

Catholicity and the Catholic Spirit

By David Carter

Catholicity is a key integrating concept both for fundamental ecclesiology and for the Ecumenical Movement. The adjective catholic is used alongside the terms one, holy and apostolic in the definition of the church in the Nicene Creed of 381 AD, a creed whose authority is recognized by all the mainstream ecumenically involved churches, including those in the free church, evangelical and Pentecostal traditions which rarely use the Creed in public worship.

A Qualitative Term

Catholicity is a term less easy to define than the companion terms of unity, holiness and apostolicity. It is above all a *qualitative* term, describing the life in Christ of the members of the Church, a life which derives from the faithfulness and utter generosity of the triune God who fills all in all.¹ The term describes both the quality of life shared by God with each and every Christian and the life of mutual fellowship shared between believers. To understand the catholicity of the Church, one has to appreciate the catholicity of the God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who seeks to embrace His creation in love, a love in which He seeks the glad and wholehearted response of those whom He calls to be His children by adoption through the catholic Christ, the eternal Son, the one Mediator.

Because of its essentially qualitative nature, catholicity is something that Christians experience in a way that is not reducible to simple analysis. As Rowan Williams states, “it is clearly a spiritual quality, not an external mark subject to canonical or juridical criteria.”² In short, it is not precisely measurable, though theologians can identify certain things that are definably necessary elements within it in accordance with the perspectives of their particular tradition. The overall spirit of catholicity finds expression in Charles Wesley’s hymns, “Being of beings, God of love” and “Christ from whom all blessings flow.” The former begins:

“Being of beings, God of love,

To thee our hearts we raise

Thy all-sustaining power we prove

*And gladly sing thy praise.”*³

The catholicity of God’s Church in all its legitimate and enriching diversity within the framework of the common trinitarian faith is something for which to be profoundly grateful, something to celebrate. It is by no sheer chance that the Ecumenical Movement has been accompanied by a revival of vibrant trinitarian theology across the denominations.

The concept of catholicity is particularly closely related to that of communion. The Church is the communion of

saints, of all those embraced in the love of the triune God, enjoying communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in and through that communion also joined with all others who belong to Christ, who is “never without his people seen”⁴ and who gives to his followers the commandment that they should “love one another even as I have first loved you” (John 13:34-5). The common life is shared in the worship of the one Father through the Son in the Spirit, in the mutual bearing of burdens amongst the disciples, in the humble preferring of one another in honor, in the freest circulation of love throughout the whole Body which is knit together in an intimacy transcending all human barriers and is lived out in increasing “wonder, love and praise.”⁵

It is important to realize from the beginning that the concept is not static. Catholicity, like unity, is both gift and calling. In one sense, as Jean-Marie Tillard and W.B. Pope both argue, the Church was perfectly catholic on the day of Pentecost.⁶ It then received the gift of the Spirit whose power to lead both Individual Christians and their particular churches into full salvation is unlimited. Nevertheless, it is a gift that needs to be received constantly re-received in terms of constant prayerful pondering. Its potential will not be exhausted until the time comes for the renewal of all things as foretold in Acts.⁷ No church will be fully catholic until that promised time when it will be fully without spot or wrinkle in all her members and the New Creation will be consummated. Until that point, the Church and the individual local and particular churches will continue to grow in fruitfulness of service of the coming Kingdom and thus in catholicity.⁸ No particular church can be fully catholic until there is perfect communion established amongst all the baptized. That is a key point made for Roman Catholics at Vatican II when the Council talked of that catholicity of the Church being impaired by the separation of other Christians from it.⁹

The word catholic is not a biblical one. In classical Greek it means “according to the whole,” or, more loosely expressed, “in terms of fullness and completeness.” I will argue that it also denotes a certain roundedness in terms of all the essential activities of the Christian life in community. It has sometimes been translated as universal or general, though it will already be clear to the reader that these two words by no manner of means capture its full flavor in Christian use. It is first used by the martyr bishop of Antioch, St. Ignatius (35-107) in his letters, in his famous statement, “wherever

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Jesus Christ is, there is the Church.” The fact that it is not expressly used in Scripture does not mean that it cannot be said to have a firm basis in what is widely implicit in Scripture.¹⁰ The qualitative nature of the word is something also apparent in contemporary secular English usage. We speak of a person who has wide ranging interests and a deep appreciation of the variety of the sheer variety of human gifts and forms of culture as having catholic tastes.

As we have seen, the word catholic when used in ecclesiology means far more than universal in a spatial or even temporal sense. It indicates a quality of life enjoyed by the Church in virtue of its calling, endowment and promised destiny by the catholic God whose mercy is over all His works and particularly over humanity as created “in his own image and likeness” (Genesis 1:26). It indicates a degree of constant growth in the exploration of the deep things of the faith, a degree of balance between *leitourgia* (worship), *diakonia* (service, service both within the church fellowship and the wider human community and *kerygma* (proclamation of the Good News). If the word catholicity is not biblical, it at least captures the qualitative side of the word fullness which is most certainly biblical, being used both of Christ as the one who expresses the fullness of God bodily and of the Church as the fullness of Him who fills all in all.¹¹

Twentieth Century exploration of catholicity

Twentieth century Christian theology has seen considerable exploration of the concept of catholicity, by such great theologians as the French Roman Catholic, Henri de Lubac, the American Catholic, Avery Dulles and the Russian Orthodox, Vladimir Lossky.¹² Previously, the churches had rather lost sight of the richness and qualitative nature of the term. Most Roman Catholics up till Vatican II thought of it in terms of universality in both a geographical and a juridical sense, pointing to the fact that their particular church was the most widespread across the world and also the only one to have the essential copestone of the petrine ministry as the God given essential ministry of unity. At the Reformation many continental Protestant churches, following Luther’s example, dropped the term catholic from the Creed, substituting either Christian or universal, thereby leaving the rich and beautiful term catholic as the sole possession of their antagonists, the Catholics obedient to the Bishop of Rome. By contrast several English churches, however, retained the term. The Church of England asserts it is part of the one holy, Catholic Church. British Methodism “claims and cherishes its place within the Holy Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ.”¹³ The United Reformed Church asserts that it is both catholic and reformed.¹⁴

In the years immediately after World War II, English Anglicans and free churchmen engaged in a debate on the meaning of catholicity for their traditions. As part of his

attempt to foster closer unity between the Church of England and the English free churches, Archbishop Fisher invited three representative groups to state their key convictions on the nature of catholicity. A group of Anglo-Catholics produced the report *Catholicity* in 1947. Another group, of evangelical and broad church Anglicans produced a report entitled *The Fullness of Christ*, a key difference between the two being in the stress in the former of episcopacy as absolutely necessary to full catholicity and churchliness and the acceptance in the latter that episcopacy was of the *beneficium* (well-being) of the Church but not to the extent that churches lacking it, but professing the orthodox trinitarian faith, could be said to lack catholicity and churchly status. In 1950 a group of free church scholars argued strongly in *The Catholicity of Protestantism* that the Reformers of the sixteenth century had upheld the faith of the Church as recorded in the New Testament and in the classic creeds. They also held that the authors of *Catholicity* had seriously misunderstood both the teaching of the Reformers and that of many later orthodox Protestants and free church people.

Since the 1970s many continental European Reformation churches have recovered the use of the term catholic and currently some of the most valuable work on catholicity is being done in that context.¹⁵ In 2010, a group of francophone Swiss Christians held a conference at the Bossey Institute, entitled *Towards an Ecumenical Catholicity*, at which presentations were given from theologians in the Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Orthodox, Reformed and Evangelical traditions, emphasis being given to the way in which catholicity is experienced and lived out as well as to its theological understanding within each of these traditions.¹⁶ Three key questions were posed throughout the discussions. How could each particular member’s church enrich the others, how could it be enriched by the others, how did it understand catholicity?¹⁷

Currently, the oldest continuously running ecumenical dialogue, that of the French Groupe des Dombes, dating from an initiative of Fr. Paul Couturier in 1937, is studying the catholicity of the Church. The dialogue, between French Roman Catholics and Protestants of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions, is unofficial in the sense that it is not directly mandated by the churches. Rather, it consists of co-opted groups from within the two traditions. It is, however, famous for the depth and creativity of its previous work, a creativity which is helped by the fact that the two teams have no official responsibility as such and are thus freer to make bold suggestions than might be the case in official dialogues.¹⁸ We may confidently expect a good historical treatment of the theme from them alongside some penetrating insights into possible creative lines of future investigation.

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Some definitions of catholicity

The nuances of the understanding of catholicity across the ages can be explored by contrasting three summaries of its meaning, the first from one of the classic Greek fathers, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386), the second from the most recent ecclesiological statement of the British Methodist Conference (1999), the last from the Uppsala assembly of the World Council of Churches (1968).

First, St. Cyril:

It (i.e. The Church) is called catholic because it exists everywhere on earth from one end to the other, because it teaches infallibly all the truths than men must know, of things unseen as well as earthly; because it brings true worship to every sort of humankind, rulers and ruled, learned and ignorant; because, lastly, it cares for and heals every kind of sin, of the body as well as the soul, possessing every sort of virtue, in work and word and spiritual gifts.¹⁹

Next, the Methodist definition:

The Church is catholic because there is one universal God who has declared his love for all creation in Jesus Christ. So the Church embraces all nations and peoples without regard to human distinctions of class or tribe, colour or race, gender or sexuality, poverty or riches.²⁰

Finally, the longer statement from the WCC Assembly, from which only a small selection of quotations are given.

Since Christ died and rose for all mankind, catholicity is the opposite of all kinds of egoism and particularism. It is the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, integrity and totality of life in Christ...Two factors in it are the unifying grace of the Holy Spirit and the humble efforts of believers...catholicity is a gift of the Spirit, but also a task, a call and an engagement.²¹

All three statements link catholicity with universality, a universality which is, of course, implicit in Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations," the two modern ones giving a clear christological justification for so doing. Cyril speaks of the infallibility of the Church's teaching, a point missing in the two modern statements doubtless because of disagreements since the Reformation as to the extent to which the Church can be said to teach infallibly.

The Reformation and post-Reformation churches do not claim to be able to make infallible declarations, though they would claim to teach all the doctrines essential to Christian faith and practice. Cyril stresses the healing ministry of the Church in both physical and spiritual terms, a truth that would not be denied by the authorities behind the two modern texts. I imagine it would be particularly welcomed by Pentecostals, for whom the recovery of the full range of the gifts of the Spirit, including those relating to tongues and healing, is part of the catholicity that they would claim in their stress upon the "full" gospel.

The WCC text goes on to say "The Church is bold in speaking of itself as the sign of the coming unity of mankind," a commonplace in modern ecumenical dialogue and consensus. It relates catholicity very specifically to the worship of the Church and its *diakonia* or service of others in the world.

Catholicity is also a constant possession and pursuit of the mystery of faith, the sacramental experience of that incorporation into Christ and involvement with mankind of which the Church is the form and the eucharist the focus. In its deepest sense liturgy is the hallowing of all we are for the sake of all that is, that God may be all in all.

Here we have, particularly neatly encapsulated, a sense of the catholicity of the Church in which the inextricable link between mission, service and worship is underlined. The eschatological perspective, hinted at in the last phrase is then more fully developed "And finally, catholicity is expectant...only in the fullness of redeemed humanity shall we experience the fullness of the Spirit's gifts." This underlines the eschatological perspective, so strong in the first few generations of the Church, but for so long overlooked until its recovery through modern biblical study and liturgical reform. The concurrent assertion that "the Church's mission to the world will bring an enrichment from the world into the Christian Church" underlines a point particularly stressed by Roman Catholics and Methodists in the twentieth century. The 1937 British Methodist ecclesiological statement, *Nature of the Christian Church*, states,

The Church of Christ is the home of the Holy Spirit, and therefore a family with a unique and developing life. It is a life of distinctive quality, a life which, under the guidance of the Spirit should be richer as new nations are added to the Church and new apprehensions of divine truth are given.²²

The sixth session of the international Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue (1992-1996) was devoted to the examination of faith, with particular reference to its fruitfulness in the life of the Church in terms of new forms of devotion and mission, such as were typified in the development of new forms of the religious life or group fellowship and mission.²³

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It should now be clear that the catholicity of the Church is a gift of the Spirit of God, involving an incredible galaxy or cornucopia of charisms given to individuals, groups and particular churches across the ages, all given in order to enrich the Church and enable it to respond to its universal task of witness/proclamation (*martyria*), worship (*leitourgia*) and service (*diakonia*) in the name of Christ.

Claims to catholicity

Today, all the mainstream trinitarian churches would claim to be catholic, not, of course, in terms of any empirical perfection (which is not to be expected until the eschaton), but in terms of being conscious of the activity of the triune God amongst them, guiding them in their mission towards the promised renewal of all things. They would each claim to practice the three fundamental tasks just mentioned and to teach all that, in their understanding, is essential Christian truth. There are, however, differences amongst them as to some of the aspects of teaching and ministry that are to be seen as fundamental and indispensable to catholicity. There are differences of opinion between them in terms of their estimation and recognition of the catholicity of the other churches.

The Anglican and Protestant churches claim to be *part* of the one holy Catholic Church, but in no way deny the claim of at least some others to a share also in the common catholicity. As already noted the Church of England and British Reformed and Methodists claim catholicity as a mark.

Nevertheless, even in the Anglo-Saxon countries, popular use of the word “catholic” has tended to be shorthand for the Roman Catholic Church in opposition to the Protestant churches. From the late nineteenth century, the word has often been used by churchmen in the three different ways, firstly, by Roman Catholics as exclusively referring to their own communion as the *only* fully Catholic body, possessing alone both all the forms of ministry and all the teaching essential to the Universal Church. It has been used by Anglo-Catholics within the Anglican Communion to refer exclusively to those churches which have retained the historic succession of bishops and the orthodox faith of the historic creeds. It has also sometimes been used most Protestant churches to champion their claim to catholicity.

The Anglican and Protestant churches generally recognize that their claim to catholicity in no way excludes others. Two major communions make more exclusive claims. The Orthodox churches in communion with Constantinople claim that they alone have preserved inviolate, without addition or subtraction, the faith once given to the saints.²⁴ They argue that the Roman Catholic Church has departed from that faith in two major ways, by elevating the author-

ity of the Bishop of Rome over all the local churches to an extent unknown in the Church of the early fathers and by making the unauthorized addition of the filioque clause to the Creed, thereby distorting the previously balanced understanding of the Trinity.²⁵ Some modern Orthodox take the view that though they know where the true church is, they cannot say where it is not and thus maintain a degree of agnosticism about the degree of catholicity of other Christian bodies.²⁶

The Roman Catholic Church claims that it alone has preserved the key cornerstone of catholicity, the petrine ministry, exercised, according to its understanding, by the Bishop of Rome since earliest times. However, at the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church accepted both that important elements of catholicity had been preserved in other churches, in some cases perhaps better preserved, and that her own catholicity was empirically wounded by lack of communion with other churches and ecclesial bodies.²⁷

The Roman Catholic view of its own catholicity is thus a subtly nuanced one, balancing an emphasis on its enduring claims to unique ecclesial fullness with a real affirmation of the varyingly significant elements of catholicity in the other trinitarian churches. Avery Dulles is insistent that all trinitarian churches can claim a degree of catholicity.²⁸ Fr. Peter Hocken, a well-known British Roman Catholic expert of Pentecostalism, maintains that each Christian confession has a responsibility before God to preserve and live as profoundly as possible the gifts it has been given. He also states that “when we encounter other Christians clinging tenaciously to practices for which they are prepared to suffer, we should presume that something has been God-given. This applies equally to Roman Catholic belief about the papacy, the Lutheran stress on justification by faith and on the Baptist stress on the priesthood of all believers.”²⁹

Some hopeful developments towards fuller consensus on catholicity

The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II took a huge step forward from previous relationships when it commended the value of dialogue on an equal footing “searching together with the separated brethren (and one may add, increasingly with the sisters as well as more women theologians rise to prominence in all the traditions) into the divine mysteries.”³⁰ This represented an important admission that catholicity can only develop fully through common prayerful seeking and dialogue, dialogue that should come, at the more local level, to include reflection and sharing by the faithful in general.

Pope John Paul II made valuable contributions to the debate on the degree of catholicity in other communions.

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As well as underscoring in great detail in *Ut Unum Sint* the importance and gains of dialogue, he referred to “the embellishment of the *koinonia* that had taken place despite the objective sin of schism.”³¹ Later he also talked about the importance of being alert to new styles of Christian discipleship and service as they emerged from varying quarters. From the other end, as it were of the ecclesial spectrum, we note the increasing interest on the part of some Baptists in engaging more fully with the patristic achievement in theology and the wider ongoing development of the Great Tradition. Steven R. Harmon in his *Towards Baptist Catholicity*, is the US standard bearer of this approach, John Colwell his British equivalent in his brilliant *Promise and Presence*, in which he makes out a case for the sacramentality of the five other sacraments accepted by Orthodox and Roman Catholics, but not generally by most Protestants.³²

What has happened at and since Vatican II has been an increasing realization amongst all the ecumenically engaged churches that there are riches which properly belong to the whole Church Universal and catholic which have been better developed and lived out in some communions than others and which thereby need to be received. The Receptive Ecumenism project of the early twenty first century has reinforced this by insisting that churches should place at the top of the agenda the question of asking what they can learn from others in order to have a more fully rounded Christian life and witness. I understand that the current stage of the Lutheran-Pentecostal international dialogue is looking at the themes of *pure gospel* as stressed by Lutherans and *full gospel*, as emphasized by the Pentecostals.

From the above, it will be seen that though all churches recognize that the completion and perfection of their catholicity will only occur at the eschaton, there remains some disagreement as to which can be said to currently have the fullest possible catholicity. What is necessary in terms of ministerial structures and sacramental life in particular remains a point of difference and debate between them. However, even here we can note important progress in terms of convergence, if not yet complete consensus. The ecumenically engaged churches increasingly agree on the need for forms of episcopate at varying levels from the most local to the global. They also increasingly agree on the need for a balance between the due autonomy, within the wider communion, of local churches, however defined, and the authority of the Church Universal, with structures that will both protect the particular charisms and traditions of local churches while keeping them open to the riches of the universal *koinonia*.

The concept of *consonance*, developed in the context of mutual recognition of presbyteral ministry between the (Anglican) Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church of Ireland may be a helpful model for advance. The Irish

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Anglican bishops recognized that the functions of the annually elected President of the Methodist Church were consonant with their understanding of the functions of a bishop in the historic succession. This enabled the recognition of the President as an episcopal minister and resultant interchange of presbyteral ministry.³³

The Anglican and Protestant churches claim to have preserved a sufficient degree of catholicity as pilgrim churches. The churches of the Reformation, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed, all claim that the reforms carried out by them in the sixteenth century clarified their catholicity in essentials. In each case both a weeding out of practices and beliefs felt to be unhelpful or misleading to the faithful in their understanding of the Gospel took place. Lutherans talk of the way in which their Reformation re-configured the Gospel, allowing the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, the key doctrine in Lutheran eyes, to stand out in greater clarity as the most essential teaching of the Church, one fundamental to its catholicity.³⁴ Anglicans insisted on the judicious preservation of elements of church order and liturgy that they felt to be genuinely primitive and in accordance with Scripture. The Reformed stressed that the Church as church of sinners needed constant reformation; it had to be seen as *ecclesia reformata* and *reformanda*, constantly needing reform.

Later developing churches in the Protestant tradition would make similar claims. Some, particularly Pentecostals, would claim to have recovered neglected aspects of the Christian tradition that had previously been forgotten or, at least, obscured. This was also true of the early Methodists with their claim to have restored biblical teaching on holiness and apostolic practice in terms of close Christian fellowship.³⁵

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The search for Christian unity is essentially a search on the part of all the churches involved for fuller catholicity. It is no accident the modern Ecumenical Movement began amongst the Anglican and Protestant churches which already admitted that they could not make any exclusive claim to catholicity. Methodists, in particular, early accepted that they were the debtors to all since Wesley had frequently acknowledged a debt to spiritual writers of many traditions.³⁶ These included counter-Reformation spiritual writers as well as Anglican and Puritan divines. Wesley conceded that he could just about cope with popish superstition on account of the holiness of so many of their saints. He referred to Fenelon as “that excellent man, the Bishop of Cambrai.”

All the major churches are now agreed on the value of theological dialogue and receptive ecumenism, believing that they both have God-given gifts to share with other churches as well as gifts to receive from them. Fundamental to this is what one might call the *catholic spirit*, a spirit of love and humility in which churches seek to share with and learn from each other in order that, together, with one accord they may give glory to God.³⁷ It is important that such a spirit characterize the faithful of all churches in their daily discipleship and meeting with Christians of other traditions.

The Catholic Spirit

In the course of the original Methodist Revival, John Wesley preached a sermon entitled *The Catholic Spirit*.³⁸ It pointed out how much basic teaching the churches shared and called for mutual love. “If we cannot all think alike, at least let us love alike.” At the end of the published version of his sermon, Wesley appended his brother’s hymn, *Catholic Love*, with its extolling of the spiritual unity of all those who love God, seek to do his will and are united, despite remaining ecclesiological or doctrinal disagreements, in the search for holiness. In another hymn, Charles Wesley writes:


*“Names and sects and parties fall,
Thou, O Christ art all in all.”*³⁹

John Wesley was not always as consistent as modern ecumenists would wish and remained frequently a bitter critic of aspects of the Roman Catholic Church and its teaching.⁴⁰ However, his call to Christians to “love alike” is still at the center of any understanding of the spirit necessary for mutual learning and close relationships. The catholic spirit involves the willingness to listen to others. It involves the preparedness to abandon prejudices that may be based on a misunderstanding of the teaching of the other. It involves humility in being prepared to accept that others have insights which can enrich the catholicity of one’s own

communion. It involves willingness to struggle to come to a common mind and consensus that may transcend the previous confessions both of one’s own church and the partner church in dialogue or reception.

Subsequent Methodist conferences and teachers have heartily upheld this teaching. The Conference of 1820 called upon the Methodist people to “ever maintain the kind and catholic spirit of primitive Methodism towards all denominations of Christians.”⁴¹ William Shrewsbury, writing in an age of fierce attacks on Methodism by both independents and anglo-catholics, called on his fellow Methodists never to respond in like manner but always to take every occasion of speaking as well as possible of others.⁴² Benjamin Gregory counselled Victorian Methodists against prejudice “if we find the Church an institution with real continuity, let us not say, this is popery...if we find in the Church and eager inclusiveness, let us not say latitudinarianism.”⁴³ He praised the Methodist habit of contributing to the missions of other denominations as a sign of catholic fellowship.⁴⁴

To a degree Gregory anticipated the increasing emphasis in ecumenical ecclesiological thinking is on catholicity as a developing feature of the Church. Though in principle the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was sufficient to endow a faithful church with full catholicity, in practice the catholic understanding and practice of the Church will continue to develop up to the time of the Lord’s return. That is inevitable granted our finite minds, our fallibility and our weakness through sin. We have, however, the apostolic promises, “Brothers and sisters, we do not yet know what we shall be like, but we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him” and that Christ will present the Church to Himself “without spot or wrinkle,” in final splendor.⁴⁵

The Church will develop in line with its faithfulness to its calling to participate in the mission of the triune God and to learn from the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit in relation to the signs of the times and the continuing development of the humanity within which it is located as “sign, instrument and first fruits” of the final Kingdom of God. Up to that point the catholicity of the Church will grow and develop until the time comes when all the promises of God are fulfilled in her.⁴⁶ 

Notes:

1. Ephesians 3:18. The Orthodox in particular stress the trinitarian source of catholicity. Thus Fr. M. Savich of the Orthodox Research Institute writes, “The Holy Trinity is the ideal and crown of catholicity.”
2. See his article in Hastings et al (eds) *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (2000), p. 101.
3. *Hymns and Psalms* (British Methodist Hymn Book, 1983), no 690.

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4. *Ibid.*, no 622.

5. The concluding phrase in Charles Wesley's "Love Divine, all loves excelling." *Singing the Faith* (British Methodist Hymn Book, 2011), no 503.

6. Tillard, J-M, *L'Eglise Locale* (1995), p.40. Pope, W.B. *Compendium of Christian Theology* (1880), pp. 263-266.

7. Acts 3:21.

8. "Imaging the Kingdom" is an interesting term used by George Tavard.

9. Decree on Ecumenism, para 4.

10. See next para.

11. See next para.

12. See e.g. de Lubac, H, *Catholicism* (1950), Dulles, A. *The Catholicity of the Church* (1985), Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (ET, 1957)

13. *British Methodist Deed of Union*, 1932.

14. The United Reformed Church was the result of a union between English Presbyterians and most Congregationalists in 1972. Later the Churches of Christ and Scottish Congregationalists joined it.

15. One of those to urge its restoration amongst Protestants was the eminent reformed ecumenist, Lukas Vischer. See *Vers Une Catholicite Oecumenique*, p 15. Some Protestants have continued to find difficulties with it because of its previous associations with the Roman Catholic Church.

16. F-X Amherdt, P. Gonzalez, M. Hoegger and H. Paik (eds). *Vers Une Catholicite oecumenique* (2013). The English title in the main text of this article is mine.

17. *Vers*, op cit, p. 21.

18. The standard account of the work of the Groupe is Clifford, C, *The Groupe Des Dombes-A Dialogue of Conversion* (2005). French Lutherans and Reformed are now united in the United Protestant Church.

19. Cited from Congar, Y. *Divided Christendom* (ET, 1950), p. 94.

20. *Called to Love and Praise*, para 2.4.4.

21. The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church, cited from Kinnamon, M. and Cope, B. (eds), *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Voices* (1997), pp. 93-7.

22. *Statements of the Methodist Church on Faith and Order*, 1933-83 (1984), p.7.

23. *The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith*, cited in Gros, J, Meyer, H and Rusch, W. *Growth in Agreement II* (2000), pp. 618-646.

24. As well as the Byzantine Orthodox communion, there is also the Oriental Orthodox communion including the Copts, the Armenians, Syrian, Ethiopian and Indian Orthodox. I have never received a fully clear answer from Coptic friends as to their exact claims, though they do acknowledge a closeness of spirit to the Byzantine Orthodox and to some extent to the Roman Catholic Church.

25. The filioque is, however, less now a bone of contention than previously. The *Chieti Report* (2016) of the Roman Catholic-

Orthodox international dialogue has made a helpful study of the ways in which East and West, from as early as the fourth century diverged in their understanding of the authority of the Bishop of Rome.

26. At the recent Great and Holy Synod, there was some Orthodox disagreement about the extent to which the word church should be used of non-Orthodox bodies.

27. Decree *Unitatis Reintegratio* of Vatican II, para 4. Paras 14ff pay further tribute to these. Earlier, Paul Couturier had already praised the greater cosmic sense of the Orthodox liturgy and spirituality, the scriptural piety of Protestants and the beauty of the Anglican daily office, duly developed from the monastic hours for wider use by the faithful in general.

28. Dulles, op cit, p. 169.

29. Hocken, P. *The Glory and The Shame. Reflections on the Twentieth Century outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (1994).

30. *Decree on Ecumenism*, para 11.

31. *Ut Unum Sint*, (1995) para 85.

32. Harmon, S. *Towards Baptist Catholicity* (2006); Colwell, J. *Promise and Presence: An Exploration of Sacramental Theology* (2005).

33. Bishop Harold Miller, Mrs Gillian Kingston and I have written about this important development in *One in Christ* (2014), pp. 165-214.

34. See the recent study on *The Apostolicity of the Church*, a study document from the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue (2006).

35. Rigg, J. *A Comparative View of Church Organisations Primitive and Protestant* (1897), p. 207.

36. William Shrewsbury, *An Essay on the Scriptural Character of the Wesleyan Methodist Economy* (1840), pp 89-90.

37. Romans 15:6.

38. No 39 on United Methodist website.

39. In "Christ from whom all blessings flow." *Singing the Faith* op cit, no. 676.

40. For a study of this see Butler, D. *Methodists and Papists* (1995). We have to remember Wesley was influenced by the general contemporary British prejudice of his time, incorporating some serious misconceptions. Nor, of course, could he envisage Vatican II and the resultant sea change in attitudes and relationships.

41. Cited in Simon, J.S. *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline* (1923), p.269.

42. Shrewsbury, W., op cit, pp. 288-291.

43. Gregory, B. *Holy Catholic Church* (1873), pp. 4-5.

44. Gregory, B. *Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles* (1888), Vol. 1, p.25.

45. 1 John 3:2, Ephesians 5:27.

46. Decree *Dei Verbum*, 9.