church relations. For reasons which will be cited

later, since that time ecumenical activities between Rome and the

"separated brethren" (as Protestants have come to be called) have seen

a steady increase. Rome and several major branches of the Reformation

churches have begun in earnest official dialogues concerning disputed

doctrines. Joint worship services have been held upon occasion, and

joint participation of Roman and Protestant clergy in mixed marriage

ceremonies is frequent.

Of special interest to Lutherans is the fact that the various

Lutheran churches have been among those upon whom Rome has particularly

focused ecumenical attention. Thus, to date, official Lutheran/Roman

Catholic dialogues in the United States have discussed The Status of

the Nicene Creed as Dogma of the Church (Dialogue I), One Baptism for

the Remission of Sins (Dialogue II), The Eucharist as Sacrifice (Dia-

logue III), Eucharist and Ministry (Dialogue IV), Papal Primacy and

the Universal Church (Dialogue V), and Teaching Authority &

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Infallibility in the Church (Dialogue VI).[1] In addition, Lutherans and

Catholic scholars have "unofficially" engaged in a discussion of the

possibilities for Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession.[2]

Moreover, in 1980, the year of the celebration of the four-hundred and

fiftieth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession and four-hundredth

anniversary of the Book of Concord, notices of joint Roman Catholic/

Lutheran observances of these confessional documents and local dialogues

concerning them appeared in the news regularly. Especially noteworthy

in the United States was the joint celebration of the presentation of

the Augsburg Confession on June 25, 1980, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in

New York City. On the local level, joint Reformation observances

abounded, and many Catholic and Lutheran lay people participated in

fraternal discussions. In short, the current ecclesiastical scene has

exhibited a frenzy of ecumenical activities between Roman Catholics and

Protestants, and in the year of 1980, particularly between Roman Catho-

lics and Lutherans.

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[1]See Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, eds., Lutherans and
Catholics in Dialogue I-III (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House,
[1967]; Idem, eds., Eucharist & Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in
Dialogue IV (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979); Idem, eds.,
Papal Primacy and the Universal Church: Lutherans and Catholics in
Dialogue V (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974); and Paul C.
Empie, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., Teaching Author-
ity & Infallibility in the Church: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue
VI (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978).
   Paul C. Empie gives some helpful background for and personal in-
sights into the workings of these dialogues in his book Lutherans and
Catholics in Dialogue: Personal Notes for a Study, ed. Raymond
Tiemeyer, with a Foreword by William Cardinal Baum (Philadelphia:
Fortress Press, 1981).

[2]Joseph A. Burgess, ed., The Role of the Augsburg Confession:
Catholic and Lutheran Views (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

While all of this ecumenical activity has helped both churches to come to a better understanding of each other and to achieve more benevolent attitudes, at the same time it has revealed the very serious doctrinal differences that separate Rome from the churches of the Reformation. For example, doctrinal differences over papal primacy, papal infallibility, and the dogmas concerning the blessed Virgin Mary continue to pose serious obstacles to reunion. Thus, it has become apparent that for the ecumenical movement to progress beyond the achievement of feelings of good will and mutual appreciation, a method of overcoming major doctrinal differences is necessary.

This necessity has been recognized by all who are seriously working toward the reunion of Rome and the Reformation churches. Several methods are being applied now in earnest to the major doctrinal obstacles by a variety of theologians. Some success has been achieved, and proponents of these methods are pressing onward.

In light of these developments it seems apparent that the church has a need to take cognizance of these methods and evaluate them to determine which, if any, are legitimate approaches to the problem of achieving doctrinal consensus in the church today. That, in short, is the burden of this study.

In the scope of this study the application of these methods to every major doctrinal obstacle now being tackled cannot be observed. Therefore, it was decided to focus attention upon one area of major disagreement which both Roman Catholics and Protestants agree is an obstacle which must be overcome if these churches are ever to be

reunited. That area of disagreement is Mariology, or the doctrine con-

cerning the blessed Virgin Mary.

Mariology has been chosen as a focus in this study of the

methods currently employed to achieve doctrinal consensus for two

reasons.

First, there is widespread agreement among contemporary theo-

logians and ecumenical scholars that the doctrine concerning the blessed

Virgin Mary is in itself a focal point of the doctrinal differences that

separate the church of Rome from the Protestant church. For example,

the Lutheran theologian K. E. Skydsgaard has observed:

> There is probably no place where the difference between the two
> understandings of Christianity becomes so plain as in their differ-
> ing conceptions of the Virgin Mary. Evangelical theology knows
> that this teaching point of Romanism has often been distorted, and
> knows that it has the duty to clarify the Roman insights on this
> point as authentically and as reliably as possible. But as Evan-
> gelical theology gains insight into the Roman view of this question,
> and sees how completely penetrating the role of Mariology is and how
> intimately it is knit into the deepest motives in Roman Catholicism,
> it grows in understanding how different the Evangelical and the
> Roman Catholic traditions are.[3]

Somewhat less irenically, Karl Barth too has identified Mariology as the

focal point of crucial problems which represents a different theological

stance by Protestants and Catholics:

> Marian dogma is neither more nor less than the critical, central
> dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, the dogma from the standpoint
> of which all their important positions are to be regarded and by
> which they stand or fall. . . . In the doctrine and worship of Mary
> there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church
> which explains all the rest. The "mother of God" of Roman Catholic
> Marian dogma is quite simply the principle, type and essence of the
> human creature cooperating servantlike (ministerialiter) in its own

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[3]K. E. Skydsgaard, One in Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,
1957), p. 207.

redemption on the basis of prevenient grace, and to that extent the principle, type and essence of the Church.[4]

Protestant scholars are not the only ones who have made this observation.

Thomas A. O'Meara, O.P., has likewise noted:

> Why the great ecumenical importance of Marian theology? <u>Because the basic dogmatic differences which split Christianity since Martin Luther are not eclipsed by Mary; they are centered in her.</u> She is a prism through which the light of theology passes, dividing into colors; and these colors are important, basic, and controversial principles of Catholic theology. Not only the problems of grace and justification, of the Church and of Scripture are found in the spectrum, but the concepts of revelation and tradition, of the Bible and magisterial infallibility, of human and divine causality of the Incarnation are there too.[5]

Finally, one may cite John A. Hardon, S.J., who agrees concerning the central role of Mariology in ecumenism when he remarks:

> One of the less-known aspects of ecumenism, the Church's teaching about Mary, is actually the keystone of the world movement for Christian unity.
> The reason is obvious. Marian doctrine and practice in the Church focus attention on those crucial areas of Christianity in which Protestants mainly differ from Roman Catholicism, and where the Eastern Orthodox are most nearly like Rome.[6]

These witnesses should suffice to exhibit the general agreement that Mariology is indeed the key to understanding and discussing the crucial problems involved in Roman Catholic/Protestant ecumenism today.

The second reason for zeroing in on Mariology as one observes contemporary methods of achieving doctinal consensus is the increasing

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[4]Karl Barth, <u>Church Dogmatics</u>, 4 vols. and Index, eds., G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956-69), vol. 1, pt. 2: <u>The Doctrine of the Word of God</u>, trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight, p. 143.

[5]Thomas A. O'Meara, <u>Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology</u> (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 24.

[6]John A. Hardon, <u>The Catholic Catechism</u> (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1975), p. 164.

attention this problem is receiving in ecumenical studies and dialogues.
For example, in 1967 the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary
was founded in England, and in 1976 the Ecumenical Society of the
Blessed Virgin Mary of the United States began to meet. Both of these
groups, composed of Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox meet
regularly to hear and respond to papers on Mariology and ecumenism.
More well known is the collaborative Progestant/Roman Catholic study
<u>Mary in the New Testament</u>, published in 1978, which will be examined
later in this investigation.[7] Even more recently, in May of 1980, twelve
Protestant church bodies from ten Eastern and Western European countries
met in Bensheim, Federal Republic of Germany, to address the topic
"Mariology and Ecumenism." Some within this group expressed a desire
to begin official theological dialogue between Catholics and Protestants
on this topic. Although no such "official" dialogue has begun yet, the
need for such is becoming increasingly apparent. For these reasons
this study will focus attention on the problem of overcoming doctrinal
differences between Protestants and Catholics concerning Mariology.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Objectives of the Study</h2>

While the objectives of this study already have been stated
somewhat implicitly, it may be helpful for the sake of clarity to do so
in a more explicit fashion at this point. This will be done by way of
delineating the general guiding objective of the study, and three sub-
ordinate objectives which are necessary to achieve the overall goal.

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[7]Raymond E. Brown, et al., eds., <u>Mary in the New Testament</u>
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

On the basis of the rationale cited above, the guiding objective of this study is to determine a legitimate ecumenical methodology whereby the contemporary church can resolve doctrinal differences.

In order to achieve this objective three contributing objectives will be pursued. The first is to set forth illustrated examples of the basic contemporary approaches of Roman Catholics and Protestants to achieving doctrinal consensus concerning disputed doctrines. The second objective is to evaluate these approaches both subjectively and objectively—that is, both in terms of the intra-/inter-church consensus they precipitate and in terms of an objective standard. Inasmuch as this writer is committed to the Lutheran Confessions of the Book of Concord as a correct exhibition of the teaching of Scripture, these will be employed as the objective standard by which to evaluate the illustrated methods. Thirdly, the goal is to focus attention specifically upon the problem of the Marian dogmas in achieving the above objectives.

Methodology of the Study

In investigating the problem of this research, the study proceeded on an inductive basis. Research began by posing the question: How can Roman Catholics and Protestants achieve doctrinal consensus concerning the doctrine of Mary? Next, the writings of a variety of contemporary Roman Catholics and Protestants on Mariology were explored to observe how individuals were approaching the problem. On the basis of these explorations patterns emerged which were grouped into three basic approaches or methods. However, in explicating the results of this research the study organizes the data in a deductive structure.

The study will begin in chapter two with a description of the above-mentioned problem, namely: How can the contemporary Roman Catholic and Protestant churches achieve doctrinal consensus concerning the Marian dogmas? In order to define the problem, the historical context which precipitated it will first be sketched. It is also at this point that the Marian dogmas will be explicitly defined. Then it will be indicated how the problem was brought to its present state of affairs by the Second Vatican Council which set the wheels in motion for achieving a resolution of this problem and signalled possible methods for doing this.

Chapters four to six will set forth the bulk of the product of the research in terms of three methods believed to describe the basic approaches employed in ecumenical methodology today. Each chapter will treat one of the following three methods which will be defined at that time: 1) the historical-critical method; 2) the constructive method; and 3) the confessional method. At the beginning of each chapter its method will be generally described. Following this, specific practitioners of the method, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, will be illustrated. In addition, with respect to the first method, the collaborative work Mary in the New Testament will be examined.

Finally, having exhibited the basic approaches to the problem, or methods of resolution, chapter seven will evaluate them in terms of the two criteria previously mentioned--that is, 1) the inter-/intra-church consensus each method precipitates; and 2) the ecumenical principles exhibited in the Lutheran Confessions as they deal with

Mariology. In light of this evaluation, determination will be made
as to which method/s is/are legitimate.

Limitations of the Study

A study such as proposed here must obviously work within cer-
tain limitations. Two such boundaries have already been noted. To
repeat, instead of examining the application of ecumenical methodology
to every doctrinal obstacle between Roman Catholics and Protestants,
the crucial problem of Mariology has been selected inasmuch as it re-
flects all the major areas of doctrinal conflict. It has also been
qualified that the evaluation of methods in terms of the Lutheran Con-
fessions will be made on the basis of the ecumenical principles they
exhibit in dealing specifically with Mariology, rather than ecumenical
principles in general.

Yet there is a need to mark perimeters even further. Parti-
cularly it is necessary to delimit which facets of Mariology will be
considered. With the definition of the term "Mariology" as the
doctrine concerning the blessed Virgin Mary, already excluded from
consideration is the problem of Mary in the worship life and pious
practice of the Roman church--what some Protestants have referred to
as "Mariolatry." In addition, it has also been stated that the
focus of attention will be on the Marian dogmas.[8] Thus, also outside

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[8]The New Catholic Encyclopedia defines dogma thus:
"Today dogma is widely used in a strict sense, for all and
only those truths that have been revealed by God and proposed as such
by the Church for belief by the faithful, that is, those things that
Vatican Council I . . . maintains have to believed on divine and Catho-
lic faith. Thus denial of dogma is heresy. To be a dogma in this
strict technical sense, the truth in question has to be part of the

the scope of this study are the very significant and prevalent <u>pious</u>

<u>beliefs</u> about Mary.[9]

The dogmas concerning the Virgin Mary are four, treating her:

1) divine maternity; 2) perpetual virginity; 3) immaculate conception;

and 4) bodily assumption. Definitions for these will be provided later.

Here the intention is to inform that, for the most part, the concern

will be with only the latter two--that is, the immaculate conception

and bodily assumption of Mary. There are a couple of reasons for this.

First, all orthodox Christians profess the doctrine of the divine

maternity of Mary, with the result that this teaching in itself pre-

sents no ecumenical difficulty. Secondly, most orthodox Christians

would also agree that the perpetual virginity of Mary <u>may</u> be piously

held by any Christian, although most would also insist that this

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public revelation. (Thus truths privately revealed are not dogmas.)
Moreover, it has to be declared by the Church's authority to be be-
lieved as revealed. Since dogma is proposed for men's belief as
revealed, it is the object of divine faith and is to be distinguished
from those other truths that the Church proposes but not precisely as
revealed." S.v. "Dogma," by M. E. Williams.

[9]With respect to pious beliefs Stephen Benko asserts:
"Marian theology and piety are not influenced or determined solely by
the dogmas promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church and made binding
upon the faithful as necessary for salvation. There are, in addition
to the dogmas, a number of theses which, although they are neither
formulated doctrines nor is belief in them binding, constitute a body
of 'pious beliefs.' These theses are particularly important, for they
constitute the lines along which possible future Marian dogmas may
develop. The five theses are:
        1. Mary is Coredemptrix with Christ.
        2. Mary is Mediatrix.
        3. Mary is Dispensatrix of All Graces.
        4. Mary is Queen of Heaven.
        5. Mary is Prototype of the Church."
<u>Protestants, Catholics, and Mary</u> (Falley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1968),
p. 46.

doctrine cannot be definitively established from Scripture. Yet, since belief in Mary's perpetual virginity does not conflict with Scripture, this dogma too does not pose an insurmountable barrier. However, the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption do pose serious problems for most Protestants since they go far beyond the Biblical data and even may be seen to contradict its witness. For this reason the study will primarily restrict its attention to them. For reasons which will be explained later, though, the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity and perpetual virginity will also be included in the illustration of the first method--that is, the historical-critical approach.

Finally, in connection with Mariology it should also be noted that not under consideration is the problem as it is exhibited between the Roman Catholic church and the Eastern church, since its nature there is dissimilar from that which exists between Rome and the Reformation churches.

Lastly, something needs to be said about the choice of theologians made to illustrate the various methods. Anyone familiar with the area of Mariology realizes that the number of works on this topic rivals that on Christology. Obviously some selectivity is thus necessitated. As the title of the thesis indicates, the intent of this research is to address the contemporary church scene. Therefore, the investigation has been restricted to works published during and after the Second Vatican Council. However, even these would be far too numerous to treat individually. Thus, those authors were selected who have dealt most extensively with the concern of the study and who are

representative of their respective churches. Among the Protestant
churches investigation has been limited to representatives of the
Lutheran, Reformed (in general), and Anglican churches. Where appro-
priate, additional representatives are mentioned in footnotes.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECUMENICAL PROBLEM

OF THE MARIAN DOGMAS

Introduction

As was stated in the first chapter, the most specific goal of

this research is to find a solution to the ecumenical problem: How can

the contemporary Roman Catholic and Protestant churches achieve doctri-

nal consensus concerning the Marian dogmas? Before proceeding to

illustrate and evaluate solutions, it is necessary to define more pre-

cisely the nature of the problem as well as to indicate the impetus for

its contemporary expression and contours of resolution. The first half

of this goal is the burden of this chapter. Here a more precise defi-

nition of the problem will be achieved by describing in somewhat broad

strokes the historical process which precipitated it. In the next

chapter, the impetus for the contemporary expression of the problem

and possible contours of its resolution will be sought in an examination

of pertinent documents of the Second Vatican Council, and responses to

these documents.

The Historical Process Precipitating the Ecumenical Problem of the Marian Dogmas

The introduction and phrasing of the above subheading make it

clear that the attempt will not be made here to provide a detailed

history of the development of Marian doctrine in general, nor even the

Marian dogmas in particular. Such a detailed historical description

is beyond the scope of this study, and many such historical studies of

Marian doctrine are already available.[1] Briefly, the intention here is

simply to exhibit that an ecumenical problem of doctrinal non-consensus

between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches concerning the

blessed Virgin Mary is the result of the former church's development

and promulgation over the years of four Marian dogmas, without a paral-

lel doctrinal development in the latter church.[2] Thus, following is an

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[1]The perhaps definitive historical study of Marian doctrine by
a Roman Catholic is: Hilda Graef, Mary: A History of Doctrine and
Devotion, 2 vols. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963-65). A thorough and
careful study (particularly of the Greek patristic period) by a Protes-
tant scholar is: Walter Delius, Geschichte der Marien Verehrung
(Munich: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1963). Paul F. Palmer provides a con-
cise collection of some of the most pertinent ecclesiastical writings
on Mary in Mary in the Documents of the Church (Westminister, MD:
Newman Press, 1952). For an extensive bibliography of some of the best
historical studies of Marian doctrine, see Eamon R. Carroll, Understand-
ing the Mother of Jesus (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979), pp. 133
-38.

[2]Several parenthetical remarks need to be made here regarding
this thesis statement for the chapter.
First, in this chapter and throughout the study, the term "Protes-
tant church" is used in the collective sense of all those non-Roman
Catholic Christian churches whose origins lie in the Protestant Refor-
mation.
Secondly, this study will operate with the following definition of
the term "dogma":
Dogma in the sense in which the term is used nowadays in the Church
and in theology (a usage which only became definite and universal
in the 18th century) is a proposition which is the object of fides
divina et catholica, in other words, one which the Church explicitly
propounds as revealed by God . . . in such a way that its denial is
condemned by the Church as heresy and anathematized. . . . It may
be so propounded either by the ordinary and universal magisterium
or by a papal or conciliar definition. . . .
Two elements are therefore required formally to constitute a
dogma. a) A proposition must be set forth by the Church explicitly
and definitively as a revealed truth (formal element). This does

historical sketch contrasting the development of the Marian dogmas in

Roman Catholic theology with the non-development of Marian doctrine in

Protestant theology.

The Development of the Marian Dogmas
in Roman Catholic Theology

In Roman Catholic theology to date, four dogmas concerning the

blessed Virgin Mary have been promulgated. These are: 1) the divine

maternity of Mary; 2) the perpetual virginity of Mary; 3) the immacu-

late conception of Mary; and 4) the bodily assumption of Mary. The

study will turn now to defining each of these dogmas in turn and briefly

tracing their development in Roman Catholic theology.

The divine maternity

The dogma of the divine maternity of Mary simply affirms that

since Jesus is both God and man in one person, and since Mary gave

birth to Jesus, the God-Man, then she should rightly be called the

"mother of God" or theotokos. The dogma does not mean that Mary

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not necessarily require an express definition. b) This proposition
must belong to divine, public and official Christian revelation (in
contrast to private revelation). Consequently, it must be contained
in the word of God addressed to us in Scripture and/or tradition
(material element).
Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, s.v., "Dogma. I. Theo-
logical Meaning of Dogma," by Karl Rahner. For a parallel definition,
see New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Dogma," by M. E. Williams.
Third, in a very summary fashion, it needs to be observed here, by
way of anticipation, that in its most proper sense, the dogma of Mary's
divine maternity (see text for definition) cannot be included in a con-
trast between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. This truth
is clearly taught in Scripture, was held by the universal catholic
church before the Reformation, and was affirmed by the churches of the
Reformation. The doctrine is also professed by both churches today,
with the important qualification noted in the text.

generated God in His aseity, or the divine Logos, the second Person of
the Trinity, in His divine nature. Rather, it is a Christological
affirmation, based upon the communication of attributes in Jesus Christ.
As a dogma, binding upon the faithful, it was first officially formu-
lated and approved at the ecumenical council in Ephesus in 431.

The reason for the qualification noted above (see footnote 2)
can now be traced, exhibiting why the history of this dogma both does
and does not belong to a discussion of the historical process leading
to the current ecumenical problem of the Marian dogmas. First, two
reasons will be given for why the dogma as originally formulated is
accepted by the Protestant church. Then it will be shown in what sense
the dogma is not accepted by Protestants, and, thus, contributes to the
present doctrinal disagreement concerning Mary, and consequent ecumeni-
cal standoff.

First, it needs to be noted, however briefly, that this dogma
is wholly grounded in Scripture, and was, therefore, believed already
in apostolic times, even though it was not technically formulated. For
the New Testament clearly teaches both that Mary is the mother of Jesus
and that Jesus is God. From these two facts, it was clear also to the
early church that Mary was the mother of God.

For example, already in the infancy narratives of Matthew and
Luke (See Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2) the two necessary premises for the
deduction are explicit. Thus, Matthew reports:

> An angel of the Lord appeared to him [Joseph] in a dream, saying,
> "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that
> which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a
> son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people
> from their sins" (1:20-21).

Likewise, Luke's account of the annunciation leaves no doubt concerning

either the identity of Jesus' mother or His divinity:

> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have
> found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb
> and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.
> > He will be great, and will be called
> > the Son of the Most High;
> > and the Lord God will give to him
> > the throne of his father David,
> > and he will reign over the house of
> > Jacob for ever;
> > and of his kingdom there will be no end."
> And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no
> husband?" And the angel said to her,
> > "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
> > and the power of the Most High will
> > overshadow you;
> > therefore the child to be born will be
> > called holy, the Son of God" (1:30-34).

The inherent deduction that Mary is the mother of God seems to have been

evident to Elizabeth, as she exclaimed to Mary, "Why is this granted me,

that the mother of my Lord [ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου] should come to me?"

(Luke 1:43). The same deduction was also apparently clear to St. Paul

when he wrote to the churches of Galatia, "When the time had fully come,

God sent forth his Son, born of a woman" (4:4).

Therefore, because the above definition of Mary's divine mater-

nity is plainly taught in Scripture, it was not disputed by the churches

of the Reformation (whose theology was claimed to be sola Scriptura),

and is held by orthodox Protestants to this day (with the qualifica-

tions by the Reformed churches which will be explained below).

Secondly, the immediate historical context of the official

formulation and promulgation of the term theotokos needs to be re-

counted to understand how the term was initially intended to be

employed. For herein lies the distinction between the Roman Catholic and Protestant profession of this dogma.

The context is, of course, the Nestorian controversy with its resolution at the council of Ephesus. Nestorius became Patriarch of Constantinople in 428. Faced with the great Christological issue of his time--explaining the union of the divine and human natures in Christ--Nestorius was inclined toward the understanding of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, one of the great theologians and Biblical scholars of the Antiochene school, under whom Nestorius probably studied.[3] Nestorius contended that through the meditation of the Holy Spirit Mary gave birth to a man who was in a unique and extraordinary sense an organ for the divinity, and that in this man the divine Logos took up His abode as in a temple. The union of the natures is, thus, only moral. In this schema, although the activity of the two natures harmonizes, the natures are not rooted in a single divine person; rather the human nature has a quasi-person of its own which is loosely linked to the divine nature and person. In other words, Christ is really two persons: one divine, the other human. This entails a denial of the communication of idioms in Christ. Accordingly, Nestorius openly proclaimed that Mary was not the mother of God, _theotokos_, but merely the mother of the human Christ, _Christotokos_. Nestorius was vigorously opposed by Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria (since 403). Cyril's second letter to Nestorius (403), in which he defends the propriety of

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[3]Graef, _Mary_, 1:101.

referring to Mary as _theotokos_, was read and approved at the ecumenical

council in Ephesus in 431. Nestorius was proclaimed a heretic and

excommunicated.

Thus, it is evident that the declaration of the council of

Ephesus, with its approval of the term _theotokos_, was primarily _Christo-

logical_, intended to ensure the truth about the incarnation and the

incarnate Christ--that is, that Jesus Christ is the God-Man, _one_ _Person_

with _two_ _natures_, divine and human. The term _theotokos_ was meant to

affirm the communication of idioms, insisting that Mary was not only

Christotokos, the mother of Christ, but _theotokos_, the mother of God.

Understood as a _Christological_ doctrine, defending the orthodox

Christology of the Scriptures and ancient church, the formulation of

the council of Ephesus has been fully supported by the Protestant

church, as far as it has remained orthodox. Thus, in this sense, the

dogma of Mary's divine maternity is fully agreed upon by both the Roman

Catholic and Protestant churches, and causes no ecumenical difficulty.

Disagreement over this dogma has arisen, however, in that the

Roman Catholic church has pushed the dogma beyond its original Christo-

logical intent to make it a first principle from which to develop an

ever increasingly fleshed-out Mariology. In other words, the dogma

whose original focus was _Christological_ has become _Mariological_. This

development is intentional and explicit as noted by a Roman Catholic

theologian, Thomas A. O'Meara:

> The principle which most Catholic theologians place as the founda-
> tion for Marian theology--the doctrine of the Divine Maternity--is

held by great segments of Protestantism. But, while Protestant theology stops here, Catholic theology goes further.[4]

According to O'Meara, Roman Catholic theology "baptizes reason" and from the basic principle of Mary's divine maternity then "draws the logical conclusions."[5] Another Roman scholar places less emphasis upon the logic, but is nonetheless certain that all Marian doctrine is legitimately based upon Mary's divine motherhood:

> The fundamental truth is the virginal motherhood of Mary. All the other Mariological assertions can be derived from this, not with logical necessity but as a well-founded development. The fundamental grace given to Mary was embodied in each of her actions in the history of salvation.[6]

Thus, from the starting point of Mary's divine maternity, it is argued that she has a special relationship to each of the three Persons of the holy Trinity as well as to the church (making her worthy of special honor, hyperdulia), and that she was ever-virgin, immaculately conceived, and bodily assumed into heaven.[7] In this sense, then, as a Mariological principle upon which to develop further Marian dogmas, the dogma of Mary's divine maternity has traditionally been rejected by the

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[4]Thomas A. O'Meara, Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), pp. 47-48.

[5]Ibid., p. 54.

[6]Sacramentum Mundi, s.v. "Mariology. I. Biblical," by Michael Schmaus.

[7]For a concise summary of this reasoning, observed by a Protestant scholar, see Stephen Benko, Protestants, Catholics, and Mary (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1968), pp. 28-30. A detailed discussion of the basic Marian principle and its applications is given by the Roman Catholic theologian M. J. Scheeben, Mariology, 2 vols., trans. T. L. M. J. Geukers (St. Louis and London: B. Herder Book Co., 1946-47), 1:132-83. A shorter discussion is provided by O'Meara, Mary, pp. 45-57.

Protestant church, creating a fissure between the two churches that has

widened with each new promulgation of Marian dogma.

The perpetual virginity

Contributing to the widening gap between Protestants and Roman

Catholics over Marian doctrine was the formal promulgation of Mary's

perpetual virginity at the Lateran Council of 649 under Pope Martin I.

Canon 3 of this council decreed:

> If any one do not truly and rightly confess with the Fathers that
> the holy, ever virginal and immaculate Mary is Mother of God, since
> in recent days she really and truly conceived, without seed, by the
> Holy Ghost, the same divine Word who was born before all time and
> gave birth to him in chastity, her virginity remaining unimpaired
> after the birth--condemnatus sit.[8]

A Protestant scholar, Stephen Benko, has clearly outlined the three

theses contained in this dogma. The dogma affirms that Mary:

1. was a virgin before the conception of Jesus took place, and
   that this conception occurred both without natural human in-
   semination, and without any violation of Mary's virginity
   [ante partum];
2. remained a virgin during the birth of Jesus. In the process
   of the baby's passing through the normal birth channel, the
   hymen of Mary remained unperforated and intact [in partu];
3. had no other children after the birth of Jesus, and although
   she lived in marriage with Joseph, there was no sexual rela-
   tionship between them [post partum].[9]

The first thesis causes no problems with the Protestant church,

inasmuch as this is the belief of all orthodox Christians, based upon

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[8]Josef Neuner and Heinrich Roos, compilers, The Teaching of
the Catholic Church as Contained in Her Documents, ed. Karl Rahner,
trans. Geoffrey Stevens (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967), p. 163.
For the original, see Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer, eds.,
Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et
Morum, 33rd ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1965), p. 172.

[9]Benko, Protestants, Catholics, and Mary, p. 30.

the clear Scripture passages of Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:26-35, and confessed in the ecumenical creeds. It has been part of the New Testament church's confession from its origin.

For the second thesis, however, there is no Scripture which speaks definitively "for" or "against." Thus, the Roman Catholic dogmatization of this aspect of Mary's virginity relies upon tradition. Patristic evidence for the belief in the early centuries is sparse. Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and possibly Ignatius held to it.[10] Tertullian denied it in no uncertain terms.[11] The first explicit formulation of Mary's virginity in partu is in the letter of the Synod of Milan to Pope Siricius in 390.[12] In 449 Pope St. Leo the Great asserted his belief in the doctrine in a letter to Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, in preparation for the Council of Chalcedon.[13] As mentioned above, at the Lateran Council in 649 the virginal parturition was included in this synod's formal definition of the maternity of Mary. From this time, Mary's virginitas in partu was scarcely questioned until the beginnings of rationalist thought following the emergence of the Protestant reformers. Then, in 1555 Pope Paul IV reiterated the position of the 649 Lateran Council, condemning the denial of Mary's virginity in, during, and after the birth of Jesus.[14]

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[10]New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v., "Virgin Birth," by Louis Gerard Owens.

[11]Giovanni Miegge, The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine, trans. Waldo Smith, with a Foreword by John A. Mackay (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 39.

[12]New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Virgin Birth."

[13]Denzinger and Schönmetzer, Enchiridion Symbolorum, pp. 102-3.

[14]Ibid., p. 427.

The Roman Catholic church's <u>affirmation</u> of Mary's virginity during the birth of Jesus does not in and of itself cause doctrinal disharmony with the Protestant church. For, many Protestants too will grant its feasability.[15] But such Protestants nonetheless maintain that this belief must remain an open question inasmuch as the Scriptures do not address the issue. Therefore, it is the Roman Catholic <u>dogmatization</u> of this belief--its insistence that the doctrine has been divinely revealed in tradition, and must be believed on pain of condemnation--that has caused the belief to become a point of doctrinal contention and basis of ecumenical division.

The third thesis in the definition of Mary's perpetual virginity, that Mary remained a virgin the rest of her life after the birth of Jesus (<u>post partum</u>), holds a status in the ecumenical context similar to that of the belief in <u>virginitas in partu</u>: while there is no certain Scriptural support for it (in fact, there seems to be sound Biblical evidence against it), there is support in tradition.

Inasmuch as Mary's <u>virginitas post partum</u> has long been inveighed against on the basis of Scriptural arguments, these contentions bear reviewing. The exegetical arguments fall into two groups. The weaker group consists of those refutations based upon such words as ἕως (Matt. 1:25), πρίν (Matt. 1:18), and πρωτότοκος (Luke 2:7) which are

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[15]For example, the Lutheran dogmatician Francis Pieper explained: "Distinct from the Scriptural doctrine of Christ's virgin birth is the question whether Mary gave birth to the Son of God 'with closed womb' (<u>clauso utero</u>). The Lutheran dogmaticians leave this question undecided, but declare that the '<u>clauso utero</u>' is possible because of the communication of divine attributes and Christ's illocal mode of subsistence." <u>Christian Dogmatics</u>, 4 vols., trans. Theodore Engelder, et al. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-57), 2:307.

claimed to indicate that Mary must have borne further children. The
stronger group contains all the arguments based upon texts which refer
to Jesus' ἀδελφοί (Matt. 12:46; Mark 3:31; 6:3; Luke 8:20; John 2:12;
7:3, 5, 10; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 1:19) and ἀδελφαί (Mark 3:32;
6:3). The reasoning is that the most natural and primary understanding
of ἀδελφός and ἀδελφή is literal "brother" and "sister," respec-
tively. This would necessitate that Mary gave birth to other children
after the birth of Jesus. Against the first group of arguments, pro-
ponents favoring Mary's virginitas post partum contend that none of
these words speaks at all about what followed. In response to the
second group of Biblical refutations, it is proposed that ἀδελφός and
ἀδελφή refer to: 1) kinsmen, on the grounds that this is what the
words sometimes meant in Jewish society; 2) children of Joseph by a pre-
vious marriage; or 3) children of another Mary and of Cleophas.[16] On
the basis of the Scriptural evidence, then, it seems a case may be made
for leaving the issue an open question, although the writer of this
study believes the Biblical evidence more strongly supports the conten-
tion that Mary gave birth to other children after Jesus.

As was the case with the doctrine of virginitas in partu, since
no absolute case for virginitas post partum can be made from Scripture,
the Roman Catholic dogmatization of the belief relied upon tradition.
Although Tertullian denied it, Origen (212), on the basis of his theology

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[16]For a review of the exegetical problem and argumentation
against the virginitas post partum by a Lutheran, see Norman P. Wangerin,
"The Brethren of the Lord and Their Relation to Jesus" (S.T.M. thesis,
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1949). A summary of the defense in favor
of the doctrine given by the Roman Catholic Marian scholar Juniper B.
Carol is Fundamentals of Mariology (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1956),
pp. 153-56.

of the incarnation, argued that anybody with a sound Mariology would say Mary had no child but Jesus.[17] Fourth century supporters of the doctrine include Hilary of Poitiers, Basil the Great, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Zeno of Verona.[18] By the middle of the fourth century the term _semper virgo_ was spreading rapidly. When Helvidius and Jovinian denied Mary's _post partum_ virginity, Jerome responded in 383 with a theological and exegetical defense that is still considered a classic work on the topic.[19] When Bonosus, Bishop of Naissus (ca. 390), renewed the denial, St. Ambrose defended the belief and was influential in securing the condemnation of Bonosus by the bishops of Illyria.[20] The triple foumula of Mary's virginity before, in, and after Jesus' birth was standard usage in Augustine as well.[21] Further, as noted above, in 449 Pope St. Leo the Great addressed a dogmatic let-ter to the Emperor Flavian in which he set forth his teaching against Eutyches concerning the blessed Virgin Mary. Included in his teaching was the affirmation of Mary's perpetual virginity.[22] Leo's letter was

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[17]O'Meara, _Mary_, p. 71.

[18]_New Catholic Encyclopedia_, s.v. "Virgin Birth."

[19]See St. Jerome _Adversus Helvidium_, _Patrologiae Patrum Latin-orum_, 23, 193-216.

[20]See St. Ambrose _De Institutione Virginis_, chapter 5, n. 35, _Patrologiae Patrum Latinorum_, 16, 328.

[21]See, e.g., St. Augustine _Sermo 196_, n. 1, _Patrologiae Patrum Latinorum_, 38, 1019.

[22]Palmer, _Mary in the Documents of the Church_, pp. 30-31.

read and accepted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451.[23] Finally, also

as indicated above, Mary's virginity _ante partum_, _in partu_, and _post

partum_ was conjointly defined at the Lateran Council of 649.[24]

Like the doctrine of Mary's _virginitas in partu_, the belief in

her _virginitas post partum_, is not, in and of itself, a stumbling block

to doctrinal unity concerning the blessed Virgin Mary. For, this doc-

trine too has been held by many Protestants.[25] However, once again,

the point of contention is that the Roman Catholic church with its

dogmatization of the doctrine insists that it _must_ be believed for sal-

vation, while the Protestant church holds that it is an open exegetical

question. In this respect, the promulgation of Mary's _virginitas in

partu_ and _post partum_ as dogma by the Roman Catholic church has contri-

buted to the doctrinal and ecumenical cleavage between the Roman

Catholic and Protestant churches.

The immaculate conception

The dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary was promulgated

by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1954 on his own initiative. In the bull

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[23]_New Catholic Encyclopedia_, s.v. "Virgin Birth." See also
Encyclopedia Britannica. Macropaedia, 15th ed., s.v. "Mary," by J. J.
Pelikan.

[24]Other significant factors cited by some scholars as contribut-
ing to the development of the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity are
the growth of the ascetic ideal in the church and the proliferation of
apocryphal literature, especially the _Protevangelium of James_, designed
to fill in the Biblical gaps with information about Jesus' parents and
childhood. See _Encyclopedia Britannica. Macropaedia_, "Mary"; and
Miegge, _Virgin Mary_, pp. 47-52.

[25]For example, see the defense of this doctrine by the Lutheran
dogmatician Francis Pieper in _Christian Dogmatics_, 2:308-9. Cf. also
the discussion below on Marian doctrine in the writings of the Reformers
and the classic Protestant confessions.

Ineffabilis Deus he proclaimed:

> We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds
> that the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her
> Conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty
> God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the
> human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is
> a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and
> constantly by all the faithful.
> Hence, if anyone shall dare—which God forbid:— to think other-
> wise than as has been defined by Us, let him know and understand
> that he is condemned by his own judgment; that he has suffered ship-
> wreck in the faith; that he has separated from the unity of the
> Church; and that, furthermore, by his own action he incurs the
> penalties established by law if he should dare to express in words
> or writing or by any other outward means the errors he thinks in
> his heart.[26]

This dogma asserts that Mary was conceived in the normal way, but with-

out contracting original sin. "By conception Catholic theology means

that first moment of time in which the soul is created by God and

infused into the body prepared for it by the parents."[27]   Thus, from

the first moment of Mary's existence as a person (being of body and

soul) she was never under the domination of Satan or subject to sin,

but was in complete harmony with God's will. It follows that because

she was without sin in herself, she also never committed any sin during

her lifetime. Positively speaking, the dogma of Mary's immaculate con-

ception means that from her inception the mother of God was "full of

grace." This pleroma of grace is said to consist of perfect internal

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[26]Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, eds., Papal Teachings: Our
Lady, trans. Daughters of St. Paul (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul,
1961), pp. 80-81; for the entire text, see pp. 61-82. The original
version of the definition is in Denzinger and Schönmetzer, Enchiridion
Symbolorum, pp. 561-62.

[27]O'Meara, Mary, p. 58.

holiness, supernatural knowledge in matters of faith, and a will moti-
vated by the perfect love of God.[28]

Two further points should be stressed before proceeding to trace
the historical development of this dogma. First, it should be noted
that the dogma does not say that Mary needed no redemption. By reason
of her purely human nature she, like all other human beings, was subject
to the necessity of original sin and in need of redemption. The dif-
ference between Mary and other humans is held to be that instead of
being redeemed after her life had begun in this world, Mary was redeemed
simultaneously with the first moment of her existence. God anticipated
the results of Christ's passion, and produced in Mary's soul from her
beginning the perfect sanctification that Christ's death and resurrection
was to earn for all men. Thus, in this sense, Mary is said to be more
redeemed than anyone else, and more dependent upon Christ than anyone
else. Second, the profound significance of this dogma for the Roman
Catholic faith, as made evident in the grave anathema of the definition,
needs to be stressed. This is no optional pious belief. Rather, one
who denies this belief is "condemned by his own judgment," "has suffered
shipwreck in the faith," and "has separated from the unity of the
Church."[29] It would seem that a dogma with such a profound anathema
must have very certain moorings in either Scripture or tradition. The
study turns now to examine this question.

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[28]Benko, Protestants, Catholics, and Mary, pp. 37-38.

[29]Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, eds., Papal Teachings: Our
Lady, p. 81.

Roman Catholic scholars admit that the Scriptures, taken by themselves, make no conclusive case for the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary.[30] Therefore, tradition is claimed as the foundation for the dogma.[31] But, as will be seen, the formulation of this belief is not found among the church fathers, and later tradition is hardly unanimous.

The earliest church fathers regarded Mary as very holy but not absolutely sinless. Origen, one of the first Marian devotees, taught that Mary must have sinned in some measure so that she too could be redeemed by Christ, since His death was for all, without exception.[32] Both Basil and Tertullian believed that for a short time Mary lost faith in Christ.[33] St. John Chrysostom suspected that Mary experienced some feeling of human vanity at the wedding at Cana, perhaps desiring to gain some attention by showing her influence over Jesus.[34] The only

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[30]See, e.g., Joseph Pohle, Mariology: A Dogmatic Treatise on the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God with an Appendix on the Worship of the Saints, Relics, and Images, 6th rev. ed., ed. Arthur Preuss, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1930), p. 43; O'Meara, Mary, p. 61; New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Immaculate Conception," by Edward D. O'Connor.

[31]A definitive study of the history of the dogma from the Roman Catholic viewpoint is Edward O'Connor, ed., The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: History and Significance (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), pp. 51-324.

[32]Origen Homilia 17 in Lucam, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Jahrhunderte, 49, 106.

[33]See Basil Epistola 260, Patrologiae Graecorum, 32, 965-68; Tertulliam De Carne Christi, chapter 7, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 2, 887-89.

[34]Miegge, Virgin Mary, pp. 108-9.

clear spokesmen in the early church for Mary's sinlessness were heretics:
Pelagius and Nestorius.[35]

A pivotal figure in the development of the dogma was St. Augus-
tine. Responding to Pelagius, who claimed that some Old Testament
saints and the Virgin Mary lived without sin, Augustine replied that
none of the righteous of the Old Testament was without sin, but that
Mary had "received a greater grace to conquer sin completely."[36]
According to Miegge, Augustine had reference only to actual sins, not
original sin. However, Miegge agrees with Adolph Harnack,

> that in conceding to Mary an exceptional position in regard to
> actual sin, Augustine favored in a general way the dogmatic develop-
> ment that was to lead to the definition of the Immaculate Conception
> fifteen centuries later.[37]

Like the tradition of the early church, that of the Middle Ages
too, until Duns Scotus (d. ca. 1308), is primarily negative concerning
the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary. One noteable excep-
tion is Paschasius Radbertus (d. 860), who declared that Mary was freed
from original sin in her mother's womb.[38] However, Anselm of Canter-
bury (d. 1109) denied it,[39] and Bernard of Claribaux (d. 1153), one of
the greatest promoters of Marian devotion in the twelfth century,
insisted in his letter to the canons of Lyons in 1140 that their newly

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[35]Ibid., pp. 109-11.

[36]Augustine De Natura et Gratia, chapter 36.

[37]Miegge, Virgin Mary, p. 111. Cf. Adolph Harnack, History of
Dogma, 7 vols., 3rd German ed., trans. Neil Buchanan (New York: Russell
& Russell, 1958), 5:235, n.

[38]See Miegge, Virgin Mary, pp. 111-12; Delius, Geschichte der
Marien Verehrung, p. 155.

[39]Anselm Cur Deus Homo? book 2, chapter 16a.

instituted festival in honor of Mary's immaculate conception was a novelty "of which the rites of the Church know nothing, that reason does not approve, and ancient tradition does not recommend."[40] The perhaps greatest theologian of the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), was certain that Mary contracted original sin, and was sanctified before her birth only.[41] Likewise, the founder of Franciscan theology, St. Bonaventura (d. 1274), maintained that Mary contracted original sin, but was sanctified before her birth.[42] Thus, it is the basic consensus of the ninth to the thirteenth centuries that Mary was not immaculately conceived.

As mentioned above, Duns Scotus broke with the above tradition which denied Mary's immaculate conception. Benko says, "In a sense Duns Scotus was the father of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception because he was the first one to remove systematically the objections raised against it by other medieval theologians."[43] Although Scotus' own conviction is somewhat uncertain, he did demonstrate the doctrine's possibility.[44] Scotus contended that it was possible that Mary was redeemed by Jesus Christ in a _preventive_ rather than in a _restorative_ manner.

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[40]Bernard of Clairvaux, as quoted in Miegge, _Virgin Mary_, p. 112; for the text of most of the letter, see pp. 112-15.

[41]Thomas Aquinas _Summa Theologiae_, part 3, question 27, articles 1-6.

[42]St. Bonaventura _Liber III Sententiarum: De Incarnatione et Humani Generis Reparatione_, distinction 3, part I, article 1, question 2.

[43]Benko, _Protestants, Catholics, and Mary_, p. 35.

[44]Miegge, _Virgin Mary_, p. 124.

In this view, Mary would have been subject to original sin, but God kept this from happening. This would be appropriate for Mary since she was most perfectly redeemed.[45]

Following Scotus' demonstration of the possibility of Mary's immaculate conception, a great controversy over it raged during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries between Franciscans (supporting the immaculate conception) and Dominicans (preferring Aquinas' view). Opinions were still so divided even by the time of the Council of Trent, that the council preferred not to define the doctrine but restricted itself to: 1) declaring that it did not mean to include the blessed Virgin Mary in its definition of original sin; and 2) confirming the constitution of Pope Sixtus IV who had sanctioned the feast of the immaculate conception in 1477.[46]

Like the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the sixteenth and seventeenth were characterized by intense discussion of the doctrine, due to the influence of the Reformation, and in France, of the Jansenists. Nonetheless, the cult of the Immaculate began to grow, and during the seventeenth century many requests for the favorable definition of the belief were submitted to the papacy.[47] Finally, in the nineteenth century, Pope Pius IX, a devoted Marianist, queried the bishops of his church concerning the opportuneness of defining the immaculate conception. When two-thirds exhibited favorable responses, the pope proclaimed the dogma in St. Peter's Basilica on December 8, 1854.

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[45]Ibid.

[46]Denzinger and Schönmetzer, _Enchiridion Symbolorum_, p. 368.

[47]_New Catholic Encyclopedia_, s.v. "Immaculate Conception."

The preceding discussion exhibits that belief in the blessed Virgin Mary's immaculate conception had a late start and a rather stormy course of development in the church. Its certainty on the basis of tradition seems rather dubious then. Even more problematic is the lack of explicit Scriptural support for the doctrine. Primarily on the basis of this latter difficulty, the Protestant church has traditionally parted company with the church of Rome concerning the dogma of the immaculate conception. Thus, this dogma has been one of the chief contributors to the doctrinal disunity of the church universal.

The bodily assumption

With respect to the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption, it is O'Meara's judgment "that of all Mary's privileges this causes the most controversy in the current dialogue between Protestant and Catholic."[48] The reasons for this will become evident when the development of the dogma is traced. First, its definition must be given.

On November 1, 1950, in the apostolic constitution _Munificentissimus Deus_, Pope Pius XII solemnly proclaimed to the church:

> We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.
> Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare wilfully to deny or to call into doubt that which We have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith.[49]

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[48]O'Meara, _Mary_, p. 72.

[49]Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, eds., _Papal Teachings: Our Lady_, p. 320. For the definition in the original, see Denzinger and Schönmetzer, _Enchiridion Symbolorum_, p. 782.

This papal bull claims that the body of the mother of God did not under-
go corruption and return to earth and dust, but was immediately trans-
lated to heaven with her soul in the form of that glorious resurrection
body which is promised to all Christians. It is important to note that
the definition does not state when and under what circumstances Mary was
assumed. It is simply propounded that she was assumed to heaven after
she "completed the course of her earthly life." The ambiguity is delib-
erate since no consensus among Roman Catholic scholars has been achieved
concerning whether or not Mary died before being assumed. Again it
should be underscored that this is no optional matter for faith as under-
stood by the Roman Catholic church. Rather, anyone who willfully denies
or questions it, is said to be guilty of apostasy from the Christian
faith. Thus, the basis for its definition is of paramount importance.

As in the case of the dogma of the immaculate conception of
Mary, Roman Catholic scholars admit that there is no explicit Scriptural
warrant for the dogma of the assumption. Even more telling, however, is
the admission that the dogma is not essentially founded upon tradition
(in the historical sense) either, but upon dogmatic reasoning. Thus,
for example, Pohle and Preuss, writing before Munificentissimus Deus,
argued for the formulation of the dogma on the following basis:

> A long step forward has been taken by setting aside the historic
> method and basing the argument on strictly dogmatic grounds. The
> theological as well as the Scriptural argument seem in this ques-
> tion to have but a secondary and subsidiary value, and the case
> for the Assumption rests mainly on an ecclesiastical tradition
> which has all the distinguishing characteristics of Apostolicity.[50]

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[50]Pohle and Preuss, Mariology, p. 118. See also Sacramentum
Mundi, s.v. "Mariology. I. Biblical"; O'Meara, Mary, pp. 72-82 (esp.
pp. 77-78); and Carol, Fundamentals of Mariology, p. 189.

In spite of the above admission, it is necessary for the achieve-
ment of the goal of this chapter to outline the historical process lead-
ing to the formulation of the dogma of the assumption. The first to
make specific mention of Mary's possible translation alive into heaven
was Epiphanius (d. 403) in his book Panarion (written ca. 377).[51] His
conclusion is that no one knows what happened to Mary. In the second
half of the fifth century, apocryphal accounts of Mary's assumption
began to circulate. These legends, often called the Transitus Mariae,
stemmed primarily from two sources: the Transitus Mariae of Pseudo-
Melito (falsely attributed to the second century bishop of Sardis), and
the Book of the Falling Asleep (Koimesis) of the Holy Mother of God from
the Pseudo-John the Evangelist.[52] Pope Gelasius I (492-496) condemned
the apocryphal accounts as unsuitable for reading. The first church
father to mention the assumption legend was Gregory of Tours (d. 594).
Relying entirely upon the apocryphal sources, he described Mary's
assumption as historical fact.[53] From then on, references to Mary's
assumption began to appear in the writings of other church fathers, with
mixed judgments concerning their veracity.[54]

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[51]Epiphanius Panarion, 78, 11, 24.

[52]For the texts of these apocryphal accounts, see Alexander
Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Transla-
tions of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325, 10 vols.
American reprint of the Edinburgh edition. Revised and chronologically
arranged with brief prefaces and occasional notes by A. Cleveland Coxe.
(Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885-97), 8:587-98.

[53]Gregory of Tours De Gloria Martyrum, Patrologiae Patrum
Latinorum, 71, 708.

[54]Benko, Protestants, Catholics, and Mary, p. 41.

The ninth century produced two significant works on Mary's assumption. The Epistle to Paul and Eustochium on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Pseudo-Jerome (thought by some to be Paschasius Radbertus) basically encourages an attitude of agnosticism concerning the assumption. In his view, it is better to leave undefined such matters that cannot be proven.[55] On the presupposition that the above letter was written by Paschasius Radbertus, it is believed that the Assumption of the Virgin by Pseudo-Augustine was actually the response of Radbertus' opponent, Ratramnus of Corbie.[56] In this latter work, Ratramnus-Augustine defends the doctrine of Mary's assumption on the grounds that it is the only thinkable position in view of Mary's status as the mother of God. These two works defined the basic attitudes of the entire Middle Ages in regard to the assumption of Mary. Until the thirteenth century Pseudo-Jerome's view held sway, but beginning with that century the view of Pseudo-Augustine gained ascendency inasmuch as the former's work was proved inauthentic by Erasmus, while the latter work's spuriousness was not acknowledged until the seventeenth century.[57]

During the period of the Reformation and the beginnings of humanistic criticism, which were negative toward the cult of Mary, Roman Catholic theologians generally presented the assumption as a definite doctrine, but not of faith.[58]

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[55]Jerome Epistola IX ad Paulum et Eustochium de Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis, Patrologiae Patrum Latinorum, 30, 122-42.

[56]Miegge, Virgin Mary, pp. 95-98, holds this theory. For the text of the letter, see Augustine De Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis, Patrologiae Patrum Latinorum, 40, 1141-48.

[57]Miegge, Virgin Mary, p. 98.   [58]Ibid., p. 99.

With the definitions of the immaculate conception in 1854 and

papal infallibility in 1870 a movement of petitioning for the definition

of Mary's bodily assumption began. Primary support came from Spanish,

Italian, and Latin American Roman Catholics, with the nations of France,

Belgium, and Germany following at some distance. Despite the opposition

of some prominent Roman Catholics, Pius XII accommodated the petitions

in 1950.[59]

The preceding summary of the history leading to the definition

of Mary's bodily assumption makes it obvious that the dogma is not based

upon historical tradition. There is no mention of this belief until the

fifth century; after that the tradition is diverse and discordant, even

up until the time the dogma was defined. Thus, the basis for its defi-

nition is said to be its relationship to other dogmas and accepted

Roman Catholic doctrines. The primary truths from which it is said to

follow are the divine maternity, the immaculate conception, and the role

of Mary as the new Eve, or co-redemptrix with Christ.[60]

Because the dogma has no Scriptural foundation, and cannot even

be buttressed by historical tradition, but must rely upon dogmatic

arguments, the belief in Mary's bodily assumption has been traditionally

rejected by the Protestant church.

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[59]See the arguments of Roman Catholic laymen Raymond Winch and
Victor Bennet, The Assumption of Our Lady and Catholic Theology (London:
S.P.C.K., 1950). Walther von Loewenich also summarizes the views of the
Roman Catholic scholars Berthold Altaner and Karl Adams who opposed the
definition. Modern Catholicism, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (New York:
St. Martin's Press, 1959), pp. 211-12.

[60]See, e.g., Carol, Fundamentals of Mariology, pp. 193-95;
O'Meara, Mary, pp. 75-76. Cf. also the Protestant summaries of Benko,
Protestants, Catholics, and Mary, pp. 42-43, and Miegge, Virgin Mary,
p. 102.

The Non-Development of Marian Doctrine
in Protestant Theology

As the above study has indicated, it was possible for the Roman
Catholic church to develop an expanding body of doctrine (including four
dogmas) concerning the blessed Virgin Mary, because its formal principle
of theology is not restricted to Scripture alone, but includes the
church's tradition. Thus, the Roman Catholic church was not limited in
its Mariology to the very minimal information provided by the New Testa-
ment. In contradistinction to this, the Protestant church has claimed
but one source of divine revelation: Holy Scripture.[61] Therefore, its
doctrine concerning Mary on the whole has not ventured beyond the New
Testament witness. It is the intention of the following portion of the
study to illustrate this contention from representative Protestant writ-
ings. For this task, the writings of three prominent Reformation leaders,
the classic Protestant confessions of faith, and the works of three
prominent modern Protestant theologians have been selected.

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[61]In actuality, not all the churches of the Reformation strictly
held to this principle in the formulation of theology. The Reformed
churches (led by Calvin and Zwingli) admitted human reason, while
pietists and enthusiasts of various sorts defended a role for private
emotions and experiences. In addition, since the Enlightenment, the
Protestant church has assigned an ever-increasing normative authority
to autonomous human reason. Only the orthodox Lutheran church has con-
sistently attempted to apply the cardinal sola Scriptura principle of
the Reformation. (See Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 1:21-34; 193-213.)
Having made these qualifications, however, it must still be observed
that the Protestant church, by and large, has identified with the sola
Scriptura principle in theory. Therefore, it has consciously avoided
formulating doctrine in areas where it has perceived that the Roman
Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture.

Marian doctrine in the writings
of the Reformers

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

There is no evidence that before 1513 Luther held any but the

Marian piety almost natural to the medieval Christian, although as Hans

Düfel indicates, data from this period are rather scant, but nonetheless

revealing.[62] One example of Luther's Marian piety during this period is

contained in a letter to Vikar Johannes Braun of Eisenach. The address

shows just how caught up in the Marian Zeitgeist he was: "For the holy

and venerable Christ and the Priestess Mary, to Johannes Braun."[63] As

he reflected on this time of his life, Luther revealed that he embraced

the commonly accepted, though not yet defined, teachings on the immacu-

late conception and assumption of Mary. In the place of Christ he put

Mary. In his own words, he "hung his heart upon her."[64]

In 1513, Luther began to lecture on the Psalms and Romans,

using these books as vehicles for theology in the style of the medieval

doctors. The lectures on the Psalms give his first expression of doubt

with respect to an over-emphasis on the adoration of Mary. His exposi-

tion of Psalm 72 may serve as a good example here. While earlier he

had interpreted verse 6 of this psalm in the standard medieval fashion

as referring to the virgin birth, he later interpreted the verse to

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[62]Hans Düfel, Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung (Göttingen:
Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), p. 69.

[63]Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel, 15 vols.
(Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolgen, 1930-78), 1:10.

[64]Idem, D. Martin Luthers Werke, 58 vols. (Weimar: Hermann
Böhlaus Nachfolgen, 1883-1948), 47:644. Hereafter this reference will
be cited as WA.

refer to the Christian's rebirth by grace alone: "As Christ was con-
ceived by the Holy Spirit, so every believer is justified and reborn
by no human work but entirely by the grace of God and the activity of
the Holy Spirit."[65] Düfel points out the significance of this change
of interpretation:

> Thus, like Mary, Christ was conceived and born "without human aid"
> --Luther ignores the "Let it be" of Mary so readily quoted by the
> medieval exegetes as the expression of her human cooperation in the
> salvation history--so also the believer is justified "by the grace
> of God alone." Here Mary is the prototype of the justifying activ-
> ity of God, which occurs by grace alone without human merit.[66]

Further rethinking of the position of Mary is expressed in the
lectures on Romans (1515/16) where Luther appeals seven times to the
Magnificat for elucidation of the text.[67] In these treatments can be
seen the beginning of a theme which Luther fully developed in his Com-
mentary on the Magnificat (1521)--the lowliness of Mary who was exalted
by the mighty acts of God.

However, it is in Luther's sermons of this time (especially in
1516) that a newly emerging view of Mary can most clearly be seen. For
example, in 1516, Luther preached on Luke 1:39 for the feast of the
visitation of Mary. In the sermon he compares Elizabeth and Mary and
finds Mary to be greater for the following reason:

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[65]Cf. WA, 3:459 and Martin Luther, Luther's Works, ed. by
Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 10: First Lectures on the Psalms: I, trans.
Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974),
p. 410.

[66]Düfel, Luthers Stellung, p. 73.

[67]Martin Luther, Luther's Works, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan, vol.
25: Lectures on Romans, trans. Walter G. Tillmanns and Jacob A. O.
Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972); see commentary on
verses 1:16; 3:4; 8:26; 10:2; 12:2; 12:16.

> The Blessed Virgin sees God in all things. . . . Although Elizabeth with great perception sees Mary to be the Mother of God, even more perceptively the Virgin sees God in all things; he alone is great. Therefore the most pure venerator of God is the Blessed Virgin, who magnifies God above all things; she has no idols. She boasts of nothing herself, nothing of merit, no work; she is, by her own admission, purely passive and a receiver, not a doer of good works.[68]

In the same year, in a sermon on Luke 1:48 on the occasion of the assumption of Mary, Luther teaches that Mary is not to be served by man, but rather she served man by her motherhood. She is not the dispenser of grace, but only a receiver. Proper honor of her, therefore, consists not in worship of her, but in grateful acknowledgement to God for the service she gave mankind.[69] Nonetheless, it is interesting that he concludes his sermon with the words, "O happy mother! O most worthy virgin! Our Recollector, grant that the Lord may do this great work for us also."[70]

The year 1517 shows similar thinking in Luther's sermons. On the Candlemas of Mary he preached on Malachi 3:1-4, ignoring Mary completely and preaching only on Christ.[71] Similarly, on the day of the assumption of Mary, Luther praised the works of Christ in believers, proclaiming not the mother full of grace, but the God who is full of compassion for Christ's sake: "Therefore no one takes hold of God in His power and wisdom, but in His mercy and sweetness, which is exhibited in Christ."[72]

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[68]WA, 1:60-61, as translated by O'Meara, _Mary_, p. 116.

[69]WA, 1:77-79.   [70]WA, 1:79.

[71]WA, 1:130-32   [72]WA, 4:648.

Yet Luther's "reformation" thought on Mary is not fully devel-
oped at this time. In 1517, he still spoke of Mary's sinlessness.[73]
In 1519, while preaching on the preparation for a happy death, Luther
advised calling on Mary at the hour of death: "At this time one should
call upon all the holy angels, especially one's own angel, the mother
of God, all the apostles, and the beloved saints, especially those God
has given to him."[74]

By 1520, however, Luther has developed a principle for Marian
theology which appears in a final sermon on the feast of the assumption.
If Mary detracts from Christ and God, then Christocentric moderation
must be practiced. Mary is to be honored, but Christ must be the ground
of this veneration.[75] In this view, Mary exists for Christ alone.

During this period of change, Luther wrote his Commentary on the
Magnificat, which "represents a true summary of the Mariological posi-
tion which the Reformer had taken in this crucial period."[76] The work
is intended as a book of instruction for a prince. Although at the
beginning and end of the work Luther still asks "the tender mother of
God" to obtain for him the right spirit to explain the canticle usefully
and thoroughly, Hilda Graef points out that "this spirit differs con-
siderably from that of the traditional interpretation."[77] Throughout
the work Luther bemoans the incorrect Mariology which emphasizes Mary

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[73]WA, 4:690-94.   [74]WA, 2:696.   [75]WA, 4:634.

[76]Düfel, Luthers Stellung, p. 113.

[77]Graef, Mary, 2:8; see Martin Luther, Luther's Works, ed. by
Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 21: The Sermon on the Mount and The Magnificat,
trans. Jaroslav Pelikan and A. T. W. Steinhauser (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1956), pp. 298 and 355.

so much. In accordance with his teaching that man can do absolutely

nothing to cooperate with God and everything is wholly due to His grace,

Luther stresses that Mary has nothing of herself nor does she claim any-

thing of herself:

> She does not desire herself to be esteemed; she magnifies God alone
> and gives all glory to Him. She leaves herself out and ascribes
> everything to God alone, from whom she received it. For though she
> experienced such an exceeding great work of God within herself, yet
> she was ever minded not to exalt herself above the humblest mortal
> living.[78]

If one would honor her properly he should say:

> "O Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, you were nothing and all despised;
> yet God in His grace regarded you and worked such great things in
> you. You were worthy of none of them, but the rich and abundant
> grace of God was upon you, far above any merit of yours."[79]

Luther blames those who honor Mary because they make an "idol" of her.

To honor her rightly, one must

> set her in the presence of God and far beneath Him, must there
> strip her of all honor, and regard her low estate, as she says; he
> should then marvel at the exceedingly abundant grace of God, who
> regards, embraces, and blesses so poor and despised a mortal.[80]

On the other hand, if Mary is portrayed as having great things of her-

self, then men are contrasted with her and not she with God. Thus, man

loses all confidence in God's grace. But man is encouraged to trust in

God precisely because the blessed Virgin was so unworthy and God never-

theless gave her so much grace.[81]

In the Commentary on the Magnificat Luther still speaks of

Mary's complete sinlessness, although he attributes this entirely to

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[78]Luther, The Sermon on the Mount and The Magnificat, p. 308.

[79]Ibid., p. 322.   [80]Ibid.   [81]Ibid., p. 323.

God's grace, not to her merit.[82] This belief he maintained for another

five years before doubts entered his mind. With respect to the immacu-

late conception, Luther changed but vacillated between the years 1522

and 1527. In 1518, in a treatise on the problem of indulgence, he

remarked incidentally that almost all of Christendom believed in the

immaculate conception, but that to hold the opposite view was not heresy

because it had not yet been defined as dogma.[83] On December 8, 1520, he

bypassed the problem as less important than an individual's own contact

with sin.[84]

In 1527, Luther preached a long sermon on the conception of

Mary. After discussing the nature of original sin and the suitability

of the virgin birth as a means of excluding original sin in the humanity

of Jesus, he takes up the topic of Mary's own conception. According to

Luther, her body had the effects of original sin and was conceived in

the ordinary fashion. Thus, in this sense it can be said that she had

original sin. However, with respect to her soul, Luther says:

> But the other conception, namely the infusion of the soul. . . it
> is believed that it took place without contracting original sin.
> Therefore the Virgin Mary is in the middle between Christ and all
> other men. . . for her first conception was without grace. . . .
> Just as men are conceived in sin both with regard to body and soul,
> and Christ is free of sin--body and soul--so Mary the Virgin is
> conceived according to the body without grace, but according to the
> soul she is full of grace.[85]

It is interesting that in 1532, on the feast of the immaculate concep-

tion, Luther possibly contradicted this: "With regard to birth I must

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[82]Ibid., p. 237   [83]WA, 1:583.   [84]WA, 9:492.

[85]WA, 17, II:287-89 as translated by O'Meara, Mary, p. 118.

say that only Christ was born in purity."[86] By 1532, he denied any

notion of a special conception of Mary: "Mary is conceived in sin just

like us."[87] Also about this time in an undated letter, Luther agrees

with Staupitz that the immaculate conception is a "fraud."[88] O'Meara

finds it "likely, but not certain, that he eventually denied the Immacu-

late Conception."[89] For Horst Preuss it is a certainty:

> After a period of transition, in which Luther partially rejected
> the particulars concerning the nature of the [immaculate] concep-
> tion of Mary or spoke of a double conception, he finally rejected
> this doctrine as unbiblical.[90]

With regard to the assumption of Mary, Luther apparently took

this belief for granted when he preached on the feast of the assumption

in 1522. He did note, however, that it is not an article of faith. In

his sermon he remarks that the Gospel says nothing of this, and the

point of his message is that it is more important to know that the

saints are in heaven, and that believers shall join them, than to know

how they got there.[91] In 1530, he asserts that the assumption is an

aspect of the "hypocritical Church" which should be eliminated.[92] By

1544, Luther abandoned the assumption as a feast. Only the ascension

of Christ was to be recognized:

> The feast of the Assumption is totally papist, full of idolatry and
> without foundation in the Scriptures. But we, even though Mary has
> gone to heaven, should not bother about how she went there. We will
> not invoke her as our special advocate as the Pope teaches. (The

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[86]WA, 10, III:331.

[87]WA, 36:141.

[88]WA, 48:692.

[89]O'Meara, Mary, p. 118.

[90]Horst Dietrich Preuss, Maria bei Luther (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1954), p. 8.

[91]WA, 10, III:268.

[92]WA, 30, II:351.

Pope takes away veneration due to the Ascension of our Lord, Christ, with the result that he has made the mother like in all things to the Son.)[93]

Thus, it can be seen that in many respects Luther's theology in regard to Mary evolved over the years of his career. However, it is his final views which remain influential and most pertinent for this study. Thomas O'Meara has brought together pertinent quotations of Luther on various aspects of Marilogy which represent Luther's final position. Included are the following:[94]

Divine Maternity

Not only is Mary the mother of Him who is born [at Bethlehem] but He who before the world existed was born of the Father in eternity. The mother in time bore together God and man.[95]

In one word is contained every honor which can be given to her: The Mother of God.[96]

The Virgin Birth

It is an article of faith that Mary is the mother of the Lord and still a virgin.[97]

Christ, we believe, came forth from a womb left perfectly intact.[98]

He who made all things from nothing, also can create the son of a virgin, this is to conceive of the Holy Spirit. . . . We may laugh but the fact remains. . . . It is the devil who teaches us to say that Christ could have been born of a man.[99]

The Child was born in time of a virgin; the Son was generated eternally by the Father.[100]

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[93]WA, 52:681, as translated by O'Meara, Mary, p. 118.

[94]O'Meara, Mary, pp. 120-21. All quotations are O'Meara's translations.

[95]WA, 36:60.

[96]WA, 7:572.

[97]WA, 11:319-20.

[98]WA, 6:510.

[99]WA, 45:436.

[100]WA, 40, III:656.

Mary's Perpetual Virginity

Mary realized she was the mother of the Son of God, and she did not desire to become the mother of the Son of man, but to remain in this divine gift.[101]

Freedom from Sin

Jesus, apparently lost in Jerusalem, was a great temptation to Mary. . . . When she questions him, "My son, why have you done this to us?" she sins against the commandment of God.[102]

It is not she who does not commit sin who is free of it, but she to whom God does not impute sin.[103]

To his death, Mary remained for Luther a great work of God. She was to be honored and imitated. He never stopped preaching on her feast days which he retained (the annunciation, the purification, and the visitation). Mary was to be honored by honoring God, as the Magnificat strained to emphasize. For Luther, Mary points to Christ and God. Although Mary's prayers may be asked, they are no different from one's neighbor's prayers. Above all, Marian doctrine and piety must be Christocentric.

In short, Luther's development of thought with regard to Mary exhibits the influence of the Reformation principles of theology he discovered in Scripture: sola gratia, sola fide, and sola Scriptura. The more he incorporated these principles in his Mariology, the further he was led from Roman Marian theology. O'Meara expresses it this way:

> Luther's own evolution was retrogressive, rejecting the contemplation of the ages in order to return to a simple reading of the Scriptures. This may not have been clear to Luther at the time, but now in retrospect we can see that his protest against Marianism was a refusal to accept dogmatic development. . . . From its

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[101]WA, 48:579; see 41:630.   [102]WA, 39, II:224.

[103]WA, 15:415.

inception the Reformation did not adjust its theology to doctrinal development, a prerequisite for Marian theology.[104]

John Calvin (1509-1564)

An examination of Calvin's doctrine concerning the blessed Virgin Mary differs from that of Luther in several respects. First, Calvin wrote no works centering on Mary; nor did he preach on her feast days. Thus, he treats Mariology primarily in his commentaries and sermons on Luke 1-2. Secondly, inasmuch as Calvin wrote his Harmony of the Gospels only two years before he died, his primary work on Mary represents his final attitude toward her. Therefore, in Calvin's writings there is no evidence of development in Marian doctrine. What is known represents his thought as fully matured in light of the prominent themes of his theology.

A third, and perhaps, most significant difference is apparent in the Genevan reformer's treatment of Mary's divine maternity. As has been seen, the affirmation of this doctrine entails the support of the orthodox formulation of Christology. While Luther fully supported the Scriptural and ancient ecclesiastical doctrine of the communion of Christ's human and divine natures, Calvin insisted, at least in theory, that while the two natures unite in one person, they really communicate nothing to each other. His contention was based upon the rationalistic axiom: "Finitum non est capax infiniti." The profound inconsistency inherent in the affirmation of this axiom and the doctrine of the unio personalis at the same time is evident also in Calvin's treatment of the divine maternity. For example, in his Harmony of the Gospels, when

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[104]O'Meara, Mary, p. 123.

commenting upon Luke 1:43, he calls Mary "the mother of her [Elizabeth's] Lord."[105] A little later, in the same commentary he names her "the mother of Christ."[106] He is also not averse to calling Mary "the mother of the Son of God" (la mere du Fils de Dieu), and claims that she "conceived the Son of God" (conceveroit Fils de Dieu).[107] Yet he never employs the term theotokos.[108] Clearly there is a preference here for avoiding what might be understood as an assertion based upon a real communication of attributes.

To be sure, Calvin desires to be understood as orthodox. He employs all the orthodox terminology and explicitly condemns the errors of Nestorius, Eutyches, and Servetus.[109] Yet, when he says such things as the eternal Word "chose for himself the virgin's womb as a temple in which to dwell,"[110] one cannot avoid gaining the impression that O'Meara describes:

> We find the usual orthodox terminology in Calvin's Christology describing the physical unity of two natures and one person, but

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[105]John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries: A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, 3 vols., ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. A. W. Morrison (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 1:33.

[106]Ibid., p. 36.

[107]Idem., Sermon 133 on L'Harmonie Evangelique, Corpus Reformatorum, 74, 404.

[108]Jerome Hamer, "Protestants and the Marian Doctrine," The Thomist 18 (October 1955):487; see also O'Meara, Mary, p. 127.

[109]John Baillie, John T. McNeill and Henry P. Van Dusen, gen. eds., The Library of Christian Classics, 26 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953-66), vol. 20: Calvin: The Institutes of the Christian Religion, by John Calvin, pp. 486-88.

[110]Ibid., p. 482.

this does not exclude the impression in his works that the Son of God is somehow using the human nature and its properties to save us. Is the humanity, for Calvin, only the separated instrument of the Logos? When Calvin describes how God acts through Jesus' humanity, he appears to have in his mind a divine agent dwelling in Christ. Calvin speaks of God dwelling and manifesting himself in heaven and doing the same corporeally upon earth.[111]

Karl Barth too has identified Calvin with a Nestorian tendency in Christology.[112]

Furthermore, in a letter to a French Calvinist community in London in 1532, Calvin encouraged against using the term "mother of God" for Mary:

> I find it wrong to have this title ordinarily attributed in sermons about the Virgin, and for my own part I would not think that such language was good or proper or convenient. . . . You know that scripture accustoms us to a rather different manner of speaking, but there is something worse here—for it could give scandal. To speak of the Mother of God instead of the Virgin Mary can only serve to harden the ignorant in their superstition. And he who is content with that shows quite clearly that he is not aware of what is edifying in the Church.[113]

It seems reasonable to conclude from the above that Calvin's inconsistent affirmation of the unio personalis, but denial of the communication of attributes in Christ, plus his employment of all the orthodox terminology, but aversion to the term theotokos, at best leads to confusion about what he really held concerning the divine maternity of Mary. In this respect he certainly differs from Luther.

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[111]O'Meara, Mary, p. 127.

[112]Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, 4 vols. and Index, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. T. Thomson, et al. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956-61), 1:2, pp. 139, 24.

[113]John Calvin, Lettres Anglaises (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1959), pp. 180-81, as quoted in O'Meara, Mary, p. 129.

However, Calvin exhibits a different attitude toward the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity. Here he is in harmony with Luther and the tradition of the early church. His catechism of 1537 clearly affirms Mary's virginitas ante partum:

> Jesus has been formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her flesh as the descendant of David, as it was foretold; and moreover this was accomplished by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit without the work of man.[114]

Furthermore, he brooked no argument against Mary's post partum virginity on the basis of Scripture. For example, in commenting upon Matt. 13:55, he contended for the traditional interpretation of the "brothers" of Jesus:

> In the Hebrew manner relatives of any sort are called "brethren," as we have said elsewhere. It was therefore very ignorant of Helvidius to imagine that Mary had many sons because there are several mentions of Christ's brethren.[115]

He also had words against Helvidius for the argument based upon "until" in Matt. 1:25:

> The perpetual virginity of Mary was keenly and copiously defended by Hieronymous. Let one thing suffice for us, that it is foolishly and falsely inferred from the words of the Evangelist, what happened after the birth of Christ. He is called first-born, but for no other reason than that we should know He was born of a virgin.[116]

Since no argument from Scripture can inveigh against the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity in Calvin's view, the tradition of the church should be upheld, as long as it is not absurd.[117]

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[114] Idem, Instruction et Confession de Foy, Corpus Reformatorum, 50, 54, as translated by O'Meara, Mary, p. 129.

[115] Idem, Calvin's Commentaries, 2:136.　　　　[116] Ibid., 1:70.

[117] Konrad Algermissen also asserts that Calvin held to Mary's virginitas in partu. See Lexicon der Marienkunde (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1960), "Calvin," 1:1042-46.

Calvin is also very clear about his position concerning the alleged immaculate conception of Mary. As far as he is concerned, the Scriptures are clear that all men, without exception, inherit original sin. This includes Mary too. Thus, Mary and the baby Jesus both had to undergo the ceremony of purification on the fortieth day after Jesus' birth—Jesus, because all men's sin was imputed against Him, and Mary, because she was corrupt in Adam.[118] Calvin also accuses Mary of sinning at the wedding in Cana:

> Although neither ambition nor any other carnal affection motivated her, she yet sinned by going beyond her proper bounds. . . . By putting herself forward, she could have obscured the glory of Christ.[119]

Furthermore, Calvin rejects the Roman Catholic interpretation of Mary's gratia plena. In his view, St. Stephen also was "full of grace." To be full of grace means to be taken into God's grace and embraced with His favor, though one is unworthy of it in himself.[120] Finally, Calvin emphasizes that Mary needs Christ as her Redeemer as much as all others do.[121] That he rejects the immaculate conception as understood by the Roman Catholic definition is certain.

Although Calvin does not directly address the question of Mary's bodily assumption, it seems reasonable to conclude that he rejected this

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[118]John Calvin, Calvin's Commentaries, 1:89-90.

[119]Idem, Calvin's Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John, 2 vols., ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. T. H. L. Parker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959), 1:46.

[120]Idem, Sermon 6 on L'Harmonie Evangelique, Corpus Reformatorum, 74, 66.

[121]Idem, Sermon 7, De la Prophetie de Christ, Corpus Reformatorum, 63, 686-87.

also in view of the fact that he attributed to Mary both original and actual sin. In addition, he considered the title _regina coeli_ for Mary to be the consequence of "gross and abominable superstitions" which "just about stripped Christ and adorned her with the spoils."[122]

In short, Calvin exhibits the same basic principle for Marian theology as seen in Luther: only that can be absolutely claimed of Mary which the Scriptures clearly teach, and what contradicts the Biblical text (for example, that Mary is sinless) must be rejected. There is no place for speculative development.

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

Like Calvin, the Swiss reformer Zwingli inconsistently affirmed the _unio personalis_ of the two natures of Christ, yet denied a real communication of attributes.[123] In his view, whenever Scripture speaks of Christ as suffering and dying, it calls for the substitution of the human nature of Christ for Christ and the Son of God (_alloesis_). Again, the agenda is the rationalization of Scripture passages in keeping with the belief that the human nature of Christ as finite is not capable of such infinite divine attributes as omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience. Thus, it would follow that the divine nature of Christ did not participate or share in the human birth from the Virgin Mary.

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[122]Idem, _The Gospel According to St. John_, 1:47.

[123]Baillie, McNeill and van Dusen, gen. eds., _The Library of Christian Classics_, vol. 24: _Zwingli and Bullinger_ by Ulrich Zwingli and Heinrich Billinger, pp. 176-238; 251-62.

Yet, in spite of Zwingli's denial of the communication of attributes, on the basis of his belief in the unio personalis, he does not hesitate to call Mary theotokos:

> The unity of the person has never been used as an argument against the fact that Christ became very man and was born of the Virgin. That is why in my judgment it is right that the Virgin should be called the Mother of God, Θεὸτοκος.[124]

As might well be expected, as a child of his times, Zwingli stands in agreement with the tradition of the early church that Mary was perpetually a virgin. Thus, he asserts her virginitas ante partum and in partu with the words: "Christ was born without any violation of the virginity of his mother, the pure Virgin Mary."[125] Furthermore, in "A Sermon on the Pure Mother of God Mary," he adds without equivocation that Mary was also perpetually a virgin post partum: "She remains a pure, undamaged virgin before the birth, in and after the birth, yes in perpetuity."[126] In the same sermon Zwingli offers the traditional interpretation of the "brothers" of Jesus as "relatives."[127] To this is added the stock rebuttal against the argument based upon "until" in Matthew 1:25.[128] Thus, Zwingli is clearly in agreement with Luther and Calvin on this matter.

However, the Swiss reformer's position on Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption are somewhat less certain.

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[124]Ibid., p. 256.

[125]Ibid., p. 220.

[126]Zwingli, as quoted in Walter Tappolet, Das Marienlob der Reformatoren (Tübingen: Katzmann Verlag, 1962), p. 227.

[127]Ibid., p. 234.

[128]Ibid., p. 242.

Both Walter Tappolet and Konrad Algermissen are inconclusive in their evaluation of the data concerning the immaculate conception.[129] While the topic of Mary's immaculate conception is never specifically addressed by Zwingli, Tappolet points out that he does describe Mary with such words as "pure," "immaculate," "undiminished (illibatus)," "most undiminished," and "purest." Although it is uncertain exactly what Zwingli meant to convey with these words, Tappolet believes it is significant that they are used in descriptions of Mary which stand in immediate conjunction with descriptions of Jesus' sinlessness and freedom from original sin. At the very least, this suggests to Tappolet that Zwingli saw Mary as being very close to the same status as Jesus vis-a-vis sin.[130] Algermissen draws attention to the same adjectives, but also says that Zwingli was not afraid in the first Zurich Disputation to disobey the order of Pope Sixtus IV of 1483: "That the Mother of God is conceived without sin is often asserted at the Council of Basel; yet there is no monk so stupid that he would speak against this."[131] Algermissen cites as further proof in favor of Zwingli's belief in the immaculate conception that a certain Pastor Ammann, an associate of Zwingli, held to the doctrine.[132] In the last analysis,

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[129]Cf. Tappolet, Das Marienlob, pp. 250-51 and Konrad Algermissen, "Mariologie und Marienverehrung der Reformatoren," Theologie und Glauben: Zeitschrift für den Katholischen Klerus, 49 (1959):17.

[130]Tappolet, Das Marienlob, pp. 250-51.

[131]As quoted by Algermissen, "Mariologie und Marienverehrung," p. 17.

[132]Ibid.

however, Algermissen leaves the issue unresolved, although he seems to favor Zwingli's belief in Mary's sinlessness.

Like the doctrine of the immaculate conception, the bodily assumption of Mary is not explicitly dealt with by Zwingli. As closely as these two beliefs are usually connected, however, it would seem that a conclusion on this matter would depend upon what conclusion is reached about Zwingli's position on Mary's sinlessness. O'Meara offers two arguments that favor Zwingli's belief in the bodily assumption. First, he points out that the Protestant magistrates of Zurich ordered that the feast of the assumption be celebrated with special solemnity, and they criticized Bern for abolishing this feast. O'Meara contends this would not have been done without Zwingli's consent.[133] Secondly, O'Meara cites the belief of Zwingli's successor at Zurich, Henry Bullinger: "For this reason we believe that the most pure chamber of the Mother of God and the temple of the Holy Spirit, her most holy body, was taken up by the angels to heaven."[134] While these two arguments are persuasive concerning the belief of Zurich's inhabitants, they are not conclusive evidence for Zwingli's own belief. Altogether, the data do suggest that Zwingli may have believed the doctrines of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. However, this does not prove that he taught them as certain truths of the Christian faith. On the whole, his public preaching and teaching seem to follow more the pattern of Luther and

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[133]O'Meara, Mary, p. 143. Cf. Algermissen, "Mariologie und Marienverehrung," p. 17.

[134]Quoted by O'Meara, Mary, p. 144, as cited in Tappolet, Das Marienlob, p. 327.

Calvin: that which is stressed is what can be supported on the basis of Scripture.

In summary, a review of the Mariology of the great reformers indicates a theological principle at work which deters the development of Marian doctrine beyond what Scripture explicitly teaches: the sola Scriptura principle. While its application to the topic of Mariology by Luther saw progressive development, and while it was not perfectly applied by Calvin and Zwingli, nonetheless it exhibited enough influence in their theologies to set the standard by which their followers would formulate the Protestant church's creedal stance toward the blessed Virgin Mary.

Marian doctrine in the classic
Protestant Creeds

The Lutheran Confessions

The Lutheran Confessions, accepted in whole or in part by the Lutheran church, are assembled together in the Book of Concord, published in 1580, and include: the ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian), Augsburg Confession (1530), Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531), Smalcald Articles (1537), Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537), Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther (1529), and Formula of Concord (1577).[135] While each of these confessions does

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[135]Quotations of the Lutheran Confessions cited here, unless otherwise noted, are from Theodore G. Tappert, ed. and trans., The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). The following abbreviations for the confessions will be employed: Augsburg Confession (AC), Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Ap), Smalcald Articles (SA), Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (Tr), Small Catechism (SC), Large Catechism (LC),

not possess the same normative authority in all the Lutheran churches

today, they did express the mind of the Lutheran church in the sixteenth

century, and are cited here as representing the Lutheran position of

that time.[136]

The Lutheran Confessions give full and unequivocal witness to

Lutherans' belief in the divine maternity of Mary and in her <u>virginitas</u>

<u>ante partum</u>. The Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed profess that Jesus

Christ "was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary," and

"was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary," respectively.[137]

The Athanasian Creed is somewhat less explicit, but nonetheless insist-

ent that Christ "is God, begotten before the ages of the substance of

the Father, and he is man, born in the world of the substance of his

mother."[138] Article III of the Augsburg Confession echoes the ecumeni-

cal creeds with its affirmation that "God the Son became man, born of

the virgin Mary."[139] Similar expressions of this doctrine are also

found in the Smalcald Articles,[140] the Small Catechism,[141] the Large

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Formula of Concord (FC), Solid Declaration (SD), and Epitome (Ep).

For a critical text of the German and Latin, see <u>Die Bekenntnis-</u>
<u>schriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche</u> (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &
Ruprecht, 1967). "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church" are given by F. Bente in the <u>Triglot</u>
<u>Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church</u> (St. Louis:
Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

[136]The focus here is restricted to the teaching of the Lutheran
Confessions concerning the Marian dogmas defined in this chapter. A
more complete picture of the Confessions' Mariology is developed in
chapter VII.

[137]Tappert, ed., <u>Book of Concord</u>, p. 18.

[138]Ibid., p. 20.   [139]AC, III:1-2, German.

[140]SA, Part I.   [141]SC, II:4.

Catechism,[142] and the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration.[143] In

addition, two passages in the Formula of Concord explicitly call Mary

"the mother of God." One of these is in Article VIII of the Epitome,

on the Person of Jesus Christ, which states:

> Therefore we believe, teach, and confess that Mary conceived and
> bore not only a plain, ordinary, mere man but the veritable Son of
> God; for this reason she is rightly called, and truly is, the mother
> of God.[144]

The other passage, from Article VIII of the Solid Declaration, on the

Person of Jesus Christ, likewise agrees that Mary "is truly the mother

of God."[145] These two passages are particularly significant as they

are spoken in the context of the article which defends the real communi-

cation of attributes in the Person of Christ.

This latter passage along with another in the Solid Declaration

of the Formula are interesting in that they also exhibit the confessors'

belief in Mary's virginitas in partu. Both express an application in

the life of Christ of His ability, according to His divine nature, to

be present without occupying space (spiritual mode of presence). The

first comes from Article VIII of the Formula, Solid Declaration, on the

Lord's Supper:

> There is, secondly, the incomprehensible, spiritual mode of presence
> according to which he neither occupies nor vacates space but pene-
> trates every creature, wherever he wills. . . . He employed this
> mode of presence when he left the closed grave and came through
> locked doors, in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and, as
> people believe, when he was born of his mother, etc.[146]

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[142]LC, The Creed, 31.

[143]FC, SD, VIII:6.

[144]FC, Ep, VIII:12.

[145]FC, SD, VIII:24.

[146]FC, SD, VII:100.

The concern of this passage obviously is to illustrate the nature of Christ's spiritual mode of presence. It must be noted that the illustration with respect to Christ's birth is preceded by the qualification, "as people believe" (German: wie man gläubet; Latin: creditur).[147] Thus, it would seem in this instance, that, while the confessors believe it is a legitimate example, they are conscious of reflecting the piety of their day and do not make doctrine their application of a divine truth. As noted above, the other passage is located in Article VIII of the Solid Declaration, which is concerned with the topic of the Person of Christ. It reads:

> On account of this personal union and communion of the natures, Mary the most blessed virgin, did not conceive a mere, ordinary human being, but a human being who is truly the Son of the most high God, as the angel testifies. He demonstrated his divine majesty even in his mother's womb in that he was born of a virgin without violating her virginity. Therefore she is truly the mother of God and yet remained a virgin.[148]

Again it should be noted that the primary concern in this article of the Formula is to set forth the orthodox Christology which involves the real communication of attributes in the unio personalis of Christ's human and divine natures. This Christology is fully documented by the confessors with holy Scripture. Inasmuch as the illustration for the communication of attributes on the basis of Mary's virginitas in partu is given no Scriptural support, it may be concluded that the confessors

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[147]Die Bekenntnisschriften, FC, SD, VII:100.

[148]FC, SD, VIII:24.

do not intend for it to be held as divine doctrine, but as pious belief
that is not in conflict with Scripture.[149]

As to the Lutheran Confessions' position on Mary's *virginitas*
post *partum*, only one explicit reference can be found. The Latin text
of a passage within the Smalcald Articles professes that the Son of God
"was conceived by the Holy Spirit, without the cooperation of man, and
was born of the pure, holy, and ever virgin Mary."[150] Again, as the
Confessions make no attempt on the basis of Scripture to prove that
Mary had no other children after the birth of Christ, and since the con-
trary belief can be equally held in accordance with the Biblical data,
it must be concluded that the Confessions do not make this a doctrinal
issue.[151]

The Lutheran Confessions make no direct reference to either
Mary's alleged immaculate conception or bodily assumption. However,
their position on these two dogmas may be easily deduced. The basis
upon which all Lutheran doctrine is formulated is clearly defined in
the Formula of Concord:

> We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic
> writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm
> according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be

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[149]See Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Suggested Principles for a Her-
meneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," Concordia Theological Monthly 29
(January 1958):19-20.

[150]SA, Part I. Cf. Die Bekenntnisschriften, SA, Part I.

[151]Stephen Benko's evaluation of the Reformer's use of the term
"semper virgo" corroborates this conclusion:
> "By the time of the Reformation the term 'semper virgo' had become
> almost a second name for Mary, so much so that even the Reformers
> used the term without giving much consideration to the implications
> of the expression."
Protestants, Catholics, and Mary, p. 31, n. 15.

appraised and judged. . . .

    All doctrines should conform to the standards set forth above. Whatever is contrary to them should be rejected and condemned as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith.

    In this way the distinction between the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments and all other writings is maintained, and Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood as good or evil, right or wrong.[152]

In these paragraphs, the sola Scriptura principle of Luther finds its clearest, most explicit formulation in the Lutheran Confessions. In light of this conscious intention to make the Scriptures the only authority and norm for doctrine, it is obvious that, inasmuch as the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption have no Scriptural basis, but derive from the authority of the Roman Catholic magisterium, they must be rejected by Lutheran Confessional theology. In addition, the Lutheran Confessions clearly teach concerning original sin:

    Since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God.[153]

In all the Confessions' detailed discussion of the doctrine of original sin, its effects are always presented as universal. No exemptions, except Christ, are ever mentioned. Thus, it must be concluded that the confessors also include the blessed Virgin Mary among the heirs of original, and therefore, actual sin. With this conclusion also falls the basis for Mary's alleged bodily assumption.[154]

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[152]FC, Ep, Rule and Norm: 1, 6-7.

[153]AC, II:1.

[154]See, e.g., Ap, II; SA, Part III, I; FC, Ep, I; SD, I.

In summary, the Lutheran Confessions display the results of the consistent application of the sola Scriptura principle. On the basis of the New Testament, Mary is affirmed to be the mother of God and to have been a virgin before the birth of Christ. Her in and post partum virginitas are left as pious opinions not in conflict with Scripture, but not required of Christian faith. The dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption, though not explicitly addressed, are excluded on the basis of their conflict with the sola Scriptura principle.

Reformed Confessions

Although there are over thirty Reformed creeds, according to Philip Schaff, "they exhibit substantially the same system of doctrine, and are only variations of one theme."[155] Those most widely employed during the productive period of the Reformed movement were the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563), the Heidelberg or Palatinate Catechism (1563), the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), the Canons of Dort (1618-19), and the Westminster Confession (1646).[156] These shall be employed here as representative of the Reformed theological stance.

Like the Lutheran church, the Reformed church perceives itself as being in continuity with the New Testament and early Christian church.

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[155]Philip Schaff, ed., The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 1:357.

[156]Ibid. The historical background of each of these creeds is given by Schaff in volume 1 of this work. Cf. John H. Leith, ed., Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963).

Therefore, it too recognizes the ecumenical creeds and their doctrine as its inheritance. For example, Article VIII of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England explicitly defends the doctrine of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds:

> The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.[157]

It may be assumed, then, that the phrases of the creed confessing the divine maternity and ante partum virginity of Mary would be supported by Reformed believers, with the qualifications concerning the divine maternity which have been cited with respect to Calvin and Zwingli. Specific professions of the divine maternity and ante partum virginity of Mary are found in the Thirty-Nine Articles,[158] the Heidelberg Catechism,[159] the Second Helvetic Confession,[160] and the Westminster Confession.[161]

None of the Reformed creeds cited here express any conviction concerning Mary's in partu virginity, and only the Second Helvetic Confession professes belief in her post partum virginity:

> We also believe and teach that the same eternal Son of God. . . was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the ever-Virgin Mary (ex semper virgine), as taught in the gospel history and the Epistles (Matt. i.18; Luke i.34, 35; 1 John iv.3; Heb. ii.16).[162]

Yet even here, the focus of attention is upon the virgin birth and incarnation of Christ, and no attempt is made to give exegetical

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[157]Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, 3:492.

[158]Ibid., 3:488.   [159]Ibid., 3:314 and 319.

[160]Ibid., 1:402.   [161]Ibid., 3:618.

[162]Ibid., 1:402

support to the phrase _semper virgine_. Therefore, the usage here is

probably parallel to that found in the Lutheran Smalcald Articles—a

pious expression without intention to formulate doctrine.

The Reformed confessions also parallel the Lutheran Confessions

in their lack of any direct reference to either the dogmas of the immacu-

late conception or bodily assumption. However, like the Lutheran Con-

fessions, each of the creeds cited above teaches that original sin

extends to all men, excluding only Jesus Christ.[163] The Canons of Dort

are especially explicit about this:

> Man after the fall begat children in his own likeness. A cor-
> rupt stock produced a corrupt offspring. Hence all posterity of
> Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their
> original parent. . . .
> Therefore all men are conceived in sin.[164]

In addition, the Reformed creeds want to be understood as basing their

doctrine on Scripture alone. For example, the Westminister Confession

states:

> The whole counsel of God. . . is either expressly set down in
> Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from
> Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether
> by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.[165]

Thus, on the basis of the Reformed teaching on the universality of

original sin and their intention to apply the _sola Scriptura_ principle,

it follows that these confessions also reject the Marian dogmas of the

immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

In short, it has been exhibited that while there was some

development or ambiguity in the position of the Reformers with respect

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[163]Ibid. Cf. The Thirty-Nine Articles, 3:492-93, 496; the
Heidelberg Catechism, 3:309-10; the Second Helvetic Confession, 1:400;
the Canons of Dort, 1:519, 522; and the Westminster Confession, 3:615.

[164]Ibid., 1:522.   [165]Ibid., 3:603.

to the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary, the Lutheran and Reformed creeds clearly leave no room for them. Their confessions concerning Mary are restricted to what the New Testament unequivocally teaches.

Marian doctrine in the writings of modern Protestant Theologians

The study to this point has labored to demonstrate that the Protestant church as represented by the sixteenth century Reformers and seventeenth century Reformation creeds were guided in their teaching about the blessed Virgin Mary by the sola Scriptura principle. While the principle was not applied consistently by the early Luther, nor by Calvin, Zwingli, and the Reformed confessions, it was followed enough to set the trend of restricting Marian doctrine to the limits of the New Testament data, thus excluding the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. Since modern theology, beginning with the Enlightment, has tended more and more prominently to erode the sola Scriptura principle in favor of a larger role for autonomous human reason, it must be asked what effect this has had upon the traditional Protestant stance toward Marian doctrine. Although many examples could be drawn from the nineteenth century, the study will focus upon the work of three major Protestant theologians of the twentieth century who may be seen as representative of major trends within both eras and who serve as a link to the present time.

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

In the words of Alasdair I. C. Heron, the dialectical theology

of Karl Barth is based upon the conviction

> that Christian faith rests solely on the revelation of God in Jesus
> Christ, and that the task of theology is to allow that revelation
> to shine in its own light and stand on its own authority as the Word
> of God to us. Theology lives out of the Word; and the name of the
> Word is Jesus.[166]

This Christological centricity in Barth's theology helps explain why he

supports the dogma of the divine maternity, but castigates any further

development of Mariology.

In Barth's view, the dogma of Mary's divine maternity must be

based upon the dogma's necessity for a proper understanding of the

incarnation of Christ. The tradition of the church cannot be relied

upon as its basis since this is the voice of the church, and not reve-

lation.[167] Nor can exegesis establish its certainty since, in his view,

the New Testament accounts of the virgin birth are inconclusive.[168]

Therefore, as said, the _dogmatic_ necessity of the doctrine follows from

the fact that it furthers the knowledge of Christ; and this, for Barth,

is normative. It should be noted at this point, however, that the

dogmatic necessity of the doctrine does not prove its historical facti-

city.

The dogma of the divine maternity has two theological functions.

First, it draws attention to the mysterious nature of the incarnation.

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[166]Alasdair I. C. Heron, _A Century of Protestant Thought_ (Phila-
delphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 74.

[167]Barth, _Church Dogmatics_, 1:2, p. 174.

[168]Ibid., pp. 174-76.

It proclaims that the birth of Jesus Christ confronts one with the
reality and workings of the completely other and holy God whose work-
ings cannot be rationalized in terms of natural causes. The dogma of
the virgin birth calls one to listen to the divine revelation.

> The dogma of the Virgin birth is thus the confession of the bound-
> less hiddenness of the vere Deus vere homo and of the boundless
> amazement of awe and thankfulness called forth in us by this vere
> Deus vere homo. It eliminates the last surviving possibility of
> understanding the vere Deus vere homo intellectually, as an idea
> or an arbitrary interpretation in the sense of docetic or ebionite
> Christology. It leaves only the spiritual understanding of the
> vere Deus vere homo, i.e., the understanding in which God's own
> work is seen in God's own light.[169]

Secondly, the dogma of Mary's divine maternity describes the mystery of
the incarnation. It is, as it were, the form while the vere Deus, vere
homo is the content of God's revelation in Christ. To put it another
way: the divine maternity is the sign, and the incarnation is the thing
signified.[170]

Only in the context of the mystery of the incarnation does the
dogma of Mary's divine maternity have any meaning. Its real signifi-
cance stems from the way that it emphasizes God's transcendence. It
teaches that the incarnation and all God's contacts with man are
totally God's work and His initiative. Mary (and men) play only a pas-
sive role at best. Thus, in the creed more stress should be placed upon
conceptus de Spiritu than ex Maria virgine. Barth draws a parallel
between God's creative work ex nihilo and His conceptive work ex Maria.
Just as nothingness does not call forth being, so Mary has no capacity
in and of herself for the incarnation:

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[169]Ibid., pp. 177.   [170]Ibid., pp. 178-79.

The virginity of Mary in the birth of the Lord is the denial, not
of man in the presence of God, but of any power, attribute or
capacity in him for God. If he has this power—and Mary clearly
has it—it means strictly and exclusively that he acquires it, it
is laid upon him.[171]

The chief significance of Mary's ante partum virginity, for
which Barth contends, is that it symbolizes that man cannot in any
active sense be God's helpmate or co-worker. Man may be the object of
God's activity, but never the subject. Thus, in the virgin birth, God
eliminated the self-willing, self-determining male principle from
redemption and replaced it with the sign of the natus ex Virgine Maria
as the definitive description of how He works.[172] The doctrine of Mary's
ante partum virginity, then, like the dogma of the divine maternity
should be maintained in the church, even if its historical veracity
cannot be established, because it has proven to be the best sign for
teaching God's transcendent nature and the nature of the incarnation.

For Barth, the Marian doctrines have importance only insofar as,
and as long as, they point beyond themselves to God and Christ. Thus,
while Barth concedes the importance of Mary's divine maternity and ante
partum virginity for Christology, he denounces any further development
of Mariology as "an excresence, i.e., a diseased construct of theologi-
cal thought. Excrescences must be excised."[173] This approach obviously
negates the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

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[171]Ibid., p. 188.   [172]Ibid., p. 194.

[173]Ibid., p. 139.

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976)

Rudolf Bultmann's stance with regard to Marian doctrine, like
his teaching on Christology or any other locus of New Testament theology,
is the consequence of his radical program of demythologization.

Bultmann's hermeneutical proposal presupposes the validity of
the form-critical interpretation of the New Testament advanced by
Johannes Weiss. In Weiss' view, the Gospel narratives are composed of
units of oral tradition which circulated in the early Christian com-
munity to meet its devotional and apologetic needs. These units, which
can be classified according to their forms, were later strung together
by editors or redactors to compose each of the synoptic Gospels. The
Gospels are said to portray the early Christian community and its
beliefs rather than the history and words of Jesus Himself. Thus, this
theory is profoundly skeptical concerning any historical facts the
Gospels purport to record. The historical Jesus Himself remains in
impenetrable shadow. In fact, according to Bultmann, "we can know
almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus."[174]

Coupled with this profound skepticism concerning the reliability
of the historical narratives of the New Testament is Bultmann's con-
viction that the entire New Testament is written in the framework and
language of mythology. In Bultmann's thinking whatever the historical
facts with regard to Jesus may have been, they have been recast into
the story of a divine pre-existent being who became incarnate and atoned
by his blood for men's sins, who rose from the dead and ascended into

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[174]Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus and the Word, trans. Louise Pettibone
Smith and Erminie Huntress Lantero (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 8.

heaven, and who, it was held, would return soon to bring the present age to a close, judge all men, and initiate a new world. Embellishing this central story are all kinds of peripheral legends which tell of miracles and wonders, voices from heaven, victories over demons, and the like. This sort of mythology is characteristic of the thinking of the prescientific age, Bultmann contends. Since twentieth century man cannot conceptualize reality in such mythological terms, the core of the New Testament message must be presented without the myths (demythologized) and expressed in current thought forms. For this task Bultmann has chosen the existential thought of the early Martin Heidegger.[175]

As a result of this approach, it is easy to see what becomes of Mariology. If the historical truth concerning _Jesus Christ_ is non-recoverable because of its enshrouding in myth, so much the more are any New Testament statements about Mary likely to be the creative embellishment of the early Christian community.

The dogma of Mary's divine maternity obviously depends upon the affirmation of Christ's divinity. But for Bultmann, the divinity of Christ belongs to the mythological element of the New Testament: "Jesus Christ is certainly presented as the Son of God, a pre-existent divine being, and therefore to that extent a mythical figure."[176] Thus, even if it were historically certain that Mary was the mother of Jesus, this

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[175]See Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology: The Mythological Element in the Message of the New Testament and the Problem of its Re-interpretation," in _Kerygma and Myth_, 2 vols., ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 1:1-44; and _Jesus Christ and Mythology_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

[176]Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," p. 34.

would only make her the mother of a human person who was later described in the mythic terms of the New Testament. In other words, the idea of a divine maternity is itself mythological.

Similarly, Bultmann believes the virgin birth of Christ to be myth: "There is for example only one occurrence of the legends of the Virgin birth and the Ascension; St. Paul and St. John appear to be totally unaware of them."[177] The doctrine of the virgin birth is held to be the creation of the Hellenistic church since the earlier church did not consider Christ divine.[178] The attribution of divinity to Jesus first appears in Luke, Matthew, and St. Ignatius of Antioch, it is argued.[179] In these sources this theology is preserved and combined with that of St. John. For Bultmann, the account of the virgin birth is simply the mythic attempt "to explain the meaning of the Person of Jesus for faith; it was trying to say to the Christians that Jesus' origin and meaning transcended both history and nature."[180]

Obviously, with the divine maternity of Mary and virgin birth of Christ interpreted as myths, the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary do not even come up for discussion. As a result of his program of demythologization, Bultmann contends for a "low" Christology, and consequently, a low or no Mariology.

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[177]Ibid., p. 9.

[178]Idem, _Theology of the New Testament_, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:50.

[179]Ibid., 2:156-57.

[180]Idem, "New Testament and Mythology," p. 34.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

In his existential interpretation of the Christian faith, Paul
Tillich describes God not only as "the ground of all being," but as
"the ultimate" and man's "ultimate concern." Like Soren Kierkegaard he
believes that the ultimate discloses itself only to one who is "passion-
ate" for God, who allows himself to be "grasped by the ultimate." Such
self-disclosure by the ultimate takes place in man's emotions, mind,
fears, and hopes. The experience of revelation is immediate, existen-
tial, and non-conceptual. Thus, the content of faith cannot be
expressed in absolute, objective terminology. For the ultimate is
beyond the finite, and every finite picture used to point to the in-
finite can only be used analogically and symbolically.

For Tillich, then, symbol and myth are two of the most important
elements of religion. They are the highest forms of religious speech
and not only point toward what is ultimate, but actually participate in
this reality which they symbolize, and enable man to encounter the ulti-
mate. In Tillich's thought, the classic Christian formulations of
doctrine are such symbols.

The central symbol of the Christian faith is Jesus as the Christ.
The symbol of Jesus as the Christ is based upon the historical Jesus,
who is a man like all other men. To make Jesus the man one's ultimate
concern, to call him God, is idolatry: "What do you mean if you use the
term, 'Son of God'? If one receives a literalistic answer to this ques-
tion, one must reject it as superstitious."[181] What is worthy of

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[181]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Chicago: Uni-
versity of Chicago Press, 1951-63), 2:110.

ultimate concern, of faith, is Jesus the Christ. In Tillich's view,
Jesus was not divine, but became the Christ at his death, when he con-
quered all the fears and anxieties that compose human existence. By
doing so he became the "New Being," that is, one with the ability to
live with all the vicissitudes of life. It follows, that the resurrec-
tion of Jesus is not a physical reality, but a symbol, created by the
apostles and early church, to express Jesus' courage to overcome life's
problems.[182] Thus, for Tillich, Jesus was a man like any other finite,
sinful, struggling human being, exceptional only in his remarkable
courage and resolve in the face of life's ambiguities and cruelties.

Obviously, in this low Christology, there is no room for Mari-
ology. Since Jesus was not divine, the dogma of the divine maternity
is merely a symbolic concept created by the early church to safeguard
the uniqueness of Jesus' paradigmatic life and death. The symbol has
been perpetuated in the life of the church because of

> the increasing valuation of the ideal of virginity under monastic
> influence, and beyond this out of the strong need of popular piety
> (and the human heart) for a powerful symbol of the protecting,
> motherly loving, embracing side of the actual relation of the di-
> vine to the human. The tremendous significance of the figure of
> Mary for contemporary Catholic piety confirms this analysis.[183]

Likewise, Tillich holds that Mary's _ante partum virginitas_
is a symbol:

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[182]Idem, _The New Being_ (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1955), pp. 19-24.

[183]Idem, "An Afterword: Appreciation and Reply," pp. 301-11,
in _Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought_, ed. Thomas A. O'Meara and Celestin
D. Weisser with a Foreword by J. Heywood Thomas (Dubuque, IA: Priory
Press, 1964), p. 310.

> The story of the virgin birth belongs to the symbols corroborating the resurrection. . . . It is the same motif which led to the Logos Christology. . . . The factual element in it is that historical destiny determined the bearer of the New Being, even before his birth. But the actual story is a myth, the symbolic value of which must be seriously questioned. . . . By excluding the participation of a human father in the procreation of the Messiah, it deprives him of full participation in the human predicament.[184]

Not only is the virgin birth of Jesus a symbol, but it is an inauthentic symbol, a rationalization created to exclude sin and a full humanity from Jesus.[185] Tillich, thus, rejects both the symbols of the divine maternity and virgin birth as too human formulations of revelation. While he maintains that Mary may still be a valid symbolic medium of revelation for contemporary Roman Catholics, he is nonetheless concerned that the Roman church not make Mary an ultimate concern, transforming the Trinity into "Quaternity."[186] In the balance, then, Tillich's theology tends to be anti-Mariological.

Thus, it has been demonstrated that while the modern Protestant theologians Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich do not maintian the _sola Scriptura_ principle of their Reformation heritage, they do, nonetheless, continue its resolve not to develop further Mariological dogma.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that, because the formal principle of the Roman Catholic church is not restricted to Holy Scripture, but includes the church's historical and magisterial tradition, it has been enabled to develop a Mariology that exceeds the limitations of the

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[184]Idem, _Systematic Theology_, 2:160.

[185]Ibid., p. 127.   [186]Ibid., 3:292-93.

minimal New Testament data concerning Mary. Consequently, in the course

of twenty centuries, the Roman Catholic church has defined four Marian

dogmas: 1) the divine maternity; 2) the perpetual virginity; 3) the

immaculate conception; and 4) the bodily assumption. In contrast, the

Protestant church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries intended

to restrict its formal principle to Scripture alone. As a result: 1) it

affirmed the New Testament teachings of Mary's divine maternity and ante

partum virginity; 2)it held as an open question Mary's in and post

partum virginity; and 3) it rejected the dogmas of Mary's immaculate

conception and bodily assumption. While it is true that the Protestant

church since the Enlightenment, on the whole, has progressively eroded

the sola Scriptura principle of the Reformation in favor of a more

autonomous role for human reason, for the very same reason it has con-

tinued to reject the Roman Catholic church's tradition and magisterium

as an authority for doctrine. Thus, like the Reformation church it

refuses to recognize the dogmas of Mary's perpetual virginity, immacu-

late conception, and bodily assumption as teachings of the New Testament

church. The obvious consequence of this historical process is that the

Roman Catholic church maintains three Marian dogmas as necessary to be

believed for salvation, which the Protestant church rejects. So far as

the Roman Catholic church is concerned, the Protestant church has

apostasized from the true Christian faith on these matters. In the view

of the Protestant church, the Roman Catholic church has shown an anti-

Christ attitude with regard to Mary, requiring for salvation doctrines

which Christ and the apostles did not teach. In short, a very serious

breach of doctrinal non-consensus concerning the blessed Virgin Mary

exists between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches which must be resolved if the two are to enjoy ecclesiastical fellowship, the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement.

CHAPTER III

THE ECUMENICAL PROBLEM OF THE MARIAN DOGMAS
AND VATICAN COUNCIL II: CATALYST FOR
RESOLUTION AND HARBINGER OF SOLUTIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter it has been exhibited that due to dif-

ferent formal principles of theology, over the course of the years, the

Roman Catholic church has developed several dogmas concerning the

blessed Virgin Mary (particularly the dogmas of the immaculate conception

and bodily assumption) which have been rejected by the Protestant church.

This state of doctrinal non-consensus concerning the Marian dogmas has

been one of the major impediments to ecumenical progress between the two

churches. Yet, as the following three chapters will demonstrate, serious

effort is now being directed by both Roman Catholics and Protestants

toward resolving this problem. This perhaps unexpected state of affairs

raises two questions: 1) What is the etiology of this ecumenical activ-

ity? and 2) What direction is this activity taking? It is the purpose

of this chapter to answer these questions, and thereby to indicate the

basic solutions or approaches to the problem that need to be investigated.

Obviously, the etiology of any historical phenomenon as com-

plex as the one under study in this chapter is multi-faceted. Not all

of these facets can be portrayed within the limitations of this study.

Therefore, one factor has been singled out as the chief impetus for the

current Protestant/Catholic ecumenical activity, and as the focal point

of many other contributing factors in the current history of the Roman

Catholic church. That most significant factor is the Second Vatican

Council (1962-65).[1]

More specifically, it is the contention of this chapter that

Vatican Council II produced two documents which both express and help

foster a spirit that has given tremendous impetus for resolving the

ecumenical problem of the Marian dogmas by the agendas now under oper-

ation. It will be argued that the Decree on Ecumenism provided a

needed catalyst for resolving doctrinal differences with the Protestant

church, and that chapter eight of the Dogmatic Constitution on the

Church prefigured the basic solutions to the problem that might be ex-

pected to develop. Finally, Protestant responses to this latter docu-

ment will be illustrated to demonstrate the Protestant church's

alignment with the prefigured solutions.

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[1]For a brief summary of the history and pronouncements of the council, see New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Vatican Council II," by R. F. Trisco. Mario von Galli gives a very concise chronology of the council along with selected council speeches and photographs by Bernhard Moosbrugger which help give a Gefühl for the events of the council, in The Council and the Future (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966). Personal observations of the council and its workings can be found in: Paul Blanshard, Paul Blanshard on Vatican II (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); Robert McAfee Brown, Observer in Rome: A Protestant Report on the Vatican Council (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964); Douglas Horton, Vatican Diary 1962-1965, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1964-66); Xavier Rynne [pseud.], Letters from Vatican City, 4 vols. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Co., 1963-66). For an authoritative historical background and commentary on the conciliar documents, see Herbert Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 5 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967-69).

Decree on Ecumenism: Ecumenical Catalyst for
Resolving Doctrinal Differences with
the Protestant Church

The Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio,[2] serves as a

catalyst for resolving doctrinal differences with the Protestant church

in two ways. First, it exhibits and encourages a conciliatory, irenic

attitude toward the "separated brethren," as non-Roman Catholic Chris-

tians have come to be called. Secondly, it outlines and urges an

ecumenical program to be engaged vis-a-vis the Protestant church.

A positive and irenic attitude toward Protestants is displayed

throughout the document in a number of ways. A significant step is

taken in the first chapter with the admission that the Catholic church

itself is partly to blame for the historical separation of the Protes-

tant church.[3] In addition, for further "sins against unity" the Roman

Catholic church humbly begs pardon from both God and the separated

brethren.[4] Further, the document stresses that those who are presently

born into and raised in the Protestant church cannot be charged with the

sin of separation. On the contrary, "the Catholic Church accepts them

with respect and affection as brothers."[5] In fact, any who believe in

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[2]The text of the Decree on Ecumenism cited here is that provided
in Austin Flannery, gen. ed., Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post
Conciliar Documents (Northport, NY: Constello Publishing Co., 1975), pp.
452-563. For the official text, see Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium
Vaticanum Secundum, Decretum de Oecumenismo (Vatican City: Typis Poly-
glattis Vaticanus, [1964]). An historical background to the document
is given by Werner Becker in Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the
Documents of Vatican II, 2:1-56.

[3]Flannery, gen. ed., Vatican Council II, p. 455.

[4]Ibid., p. 460.   [5]Ibid., p. 455.

Christ, and have been properly baptized, are said to be in "some, though imprefect, communion with the Catholic Church."[6]

Not only individual Protestant believers, but the Protestant "ecclesial communities" also are spoken of in favorable terms. Of these it is said that they possess "very many, of the most significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the Church," such as, the Scriptures, grace, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[7] In addition, the Protestant churches are said to "carry out many liturgical actions of the Christian religion" which "give access to the communion of salvation."[8] It is joyfully recognized that the Holy Spirit has used the separated churches to lead men to salvation in Christ.[9] For this work, the Protestant churches have been graciously endowed not only with gifts of the Spirit, but with many excellent good works.[10] All of this gracious work of the Spirit in the Protestant ecclesial communities is claimed to contribute to the edification of the Roman Catholic church.[11]

Such expressions of good will toward the Protestant church are joined in the Decree on Ecumenism with a specific agenda for developing closer relationships between the Roman church and the separated brethren. The need for this is acknowledged in the very first sentence of the decree: "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of

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[6]Ibid., Cf. pp. 366-67 from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium. For a discussion of what constitutes a proper Baptism, see pp. 487-90.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., pp. 455-56.

[9]Ibid., p. 456.

[10]Ibid., pp. 458 and 490.

[11]Ibid., p. 458.

the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council."[12] The primary

ecumenical responsibility of every Roman Catholic believer and of the

Roman church as a whole is so to renew themselves and so to live the

Christian life that the best possible witness may be given to the beauty

and truth of the Roman Catholic faith.[13] Secondly, every effort is to

be made by Roman Catholics to avoid saying or doing anything that mis-

represents the position of the separated brethren, and thereby makes

mutual relations with them more difficult. Truth and fairness are to

norm every interaction with the Protestant church.[14] Thirdly, in a more

positive vein, the decree mandates "dialogue" between competent experts

of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches through which "everyone

gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and

religious life of both communions."[15] It is noteworthy that such dia-

logue is to be carried on with the recognition "that in Catholic doc-

trine there exists an order or 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary

in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith."[16] Fourthly,

also to be developed more and more is the common participation in human

welfare activities.[17] Finally, with regard to worship, Roman Catholics

are encouraged to participate in ecumenical prayer services, but to be

very discriminate in sharing worship in common (communicatio in sacris)

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[12]Ibid., p. 452.   [13]Ibid., pp. 457-58.

[14]Ibid., p. 457. Cf. the principles for ecumenicism in higher education, pp. 515-32.

[15]Ibid. Cf. pp. 535-53 for the specifics of the nature, bases, conditions, method, subjects, and forms of dialogue.

[16]Ibid., p. 462.   [17]Ibid., pp. 457 and 462.

with Protestants, although this is not forbidden in all circumstances.[18]

In conclusion, the value that the Roman Catholic church places upon this

ecumenical activity may be seen by the fact that the Decree on Ecumenism

does not leave this an optional matter, but exhorts all the Catholic

faithful to take an active and intelligent role in this activity.[19]

Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter VIII: Harbinger of Solutions to the Ecumenical Problem of the Marian Dogmas

It is the contention of this portion of the study that in the

historical process of the composition, as well as in the final text it-

self, of chapter eight of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen

Gentium,[20] three approaches to Mariology are exhibited which represent

the basic types of solutions to the ecumenical problem. The three

approaches, perhaps more evident as influences than as consciously and

explicitly formulated programs, are: 1) the conservative approach

which seeks to defend the traditional Mariology and, if possible, develop

it further; 2) the moderate approach which seeks basically to stay with-

in traditional bounds, but make the presentation of Mariology more

acceptable to Protestants; and 3) the Biblical/patristic approach which

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[18]Ibid., pp. 460-61. Cf. pp. 499-507 for specific guidelines
concerning communicatio in sacris, especially the celebration of the
Eucharist.

[19]Ibid., pp. 456 and 459.

[20]Again the text cited here is that provided by Flannery, gen.
ed., Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents,
pp. 350-426; chapter 8: pp. 413-23. For the historical background of
the document, see Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of
Vatican II, 1:105-37. For the official text, see Sacrosanctum Oecumeni-
cum Concilium Vaticanum Secundum, Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia
(Vatican City: Typis Polyglattis Vaticanis, 1964), chapter 8:60-69.

stresses studying the original sources afresh, and formulating Mari-

ology, in terms of the results of such study. It should be observed

that these approaches do not operate in pure forms, but exist more as

emphases or influences in certain theologians or groups of theologians.

Mariological Approaches Exhibited in the Development of Chapter Eight ("Our Lady") of Lumen Gentium

The conservative, traditional influence in the production of

the schema on the blessed Virgin Mary was evident from the beginning.

Its origins lay in a pre-council subcommission of the largely conser-

vative commission De doctrina fidei et morum which was headed by

Cardinal Ottaviani. This subcommission had the responsibility of draw-

ing up a document that dealt with ecclesiological questions. Initially,

it composed a comprehensive draft with eleven chapters. Separate from

this the subcommission also composed a chapter on the "Virgin Mary,

Mother of God and Mother of Men."[21] The importance of this separation

is interpreted by Jorge Medina Estevez, of the Catholic University of

Chile:

> It was very obvious that according to the minds of those who served
> on the preparatory commissions of the Council, the doctrine on the
> Virgin Mary would not be a part of the document on the Church, but
> would be a separate and exclusive constitution.[22]

This distinction of the schema on Mary was calculated to give Mariology

special prominence in the council documents. Coupled with the impact

of the strategic placement of the Marian schema was its conservative,

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[21]Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:106.

[22]Jorge Medina Estevez, "The Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium," in Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal, ed. John H. Miller (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press; New York: Association Press, 1966), pp. 102-3.

"maximal" Marian tone. The document was a systematic composition of nineteenth and twentieth-century teaching on Mary, supported by the encyclicals of recent popes. It attempted to raise to the rank of a dogmatic decision of the council rather devotional remarks of the recent popes expressing the theory of Mary's universal mediation and her co-redemption, although the term "co-redemptrix" was omitted. The schema did seek to gain explicit acknowledgment of the term "mediatrix" for Mary.[23] The combined effect of these two factors would have carried official Catholic teaching about Mary further than ever before.

However, the moderate influence at the council saw to it that the original maximal Marian intentions of the theological subcommission were compromised with a more "minimal" approach. This influence is seen first in the debate and vote concerning whether Mary should be treated in a separate schema, or in a chapter within the constitution on the church. Paul Blanshard summarizes well what was at stake in the controversy:

> To devote a whole independent chapter in the agenda to Mary meant at least an implied endorsement of the present very exaggerated Catholic emphasis on the Virgin and her role in Christian development. To relegate Mary to a subchapter in the chapter on the church was, in fact, a slight downplaying of her place in theology, indicating some willingness on the part of the church to discuss Mariology with Protestantism in a mood of give-and-take.[24]

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[23] Gregory Baum, "End of the Deadlock," The Commonweal 79 (November 22, 1963):251. Cf. Warren A. Quanbeck, "Problems of Mariology," in Dialogue on the Way: Protestants Report from Rome on the Vatican Council, ed. George A. Lindbeck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), p. 179.

[24] Paul Blanshard, Paul Blanshard on Vatican II, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 175.

On October 24, 1963 it was announced by Cardinal Döpfner of

Germany that the theological commission, meeting in plenary session,

decided to ask the council fathers to determine by vote the status of

the Marian schema. Carinal Rufino Santos, Archbishop of Manila, was

named to argue for the separate schema, and Cardinal Franz König of

Vienna was chosen to present the case for the schema's inclusion within

the document on the church.

Cardinal Santos presented seven reasons for a separate schema

on Mary: 1) Mary deserves a separate schema because of her special

dignity as the mother of God. 2) Inclusion of the schema on Mary within

the document on the church would surely be interpreted as a diminution

of concern for Mary on the part of the council fathers. 3) Mary's

special role in the church cannot be sufficiently clarified in a single

chapter of a schema. 4) The distinction between Mary's powers and those

of the hierarchy and laity cannot be adequately differentiated in a

chapter merely added onto the chapter concerning these topics. 5) While

the blessed Virgin is in the church as its first and chief member, she

is in some ways above the church and cannot, therefore, properly be

dealt with in a document on the church. 6) The full treatment of Mary

that is demanded by a conciliar statement is difficult to summarize in

a single chapter. 7) The present structure of Lumen Gentium makes

inclusion of the Marian material difficult to achieve. To make the

necessary changes would take valuable time that the council should

devote to other matters.[25]

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[25] See Michael Novak's summary of Santos' speech in The Open
Church: Vatican II, Act II (New York: Macmillan Co., 1964), pp. 173-74.

Cardinal König categorized his arguments for the inclusion of the schema on Mary within the document on the church as theological, historical, pastoral, and ecumenical. His <u>theological</u> contention was that, since the church was the theme of the council, the council should emphasize the relation of Mary to the church rather than putting a dividing wall between doctrines about Mary and other doctrines. Since Mary is the most eminent member of the church, her role within it would be enhanced, rather than diminished, by considering her in the context of the church. <u>Historically</u>, König observed that recent considerations of Mary in Catholic life and thought (for example, the Litany of Loreto, the recent Marian congress at Lourdes, and Pope Paul's speech on October 11) were stressing her connection with the church. As a <u>pastoral</u> argument, König contended that popular devotion should be guided to understand Marian teaching as something intimately related to the life of the entire church, and not independent of it. Finally, <u>ecumenically</u> speaking, it was reasoned that the location of the Marian material within <u>Lumen Gentium</u>, especially if the chapter were amended to have a foundation in Scripture and early tradition, would foster better relationships with non-Catholics in both the East and West.[26]

The above two speeches, which summarized the major contentions of the conservatives and moderates, respectively, were presented to the council fathers in printed form on the following day, October 25, 1963. Politicking for both sides proceeded from then until the vote was taken on October 29.

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[26]Ibid., see pp. 174-75.

Politicking in behalf of those fathers who favored the inclusion of the Marian schema in Lumen Gentium were Cardinal Raul Silva and Msgr. Alfredo Viola who distributed a mimeographed sheet containing nine positive arguments, such as the relationship between Mary and the church, giving the proper context for the doctrine of Mary, the traditional sentiment of the East, and so on.[27] For the other side, on the day of the vote, Ukrainian bishops of the Eastern rite of the church (ardent devotees of Mary) distributed on the steps of St. Peter's Cathedral a propaganda leaflet signed by both Ukrainian and Indian functionaries opposing the placement of the Marian chapter in the schema on the church. This, they argued, was a blow to her prestige as the mother of God. The propagandists were accused of deceptive collaboration with Cardinal Ottaviani and the holy office because one of the pamphlets (written by the Yugoslav Franciscan, Karl Balic, a member of the preparatory theological commission and director of the Mariological Institute in Rome) not only bore the imprint of the Vatican press office, but also had the exact form of official literature, and was marked "sub secreto."[28] Apparently, both sides gauged the issue to be of enough significance to warrant political persuasion.

On October 29, Cardinal Agagianian, moderator for the day, preceded the vote with a careful explanation that the council members were not to perceive themselves as voting for or against Mary. They were

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[27]Estevez, "The Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium," pp. 114-15.

[28]Blanshard, Paul Blanshard on Vatican II, pp. 173-74. Cf. Xavier Rynne [pseud.], Letters from Vatican City, 2:167.

simply voting for or against the <u>location</u> of the chapter on Mary. No
vote was to be construed as indicating any lessening of the dignity of
the blessed Virgin, or any downplaying of her pre-eminent role in the
church.[29] The council fathers decided by a slim majority of forty to
incorporate the schema on Mary into the document on the church, with
1,114 votes for its inclusion, and 1,074 votes against this. Thus, in
the placement of the Marian schema, the moderate influence gained a
victory. However, the closeness of the vote indicated a rather divided
mind of the Catholic church over what approach to take vis-a-vis
Mariology.

The decision to include the Marian schema within <u>Lumen Gentium</u>
did not conclude the debate concerning this schema. Attention was now
directed toward its contents. Here again surfaced the concerns of con-
servative maximalists and moderate minimalists, as well as those who
advocated greater dependence upon Scripture and the early church fathers.

Inasmuch as many of the moderate bishops found the original
schema prepared by the pre-council subcommission unacceptable, several
new drafts were unofficially prepared as possible substitutes. Some of
these were submitted, with the required number of signatures, to the
Secretariat of the Council. One of these was a text composed by Dom
Butler, Abbot of Downside, at the request of the English hierarchy. He
presented Catholic teaching on Mary in terms of the Scriptures and the
ancient tradition of the church.[30] Another text, requested by Cardinal

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[29]Ibid., pp. 174-75.

[30]Baum, "End of the Deadlock," p. 252.

Henriquez of Santiago, was drawn up by the Chilean bishops.[31] This

schema also stressed the Marian teaching of the ancient church (espe-

cially the theme of Mary as the type of the church) and avoided the

modern doctrines of universal mediation and co-redemption of Mary.[32]

Although these texts received significant support from many sectors,

they were not accepted as the basis for the conciliar text. After a

special commission of bishops and periti failed to produce any concrete

results, two periti from the theological commission, Msgr. Gerard

Philips and Father Karl Balic (who held diverse views on Mariology),

drew up a text that was revised by the theological commission and pre-

sented to the council for debate.[33]

Debate on chapter eight of Lumen Gentium took place during

September 16-18, 1964. Moderates criticized its use of Scripture, and

expressed concern that some of its language was not sufficiently

cautious. In particular, Cardinals Léger of Montreal, Döpfner of

Germany, Silva Henriquez of Chile, and Bea of the Secretariat asked for

more precision in describing the relationship of Mary to the church.

They warned that the council should not set forth theological positions

on issues not yet resolved—and the relation of Mary to the redemptive

process was one such issue.[34] On the whole, the moderates pleaded that

[31]Bernard Wall and Barbara Wall, Thaw at the Vatican: An Account of Session Two of Vatican II (London: Victor Gollancy, 1964), p. 74.

[32]Baum, "End of the Deadlock," p. 252.

[33]Estevez, "The Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium," p. 118.

[34]Douglas Horton, Vatican Diary 1962-1965, 3:23-24.

the schema be expressed modestly for ecumenical reasons, so that no additional barriers be placed before the Orthodox and Protestant brethren. Conservatives, on the other hand, insisted that the title "mother of the church" should be employed, accused the schema of minimizing tendencies, found it too reserved in praising Mary, and warned that the omission of the title "meadiatrix" would scandalize the Catholic faithful. The bishops of Belgium, Brazil, and Poland requested that the church be solemnly dedicated to the blessed Virgin.[35] Generally, conservatives urged that Mary's privileges be adequately stated and that Marian devotion be encouraged. Neither moderates nor conservatives were entirely happy with the schema.

In view of the strong feelings on both sides, Cardinal Frings of Cologne, seconded by Cardinal Alfrink of Utrecht, strongly appealed that everyone sacrifice some personal preferences so that the document could be accepted with only minor changes.[36] Following the debate, the theological commission made several amendments of the text. The new text now spoke of Mary's maternal affection for the church, without using the title, "mother of the church," and expressed her motherhood in the order of grace with strict precision.[37] The term "mediatrix"

[35]Quanbeck, "Problems of Mariology," p. 181.

[36]Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:134-35.

[37]However, it should be noted that in his closing address of the third session of the council on November 21, 1964, Pope Paul VI on his own initiative officially proclaimed Mary to be "mother of the church." This was apparently intended as some sort of conciliatory gesture toward the Marian maximalists.
A translation of the above address is given in Rynne [pseud.], Letters from Vatican City, 3:381-89 (note especially p. 387).

was kept, but given the same status as the other usual forms of address, such as "intercessor" and "helper." In addition, the context explicitly declares the transcendence of Christ's mediatorship. Finally, the pastoral section was lengthened to show how all the apostolic activity in the church has a perfect model in Mary, the mother of God and men.

On October 29, 1964, the council fathers adopted chapter eight of Lumen Gentium by a vote of 1,559 to 10, with 521 approvals with qualifications. After the theological commission made several further corrections in the text, the final vote of the council on November 18 was 2,096 for and 23 against the schema.[38] Apparently, then, the theological commission succeeded in producing a document that finds a middle way between the strongly contending viewpoints of the conservatives and moderates. At any rate, it is obvious that the final product represents the influence of conservatives, moderates, and those who pressed for a Scriptural/patristic approach.

<div align="center">

Mariological Approaches Exhibited in the Text of
Chapter Eight ("Our Lady") of Lumen Gentium

</div>

The conservative approach

Earlier in the chapter, the conservative approach was described as that which seeks to defend the traditional Mariology and, if possible, develop it further. The study turns now to demonstrating how chapter eight of Lumen Gentium supports the traditional Marian dogma, as well as several pious beliefs, although it does not raise the latter to the status of official teachings in the church.

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[38]Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:35.

In the very first paragraph of the chapter on "Our Lady" the council stresses in the words of the canon of the mass that "the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory 'of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.'" In the next paragraph, the constitution again affirms that Mary is "truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer." Elsewhere she is called "Mother of the Son of God," "Mother of Christ," "Mother of the Saviour," "Mother of the Redeemer," "Mother of Jesus," and "Mother of Our Lord and Saviour." In addition, it is explicitly confessed that Mary "gave birth to the very Son of the Father," and that she "received the Word of God in her heart and in her body and gave Life to the world."[39] In short, the council clearly and amply states the church's belief in the dogma of Mary's divine maternity.

As already noted in quoting the canon of the mass, the council also confesses the Roman church's belief that Mary was "ever Virgin."[40] It sees in Mary the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies in Isaiah 8:14 and Micah 5:2-3 that the mother of Emmanuel would be virginal in her conception. Not only her _ante partum_ virginity is affirmed, but also her virginity _in partu_. The union of Mary with Christ in the work of salvation is said to be made manifest "at the birth of our Lord, who did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it."[41] Significantly, in the last paragraph of the chapter, the council is careful to describe Mary as "ever virgin," and in a footnote refers

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[39]Flannery, gen. ed., _Vatican Council II_, p. 414-22, passim.

[40]Ibid., p. 414.   [41]Ibid., p. 416.

to two papal encyclicals which support this dogma.[42] Thus, _Lumen Gentium_ also affirms the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity.

Again, although references are few, the chapter on "Our Lady" also unmistakably teaches the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary: "Enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendor of an entirely unique holiness, the virgin of Nazareth is hailed by the heralding angel, by divine command, as 'full of grace.'"[43] On account of this, the council notes "that it was customary for the Fathers to refer to the Mother of God as all holy and free from every stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature."[44] In addition, this chapter from the constitution on the church deliberately calls Mary the "Immaculate Virgin" and refers readers to Pope Pius IX's bull _Ineffabilis Deus_ of December 1854 in which he defined Mary's immaculate conception as dogma.[45] The intent of the council is clear.

Especially clear is the council's affirmation of the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven:

> Finally the Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords, (cf. Apoc. 19:16) and conqueror of sin and death.[46]

In other instances she is described as having been "taken up to heaven"[47] and "exalted above all angels and men to a place second only to her

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[42]Ibid., p. 423, See n. 24.

[43]Ibid., p. 415.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid., p. 417. See n. 12.

[46]Ibid., pp. 417-18.

[47]Ibid., p. 419.

Son."[48] Finally, in the second to last paragraph, the council reiter-
ates its belief that Mary possesses glory in both body and soul in
heaven.[49] It is, therefore, evident that chapter eight of _Lumen_
Gentium explicitly teaches all four Marian dogmas.

As mentioned above, the chapter on "Our Lady" supports not only
the Marian dogmas, but also several pious beliefs. One such belief
with the potential for dogmatization is the doctrine that Mary was co-
redemptrix with Christ. This belief asserts that Mary actively co-
operated with Christ in all phases of His redemptive work. Therefore,
her own merits along with Christ's are claimed to have been accepted by
God for the redemption of man. In keeping with this, the council con-
tends that Christ's redemptive work from His incarnation to His death
was shared and supported by the blessed Virgin. Using the typology of
some of the early church fathers, the council views Mary as the antitype
of Eve: what Eve precipitated by her act of sinful rebellion against
God, Mary undid by her willful compliance with God's plan of salvation
in Christ. Because Mary was uniquely conceived without sin, and was
full of grace, she was able to commit herself whole-heartedly to God's
plan. Her first coredemptive act consisted of her willing and free
consent to become the mother of Jesus.[50] After the conception, such
coredemptive acts are cited as the birth of Christ, the presentation of
Christ at the temple, the initiation of Jesus' miracles by Mary's inter-
cession at the wedding at Cana, and the Virgin's reception of Christ's
words that the blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.[51]

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[48]Ibid., p. 421.   [49]Ibid., p. 422.

[50]Ibid., p. 416.   [51]Ibid., pp. 416-17.

The climax of Mary's coredemptive activity is, of course, her consent
to sacrifice her Son for the sin of the world.[52] After the passion,
Mary's coredemptive work continued in that she then further implored
the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which her Son had promised.[53]
Finally, she was assumed into heaven to reign with Christ. Thus, the
concept of co-redemptrix, while not dogmatically defined, is plainly
taught in this chapter of Lumen Gentium.

On the basis of Mary's coredeeming work with Christ, the council
asserts that she also shares in His role as Mediator and Dispenser of
grace.[54] While the council is careful to insist that Jesus Christ is
the one and only Mediator before God, it nonetheless portrays Mary as a
kind of mediator before Christ. It is recommended that the faithful
give heartfelt attention to her maternal help so that they may be en-
couraged all the more in their petitions to Christ.[55] Similarly, while
the blessed Virgin's assistance is claimed to rest solely upon the
superabundance of the merits of Christ, nonetheless she is portrayed as
having the privilege of dispensing these graces and/or effecting Christ's
disbursement of them. Certainly the titles "Advocate," "Helper," "Bene-
factress," and "Mediatrix" encourage this understanding.[56] Therefore
once again the council supports the traditional pious beliefs about Mary,
even if it has not further developed them.

With respect to the pious belief of Mary as queen of heaven,
the chapter on "Our Lady" explicitly states in three places that Mary

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[52]Ibid., p. 417.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., pp. 418-19.

[55]Ibid., p. 419.

[56]Ibid.

is exalted above all creatures, both in heaven and on earth, and is second in glory only to her son.[57] Further, as noted previously, the council declares that the blessed Virgin was "exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son."[58] Although this imagery is not fleshed out in detail, it is sufficient to indicate that the council upholds the concept of Mary as queen of heaven.

One final pious belief, Mary as the type of the church, while again not receiving formal definition, is given significant attention and development. Already in the second paragraph of the introduction the council claims of the blessed Virgin: "Wherefore she is hailed as pre-eminent and as a wholly unique member of the Church, and as its type and outstanding model in faith and charity."[59] Again, in the second to last paragraph of the chapter Mary is commended to the church as its type and the sign that it likewise will be perfected in the life to come.[60] However, it is under the section entitled "The Blessed Virgin and the Church" that this theme is most fully developed. For here the correspondence between Mary's maternity, virginity, and virtues (for example, faith, hope, and charity) and those of the church are directly related.[61] Thus, as the church goes about all its work, it is to meditate upon and imitate Mary in all things, and so fulfill its mission as Mary did hers.

[57]Ibid., pp. 414, 421, and 423.

[58]Ibid., pp. 417-18.   [59]Ibid., p. 414.

[60]Ibid., p. 422.   [61]Ibid., pp. 419-20.

In summary, the examination thus far of the chapter on "Our Lady" in Lumen Gentium has amply illustrated a conservative influence, in that, while this "solemn and extraordinary" voice of the magisterium has not defined any new dogmas or developed any new themes on Mary, it certainly has formally reiterated the Roman church's traditional stance on the Marian dogmas and popular pious beliefs.

The moderate approach

The moderate influence in the text on Mary is perhaps more evident from what the text does not say, than from what it affirms about Mary. Some of these omissions have already been observed in the examination of the historical development of the text, but bear closer scrutiny here. One striking omission from the title of the schema is the Marian title "mother of the church," which appeared at the head of the chapter when it was presented during the second session of the council.[62] Due to the moderate influence, which held that the title is confusing and possibly misleading, the schema's title became: "On the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church."[63] Another significant omission is the term "co-redemptrix" from the discussion on Mary's role in the economy of salvation. Moderates argued that this term also could lead to dangerous misunderstanding

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[62]Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:286.

[63]The Latin title is: De Beata Maria Virgine Deipara in Mysterio Christo et Ecclesiae. See Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum Secundum, Constitutio Dogmatica de Ecclesia, p. 60.

and cause offense to the separated brethren.[64] Finally, as has been noted earlier, the text purposely avoids defining new Marian dogmas. Explicitly, the council fathers rejected any intention "to give a complete doctrine on Mary . . . [or] to decide those questions which the work of the theologians has not yet fully clarified."[65]

Although the moderate approach may have accomplished most by what it managed to omit from the text on "Our Lady," positive influences are not altogether lacking. For example, the beginning of the schema exhibits the intention to ground the council's Mariology in Scripture, and to relate it to the topic of Christology.[66] Also significant is the council's identification of Mary as "of the race of Adam" and "united to all those who are to be saved."[67] According to Otto Semmelroth, "This passage may not decide the question whether Mary is in the debitum of original sin, but it certainly suggests that she is. Mary is no less redeemed than the rest of us are."[68] A moderating influence is also evident in the paragraphs describing Mary's relationship to the church. In the original schema the stress was on Mary's role as the spiritual mother of those who receive the life of grace in the church. Special attention was given to the term "mediatrix." The council

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[64] Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:288.

[65] Flannery, gen. ed., Vatican Council II, p. 414. For examples of such undecided issues, see Carl Balic, "Mariology and Ecumenism in the II Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church." Unitas 17 (Fall 1965):183-87.

[66] Ibid., pp. 413-14. [67] Ibid., p. 414.

[68] Vorgrimler, gen. ed., Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, 1:287.

fathers clashed over the use of this term, with the moderates contend-

ing for its omission. A compromise was reached by couching the term

among others that would allegedly deter it from being misunderstood.[69]

Further attempt was made in the text to help to distinguish the nature

of Mary's mediation from Christ's and to give Christ pre-eminence. In

addition, this entire section was made to focus primarily upon Mary as

the type of the church, in accord with the patristic studies.[70] Mention

should also be made of the council's pastoral admonition to theologians

and preachers to refrain from all false Marian exaggeration, and "from

whatever might by word of deed lead the separated brethren or any others

whatsoever into error about the true [Marian] doctrine of the Church."[71]

Finally, a conciliatory note is included in the concluding paragraphs

which rejoices "that among the separated brethren too there are those

who give due honor to the Mother of Our Lord and Saviour."[72] These

elements represent the attempts of moderate council members to make the

Marian schema more acceptable to the separated brethren, in the interest

of the ecumenical movement.

Thus, the chapter on Mary exhibits the influence of both a con-

servative and moderate approach to Mariology, along with the influence

of those desiring a Biblical/patristic approach. These approaches sug-

gest what form the Protestant response to this formulation of Mariology

might take.

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[69]Ibid., p. 290. Cf. Flannery, gen. ed., Vatican Council II, p. 419.

[70]Flannery, gen. ed., Vatican Council II, pp. 419-21.

[71]Ibid., p. 422.   [72]Ibid.

Protestant Responses to <u>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</u>, Chapter VIII: Alignment with Types of Roman Catholic Approaches to Mariology in this Document

With the basic contemporary approaches of the Roman Catholic church toward Mariology exhibited from the Marian schema of Vatican Council II, it remains to illustrate now how Protestant responses to this document show the same trends, and thus indicate possible Protestant/Catholic alignments for working to overcome doctrinal differences concerning the blessed Virgin Mary. Two examples will be employed to illustrate both the conservative and moderate approaches.[73]

The conservative approach

One example of the conservation of the traditional Protestant criticisms of Roman Catholic Mariology is the critique of <u>Lumen Gentium</u>, chapter eight, by Warren A. Quanbeck, a theologian of the American Lutheran Church. Quanbeck faults the document on two basic counts.

For one thing, Quanbeck is critical of the council fathers' exegesis in this document. He contends that Scripture passages have been illegitimately pressed into Marian service. For example, the application of the prophetic nuptial imagery to Mary is questionable. It is far more likely that such passages point to an analogy between

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[73]The terms "conservative" and "moderate" as used here are not meant to describe traditional and critical attitudes, respectively, toward Scripture and hermeneutics. They are employed here in a broader sense to describe the approach which seeks to conserve the traditional Protestant criticisms of Roman Catholic Mariology, and that approach which exhibits a willingness to compromise the traditional critique for the sake of closer church relations with Rome. Advocates for the use of historical criticism in Biblical interpretation may be found in both groups. An approach for resolving Marian doctrinal differences based upon the use of historical-critical exegesis alone will be exhibited in the next chapter.

Israel and Christ and Israel and the church. Also to be rejected is
the psychologizing exegesis of such passages as John 2:1-11 and 19:26-
27 which reads the devotional tradition of Rome into the texts and dis-
torts the original author's meaning. In addition, it is also faulty to
draw dogmatic conclusions from traditional spiritual interpretations,
such as the parallel between Eve and Mary first encountered in the works
of Irenaeus and Tertullian.[74]

Secondly, Quanbeck criticizes the theological method exhibited
in "Our Lady." Although the chapter insists that Mary's role in the
work of redemption in no way adds to or detracts from Christ's work,
and although it insists that the cult of Mary must be distinguished from
worship of God, it does not define either Mary's role in redemption or
the meaning of devotion offered to her. Given the excresences of past
Marian dogmas (for example, the immaculate conception and bodily assump-
tion) and devotions (for example, the shrines and Marian congresses),
it seems necessary that some caveat should have been spoken here. Quan-
beck asserts that "Mary is ascribed a role which goes far beyond that
attributed to any other saint and which at times shades into that of
her Son."[75] Furthermore, the promotion of the Marian cult seems to
press toward a more extensive definition of Mary's soteriological role.
In addition, the proliferation of suggestive Marian titles (for example,
"mother of God and mother of men," "new Eve," "queen of the universe,"
and "mediatrix") is dangerous as it promotes a Mariology that is not
Biblical. This document, like all Roman Catholic Mariology, to become

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[74]Quanbeck, "Problems of Mariology," pp. 182-83.

[75]Ibid., p. 183.

acceptable to Protestants, should have remained within the bounds of the New Testament data and language.[76]

Within the Reformed tradition, a more extensive conservative critique of Vatican Council II's Marian schema is offered by Oscar Cullmann. Cullmann argues that, although the document on Mary strives for a softening of Marian dogma, this has not really been achieved. The placement of the Marian text in the last chapter of the constitution on the church could be interpreted as a strengthening of Mariology "since now all statements about the church culminate, so to speak, in this final chapter about Mary."[77] Cullmann believes it is unfortunate that the principle of renewal through Biblical studies, which was so effective on the work in other areas, produced nothing in Mariology.[78] Unfortunately, in this area the stronger influence was the church's devotional tradition, in which emotional elements play a large role. It is this emotional element, arising from a faulty Christology, that is largely responsible for Roman Catholicism's over-developed Mariology:

> A monophysite theology in practice . . . has always characterized the popular piety of the Catholics. In spite of the Council of Chalcedon in which Christ was declared "fully God, fully man," the "fully man" is not taken with sufficient seriousness by Catholicism. The Son is thus confused with the Father in popular piety, ceasing to be the true mediator for men. From this arises the tendency to

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[76]Ibid., pp. 184-85.

[77]Oscar Cullmann, "Was bedeutet das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil für uns Protestanten?" in Was bedeutet das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil für uns? ed. Werner Schatz (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Verlag, [1966]), p. 38.

[78]Ibid., p. 39.

transfer to Mary the "humanity" of Christ. Popular piety feels
itself closer to Mary than to Christ.[79]

Because the council fathers relied more upon devotional tradi-
tion that Scripture, the Marian schema contains a number of aberrations,
according to Cullmann. For example, he believes it is illegitimate to
attribute to Mary as the Marian schema does, "a superiority of degree
in her election over the other elected instruments of the divine plan."[80]
The recognition of Mary as an elected instrument of God's grace does not
justify a "Mariology" or a "Marian" cult any more than an "Abrahamology"
or "Paulology" is justified by the status of these saints. Cullmann
also rejects the council's treatment of such passages as Mark 3:21-33
and John 2:4, contending that these accounts display momentary absences
of faith in Mary. Further, he accuses the current Catholic exegesis of
Revelation 12 of superficiality.[81]

Especially objectionable is the treatment of Mary as a kind of
mediator. The New Testament proclaims that there is only one Mediator--
Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Rev. 19:10 and 22:8-9 exclude any cult of
saints. Thus, the description of Mary as "mediatrix" is most deplora-
ble, particularly since it encourages the excesses of popular Roman
Catholic piety.[82]

Finally, Cullmann criticizes "Our Lady" for reiterating support
for the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

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[79]Idem, Vatican Council II: The New Direction, ed. James D.
Hester, trans. James D. Hester, et al. (New York: Harper and Row,
Publishers, 1968), p. 53.

[80]Ibid., p. 51.   [81]Ibid.

[82]Idem, "Was bedeutet das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil für uns
Protestanten?" p. 39.

These have no Biblical foundation, but represent a tendency in the
apocryphal accounts of the infancy of Christ which treats Mary as an
independent object of veneration. According to Cullmann, this is a
deviant tradition.[83]

In short, both Quanbeck and Cullmann exhibit a concern for the
sola Scriptura principle, reminiscent of the stance of the Reformers.[84]

The moderate approach

Although his review of chapter eight of Lumen Gentium is not
extensive, the Anglican Bernard C. Pawley, Canon of Ely and first
Representative of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in Rome 1960-
65, sees in the document much progress toward an ecumenical understand-
ing of Mary. Concentrating upon the gains of the Roman Catholic moder-
ates, he views it as a major accomplishment that the council proclaimed
no further dogmas, though it had been petitioned to do so. He also sees
in the Marian schema "a real endeavor to bring Marian doctrines and
devotions within a compass which would not distort the totally Christo-
centric nature of our faith."[85] Further, Pawley believes that the
council's compromise on the treatment of Mary's mediating role "should
be a help to many who find the excesses of Roman Marian devotion hard
to understand."[86] To make further ecumenical progress, he does not

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[83]Idem, Vatican Council II: The New Direction, p. 52.

[84]Another extensive conservative critique of the Marian schema
is given by Jean-Jacques von Allmen. See Karl Barth and Max Geiger, gen
eds., Theologische Studien, 96 vols. (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1968), vol. 89:
Gedanken zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche "Lumen Gentium,"
pp. 17-25.

[85]Bernard C. Pawley, "Introduction," in The Second Vatican Coun-
cil: Studies by Eight Anglican Observers, ed. Bernard C. Pauley (London:
Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 20.

[86]Ibid.

advocate investigation of the Scriptures or patristic sources, but "a really deep attempt to discover what is the spiritual and psychological urge which impels our Roman Catholic brethren to seek the consolations of 'Marian' piety."[87] Here, Pawley believes, the Anglican church can be of real assistance in helping Rome to achieve a more properly balanced Marian piety. Pawley's approach exhibits a desire to concentrate upon what was positively accomplished in the schema, while looking for some way that remaining differences can be negotiated.

Another Anglican, Eugene R. Fairweather, professor at Trinity College, Toronto, similarly focusses upon the moderate contributions to chapter eight of Lumen Gentium, and sees in these a basis for ecumenical progress. He finds it particularly significant that the Marian schema was placed at the end of Lumen Gentium, interpreting this as a portrayal of Mary "both as archetype of the Church's role in the history of salvation and as pre-eminent member of the heavenly Church--in effect, as a personified synthesis of ecclesiology."[88] Fairweather believes this signifies the Roman Catholic church's intention to treat Mariology in the future in an "ecclesio-typical" fashion. He observes that, generally, proponents of this approach discourage further Marian dogmatic definitions, and some wish the earlier ones had not been formulated.[89] The council is to be commended for emphasizing Mary as a member and the archetype of the church. This approach helps put Mary's role as

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[87]Ibid.

[88]Eugene R. Fairweather, "The Church," in The Second Vatican Council: Studies by Eight Anglican Observers, ed. Pawley, p. 80.

[89]Ibid., pp. 80-81.

mediatrix into proper perspective, emphasizing that her mediation is akin not to Christ's, but to the mediatorial acts of the ministerial priesthood and all the faithful. Thus, the offense of this term and concept is removed. Furthermore, the pastoral admonitions concerning the proper devotion to Mary make a significant contribution to a renewal of genuine Marian doctrine and piety. Fairweather optimistically concludes that Vatican II's Marian schema encourages both a Scriptural and patristic approach to Mariology, and, thus, points the way for a common understanding.[90]

Like Pawley, Fairweather illustrates a moderating approach which tends to downplay or overlook doctrinal differences, and to focus upon what is held in common, with the hope that a future compromised position can be achieved.

Summary

In this chapter it was demonstrated that two documents of Vatican Council II gave new movement to resolving the ecumenical problem of doctrinal non-consensus concerning the Roman Catholic Marian dogmas. The Decree on Ecumenism was shown to catalyze the somewhat dormant ecumenical relations between the Roman church and the "separated brethren," while chapter eight ("Our Lady") of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church was investigated to identify basic approaches of the contemporary Roman Catholic church toward Mariology. Three trends, influences, or approaches were illustrated and parallelled with the same types of approaches exhibited by Protestant responses to the Marian

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[90]Ibid., p. 82.

schema. The conclusion is that the correlation of approaches suggests how post-Vatican II Protestant/Roman Catholic approaches to solving the Marian ecumenical problem will develop.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL SOLUTION:
CONSENSUS BY REDUCTION

Introduction

To this point, the study has accomplished two goals. First, it

has outlined the history and nature of the ecumenical problem of doc-

trinal non-consensus between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches

concerning the Marian dogmas of the Roman church. Secondly, it has

demonstrated the cause of the current ecumenical attempts to resolve

this problem, and exhibited the basis for the types of solutions that

are now being employed. With this chapter the study now turns to de-

fining and illustrating the three basic post-Vatican II solutions,

approaches, or methodologies currently utilized by both Roman Catholics

and Protestants to achieve doctrinal consensus in this area. This

chapter will focus specifically on the historical-critical solution

which seeks to achieve consensus by reduction. After the solution is

described, its application will be illustrated by the works of repre-

sentative Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars working independently,

and then by a joint Roman Catholic/Protestant project.

Description of the Historical-Critical Solution:
Consensus by Reduction

The description of this solution involves the definition of

four component terms. The sense of the terms "solution" and "consensus"

have already been indicated: a method is being sought which will
achieve doctrinal agreement or harmony between the Roman Catholic and
Protestant churches concerning the Marian dogmas as defined by the
Roman Catholic church. The particular method described here is that
which employs the application of the historical-critical method of
Biblical interpretation to the Biblical data concerning the blessed
Virgin Mary.[1] The outcome of the application of this method has been
termed "consensus by reduction" for two reasons. First, the practi-
tioners of this method limit their goal to achieving consensus on the
basis of what the Scriptures alone say about Mary. Secondly, the
result of the method is such that its practitioners reach consensus that
the Biblical data says little about Mary, and even less that is histori-
cal. Thus, their doctrinal consensus is reductionistic.

Since this solution aims at achieving consensus concerning the
Biblical data about the Virgin Mary, it focuses upon those dogmas which
are claimed to be based primarily upon Scripture--that is, the divine
maternity and perpetual virginity of Mary. This approach is relevant
for this study whose primary focus of attention is upon the dogmas of
the immaculate conception and bodily assumption, in that these latter
are founded upon and developed from the former. Thus, any solution
which effects how the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity and perpetual
virginity are viewed, also effects the treatment of these other Marian

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[1]The historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation is
understood here to be that method which involves the presuppositions,
tools, and goals outlined by Edgar Krentz in The Historical-Critical
Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

dogmas. This logical result will be exhibited in the work of Raymond
E. Brown and the joint Roman Catholic/Protestant ecumenical study of
Mary.

Roman Catholic Models of the Application of the Historical-Critical Method to the Biblical Data Concerning the Virgin Mary

Raymond E. Brown

On the divine maternity

As exhibited in the second chapter, the affirmation of the dogma
of Mary's divine maternity depends upon the affirmation of two asser-
tions: 1) Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ; 2) Jesus Christ is the
God-Man, the Second Person of the Trinity. As previously shown, the
deduction from these two assertions is that Mary is the mother of Jesus
Christ, the God-Man; or, in other words, Mary is the mother of God,
theotokos. The affirmation of this truth is really, then, the affir-
mation of the orthodox Christology of the church which is based upon a
straightforward, literal interpretation of the New Testament. The first
question which must be asked, then, is: Does Raymond Brown accept the
literal interpretation of New Testament statements about Jesus Christ
as historically certain facts? The answer is "no."

In an essay on twentieth-century views on the Christology of the
New Testament, Brown outlines six positions held by contemporary theo-
logians: non-scholarly conservatism, non-scholarly liberalism, scholarly
liberalism, Bultmannian existentialism, and moderate conservatism, which
he subdivides into implicit and explicit Christology.[2] Non-scholarly

[2]Raymond E. Brown, Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the
Church (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), pp. 20-37.

conservatism Brown defines as the "theory [which] posits that Jesus was christologically evaluated during his ministry exactly as he is portrayed in the Gospels (which are literal accounts of the ministry)."[3] In other words, this view holds that the New Testament accounts of Jesus are to be taken at face value: they simply record the words and deeds of Jesus without any development of thought. This position Brown rejects as unscholarly and fundamentalistic. Instead, he opts for "moderate conservatism" which holds that there is some continuity between the historical Jesus and the New Testament's portrayal of Him, but that "there has been considerable development from Jesus to the NT writings."[4] In accord with the Pontifical Biblical Commission's Instruction on The Historical Truth of the Gospels, Brown identifies three stages in the formation of the Gospels.[5] Stage one consists of the actual words and deeds of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Stage two is the period of the apostolic preachers who developed a Christology in light of the resurrection of Jesus and then read this Christology back into the accounts of Jesus' ministry. The third stage is the work of the sacred writers who, because they were not eye-witnesses, selected and synthesized the traditions that came down from the apostles and explicated those traditions to fit the needs of the audiences to whom they were writing.[6] Stages two and three, while having some relationship to stage one, are

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[3]Ibid., p. 23. [4]Ibid., p. 33.

[5]For a translation of this document and commentary, see J. A. Fitzmyer, Theological Studies 25 (September 1964):386-408.

[6]See Raymond E. Brown, Biblical Reflections, pp. 111-15; The Virginal Conception & Bodily Resurrection of Jesus (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973), pp. 16-18; The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), pp. 26-29.

primarily _faith_ statements of the early church "to show the significance

of those events as seen with hindsight."[7] These stages are not neces-

sarily intended to communicate factual history concerning Jesus. They

are theological formulations of the church's _faith_ _about_ Jesus. It is

the task of the Biblical exegete to discern what is the historical core,

and what are the theological interpretations that are exhibited in the

New Testament. For this task, the exegete uses the tools of historical

criticism.[8] The final step of the hermeneutical task is to adapt the

New Testament theological formulations in terms that are meaningful for

the church today.[9]

Applying this theory to Christology in particular, Brown

contends:

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[7]Idem, _Virginal Conception_, p. 17.

[8]See Brown's description of the hermeneutical task, "Herme-
neutics," in _The Jerome Biblical Commentary_, 2 vols., ed. Raymond E.
Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, NJ:
Prentice-Hall, 1968), 2:605-23. For tools and presuppositions of the
historical-critical method which Brown considers legitimate, see ibid.,
John S. Kselman, "Modern New Testament Criticism," pp. 7-20; and Raymond
E. Brown and Thomas Aquinas Collins, "Church Pronouncements," pp. 624-32.

[9]For example, Brown contends:
"[There is a] human component in all past (as well as present)
phrasings of God's revelation. God and Jesus have always been
understood through the prism of human minds limited in what they
can grasp by the interpretative skills of their time. A God
described in Semitic categories was understood differently from a
God described in Platonic categories. Yet neither the Semitic nor
Platonic insight was exhaustive, nor did they totally agree. And
today a God looked at through a world view aware of developments in
physical and social sciences will be understood differently from a
God reflected upon by a medieval mind dominated by Aristotelian
categories. . . . .
. . . .
All human formulations of truth are limited, and in the light of
vast new bodies of knowledge we are attempting to rethink past under-
standings of divine truth to see if enriching new insights and modi-
fications are possible."
Biblical Reflections, pp. 5 and 14.

Obviously the first century and the NT were only the beginning of
a longer quest to understand who Jesus is, a quest that stretched
through Nicaea and which continues today. The Church has rejected
some answers about Jesus and has embraced others at least partially
expressing her faith. But as long as the Church exists, she must
continue her struggle to find a still more adequate answer.[10]

Thus, a study of the New Testament Gospels, employing historical-

critical tools, can reveal a core of information about the historical

Jesus of Nazareth, and at least two layers of tradition in the early

church's faith assessment of Jesus. Historical-critical exegetes who

do not have an anti-supernaturalistic bias should be able to reach a

basic consensus concerning the content of both the historical core and

the early church's interpretation of this core. However, only the Holy

Spirit, working in the church as a whole, can reveal what is the true

interpretation of the historical Jesus for one's own time. For the

Roman Catholic, this happens largely through the magisterium of the

church, as it is guided by scholarly investigation.[11] Still, the

historical-critical evaluation of the New Testament data is the indis-

pensable first step.

Exemplary of Brown's application of this first step to the New

Testament data concerning Jesus is his study, "Does the New Testament

Call Jesus God?"[12] Admittedly, Brown acknowledges that the issue of a

"high" Christology for Jesus in the New Testament is broader than a dis-

cussion of the use of the name $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ for Jesus, but he contends that

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[10]Ibid., p. 37.

[11]See Raymond E. Brown and James C. Turro, "Canonicity," in
Jerome Biblical Commentary, 2:533, Biblical Reflections, p. 12, and
Virginal Conception, p. 12.

[12]Raymond E. Brown, Jesus God and Man (Milwaukee: Bruce Publish-
ing Co., 1967), pp. 1-38.

the method he employs and the results gained should be the same for
investigating other facets of the issue. Brown concludes that in the
earliest layers of New Testament tradition, those closest to the reality
of the historical Jesus, "there is no reason to think that Jesus was
called God."[13] The use of the title "God" for Jesus began only during
the second half of the New Testament era (which Brown dates from 30 to
100 AD). Even then, its usage was not widespread and was opposed by
some, as a study of the pastoral epistles and Johannine literature
testifies.[14] At first, under the influence of the Old Testament, the
title "God" was too narrow to apply to Jesus: it referred strictly to
the Father, the God to whom Jesus prayed. Gradually, "God" came to be
understood in a broader sense. Since God the Father had revealed so much
of Himself in Jesus, the term "God" had to enlarge to include Father and
Son. The Sitz im Leben for this usage is held to be the liturgical ex-
pressions of the Christian community. As such, the usage must not be
pressed as an attempt to define Jesus essentially or ontologically.
Rather, it is more likely the language of worship, expressing the belief
of God's divine rule in, through, and by Jesus.[15] Thus, a study of the
New Testament's usage of the term "God" for Jesus reveals that the
earliest data did not call Jesus God. This usage developed later, after
the resurrection of Jesus. Actually, the church's terminology equating
Jesus with God was not solid until the council of Nicea in 325.[16] There-
fore, this study, which could be parallelled by others, indicates that

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[13]Ibid., p. 30.   [14]Ibid., p. 33.

[15]Ibid., pp. 33-38.   [16]Ibid., p. ix.

the earliest Biblical data does not represent Jesus as divine.[17] Rather,
belief in His divinity developed--primarily after the resurrection, and
then gradually. To call Jesus God or divine, then, is a faith statement
of the church, not the primary, "stage one," Biblical witness.[18]

The implication of this conclusion for Mariology is obvious.
Since the earliest historical data of the New Testament does not treat
Jesus as divine, one would expect that it also does not treat Mary as
the mother of God, but as the mother of Jesus, the man. The doctrine of
the divine maternity of Mary would then be a later formulation of the
church's faith about Jesus and Mary.

The validity of the above expectation is borne out by Brown's
treatment of the New Testament passages on Mary. As Brown points out,
a "New Testament quest for the historical Mary" must be based upon the
data in the Gospels as this is where most of the passages on Mary are
located. According to Brown, in the synoptic Gospels there are only two
historical references to Mary. The first reference simply identifies
Jesus as Mary's son.[19] The second synoptic reference, besides again
identifying Mary as the mother of Jesus, also either replaces Mary with
those who hear the Word of God and do it as Jesus' real family (see

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[17]For a similar study concerning Jesus' limitations of knowledge,
see Brown's companion essay in Jesus God and Man, "How Much Did Jesus
Know?" pp. 39-102.

[18]Brown gives a brief sketch of his schema of New Testament
Christological development in Birth of the Messiah, pp. 29-32. Further
details and reflections upon this outline are expanded in the commentary
proper.

[19]Cf. Mark 6:3, Luke 4:22, and Matt. 13:55. Although Luke
speaks of Jesus as "Joseph's son" and Matthew may be seen to combine
the two traditions, Brown contends that Mark's reference is the earliest
and most reliable. See Brown, Biblical Reflections, p. 88.

Mark 3:19-21; 31-35 and Matt. 12:46-50), or credits Mary with being

Jesus' mother because she hears the Word of God and keeps it (see Luke

8:19-21). In addition to these synoptic references, the last specific

mention of Mary in New Testament history, Acts 1:14, also calls Mary the

mother of Jesus.[20] In summary, these few oldest and most reliable New

Testament references to Mary refer to her as the mother of Jesus, and

not the mother of Christ, God, or the Son of God. Thus, the early New

Testament witness concerning Mary's relationship to Jesus corroborates

the witness of the New Testament's early Christology: before the resur-

rection message took hold, Jesus was viewed only in terms of His humanity.

Therefore, Mary gave birth to Jesus, the man. It is the church's later

post-resurrection reflection that posits Mary as the mother of God.

Such post-resurrection confession of the church concerning Mary

as the mother of the Son of God and Christ is found in the Lucan infancy

narrative (compare Luke 1:32, 35, and 2:11). But, in Brown's view,

neither the infancy narrative of Luke (1:5-2:51) nor that of Matthew

(1:1-2:23) are intended as historical accounts. The purpose of both of

these is theological. That they are primarily non-historical is evident

to Brown for several reasons. First, although the memories of what

Jesus said and did during His ministry came down to the evangelists

through the channel of apostolic preachers (some of whom were eyewit-

nesses), there is no evidence of the origins or transmission of the

material concerning Jesus' birth and early years. Second, a comparison

of the two infancy narratives reveals that they are not only different,

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[20]Ibid., pp. 89-91.

but contradictory in a number of details. Third, the material of the infancy narratives conflicts with information given in the rest of the Gospels. (For example, if Jesus' parents knew who He was through an angelic message—that is, the Son of God—why did His disciples have such a difficult time discovering this later on?) Fourth, the infancy narratives contain historical references that are incorrect or dubious. Fifth, the narratives contain some events that are seemingly styled after Old Testament parallels. Sixth, the infancy narratives make the most sense as the evangelists' attempts to provide appropriate introductions to the career and significance of Jesus, and to supply a transition from the Old Testament to the Gospel in terms of the Christological preaching of the church dressed in the imagery of Israel.[21]

Therefore, inasmuch as the infancy narratives are non-historical, the Lucan references to Mary as the mother of the Son of God and Christ do not represent "stage one" historical information, but are later post-resurrection formulations of the church's belief that Jesus is divine, and that, therefore, Mary is the mother of God. In summary, the New Testament evidence is that the doctrine of the divine maternity of Mary does not belong to the essential historical core of the New Testament witness, but belongs to the post-resurrection faith responses of the Christian community.

[21]Idem, Birth of the Messiah, pp. 29-38. See also idem, "Luke's Method in the Annunciation Narrative of Chapter One," in No Famine in the Land: Studies in Honor of John L. McKenzie, ed. James W. Flanagan and Anita Weisbrod Robinson (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), pp. 179-94.

On the perpetual virginity

The dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity, as defined in chapter two, affirms first of all the virginal conception of Jesus. Thus, it must first be inquired whether Brown supports this primary assertion of the dogma.

In his essay, "The Problem of the Virginal Conception of Jesus," Brown sets forth three Scriptural arguments against the historicity of the virginal conception of Jesus, and two Scriptural arguments in its favor.[22]

Against the historicity of the virginal conception of Jesus, Brown first contends that the "high" Christology implied in the virginal conception is most likely a late, post-resurrection development of the church. Second, the support of this doctrine on the basis of the infancy narratives is highly problematic since these are primarily non-historical prologues to the Gospel, as has been indicated. Third, the rest of the New Testament is silent about this doctrine, and this is very significant in light of the questionable historical character of the infancy narratives. While such silence does not disprove the historicity of the virginal conception, it certainly indicates ignorance of this tradition. This ignorance argues for its absence as a part of early Christian proclamation. However, Brown contends it is possible that sometime in the sixties one or more Christian thinkers, in attempting to solve the Christological problem, affirmed symbolically that Jesus was God's Son from His conception. Later, the symbolic aspect of

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[22]Idem, Virginal Conception, pp. 52-66.

this theory was forgotten as it was disseminated among various Christian communities, and finally recorded by the evangelists.[23]

In favor of the historicity of Jesus' virginal conception, Brown argues that the story of Jesus' conception is in a form for which there is no exact parallel or antecedent material available to the first-century Christians who formulated this account. Thus, it is un-likely that the doctrine of the virginal conception is merely a symbolic, theological construction imitating similar birth narratives in other sources. This suggests that the virginal conception is really what took place. Further support comes from the persistent non-Christian charge that Jesus was illegitimate. Those who would deny the virginal con-ception must explain how the rumor of illegitimacy and irregularity of birth arose--without reverting to an unacceptable alternative (that is, that Mary was adulterous).[24]

Because there are good historical arguments on both sides of the issue, Brown leaves it as an open question whether Jesus was virginally conceived. As a Roman Catholic, he looks for guidance in finding a solution to his church's magisterium.

With respect to Mary's _virginitas in partu_ Brown has few com-ments. In his commentary on Luke 2:23, he concludes that the phrase "opens the womb" refers to nothing more than that Jesus was the first-born.[25] However, this conclusion cannot be used as a defense of the

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[23]Ibid., pp. 53-61.   [24]Ibid., pp. 61-66.

[25]Luke 2:22-24:
"And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') and to offer a

idea of virginity _in partu_. According to Brown, it is highly unlikely

that such an idea ever occurred to Luke, and if it did, that he would

not have used some expression to indicate this. Furthermore, if Mary

maintained her virginity _in partu_, no purification would have been

necessary.[26] The fact of the matter is that this belief in virginal

birth (as opposed to virginal conception) is a development of "post-

biblical Christianity," something already hinted at in the second-

century _Protevangelium of James_.[27] Brown also points out that although

Roman Catholics have traditionally considered this to be revealed doc-

trine, Catholic theologians are now beginning to take a more nuanced

position toward it.[28] Whatever the view of the church is, however, it

cannot appeal to the New Testament for evidence.

Brown does give a little more attention to the issue of Mary's

virginitas _post_ _partum_. With respect to the argument based upon "until"

in Matthew 1:25, Brown contends:

> The immediate context favors a lack of future implication here, for
> Matthew is concerned only with stressing Mary's virginity before
> the child's birth, so that the Isaian prophecy will be fulfilled.
> . . . As for the marital situation after the birth of the child, in
> itself this verse gives us no information whatsoever.[29]

Likewise, he also believes that Luke's use of $\pi\rho\omega\tau\acute{o}\tau\sigma\kappa\sigma\varsigma$ (firstborn)

instead of $\mu\sigma\nu\sigma\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ (only-begotten) in 2:7 is inconclusive. It

proves only that Luke had no interest in presenting Jesus as Mary's only

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sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair
    of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.'"
See Brown, _Birth of the Messiah_, p. 437.

[26]Ibid.   [27]Ibid., pp. 517-18.

[28]Ibid., p. 518.   [29]Ibid., p. 132.

son. The real point of the use of προτότοκος here is that there was

no child <u>before</u> Jesus, and that, therefore, Jesus was to have the privi-

leges and status that Israelite tradition gave to the firstborn.[30] Nor

can a conclusive argument be based upon New Testament references to

Jesus' brothers and sisters. Although in Greek ἀδελφός normally

refers to a real brother, the Hebrew אח covers masculine relatives of

varying degrees, and the Septuagint uses ἀδελφός to render all these

shades of meaning.[31] In addition, one must ask whether the evangelists

were in a position to know the facts on this matter.[32] However, if the

above arguments cannot disprove the doctrine of Mary's <u>post partum</u>

virginity, neither can Mary's question in Luke 1:34, "How can this be,

since I do not know a man?" be used to support it, with the contention

that Mary was making a vow of chastity. Brown argues that this inter-

pretation of the passage is totally implausible in the context supposed

by Luke. Contemporary knowledge of Palestinian Judaism reveals nothing

that would explain why such a young girl would have entered marriage

with a vow of virginity, and thus have risked the inevitable abuse of

the village women who would scorn her for her barrenness.[33] Ultimately,

belief in Mary's <u>post partum</u> virginity, like belief in her <u>in partu</u>

virginity, is a matter of faith in the "post-biblical theology" of the

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[30]Ibid., p. 398.

[31]Idem, <u>The Gospel According to John (i-xii)</u>. (Garden City,
NY: Doubleday & Co., 1966), p. 112.

[32]Idem, <u>Birth of the Messiah</u>, p. 132.

[33]Ibid., cf. pp. 303-6 and p. 361.

church.[34] For this doctrine too has no basis in the New Testament

historical data.

Thus, for Raymond Brown, the New Testament data on Mary indicates that both the dogmas of her divine maternity and perpetual virginity are not based upon the witness of the historical core of the New Testament, but are post-resurrection (and/or post-New Testament) faith formulations of the Christian church. Belief in them depends upon one's attitude toward the tradition of the early church.

On the immaculate conception and bodily assumption

As a New Testament scholar, Brown has not devoted much attention to the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. This is because he contends that there is no New Testament evidence for either of these dogmas. In fact, according to Brown, the concept of original sin did not fully exist in the first century. Both of these dogmas, while they must be believed by a Roman Catholic on the basis of the authority of the church, are non-historical. The dogma of Mary's immaculate conception "is based on the Church's insight that the sinlessness of Jesus should have affected his origins, and hence his mother, as well."[35] Similarly, the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption "stems from the Church's insight about the application of the fruits of redemption to the leading Christian disciple: Mary has gone before us, anticipating our common fate."[36] Thus, since even the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity and perpetual virginity cannot be based upon certain

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[34]Ibid., p. 132.

[35]Idem, Biblical Reflections, p. 105.   [36]Ibid.

New Testament history, much less can the other Marian dogmas appeal to the New Testament. Ultimately, one's attitude toward them is dependent upon his attitude toward the authority of the Roman Catholic teaching office.

Bruce Vawter

On the divine maternity

Like Raymond Brown, Bruce Vawter appeals to the 1964 Instruction of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on The Historical Truth of the Gospels to justify his presupposition that the New Testament Gospels record three layers of development: 1) the words and deeds of the historical Jesus; 2) the kerygma of the apostolic tradition (investigated by form criticism); and 3) "the modifications introduced by the sacred authors" (revealed through redaction criticism).[37] Again, like Brown, he believes it is the task of the Biblical exegete to employ the tools of historical-criticism to discern the historical core of the New Testament concerning the actual words and deeds of Jesus and the New Testament church's faith interpretation of these events. Vawter claims to have a high regard for the kerygmatic ("stage one") data. Nonetheless, he contends:

> A respect for the nature of the kerygma itself, therefore, impels us to approach it as a word concerning a person recent in history and to discover, if we can, which of his [Jesus'] words and deeds are historically recoverable through the impact that he made upon it. And in these words and deeds we may find an incipient Christology implied in what Jesus knew or sensed himself to be.[38]

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[37]Bruce Vawter, This Man Jesus: An Essay Toward a New Testament Christology (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1973), p. 18. Cf. idem, The Four Gospels: An Introduction (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), pp. 15-30.

[38]Idem, This Man Jesus, p. 25.

According to Vawter, a distillation of the historical core of

the Gospels from the New Testament church's faith interpretation of

these primary historical data will reveal a plurality of theologies, or

interpretations of the Christ event.[39] The final task of the Biblical

theologian, then, is to evaluate these theologies, and translate what

is valuable in them into the "terms, categories, and frames of reference"

that are meaningful for contemporary man.

> A biblical theology today does neither more nor less than this when
> it seeks not merely to retrace the steps of the theologians of the
> Bible but also to judge whether these steps still lead to a desired
> destination. Part of the task of biblical theology, in other words,
> is to point out the limitations of the Bible, and to continue its
> work of translation by acknowledging that its authors have made use
> of some categories that were either wrong from the beginning or at
> least are no longer helpful, for which reason it must substitute
> better categories to take their place.[40]

The consequences for Mariology of the application of this

methodology are illustrated in Vawter's treatment of the New Testament

titles for Jesus. Exemplary of this treatment is his discussion of the

title "Son of God." Using Romans 1:3-4 as an example of the church's

earliest Christology, Vawter contends that one early Christian tradition

is that the man Jesus _became_ the Son of God (received divine dispensa-

tion) at some point in time--in the resurrection, in the parousia, or

at some stage in His historical ministry. Such a sonship is _functional_,

like the designation of an Old Testament king as son of God at his en-

thronement.[41] In this understanding, then, Jesus was not divine, but

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[39]Idem, "Johannine Theology," in _Jerome Biblical Commentary_,
2:289.

[40]Idem, _This Man Jesus_, p. 29.

[41]Ibid., pp. 122-23.

divinely endowed. According to Vawter, even the earthly Jesus did not

consciously know He was divine:

> To say that Jesus in his earthly life knew and judged himself
> to be God's natural Son and very God is to assert the unprovable
> and, from the perspective of the New Testament, the improbable.
> Had Jesus known such a thing he could hardly have contained his
> knowledge, yet the gospels are witness that his most intimate dis-
> ciples did not recognize his essential relation to God prior to the
> resurrection. The gospels, for all their other claims about Jesus,
> never hide but rather insist on his character both as a man and as
> a man of his age, with the limitations dictated by his human and
> his temporal condition. For this precise reason it is quaint and
> naive to expect of them an answer to the anachronistic question:
> Did Jesus know he was God?[42]

Vawter quotes approvingly the argumentation of Raymond Brown that the

Gospels never use the term "God" for Jesus, but that this is a later

post-resurrection designation for Him.[43] After the resurrection, as the

church reflected upon the uniqueness of Jesus and was led by the Holy

Spirit it eventually acclaimed Jesus to be God Himself.[44] The church

formulated this belief through such "models" as pre-existence and incar-

nation. Vawter is careful to assert that although Jesus' divinity was

not realized during His earthly ministry, nonetheless He was divine at

this time.[45] Nevertheless, he believes there was a significant change

in Christ's nature before and after the resurrection, and it is this

change which accounts for the fact that Jesus was God before the resur-

rection, but was not perceived as such. For this explanation Vawter

acknowledges his indebtedness to the process description of God as

formulated by Wolfhart Pannenberg.[46]

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[42]Ibid., p. 134.

[43]Ibid., pp. 134-35.

[44]Ibid., pp. 140-41.

[45]Ibid., p. 143.

[46]Ibid., pp. 144-45.

Again the implication of this Christological theory for the

doctrine of Mary's divine maternity is obvious. Inasmuch as the earliest

Christian witness did not think of Jesus as divine but as a divinely-

endowed man, so the Virgin Mary was not thought of as the mother of God,

but as the mother of a divinely-endowed man. Later, when the church set

itself to the task of elaborating a precise Christology, then Jesus was

explicitly defined as God, and Mary as the mother of God. But this was

a post-New Testament development.[47]

On the perpetual virginity

Considering first the virginal conception of Jesus, Vawter

claims the idea for this appears only in the infancy narratives. How-

ever, its basis here cannot be taken as historically reliable for

several reasons. First, these accounts give every evidence of being

"legend," that is, "written . . . storying about great men by which was

handed on the lore of the past."[48] By definition, "legend is often un-

reliable and usually univerifiable in its details."[49] The infancy

narratives had to rely upon legendary techniques since the information

they propose to convey was not part of the early kerygma. Second, the

infancy narratives exhibit the presence of an earlier tradition (parti-

cularly in the genealogies of Matt. 1:1-7 and Luke 3:23-37) which traced

Jesus' ancestry through Joseph, making Jesus the product of a natural

procreation. Third, both the earliest Gospel (Mark) and the latest

(John) provide no information about a virginal conception of Jesus.[50]

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[47]Ibid., p. 194.

[49]Ibid.

[48]Ibid., p. 180.

[50]Ibid., pp. 184-88.

While the Gospels do not provide any conclusive evidence against the historicity of the virginal conception of Jesus, neither, in the last analysis, do they prove it. The formulation of this doctrine is the result of the early church's faith interpretation of the Christ event.[51]

Like Brown, Vawter has little to say about Mary's alleged virginitas in partu. In his commentary on Luke 2:7 he does remark that πρωτότοκος (firstborn) "was a technical term for 'the child who opens the womb.'"[52] Although Vawter himself draws no conclusions from the use of this word, its meaning as he has defined it would seem to rule out a birth which leaves the womb physically intact. Apparently he believes Luke intended nothing one way or the other inasmuch as Vawter claims the development of the doctrine of Mary's virginitas in partu was "speculation that . . . had nothing to with what the New Testament was all about."[53] In other words, there is no foundation for this teaching in the New Testament.

With regard to Mary's virginitas post partum, Vawter contends that while the Gospels do not support this belief, neither do they rule it out. The argument against the belief on the basis of the word "firstborn" in Luke 2:7 is invalid: the word does not indicate that Jesus was one of many children since any Jewish mother's son, if the first one, was her firstborn, even if an only son. In addition, Vawter believes that the account of the young Jesus and the temple (Luke

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[51]Ibid., p. 192.

[52]Idem, The Four Gospels, p. 62.

[53]Idem, This Man Jesus, p. 193.

2:41-52) assumes that Jesus was an only child.[54] Also, in 15:40 Mark

identifies two of the brothers of Jesus he named in 6:3 as children of

another Mary. Furthermore, it can be argued that the Gospel and other

New Testament references to Jesus' brothers and sisters presuppose

Semitic usage which uses "brother" for half brothers, nephews, near

cousins, remote cousins, and relatives in general.[55] Finally, it must

be considered that it would be hard to see how the ancient tradition of

this belief could have developed if there were any clear Scriptural

witness against it.[56] On the other hand, Vawter agrees with Brown that

Mary's "How will this be since I do not know man?" (Luke 1:34) cannot

be used to argue for her virginity. This passage merely follows the

pattern of an annunciation story, serving to introduce the angelic

explanation that the child's conception will be virginal--that is,

achieved by the power of God and not of man.[57] In short, the New Testa-

ment data cannot be used to arrive at a conclusive decision about Mary's

virginity after the birth of Jesus.

According to Vawter, the whole attempt to define Mary's per-

petual virginity in the clinical language of physical virginity is a

reductio ad absurdum. The writers of the New Testament had no such

interest. It arose, rather, in the accounts of the post-New Testament

pseudo-Gospels. In fact, the formulation of both the Marian dogmas

under discussion here were post-New Testament developments of the church

as it pondered the mystery of Jesus Christ:

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[54]Ibid., p. 189.

[55]Idem, The Four Gospels, p. 153.

[56]Ibid.   [57]Ibid., p. 54.

The early mariological dogmas were formulated, when the Fathers set about completing the work of the New Testament, because they were necessary to the completion of their christological elaboration.[58]

In summary so far, it has been demonstrated that both Raymond Brown and Bruce Vawter relegate the formulation of the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity and perpetual virginity to the (at least) post-resurrectional reflections of the Christian community, and generally deny them any foundation in the historical core of the New Testament.[59]

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Protestant Models of the Application
of the Historical-Critical Method
to the Biblical Data Concerning
the Virgin Mary

Reginald H. Fuller

</div>

On the divine maternity

By way of reminder, this portion of the study seeks to discover if Reginald H. Fuller, a Protestant practitioner of the historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation, teaches that the New Testament proclaims Mary as the mother of God, that is, of Jesus who is divine, and that Mary was perpetually virgin. To give Fuller's answer, his approach to the study of the Gospels must first be sketched.

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[58]Idem, This Man Jesus, p. 194.

[59]Further Roman Catholic critical studies reaching the same conclusions are: John F. Craghan, "Mary's 'Ante Partum' Virginity: The Biblical View," The American Ecclesiastical Review 162 (1970):361-72; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Virginal Conception of Jesus in the New Testament," Theological Studies 34 (December 1973):541-75. For a critical study by a Roman Catholic scholar who finds validation in the New Testament for the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity and perpetual virginity, see John McHugh, The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1975). Raymond Brown gives a generally unapproving critique of the book in America 133 (October 25, 1975): 260-63.

Like his Roman Catholic counterparts Raymond E. Brown and Bruce

Vawter, Reginald H. Fuller posits that there are various strata of wit-

ness contained in the New Testament Gospels. Fuller contends for _four_

layers. The first layer consists of the _ipsissima verba_ and _ipsissima_

acta of the historical Jesus. Then comes the layer consisting of the

contribution of the earliest post-Easter Palestinian community, which

transformed through its additions and modifications, its memories of

Jesus' words and deeds in light of its faith in the resurrected Jesus.

Ths next layer was contributed by the Hellenistic churches which trans-

lated the Aramaic traditions from the Palestinian churches into Greek,

and added to them new sayings which they erroneously attributed to

Jesus to fit their situation. The uppermost layer consists of the con-

tributions of the evangelists themselves who adapted the traditions to

the needs of their respective communities of faith.[60]

To peel away the layers of faith-formed response and discover

the historical core of the Gospels the exegete must employ the tools of

historical criticism. In essence, this is the quest for the historical

Jesus. According to Fuller, the exegete first applies source criticism

and the redactio-historical method of K. L. Schmidt to discern the

redactive additions of the Gospel-writers. Then, using source

criticism, he establishes the primary sources used by the evangelists.

The Hellenistic and Palestinian oral traditions are established through

the use of the cross-section method applied to the primary sources (as

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[60]Reginald H. Fuller, _The New Testament in Current Study_ (New
York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), pp. 70-71. Cf. Idem, _A Critical_
Introduction to the New Testament (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co.,
1966), p. 3.

Burkitt), by form criticism (as Bultmann and Dibelius), by the Cross-
section method applied to the oral forms (as Dodd), and by linguistic
and environmental tests (as Jeremias and Black). Fourthly, the authen-
tic Jesus tradition is established by the criteria of distinctiveness.
Finally, the exegete employs the criterion of consistency (as Carlston)
to confirm the results at each stage and to recover some authentic
Jesus tradition which may have been provisionally rejected via the test
of distinctiveness.[61] Once again the assumption is evident that not
everything the Gospels record about Jesus can be taken as historical
fact. Rather, the New Testament accounts of Jesus record primarily the
New Testament communities' faith-interpretations of Jesus. These must
be filtered out by historical-critical tools to discern who the his-
torical Jesus really was.

Specifically, it should be noted that the New Testament _kerygma_
does not present a single, unified testimony to who Jesus was. The
Palestinian church's interpretation of Jesus as the Christ differed from
that of the Hellenistic Jewish Christians, and this in turn differed
from the interpretation of the Gentile Christians converted by Paul.
The proclamation of the sub-apostolic age was different again. Thus,
within the pages of the Gospels there is a plurality of varying faith
interpretations of Jesus. The necessity for the use of historical criti-
cism to discern the core historical witness to Jesus, then, is obvious.[62]

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[61]Idem, _Critical Introduction_, p. 98. For a detailed presen-
tation of Fuller's explanation, defense, and application of historical
criticism vis-a-vis the Gospels and Acts, see _Critical Introduction_,
pp. 69-132, and _New Testament in Current Study_, pp. 70-85.

[62]Ibid., p. 3.

Unlike many practitioners of the historical-critical method,

Fuller does state quite explicitly what he believes the core historical

witness to Jesus of Nazareth to have been.[63] Strikingly obvious omis-

sions from this core are the resurrection and professions of Jesus'

divinity. However, this is verständlich inasmuch as Fuller adopts the

standard critical theory that the resurrection event (whatever it is

understood to be) triggered the faith responses of the New Testament

communities, including responses professing Jesus' divinity.[64] It

should be noted that, while the historical critic can establish what

the historical basis for the church's faith is, he cannot determine

which of the church's faith interpretations of that historical data is

true. Only the believer can do that, as he is guided by the procla-

mation of the living church today.[65]

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[63]Ibid. See "Summary of the authentic Jesus Tradition," pp. 102-3.

[64]For Fuller's own interpretation of Jesus' resurrection and its meaning for the church, then and now, see idem, The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives (New York: Macmillan Co., 1971). For the impact of the resurrection as the experience which originated the church's task of formulating Christology, see idem, The Foundations of New Testament Christology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), pp. 142-81.

[65]Idem, New Testament in Current Study, p. 142, and The Mission and Achievement of Jesus: An Examination of the Presuppositions of New Testament Theology (London: SCM Press, 1954), p. 117. Cf. these with Fuller's statement:

> In our view the truth of the Christian confession of faith in Jesus as the redemptive act of God does not rest upon the historicity of Jesus' Messianic consciousness or claims. It was . . . the resurrection which brought the earliest disciples to this faith, not the teaching which he delivered in his earthly life. And we believe in Jesus as the redemptive act of God because we have made a decision of faith in the apostolic preaching as it is continued in the life of the Church, not because we are persuaded that the Jesus of history claimed to be so.

George E. Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957), p. 252.

As already noted, the belief in Jesus' divinity belongs to the early church's post-Easter faith interpretation of Jesus. Fuller is insistent that, in fact, Jesus Himself attempted to teach no Christology, no interpretation of His own person and words, to His followers. He was concerned only to evoke from them the response of faith in God's eschatological action in Him. He came to proclaim the impending advent of the reign of God and to perform the signs which heralded its approach, culminating in the suffering of the cross. From the raw materials of His proclamation and performance the followers of Jesus were to formulate their own response.[66]

Fuller spells out the implications of this approach for the church's formulation of Christology and Mariology in an article entitled "New Testament Roots to the Theotokos."[67] Even the title is meant to indicate that the legitimacy of the term "theotokos" cannot be proven from Scripture; all that one can hope to do is see if there is any continuity between the church's formulations of Christology in the New Testament and the later Christological doctrine of the theotokos.

On the basis of the etymology of the term "theotokos" ("God-bearer"), Fuller divides his essay into two concerns: 1) the origin of Jesus (suggested by the tokos), and 2) the divinity of Jesus (suggested by the theo-). His intention is to discover what the New Testament has to say about Jesus' origin and His divinity.

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[66]Wright and Fuller, Book of the Acts of God, p. 256, and Fuller, Mission and Achievement of Jesus, pp. 79 and 116-17.

[67]Reginald H. Fuller, "New Testament Roots to the Theotokos," Marian Studies 29 (1978):46-64.

Focusing most of his attention upon the question of Jesus'
origin, Fuller cites three "patterns" or "formulas" which the New Testa-
ment church used to describe Jesus' origin.[68] However, from the outset
it must be observed that the early church was little concerned with
Jesus' origin ontologically or metaphysically; rather, theirs was a
functional Christology. They were concerned with what Jesus became in
a functional sense.

One of the earliest Christological patterns Fuller labels
"adoptionistic." Formulations conforming to this pattern describe Jesus
as a man with a special relation to God before the resurrection, but who
was given an entirely new function by God after His resurrection. For
example, Romans 1:3 contrasts Jesus as the "Son of David" in His earthly
existence with Jesus as the "Son of God" which He was appointed at His
resurrection.[69]

A second pattern is one which expresses God's sending Jesus into
history. The model for this pattern is God's raising up and sending of
prophets in the course of Israel's salvation history. Although Jesus'
being sent is unique in that it is God's final act of sending, still
this pattern has no reference to a metaphysical quality in Jesus, but
rather only describes the role He is to play in salvation history. An
example of this pattern is given in Galatians 4:4 which says that "God
sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons."[70]

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[68]Much of this material is also discussed in Fuller's article
"The Condeption/Birth of Jesus as a Christological Moment," Journal for
the Study of the New Testament 1 (1978):37-52.

[69]Idem, "New Testament Roots to the Theotokos," pp. 47-48.

[70]Ibid., pp. 48-54.

Finally, Fuller identifies the pre-existence-incarnation Christology as a third pattern for describing Jesus' origin. In the understanding of this Christology, a pre-existent reality which had acted as the agent of creation was incarnate in the man Jesus. The source of this concept is the development of the idea of wisdom in Hellenistic Judaism. Although this pattern introduces an ontic and a cosmological-speculative element into consideration, its purpose is similar to the earlier Christologies--to affirm the soteriological significance of the Christ event in its totality. Examples of this Christological pattern are 1 Cor. 8:6, Phil. 2:6-11, Col. 1:15-17, Heb. 1:2, and the prologue to John's Gospel.[71]

Again it must be emphasized that the purpose of these Christologies is to describe Jesus' function and not His ontological nature. Therefore, with respect to Mariology, this information indicates that the early, post-resurrection church thought of Mary as the mother of a very special man chosen by God to inaugurate the final era of salvation history.[72] At the same time, it should be recognized that the New Testament also shows a trend of combining some of these Christological patterns. It is the combination of these trajectories in the post-New Testament church, a valid development, which led to the later ontological formulations of Christology with their implications for Mariology.[73]

With respect to the question of the divinity of Jesus, Fuller contends that few New Testament texts speak of Jesus as God, and these only in a particular, nuanced sense. In Fuller's view, the only synoptic Gospel text to come close to calling Jesus God is Matt. 1:23, which

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[71]Ibid., pp. 54-59.   [72]Ibid., p. 51.   [73]Ibid., pp. 60-62.

titles Jesus "Emmanuel" (God with us). However, this is not to be
interpreted ontically, but functionally, in terms of salvation history.
In the Pauline passages of Rom. 9:5, 2 Thess. 1:12, Titus 2:13, and
2 Peter 1:1, the two-membered phrases, God and Christ, are to be taken
as separate persons. Heb. 1:8 and John 1:1 predicate the title $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$
of the Son in His pre-existent state. However, these occur in a stra-
tum of the New Testament in which wisdom Christology is central. While
the identification of Jesus as the incarnation of the divine wisdom led
to the eventual designation of Jesus as $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$, the wisdom Christology
itself indicates that this is not to be understood as complete ontologi-
cal identity. Rather, Jesus is identified as the incarnation of God
only in a certain aspect of His being—namely, in the being of God which
is turned outward, toward the world, man, Israel, and the church. Thus,
the New Testament speaks of Jesus' divinity only in a highly nuanced
sense.[74] However, Fuller concludes, inasmuch as these nuanced refer-
ences to Jesus' divinity do not occur in the texts which speak of His
birth from Mary, the early church never connected the two to derive
the concept of Mary as theotokos. This became possible only later after
the New Testament period, when the wisdom mythology of pre-existence and
incarnation was combined with the conception Christology of the birth
narratives, and when that mythological Christology was ontologically
defined.[75] In short, Fuller concludes that the doctrine of Mary's
divine maternity is not taught in the New Testament, but belongs to the

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[74]Ibid., pp. 62-64.   [75]Ibid., p. 64.

post-New Testament church's faith response to the Biblical kerygma about Jesus of Nazareth.[76]

On the perpetual virginity

Considering first the virginal conception, Fuller states that this doctrine has attestation in the annunciation accounts of Matt. 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-38, and possibly also in John 1:13. However, he contends that it was probably unknown to Mark and Paul. In addition, the earliest kerygmatic tradition, including Matthew and Luke apart from the annunciation stories, assumes that Jesus is the son of Joseph as well as of Mary.[77] Thus, the evangelists contradict themselves on this issue.

Fuller deduces that the virginal conception tradition is non-historical for several reasons. First, as already noted, the Gospel accounts are contradictory. Second, Matthew and Luke "both relate the virginal conception in a curious oblique manner"--Matthew in a dream and Luke in an angelic visitation.[78] Third, in both Matthew's and Luke's annunciation accounts, there is little stress upon the biological element. Both evangelists exhibit a lack of interest in the biological aspect; their concern is to emphasize the conception as the work of the Holy Spirit, as due to God's initiative and plan, not man's.

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[76]This is the conclusion of Fuller's detailed study The Foundations of New Testament Christology. See especially pp. 243-50.

[77]Idem, "The Virgin Birth: Historical Fact or Kerygmatic Truth?" Biblical Research 1 (1956):4; and "The Role of Mary in Anglicanism," Worship 51 (May 1977):220-21.

[78]Idem, "The Virgin Birth," p. 4.

Fourth, the tradition of virginal conception is irreconcilable with the "Messianic secret." For, if the virginal conception is historical, Mary would have known it! If she did, then how can one account for the Marcan tradition that Mary thought Jesus was "beside himself" (Mark 3:21 and 32)? Fifth, form-critical analysis of the annunciation accounts reveal that they are midrashic narratives, intended to express the church's faith response to Jesus, but not necessarily history. On account of these difficulties, Fuller leaves it as an open question whether the virginal conception is historical. Inasmuch as the New Testament witness demonstrates a plurality in its response to this doctrine, so may the church today.[79]

Fuller has relatively little to say about Mary's _virginitas in partu_ and _post partum_. He notes that there is New Testament evidence that on a surface reading seems to indicate that Jesus had uterine brothers and sisters. However, he notes that these passages can be legitimately interpreted to preserve the concept of Mary's perpetual virginity. Still, his final conclusion is that the tradition of Mary's perpetual virginity is non-historical and not based upon New Testament data. This doctrine, he asserts, is the post-New Testament church's development of Luke 1:38 and Acts 1:14.[80]

In summary, Reginald Fuller supports the consensus of critical New Testament scholars that the New Testament teaches neither the doctrine of Mary's divine maternity nor perpetual virginity. At most, it

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[79]Idem, "The Virgin Birth," pp. 4-7; "Mary in Anglicanism," p. 221; and _Luke's Witness to Jesus Christ_ (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), p. 16.

[80]Idem, "Mary in Anglicanism," p. 222.

can be said to contain trajectories of thought which were amenable to
later expansion into these doctrines by the post-New Testament church.

Paul J. Achtemeier

On the divine maternity

As was done with the studies of the other exegetes, the hermen-
eutical presuppositions of Paul J. Achtemeier vis-a-vis the study of the
New Testament, particularly the Gospels, must be set forth before his
stance on either of the dogmas in question can be discerned.

Like the other Biblical scholars examined so far, Achtemeier
propounds a several-stage development of the Gospels. He speaks of
three "levels" or "kinds" of Biblical data composing each Gospel, num-
bering the last level as first, and working his way back from there.
In his schema, the first level is the final form of the material given
by the final author, the finished Gospel, the redactional level. This
level represents the theological understanding of the evangelist as he
shapes and adapts the traditions at hand to create his post-resurrection
faith picture of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. Presumably, this
picture also reflects the view and needs of the evangelist's community.
The second level to be distinguished is composed of the traditions which
the evangelist wove together into a whole. Allegedly, early Christians,
according to their different situations and concerns, selected deeds and
sayings of Jesus, narrated them, and reflected on them theologically.
This was the work of both communities and individuals, especially the
apostolic preachers. Like the first level, this second is colored by
the faith-commitment as well as the needs of the bearers of these tra-
ditions. The third level of each Gospel consists of the actual

historical events of Jesus of Nazareth which gave rise to the traditions (second level) that are embodied in the Gospels (first level).[81]

Again, like the other critical Biblical scholars examined in this study, Achtemeier defends the use of historical-critical interpretive tools to discover the level three, historical core of the Gospels. The individual theology of each evangelist is uncovered through the use of redaction criticism which compares the edited, adapted form of each Gospel with its original sources. This approach is most successful with the analysis of Matthew and Luke, since their original source, Mark, is extant. Since the original sources of Mark and John are not extant, various literary criticisms must be employed to disentangle the sources which lie embedded in their narratives. To discern the component traditions of each Gospel, form criticism is applied. This analysis identifies the "forms" (types of stories and sayings) in which the material of each Gospel circulated before the evangelists pulled them together in their extended narratives. The intention of this criticism is to describe and catalogue the forms so that inferences can be made about what sort of need they filled in the preaching and teaching of the primitive church before the Gospels were written. To move from level two to level three, from the traditions of the early church to the actual historical events, the criteria of dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence are applied to the second level materials. This process yields a tentative picture of the historical Jesus.[82]

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[81]Paul J. Achtemeier, Mark (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 15-17.

[82]Ibid., pp. 15-20. Achtemeier gives an exemplary study of how these tools operate on a given pericope in "Miracles and the Historical Jesus: A Study of Mark 9:14-29," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 37 (1975):471-91.

Once again, the assumption behind the above critical methodology

is that the Gospel writers as well as the apostolic preachers did not

intend to simply hand on an objective historical report of the actual

words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, they were concerned with

"proclaiming" Jesus--that is, giving post-resurrection faith interpre-

tations of His significance for their lives. Obviously, there is some

continuity between the historical Jesus and the early church's procla-

mation of Him. But the actual, historical Jesus can only be discovered

by critically sifting through the layers of the church's faithful, but

interpretive witness to Him. Again, Achtemeier agrees with his critical

peers that while the various faith interpretations of the early church

and evangelists can be distinguished from the historical Jesus, each age

and every believer must grapple with the question of whether these early

interpretations are adequate to express faith in Jesus today. In other

words, while the historical Jesus can be objectively discerned with a

certain degree of probability, the truthfulness of the church's inter-

pretation of Jesus is a matter for faith.[83]

In the interest of Achtemeier's evaluation of the validity of

basing the doctrine of Mary's divine maternity on New Testament data,

the effect of his historical-critical methodology on Christology can now

be demonstrated. For, as has been exhibited, the validity of this doc-

trine hinges upon whether one views the New Testament as demonstrating

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[83]Cf. idem, "On the Historical-Critical Method in New Testament
Studies: Apologia pro Vita Sua," Perspective 11 (Winter 1970):289-304;
An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press,
1969), especially pp. 149-65; "How Adequate Is the New Hermeneutic?"
Theology Today 23 (April 1966):101-2, 111-19; and "Is the New Quest
Docetic?" Theology Today 19 (April 1962):355-68.

Jesus' divinity. In all fairness, it should be admitted at the outset

that Achtemeier as an individual has not directly addressed this

aspect of Christology with its implications for Mariology.[84] Nonethe-

less, it is the reasonable deduction of this study that his treatment

of New Testament Christology logically entails the conclusions which

will be drawn here.

While Achtemeier has not dealt with the Christology of the

entire New Testament (aside from his discussion of the $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\mathring{\alpha}\nu\mathring{\eta}\rho$),

he has written extensively on the Christology of Mark which he believes

represents the earliest Gospel interpretation of Jesus. Inasmuch as he

also assumes that Mark represents the viewpoint of his community to a

certain extent, it may be concluded that Mark's Christology represents

one of the earliest Christological interpretations of a significant

Christian community.

While Achtemeier's interpretation of Mark's Christology is

purely _functional_, he does seem to leave open the possibility of an

ontological Christology in his discussion of Jesus as the $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\mathring{\alpha}\nu\mathring{\eta}\rho$,

or divine man.[85] In his article on this topic he investigates the

possibility of the influence of the Hellenistic concept of the divine

man on the primitive church's interpretation of Jesus. In Hellenistic

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[84]As a participant in the ecumenical study on Mary which is
examined below, Achtemeier joins in the conclusion that the concept of
Mary as the mother of God (theotokos) is a post-New Testament formula-
tion. See Raymond E. Brown, et al., eds., Mary in the New Testament
(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), pp. 272, 283-94. This observation
also lends credence to the study's argument that Achtemeier's attitude
on the New Testament's teaching about Mary's divine maternity can be
deduced from his Christology.

[85]See Paul J. Achtemeier, "Gospel Miracle Tradition and the
Divine Man," Interpretation 26 (January 1972):174-97.

thought, the divine man was a man (such as Apollonius) so endowed with divine powers that he could perform all manner of miraculous, super-human acts and could ultimately become a god himself.[86] If Jesus were interpreted in this way in the New Testament, this would seem to indicate some attempt to interpret Him as ontologically divine. Achtemeier does see some parallels between the Hellenistic descriptions of divine men and the New Testament's descriptions of Jesus. However, he also sees some very significant differences. The differences lead Achtemeier to conclude, while leaving the question open for further study, that the evidence thus far leads away from understanding the Gospels as attempts to portray Jesus as a divine man.[87] This would exclude an ontological interpretation of Jesus' divinity.

In the above-cited commentary on Mark, Achtemeier gives an extended explication of this evangelist's Christology.[88] As already noted, his evaluation here is that Mark's Christology is functional. That is to say, Mark is more concerned to describe what Jesus did than what He was; he is more concerned with portraying Jesus' words and deeds than His nature or essence.

This functional interpretation is evident in Achtemeier's evaluation of Mark's use of Christological titles. After considering the titles "Christ," "Son of God," and "Son of David," and concluding that Mark attributes no real significance to these because of their ambiguity concerning Jesus' status, Achtemeier settles on the title "Son of Man" as Mark's favorite and characteristic title for Jesus.

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[86]Ibid., pp. 186-87. [87]Ibid., pp. 194-97.

[88]Idem, Mark, pp. 41-81.

This he interprets not as an ontological description but as a functional description of Jesus as the one who came to suffer, die, and rise again under divine mandate. All of Mark focuses upon developing this theme of Jesus as the suffering servant of God. Everything in the Gospel is intended to highlight His <u>act</u> of suffering and thereby bringing God's salvation. This emphasis upon Jesus' activity is why Mark's Gospel is so largely narrative. The <u>function</u> of Jesus is all important.[89]

Achtemeier further develops this functional Christology with explications of Mark's portrayal of Jesus as preacher, teacher, and miracle worker. In a sense, these three tasks all focus upon the same theme—that Jesus is the one in whom God's <u>power</u> is active to bring about the kingdom of God. Whether the activity is preaching, teaching, or performing miracles, the emphasis is upon the power that is exhibited in Jesus as evidence of God's coming rule, and Jesus' summons to join in the kingdom. Jesus seeks to draw attention to God's power and rule, and not to His own person. Achtemeier sees in all this Mark's deliberate attempt to focus upon the activity of Jesus for men. No concern is shown in Mark for questions about Jesus' nature.[90]

In summary, then, it follows from Achtemeier's discussion of Christology that the earliest Gospel witness shows no interest in the question of Jesus' essential or ontological divinity. It prefers to speak of Jesus in terms of His function as God's suffering servant.

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[89] Ibid., pp. 41-50.

[90] Ibid., pp. 51-81. Cf. idem, "'He Taught Them Many Things': Reflections on Marcan Christology," <u>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u> 42 (1980):465-81.

From this it follows that this earliest Gospel testimony gives no support for the doctrine of Mary's divine maternity. Uninterested in such a concern, it treats Mary as the mother of God's suffering servant, the man God chose to suffer, die, and rise again to usher in His kingdom.

On the perpetual virginity

Turning first to the topic of Mary's virginal conception, Achtemeier concludes that the only explicit New Testament references to this doctrine occur in the Matthean and Lucan infancy narratives. However, he contends that these references cannot be taken as certain historical truths since the historicity of the infancy narratives is dubious. To begin with, not a single item of peculiarly infancy narrative information (including the virginal conception of Mary) is clearly verified anywhere else in the New Testament. Second, Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 agree between themselves on very few points. Third, the infancy narratives are uniquely colored by Old Testament parallels. The combination of these problems makes any conclusion about the historicity of events recorded in the infancy narratives highly speculative.[91] As might be expected, Achtemeier focuses particular attention upon the absence of any mention of the virginal conception in the Gospel of Mark. He finds it highly unlikely that Mark knew of such a virginal conception in light of the fact that Mark has a reference to Jesus' family (including Mary) as thinking that Jesus is beside Himself (Mark 3:21). If Mary conceived Jesus virginally, and thus knew that He was

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[91]Idem, "Chapter Two: Presuppositions of the Study," in _Mary in the New Testament_, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al., pp. 12-14.

a miraculous child, such a negative attitude would seem to be pre-

cluded.[92] For these reasons, Achtemeier concludes that the historicity

of the virginal conception cannot be settled on the basis of New Testa-

ment data.

Leaving the question of Mary's virginitas in partu without com-

ment, Achtemeier devotes considerable attention to the issue of Mary's

virginitas post partum. In connection with the naming of four brothers

of Jesus and the reference to sisters of Jesus in Mark 6:3, Achtemeier

takes up a discussion of the meaning of ἀδελφός. He notes that this

term for brother which is used in Mark 6:3 normally denotes a blood

brother. However, he further points out that in the New Testament

ἀδελφός also refers to a "co-religionist" (for example, Rom. 9:3), a

neighbor (Matt. 5:22-24), and a step-brother (Mark 6:17-18). Further-

more, in the Septuagint ἀδελφός is sometimes used in the broad sense of

kinsman or relative (for example, in Gen. 29:12; 24:48), translating the

Hebrew אָח which means both blood brother and kinsman. Thus, if one

believes the Gospel of Mark reflects a Semitic background, ἀδελφός may

refer to a kinsman rather than uterine brother.[93] No definite conclu-

sion can be reached on the basis of the meaning of ἀδελφός.

Also in connection with Mark 6:3, though, one must consider

Mark 15:40, 47, and 16:1. According to Mark 6:3 Jesus is "the son of

Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon." This passage

is paralleled by Matt. 13:55 which lists Jesus' brothers as "James and

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[92]Paul J. Achtemeier and Karl P. Donfried, "Chapter Four: Mary
in the Gospel of Mark," in Mary in the New Testament, ed. Raymond E.
Brown, et al., p. 63.

[93]Ibid., pp. 65-67.

Joseph and Simon and Judas." Thus, it seems clear that two of Jesus'

brothers are James and Joses or Joseph. Now, in the description of the

women at the cross in Mark 15:40 there is included "Mary the mother of

James the younger and of Joses." Again this is paralleled in Matt.

27:56 with "Mary the mother of James and Joseph." Therefore, if this

Mary at the cross is the mother of Jesus, then the brothers of Jesus

(specifically James and Joses/Joseph) are the blood brothers of Jesus.

However, if this Mary at the cross is not the mother of Jesus, then one

must ask if the James and Joses/Joseph are the same as the James and

Joses/Joseph of Mark 6:3. If they are, then these are not blood

brothers of Jesus, but kinsmen. After reviewing arguments in behalf of

both interpretations, Achtemeier concludes that there is no way to be

certain whether the evidence of Mark 15:40, 47, and 16:1 solves the

problem of the nature of the relationship between Jesus and the brothers

and sisters mentioned in Mark 6:3. Thus, the New Testament data once

again leaves the question open.[94]

Generally, Achtemeier contends that the whole issue of Mary's

perpetual virginity rose <u>after</u> the New Testament period. The New Testa-

ment itself shows no interest in this question. What little information

the New Testament does give is inconclusive. Thus, the attitude one

adopts toward this doctrine will largely be determined by what authority

he allots to later church tradition.[95]

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[94]Ibid., pp. 68-72. Cf. Paul J. Achtemeier, <u>Invitation to Mark:</u>
<u>A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark with Complete Text from The Jerusalem</u>
<u>Bible</u> (Garden City, NY: Image Books, A Division of Doubleday & Co., 1978),
pp. 89-90, 223-24.

[95]Idem, "Chapter Four: Mary in the Gospel of Mark," p. 72.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that, on the basis of the historical-critical evaluation of the New Testament data, Reginald Fuller and Paul Achtemeier stand in agreement with Raymond Brown and Bruce Vawter that the New Testament gives no testimony to an historical basis for either of the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity or perpetual virginity. All four scholars agree that these doctrines are post-resurrection and/or post-New Testament faith interpretations of the church. Whether one personality believes them or not, depends then, upon his evaluation of church tradition.

Model of Joint Roman Catholic/Protestant Application of the Historical-Critical Method to the Biblical Data Concerning the Virgin Mary: Conclusions of Mary in the New Testament

It will not be necessary to outline here the hermeneutical presuppositions and methodology of the ecumenical group of scholars who participated in this project. Suffice it to say that the group's presuppositions and methodology are consonant with those which have been severally described in this chapter.[96] Nor will it be necessary to rehearse once again all the exegetical arguments for the group's conclusions. These too are not unlike the arguments which have been detailed previously in this chapter.[97] Rather, it will be sufficient for the purpose of this study to summarize briefly the conclusions reached by this group of Roman Catholic and Protestant Biblical scholars

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[96]See Brown, et al., eds., Mary in the New Testament, pp. 7-31. For background information on the nature and origins of the study, see pp. 1-6.

[97]See Mary in the New Testament, pp. 33-282.

to see how they compare with the conclusions of the scholars examined thus far.[98] While the conclusions cited here may not be those which any one of the scholars would write as an individual, nonetheless each agreed that the views concluded are within "reasonable limits of plausibility."[99]

<div align="center">Conclusions about the divine maternity
and perpetual virginity of Mary</div>

Turning first to the dogma of the divine maternity, it should be observed that these scholars operate with the standard critical distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Thus, by an historical investigation of the Biblical record, they can obtain some probable information about the man Jesus. However, to assert that this same man is also God is a faith statement, not open to historical verification. The most that one can say is that some Biblical writers expressed this faith about Jesus--that is, that Jesus is God, or in the somewhat technical faith terminology, Jesus is the Christ. Since these scholars are reluctant to identify the historical Jesus with the divine Christ of the New Testament faith community, one would therefore expect their reluctance to affirm that Mary was the mother of Christ, or the mother of God. And in fact, this is the case. While each of these scholars may affirm that by faith, they do not believe that the Biblical

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[98]Roman Catholic participants in the study were: Myles M. Bourke, Raymond E. Brown, Schulyer Brown, and Joseph Fitzmyer. Protestant participants included: Paul J. Achtemeier (United Church of Christ), Karl P. Donfried (Lutheran Church in America), Karlfried Froelich (Lutheran Church in America), Reginald H. Fuller (Episcopalian), Gerhard Krodel (Lutheran Church in America), Louis Martyn (Reformed), Elaine Pagels (Episcopalian), and John Reumann (Lutheran Church in America).

[99]Brown, et al., eds, Mary in the New Testament, p. 6.

record establishes the dogma as fact. Thus, one would search the entire book in vain to find Mary referred to as the "mother of Christ" or the "mother of God." Only once is the theological term _theotokos_ employed, and then in a footnote to say that this term is not clearly attested before the early fourth century.[100] Throughout the book Mary is uniformly referred to as the "mother of Jesus."

This same critical approach accounts for the fact that these scholars are also reluctant to affirm the virginal conception of Jesus. While they conclude that Matthew and Luke both taught a virginal conception, this does not settle the matter historically:

> The task force agreed that both infancy narratives, and especially the Lucan, reflect a christology which finds its earliest expression in such formularies as Rom. 1:3-4. Both narratives have moved Jesus' being "constituted" Son of God back from the resurrection, beyond baptism, to the time of his conception. But such a conclusion does not necessitate a _virginal_ conception, and we had to inquire whence that idea was derived. Although one member favored derivation from a putative Hellenistic-Jewish tradition about the virginal conception of Isaac, the majority found that suggestion unconvincing, as well as other proposed derivations from Jewish or pagan sources. Family tradition, coming ultimately from Mary, was also deemed an unsatisfactory explanation. It was suggested that the "catalyst" for the notion might have been that Jesus was born prematurely (i.e., too early after Joseph and Mary came to live together—cf. Matt. 1:18), a "fact" which was interpreted by his enemies in terms of his illegitimacy, and by Christians in terms of his having been miraculously conceived. The tenuousness of this hypothesis was acknowledged. The task force agreed that the question of the historicity of the virginal conception could not be settled by historical-critical exegesis, and that one's attitude towards church tradition on the matter would probably be the decisive force in determining one's view whether the virginal conception is a theologoumen or a literal fact.[101]

Thus, belief in the virginal conception of Jesus is also a matter of one's private faith.

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[100]Ibid., p. 272.

[101]Ibid., pp. 291-92.

Inasmuch as these scholars cannot affirm the virginal conception of Jesus on the basis of the New Testament record, quite consistently neither can they affirm the dogma of Mary's _perpetual_ virginity:

> In respect to the church tradition of the perpetual virginity of Mary, we agreed that the intention of Matt. 1:25 was to exclude sexual relations between Joseph and Mary before the birth of Jesus, so that the verse does not necessarily indicate what took place afterwards in the marital relationship of Joseph and Mary. The fact that the NT speaks of brothers and sisters does not constitute an insuperable barrier to the view that Mary remained a virgin, but there is no convincing argument from the NT against the literal meaning of the words "brother" and "sister" when they are used of Jesus' relatives. Here again, as in the case of the virginal conception, church tradition will be the determining factor in the view that one takes, with the important difference that while the tradition of the virginal conception is based on NT evidence, the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity goes beyond anything said of her in the Scriptures.[102]

Conclusions about the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary

Furthermore, the writers of _Mary in the New Testament_ are in agreement that there is no New Testament evidence at all for either the immaculate conception or bodily assumption of Mary. In fact, they believe there is at least one tradition (Marcan) which portrays Mary at least for part of her life as "outside of Jesus 'eschatological family,'" a picture hardly commensurate with the effects of an alleged immaculate conception.[103] Moreover, they do not see any evidence within the second or even third-century tradition for these two dogmas. Their explanation of the basis for these dogmas and other pious beliefs about Mary is quite logical:

> In the context of a lively, diversified church, the NT texts about Mary, scant as they were, became the starting point of a rich and imaginative unfolding of a new body of doctrine. This doctrine

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[102]Ibid., p. 292.   [103]Ibid., p. 286.

reflected the polemic, devotional, and ethical emphasis of the church. . . . The history of the mother of Jesus flowed into the history of Marian piety and mariology.[104]

SUMMARY

In this chapter it has been demonstrated that the application of the historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation to the New Testament data concerning the Virgin Mary produces the same results whether employed by Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetes working singly or by a Roman Catholic/Protestant group working together. The result of the application of this method is a consensus that the New Testament gives no historical data to establish either of the dogmas of Mary's divine maternity or perpetual virginity. Rather, the consensus is that these doctrines are post-resurrection and/or post-New Testament faith interpretations of the Christian community. Inasmuch as the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption to a certain extent are based upon the former dogmas, it follows that the ultimate basis for these cannot be claimed to be Biblical either. In fact, this is the conclusion reached by the ecumenical scholars who participated in Mary in the New Testament. In short, the consensus of the critical exegetes is that belief in the Marian dogmas is a matter of faith, dependent upon how one evaluates the traditions of the early church. Thus, the historical-critical solution does produce a consensus, but it is a consensus whose content is reduced to historical agnosticism concerning the Marian dogmas, and acceptance of a plurality of faith responses.

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[104]Ibid., p. 282.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTION: CONSENSUS BY ACCOMMODATION

Introduction

In this chapter the study proceeds with defining and illustrat-
ing a second major post-Vatican II solution to the problem of achieving
doctrinal consensus between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches
concerning the Marian dogmas. At this point it may serve well to recall
that the intention of this study is to focus particularly upon the
problem of achieving doctrinal consensus concerning the dogmas of Mary's
immaculate conception and bodily assumption. Therefore, this chapter
and the next will address themselves to these dogmas exclusively.

The solution, approach, or methodology that will be set forth
in this chapter is the constructive solution which seeks to achieve
consensus by accommodation. Once again, after this solution has been
described, its application will be illustrated through the works of
representative Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians.

Description of the Constructive Solution:
Consensus by Accommodation

The terms "solution" and "consensus" are employed here in the
same sense as defined in the previous chapter--namely, to indicate that
a method is being sought which will achieve doctrinal agreement or
harmony between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches concerning
the Marian dogmas as defined by the Roman Catholic church.

The particular method illustrated in this chapter has been termed "constructive" for two reasons. First, the term was chosen to indicate that the solution described here is that offered from the perspective of that branch of theology called "systematic" or "constructive." As distinguished from exegetical or Biblical theology (illustrated in the last chapter) whose primary task is the exposition of the Biblical data, systematic or constructive theology seeks "to formulate the kerygma [Biblical data] or proclamation of the Church and to interpret the same for their [theologians'] time or age or situation."[1] In other words, the systematic or constructive approach to theology aims to present the Biblical data mined by exegesis in a structured, orderly, and coherent fashion vis-a-vis the concerns of the church at a given time and place in its history.[2] It is this systematic approach which is being demonstrated in this chapter. However, in addition to this, the term "constructive" is also intended to signify the positive attitude which each practitioner of this approach exhibits toward the theology of the church with which he seeks to achieve doctrinal harmony. Thus, Roman Catholic theologians employing the constructive approach seek to explain or interpret the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary in ways that are consonant with primary theological themes and concerns of the Protestant understanding of the Christian

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[1] Richard Klann, "Study Notes for Systematic Theology (S-10)," p. 2. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. (Concordia Seminary Print Shop, #9730a).

[2] For the Roman Catholic systematician, the basic data with which he works as formal principle of course includes not only the Biblical kerygma, but also the tradition of his church.

faith. Likewise, Protestant constructive theologians seek to interpret the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption in such a manner as to express their validity and importance for Protestants also. In other words, both Roman Catholic and Protestant constructive theologians genuinely attempt to build a bridge of common theological ground between the two churches concerning the Marian dogmas.

The above definition of "constructive" should make it clear that this method seeks consensus by accommodation. Its practitioners seek to reconcile doctrinal differences and achieve a kind of compromised agreement through modification, adaptation, reinterpretation, or relocation of emphasis of the traditional theological positions of both churches. A constructive theologian attempts to accommodate his formulation of the Christian kerygma to that of the church with which he seeks doctrinal agreement. Specifically, in this case, the Roman Catholic constructive theologian attempts to accommodate his formulation of the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption to the theological formulation of his Protestant counterparts on this issue, and vice versa. On account of this, the constructive solution has been described as consensus by accommodation.

Roman Catholic Models of Accommodation

Karl Rahner: Accommodation through Transfer of the Focus of Emphasis

One of the primary traditional objections of Protestants to the Roman Catholic dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption is that these tend to elevate Mary to the same status as the Godhead, obscuring her creatureliness, affinity with all other human

beings, and need for grace. While Karl Rahner supports the validity of

the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption, he

nonetheless attempts to explicate them in such a manner as to overcome

the above-mentioned Protestant objections. He tries to transfer the

focus of these dogmas from the traditional emphasis upon the uniqueness

of the person of Mary and her privileges to a stress upon a theme he

believes close to the heart of Protestantism--the undeserved and over-

whelming grace of God. More specifically, in harmony with his "theology

of grace" Rahner explicates the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception

and bodily assumption such that they underscore her complete dependence

upon God's grace for everything she was and did. In fact, Rahner ex-

hibits Mary as the type or paradigm of the Christian and church that is

saved <u>sola gratia</u>. Thereby, he also intends to focus the church's

attention upon grace, which, in his view, is the foundation for the

ecumenical movement. The intellectually challenging nature of Rahner's

thought requires that this portion of the study be treated in some

detail. Therefore, the following outline has been devised to facilitate

a clear understanding of his ecumenical intention in his formulation of

the Marian dogmas under discussion here: 1) Rahner's understanding of

the nature of grace; 2) his treatment of the immaculate conception and

bodily assumption as testimonies to God's saving grace; and 3) his focus

on grace as aid to the ecumenical movement.

On the nature of grace

It has been observed already that the profundity of Rahner's

treatment of Mary as the model par excellence of redemption by grace

cannot be understood without first comprehending what he means by grace

and the centrality he assigns it in Christian life and theology.

Yet to understand grace in this system first one must pause

briefly to summarize Rahner's anthropology. According to Rahner,

> creatureliness is the most comprehensive characteristic of man,
> but primarily and specifically creatureliness as personal subject
> (of which the createdness of mere things is only a diminished mode),
> that is, the infinite receptivity to God of him who is not God.[3]

In other words, man is a personal, spiritual/physical being, created by

God with a capacity for and dynamic toward transcending himself, until

he is perfectly, totally grasped by the life of God Himself. Rahner

describes this as man's

> position as a free spirit having eternal personal significance and
> value for God; his capacity to become a partner with God in a
> genuine dialogue or "covenant relationships" which leads to abso-
> lute intimacy "face to face" in light inaccessible, to "partaking
> in the divine nature" where we shall know even as we are known; his
> capacity to disclose his own existence as an expression of God him-
> self (God-becoming-man).[4]

Thus, the primary constitutive element of man is God's inner, intimate,

free offer of Himself to man. It is through this "supernatural exis-

tential" that man exercises and experiences himself as a spiritual/

physical being reaching out toward complete life in God in all that he

is and does.[5] As a human being and creature of God, this is the nature

of the blessed Virgin Mary also.

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[3]Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, ed. Cornelius Ernst, trans. Richard Strachan (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), p. 26.

[4]Ibid.

[5]See Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity, trans. William V. Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), chapter 2, "Man in the Presence of Absolute Mystery," pp. 44-89; and chapter 4, "Man as the Event of God's Free and Forgiving Self-Communication," pp. 116-37.

As has become obvious, the discussion of anthropology already
anticipates the topic of grace, and cannot be discussed apart from it.
A basic definition of grace by Rahner is "God's personal condescension
and absolutely gratuitous clemency to man . . . [which] also signifies
the effect of this clemency, in which God communicates himself to man."[6]

Thus, it can be seen that the basic nature of grace is the per-
sonal gift of God Himself to man:

> God communicates himself. . . . He makes man share in the very
> nature of God. He constitutes man as co-heir with the Son himself,
> called to the eternal life of God face to face, called to receive
> the direct vision of God, called therefore to receive God's own
> life.[7]

From eternity it was God's intention to create a being to whom He could
communicate His essence personally and fully. Thus, He made man and
gratuitously created him such that man has the capacity to receive God.
This is what Rahner means by human "nature."[8] But the very fact that
man does accept and receive God's offer of Himself is purely the result
of God's grace at work. God not only offers Himself, but also creates
the conditions and the movement by which man accepts the offer.[9]

Rahner is at pains to emphasize that grace is God's _free_ gift
to man. It is a totally unmerited favor on the part of God. Grace is
not owed to man, even prior to his unworthiness as a sinner. God is

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[6]Rahner and Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, p. 192.

[7]Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology, s.v. "Grace.
II. Theological. B. Systematic," by Karl Rahner.

[8]Karl Rahner, Theological Investigations, vol. 4: More Recent
Writings, trans. Kevin Smyth (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), p. 186.

[9]Sacramentum Mundi, s.v. "Grace," by Karl Rahner.

under no compulsion to give His life to man. On the other side of the coin, man has no sort of claim to grace and is wholly incapable of earning grace by his own powers inasmuch as of himself he is unable to ask for grace or to prepare himself to receive it.[10] Thus, man is utterly dependent upon God both for the offer of His life and for the ability to accept it. Grace is, therefore, fittingly called "supernatural"[11] and God Himself is termed the "supernatural existential."[12]

By the definition of grace as God's personal, existential, self-communication to man, Rahner does not intend to eliminate or even downplay the concept of grace as forgiveness. For the fact is that man in the concrete is always doubly situated: he is always both creature and sinner. These two realities mutually condition and shed light on one another. That the finite creature is fallible is not sin, but through sin that fallibility is made radically apparent. Sinfulness, in turn, compels man to comprehend that he is an absolutely finite creature whom God freely "divinizes" by His grace. Rahner attributes to this state of affairs the fact that the Council of Trent conceived of grace as the pardoning of the ungodly:

> To the extent therefore that divinizing grace is bestowed on the sinner and as the proffered self-communication of the holy God implies God's readiness to forgive and the acceptance of this (through grace) that grace is once again unmerited, by being conferred on one who is positively unworthy of it. Consequently, it is not surprising that the whole doctrine of justifying grace at the Council of Trent, though concerned with supernatural grace, is not conceived on the pattern of the "elevation" of a nature but of

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[10]Rahner and Vorgrimler, Theological Dictionary, p. 194.

[11]Rahner, More Recent Writings, pp. 165-88.

[12]Idem, Foundations, pp. 126-33.

pardoning the impious. . . . The real need for redemption extends
just as far and as radically as does man's capacity for elevation
into the life of God.[13]

Finally, it must be observed that since grace comes to man who

is in the state of original sin (before Baptism), elevating and pardon-

ing him, this is the grace of <u>Jesus</u> <u>Christ</u>. Although God's grace is

intended for all people everywhere of all times, still it is dependent

upon the event of the historical Jesus Christ. Therefore, grace is

incarnational and sacramental in nature and incorporates the forgiven

man into the life and death of Jesus.[14]

To summarize so far, Rahner defines grace as the personal, inti-

mate, existential, free, unmerited, forgiving offer of God Himself to

man, made on the basis of the event of Jesus Christ. By this grace God

gratuitously draws man into His own life. Therefore, nothing gives God

greater glory or speaks more to His praise than the testimony to the

presence of His grace in men's lives. In other words, anthropology is

doxology.

On the immaculate conception and bodily assumption as testimonies to God's saving grace

If anthropology is doxology, then the human being whose life

most perfectly exhibits what it truly means to be human (that is, to be

in possession of God's grace) gives the greatest praise to God. For

Karl Rahner and the Roman church that person is the blessed Virgin Mary.

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[13]<u>Sacramentum Mundi</u>, s.v. "Grace," by Karl Rahner.

[14]Rahner and Vorgrimler, <u>Theological Dictionary</u>, p. 194. Cf.
Rahner, <u>Foundations</u>, section 6, "Jesus Christ," pp. 176-321.

This is Rahner's line of reasoning as he seeks for a principle that will relate Mariology to the structure of theology as a whole. He begins with the question: "What exactly is perfect Christianity?"[15] This obviously entails the prior question: What is Christianity? Rahner's response to this question reveals the basis for his treatment of anthropology in general, and Mariology in particular. It is worth quoting in full:

> Christology is not something thought out or discovered by men. It is not man's approach to God by his own power. Nor is it primarily the fulfilling of commandments given us by God so that for our part we may observe them. Christianity is rather what the living God does in relation to us, what the living God of grace gives us, in forgiveness, redemption, justification, and the communication of his own glory. Since, however, what God gives is not, in the last resort, a created gift, but himself, Christianity is ultimately simply the eternal God himself, coming himself to a man, and himself by his grace influencing this man, so that he freely opens his heart for the whole glorious infinite life of the triune God to enter the poor heart of this tiny creature. This one total ultimate can be considered from God's side, and then it is God's love for man, by which he gives his own self to man. Or it can be viewed in human perspective, and it is man's love for God (given him by God), by which he accepts God's gift, which is God himself.[16]

This description of Christianity makes it apparent that it is entirely God's loving activity on behalf of man, His self-communication, His grace. Therefore, whoever expresses this grace perfectly is the perfect image of Christianity. What would such a perfect Christian look like?

> Perfect Christianity must consist in receiving this gift of the eternal God, God himself, in grace-given freedom, with body and soul and all the powers of the whole being, with all a man is and has, all he does and suffers, so that this receiving of God takes up his entire nature and his whole life-history into the eternal life of God.[17]

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[15]Karl Rahner, _Mary: Mother of the Lord_, trans. W. J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), p. 34.

[16]Ibid., p. 35.   [17]Ibid., p. 36.

For Rahner, the one who fits this description, and thus perfectly mir-

rors the grace of God, is Mary. She is "the type or figure that mani-

fests completely the meaning of the church, and grace, and redemption,

and God's salvation."[18] Thus, the principle that relates Mariology to

the structure of theology as a whole is that Mariology testifies to the

grace of God, which is the most proper topic of theology. It follows

that to speak of the "privileges" of Mary as declared in the Marian

dogmas is really to praise the greatness and goodness of God's grace.

It may now be demonstrated how Rahner develops the Marian

dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption to show forth

God's grace.

The immaculate conception

Rahner's accent on God's grace in his explication of the

immaculate conception is made plain from the outset as he defines what

this dogma means:

> The Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin, therefore, consists
> simply in her having possessed the divine life of grace from the be-
> ginning of her existence, a life of grace that was given her (with-
> out her meriting it), by the prevenient grace of God, so that through
> this grace-filled beginning of her life, she might become the mother
> of the redeemer in the manner God had intended her to be for his own
> Son.[19]

To begin with, it should be noted that the immaculate conception

underscores Mary's creatureliness, her affinity with all other human

beings. It indicates that she, like every human being, stood in absolute

need of redemption. "Even her existence is constructed in 'counterpoint'

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[18]Ibid., p. 37.   [19]Ibid., p. 43.

to sin."[20] Had she not been completely sanctified by God from her

origin she too would have suffered all the consequences of original and

actual sin.[21] But, since God had predestined her to be the mother of

His Son, to bring grace into the world in the most perfect form, He

also graced her with a radical redemption—freedom from sin from her

origin. Far from elevating the status of Mary, this plan of redemption

rather emphasizes how completely God intends to save. It shows "what

already determined the existence of the Blessed Virgin from the begin-

ning right down to the last depth: God's grace."[22]

Moreover, the immaculate conception of Mary demonstrates "the

primacy of God's saving action in her regard. . . . For before any free

act on her part, God freely calls Mary to a special destiny and promises

her the efficacious means she will need in order to fulfill that des-

tiny."[23] Mary did not choose God, but was chosen by Him in eternity and

confirmed by Him in her vocation from the first moment of her existence.

This radical redemption of Mary from her origin combined with

the normal man's redemption beginning at Baptism and continuing through-

out his life is intended by God to show man how utterly and completely

redemption is the work of God's grace alone:

> The fact that there is _our_ way to beatifying perfection, is meant
> to show us and make clear to us that our salvation is God's grace,
> always and in every case grace _alone_ (and hence not our good work

[20]Idem, Theological Investigations, vol. 3: The Theology of
the Spiritual Life, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore,
Helicon Press, 1967), p. 131.

[21]Ibid.   [22]Ibid., p. 139.

[23]Donald L. Gelpi, Life and Light: A Guide to the Theology of
Karl Rahner (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966), p. 265.

performed by our own power); that there is <u>her</u> way, is meant to show and to make clear to us that our salvation (always and in every case) is only God's <u>grace</u> (and hence not also our guilt as something which remains a permanent component of it).[24]

In addition to underscoring Mary's need for grace and God's magnanimous capacity and willingness to fill this need, the dogma of the immaculate conception teaches man several truths about the operation of God's grace in <u>his</u> life.

First, this privilege of Mary illustrates that the beginning of the spiritual life of every human being is of utmost importance to God and is determined by Him. While it is true that man has freedom, responsibility, and real creativity, it is nonetheless true that God in His mysterious providence has a unique and personal plan for every human life, from its origin to its completion in Him. Just as in the case of Mary, no man chooses in what age he will be born, what his physical make-up will be, what social/historical context will be his starting point. These are all gifts determined by God for man as part of God's over-all gracious but unfathomable plan.[25]

Secondly, the immaculate conception demonstrates that God <u>sur-rounds</u> man's life with redemming love. So many of God's workings in men's lives are mysterious, hidden in silences or in what man deems to be misfortunes or evils. Man cannot observe God and His ways under a microscope, dissect His make-up in a laboratory, or predict His paths. How can he know that God's intentions for him are plans for good and not for evil? For most men, God's loving summons is ambiguous. But in

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[24]Rahner, <u>The Theology of the Spiritual Life</u>, p. 137.

[25]Idem, <u>Mary</u>, p. 44.

the life of Mary man can see that God's quiet, mysterious, hidden work-
ings are full of love and good will, from beginning to end. He can take
confidence from this that God loves humanity. In this connection, it is
important to emphasize that the Virgin Mary's life did not follow the
script of an apocryphal story but looked like the average human biog-
raphy:

> The holy life of the blessed Virgin, however, is startlingly like
> our own. She lived what, viewed from the outside, was a really
> commonplace and obscure life, enduring the ordinary petty round of
> any average woman in any odd corner of a small country, far from
> the great stream of history, of civilization and of politics. She
> set off on a search, she felt anxious, she did not know everything
> either, wept, had to ask her way and seek her way from stage to
> stage of her life's journey, like other human beings.[26]

Yet in the midst of this sober, unassuming, ordinary human life of Mary,
man knows that God was working His hidden, splendorous plan of bringing
Christ into the world. This should give him the courage and comfort to
trust that this mysterious God is surrounding his life with love also:

> A lot of what is apparently evil and imperfect on the surface, may
> only be the appearance that hides what God's grace in fact has tri-
> umphantly accomplished in us. In this life of darkness, weakness,
> poverty, ignorance, weariness and grief, one can after all be a
> human being who loves God and is loved by him, a child of God, liv-
> ing the life of the Spirit, sustained, enveloped and inescapably
> surrounded by the mercy of God. If we look to God and trust more
> to him and his testimony concerning his grace, than to what God the
> judge says of us and our wretchedness--and we may do so!--then we
> may also believe that our life and our weakness are really already
> so moulded by grace, that in the very depths of our being there
> dwells, not the evil spirit of darkness, but the radiant light of
> God; and we may trust that we too are on our way to God, and that
> our life is already such that it will end in our blessedness.[27]

A third lesson taught by the immaculate conception is that God
is _faithful_. He gives man a gracious beginning because He means to bless
his end. When God originates a human being He has his ultimate goal in

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[26]Ibid., pp. 78-79.   [27]Ibid., p. 81.

mind; He envisages the whole. That this is true of the Virgin Mary has
already been made plain. That it is also true for the rest of humanity
must be grasped in hope, as it is acted upon in history.[28]

Finally, Mary's immaculate conception shows that God's gracious
plan "cannot be encompassed within abstract universal principles but
extends to the individual as such."[29] To be certain, grace is the real
and comprehensive beginning and end. But God intends that man fulfill
His plan as a free, historical, creative being, daring to achieve and
taking responsibility for life. God did not create man as a computer
or robot, but as a free, responsive spirit. He intends man to be an
artist, with himself and the world as his media. Every human life,
therefore, is a story, an adventure whose chapters and denouement are
to be filled in as man lives in creative response to God's omnipresent
gracious calling. Although one's role in salvation history may not be
as kairotic as Mary's, he can nonetheless be certain on the basis of
God's modus operandi in her life that God also is working His plan
through the unique individuality of his life, and that his life has a
valuable contribution to make.

> Since he did for Mary what the mystery of the Immaculate Conception
> tells us about her, we know that what he himself did by the incar-
> nation of the Logos overflows for mere humanity as love and fidelity,
> grace, divine life and the eternal value of each individual exist-
> ence.[30]

Thus, the dogma of the immaculate conception with what it tells
man about how God worked in Mary's life and what this means for each
man stands as a monument to God's grace.

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[28]Ibid., p. 47.   [29]Gelpi, Life and Light, p. 266.

[30]Rahner, Mary, p. 52.

The bodily assumption

Of this dogma, which claims that Mary after death entered wholly, soul and body, into the glory of the redeemed, Donald Gelpi has observed: "There is perhaps no single dogma concerning the mother of the Lord which troubles contemporary Christians more."[31] If this is true, one would expect Rahner to give considerable attention to and defense of this dogma. Yet, while this topic is treated by Rahner, it is given no more attention than the other Marian privileges, and even somewhat less attention than the immaculate conception.

Although this may seem like a strange state of affairs, actually there is a quite natural explanation. For Rahner, in a sense, the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption is merely the logical consequence of her immaculate conception. That is to say, since Mary is the one who has been _perfectly_ redeemed by God, God's showpiece of grace, it follows that God has also graced her with the ultimate effects of redemption—complete redemption of her whole being, body and soul. And since it has been shown that for Rahner that redemption only and always points to God's grace, then it is evident that for him the doctrine of Mary's perfect, eschatological redemption is merely the capstone of Marian (and, thus, anthropological) doxology. So, in a sense, everything that needs to be said about the basis for this dogma and its importance as showing forth the grace of God, has already been said. Rahner states the reasoning quite succinctly:

> If Mary is the ideal representation of exhaustive redemption be-
> cause of her unique place in saving history, then she must 'even

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[31]Gelpi, _Life and Light_, p. 274.

now' have achieved that perfect communion with God in the glorified totality of her real being ('body and soul') which certainly exists even now.[32]

Thus, in Rahner's view the Christian who affirms this truth praises the boundless mercy and grace of God who brought this most glorious state to be in Mary, and who promises it to all men through the grace of Jesus Christ.[33] It is his conclusion that through this dogma the church also proclaims that God has already judged the corporeality of man and announced it worthy to be eternally with God, eternally saved and acknowledged. Indeed, with this dogma Rahner claims the church

> gazes towards the only hope in which she really trusts, the future of God, who is so far advanced with his Kingdom, that he has already begun to be wholly present. The Church looks on high and greets in Mary her own type and model, her own future in the resurrection of the body.[34]

In summary, this review of Rahner's treatment of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption has made it evident that while Rahner honors the blessed Virgin Mary as the one human being perfectly redeemed, he does so in a way that seeks to focus the primary attention upon God and His bountiful grace which accomplished these deeds in Mary. The gracious acts of God on Mary's behalf are meant to encourage all men that God has the same loving heart and gracious will toward them. With this interpretation and relocation of emphasis Rahner hopes to remove some of the scandal Protestants have traditionally experienced over Roman Catholic Mariology, and thus further ecumenical progress.

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[32]Karl Rahner, _Theological Investigations_, vol. 1: _God, Christ, Mary and Grace_, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), p. 225.

[33]Idem, _Mary_, p. 90.   [34]Ibid., p. 92.

On the focus on grace as aid
to the ecumenical movement

It has been concluded that Rahner seeks to aid the achievement

of closer doctrinal consensus on Mariology by emphasizing the Roman

Catholic Marian dogmas not as Marian privileges but as testimonies to

God's overwhelming grace, a theme which he perceives as central to

Protestant theology.

Yet there is perhaps an even profounder, more basic reason, in

Rahner's way of thinking, for focusing attention on grace as contro-

versial topics are discussed in ecumenical dialogue. One would miss

somewhat the significance of Rahner's approach to Mariology if he did

not mention this reason, however briefly.

Simply stated, the reason is that grace itself is the very

reality that makes ecumenical dialogue and the development of ecumenical

theology possible.[35] For the grace of God has justified alike (contrary

doctrinal formulations notwithstanding) all partners in the ecumenical

dialogue, making them sharers in the divine nature.[36] Therefore, all

ecumenical participants already share the same faith at an implicit,

subjective, pre-conceptual level.

> In the Spirit of God all of us 'know' something more simple, more
> true and more real than we can know or express at the level of our
> theological concepts. . . . This common faith at the heart and centre
> of human life through the power of God's grace, which is the same in

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[35]Idem, Theological Investigations, vol. 11: Confrontations 1,
trans. David Bourke (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp. 33-40.

[36]Idem, Theological Investigations, vol. 14: Ecclesiology,
Questions in the Church, the Church in the World, trans. David Bourke
(New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 249.

all and true beyond all distortion, constitutes the true basis and the ultimate condition for ecumenical dialogue and an ecumenical theology.[37]

The purpose of ecumenical dialogue, then, is to convince one's dialogue partner that one's own theological concepts only express more correctly, fully, and precisely what the partner already believes in the core of his faith through the power of the Spirit. But to convince him that this is so, he must first comprehend grace as the basic element which he shares with his dialogue partner and as the element which makes dialogue possible.

Thus, it would seem that a mutual understanding of and agreement concerning grace would be a helpful, if not necessary, prerequisite for ecumenical dialogue. If this is the case, then Rahner, by focusing attention upon the topic of grace in his presentation of Mariology, has attempted not only to take off some of the "offensive" edge vis-a-vis Protestant thought, but has, at the same time, sought to foster a situation in which Protestants and Catholics alike will confront the very reality which drives them toward the explicit unity the church seeks—God's grace! In this desire to transfer the focus of attention from Mary to the unmerited grace of God, a prominent theological theme of the Protestant church, Rahner reveals his agenda to accommodate the traditional theology of his church to Protestant concerns about Mariology.[38] He, therefore, illustrates the methodology of the constructive theologian seeking consensus by accommodation.

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[37] Ibid., p. 251.

[38] This approach of explicating the Marian dogmas in terms of themes more acceptable to the Protestant tradition is also illustrated by the attempts of those Roman Catholic theologians who have sought to transfer the focus of attention from the privileges of Mary to the

Piet Schoonenberg and A New Catechism:
Accommodation through Redefinition of Terms

It has been observed that one of the primary traditional objections of Protestants to the Roman Catholic dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption is that these tend to elevate Mary to the same status as God, and obscure her creatureliness, affinity with all other human beings, and need for grace. It has also been demonstrated that Karl Rahner attempts to assuage these concerns by focusing not upon the unique person and privileges of Mary, but upon the saving grace of God which accomplished great things in Mary's life and

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characteristics and mission of the church. This approach treats Mary as the model or type of the church, and defends the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary on the grounds that these typify characteristics apropos of the church—namely, its holiness and eschatological destination. This approach seems less compelling than that of Karl Rahner, perhaps because ecclesiology is not as central a concern for Protestants as the doctrine of saving grace. Good examples of this approach include: Otto Semmelroth, Mary, Archetype of the Church, trans. Maria von Eroes and John Develin, with an Introduction by Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963); and Edward Schillebeeckx, Mary: Mother of the Redemption, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964). Although he has not developed the theme as fully as have Schillebeeckx and Semmelroth, René Lauentin seems to also lean toward this approach. Cf. René Laurentin, The Question of Mary, trans. I. G. Pidoux, with a Preface by Hilda Graef (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 84-86; "Holy Mary," trans. John Cumming, in Models of Holiness, ed. Christian Duquoc and Casiano Floristan (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), pp. 56-64; and Catholic Pentecostalism, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1977), pp. 192-200.
    Similarly, Mary is used as the spokesperson and/or type for various contemporary theological movements that have gained a following in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, making Mariology more accepable to Protestants. For a charismatic treatment of Mary, see Leon Joseph Cardinal Suenens, A New Pentecost?, trans. Francis Martin (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 196-211. Gustavo Gutiérrez makes Mary a spokesperson for liberation theology in A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation, trans. and ed. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 207-8. René Laurentin surveys recent feminist attempts to make Mary a prototype of the liberated woman in "Bulletin sur la Vierge Marie," Revue des sciences philosophiques et Theologiques 58 (1974):298-301.

is the basis for the unity of the church. Another way of removing
Protestantism's objections about Mary's uniqueness, however, is to rede-
fine the nature of her privileges such that she becomes less unique and
more like other believers. This approach can be observed in Piet
Schoonenberg's treatment of the immaculate conception, and A New Cate-
chism's explication of the bodily assumption of Mary.

Piet Schoonenberg on the immaculate conception

Schoonenberg's redefinition of the nature of the privilege of
Mary's immaculate conception is the result of his redefinition of
original sin from which Mary is said to have been preserved. The logi-
cal relationship between the doctrines of original sin and Mary's
immaculate conception is obvious: if the understanding of the former
changes, then so does the latter. Thus, to understand Schoonenberg's
novel interpretation of Mary's immaculate conception, first his
explication of the doctrine of original sin must be set forth. This
requires, as background, a brief summary of his general view of sin.
These topics will now be exhibited, primarily on the basis of
Schoonenberg's work on this subject, Man and Sin.[39]

In Schoonenberg's view, sin in the individual is primarily a
personal, existential refusal of God's offer of love, which is charac-
terized by a blocking of self-actualization and interpersonal develop-
ment. Man's rejection of God's love cannot first of all be defined
vis-a-vis an abstract, static concept of "pure nature"; rather, it is

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[39]Piet Schoonenberg, Man and Sin: A Theological View, trans.
Joseph Donceel (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965).
Cf. also idem, "Original Sin and Man's Situation," Theology Digest 15
(Autumn 1967):203-8.

primarily a dynamic refusal within the framework of space and time.

However, while a sinful act takes place within the historical order, it

also wars against this order inasmuch as it is contrary to God's will

in history. Above all, sin is the rejection of Jesus Christ, the ful-

fillment of history. This necessitates also a rejection of oneself and

one's community. Sin manifests itself in varying degrees at different

times and places as mortal and venial sin. According to Schoonenberg,

sin is its own punishment because it is an inability to love, made final

when the rejection of God's love is final. The "second death" is the

full realization of the loneliness and anxiety entailed in every sin,

fully realized and manifested in the general judgment and resurrection.[40]

Against this background of individual sin, Schoonenberg takes up

his real concern in Man and Sin--the social dimension of sin. Beginning

with Old Testament concepts of man's inter-connectedness and solidarity

as community, and the Johannine concept of "the sin of the World" inter-

preted as implying punishment for and imitation of the sins of others

in an individual, Schoonenberg shows how the freedom of each person is

affected by factors beyond his control, but not depriving him of free-

dom. From this he develops his notion of original sin.

According to Schoonenberg, whenever a person acts he creates a

situation that influences others. Each act of a free person is an

invitation addressed to the freedom of others, calling them to act in

kind.[41] When one acts evilly, or fails to give a good example, he

deprives others of the stimulus and assistance they need to develop a

true moral conscience. And when a whole community so lives and thinks

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[40]Idem, Man and Sin, pp. 1-97.   [41]Ibid., pp. 111-12.

that it urges a person to sin, the pressure is so great that it is
practically impossible for the individual to resist.[42]

It must be further understood that sin not only damages inter-
personal relations; it is also the refusal of grace--the relationship
between God and man. Thus, one individual's (or community's) sin places
another in a situation where he is not only deprived of proper values
and norms, but also of grace. For, in Schoonenberg's view, grace can
be communicated to a man only through the mediation of other men.[43]
Whenever one sins, he fails to communicate grace. Therefore, if the
world ever got to a state where no grace at all was mediated, only sin
would be possible. Then every person would be born into a condition in
which he could do nothing but sin. Indeed, sinfulness and gracelessness
would be universal. This state of affairs Schoonenberg calls original
sin.

In fact, Schoonenberg claims such a situation of original sin
has developed. It came with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ who was the
unique mediator of grace to the world. With His death, no man remained
capable of communicating grace on his own.[44] Since Christ's death every-
one is born into a situation from which the source of good is absent and
where prior to any voluntary inclination to personal sin or virtue there
exists a radical inability to love the good as such. The inability con-
sists in the fact that only bad models are available for imitation and
the communication of their spiritually evil interior. But sin is not a

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[42]Ibid., pp. 113-18.   [43]Ibid., p. 119.

[44]Ibid., pp. 107-8.

congenitally inherent factor of existence. It is passed on by imitation and interpersonal communication, not propagation.

However, in this schema it must be understood that prior to the crucifixion of Christ, mankind was <u>not</u> totally deprived of grace. Man was given grace in primeval times and this filtered down through history, diminishing somewhat with time. Thus, the fall of man did not occur in the beginning of man's history, but came about gradually through a long history of sin. The fall was not completed until the crucifixion. Only then did sin become universal, become original sin. Prior to this occasion, grace was passed on from time to time at certain places by certain grace-filled people.

The effect of the redefinition of original sin on the meaning of Mary's immaculate conception can now be shown. Because Mary was conceived and born before the crucifixion of Christ it was possible for her to have entered into a grace-filled environment, to have been conceived by and born of people who communicated grace to her and set a good example for her to imitate. This is all the more likely in the milieu ushered in by the presence of Jesus Christ, the unique mediator of grace.[45] This solution in itself poses no problem for the traditional doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception; however, a difficulty for the traditional understanding does arise in that Mary's <u>unique</u> status in this regard is sacrificed. For, according to Schoonenberg, it is possible that before the finalization of the fall in Christ's crucifixion, particularly in the era preceding this, there may have been <u>many</u> immaculate conceptions:

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[45]Ibid., p. 189.

> For if the fall should not occur in one well-determined sin which affects each man by way of heredity, if it happens throughout a long history of sin, it is possible that Christ's redemption would, in a history of faith, hope and charity, impregnate a certain milieu so thoroughly that human beings living in it would start their existence in full openness for the life of grace; that is, without original sin, in a state of "immaculate conception."[46]

In this way of thinking, it would also seem possible that in man's early history, before sin spread so broadly and deeply, there also may have been many immaculate conceptions. In fact, throughout history, one would expect occasional occurrences of this phenomenon among isolated pockets of spiritually good people. In short, through this redefinition of original sin, Schoonenberg has removed the uniqueness, exclusivity, and singularity of Mary's status.[47] She has become one of many believers immaculately conceived before the fall. Furthermore, her special privilege cannot be attributed to any inherent quality, but is rather the result of her being in the proper environment. In this way, Schoonenberg has accommodated the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception to some important Protestant concerns.

A New Catechism on the
bodily assumption

A New Catechism provides another example of how a redefinition of basic terms accommodates a traditional Marian dogma to Protestant accusations that the dogma elevates Mary's status too much and removes

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[46]Ibid.

[47]To be sure, Schoonenberg tries to maintain Mary's distinction from others immaculately conceived by proposing that her conception alone was in view of the redemptive work of Christ. But this solution, as critics have pointed out, is hardly satisfactory in that it means the others were in no need of Christ's redemption, making Mary inferior to them. See Edward D. O'Connor, "Modern Theories of Original Sin," Marian Studies 20 (1969):121-22.

her affinity with all other believers.[48] This time the dogma is the

doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption; and it is given new meaning by a

redefinition of afterlife with God.

In traditional Roman Catholic as well as Protestant doctrine,

it is taught that temporal death is the separation of man's soul from

his body. At the time of his death man is given particular judgment by

God, and his soul is either taken to heaven to be with God, or condemned

to hell. In either case, his body awaits the day of resurrection and

general judgment, after which it will join his soul in a modified state

either for eternal glory or eternal damnation. In Roman Catholic

thought, the blessed Virgin Mary is the only human person exempted from

this general plan of God in that at the end of her earthly life she

already was taken soul _and_ _body_ to be with God in heaven.[49]

A New Catechism objects to the traditional understanding that

soul and body are separated at death. It contends that the Bible never

speaks of man's soul as divested of corporeality. There is no such

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[48]See Higher Catechetical Institute at Nijmegen, A New Catechism, trans. Kevin Smyth (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), pp. 470-76. Otherwise known as the "Dutch Catechism," this book, which received the imprimatur for the original Dutch edition from Bernardus Cardinal Alfrink, claims to be "an attempt to render faithfully the renewal which found expression in the Second Vatican Council," and "tries to present the faith of our fathers in a form suitable to the present day" (p.v). While seeking to be faithful to the Roman Catholic tradition, this catechism also hopes to be a positive force in the progress of ecumenical relationships.

[49]For example, see The New Confraternity Edition, Revised Baltimore Catechism and Mass, No. 3: The Text of the Official Revised Edition 1949 with Summarizations of Doctrine and Study Helps by Francis J. Connell (New York: Benziger Brothers, [1958]), pp. 103-8. Cf. A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), pp. 141-44.

thing as a purely disembodied soul of man. When Jesus says, "Do not

fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28),

"soul" does not refer to a spirit separate from the body, but to "the

living kernel of man as a whole, body and soul'."[50] Thus, when man

dies, in the afterlife he continues to exist as a whole being with soul

and body. However, the body of the new life is not the old body which

disintegrates in the ground. On the other hand, it is also not the

resurrection body in all its glory. A New Catechism seems to suggest,

rather, that after death, man, as a unified being of body and soul, is

in process of becoming what he will be fully established as in the

resurrection:

> It seems to be that we are to think of the "today" [in reference
> to Jesus' words to the malefactor on the cross: "Today you will be
> with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43)] as something that has already
> begun, and that is not without the body. In other words, existence
> after death is already something like the resurrection of the new
> body. This body of the resurrection is not molecules which are
> buried and scattered in the earth. . . . Man begins to awake as a
> new man.[51]

Just what the nature of the new being is, or how the old being is trans-

formed is an unrevealed mystery. However, it can best be thought of in

terms of "the good that lives after a man on earth."[52] Images involv-

ing space and time dimensions are, however, totally inadequate. In the

final analysis, it must be admitted that the nature of the afterlife is

a mystery. Yet it can be said that, whatever its exact nature, every

man participates as a being of both soul and body.

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[50]Higher Catechetical Institute at Nijmegen, A New Catechism,
p. 473.

[51]Ibid., p. 474; cf. pp. 478-79.

[52]Ibid., p. 475.

Thus, once again, Mary's unique privilege and status, this time with respect to the afterlife, is diminished. For _all_ men who enter eternal glory do so as beings of soul and body. To be sure, it is insisted that Mary is the most fully glorified, the furthest along the way to her full glory. Yet even Mary's glory is not now perfect; it too awaits the time when the whole of mankind will be gathered together.[53] Thus, the nature of Mary's afterlife differs not _in kind_ from the ordinary believer's, but _in degree_. In this redefinition of the afterlife with its implication for the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption, A New Catechism exhibits an accommodation to the Protestant stance vis-a-vis this dogma.

Hans Küng: Accommodation through Radical Ecumenical Reformulation of the Christian Faith

To this point the examination of Roman Catholic models of accommodation has focused upon representative theologians who deliberately attempt to remain faithful to the traditional Roman Catholic formulations of the Marian dogmas while making these more acceptable to Protestants, either by redirecting the original focus of attention (as Karl Rahner) or by redefining key terms involved in the definition of the dogmas (as Piet Schoonenberg and A New Catechism). With Hans Küng the study turns to an example of a Roman Catholic theologian who advocates consensus through a radical ecumenical reformulation of the Christian faith.[54] The specifics of his program of reformulation and the

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[53]Ibid.

[54]While this study recognizes that the title of "Catholic theologian" for Hans Küng was officially revoked by the Vatican on December 18, 1979, it nonetheless includes him in this study inasmuch as Küng

effects for the Marian dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily

assumption will be demonstrated by means of the following outline:

1) Küng's general description of the task of theology today; 2) the

application of this description to the problem of dogmas in general;

and 3) the application of this description to the Marian dogmas of the

immaculate conception and bodily assumption in particular.

Küng's general description of the task of theology today

Hans Küng is in agreement with the theologians examined thus

far in this chapter that the proclamation of the Christian faith today

needs some reworking. He also agrees that this work should be carried

on in an ecumenical context. However, he rejects the idea that it is

sufficient to recast the old formulations in a more irenic spirit, more

compatible with Protestant concerns, or that it is sufficient to rede-

fine terms and bring the old formulations more in line with modern

ecumenical thought. These approaches he condemns as "neo-scholastic"

"subjective whims," lacking in any sort of standard by which to be criti-

cized.[55] Such approaches only treat surface symptoms: they do not get

at the heart of what is really needed in theology today. In their place

Küng proposes a fresh start for both Roman Catholics and Protestants—a

fresh start of returning together to the original sources of Christian

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contends that he remains within the Roman Catholic tradition, and he
continues to have a wide following among the Roman Catholic faithful.
See Küng's "Why I Remain A Catholic," trans. Edward Quinn and Leonard
Swidler, in Consensus in Theology? A Dialogue with Hans Küng and
Edward Schillebeeckx, ed. Leonard Swidler (Philadelphia: Westminster
Press, 1980), pp. 159-65.

[55]Hans Küng, The Church—Maintained in Truth, trans. Edward
Quinn (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), pp. 42-43.

theology and reformulating the Christian message for the needs of modern man.[56] In so doing, those doctrinal concerns which have separated Christians in the past should fall away as insignificant for the concerns of today. Included among such concerns of course would be the Marian dogmas.

According to Küng, the older theological definitions and distinctions used in explicating the Christian faith are "hardly intelligible" to anyone today.[57] Modern man does not hold the same world views or think in the same philosophic categories that have been used to formulate the Christian faith in the past. Thus, the original Christian message needs to be "translated" into the world view and thought forms of the contemporary world.[58]

In order to carry out this "translation" of the original Christian message, Küng proposes a program of correlation between two sources, poles, or standards of Christian theology. The first pole he terms a "return to the sources" of Christian theology.[59] These sources are "God's revelational address in the history of Israel and the history of Jesus," as recorded in the Bible.[60] The formulation of the message of Christian theology must always begin with an arduous scrutiny of those

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[56]Idem, Truthfulness: The Future of the Church, "Part B/Realization of Truthfulness," trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), p. 167.

[57]Idem, The Council, Reform and Reunion, trans. Cecily Hastings (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 4.

[58]Idem, Truthfulness: The Future of the Church, p. 47.

[59]Idem, "Toward a New Consensus in Catholic (and Ecumenical) Theology," trans. Anthony Matteo, in Consensus in Theology?, p. 3.

[60]Ibid., p. 5.

documents which record the original Christian experience. Of course,
the tools of historical criticism must be used for this study. The
second pole is contemporary human experience. When the original Chris-
tian experience has been discovered through the historical-critical
examination of the Scriptures, this experience must be made meaningful
in terms that modern man can understand and assimilate as valid
experiences for his life today. In this regard the disciplines of the
humanities and social and natural sciences have a tremendous contribu-
tion to make.[61] In addition, other world religions should be sympa-
thetically heard for the positive contributions they make to the
correlation task.[62]

As the experience of Christians recorded in the Bible is
correlated to the experience of contemporary man, only the Gospel of
Jesus Christ may serve as norm. That Gospel states that in the person
and work of the man Jesus Christ God Himself encountered/encounters man
and manifested/manifests Himself for the sake of a saving relationship
with Himself and a new relationship with other men. This is the sine
qua non of the Christian faith. Throughout the course of the history
of the church this message has been couched in varying theological
interpretations and terms, but this core has always remained the same.
It is this core witness and experience of the Bible that needs to be
translated into this era's world view and philosophy. This translation
makes possible the revelation to modern man of the true Gospel, Jesus
Himself:

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[61]Ibid., p. 11   [62]Ibid., p. 14.

The Church however needs a criterion for what is to be considered as true in the Christian Church: this is the Christian message as originally recorded in the New Testament, ultimately Jesus Christ himself. The Christian message must be read critically against the background of the ecclesial community and tradition. Precisely in this way it becomes clear that the Christian ultimately believes not in propositions or truths, not even in the Bible, in tradition, or in the Church, but in God himself and in him in whom God revealed himself.[63]

To be sure, formulations of the faith in propositional language are necessary if the faith is to be propogated, but it must be recognized that all such formulations are transitory, imperfect witnesses to the real Gospel, Jesus Himself.

Küng is convinced that if his program of reformulating the Christian message of the Scriptures within the horizon of the contemporary world were followed, Roman Catholic and Protestant believers would discover that they have no great differences. For their faith would be based upon the same original sources and the same contemporary experience of man. Actually, all that really separates these groups of Christians today is the difference in their traditional basic attitudes built up from the Reformation period. Allegedly, Roman Catholics attach special importance to the <u>entire,</u> universal, all-embracing church and to the continuity of its doctrine, while Protestants attach special importance to "constant critical recourse to the <u>gospel</u> (scripture) and

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[63]Idem, The Church--Maintained in Truth, p. 66. Cf. also idem, Signposts for the Future (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1978), pp. 28-30; The Council, Reform and Reunion, p. 56; and "Toward a New Consensus in Catholic (and Ecumenical) Theology," pp. 6-7 and 14. This concern to translate the original Christian experience into a message correlative with contemporary human experience, but normed by the Gospel as defined above, is carried out by Küng in his fundamental work On Being a Christian, trans. Edward Quinn (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1976).

to constant practical <u>reform</u> according to the norm of the gospel."[64]

However, Küng contends that these basic attitudes are not mutually

exclusive. Therefore, it is possible for Protestants to be <u>catholic</u>

in their vision of the church, and it is possible for Roman Catholics

to carry out evangelical <u>reform</u> of their church. Since these two

attitudes can be resolved, a real ecumenical consensus is indeed pos-

sible in the church today. Thus, the mandate of the church today is to

carry out a radical ecumenical reformulation of the Christian faith by

correlating the original Christian experience recorded in the Bible with

contemporary human experience.

<u>Application of Küng's description
of theology to the problem of
dogmas in general</u>

It has been noted above that formulations of the Christian faith

in propositional language, while necessary, are historically-conditioned,

imperfect witnesses to the Gospel, to Jesus Christ Himself. Dogmas

defined by the church fall into this category of historically-

conditioned witnesses. In Küng's thought, dogmas are not to be equated

with the Christian message itself; they are not revelation properly

speaking. Rather, dogmas are "official aids, guides and warning signs

in the course of the centuries that are intended to protect the Church,

the individual, and of course theologians, from misunderstanding the

Christian message."[65] The historical conditioning of dogmatic state-

ments produces four correlated results.

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[64]Idem, <u>Signposts</u>, p. 28.

[65]Idem, "Toward a New Consensus in Catholic (and Ecumenical)
Theology," p. 3.

To begin with, it must be understood that most dogmas are <u>polem-ical</u>. They arise out of a need to combat heresies, and are constructed primarily as "defensive barriers." They necessarily focus upon points of doctrine that are endangered by specific heretical arguments, and are, thus, rather narrow in the intended scope of their attention. As a result, those points which are specifically addressed will be care-fully formulated and fully illuminated, while other related but less involved aspects may be given obscure and incomplete treatment. "Definitions and decrees are simply not intended to say everything that there is to say about the truth in question. They are not intended as balanced, detached, learned treatises but as corrections of particular, definite errors."[66] Thus, the range of truth of most dogmas is rather limited.

Secondly, as human, finite statements dogmas "can never exhaust the mystery and the fullness of the divine revelation of truth."[67] In the formulation of dogma there is a certain degree of development and progressive insight into the revelation of God, wrought by the Holy Spirit. While the whole truth may be <u>implicit</u> within a dogma, it is made <u>explicit</u> only gradually. No one age can claim to have the last word on the understanding of any truth. The Holy Spirit <u>continually</u> guides the understanding of the church, bringing it into an ever fuller and more complete comprehension of the mysteries of God. While there is truth in every dogma, there is not exhaustive truth. Each age experiences a little more drawing back of the curtain hiding the

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[66]Idem, <u>The Council, Reform and Reunion</u>, pp. 113-14.

[67]Ibid., p. 113.

mysteries of God than was experienced in the previous age. Obviously,
then, the formulations of dogma continually need updating in keeping
with the ever fuller insights provided by the Spirit of God.

Thirdly, inasmuch as dogmas are not revelation per se, but are
carriers of revelation and witnesses to revelation, they contain both
God's Word and man's word. Every formulation of dogma contains a cer-
tain core of abiding constant truth which is given by God through Jesus
Christ in the Holy Spirit. This divine core of truth is irreformable.
For example, it is an irreformable truth of dogma that Jesus Christ is
in some sense both God and man. In addition to the abiding constant
truth in every dogma, however, there is also the human formulation of
this truth, packaged in the fallible concepts of a given age. This
human packaging is reformable. Thus, each dogma contains both divine,
irreformable truth and human, fallible, reformable formulation of the
truth.[68]

Fourthly, that truth which has been divinely and irreformably
communicated to the church by the Holy Spirit can, at the hands of sin-
ful men, suffer distortion and corruption. Heretics may willfully
introduce error, or the "pseudo-orthodox" may formulate the truth once
purely given in an arid and one-sided fashion. Thereby, truth which
was once pure becomes impure, and which was once properly formed becomes
de-formed. No dogma is exempt from this possibility of deformation.
Therefore, every dogma holds the theoretical possibility of renewal.[69]

As a result of these four effects of the historical conditioning
of dogma, Küng contends, quite consistently, that post-Biblical dogma be

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[68]Ibid., pp. 115-16.   [69]Ibid., pp. 54-55.

scrutinized by the same historical-critical investigation as are the

Scriptures in order to discern their truth:

> If the Bible must undergo critical interpretation, it is all the
> more imperative that post-biblical dogmas be subject to the same
> scrutiny. A theology which fails to critically investigate the
> "data" and remains overtly or covertly authoritarian will in the
> future, despite protestations to the contrary, lose any viable
> claim to scientific respectability.[70]

Like a Biblical text, a dogmatic document must be viewed as the result

of a quite definite historical process. Thus, it is proper to investi-

gate the sources, forms, and redaction history. Finally, it is neces-

sary to critique a dogma in terms of the philosophical and cultural

milieu in which it was formulated, and particularly vis-a-vis the

original Christian message attested in the Old and New Testaments.[71]

While the theologian is committed to the faith of the church,

he is not committed to an uncritical wholesale endorsement of all its

formulations of the faith. An honest theology today demands that all

theological formulations be subjected to scientific, historical-

critical anaylsis.[72]

The presupposition of such historical-critical analysis of

dogma is that the church and its formulators of dogma are fallible,

limited by their historical context, and therefore subject to error.

As a result of historical-critical evaluation of her dogmas, the church

must be willing to admit error and correct itself. Unfortunately, Küng

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[70]Idem, "Toward a New Consensus in Catholic (and Ecumenical) Theology," pp. 8-9.

[71]Idem, Truthfulness: The Future of the Church, pp. 147-48.

[72]Idem, The Church--Maintained in Truth, p. 42. Cf. Truthfulness: The Future of the Church, p. 147.

claims, in the past the church has exhibited a tendency to identify

itself with the Holy Spirit, and on that basis to ascribe to itself in-

fallibility. It thus viewed its definitions and dogmas as irreformable

and incorrigible.[73] Furthermore, in order to defend its claim of

infallibility, the church had to

> take refuge in all kinds of clever distinctions, dialectical expla-
> nations—yes, even in not completely honorable theological tricks—
> in order to defend in doctrine what was not defensible, in order
> to avoid admitting that we had been wrong when mistakes were alto-
> gether possible and had in fact been made.[74]

The church did not understand that infallibility does not mean that it

cannot err in its formulation of dogma, but that led by the Spirit of

God it has a basic persistence in the fundamental truths, despite errors,

because God does not abandon the church. Infallibility and indefecti-

bility refer primarily to God and His providence in behalf of the church

and its truth, rather than to a quality of the church.

> This is the great miracle of the Holy Spirit of God in the Church:
> not that no errors occur—where then would be the humanity of the
> Church of men?—but that the Church, in spite of all her defection
> from God, is never dropped by God, never abandoned by God; that, in
> spite of all sins and errors of popes, bishops, priests, theologians
> and laymen, she did not perish like the dynasties of the Pharoahs
> and the Roman Empire of the Caesars, but continues to be sustained
> by God in the Spirit throughout the centuries and—even after long
> periods of decadence—is led to ever new life and new truth. Par-
> ticularly here it is strikingly evident that the truth and truthful-
> ness of the Church is not her own achievement, but the incomprehen-
> sible event of God's merciful grace. And our faith rejoices in the
> thought that ultimately our own endurance in truth although we
> constantly fail, is indeed important, but not ultimately decisive.
> What is much more decisive is the great promise of his fidelity,

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[73]Ibid., p. 37.

[74]Idem, Truthfulness: The Future of the Church, pp. 24-25.

which God will not revoke in all eternity, in spite of our failure all along the line.[75]

With a proper understanding of infallibility, the church is free to and should admit its errors in dogmatic formulations, and correct them. The church has no reason to be ashamed of error, but should rejoice that under God's grace it is capable of real metanoia from former errors, mistakes, sidetracks, diversions, ignorance, limitations, inexperience, incapacity, and superficiality to better knowledge, insight, lucidity, certainty, closeness to life, reality, and greater truth. Thus, rather than trying to cover up mistakes and shortcomings, the church is free to reformulate the unchangeable truth of God for the contemporary world.[76] In so doing, of course, it will not discard the old formulations as of no value at all. Rather it will seek to maintain what is best in them and honor them as faithful expressions of the faith for their time and place in the history of the church. They serve as models to be reverenced and followed.[77] Such reverence and honor, however, do not relieve them of the necessity to be reformulated for the church of today. This remains the ever-abiding task of the contemporary theologian vis-a-vis the dogma of his church.

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[75]Ibid., pp. 136-37. For Küng's extended treatment of this topic, see idem, Infallible? An Inquiry, trans. Edward Quinn (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1971).

[76]Ibid., p. 47.

[77]Ibid., pp. 147-50.

<u>Application of Küng's description</u>
<u>of theology to the problem of the</u>
<u>Marian dogmas of the immaculate</u>
<u>conception and bodily assumption</u>
<u>in particular</u>

Exemplary of dogmas that come under Küng's critique and are

cited as being in need of reformulation are the Marian dogmas of the

immaculate conception and bodily assumption. These dogmas represent a

confusion of veneration for Mary with "Marianism," which needs refor-

mation today.[78] The dogma of Mary's bodily assumption is particularly

suspect inasmuch as its proposal and proclamation met with so much dis-

agreement, even within the Roman Catholic church itself. The pastoral

effects it was supposed to have had are hardly obvious in retrospect.[79]

In light of the fact that these dogmas pose some weighty prob-

lems for ecumenism, Küng proposes that they be subjected to "an honest,

critical examination," particularly following the guidelines of the

Biblical evidence. Küng contends that they have no compelling founda-

tion in Scripture, tradition, or the intrinsic reasoning of theological

discourse. Furthermore, they rank "very low" in the "hierarchy of

truths" spoken of in the <u>Decree on Ecumenism</u> of the Second Vatican

Council.[80] Thus, these dogmas call for a critical analysis which would

separate possibly valid intentions behind the dogmas from their poor

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[78]Idem, <u>The Council, Reform and Reunion</u>, p. 55.

[79]Idem, <u>The Church--Maintained in Truth</u>, p. 54.

[80]See Austin Flannery, gen. ed., <u>Vatican Council II: The</u>
<u>Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents</u> (Northport, NY: Costello Pub-
lishing Company, 1975), p. 462.

formulations.[81] A reformulation of the dogmas should be made which would be acceptable to Protestants.[82]

Of those approaches outlined thus far in this chapter, that of Hans Küng appears as the most radical and genuinely ecumenical. For he advocates not merely a change in emphasis or redefinition of terms, but a joint Protestant/Roman Catholic return to the two poles of theology (the original Christian experience recorded in the Bible and contemporary human experience) to hammer out together a view of Mary that is appropriate for contemporary Christian faith.

Protestant Models of Accommodation

John de Satgé on the Bodily Assumption: Accommodation through the Transfer of the Focus of Emphasis

John de Satgé, who claims to be an evangelical. or Protestant Anglican, as opposed to an "Anglo-Catholic," pursues his attempt to accommodate the Anglican faith to the Marian dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption with the clear presupposition that Anglicans can accept neither of these doctrines as dogmas inasmuch as they are not "part of the original deposit of faith."[83] Nonetheless, he believes that the traditions concerning the end and beginning of the Virgin Mary's life do not represent distortions from the Biblical kerygma, but are "congruent with it" and "legitimate extensions" of

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[81] Hans Küng, On Being a Christian, p. 462.

[82] Idem, The Council, Reform and Reunion, p. 127.

[83] John de Satgé, "Towards an Evangelical Reappraisal," in The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglican Writers, ed. E. L. Mascall and H. S. Box (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), p. 111.

it.[84] It is possible, according to de Satgé, to express these traditions in harmony with the "great evangelical centralities of the faith."[85] In particular, he attempts to bring the tradition of Mary's bodily assumption under the theological control of the evangelical centralities of the Christian faith by using the doctrine as a testimony to God's undeserved grace and power, as opposed to Mary's unique status and aptitude.[86] Thus, in a fashion similar to that of Karl Rahner, de Satgé seeks to transfer the focus of emphasis in the traditional formulation of the dogma to a theme more prominent and acceptable to evangelical Anglicans.

To clear the way for this approach, de Satgé first anticipates four evangelical objections and rebuts them. In response to the first objection, that the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption is not contained in Scripture, he counters, as has already been noted, that the doctrine is nonetheless congruent with Scripture, and therefore worthy to be maintained as truth. The second objection, that the teaching represents a dogmatic distortion, detracting from the unique glory and honor of Christ, de Satgé refutes with the contention that doctrine concerning Mary only arose in the history of the church after Christology had been worked out, and then as a support of Christology. Rather than detracting from Christ's honor, the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption

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[84]Idem, Down to Earth: The New Protestant Vision of the Virgin Mary ([Wilmington, NC]: Consortium Books, 1976), p. 78.

[85]Ibid., p. 79.

[86]For de Satgé's treatment of the immaculate conception (accommodation through redefinition of terms), see below, footnote 107.

adds to it. The third anticipated objection, closely related to the second, is that this dogma is unnecessary and religiously dangerous, tending to idolize Mary. To this de Satgé replies that since believers compose the body of Christ, and since Mary is the mother of Christ, therefore she is in some sense every believer's mother also. This special relationship needs to be cultivated by the Christian, although in proper balance, remembering that Christ is also the Head of His body, the church. The doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption helps the believer to understand the basis for his proper relationship to Mary as mother. The fourth possible objection is that this Mariological doctrine, like the others, tends to emasculate the strong Biblical emphasis on grace, supplementing the saving activity of God by an improper intrusion of human merit. It is de Satgé's response to this accusation in particular that illustrates his approach of treating the doctrine of Mary's assumption as "a splendid trophy of the gospel's grace and power."[87]

De Satgé contends that, rather than emasculating the Biblical emphasis on grace, the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption enhances it. For it _fully_ demonstrates how, in spite of sin, God's will for man is ultimately accomplished by His grace. Mary is the example _par excel-lence_ that God keeps His promises. In Mary who has already "got there" the church has proof positive that God not only calls and justifies, but that He also glorifies--all out of His grace. Thus, the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption teaches primarily that God is good and gracious

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[87]John de Satgé, _Down to Earth_, p. 79. The arguments presented in this paragraph are fleshed out in pp. 79-81 and "Towards an Evangelical Reappraisal," pp. 104-13.

and that He fully intends to carry out His ultimate plan for His church.

From this perspective, "Mary is a sign of sure hope and solace for the

wandering People of God."[88] Through this shifting in the focus of

emphasis in the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption, de Satgé hopes to

persuade Protestants of its validity and value for their spiritual lives

as well as the lives of their Roman Catholic brethren.[89]

John Macquarrie on the Immaculate Conception: Accommodation through Redefinition of Terms

John Macquarrie believes that the dogma of Mary's immaculate

conception can be shown to be "a clear implicate of basic Christian

doctrines which we all accept,"[90] if one redefines the formal, dogmatic,

static terms of the mid-nineteenth-century formulation of the dogma in

twentieth-century personalistic terms. Specifically, Macquarrie advo-

cates redefining the terms "immaculate" and "conception."

Macquarrie contends that behind the term "immaculate" lurks a

static, substantial understanding of sin, "somewhat Manichaean in

tendency."[91] This understanding views sin as a "stain," a substance

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[88]Idem, _Down to Earth_, p. 79.

[89]Another significant Protestant study which uses this approach, focusing on Mary as a type of the church, but which stops short of an evaluation of the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption, is the French Calvinist Max Thurian's _Mary, the Mother of All Christians_, trans. Neville B. Cryer (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964). Also employing this approach, making Mary the model for feminist theology, thus appealing to Protestant and Roman Catholic feminists, is Rosemary Radford Ruether's study, _Mary--The Feminine Face of the Church_ (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977).

[90]John Macquarrie, "Immaculate Conception," _Communio: International Catholic Review_ 7 (Summer 1980): 100 and 112.

[91]Ibid., p. 108.

existing in its own right, rather than as essentially a lack or dis-
tortion. This view Macquarrie rejects along with "any understanding of

original sin that would think of it as a kind of hereditary taint,

passed along in the genes, as it were."[92] In place of the more tradi-

tional understanding of sin and original sin Macquarrie posits person-

alistic, existential interpretations.[93]

Macquarrie's definitions of sin and original sin stem from his

existential treatment of anthropology. According to Macquarrie, man's

basic characteristic, that which separates him from other beings such

as cats, trees, and rocks, is his self-awareness, self-consciousness, or

self-transcendence with its attendant responsibility for choice and self-

direction. It is man's basic nature always to be transcending any given

stage of his condition, to be dynamically developing into an authentic

self, into an actualized being, as he is drawn to do this and invited

to do so by Being, or God. As each man works out the shape of his own,

individual, perculiar existence he must wrestle to find a balance

between the various tensions within: possibility and facticity (or

potential and finitude), rationality and irrationality, responsibility

and impotence, anxiety and hope, and individuality and sociality.[94] The

goal of man's existence is to achieve authentic selfhood, or "a unified

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[92]Ibid., p. 109.

[93]Idem, Christian Unity and Christian Diversity (Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1975), p. 93.

[94]Idem, Principles of Christian Theology, 2nd ed. (London: SCM
Press, 1977), pp. 59-68.

existence, in which potentialities are actualized in an orderly manner and there are no loose ends or alienated areas."[95]

In this existential description of man, sin, then, is an imbalance among the tensions or polarities of existence. Because of imbalances, man's potentialities of existence are not actualized as they might be, but are lost, stunted, or distorted. Although the possibilities for distortion are theoretically infinite, generally there are two main directions in which imbalance takes place. The first is a

> reluctance or refusal to give full acceptance and acknowledgement
> to the facticity, finitude, and, generally, the limitation of human
> existence, and also from the desire to have a super-human or god-
> like existence, free from the restraints that are inseparable from
> a genuinely human life.[96]

The second direction is characterized by a "retreat from possibility, decision-making, responsibility, individual liability and even from rationality."[97] In their core, both of these directions represent an alienation from self, others, and essentially, Being. Sin is primarily, thus, a lack of faith in, acceptance of, and commitment to the goodness of Being, or God, and His calling to fully actualize oneself in existence.[98] It is, instead, a commitment to and faith in a being to bring one's existence to its fullest potential.

Original sin is constituted by the "world" or human society into which each person is born that is already imbalanced and disordered in its collective existence. Inevitably, then, every individual existence

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[95]Ibid., p. 77.

[96]Ibid., p. 69.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid., pp. 76-83.

shares its disorder, and every man willingly or not finds himself "caught up in a kind of escalation of sin," "carried away," and "impotent to halt the process."[99]

Before proceeding to demonstrate the effect of these definitions of sin and original sin on the meaning of "immaculate," it should be observed that Macquarrie rejects any notion of total depravity. While he believes man is a sinner and participates in original sin, he nonetheless contends that man also still maintains some degree of a proper orientation toward God. Man is never totally alienated from God; to be so would be to no longer exist as man, but as unconscious, unaware, untranscending being. But such a state is not possible for man who is "created" with a tendency toward Being/God. Every human being has some residuum of "original righteousness" and "grace." What differs from person to person is the extent to which the orientation toward God is realized.[100] At birth, however, inherently, each person has the same potential and possibility for leading a balanced, harmonized, sin-free life. One is not born as sinner, but as potential sinner in a sin-filled environment.

To say that the blessed Virgin Mary was conceived immaculate or was preserved from original sin, then, means that she was preserved in a right relationship to God/Being. Her self-actualization was not stunted or distorted by the imbalanced society and human race into which she was born. Mary used her freedom and orientation toward God to

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[99]Ibid., p. 265.

[100]Ibid., p. 267. Cf. idem, Christian Unity and Christian Diversity, p. 94.

develop the fullest and closest possible relation to Him. She kept the

polarities or tensions of existence in balance. While theoretically

this may have been possible for others, it was accomplished by Mary.

Mary is the one in whom alienation toward God was fully overcome.[101]

Thus, Mary is distinguished from other people, not because she was

inherently different, but because her life, her existence was actualized

to a fuller degree than those of others. In this way, the distance of

the gap between Mary and other human beings has been narrowed by

Macquarrie.

To buttress this personalistic, existential interpretation of

Mary's immaculate nature, Macquarrie rejects the biological understand-

ing of the blessed Virgin's conception in favor of a philosophical/

theological definition. His definition "speaks not of the fusion of

cells or anything of the sort but of the mystery of the coming into being

of a person."[102] Macquarrie contends for a threefold understanding of

Mary's conception.

The first level of the philosophical/theological sense of the

term "conception" with respect to the blessed Virgin Mary took place in

the mind of God as He purposed in eternity to include Mary in His salvi-

fic plans for man. In this respect, Mary is not unique. For the mys-

tery of election and predestination affects the whole human race. In

this sense, in eternity God chose Mary just as He chose all other human

beings to enter into a loving relationship with Himself. However, He

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[101]Idem, "Immaculate Conception," pp. 109-10; cf. idem, Chris-
tian Unity and Christian Diversity, pp. 93-94.

[102]Ibid., p. 105.

further purposed to accomplish this loving relationship by becoming
human and living with men Himself. Therefore, it was necessary to so
clear the human race of sin and fill it with grace that it would be
ready to receive the gift of Himself (that is, that it would be capax
Dei). This is where the special predestination and election of Mary
entered into the picture. For Mary was the one God determined to be
His entrance way, so to speak. Thus, she occupies a special as well as
general place in God's election. Macquarrie insists that this special
conception of Mary in the mind of God follows directly as an implication
of the doctrines of creation and incarnation:

> Even if we did not know Mary's name and knew nothing at all about
> her history and background, nevertheless if we believed in the
> doctrines of creation and incarnation, we would have to posit this
> moment in humanity. There is a sense in which Mary's significance
> lies not in herself as an individual but as that moment in the
> spiritual history of mankind.[103]

In this way Macquarrie has used a redefinition of terms to propose the
dogma of Mary's immaculate conception as an implication of doctrines
which are solidly founded upon Scripture and which are universally con-
fessed in the church (that is, have catholicity). He believes he has,
therefore, established the dogma as being a part of the one truth of
Christianity which comes out when the Christian truth is brought to
maximal expression.[104]

On a second level, the conception of Mary took place within the
stream of ancient Israel's history and culture. To carry out His loving
plan God chose a weak and obscure people to be His own. He bound Him-
self to them through covenants, spoke to them and educated them in His
ways through prophets and teachers, and kindled in them a drive for

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[103]Ibid., pp. 105-6.   [104]Ibid., p. 103.

righteousness. The purpose of all this was to prepare a people who would bring into the world for the whole world the gift of God Himself. When Israel's drive for righteousness reached its peak, it conceived Mary who brought God's Son into the world.[105]

Thirdly, on the most proximate level, Mary was conceived in a human family. Here again, however, one must not think of conception in merely biological terms. For the conception of a child is not primarily physiological, but spiritual. Now, if a child were conceived out of pure love before God and for the child, such a child would have its origin in a proper orientation toward God. Such a child would from its conception be grace-filled. Macquarrie contends that Mary was such a child. In this sense also, Mary was immaculately conceived.[106]

Thus, both by redefining terms and using the new definitions to extablish the dogma as a necessary implicate of other solidly-founded doctrines, Macquarrie attempts to make the formulation of Mary's immaculate conception acceptable to Protestants.[107]

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[105]Ibid., pp. 106-7. Cf. idem, Christian Unity and Christian Diversity, p. 94.

[106]Ibid., pp. 107-8.

[107]John de Satgé in Down to Earth employs an approach similar to Macquarrie's as he seeks to find a place for the doctrine of Mary's immaculate conception which he feels is in harmony with central evangelical doctrines. De Satgé rejects the notion of sin as being primarily moral failure. Rather he defines sin comprehensively as "whatever in man frustrates the purpose of God" (p. 67). Beginning with creation, the primary purpose of God has been to bring into being the New Man who does all things consistent with God's will. Throughout the centuries, God has been at work in generation after generation preparing mankind for the day when the conditions would be right for the New Man (Jesus) to emerge from humanity at God's initiative. Finally, God produced Mary whom He graced with the will to say "yes" to His plan to bring the New Man into the world through her. Mary's immaculate conception then means that God formed Mary such that she was "perfect" enough to readily

Wolfhart Pannenberg: Accommodation through
Symbolic Interpretation

Wolfhart Pannenberg begins his argumentation for the symbolic

nature of the Marian dogmas with the contention that the church's

understanding of the character of Mary is based upon the Biblical story

of Jesus' birth.[108] However, the story of Jesus' birth, Pannenberg

argues, is purely an aetiological legend. The intention of the story

was to explain why Jesus is called "Son of God." The story is a retro-

spective explanation of the title which had already previously been

conferred for reasons other than a virgin birth. Matthew and Luke

employ the idea of a virgin birth to make Jesus not unlike other great

heroes of the Hellenistic period who were claimed to have divine origins

--men like Perseus and Hercules, sons of Zeus. In addition, the

evangelists did not want Jesus to be pictured as inferior to the great

saints of ancient Israel who were chosen "from birth"--men like Samson,

Jeremiah, and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. Thus, while the fact of

Jesus' divine origin is not to be doubted, the use of the account of a

virgin birth to teach this truth must be rejected today as nonhistorical.

The result of this conclusion for Mariology is that Mariology has no

historical basis.[109] Consequently, from the outset, Mariology has been

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cooperate with His long-term plan coming to fruition in the birth of the
New Man from her. Yet, de Satgé insists that in herself, by herself,
Mary possessed no distinctive moral quality, and remained a sinner who
rejoiced in her Savior (see pp. 65-74).

[108]Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Mary, Redemption and Unity," Una Sancta
24 (Michael and All Angels, 1967):67.

[109]Idem, The Apostles' Creed in the Light of Today's Questions,
trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1972), pp. 71-77.

developed on the basis of projected characteristics which have no sound

historical basis in what is known about the mother of Jesus. For

example, in the early post-New Testament period, the primary source of

Mariological speculation was the unhistorical comparison between Eve

and Mary.[110]

Pannenberg is insistent that there is a fundamental difference

between Christology and Mariology. Christology is the explication of

the definite, objective, historical event of Jesus Christ which has a

unique meaning. Mariology, on the other hand, is the attempt of the

church to personify the characteristics of the new mankind of faith,

particularly the church as the recipient of grace.[111] Therefore, inas-

much as Mariological statements are not grounded in historical objec-

tivity, there can be no Marian dogmas binding upon all the faithful in

the sense that there are Christological dogmas the acceptance or

rejection of which determines one's salvation. Rather, Mariological

doctrines are theologoumena, or theological opinions.

Having argued for the above distinctions between Christology

and Mariology, Pannenberg, nonetheless, does not disparage or even

discourage Mariology. Mariology serves the important function of

symbolically depicting the nature of the new man in Christ. In other

words, Mary is the type of the church, and Roman Catholic developments

of Mariology which take this approach should be encouraged. Thus, Mary

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[110]Idem, Jesus—God and Man, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane
A. Priebe, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 144.

[111]Ibid., pp. 144-50. Cf. idem, "Mary, Redemption and Unity,"
p. 67.

is a good paradigm of the passive aspect of man's situation in relation to God's saving activity. Beyond this, and most important for this study, is Pannenberg's concession that even the doctrines of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption can be accepted by Protestants as valid expressions of the new man's faith life and sharing in the resurrection of Christ.[112] Therefore, in his view, it is possible for Roman Catholics and Protestants to reach doctrinal consensus concerning the Marian dogmas if both agree that these doctrines are not dogma proper, but theologoumena, symbolic expressions of the nature of the new mankind, the church.

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H. S. Box: Accommodation through
Logical Deduction

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Practically on the opposite end of the scale from Pannenberg, in terms of how much of the literal content of the Marian dogmas is to be accepted, is the high church Anglican, or "Anglo-Catholic," H. S. Box. As might be expected, Box accepts as true all of the Marian doctrine set forth in the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption—and this in compliance with all the original intention of the terminology. However, as an Anglican, what he cannot accept is that these doctrines are dogma, necessary to be believed for salvation, inasmuch as neither of these doctrines is taught in Scripture. Therefore, Box contends that they are "eminently reasonable," and can be logically deduced from Mary's unique position in the economy of

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[112]Idem, "Mary, Redemption and Unity," p. 67.

salvation.[113] Thus, through logical arguments, Box intends to establish a ground for the acceptance of these doctrines, although they cannot be _required_ of the faithful. In other words, the stumbling block to be overcome for Box and other high church Anglicans is not the content of the Marian dogmas, but their dogmatic framework. If this latter can be gotten around, then the way is paved for the acceptance of the former.[114]

Therefore, Box advances several arguments in behalf of the doctrine of the immaculate conception which are said to follow from Mary's role as the mother of the Redeemer. First, he argues that there are two ways to be redeemed: by being cleansed from sin after being stained by it, or by being prevented from obtaining the stain in the first place. The second is held to be the more perfect of the two. Therefore, this way of redemption is the more fitting for the mother of God, the most perfect of saints.[115] Secondly, the early church fathers often speak of Mary as without _actual_ sin. Therefore, she must have been without _original_ sin also.[116] Thirdly, it is the universal and ancient tradition of Christian teaching that Mary was appointed by God to counteract the work of Eve in the same sense in which Christ is

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[113]H. S. Box, "The Immaculate Conception," in _The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglican Writers_, ed. E. L. Mascall and H. S. Box, p. 77.

[114]Incidentally, this is also the nature of the disagreement concerning the Marian dogmas between the Roman church and the Orthodox church. Unlike the high church Anglicans, however, the Orthodox rely more on tradition than on logical arguments.

[115]Box, "The Immaculate Conception," pp. 77-78.

[116]Ibid., p. 78.

the counteractor of the work of Adam. To hold this position she must be without sin, and thus, immaculately conceived.[117] Fourthly, Box agrees with St. Francis de-Sales that it was fitting that Christ who is all wise, all mighty, and all good wished to prepare for Himself a mother suitable for His nature—that is, one who is without sin.[118]

Similarly, in accord with some of the early church fathers, Box posits a series of arguments in favor of the bodily assumption of Mary. First, inasmuch as the Virgin Mary's body was "wholly sacred, wholly pure, wholly the dwelling-place of God," it follows that it was not liable to dissolution, but was given immortal glory.[119] Secondly, an earthen grave was not a suitable receptacle for her who had been Christ's dwelling-place. Her role as the mother of God required more dignity than this. Thirdly, it was appropriate that since Christ's body was raised from the dead, so the body of her who gave birth to Christ should be raised with Christ and joined to Him in heaven. Fourthly, it seems right that since Mary sheltered God the Word in her womb, she should inhabit the eternal dwelling-place of her Son. Fifthly, since Mary kept herself virginally pure, she should be kept from corruption after death. Sixthly, it was fitting that Mary who saw Jesus die on the cross, and who herself received in her heart the sword of pain, should be allowed to physically see Jesus in His glory.[120] All of these arguments are based upon the famous principle which has been attributed to

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[117]Ibid., pp. 79–80.   [118]Ibid., p. 88.

[119]Idem, "The Assumption," in The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglican Writers, ed. E. L. Mascall and H. S. Box, pp. 94–95.

[120]Ibid., pp. 95–96.

Duns Scotus in his support of the immaculate conception: God could do it; it was seemly that He do it; therefore, He did it. Perhaps none of these arguments alone would establish the truth of Mary's bodily assumption; but, taken together, Box contends these with others generate a strong conviction.

In the last analysis, Box admits that logical arguments cannot establish the truth of the Marian dogmas as articles of faith, since these can only be derived from Scripture. However, logical deductions can establish "highly probable secondary truths of our religion, having a due place in Christian devotion, in subordination to those truths that are primary."[121] It is Box's contention that the doctrines of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption belong to that category.

Summary

In this chapter a second major post-Vatican II solution to the problem of doctrinal non-consensus concerning the Marian dogmas was defined and illustrated. It was demonstrated that both Roman Catholic and Protestant constructive or systematic theologians are earnestly seeking to accommodate the stance of their church to that of the other. As such, these theologians call for both churches to modify somewhat their traditional stances in order that a compromised agreement might be reached. As has been exhibited, the extent of compromise or accommodation called for, varies widely from the high church Anglican H. S. Box's virtual acceptance of the doctrinal content of the dogmas but rejection of their dogmatic framework, to the liberal Lutheran Wolfhart

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[121]Ibid., p. 100.

Pannenberg's interpretation of the dogmas as merely symbolic formulations of the nature of the new man. Similarly, the Roman Catholic accommodations range from Karl Rahner's shift of the focus of emphasis in the traditional understanding of the dogmas to Hans Küng's summons for a radical ecumenical reformulation of them. In between, common ground has often been proposed on the basis of redefining terms. Obviously, not all constructive, accommodating theologians are in agreement concerning how much of the traditional understanding of their churches is to be retained; nor do they agree about what is the best specific program to follow in attempting to achieve consensus. What they do agree upon is the necessity to achieve some doctrinal consensus concerning the Marian dogmas, as well as the preference to accomplish this by rethinking traditional positions in light of contemporary theology and church life. The feasability of achieving consensus by this methodology will be examined in chapter seven.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONFESSIONAL SOLUTION: CONSENSUS BY CONVERSION

Introduction

This chapter takes up the study's third and final observed post-
Vatican II solution to the problem of achieving doctrinal consensus
between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches concerning the Marian
dogmas. As recalled in the last chapter, it has been the intention of
this endeavor to focus particularly upon the problem of achieving doc-
trinal consensus concerning the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception
and bodily assumption. Thus, once again, the analysis of this final
portion of the study's survey will direct its attention particularly to
these dogmas.

The solution which will be demonstrated in this chapter is the
confessional solution which seeks to achieve consensus by conversion.
Again the chapter begins with a brief description of this solution, fol-
lowed by its illustration through the works of representative Roman
Catholic and Protestant theologians.

Description of the Confessional Solution:
Consensus by Conversion

As in the previous chapters, the terms "solution" and "consen-
sus" are meant to exhibit that a method is being sought which will
achieve doctrinal agreement or harmony between the Roman Catholic and

Protestant churches concerning the Marian dogmas as defined by the Roman Catholic church.

The method illustrated in this chapter has been termed "confessional" for two reasons. First, the term is intended to indicate that advocates of this method are committed to the traditional, historic, orthodox, "conservative" doctrinal stances of their churches as expressed in their respective formal ecclesiastical creeds, confessions, or dogmatic formulations. (For this reason, the method also could have been called the "creedal" or "dogmatic" solution.) Secondly, the term suggests the methodology of this solution's practitioners: they "confess" or publicly attest to what they believe to be the correct position vis-a-vis the doctrines in question.

The goal of the confessional method is the "conversion" of those to whom one confesses one's own stance. Confessional theologians begin with the earnest conviction that they already possess truth with regard to the doctrine at issue. Thus, they are convinced that if doctrinal consensus is to be achieved, they must persuade those with whom they differ of the validity of their position, so that their "opponents" will convert or change to their view. Confessional theologians operate in precisely the opposite manner of the practitioners of accommodation or reduction. They seek to maintain the full integrity of the traditional, official positions of their churches as these were originally understood. They do not attempt to reduce, adapt, modify, redefine, compromise, or accommodate them. Rather, they are convinced of the validity of their confessions for all time and thus seek to defend and promote them in all clarity and candor, albeit in an irenic, winsome spirit.

Roman Catholic Models Calling for Protestants
to Convert to Roman Catholic
Teaching on Mary

Papal Models

Pope Paul VI

In order to exhibit Pope Paul VI as a model of one who seeks consensus concerning the Marian dogmas by converting Protestants to the Roman Catholic teaching, it is necessary to establish: 1) Paul VI's general ecumenical methodology; and 2) his specific stance toward the Marian dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

General ecumenical methodology

Pope Paul VI's theory of ecumenism rests on the belief that non-Roman Catholic Christians are fellow members of the mystical body of Christ, the church, but do not have full communion with Christ's visible church on earth, the Roman Catholic church. The goal of ecumenism, then, is to restore the "separated brethren" to full and perfect communion with the Roman Catholic church.

Thus, in describing the relationship of the Roman Catholic church to non-Roman Catholics, Paul VI describes a series of concentric circles with God at the center. Those circles closest to the center represent the groups of people who are most consistent with God's purposes. Naturally, the Roman Catholic church enjoys the closest relationship to God. The next circle, however, represents all non-Roman Catholic Christians.[1] These Christians are admitted to be "churches" and "ecclesial communities"

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[1]Pope Paul VI, "The Encyclincal Letter Ecclesiam Suam," The Pope Speaks 10 (1964):284-89.

"which really adhere with us [the Roman church] to the Christian faith
of one and the same Baptism that regenerates in the name of the Most
Blessed Trinity."[2] They are to be respected for the truly Christian
values they possess,[3] and for their "numerous elements of truth and
sanctification."[4] It should be recognized that these Christians "are
united to Us by the powerful tie of faith and love for the Lord Jesus
and are marked with the seal of the one and only Baptism."[5] Says
Paul VI: "We call them by the sweet name of brothers."[6]

While non-Roman Catholic Christians are recognized as brothers
by Pope Paul VI, they are nonetheless separated brothers who do not
possess all the elements of the true church. The separations of the
past took place partly because of doctrinal errors on the part of the
separated churches and ecclesial communities.[7] Thus, these churches
are "outside the visible frontiers of Catholicism,"[8] "are still sub-
divided in many factions, separate among themselves and from communion

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[2]Idem, "Fidelity: The Criterion for Ecumenism: Address of
Pope Paul VI to a General Audience," The Pope Speaks 12 (1967):187.

[3]Ibid., p. 189.

[4]Idem, "The Credo of the People of God: Solemn Profession of
Faith by Pope Paul VI at the Closing of the Year of Faith," The Pope
Speaks 13 (1968-69):280.

[5]Idem, "The Voice of the Modern World: The Coronation Homily
of His Holiness Pope Paul VI," The Pope Speaks 9 (1963-64):9.

[6]Idem, "A Labor of Love: The First Public Address of His Holi-
ness Pope Paul VI," The Pope Speaks 9 (1963-64):81.

[7]Idem, "Pope Paul VI: Genuine Ecumenism," American Ecclesiasti-
cal Review 161 (July-December 1969):345.

[8]Ibid.

with the Church,"[9] "are not in full communion with her [the Roman

Catholic church],"[10] are "outside the organism of the Church of

Christ,"[11] and "are still separated from the perfect communion of the

one fold of Christ."[12]

Consequently, the goal of ecumenism in Pope Paul VI's thought

is to restore the separated brethren to complete ecclesial communion

with the Roman Catholic church:

> We have more of a heartfelt obligation than anyone else to call
> upon the Lord, asking that the unity of all those who believe in
> Him may also be solemnized and accomplished--in keeping with His
> final wish--in this pilgrim Church [the Roman Catholic church] in
> time.[13]

All of the various gracious gifts which God has given the churches of

the separated brethren really belong to the Roman Catholic church and

serve to bring about unity with it.[14] The return of the separated

Christians to the Roman church is willed by God.[15] Thus, the papacy

must pursue unity according to its own terms.[16]

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[9] Pope Paul VI, et al, "Four Statements on Ecumenism," Catholic Mind 68 (1970):43.

[10] Pope Paul VI, "Reconciling All in Christ," The Pope Speaks 10 (1964-65):55.

[11] Idem, "Credo of the People of God," p. 280.

[12] Idem, "Fidelity: The Criterion for Ecumenism," p. 189.

[13] Ibid., p. 187.

[14] Idem, "Credo of the People of God," p. 280.

[15] Pope Paul VI, et al, "Four Statements on Ecumenism," p. 43.

[16] Pope Paul VI, "The Encyclical Letter Ecclesiam Suam," pp. 289-90.

The restoration of the separated brethren to the faith of the Roman Catholic church is to be accomplished by irenic and humble, but unflinching witness to the full truth of Roman Catholic doctrine.

On the one hand, no unnecessary roadblocks must be placed in the way of the potentially returning Protestants. The truth of the Roman Catholic doctrine must not be forced upon anyone. Rather, it should be presented in a friendly way in ordinary conversation.[17] Moreover, dialogue must be characterized by meekness, lack of arrogance or superiority, and sensitivity to others' capabilities for receiving the truth.[18] In fact, Roman Catholics should even "humbly recognize the part of moral guilt that Catholics may have had in these ruins [that is, the divisions of the body of Christ]."[19] In addition, the Roman church is willing to allow for leeway in "tradition, spirituality, canon law, and worship."[20] Finally, Pope Paul VI contends that if someone can present controverted points in more clear and precise terms that are more understandable to Protestants, this too is commendable.[21] In short, the Roman Catholic church is to do all it can to present the truth of its teachings in as clear, irenic, and winsome a way as possible.

On the other hand, ecumenical dialogue by Roman Catholics must not exhibit a false irenicism, or spirit of compromise in doctrine. The ecumenical cause is not furthered by those Roman Catholics who

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[17]Ibid., p. 279.　　　　　　　　[18]Ibid., p. 281.

[19]Idem, "Pope Paul VI: Genuine Ecumenism," p. 345.

[20]Idem, "The Encyclical Letter Ecclesiam Suam," p. 289.

[21]Idem, "The Real Meaning of Ecumenism: Address of Pope Paul VI to a General Audience," The Pope Speaks 10 (1964-65):143.

assess their own church with all the blame and portray the Protestant
church as perfect.[22] Nor can true unity be accomplished by simply
ignoring doctrinal differences and celebrating unity in holy Communion.[23]
Especially to be abhorred and rejected is any type of accommodation as
defined in the previous chapter:

> We mean the temptation to lay aside controversial points; to hide,
> or weaken, or modify, or empty of meaning, or even deny those teach-
> ings of the Catholic Church that are not accepted today by our
> separated brethren. We call it a ready and easy temptation, because
> it may not seem to be of much importance if you minimize and elimi-
> nate certain truths and certain dogmas that are objects of contro-
> versy, in order to make it easier to attain the union that is longed
> for so much.
> . . . .
> But pretending to remove doctrinal difficulties by denying the
> authority of--or by passing over or hiding--assertions that the
> magisterium of the Church declares to be definite and binding, is
> not performing a good service. It is not good service to the cause
> of reunion, because it creates mistrust among our separated brethren,
> a suspicion that they are being fooled, or else it produces belief
> in false possibilities. Moreover, it implants a fear in the Church
> that union is being sought at the price of truths that are beyond
> question, and it stirs up suspicion that the dialogue is going to
> result in some harm to sincerity, to fidelity, and to truth.[24]

Instead of watering down or whittling away the traditional doctrine of

the church, Roman Catholic ecumenists must give full obeisance to all

the dogma of the Roman church. Instead of attempting to hide or ignore

controversial Catholic teachings, Catholic Christians will seek to con-

vince Protestants of the logic of the Catholic position.[25] They will

strive to show "how difficulties can be removed, misunderstandings

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[22]Idem, "Pope Paul VI: Genuine Ecumenism," p. 346.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Idem, "The Real Meaning of Ecumenism," pp. 143-44.

[25]Idem, "Easter and Ecumenical Hopes," The Pope Speaks 11
(1966):77.

dissipated, and the authentic treasures of truth and spirituality . . . respected."[26] The goal of Roman Catholic ecumenism, then, is to persuade Protestants of the correctness of Catholic teaching and do this in a manner so winsomely that Protestants will gladly abandon their disparate beliefs and reunite with the Roman church.

Stance on the dogmas of the
immaculate conception and
bodily assumption

Perhaps it goes without saying that Pope Paul VI, or any pope for that matter, supports the traditional understanding of the Roman Catholic dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. Nonetheless, in light of the barrage of contemporary reinterpretations of these dogmas, it seems appropriate for this study to substantiate the above claim. Of course, innumerable papal addresses and writings of Paul VI could be cited in behalf of his orthodoxy with respect to the Marian dogmas. However, it is sufficient for the purposes of this study to focus upon three major representative writings.

In an address to a general audience before the publication of his first encyclical, Ecclesiam Suam, in August, 1964, Pope Paul VI explained that the intention of this encyclical was to set forth "what We think the Church has to do today, if it is to be faithful to its vocation and fitted for its mission. . . . We are talking about the methodology that We feel the Church ought to follow in order to move

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[26]Idem, "Discourse of the Holy Father to the Observers at the Third Session of the II Vatican Council," Unitas 16 (1964):218.

ahead in accordance with the will of Christ the Lord."[27] In short, the intention of the encyclical is to manifest Paul VI's vision of the mission of the church today. In view of this lofty goal, the role assigned to the blessed Virgin Mary clearly signifies how central Mariology is for Pope Paul VI. After describing the better part of the church's task today as renewal, Paul VI then directs attention to Mary as the best model the church can follow as it goes about its contemporary mission. He rejoices that "devotion to the Mother of God is happily flourishing in the Church in this day and age," and stresses such "devotion to the Mother of God as of paramount importance in living the life of the Gospel."[28] Chief among the acts of Marian devotion is recognition that Mary is the most "unsullied of creatures," and that "now in heaven she enjoys its glory and blessedness," obvious allusions to Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption.[29] Clearly, for Paul VI the acceptance of these dogmas is of no little significance for the mission of the church today.

One of the most definitive writings of Pope Paul VI is his authoritative interpretation of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the solemn profession of faith, Sollemnis Professio Fidei, otherwise known as "The Credo of the People of God," pronounced by the pope on June 30, 1968. The pope's intention in this solemn profession was

[27] Idem, "The Idea of an Encyclical: Address of Pope Paul VI to a General Audience," The Pope Speaks 10 (1964):250.

[28] Idem, "The Encyclical Letter Ecclesiam Suam," pp. 274-75.

[29] Ibid.

to give a firm witness to the divine truth entrusted to the Church
to be announced to all nations.

We have wished Our profession of faith to be to a high degree
complete and explicit, in order that it may respond in a fitting
way to the need for light felt by so many faithful souls.[30]

Thus, Paul VI intended to explicitly clarify for the many confused
faithful just what the Roman Catholic church believes and teaches in
the wake of the Second Vatican Council. In this context, it is highly
significant that after affirming the church's traditional belief in the
triune God, the very next topic for the profession of faith is Mariology.
Almost in the very words of Pius IX, he states the church's belief that
Mary was "in consideration of the merits of her Son, redeemed in a more
sublime manner, preserved immune from all stain of original sin."[31]
Likewise, he echoes the words of Pius XII that "the Blessed Virgin Mary,
the Immaculate, was raised body and soul to heavenly glory at the end of
her earthly life."[32] In short, this solemn profession of faith leaves
no doubt about Paul VI's commitment to traditional Roman Catholic
Mariology.

Finally, Pope Paul VI's attitude toward traditional Mariology
(including the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assump-
tion) as it relates specifically to ecumenism is set forth in his
apostolic exhortation issued on February 2, 1974, Marialis Cultus.
Here the pope expresses his belief that devotion to Mary in accord with
the traditional Roman Catholic Marian dogmas "will become, even if only
slowly, not an obstacle but a path and a rallying-point for the union

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[30]Idem, "The Credo of the People of God," p. 276.

[31]Ibid., p. 278.   [32]Ibid.

of all who believe in Christ."[33] The pope believes Mariology and Marian

devotion will serve as a rallying-point for unity since the same Spirit

who conceived Christ in her womb is at work in the body of Christ, the

church, in behalf of the ecumenical movement. Evidence of the ecumeni-

cal progress of the Spirit is the close agreement concerning Marian

devotion and theology between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches,

as well as the high church Anglicans. Moreover, even the "churches of

the Reform" exhibit a veneration for Mary as they sing the Magnificat

in their liturgies.[34] Thus, Pope Paul VI believes that the liturgical

worship of the Roman Catholic church is one of the primary means the

Spirit uses for fostering the unity of the church. Among the liturgi-

cal observances of the church, the celebrations of Mary's immaculate

conception and bodily assumption have special prominence.[35] Therefore,

once again it can be seen that Pope Paul VI not only whole-heartedly

embraces the traditional teaching of his church on the Marian dogmas,

but believes that the promulgation of these beliefs furthers the

ecumenical cause. In other words, he clearly represents a "confessional"

approach to ecumenism.

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[33]Idem, Apostolic Exhortation: Marialis Cultus of his Holiness
Paul VI to all Bishops in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See
for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin
Mary (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1974),
pp. 24-25.

[34]Ibid., pp. 23-25.   [35]Ibid., pp. 4-12.

Pope John Paul II

In exhibiting Pope John Paul II as a model of the "confessional"
ecumenical approach vis-a-vis Marian doctrine, again his general ecu-
menical methodology will be outlined first, followed by his position
with respect to the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily
assumption.

General ecumenical methodology

The rule of John Paul II is marked by a sense of urgency for
the work of ecumenism. Says the pope:

> Let no one delude himself that work for perfect unity in faith
> is somehow secondary, optional, peripheral, something that can be
> indefinitely postponed. Our fidelity to Jesus Christ urges us to
> do more, to pray more, to love more.[36]

John Paul II considers the current separations in Christendom to be
confusing and scandalous.[37] Such divisions are serious because they
"impair the credibility of the Gospel, the credibility of Christ him-
self."[38] Consequently, he perceives himself and the Roman church to
have a mandate from God and the Second Vatican Council to do all in
their power to remove the obstacles to the reunion of all Christians.
Thus, at the time of his election, the pope pledged that as one of his

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[36]Pope John Paul II, "Ecumenism a Pastoral Task: Address of
Pope John Paul II to the Delegates of the National Ecumenical Commis-
sions (November 23, 1979)," The Pope Speaks 25 (1980):113.

[37]Idem, "The First Speech of Pope John Paul II," Catholic Mind
77 (1979):58-59; "The Continuing Quest for Unity: Address of John Paul
to the Secretariat for Christian Unity (November 18, 1978)," The Pope
Speaks 24 (1979):81.

[38]Idem, "Ecumenism a Pastoral Task," pp. 112-13.

primary duties he would implement the norms and directives for ecumenism adopted at Vatican Council II.[39] Just how John Paul II interprets these norms and directives is outlined in his Sources of Renewal.[40]

Like Paul VI, John Paul II begins with the joyful recognition that Christians outside the Roman Catholic church, although separated from it, are nonetheless brothers in the faith. Consequently, such "separated brethren" should not be charged with the "sin of separation" simply because they were born into ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Roman church.[41] In fact, with respect to the separated brethren, the Roman church itself is "ready to acknowledge the wrongs we have done to one another, our egoism, our remissness."[42] Positively speaking, the objective basis for recognizing some unity with the non-Roman Christians is their possession of certain elements of genuine Christianity: Scripture, liturgy, the life of grace, and Spiritual gifts (such as faith, hope, and love).[43]

However, while rejoicing that the separated brethren enjoy some elements of genuine Christianity, John Paul II regrets that they do not possess the fullness of the means of salvation. Such fullness is

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[39]Idem, "The Continuing Quest for Unity," p. 80.

[40]Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council, trans. P. S. Falla (London: William Collins Sons, 1980), pp. 310-29.

[41]Ibid., p. 315.

[42]Pope John Paul II, "Mother of God and Mother of the Church: Homily of John Paul II in the House of the Virgin at Ephesus (November 30, 1979)," The Pope Speaks 25 (1980):32.

[43]Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Sources of Renewal, p. 316.

possessed only by the Roman Catholic church. Therefore, the goal of
ecumenism is to reunite the separated brethren to the Roman Catholic
church so that they may participate in the full means of salvation.[44]

In keeping with the directives of the Second Vatican Council,
John Paul II then endorses a threefold ecumenical program: 1) personal
spiritual renewal by all Roman Catholics in order to give a positive
witness to the Roman faith; 2) theological dialogue between competent
representatives of Rome and the various ecclesial communities of the
separated brethren; and 3) cooperation in social ministry and action.[45]
In view of the focus of this study, only the second point need be con-
sidered here.

John Paul II defines theological dialogue as "exchange of opin-
ions on doctrinal matters, which . . . presupposes adequate theological
preparation."[46] The goal of such dialogue is twofold. On the one hand,
it is "to enable the parties to know one another,"[47] "to promote reci-
procal knowledge of one another,"[48] to "contribute to a deepening of the
full historical and doctrinal understanding of the issues,"[49] and "to
understand everyone, inquire into every system, and approve what is
valid."[50] In other words, the first goal is accurate mutual

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[44]Ibid., p. 317.　　　　　　　[45]Ibid., pp. 317-25.

[46]Ibid., p. 318.　　　　　　　[47]Ibid.

[48]Pope John Paul II, "The Redeemer of the Human Race: An Ency-
clical Letter," The Pope Speaks 24 (1979):112.

[49]Idem, "I Embrace You in Charity Beloved Brothers in Christ:
Address of Pope John Paul II at Trinity College (October 7, 1979),"
The Pope Speaks 24 (1979):290.

[50]Idem, "The Redeemer of the Human Race," p. 105.

understanding. Beyond this, however, the aim of "joint theological investigation" "is always [to reach] the full evangelical and Christian dimension of truth,"[51] to "urge each other on to an increasingly demanding fidelity to God's plan in its entirety,"[52] and "to work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the visible and perfect oneness in faith . . . of all who profess faith in our one Lord Jesus Christ."[53] To put it succinctly, the second goal of ecumenical dialogue is to achieve complete doctrinal consensus, or agreement in the teaching of the objective content of faith. The achievement of this goal is absolutely necessary before the Roman church and the separated brethren "can lovingly celebrate the Eucharist together in truth."[54]

How is such doctrinal consensus to be achieved? What is the norm or standard to which disparate doctrine must conform? John Paul II answers these questions with his twofold criteria for the Roman Catholic contribution to the dialogue process.

First, ecumenical dialogue must be characterized by an irenic spirit. It must demonstrate the openness of the Roman church:

> To act in a truly ecumenical manner means to be open, to approach others, to be ready for dialogue, and to carry on a common search for truth in an evangelical and Christian spirit.[55]

[51]Idem, "I Embrace You in Charity Beloved Brothers in Christ," p. 290.

[52]Idem, "The Present State of Catholic Ecumenism: Address of Pope John Paul II to the Secretariat for Christian Unity (February 8, 1980)," The Pope Speaks 25 (1980):169.

[53]Idem, "Ecumenism a Pastoral Task," p. 111.

[54]Idem, "I Embrace You in Charity Beloved Brothers in Christ," p. 291.

[55]Idem, "The Redeemer of the Human Race," pp. 104-5.

Along with openness, Roman Catholic participants in ecumenical dialogue should constantly exhibit humility.[56] Interesting for Lutherans is the fact that just these two irenic characteristics are cited by John Paul II as necessary for the Roman Catholic dialogues with the Lutheran World Federation:

> This year [1980] marks the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. In our dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation we have begun to rediscover the profound bonds of faith that unite us but have been kept hidden by the polemics of the past. If Catholics and Lutherans could, after 450 years, come to a more accurate historical evaluation of this document and more clearly establish its role in the movement of Church history, an important step would have been taken in advance toward unity.
> We must continue with clearsighted openness and humble love, to study the main doctrinal differences that were, at one time, the source of divisions which still separate Christians today.[57]

The other criterion for the Roman Catholic contribution to ecumenical dialogue, which is just as important as an irenic spirit, is fidelity to Roman Catholic doctrine as this is interpreted by the magisterium of the church, especially by the pope. For, as will be demonstrated, John Paul II contends that it is the Roman Catholic church in its dogmatic formulations which possesses the truth standard to which all participants in the dialogue process must conform their doctrine if unity is to be achieved.

One of the pope's recurrent emphases in his first encyclical, "The Redeemer of the Human Race" (Redemptor Hominis), is that the Roman Catholic church is the bearer and guardian of divine truth which has been revealed to it. Consequently, the Roman church has a prophetic mission and divine responsibility to proclaim its truth to every human

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[56]Ibid., p. 104.

[57]Idem, "The Present State of Catholic Ecumenism," p. 171.

being. Only when it does so is the church faithful to its own es-

sential nature:

> We know in our hearts how binding on us is the truth God has
> revealed to us. We are aware specifically of our very great
> responsibility for this truth. By Christ's will the Church is
> guardian and teacher of this truth; to this end she is protected
> by a special assistance of the Holy Spirit, in order that she may
> faithfully guard this truth and teach it is undiminished integ-
> rity.[58]

Not only has divine truth been revealed and entrusted to the

Roman church, but the church has also been graciously blessed by the

Holy Spirit with infallibility. Thus, it is also able to transmit or

teach the faith revealed to it with faithfulness and integrity.[59] This

infallibility of the church's magisterium is the foundation for its

absolute certainty concerning its formulations of doctrine. Thus, the

infallibility of the church must not be doubted or challenged in any

way. For to doubt or challenge the infallible certainty of the church's

faith impairs its ability to profess the truth in ecumenical dialogue.

John Paul II clearly spells out the relationship:

> Only a <u>Church of profound and solid faith</u> can be a <u>Church of genu-
> ine dialogue</u> for dialogue requires a special maturity in regard to
> the truth that is attested and proclaimed.
>   Only this kind of maturity, i.e. only certainty about the faith,
> is in a position to defend itself against the radical negations of
> our age.[60]

Because the Roman church's magisterium is infallible, the Roman

Catholic faithful can and should be absolutely certain that the Roman

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[58]Idem, "The Redeemer of the Human Race," p. 114; cf. p. 136.

[59]Ibid., pp. 134-35.

[60]Idem, "The Infallibility of the Church: Letter of Pope John
Paul II to the German Episcopal Conference (May 15, 1980)," <u>The Pope
Speaks</u> 25 (1980):244.

Catholic dogmatic formulations of the Christian faith are absolutely

true and are in no wise to be doubted. Consequently, all Roman Catho-

lics, especially theologians, are bound to profess and teach the Chris-

tian faith in conformity with the dogmatic standards of the Roman church:

> Theologians must, therefore, be extremely careful to assist the magisterium. . . .
> No one, therefore, may theologize as though theology were simply a collection of personal ideas. On the contrary, each theologian must be conscious of remaining closely united to the Church in her mission of teaching the truth.[61]

Especially those theologians who are involved in ecumenical dialogue

must be certain that the faith which they profess is the traditional,

normative faith of the Roman church: "To work for unity is not simply

to follow one's own fancy, one's personal preference; it means being

faithful to and truly representative of the position of the Catholic

Church."[62]

It is clear, then, that in John Paul II's view, the task of the

Roman Catholic ecumenist is to contend for the traditional Roman Catho-

lic doctrine in as clear and winsome a fashion as possible. For his

goal is to convince his separated brethren of its truth and, thus,

validity for them also. In this way, through the Spirit's work, there

is hope for the separated brethren to enter into full communion with

Christ's church on earth. Therefore, in ecumenical dialogues, the church

must not compromise or accommodate its doctrine in any way but must main-

tain complete fidelity. Only in this way will true unity in the church

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[61]Idem, "The Redeemer of the Human Race," p. 135.

[62]Idem, "Ecumenism a Pastoral Task," p. 113. Cf. idem, "The Present State of Catholic Ecumenism," p. 169.

be accomplished. John Paul II asserts that this is the conclusion of

the Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican Council II:

> It is significant that this document does not speak of any
> "compromise" but of an encounter that takes place in an even riper
> fullness of Christian truth.
> . . . The ecumenical quest of Christian unity, then, in no way
> justifies us in asking the Church to deny truths she proclaims.
> Such an action would be in contradiction to the conduct outlined by
> the council. When the council insists that in attaining the goal
> of unity "the Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and
> correctly," it is also explaining the mission of theologians. This
> passage in the Decree on Ecumenism is very important for it speaks
> directly of Catholic theologians and stresses the point that when
> they "join with separated brethren in an ecumenical dialogue to
> study the divine mysteries together," they must "stand fast by the
> teaching of the church."[63]

In short, it can be seen, then, that John Paul II advocates achieving

doctrinal consensus in ecumenical dialogues by "converting" the sepa-

rated brethren to Roman Catholic doctrine.

Stance on the dogmas of the
immaculate conception and
bodily assumption

That doctrine to which the separated brethren need to be con-

verted includes, of course, the Marian dogmas of the immaculate con-

ception and bodily assumption. Again, as in the case of Pope Paul VI,

innumerable papal addresses of John Paul II could be cited to substanti-

ate his traditional understanding and support of these dogmas. Once

again, however, the study will focus upon a few major writings of the

pope.

The major devotional work of John Paul II was written while he

was Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop Metropolitan of Cracow. The

book is entitled Sign of Contradiction and is a collection of Lenten

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[63]Idem, "The Infallibility of the Church," p. 245.

meditations delivered to Pope Paul VI and his closest collaborators at

a Lenten retreat in 1976.[64] Consequently, the work represents the

mature and definitive thought of the now Pope John Paul II.

While Sign of Contradiction is primarily Christological in its

focus, the book does direct significant attention to the role of the

blessed Virgin Mary in God's redemptive plan. Amid such passages are

explicit references to the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and

bodily assumption—references which leave no doubt that Karol Wojtyla

(John Paul II) supports the traditional magisterial interpretation of

these doctrines. Typical of such passages is the following:

> The Mother of Christ, who follows her Son in leaving this earth,
> has a profound role within his mystery, the mystery of redemption
> of the world. This role colours the whole of her nature from the
> time of her Immaculate Conception until the end. The mystery of
> her Assumption is already present, though in embryo so to speak,
> at the time of her Immaculate Conception. The inheritance of death,
> the fruit of sin (Sir 25, 24), did not affect the Mother of the Re-
> deemer—thanks to the merits of her Son—and that was so from the
> moment of her Immaculate Conception (cf Pius IX, Ineffabilis
> Deus).[65]

Just how significant such dogmas are for ecumenism is shown by Karol

Wojtyla (John Paul II) at the conclusion of his meditations where he

glowingly speaks about the unity of the church and relates the hope of

this to Mary's assumption:

> Our times are marked by a great expectation. All who believe
> in Christ and worship the true God are seeking ways of coming
> closer to one another. They are seeking paths leading to unity.
> . . . Mary, by the working of the Holy Spirit, gave unity to the
> human body of Christ. And that is why our hope today turns in a
> special way towards her, in these times of ours when the Mystical

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[64]Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), Sign of Contra-
diction, trans. Mary Smith (Middlegreen, England: St. Paul Publications,
1979).

[65]Ibid., p. 113; cf. pp. 37 and 114-15.

Body of Christ is being more fully constituted in unity. . . . For just such a time as this we have been given the sign: Christ, 'sign of contradiction' (Lk 2, 34). And the woman clothed with the sun: 'A great sign in the heavens' (Rev 12, 1).[66]

As already noted, another major work of Pope John Paul II written while he was Archbishop Metropolitan of Cracow is his definitive interpretation of the dogmatic documents of the Second Vatican Council, Sources of Renewal. This work is particularly important for the purposes of this study since Vatican Council II represents the major magisterial voice of contemporary Catholicism and since John Paul II considers it his primary duty to implement its directives.

When discussing the relationship between Mariology, the incarnation of Christ, and God's plan of redemption, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (John Paul II) agrees with the council that Mary is "'free from every stain of sin,'" "'enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendour of an entirely unique holiness,'" and "'impeded by no sin.'"[67] When setting forth the nature of worship due to Mary, he again contends that the council has given sufficient reason to conclude that the mother of Christ should be praised since she is "full of grace" and began her earthly existence as the "Immaculate Conception."[68] Likewise, Wojtyla (John Paul II), when defending the Marian title "Mother of the Church," approvingly echoes the council that the blessed Virgin was "'taken up to heaven'" and "'was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen

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[66]Ibid., p. 206.

[67]Idem, Sources of Renewal, pp. 103-4, quoting Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium, par. 56.

[68]Ibid., p. 109.

over all things.'"[69] Finally, when Wojtyla (John Paul II) argues for

Mary's role as type of the church both now and in eternity he draws sup-

port from the council's words:

> "In the meantime the Mother of Jesus in the glory which she posses-
> ses in body and soul in heaven is the image and beginning of the
> Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come."[70]

Thus, it can be seen that John Paul II understands Vatican

Council II to support the Roman church's traditional teaching about the

Virgin Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

Finally, mention should be made of the attention which Pope John

Paul II directs in his encyclicals to the Marian dogmas and the impor-

tance of Mary for ecumenism. In his encyclical "Rich in Mercy" (Dives

et Misericordia), the pope sets forth a lengthy description of the

nature and role of mercy in God's redemptive work. In the midst of

this discussion he exhibits Mary as the "Mother of Divine Mercy."[71]

Mary is particularly capable of manifesting the mercy of God, the pope

explains, because by divine mercy she received "special preparation of

her soul and, indeed, of her whole nature and personality,"--that is,

was immaculately conceived.[72] Furthermore, since Mary has been "assumed

into heaven" she now exhibits a maternal mercy for the whole church in

all its affairs.[73] The encyclical "Redeemer of the Human Race"

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[69]Ibid., pp. 107 and 110, quoting Lumen Gentium, para. 62 and 59.

[70]Ibid., p. 199, quoting Lumen Gentium, par. 68.

[71]Pope John Paul II, "Rich in Mercy: An Encyclical Letter of
Pope John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Faithful of the Entire
Catholic Church (November 30, 1980)" The Pope Speaks 26 (1981):42.

[72]Ibid.   [73]Ibid., p. 43.

(Redemptor Hominis) also emphasizes the maternal role that Mary exercises in the governance of the church, and claims that unity in the church is unity in Mary. Therefore, if the church wishes to grow in its unity, it must look to Mary as its mother for direction.[74] The premise for such a providential role of the blessed Virgin Mary is, of course, her immaculate conception and bodily assumption.

Thus, like Pope Paul VI, John Paul II not only generally demonstrates a confessional approach to ecumenical dialogue, but specifically contends that focus on Mariology (including the disputed Marian dogmas) will further the church's quest for unity.

Conciliar Models

Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents of Vatican Council II

The primary conciliar model for contemporary Roman Catholic ecumenical activity is, of course, outlined in the decrees adopted at the Second Vatican Council. The official attitude of the Roman Catholic church toward ecumenism, as well as its general program for achieving unity with Christians separated from the Roman church, is set forth in the Decree on Ecumenism, Unitatis Redintegratio. The ecumenical attitude and general ecumenical program contained in this decree have already been sketched in chapter three of this study, and need not be repeated here.[75] It should suffice to recall that, like Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, Unitatis Redintegratio commends irenic dialogue with

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[74]Idem, "The Redeemer of the Human Race," pp. 145-47.

[75]See Chapter 3, pp. 80-83.

the separated brethren as a necessary and helpful means for achieving

unity in the expression of the objective content of the Christian faith.

Specific guidelines for such ecumenical dialogue are given in

the post-conciliar document entitled Reflections and Suggestions Con-

cerning Ecumenical Dialogue.[76] This document was issued by the Secre-

tariat for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians in September 1970.

Although the document does not have the authority of a conciliar decree,

it was issued with the full approval of Pope Paul VI and intended to

give to all Roman Catholic pastors guidelines for the concrete appli-

cation of Unitatis Redintegratio. Thus, it intends to be a somewhat

official interpreter of and commentator upon this conciliar decree.

Throughout the document two concerns of Unitatis Redintegratio are seen

to reappear continually: 1) the concern for the proper ecumenical

attitude—that is, an irenic spirit; and 2) the concern for fidelity of

Roman Catholic ecumenists to the truth of Roman Catholic doctrine as

this is taught by the magisterium. The study turns now to demonstrating

how both of these concerns are exhibited in the various applications of

the document.

Considering first how the document reflects the concern for an

irenic ecumenical attitude, it should be noted that the Secretariat

defines the very nature of dialogue as open, free, honest, receptive and

reciprocal.[77] When setting forth the aims of dialogue, the Secretariat

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[76]Secretariat for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians,
Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue, August 1970
in Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, gen.
ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1975),
pp. 535-53.

[77]Ibid., pp. 539-40.

stresses shared goals of the Roman church and ecclesial communities of the separated brethren: appreciation of areas of agreement in doctrine and practice; common witness to the one Christ; cooperation in bringing the Gospel to areas where it has not been proclaimed; and joint consideration of common internal theological issues--for example, the role of laity, the nature of ministry, and the renewal of liturgy.[78] The document also shows an irenic attitude when delineating the bases which make ecumenical dialogue valid. It is said that the Roman church and churches of the separated brethren share gifts of the Holy Spirit, "sacred actions" which "provide access to the community of salvation," and a common source of revelation in the Holy Scriptures.[79] Further, the Secretariat recommends as irenic conditions for dialogue "an attitude of sympathy and openness between those who take part," an "attitude of equality," recognition "that a certain communion exists between the Christian communities," and "purity of intention, desire for holiness, [and] an attitude of humility and repentance."[80] Further, with respect to the method of dialogue it is recommended that "each partner should seek to expound the doctrine of his own community in a constructive manner, putting aside the tendency to define by opposition," and that partners "work together towards a constructive synthesis" where this is possible.[81] Thus, in the nature, aims, bases, conditions, and method of dialogue the Secretariat advocates an irenic spirit as the most helpful attitude for achieving unity in doctrine and practice.

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[78]Ibid., p. 540.

[79]Ibid., pp. 541-42.

[80]Ibid., pp. 542-46.

[81]Ibid., pp. 547-48.

At the same time, this document produced by the Secretariat requires fidelity to Roman Catholic doctrine in every concrete application of ecumenical principles. Already in the "Introduction" bishops are reminded that as they arrange for ecumenical activities, such as dialogue, they must remain "loyal to the truth . . . received from the apostles and the fathers, and in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed."[82] When the _nature_ of ecumenical dialogue is discussed, it is contended that such dialogue seeks the visible unity of faith for all Christians which the Roman Catholic church already possesses and can never lose.[83] With respect to the _conditions_ for dialogue, the Secretariat states:

> The Catholic participant, believing as he does that the Lord has confided to the Catholic Church the fullness of the means of salvation and all truth revealed by God, will be ready to give an account of his faith.[84]

It is added that Roman Catholic ecumenists will forthrightly recognize differences in the formulations of faith of the Roman church and the ecclesial communities of the separated brethren, and will make every attempt to witness as clearly as they can to the Gospel as the Roman church understands it.[85] Thus, for his presentations of doctrine, the Roman Catholic ecumenist must "carefully inform himself of the content of his Church's faith . . . remembering that ecumenical encounter is not merely an individual work, but also a task of the Church, which takes precedence over all individual opinions."[86] Since the task of the

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[82]Ibid., p. 539, quoting _Unitatis Redintegratio_, par. 24.

[83]Ibid., p. 541.   [84]Ibid., p. 543.

[85]Ibid.   [86]Ibid., p. 545.

ecumenist in dialogue is to set forth the position of his church as

clearly and winsomely as possible, he will also critically analyze his

use of language so that he conveys precisely what the church teaches

without distortion.[87] Again, when setting forth the _forms_ of dialogue,

the Secretariat takes the opportunity to remind all Roman participants

in dialogue: "The Catholics will take pains to deepen their faith and

to remain in communion of thought and desire with their Church."[88] This

is especially true for members of ecumenical institutes, universities,

faculties of theology and seminaries who must take special care "to note

the necessary differences between the Church's dogma, the great spiritual

and liturgical traditions, and the legitimate options in the matter of

free discussion and research."[89] Thus, the nature, conditions and form

of ecumenical dialogue for the Roman Catholic are normed by the doctrine

of his church as this is expounded by the magisterium.

In short, this post-conciliar document setting forth guidelines

for _Unitatis Redintegratio_ operates with the underlying presupposition

that the Roman Catholic church possesses the God-given fullness of truth

in its dogmatic formulations. Consequently, the task of the Roman

Catholic ecumenist in dialogue is to witness to this truth in as lucid,

meaningful, and convincing a way as possible. While he operates in an

irenic spirit, he nonetheless also stands firmly committed to the dogma-

tic teaching of his church. His goal ultimately is to persuade his

partners in dialogue of the truth of Roman Catholic teaching and thereby

lead them to the fullness of the means of salvation and truth in the

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[87]Ibid.   [88]Ibid., p. 551.

[89]Ibid., p. 552.

Roman church. In other words, the Vatican II conciliar/post-conciliar model for ecumenism advocates achieving consensus by conversion.

The area of doctrinal consensus with which this study is particularly concerned, of course, is the dogmatic formulations concerning the blessed Virgin Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. That the Second Vatican Council fully supports the traditional understanding of these dogmas in Lumen Gentium has already been demonstrated.[90]

Therefore, it may be concluded that Vatican Council II recommends achieving consensus concerning the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption by "converting" Protestants through the confession of its faith.

National Conference of Catholic
Bishops of America

Another exemplary conciliar model of ecumenism recommending consensus by conversion is the pastoral letter Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith, issued to American Roman Catholic clergy by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of America.[91] Like Unitatis Redintegratio this national conciliar document favors an irenic profession of the Roman church's traditional beliefs concerning the immaculate conception and bodily assumption of Mary.

The American bishops rejoice that they "live in a new era of friendly relations between Catholics and members of other Christian

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[90]See chapter 3 of this study, pp. 94-95.

[91]National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1973).

Churches, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant."[92]   They regret that "often

in the past, even fairly recently, the matter of Mary caused acrimonious

differences between Catholics and Protestants."[93]   The bishops contend

that the divisions from which the church has suffered are due in large

part to the many excesses of both the Protestant Reformation and Roman

Catholic Counter-Reformation. But, fortunately, since Vatican Coun-

cil II, ecumenical dialogues have made some real progress in healing the

divisions of the church, even the divisions caused by differing views of

the role of Mary. Consequently, such dialogue is to be encouraged as an

important means for achieving unity in the church.

Behold Your Mother suggests that ecumenical dialogue between

Roman Catholics and Protestants on Marian doctrine should begin with the

recognition "that all Christians share a basic reverence for the Mother

of Jesus, a veneration deeper than doctrinal differences and theological

disputes."[94]   In addition, ecumenists in dialogue should joyfully note

the significant areas of agreement: for example, appreciation of Mary

as a model Christian saint and common belief that Mary is the mother of

God. Furthermore, profitable dialogue could begin with a study of the

Scriptural witness concerning Mary. Participants in such dialogue should

"speak openly and charitably, putting aside old prejudices in common

efforts to seek out what we share jointly in our Christian heritage and

also where and why we differ."[95]

This last remark reveals that Behold Your Mother, while advocat-

ing an irenic spirit, is not oblivious to the fact that "the role of the

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[92]Ibid., p. 38.   [93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid., p. 39.   [95]Ibid.

Mother of Jesus remains one of . . . [the] many persisting religious

differences" between Roman Catholics and Protestants.[96] How are such

doctrinal differences to be overcome? The American bishops issue the

invitation: "We ask our brothers in other Christian Churches to re-

examine with us Mary's place in our common patrimony."[97] The bishops

are insistent that "no sound ecumenism can ignore the question of

Mary."[98] Just what the nature and goal of that ecumenical "reexamina-

tion" should be is clear in the minds of the American bishops. For

they applaud efforts by Roman Catholics

> to show that such beliefs about the Mother of the Lord as her
> initial freedom from original sin (the Immaculate Conception) and
> her final union with the risen Christ (the Assumption) are not
> isolated privileges, but mysteries filled with meaning for the
> whole Church.[99]

In other words, in Behold Your Mother, the American bishops recommend

explaining as clearly and winsomely as possible the validity and meaning

for the whole church of the traditional Roman doctrines of Mary's immacu-

late conception and bodily assumption. That the traditional understand-

ing of these dogmas is intended is clear from the document's explicit

endorsement of the original definitions by Popes Pius IX and Pius XII.[100]

Thus, it is clear that in Behold Your Mother the American bis-

hops also contend for that solution to doctrinal differences concerning

the blessed Virgin Mary which this study has described as the confessional

solution--the solution which seeks doctrinal consensus through conversion.

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[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid., p. 40.

[98]Ibid., p. 41.

[99]Ibid., p. 39.

[100]Ibid., pp. 20 and 22.

Catechetical Models

It should be recalled at this juncture that the aim of this

first half of this chapter is to exhibit Roman Catholic models of

ecumenical methodology that call for Protestants to convert to the

traditional Roman Catholic teaching on Mary (specifically the dogmas of

the immaculate conception and bodily assumption). Quite naturally, then,

the study has investigated expressions of the church's magisterium.

Thus far, the teaching of the prominent post-Vatican II popes and

representative conciliar documents have been examined. While both of

these sources have implications for and effects upon all the Roman

Catholic faithful, their most immediate influence is upon the clergy.

Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider at this time an expression

of the magisterium which has more direct influence upon the Catholic

layperson. For this purpose the study now turns to examining two post-

Vatican II catechisms.[101]

The Catholic Catechism[102]

With the imprimatur of James P. Mahoney, Vicar General of the

archdiocese of New York, and a hearty endorsement by John Cardinal

Wright, this catechism by John A. Hardon of the Jesuit School of Theol-

ogy in Chicago is intended to be "an up-to-date and concise source book

on the principal teachings of the Catholic Church," and "a manual for

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[101]Another post-Vatican II Roman Catholic catechism which is
illustrative of the confessional approach is John P. Haran's Marian
catechism Mary: Mother of God (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1973).

[102]John A. Hardon, The Catholic Catechism (Garden City, NY:
Doubleday, 1975).

catechetical instruction."[103] It consciously attempts to be faithful

to the church's vast tradition from the past as well as to the conciliar

and post-conciliar documents of Vatican II. In short, it is a good

representative of the contemporary magisterium's understanding of tra-

ditional Roman Catholic theology. What it teaches concerning the dogmas

of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption and their relation

to ecumenism is, therefore, of prime importance for this study.

Hardon begins by carefully rehearsing the history of the Roman

church's pious belief in the above-mentioned dogmas. He contends that

the dogmatic definitions of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily

assumption in 1854 and 1950, respectively, as well as the rest of the

prolific doctrinal development in Mariology during the "Marian century,"

were the effect of two causes. First, this was the time of rationalism

which challenged the church's belief in Christ's divinity. Thus, the

church responded in defense of Nicea and Chalcedon, with special concern

to safeguard the dignity of Mary, mother of God. Second, this period

was also marked by rampant secularism with its tendency to exploit women

for man's own ends. To this the church responded with an increased

reverence and dignity for Mary as the ideal of her sex. In that context,

Hardon concludes, the promulgation of these Marian beliefs as dogma was

appropriate.[104]

Yet, Hardon argues, these dogmas were officially promulgated not

just because they are appropriate for the needs of the church, but pri-

marily because they are solidly grounded in the church's doctrine. In

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[103]Ibid., pp. 20, 25.   [104]Ibid., pp. 150-56.

support of the immaculate conception the author of The Catholic Cate-
chism appeals to all the evidence cited in Ineffabilis Deus "whose full
text," he submits, "is a masterpiece of theological restraint."[105] In
particular, he stresses that this dogma affirms:

> (1) this immunity was a special grace from God, (2) through the
> forseen merits of Christ, (3) Mary was exempt from original sin con-
> tracted by the rest of mankind, and (4) the exemption took place at
> the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother.[106]

Hardon explains that Christ's redemptive merits operated on His mother
by anticipation. Such "preredemption" consisted in the infusion of
sanctifying grace into her soul at the moment of its creation, which
was simultaneous with infusion into her body. As corollaries of Mary's
exemption from original sin it is taught that from the moment of her
conception Mary was also free from all motions of concupisence, and (on
attaining the use of reason) free from every personal sin during her
whole life. The mother of God was given perseverance in grace as re-
gards grave sin, and confirmation in grace for lesser sins. By reason
of inherent quality, she was incapable of sinning. Hardon ties this
Marian dogma into the preceding dogmas of Mary's divine motherhood and
perpetual virginity: "Like the Immaculate Conception, which it pre-
supposes, Mary's personal sinlessness follows from the Church's constant
belief in her spotless purity and is founded on her dignity as the
Mother of God."[107] In addition, the author cites the supposed super-
natural phenomena at Lourdes as attesting the truth of the dogma.

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[105]Ibid., p. 156.   [106]Ibid., p. 158.

[107]Ibid., p. 159.

With respect to the bodily assumption, Hardon agrees with
Pius XII that it was a consequence of the immaculate conception in the
logic of supernatural merit and providence. The author quotes with
approval this statement of Pius XII in the encyclical Fulgens Corona:

> These two singular privileges bestowed upon the Mother of God stand
> out in the most splendid light as the beginning and the end of her
> earthly journey. For the greatest possible glorification of her
> virgin body is the complement, at once appropriate and marvelous,
> of the absolute innocence of her soul, which was free from all stain.
> Just as she took part in the struggle of her only-begotten Son with
> the serpent of hell, so also she shared in his glorious triumph over
> sin and its sad consequences.[108]

Thus, it is obvious that The Catholic Catechism teaches the Roman
church's traditional doctrine concerning Mary's immaculate conception
and bodily assumption.

But what solution does Hardon recommend for resolving differences
with Protestants concerning these traditional Marian dogmas? Like most
post-Vatican II theologians he appeals to Unitatis Redintegratio, the
Decree on Ecumenism, for "doctrinal principles for reuniting a dismem-
bered Christianity."[109] Hardon understands this document to recommend
an attitude of respect and affection for non-Roman Christians. He be-
lieves such Christians should be recognized as brothers in Christ
because they possess important essential elements which are necessary
for the life of the church, are blessed with gifts of the Holy Spirit,
and perform certain ritual actions which are means of salvation.[110]
Nonetheless, Hardon believes the separated brethren are "deficient by
Catholic standards," "are not blessed with the unity that Christ wants

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[108]Hardon, quoting Pope Pius XII, ibid., p. 162.

[109]Ibid., p. 242.   [110]Ibid.

his followers to possess," and "lack the fullness of those benefits of the New Covenant that Christ entrusted 'to the apostolic College over which Peter presides.'"[111] Consequently, the author of The Catholic Catechism, on the basis of Unitatis Redintegratio, endorses ecumenical dialogue between the Roman church and the Protestant ecclesial communities.

The nature of such ecumenical dialogue is determined by the fact that only the Roman Catholic church possesses the fullness of God's revelation and the fullness of His authority. Therefore, the goal of the Roman Catholic in ecumenism is to witness lovingly to the truth and unity of the Roman Catholic faith so that the separated Christians will be won over to the Roman church. Quoting Pius XII, Hardon stresses that his church must remain "'inflexible before all that could have even the appearance of a compromise, or of an adjustment of the Catholic Faith with other confessions.'"[112] He is convinced that this has been the method of the Roman church in its ecumenical endeavors from the earliest years of its history. In support of this contention he offers quotations from Popes Clement I, Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII, and the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council.[113]

Specifically, Hardon advises Roman Catholics to be faithful to the church's teachings concerning the blessed Virgin Mary. On the one hand, Roman Catholic Christians should not undercut their Marian piety nor disavow Marian dogmas; on the other hand, they should not urge devotion to Mary beyond the limits of what the church has thus far

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[111]Ibid.   [112]Hardon, quoting Pope Pius XII, ibid., p. 241.

[113]Ibid., pp. 241-43.

defined. On the whole, a devotion to the mother of God that is solidly grounded upon the church's teaching and traditional practice will slowly attract the separated brethren to the fullness of truth in the Roman church, including the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption.[114] This, it will be recognized, is the method of the confessional theologian who seeks consensus by conversion.

The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults[115]

Like The Catholic Catechism, The Teaching of Christ is an exemplary representative of the contemporary magisterium's understanding of traditional Roman Catholic theology. It bears the imprimatur of the conservative Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Leo A. Pursley, and is unqualifiedly recommended for use in catechetical instruction by John Cardinal Wright. The authors of this catechism intend to give an account of the Roman Catholic faith that is "accurate, clear, comprehensive, up to date, and in language readily understandable in the world today."[116] Yet they do not intend to present merely their own personal theological opinions. Rather, The Teaching of Christ consciously endeavors to "present fully and in a carefully authenticated way the teaching of the [Roman Catholic] Church itself."[117] Thus, this work, in use since 1976, serves well for the purposes of the present study.

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[114]Ibid., pp. 170-71.

[115]Ronald Lawler, Donald W. Wuerl, and Thomas Comerford Lawler, eds., The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976).

[116]Ibid., p. 18.

[117]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

First it must be enquired: what do the authors Ronald Lawler,
Donald Wuerl, and Thomas C. Lawler present as the Roman Catholic church's
teaching concerning Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption?
In short, it may be said that they interpret these dogmas according to
their original sense.

The authors contend that the dogma of Mary's immaculate con-
ception is grounded in Luke 1:28, the angel Gabriel's greeting to Mary
in which he allegedly addresses her as "full of grace." They claim
that the church, guided by the Spirit, came to understand this to mean
that the blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin as well as
actual sin. William of Ware and John Duns Scotus solidified this under-
standing in their theory that a special divine decree kept Mary free
from original sin in light of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ. This
theory was solemnly defined as a truth of divine revelation by Pope
Pius IX in 1854. It is with this sense that the church must profess its
belief in Mary's immaculate conception today.[118]

Similarly, while The Teaching of Christ acknowledges that the
Scriptures contain no explicit reference to the bodily assumption of the
Virgin Mary, this catechism posits nonetheless that this belief is
deeply rooted in various related teachings of Scripture. Drawing upon
Munificentissimus Deus, three arguments are set forth for the validity
of the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption: 1) As the merits of Christ
were foreseen to preserve Mary from original sin as the perfect model
of redemption, so they were foreseen to take her bodily to heaven before
the general resurrection. 2) Since Mary was never subject to sin, it

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[118]Ibid., pp. 121-22.

was not appropriate that she be subject to the consequences of sin--
for example, the physical corruption caused by death. 3) It is appro-
priate that she who gave bodily birth to Jesus should be with Him
bodily in heaven.[119] Furthermore, the authors of The Teaching of
Christ contend that when Pope Pius XII in 1950 formally defined the
belief of Mary's bodily assumption as a divinely-revealed dogma, he was
simply formalizing what the church had believed since the earliest cen-
turies. Therefore, the church should maintain fidelity to this belief
about Mary today.

Having established that The Teaching of Christ teaches the
Roman church's traditional faith concerning Mary's immaculate conception
and bodily assumption, it may now be asked: how do the authors of this
catechism foresee achieving doctrinal consensus with the Protestant
church with regard to these dogmas? Once again, these post-Vatican II
Roman Catholics appeal to the proposals of Unitatis Redintegratio and
advocate irenic but staunchly faithful witness to the truth of Roman
Catholic doctrine.

Lawler, Wuerl, and Lawler assert that the principal divisions
in Christendom today are the result of separations from the Roman church
which took place centuries ago. Therefore, "those born into communities
long since separated from the Church are not themselves guilty of that
separation."[120] Consequently, they recognize the Protestant churches
to be "ecclesial communities," who have a close relationship to the
Roman Catholic church. Protestant churches should be respected and

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[119]Ibid., p. 244.   [120]Ibid., p. 252.

cherished because they share faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, possess

the grace of Baptism, have God's word in the Scriptures, and bear Chris-

tian fruits of faith.[121]

Unfortunately, however, The Teaching of Christ points out, Pro-

testants are "separated Christians." In accord with Unitatis Redinte-

gratio, this catechism observes that the "separated brethren" lack the

fullness of divine truth and the means of salvation (especially the

Eucharist) which only the Roman church possesses. It follows that it

is God's will that the separated Christians be restored to the unity of

the Roman Catholic church. To promote this unity, all Roman Catholics

should participate, according to their abilities and opportunities, in

the ecumenical program adopted at the Second Vatican Council.

Especially helpful for the ecumenical cause is dialogue between

competent representatives of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches.

In fact, such dialogues carried on since Vatican II "have in some im-

portant matters shown that actual areas of difference are often smaller

than has been believed."[122] The authors of The Teaching of Christ are

hopeful that "by the grace of God the distance of separation may be

narrowed to the point of non-existence."[123] The way in which that dis-

tance becomes narrowed is through loving but faithful witness to the

truth of Roman Catholic teaching. Roman Catholic ecumenists must

present the Roman faith clearly and in its entirety. Roman Catholic

identity must not be submerged, nor Roman Catholic truth suppressed in

any way. Roman ecumenists begin with the presupposition that their

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[121]Ibid., p. 255.   [122]Ibid., p. 257.

[123]Ibid.

church alone possesses the God-given fullness of truth and means of salvation. Consequently, they are morally bound to humbly but confidently and clearly confess the Roman faith in its entirety. Through their winsome, faithful witness, it is believed, the Holy Spirit will eventually persuade the separated brethren to give up their inherited errors and embrace the truth of the Roman faith (including the truths of the Marian dogmas).[124] Thus, like The Catholic Catechism, The Teaching of Christ contends for the confessional solution for overcoming doctrinal differences: consensus by conversion.

Thus far in this chapter it has been exhibited through papal, conciliar, and catechetical models that there is widespread support among Roman Catholic theologians for that approach to resolving doctrinal differences that this study has termed the "confessional solution." All Roman Catholic theologians employing this approach are convinced that their church alone possesses the fullness of divine truth and the means of salvation. Consequently, these theologians contend that the task of the Roman Catholic ecumenist is irenically to witness to the full truth of Roman Catholic teaching, even on such matters as the controversial dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. Through their loving profession of faith, such Roman ecumenists hope to convert Protestant Christians to the Roman faith, and thereby achieve doctrinal consensus among Christians. In the process of illustrating this approach through the various magisterial models, it has also become apparent that there is a great deal of uniformity in the application of

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[124]Ibid., pp. 257-58.

this method. Perhaps this is because nearly every magisterial voice represented here consciously reflects the agenda of <u>Unitatis Redinte-gratio</u>.

<u>Protestant Models Calling for</u>
<u>Roman Catholics to Convert to</u>
<u>Protestant Teaching on Mary</u>

It is now time to illustrate that a variety of Protestant theologians too have applied the confessional approach to the problem of achieving doctrinal consensus with the Roman Catholic church concerning the Marian dogmas. While the same method of irenically but forthrightly professing what one believes to be truth will be demonstrated, a couple of differences will be observed. First, the application of the method will not be as uniform as was the case with Roman Catholic theologians. Perhaps this is because no one document such as <u>Unitatis Redintegratio</u> serves as a model for all Protestant theologians. Second, the application of the method to the problem of the Marian dogmas will not, by and large, be as detailed. For the Protestant task does not involve so much the defense of teachings they hold as the refutation of teachings they reject. By nature, then, their task is somewhat less involved. Nonetheless, a uniformity in the confessional posture of the Protestant theologians concerning the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption will become obvious. This is because the Protestants illustrated here do share in common (at least theoretically) that the primary norm for their doctrinal formulation is holy Scripture alone. For the reasons cited in the introductory chapter

this portion of the study will focus its attention upon representative

Protestant theologians from the Reformed, Anglican, and Lutheran tra-

ditions.[125]

Reformed Theologians

G. C. Berkouwer

In his book The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism

this well known professor of systematic theology at the Free University

of Amsterdam devotes a chapter to critiquing contemporary trends in

Roman Catholic Mariology.[126] His treatment exhibits Berkouwer as a con-

fessional theologian who seeks consensus by conversion. In fact, in

this particular discussion his approach parallels that of many of his

Roman Catholic counterparts illustrated in the first half of this

chapter. That is to say, Berkouwer first displays an irenic, open

attitude toward many contemporary Roman Catholic theologians for what

he perceives as positive, healthy steps in their approach to Mariology.

But this is no false irenicism. For he then proceeds to refute both

Marian maximalists and minimalists for their defense of the dogma of

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[125]In addition to the Reformed theologians discussed below, two
other exemplary models are: Stephen Benko, Protestants, Catholics, and
Mary (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1968), pp. 62-78; David C. Stein-
metz, "Mary Reconsidered," Christianity Today 20 (Dec. 5, 1975):4-7.
    Additional Lutheran theologians who offer good critiques of contem-
porary Roman Catholic Mariology, but who do not clearly advocate con-
fessional methodology are: Edmund Schlink, After the Council, trans.
Herbert J. A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 94-99;
Warren A. Quanbeck, "Problems of Mariology," in Dialogue on the Way:
Protestants Report from Rome on the Vatican Council, ed. George A.
Lindbeck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965) pp. 175-85.

[126]G. C. Berkouwer, The Second Vatican Council and the New
Catholicism, trans. Lewis B. Smedes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 1965), pp. 221-48.

Mary's bodily assumption. His aim is to point up the difficulties in their position, hoping to encourage them to reconsider in light of further Biblical investigation.

Berkouwer applauds the Roman Catholic church for what he interprets as signs of a new willingness to reevaluate traditional Protestant criticism of the Marian dogmas. The positive signs he cites are trends or emphases among those theologians he identifies as Marian "minimalists."[127]

For example, Berkouwer welcomes the criticism he hears from some Roman Catholic theologians of over-zealous Marian devotion. It is admitted by some that popular devotion has taken some bizarre forms. Thus, he approvingly observes:

> There is an honest recognition that Marian devotion contains a real
> danger of obscuring the glory of Jesus Christ. Catholics are not
> content merely to answer Reformed charges by saying that Marian de-
> votion, far from robbing Christ of His due, actually honors Christ,
> Mary's son. Today they are more likely to admit that in fact popu-
> lar piety has indeed tended to let Mary overshadow the mediatorship
> of Christ.[128]

Second, Berkouwer commends those in the Roman church who are resisting further development of Marian dogma, especially development of the doctrine of Mary as "coredemptrix" with Christ. Fortunately, he notes, there are those who accent the unique mediatorship of Jesus Christ and warn that if Mary is made a partner with Christ in His redemptive work, then His unique role will be sacrificed. If too much stress is placed upon Mary's fiat then redemption is understood to stem from

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[127]Ibid., p. 226.

[128]Ibid., p. 224.

two sources--the act of God in Christ <u>and</u> the act of Mary.[129] It is a

good sign that there are many in the Roman Catholic church who know

this, says Berkouwer.

Third, this Reformed theologian praises the new enthusiasm for

Biblical studies and the criticism by the new Catholic exegetes of

previous fanciful use of Scripture to support Marian doctrine. He notes

that "today there is a great deal more care taken before a text is cited

as a 'Marian text.'"[130] Much attention is now being directed toward

those Biblical passages in which the natural relationship between Jesus

and His mother is relegated to the background and where Mary is found as

part of the faithful congregation in Acts 1, as well as to the fact that

after Pentecost she does not appear at all. Moreover, Roman Catholic

exegetes are facing up without embarrassment to the words Jesus spoke to

His mother at the wedding in Cana: "Woman, what have I to do with you?"

(John 2:4) Finally, Roman exegetes are also to be commended for veer-

ing away from the analogies and types that have long been seen in

Scripture and for fastening instead on the passages that deal with Mary

directly, particularly the stories of the birth of Christ.

Lastly, Berkouwer sees a positive sign in the recent return to

the older emphasis on Mary as part of the church, not a figure standing

over it. This emphasis corresponds to the new stress on Mary in her

human situation, especially in her historical association with the people

of God in the Old Testament and the church of the New. Mary is now being

seen on the side of believers, like Abraham. He finds the new interest

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[129]Ibid., pp. 225-26 and 235.   [130]Ibid., p. 228.

in Mary as type of the church to be hopeful. Similarly, the placement

of the chapter on Mary in the document on the church by the Second

Vatican Council is a good omen of what may be possible in future treat-

ments of Mary.[131] All of these signs contribute to Berkouwer's optimism

and positive attitude toward his Christian brothers in the Roman Catho-

lic church.

However, this positive attitude does not alleviate Berkouwer of

his confessional responsibility, as he sees it, to critique both Marian

"maximalists" and "minimalists" for their support of the dogma of Mary's

bodily assumption.

Berkouwer criticizes Marian maximalists because they logically

deduce the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption from the dogma of her immac-

ulate conception. The fact of the matter is, neither of these dogmas

has Scriptural warrant.[132] Furthermore, such an approach to developing

doctrine is sure to lead to the magisterial promulgation of Mary as

"coredemptrix" with Christ, a development the maximalists would like to

see. But such a view of Mary is not only unscriptural; it also threat-

ens the unique status of Jesus as Redeemer, and thus threatens the

Gospel message. Berkouwer contends that this traditional approach to

Mary is the result of a basic docetic tendency within Roman Catholic

Christology. He believes that the Roman church laid so much stress upon

the divinity of Christ that sinful human beings could not find comfort

in Him. Consequently, they looked for mercy to the all-human and under-

standing Virgin Mary. If the human nature of Christ had been properly

stressed, there would be no need for a complement to His divine

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[131]Ibid., pp. 232-37.   [132]Ibid., p. 222.

work.[133] Thus, the way to meet the human need for an understanding, sympathetic Savior is truly to preach about the God-Man Jesus Christ, not promote a continually developing Mariology as a substitute.

The minimalists fare no better in Berkouwer's critique. To be sure, their use of the dogma of Mary's assumption is at least evangelically motivated. For they do not deduce the dogma as an inner ontological necessity stemming from Mary's status as the mother of God or coredemptrix; therefore, minimalists do not employ the dogma to enhance the status of Mary. Rather, they see the assumption of Mary as a gracious privilege bestowed on her for the sake of all believers-- that is, to comfort and encourage all believers that God has the same eschatological goal for them. The assumption is, then, a form of realized eschatology. It signifies that grace which truly triumphs over sin and death and for that reason proclaims that God has really begun realizing His salvation.

But, says Berkouwer, even in this evangelically motivated use of the assumption dogma, the life of the blessed Virgin is still being set forth as a complement to the work of Christ. "If she is not here the co-redemptrix, is she not an assistant in giving the grace of assurance concerning the coming salvation?"[134] Berkouwer contends that underlying this approach is again a docetic tendency in Christology. For the minimalists associate the ascension of Christ with His divinity, while the assumption and glorification of Mary are emphasized as happening to one who is completely human. Therefore, it is held forth as

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[133]Ibid., pp. 224-25.   [134]Ibid., p. 243.

an even stronger assurance of the believer's resurrection and glorifi-
cation than that of Christ.

Here again, Berkouwer insists, Mariology subverts Christology.
For, according to the New Testament, Christ is the complete assurance
of both salvation and eschatological hope. He has made believers alive
in Him and provided them a sure place in heaven (Ephesians 2:4-6).
Christ in His resurrection and ascension is the one assurance of the
believer's participation in the future.[135]

Thus, Berkouwer urges minimalists also to reexamine the New
Testament witness to the full humanity of Jesus Christ and its suffici-
ency to provide believers with the comfort of salvation and hope of the
resurrection. He is hopeful that if Roman Catholics continue seriously
to study the Biblical sources, the Holy Spirit will convince them of the
validity of traditional Protestant objections to the Roman Catholic
Marian dogmas. His own careful critique and Scriptural witness are
intended for that purpose. In other words, Berkouwer seeks to convert
Roman Catholics to the Protestant teaching on the Virgin Mary.

David F. Wells

Another Reformed theologian who has given some direct attention
to the problem of resolving doctrinal differences with the Roman Catho-
lic church over the Marian dogmas is David F. Wells. In his book

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[135]Ibid., pp. 244-45.

Revolution in Rome Wells has devoted a tightly-reasoned, well-documented appendix to the problem.[136]

In the preface to the book Wells states: "I have sought to be informative without ceasing to be analytical, to be biblical without failing to be charitable. Clarity of mind and generosity of spirit have been by goals."[137] These goals characterize Wells' direct but fair treatment of the problem of Mariology.

Wells begins his assessment with an accurate account of the dilemma which faced the Second Vatican Council in its treatment of Mariology as well as its compromised solution. He observes that the essential challenge which faced the council was how to maintain the traditional teaching of the Roman church while attempting to minimize the differences between Protestantism and Catholicism and to return to the foundation of the Biblical sources. Thus, Wells contends the council compromised by retaining the traditional teaching (for Roman Catholics), while downplaying its importance (for Protestants). In addition, he notes, the council made little appeal to extrabiblical sources in establishing the traditional Marian doctrine.[138] However, unfortunately, the council did fully reaffirm all the traditional dogmas and pious beliefs about the Virgin Mary.

Consequently, Wells feels compelled to offer his critique of the foundation for all these dogmas in the hope that his Roman Catholic brethren will reassess their teaching. Since the council attempted to

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[136]David F. Wells, *Revolution in Rome* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1972), pp. 129-37.

[137]Ibid., p. 7.   [138]Ibid., pp. 129-30.

ground its teaching in Scripture, Wells identifies what he believes to be their two key Biblical passages. He then proceeds to set forth some detailed exegetical reasons why these passages cannot be interpreted as the council does. The conclusion is that the Roman church should reconsider the Protestant interpretation of these passages which should persuade them to the truth.

The first foundational passage Wells identifies is Genesis 3:15: "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." He observes that the Second Vatican Council supported the Douay-Rheims translation (based on the Latin Vulgate): "She shall crush your head, and you shall bruise her heel."[139] The understanding is that the passage prophesies the birth of the Virgin Mary and indicates her cooperative role in the economy of salvation. But Wells counters this translation and its implications with the fact that both the Hebrew and Septuagint texts employ the masculine pronouns in both clauses of this verse. Second, he argues that the words of Genesis 3:15 were addressed to Eve and the promise was that her masculine seed would conquer Satan. To translate "he" as "she" is illegitimate in this context. Third, to represent Mary as the "second Eve" who undid what the "first Eve" wrought is Scripturally unfounded. For it is Adam rather than Eve who is regarded as representing mankind. Scripture identifies Christ as the last Adam but never speaks of a "second Eve." Christ is called the last Adam because He represents all mankind just as the first Adam did; and He reversed all the consequences of the first Adam's transgression. But, to call Mary the

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[139]Ibid., Wells, quoting the Douay-Rheims translation of the Holy Bible, p. 133.

"second Eve" and imply that she contributed to mankind's salvation is unscriptural and threatens the Gospel. For these reasons, Roman Catholics should reexamine the text of Genesis 3:15 and reject the traditional Roman translation with its implications.[140]

The second foundational passage Wells identifies is Luke 1:28: "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" As he points out, the crucial word in this passage is "favored" (Greek: κεχαριτωμένη). Wells contends that Roman Catholics have built their view of Mary's unique experience of grace with all the implications and corollaries which follow from it on the basis of this word. The proper translation of this word is, therefore, crucial. He sets forth two arguments against the traditional Roman Catholic interpretation of "full of grace." First, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines the verb χαριτόω to mean "bestow favor upon, favor highly, bless."[141] Second, the only other New Testament use of this word is in Ephesians 1:6. Here it is used to describe the grace which God has "freely bestowed" upon all believers in Christ. Thus, Wells argues that if one deduces from Luke 1:28 that Mary was conceived without sin, never sinned in her life, and was bodily assumed into heaven, then on the basis of Ephesians 1:6, he should conclude that the same experiences are true of all Christians. But, since such a conclusion is "ridiculous," the premise should also be rejected. Moreover, Scripture teaches that all people are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23), and Mary is nowhere specified as an

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[140]Ibid., pp. 133-35.

[141]Cf. Walter Bauer, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, s.v., "χαριτόω."

exception. Consequently, she was obviously neither conceived immacu-

lately nor bodily assumed into heaven. This is the clear testimony of

Scripture which should be persuasive.[142]

However, Wells concludes that Roman Catholics cannot accept

the Biblical exegesis of these foundational Marian texts without at the

same time sacrificing the basic principle of their faith--that is, that

man gains the approval of God by his cooperation in the works of God.

Wells then challenges his Roman Catholic brethren to place their Marian

doctrine under the scrutiny of the Biblical Word as they have proclaimed

they would. He is convinced that such a scrutiny, if carried on with

integrity, would convert Roman Catholics to the Protestant Biblical

teaching on the Virgin Mary. This is how Wells envisions the achieve-

ment of doctrinal consensus concerning the Marian dogmas.

Anglican Theologian

Philip E. Hughes

In his article "The Council and Mary," Anglican theologian

Philip E. Hughes critiques the Mariology professed by the Second Vati-

can Council in Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.[143]

Hughes, although somewhat less irenic than the Protestant theologians

examined thus far, nonetheless displays the confessional approach to

resolving doctrinal differences. He vigorously and unequivocally speci-

fies Protestant objections to the Marian dogmas and urges Roman Catho-

lics to convert to the Protestant view of the Virgin Mary.

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[142]Wells, p. 135.

[143]Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, "The Council and Mary," Christianity
Today 12 (Dec. 8, 1967):7-10.

It should be noted that Hughes is not without conciliatory gestures. Thus, for the sake of fairness, he points out that <u>Lumen Gentium</u>: 1) does exhort theologians and pastors not to exaggerate Marian devotion; 2) explicitly identifies Mary with all human beings in her need for salvation; and 3) assures that Mary's maternal relationship to the church in no way obscures or diminishes the unique mediation of Christ.[144] Moreover, his basic orientation toward Roman Catholics as well as his motivation for critiquing their theology is revealed in the final paragraph of this confessional work when he appeals to "our Roman Catholic <u>friends</u>" (italics added).[145]

More pronounced than his irenic gestures, however, are Hughes' criticisms of the Mariology represented in <u>Lumen Gentium</u>. His critique is essentially a two-pronged Biblical analysis of the theology of Mary there presented.

First, Hughes compares New Testament statements about the work of Christ with <u>Lumen Gentium</u>'s descriptions of the activity of Mary. He observes that while Christ declares that He gives life to the world (John 6:33), the council adds that Mary also gave "Life" to the world. While the apostles urge Christians to be conformed to the likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2), the council affirms that Mary is the the church's model to whom the faithful community should direct its attention. Whereas the Scriptures unanimously teach that Christ alone was sinless (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5), the council

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[144]Ibid., p. 9.

[145]Ibid., p. 10.

supports the traditional dogma of Mary's immaculate conception and
freedom from all sin. Finally, although the New Testament consistently
states that Jesus Christ is the sole and unique Mediator between God
and man and the only Redeemer of mankind (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15;
John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:1), the council applies the title
"mediatrix" to Mary and affirms that she cooperated with Christ in the
work of salvation. From these observations Hughes concludes that the
Mariology of the contemporary Roman Catholic church "rob[s] Christ of
the uniqueness of his redemptive and mediatorial office."[146]

Second, like David Wells, Hughes refutes Lumen Gentium's tra-
ditional exegesis of Genesis 3:15 and Luke 1:28. Pointing to the Hebrew
text for Genesis 3:15, he shows that the Hebrew pronoun for the seed of
the woman is masculine in gender, agreeing with the Hebrew noun for
"seed." The Vulgate version, he flatly declares, is a mistranslation
from which Roman Catholic Mariology has gotten too much mileage. Again,
Hughes contends, the Vulgate mistranslated the Greek of Luke 1:28 as
"gratia plena" ("full of grace"), while it should have been "highly
favored." The result was that "for centuries this rendering has been
used to bolster up the doctrine of the unique sinlessness and holiness
of Mary."[147] Hughes faults the council for not correcting these tra-
ditional errors and for perpetuating the traditional Mariology which they
undergird.

This Anglican theologian concludes that the Mariology of today's
Roman Catholic church remains a concrete symbol of its anthropology.

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[146] Ibid.   [147] Ibid.

That is to say, the Roman Mary is the perfect example of man's ability to cooperate with God in the achievement of his salvation. That is why this Mariology (including the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption) "is disruptive of the very heart of the Gospel of the grace of God in and through Christ alone."[148] Hughes is convinced that "nothing less than the Gospel of our redemption is at stake here.[149] Consequently, he testifies to his belief that the Scriptures teach salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. He concludes with a challenge to his Roman Catholic friends to study the Scriptural teaching on Mary. His hope is that they will be converted to the Gospel as the Protestant church professes it—and this will produce consensus in the church.

<div align="center">Lutheran Theologians</div>

James G. Manz

A Lutheran theologian advocating the achievement of doctrinal consensus by conversion is James G. Manz. In his evaluation of the Second Vatican Council and its formulation of Mariology Manz clearly exhibits confessional ecumenical methodology. His critique of Roman Catholic Mariology is irenic while faithful to the evangelical tradition he represents.

Evidence of Manz' intention to be irenic can be found throughout his work Vatican II: Renewal or Reform?[150] In the preface to this book the author contends that his "evaluation has been conducted in

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[148]Ibid., p. 7.   [149]Ibid., p. 10.

[150]James G. Manz, Vatican II: Renewal or Reform? (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

charity."[151] Such charity is at work when Manz states: "Much can be said in defense and praise of the Christianity of the Church of Rome down through the ages and up to the present time."[152] Thus, Manz praises the Roman church for its "admirable sense of the reality of heaven and the life of the glorified saints and the holy angels."[153] In part responsible for this is the Roman Catholic teaching concerning Mary and the saints and angels. Manz believes Protestants can learn a lesson from Roman Catholics in their greater appreciation for the communion of saints. He also points out that the modern liturgical movement in the Roman church has accomplished much by way of exalting Christ and putting attention on Mary and the saints into proper focus.[154]

In particular, Manz exhibits a winsome spirit in his evaluation of the Marian chapter in Lumen Gentium. He believes that the Marian schema "is in many ways a truly warm, devotional, and Scriptural document on the Virgin." In fact, "some passages remind one of what Martin Luther said concerning Mary in his Magnificat."[155] On the whole, Manz believes the document intends to present a balanced and sober doctrine of Mary, drawn from Scripture. He is appreciative that Mary is displayed as one of the redeemed, within the church, and finds it significant that pastors and theologians are warned not to falsely exaggerate Marian theology or over-zealously practice Marian devotion. Such irenic observations form the backdrop for Manz' critique of contemporary Roman Catholic Mariology.

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[151]Ibid., p. 7.

[152]Ibid., p. 15.

[153]Ibid., p. 40.

[154]Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[155]Ibid., p. 96.

Manz is explicit in his attitude toward the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption. Already in the first chapter of Vatican II he criticizes the dogma of the immaculate conception as being "additional to the New Testament account of the conception and the virgin birth of Jesus Christ" (emphasis added).[156] Likewise, in the same chapter Manz calls the dogma of Mary's bodily assumption "non-Biblical," and blames it for establishing "a high wall of separation between Roman and non-Roman Christendom."[157] This same criticism of these Marian dogmas is repeated in the author's report on the sessions of Vatican Council II. After commending the council for not promulgating any new Marian dogmas, he remarks:

> Papal and Marian dogma, which now forever and unalterably binds and restricts the Roman Catholic Church, is unbiblical and divisive in the eyes of almost all Protestants.[158]

This fundamental criticism and rejection of the Marian dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption on the grounds that they are not Scriptural is continued in Manz' assessment of the Marian chapter of Lumen Gentium. Such criticism here is significant in view of the author's otherwise positive remarks about this formulation. Once again he condemns these dogmas as "non-Biblical" and "extra-Scriptural."[159] In fact, here he patently identifies them as "false doctrine," and faults the council for reiterating and not retracting these teachings.[160] In addition, like other Protestant theologians, Manz takes the council to task for uncritically perpetuating the Vulgate mistranslation of

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[156]Ibid., p. 22.

[157]Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[158]Ibid., p. 85.

[159]Ibid., p. 97.

[160]Ibid.

Luke 1:28 which calls Mary "full of grace." The Greek text, he insists,

simply says that God bestowed grace upon Mary.[161]

The perpetuation of the mistranslation of Luke 1:28 and the

implications drawn from it are symptomatic of the two fundamental prob-

lems involved in Roman Catholic Mariology: the failure to base doctrine

on Scripture alone and the profound misunderstanding of grace. Says

Manz:

> The present position of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Catholic
> Church is the result of a historical development which would have
> been impossible if theologians had been firmly grounded in the
> doctrine of grace and had based their teachings solely on Holy
> Scripture.[162]

In fact, herein lies the most serious problem of Roman Catholic

Mariology: it beclouds and even denies the unique role of Jesus Christ

as mankind's only Redeemer and Mediator. This perverts the doctrine of

justification by grace alone through faith in Christ, or the Gospel.

Thus, on the basis of the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions, Manz is

compelled to denounce the Marian doctrines which cause such a perversion

of the Gospel.[163] While he longs and prays for the visible expression

of the church's spiritual unity, this theologian observes:

> Lutherans are deeply suspicious of any type of church fellowship
> or unity which would compromise in the slightest degree the blessed
> Gospel of salvation only through God's grace in Christ, by faith in
> Him.[164]

Consequently, the task of the Lutheran ecumenist is to witness

faithfully to the pure Scriptural teaching on these controverted

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[161]Ibid., p. 98.   [162]Ibid., p. 41.

[163]Ibid., pp. 42-43.   [164]Ibid., p. 63.

articles of doctrine.[165] For all doctrine has an integral relationship

to the message of the Gospel. The pure proclamation of the Gospel, in

turn, is the essential element for achieving unity in the church. For

through it Christ, the Lord of the church, creates the inner, spiritual

unity of the church and motivates men to be outwardly faithful to His

Word. Only such outward faithfulness to His Word establishes unity in

the church, that is, the unified teaching of doctrine. Therefore, Manz

recommends that his Roman Catholic brethren carefully and honestly study

the New Testament witness concerning Mary and the New Testament teaching

on grace. Through these the Holy Spirit will be operative to convert

Roman Catholics to the Biblical/Lutheran teaching about Mary and Christ.

Nothing but this confessional approach will achieve real consensus in

the church.

Roland H. A. Seboldt

Another Lutheran theologian who applies the confessional solu-

tion to the problem of achieving consensus with Roman Catholics concern-

ing Marian teaching is Roland H. A. Seboldt. Admittedly, in his work

Christ or Mary? Sebolt focusses his primary attention upon the problem

of the Roman Catholic pious belief that Mary is coredemptrix with

Christ.[166] Nonetheless, his work is an appropriate representative for

this study for three reasons. First, Seboldt claims that the pious

belief of Mary's coredemption is based upon the dogmas of the immaculate

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[165]Ibid., pp. 116-17.

[166]Roland H. A. Seboldt, Christ or Mary? The Coredemption of
Mary in Contemporary Roman Catholic Theology (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1963).

conception and bodily assumption.[167] Therefore, whatever criticism he levels against the doctrine of Mary's coredemption also applies against these Marian dogmas. Second, Seboldt himself claims that his critique of the Roman Catholic concept of Mary's coredemption in particular is applicable to Roman Mariology in general.[168] Third, as will be shown, the author of this confessional work does make some explicit criticisms of the Marian dogmas which are the concern of this study.

While Seboldt gives a thorough critique of contemporary Roman Catholic Mariology, he also displays a positive and irenic spirit toward his Roman Catholic brethren. On the one hand, he openly expresses his appreciation of what he believes are positive trends within the contemporary Roman church. On the other hand, he positively outlines a Lutheran appreciation for the blessed Virgin Mary. These irenic overtures will be cited first, followed by the author's critique.

Seboldt is encouraged by what he views as the development of "a new evangelical theology" in the Roman Catholic church. As evidence of this he cites the wide appreciation Roman Catholics have expressed for Hans Küng's emphasis on justification by faith.[169] Moreover, he commends the Roman church for its liturgical movement which has deemphasized devotion to the Virgin Mary.[170]

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[167]Ibid., pp. 14 and 22. Sebolt also identifies the decision of the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 to describe Mary as "theotokos" as "opening the way for a fully developed Mariology" (p. 12). However, he understands this Mariological development to be a misuse of a legitimate Christological formulation.

[168]Ibid., pp. 46 and 51.   [169]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[170]Ibid., p. 6.

Even more positively, Seboldt offers a Lutheran appreciation for the blessed Virgin Mary. He states that Lutherans value Mary highly "because through her we know that the humanity of Christ was real and true."[171] He notes that the Latin edition of the Augsburg Confession, Article III, piously speaks of Jesus' mother as "the blessed virgin Mary." Moreover, Seboldt emphasizes that Article XXI of the same confession commends the memory of Mary and other saints so that their faith and good works may be imitated. Furthermore, he approves of Article XXI of the Apology which asserts that Mary is "worthy of highest honors."[172] Thus, Lutherans do find a place for Mary in their theology and devotional life. "She is held in honor as the servant who was granted the grace of bearing our Savior into human flesh and life."[173] By honoring her, Lutherans praise God who was so gracious as to send His only Son in human flesh to redeem men from their sin. According to Seboldt, this is Biblical and Lutheran veneration of Mary.

In contrast to this, the Roman church has developed a Marian theology and devotion that goes beyond the Biblical witness. Seboldt is direct in his claim that the dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption are without Scriptural foundation. For example, he states that the dogma of the immaculate conception is based solely upon the theological principle that Mary possesses human privileges analogous to those of the humanity of Jesus. Thus, since Jesus was conceived by a virgin and never sinned, so it is claimed that Mary was conceived immaculate and never sinned.[174] Similarly, the dogma of Mary's assumption is

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[171]Ibid., p. 55.   [172]Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[173]Ibid., p. 56.   [174]Ibid., p. 24.

deduced from Jesus' bodily ascension to heaven.[175] The assumption is completely without basis in either Scripture or apostolic tradition. The only sources that can be appealed to are post-apostolic apocryphal accounts.[176] Because these dogmas are not grounded in Scripture, they must be rejected.

Even more explicit and much more comprehensive is Seboldt's critique of the doctrine of Mary's coredemption with Christ. Predictably, his criticisms are based upon the Roman church's failure to observe the formal and material principles of the Lutheran exposition of the Christian faith.

First, Seboldt demonstrates that the Scriptures do <u>not</u> describe any special relationship between Jesus and Mary during Jesus' earthly career. The synoptic Gospel references which portray the relationship between Jesus and His mother during His ministry (Mark 3:31-35 and Matt. 12:46-50) deemphasize the position of Mary as the mother who has intercessory influence with her Son. Likewise, John's account of Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana shows that "Jesus did not welcome His mother's interference in His Messianic work."[177] Similarly, Jesus' entrusting of His mother to St. John and vice versa (John 19:25-27) simply express His affectionate provision for His mother after His departure. Finally, after Jesus' resurrection, Mary appears only at Acts 1:14, together with Jesus' brothers. Here she joins with the Jerusalem Christians to pray for the gift of the Spirit. After this she disappears from the pages of revelation. Therefore, Seboldt

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[175]Ibid., p. 25. [176]Ibid., pp. 10, 13, and 22.

[177]Ibid., p. 47.

concludes, there is no basis in Scripture for portraying Mary as cooperating with Christ in His earthly ministry.[178]

Second, this Lutheran theologian also contends that the narratives of the annunciation and nativity do not establish grounds for hyperdulia to Mary, but for worship of the gracious, creative, glorious, and almighty God and Father of Jesus Christ. The annunication account stresses the action of God working through Mary as the passive instrument of service. Thus, Seboldt too rejects the Vulgate's rendering of "full of grace" in Luke 1:28. According to Seboldt, a good paraphrase of this verse would be: "'Hail, thou who hast had the fortune to be the object of the kindness of God, who has chosen thee as the instrument of His ways.'"[179] In like manner, the account of Jesus' birth "is not a Gospel declaration to glorify Mary, but to proclaim that Christ is Lord and that His birth is the work of God."[180] The glory of this event is not in the instrument God chose to bring it about, but in the One who became incarnate. Mary's importance lies in her humble witness to this great event. Seboldt's conclusion is that the Roman Catholic church has completely distorted the meaning of this clear Biblical witness in favor of their traditional Mariology.

Because the Roman church has compromised the Scriptural witness concerning the Virgin Mary, inevitably they also have distorted the Scripture's central message, the Gospel. For the New Testament proclaims redemption only in Jesus Christ. Seboldt points to 1 Tim. 2:5: "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This

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[178]Ibid., pp. 47-50.   [179]Ibid., p. 49.

[180]Ibid., p. 50.

passage excludes the possibility of coredemption by any other person.

Only Christ Jesus bore the sins of the world and offered Himself as

Savior of mankind. But the Roman church insists that Mary, beginning

with her _fiat_, cooperated with Christ in the work of redemption. This

makes her partly responsible for man's salvation, and man partly

dependent upon her. As a result, Seboldt concludes:

> Resting on the Scriptures, we are compelled to conclude that
> Roman Catholic views on Mary are an obstacle to faith in Christ
> alone. The growing parallelism between Christ and Mary is un-
> Scriptural. The one Savior grants the grace of His salvation
> through the Holy Spirit by Word and Sacraments. He alone became
> man. He alone took the whole human race to Himself and redeemed
> it by His life, death, and resurrection. The Roman Catholic motto
> is "through Mary to Christ." This has become Mary _and_ Christ, and
> in the popular mind, often Mary _versus_ Christ. The Scriptures pre-
> sent one Savior and Lord for all and over all.[181]

In Seboldt's view, the only way that consensus can be achieved

with the Roman Catholic church concerning the doctrine of Mary is for

the Roman church to convert to the Lutheran formal and material prin-

ciples. Thus, it is his responsibility as a theologian interested in

the unity of the church, irenically but candidly to witness to the

faith he professes. This he has done in Christ or Mary?. Therein he

has clearly established himself as a confessional theologian who seeks

consensus by conversion.

Summary

In this chapter both Roman Catholic and Protestant models of the

confessional solution have been demonstrated. Whether Roman Catholic or

Protestant, these theologians are in complete agreement concerning

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[181]Ibid., p. 53.

methodology. They share the view that the contemporary ecumenist must exhibit his openness to and appreciation for all Christians as true members of Christ's body, the church. At the same time, they also are insistent that today's ecumenical theologian best serves the cause of unity by faithfully testifying to the truth of the Christian faith as he and his church understand it. Confessional theologians are agreed that truth and love are both necessary partners for achieving real unity.

However, although these theologians agree concerning methodology, they are distinguished by differing norms for truth. On the one hand, the Protestant ecumenist claims one norm for his confession of faith: Scripture alone. On the other hand, the confession of the Roman Catholic ecumenist is normed by Scripture and the living tradition of his church as this is formulated by the magisterium. This distinction makes a great deal of difference in the discussion of such doctrines as Mariology. In fact, as has been exhibited, it leads to a virtual impasse in reaching consensus concerning the Roman Catholic dogmas of the immaculate conception and bodily assumption. For the Roman Catholic is convinced on the basis of tradition that these dogmas are divinely-revealed truths. Thus, he is certain of his duty to convert his Protestant brothers to the Roman faith concerning Mary. At the same time, the Protestant ecumenist is just as adamant, on the basis of Scripture alone, that the Roman Catholic dogmas concerning Mary are without foundation and are, thus, harmful to the proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore, he is also confident that he must convert his Roman Catholic brothers to the Protestant confession concerning Mary.

In conclusion, it seems necessary, then, that if the confessional method is to succeed in achieving consensus concerning the Marian dogmas and other controverted doctrines, the preliminary, fundamental issue of the source and norm for doctrine will have to be resolved first. This can only be resolved, however, if both Roman Catholic and Protestant believers maintain their concern for truth and integrity. The confessional solution at least preserves this concern.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: EVALUATION OF SOLUTIONS

Introduction

It may be helpful to recall at this point that the objective of this study is essentially twofold. In view of the significant impact on the church of the application of contemporary methods for resolving doctrinal differences, the first goal has been to define and illustrate such methods for the purpose of information. Focusing particularly upon the problem of achieving doctrinal consensus between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches concerning the dogmas of Mary's immaculate conception and bodily assumption, the last three chapters have been devoted to this purpose. They have identified, defined, and illustrated the three primary methods or solutions which are believed to be operative in contemporary ecumenical endeavors to achieve doctrinal consensus. By way of reminder, these solutions are: 1) the historical-critical solution which achieves consensus by reduction; 2) the constructive solution which achieves consensus by accommodation; and 3) the confessional solution which achieves consensus by conversion. To be sure, the description and illustration of the solutions (methodologies) has been a laborious and, at times, painstakingly detailed task. However, it is believed that such a thorough and careful treatment has been necessitated in order to ensure the accuracy and applicability of the evaluation.

With the necessary information of the previous chapters at hand, the study can now proceed to its perhaps major goal: the evaluation of the above-illustrated solutions to determine which, if any, are legitimate methods for the church to employ as it seeks doctrinal unity today. On the basis of such evaluation a recommendation can then be made to assist the church in its contemporary ecumenical challenge.

Any evaluation, of course, must be determined on the basis of some standard. In the prolegomena for this study two standards were proposed.

First, it was proposed that each solution be assessed subjectively--that is, on the basis of the projected success each would have of attaining doctrinal consensus in the church, given the current theological realities. Each solution is to be evaluated in view of both the consensus it might achieve within each of the churches ("intra-church consensus") and the consensus it might achieve between the two churches ("inter-church consensus"). While such a pragmatic evaluation cannot be the ultimate basis for determining the legitimacy of a methodology, nonetheless, given the pragmatic orientation of contemporary American society, it should indicate which solution/s is/are likely to exert a dominant influence, at least in the American religious context. That information will be helpful, if not essential, for every theologian as he responsibly attempts to explicate the Christian faith in today's ecumenical context.

Secondly, it was proposed that each solution be evaluated on an objective basis--that is, on the basis of some known standard which holds ultimate authority. As was stated in the opening chapter, inasmuch as

this writer is committed to the Lutheran Confessions of the Book of

Concord as a correct exhibition of the teaching of Scripture, these

will be employed as the standard by which the legitimacy of the illus-

trated solutions will be determined.[1] While a comprehensive examination

of the ecumenical principles displayed in the Lutheran Confessions would

be both instructive and beneficial, for the purposes of this study (with

its focus on the controverted Marian dogmas), it will be sufficient to

employ those ecumenical principles which the Lutheran Confessions

exhibit in their treatment of Mariology.[2]

The study will evaluate the ecumenical solutions first sub-

jectively, then objectively.

<u>Evaluation of Solutions in Terms</u>
<u>of Their Projected Success</u>
<u>of Achieving Consensus</u>

The Historical-Critical Solution:
Consensus by Reduction

In view of the conflict concerning the methodology and results

of the historical-critical solution in both the Roman Catholic and

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[1]All references to the Lutheran Confessions are from: Theodore
G. Tappert, et al., ed. and trans., <u>The Book of Concord: The Confessions</u>
<u>of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</u> (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959).
The following abbreviations for the confessions will be employed:
Augsburg Confession (AC); Apology of the Augsburg Confession (Ap).

[2]For a fuller description of Confessional principles for ecumeni-
cal activity, see: Ralph Bohlmann, "The Celebration of Concord," in
<u>Theologian's Convocation: Formula for Concord Essays</u>, ed. Commission on
Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (St.
Louis: Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran
Church--Missouri Synod, 1977), pp. 55-89; Commission on Theology and
Church Relations of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, <u>A Lutheran</u>
<u>Stance Toward Ecumenism</u> (St. Louis: Commission on Theology and Church
Relations of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1974), pp. 9-12; Henry
P. Hamann, <u>Unity and Fellowship and Ecumenicity</u> (St. Louis: Concordia
Publishing House, 1973), pp. 36-46.

Protestant churches, it seems highly unlikely that this approach will ever achieve a unified intra-church consensus in either church. While accommodating theologians may be willing to accept the reductionist results of historical-critical Biblical exegetes, traditional, confessional theologians will always insist that the Biblical record is reliable and authoritative. Protestant confessional theologians will insist that the New Testament clearly establishes Mary as the mother of God. Roman Catholic confessional theologians will agree with this and add that the other Marian dogmas are at least certainly grounded in Scripture, if not explicitly taught there. As long as there is fundamental disagreement concerning the methodology of this solution it is likely to contribute little progress toward the achievement of intra-church consensus in either church.

However, as was observed in chapter four, the historical-critical solution has produced a significant inter-church consensus. By employing the same exegetical methodology to the study of the Scriptural data concerning Mary, Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians have reached virtual agreement that the Scriptures say very little about Mary and even less that is reliable. The ecumenical study <u>Mary in the New Testament</u> stands as vivid testimony that this solution is successful in achieving inter-church consensus.[3] Given the pervasiveness of this methodology among contemporary Biblical scholars in both churches, it seems likely to continue forging a consensus on this and many other devisive issues. Consequently, this writer anticipates that

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[3]Raymond E. Brown, et al., eds., <u>Mary in the New Testament</u> (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

this methodology is one which is here to stay and whose results will have to be contended with by both its practitioners and opponents.

At the same time, it needs to be observed that the historical-critical solution is limited to achieving consensus only among those who accept its methodology and are satisfied with its meager doctrinal results. However, as the study has shown, many Roman Catholics as well as Protestants are not at all satisfied with its achievements. Therefore, Roman Catholic historical critics will continue to be in conflict with confessional Protestants and Protestant historical critics will continue to clash with the doctrine of confessional Roman Catholics. Consequently, this methodology holds little possibility of achieving a unified inter-church consensus. Nonetheless, for the reason mentioned above, it bears further watching.

The Constructive Solution: Consensus by Accommodation

This solution would seem to hold the greatest potential of the three for achieving the greatest intra- and inter-church doctrinal consensus. For it is based upon the widely held view today that man's knowledge and formulations/confessions of truth (including theological truth) are always somewhat relative, approximate, and therefore subject to some amount of periodic revision and reformulation. It appeals to many modern minds because it maintains a greater or lesser portion of one's previously held beliefs while allowing him to be (to a greater or lesser extent) contemporary in his thought. Thus, it has the appeal of preserving a certain amount of security in one's traditional belief system, while offering the stimulation and excitement of new adaptations.

The success of any accommodating solution, then, depends upon the degree

to which believers are willing to alter their traditional beliefs and

the degree to which a given constructive theologian challenges them to

do so. Since many in this age hold to a relative view of truth but

still need the security of some permanence and continuity in their

thought, those accommodating approaches are likely to be most successful

which challenge the believer to make some significant but not radical

revisions in his faith.

Thus, with respect to intra-church consensus, the work of Karl

Rahner would likely produce substantial doctrinal agreement among Roman

Catholics insofar as he does not reject the traditional dogmas concern-

ing Mary. Rather, he calls for Roman Catholics to rethink the signifi-

cance of these dogmas for their spiritual lives (that is, to concentrate

on what they teach about God and His grace rather than what they teach

about the blessed Virgin Mary). Similarly, the Anglican John de Satgé

may well induce many Protestants to accept the assumption of Mary not

as a dogma but as an acceptable pious belief which testifies to God's

undeserved grace and power. On the other hand, while Piet Schoonenberg

and the "Dutch catechism" maintain the traditional terminology concern-

ing the Marian dogmas, they redefine them in such a way that many Roman

Catholics are probably not ready to accept yet. Certainly they have met

with much opposition from confessional, traditional theologians in the

Roman church. Hans Küng's call for a radical ecumenical reformulation

of these dogmas is more threatening still and likely to polarize rather

than unite Roman Catholic thought. Among Protestants the redefining work

of John Macquarrie may make the dogma of Mary's immaculate conception

acceptable to those who adopt his existential interpretation of sin and original sin, but many within the Protestant church will find his views unacceptable. Thus, the more radical accommodations are not likely to be helpful for intra-church consensus.

The projected success of the constructive solution for achieving inter-church consensus parallels that for intra-church consensus. The similar, moderate approaches of Karl Rahner and John de Satgé have the potential for uniting many Roman Catholics and Protestants in their faith concerning the Virgin Mary. Although the more radical methodologies exhibited by the Roman Catholics Schoonenberg and Küng and the Protestants Macquarrie and Wolfhart Pannenberg will achieve some inter-church consensus, the scope of their success is likely to be limited.

Once again it is highly improbable that the constructive solution in either its moderate or radical application will accomplish a complete inter-church consensus. For again the voice of the traditional, confessional theologians must be reckoned with. With their belief that truth and its formulations are changeless these theologians will never consent to accommodating or modifying in any way the traditional teachings of their churches. As a result, confessional Protestants will continue to oppose accommodating Roman Catholics as well as accommodating Protestants; likewise, confessional Roman Catholics will maintain their opposition to compromising Protestants as well as compromising Roman Catholics. Nevertheless, this methodology (especially in its more moderate application) will continue to exert a strong influence on the formulation of contemporary Roman Catholic and Protestant theology. It may well achieve a substantial consensus in the future.

The Confessional Solution:
Consensus by Conversion

From the human perspective, this solution would seem to be the least likely to achieve a unified intra- or inter-church doctrinal consensus. For it directly contradicts the prevailing belief of modern man that the knowledge and formulation of truth are relative. The confessional solution is based upon the confidence that ultimate truth _is_ knowable to man and, in fact, has been objectively revealed. It insists that the traditional, historic, orthodox formulations (although perhaps in need of some updating in language and application) are still authoritative for the church today since truth does not change. This approach seems presumptuous, naive, antiquated and anachronistic to many modern believers. Such are more likely to be persuaded by the historical-critical or constructive methodologies.

With respect to intra-church consensus, this solution has been very successful in the past. On the basis of the authority of the magisterium, Roman Catholic faithful have been virtually united in their belief that the blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of God, perpetually virgin, who was immaculately conceived and bodily assumed into heaven. Similarly, on the basis of the authority of Scripture, Protestant believers generally have agreed that the Virgin Mary is the mother of God who _may_ have been perpetually virgin, but certainly was not immaculately conceived or bodily assumed into heaven.

Because of the strength of the Roman magisterium, this solution is still effective for many contemporary Roman Catholics. However, the _defense_ of these dogmas by the contemporary magisterium in its several

voices (papal, conciliar, and catechetical) is proof that the Roman church faces an increasingly large number of challengers to its traditional doctrine. As contemporary thought continues to settle in, and ecumenical relationships with non-confessional Protestants continue to influence Roman Catholic believers, the confessional solution as exercised by the Roman magisterium is likely to be less and less effective.

In the Protestant church, with a few notable exceptions, the traditional authority of the Scriptures has been all but abandoned by the clergy and educators. Of course, many of the faithful have followed their lead—but not all. As a result, most Protestant denominations have suffered bitter controversies and divisions. Thus, the Protestant church today is divided not only by their traditional differences concerning the Sacraments, church polity, and so forth, but by disagreements concerning fundamental doctrines such as the divinity of Christ or the reality of Christ's resurrection. As long as Protestants hold such disparate beliefs concerning the authority of Scripture, the confessional solution will produce little consensus within the Protestant church either.

Humanly speaking, if the confessional solution is unlikely to achieve much intra-church consensus, it will probably produce even less inter-church consensus. The problem that each church faces of achieving some consensus within itself in the face of the challenge of traditional authority is only compounded in inter-church relationships. For Roman Catholic confessional theologians are challenged not only by non-traditional Roman Catholics but by non-traditional Protestants as

well. Similarly, confessional Protestant theologians are engaged vis-a-vis non-traditional Protestants and non-traditional Roman Catholics. In addition to this, even if both churches possessed solid intra-church consensus concerning traditional beliefs of their respective churches, they still would be challenged by the crucial differences that have separated them for centuries. As the Protestant confessional theologians pointed out with almost united voice, the differences involve such fundamental doctrines as the nature of man, grace, and salvation. Such discrepancies are not likely to be resolved easily—especially since confessional theologians of both churches are convinced that their respective churches profess the truth to which the other church should be converted.

In short, in terms of likely success, the confessional solution seems to be fraught with the most difficulties and the least potential for profitable returns. Thus, it will probably continue to be an unpopular methodology in contemporary ecumenical endeavors to achieve doctrinal consensus. However, because of the profound convictions of its practitioners, it will also likely be a continuing influence.

For the reasons cited above, none of the solutions now operative in ecumenical endeavors to achieve doctrinal consensus seem likely to achieve a complete intra- or inter-church consensus. That which seems most likely to be successful is the constructive solution, while that which appears least successful is the confessional solution. If one were pragmatically determining a solution purely on the basis of its likelihood to achieve a consensus of some sort, then he surely ought to adopt the constructive methodology. However, as stated above, the

ecumenical activity of the confessional Lutheran theologian is normed
not by projected pragmatic outcomes, but by the Word of God as this is
explicated in the Lutheran Confessions. Consequently, the study turns
now to its final evaluation in terms of the objective standard of the
Lutheran Confessions.

Evaluation of Solutions in Terms of Ecumenical Principles Exhibited in the Treatment of Mariology in the Lutheran Confessions

At its best the Lutheran church has always understood itself
to be a confessing movement within the church catholic. Thus, it
forged its confessional documents not for the purpose of sectarian
identification but to serve the church in its need to be united in the
clear proclamation of the Gospel. The Lutheran church believed that
its confessional methodology would actually assist the church in the
achievement of this goal. Therefore, it may be assumed that the treat-
ment of any particular theological topic will illustrate the essential
principles which guided these Lutheran theologians as they confessed
the Christian faith in their age in the service of the ecumenical cause
of the church. It is the conviction of this writer that the same prin-
ciples are authoritative for the Lutheran theologian in his ecumenical,
confessional task today. In keeping with the focus of this study, the
Lutheran Confessions will be examined for their ecumenical/confessional
principles as they treat the topic of Mariology. These principles will
then be employed to critique the contemporary ecumenical solutions
illustrated in this study.

The Lutheran Confessions' treatment of Mariology clusters around two topics: the person of Jesus Christ and the cult/invocation of the saints.

All of the confessional references to the blessed Virgin Mary made in the context of teaching about the person of Jesus Christ already have been set forth in detail in chapter two of this study.[4] At that point it was demonstrated and underscored that the Lutheran Confessions consistently exhibit the application of the sola Scriptura principle in their formulations about the Virgin Mary. That is to say, one of their chief aims in confessing what they believe about the Virgin Mary is to strictly limit their confession to what the holy Scriptures teach about her. Thus, they insist that no pious belief (for example, Mary's perpetual virginity) may be made binding doctrine, and no doctrine that is not clearly taught in Scripture (for example, Mary's bodily assumption) or that contradicts Scripture (for example, Mary's immaculate conception) can be tolerated as the teaching of the church. In other words, it is a fundamental principle of Lutheran confessional/ecumenical theology that all doctrinal formulations must be clearly taught in Scripture. That which is not Scriptural is also not ecumenical.

Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession deals with the topic, "The Cult of Saints." It does not explicitly mention the blessed Virgin Mary but refers to all saints, certainly including Mary. This very brief article makes two points. First it stresses that

> saints should be kept in remembrance so that our faith may be
> strengthened when we see what grace they received and how they were

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[4]See chapter two, pp. 57-63.

sustained by faith. Moreover, their good works are to be an example for us, each of his own calling.[5]

Secondly, however, the confessors claim that Scripture does **not** teach believers to pray to the saints or seek their help. Rather, such passages as 1 Tim. 2:5, Rom. 8:34 and 1 John 2:1 explicitly proclaim that Jesus Christ _alone_ is man's Savior, high priest, advocate, and intercessor before God. (Note the application of the _sola_ _Scriptura_ principle here.) Therefore, the Christian is to pray _only_ to Christ and to trust _only_ Christ for redemption.[6] Any teaching which encourages man to put his trust for spiritual help and salvation in anyone but Jesus Christ is to be rejected. Such false teaching challenges the very essence of the Gospel and threatens man's salvation. This is the _solus_ _Christus_ principle of the confessors' ecumenical theology.

The same concern is expressed in greater detail in Article XXI of the Apology, "The Invocation of the Saints." Here again the confessors point out that Lutherans give true honor to the saints by: 1) thanking God for their witness and contribution to the church; 2) taking comfort from the example of God's grace given to them as sinners; and 3) imitating their faith and other virtues.[7]

However, the Apology also insists that "Scripture does not teach us to invoke the saints or to ask their help. Neither a command nor a promise nor an example can be shown from Scripture for the invocation of the saints."[8] Since invocation of the saints cannot be supported from Scripture, it must be abandoned.

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[5]AC, XXI:1, German.   [6]AC, XXI:2-4.

[7]Ap, XXI:4-6.   [8]Ap, XXI:10.

Also to be rejected is the belief that the saints have merits which they apply to others for their spiritual benefit. The confessors reject such a concept of the saints as propitiators or mediators for two reasons. First, they argue that if one is to be a legitimate propitiator or mediator for others before God, "there must be a Word of God to assure us that God is willing to have mercy and to answer those who call upon him through this propitiator."[9] For the saints there is no such promise. But for Jesus Christ the Scriptures are replete with these promises (for example, Psalms 45:12-13; 72:11, 15; Isaiah 11:10; Matthew 11:28; John 5:23; 16:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

Secondly, the merits of a propitiator/mediator "must be authorized to make satisfaction for others and to be bestowed on them by divine imputation, so that through them we may be accounted righteous as though the merits were our own."[10] Once again, however, Scripture nowhere recognizes the merits of anyone but Jesus Christ. Only His merits count before God. Therefore, only faith in the person and work of Christ alone has the power to save. Trust in the merits of anyone else is idolatry.

Here the Apology especially singles out and condemns the prevalent practice of calling upon and trusting in the blessed Virgin Mary for forgiveness and grace:

> Granted that blessed Mary prays for the church, does she receive souls in death, does she overcome death, does she give life? What does Christ do if blessed Mary does all this? Even though she is worthy of the highest honors, she does not want to be put on the same level as Christ but to have her example considered and followed. The fact of the matter is that in popular estimation the blessed

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[9]Ap, XXI:17.   [10]Ap, XXI:19.

Virgin has completely replaced Christ. Men have invoked her, trusted in her mercy, and sought through her to appease Christ, as though he were not a propitiator but only a terrible judge and avenger. We maintain that we dare not trust in the transfer of the saints' merits to us, as though God were reconciled to us or accounted us righteous or saved us on this account. We obtain the forgiveness of sins only by Christ's merits when we believe in him.[11]

Therefore, any veneration of or teaching about the blessed Virgin Mary which compromises the uniqueness of Christ's status as man's only Redeemer and Mediator is to be rejected as unscriptural and destructive of faith in Christ. "Our whole knowledge of Christ disappears if we seek out other mediators besides Christ and put our trust in them."[12]

Thus, Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession and Apology in their response to the Mariology of their time clearly demonstrate the second fundamental principle of Lutheran confessional/ecumenical theology: all doctrinal formulations must conform to the central article of the Christian faith—the good news of God's free forgiveness for man through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. Lutheran confessional theology must be Christocentric. Its guiding principle must be solus Christus, or it is not ecumenical theology.

In the interest of the ecumenical cause of the church, then, the confessional Lutheran theologian will evaluate any proposed solution for achieving doctrinal consensus in terms of its fidelity to the sola Scriptura and solus Christus principles. Thus, the study turns to this concluding evaluation.

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[11]Ap, XXI:27-29.   [12]Ap, XXI:34.

The Historical-Critical Solution:
Consensus by Reduction

The historical-critical solution purports radically to observe the <u>sola</u> <u>Scriptura</u> principle. It intends to let no creeds or theological formulations prejudice its study of the Biblical text or its conclusions. But, in fact, its practitioners are bound to a very prejudiced and strict canon of rationalistic hermeneutical rules. This methodology does not let the Scriptures speak for themselves but only allows them to say what rationalistically critical scholars will permit. Consequently, it is not even capable of reaching the one Mariological assertion which both Roman Catholics and Protestants have always agreed upon--that Mary is the mother of God.

Because this methodology so radically breaches the <u>sola</u> <u>Scriptura</u> principle in favor of rationalistic criteria for truth it also seriously threatens, if not destroys, the <u>solus</u> <u>Christus</u> principle. As the study exhibited, most historical-critical theologians contend that the New Testament settles only <u>what</u> <u>the</u> <u>early</u> <u>Christian</u> <u>church</u> <u>believed</u> about Jesus Christ; the Scripture's interpretation of the person and work of Jesus Christ is not the authoritative, final word for <u>all</u> time. Rather, every age, it is contended, must make its own faith decision about Jesus. Such "faith decisions" often make Jesus over in modern man's own image. On this basis, many lose the unique Gospel message of the forgiveness of sins in the God-Man Jesus Christ.

Consequently, this solution must be rejected. It can hardly be regarded as an aid to the ecumenical cause of the church. For it not

only fails to achieve the outward unity of consensus in doctrine, but
even destroys the inner spiritual unity of the church in the God-Man
Savior Jesus Christ.

The Constructive Solution:
Consensus by Accommodation

The very name of this solution indicates that its practitioners
hold no norm, including Scripture, as totally authoritative and binding.
As demonstrated, the degree to which its advocates stray from the
Scriptural norm varies. Of course, even the orthodox Roman Catholic
theologians violate the _sola Scriptura_ principle by including the
tradition of their church as a legitimate source of revelation and
authority. Less orthodox Roman Catholic theologians, such as Piet
Schoonenberg and the authors of the "Dutch catechism," deviate even
farther from the Biblical norm by emptying traditional theological
terms (such as "original sin" and "afterlife") of their Scriptural
content and filling them with existential concepts.

The extent of disregard for the _sola Scriptura_ principle also
varies among Protestants. Theologians such as H. S. Box and John de
Satge remain orthodox on the fundamental articles of Christian faith
but wish to compromise on what they consider peripheral issues (for
example, the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption). Others, such as
John Macquarrie and Wolfhart Pannenberg compromise some of the basic
tenets of Christian belief.

To the degree that a theologian compromises on the _sola_
Scriptura principle, he also jeopardizes the _solus Christus_ principle.
For the Scriptures are the _only_ source and norm for the message of

forgiveness in Christ alone. If their authority and truthfulness are called into question on any doctrine (regardless of how "peripheral" it is regarded), then in principle the authority and truthfulness of the Gospel is also under suspicion.

Because of His goodness and grace God often prevents believers from a consistent application of their theoretical doubt about the full authority of His Word. Some, however, are fairly consistent in their erosion of Biblical authority, and these inevitably "suffer shipwreck of their faith." They lose trust in the very one who is the central message of the Scriptures. Thus, disregard for the sola Scriptura principle to any extent always endangers the solus Christus principle.

Therefore, the constructive solution based upon the legitimacy of the accommodation or compromise of truth is not an acceptable methodology for achieving doctrinal consensus in the church—on the issue of Mariology or any other doctrine. Any consensus so achieved is false and poses a constant threat to the purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is the only means for achieving the true unity of the church.

The Confessional Solution: Consensus by Conversion

As previously noted, the confessional solution is to be commended because it maintains concern for theological truth and the integrity of one's confession. However, the legitimacy of this solution depends upon the fidelity of its practitioners to the sola Scriptura and solus Christus principles.

It has already been observed that the confessional Roman Catholic theologian, while faithful to his tradition, nonetheless does not observe the sola Scriptura principle. His theology is grounded in and normed by not only Scripture, but the tradition of his church. Over the centuries this has lead to the dogmatization of several Marian doctrines which have no support from Scripture and therefore cannot be accepted by confessional Protestant theologians.

Moreover, the failure of the Roman church purely to observe the sola Scriptura principle in its formulations of doctrine has lead to an obscuring of the solus Christus principle in its theology. In fact, as Karl Barth remarked, the Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary is the best example of this obfuscation. For Mary is the paradigm of the believer who gains God's favor and salvation by cooperating with God on the basis of God-given grace. While Christ and His merits are not excluded in the Roman system, they no longer are the only basis for the believer's hope of salvation. Other saints, especially the blessed Virgin Mary, and the believer himself make a contribution to his redemption. Such blatant synergism is an obvious deviation from the sola Scriptura and solus Christus principles. Thus, while the confessional Roman Catholic theologian is to be respected for his integrity and concern for truth, the contribution of his confession of faith to the ecumenical progress of the church is limited by his departure from the Biblical norm and obscuration of the Gospel.

On the other hand, the Protestant confessional theologians (with the qualifications concerning the Reformed made in chapter two)

clearly exhibit faithfulness to the <u>sola</u> <u>Scriptura</u> principle.[13] They

allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves because they believe

Scripture is the very Word of God. Consequently, confessional Pro-

testant theologians humbly accept whatever Scripture teaches as truth,

and they limit their confession to this truth. Thus, their confession

of faith concerning the blessed Virgin Mary is restricted to what the

Scriptures witness about her—that is, that she is the mother of Jesus

Christ and a model of Christian piety.

Especially are the confessional Protestants eager to maintain

the <u>solus</u> <u>Christus</u> principle. To a man they emphasize that Jesus

Christ is mankind's <u>only</u> and unique Redeemer from sin and Mediator of

God's forgiveness. Therefore, they reject any Marian doctrine which

challenges the purity of this Gospel.

Thus, the confessional solution as demonstrated by the Protes-

tants in this study (especially by the Lutheran theologians) provides

the answer to the question raised at the beginning of this study: How

can Roman Catholics and Protestants achieve doctrinal consensus con-

cerning the doctrine of Mary? The answer to this question is also the

answer for resolving all other areas of doctrinal discord. The only

legitimate ecumenical methodology is to lovingly confess the truth of

Scripture on the controverted doctrine, while proclaiming the Gospel

of Jesus Christ in its purity. This methodology alone, based upon the

<u>sola</u> <u>Scriptura</u> and <u>solus</u> <u>Christus</u> principles, contains the two essen-

tial elements for the progress of the church toward a unified

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[13]See chapter two, p. 38, n. 61.

expression of faith. For it sets forth the teachings of God's Word, the only means the Holy Spirit uses to create true doctrinal consensus in the church, and it purely proclaims the Gospel of forgiveness in Jesus Christ, the only means the Holy Spirit uses to motivate men to lovingly search for the truth. While humanly speaking, the confessional solution seems to be the least likely to achieve the goal of doctrinal consensus, it is the only solution which can attain a God-pleasing harmony.

For Jesus Christ who has reconciled all things to Himself through the blood of His cross is infinitely capable of reconciling all divisions in His church through the power of His Word. In His Word the church receives its direction and strength for the ecumenical task.

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