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Professor of Religious Studies
University of Dayton

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T. Marie Chilton Professor of Catholic Theology
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Bradford E. Hinze
Karl Rahner Chair in Theology
Fordham University

“An engaging collection that demonstrates the vibrancy, range, and continued promise of US ecclesiology today. As well as being a most valuable addition to any syllabus engaging the church of our times, it serves as a fitting tribute to Thomas O’Meara, OP, a true theological great whose own creative theological work and wider ecclesial service alike have embodied a vision of *A Church with Open Doors* across many fruitful years.”

Gerard Mannion
Amaturo Chair in Catholic Studies
Georgetown University

A Church with Open Doors

Catholic Ecclesiology
for the Third Millennium

Edited by

Richard R. Gaillardetz

and

Edward P. Hahnenberg



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To Thomas F. O'Meara, OP,
*who taught a whole generation of theologians
to engage the challenges of our age
in dialogue with the vital thought forms
of the great Christian tradition.*

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Abbreviations

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> Vatican II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity
CD	<i>Christus Dominus</i> Vatican II, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church
DH	<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> Vatican II, Declaration on Religious Liberty
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> Pope Francis, On the Joy of the Gospel
EV	<i>Evangelium Vitae</i> Pope John Paul II, The Gospel of Life
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> Vatican II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> Vatican II, Decree on Ecumenism

Introduction

Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg

A Church which “goes forth” is a Church whose doors are open.

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

In a speech to his fellow cardinals before the conclave that would elect him pope, Jorge Mario Bergoglio invoked the image of Jesus knocking at our door. He acknowledged that this metaphor, drawn from the book of Revelation, places Jesus on the outside waiting to come in. But then the future Pope Francis reversed the image and asked about all those times Jesus knocks from the inside trying to get out! He argued that the church must be a church with open doors, and not simply to welcome in those who might come. The church must open its doors so that the whole people of God can go out to a world sorely in need—out to those on all the peripheries of life, those on the edge of sin, pain, and injustice, those trapped in ignorance, indifference to religion, and all forms of suffering. This “going forth”—this mission of evangelization in its broadest sense—is the *raison d’être* of the church, a church which, according to the Second Vatican Council, is missionary by its very nature.

Pope Francis’s image of a church with open doors recalls a story now fifty years old. When Pope John XXIII was asked about his hopes for the Second Vatican Council, he went over to a window and threw it open, allowing light and fresh air into the room. Whether this dramatic gesture ever actually occurred, the image of throwing wide the windows of the church captured the spirit of openness, engagement, and mission that marked the time of the council. It also captures the spirit of Catholic theological reflection on the church over the intervening years. Catholic

ecclesiology after Vatican II “opened up” in myriad ways—through ecumenical dialogue, through engagement with modern philosophy and historical-critical methodologies, through drawing on the insights of the social sciences, through greater attention to changing pastoral realities, through intercultural exchange and a growing awareness of the global dimensions of a world church, and through encounter with the profound context of injustice and human suffering that continue to define our time.

Today the Second Vatican Council, for all its many and real contributions to this ecclesiological renewal, remains a contested site, with significant disagreements lingering over the development of an adequate conciliar hermeneutics. At the same time, contemporary ecclesiology finds itself engaged in a series of debates regarding the place of the church in the present cultural moment often referred to as postmodernity. This postmodern engagement has taken ecclesiology in quite different directions. Some are eager to pursue a transdenominational ecclesiology that employs comparative methodologies that honor the integrity of diverse Christian traditions but that, its critics charge, may be abandoning the goal of full visible unity that has long been at the heart of the ecumenical movement. Others espouse a postliberal or postsecular turn that promises a rich *ressourcement* (return to the sources), but that is vulnerable to both sectarianism and neotriumphant tendencies. Still others would call attention to the ecclesiological consequences of the tremendous growth of the church in the Global South and the important emancipatory impulses of various feminist and liberationist ecclesiologies. In the midst of these debates, Pope Francis has taken the new evangelization championed by his two immediate predecessors beyond a cramped pastoral program for shoring up Catholic numbers and a faltering Catholic identity. For Francis, a church that is focused in on itself fails to respond to the call of the Gospel. With doors and windows closed, such a self-referential church becomes pale and sick. Instead, Francis has re-fashioned the new evangelization as a call to a missionary discipleship animated by solidarity with the poor and marginalized and a commitment to building a “culture of encounter.”

It was in light of the real challenges and opportunities of the present moment that the two editors of this volume imagined a project that would bring together theologians in North America for a symposium on the state of Catholic ecclesiology. The goals of the symposium were twofold. The first was to gather experts who could reflect on the development of Catholic ecclesiology over the fifty years since Vatican II, assess the present state of the field, and identify some of the more promising

avenues for future theological work. The second goal was to honor the many contributions to Catholic ecclesiology made by Thomas F. O'Meara, OP, who, over the years, taught and mentored a number of students of ecclesiology, including the two editors of this volume and the other members of the symposium planning team, Stephen Bevans and Vincent Miller. In September 2014, over forty scholars gathered at Boston College's Connors Conference Center to engage in extended theological conversation.

The conversation at the symposium was oriented around nine essays that, after significant feedback and revision, appear as the chapters in this volume. In chapter 1, Stephen Bevans begins with a claim that will run throughout the volume: any ecclesiology adequate for the third millennium must take its starting point in *mission*. He approaches the mission of the church through the notion of the "new evangelization," tracing the development of this concept in the writings of Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, arriving at the 2012 synod of bishops dedicated to this theme. There Bevans notices a shift in the center of gravity. It is the shift from the concerns of a secularized Europe to those of the growing Global South, and, with it, a shift on the part of the church from a posture of proclamation to one of listening and dialogue. Following the impulses of Pope Francis's witness, Bevans seeks to rethink all of ecclesiology in light of missiology, privileging the image of the church as "a community of missionary disciples." In chapter 2, Paul Lakeland affirms the fundamental orientation laid out by Bevans: the church exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of the world to which it is sent. Lakeland explores this "centrifugal" approach to ecclesiology in dialogue with the science of demography. But rather than summarize statistics, Lakeland is interested in what our response to the data reveals about our ecclesial self-understanding and, in particular, our understanding of the church's apostolic mission, or *apostolicity*. He organizes his analysis under three types—apostolicity seen as maintenance, as new evangelization, and as kenosis. Only in the third, with its christological pattern of death to new life and its humble confidence in divine grace permeating the whole world, does Lakeland find an ecclesiological posture adequate to our contemporary postmodern context.

In chapter 3, Natalia Imperatori-Lee carries forward Lakeland's attention to the concrete realities of the church in the United States but does so in a way that unsettles the stories we so often tell about American Catholicism. Drawing on the insights of Latino/a theologians, Imperatori-Lee challenges the historical narrative that begins in the

Northeast, ends in the West, and revolves around the assimilation of nineteenth-century European immigrants—while ignoring the presence of Spanish-speaking Catholics who lived in what is now the United States centuries before the Irish arrived in Boston. In their approach to interculturality, their engagement with pastoral theology, their attention to the sacredness of everyday life, popular religion, and forms of Christian praxis outside of the parish, Latino/a theologians like Imperatori-Lee disrupt the dominant narrative of Catholic ecclesiology, calling for a historical, methodological, and thematic reimagining of the field. Vincent Miller is also interested in the inculturation of Catholicism in the United States, but he invites us to push deeper, to get at the fundamental assumptions at work whenever we discuss “culture.” Thus, chapter 4 situates contemporary ecclesiological concerns within the context of changing cultures and changing conceptions of culture. He argues that both the dialogical stance toward culture advanced by Vatican II’s *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) and the more contrastive approach of Pope John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical *Eoangelium Vitae*—for all their obvious differences—nevertheless share a common horizon. They both assume that one of the challenges facing Christianity in the modern world is the threat of cultural homogenization. For Miller, this is no longer the case. As new forms of media, technology, and political niching split us into a million different subcultures, Miller argues that the real problem is not homogenization, but heterogenization. Thus the fundamental challenge of the present moment is to maintain the unity of the church amidst cultural fragmentation. In his call for a culture of encounter, Pope Francis seems keenly aware of this new challenge—offering not another subculture, but a way to draw human beings into communion.

If parts 1 and 2 treat the importance of mission and local context, respectively, then part 3 takes up several traditional ecclesiological themes, exploring potential openings for future theological development. Richard Gaillardetz’s chapter 5 sketches the outlines of a constructive theology of power and authority in the church. Gaillardetz draws on Michel Foucault to critique a zero-sum conception of power that assumes power is inherently dominating and coercive. This critique opens up to a more positive account that, on the one hand, acknowledges the power that exists within all relational networks, and, on the other hand, emphasizes the way in which power can be disciplined toward certain ends. For the Christian, this disciplining of power need not constrain, but can in fact enable the free exercise of Christian discipleship. Such a reimagin-

ing of power along relational lines holds important implications for understanding the church's teaching office, and for a broader conception of authority as oriented toward the mission of the church. These issues of power and authority come front and center when considering the role of women in the church. In chapter 6, Mary Ann Hinsdale offers a feminist reading of ecclesiological developments since the Second Vatican Council. After surveying the involvement of women before, during, and after the council, Hinsdale argues that a theology of gender complementarity stands as the "issue under the issues" in ecclesiology today—frustrating a more adequate official response to the many contributions of women to the life of the church. Hinsdale suggests several ecclesial practices that can provide the kind of disciplining of power relations appropriate to a church with open doors.

In chapter 7, Susan Wood turns to the sacramental nature of the church. There she explores the possibilities for the future of Catholic ecclesiology drawn from liturgical theology. To do so, Wood engages in an appreciative, yet critical, ecumenical discussion of baptismal and eucharistic ecclesiologies found within the Orthodox and Anglican traditions. She concludes by developing the beginnings of her own liturgical ecclesiology grounded in the action of the worshipping assembly. In chapter 8, Edward Hahnenberg focuses on the Catholic theologies of ministry that emerged after Vatican II. He notes a basic shift from a deductive, neoscholastic methodology to more inductive approaches, highlighting the importance of both history and contemporary experience to Catholic theologians writing on ministry. However, the theological appeal to history and experience needs further methodological refinement in order to avoid overlooking the ministerial anomalies that have shaped the past, mark the present, and point toward the future. In the final chapter, chapter 9, Michael Fahey draws on his own long engagement in ecumenical work to highlight the great strides and the remaining challenges of ecumenism today. Noting the lack of reception of many ecumenical statements, Fahey offers a positive discussion of "receptive ecumenism" as a promising way forward for ecumenical dialogue.

What unites the essays in this volume is the shared conviction that Catholic ecclesiology cannot remain closed in on itself; it must engage the world beyond the walls of the church. This sense of openness can be found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in the example of Pope Francis. It can also be found in the lifework of the theologian this volume is meant to honor. Few of the topics treated here escaped the interest, study, and insightful commentary of Thomas F. O'Meara. From

his early engagement with Midwestern Lutherans to his recent reflections on the cosmic expanse of God's grace, running throughout O'Meara's theological work is a deep appreciation for the interplay of church and culture, a recognition that all of human history is a story of salvation and that all of creation is a world of grace. Thanks to God's pervasive presence, nothing escapes theological reflection. No theology—and certainly no ecclesiology—can retreat into solipsistic solitude, or remain locked behind closed doors.

Part 1

A Church of Missionary Disciples

Beyond the New Evangelization: Toward a Missionary Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century

Stephen Bevans, SVD

Thomas O'Meara's theological autobiography, *A Theologian's Journey*, bristles with references to time. "I have written down these memories," he writes, "to be a witness to a time, to recall that I once stood on the edge of a change in history that still continues."¹ Roman Catholicism before Vatican II, the period in which he grew up and was formed as a Dominican, O'Meara describes as one of "bland timelessness."² Summers in the seminary were "summers without days." The timelessness of Dominican life was "the only world." "Little radio, rare newspapers, and no magazines entered this isolated world."³ "In monastic life, and in Eisenhower's America, I expected all days to be the same."⁴

But when he travelled to Europe to begin doctoral studies at the Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich in 1962, "experience and history, my new mentors, stepped forth to meet me, ready to show me Europe and ages past, but also worlds being born, worlds yet to come."⁵ He had walked into history; he had walked into the modern world; he had encountered time, and with time, culture.⁶ It was this encounter that

¹ Thomas F. O'Meara, *A Theologian's Journey* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002), 314.

² *Ibid.*, 29.

³ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 38. See also 105.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 71 and the title of chapter 4, 105.

set the mark on his career as a theologian and a teacher and mentor to so many.

O'Meara's life is thus emblematic of a fundamental change in the last fifty years in the theology of the church. In the years before Vatican II, "the church too often was the schoolteacher of blind obedience and subservience to an ignorant, authoritarian will."⁷ But now time "was setting us free from the prisons of the 1940s and 1950s, from the ruthless and mindless scholasticisms of Rome, Moscow, and Washington."⁸ A century before, the church of Pius IX had refused to have anything to do with the "modern world" or "progress." Now the council had issued *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), expressing its solidarity with the "joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time" (GS 1). A century before, the church spoke of its essence as institutional, hierarchical, and monarchical. The council did not reject that identity but emphasized the identity of the church as mystery and as God's pilgrim people. A century before, laity were encouraged to do little more than "to be led and to follow its pastors as a docile flock";⁹ the council spoke of a fundamental equality shared by all Christians because of baptism, an idea that exploded, as O'Meara has described it, into a wide variety of lay ministries.¹⁰ Thanks to the council, the church began fashioning a self-image for real time; time was leading the church into the modern world, and so into experience, history, and culture.

The Second Vatican Council was fundamentally a "missionary council."¹¹ This is not always seen clearly, but as one revisits the council after fifty years and in the light of present developments, its missionary spirit and style emerge quite sharply.¹² As John XXIII's articulation of his goals for the council gained precision in the years between 1959 and 1962, a

⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁹ Pius X, *Vehementer Nos* (To the Bishops of France), February 11, 1906, quoted in Michael A. Fahey, "Church," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, vol. 2, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John Galvin (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 32.

¹⁰ See Thomas F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, rev. ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 6–12.

¹¹ Johannes Schütte, "Ce que la mission attendait du concile," in *Vatican II: l'activité missionnaire de l'église* (Paris: Cerf, 1967), 120.

¹² See Stephen Bevans, "Revisiting Mission at Vatican II: Theology and Practice for Today's Missionary Church," *Theological Studies* 74, no. 2 (June 2013): 261–83.

vision emerged that the council “would mark a transition between two eras, that is, that would bring the Church out of the post-tridentine period and . . . into a new phase of witness and proclamation.”¹³ John XXIII called for *aggiornamento* in the church, but not for its own sake. Any renewal the council would bring was for the sake of a more intelligible and effective preaching of the Gospel.¹⁴ The church, the council proclaimed, was “missionary by its very nature” (AG 2). Vatican II’s missionary church was a church for real time.

The New Evangelization

Vatican II’s document on mission outlined three areas or fields where the church carries out its missionary mandate. The major emphasis of mission is “missionary work among the nations,” but “closely connected with the church’s missionary endeavor” is “pastoral care of the faithful” and “efforts aimed at restoring Christian unity” (AG 6). As the years progressed after Vatican II, however, the ecumenical aspect of mission diminished (although this did not completely disappear).¹⁵ What began to emerge in official church documents in place of this third area of mission activity was a greater emphasis on the need to evangelize within the context of growing secularity and indifference to the church among those peoples who made up traditionally Christian nations. This emerging emphasis was eventually named the “new evangelization.”¹⁶

Ronald Witherup suggests that the roots of the new evangelization go back at least to Paul VI’s 1975 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*,

¹³ Giuseppe Alberigo, “The Announcement of the Council: From the Security of the Fortress to the Lure of the Quest,” in *History of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, vol. 1, *Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 42.

¹⁴ This is certainly the spirit of Pope John’s opening speech. See the speech in Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Association Press, 1966), 710–19.

¹⁵ Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 54, 64, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html, accessed September 23, 2014; John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 23, 49, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

¹⁶ For a much more detailed history of the new evangelization than appears here, see Stephen Bevans, “New Evangelization or Missionary Church? *Evangelii Gaudium* and the Call for Missionary Discipleship,” *Verbum SVD* 55, nos. 2–3 (2014): 158–76.

which speaks of the need for evangelization in the modern world.¹⁷ It was John Paul II, however, who began to use the term in his speeches and documents, possibly influenced, as missiologist John Gorski suggests, by the 1979 statement issued by the Latin American bishops meeting at Puebla.¹⁸ John Paul II's first use of the term was during his historic visit to Poland that same year, although he used it without any particular sense that this would be one of the hallmarks of his future teaching.¹⁹ He used it again in a much more deliberate way in 1983 while addressing the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean assembled in Haiti, and again in his opening address at Santo Domingo in 1992, explaining that what was needed in Latin America today was an evangelization "new in its ardour, methods and expression."²⁰ Subsequently the Latin American bishops picked up the term in their 1992 General Assembly in Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, recognizing the new evangelization as the "all-encompassing element" or "central idea" of the conference.²¹

In 2005 Joseph Ratzinger was elected pope and quite deliberately chose the name Benedict, the choice of which he explained in his first general audience. The name was to recall Benedict XV (1914–1922), who had worked to prevent World War I and worked afterward to promote reconciliation. Probably more significant, however, Benedict's name referred to Benedict of Nursia, "one of the patron saints of Europe who—

¹⁷ Ronald D. Witherup, *Saint Paul and the New Evangelization* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 10–11. Witherup does not give a reference to the apostolic exhortation, but the pope speaks of evangelization within the context of secularism in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 54 and 56.

¹⁸ See John F. Gorski, "From 'Mission' to 'New Evangelization': The Origin of a Concept that Challenges Our Institutes," 5, http://www.sedosmission.org/sedos/articles/documents/jgorski_2013_en.pdf, accessed September 14, 2014.

¹⁹ See John Paul II, "Homily at the Sanctuary of the Holy Cross, Mogila, Poland, June 9, 1979," *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English* (July 16, 1979): 11; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 71 (1979): 865. XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta* of The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, 5, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

²⁰ John Paul II, Discourse to the XIX Assembly of CELAM (March 9, 1983), 3; *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English* (April 18, 1983), 9; AAS 75 (1983): 778.

²¹ Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops, "Conclusions: New Evangelization, Human Development, Christian Culture," in *Santo Domingo and Beyond: Documents and Commentaries from the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 80.

according to the pope—had exercised an enormous influence on Europe’s Christian heritage”²² and saved Europe from the ravages of the non-Christian or Arian migrating tribes of his time. As a cardinal, Ratzinger had repeatedly expressed his concern for Europe in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Especially since 1989, he had argued that “Europe has been deeply affected by the master narratives of progress and emancipation” and has embraced a relativism that has actually betrayed genuine truth and freedom. Because of this, the church has to witness to a truth which is not the result of subjective experience but is given in revelation. The church has to be a “minority that is often opposed to ‘the spirit of the world.’”²³ As pope, Ratzinger committed himself to saving Europe from the ravages of postmodernism and unbelief. In this way Benedict, it could be said, was trying to move the church back into its timeless, pre-Vatican II existence through a number of policies that misologist John Sivalon characterizes as “romantic conservatism.”²⁴

It is in this context that Pope Benedict created the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization in September 2010. In the apostolic letter *Ubique et Semper* that established the new council, Benedict acknowledged that “to speak of a ‘new evangelization’ does not in fact mean that a single formula should be developed that would hold the same for all circumstances.” Nevertheless, he says that churches in “traditionally Christian territories” require a “renewed missionary impulse.”²⁵ Shortly afterward the pope announced that the theme of the upcoming Synod of Bishops in 2012 would be “the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith,”²⁶ the *lineamenta* for which speaks of the new evangelization as “primarily addressed to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries.”²⁷

²² Lieven Boeve, “Europe in Crisis: A Question of Belief or Unbelief? Perspectives from the Vatican,” *Modern Theology* 23, no. 2 (April 2007): 209.

²³ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁴ See John Sivalon, *Mission in Postmodernity: The Gift of Uncertainty* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 32.

²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Ubicumque et Semper*, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper_en.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

²⁶ Benedict XVI, “Homily at the Conclusion of the Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops,” *L’Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, October 27, 2010.

²⁷ XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, *Lineamenta*, preface.

Pope John Paul II had spoken several times of three aspects of the new evangelization: its newness in ardor, methods, and expression. Although all three are mentioned occasionally in the presynodal documents and in the talks of Pope Benedict, the impression these documents and talks give is that newness in *ardor* is the most important.²⁸ One of the key words in the *lineamenta* is “boldness,” recurring thirteen times in the document, seven times in the text, and six times in the questions that follow. In the *instrumentum laboris* we read that “our institutions need to adopt a bold and even ‘apologetic’ approach and seek ways of publically affirming their faith, fearlessly and with a clear sense of pastoral urgency.”²⁹ The *instrumentum laboris* quotes Pope Benedict’s conviction that there is in the church an “educational emergency” due to the individualism and secularism of the age.³⁰

The 2012 Synod: Shifts in the Center of Gravity

While an emphasis on a new ardor or boldness in the church’s evangelizing efforts was also expressed in the synod itself,³¹ some of the more striking interventions of the bishops focused more on a new attitude of humility, gentleness, and listening that needed to be espoused by the church as it renews its efforts of evangelization in the world. Bishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham, England, for example, emphasized that the prerequisite for evangelization today is “profound listening.” “There can be no effective proclamation of the faith, Longley said, ‘without an attempt to understand how the message is likely to be heard, how it sounds to others.’”³² Archbishop (now Cardinal) Luis Antonio Tagle

²⁸ XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, *Lineamenta*, 5; see also XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris* of The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, preface, 23, 45, 62, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20120619_instrumentum-xiii_en.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

²⁹ See XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, *Lineamenta*, 2–11. See also XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 138.

³⁰ XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 152.

³¹ For example, the interventions of Cardinal Peter Erdő of Hungary, Archbishop John Dew of Wellington, New Zealand, and Cardinal Sodano. See http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/xx_plurilingue/b05_xx.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

³² Intervention of Archbishop Bernard Longley, quoted in Noel Connolly, “New Evangelisation in Australia,” *Sedos Bulletin*, 137, <http://www.sedosmission.org/sedos/articles/documents/nconnolly-2013-newev-en.pdf>, accessed September 23, 2014.

of Manila also called for the church to listen first before speaking. "The Church must discover the power of silence," he said. "Confronted with the sorrows, doubts and uncertainties of people she cannot pretend to give easy solutions. In Jesus, silence becomes the way of attentive listening, compassion and prayer."³³ Another bishop from the Philippines, Socrates Villegas from Lingayen-Dagupan, emphasized the fact that "the new evangelization calls for new humility. . . . This humility will make us more credible new evangelizers. Our mission is to propose humbly, not to impose proudly."³⁴ To give one more example, Adolfo Nicolás, Jesuit Superior General and longtime Asian missionary, spoke of how humility, simplicity, generosity, and joy are the tried and true ways of best communicating the Gospel.³⁵ These interventions, though a minority voice at the synod, went beyond the impression often given that the new evangelization is simply evangelization "revved up,"³⁶ or as I have put it in several talks I have given, saying the same old thing but saying it more loudly. If other voices advocated a move back to the time before the council, these voices at the synod were advocating a real time dialogue of the church with today's world. Only a listening church could offer the conditions of the possibility of an evangelization adequate to the present day.

Ronald Witherup reflects on the fact that the synod pointed away from the new evangelization's rather exclusive emphasis on the secular West. Writing about the list of final propositions from the synod, he takes note of a "slight change in direction"³⁷ that developed as the synod progressed. As noted above, the original intention of the synod was to address issues arising particularly in the secularized West. Such a perspective was seen in many of the interventions as well, and also in the final propositions. Witherup says, however, that "a renewed emphasis on the mission *ad gentes* or *ad extra*, that is, an outreach to those who have

³³ Intervention of Luis Antonio Tagle, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/xx_plurilingue/b07_xx.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

³⁴ Intervention of Socrates B. Villegas, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/xx_plurilingue/b07_xx.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

³⁵ Intervention of Adolfo Nicolás Pachón, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_25_xiii-ordinaria-2012/xx_plurilingue/b09_xx.html, accessed September 23, 2014.

³⁶ See Witherup, *Saint Paul*, 51.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

not received the Gospel message, is now also prominent. It reinforces the notion that the church is always on mission, always outwardly oriented to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ."³⁸

Pope Francis and *Evangelii Gaudium*: Beyond the New Evangelization

The calls at the synod for a more open, listening church, the shifts toward spirituality, structural reform, and dialogue, and the insistence on a renewed form of evangelization for the entire church, not just the West, are all features of the remarkable postsynodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. Since his election, Francis has astounded the world with one dramatic gesture after another—asking the crowds to pray for him when he first appeared on the balcony after his election, embracing a quadriplegic man at his inauguration, washing the feet of Muslim women on Holy Thursday, uttering his famous phrase, “Who am I to judge?” when asked about gay priests, releasing wide-ranging and frank interviews. Such gestures seemed to signal an entirely new, astonishingly fresh approach not only to the Petrine ministry but also to witnessing to the Gospel. The first pope ordained to the priesthood after the Second Vatican Council was signalling the validity of all that the council stood for. In his commentary on *Evangelii Gaudium*, Italian theologian Christian Albini expressed his conviction that the document “signals a new stage in the trajectory opened by Vatican II.”³⁹

Evangelii Gaudium seems to lead the church beyond the synod’s theme of new evangelization toward a vision of the church as going forth as a “community of missionary disciples.”⁴⁰ It is perhaps significant that the term “new evangelization” appears only twelve times in this very long

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Christian Albini, *Guida alla lettura della Evangelii Gaudium* (n.p., n.d.), 72. This connection with the council has been noted as well by Richard R. Gaillardetz, “The ‘Francis Moment’: A New Kairos for Catholic Ecclesiology,” *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 69 (2014): 63–64, <http://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ctsa/article/view/5509/4988>, accessed September 23, 2014. See also Richard R. Gaillardetz, “Francis: Pope of the Council,” <http://elephantsinthelivingroom.com>, accessed September 23, 2014.

⁴⁰ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (On the Joy of the Gospel), 24, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, accessed December 11, 2014. See also Albini, *Guida*, 18.

document.⁴¹ Equally significant are phrases like “new chapter,” “new paths,” “new phase,” and “new processes” of evangelization.⁴² The pope likewise speaks of a “new missionary going forth,” a “new evangelical fervor,” and “new challenges to evangelization.”⁴³ The pope gives the strong impression that he is leading the church beyond the new evangelization toward an understanding of the church that is, in the words of Vatican II, “missionary by its very nature” (AG 2). As he introduces his apostolic exhortation, Francis notes that the topics on which he reflects in the document “help give shape to a definite style of evangelization which I ask you to adopt *in every activity you undertake*.”⁴⁴

“I dream of a ‘missionary option,’” Francis writes, “that is a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her preservation.”⁴⁵ Here in one sentence is Francis’s vision for the church, one adequate for this time. The passage goes on to speak of a “pastoral conversion” that demands renewed structures that will make “ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open,” that will call pastoral workers to go forth to preach and witness to the gospel. As Martin Tuelan, National Director of Australia’s Catholic Mission, observes, “rather than stressing new evangelization or overseas mission, Pope Francis sees that the whole Church needs to be ‘permanently in a state of mission.’”⁴⁶ Francis echoed the 2012 synod’s move to speak of new evangelization not only in terms of the secularized West but also as taking place in ordinary pastoral work, among people “whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism,” and in situations of primary evangelization.⁴⁷ Thus, like the synod itself, he offers a wider

⁴¹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 73, 120, 126, 198, 239, 260, 284, 287, 288. A word count on the Vatican website yields a count of fourteen times, but two of these are in the introductory outline of the document, not in the document itself.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1, 11, 17, 31, 69, 161, 287, 288.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20, 29. I think it quite significant that the title given to the October 2014 Synod of Bishops is “The Pastoral Challenge of the Family in the Context of Evangelization”—not “the *New Evangelization*.”

⁴⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 18. Italics are in the original.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁶ Martin Tuelan, “Called to Be Missionary Disciples,” in *The Francis Effect: Living the Joy of the Gospel*, ed. Danielle Achikian, Peter Gates, and Lana Turvey (Sydney: Catholic Mission and Catholic Religious Australia, 2013), 44.

⁴⁷ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 14. Here Francis is citing Benedict XVI’s opening homily of the synod.

understanding of the new evangelization than the synod's preparatory documents, moving that understanding toward a consistent vision of a missionary church.⁴⁸

This move from the new evangelization to a more comprehensive missionary church is a highly significant one, both ecclesiology and missiologically. The new evangelization emerged out of the concern of two European popes in the context of a radically secularized Europe, on the one hand, and a church that, to their minds, had lost the clarity of its commitment to the content of the faith, on the other. Pope Francis's call for a truly missionary church comes out of a totally different context, and reflects not a European interest, but that of the majority world. Perhaps much of the missionary emphasis of the Aparecida document—a major source for *Evangelii Gaudium*, and the source of the term “missionary discipleship”—was occasioned by a need to respond to the growing exodus of Catholics to Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, and so very rooted in the Latin American context.⁴⁹ The tone of the apostolic exhortation, however, transcends that context and is motivated by a more universal missionary vision. It does not deny the vision of the new evangelization but takes the vision further to make it more comprehensive and more relevant for the entire church.

Moving Forward: Toward A Missionary Ecclesiology

Pope Francis's call for the church to understand itself as a “community of missionary disciples” seems to require a thorough rethinking of ecclesiology in the light of missiology. The perspective favored by John Paul II and Benedict XVI was to reflect on and explain the church in terms of “communion,” an understanding also favored by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops of 1985.⁵⁰ Francis's preferred way of speaking about the church taps into a separate emphasis in Vatican II, evident in documents like the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity. This latter document

⁴⁸ For fuller reflections on *Evangelii Gaudium*, see Bevens, “New Evangelization,” and Gaillardetz, “The ‘Francis Moment,’” 67–72.

⁴⁹ Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, Concluding Document, 225–26 (Aparecida, 2007), <http://www.aecrc.org/documents/Aparecida-Concluding%20Document.pdf>, accessed September 23, 2014.

⁵⁰ See Gaillardetz, “The ‘Francis Moment,’” 64–65.

speaks forcefully of the church, rooted in the missions of the Trinity, as “missionary by its very nature” (AG 2). It is this phrase, I suggest, that should be the starting point for a contemporary ecclesiological reflection that is adequate for our time. As Richard Gaillardetz describes Francis’s ecclesiological agenda, “a missionary council has inspired a missionary pope to create a missionary church.”⁵¹

Gaillardetz himself, of course, has gone a long way in developing a missionary ecclesiology in his *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, especially in terms of dialogue with cultures beyond the West.⁵² Neil Ormerod’s recently published *Re-Visioning the Church* stresses the “operator” of mission as shaping the “integrator” of communal identity.⁵³ While more specifically missiological, Roger Schroeder’s and my books *Constants in Context* and *Prophetic Dialogue* have been rooted in an implicit missionary ecclesiology.⁵⁴

What I would like to sketch out in the final section of this chapter is the outline of a full missionary ecclesiology, one that contains the main issues and questions demanding scholarly attention from ecclesiologists today. Such an ecclesiology attempts to unpack the lapidary phrase in Vatican II’s Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity regarding the church’s essential missionary nature. It might also be described as the unpacking of Pope Francis’s call for a “community of missionary disciples.”⁵⁵

This sketch of a missionary ecclesiology is divided into three parts, emphasizing varying aspects of the image of the church as a “community of missionary disciples.” A first part reflects on “The Essence of the Church: A Community of Missionary Disciples.” A second part probes “The Mystery of the Church: A Community of Missionary Disciples.” A third and final part outlines “The Structure of the Church: A Community of Missionary

⁵¹ Richard R. Gaillardetz, “Francis Wishes to Release Vatican II’s Bold Vision from Captivity,” *NCROnline* (September 25, 2013), <http://ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-wishes-release-vatican-iis-bold-vision-captivity>, accessed September 25, 2014. See also Gaillardetz, “The ‘Francis Moment,’” 67–71.

⁵² Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).

⁵³ Neil Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church: An Experiment in Systematic-Historical Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).

⁵⁴ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004); Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

⁵⁵ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24.

Disciples."⁵⁶ The challenge of a missionary ecclesiology is to keep a balance between the "centrifugal" nature of the church lived out in mission and a more "centripetal" aspect of the church expressed in the understanding of the church as communion. One might characterize the church, a community of missionary disciples, as a "communion-in-mission," a dynamic interplay of communion and mission.

In developing such a missionary ecclesiology, attention needs to be paid to sources available in the global church, not only Roman documents. These might be documents from official sources like the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), the Episcopal Conference of the Pacific (CEPAC), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), or the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB). Such an ecclesiology should be developed in dialogue with major Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical sources such as those issued by the World Council of Churches, the various Orthodox Churches, and the Lausanne Movement. Sources should also include major theologians from every region of the globe, especially the voices of various liberation and contextual theologies, such as feminist, African American, queer, Asian, and Latino/a theologies. Concerns from all these various perspectives, as Natalia Imperatori-Lee advocates in her chapter in this volume, should be "mainstreamed" into an ecclesiology that is in dialogue with all Christian and theological voices. Such an ecclesiology would be both contextual—rooted in particular contexts and cultures—and a product of dialogue *among* contextual theologies.

*The Essence of the Church:
A Community of Missionary Disciples*

What needs to be recognized first in the construction of a missionary ecclesiology is that the church is rooted in the overflowing life of the Trinity, which is itself a communion-in-mission. God's first act of mission is creation, and God has been present and active in creation from its first

⁵⁶ Readers will no doubt notice that this threefold structure is very much influenced by Hans Küng's classic ecclesiology *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967). While in many ways now outdated after fifty years, it still remains, in my mind, an articulation of Catholic ecclesiology of the utmost importance.

nanosecond. Such presence and activity is the work of the Spirit, who from the beginning persuades, encourages, cajoles, inspires—but never imposes on creation’s freedom.⁵⁷ And so came to be the gasses, the molecules, the stars, the galaxies, and our earth with its abundant life. As human beings emerged on our planet, the Spirit was there and was present in humanity’s first groping toward understanding the depth and breadth of life’s meaning, gradually taking shape in the world’s great religions.⁵⁸ One of these religions was that of Israel, who expressed God’s presence and activity in the images of wind, fire, breath, water, oil, a soaring bird—all images that, while palpable, are nevertheless illusive and mysterious, images of God as Mystery “inside out” in creation and human history.⁵⁹ We read of God breathing life into “earth creature” (*ha Adam*, Gen 2:7),⁶⁰ anointing prophets to proclaim healing and justice (Isa 61:1-2), flowing like a river to bring freshness and life in the desert (Ezek 47), blowing over dry bones to bring them together and back to life (Ezek 37:1-14).

The history of the presence of the Holy Spirit in creation and especially in Israel is a prelude to understanding the foundation of the church, which begins with the mission and ministry of Jesus. In the “fullness of time,” as Paul wrote (Gal 4:4), the ever-present saving activity of God took on flesh and a human face in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. As Elizabeth Johnson writes, “[T]hrough [Jesus’] human history the Spirit who pervades the universe becomes concretely present in a small bit of it.”⁶¹ Jesus’ mission was, in the words of Neil Ormerod, the advancement of the reign of God⁶²—the continuation of God’s saving work from the beginning, but now imminent. “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news” (Mark 1:15).

⁵⁷ Both Denis Edwards and, more recently, Elizabeth Johnson have written elegantly in this regard. See Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption, and Special Divine Acts* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008); and Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

⁵⁸ The inspiration for this sentence is Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 33, 171–72.

⁵⁹ See Stephen Bevans, “God Inside Out: Toward a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 3 (July 1998): 102–5.

⁶⁰ “Earth creature” is author’s translation.

⁶¹ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 150.

⁶² Ormerod, *Re-Visioning the Church*, 106–8.

Jesus witnessed to this coming fulfillment by his own personal behavior of welcoming and inclusion, as well as his freedom from the ritualistic and dehumanizing aspects of religious custom. He served his vision by his healings and exorcisms—signs of the wholeness of God’s salvation and of God’s liberating action in human life. And he preached God’s nearness in parables that spoke of God’s mercy, God’s commitment to justice, God’s inclusion, and God’s tenderness. Jesus was a person filled with the Holy Spirit, anointed by the Spirit at his baptism to proclaim the good news and bring healing and hope to God’s people (Luke 4:18-19).

Such behavior, however, got Jesus into trouble. What infuriated the religious leaders of his day, says Latino theologian Virgilio Elizondo, was “his willingness and ability to have a good time with anyone and everyone” and his refusal “to be scandalized by anyone.”⁶³ And so they killed him. But, of course, three days later his disciples began to experience his living presence among them, and gradually, in the aftermath of Pentecost, they came to the amazing realization that the Spirit that had been lavished upon Jesus had also been lavished upon them. In this growing realization that *Jesus’* mission was *their* mission, the church was born. The church is indeed “missionary by its very nature” because it is missionary in its very origin.

The missionary nature of the church is further probed by a reflection on its complex relation to the reign of God. As Jesus’ mission and ministry were defined by the reign of God, so are those of the church. The church exists as subordinate to and servant of the reign of God, although God’s reign is not entirely a separate reality from it. Indeed, the church is a community of sinners, God’s people imperfectly assembled, who nevertheless pray for the reign’s arrival as they “wait in joyful hope.” It is to the reign of God—and not necessarily to the church—that all are called by God’s all-inclusive salvific will (see LG 16). Nevertheless, the church must never cease from inviting women and men to join its ranks, but not out of a motivation to join an exclusive group whose members alone are saved. Rather, the church must be envisioned as a life-giving community that finds the fullness of life in the joyful sharing in God’s saving work and service. Salvation is found in such kenotic free giving of self. Understanding the church’s relationship to the reign of God re-

⁶³ Virgilio Elizondo, “The Miracle of Conversion,” *Give Us This Day* 3, no. 1 (January 2013): 205.

veals the church as “not of ultimate importance.”⁶⁴ Although opinions vary here,⁶⁵ a fair consensus among ecclesialogists is that the church as such will cease to exist when the reign of God is finally established. This is the essence of the church: to give itself in service to God’s reign, just as Jesus, anointed by the Spirit, gave *himself*. The church—sign, foretaste, and witness to God’s reign—continues Jesus’ mission in a trinitarian practice of “prophetic dialogue,” boldly yet humbly witnessing to the Gospel with which it is entrusted.⁶⁶

*The Mystery of the Church:
A Community of Missionary Disciples*

Having established the missionary nature of the church, ecclesiology turns to the reality of the church as mystery. The church is not simply a visible, fallible society. It is, in its deepest core, a society “imbued with the presence of God,” a communion of “people made one with the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”⁶⁷

Here we reflect on the missionary nature of three scripturally based images of the church: the people of God, the Body of Christ, and the creation/temple of the Holy Spirit. The image of the church as God’s special people, grafted onto the original olive tree of Israel (see Rom 11:17-24), is that of a people chosen not for privilege but for service, a people in which all nations will find a blessing (see Gen 12:3).⁶⁸ Paul’s image of the Body of Christ appears in 1 Corinthians and Romans, and on closer reading, we discover that it is a missionary image. Baptism identifies us with Christ, whom we have put on as a garment, in whom we live, and with whom we become one in our participation in the Eucharist (see Rom 6:1-11; Col 3:10-11; Gal 2:20; 1 Cor 10:16-17). In this image, the church is the way that Christ continues to be present and active in the world. The third image is that of the creation/temple of the

⁶⁴ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 7.

⁶⁵ E.g., Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Books, 1978), 109–27.

⁶⁶ See Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*; and David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 489.

⁶⁷ Paul VI, Opening Address of the Second Session of Vatican II, in *Enchiridion Vaticanum* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1968), 97; LG 4.

⁶⁸ See also Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 190–264; Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 80–88.

Holy Spirit. In the previous section, we saw that it is the Spirit who creates the church as she pushes the early community beyond the boundaries of Israel to the Gentiles, who continues to push the church to new and surprising realizations and practices.⁶⁹ The temple is the place of God's mysterious yet palpable presence in the world (1 Kgs 9:1-9; Ezek 10:18-23; 1 Cor 3:16). As God's temple, the church is called to be a witness to God's saving presence in the world.

The four traditional "marks" of the church—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—are, in evangelical theologian Charles van Engen's words, dynamic "distinctives" of the church's mission.⁷⁰ In a missionary ecclesiology, the mark of "apostolicity" comes first, since it roots the church in the apostolic commission of "teaching all nations" (Matt 28:19; cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Pet 3:15).

Each dimension of the church has a threefold identity. Thus the church *is* apostolic as a gift; it is *called* to be apostolic in fidelity; and it is to *act* apostolically in mission. In the following chapter, Paul Lakeland will develop this dynamic notion of the mark of apostolicity. Similarly, the church *is* catholic but *called* to be catholic in its appreciation of local identity and diversity-in-unity, and commissioned to *work* for the catholicity of the world by protecting and fostering diversity (as regards culture, theology, gender, and generational identity) in a constant dialogue for unity. Such unity *is* already a gift and yet *calls* the church to *work* for unity among all Christians and to work as well for unity among all religions and peoples. Finally, the church *is* holy as God's special people and therefore *called* to be holy as a sign of God's presence in the world. The church is called as well to *point out* the holiness beyond its boundaries and invite people into the explicit relationship with God that it already enjoys.

In sum, "communion and mission enrich each other." As Pope Francis has written, "we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples.'" ⁷¹

⁶⁹ See Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>, 25. See also Stephen B. Bevans, "The Church as Creation of the Spirit: Unpacking a Missionary Image," *Missiology: An International Review* 35, no. 1 (January 2007): 5–21.

⁷⁰ Charles van Engen, *God's Missionary People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1991), 59–71.

⁷¹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 120.

*The Structure of the Church:
A Community of Missionary Disciples*

The structure of the church should serve the church's mission. As Reformed theologian Craig van Gelder put it tersely, the church "organizes what it does."⁷² Pope Francis writes that, in light of the "missionary option" about which he dreams, everything in the church "can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented."⁷³

An initial point that needs to be made is that, in the light of mission, the primary structure of the church is no structure. Rather, first and foremost there is a "structure" of fundamental equality in virtue of baptism. We are first of all *disciples*—in particular, *missionary* disciples (see LG 32).⁷⁴ As Hans Küng insists, distinction of any kind in the church "is of secondary if not tertiary importance."⁷⁵ Kathleen Cahalan argues that disciples are *followers* of Jesus, as well as worshippers, witnesses, neighbors, forgivers, prophets, and stewards.⁷⁶ All participate in the mission of God, as God's people.

Thomas O'Meara writes that, in terms of the reality of grace, "ultimately, there are only two theological perspectives: the dividing line or the circle of circles."⁷⁷ The same is true of the church's structure. While some disciples are called to ministry within the church, ministry does not so much *divide* ministers from "ordinary disciples" as it marks a particular presence of baptismal grace that all share equally. Rather than distinguishing sharply between "laity" and "clergy," a missionary ecclesiology should focus on the various ways that Christian women and men share in the one mission of the church in its witness, service, and proclamation of the reign of God.⁷⁸

⁷² Craig van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 37.

⁷³ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 27.

⁷⁴ See also Kathleen Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010), 24–47; and Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24.

⁷⁵ Küng, *The Church*, 363.

⁷⁶ Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*, 3–23.

⁷⁷ O'Meara, *A Theologian's Journey*, 301.

⁷⁸ On this, see the very helpful reflections of Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (Mahwah,

That being said, there does exist in the church a certain order that is not so much hierarchical as ministerial. As Edward Hahnenberg points out, various kinds of ministries are shaped by various factors. First, there is the degree of commitment that a minister evidences. Is it occasional? For a particular period of time? A lifetime commitment? Second, ministry is characterized by the kind of ministry in which the minister is engaged. Is the person working under someone else's leadership or assuming a distinct role of leadership in a particular area? Third, a particular ministry is distinguished by the type of recognition it is given in the church and by the church's leadership.⁷⁹ Some ministries are public roles of service in the church yet are taken up occasionally and require a relatively minimal level of training and formation. Lectors and choir members are certainly examples of these important ministers. Others are responsible for a particular area of leadership in the church—for example, the director of religious education in a parish or the director of music or liturgy or social justice ministries. For this task a particular expertise is required, a theological degree is necessary, and the minister might be a salaried member of a parish or diocesan staff and receive a special commission from a local bishop. Still others are called to be more widely responsible for the general order of their community, coordinating, forming, and leading the various ministries of a parish or diocesan faith community. Such a ministry ordinarily demands a lifetime commitment and a high level of theological and pastoral competence.

These various kinds of ministries are traditionally spoken of as lay ministry, the newly emerging reality of lay ecclesial ministry, and ordained ministry. Richard Gaillardetz has proposed that we speak instead of commissioned ministries (e.g., lectors), installed ministries (e.g., directors of liturgy), and ordained ministries (bishops, presbyters/priests, and deacons).⁸⁰ However we speak of them, their purpose is to serve and order the church's mission.

In the Roman Catholic Church we speak of the Petrine ministry, or the ministry of the pope. In the light of a missionary ecclesiology, the pope is the "servant of the servants of God," the one who exercises the

NJ: Paulist Press, 2006), 52–55; see also Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Theology for Ministry: An Introduction for Lay Ministers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014), 107–27.

⁷⁹ Hahnenberg, *Theology for Ministry*, 120.

⁸⁰ Richard R. Gaillardetz, "Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion," in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, ed. Susan Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 26–51, esp. 36–47.

care of all the churches and serves as a sign of unity and the possibility of dialogue for the entire communion of local churches that make up the universal, global church of today. While the pope is indeed, in the preferred idiom of Pope Francis, the “Bishop of Rome,” nevertheless, in light of the fact that the last three popes have not been Italian, the papacy has taken on a rather new role in the church as a global leader in a globalized church. In this role, the pope is not a “super bishop,” but one whose primacy is to oversee the entire church as it engages in its mission of witness, service, and proclamation of the reign of God.

The title of David Power’s important book, *Mission, Ministry, Order*, is instructive. First there is *mission*, in which every Christian shares as a baptized disciple. Then there is *ministry*, in which some Christians share with varying levels of responsibility—although these do not correspond to differences in importance or dignity (as Pope Francis insists, our dignity “derives from Baptism, which is accessible to all”⁸¹). In the third place comes *order* “for the sake of the particular church and the sake of communion between churches.”⁸² The church is shaped to serve its participation in the mission of God.

Conclusion

This chapter has been a reflection on how today’s church, under the leadership of Pope Francis, is once more discovering its time, and with time, history and culture. Today’s church is a missionary church. The “fields” of mission described by *Ad Gentes* are present in virtually every instantiation of the local church. In almost every church there are people to whom the Gospel needs to be preached or re-presented, people whose Christian life needs to be nourished and equipped for service, and Christian communities that need to be healed of the scars of 1054 and 1517. This is as true in suburban Boston as it is in inner city Chicago, the Kibera slum in Nairobi, the favelas of Rio, or the barrios of Ilocos Sur in the Philippines. The new ardor, methods, and expressions called for by Pope John Paul II need to be operative in every field of mission, not just in situations of Western secularism. Our time calls forth a church that moves beyond what has been called the new evangelization to the formation of a community of missionary disciples, and ecclesiology for our

⁸¹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 104.

⁸² David Noel Power, *Mission, Ministry, Order: Reading the Tradition in the Present Context* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 2.

time has to reflect that community's life and practice as it participates in the mission of God.

For Further Reading

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