

**How Might We Envision the Unity We Have?**  
**Engaging *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Part 1**

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The church is not visibly one. That's why there's an ecumenical movement. That's why we need to have such a thing as an "Interchurch Conference." Our baptisms are paradoxical: we're simultaneously baptized into the one church of Jesus Christ and into its divisions. In the midst of those divisions, how might we yet envision what it means to be the one church of Jesus Christ? Now over a hundred years since the institutional launch of the modern ecumenical movement with the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910, we're moving toward greater clarity in our shared theological imagination of the church's unity—perhaps more than the pioneers of the movement dreamed possible. The story of the past century of ecumenical advance helps us understand how this encouraging convergence toward a common ecclesial vision has taken shape.

It's no mere historical accident that the nineteenth-century beginnings of the modern ecumenical movement coincided with the beginnings of the modern missions movement. The missionaries quickly concluded that taking a divided Christianity to the mission field scandalized their witness for Christ. Some of them issued the earliest modern calls for ecumenical convergence. One such call came from William Carey, a Baptist missionary to India. In 1806 Carey proposed that "a general association of all denominations of Christians from the four quarters of the earth" meet each decade at the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>1</sup> Carey's dream was realized in part a century later by the 1910 World Missionary Conference, which gave birth to the International Missionary Conference in 1921. These gatherings were initially limited to Protestants, but they served as the nucleus for what became the primary institutional expression of the worldwide ecumenical movement.

One of the speakers at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference was Bishop Charles Brent, an Episcopal missionary to the Philippines from the United States. Bishop Brent urged conference participants not to be content with merely seeking greater cooperation in missions among the denominations, for visible unity would require that divisive issues of doctrine and church order be addressed. He called for creating an international commission devoted to studying the matters of faith and order that presently divided the churches, and he personally made this proposal to representatives of the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and the various Protestant communions.<sup>2</sup> In 1927 a World Conference on Faith and Order held its initial meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, with representatives of all major Christian communions, including the Orthodox, but with the exception of the Catholic Church. Two years earlier, the Conference on Life and Work had been founded in Stockholm, Sweden to seek worldwide cooperation between the churches in addressing social issues in the wake of the industrial revolution and the First World War.

Cooperation in mission, joint work on doctrine and church order, and solidarity in social action—these three complementary expressions of the worldwide ecumenical movement ultimately coalesced in a unified institutional embodiment of the quest for Christian unity. In 1948 the Life and Work and Faith and Order movements joined to form the World Council of Churches, and in 1961 the International Missionary Conference also merged into the WCC. The ecumenical movement has been its healthiest when these three emphases—mission, doctrine, and social justice—have gone hand in hand. It's suffered whenever any one of those emphases has dominated to the neglect of the others.

The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, India in 1961 issued what's now regarded as the classic definition of the visible unity sought by the ecumenical movement. Here's how it defined the unity we seek:

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully-committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages, in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.<sup>3</sup>

The New Delhi definition is now commonly embraced as the best concise explanation of the ecumenical movement's goal. It's a visible unity in which all baptized Christians—in every place there are Christians—fully belong to one another in a covenanted community; a community both local and worldwide in which all Christians share the historic faith of the church; a community in which all Christians are able to share in celebrating the Eucharist together; a community in which all Christians jointly engage in mission and service; a community in which all churches accept the ministers and members of one another's churches as their own; and, a community in which the churches together can speak prophetic words to the world with a unified voice whenever God calls them to do so.

We're still a long way from fully realizing that sort of visible unity. Tomorrow we'll talk more about our current lack of the unity we envision and what we can do about it. We may be a long way from visible unity, but it became a less unrealistic hope when the Catholic Church officially embraced the worldwide ecumenical movement at the Second Vatican Council. This year we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Vatican II's final session in 1965. In preparation for the Council, the Vatican established a Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and extended invitations to other churches and denominations to send official observers, who exercised much influence on the Council's outcomes. One of the most significant developments of Vatican II was its Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Latin for "the restoration of unity." After acknowledging that "division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature," the decree recognized the modern ecumenical movement that began among Protestants as nothing less than the work of God's Holy Spirit. It was the major twentieth-century turning point in the progress of the quest for Christian unity. The Decree on Ecumenism acknowledged that all churches, including the Catholic Church, share responsibility for their contributions to the present divisions. It explicitly affirmed that non-Catholic Christians experience the grace of God through the presence of Christ and the work of the Spirit in Christian communities that are outside the institutional structures of the Catholic Church. The decree called for all Catholics, clergy and laity alike, to learn about and learn from the distinctive gifts that the other denominational traditions contribute to the body of Christ. It applied the priestly ministry of all believers to the church's work of ecumenical engagement. It insisted that every Catholic, and by implication every Christian, has the obligation to embrace personally the quest for Christian unity. The Decree said, "The Sacred Council exhorts all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism"; it said also, "The attainment of union is the concern of the whole Church, faithful and shepherds alike." We might call this the "ecumenist-hood of all believers." All of us would do well to take note and likewise encourage this ecumenist-hood of all believers, for every Christian is simultaneously baptized into the one church of Jesus Christ and into its divisions. Seeing to their reconciliation belongs to the priestly ministry to which all Christians are commissioned in their baptism. The Decree on Ecumenism irrevocably committed the Catholic Church to participation in the various forms of the

worldwide ecumenical movement, and thus it also opened the way for many other denominations to follow through on their own ecumenical convictions by entering into formal dialogue with the Catholic Church, and with one another as well.

The changed ecumenical situation that followed Vatican II fostered numerous bilateral and multilateral dialogues between representatives of various denominations. Over the past four decades these dialogues have produced a rich body of agreed statements that document strides toward unity in faith and practice along with the matters of continued disagreement that warrant future dialogue, published in three (and soon to be four) thick volumes of the *Growth in Agreement* series sponsored by the World Council of Churches. The most exciting outcome of the bilateral dialogues is the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* ratified by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, and in 2006 joined by the World Methodist Council. There remain other church-dividing issues, but the very doctrine that divided the Western church in the sixteenth century is no longer one of them. Justification as the gracious work by which God accepts us as righteous and makes us righteous is an ecumenically shared doctrine.

There have also been multilateral dialogues, conversations between representatives of three or more Christian communions; these have borne the fruit of significant convergence on divisive issues, even if not full visible unity. The most broadly inclusive multilateral dialogues take place through the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. In 1982 the WCC Faith and Order Commission issued a convergence statement on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, or *BEM*, was the fruit of fifty years of multilateral work on Faith and Order, and it received input from representatives of multiple Protestant denominations, including the Free Church or Believer's Church traditions, along with the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup> It commended two legitimate patterns for uniting baptism, personal faith, and Christian formation in the churches' work of making disciples in a way that has encouraged much progress toward mutual baptismal recognition, between churches that baptize only those who have embraced the faith of their own volition and churches that also baptize infants whom the church nurtures in faith. *BEM* likewise treated the Eucharist and the ministry of the church in ways that invite mutual recognition of the essential features of Eucharistic practice and the exercise of ministry in one another's churches in the midst of our significant remaining differences regarding Eucharist and ministry. Along with the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* is one of the modern ecumenical movement's two major success stories.

In the wake of *BEM* and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, we are able to say much together about our common experience of the reconciling work of God in Jesus Christ, about the one baptism that unites us with Christ and with one another, about our common participation in the wine and the bread even in the present lack of full Eucharistic communion, about the participation of our various patterns of ministry in the ministry of Christ. But those convergences haven't brought about full communion in and of themselves. They must be received and reflected upon and lived into, a process that in turn reveals additional matters we must address to make more progress toward visible unity. The World Council of Churches received 186 responses to *BEM* from member communions, collected in six volumes. The responses surfaced some ecclesiological themes that needed further study: first, the role the church plays in God's salvific goals; second, the implications for ecclesiology of the concept of *koινωνia*, the New Testament Greek word for "participatory fellowship"; third, the manner in which the church is created by the word of God; fourth, the nature of the church as a sacrament by which the world comes to experience God's love; fifth, the church's identity as a pilgrim community; and sixth, the church as prophetic sign and servant of the coming reign of God.

Thus the WCC Faith and Order Commission undertook a new project to address these broader issues of ecclesial vision. It evolved in several stages. First came a 1998 Faith and Order text

titled *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*. As with BEM, again the churches offered responses taken into account in the next phase of the Faith and Order Commission's work. At the 2006 WCC Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Commission presented a new draft, *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, again subtitled *A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, and again the Commission submitted the text to the churches for response. Further input came from the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order meeting in Crete in October 2009. I had the privilege of participating in that Faith and Order Commission meeting, representing the Baptist World Alliance among the Christian world communion representatives. Many of us were new to the Faith and Order Commission, and the meeting was planned so as to maximize input from a new generation of ecumenical theologians. Several plenary addresses offered global perspectives on the ecclesial vision of *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. One especially memorable address was by Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Coorilos of India. Metropolitan Coorilos critiqued the way the draft text on *The Nature and Mission of the Church* treated biblical images of the church in purely doctrinal terms without sufficient attention to their sociological dimensions and implications for the liberation of the dispossessed and the disempowered, what Metropolitan Coorilos called "the actual church amongst communities of people in their struggle for the fullness of life." He said,

In India, for the ["untouchable" members of the Dalit caste] who form the majority of the Indian church, the body of Christ is a Dalit body, a 'broken body' (the word Dalit literally means "broken" and "torn asunder"). Jesus Christ became a Dalit because he was torn-asunder and mutilated on the cross. The Church as "body of Christ," in the Indian context, therefore, has profound theological and sociological implications for a Dalit ecclesiology....[*The Nature and Mission of the Church*], however, fails to strike chords and resonate with such contextual theological challenges...In other words, the text fails to encounter the real *ecclesia* among communities of people in pain and suffering.<sup>5</sup>

That was the sort of feedback we offered in the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order—in addresses like the one by Metropolitan Coorilos, in smaller working groups, and in general discussions. The major recommendations from the Plenary Commission were these: "to shorten the text and to make it more contextual, more reflective of the lives of the churches throughout the world, and more accessible to a wider readership."<sup>6</sup> The drafting committee took these into account along with the churches' earlier responses to *The Nature and Mission of the Church* and a 2011 inter-Orthodox consultation on the text. It underwent three more drafts making improvements in light of continued feedback, and in September 2012 the WCC Central Committee officially received the new convergence statement, now titled *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. It was published in 2013 and presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea that October, and commended to the churches for study and response.

*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* has the potential to become this generation's *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Beyond BEM, how does the new text envision the church's unity in a way that represents a fresh vision for our life together? If we compare the two documents, one feature of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* that seems most obviously an advance beyond BEM is the way it reengages the roots of the modern ecumenical movement in the modern missions movement. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* frames the quest for Christian unity as a participation in God's mission in the world in its opening chapter, titled "God's Mission and the Unity of the Church."<sup>7</sup> The opening paragraph ends with these two sentences:

The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God's work of healing a broken world. Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity, is both the gift by which the Church lives and, at the same time, the gift that God calls the Church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity in hope of reconciliation and healing.<sup>8</sup>

This first chapter sees the *missio dei*, (the “mission of God,”) “God’s plan to save the world,”<sup>9</sup> as carried out in the sending of the Son, defined by the earthly ministry of Jesus, extended in the church as the body of Christ that continues his mission, and empowered by the Holy Spirit sent upon the church and into the world. In the next chapter on “The Church of the Triune God,” the church “is by its very nature missionary, called and sent to witness in its own life to that communion which God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom.”<sup>10</sup> We’ve moved from an earlier text on The Nature *and Mission* of the Church—a title that suggested that we could somehow differentiate the church’s nature and the church’s mission—to now conceiving of mission as essential to the church’s nature. But this is a strengthening of a long-developing trajectory in ecclesiology and ecumenical theology that appropriates the work of the missiologists that’s given us the language of the *missio dei*, the mission of God in the world, in which the church participates and becomes more fully the church whenever it does so. This trajectory has been taking shape for well over a half-century. I mentioned earlier that we’re in the midst of a series of fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Second Vatican Council. Last November 21 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism. The Decree anticipated this linkage of missiology and ecclesiology and ecumenism. The first sentence of section 2 that begins the chapter on “Catholic Principles on Ecumenism” was this: “What has revealed the love of God among us is that the Father has sent into the world His only-begotten Son, so that, being made man, He might by His redemption give life to the entire human race and unify it.”<sup>11</sup> The unity we envision is a missiological unity. That’s an ecumenically shared conviction. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* encourages us to embrace this vision of a church that is most fully church when it joins God in what God is doing in the world, where God is doing it and with whom God is doing it, in moving the world toward the consummation of God’s goals for creation. When we do that with God, we’re drawn into doing that together. To the degree that we resist doing that together, we compromise our participation in God’s mission. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* calls us to envision the church as the community that “continue[s] [Jesus’] life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world.”

A second notable advance beyond *BEM* of *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* is the way it roots the unity of the church in the unity of the Triune God—which it sees as inseparable from the mission of God. Again, I quote the last two sentences of the opening paragraph:

The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world. *Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity*, is both the gift by which the Church lives and, at the same time, the gifts that God calls the Church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity in hope of reconciliation and healing.<sup>12</sup>

“Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity”: the text advances this Trinitarian rationale and framework for conceiving of the church and its unity not only in its first chapter, titled “The Church of the Triune God,”<sup>13</sup> but throughout the document. It does so especially in terms of the biblical concept of *koinonia*. In the New Testament, *koinonia* means “communion, participation, fellowship, sharing.”<sup>14</sup> In the Trinitarian benediction at the end of 2 Corinthians, it refers to the “communion” that characterizes the Holy Spirit and comes from the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, it refers to the church as a fellowship that has all things in common. In 1 Corinthians 10, it refers to the Eucharist as a “participation” in the body and blood of Christ. In Galatians 2, it refers to the “fellowship” restored in the reconciliation of Paul and Barnabas with Peter, James, and John. In 1 John, *koinonia* is both the fellowship we have with the Triune God and the fellowship we have with one another. The subsequent Christian theological tradition has made much of this biblical concept of *koinonia* as both a Trinitarian concept and an ecclesiological concept.

Not since the fourth century has so much attention been focused on Trinitarian theology and its implications for ecclesial praxis as at the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>15</sup> Karl Barth's mid-twentieth-century reclamation of the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian theology paved the way for social Trinitarian thought. Social Trinitarian theology understands God as a *koinonia* of persons who creates humanity in the image of this relational God, whose reconciling work in Christ makes us to share in Trinitarian community, who calls into being the church as a Trinitarian fellowship in which the lives of its members are as intertwined with the lives of one another as are the three mutually interpenetrating persons of the Trinity, whose mission in the world is to draw the world into the *koinonia* of Trinitarian community. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* reaps the harvest of this Trinitarian ecclesiological ferment. But again, it's a deepening of a theme long present in ecumenical theology. The Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism framed its vision of unity this way:

This is the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church, in Christ and through Christ, the Holy Spirit energizing its various functions. It is a mystery that finds its highest exemplar and source in the unity of the Persons of the Trinity: the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, one God.<sup>16</sup>

The unity we envision is a Trinitarian unity. That too is an ecumenically shared conviction. As we participate more fully in the life of the Triune God and the life of the Triune God reproduces itself in our lives, we become more and more fully united with one another. *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* encourages us to embrace this Trinitarian vision of the source and shape of the unity we have and the fuller unity we seek.

There's a third strand in this ecumenical vision that *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* brings into sharper focus. More strongly than *BEM* it develops the church's ecumenical imperative eschatologically—something our text sees as inseparable from the mission of God, the Triune God, who is the source of the church's unity. Once more, I quote the last two sentences of the document's opening paragraph, where the three strands come together:

The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God's work of healing a broken world. Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity, is both the gift by which the Church lives and, at the same time, the gift that God calls the Church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity *in hope of reconciliation and healing*.<sup>17</sup>

*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* portrays the church that has this eschatological hope as “an eschatological reality, already anticipating the kingdom, but not yet its full realization.” The church is not yet the church fully under the rule of Christ, not yet the community fully participating in God's reign. Therefore it's also “a pilgrim community” on a “journey towards the full realization of God's gift of communion.”<sup>18</sup> That thoroughly eschatological pilgrim church motif likewise was already expressed in the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, which said that the church “makes its pilgrim way in hope toward the goal of the fatherland above,” with that goal defined in the next sentence as “the sacred mystery of the unity of the Church.”<sup>19</sup> But this pilgrim church identity belongs broadly to the modern ecumenical movement and all churches that participate in it. The concept is clearly expressed in reports and documents issued in connection with assemblies of the World Council of Churches that preceded and followed the Second Vatican Council—Evanston in 1954 and New Delhi in 1961, as well as Uppsala in 1968. The New Delhi assembly issued a Report on Witness that urged “a reappraisal of the patterns of church organization and institutions inherited by the younger churches” so that “outdated forms...may be replaced by strong and relevant ways of evangelism.” It offered this as an example of “How the Church may become the Pilgrim Church, which goes forth boldly as Abraham did into the unknown future, not afraid to leave behind the securities of its conventional structure, glad to dwell in the tent of perpetual adaptation, looking to the city whose

builder and maker is God.” The New Delhi assembly also proposed a vision of the ecumenical future toward which the pilgrim church journeys in its definition of the unity sought by the modern ecumenical movement I quoted earlier.<sup>20</sup> Those who embrace this vision know painfully well that there can be no realized eschatology of the ecumenical movement. The kind of visible unity the New Delhi definition envisions doesn’t exist even within the denominational communions, much less between the divided churches. Only a vision of the church as a pilgrim community can sustain the quest for the church’s visible unity. It recognizes that each church lacks something it needs to receive to be visibly united with the other churches, and it recognizes that each church perhaps retains something it must relinquish for visible unity to be realized. It refuses to be content with the status quo of the ecumenical movement, though it’s achieved much, and it regards the nonetheless significant expressions of the unity we already have as only partial embodiments of what ought to be. Until there’s a unity within the church that the world without the church can see, the church’s pilgrim journey must continue. Tomorrow we’ll talk about what we can do now about the unity we envision, but currently lack, on our pilgrim journey toward the unity of God’s future.

*The Church: Towards a Common Vision* encourages us to envision the unity we have as incomplete, and therefore as something we must attend to with urgency, because it’s essential to the future God envisions for the world. That’s why it envisions the church and its unity in missiological, Trinitarian, and eschatological terms. Hear this again from the end of the opening paragraph:

The Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world. Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity, is both the gift by which the Church lives and, at the same time, the gift that God calls the Church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity in hope of reconciliation and healing.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, the one God, the Triune God, is at work in the world, working to draw the world into a wonderfully diverse community that finds its unity in the divine unity. That’s who God is; that’s what God’s reign is about; that’s who we are; that’s what we should be about. It’s what this violently divided world most desperately needs. Will we join God in helping that happen? We’ll need a common vision of the church’s unity if we’re to offer God’s gift of unity to the world. We’ll need to *embody* our vision of the church’s unity if we’re to offer God’s gift of unity to the world. May it be so, O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> William Carey to Andrew Fuller, Calcutta, May 15, 1806; quoted in Timothy F. George, *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey* (Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1991), 163.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander C. Zabriskie, *Bishop Brent, Crusader for Christian Unity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948).

<sup>3</sup> “Report of the Section on Unity,” in *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961* (New York: Association Press, 1962), 116.

<sup>4</sup> World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper no. 111; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), available online: [http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text/@@download/file/FO1982\\_111\\_en.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/baptism-eucharist-and-ministry-faith-and-order-paper-no-111-the-lima-text/@@download/file/FO1982_111_en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, “The Nature and Mission of the Church: An Indian Perspective,” in *Called to Be the One Church: Faith and Order at Crete*, ed. John Gibaut (Faith and Order Paper no. 212; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2012), 190-91 (188-92).

<sup>6</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper no. 214; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013), 45, available online: [http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision/@@download/file/The\\_Church\\_Towards\\_a\\_common\\_vision.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision/@@download/file/The_Church_Towards_a_common_vision.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, §§ 1-10 (pp. 5-8).

<sup>8</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 1 (p. 5).

<sup>9</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 3 (p. 6).

<sup>10</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 13 (p. 10).

<sup>11</sup> Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* (21 November 1964), § 2, available online: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html).

<sup>12</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 13 (p. 10).

<sup>13</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, §§ 11-32 (pp. 9-19).

<sup>14</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 13 (p. 10).

<sup>15</sup> E.g., Sarah Coakely, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Truly Trinitarian Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2003); James J. Buckley and David S. Yeago, eds., *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2001); Bruce Marshall, *Trinity and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2000). Notable constructive trinitarian theologies in the decade before the turn of the twenty-first century include Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Robert Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); David S. Cunningham, *And These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998). These more recent projects build on the influential trinitarian works of the 1980s, which in turn continued in diverse ways a trajectory rooted in the Western recoveries of the centrality of the doctrine of the Trinity to Christian theology by Karl Barth (*Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols./13 parts, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al. [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1956-75]) and Karl Rahner (*The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Donceel [New York: Herder and Herder, 1970]); notably Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981); Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols., trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1983); Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Crossroad, 1984); John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and Church* (Contemporary Greek Theologians, no. 4; Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Theology and Liberation Series; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988). The treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity in the first volume of Wolfhart Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology*, published in 1988 in German and in 1991 in English translation, functions as a bridge between the groundbreaking trinitarian work of the 1980s and its consolidation and extension in the following decade (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1991]).

<sup>16</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio*, § 2.

<sup>17</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 1 (p. 5).

<sup>18</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, §§ 33, 35, 37 (pp. 21-22).

<sup>19</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio*, § 2. Cf. the use of the "pilgrim church" motif in Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 November 1964), §§ 7 and 48, available online: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html).

<sup>20</sup> World Council of Churches, "Report of the Section on Unity," 116.

<sup>21</sup> World Council of Churches, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, § 1 (p. 5).