

## 2. Relations with those not in full communion: History and Theology

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### *Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue*

#### **Christ and the other religions**

- Judaism
- Greek and Roman Paganism
  - Justin Martyr
  - Origen
  - Tertullian
    - *Christ laid down one definite system of truth which the world must believe without qualification, and which we must seek precisely in order to believe it when we find it. (De praescriptione, 9)*

#### **The Church and others who call themselves Christian**

- Rome as the anchor of faith
  - *Letter of Clement to the Corinthians*
  - Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Romans*
    - *Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto her that has found mercy in the bountifulness of the Father Most High and of Jesus Christ His only Son; to the church that is beloved and enlightened through the will of Him who willed all things that are, by faith and love towards Jesus Christ our God; even unto her that has the presidency in the country of the region of the Romans, being worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of felicitation, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy in purity, and having the presidency of love, walking in the law of Christ and bearing the Father's name... (beginning)*
- Apostolic succession
  - Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses*, 3.3
    - *...by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority (ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potiore principalem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam), that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolic tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere. (3.3.2)*
  - Tertullian
    - *They [the apostles] set up churches in every city, from which the other churches afterwards borrowed the transmission of the faith and the seeds of doctrine and continue to borrow them every day, in order to become churches. (De praescriptione, 20)*
    - *It follows that all doctrine which is in agreement with those apostolic churches, the wombs and sources of faith, is to be deemed true on the ground that it indubitably preserves what the churches received from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God. (De praescriptione, 21)*
- Separation from the Church
- No good outside the Church
  - Cyprian of Carthage, *On the Unity of the Church*
    - *Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined with an adulteress is separated from the promises of the Church, nor will he who has abandoned the Church arrive at the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He cannot have God as a father who does not have the Church as a mother. (6)*
    - *Does anyone believe that this unity which comes from divine strength, which is closely connected with the divine sacraments, can be broken asunder in the Church and be separated by the divisions of colliding wills? He who does not hold this unity, does not hold*

*the law of God, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation. (6)*

- *Let no one think that the good can depart from the Church; the wind does not ravage the wheat, nor does the storm overturn the tree strongly and solidly rooted; the light straws are tossed about by the tempest; the feeble trees are thrown down by the onrush of the whirlwind. (9)*
  - *Although there cannot be another baptism than the one, they think that they baptize; although the fountain of life has been deserted, they promise the grace of the life-giving and saving water. There men are not washed but rather are made foul, nor are their sins purged but on the contrary piled high. That nativity generates sons not for God but for the devil. Being born through a lie they do not obtain the promises of truth; begotten of perfidy they lose the grace of faith. They cannot arrive at the reward of peace who have broken the peace of the Lord by the madness of discord. (11)*
  - *Even if such men are slain in confession of the Name that stain is not washed away by blood; the inexpressible and serious fault of discord is purged not even by martyrdom. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church. He will not be able to arrive in the kingdom who deserted her who is to rule. Christ gave us peace; He ordered us to be in agreement and of one mind; He commanded us to keep the bonds of love and charity uncorrupted and inviolate. He cannot display himself a martyr who has not maintained fraternal charity. (14)*
  - *He will not be able to attain it who has violated the love of Christ by perfidious dissension. He who does not have charity does not have God. The words of the blessed Apostle John are: 'God,' he says, 'is love, and he who abides in love, abides in God and God abides in him.' They cannot abide with God who have been unwilling to be of one mind in God's Church. Although they burn when given over to flames and fire, or lay down their lives when thrown to the beasts, that crown of faith will not be theirs, but the punishment of perfidy, and no glorious ending of religious valor but the destruction of desperation. Such a man can be slain; he cannot be crowned. (14)*
  - *God is one and Christ one and His Church one and the faith one and the people one joined together by the tie of concord into a solid unity of body. The unity cannot be torn asunder, nor can the one body be separated by a division of its structure, nor torn into bits by the wrenching asunder of its entrails by laceration. Whatever departs from the parent-stem will not be able to breathe and live apart; it loses the substance of health. (23)*
- Baptism outside the Church
    - Cyprian
    - Stephen of Rome
    - Augustine
      - *Nor is the water 'profane and adulterous' over which the name of God is invoked, even though it be invoked by profane and adulterous persons; because neither the creature itself of water, nor the name invoked, is adulterous. But the baptism of Christ, consecrated by the words of the gospel, is necessarily holy, however polluted and unclean its ministers may be; because its inherent sanctity cannot be polluted, and the divine excellence abides in its sacrament, whether to the salvation of those who use it aright, or to the destruction of those who use it wrong. (De Baptismo, 3.15)*

## **Before the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

- Non-Christians
- Conviction that the Gospel had spread throughout the world
- Dignity of each person
- The Church and its limits
- Thomas Aquinas
- Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctam* (1302)
  - *We believe in her [the Church] firmly and we confess with simplicity that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins. . . .*
  - *Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God [Rom 13:2], unless he invent like Manicheus two beginnings, which is false and judged by us heretical, since according to the testimony of Moses, it is not in the beginnings but in the beginning that God created heaven and earth [Gen 1:1]. Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.*

## 16-19<sup>th</sup> centuries

- Non-Christians
  - The necessity to preach the Gospel
  - Methods of preaching
  - Those who do not accept the Gospel
    - Paul III's *Sublimus Dei* of May 29, 1537
    - *The enemy of the human race, who opposes all good deeds in order to bring men to destruction, beholding and envying this, invented a means never before heard of, by which he might hinder the preaching of God's word of Salvation to the people: he inspired his satellites who, to please him, have not hesitated to publish abroad that the Indians of the West and the South, and other people of whom We have recent knowledge should be treated as dumb brutes created for our service, pretending that they are incapable of receiving the Catholic Faith.*
    - *We, who, though unworthy, exercise on earth the power of our Lord and seek with all our might to bring those sheep of His flock who are outside into the fold committed to our charge, consider, however, that the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it. Desiring to provide ample remedy for these evils, We define and declare by these Our letters, or by any translation thereof signed by any notary public and sealed with the seal of any ecclesiastical dignitary, to which the same credit shall be given as to the originals, that, notwithstanding whatever may have been or may be said to the contrary, the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen, it shall be null and have no effect.*
    - *By virtue of Our apostolic authority We define and declare by these present letters, or by any translation thereof signed by any notary public and sealed with the seal of any ecclesiastical dignitary, which shall thus command the same obedience as the originals, that the said Indians and other peoples should be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ by preaching the word of God and by the example of good and holy living.*
    - John Calvin, *Institutes*, III.24.
- Non-Catholic Christians
  - Repetition of the teaching of Aquinas
  - Elements of the Church outside the Church: an invisible Church or mystical Church?

## The Twentieth Century

- First ecumenical outreach
  - Leo XIII issues *Satis Cognitum* in 1896 critical of ecumenism
  - Benedict XV meets with Bishop Charles Brent of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1919
  - Malines conversations between Anglicans and Roman Catholics (1921-25) under Cardinal Désiré Joseph Mercier
  - Pius XI issues *Mortalium animos* in 1928, critical of the ecumenical movement
  - First ecumenical conversation at the Trappist monastery of Les Domes in 1937
- The Ecumenical Movement
  - US Episcopal Church and Anglican Lambeth Conference call to unity (1888)
  - World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (1910)
    - Scriptures
    - Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
    - Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist
    - Historic episcopate
  - World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne (1927)
    - Recognized Christian division as a missionary problem
    - Attended by Protestants, particularly from North America
  - International Missionary Council (1921)
    - Founded the Conference on Life and Work
  - Establishment of ecumenical bodies in many countries
    - Life and Work (social service and action)

- Faith and Order (theological basis for church unity)
  - International Missionary Conference (common evangelization)
  - World Council of Christian Education
  - World Conference on Faith and Order in 1927 in Lausanne, Switzerland
    - Representatives of all major Christian traditions except Catholics
  - In 1920, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople wrote to the “Churches of Christ everywhere” urging a “fellowship of Churches” (*koinonia to ekklesion*)
  - World Council of Churches
    - Founded in 1948 with the joining of Faith and Order and Life and Work
    - International Missionary Council joins in 1961, with the Orthodox churches & Pentecostals
    - World Council of Christian Education joins in 1971
    - Catholic Church joins Faith and Order in 1968
    - Assemblies (9 so far)
      - Amsterdam (1948), Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983), Canberra (1991), Harare (1998), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2006), Busan, Korea (2013)
    - “The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity. The WCC brings together 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 560 million Christians and including most of the world’s Orthodox churches, scores of denominations from such historic traditions of the Protestant Reformation as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed, as well as many united and independent churches. While the bulk of the WCC’s founding churches were European and North American, today most are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific. For its member churches, the WCC is a unique space: one in which they can reflect, speak, act, worship and work together, challenge and support each other, share and debate with each other. As members of this fellowship, WCC member churches:
      - are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship;
      - promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism;
      - engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace, and upholding the integrity of creation; and
      - foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.”
- “The WCC is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

--from the WCC website (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we.html>)

- *Mystici Corporis Christi* (June 29, 1943)
  - *It was possible for Him of Himself to impart these graces to mankind directly; but He willed to do so only through a visible Church made up of men, so that through her all might cooperate with Him in dispensing the graces of Redemption. (12)*
  - *Hence they err in a matter of divine truth, who imagine the Church to be invisible, intangible, a something merely “pneumatological” as they say, by which many Christian communities, though they differ from each other in their profession of faith, are united by an invisible bond. (14)*
  - *For Peter in view of his primacy is only Christ’s Vicar; so that there is only one chief Head of this Body, namely Christ, who never ceases Himself to guide the Church invisibly, though at the same time He rules it visibly, through him who is His representative on earth. (40)*
  - *They, therefore, walk in the path of dangerous error who believe that they can accept Christ as the Head of the Church, while not adhering loyally to His Vicar on earth. They have taken away the visible head, broken the visible bonds of unity and left the Mystical Body of the Redeemer so obscured and so maimed, that those who are seeking the haven of eternal salvation can neither see it nor find it. (41)*

- *There can, then, be no real opposition or conflict between the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the juridical commission of Ruler and Teacher received from Christ, since they mutually complement and perfect each other. . . . (65)*
- *Now since its Founder willed this social body of Christ to be visible, the cooperation of all its members must also be externally manifest through their profession of the same faith and their sharing the same sacred rites, through participation in the same Sacrifice, and the practical observance of the same laws. Above all, it is absolutely necessary that the Supreme Head, that is, the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, be visible to the eyes of all, since it is He who gives effective direction to the work which all do in common in a mutually helpful way towards the attainment of the proposed end. (69)*
- *As you know, Venerable Brethren, from the very beginning of Our Pontificate, We have committed to the protection and guidance of heaven those who do not belong to the visible Body of the Catholic Church, solemnly declaring that after the example of the Good Shepherd We desire nothing more ardently than that they may have life and have it more abundantly. Imploring the prayers of the whole Church We wish to repeat this solemn declaration in this Encyclical Letter in which We have proclaimed the praises of the "great and glorious Body of Christ" and from a heart overflowing with love We ask each and every one of them to correspond to the interior movements of grace, and to seek to withdraw from that state in which they cannot be sure of their salvation. For even though by an unconscious desire and longing they have a certain relationship with the Mystical Body of the Redeemer, they still remain deprived of those many heavenly gifts and helps which can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church. Therefore may they enter into Catholic unity and, joined with Us in the one, organic Body of Jesus Christ, may they together with us run on to the one Head in the Society of glorious love. Persevering in prayer to the Spirit of love and truth, We wait for them with open and outstretched arms to come not to a stranger's house, but to their own, their father's home. (103)*
- *Though We desire this unceasing prayer to rise to God from the whole Mystical Body in common, that all the straying sheep may hasten to enter the one fold of Jesus Christ, yet We recognize that this must be done of their own free will; for no one believes unless he wills to believe. Hence they are most certainly not genuine Christians who against their belief are forced to go into a church, to approach the altar and to receive the Sacraments; for the 'faith without which it is impossible to please God' is an entirely free 'submission of intellect and will.' Therefore, whenever it happens, despite the constant teaching of this Apostolic See, that anyone is compelled to embrace the Catholic faith against his will, Our sense of duty demands that We condemn the act. For men must be effectively drawn to the truth by the Father of light through the spirit of His beloved Son, because, endowed as they are with free will, they can misuse their freedom under the impulse of mental agitation and base desires. Unfortunately many are still wandering far from the Catholic truth, being unwilling to follow the inspirations of divine grace, because neither they nor the faithful pray to God with sufficient fervor for this intention. Again and again We beg all we ardently love the Church to follow the example of the Divine Redeemer and to and to give themselves constantly to such prayer. (104)*