

The Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne

Peter De Mey and Saretta Marotta

1 The Origins: The Longing for Ecclesiological Ressourcement of a New Generation of Leuven Theologians

On Jul 4, 1942,¹ a few months after Rome's condemnation of the work of the two Dominicans Marie-Dominique Chenu and Louis Charlier,² the Belgian Archbishop Jozef-Ernest Van Roey received a letter from the Holy Office urging him, without any further explanation, to prudently remove the theologian René Draguet from his teaching position at the Faculty of Theology in Leuven. On Jul 22 Draguet himself was informed of the measures taken by the Holy Office against him.³ This decision struck very hard at the University of Leuven, where Draguet, a specialist in the field of doctrinal history and Eastern patristics, had held since 1927 one of the most important chairs, that of fundamental theology (*Dogmatica generalis*). The removal was the result of the thorough

examination to which his course entitled "De notione, obiecto et methodo theologiae" had been subjected by the Holy Office in December 1941, the year when he published a general survey on the history of Catholic dogma.⁴ It was common knowledge that the disputed book by Charlier was based on college notes taken during Draguet's courses,⁵ whose studies focused on the notion of tradition, the role of the magisterium, the development of dogma and the methods of theology, which were all aspects of the "two sources of faith" question, that would finally be addressed by Vatican II.⁶ When Draguet was removed from teaching, his students not only lost a mentor, but were severely affected in their theological research, in which they hoped to find a solution to the uncomfortable distance and frequent contradictions between speculative theology and Holy Scriptures. From March 1942, about 20 students and young researchers of the Faculty of Theology in Leuven had begun to meet monthly in a confidential "theological circle," to which some professors and Draguet himself had been invited to speak, the latter during the circle's last meeting on Jul 19, three days before learning of

1 Sections 1–3 of this contribution were written by Saretta Marotta, and sections 4–6 by Peter De Mey. All translations from French have been provided by the authors and by Susan Dawson Vásquez and David Dawson Vásquez (in the footnotes).

2 The censorship on their works (Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir*, Etioles, Le Saulchoir, 1937; Louis Charlier, *Essai sur le problème théologique*, Thuillies, Ramgal, 1938) intervened in February 1942 and the two Dominicans were removed from teaching, respectively from Paris and Leuven. See: *AAS* 34, 1942, 37 and 148; Robert Guelluy, "Les antécédents de l'encyclique 'Humani Generis' dans les sanctions romaines de 1942: Chenu, Charlier, Draguet," *RHE* 81, 1986, 420–497; Jürgen Mettepenningen, "L'Essai de Louis Charlier (1938): Une contribution à la nouvelle théologie," *RTL* 39, 2008, 211–232; Étienne Fouilloux, "L'affaire Chenu 1937–1943," *RSPT* 98, 2014, 261–352.

3 ACDF, *Censura librorum 1942*, 113/1942. The decision of the Holy Office against Draguet was taken on Jul 1. About the background to the removal, see Ward De Pril, *Theological Renewal and the Resurgence of Integrism: The René Draguet Case (1942) in Its Context*, Leuven, Peeters, 2016, 208–221.

4 René Draguet, *Histoire du dogme catholique*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1941.

5 Decision taken on Dec 17, 1941, in: ACDF, *Censura librorum 1942*, 113/1942. De Pril compares the work of Draguet and Charlier, claiming that, ever since the *Essai sur le problème théologique* had come out in 1938, rumors were circulating that Draguet was its real author. See De Pril, *Theological Renewal*, 16–17 and 85–119. Draguet himself, in a review of Charlier's book, pointed out that the Dominican – without his knowledge – had been heavily inspired by his course: see René Draguet, "Review of Essai sur le problème théologique by L. Charlier," *ETL* 16, 1939, 143–145.

6 On the debate, see Karim Schelkens, *Catholic Theology of Revelation on the Eve of Vatican II: A Redaction History of the Schema De fontibus revelationis (1960–1962)*, Leiden, Brill, 2010; Riccardo Burigana, *La Bibbia nel concilio: La redazione della costituzione "Dei verbum" del Vaticano II*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1998.

the Holy Office's measure against him.⁷ The discussions focused on the central place of the Bible in theology and the need for renewal in the Catholic Church, even if the term "adaptation" was preferred. After Draguet's removal, no further meetings took place in Leuven, and the 30-year-old Charles Moeller, one of the most active theologians in the circle, was looking for a more protected place than the university to continue these discussions.⁸ Since 1941, he had re-established contact with the Benedictine monk and editor of the journal *Irénikon*, Clément Lialine, whom he had met ten years earlier as a fellow student in Leuven. Moeller probably thought that the Belgian monastery of Chevetogne might be the ideal place to continue this experience of joint research and discussion.⁹

Lialine, a Russian emigrant and convert from Orthodoxy to Catholicism who had entered the monastery of Amay-sur-Meuse in 1928 in order to devote himself to the work for Christian unity, was one of Lambert Beauduin's most remarkable disciples.¹⁰ During the enforced absence of

Dom Beauduin from Chevetogne (1931–1951),¹¹ he took care to keep his ideal alive and, deeply attached to the spiritual traditions of his country and his church of origin, he promoted a better knowledge of Eastern liturgy and theology in the West. Since he had maintained a correspondence with several friends from his theological studies in Leuven – among whom in particular Moeller – in that summer of 1942, on the eve of the feast of the Transfiguration,¹² he warmly welcomed his former fellow students into the monastery. They thus finally found a place to continue their discussions and also had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Eastern spirituality. The meetings continued every year, always during the summer holidays. Lialine and these young theologians were obviously unaware that they had given birth to an institution that would exist until 1999.

From Aug 2 to 5, 1942, in the midst of World War II, Moeller, together with his 27-year-old colleague Roger Aubert,¹³ converged on the monastery near

7 The elected president for the session was the Benedictine Paul Denis. Lucien Cerfaux attended each session as professor. Also present at the meeting of Jul 19 was the Vice-Rector Léon-Joseph Suenens, the future archbishop of Malines (1961–1979) and one of the four cardinal moderators of the council. See the minutes of the sessions from Mar 23 to Jul 19, 1942, in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1942.

8 For more information on this theologian, see Fernand Colleye, *Charles Moeller et l'Arbre de la Croix: Crise de l'Église et désarrois du Monde. La vie d'un théologien du XX^{ème} siècle*, Paris, Publibook, 2007.

9 Étienne Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du XIX^{ème} au XX^{ème} siècle: Itinéraires européens d'expression française*, Paris, Le Centurion, 1982, 769, based on an interview with the author in July 1970. Moeller met Clément Lialine at the Benedictine abbey of Mont César in Leuven, where he received a significant part of his seminary studies.

10 Olivier Rousseau, "Dom Clément Lialine (1901–1958)," *Irén* 31, 1958, 165–182; Michel Van Parys, "Dom Clément Lialine: Théologien de l'unité chrétienne," *Irén* 76, 2003, 240–269.

11 Jacques Mortiau & Raymond Loonbeek, *Dom Lambert Beauduin visionnaire et précurseur (1873–1960): Un moine au cœur libre*, Paris, Cerf/Éditions de Chevetogne, 2005, 193–226.

12 Rousseau attributes the origin of the Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne to Lialine's initiative to bring together a small group of young theologians from Leuven on the occasion of some important Orthodox liturgical feasts, such as the Transfiguration on Aug 6 and the Feast of the Cross on Sep 14: "They [the ecumenical study days] had for their object the deepening, often prolonged in endless discussions, of the liturgical texts of these feasts which, in the Byzantine Rite, are of a very spiritual significance and of an incomparable doctrinal richness"; Olivier Rousseau, "Les journées œcuméniques de Chevetogne (1942–1967)," in: *Au service de la parole de Dieu: Mélanges offerts à Monseigneur André Charue, évêque de Namur*, Gembloux, Duculot, 1969, 451–485, here 452.

13 Moeller had introduced Aubert, who was at that time a doctoral student, to Lialine one year before. See the autobiographical memories written by Aubert to Moeller, Nov 25, 1952, in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1942. Aubert had become interested in ecumenism during his military service in Leopoldsborg, through the chaplain Guillaume Vander Elst, a disciple of Beauduin himself. See Colleye, *Charles Moeller*, 129–130.

Namur for the first of those “theological days” which would be later officially called Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne (Journées œcuméniques de Chevetogne). The group involved in this first initiative was very small: no more than six people,¹⁴ including four Benedictine monks and among them Théodore Strotmann, who would become a frequent speaker at the study days in the following years, and the New Testament scholar Jacques Dupont, from Saint-André-de-Clerlande, at that time a long-term guest of the monastery during his studies.¹⁵ Despite the small number, the discussion, which was centered on the theme “Écriture et Magistère,” was nonetheless of a high level, picking up the thread of the previous meeting in Leuven. The handwritten notes taken by Dupont and the report on the session written by Moeller, testify to the intensity of the discussion.¹⁶

14 “A half-dozen Catholics”; according to Albert Verdoordt, *Les colloques œcuméniques de Chevetogne (1942–1983) et la réception par l’église catholique de charismes d’autres communions chrétiennes*, Chevetogne, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1986, 7.

15 According to Jacques Dupont’s notes (preserved in ~~AJOC, Journées œcuméniques~~ and limited to the first three sessions, 1942–1945) and the memories of Aubert (letter to Moeller, Nov 25, 1952), the participants in this first meeting were: Clément Lialine; Charles Moeller; Roger Aubert; Jacques Dupont; Robert van Cauwelaert; and Théodore Strotmann.

Moeller had probably hoped to publish this report in *Irénikon*, but from 1941 to 1944 the community was obliged to put its publication activities on hold. In 1953, Moeller collected the conference reports of the first ten years of the Ecumenical Study Days in a book that has remained unpublished: Charles Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité à la croisée des Chemins: Dix années d’œcuménisme à Chevetogne, 1942–1951* (manuscript finished on Jan 19, 1953 and preserved in AJOC). Later this work was summarized in Verdoordt, *Les colloques œcuméniques*, which remained one of the few historical reconstructions of the Study Days, together with the essays of Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques” and Emmanuel Lanne, “Le rôle du monastère de Chevetogne au Deuxième Concile du Vatican,” in: Doris Donnelly & others, eds., *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council: International Research Conference at Mechelen, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve (September 12–16, 2005)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2008, 361–388.

The Belgian theologians were dissatisfied about the extensive use of biblical expressions as a mere source of *auctoritates* for deductive theological affirmation (as if they were some “glosses to the Denzinger,” according to a metaphor used by Draguet and taken up also in the Leuven circle). In Draguet’s footsteps, the Chevetogne group advocated a double return to the two sources of revelation: on the one hand to the Holy Scripture and on the other to the authentic tradition of the church. Furthermore, they perceived the “fullness of Christian truth present above all and even only in the tradition of the living magisterium.”¹⁷ It was precisely the living magisterium that had to constitute the *regula proxima* for Christian faith and life. According to them, the tradition of the church consisted indeed not only of the extraordinary or explicit magisterium (the dogmatic definitions of councils and so on), but also of the ordinary magisterium, the living tradition of the church, which expresses itself in other ways, such as the liturgy in the first place. These reflections, which had previously given rise to a written consultation in Leuven on the subject,¹⁸ were all issues with ecumenical implications, since also Protestant and Orthodox theologians had denounced the lack of vitality of Catholic theology. It is not by chance, therefore, that the starting point of the debates in Chevetogne, in addition to the results of the discussions of the Leuven theological circle, were the proceedings of the Orthodox Theological Conference that had taken place in Athens in 1936 and which Draguet had included in the program of his courses.¹⁹ Thanks to two lectures delivered there by the theologian Georges Florovsky, Orthodox

17 Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité*, part 1, ch. 1–2.

18 The result of the consultation was a dossier of *vota* of each theologian about the “role of Holy Scripture today in systematic theology.” The *vota* are collected in UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, *papiers*, 1942.

19 “[He] had the audacity, for the time, to put on the program the work of the Athens Conference of Orthodox Theology (1936) or that of S. Bugakov”; Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l’unité*, 769. The proceedings had been published in 1939: Hamilkar S. Alivisatos, ed., *Procès-verbaux du Premier Congrès de Théologie*

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theologians had identified the return to biblical and patristic sources as a way of reaching the heart of the church's true tradition. In the same year as the Jesuits of Lyons launched the collection of patristic texts entitled *Sources Chrétiennes* aiming to break with neoscholasticism,²⁰ the *ressourcement* thus constituted the original core and the starting point of the reflections of the study days of Chevetogne as well. In particular, the discussions of 1942 identified the confrontation with Orthodox spirituality and theology as a means of rediscovering the living tradition of the church, so that it was decided to devote the following meeting to a comparison of Eastern and Western ecclesiology.

"Les signes de l'Église dans le catholicisme et l'orthodoxie" was the theme chosen for the 1943 session, held just a few months after the publication of *Mystici corporis*.²¹ The theology of the

Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 Novembre–6 Décembre 1936, Athènes, Pirsos, 1939.

20 See Michel Fedou, "Sources Chrétiennes: Patristique et renaissance de la théologie," *Greg* 92, 2011, 781–796, here 797–788 (italics original): "The future collection *Sources Chrétiennes* did not only have the sole aim of making patristic texts known in French, but, by this very means, it was to contribute to a true renewal. The project implied, first of all, a distancing from a theology which, up until that time, was dominated above all by Thomist, or rather Neo-Thomist, scholasticism: it was a question of rediscovering, upstream, a direct and fruitful contact with the patristic sources, which was to have an impact on the very organization of theological disciplines." See the detailed reconstruction provided by Étienne Fouilloux, *La collection "Sources chrétiennes": Éditer les Pères de l'Église au XX^e siècle*, Paris, Cerf, 1995.

21 The session was held from Aug 9 to 12, 1943 and was attended by: Lialine, Moeller, Aubert, Dupont, Luc Lialine (Clément Lialine's brother), Rousseau, the converted Lucien Morren with his wife Hélène ("Mr. and Mrs. Morren, converts from the University of Brussels, whose active presence gave to the exchange of views an overall particularity"; Jacques Dupont's notes in AJOC), Jean Leclercq, Ambroise Verkeulen and a not yet identified Abbé R. Felix. On Aug 10, further guests arrived: van Cauwelaert, Gisbert (Maret) Ghyssems and some monks of Chevetogne's community, among whom also Strotmann and Stéphane De Vos. The list

sign applied to ecclesiology was an attempt to go beyond the ecclesiology of the encyclical and to interpret the hierarchical unity as a sign of the church and the church as a visible sign of Christ. This attempt to justify the importance of structures of authority in the divine economy functioned as a response to Orthodox ecclesiology, which considered charismatic holiness a prerequisite for the authority of bishops. The Chevetogne theologians claimed that obedience to a human and imperfect head, which does not necessarily presuppose sanctity, constitutes in itself a true act of faith, because it is an act of faith to see behind this authority a sometimes obscure sign of God. From the comparison between jurisdictional and charismatic authority, the discussions then moved on to the different concepts of **holiness**, for individuals and as a church. In contrast to the Orthodox ideal of a visible church that would find itself in a continuous state of ~~holiness~~^{holiness} and transfiguration, Catholics were aware that the **holiness** that became manifest at Pentecost is not typical for the daily life of the church but is only the necessary but momentary manifestation of a deeper sanctity, that is the humiliated and crucified **holiness** of the incarnate Christ. In short, while Eastern theology insists on the transfigured Christ of Mount Tabor, Western theology privileges the suffering, earthly Christ. Similarly, individual ~~holiness~~^{holiness} for Catholics was to be achieved by obeying God's will in inhabiting the world, while for the Orthodox the ideal of sanctity was a transfigured ~~holiness~~^{one} **holiness**, separated from the world, time, and space, an ideal of which hermit monks were an eloquent example. The contrast between these different theological systems could be overcome in a single "total ecclesial consciousness" ("une Église totale"), after the model of the Apostolic Church as another expression of *ressourcement*.

of participants is inferred from Jacques Dupont's notes in AJOC and Roger Aubert, "Conversations de Chevetogne. Août 1943. Confrontation des points de vue catholique et orthodoxe sur l'Église et en particulier sur la place de la Hiérarchie," in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1943.

Still, the participants in the Chevetogne conversations came to the conclusion that in the end the different ecclesiology (and Christology) of Orthodox and Catholics (differences which were also visible in their liturgies)²² referred to two different anthropological perspectives and visions of the relationship of Christians with the secular world. Thus it was decided to devote the 1944 session to a reflection on the meaning of Christian humanism. However, this meeting had to be postponed due to the escalation of the war.²³

2 Lialine's Leap Forward: From an International and Ecumenical Expansion to Clarifying the Meaning of Christian Humanism

After a temporary suspension, a third meeting was planned from Aug 20 to 25, 1945. This meeting bore numerous novelties, resulting from the personal imprint of Lialine, who worked more closely with Moeller in the organization of the ecumenical study days. First of all, the participation in the event increased considerably: 24 participants instead of 15 during the 1943 meeting,

²² "The byzantine liturgy transports us mysteriously but truly into paradise ... The Latin liturgy, to the contrary, invites us to identify ourselves, in faith, with the humanity of Christ, which we know, also by faith, to be the mediator between God and us, and the bearer of divine life"; Charles Moeller, "Naissance de l'Église totale," in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1943, 4. It is a report of the 1943 session, substantially reproduced later in Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l'unité*. This report may have been sent to all the participants, including Jacques Dupont, who on Sep 8 replied to Moeller with a letter of observations (see Dupont to Moeller, Sep 8, 1943, in: AJOC, Jacques Dupont's notes).

²³ "We agreed that it is a matter of anthropology that governs all differences between the two churches"; Olivier Rousseau, "Résumé des Conversations théologiques. Chevetogne, 6–12 août 1943," in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1943. "If there is one subject that stands out at the end of these discussions in 1943, it is that of supernatural anthropology"; Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l'unité*, part I, ch. 2, 39.

among whom were Gustave Thils, Jérôme Hamer and Jean Giblet, and for the first time theologians from beyond the national borders of Belgium attended the conference.²⁴ The war being over, it was indeed possible for Lialine to invite some of his contacts abroad, especially from France, such as the Jesuit Jean Daniélou, founder of the Sources Chrétiennes series,²⁵ and the Dominican Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, who had just been released from German captivity:²⁶ both would become regular guests of the study days. From 1947 (the year before the monitum *Cum compertum*),²⁷ this expansion would also become ecumenical, since the first non-Catholic speakers were invited, among whom were Max Thurian, from the Reformed Taizé community, and Orthodox theologians from the Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge in Paris. In this way, the Chevetogne conversations became a very valuable and exceptional experience of direct confrontation between theologians from the Catholic and other Christian confessions in the pre-conciliar era.

Secondly, from that moment on, the discussions were no longer left to free improvisation, but were stimulated by a precise program of keynote speeches. Even if the theme of Christian humanism was not completely removed from the agenda (and would be proposed again in 1947 and 1948), the new subject of the conference, "Les Églises au sortir de la deuxième guerre mondiale," was

²⁴ Moeller, Aubert, Felix, Giblet, Thils, Morren, Dupont, Rousseau, Clément Lialine, Léon Lialine, Edouard Beauvuin (Dom Lambert's nephew), Strotmann, De Vos, van Cauwelaert, Daniélou, Congar, Hamer, Jean Leclercq and the Benedictine monks from Chevetogne, Mont-César and Clervaux, Leclercq, Hild, Roux, François Vandenbroucke, Jean van den Mensbrugghe and Marc Forêt (list taken from AJOC, Jacques Dupont's notes).

²⁵ Daniélou also presented a contribution that was later published in Jean Daniélou, "Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse," *Études* 249, 1946, 5–21, and which is often cited as a "manifesto" of the *nouvelle théologie*.

²⁶ Étienne Fouilloux, *Yves Congar (1904–1995): Biographie*, Salvator, Paris, 2020, 97ff.

²⁷ See the contribution by Saretta Marotta in this volume.

introduced by an opening speech by Roger Aubert, who gave a broad overview of recent developments in theological trends in Europe at the end of the war period.²⁸ Aubert illustrated the important changes in theological life between the two wars, such as the rise of the liturgical, biblical, and ecumenical movements, and the challenges associated with this transformation, both in the field of ecclesiology and in that of Christian humanism, which means i.e. the relationship between Christianity and the modern world, in light of the different anthropologies (pessimism and positivism) that had been established in the philosophical currents of the last 20 years. The speeches that followed clarified all these aspects one by one, and the return to the sources once again proved to be an essential method of analysis.²⁹ In particular, the intervention of the Benedictine Jean Leclercq opened up new perspectives,³⁰ leading to the awareness of the need to investigate theological and ecclesiological questions from a *historical* perspective, with an

approach that was not obvious at that time and which was the same as that pursued by the incarnational theology of Le Saulchoir of Chenu and Congar (and condemned by Roman authorities).³¹ Another concept that made its first appearance at the Chevetogne conversations precisely during the 1945 meeting was the ecclesiology of the “people of God,” introduced by Lialine’s intervention in opposition to the approach of the encyclical *Mystici corporis* and which would be further developed especially in the 1950s’ sessions on ecclesiology.³² However, although only three out of eight keynote speeches dealt explicitly with it, the main theme of the conference remained Christian humanism, which Moeller and Aubert, also thanks to the presence of Thils, saw as “the principal task of Christian theology.”³³ As Aubert wrote later in his book of 1954:

In its confrontation with modern thinking, theology has also been led to discover new objects of study, aspects of reality which the theologians in the past considered unnecessary to dwell on, in particular the place of lay people in the Church, the sense of human history in the eyes of the believer and the Christian understanding of temporal values, scientific progress, secular action.³⁴

Moeller himself, concluding the report of the 1947 session, also stated:

Is it not for this reason, among others, that the living magisterium is necessary, that is to say, in order to answer, in the course of the

²⁸ This speech was published as Roger Aubert, “Les grandes tendances théologiques entre les deux-guerres,” *Col-Mechl* 31, 1946, 17–36 and later its contents were developed in the book Roger Aubert, *La théologie catholique au milieu du xx^e siècle*, Paris, Castermann, 1954.

²⁹ Here is the complete list of interventions, taken from AJOC, Jacques Dupont’s notes: Roger Aubert, “La vie théologique dans l’entre-deux guerres”; Charles Moeller, “Problématique générale de l’humanisme chrétien”; François Vandenbroucke, “Les bases ecclésiologiques du monachisme”; Jean Leclercq, “Médiévisme et unionisme”; Jean Daniélou, “Le mouvement de la pensée religieuse en France des dernières années”; Olivier Rousseau, “L’exégèse patristique”; Clément Lialine, “Deux essais récents de renouvellement théologique dans l’Orthodoxie (Boulgakov et Florovsky)”; Charles Moeller, “Réflexions sur le livre de Vladimir Lossky: La théologie mystique de l’Orient”; Charles Moeller, “Conclusions.”

³⁰ Dom Jean Leclercq, “Médiévisme et Unionisme,” *Irén* 19, 1946, 6–23. Moeller commented that it was “a veritable revelation,” having shown “the true face of the Middle Ages,” exploring in particular the monastic context, strongly patristic and therefore closer to dialogue with the East than the usual historical prejudice suggests, seeing it as the starting point of the division among the Churches. See Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité*, part II, ch. 1, 13–14.

³¹ Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, Paris, Cerf, 1985.

³² Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 456. The 1955 session in particular would reflect on the different “images” of the church, starting with that of the church as bride.

³³ See Dries Bosschaert, *The Anthropological Turn, Christian Humanism, and Vatican II: Louvain Theologians preparing the Path for Gaudium et Spes (1942–1965)*, Leuven, Peeters, 2019.

³⁴ Aubert, *La théologie catholique*, 52.

centuries, the new questions which arise for the Christian conscience? Does not our contemporary world ... present us with problems unknown to the Fathers and which it is precisely the role of the teaching Church to resolve (of course in the light of fundamental Christian principles)? ... On the other hand, there are science and technologies. Will they remain outside? How can we bring them back to God?³⁵

This new perspective, which had made its way into contemporary theology for some years, from Jacques Maritain to Karl Rahner,³⁶ explains why so many of the Chevetogne sessions were devoted to this topic, and particularly the 1947 session, dedicated to the theme of supernatural anthropology in light of the ancient tradition, both Western and Eastern, and which made an attempt to include non-Catholic theologians into the dialogue.

The 1947 session, “L’anthropologie chrétienne,” had a rich program of 16 lectures, five of which presented by non-Catholics: the Orthodox Nicolas Arseniev, the Swedish Lutheran theologian Gunnar Rosendal, the Reformed Max Thurian and the two Anglicans Geoffrey Curtis and Patrick Thompson. Among the numerous speeches, which examined the different anthropological visions in past and present theological currents, ranging from patristics to contemporary theology,³⁷ for the first time the thinking of theologians of the Reformation was studied in Chevetogne, for example through the conference of Hamer on the theology of Karl

Barth and that of Max Thurian on Calvin.³⁸ The antinomy between the “incarnated” anthropological vision of the Western Church and the “eschatological” vision of the Eastern Church (but also the vision *solī Deo gloria* of the Reformation) was identified by Chevetogne theologians as one of the major obstacles to unity. Their proposal to work in the direction of a possible “earthly humanism” that is, of a human anthropology transfigured by the mystery of the incarnation, basically meant following the same line pursued by Life and Work. “It was therefore a question of *doing ecumenism* by studying what, in each tradition, is authentically Christian and not only what is opposed to a different confession. In this way, *the possibility of new dogmatic developments* had to be integrated

35 Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité*, part II, ch. 2, 42–43. He had already published Charles Moeller, *Humanisme et sainteté: Témoignages de la littérature occidentale*, Paris, Casterman, 1946.

36 About the latter, see Anton Losinger, *The Anthropological Turn: The Human Orientation of the Theology of Karl Rahner*, New York NY, Fordham University Press, 2000.

37 See Moeller’s long report, which summarizes each theological system in a chronological and historical overview and denounces the poverty of post-Tridentine theology in this respect compared to the past, in Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité*, part II, ch. 2, 1–46.

38 Here is the complete program (taken from UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1947, where one can also find the text of each intervention): Charles Moeller, “Introduction”; Lucien Cerfaux, “L’anthropologie de saint Paul”; Geoffrey Curtis (monk of the Anglican community of Mirfield), “L’anthropologie de saint Irénée”; Olivier Rousseau, “L’anthropologie de la liturgie”; Charles Moeller, “L’anthropologie de l’école d’Antioche”; Gunnar Rosendal, “L’anthropologie du protestantisme”; Jean Chatillon, “L’anthropologie des Victorins”; Jérôme Hamer, “L’anthropologie de Karl Barth”; Clément Lialine, “L’anthropologie des Pères ascétiques”; Yves-Marie-Joseph Congar, “L’anthropologie chez S. Thomas”; Max Thurian, “L’anthropologie de Calvin”; Jean Giblet, “L’anthropologie de Philon d’Alexandrie”; Patrick Thompson (Anglican), “L’anthropologie chez les auteurs anglais de 1600 à 1830”; Roger Aubert, “L’anthropologie post-tridentine”; Nicolas Arseniev, “L’anthropologie russe contemporaine”; Charles Moeller, “Conclusions.” The speeches of Chatillon and Thurian were published in *Irénikon* (respectively: Jean Chatillon, “Une ecclésiologie médiévale: L’idée de l’Église dans la théologie de l’école de Saint-Victor au XII^e siècle,” *Irén* 22, 1946, 115–138 and 395–411, and Max Thurian, “L’anthropologie néo-calviniste,” *Irén* 25, 1952, 420–440). The contribution of Giblet was later published as Jean Giblet, “L’homme, image de Dieu dans les Commentaires littéraires de Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Studia Hellenistica* 5, 1948, 93–118, whereas Hamer’s lecture was reworked in the book by Jérôme Hamer, *Karl Barth: L’occasionalisme théologique de Karl Barth. Étude sur sa méthode dogmatique*, Paris, Desclée, 1949.

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“L’Anthropologie réformée”, 20-52

into the research.³⁹ In Moeller's conclusion, it is already possible to note a desire to go beyond Lialine's "irenic methodology,"⁴⁰ which above all aimed to highlight fundamental differences among the confessions. This initial formulation of the goal of the study days, which moreover dealt with such general and broad themes, soon began to show its limitations. The theme of Christian humanism and supernatural anthropology was again proposed at the meeting in the conference are left; furthermore, Moeller reports that there were no planned interventions at that conference, as all the attention was focused on the founding assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam.⁴¹ Be that as it may, this session, entitled "La théologie des réalités terrestres" (imitating the title of a book by Thils),⁴² constituted the last act before the definitive abandonment of this theme, "too vast and complex for there not to be, sooner or later, a concern to return to the concrete."⁴³ From 1949 onwards, the discussion shifted towards more biblical and ecclesiological topics, each time followed in the title with the words "... and ecumenism." It was not merely by chance that this transition did coincide with the changing of the guard between Lialine and Olivier Rousseau in the organization of the ecumenical study days. The intellectual animation of which, however, also remained in Moeller's hands.

3 The "Rousseau Era": The Series "... and Ecumenism" to Discuss the Meaning of Tradition

Dom Olivier Rousseau was a close friend and collaborator of Dom Lambert Beauduin. Together they had conceived the project of the "monastery

of the union" at Amay-sur-Meuse, although once it had been founded, the abbot of Maredsous, Célestin Golenvaux, the monastery to which Dom Olivier belonged, would not allow him to change community.⁴⁴ Finally allowed to join the Amay group in 1930, when the monastery was already experiencing a moment of strong conflict with Rome that would soon lead to Beauduin's exile, he became master of novices there and editor of *Irénikon* together with Lialine.⁴⁵ Strongly committed to the liturgical movement, Rousseau was also a scholar of patristics, taking furthermore an interest in Aramaic and Syriac sources, convinced that it was necessary to go beyond the Greek-Latin binomial in order to achieve a true ecumenical consciousness. It is probably due to him that the problem of the competition between the Ecumenical Study Days and the "Oriental days," both organized by the monastery of Chevetogne, was solved, by insisting that the former should not be limited only to dialogue with the Eastern Churches. Rousseau himself would later write: "It was around Orthodoxy that our meetings began, and the dialogue should never be one-sided."⁴⁶ Another innovation introduced in the "Rousseau era" was the fact that from then on the journal *Irénikon* would publish the reports of the sessions written by Moeller, thus making the study days known to the public, even if the names of

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italics original

39 Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l'unité*, part II, ch. 2, 4.

40 Clément Lialine, "De la Méthode irénique," *Irén* 15, 1938, 3–28, 131–153, 236–255, 450–459.

41 Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l'unité*, part III, introduction.

42 Gustave Thils, *Théologie des réalités terrestres*, Bruges, Desclée, 1946.

43 Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité*, 771.

44 Emmanuel Lanne also reports that Rousseau had been the true inspirer of the letter *Equidem verba* addressed by Pius XI to the Superior General of the Benedictines Fidelis von Stotzingen. Emmanuel Lanne, "Dom Olivier Rousseau: 1898–1984," *Irén* 67, 1994, 163–185.

45 On the events at Amay-sur-Meuse/Chevetogne and Dom Beauduin, see the contribution by André Haquin in the first volume of this work.

46 Rousseau, "Les journées œcuméniques," 462. Moreover, in his report on the 1949 session, he specified: "We would even say that a [four-way dialogue] is needed, given the important nuances that separate Greek Orthodoxy and Slavic Orthodoxy, nuances that are too often neglected in ecumenical meetings"; Charles Moeller, "Bible et Œcuménisme," *Irén* 23, 1950, 164–188, here 167, note 1.

the individual speakers and participants were not always mentioned in the published reports.

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The sessions of 1949, 1950, and 1951 constitute a single path of progressive awareness that developed in three consequential stages: from the initial reflection on the role of Holy Scripture in the church, to the centrality of the ^{biblical theology} ~~ecclesiological~~ ^{question} in the ecumenical debate.* The choice of the theme for the 1949 meeting, “Bible et œcuménisme,” was apparently based on an “almost banal” observation: the fact that common prayer resulting from the shared reading of a biblical page was a normal experience in ecumenical meetings.⁴⁷ In reality, this recognition of spiritual ecumenism as the primary source of practical and theological ecumenism was instead highly meaningful. In that summer of 1949, a year after the Holy See’s monitum *Cum compertum* that had reaffirmed the prohibition of any form of *communicatio in sacris*, the reference to the practice of common prayer during interdenominational meetings, mentioned even in the report of the session published in the pages of *Irénikon*,⁴⁸ was not a neutral statement. Moreover, in the aftermath of the bitter experience of Amsterdam, where the absence of representatives of the Catholic Church had been so polemically emphasized by theologians such as Karl Barth,⁴⁹

47 “In ecumenical meetings, a kind of ‘de facto ecumenism’ is manifested in the prayers said in common before the meetings ... The common reading of a page of Holy Scripture shows each time that the true ‘place’ where the ‘Word’ should be heard is in a praying community. Only then does it take on all its resonance. It may be said that this community experience is banal. We do not think so”; Moeller, “Bible et Œcuménisme,” 164–165.

48 However, at the time when *Irénikon* printed the report of the session, the instruction *Ecclesia Catholica* had already appeared, correcting that monitum and specifying in particular that the common recitation of the Our Father during ecumenical meetings was licit.

49 Karl Barth, “Die Unordnung der Welt und Gottes Heilsplan,” in: Focko Lüpsen, ed., *Amsterdamer Dokumente: Berichte und Reden auf der Weltkirchenkonferenz in Amsterdam 1948*, Bethel bei Bielefeld, Evangelischer Presseverband für Westfalen und Lippe, 1948, 136–146; See also Karl Barth, “No Christian Marshall Plan,”

to reaffirm that the Bible was the common ground on which rapprochement among the confessions could take place, was a programmatic choice. It showed indeed that dialogue with Protestantism was intended as the starting point for the new Ecumenical study days led by Rousseau. As a matter of fact, since the beginning of the century, Catholic and Protestant exegetes had been confronted with the common challenge posed by historical criticism to the sacred texts, which risked reducing the Bible to a literary collection of historical myths. Scientific researches that had been carried out within each confession in parallel, starting from common questions but threading different paths, had been able to enter into dialogue with each other since the 1943 encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu*, which had sanctioned the legitimacy of the application of the historical-critical method in Catholic exegesis as well.⁵⁰ The 1949 session of the study days, however, was not a comparison of the results of various exegetical studies, but rather a confrontation of the relevance of the biblical movement in the different denominations. No traces of this conference remain in the Chevotogne archives, but a few pages of the Moeller diaries have survived, including the list of participants and scheduled speakers.⁵¹ In addition to Paul Evdokimov from Saint-Serge representing Russian Orthodoxy and, for the Greeks, the deacon of Phanar, Chrysostom Constantinides, at that time a student at Leuven, three of the five non-Catholics present at the session were Reformed Christians.⁵² Among their names, particularly note-

The Christian Century, Dec 8, 1948, 1330–1333. Christophe Chalamet, “Karl Barth on the Quest for the Church’s Unity,” *CrSt* 37, 2016, 343–359.

50 See the recent synthesis of Michael Florian Pfister, *Ein Mann der Bibel: Augustin Bea SJ (1881–1968) als Exeget und Rektor des Päpstlichen Bibelinstituts in den 1930er und 1940er Jahren*, Regensburg, Schnell und Steiner, 2020 and François Laplanche, *La crise de l’origine: La science catholique des Évangiles et l’histoire au XX^e siècle*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2006.

51 UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, cahiers: n. 44. **Emile Fabre**
52 The other two were the reformed pastor E. Fabre from Lille and the art historian Louis Quévieux. About 20

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worthy was that of the first female speaker of the ecumenical study days, Suzanne de Dietrich, one of the founders and directors, together with Hendrik Kraemer, of the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, near Geneva,⁵³ where the reading and study of Scripture was the core of the formative course designed for lay people.⁵⁴ In this context, one of the main milestones gained during the 1949 meeting in Chevetogne was the consciousness that the Bible is not a private reading, but a word announced to a community: “The Word of God, before being a *written* word, is first of all a word *proclaimed* by God himself, transmitted in and by a community of believers, and whose meaning only

does take on its *full meaning* when it is *heard*, religiously, by the community of redeemed.”⁵⁵ That means that the imperatives of scientific exegesis remained secondary in the face of the need for an exegesis of faith, i.e. a biblical theology. In addition to the demands of the scientific study of the Bible and its historical-critical exegesis, also the participants gathered in Chevetogne thus affirmed the need to safeguard a “spiritual reading” of the Scriptures,⁵⁶ in response to a demand that came from the very heart of the experience of believers but also from the liturgical experience: “How can we admit that the meditation of Christians, that is, their *spiritual life*, is based on uncontrollable and perhaps fanciful theological views? How can such a view be maintained, when this typological use of the Old Testament through the New is *the essential method of the Church in its Liturgy*?”⁵⁷ Here the influence of the liturgical movement⁵⁸ on the

participants attended the conference. This is the complete program (taken from UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1949): Jean Daniélou, “Bible et Tradition”; Roger Aubert, “L’évolution de la science catholique autour de la Bible depuis le XIX^e siècle”; Albert Denis, “Exposé des journées bibliques de Louvain”; Suzanne de Dietrich, “Le mouvement de la pensée religieuse protestante autour de la Bible au cours de ces vingt dernières années”; Paul Evdokimov, “La valeur religieuse de la Bible dans l’Orthodoxie”; Georges Chevrot, “La pastorale biblique auprès du peuple fidèle. Expériences d’un curé de grande ville”; Antonin-Marcel Henry, “Enquête sur les appétences et les répulsions des élites chrétiennes d’aujourd’hui concernant la Bible”; Louis Quiévreux, “La Bible et la piété populaire médiévale d’après les vitraux de la Cathédrale de Bourges”; Jean Giblet, “Exposé des journées bibliques de Beauraing”; Roger Poelman, “Les expériences d’un professeur de religion dans une institution moderne concernant la lecture de la Bible.” Evdokimov’s contribution was later published as Paul Evdokimov, “La Bible dans la Piété orthodoxe,” *Irén* 23, 1950, 377–386.

53 Hans Ruedi-Weber, *The Courage to live: A Biography of Suzanne de Dietrich*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1995; Hans Ruedi-Weber, *A Laboratory for Ecumenical Life: The Story of Bossey (1946–1996)*, Geneva, WCC Publications, 1996. De Dietrich wrote a report of the session and sent it to the WCC headquarters: Suzanne de Dietrich, *Rapport sur la rencontre de Chevetogne, 29 septembre–2 octobre 1949*, 6 typewritten pages, in: WCCA, Study Department, D 97.

54 On the impact of the biblical movement on the ecumenical movement, see Matthias Haudel, *Die Bibel und die Einheit der Kirche: Eine Untersuchung der Studien von “Glauben und Kirchenverfassung,”* Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012.

55 Moeller, “Bible et Œcuménisme,” 165 (italics original and the authors’s).

56 The “spiritual” exegesis defended by the participants in the Chevetogne sessions was certainly not equivalent to the “pious” exegesis promoted by traditionalist Catholicism, as opposed to historical-critical exegesis (e.g. the multi-volume commentary by Dolindo Ruotolo, which was so successful among the Italian bishops), but referred back to the reproaches that the *nouvelle théologie* and the *ressourcement* posed to scientific exegesis, contesting the absence of a biblical theology. See Anthony Dupont & Karim Schelkens, “Scopuli Vitandi: The Historical-Critical Exegesis Controversy between the Lateran and the Biblicum (1960–1961),” *Bijdragen* 69, 2008, 18–51; Saretta Marotta, “Augustin Bea e la disputa sulla storicità dei Vangeli,” *Modernism* 6, 2022, 62–97, and Mauro Pesce, “Un bruit absurde? Henri de Lubac di fronte alla distinzione tra esegesi storica e esegesi spirituale,” *Annali di Storia dell’Esegesi* 10, 1993, 301–353.

57 Moeller, “Bible et Œcuménisme,” 175 (italics original).

58 In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the founder of Chevetogne Dom Lambert Beauduin, recently reintegrated into the community after his exile, was able to participate for the first time to the event. It is not a chance that he was also one of the first animators of the Belgian liturgical movement. See Lucien Morren, “Preface,” in: Verdoodt, *Les colloques œcuméniques*, 2: “And already, earlier, he [L. Beauduin] was given permission to participate in the 1949 session. He attended

study days is evident in the conviction that the liturgy, “existentially” loyal and conforming to the biblical tradition, constitutes the “first theological *locus* of the ordinary Magisterium,”⁵⁹ i.e. a living tradition.

The 1950 session “Théologie de la Parole et œcuménisme”⁶⁰ (held this time in October, two weeks after the international congress of Catholic ecumenists organized in Grottaferrata by Charles Boyer and attended by Dom Rousseau and Dom Lialine)⁶¹ focused on the problem of determining the identity of this much needed “biblical theology.” Reflection on biblical theology implied reflection on the very content of preaching and catechesis, distinct moments of the same ministry of the Word, but with different objectives.⁶² The point of departure was the observation that “all Christian denominations need to pronounce a *mea culpa* on the subject of the Ministry of the

Word,”⁶³ since each denomination has lent more weight to one aspect while neglecting the others.⁶⁴ A large number of the reports at the 1950 session were devoted to the historical analysis of preaching and catechesis, looking for “the causes of this decadence” in the course of history.⁶⁵ As a result, these were identified with the end of the patristic era and the consequent dissolution of the intimate union among catechesis, liturgy, and the Word that had characterized it. Until the 13th century, theology was indeed identified with commentary on Scripture, while the theological *summae* did not go beyond the circles of specialists: for

in the company of his good friend Msgr. Chevrot, the well-known Parisian priest-preacher; how could those present not remember their tasty conversations!” Dom Beauvain also attended the following sessions until his death in 1960.

59 Moeller, “Bible et Œcuménisme,” 184.

60 The conference took place from Oct 2 to 4, 1950 and was attended by 26 participants, almost a third of whom were non-Catholic. For this session as well, the archives only contain the list of scheduled talks and the list of participants.

61 See our contribution on the Catholic conference for ecumenical questions and Saretta Marotta's contribution in this volume. Dumont and Congar were also present at Grottaferrata, but not at this meeting in Chevetogne.

62 “Preaching in the strict sense ... is connected to the ‘prophetic’ mission of the Church: ... it must not seek to triumph over the person by presenting ‘arguments of human persuasion,’ we would say today, a secularized, ‘humanist,’ Christianity, in the non-religious sense of the term. Preaching brings ‘the good news’ not as a superior ‘wisdom’ (which it is in one sense), but as a ‘paradox’ that saves ... Catechesis is no longer addressed to the person to convert him or her. Strictly speaking ... it presupposes the Christian life. It seeks to instruct the Christian more deeply in the mysteries of revelation”; Charles Moeller, “Théologie de la Parole et Œcuménisme,” *Irén* 24, 1951, 313–343, here 313–316 (italics original).

63 Moeller, “Théologie de la Parole,” 324.

64 “In the area of *preaching*, our Protestant brothers and sisters are considerably ahead of us because they have developed a ‘theology of the Word’ ... Our Orthodox brothers and sisters, on the other hand, suffer from an almost total absence of preaching. Their ecclesiology directs them more readily to liturgical catechesis ... As for Catholic preaching, it seems that it is not sufficiently concerned to ground itself in a ‘theology of the Word’ ... the teaching is too exclusively focused on morals, too inspired by a natural theodicy ... In regard to *catechesis*, the situation is the opposite ... The insistence of our Protestant siblings on the *kerygma* leads them to neglect catechesis”; Moeller, “Théologie de la Parole,” 320–321 (italics original).

65 Moeller, “Théologie de la Parole,” 324. Here is the complete program (taken from UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, papiers, 1950 and AJOC): Olivier Rousseau, “Introduction: Sens de ces réunions”; Jean-Louis Leuba (pastor in Basel), “L’efficacité de la Parole”; Chrysostome Baur, “Les grands prédicateurs de l’antiquité chrétienne: S. Jean Chrysostome”; Cyrille Lambot, “Les grands prédicateurs de l’antiquité chrétienne: S. Augustin”; Jean Leclercq, “Moyen-Age et prédication”; Aymon-Marie Roguet, “Expériences positives et négatives concernant la prédication: catholique”; Élie Méliá, “Expériences positives et négatives concernant la prédication: orthodoxe”; Jean-Louis Leuba, “Expériences positives et négatives concernant la prédication: protestant”; Olivier Rousseau, “Rapport sur le congrès unioniste de Grottaferrata”; Pierre Ranwez, “Notes sur l’histoire du Catéchisme”; Léon van der Elst (alias: Jean de Vincennes), “Les affamés de la Parole”; Charles Moeller, “Conclusions.” Ranwez’s contribution was later published as Pierre Ranwez, “Réflexions sur le catéchisme et son histoire,” *L’union*, April 1953, 39–46; May–June 1953, 37–47.

the faithful the reception of the Word was like the reception of the sacraments. However, between the 14th and 16th century the abandonment of the *lectio continua* of the Bible led to forgetting some texts; meanwhile, conferences “on religious subjects,” i.e. on abstract notions, multiplied, replacing images and biblical themes. Eventually, the Counter-Reformation would accentuate the polemical effort of catechesis and preaching by increasingly distancing them from the liturgy. Scripture thus became that florilegium, that “arsenal of evidence” which characterized the theology textbooks of the time. From this historical analysis, the participants in the Chevetogne meeting unanimously agreed on the urgent need to integrate the various aspects of evangelization along a single mystery, that of the Holy Scripture received by the ecclesial community.⁶⁶ These are Jérôme Hamer’s comments on the conference: “It seemed urgent ... to create without delay a great movement of enthusiasm for the ‘Word of God.’ ... Where does it draw its effectiveness from? Is it from the talent of the speaker, from his priestly character, or from the divine origin of his message? These various questions demand more profoundly doctrinal answers than have been given to them so far.”⁶⁷ Since developing a theology of the Word is, after all, nothing other than restoring the importance of the “Church’s prophetic role,”⁶⁸ the Chevetogne discussions came back to the ecclesiological question, i.e. the role of the church in preserving and transmitting Word and tradition. From highlighting the need for a biblical theology, the session

thus ended by returning to the dilemma of the relationship between Scripture and the magisterium, from which in 1942 the reflection of the group of theologians of Leuven and the first session of the study days had started. However, this time such reflection took place through a direct comparison with the other Christian confessions, and was, moreover, no longer limited to Orthodoxy alone, but also included the Reformed and Lutheran traditions.

“Tradition et œcuménisme” was the theme of the 1951 session, which tackled head-on the point on which ecumenical differences appeared most irreducible. And yet, on closer examination, even on this subject the greater mutual knowledge made it possible to dismantle age-old prejudices, such as the one that denied that the Protestant *sola Scriptura* could ever accept the idea of tradition. The intervention of pastor Marc-Henry Rotschy (who had replaced Thurian at the last moment in presenting the paper “Tradition in Calvin’s Theology”) demonstrated instead the existence of a tradition in his church, in the same way as the Benedictine Paul De Vooght, an expert on early Reform movements, explained that even for John Wycliff the highest authority after the Bible was the tradition of the church fathers (*consensus patrum*).⁶⁹ However, it was mainly Edmond Ortigues’ intervention that denounced how the

66 “This was one of the major conclusions of the October 1950 session – if not the most important ... The unanimity of all participants on its necessity was so impressive that it should be stressed”; Moeller, “Théologie de la parole,” 330 (italics original).

67 Report by Jérôme Hamer, in: *Témoignage chrétien*, January 1951, cited in Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 465.

68 “To develop a theology of the Word is, after all, nothing other than to give a prophetic role to the Church, the same importance that one gives to its priestly role or its jurisdictional role”; Moeller, “Théologie de la parole,” 331.

69 Here the complete program (taken from UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, cahiers: n. 45): Olivier Rousseau, “Exposé du programme de la semaine”; Lucien Cerfaux, “Analyse de la notion de Tradition chez S. Paul”; Paul De Vooght, “La Tradition chez les scolastiques et le préreformateurs (Wycliff)”; René Blanc, “La Tradition dans la théologie luthérienne”; Marc-Henry Rotschy, “La tradition dans la théologie de Calvin”; Henry Renaud Turner Brandreth OGS (anglican parish of Paris), “La notion anglicane de la Tradition”; Pierre Kovalevsky, “Tradition et Sobornost dans la théologie Orthodoxe”; Edmond Ortigues, “La notion de Tradition d’après le Concile de Trente”; Jan-Hendrik Walgrave, “Newton et l’évolution du dogme”; Roger Aubert, “La théologie catholique contemporaine de la Tradition”; Charles Moeller, “Conclusions.” The conference was attended by 39 participants among whom were many ecumenists like Christoph-Jean Dumont, Robert Grosche, and

doctrine of the “two sources of Revelation” was the result of a misinterpretation of the Council of Trent, which had initially preferred *regula* to the term *fons*:

The serious and important fact to know is that the decree of the fourth session concerning the Scriptures and the Traditions was misunderstood and distorted by the polemic of the sixteenth century. ... The thesis of two juxtaposed “sources” confused the humanist notion of historical source, a document from which earthly intelligence extracted its information, with the spiritual source of faith, which is Christ sanctifying his Church. ... It is not a question of two sources/documents of Revelation, *de fontibus Revelationis*, as thousands of manuals have repeated, confusing the problem of the theological places, that is to say of the sources of theology, with the problem of Revelation, which has no source, because it is none other than Jesus Christ, the source of faith.⁷⁰

If for Catholics tradition is not an autonomous source of revelation (the overcoming of the doctrine on the “two sources” would become one of the focal points at Vatican II),⁷¹ on the other hand, *sola Scriptura* does not really apply to other confessions either: “All Christians admit that Scripture is

a norm only when it is read in *church-community*. It is not, therefore, the *littera scripta*, the written letter, that is authoritative, but the ecclesial proclamation of the message contained in the Book.”⁷² The reflection on the theology of the Word thus referred back to the ecclesiological question, highlighting the role of the community in the written fixation of revelation⁷³ and shifting the focus from the dialectic between Scripture and tradition to that between revelation and church. It is the ecclesial community indeed that constitutes the theological place in which Scripture and tradition are combined. However, reflecting on the relationship between the church and revelation meant once again reflecting on the magisterium, i.e. the possibility for the church to transmit an active tradition as well as a passive one and the possibility of the evolution of dogma. On Nov 1, 1950, a month after the previous session of the study days of Chevetogne, Pope Pius XII had defined the dogma of the Assumption. As is well known, this was a veritable earthquake for ecumenical relations.⁷⁴ In fact, the papal bull *Munificentissimus Deus* said nothing about any scriptural argument, or about the alleged “traditions” about the death of the Virgin, but appealed only to the “faith of the Church,” i.e. of the faithful, offering a clear example of “active magisterium.” The Catholics present at Chevetogne strongly defended how active tradition was already present in all the early councils, where notions such as *homoousios* or the Trinity

Frans Thijssen. Henri De Lubac was present for the first time.

70 Edmond Ortigues, “La tradition de l’Évangile dans l’Église d’après la doctrine catholique,” *FoiVie* 49, 1951, 304–322, here 318–319. This contribution was also published in Edmond Ortigues, “Écriture et Traditions apostoliques au Concile du Trente,” *RSR* 36, 1949, 271–299. The text of his speech in Chevetogne is in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, cahiers: n. 45, annexes. See also Moeller’s comments in his report of the 1951 session: “There is only one source of faith and not two that are juxtaposed, without visible communion, and sometimes in opposition. This is undoubtedly the central discovery of the ecumenical meeting”; Charles Moeller, “Tradition et Œcuménisme,” *Irén* 25, 1952, 337–370, here 346 (italics original).

71 See Schelkens, *Catholic Theology of Revelation*.

72 Moeller, “Tradition et Œcuménisme,” 339 (italics original).

73 “The Bible, as a book, has been composed in the community and was meant primarily for its edification. The book and the Church cannot be separated”; Georges Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, vol. 1, Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, Belmont, MA, Nordland Publishing, 1972, 18, perhaps quoted in Pierre Kovalevsky’s speech.

74 For an overview of the reactions, see *Irén* 23, 1950, 425–427; *Vers l’unité chrétienne* 28, 1950, 10–19 and *La Documentation catholique* 33, 1951, 235–250. Max Thurian’s reaction is one of the most notorious: Max Thurian, “Le dogme de l’Assomption,” *Verbum Caro* 5, 1951, 2–50.

did not belong to the biblical vocabulary but were concepts that already represented interpretations of the Scripture. They therefore defended the possibility of an active magisterium by resorting to the notion of the church as the bride of Christ, i.e. spiritually united to him, assisted by the Holy Spirit, indissolubly and therefore also infallibly bound to her bridegroom.⁷⁵ The image of the *Ecclesia sponsa* would be the object of an entire session of the study days in 1955, but already in 1952 had become clear that ecclesiology and, primarily, Christology, was what for Moeller constituted the hard core, the “crossroads” of all ecumenical confrontations. It was on the relationship between Christ and his church that the ecclesiologies of the different denominations diverged profoundly, especially among the Western Churches. For Protestants, the church “exists only in act, in the very moment when God speaks to it, in the community. The church is entirely generated by Holy Scripture. When it no longer hears this divine Word, *it dies*. From then on, the church cannot judge Scripture but is always ‘judged by it.’”⁷⁶ For Catholics, on the other hand, the church has a *permanent* charisma, which enables it to discover and promulgate the exact meaning of revelation. This is possible because of the church’s condition as bride of Christ. Mariology, too, was ultimately reduced to an ecclesiological problem. By reflecting on the figure of Mary, Catholics defended their conception of the mediation of grace through the church. These different ecclesiological conceptions, “constitute two Christian universes that nothing, for the time being, will be able to bridge,”⁷⁷ as Moeller concluded in his 1953 manuscript reviewing the first ten years of activity of the Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne. However, the differences over Mariology and ecclesiology highlighted the fact that the core of the divergences was the interpretation of the figure of Christ, about which, in Moeller’s view, nothing

had changed since the debates that had animated the councils of the early centuries of Christianity, when the first schisms had occurred. Indeed, the *querelle* between Nestorians (a human Jesus) and Monophysites (a divine Jesus) never ended, but basically all the churches of today blame the others for not being faithful to the Council of Chalcedon, that is, either to humanize Christ or to deify him too much. The ecclesiological problem derives from this Christological problem, since the church is but an extension of the Incarnation. Especially because it is always Christology, i.e. the presence of Christ in the church, that constitutes the sole object of all controversies, Moeller concluded that it was necessary to go back and reflect on the origin of the schisms, starting with the schisms of the 4th century, which can also explain the prehistory of further divisions.

The 1952 session of the study days would indeed have as its theme “La théologie du schisme.”⁷⁸ There were several reasons for this choice. The first was that on Sep 8, 1951 Pius XII’s encyclical *Sempiternus rex Christus* had appeared, celebrating the 15th centenary of the Council of Chalcedon. Precisely in this encyclical, which recalled the terms of the debate among Nestorians, Monophysites, and Diophysites, Pius XII extended the call for ecumenical unity also to the Miaphysite churches. Similarly, the organizers of the study days of Chevetogne were also convinced that it was necessary

75 Moeller, “Tradition et Œcuménisme,” 354–370.

76 Moeller, “Bible et Œcuménisme,” 183 (italics original).

77 Moeller, *Le mouvement pour l’unité*, part III, ch. 1, 185.

78 The conference took place from Sep 30 to Oct 2, 1952 and was attended by 38 participants (among them there were also Nikos Nissiotis, from the WCC, and Johannes Willebrands, who a month earlier had just started the experience of the CCEQ). This is the program: Yves Congar, “La notion théologique du schisme”; Hilaire Duesberg, “Le schisme dans l’Ancien Testament”; Jacques Dupont, “Le schisme à partir du Nouveau Testament”; Charles Moeller, “Le schisme au temps des premiers conciles”; Maurice Pontet, “Notion du schisme chez S. Augustin”; Archimandrite Emilianos Timiadis, “Séparation entre l’Orient et l’Occident”; Jean Leclercq, “Le grand schisme d’Occident”; Jacques Courvoisier, “Le schisme dans la tradition réformée”; Clément Lialine, “Brève communication sur une opinion orthodoxe récente concernant le schisme”; Jean Gribomont, “Schisme et appartenance à l’Église.”

to involve the Eastern non-Chalcedonian churches in the ecumenical debate, starting from the study of their schism. The reflection of the 1952 session was not accidental for yet another reason: in August 1952 the third world conference of the Faith and Order movement was held in Lund, and “Christ and his Church,” along with the biblical roots of this relationship, was the theme of one of the three preparatory reports that had been sent in advance to the delegates, and in which the very notion of schism had been discussed, too.⁷⁹ The third reason was that in 1950 Dom Lambert Beauduin had returned from his exile and was reintegrated into Chevetogne. He would be 81 years old in 1954, precisely on the 900th anniversary of the Great Schism. Beauduin had always invited his monks to develop a scholarly interest in the first councils, particularly concerning the doctrine on the episcopate.⁸⁰ The decision to dedicate a miscellaneous volume collecting contributions on the first councils and the first schisms in the history of Christianity on the occasion of his birthday therefore seemed the most obvious choice.⁸¹ Moeller’s book on the first ten years of the Ecumenical

Study Days was also probably intended to accompany these celebrations.

The meetings of 1952 and 1953 can therefore be seen as a single in-depth study of schisms: from those of the first centuries concerning the Christian East (1952) to that on the theology of grace at the origin of the Reformation (1953). Six of the eight lectures presented at the 1952 session were published in the two volumes offered to Dom Beauduin.⁸² Of all the contributions, which mainly reported on the history of the various schisms over the centuries, the one by Congar was particularly noteworthy. It was perceived as “shocking” because of the interpretations that it offered and was therefore placed as an introduction to the first volume of the *Festschrift*.⁸³ for instance, when Congar blamed the schism of 1054 and the subsequent Council of Florence for the canonical separation of rites, which had become a clear sign of the separation of the churches, putting an end to the “healthy pluralism” that had characterized the Catholic Church in previous centuries.⁸⁴ Or, above

79 Faith and Order had also already used the notion of the church as the “people of God” for a long time. See Oliver S. Tomkins, *The Church in the Purpose of God: An Introduction to the Work of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, in Preparation for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order to be Held at Lund, Sweden in 1952*, Chatham, Parrett & Neves, 1950; *Report of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order: Lund, Sweden: August 15–28, 1952*, London, John Roberts Press, 1952, esp. 7–11 and 16–17. See also Clément Lialine, “Le mouvement Foi et Constitution à l’étape ‘Lund 1952,’” *Irén* 26, 1953, 146–161 and 256–282.

80 Emmanuel Lanne, “Il ruolo del monastero di Chevetogne al Concilio Vaticano II,” *CrSt* 27, 2006, 513–545, here 514.

81 *1054–1954: L’Église et les Églises: Neuf siècles de douloureuse séparation entre l’Orient et l’Occident. Études et travaux offerts à Dom Lambert Beauduin*, 2 vols., Chevetogne, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1954–1955. The two volumes collected the contributions of 44 authors, two-thirds of whom Roman Catholics, the rest Greek and Russian Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, and one Anglican.

82 Yves M.-J. Congar, “Neuf cents ans après: Notes sur le ‘Schisme oriental,’” in: *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 1, 3–98; Dom Jacques Dupont, “Le Schisme d’après Saint Paul,” in: *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 1, 111–127; Charles Moeller, “Réflexions sur les schismes à l’époque des premiers conciles,” in: *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 1, 241–260; Maurice Pontet, “La notion de schisme d’après saint Augustin,” in: *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 1, 163–182; Dom Jacques Leclercq, “Points de vue sur le Grand Schisme d’Occident,” in: *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 223–240; Jacques Courvoisier, “Du Schisme dans la tradition et dans l’histoire des Églises réformées,” *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 283–307.

83 “As for Fr. Congar, whose address caused a stir, he returned to the material he covered in his *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* entry ‘Schism,’ bringing it up to date, insisting particularly on the importance of the local church in antiquity and the centralizing development in the West, which gave the notion of schism a different meaning from what it was in the past between particular churches”; Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 467. See Yves M.-J. Congar, “Théologie,” in: *DThC* 15, 341–502.

84 “In the sixth century in Rome ... when a child was brought to the baptistery, the acolyte asked: ‘In what language does he confess our Lord Jesus Christ?’

all (this was the basic thesis of his contribution), when he stated that the process of “estrangement” between East and West had begun well before 1054 and the schism was nothing more than the final acceptance of this progressive distancing.⁸⁵

As far as the 1953 session is concerned, although all the speakers were invited to participate in the second volume of the collective work *L'Église et les églises*,⁸⁶ there they dealt with other topics, so that none of the contributions presented at the session “La grâce et l'œcuménisme” was published in that volume or in the pages of *Irénikon*. Unfortunately, not even the texts of the speeches remain in the archives, but only brief summaries and notes, so that it is not easy to reconstruct the content of the session. However, it is clear from Moeller's account (although the names of the speakers were never mentioned in *Irénikon*) that one of the key contributions had been pronounced by Gérard Philips, from the University of Leuven, who had traced

According to the answer, he recited the creed in Greek or in Latin.' Surely this state of things can be considered a wholesome pluralism ... Before modern times, ritus meant concrete ritual, a manner of celebrating the liturgy, the concrete expression of one's faith ... But since then – and who can say precisely when? – 'rite' became an abstract reality, a thing in itself; it became a separate entity and one begins to speak of *the* Oriental rite ... The question of rite has become identified with the very question of church"; Congar, “Neuf cents ans après,” 35–36; English translation: *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism between the Eastern and Western Churches*, New York, Fordham University Press, 1959, 35–36, quoting Bréhier, “Avant le schisme du XI^e siècle,” *Istina* 6, 1959, 367, italics in the original.

85 Congar, “Neuf cents ans après,” 8, also 20–22, 52–63, 80–87, and 98.

86 Endre von Ivánka, “Palamismus und Vätertradition,” in: *L'Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 29–46; Jean Meyendorff, “Un mauvais théologien de l'unité au XIV^e siècle: Barlaam le Calabrais,” in: *L'Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 47–66; Pierre-Yves Emery, “La Réforme du XVI^e siècle et les conciles œcuméniques,” in: *L'Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 263–281. In the same volume, the contribution of Paul Evdokimov, who was not present at the 1953 session but was presumably initially invited as a speaker, is worth mentioning: Paul Evdokimov, “De la nature et de la grâce dans la théologie de l'Orient,” in: *L'Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 171–195.

the origins of the concept of “created grace” in the history of Catholic theology from St. Augustine to the Council of Trent, showing that the doctrine against which Luther railed was in fact a misinterpreted degeneration.⁸⁷ The Dominican Nikolaus Walty from Le Saulchoir then spoke about the Tridentine doctrine on grace, while two pairs of speakers, Jean Meyendorff from Saint-Serge and Endre von Ivánka from the University of Graz for the Orthodox Churches, and Pierre-Yves Emery from Taizé and the pastor Henry Bruston from Lyons for the Reformed, illustrated respectively the concepts of “divinization” and “extrinsic grace” which were fundamental concepts for the theology of grace in the respective confessions.⁸⁸

The 1953 session was attended by 38 participants, a number that had also been reached in the 1951 and 1952 editions. This progressive increase in the audience of the Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne was a characteristic mark of the “new Rousseau era.” The new study days had a greater impact also through its representativity: Suzanne de Dietrich's participation in 1949 on behalf of the WCC was followed in 1950 by the participation of Jean-Louis Leuba, a member of the Faith and Order commission, and that of Nikos Nissiotis, associate director of Bossey, in

87 Years later, Philips would return to this subject in greater detail: Gérard Philips, *L'union personnelle avec le Dieu vivant: Essai sur l'origine et le sens de la grâce créée*, Gembloux, Duculot, 1974. Moeller published the report of this session, as usual, in *Irénikon*. See Charles Moeller, “Théologie de la Grâce et Œcuménisme,” *Irén* 28, 1955, 19–56. Because the issue quickly sold out, he invited Philips to provide some additions and publish the report as a small joint book. See Charles Moeller & Gérard Philips, *Grâce et œcuménisme*, Chevetogne, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1957.

88 Here is the complete program: Jean Meyendorff, “La théologie de la divinisation en Orient et dans le monde orthodoxe”; Endre von Ivánka, “Anthropologie de la grâce en Orient et en Occident”; Gérard Philips, “La théologie de la gratia creata”; Nikolaus Walty, “La doctrine de la grâce au Concile de Trente”; Pierre-Yves Emery, “Grâce externe et interne chez Calvin”; Henry Bruston, “La notion de la grâce dans la théologie réformée”; Charles Moeller, “Conclusions.”

1952.⁸⁹ As the fame and importance of these study days increased, their echo reached even Rome, which was worried about them and tried subject them to its own authorization. The attempt was eventually thwarted thanks to the action of the prior of Chevetogne, Dom Thomas Becquet, and Bishop André-Marie Charue of Namur.⁹⁰ This way, the experience of the Ecumenical Study Days was able to continue its course, intensifying an ecclesiological reflection that would anticipate by several years the fundamental themes of Vatican II.

4 The Ecclesiological Conferences: 1954–1958

The organizers of the 1954 conference on “Baptême et Église,” which was attended by 34 participants, may have been inspired by an article which the Dominican father Jérôme Hamer had published a few years earlier in *Irénikon*.⁹¹ On the basis of his analysis of the teaching of Western and Eastern church fathers about the validity of the baptism when administered by heretics and schismatics, Hamer had come to the conclusion that, “even when administered outside the visible unity, baptism is by its proper nature a real element of the Church of Christ.”⁹² The recently nominated Leuven professor Albert Descamps was asked to give a lecture on the theology of baptism in the New Testament.⁹³ Due to his openness to the approach of the *formgeschichtliche*

Schule, he was convinced that the New Testament reveals a “diversity of theologies of baptism.”⁹⁴ Some accounts understand baptism as a rite of purification leading to the forgiveness of sins; others as the sign of accepting Christ and the Triune God; it was understood by another group as the “rite of initiation into the Church” or as a rite symbolizing “the mystical union to the Risen Lord.” The theology of baptism today is invited to reflect this variety even more.⁹⁵ Bernard Botte, a Benedictine monk at the abbey of Mont César in Leuven, must have been invited because of his 1952 article on the interpretation of the baptismal rites.⁹⁶ The article contains a strong plea to the Sacred Congregation of Rites to restore the *Rituale Romanum*⁹⁷ and its rites for infant and adult baptism, as had been the case in 1951 with the Easter vigil. Since the lecture by Dom Botte is the only one of those comprising this conference to be published in full, it is a precious testimony to the intention of the organizers to ask a celebrated liturgist to reflect on the ecclesial significance of baptism.⁹⁸ For Botte, this requires attention to the three dimensions of the word *ἐκκλησία* in the New Testament: the

89 Verdoodt reported that in March 1952 a week of “ecumenical social days” was held in Chevetogne, organized in collaboration with the study department of the WCC of Geneva, on the Christian significance of economy and human work. See Verdoodt, *Les colloques œcuméniques*, 11–12. The meeting actually took place from Mar 28 to 31 and news of it also reached the Holy Office. See ACDF, *Rerum variarum*, 1948, n. 39, pos. 146.

90 Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité*, 772.

91 Jérôme Hamer, “Le baptême et l'Église: À propos des ‘Vestigia Ecclesiae,’” in *Irén* 25, 1952, 142–164, 263–275.

92 Hamer, “Le baptême et l'Église,” 275.

93 Albert Descamps, “*Simple réflexions sur la théologie primitive du baptême chrétien*,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, *carnets*, n. 50, 1954, 1.

94 According to Jean Giblet, “Mgr Albert Descamps, exégète et théologien de Louvain,” *RTL* 12, 1981, 40–58, Descamps combined the thematic approach of his teacher Cerfaux with Dibelian *Formgeschichte*. After the council, Descamps remained willing to reflect on baptism in relation to Christian unity, as appears from Albert Descamps, “Le baptême, fondement de l'unité chrétienne,” in: Lorenzo de Lorenzi, ed., *Battesimo e giustizia in Rom 6 e 8*, Rome, Abbazia S. Paolo fuori le mura, 1974, 203–234.

95 “We must not synthesize these themes too quickly but rather study each separately for itself; rather than the artificial unity of a synthesis, we should prefer, in this case, the rich diversity of a tapestry to which a number of artists have contributed”; Descamps, *Simple réflexions*, 1.

96 Bernard Botte, “L'interprétation des textes baptismaux,” *La Maison-Dieu* 32, 1952, 18–39.

97 “It seems obvious to me that it is, among our liturgical books, the one most in urgent need of a correction or even a reworking”; Botte, “L'interprétation des textes baptismaux,” 36.

98 Bernard Botte, “Les rapports du baptisé avec la communauté chrétienne,” *Les Questions Liturgiques et Paroissiales* 34, 1953, 115–126.

liturgical assembly, the local church, and the universal church. For him, the significance of baptism as incorporation in the universal church is undisputed; in his time, the sense of belonging to the local church, and of being in regular contact with its bishop, besides a more regular attendance at its liturgy, needs to be emphasized.⁹⁹

Three speakers from other ecclesial traditions also took the floor. The Protestant scholar who had originally been invited to the meeting, André Benoît, was a specialist in the theology of baptism in the 2nd century.¹⁰⁰ In an article written in the same period, he defended the “coexistence” of local parish and universal church in the early church. Unlike the Catholic tradition, however, for Protestants the notion of universal church is understood as the experience of the presence of Christ in the celebration of baptism and Holy Supper by the community.¹⁰¹ Both the Anglican and Orthodox speaker point to the relationship between baptism and the resurrection of Christ and to the importance of the liturgy as *locus theologicus*. According to the Anglican priest Geoffrey Curtis, the Book of Common Prayer understands baptism as incorporation in the Risen Lord. Being united with Christ’s resurrection becomes visible by the activity of the

Spirit in us, not just for ourselves but for the whole of creation.¹⁰² The Orthodox speaker, Élie Méliá, pointed to the importance of the rite of immersion, which signifies that the baptized person participates in Christ’s sacrifice and in his resurrection. For him, baptism also means the inclusion in the local eucharistic community.¹⁰³

In the following year, the community of Chevetogne organized a conference on “Ecclesia sponsa,” the church as bride of Christ, with 41 participants. In the opinion of Henri Cazelles, the metaphor of the nuptial relation of Yahweh and Israel may have been developed in response to the presence of fertility cults and sacred prostitution in the religions of the ancient Near East.¹⁰⁴ The professor of ~~New Testament~~ ^{Studies} at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Geneva, Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, had probably been invited because he had paid attention to the ~~New Testament church~~ ^{church of the Acts of the Apostles} in some of his

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99 See especially the conclusion to Botte, “Les rapports du baptisé avec la communauté,” 124: “In requesting baptism, the catechumen asks to be incorporated into the universal church. They are perfectly aware of this. But this church is hierarchically organized ... Today, as in the first centuries, every Christian is incorporated into a local church, placed under the jurisdiction of a bishop. Of this, our Christians are not sufficiently aware.” Botte’s defense of the parish ended with a criticism of Catholic Action: “To dream of a *cura animarum* organized on the level of Catholic Action, according to social classes, would be, in my opinion, a dangerous utopia. In any case, at the present time, the parish remains the normal community of the Christian”; Botte, “Les rapports du baptisé avec la communauté,” 126.

100 André Benoît, *Le baptême chrétien au second siècle: La théologie des Pères*, Paris, PUF, 1953. Benoît, a patrologist from the University of Strasbourg, was replaced by Pierre Regard, a Protestant pastor from Mons, Belgium.

101 See André Benoît, “La paroisse dans le christianisme primitif,” *FoiVie* 50, 1952, 215–231, esp. 219–221.

102 See Geoffrey Curtis, “L’appartenance à l’Église par le baptême et l’incorporation au Christ et à sa Résurrection par ce sacrement,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 50, 1954. Curtis was a member of the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield, a peculiar Anglican monastic experience.

103 See Élie Méliá, “L’insertion dans l’Église par le baptême dans la tradition de l’Église orthodoxe,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 50, 1954. Méliá, a former student of Sergius Bulgakov at the Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge, was rector of the Georgian parish in Paris. His theological work was mainly a reflection on his pastoral experience. In the same period, Méliá had been invited to contribute to an important collective by Serge Verhovskoy, who had been professor at Saint-Serge from 1944 to 1952 and had accepted the invitation to teach dogmatics at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. See Ilya Melia, “Malaja Cerkov’: Prichod, kak christianskaja obščina” [The small church: The parish as Christian community], in: Sergey Verhovskoy, ed., *Pravoslavie v žizni: Sbornik statej* [Orthodoxy in life: Collection of articles], New York NY, Chekhov Publishing House, 1953, 85–116. The article is about the relationship between the parish and the bishop. In the conclusions to this chapter, he warned against a two-fold danger, minimizing the importance of the parish by not seeing her as the church of Christ, and assuming that the parish is a self-sufficient entity.

104 Cazelles had only recently become professor at the ICP.

previous writings.¹⁰⁵ The most important Pauline metaphor for the church is that of Body of Christ, with its attention to both the mystical relationship between the faithful and Christ and to the sociological dimension of the church.¹⁰⁶ In another publication he discusses the conjugal relationship of Christ with the church in Eph 5 as a variation of the metaphor of the church as the Body of Christ. We are united with Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit, thanks to Christ love for us culminating in the crucifixion.¹⁰⁷ This time, the typical attention to the patristic tradition focused exclusively on the Syriac East. *Irénikon* had already published a study in 1955 by the Syriac Catholic priest Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis on the feast of the consecration and the dedication of the church, which in the Syrian tradition opens the liturgical year.¹⁰⁸ The Jesuit François Graffin, who had been nominated professor of Oriental Christianity at the Catholic University of Paris in 1951, dealt with the same theme in the Ecumenical Study Days but on the basis of a richer collection of sources, namely the Syriac and Chaldean breviaries, and the homilies of the Syrian bishop Mar Jacob of Serugh. The main goal of his article, the only one from the 1955 conference to be published, was to make this rich liturgical tradition known in the West as well.¹⁰⁹

105 See especially Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, *Études sur l'Église dans le Nouveau Testament*, Geneva, Georg & Cie, 1940.

106 Leenhardt, *Études sur l'Église*, 42.

107 Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, "Réalité et caractères de l'Église," in: Georges Florovsky & others, *La Sainte Église Universelle: Confrontation œcuménique*, Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1948, 59–91, here 74.

108 Gabriel Khouri-Sarkis, "La fête de l'Église dans l'année liturgique syrienne," *Irén* 28, 1955, 186–193. By means of quotations from the Syriac breviary the author praises the church as the bride of Christ, who receives and renders back Christ's love for her.

109 François Graffin, "Recherches sur le thème de l'Église-Épouse dans les liturgies et la littérature patristique de langue syriaque," *L'Orient Syrien* 3, 1958, 317–336. The journal was founded by Khouri-Sarkis two years earlier, and to the first issue contained the contribution by Olivier Rousseau "Actualité des Études syriennes," in *L'Orient Syrien* 1, 1956, 31–43.

In his conference on the church as bride in the Orthodox tradition, theologian Boris Bobrinskoy highlights the doctrinal themes that resonate with this "nuptial symbolism." Among these are the relationship of God with Israel, the holiness of the church and the sinfulness of its members, its motherhood, the relationship between the Mother of God and the church, the one between church and wisdom in Sergius Bulgakov. After the conference, he sent a detailed overview of citations by church fathers and Orthodox theologians on "L'action du Saint-Esprit dans l'Église-Epouse du Christ" to Moeller, partly in preparation for the next conference.¹¹⁰

Just a few months earlier, the CCEQ had organized its fourth meeting in Paris on a similar theme.¹¹¹ Its theologians sought to stimulate the Catholic reflection on the nature of the church by focusing on two important images, that of the church as bride and that of the church as Body of Christ. Unlike in Chevetogne, the CCEQ gave the floor only to Catholic speakers who, as converts, were asked to explain the theology of their previous traditions. The conferences by Louis Bouyer, Joseph McGill, Willem Hendrik van de Pol and Johannes Petrus Michael all expressed the need to emphasize the superiority of the Catholic view on this theme. Furthermore, the lecture by Swiss theologian Charles Journet offered a rich Catholic reflection on the image of the church as bride of

110 Bobrinskoy, who had accepted the chair in dogmatic theology at the Saint-Serge only one year earlier, had been asked by the Georgian priest Melia to replace him. The theme of his lecture was to remain important in his mature ecclesiology. See Boris Bobrinskoy, *Le mystère de l'Église: Cours de théologie dogmatique*, Paris, Cerf, 2003. In the New Testament, the bridal imagery "is no longer an analogy; it is the reality of divine love, of Christ towards his church and towards every human soul that the Spirit entrusts to the Lord. It is the mystery of the eternal wedding of Christ and the church which becomes the foundation of human love"; Bobrinskoy, *Le mystère de l'Église*, 143. The section ends with a reflection on sinfulness and holiness in the church: Bobrinskoy, *Le mystère de l'Église*, 148–151.

111 See also our article on the significance of the Catholic conference for ecumenical questions in this volume.

Christ, which is able to express both the intimate relationship and the difference between the two.¹¹² Journet was equally convinced that the Protestant reluctance to apply this image to the church can be countered by paying greater attention to the connection between pneumatology and ecclesiology. The Spirit is “the efficient personality of the Church.”¹¹³

The Swiss Protestant exegete Pierre Bonnard, known for his welcoming reaction to *Divino afflante Spiritu*,¹¹⁴ had been invited to the 1956 conference on “L’Esprit-Saint et l’Église” – attended by 34 speakers – in order to explain the New Testament background of this theme.¹¹⁵ Describing the precise relationship between the Spirit and the church is a delicate issue. The Christian community *is* the temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16) but individual Christians still are able to act against the Spirit. Bonnard follows Congar in speaking about a “covenant relationship” between church and Spirit, not that the infallibility of the ordained ministry could be derived from this image.¹¹⁶ In the New Testament, ecclesiology is still characterized by “a spiritual monism” which is not in favor of making strict divisions between community members and their leaders.¹¹⁷ The conference by

Nicolas Koulomzine had also a strong focus on Scripture, especially on the Spirit as revealer of Christ in the New Testament and in the church.¹¹⁸

In his first contribution to the ecumenical study days, Emmanuel Lanne presented the contribution of patristic theology on this theme.¹¹⁹ His attention goes first to the teaching of the African theologians, from Tertullian to Augustine, on the validity of the baptism administered by heretics. In his opinion, the famous conclusion to Book III of Irenaeus’s *Adversus Haereses*, which Lanne quotes in Latin as “ubi enim Ecclesia, ibi et Spiritus Dei, et ubi Spiritus Dei, illic Ecclesia et omnis gratia,”¹²⁰ can be interpreted as a reflection on the boundaries of the church.¹²¹ According to him, the Greek church fathers Irenaeus of Lyons and especially Cyril of Alexandria remain very helpful for a contemporary theological reflection on the proper roles of Christ and the Spirit in the process of divinization.¹²²

Since the topic of this session was thematically linked to that on grace, Moeller had asked Professor Philips once again to present the more recent

112 Charles Journet, “L’Église, Épouse du Christ,” in: CCEQ archives, FWC, Dossier 3, 5. When treating the Chevetogne conference on “Ecclesia sponsa,” Olivier Rousseau is attentive to the impact of this idea on the redaction of the Dogmatic constitution on the church *Lumen Gentium*. See Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 472.

113 Journet, “L’Église, Épouse du Christ,” 6.

114 Pierre Bonnard, “L’Encyclique *Divino Afflante Spiritu* et l’orientation de l’herméneutique biblique,” *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* n.s. 38, 1950, 51–56. According to Bonnard, a professor of the New Testament at the Freie Fakultät Lausanne, with this encyclical “l’aube de l’herméneutique catholique romaine” had started, see Bonnard, “L’Encyclique *Divino Afflante Spiritu*,” 51.

115 Pierre Bonnard, “L’Esprit saint et l’Église selon le Nouveau Testament,” *RHPR* 37, 1957, 81–90.

116 Bonnard, “L’Esprit saint et l’Église,” 85, in reference to Yves M.-J. Congar, *Esquisses du mystère de l’Église*, Paris, Cerf, 21953, 160.

117 Bonnard, “L’Esprit saint et l’Église,” 88.

118 Nicolas Koulomzine was already teaching at Saint-Serge but would become the successor to Cassien Bézobrazov on the chair of **New Testament studies** after the council. In Nicholas Koulomzine, “Images of the Church in Saint Paul’s Epistles,” *SVTQ* 14, 1970, 5–27, esp. 19, it becomes clear that he considers 1 Cor 12:3 – “no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” – as “the spiritual gift.”

119 Emmanuel Lanne obtained his PhD from the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and in the same year would be nominated dean of studies of the Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome. His lecture was only published in 1970 as “Lo spirito e la Chiesa nella teologia patristica,” in: Emmanuel Lanne, ed., *Lo spirito Santo e la Chiesa: Una ricerca ecumenica*, Rome, Ave, 1970, 153–205.

120 Lanne, “Lo spirito e la Chiesa,” 171.

121 “Those who do not have faith in the Church, are not of the Church and so they do not possess the Spirit, because the Spirit is Truth. They cannot quench their thirst with the draught of youth inside the Church, says Irenaeus, hence they reject the Spirit”; Lanne, “Lo spirito e la Chiesa,” 173.

122 “In the Church we participate in the body and Spirit of Christ, which are two different aspects of the same reality”; Lanne, “Lo spirito e la Chiesa,” 202.

Catholic teaching on the relationship between the Spirit and the church. He did not publish his lecture but integrated it into his course notes.¹²³ Philips invited Catholic theologians to pay more attention to the Greek church fathers when teaching Trinitarian theology. They would thus become more attentive to the union of the believer with each of the divine persons, “ad propria personarum” as Thomas Aquinas put it.¹²⁴ Philips insisted that the union between the church and the Holy Spirit is “a personal union, not a hypostatic one.”¹²⁵

The cycle of ecclesiological conferences ended in 1958 with one on “Présence réelle du Christ dans l’Eucharistie,” once again attended by 34 participants. Moeller reports in his introduction how Professor Leenhardt, during their correspondence in preparation of the study day on “Ecclesia sponsa,” had already made the suggestion to dedicate a part of that conference to a discussion of this theme. He had published *Le sacrement de la Sainte Cène* in 1948¹²⁶ and his 1955 study on the same topic had been well received by the Catholic theologian Joseph de Baciocchi.¹²⁷ Soon

afterwards, *Istina* paid attention to this debate.¹²⁸ Moeller started to prepare a conference on unity and the Eucharist, but due to a meeting of the CCEQ in Chevetogne and the inauguration and consecration of the Byzantine Church in 1957, the Study day took place only in 1958 and would bring together both Leenhardt and de Baciocchi. In his conclusions, indeed, Moeller warned that there is more than the scholastic debate on transubstantiation: there is “the role of the Holy Spirit, the divine presence in the other sacraments and in God’s word, the relation of the Eucharist with the mystical body.”¹²⁹

The analysis of the institution narratives in the New Testament by Jacques Dupont, almost echoes Moeller’s words.¹³⁰ The theological basis of the dogma of the real presence is the prophetic reference to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross in the institution narratives, which, however, have also become a “memorial.”¹³¹ The Orthodox theologian

123 See Gérard Philips, “De Spiritu Sancto et Ecclesia in theologia contemporanea,” Leuven, 1957–1958. The centrality of this theme in his theological work also appears from the title of his *Festschrift: Ecclesia a Spiritu Sancto edocta (Lumen Gentium 53): Mélanges théologiques Hommage à Gérard Philips/Verzamelde Tehologische Opstellen aangeboden aan Mgr. Gérard Philips*, Gembloux, Duculot, 1970.

124 See Gérard Philips, “Le Saint Esprit en nous: À propos d’un livre récent,” *ETL* 24, 1948, 127–135.

125 See Gérard Philips, “L’Esprit-Saint et l’Église dans le développement de la Théologie Catholique,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 50, 1956. Unlike other Catholic theologians in his time, Philips showed great respect for the freedom of the believers and did not explain the personality of the church in such a way that the Holy Spirit would almost appear as the hypostasis of the church. See Claude Gérard, *Le Saint-Esprit et ses œuvres dans la pensée de Monseigneur Gérard Philips*, Rome, Pontificium Athenaeum Sanctae Crucis, 1995, 64–66.

126 Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, *Le sacrement de la Sainte Cène*, Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1948.

127 Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, *Ceci est mon corps: explication de ces paroles de Jésus-Christ*, Neuchâtel, Delachaux et

Niestlé, 1955. Joseph de Baciocchi, “Le Mystère eucharistique dans les perspectives de la Bible,” *NRT* 87, 1955, 561–580, deplores the insufficient attention to Scripture and the exaggerated emphasis of Catholic theology on philosophical speculation: “First of all, it was necessary to see in what sense Eucharistic sacramentalism prolongs the structure of the Jewish Passover; and for this work, Franz Leenhardt’s book was most valuable to me”; de Baciocchi, “Le Mystère eucharistique,” 562.

128 Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, “Chronique bibliographique: Un débat sur l’eucharistie,” *Istina* 3, 1956, 210–240.

129 Charles Moeller, “Conclusions,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 54, 1958, 4.

130 Jacques Dupont, “Ceci est mon corps,” ‘Ceci est mon sang,’ *NRT* 90, 1958, 1023–1041, esp. 1026: “The real presence is, in fact, only one aspect of Eucharistic doctrine.”

131 “The defenders of the dogma of the real presence sometimes tend to neglect or to blur the symbolic and figurative character of the Eucharistic rite ... Jesus announces by a prophetic action the sacrifice that he will accomplish on Calvary. It is an effective sign, however, because in eating this bread and drinking from this cup, the apostles truly enter into the covenant that the sacrifice of Calvary will seal ... It is from this perspective that one must ask the question of the real presence”; Dupont, “Ceci est mon corps,” 1035, 1037. Furthermore, Dupont approvingly refers to Leenhardt’s work when saying that “from the prophetic, the rite has become a memorial.”

Nicolas Koulomzine, derived two theses from the same New Testament texts: "(1) The institution of the Eucharist cannot be understood differently from the institution of a sacrament, according to the will of our Savior; (2) The sacrament of the Eucharist cannot be understood other than ecclesial according to the intention of Christ."¹³² Gisbert Ghysens, a Benedictine from Maredsous, made an attempt to reread the doctrine on the real presence and on transubstantiation from the Council of Trent in an ecumenical way. It is helpful to realize, as Henri de Lubac has shown in his *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Église au Moyen-Age*,¹³³ that the theologians of the late 12th and early 13th century used the term *substantia* in the broad sense of referring to the "reality" (*veritas*) of something.¹³⁴ It is advisable to explain the change in substance of the liturgical elements to be metaphysical and not physical.¹³⁵

Franz-Jehan Leenhardt chose to make his mainly Catholic audience more familiar with the theology of Calvin on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The communion with the body of Christ is a mystery for Calvin, which is brought about "through the secret force of the Holy Spirit."¹³⁶ Joseph de Baciocchi reassured his Protestant

readers that Catholic theologians have no difficulty in accepting the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice and of God's reconciliation.¹³⁷ In the course of his careful exposition of the Catholic teaching on transubstantiation, including the "definitive" nature of the change of the elements,¹³⁸ insights were shared that after the council would lead to ecumenical rapprochement on this theme, such as the conviction that the term "transubstantiation" was not to be explained in reference to the Thomistic understanding of *substantia*.¹³⁹ Dom Rousseau characterizes this session as "probably the most dense of all in view of the dialogue."¹⁴⁰

5 Engaging in a More Intensive Preparation of Vatican II: 1959–1962

Immediately after the announcement of the council, the original plan to continue the theological reflection on the Eucharist was left aside.¹⁴¹ Congar's suggestion to revisit the history of the previous councils up to Vatican I¹⁴² and to invite more speakers than usual to this conference on

132 See Nicolas Koulomzine, "Le caractère sacramental et ecclésial de l'Eucharistie d'après le Nouveau Testament et la tradition de l'Église orthodoxe," in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 54, 1958.

133 Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: L'Eucharistie et l'Église au Moyen-Age*, Paris, Aubier, 1944.

134 Gisbert Ghysens, "Présence réelle eucharistique et transsubstantiation dans les définitions de l'Église catholique," *Irén* 32, 1959, 420–435, esp. 431.

135 Ghysens, "Présence réelle eucharistique et transsubstantiation," 434, with a reference to Carlo Colombo, "Teologia, filosofia e fisica della transustanziazione," *La Scuola Cattolica* 83, 1955, 89–124.

136 Franz-Jehan Leenhardt, "La présence eucharistique," *Irén* 33, 1960, 146–172, here 149. "Calvin is concerned exclusively with the substance of the body of Christ, while the Catholics, beginning with substance, are interested in what in the bread undergoes a conversion"; Leenhardt, "La présence eucharistique," 155–156. Leenhardt does not hesitate to criticize the objections against Catholic theology found in Calvin's *Traité de la Sainte Cène* harshly.

137 Joseph de Baciocchi, "Présence eucharistique et transsubstantiation," *Irén* 32, 1959, 139–161, esp. 140–141.

138 de Baciocchi, "Présence eucharistique et transsubstantiation," 152.

139 de Baciocchi, "Présence eucharistique et transsubstantiation," 154. Their dialogue also continued after the council, as appears from Joseph de Baciocchi, "Église et Trinité dans le mystère eucharistique: Méditation œcuménique," in: *L'Évangile, hier et aujourd'hui: Mélanges offerts au professeur Franz-J. Leenhardt*, Geneva, Labor et Fides, 1968, 241–249.

140 Rousseau, "Les journées œcuméniques," 474.

141 Olivier Rousseau, "Introduction," in: Bernard Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles: Contribution à l'histoire de la vie conciliaire de l'Église*, Chevetogne/Paris, Éditions de Chevetogne/Cerf, 1960, ix–xix.

142 See O. Rousseau to J. Willebrands, Feb 18, 1959, in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 55, 1959. Since the CCEQ was thinking of discussing the upcoming council as well, Rousseau makes the suggestion that the CCEQ would in its conference focus on the theology of the council and the challenges to organizing one today. It would soon become clear, however, that the Paderborn conference on mission and unity would take place as

“Les mouvements de l’Écclésiologie à travers l’Histoire des Conciles”¹⁴³ was accepted. Less than a year after the conference, which took place in October 1959, all the papers, including an additional study by Congar, had been published in an edited volume.¹⁴⁴ Congar opened the encounter by raising four questions.¹⁴⁵ The opening question “whether collegiality is essential for the church and in which sense” indicates that the conference wanted to contribute to the renewal of the church, even when it focused on the history of previous councils. Other questions dealt with the canonical value of councils, which as collegial events are somehow in conflict with the monarchic and hierarchical constitution of the church, and with the question of who grants authority to the councils and what exactly this authority is. Finally, Congar hoped that their conference would also shed light on what makes a council “ecumenical.”

Dom Botte was the only one to use the term collegiality in the title of his chapter, but he explained

scheduled and that the executive board of CCEQ would prepare a position paper on the council.

143 On Feb 17, 1959, Rousseau proposed eight names to Moeller: Hilaire Marot, Pierre Camelot, Hamilcar Alivisatos, Gérard Fransen, Jean Leclercq, Jean Meyendorff, Alphonse Dupront and Roger Aubert. He would thereby have two Orthodox speakers, and Meyendorff would have to comment on the unionist councils of Lyons and Florence as an Orthodox. In the program sent out to the participants on Aug 10, 1959, the decision was made to set off with a lecture on collegiality in the New Testament and in the apostolic fathers, which was entrusted to Dom Botte. On the Council of Basel, Leclercq was replaced by Paul De Vooght, and on Lyons and Florence, Meyendorff by Joseph Gill. Congar was entrusted with providing a synthesis that would precede the concluding words by Moeller. The colloquium was able to attract 44 participants.

144 See Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*. Two translations contributed to the wide reception of the book: *Das Konzil und die Konzile: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Konzilslebens der Kirche*, Stuttgart, Schwabenverlag, 1962 and *Il Concilio e i concili*, Rome, Edizioni Paoline, 1962.

145 Information derived from the notebooks of Willebrands and Jan Grootaers, Centre for the Study of the Second Vatican Council, KU Leuven.

from the very outset that the title was imposed on him.¹⁴⁶ Still, he was convinced that the full establishment of the hierarchical church between the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon did not happen in complete discontinuity with the time of the New Testament, where both the collegial character of the group of the Twelve and the leadership of Peter are mentioned throughout.¹⁴⁷ The confirmation of the apostolic succession of the bishops in the first letter of Clement was important to protect the unity of the church but it also enhanced communion relationships among bishops. Dom Hilaire Marot, the only monk from Chevetogne to take the floor, developed a similar reasoning in the second contribution, dealing with the period preceding the ecumenical councils. One should not consider them to be an absolute novelty. When in the pre-Nicene period regional councils were convened in reaction to certain difficulties, the underlying ecclesiology, according to Marot, was already that of an “ecclesiology of communion” based on “the local Church.” Only a meeting of a substantial number of bishops, representing their local churches, is able to safeguard the unity and catholicity of the church through the unanimity of its teaching.¹⁴⁸ The professor of patristics and former rector of Le Saulchoir, Pierre-Thomas Camelot also repeats the point made by Marot: the institution of the

146 Congar had coined the notion of collegiality in Yves M.-J. Congar, “Le peuple fidèle et la fonction prophétique de l’Église,” *Irén* 24, 1951, 289–312, 440–466, esp. 446: “We must not hesitate to translate *sobornost*’ as ‘collegiality’ or ‘collegial principle.’” Rousseau had reviewed a number of publications that had picked up the term in Olivier Rousseau, “Propos sur la ‘collégialité,’” *Irén* 29, 1956, 320–329.

147 Bernard Botte, “La Collégialité dans le Nouveau Testament et chez les Pères apostoliques,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 1–18.

148 Hilaire Marot, “Conciles anténicéens et conciles œcuméniques,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 19–43. The quotation comes from the conclusion on page 42. Thanks to his reflections on communion ecclesiology, his contribution was a key to this conference, in the opinion of Emmanuel Lanne. See Lanne, “Le rôle du monastère de Chevetogne,” 366.

council predates the ecumenical councils. The reunification of the Roman Empire made it possible to organize councils at a universal level that continued to express the unity and catholicity of the church.¹⁴⁹ Few bishops from the West were present at the Councils of Nicaea, Ephesus, or Chalcedon, but the bishop of Rome was represented by his legates, and if the council had to approve canons in their absence, as was the case with canon 28 of Chalcedon, the approval of the pope was awaited. According to Camelot, it is not necessary to ask whether the council is above the pope or vice versa: “The Council takes place in union with the pope, just as the members are united to the head.”¹⁵⁰ The idea of collegiality is present as the awareness to “collectively represent the unity of the body,” particularly in the task of remaining faithful to the apostolic tradition, enlightened by Christ and inspired by the Spirit.¹⁵¹ Congar enriched the volume with a historical study on the motif of the priority of the first four ecumenical councils. When in 519 Pope Hormisdas was finally able to recognize the Council of Constantinople, despite the complete absence of Latin bishops, this was accompanied by a statement which highlighted the value of the first four councils. The comparison of these councils with the four Gospels by Pope Gregory the Great and with the **four rivers of the Apocalypse** by Isidore of Seville equally belongs to the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of this motif. With an appeal to the British medievalist Brian Tierney, Congar shows that in the 12th century canonists were convinced that popes were bound by the decisions of these councils

and thus prepared the conciliar theories of later centuries.¹⁵² He knows that the motif is important for the Anglican Church as well but is used by it in an exclusive way that is foreign to the Catholic tradition.¹⁵³ He especially hopes that a rediscovery of the value of the first four councils may serve the dialogue with the Orthodox, who commemorate the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon liturgically, as they also did with the seventh ecumenical council of 787.¹⁵⁴

The Orthodox contribution to the colloquium and volume dealt with the fifth to eighth ecumenical councils, even if the Orthodox Church considers only the first seven to be ecumenical.¹⁵⁵ Hamilcar Alivisatos, who had been professor at the University of Athens for over four decades, had been promoting the Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement since the 1920s. He welcomed the initiative of the Ecumenical Study

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149 Pierre-Thomas Camelot, “Les Conciles œcuméniques des IV^e et V^e siècles,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 45–73, here at 47–52. A few years later, Camelot published the monograph *Éphèse et Chalcedoine* as the second volume of Gervaise Dumeige, dir., *Histoire des conciles œcuméniques*, Paris, Éditions de l’Orante, 1962.

150 Camelot, “Les Conciles œcuméniques,” 72.

151 Camelot, “Les Conciles œcuméniques,” 66. As in the Council of Ephesus, the presence of Christ amidst the college of the apostles was symbolized by the enthronement of the Gospel.

152 Yves Congar, “La Primauté des quatre premiers conciles œcuméniques: Origine, destin, sens et portée d’un thème traditionnel,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 75–109, esp. 93–94. Reference is made to Tierney’s 1951 dissertation that was published as Brian Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955.

153 Congar, “La Primauté des quatre premiers conciles œcuméniques,” 98.

154 “The dialogue between the Orthodox east and the Catholic west is being resumed today in new and favorable conditions. Sooner or later the question of ecumenical councils and their number will be addressed. It is not for us to say what the Orthodox position might be: open or rigid. It is up to us to prepare, on the Catholic side, the basis for proposals that could respond to an open Orthodox attitude”; Congar, “La Primauté des quatre premiers conciles œcuméniques,” 109. See also Peter De Mey, “Preparing the Ground for Fruitful Dialogue with the Orthodox: An Important Motivation of the Ecumenical ‘Avant-garde’ during the Redaction History of *Lumen Gentium*, *Unitatis Redintegratio* and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (1959–1964),” in: Benoît Bourguine, ed., *Le souci de toutes les Églises: Hommage à Joseph Famerée*, Leuven, Peeters, 2020, 57–85.

155 Hamilcar S. Alivisatos, “Les conciles œcuméniques V^e, VI^e, VII^e et VIII^e,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 111–123.

Days as a way of filling the void that was caused “by the total absence of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement.” Such initiatives were necessary “to prepare the necessary climate for future official discussions.”¹⁵⁶ The major historical point made in his article is the absence of the pope at the first seven ecumenical councils, which proves, in his opinion, that the supreme authority in the church lays with the council. He was convinced that Orthodox and Catholics need to return to the situation before the Schism. The East and the West have developed profoundly different structures of authority, but differences in local traditions at that moment were still deemed compatible with unity.¹⁵⁷

The Leuven professor of canon law Gérard Fransen ended his contribution on the medieval councils with an impasse to be solved by later councils: how can the pope be the supreme legislator and judge in matters of faith and at the same time have to obey the canons of earlier councils?¹⁵⁸ The question was taken up by Paul De Vooght, who as a specialist of John Hus was asked to treat the topic of conciliarism at the Councils of Constance and Basel.¹⁵⁹ At the former, conciliarism appeared under two forms, that pleading to convene councils more regularly and that entrusting the ordinary governance of the church to the

Roman curia.¹⁶⁰ The latter granted the council the highest authority in matters of faith and church reform, but once the pope had recognized the decisions taken there, the church was bound to his primacy. Even then, however, it maintained the right to question a pope’s orthodoxy.¹⁶¹

The organizers had been able to invite some of the greatest historians of their time to summarize their insights on the last three councils of the Catholic Church. The British Jesuit Joseph Gill was working on the critical edition of the acts of the Council of Florence and could base his presentation on his recent monograph on the same event.¹⁶² Even if the three Greek delegates that were present were in favor of the theological consensus that, despite the different theological explanation of the procession of the Holy Spirit, Greek and Latin saints had been inspired by the same Spirit, Gill was also attentive to the pressure they would have to face upon returning to Constantinople. The French historian Alphonse Dupront, who had been a professor at the Sorbonne since 1956, was a specialist on the crusades. As in other studies on the Council of Trent which he had published on the occasion of its fourth centenary, Dupront highlights in particular its sociological aspects: the provenance of the small number of council fathers, the enormous impact of the absent pope on the council through his legates, the important role of the theologians both in defining the position of the absent

156 Alivisatos, “Les conciles œcuméniques,” 112. Alivisatos, “Les conciles œcuméniques,” 112. Dom Rousseau honored him posthumously with a substantial in memoriam, see Olivier Rousseau, “Un grand œcuméniste: le Professeur H.S. Alivisatos,” *Irén* 42, 1969, 523–531.

157 Alivisatos, “Les conciles œcuméniques,” 122. See also Hamilcar S. Alivisatos, “Les deux régimes dans l’Église unie avant le schisme,” in *L’Église et les Églises*, vol. 2, 105–116.

158 Gérard Fransen, “L’Ecclésiologie des Conciles médiévaux,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 125–141, esp. 141.

159 Dom Paul De Vooght, “Le Conciliarisme aux conciles de Constance et de Bâle,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 143–181. One year later he would publish his major monograph *L’Hérésie de Jean Huss*, Leuven, Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1960.

160 De Vooght, “Le Conciliarisme aux conciles de Constance et de Bâle,” 147. As a result of the new constellation that, “it is for the pope to consecrate bishops, for the cardinals to create the pope. It was therefore impossible for the cardinals to be completely conciliarist in the manner of the bishops and the theologians”; De Vooght, “Le Conciliarisme,” 148.

161 De Vooght, “Le Conciliarisme,” 172–173 and 179.

162 Joseph Gill, “L’accord gréco-latin au Concile de Florence,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 183–194. Joseph Gill, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1959. For a recent ecumenical study of this council, see Barbara Hallensleben & Antoine Arjakovsky, eds., *Le Concile de Florence (1438/39): Une relecture œcuménique/The Council of Florence (1438/39): An Ecumenical Rereading*, Münster, Aschendorff, 2021.

Protestants and in presenting the Catholic tradition as a coherent whole.¹⁶³ The participants in Chevetogne, as well as the many readers of the proceedings volume, will have greatly profited from the detailed presentation and evaluation of all the documents on ecclesiological issues of Vatican I by Leuven church historian Roger Aubert.¹⁶⁴ The author also indicates the limitations of this council to be remedied at the next: more attention needs to be paid to the role of the Holy Spirit in the church, to the theology of the episcopate and to the theology of the laity,¹⁶⁵ and ambiguous formulations (the characterization of the primacy of the pope as “vere episcopalis” and of his infallible teaching as valid “ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae”) need to be explained better in order to

allow for a different reception from that of “papal centralization.”¹⁶⁶

In his conclusion, Congar makes use of the distinction between institution and life.¹⁶⁷ For the Catholic Church, the binding character of the canons of ecumenical councils is an institution of divine right. If other churches believe that decisions by a council need to be received by the church, then this creates a “serious divergence.”¹⁶⁸ If in many contributions attention is paid to the collegiality of the bishops that is displayed during a council, then Congar deduced that this belongs to the life of the church.¹⁶⁹ He also expresses his sympathy for the notion of church as communion, because such an ecclesiology is both theological and anthropological,¹⁷⁰ while he also hopes that the next council will be open towards the

163 Alphonse Dupront, “Le Concile de Trente,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 195–243. See also Alphonse Dupront, “Du Concile de Trente: Réflexions autour d’un IV^e centenaire,” *Revue Historique* 206, 1951, 262–280. The method of Dupront is welcomed as highly innovative by Marie-Dominique Chenu, “Vie conciliaire de l’Église et sociologie de la foi,” *Esprit* 12, 1961, 678–689.

164 Roger Aubert, “L’ecclésiologie au concile du Vatican,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 245–284. The references to Leuven dissertations on aspects of Vatican I are a sign of the interest in this council in this university. Half of the speakers at a 1961 conference on fundamental theology also dealt with Vatican I. See Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Les grandes lignes de la théologie de l’épiscopat au Concile du Vatican: Le point de vue officiel,” in: Georges Dejaifve & others, *Le Premier “symposium” internationale de théologie dogmatique fondamentale: Louvain, 31 août–2 sept. 1961*, Turin, Società editrice internazionale, 1962, 49–66; Georges Dejaifve, “Ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae,” in: Georges Dejaifve & others, *Le Premier “symposium” internationale*, 67–81; and Gustave Thils, “L’infaillibilité de l’Église ‘in credendo’ et ‘in docendo,’” in: Georges Dejaifve & others, *Le Premier “symposium” internationale*, 83–122.

165 “Today, after half a century of progress in ecclesiology, accomplished in an atmosphere of scriptural and patristic renewal, a new council will be able to take up in much better conditions a formulation of the Catholic doctrine of the church that is both precise and harmonious”; Aubert, “L’ecclésiologie au concile du Vatican,” 262.

166 “The years following the council would bring a strengthening of the direct action of the pope over dioceses and, let us say it, of pontifical centralization. ... A well-balanced theology of the church nonetheless demands that this question be asked, just as practical life demands that its applications be regulated. Will this be the work of the second Vatican council? This is the secret to the future.”; Aubert, “L’ecclésiologie au concile du Vatican,” 284. An important document that can provide assistance in the process of reception is the 1875 declaration of the German episcopate, which had been translated and commented by the Chevetogne community. See Olivier Rousseau, “La vraie valeur de l’Épiscopat dans l’Église: D’après d’importants documents de 1875,” *Irén* 29, 1956, 121–142.

167 Yves M.-J. Congar, “Conclusion,” in: Botte & others, *Le Concile et les conciles*, 285–334.

168 Congar, “Conclusion,” 300. This part of his conclusion even ends in a rather negative fashion: “In many ways, over the past fifteen years or so, our discussions have come back to this same point, which is that of an (irretrievable?) ‘parting of the ways.’”

169 “Authority itself may not be collegial; its exercise must, to some degree and in some way, honor the demands of collegiality, of communion, and therefore, far from excluding them, encompassing and assuming, as co-responsible, all the other Christians who are part of the same body. On many occasions, in the course of our exchanges, we have found it interesting to distinguish between the constitution – legal form or structure – on the one hand and the concrete regime ... on the other”; Congar, “Conclusion,” 302.

170 Congar, “Conclusion,” 305–314.

“missionary, ecumenical and pastoral” questions that are addressed to it “by the world and by the others.”¹⁷¹

Of the 1960 consultation on “L’Église locale et l’Église universelle,” which was attended by 51 participants, only some contributions have been published. Half of the six speakers were non-Catholics, and the colloquium started with the Swedish Lutheran exegete Bo Reicke highlighting the notion of the local church in Paul¹⁷² and the French Reformed pastor Hébert Roux treating the notion of the universal church in the letters of the same apostle.¹⁷³ Olivier Rousseau recalls that the rector of the Georgian parish in Paris, Élie Méliá, had impressed his audience with the then still innovative thesis that, within a sacramental ecclesiology, the Eucharistic community of the local church is the basis of the Orthodox

understanding of catholicity.¹⁷⁴ The French patristologist Jean Colson discussed the articulation of the two notions in the 2nd century, from Clement of Rome to Irenaeus of Lyons. In this period, the notion of church was applicable to both realities, even if the see and the bishop of Rome became very aware of their special role.¹⁷⁵ The title of the published version of Congar’s lecture describes the historical evolution in church history from an ecclesiology of communion to an ecclesiology of the universal church.¹⁷⁶ Whereas in the former the church was understood as a communion of local churches, with bishops visiting one another and seeking to make unanimous decisions during synods and councils, especially since the Gregorian Reform, the papacy, with the help of the mendicant orders, imposed an ecclesiology of the universal church. In an attempt to learn from the Eucharistic ecclesiology of the Orthodox theologians of the emigration, Congar expressed the hope that this universal ecclesiology would be enriched by an ecclesiology of communion. *Mystici Corporis* has shown the way, but the upcoming

171 “The next council must be a council in which the church, in examining itself in the light of the questions of the day, defines itself in a very open and generous way, not so much in itself and for itself than in its relationship to the world and in the relationship that the others have with it”; Congar, “Conclusion,” 329.

172 As a specialist on the first community of Jerusalem – see Bo Reicke, *Glaube und Leben der Urgemeinde: Bemerkungen zu Apg. 1–7*, Zürich, Zwingli, 1957 – the exegete explained that, even if Paul had encountered the Christian faith in the local church of Jerusalem, he understood each community as the local realization of the universal church. In Phil 2 Paul refers to Christ’s pro-existence to correct the imperfections of a local church which excels in diaconal service. See Bo Reicke, “Unité chrétienne et diaconie: Phil. ii 1–11,” in: Willem Corneli van Unnik, ed., *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann Zu Seinem 60. Geburtstag Überreicht*, Leiden, Brill, 1962, 203–212.

173 See Hébert Roux, “La notion d’Église universelle dans les Épîtres pauliniennes,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 56, 1960, 1. The entire intervention is preserved in: Archives de la Fédération Protestante de France, Hébert Roux, “Chevetogne,” 1960. Roux argues that in the Pauline letters and especially in the Letter to the Ephesians Paul pays attention both to the catholicity – its being filled by Christ – and the universality – its universal mission – of the church.

174 Élie Méliá, “L’Église locale manifestation de l’Église catholique,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 56, 1960, 1. See Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 476. Similar ideas occur in Élie Méliá, “Point de vue orthodoxe sur le problème de l’autorité dans l’Église,” in: John M. Todd, ed., *Problèmes de l’autorité: Un colloque anglo-français*, Paris, Cerf, 1962, 127–142, esp. 134: “The local church, in fact, in which the bishop exercises his primacy, has priority in the ontological order because it finds the Eucharistic community through sacramental communion with Christ, while the universal church, on the other hand, manifests the communion of Eucharistic communities with one another.”

175 Jean Colson, “Église locale et Église universelle au 11^e siècle,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 56, 1960, 1. Similar ideas can be found in chapters 3 and 4 of Jean Colson, *L’épiscopat catholique: Collégialité et primauté dans les trois premiers siècles de l’Église*, Paris, Cerf, 1963, 39–64.

176 Yves Congar, “De la communion des Églises à une ecclésiologie de l’Église universelle,” in Yves Congar & Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, eds., *L’épiscopat et l’Église universelle*, Paris, Cerf, 1962, 227–260.

council needs to go further.¹⁷⁷ In broad strokes, Emmanuel Lanne discussed the evolution of the organization of the church at the provincial level and beyond, from the 1st to the 7th century.¹⁷⁸ His central argument is that, long before the Council of Nicaea, the church had already started to organize itself beyond the local level by accepting the preeminence of certain episcopal sees according to the twofold principle of their political significance in the empire and their apostolic origin.¹⁷⁹ This evolution would lead, in the 7th century, to the creation of the institution of the pentarchy.¹⁸⁰

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- 177 "This synthesis must be pushed today in the direction of a better consideration of the relationships between the particular church and the universal church, episcopacy and papacy"; Congar, "De la communion des Églises à une ecclésiologie de l'Église universelle," 256. "A theology of papal power, linked to an ecclesiology of the universal church, requires, in order to be fully in line with the tradition, to be harmonized with an ecclesiology of the church as communion, a theology of the power of bishops as power by divine right"; Congar, "De la communion des Églises à une ecclésiologie de l'Église universelle," 259.
- 178 Emmanuel Lanne, "Églises locales et patriarcats à l'époque des grands conciles," *Iren* 34, 1961, 292–321.
- 179 He regularly comments on Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1958.
- 180 In the introduction to this article, the reader already felt that during the council this monk would also combat Latinization and would defend the rights of the Eastern Catholic Churches: "The extremely centralized organization of the western church, especially since the Middle Ages, the influence of the theology of Bellarmine on the church, and finally the immense prestige which the papacy has enjoyed since the Vatican council have been the principal factors which have contributed to the blurring in Catholic thought of the role and importance of the notion of the local church. We also know that a very clear tendency of a certain theology would like, in a more or less conscious way, to see in the patriarchate only a rather anachronistic honorific title and in the bishops only functionaries, temporary depositaries of the central authority for the section of the Catholic church whose charge is entrusted to them"; Lanne, "Églises locales et patriarcats," 292.

In his speech at the opening of the 1961 meeting on "L'Esprit-Saint, Esprit de vérité et l'infaillibilité de l'Église," Dom Rousseau indicated that, in view of the upcoming council, the organizers had chosen to discuss an ecclesiological theme that would induce "a confrontation of positions useful for the advancement of the dialogue."¹⁸¹ Rousseau knew that the infallibility of the church was "affirmed" by Catholics and Orthodox, but "denied" (or "discussed," as the introduction to the proceedings has it) by the Protestants. Even so, it had been entrusted to Jean-Jacques von Allmen, the Swiss Reformed pastor and professor at the University of Neuchâtel, who had also attended the previous conference, to highlight the first part of the title of the colloquium in his opening conference, which he did from a biblical perspective.¹⁸² The indefectibility of the church is related to it being the result of the incarnation as God's work in Jesus Christ through the power of the Spirit. As a reality in time and space, the church is fallible and in need of repentance. Originally the organizers had not intended to focus on all the historical aspects connected to this theological topic but to study the vision of one theologian by way of example. According to Irenaeus of Lyons, as Bruno Reyners highlighted, the church disposed of a great instrument to counter heretic attacks, that is to say, the rule of faith. It was the task of bishops as successors to the apostles to summarize what the church had always taught. The words "infallibility" and "inerrancy" however, did not yet belong to Irenaeus' vocabulary.¹⁸³

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- 181 "Introduction aux journées œcuméniques de Chevetogne (25–29 septembre 1961)," in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 56bis, 1961, 1.
- 182 Jean-Jacques von Allmen, "L'Esprit de vérité vous conduira dans toute la vérité," in: Rousseau & others, *L'infaillibilité de l'Église: Journées œcuméniques de Chevetogne 25–29 Septembre 1961*, Chevetogne, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1963, 13–26.
- 183 Bruno Reyners, "Premières réactions de l'Église devant les falsifications du dépôt apostolique: Saint Irénée," in: *L'infaillibilité de l'Église*, 27–52. Reyners, who was awaiting the permission to make a transfer to Chevetogne, had recently published *Vocabulaire de la*

Since it was felt during the discussion that important historical information on the period preceding the one covered by the Leuven professor Gustave Thils was missing, two participants accepted to prepare a contribution to the volume. The French Dominican Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, who had started to attend the Ecumenical Study Days since his nomination as successor of Congar as professor of fundamental theology at Le Saulchoir in 1959, discussed the teaching authority of the church from the period of the New Testament up to the 13th century.¹⁸⁴ Before the period of the ecumenical councils bishops and presbyters had already seen it as their duty to transmit the apostolic faith to new generations of Christians, but this could be carried out in a variety of creeds. Starting from the Council of Nicaea, the bishops exercised their teaching authority by expressing the *consensus patrum* in the form of binding creeds and canons.¹⁸⁵ In the medieval period, particular attention was paid to the promulgation of the symbols of faith by the pope. The pope continued to be held personally fallible, however, and it was insisted that the creeds needed to express the faith of the church.¹⁸⁶ Dom De Vooght, who had not missed a single conference since 1951, agreed to study the use of the term “infallibility” by Latin

theologians from the 13th till the 15th century.¹⁸⁷ In the late 13th century Petrus Olivi coined the term *inerrabilitas* and applied it in first instance to the church and in a derived sense to the see of Rome and to the pope. For the 14th century, De Vooght focused on two theologians who started using the term *infallibilis*. The Catalan canonist Guido Terrena was the first to define as infallible the definitions of the pope that were the result of previous consultation with his cardinals and with the bishops that had convened in a council. This, however, does not apply to his teaching as a private person. The German Augustinian Hermann von Schildesche, on the other hand, was an early “papalist,” and for the 15th century De Vooght followed the papalist line through a few other theologians from Prague, as well as through the Spanish Dominican Cardinal Juan de Torquemada. His most important conclusion, however, is a negative one, in that the great scholastic theologians, among whom Thomas Aquinas, remained reluctant to use the term.¹⁸⁸

The Leuven professor Gustave Thils participated in the conference at the time when he was already an active member of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity¹⁸⁹ and presented part

“*Démonstration*” et des fragments de St. Irénée, Chevetogne, Éditions de Chevetogne, 1958.

- 184 Bernard-Dominique Dupuy, “Le magistère de l’Église, service de la parole,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 53–97. Because his paper was prepared after the conference, in the footnotes he could already refer to Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, *La tradition et les traditions*, Paris, Fayard, 1960.
- 185 “The formulations of the great councils are a determining moment in the exercise of the Magisterium and in the clarification of the infallibility of the church ... Infallibility is only the translation on the level of the Magisterium of the doctrinal immutability affirmed at that time on the level of truth”; Dupuy, “Le magistère de l’Église,” 81.
- 186 Dupuy, “Le magistère de l’Église,” 94–96 contains an interesting discussion of Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 11^a–11^{ae}, 1, a. 9: “Utrum convenienter articuli fidei in symbolo ponantur” and a. 10: “Utrum ad Summum Pontificem pertineat symbolum fidei ordinare.”

- 187 Paul de Vooght, “Esquisse d’une enquête sur le mot ‘infaillibilité’ durant la période scolastique,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 99–146. His footnote references show the scholarly interest in this theme in those years. See Adolar Zumkeller, *Schrifttum und Lehre des Hermann von Schildesche O.E.S.A. († 1357)*, Würzburg, Augustinus-Verlag, 1959 and Pacifico Massi, *Magistero infallibile del papa nella teologia di Giovanni da Torquemada*, Turin, Marietti, 1957.
- 188 The conclusion is clear: “The most papalist of theologians, Juan de Torquemada, did not quite succeed in placing the pope fully above the council. It took another four centuries to develop this point of doctrine”; Vooght, “Esquisse d’une enquête,” 146.
- 189 Gustave Thils owed his nomination at the secretariat to his *Histoire doctrinale du mouvement œcuménique*, Leuven, Warny, 1955, and had already presented first drafts of proposals for the secretariat during its August 1961 plenary session in Bühl. See Peter De Mey, “Gustave Thils and Ecumenism at Vatican Council II,” in: Donnelly & others, eds., *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council*, 389–413.

of his ongoing research on Vatican I.¹⁹⁰ The first schema *De Ecclesia* in its chapter “De Ecclesiae infallibilitate” and the revised schema *De Ecclesia* in its chapter “De ecclesiastico magisterio” briefly affirm the *infallibilitas in credendo* of all the faithful as the foundation lege of bishops and the other exercised by the pope. The reason for the relative neglect of the *infallibilitas in credendo* in the documents of Vatican I was that this teaching was universally accepted and no difficulties remained to be solved by the council.¹⁹¹

This conference was also an ecumenical learning experience. The critical but constructive viewpoints expressed by non-Catholic theologians became important elements in Moeller’s conclusion.¹⁹² The ecclesiohistorian of Saint-Serge, Nicholas Afanassiev, proposed to reformulate the Catholic discussion on infallibility in terms of the notion of truth. The Orthodox Church is called to protect the truth which it had discovered with the assistance of the Spirit of truth. Hence decisions by an ecumenical council have to be verified by the church.¹⁹³ As he would repeat on other occa-

sions, in his opinion the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church shared a fascination for universal ecclesiology.¹⁹⁴ Within this framework, it was the ecumenical council’s task to define the truth, but it was less clear for the Orthodox Church which **instance** had to validate the decisions of a council, except that this could not be entrusted to the local churches. The two options were the emperor or the bishop of Rome; if one maintains this ecclesiology, then even an Orthodox theologian would nowadays ascribe this function to the pope.¹⁹⁵ Within the framework of a Eucharistic ecclesiology, which is more congenial to the Orthodox conscience in Afanassiev’s opinion, the unity of God’s church is safeguarded in the plurality of local churches establishing relations of communion with one another.¹⁹⁶ Thanks to the incomparable testimony delivered by the Church of Rome, one could eventually call infallible the decisions pronounced by the bishop of Rome in the name of his church.¹⁹⁷ According to the canon theologian of Exeter, Henry Balmforth, there is a strong awareness within Anglicanism that the church cannot err in its essential truths, while it insists that these truths can be discovered by means of a variety of ways: Scripture, the rule of faith, the liturgy, the

190 Gustave Thils, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église dans la constitution ‘Pastor aeternus’ du 1^{er} Concile du Vatican,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 147–182. See also Thils’s works: *Primauté pontificale et prérogatives épiscopales: “Potestas ordinaria” au Concile du Vatican*, Leuven, Warny, 1961 and *L’infaillibilité du peuple chrétien “in credendo”*. *Notes de théologie posttridentine*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1963.

191 Thils warns however: “Nothing is more contrary to the Vatican definition of 1870 itself than to imagine a pontifical Magisterium ‘separated’ from the church, without any organic ‘connection’ with it, and even ‘distinct’ from it in its normal and habitual exercise”; Thils, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église dans la constitution ‘Pastor aeternus,’” 180. His chapter also prepares the discussion on the passive nature of the *infallibilitas in credendo* during the Second Vatican Council, see Thils, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église dans la constitution ‘Pastor aeternus,’” 173–174.

192 Charles Moeller, “Conclusion: Infaillibilité et Vérité,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 223–255.

193 Nicolas Afanassiev, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église du point de vue d’un théologien orthodoxe,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 183–201. “Infallibility then belongs neither to a council nor to any person,

whether the bishop of Rome or someone else; but it belongs to the truth held by the Church”; Afanassiev, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église,” 186. Rousseau explicitly mentions in his overview that “Afanassiev’s presence was significant in this session”; see Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 478.

194 See the famous article he also allowed the Chevetogne community to publish: Nicolas Afanassiev, “Una Sancta,” *Iren* 36, 1963, 436–475.

195 “Remaining on the terrain of universal ecclesiology, we can logically admit that it is indeed the pope who is the organ through which the reception by the church of the decisions of an ecumenical council is manifested”; Afanassiev, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église,” 192.

196 “Infallibility belongs to the union of the local churches in concord”; Afanassiev, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église,” 197.

197 “When the bishop of Rome speaks, his decisions can be infallible, if he thus manifests the church of Rome acting in agreement with all the other local churches”; Afanassiev, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église,” 200.

consensus fidelium and theological reflection.¹⁹⁸ While continuing to believe that the definitions of Vatican I are not based on Scripture, the church fathers, and the historical reality of the church in the first millennium, Anglicans might be willing to accept that the apostolic see of Rome enjoys “a primacy of honor, or of responsibility.”¹⁹⁹ Finally, Jean Bosc, professor of dogmatic theology at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Paris, explained the position of the Reformed churches in this debate.²⁰⁰ His church denies the infallibility of the church (albeit not its indefectibility) because the authority of the Holy Scripture is guaranteed by God. In order to assist believers in interpreting God’s Word, the church is free to convene councils or may decide on particular confessions of faith but these need to be received by the believers.

Moeller’s conclusions show that the Catholic organizers had learnt a great deal from this ecumenical conversation. It was advised to substitute the biblical notion of truth for the technical term infallibility, to be more aware of the exceptional character of the extraordinary magisterium²⁰¹

and to appreciate the liturgical celebrations of the local church as instances in which both the infallibility *in credendo* and the infallibility *in docendo* can be practiced.²⁰²

The final colloquium in this series returned to the theme of collegiality. The meeting on “Les Douze” was attended by 49 participants. It took place two weeks before the start of the first session of the council but its conferences were not published in one volume. The first four conferences were dedicated to exegetical issues. Following his general interest in the link between the Old and the New Testament, the Swiss Reformed Old Testament scholar Wilhelm Vischer compared the use of the number twelve in both parts of the Holy Scripture. Vischer’s main thesis is that Jesus is “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16) who fulfilled God’s promises to Israel in his life, death and resurrection.²⁰³ The Leuven exegete Jean Giblet dealt with the twelve in the synoptic Gospels. Even if some scholars had started to question the well-known thesis of Karl Heinrich Rengstorff that the institution of the twelve goes back to the historical Jesus and was inspired by the Jewish institution of the *Shaliah*, Giblet remains convinced that some biblical passages that refer to the twelve belong to a very old tradition. Apart from the reference to the apostles in 1 Cor 15:5, there is the Semitic vocabulary in Mk 3:14, the acknowledgement of Judas as “one of the twelve” in all three synoptic Gospels, and the announcement that the twelve will sit “on

meeting without defining any point of faith ... In other words, and if we may make the comparison, the definitions of the extraordinary Magisterium are similar to mountain paths, which make it possible to reach this or that point more quickly; but the path must not make us forget the mountain itself. The mountain, in this case, is the living tradition of the whole church assisted by the Spirit in proclaiming the truths of salvation”; Moeller, “Conclusion: Infaillibilité et Vérité,” 251–252.

²⁰² “The first organ of irrefutable proclamation of the truth of God is the liturgy of the local church”; Moeller, “Conclusion: Infaillibilité et Vérité,” 237. This is a remarkable insight for a Catholic theologian in 1961.

²⁰³ “Précis de l’étude présentée par M. Wilhelm Vischer,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 57, 1962, 2 pages.

¹⁹⁸ Henry Balmforth, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église selon la doctrine de l’Église anglicane,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 203–210. Balmforth was known for his book *The Royal Priesthood*, London, The Church Union, 1956. The Council on Inter-Church Relations of the Church of England had delegated five more Anglicans to the conference. A report by one of them, John de Satgé, was added in appendix to the volume. See John de Satgé, “Quelques réflexions sur la conférence œcuménique de Chevetogne, septembre 1961,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 257–263.

¹⁹⁹ Balmforth, “L’Infaillibilité de l’Église selon la doctrine de l’Église anglicane,” 210.

²⁰⁰ Jean Bosc, “L’attitude des Églises réformées concernant l’Infaillibilité de l’Église,” in: Rousseau & others, *L’infaillibilité de l’Église*, 211–222. Bosc, who would become a member of the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Catholic Church after the council, was already engaged in regular dialogues with Catholic theologians. See Jean Bosc, Jean Guitton, & Jean Daniélou, *Le dialogue catholique-protestant*, Paris, La Palatine, 1960.

²⁰¹ “On the other hand, in the acts of the extraordinary Magisterium, everything does not regard the faith, far from it. There is even the possibility of a council

twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” in Mt 19:28 and Lk 22:28–30, which is in line with the eschatological character of Jesus’ proclamation.²⁰⁴ The conference by François-Paul Dreyfus, professor of **New Testament** at Le Saulchoir, aimed to put Paul in relation to the institutions of the twelve and the apostles. Even if at the level of the New Testament there is a difference in vocabulary between Paul, counting himself as one of the apostles, and Luke’s never including Paul in the number of the twelve, the occurrence of the concept of beginning in both Acts 1:22 and Jn 15:27 already anticipates the synthesis of the twelve and the apostles in the post-apostolic church.²⁰⁵ Finally, the rector and professor of **New Testament** from the Orthodox theological faculty of Saint-Serge in Paris, Msgr. Cassien (Serge Bézobrazov), dealt with the twelve in Johannine literature, which he considered a literary unity produced by the same apostle. He had a special interest in the symbolism of numbers. His most important conclusion was that nothing is said about apostolic succession in these writings.²⁰⁶

Two monks from the Chevetogne community had also prepared a contribution. Théodore Strotmann spoke about “The cult of the apostles in the Byzantine Liturgy”²⁰⁷ and Hilaire Marot about “The notion of apostolicity and its titles in the tradition of the church.”²⁰⁸ The Byzantine liturgical tradition of the East praises the apostles Peter and Paul in an equal manner on Jun 29, a feast inherited from the Latin tradition. According to Strotmann, this praxis also has ecclesiological implications.²⁰⁹ Honorific titles that had been applied exclusively to the pope since the Gregorian Reform (*Sedes apostolica*, *Summus Pontifex*, etc.) were, as Marot’s detailed investigation shows, applied from the 5th to the 7th centuries to bishops as well.²¹⁰ In these years, the Belgian Jesuit Georges Dejaifve was mainly doing ecclesiological

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- 204 A comparison with the outline “Les Douze dans les évangiles synoptiques” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 57, 1962, 2 pages, shows that Giblet pronounced an identical lecture at the Colloquium Biblicum Lovanienses of August 1962 which he presided. See Jean Giblet, “Les Douze: Histoire et théologie,” in: Jean Giblet & others, eds., *Aux origines de l’Église*, Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, 1965, 51–64.
- 205 François-Paul Dreyfus, “Paul, les Douze et les Apôtres,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 57, 1962, 2 pages.
- 206 Msgr. Cassien (Bezobrazov), “Les Douze dans les écrits johanniques,” in: UCL-LG, Charles Moeller, carnets, n. 57, 1962, 1 page. In 1955, *Istina* had published – with much hesitation, as the foreword indicates, and accompanied by a lengthy response by Pierre Benoît – an article by the author dealing with a similar theme. See Cassien, “Saint Pierre et l’Église dans le Nouveau Testament (le problème de la primauté),” *Istina* 2, 1955, 261–304. In his opinion, Peter enjoyed the “hierarchical primacy” at no point in his apostolic ministry (267); his post-paschal appointment as pastor was qualitatively different from that of the other apostles but ended – thus he argued on the basis of Jn 21:23 – at the moment of his death (295–298). On the basis of the New

- Testament, one can only conclude that, “no church has inherited the primacy of the hierarchic center of Jerusalem in the Christian world” and that “Saint Peter died a martyr without leaving a successor.” What he interestingly does not exclude is “the hierarchical primacy of one local church, like the primacy of the church of Jerusalem, presided over by Saint Peter and later by Saint James”; Cassien, “Saint Pierre et l’Église,” 303–304.
- 207 Published as Théodore Strotmann, “Les coryphées Pierre et Paul et les autres apôtres,” *Irén* 36, 1963, 164–176.
- 208 Published as Hilaire Marot, “La Collégialité et le Vocabulaire épiscopal du V^e au VII^e siècle,” *Irén* 36, 1963, 41–60 and *Irén* 37, 1964, 198–226.
- 209 “Without diminishing the eminence of the Peter’s place among the apostles, the juxtaposition of the two coryphaeuses expresses more a regime of government that is charismatic rather than directly juridical, a plenitude of governance that is polyarchic (the ‘chorus’ of the bishops of the universal church) rather than a monarchical shrinkage (the ‘papal church’);” Strotmann, “Les coryphées Pierre et Paul,” 175. The article had been published after the demise of Pope John XXIII and had been dedicated to his memory: “In memory of Pope John XXIII who called himself ‘the humble successor of Peter and Paul.’”
- 210 For the implications for the discussion on collegiality, see Marot, “La collégialité et le vocabulaire épiscopal,” 41: “This fact is not indifferent to a study of collegiality as it was then envisioned because it was, as we will see, to manifest the apostolic character of every episcopate ... that a series of expressions were created at that time.”

research on Vatican I,²¹¹ but in the concluding lecture of this conference he dealt with “The succession of the twelve in Roman Catholic tradition and theology.”²¹² By looking more closely at selected moments in the tradition, Dejaifve hopes to show that the relationship between the college of the twelve and its head in the New Testament has in the Latin tradition become the relationship between the collegial authority of the college of bishops and the successor of Peter as their principle of unity.²¹³ At the time of the church fathers, Cyprian sees the pope as the one in charge of the unity of the bishops, and according to Augustine Peter’s successor is able to represent the college of bishops.²¹⁴ In the 12th century, the relationship between the pope and bishops is explained by making a distinction between the power of sacred order and the power of jurisdiction. The former is received from God and the latter from the one possessing the *plenitudo potestatis*, even if the canonists know that the pope needs the assistance of the college of cardinals and can eventually be deposed by a council.²¹⁵ In modern times, despite the crisis of Gallicanism, the Catholic Church has preferred to maintain the paradox that there are two subjects possessing the highest authority in the church.²¹⁶

211 See Georges Dejaifve, *Pape et évêques au premier Concile du Vatican*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1961.

212 Published as Georges Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité dans la tradition catholique,” *ETL* 39, 1963, 760–778.

213 Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité,” 762.

214 Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité,” 762–767.

215 Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité,” 767–773.

216 Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité,” 773–777. Hence Dejaifve is able to conclude: “The western tradition, through the vicissitudes of its history, has tried to remain faithful to the precept of the Lord in keeping the ever-threatened balance between the one and the many within the church. Has it always succeeded in doing so in practice? This is a question that we leave open. Unfortunately, practice is not always up to the convictions of the faith, neither for individuals nor for the church”; Dejaifve, “Les douze apôtres et leur unité,” 778.

6 Conclusion

The sheer number of 18 Ecumenical Study Days which the Benedictine community of Chevetogne has organized between 1942 and 1962 makes it clear that this community has participated immensely in the ecumenical formation of Catholic theologians in the decades preceding Vatican II. The success of the study days is partly connected to the special setting and the outstanding personalities of some of the monks. Making the demanding journey to Chevetogne, participating in their bi-ritual life of prayer, and feeling warmly welcomed by the community made a profound ecumenical impact on the participants.²¹⁷ Religious communities often courageously defend their ideals and cherish a critical distance from Rome. This motivated the monks of Chevetogne to offer refuge to the young students from Leuven who had been confronted with the magisterium’s distrust of *nouvelle théologie*. The role of the Chevetogne community, however, was not limited to being good hosts, but it also allowed many confreres – such as Clément Lialine, Olivier Rousseau, Théodore Strotmann, Hilaire Marot, and Emmanuel Lanne – to share their well-prepared scholarly work during these conferences.

In comparison to the ambition of the CCEQ to include all major ecumenical centers in Europe, the study days were narrower in scope and were oriented in particular towards francophone scholars. On the other hand, unlike the CCEQ, from 1947 the community started to invite Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant theologians to present their views and participate in a truly ecumenical event. This opportunity for direct conversations between Catholic and non-Catholic theologians makes the Ecumenical Study Days of Chevetogne a distinctive and exceptional experience in the panorama

217 “May the final reporter say that the Amay-Chevetogne ‘institution,’ through the celebration of the liturgy, the attentive hospitality of the community and of its prior, also represents an ‘event’ which, each time, ‘converts’ the participants of these ecumenical meetings”; Moeller, “Conclusion: Infaillibilité et Vérité,” 224.

of initiatives organized by Catholic ecumenism in the pre-conciliar period.

The high quality of the conferences was the result of the strategy to select well-known specialists on the topic assigned to them. Examples are Franz-Jehan Leenhardt and Joseph de Baciocchi on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Gérard Philips on grace, Yves Congar on the Great Schism, Joseph Gill on the Council of Florence, Roger Aubert and Gustave Thils on Vatican I, and Nicholas Afanasiev on Eucharistic versus universal ecclesiology. From the very beginning, the talent of fundamental theologian Charles Moeller to broaden the discussion in his concluding thoughts was appreciated. The scholarly ambition of the Chevetogne conferences also becomes clear when observing that many conferences were followed by valuable volumes edited by the Éditions de Chevetogne, whereas the CCEQ left it exclusively to the speakers to decide whether to publish their findings. As for the thematic focus, the Ecumenical Study Days were particularly interested in the renewal and reform of Catholic ecclesiology (openness to the world, collegiality, infallibility, and apostolicity), whereas those of the CCEQ were

also interested in a systemic reflection on models of Christian unity and on the themes discussed in the WCC.

When studying the materials of the study days organized after the announcement of Vatican II, one feels that some of its innovative ideas were prepared there.²¹⁸ Lanne therefore calls these conferences “the far, then close preparation of Vatican II in Chevetogne.”²¹⁹ Towards the end of the council the community reassumed this series of conferences and started to harvest its fruits to improve ecumenical relations between churches.²²⁰

²¹⁸ In his overview, Lanne points to the connection between his own contribution to the 1960 conference on the local church and *Lumen gentium*, § 23, as well as Thils’ intervention on infallibility and *Lumen gentium*, § 12. Lanne, “Le rôle du monastère de Chevetogne,” 367.

²¹⁹ Lanne, “Le rôle du monastère de Chevetogne,” 370.

²²⁰ This took place especially in the 1964 conference on Vatican II and the ecumenical situation, and in the 1965, 1966, and 1968 sessions dealing with the three major documents *Lumen gentium*, *Dei Verbum*, and *Gaudium et spes*. See also Rousseau, “Les journées œcuméniques,” 479–483.

AQ 1: Footnote 15: Is **AJOC** the same archive as **AAC** Archives d'Amay-Chevetogne?

AQ 2: In bold the repetitions, is it possible to avoid some of them?

AQ 3: Footnote 38: "L'anthropologie néo-calviniste," or "L'Anthropologie réformée,"; "420-440" or "20-52"?

AQ 4: Footnote 39: italics original?

AQ 5: What's the middle stage?

AQ 6: Footnote 52: please provide full name of E. Fabre.

AQ 7: "New Testament" or "New Testament studies"?

AQ 8: "New Testament church" or "early church"?

AQ 9: Footnote 118: "New Testament" or "New Testament studies"?

AQ 10: Please specify the "four rivers of the Apocalypse."

AQ 11: "instance" or "body/authority"?

questions for Peter

AQ 12: Footnote 198: "Council" or "Commission"?

AQ 13: "New Testament" or "New Testament studies"?

AQ 14: "New Testament" or "New Testament studies"?