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Liberating Ecumenism: an ecclesiological dialogue with the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches

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Abstract

The thesis attempts to address Orthodox Church concerns about the Protestant nature and ethos of the ecumenical movement, as it is encountered in the World Council of Churches, by examining Orthodox theological contributions to ecclesiology. This preliminary work is undertaken, as a first step, to establish points of dialogue with the theology of liberation and wider critical theories, in the search for a liberating ecumenism. At the same time, and in a second step (to follow the epistemology of the theology of liberation), this Orthodox theology is placed in a critical dialogue with the theology of liberation in the search for liberating ecclesiological perspectives that can contribute to the *movement* in ecumenism. This uneasy dialogue helps to recover absent epistemologies from ongoing ecumenical dialogues by re-reading orthodoxies, both ecumenical and ecclesiological, from a liberationist paradigm, and sets ecclesiology within the wider framework of contributions from critical theory.

This dialogue between Orthodox theology and the theology of liberation helps to construct an ecclesiology that liberates ecumenism by setting ecclesiology and the ecumenical movement in the wider context of social movements. This thesis calls the ecumenical movement to 'another possible world' influenced by people-centred ecclesiologies, which transgresses the canonical boundaries in the ecumenical movement. To be ecumenical implies an Orthodox content to ecclesiology, otherwise the ecumenical movement is open to charges of pan-Protestantism. It is by embracing Orthodoxy that the ecumenical movement can move beyond hegemonic colonial projects and find a liberating praxis.

This thesis proposes a dialogue that reflects the structure of the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches. However, it engages with Orthodox ecclesiology and ecumenical histories from the perspective of the theology of liberation in the search for a liberating ecumenism and proposes a praxis that develops *movement* in the ecumenical and the ecclesiological through developing an ecclesiology from different peripheries of the Church.

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Prolegomenon

In 2006 I was elected to the World Council of Churches central and executive committees. The Church of Scotland had included me on its delegation to the Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil, because I was living in São Paulo, Brazil. I was living in the city because the Church of Scotland had supported me in accepting a scholarship to study theology in Brazil as part of my formation for Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The world that I encountered at Porto Alegre in 2006 was fascinating. I always recall the dissonance between the place where I was living in São Paulo and the world that met me when I arrived in Geneva for my first WCC meeting. Bossey Ecumenical Institute is situated in the grounds and buildings of a château, on gently sloping land on the shores of Lac Leman. From the lake-facing windows, it is possible to see the snow-capped peaks of the Alps, including Europe's highest mountain, Mont Blanc. Set against a clear blue sky, and in the chill and still of winter, it is a breathtaking setting for any ecumenical meeting.

I had walked down a gentle slope in São Paulo, to exit the *favela*, *Paraisópolis*, and make my way to the international airport. *Paraisópolis*, translated as the Paradise City (it is anything but) is one of the biggest favelas – slum areas of the city – in São Paulo. It is home to about 80,000 people living in improvised housing on the invaded land of a former farm in Morumbi, which is paradoxically one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in São Paulo. The favela, which sits inside a kind of crater, jostles for space amidst the wealth. High-rise buildings – luxury apartment blocks – and trees tower above the bustling world of the favela below.

I lived in a two-roomed penthouse! The narrow alleyway (*beco*) that led from Rua Ernest Renan was dotted with doors and window frames. At the end of the *beco*, to the left, was a narrow set of home-made concrete stairs. At the top of the third flight of stairs was a flat roof. Across the flat roof, perched on the western corner, was my house. It offered extensive views across the favela to the Morumbi football stadium and the State Governor's Palace beyond: improvised houses hugged steep slopes, roads and *becos* rounded rugged outcrops, kites almost always danced against the blue sky and home-made firecrackers would boom in the night sky. Music blared almost 24 hours a day, from neighbours' houses and souped-up cars. There was chattering and laughter, which only ever seemed to cease in the wee small hours.

I also recall the open sewers and the wretched smells that would rise into the polluted sky and the screams of children, which it was not always possible to identify as either being of

joy or pain. Then there were the women who worked in the luxury apartments in Morumbi during the day, and continued to work in their own homes in the evening: cooking, cleaning, and caring for children all while being faced with machismo from their husbands, fathers and sons, and prevailing social prejudices. There was also the sporadic sound of gunfire.

As my first WCC meeting approached there was a curfew placed on the favela as the police surrounded and invaded under superior orders and in response to a wave of violent attacks that had swept through the city. There were restrictions on entry and exit, whereby inhabitants of the favela had to pass through police roadblocks and show identification. There were occasional questions, barked aggressively. It was doors locked and lights out by 9pm: and then the gunfire would begin.

I walked down the gently sloping Rua Ernest Renan towards the police roadblock at the one side of the favela which was bordered by the foot of the hill at the main road. I trailed a suitcase in one hand and carried my passport in another. A British passport can take you many places, but would it get me out of a favela under curfew? In the early morning half-light, the policeman who addressed me looked astonished, and then let me through. I jumped into a waiting taxi – taxis do not always enter the favela – and the equally astonished driver took me to the airport, after he had clarified the destination multiple times. I was met at Geneva airport by a driver and taken to Château de Bossey in a luxury German car.

The violence in São Paulo received extensive coverage in the Brazilian media. On the 15th of May 2006, the *Folha de São Paulo*, a leading daily newspaper in Brazil, reported on the violence. According to the article, the state government of São Paulo released preliminary statistics showing that there were 180 violent attacks co-ordinated by the group *Primeiro Comando da Capital*. There were unconfirmed reports of 91 deaths in the violence, including police, prison officers, prison inmates and 38 further people, while 49 people suffered serious injury (*Folha de São Paulo*, 15 May, 2006).[1]

The news of the violence in São Paulo also reached the deliberations of the WCC executive committee, under the influence of its Brazilian Moderator, Rev. Dr Walter Altmann from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. I played no part in drafting the

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[1] 'SP sofre ao menos 180 ataques criminosos: mortos passam de 81' in *Folha de São Paulo*, 15 May, 2006. http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/cotidiano/ult95u121535.shtml (accessed July, 2014).

letter issued by the WCC general secretary, as a result of the deliberations of the executive committee, other than to show my orange card (a sign of consensus in the WCC) when asked in the plenary.[2] In fact, I told no one at the meeting about my place of residence or the details about my journey to the meeting. Nor did I mention that my wife and other family members were still under curfew in *Paraisópolis*, with bullets ricocheting through the air and finding stonework or (God forbid) people. An open letter, even one from a WCC general secretary to the Brazilian churches, seemed a distant response to the immediate distress in São Paulo.

In São Paulo, I had felt part of what Dom Helder Câmara had earlier called Abrahamic Minorities (1976, 77). According to this prophetic bishop, the Abrahamic Minority is a *mística* that overcomes isolation and is rooted in the peoples' praxis of faith and hope and love.[3] The *mística* documents the struggles of the subaltern people, humanising their story by drawing on their places of residence (1976, 78).[4] My involvement with the ecumenical movement in Brazil was inspired by the peoples' struggles for life.

It was something of a surprise then to be invited by the WCC central committee to become a member of the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. This oddly named committee is, to my mind, unique in the world of ecumenical dialogues. It is a parity committee – seven members from Orthodox member churches of the WCC and seven members drawn from other member churches of the WCC – and it is the inheritor of the legacy of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. It is a technical committee, but with a potential working agenda that reaches into the heart of Christian division. It considers matters related to ecclesiology, prayer, and social and ethical issues, amongst other topics. It is the only international forum of encounter addressing fundamental ecumenical questions that I am aware of that is not a bilateral dialogue or a dialogue driven by a Christian world communion vision of the Church.[5] As I

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[2] The full text of the letter issued by the WCC to the Brazilian churches is available in English at: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/messages-and-letters/letter-to-brazilian-churches. A copy is included in Appendix I. The letter expresses shock at the levels of violence, draws attention to the inadequate legal system and prison overcrowding, and states that reforms have been difficult due to corruption, impunity and lack of political will. It closes by encouraging the churches to continue to promote a culture of peace and non-violence.

[3] In his book, Helder Câmara describes the *mística* of the Abrahamic Minority as an alternative to institutional expressions of faith (1976, 77).

[4] For a fuller discussion of the term *mística*, including its different uses in Latin America and Orthodoxy, see Chapter 5.

[5] The influence exerted by the Roman Catholic Church on ecumenical dialogues, since *Unitatis redintegratio* (1964), has encouraged a bilateral approach between communions or families of churches. For further reading see: Kasper, Walter. *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogues*. London: Continuum, 2009. The original vision of the WCC promotes a conciliar vision of ecumenical dialogue between churches, and resists the 'confessional families' approach to dialogue that

will argue in this thesis, the work of the Special Commission and the continuing dialogues in the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration address some of the fundamental challenges facing the ecumenical movement.

In many senses this thesis presents an uneasy dialogue. It tries to bring together three fields of theological study, each with their own epistemologies. I am fully aware that within each of the three fields – Orthodox theology, the theology of liberation and ecumenism – that there are contested epistemologies, as well as consensus. This only serves to make the dialogue more uneasy at times. To some extent this thesis is addressed to three theological communities – the Orthodox Church, the theology of liberation and the ecumenical movement. I am aware that presenting throughout the thesis a theological position as 'Orthodox', 'liberation' or 'ecumenical' does not do full justice to the nuances of debate within each community or theological epistemology. That, however, is not the task of this thesis. The task is to hold an uneasy dialogue.

As the Introduction to the thesis explains, the thesis invites reflection on absent themes within each theology and tries to suggest ways forward. There is an extremely limited bibliography for this dialogue. There is only one published book on the work of the Special Commission.[6] There is limited exposure to the theology of liberation as theology (rather than Marxism) in Orthodox theology, and I have yet to encounter a sustained reflection from a Latin American theologian of liberation on the Orthodox Church. Therefore, the thesis pioneers an uneasy dialogue, which may not always prove to be a possible dialogue.

This uneasy dialogue has been a part of my own theological formation, from the favela to the framework of ecumenical dialogues. I have been greatly enriched by my encounter with Orthodox theology, although I was clearly nurtured in another theological world. I now offer this dialogue to a wider audience in the search for a liberating ecumenism.

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emerges in the 1970s. It prefers to speak of a *koinonia* of local churches. For further reading see: Santa Ana, Julio. H. *Ecumenismo e Libertação*, Petropolis: Vozes, 1991.

[6] There are also two theses on the Special Commission, which have been published in recent years. Elina Hellqvist, *The Church and Its Boundaries. Conflicting Ecclesiologies, A study of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC*. Helsinki: Luther/Agricola/Society, 2011 and Helene Lund, *Exploring the Ecclesiological Discourse in the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches from 1998 to 2002*. Oslo: Norwegian School of Theology, 2011.

Introduction

Esse and Absence in Ecclesiology

'The one Church is made up of many Churches, and this is the very *esse* of the Church' claims Zizioulas (2010, 341). The essential unity of the Church is a fundamental for Orthodox thinkers. In his ecclesiological discussion of the limits of the Church, Georges Florovsky affirms that, 'what is valid in the sects is that which is in them from the church, which in their hands remains as the portion and sacred inner core of the church, through which they are with the Church' (1933, 126). Even where unity is not visible (the sects that Florovsky refers to are principally Protestant churches), the presence of the essence of the Church potentially expresses the unity of the Church. Beyond theology, the philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev has expressed essential unity as an explanation for our need to overcome a sense of remoteness (1950, 264).

The work of the Special Commission considered ecclesiology to be at its heart (2003, 7). It took as its starting point some essential differences. The essential differences were demarcated as including: differences between Orthodox churches and other member churches of the WCC; a continued conceptual use of the concept of an East–West divide; differences between understandings of the liturgy and prayer in different churches; and discussion of representation (who represents the church) and participation (in whose name does the ecumenical movement act) in the search for unity. Most of the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC located the essential ecclesiological differences raised by the discussion within an understanding of matters of structure and ethos of the WCC. Therefore, the proposals from the Final Report were institutionally inward facing, addressing the structure and ethos of the WCC rather than studying the Church.

The Final Report did not begin with the Orthodox theological principle of the essential unity of the church. It, therefore, did not ask the churches to consider their *esse* – their original kinship and the unity of their common past (Florovsky 1974, 161) – and their shared ecclesiology, including recognition of legitimate diversity of theological opinion (Zizioulas 2010, 342). The consequence of this decision to avoid considering the *esse* of the Church is that the Final Report does not explain in depth the essential differences, and

in fact, it does not consider if the essential differences suggested in the work of the Special Commission are actually all that essential.

The thesis begins with Orthodox theological contributions to the ecumenical movement. However, throughout this thesis Orthodox theology is placed in a critical dialogue with the theology of liberation in the search for liberating ecclesiological perspectives that can contribute to the *movement* in ecumenism. There is both a recovery of absent epistemologies from ongoing ecumenical dialogues by re-reading orthodoxies from a liberationist perspective, and a setting of ecclesiology within the wider framework of contributions from critical theory.

This thesis explores 'another possible world' for ecumenism which transgresses the current canonical boundaries in the ecumenical movement. It emphasises that it is by embracing Orthodoxy's critiques that the ecumenical movement can move beyond hegemonic colonial projects in the life of the WCC and find a liberating praxis for ecumenism and ecclesiology.

The thesis proposes a dialogue that reflects the structure of the Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches. The titles of the first five chapters of the thesis are based on the five areas for specific study from the Final Report. However, it is not an in-depth study of the work or report of the Special Commission. Rather, the first five chapters engage with Orthodox ecclesiology and ecumenical histories from the perspective of the theology of liberation in the search for a liberating ecumenism Chapter six draws together the (sometimes) disparate dialogues from the preceding five chapters and proposes an ecclesiological praxis that develops the movement in the ecumenical and the ecclesiological through developing an ecclesiology from different absent peripheries of the Church.

Absent Theological Themes

The absence of consideration of the essential unity of the Church is not the only absence in the Final Report. There is an absence of a critique of the use of the Protestant 'confessional' understanding of the Church throughout the Final Report. There is an absence of questioning the lazy assumptions in the continued use of the East-West divide in the ecumenical movement. Various theologians, both Orthodox and theologians of liberation, question the geographical definitions of the Church. The Final Report does not do enough to acknowledge this theological work. Furthermore, the Final Report does not expose the power struggles within Orthodox theology and ecclesiology and it does not

emphasise sufficiently that the ecumenical movement, more than an inter-church organisation, seeks to participate in the coming Kingdom of God.

This thesis seeks to address these (and other) absent themes. It begins by recalling that Jung Mo Sung (1994) was among the first theologians of liberation to draw attention to the absent themes in the theology of liberation when he critically examined the relationship between economic theories and theology. He identifies two reasons for this. Firstly, the more well-known and widely published liberation theologians did not turn their attention to economic themes after the period of 'dependency theory' (1994, 8), and secondly, liberation theologians who do reflect on the absent theme of theology-economy are not presented as part of the canon of the theology of liberation (1994, 9). Jung Mo Sung is correct on both counts: it is correct to identify the absent theme of the economy in the canon of the theology of liberation and it is also correct to draw attention to absent themes from the theology of liberation.

Sung specifically notes the anomaly in his study that there is little theological reflection on the economy in the theology of liberation. That is not to say that there is not any reflection. He suggests that Hugo Assmann, Julio de Santa Ana and principally Franz Hinkelammert have offered reflections in this area, but that they are not cited by other theologians of liberation and do not appear in comprehensive bibliographies or histories of the theology of liberation (1994, 9). Interestingly, each of those cited by Sung does not have a Roman Catholic priestly function post-Vatican II. Sung's perceptive analysis can be extended to ecumenism. There is little theological reflection on ecumenism amongst theologians of liberation (at least the canonical ones). In their book, *Espiritualidade da Libertação* (Spirituality and Liberation) (1994), Pedro Casaldáliga and José María Vigil alight on the theme in parts of the book, but it is not a book per se about ecumenism. Only Julio de Santa Ana has written a theology of liberation book on ecumenism, *Ecumenismo e Libertação* (Ecumenism and Liberation) (1991). Santa Ana, while recognised as a contributor to the theology of liberation, is not part of the canon which Sung alluded to for two reasons: he is a Protestant theologian and he lives outside of Latin America.

Absent themes have begun to nurture a new generation of liberation theologian. Marcella Althaus-Reid identified the absent theme of sexuality, and simultaneously brought to fruition a critique of the theology of liberation and an uncovering of absences: 'times change and subversive theology becomes incorporated: church leaders claim that they themselves have always been liberation theologians … Having reached calm waters, why would I as a feminist liberation theologian risk rocking the boat by introducing such a

scandalous theme as sexuality?' (2004, 2). Althaus-Reid, like Jung Mo Sung, answers her own question by showing that while the theme of sexuality is absent from the theology of liberation, it is present in the *comunidades* and amongst the *pueblo*.[7] In other words the epistemological location of the theology of liberation – *comunidades* and *pueblo* – cries out for reflection on absent themes.

If economy and sexuality are more recent themes for reflections by liberation theologians, they are not the only absent themes making their way into theological reflection. Mario Aguilar has recently suggested an inter-religious theology of liberation in which he, too, is conscious of addressing an absent theme: 'Latin American theologians reflected on processes of social and personal "liberation" using the same word that Buddhists use and therefore creating a bridge between the centrality of human rights and respect for a common humanity' (2012, 11). Further, Ivan Petrella has reminded the theology of liberation that as well as rereading Christianity from the perspective of the oppressed, it is also tasked with the construction of 'historical projects' (2006, vii) and I will return to Petrella's observation later in this chapter. Economy, sexuality, inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, plus historical projects, are some examples of absent themes that have all brought new directions for the theology of liberation.

Surprisingly, another absent theme from liberation theologians' reflections is ecumenism. There are a small number of liberation theologians explicitly committed to ecumenism – including José Miguez Bonino[8] and Julio de Santana,[9] and books published by liberation theologians which address ecumenism – for example, the writings of Marcelo Barros.[10] However, it is an absent theme that helps to underline the critique of current theology of liberation made by both Marcella Althaus-Reid and Ivan Petrella. Too often, the theology of liberation has become a reviewing of historical accounts of post-Vatican II Roman Catholic history, emphasising the role of Medellin and Puebla, the Bishops' Conferences

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[7] I have used the Spanish words for 'community' and 'people', which in the Latin American theology of liberation have a particular meaning that the English terms do not fully capture. *Comunidade* and *pueblo* recall the 'option for the poor'.

[8] José Miguez Bonino was a Methodist minister and professor of theology from Argentina. He served as a President of the World Council of Churches. He was a leading Protestant contributor to the theology of liberation in Latin America. His reflection, however, in the global ecumenical movement is more noted for his involvement in Christian-Marxist dialogues, and its implications for theology (Miguez Bonino 1975).

[9] Julio de Santana is a theologian from Uruguay who was a professor of theology at the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute at Bossey (1994-2002). Before becoming a professor at Bossey, he worked in Geneva with the WCC's Commission on Participation in Development and he worked for the Church and Society movement in Latin America (ISAL). He studied theology and sociology in Argentina and France. In publications, his name appears in various forms: Julio Santa Ana, Julio H. de Santa Ana. These variants appear throughout this thesis.

[10] Marcelo Barros is a Benedictine monk who led an ecumenical community in Goias, Brazil. He is a biblical scholar, a leading exponent of ecumenical and inter-religious spirituality and he supports the work of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* (MST, The Landless Workers' Movement) and other social movements.

which adopted a "preferential option for the poor" and supported the developing *comunidades eclesiais de base* throughout Latin America . Such a narrow ecclesial framework removes the theology of liberation from its roots in liberation struggles against political and economic dictatorships in Latin America, but more importantly for this research project, it fosters an absence of ecumenical reflection by the theology of liberation.

The canon of the theology of liberation which Jung Mo Sung criticises is, arguably, established in a curious publication edited by Ignacio Ellacuria and Jon Sobrino, *Mysterium Liberationis* (1993). The book – two volumes in Spanish and one in English – brings different theologians of liberation together 'to present a few basic theological concepts … of liberation theology' (1993, x). It also has an extensive bibliography. The opening chapter by Roberto Oliveiros begins: 'Twenty-five years ago the Second Vatican Council was getting underway' (1993, 3). It establishes the ecclesial framework of the canon, and it establishes the anomaly of the change of locus of the theology of liberation from *comunidade* and *pueblo* to Roman Catholic Church, post Vatican II.

There is no mention of the epistemological importance of the work of the educationalist Paulo Freire. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (originally published in 1970) was a vital tool in early base communities (CEBs[11]). The base community was constituted by people at the grassroots, sometimes called popular sectors of Latin American society, and drew people together to learn (hence Freire's literacy and *conscientização* work) and to engage in transformation of their neighbourhood or workplace. Later, it focussed on more exclusively ecclesial concerns as way for people to live their faith without a church building or religious leader. Freire's work was adopted by the Brazilian Bishops' Conference through the Movement for Popular Education.[12] His work was used by the Social Service of Industry – a network of adult education and cultural centres financed by Brazilian industry for their workers. Furthermore, Balduino A. Andreola and Mario Bueno Ribeiro have written a short book reflecting on the influence of Paulo Freire's work in the World Council of Churches, where he was a staff member during his exile from Brazil's military dictatorship in the 1970s. Describing Freire's option to work for the WCC, rather

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[11] Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educationalist. His book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) is fundamental to understanding the historical development of the theology of liberation. The Preface to the English language edition is written by Richard Shuall (a theologian of liberation), who draws attention to Freire's connections with CEBs in North East Brazil (1993, 13). Paulo Freire was also a staff member of the WCC. For a fuller study of his influence on ecumenism see *Andarilho da Esperança: Paulo Freire no CMI* (Wanderer of Hope: Paulo Freire at the WCC) (2005).

[12] *Movimento de Educação de Base* (Base Education Movement) was responsible for adult literacy programmes in poor neighbourhoods.

than taking up a position at Harvard, Andreola and Ribeiro note that this was part of Freire's option to make pedagogy of the oppressed a 'historical project' (2005, 53). In Freire's own words, his decision to go to the WCC was rooted in his desire to not lose contact with *comunidades* (Balduino and Ribeiro 2005, 52).

There is no mention of Rubem Alves's[13] pioneering publication, *A Theology of Human Hope* (originally published in 1969), in Ellacuria and Sobrino's presentation of 'the core and nucleus of the theology of liberation' (1993, ix). Alves's Princeton doctoral thesis[14] was given a title in English by the publisher to highlight its contribution to the theological dialogue led by Jürgen Moltmann. In Latin America, his book is published under the title, *Religion: Oppression or Liberation* and is understood by many to be one of the foundational texts for the emerging theology of liberation alongside the work of Gustavo Gutierrez and Hugo Assmann. *Mysterium Liberationis* writes Alves's contribution out of the history, and canon, of the theology of liberation.

Then there is the now uneasy relationship with 'dependency theory'. Dependency theory was influential in the 1970s and arose from the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America as an explanation of how social, political and economic development are related in Latin America. It is widely recognised that 'dependency theory', particularly the work of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (originally published in Spanish in 1971) influenced the early theologians of liberation including Gustavo Gutiérrez, Hugo Assmann and Juan Luis Segundo. The influence of 'dependency theory' in the important development of the relationship between social sciences and theology in the theology of liberation is not addressed in *Mysterium Liberationis*. Such an omission, in addition to altering the history of the theology of liberation, also prevents a number of older theologians of liberation from engaging in the epistemological debates that emerge through the work of Enrique Dussel's *Philosophy of Liberation*[15] (1995) and the subsequent work of people like Eduardo Mendieta, who see the theology of liberation contributing to a wider discourse of 'decolonializing epistemologies' (2012). I will return to Mendieta's contribution later in this chapter.

In this thesis, I propose to reflect on an absent theme from the theology of liberation by incorporating absent liberationist epistemologies. I will situate the theology of liberation in

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[13] Rubem Alves is a Presbyterian minister from Brazil. He worked as a psychotherapist and professor at the state university in Campinas, Sao Paulo.
[14] He studied on a scholarship from the World Council of Churches.
[15] This publication is the culmination of work that Dussel produced from the early 1980s in his search for a Latin American philosophy and history of philosophy.

contemporary epistemological debates influenced by thinkers like Boaventura de Sousa Santos[16], Walter Mignolo and Eduardo Mendieta. This will introduce theologies of liberation as theories of knowledge beyond northern epistemologies (Santos 2008); as a subaltern knowledge with a particular relationship to Western categories and colonial projects (Mignolo 2000); and as a discourse that recovers lost voices and lost *comunidades* (Isasi-Díaz and Mendieta 2012).

However, I would like to reflect on the absent theme of ecumenism, and in particular its ecclesiological aspects, from the theology of liberation from a very particular and, at first glance, not particularly obvious place: the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches. While the major conclusions of the Final Report of the Special Commission influence the shape of the subsequent chapters in this research,[17] this reflection is not primarily concerned with a detailed study of the work of the Special Commission (and the Permanent Committee, which inherited its mandate). Rather, the Final Report of the Special Commission offers a structure to reflect on ecumenism from the perspective of the theology of liberation, and in particular to hold a dialogue with Orthodox theological contributions and ecclesiological perspectives.[18] In subsequent chapters, the thesis alights on proposals about the charismatic church and the local church (from Florovsky and Zizioulas), discusses perspectives of the symphony (by drawing on studies by Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis), considers the influence of *mística* or *theosis* for the church (including aspects of the philosophy of Berdyaev and the theology Evdokimov). It looks at the proposal by Aram I (Catholicos of Cilicia), a former moderator of the Central Committee of the WCC, for a people-centred ecumenism. The thesis weaves these contributions into a critique of the hegemonic models of ecumenism, as perpetrated by the WCC.

In the course of this reflection I hope to demonstrate that Orthodox contributions to ecumenical theology can be interpreted in categories which appeal to the theology of

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[16] Boaventura de Sousa Santos is a Portuguese Sociologist who studied at Yale University. He is professor at Coimbra University and is visiting professor at a number of leading universities around the world including the London School of Economics and the University of São Paulo. He is an active participant in the WSF.

[17] The five thematic areas of study presented in the Final Report of the Special Commission provide the lead for chapters in this thesis. The chapters are not arranged in the same order as the themes are presented in the Final Report.

[18] In light of the WCC Fifth Assembly, held in Nairobi, the Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) initiated a project under the leadership of Julio Santa Ana with the purpose of facilitating 'a process of ecumenical reflection on the teachings of the Bible and the lessons from church history on the challenge of the poor' (Santa Ana 1977, xi). The two published volumes included aspects of Orthodox theology and contributions from Orthodox thinkers (Nicolai A. Zabolotsky from the Russian Orthodox Church and George Khodr from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch). The CCPD process is an ecumenical reflection on development. It is not necessarily a theology of liberation dialogue with Orthodoxy.

liberation: as theories of knowledge beyond northern epistemologies; as a form of subaltern knowledge with a particular relationship to Western categories and colonial projects; and a discourse that recovers lost voices and ecclesiologies.[19] The work of Edward Said, particularly in his study of *Orientalism* (2003), stimulates a fruitful dialogue with Orthodox theologies. Olivier Clément[20] begins his study of Christian mysticism by reminding the reader that, 'Christianity is in the first place an Oriental religion' (Clement 1993, 7). It is, however, not just the location and perspective of Orthodox contributions to theology and ecclesiology that need to be considered: recognising that Orthodoxy (Christianity) is Oriental helps to connect the theology of liberation discourse with Orthodox discourses – not immediately obvious partners in a dialogue. It enables both to offer together a critique of the ecumenical movement as a Western project; and both, together, offer visions for a future ecumenism which recovers lost ecclesiologies and *comunidades*.

The following observation from Anna Marie Aagaard and Peter Bouteneff also demonstrates that the work of the Special Commission and its conclusions is an absent theme for many in the ecumenical movement:

> The Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC is a funny animal. Some people place their entire hope for the future of the Council on it. Some people are in denial about its existence and wish it would just quietly go away. And perhaps the majority of the people have no special knowledge or interest in its work. (2001, xi)

The work of the Special Commission has continually been described as a field of Orthodox special interest, rather than comprehensively addressing the needs and interests of the ecumenical movement. Julio Santa Ana describes it as addressing Orthodox concerns or responding to Orthodox dissatisfactions (2006, 41). Orthodox theologians, such as Peter Bouteneff, have been keen to stress that the work of the Special Commission holds promise for the whole ecumenical movement and that the concerns that it articulates are not only Orthodox concerns (2003, 49).

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[19] This three-fold approach influences the choice of Orthodox thinkers – theologians and philosophers – who are incorporated into the dialogue in this thesis. The philosophy of Nicolas Berdyaev provides a direct link to the theology of liberation. Juan Luis Segundo's doctoral dissertation was on Berdyaev's philosophy of the person and his thinking influenced Segundo's early theological writings. A fuller discussion of this aspect of Segundo's relation to Berdyaev's philosophy is available in Odair Pedroso Mateus, 'Volverán las oscuras golondrinas…': o opúsculo de 1948 e a gênese universitária da obra de J. L. Segundo' In Soares, ed 2005. Other thinkers, like Bouteneff, Florovsky, Evdokimov and Clement are, to differing extents, 'exiles', or part of the Orthodox diaspora. While their influence internally on Orthodoxy varies, they are in a particular relationship to Western categories and colonial projects. They might be lost voices for Orthodoxy, to which this thesis contributes to a recovery.

[20] Olivier Clément was a French-born Russian Orthodox theologian based at the Institute of St Sergius, Paris.

An Ecumenical Movement in Decline?

The WCC was formally constituted in 1948 at a meeting in Amsterdam that was the culmination of an 11 year World Council of Church in Formation period (Goodall 1964, 67). The formation of the WCC sought to respond to the divisions and destructions sown by two world wars, but was also the fruit of varied work which brought the churches together, most notably in the mission field. The three streams which later became full parts of the WCC influenced the organisation's agenda for Christian unity. The Faith and Order movement, the International Missionary Council and the Life and Work movement all merged with the WCC at different points in the 20th century. This influenced the focus of work of the WCC. Faith and Order brought theologians together to discuss matters related to doctrine, most famously reflecting on, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982). The integration of the International Missionary Council with the WCC in 1961 brought a greater emphasis to mission and unity as integrated concepts (Werner 2007, 189). And the vision of unity in service to the wider world was inspired by the Life and Work movement which in the WCC became Church and Society work.

Although some Orthodox churches were founding members of the WCC, it was in 1961 with the entry of the Russia Orthodox Church along with Orthodox churches from Bulgaria, Romania and Poland that helped to complete the Orthodox commitment to the ecumenical movement. The Russian Orthodox commitment was expressed as 'strengthening the Orthodox witness of her Sister-Churches' and 'furthering the development of Christian work, and doing everything in her power to serve mankind' (Goodall 1964, vii). This commitment of the Russian Orthodox Church, during the Cold War, was viewed by some as an opportunity for opening relationships between Eastern and Western traditions (1964, viii).

The early project of the WCC was a search for reconciliation between the churches in light of two world wars and a Cold War. It drew from four distinct agendas: the faith and order movement, the missionary movement, the life and work movement and the growing commitment of the Orthodox church to Christian co-operation. While the WCC narrative of unity has helped to integrate the four distinct agendas with substantial work in the areas of ecclesiology, mission, service and unity, it has also been open to questioning. The questioning of the ecumenical vision of the WCC has grown since the latter part of the twentieth century and continues apace today.

For a number of years, there has been a subtle but prevalent sense that the ecumenical movement is in decline. Konrad Raiser reminds the WCC that, as early as 1972, Ernst Lange had analysed a certain 'ecumenical malaise' (1997, 89). It can be difficult to define this sense of decline and even to understand what is meant when using the term 'ecumenical movement': '[A]t the beginning of the twenty-first century there is more than one understanding of what "ecumenical" means' (2006, 32), affirms Julio Santa Ana. Konrad Raiser himself suggests that the twentieth century was, 'a century of advances and retreats on the way towards unity' (1997, 87). And he attempts to define the ecumenical movement in terms of being a movement that is a 'goal-orientated, voluntary organisation of people who decide to work together in order to change an existing situation or to prevent undesirable change. They are characterised by flexible forms of organisation, spontaneity and a high degree of personal commitment on the part of their members' (1997, 89). Raiser's reflections urge the WCC to rediscover the *movement* in the ecumenical project.

The Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC (1997), also acknowledges that there is 'uncertainty', 'ambiguity' and 'confusion' about what is meant by the 'ecumenical movement'. It proposes, however, that there is a wide characterisation of the activities of the ecumenical movement, which includes 'the quest for Christian unity, common witness in the worldwide task of mission and evangelism, and commitment to *diakonia*[21] and to the promotion of justice and peace' (1997, 10). The document speaks of God's reconciling action for the whole inhabited earth, not only the church. This opens new directions and dialogues for the ecumenical movement, particularly Orthodox perspectives on the environment and theology of liberation's perspective on the 'people of God'.

However, others draw attention to a wider 'crisis of ecumenism' (Santa Ana *et al.* 2006, 32) that has its roots in broader social changes and not necessarily the institutionalisation of the ecumenical movement in the form of the WCC. Ninan Koshy and Julio de Santana reflect that, 'the deepest challenge facing ecumenism concerns not so much the sense of being ecumenical; rather it concerns the process of modernization' (2006, 32). Their reflection introduces questions about modernisation, globalisation and liberation as it relates to the ecumenical movement. I will address this further in chapter two.

While a number of commentators fall in behind the sense of an 'ecumenical winter', the churches are part of a world that is increasingly aware of its neighbours, and, arguably, the interaction between the churches at a relational level has never been greater. The sense that

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[21] *Diakonia* is the service work of the WCC. In the past, it would have incorporated the aid and development work of the organisation.

the ecumenical movement is in decline coincides with conditions that should potentially give it momentum. The Orthodox churches in the WCC have consistently affirmed that, 'the world will continue to need a council of churches … an instrument to serve the churches by bringing them into a space for dialogue, shared work, for mutual exchange of gifts and insights from our traditions, for prayer together' (Sassima, ed. 2006, xii). Yet, increasing interaction between churches – sometimes called inter-church dialogue – is not necessarily ecumenism, and an increasing awareness of the global world is not necessarily an expression of visible unity. Interestingly, it is often the case that Orthodox theologians and church leaders prefer to use the term 'inter-church relations' or 'inter-church dialogue', when others in the ecumenical movement would use the term 'ecumenical'. The unease provoked by the use of the term 'ecumenical' in the Orthodox Church is twofold: firstly, it is a term reserved for use in describing the early Ecumenical Councils; secondly, non-Orthodox churches are viewed by many in the Orthodox church as not properly churches and therefore not possessing an ecclesiology that can be described by the term ecumenical. I will return to this point in chapter one.

A New Approach to Understanding Ecumenism

In Latin America, theologians have developed a way of 'doing' theology that liberates. This theology of liberation accompanied the struggles of the economically poor and politically excluded in the 1960s and 1970s in dictatorship states in Latin America. It moved through periods of re-reading of biblical, theological and ecclesiastic history to reclaim lost Christian traditions and to expose the power relations inherent in Christianity. This liberating theology challenges different forms of oppression – economic, political, gender, ethnic, among others – and unmasks the ideological assumptions inherent in Christianity, particularly it's theology and ecclesiology. It searches for God's justice and compassion – and points towards God's coming Kingdom – with people who have been described variously by theologians of liberation as oppressed, marginalised or fragmented. This approach to theology could prove useful in order to address the sense of malaise and to help to define the ecumenical movement. Theology that liberates always recognises that theology is the 'second step'. The 'first step' is a commitment to struggle with the oppressed, marginalised or fragmented. This recognition brings to the fore that something precedes 'doing' theology. There is now some discussion within the theology of liberation as to what is recognised as the 'first step'. In the early days, the first step was commitment to the poor. Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of São Felix de Araguaia in Brazil writes: 'The option for the poor is always vital, at least for a Christianity that merits this name'

(Casaldáliga in Fragoso *et al.* 2003, 399). There then followed a period where the first step was the use of social sciences in preparing theological analysis. Gustavo Gutiérrez defends this approach: 'To speak about poverty in Latin America presupposes descriptions and interpretations … Social analysis is the resource used' (2000, 73).,More recently, the first step has been presented as the expression of faith (what some Latin American theologians call *mística*) within a community. Marcelo Barros says: 'In many cases, the strength of action comes from faith and expresses confidence in God' (2011, 76).

Theology that liberates – theology as a second step – needs to clarify its first step. This approach returns liberation theology to one of its most basic methodologies. Theology is a second step (Gutiérrez and Segundo). Gutiérrez expresses this in his classic work, A Theology of Liberation (2001), in the following way: 'Theology must be critical reflection on humankind, on basic human principles' (2001, 55). And Juan Luis Segundo, picking up on Gutiérrez's thinking, formulates it as, 'every theological question begins with the human situation. Theology is "the second step" … commitment is the first step' (1982, 79).

I would like to return to a suggestion from Ivan Petrella. According to Petrella, 'The time to reinvent liberation theology is now … If liberation theology is to do more than just talk about liberation it must continue making the development of historical projects an integral part of the theological task' (2006, vii). In order to do this Petrella suggests that the theology of liberation needs an historical project rooted in the 'option for the poor'; that it needs to rediscover epistemologies that go beyond capitalism-dependency theory frameworks, and that it needs a participatory approach that envisions a more positive future. Petrella's manifesto provides a useful starting point to re-examine the history of the ecumenical movement and its concrete historical project in the form of the WCC.

For the ecumenical movement, in the early days, the first step was a commitment to stay together. The coming together of the missionary movement, the 'Life and Work' movement and the 'Faith and Order' movement at Amsterdam in 1948, was the fruit of a long historical development. The "confluence of three streams" (Visser 'T Hooft 1949, 12) into the WCC, to witness to and serve the world together was expressed by the delegates from churches to the Amsterdam Assembly in the following way: 'We have committed ourselves afresh to Christ and have covenanted with one another in constituting the World Council of Churches. We intend to stay together' (Van Eldren and Conway 2001, 28). Then there followed a period where the first step for the WCC and the ecumenical movement was the search for visible unity. This resulted in the member churches of the

WCC, and the Roman Catholic Church (as a full member for the Faith and Order Commission), producing the somewhat iconic document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982). After many years of theological dialogue, this document notes that, "If the divided churches are to achieve the visible unity they seek, one of the essential prerequisites is that they should be in basic agreement on baptism, eucharist and ministry" (1982, viii). Although not all the Orthodox churches were founding members of the WCC – Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland were admitted to the fellowship of churches in 1961 -, the 1982 document was produced when Orthodox churches were full members of the WCC[22], and it states in its preface:

> At the same time, [churches] are striving together to realize the goal of visible Church unity … If the divided churches are to achieve the visible unity they seek, one of the essential prerequisites is that they should be in basic agreement on baptism, eucharist and ministry. (1982, vii)

Presently, the first step is, perhaps, best interpreted as understanding differences (reconciling diversity). The WCC document, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013), sets out this idea in the following way: 'Legitimate diversity in the life of communion is a gift from the Lord. The Holy Spirit bestows a variety of complementary gifts on the faithful for the common good' (2013, 16).

However, on closer examination, each of these so-called first steps is actually a form of theology and not a first step within the understanding of the theology of liberation. Theology should be the second step. More specifically, the theology as first step described in the previous paragraph is a particular theology of the ecumenical movement. If theology, as set out by the WCC, is the first step, then the ecumenical movement has not developed a theology that liberates. In other words, the ecumenical movement needs, in Petrella's words, an historical project. Petrella criticises any theology which only talks about liberation, but which does not enact it in society. He states that this is 'an abdication of intellectual ambition and social responsibility' (2006, vii). The problem that Petrella exposes in some theologies of liberation is also potentially partly where the problem lies in ecumenism.

To overcome the subtle but prevalent sense that there is a malaise in ecumenical movement, the task before us is to liberate ecumenism. This liberating can be done in three ways. Firstly, it is necessary to do theology as a second step. It is necessary for ecumenical

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[22] It is perhaps worth noting that the work of the Special Commission began, partly, in light of the "withdrawal" from participation in the WCC of Georgia and Bulgaria (1997) and Estonia (1998).

theology to respond to the contextual ecclesial concerns and realities, particularly the 'border-crossers' – those oppressed, marginalised or fragmented by some forms of ecclesiology. The commitment of the Church to the struggles of people is a necessary first step for a liberating ecumenism. Secondly, it is important to understand more fully the 'movement' in the ecumenical movement. This does not mean analysing 'shifts or changes', but approaching ecumenism from the perspective of those who participate. Michael Schartz and Shuva Paul, scholars of social movements, think that when looking at movements and their linked institutions it is important to remember that they are 'fundamentally different processes that require very different tools of analysis' (in Morris and Mueller, ed. 1992, 211): who the people are, and how they act in a movement is not necessarily correlated to the analysis of an institution. Thirdly, with this in mind, it is opportune to address concerns directed at the ecumenical movement by constituent members. In the course of this research, these concerns are articulated through an engagement with the Orthodox churches, their ecclesiology and theology. This liberating critique of the ecumenical movement from the perspective of Orthodox churches is used to deconstruct the hegemonic ecumenical narrative and to offer other potential ecumenical commitments. This returns the ecumenical movement to the first step – a commitment to the struggles of the oppressed, marginalised and fragmented – in an ongoing 'movement'.

One of the most consistent concerns raised by Orthodox churches is the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement and how it affects the programmatic work and life of the World Council of Churches. Although not a new issue, it was taken up in a new way by the WCC when it created a Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC. The five areas for study, which formed the basis of the conclusions from the Final Report, will be examined in this thesis. The five areas for study are: Ecclesiology, Social and ethical issues, Common prayer, Consensus model of decision-making, and Membership and representation. The Final Report provides the framework for a dialogue with the ecumenical movement. Therefore, the next section will introduce the work of the Special Commission and set the Commission in broader context.

The Special Commission

In May 1998, prior to the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), a number of Eastern Orthodox member churches held a meeting in Thessaloniki at which a number of concerns were expressed regarding, 'certain developments within some Protestant members of the Council that are reflected in the debates of the WCC' (2000, 111). These concerns were related to '(1) the organisation of the WCC; (2) the style and

ethos of our life together; (3) theological convergences and differences between Orthodox and other traditions; and (4) existing models and new proposals for a structural framework for the WCC that would make possible meaningful participation by Orthodox churches' (2000, 111). Aram I summarised these concerns, in an opening address to the Special Commission by contrasting Orthodox, and Protestant and Western models which he argued largely still influence the theology, programmes, language, working style, methodologies and procedures of the WCC (2000, 113). In particular, he highlighted a perceived growing horizontalism, described by the Orthodox as 'a shift from theological matters to social-political problems' (2000, 113), concerns about the use of inclusive language in prayer, and the 'out of line… with tradition' ordination of women and issues of sexual orientation (2000, 113).

In response to these concerns, and recognising that other churches and ecclesial families have (or had) similar concerns, the WCC member churches voted at the Eighth Assembly in Harare to establish a Special Commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC. Its final report was presented and approved at the Central Committee meeting in Geneva in 2002. The four-year reflection was presented through five areas for specific study: ecclesiology; social and ethical issues; common prayer; consensus model of decision-making; and membership and representation. The Final Report presented a summary of the work from various sub-groups. The sub-groups had examined background materials including statements and reports on all aspects of Orthodox participation in the WCC. The groups had also received papers on worship, baptism and ecclesiology. There is no explanation in the Final Report regarding the decision to present five areas for specific study to the WCC, not the process by which the Special Committee arrived at the five chosen areas, as opposed to another different five areas. The work of the Special Commission, which comprised more than 60 people, is continued by the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. This Committee has 14 members – seven from members of Orthodox churches and seven members appointed by the Central Committee from among other WCC member churches to represent the fellowship. It is charged with 'continuing the authority, mandate, concerns and dynamic of the Special Commission' (2013, 60) and advising the WCC governing bodies on consensus and the improved participation of the Orthodox in the entire life and work of the WCC.

While this appears, at first sight, a bureaucratic programme for an international institution, this thesis will argue that the questions raised at the meeting in Thessaloniki and pursued through the work of the Special Commission are central to understanding the theology of

ecumenism as interpreted by the WCC and are questions which also highlight wider critical theories in discussion in contemporary discourses. In order to begin to consider this wider perspective, the next section will introduce the work of the Special Commission in light of recent ecumenical debates.

Ecumenical Debates Leading to the Special Commission

The meeting in Thessaloniki was not the first time that Orthodox member churches of the WCC had held a meeting to express concerns about the WCC. It was not the first time, either, that Orthodox member churches had raised questions about theological convergences and differences between Orthodox and other traditions. In 1981, at the Sofia Consultation, Orthodox member churches had already raised concerns that can be understood as a precursor to the Thessaloniki meeting. Somewhat inevitably, the Sofia concerns were interpreted within an institutional framework which projected the WCC as a Western and Protestant institution with a structure and agenda that reinforced this. This appears again in the work of the Special Commission Report over twenty years later.

However, of more interest to this thesis is the underlying concern expressed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Sofia that the WCC needed to give serious recognition to Orthodox Churches 'in theological discussions which have direct ecclesiological repercussions on essential aspects of the faith and the life of the Church' (1982, 69). It is this ecclesiological concern, and not the institutional concern, that this thesis will focus on. At the presentation of the Special Commission report, Margot Kassmann, a German church leader and theologian, reminded the churches that, despite a lot of work the ecclesiological question still remained: 'At the heart of all the trouble is the question: Who is the Church?' (2003, 69).

Some of the concerns expressed at the meetings in Sofia and in Thessaloniki have been incorporated into the working life of the WCC. This is a result of the work from the Special Commission (1998–2006) and the ongoing remit of the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (2006–2013). However, while the WCC has responded to three of the four Thessaloniki critiques – the organisation of the WCC; the style and ethos of our life together; and the existing models and new proposals for a structural framework for the WCC that would make possible meaningful participation by Orthodox churches – it is the fourth critique that this research will focus on: theological convergences and differences between Orthodox and other traditions. Since the adoption of the Final Report of the Special Commission, the WCC has made changes to its Constitution and Rules, its

staffing and its working practices to address the Thessaloniki critiques, which were presented, also, in the work of the Special Commission.

The concerns of the Orthodox member churches at the Sofia meeting regarding the theology and ecclesiology of ecumenism, as expressed through the WCC (1983, 71), is a substantial critique of what critical theory would call the 'global design' of the ecumenical project. The Sofia Consultation voiced concerns that the Orthodox churches were affiliated to the WCC at different times and as local churches (as representatives of national units, along the lines of the model of the UN state-based system), meaning that the ecclesiology of Orthodoxy did not have an integrated approach to understanding the ecumenism advocated by the WCC (Tsetsis 1983, 71). The Sofia Consultation specifically challenged the programmatic undertakings of the WCC, describing them as 'alien' (Tsetsis 1983, 71), and requesting changes that would bring Orthodox priorities to the programme work of the WCC. In other words, the Orthodox voices at Sofia questioned the subsuming of Orthodoxy in the 'global design' of Pan-protestant ecumenism. The term 'global design' is taken from Walter Mignolo (2000), and according to Mignolo's theory, a critique of hegemonic projects can help to recover local histories – as this thesis will also argue for Orthodox theology. Mignolo posits that hegemonic projects are a form of coloniality of power whereby an entire field of study is articulated through a particular perspective which considers itself universal, thereby supressing and excluding subaltern perspectives (Mignolo 2000, 17). A critique of the hegemonic project from the perspective of subaltern voices or local histories unmasks the power relations in the formation of ecumenical theologies and ecclesiologies. This thesis will argue that it is possible to understand the Orthodox churches' concerns and critiques of the WCC and the ecumenical movement as the contribution of a local history (Orthodox theology and ecclesiology) to a critiquing of a global design – the ecumenical movement as represented by the WCC. This will be explored further in the next introductory section, which will present the other debates leading to the Special Commission.

Other Debates Leading to the Special Commission

Ecclesiastical history is not only a history of the ecclesial, and ecumenical history is not only a history of the ecumenical. The Eighth Assembly in Harare in 1998 was the first WCC Assembly to take a fuller account of the new world order. (The Seventh Assembly in Canberra in 1991 was perhaps too close to the unfolding events which were later dubbed the 'fall of Communism' and the 'first Gulf War'. Both were significant events for Orthodox churches present in the East–Eastern Europe and the Middle East).

It is political and social histories which offer an insight into the changing approach by the WCC to what was once labelled 'the Orthodox problem'. And it is by taking account of these histories that theology is able to ensure its place as second step, according to liberation theology approaches which take account of the social sciences and other academic disciplines. The 'essential questions' (Raiser 2003, 2) arising from the work of the Special Commission need to be developed in a three-fold perspective: (1) a critique from the perspective of Orthodox theology of the global designs of the hegemonic ecumenical project; (2) an invitation from the perspective of the theology of liberation to reread ecumenism from the perspective of the marginalised; and (3) a consideration of the need for an ecumenical historical project that prioritises the local church.

In order to complete this task, the research will focus on a dialogue with the five areas for specific study of the Special Commission. It will construct a dialogue as both an evaluation of this work and a proposal for 'another possible ecumenical world' influenced by local expressions of community which are people-centred, inclusive of the margins and transgressing the borders already established.

Moving the Dialogue Forward

It will now be clear that a number of different worlds – a number of different theological discourses – are brought together in this thesis. There is the world and theology of the Orthodox churches, plus there is the world and theology of the ecumenical movement, and there is the world and theology of theology that liberates. Each of these worlds has its own way of doing things. There is a language to learn, a history to understand and a tradition to be developed. It is not the focus of this thesis to undertake these tasks in depth.

Instead, the proposal is to try to bring perspectives from the 'theology which liberates' into dialogue with Orthodox theologies to move forward the ecumenical dialogue. The perspectives from theology which liberates will help to understand Orthodox critiques of the ecumenical movement as a form of liberating theology. At the same time, it will challenge Orthodox theologies to do more to address first steps in ecumenical theologies.

This approach takes forward three concerns in contemporary theological debates. Firstly, it contributes to reassembling theology that liberates by moving beyond Latin American Roman Catholic post-Vatican II ecclesial concerns. Secondly, it enfolds Orthodox theological approaches into ecumenical theology assuming that it is not possible to be ecumenical if it is not also embracing of this perspective. Thirdly, it offers a critique of

hegemonic ecumenical theology and tries to rediscover an ecumenical project in which many participate.

At this point, perhaps it is also worth stating what is not being done in this thesis. It is not a dialogue with and among ecumenical texts (convergence or otherwise). It is not an exhaustive survey of Orthodox theology within and outside of an ecumenical framework. It is not a review of the current status of ecumenical agreement or the work of the Special Commission. It is a project that tries to bring different concerns into dialogue. The concerns are articulated by the work of the Special Commission, but they are revealing of a wider dialogue at once theological and beyond theological. Sometimes this dialogue will prove helpful and at other times, it will be difficult to even establish the dialogue.

Orthodox theology, ecumenical theology and theology that liberates all lay claim to being comprehensive theologies. This can have two aspects. On the one hand, each as a comprehensive theology has no requirement for recourse to different theological discourses. This is perhaps evidenced by the fact that there is not a recognised set of texts which testify to reciprocity. Indeed, where ecumenical theology is the comprehensive organiser, Orthodox theology is frequently categorised under the 'Faith and Order movement', while theology that liberates is associated with the 'Life and Work movement'. 'Life and Work' encapsulates the work of Christians in relation to wider society. 'Faith and Order' is the place for doctrinal discussions. This erroneous organising principle – perhaps deriving from a hegemonic ecumenism that is informed by Western or Northern or Protestant bias – does not account for the contributions from Orthodox theology to reflections on mission, *diakonia,* and inter-religious dialogue and co-operation.

An example of this approach is evidenced in the work of Yacob Tesfai. He is one of the few ecumenical theologians to attempt to draw the theology of liberation and doctrinal orthodoxy into dialogue in his book, *Liberation and Orthodoxy: the promise and failures of interconfessional dialogue* (1996). Tesfai makes a number of important contributions to understanding the tension between the two movements within the history of the WCC. I will return to his contributions in chapter four.

I will, throughout this thesis, challenge the tendency to separate liberation and Orthodoxy and to find within that separation a tension. Rather, in acknowledging the comprehensiveness of each theological discourse, there should emerge approaches to similar questions in which a dialogue might, at the very least, prove interesting in bringing

the different but comprehensive worlds to each other. This, ultimately is the task of this research.

Chapter 1 – Ecclesiology: Part I

Introduction

The Final Report of the Special Commission raises, within its section on ecclesiology, questions which have been central to ecumenical dialogue throughout the twentieth century. This chapter will introduce the question posed to Orthodox churches: 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' (2003, 8). It will offer a close reading of two Orthodox theologians – Georges Florovsky[23] and John Zizioulas[24] – highlighting two historic contributions from Orthodox theologians to respond to this question. Both, in different ways, explore the limits of the Church and contribute substantially to Orthodox reflections on the Church.

The follow-up question in the Final Report of the Special Commission asks, 'How would this space and its limits be described?' (2003, 8). Florovsky's ecclesiology distinguishes between canonical and charismatic boundaries and observes that they are not one and the same, although both are still Church. Zizioulas prefers to focus on the local Church as the full expression of the one Church and the catholic Church. Florovsky and Zizioulas focus on the Church in relation to a particular culture in time and space – Florovsky's 1933 essay, *The Limits of the Church*, looks at ecclesial culture and how it defines limits, Zizioulas considers the interplay between ecclesial gatherings and Church gatherings in his 1985 book, *Being as Communion*. However, the theology of liberation questions this approach. In dialogue with critical theories, does the Orthodox epistemological premise actually westernise the ecclesiology of the Eastern Church through the use of Western philosophical and theological categories? This part of the reflection is aided by contributions from critical theory, particularly Said's theory of Orientalism. There will be a fuller exploration of contributions from critical theory in chapters four and six.

In a second step (a reference to the methodology of the theology of liberation), the chapter briefly introduces ecclesiological principles from the theology of liberation, which explores briefly the changing boundaries or limits of the Church. This new ecclesiology, an

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[23] Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) was an Archpriest and leading theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church. He is closely identified with the "patristic revival" in Orthodox theology and was a major contributor to ecumenical dialogues. He was a contributor at the Amsterdam Assembly (1948).

[24] John Zizioulas is a bishop and theologian in the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He studied under Florovsky at Harvard Divinity School and has taught theology in the UK, Switzerland and Italy. He worked at the Faith and Order secretariat of the WCC and continues to be involved in ecumenical dialogues.

ecclesiogenesis in the words of Leonardo Boff (2008), invites reflection on non-territorial ecclesiology. It therefore questions the theological approach of the work of the Special Commission, while also encouraging further clarification of the understanding of the Church in the world or the Church beyond the Church. It does this through two ecclesiological categories, which are not used by Florovsky or Zizioulas. Jon Sobrino posits that the Kingdom of God, the space for God's action and presence in people, needs to be incorporated into ecclesiology and its boundaries. Secondly, the people-centred ecclesiology is given a specific context and definition in the theology of liberation: namely, the poor. The need for an ecclesiology that responds to an understanding of Zizioulas's local Church as Sobrino's Church of Poor introduces a different boundary for ecclesiology. This initial suggestions in this chapter will be explored further in chapter six.

Summary of Special Commission

The Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC is written in three sections. Section A sketches the historical context for its work and Section B addresses the five themes of its work. The five themes are: ecclesiology, social and ethical issues, common prayer, a consensus model of decision-making, and membership and representation. Section C offers recommendations to the WCC Central Committee for action. The whole report is supported by Appendices which offer practical reflections on suggestions from Section B of the Final Report. Section B is, therefore, the content proper of the Final Report and it begins: 'Ecclesiological issues embrace all of the matters under the consideration of the Special Commission' (2003, 7).

According to the Final Report, two basic ecclesiological questions can be posed to the churches in the ecumenical movement: 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' (2003, 8); and, 'How does [a church of the Reformation] understand, maintain and express belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church?' (2003, 8). The Final Report does not provide an answer to these two questions. Instead, the Final Report suggests that there are a number of issues that require further discussion, which included further exploration of the terms 'visible unity' and 'unity in diversity', mutual recognition of baptism, as well as clarifying the theological meaning of church, ecclesial and *koinonia,* amongst other terms (2003, 8). The Final Report is not the first WCC document, nor will it be the last, to alight on, and ask for further exploration and clarification of terms widely in use in the ecumenical movement, but which are not clear in their meanings.

This chapter is concerned with addressing the first of the ecclesiological questions posed by the Final Report. In particular, it focusses on the follow up question in the Final Report: 'How would this space and its limits be described?' (2003, 8). The chapter gives space to Orthodox theologians, who articulate Orthodox ecclesiology with an awareness that the world is 'plural', opening up once homogeneous interpretations of churches and communities, cultures and nation-states. This is not to diminish Orthodox perspectives of the eschatological universalism of the Church or admit that pluralism is uniquely a consequence of the Enlightenment, and therefore a Western category, as Petros Vassiliadis asserts (Vassiliadis in Clapsis, Emmanuel, ed. 2004, 192). There is a rich history of theological engagement by Orthodox theologians with the ecclesiological question posed in the Final Report. It is not a new question; however, it is not possible to bring the fullness of that work into this chapter.

Instead, the first part of the chapter will present the ecclesiology of the Orthodox Church through an historic text from an Orthodox theologian who has tried to address the first basic ecclesiological question identified by the work of the Special Commission. Georges Florovsky's 1933 article, *The Limits of the Church*, is written before the formation of the WCC (in 1948). The question posed by the Final Report of the Special Commission is not a new question. It is one that has run through the work of the WCC and ecumenism in the twentieth century. Nor, it should be remembered, is there any one Orthodox theological approach to the question.

Georges Florovsky's 1933 text, *The Limits of the Church*, is still considered to be a reference for Orthodox ecclesiology in relation to other churches.[25] After establishing an understanding of Florovsky's limits of the Church, the chapter introduces John Zizioulas's ecclesiological approach and assesses how it describes space and limits for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology. Importantly, Zizioulas's contributions remind Orthodox theologians that division within Christianity is not only a Western responsibility (cited by Jillions in Cunningham and Theokritoff 2008, 277). The chapter concludes with suggestions for an ecclesiological approach that finds space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology. Such an approach draws on the theology of liberation and critical theory.

Orthodox Ecclesiology – The Limits of the Church

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[25] Florovsky's article continues to be cited by Orthodox theologians in contemporary publications reflecting on ecclesiology, including Bouteneff (2001), Petros Vassiliadis (2004), and Zizioulas (2010).

Peter Bouteneff is an Orthodox theologian who accompanied the work of the Special
Commission and co-wrote the only book published on the work of the Special
Commission, *Beyond the East–West Divide: The World Council of Churches and 'the
Orthodox Problem'* (2001). His opening chapter includes references to Georges
Florovsky´s article from *The Church Quarterly Review* in 1933 entitled, 'Limits of the
Church'. Bouteneff appreciates Florovsky's contribution because:

> there is ample evidence from the Church's Tradition which bear out the moderate approach
> … as elucidated by Florovsky, which would not completely cut off other 'churches' from the
> Church. Indeed, the gift of Florovsky's article is that the canonical boundaries of the Church
> are not coextensive with its charismatic boundaries.   (2001, 39)

Georges Florovsky has been described as 'a churchman, ecumenist, and scholar of the
Eastern Orthodox Church' (Bauman and Klauber 1995, 449). He was born in Russia and
taught philosophy and theology in Europe before embarking on a distinguished academic
career in the USA. His 1933 article was written while he was teaching theology at St
Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris.

His article discusses the validity of the sacraments through the perspective of the difficult
reality of 'a *sect* in the Church' (1933, 117). He tries to explore the themes of unity and
catholicity (the Church) and separation and solitariness (the sect). He also touches upon a
theological theme that will be found in his later theological writings and ecumenical
commitment: 'The East and West can meet and find one another only if they remember
their original kinship and the unity of their common past' (1974, 161).

Florovsky presents a reading of the Church Fathers in which he acknowledges that the
Church has given permissive understanding historically to the recognition of the reality of
rites performed outside the Church. He gives two examples: the Church has received
adherents not through baptism, and it has received clergy in their existing orders (1933,
118). In other words, baptism and ministry, by what Florovsky calls 'sects', have been
recognised by the Church during the Patristic period. (One of the grand projects of the
ecumenical movement, particularly the WCC, has focussed on mutual recognition of
Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry).

However, Florovsky warns against interpreting this simply as a practical pastoral response
by the Church, noting how Jews and Muslims have been treated differently from
Sectarians. Belief in the One God does not necessarily imply a pastoral relationship that
can facilitate being a part of the Church. Instead, Florovsky invites the reader to discern

that: 'Very often the canonical boundary determines the charismatic boundary as well …
But not always. And still more often, not immediately' (1933, 119). This is a key insight
from Florovsky´s reflection. According to Florovsky's ecclesiology, 'sectarian' space in
the Church is situated by these boundaries. Florovsky invites a perception that prioritises
the mystical and eschatological realities of the Church. He recognises that the breaking of
the 'bond of peace' (the separation and solitariness of sectarianism) does not bring to an
end the 'unity of the Spirit' (the unity and catholicity of the Church). His vision is,
however, also sacramental (1933, 126). The Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry of the Church
are central to delimiting the Church, in a way that other theological approaches would
challenge. However, Florovsky's article is a theological contribution that informs
Orthodox ecclesiology.

The main thrust of Florovsky´s ecclesiology argument is a helpful contribution to
understanding how the Orthodox churches can welcome in those who are outside its
canonical limits[26]. The Orthodox Church, in the ecumenical movement, has primarily been
concerned with acting as a canonical Church and resolving canonical questions. It is
represented by hierarchs (or individuals approved by the hierarchs) and it works to present
Orthodox theology and ecclesiology to the ecumenical movement. This perhaps explains
the weight it gives to questions and perspectives related to the Tradition of the Church.
Florovsky's ecclesiology, which is also sacramental (drawing on premises established by
St Augustine and used also in Roman (or Western) theology, according to Florovsky)
offers an understanding that, 'What is valid in the sects is that which is in them *from* the
church, which in their hands remains as the portion and sacred inner core of the church,
through which they are *with* the church' (1933, 126).

This approach to ecclesiology, and the fact that it is still recognised by Orthodox
theologians as a reference text, helps to open the discussion on the question from the Final
Report of the Special Commission: 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox

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[26] The Orthodox churches are sometimes described as Eastern and Oriental. Oriental churches are sometimes
'referred to as non- or anti- or pre-Chalcedonian, Monophysite, Ancient Oriental or Lesser Eastern' (van
Beek, ed. 2006, 60). The Council of Chalcedon in 451 had a Christological affirmation which in Zizioulas's
expression brought about a 'state of schism' (2010, 290). Since 'The Bristol Consultation' in 1967 there has
been 'a remarkable measure of agreement' (2010, 288) between the Eastern and Oriental churches and the
Council of Chalcedon is no longer considered an ecclesiological divisive issue in Orthodoxy. The affirmation
(and reception) of the first three ecumenical councils of the Church – Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381),
Ephesus (431) – has been the reference point in discussions of Church unity for Orthodox churches. Timothy
Ware describes Eastern Orthodox as comprising the four ancient Patriarchates: Constantinople, Alexandria,
Antioch, Jerusalem; nine autocephalous churches: Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Cyprus,
Greece, Poland, Albania; and five autonomous churches: Czech Republic and Slovakia, Sinai, Finland,
Japan, China. The Oriental Orthodox are the Syrian Church of Antioch, the Syrian Church in India, the
Coptic Church in Egypt, the Armenian Church, the Ethiopian Church and the churches of Iraq and Iran
(1997, 3-6).

ecclesiology? How would this space and its limits be described?' (2003, 7). Florovsky offers a distinction between the canonical church and the charismatic church. His distinction is drawn on by other Orthodox theologians in the twentieth century, including John Zizioulas and Emmanuel Clapsis. This will be addressed in another section of this chapter. The distinction between the canonical and charismatic Church is also important for the ecclesiology of theology of liberation, which will be addressed later in this thesis. Jon Sobrino, for example, posits that the Kingdom of God is a potential charismatic boundary in critical dialogue with the canonical church and not necessarily dependent on the canonical church. The presence of God, in the signs of the times or the prophets, is an important charismatic boundary for Sobrino (1990, 143). Such an approach would critique Florovsky's ecclesiology because, while he distinguishes between the canonical and charismatic, he appears to suggest that the charismatic is only recognised by the canonical Church: 'It is impossible to state or discern the true limits of the Church simply by canonical signs or marks. Very often the canonical boundary determines the charismatic boundary as well' (Florovsky 1933, 119). He does not appear to explore how the charismatic Church could potentially redefine the canonical boundary apart from through some reference of relation to the canonical. The charismatic Church is the exception to the canonical boundary for Florovsky. The canonical Church still has primacy in Florovsky's ecclesiology, even although his ecclesiology opens space for others.

Florovsky's argument offers a sacramental space for other churches if individual Christians return to the Orthodox Church. This is a view shared by contemporary Orthodox ecumenical leaders like Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima, '[Orthodox ecclesiology] asks all divided Christians who have tasted the power of God's goodness and grace to unite with it' (in Grass *et al.* 2012, 147). However, it seems doubtful that Florovsky's limits of the Church will open space for other churches as the Church, and indeed, Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima's reflection underlines this when he speaks of 'division among Christians' (2012, 147). There is no acknowledgement of the divided Church in Orthodox ecclesiology. In other words, Florovsky's contribution does not necessarily aid the recognition that ecclesial realities exist, and can remain, outside the limits of the Orthodox Church.

In this respect, it is worth reflecting that the definition of 'other' in the question posed by the Special Commission takes on added significance if the question is framed by the tradition of Orthodox ecclesiology rather than being an interrogative from the other churches. In light of Florovsky's argument, the 'other' is recognised and absorbed into the

Church to the extent that the 'other' is not actually 'other' but retains some 'portion and sacred inner core of the church' (1933, 126). This counters Levinas's theory about the 'otherness of the other'. Levinas postulates that the uniqueness of the 'other' is to remain 'other' (2006, 177). In Florovsky's text, there is an element of recognising not the 'other' but the Church itself in the space beyond the canonical boundary of the Church. In other words, the recognition by the Church of the charismatic boundary depends on the charismatic displaying not 'otherness' but comparability. In looking to the 'other', which Florovsky's charismatic boundary potentially exposes, Orthodox ecclesiology is actually looking for itself. Potentially the charismatic boundary is reduced to the undefined – or as yet unconquered in a missiological sense – canonical boundary.

That said, Florovsky's 1933 text helps to establish three reference points for Orthodox ecclesiology in ecumenical dialogue. Firstly, there are limits to the Church. Secondly, the Church has canonical and charismatic limits and they are not necessarily always one and the same. Thirdly, the charismatic limits of the Church can embrace other churches not as 'other' but to the extent that the 'other' is recognisably Orthodox.

The first reference point is present in reflections by Orthodox theologians throughout the twentieth century. Theologians like Sergius Bulgakov, Timothy Ware, Peter Bouteneff, John Zizioulas and Emmanuel Clapsis have all written, in different ways, on the limits of the Church. Mostly, Orthodox theologians affirm an ecclesiology seeking to safeguard the *Una Sancta*: 'The Church is one' (1988, 87), affirms Sergius Bulgakov. This is an affirmation that demonstrates continuity with the ecclesiology of the Russian theologian Alexis Khomiakov who wrote in a previous century, and whose position Florovsky tried to broaden. Khomiakov was a lay person who wrote many treatises on ecclesiology. He defended Orthodoxy as the true Church and criticised the Roman Catholic Church as a local church which accepted heretical teaching (Alfeyev 2011, 239). This is based on Khomiakov's opinion that 'dogmatic innovations' were introduced to the Roman Catholic Church, including the *filioque* and papal infallibility (Alfeyev 2011, 239). It placed itself outside the unity of the Church because it accepts teachings not authorised by the ecumenical councils (Alfeyev 2011, 240). Equally, he dismissed Protestantism as an exercise in rational faith, which rejects the tradition of the church and clings to arbitrary mysticism (Alfeyev 2011, 240). The limit of the Church is, for Khomiakov, the recognisable boundary of the Orthodox Church: a polemical contribution, but one that nonetheless has influence on Orthodox ecclesiology.

The second reference point, distinguishing between the canonical and charismatic limits of the Church, provides a useful starting point for further consideration in this thesis. By asking the question, 'How does the activity of the Spirit continue beyond the canonical border of the church?' (1933, 127), Florovsky lays the ground that Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement has wrestled with throughout the twentieth century and which Emmanuel Clapsis more recently has called the 'urgent theological question facing the Orthodox' (2000, 114).

Orthodox ecclesiology tacitly admits the importance of the charismatic boundary and the activity of the Holy Spirit within that boundary through its participation in the ecumenical movement. For example, the search for visible unity in the WCC takes place among member churches, not all of whom recognise each other as Church. This principle is set out in the so-called 'Toronto Statement' (1950), a document received by the Central Committee of the WCC in 1950. Article III.3 and III.4 describe the limits to the ecclesiology in use in the WCC: 'The World Council cannot and should not be based on any one particular conception of the Church. It does not prejudge the ecclesiological problem' (1950, III.3) and 'Membership in the World Council of Churches does not imply that a church treats its own conception of the Church as merely relative' (1950, III.4). The 'Toronto Statement' is frequently viewed as a fundamental ecclesiological document in the WCC, and Georges Florovsky was one of the main drafters of the document[27]. There is a recognition by Orthodox ecclesiology (and its commitment to the ecumenical movement) that the activity of the Holy Spirit is with the ecumenical movement. In such terms, it is possible for Orthodox ecclesiology to affirm that one charismatic boundary of the Church is the ecumenical movement.

However, Florovsky's ecclesiology does more. The second reference point that he offers to the ecumenical movement not only addresses itself urgently to the Orthodox, it also potentially invites Orthodox ecclesiology to an engagement with contemporary critical studies approaches, whereby the focus is on traversing boundaries and limits or, as post-colonial theorist Walter Mignolo says, 'border-crossing' (Mignolo 2000). Critical studies is interested in the borderlands, the boundaries and the 'limit' spaces precisely because it asserts that this is where the critiques of current praxis are thought and where new praxis emerges. It reacts to theories that have conspired to 'exclude the non-West, the non-Male, the non-White, and the non-European, which means the privileging of European, White,

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[27] The full document is available at: http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/1950/toronto-statement (accessed September 2014).

Anglo-Saxon Protestant' (Isasi-Díaz and Mendieta 2012, 6). It is a useful lens to consider and through which to reread Orthodox critiques of the ecumenical movement. I will return to this aspect in a later chapter.

The third reference point – the relationship between charism, 'other' and Church – will be explored in subsequent chapters and addressed fully in its own chapter at the end of this thesis. At the moment, it is sufficient to suggest that the charism of the Church appears demonstrably to provide the space in Florovsky's ecclesiology for other churches. But, we might ask further, what kind of space is Florovsky describing? Furthermore, it is worth reflecting on what kind of influence this space has on Orthodox ecclesiology. The charism has been important in theology of liberation, although it is probably used in a slightly different way to that deployed by Florovsky. Leonardo Boff uses it as an alternative organising principle for the Church (1982, 234). He says, 'The charism is a manifestation of the presence of the Spirit in the members of the community' (1982, 240). Florovsky and Boff share a pneumatological premise for the charismatic boundary of the Church However, Boff is more explicit in articulating the consequences of the pneumatological premise for the charismatic boundary in suggesting how the charism orders the Church 'in the members of the community' (1982, 240). The community to which Boff refers is not necessarily the canonical Church. Florovsky, despite his pneumatological premise, is still primarily concerned with its relation to the canonical Church.

Florovsky's 1933 text restricts itself to describing a sacramental space for Christians beyond the canonical limits of the Church, and by distinguishing between canonical and charismatic limits he invites the question: if a Church can fully be Church if it only exists within one of the limits? Can a canonical Church be the Church fully when it does not fully encompass the activity of the Holy Spirit in the charismatic boundary? And can the charismatic Church be the Church fully when it does not necessarily relate to the canonical Church? Even a theologian of liberation like Leonardo Boff is concerned about this, describing a place for what he calls the hierarchical Church within the Church organised on the principle of charism (1982, 242).

While Georges Florovsky´s article explores the limits of the Church and to some extent the limits of the ecumenical agenda of the Orthodox churches, other Orthodox theologians have also tried to clarify Orthodox ecclesiology and its limits. The next section will explore ecclesiologically the space and the limits of the Church through the work of John Zizioulas. Although there is no theological consensus amongst Orthodox theologians on the limits of the Church – and even on the suggestions from Zizioulas – there does appear

to be an awareness of the need to search for a theological solution to understanding the Church. The work of the Special Commission places ecclesiology at the centre of its Final Report, 'Ecclessiological issues embrace all of the matters under the consideration of the Special Commission' (2003, 7). Zizioulas's contribution is offered in this light.

Orthodox Ecclesiology – The Local Church

The Church: towards a common vision, a recent publication by the WCC Commission on Faith and Order, has part of a chapter dedicated to the 'Communion of Local Churches' (2013, 17). The study paper (an ecumenical convergence text) is the fruit of an international theological dialogue involving delegated representatives of the WCC member churches and representatives from the Roman Catholic Church. The text states: 'Each local church contains within it the fullness of what it is to be the Church' (2013, 18), and it goes on to add that, 'The universal church is the communion of all local churches united in faith and worship around the world' (2013, 18). The designation 'local church' has obviously provided a helpful ecclesiology in the ongoing call for visible unity even if, as the text admits, there is a difference of opinion on the meaning of the expression 'local churches'.

In light of Florovsky's contribution to understanding ecclesiology, the following question might be posed to the Faith and Order text: does the fullness of what it is to be the Church in the 'local church' contain a canonical or charismatic definition? It is an important question to pose even although the context of the affirmation from, *The Church: towards a common vision* (2013), is focussed on the usefulness of an ecclesiology of communion in considering the relation between local and universal church. In fact, the definition of the local church as an expression of the universal Church draws on Orthodox ecclesiology. 'The church is both catholic and local, invisible and visible, one and many' (Gennadios of Sassima in Grass *et al.* 2012, 132). This approach of the Faith and Order text, and of Orthodox theologians seeking to express the unity of the Church, is slightly different from Florovsky's approach. Florovsky was more concerned with delimiting the boundaries of the Church in relation to 'the other', namely separated Christians; those people who did not belong to the canonical Church, but through whom the activity of the Holy Spirit had brought into the charismatic boundary of the Church.

It is possible to trace the inclusion of the term 'local church' on the international theological dialogue agenda to the earlier work of the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas. In the closing paragraph to his book, *Being as Communion* (1985), he asks:

> Can a local Church be regarded as truly local and truly Church if it is in a state of confessional division? ... If the notion of the local Church with all the implications we have mentioned here is to be taken into account – if in other words the Church is a true Church only if it is a local event incarnating Christ and manifesting the Kingdom in a particular place – we must be prepared to question the ecclesial status of confessional churches as such, and begin to work on the basis of the local Church.   (1985, 260)

Zizioulas's approach to ecclesiology – challenging the Church to a local ecclesiology – is the beginnings of a different ecclesiological approach from that proposed by Georges Florovsky. In addition, it directly challenges Protestant, or ecumenical, ecclesiologies that begin with confessional or denominational identities of the Church. Important to uncovering the difference in approach between Florovsky and Zizioulas is to understand that the question posed by Zizioulas, in the quote in the previous paragraph, seeks to approach the still-unresolved framework of canonical and charismatic boundaries of the Church. Zizioulas tries to account for the one and the many (or unity in diversity) in his book, while Florovsky focusses rather on finding ways to reconcile the charismatic with the already-existing canonical. An ecclesiology of the local Church that Zizioulas proposes potentially recognises the existence of many churches in a way that Florovsky's Orthodox ecclesiology is unable to. Furthermore, implicit in Zizioulas is a suggestion that the canonical Church should be at the service of the charismatic Church. If the local Church is to be understood in its catholicity, Zizioulas suggests that it needs to identify what is 'local' and what is 'Church' (1985, 253). In order not to reduce the 'local' to a culture, Zizioulas begins with the action of God through Christ. He says: 'The Church is local when the saving event of Christ takes root in a particular local situation with all its natural, social, cultural and other considerations which make up the life and thought of the people living in that place' (1985, 254). The charismatic boundary – in Zizioulas's case, the action of God – turns to a Christological formulation rather than the pneumatological formulation used by Florovsky.

If Florovsky's ecclesiology invited the Church to admit the possibility of the Church in 'the other', inviting the canonical border to be transgressed by the charismatic, Zizioulas's ecclesiology reminds the Church that its local catholicity is served by the canonical and charismatic Church – what he describes as the 'structure and event' (1985). The canonical structure of the Church ought to facilitate the catholicity which already is present in local Churches. It is the Church event, either Christological or pneumatological depending on the Orthodox emphasis, which enables a local Church fully to be the Church. This is why Zizioulas insists that in the context of division, and particularly division expressed by

confessional or denominational terms, local churches are susceptible to borrowing from existing cultures and 'not a *locality* which critically embraces all cultures' (1985, 260). In other words, according to Zizioulas, the limit of the Church in this case, rather than ecclesiological, is susceptible to influence by the sociological. The divisions may be cultural or particular because there is no universal culture in the way that the Church can be universal.

Of course, Zizioulas as an Orthodox theologian does not consider the Orthodox Church to be a confessional Church. His critique, which asks if a confessional Church is per se a Church (1985, 260), is echoed in the question in the Final Report of the Special Commission (already quoted at the beginning of this chapter): 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' (2003, 8). Zizioulas is asking if confessional churches, which he views as confessions or denominations borrowing from already-existing cultures – the churches of the Reformation, or Pentecostal churches, for example – can be the local Church. This is not possible for Zizioulas, or for Orthodox ecclesiology because it founds the church on history, or as only an institution, and it does not express the fullness of the eschatology of the Church (1985, 22). A local Church which absorbs only one culture is certainly local, but it is not necessarily Church: it requires the activity of God. Zizioulas, therefore, focusses on the Eucharist as the realised eschatology of the local Church. The Church event becomes 'the eschatological community of Christ' (1985, 254) and presents 'an image of the Kingdom'.

The Church as event calls the Church as structure into being as a local Church. Zizioulas's ecclesiology is not dissimilar here from some aspects of the theology of liberation. Leonardo Boff calls for the Church as event to take precedence over the Church as hierarchy (2008, 95). The hierarchy is the institutional ordering of the church, which interestingly for Boff includes its sacraments (2008, 95). The event is the faith and *koinonia* of people meeting and communioning with the Holy Spirit (2008, 95). It is the Holy Spirit and the 'people of God' who take precedence over the hierarchy, although as Boff reminds his readers, the Church is simultaneously event and institution (2008, 94). Boff does not draw the distinction that Zizioulas does between the institution and the eschatology of the Church, between a limiting of the eschatology of the Church through the institution and a realised local Church eschatology in the event.

Jon Sobrino, another theologian of liberation, is bolder in asserting that God's action is greater than the Church as event: 'God is greater than the church in its totality, and greater than each of its members or echelons. God's will may become present in the signs of the

times, or through prophets, and therefore outside the church or inside it – and inside it, anywhere at all' (1990, 143). Sobrino firmly presents the event, in this case God's event, as potentially outside the church as event and he revolutionises the ecclesiological implications of both Boff's and Zizioulas's church as event.

Zizioulas's reflection also draws attention to the fact that the Church local is set in an already-existing culture. A church need not be confessional to maintain a dialogue with existing cultures, in fact, if Sobrino is correct, a local Church absorbing a local culture may actually be absorbing God's action from outside the Church. Zizioulas has returned to this complex theme for Orthodox ecclesiology in a recent publication, *The One and the Many* (2010), in a chapter that considers 'The Self-understanding of the Orthodox and Their Participation in the Ecumenical Movement'.

Zizioulas explains that the Orthodox Church believes that it is the *Una Sancta*. However, he goes on to say: 'The *Una Sancta* transmitted in and through the Church is not a possession of the Orthodox. It is a reality judging us all' (2010, 330). This distinction between the Church and *Una Sancta*, whereby the *Una Sancta* judges the Church, is an Orthodox ecclesiological principle that facilitates discerning the twofold dimensions of the ecclesiological and the sociological in the ecclesiological. It raises the possibility that the Church local, and not only what Zizioulas calls confessional churches, absorb already-existing cultures. Moreover, according to Orthodox theology, there is no formal doctrinal definition of the Church that can be found in the Church Fathers or Ecumenical Councils (Florovsky 1972, 57). In such a tradition, ecclesiology is only ever suggestive; it can but try to give an account of the Church.

Zizioulas sets out his account of the local Church in, *Being and Communion* (1985). Drawing on fragments of liturgical information, Zizioulas suggests that, 'The "whole Church" dwelling in a certain city' would 'come together' mainly on a Sunday to 'break bread' (1985, 150). Zizioulas is drawing on New Testament texts as he sets out his account of the local Church, particularly the First Letter to the Corinthians in chapters 1 and 11. This suggestion, while reflecting biblical and liturgical evidence, locates the local Church in time and space. It is a form of association nascent in the Roman Empire, which in turn draws on the model of the Greek city-state. The unity of Christians in the city – which includes surrounding countryside – is not exclusively an ecclesiological principle, but is related to the social organisation of human associations in the Greek and Roman worlds. It is the 'indispensable geographical principle' for the local Church (1985, 256).

John Meyendorff is an Orthodox theologian who sets out most clearly this Church–culture relationship in his book, *Catholicity and the Church* (1983). Meyendorff establishes a strict territorial space for the Church through the affirmation: 'One Bishop in One City' (1983, 111). It is a single Church in a single territorial unit, which in Meyendorff's case is the Greek city-state. The relationship between ecclesial administration and city administration will be addressed in chapter two, however, it is worth introducing an observation from Aristotle at this point.

Aristotle begins his book, *Politics* (1998), observing that, 'first, every city [*polis*] is a species of association, and, secondly, that all associations come into being for the sake of some good' (1998, 7). The Church, which comes together to break bread, is an association [*ekklesia*]. The Church is an ecclesial association, but not all ecclesial associations are the Church. The debates in Latin America regarding the CEBs – church or ecclesial community –, and the question in the Final Report of the Special Commission, addressed to Orthodox churches, 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' (2003, 7) are two examples. These two examples might be placed alongside another: the gatherings of citizens in the ancient city-states – ecclesial associations, but not the Church. The word ecclesia is adopted by the early Christian community from the Greek language, although, as Wayne Meeks notes, while there is a resemblance, the church and ecclesia do not quite fit into each other (1983, 74). An ecclesia is an assembly of people, most commonly associated with voting free citizens (Meeks 1983, 79). In light of Aristotle's observation of the life of the *polis*, an ecclesial association could be a congregation of people for religious or political or cultural or economic ends. It is a term that is used by early Christians to define both belonging and boundaries, according to Meeks (1983, 84). It assimilates its Greco-Roman environment, but is not coextensive with the ecclesia as used by that political-cultural world.

Frequently, theologians speaking about ecclesial communities use the term to distinguish them from the Church. For example, Sergius Bulgakov suggests: 'all ecclesiastical communities … have "a grain" of Orthodoxy' (1988, 188). Mary Tanner, writing in response to the Final Report of the Special Commission, alights on this distinction too: 'are [the Orthodox] able to recognise some form of "ecclesial reality", some form of ecclesial significance, some elements of church in other churches' (2005, 117). Zizioulas's suggestion points towards the possibility that the form of association of the local Church is an ecclesial reality. It is then necessary to discern if the ecclesial reality is judged to be Church by the *Una Sancta* – an altogether more difficult proposition.

In addition to influencing ecumenical theological dialogues on ecclesiology, Zizioulas's approach to ecclesiology attends to the question present in the Final Report of the Special Commission, echoed by Mary Tanner's reflections: 'How would this space [for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology] and its limits be described?' (2003, 8). Like Florovsky before him, Zizioulas is able to suggest some limits to the Church. However, he does this in a very different way from Florovsky. Firstly, according to Zizioulas, the local Church is in some sense the limit to the Church: 'it follows inevitably that a local Church, in order not just to be local but also Church, must be in communion with other local Churches in the world' (1985, 257). However, the local Church must be people-centred. It cannot be a structure: 'A Church must incarnate people, not ideas or beliefs' (1985, 260). In other Orthodox ecclesiologies, which major on Christology or pneumatology to explain the Church, this crucial people-centred vision is lacking: a Church is people participating in God's action as a cursory reading of Florovsky's ecclesiology describes.

Secondly, it must be recognised that there is no theological consensus on the definition of 'local church'. Applying the principle of *Una Sancta* is important for Orthodox ecclesiology, but so too is the recognition that the local Church relates to an already-existing culture. Furthermore, the application of *Una Sancta* differs in Khomiakov and Zizioulas, for example. The local Church is both an ecclesial community and a sociological reality. There is some element of the non-ecclesial in the one Church as event. The theology of liberation can help to understand this more fully, and I will explore this in a later section in this chapter.

Thirdly, it is possible that the expression of the 'local church' provides the space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology. However, it would require admission of an ecclesial administration which is not based on the models of the Greek city-state. In addition, it would encourage Orthodox theologians to ask about the ecclesial nature of gatherings (*ekklesias*) that are not expressly religious, further exploring the interconnections between church and culture, which Zizioulas dismissed as a manifestation of confessional or denominational Christianity because it does not fully express the eschatology of the Church. This perspective is challenged by the ecclesiology developed by theologians of liberation, like Boff and Sobrino, who demonstrate that the 'local church' as event has a particular relation to culture. Boff describes such an ecclesiology as a 'popular church' (2008, 229), one in which the 'local church' (understood to be a basic Christian community) questions a 'hierarchical, transnationalised, rigid institution' (2008, 228). It admits an alternative form of ecclesial administration and gives space to reflections on the

ecclesial nature of gatherings that are not expressly religious. Sobrino develops this by suggesting that the 'local church' will display intra-ecclesial conflict, reflecting the contesting localities (1982, 205). It is this admission which leads Sobrino to formulate the eschatology of the Church in the following terms: 'the Church is not the kingdom of God' (1982, 205), and the question therefore becomes one of developing a positive relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God.

Ecclesiology – East and West

A major part of the ongoing ecclesiological debate has centred round the 'East–West divide'. Anna Marie Aagaard and Peter Bouteneff consider it necessary to 'get beyond the great divide of Christian East and West' (2001, 1). Partly, the term 'East–West divide' is used as shorthand for the relationship between Orthodox and non-Orthodox member churches of the WCC. In this case, East–West is an ecclesial shorthand and, at times, it is used to designate a difference in theological approach. Timothy Ware notes:

> Christians in the west, both Roman and Reformed, generally start by asking the same questions, although may disagree about the answers. In Orthodoxy, however, it is not merely the answers that are different – the questions themselves are not the same as in the West. (1997, 1)

Sometimes, theologians even insist that the difference is cultural: 'The cultural alienation between east and west was caused to a considerable degree by the fact that Greek was spoken in the eastern Roman empire while Latin was used in the West' (Alfeyev 2011, 108).

Such approaches by theologians can give rise to understanding that there is an Eastern and a Western Church. This draws ecclesiological debates into analysis of a historical dialectic of division and reconciliation traced through the rise and fall of empires in the Middle East and on into Europe. Peter Bouteneff articulates this history in the following way:

> The first great split could be seen in the 5th century, separating Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches. That division plagues us to this day. There follows the division, which in fact is not easy to date precisely, between Christian East and West. Subsequently, the Reformation and intra-Western Christian division appears. And the churches descending from the Reformation continued (and continue) to divide and multiply. Add to this saga of division the Christian bodies which generated outside of any perceived continuity with an

existing church, seeking an unmediated connection with (or 'restoration' of) the spirit of the first Christians and the scripture.   (2001, 15)[28]

For the purposes of this chapter it is possible to pose the following questions to an ecclesiology that designates an East–West divide: does the frontier between east and west designate a boundary or limit of the Church, and can ecclesiology describe this limit? Does the local Church – Zizioulas's proposal as an ecclesiological category – have a geographical definition and how is this interpreted theologically and sociologically?

Before responding to these two ecclesiological questions, it is important to recognise that separating the world into Eastern and Western is not exclusive to theology. Edward Said's book, *Orientalism*, first published in 1978, is a ground breaking attempt to understand the Western approach to the east: 'The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences' (2003, 1). Although it is 'the Other' for European Western experience, it has had a particular influence on European culture, history and language, according to Said.

In addition to being 'a European invention', Said goes on to suggest that it is also an 'imagined geography' instigated by academic studies that were approved by a decision of the Church Council of Vienne in 1312 (2003, 49). In other words, the Church in Europe invented the Orient through geographical demarcation of a civilizational 'Other'. The early focus was on Semitic languages, Islam and Sinology (2003, 51) and the influence of travelling, trading and crusading captured: 'the journey, the history, the fable, the stereotype, the polemical confrontation. These are the lenses through which the Orient is experienced, and they shape the language, perception and form of encounter between the East and the West' (2003, 58). Interestingly, Said suggests that these lenses produce a unity that admits to seeing different versions of previously known things: 'it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things' (2003, 59).

At root Said's analysis draws attention to the colonising enterprise of Europe. Moreover, Sadik Jalal Al-'Azm notes, 'Orientalism's persistent belief that there exists a radical ontological difference between the natures of the Orient and Occident' (cited in Achcar 2013, 42). This ontological difference between the Orient and Occident is variously

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[28] The Council of Chalcedon in 451 used a Christological affirmation which fragmented the Church, often described as Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy. Since 'The Bristol Consultation' in 1967 there has been 'a remarkable measure of agreement' (Zizioulas 2010, 288) between the Eastern and Oriental churches and the Council of Chalcedon is no longer considered an ecclesiologically divisive issue in Orthodoxy.

expressed by Orthodox theologians in their theology and ecclesiology in the WCC. Frequently, Orthodox theologians or church leaders locate the influence of the European Enlightenment as a dividing moment in theology for East and West. More recent Orthodox reflections have begun to address the role of the Enlightenment in Orthodoxy, seeing it as one tool among many that Orthodox theology is able to use (Cunningham and Theokritoff 2008, 10). Orientalism has, however, had an influence on theology, and the work of the Special Commission. The East–West divide, sometimes interpreted as a relic of the Cold War, or even having its roots in the 1054 separation between Orthodox east and Latin West and culminating with the 1204 crusade and the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders, is actually neither an interpretation of Cold war politics, nor of ecclesiastical history. The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches' engagement with the ecumenical movement is a European invention, which includes an imagined geography from which the Church has been unable to escape. I will explore this further in chapter four.

Said's contribution, however, points to the need for an ecclesiology that is neither Eastern nor Western. It points to the need for an ecclesiology that is not geographically imagined, but that is geographically incarnated in people in localities. The suggestion from John Zizioulas to develop an ecclesiology of the local Church is appealing precisely because it critiques the Orientalising tendency in the work of the Special Commission. The inherent Orientalism in the Final Report of the Special Commission is present in the central questions raised at the beginning of this chapter: 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' (2003, 8); and, 'How does [a church of the Reformation] understand, maintain and express belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church?' (2003, 8). The questions underline an invented difference, rooted in the unspoken East–West divide: who and what is the Church? In addition, the language of the questions betrays that the framework is influenced by Orientalism; that the dominant partner in the dialogue is the Western European Church. Orthodox ecclesiology is taken seriously by the ecumenical movement only to the extent that it is able to express itself in categories intelligible to existing European ecclesiology. Gennadios of Sassima's reflections capture the implications of this Orientalism for the ecumenical movement: 'One of the greatest ecumenical difficulties facing the Orthodox Church is that its thought forms and terms of reference are different from those of the West' (in Grass *et al.* 2012, 133). In doing this, such an ecclesiology is vulnerable to the charge that it emphasises a 'radical ontological difference' in the guise of canonical structure. In asking two sides – the Orthodox and the 'others' – about 'space' for other churches and relationships to the catholicity of the church, the Special Commission reduces ecclesiology to the impasse of a resolution of

canonical boundaries. Creative Orthodox theologians like Florovsky and Zizioulas resist this approach, and open new possibilities for ecclesiology.

A local Church, for example, is neither Eastern nor Western: it is local. Zizioulas's ecclesiology can be understood as an Orthodox ecclesiology which is neither Eastern nor Western and yet is able, at the same time, to dialogue with these limits to 'deconstruct' ecumenical ecclesiological presuppositions which focus excessively on the canonical Church to the detriment of the charismatic Church. The limit to the Church that the local Church offers can be interpreted in a positive way. A local Church, while having a location or context, is not understood necessarily only ecclesiologically by its geographical space. The local Church is fruit of a locality and event, of people struggling and meeting, and of God's action. This aspect, which also brings into the discussion the catholicity of the Church, demonstrates that the space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology (as in other ecclesiologies) is delimited by the local nature of the Church, not its geopolitical structures.

There is, of course, no comprehensive consensus on what is meant by 'local church', but there is opportunity for clarifying the potential of this term in ecclesiology. And the fact that aspects of the local Church, as offered by Zizioulas, have now found their way into ecumenical convergence texts demonstrates that it has some wider resonance in ecclesiology and the ecumenical movement. For example, is 'local church' a congregation, a diocese, a city, or a region? Zizioulas explores the potential in each designation, recognising that the Church must always assemble in some place (1985, 248). Furthermore, he recognises – although dismisses – that designating the place can give rise to 'a definition of local Church which is non-geographic … a sociological concept of locality' (1985, 249).

The Final Report of the Special Commission is influenced by Zizioulas's need for a geographical definition of the Church. However, although probably not his intention, his reflection at least raises the possibility that Orthodox ecclesiology can articulate the Church and local churches without recourse to limits, or borders, in terms of geography or territoriality. This would enable the dialogue emerging from the Special Commission to consider other ecclesiologies, and to face, and assimilate, critiques arising from critical theories, such as those from Edward Said.

Ecclesiology and the Theology of Liberation

The theology of liberation begins from a place that is not territorial. Marcella Althaus-Reid anticipates that theology has a basic geopolitical need (2004, 107). It needs to be present in the material reality and be aware of what specific boundaries it is crossing, and how the power relationships structure that boundary crossing. This is a theology of liberation that is more than territorially delimited. It might be the black church acting against apartheid (2004, 109), or it might be the theological reflection on the presence of God's Spirit in everyday life. In other words, it is not 'Latin American' as a regional place, for example, that denotes a specific kind of theology.[29] In the words of Gustavo Gutiérrez, it is a theological recognition that 'Christian involvement in the praxis of liberation constitutes the major fact of present-day life of the Christian community' (1980, 2). The geopolitical is people and the commitment to the praxis of liberation. This is not restricted to the territorial, but it is geopolitical and poses questions to the formation of territorial churches, and territorial theologies.

Althaus-Reid also has an interesting perspective on geography: 'we could reflect on an ecclesiology made in theological defiance, considering that the body of Christ (believers) is God's geography' (2004, 107). For Althaus-Reid, the Church, theology and the existing political system are dialogue partners in producing an ecclesiology of defiance (2004, 107). An ecclesiology of defiance recognises the spirit of conceptual changes that challenge the society and the church, and considers the body of believers (the Church) incarnating this spirit in everyday life. It invites the Church to be people-centred and theology to be the praxis of the people (2004, 108): the theology of liberation begins from the people. Georges Florovsky, although not a theologian of liberation, reminds us that, 'Christianity from the very beginning existed as a corporate reality, as a community … Christianity means common life' (1972, 59). Zizioulas's observation that a Church is people resonates with Althaus-Reid's description, although he defines people differently to the theology of liberation, restricting use of the word 'people' to those who are canonically recognised by the Church.

In the early days of the theology of liberation, before it was accommodated to the emerging theological discourses from Vatican II, it was interested in an ecclesiology of people. At the El Escorial meetings (1969–1972), Juan Luis Segundo presented a paper on

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[29] Latin America is 'another European invention , if we were to follow the argument of Walter Mignolo who describes it as, 'a[n imperial allocation] process of making and unmaking the Americas' (2000, 127).

ecclesiology.[30] He suggested that the Church was used by elites to control the masses in the creation of Latin America and that, equally, a theology that liberates requires a conscious minority to de-ideologise theology and ecclesiology (cited in Bolado *et al.* 1977, 180). Segundo draws on Freire's *consientização* and invites theology to consider the use of the social sciences and philosophy to delegitimise the uncritical (and unconscious) faith as lived by the masses (cited in Bolado *et al*. 1977, 180). What is of interest to this chapter, in Segundo's contribution to El Escorial, is that his ecclesiology is people centred, it is not church centred. The local Church, to use Zizioulas's term, is interpreted by Segundo as a sociological interplay between elites and masses. This is why it is important not to dismiss, as Zizioulas does, the non-geographic concept of local. The theology of liberation invites consideration of a local Church which is not necessarily located in a homogenous geographic locality (the city-state of Zizioulas, for example), nor even in a geographic space ('the poor' or 'the masses', described sociologically by the theology of liberation, for example). The local, rather, is textured. The canonical Church – or what the theology of liberation frequently interprets as the Church hierarchical – and the charismatic Church – what the theology of liberation denotes as the event of people gathering – are not two ideal types whose boundaries help to define each other. Within the canonical and the charismatic there is the sociological contest between elites and masses as identified by Segundo. In the local Church, the locality might not be geographical in its definition as in the case of the theology of liberation, which deploys a particular concept of the people to define the local Church. In its English usage, the word 'people', which in Spanish is *pueblo* and in Portuguese is *povo*, does not convey the social struggle and social structuring on which the theology of liberation builds to bring forth a perception of the Church as the 'people of God'.

The theology of liberation, in using non-geographic and sociological concepts, uncovers an ecclesiological principle, which could be stated as the Church beyond the Church: 'The most exciting and rewarding experience of those Christians who have joined the struggle of the poor and the oppressed is that within that context they found new ecclesial communities' (Santa Ana 1979, xxiv). Santa Ana's reflection, consistent with other theologians of liberation, interests us because it suggests the need for an ecclesiology to engage with wider social movements (assemblies of people) and to discover what is ecclesial in peoples' movements. Christians 'join in the struggle of the poor and oppressed'

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[30] His paper wrestles with the role of the Church and theology at the hands of Latin American elites, and searches for ways to de-ideologise Christianity for the masses. He was to explore this further in his 1975 book, *The Liberation of Theology* published in English in 1976.

(1979, xxiv) and find new ecclesial communities. Santa Ana cites the struggles against dictatorship in Chile (1979, 181) as an example of this ecclesiology of peoples' movements. A more contemporary example might include Marcella Althaus-Reid's suggestion that ecclesiology needs to account for the transient encounters at church doors and salsa clubs, whereby a person goes to the bar with her rosary beads or to church with the love letter from an ecclesiastically prohibited lover. What is ecclesial in these queer readings and experiences of Christianity? (2003, 2). This is why Santa Ana states that within the communities of poor and oppressed peoples already-existing ecclesiologies can be found, even if they have not been recognised by ecclesiology as the Church. It is a new charismatic boundary for ecclesiology, and one which does not appear in Orthodox ecclesiologies.

In addition to locating the ecclesial beyond the Church, something which Florovsky's ecclesiology already implies, and beyond territory (a direct challenge to Orthodox ecclesiology), the local Church of the theology of liberation locates the charism of ecclesiology precisely at the limits of the Church and in God's Kingdom. Florovsky's question, 'How does the activity of the Spirit continue beyond the canonical border of the church?' (1933, 127) raises an important reflection for ecclesiology, namely its relationship to pneumatology. The theology of liberation challenges ecclesiology to shift from beginning with structure, hierarchy and institution (and the implied contours of scripture, tradition and authority) to a new ecclesiology of border-crossing, which introduces more fluid and transparent limits. José Comblin[31] explains this ecclesiology of the theology of liberation in relation to the theological work of *Lumen gentium* from Vatican II: 'By saying that the people of God subsist (or are present) in the Catholic Church, the text does not exclude that the people of God could also subsist in some way in other places – for example in other Christian communities, or even, in other religions'[32] (2002, 34).

Comblin's reflection on the 'people of God' was published in 2002 and can be understood to develop Roman Catholic theology post-Vatican II with particular reference to LatinAmerican interpretations and experiments. His book is a comprehensive review of the use of the term from the Vatican II onwards. He suggests ways that the term has fallen out of use and argues for the church hierarchs to return to this lost contribution from the

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[31] José Comblin was a Belgian theologian who lived and worked in Latin America for over 50 years. He was a theological advisor to Dom Helder Câmara and a leading theologian of liberation. He worked as a priest and theologian in the northeast of Brazil, before being exiled to Chile by the Brazilian military dictatorship. On his return to Brazil, he continued to support CEBs and the rural agricultural workers throughout Brazil.
[32] Author's translation.

Vatican II in order to instigate change in the ecclesiology of Church which impacts the pastoral vocation of the Church. The mission on Faith and Order in its recent publication picks up a theological reflection on the 'people of God' in its description of the Church., *The Church: towards a common vision* (2013), includes a reference to 'people of God' in its ecclesiology (2013, 11).

Comblin's reflection on the term 'people of God' and the reflection of the Commission on Faith and Order are quite distinct and follow different pathways: Comblin chooses the work of Vatican II as an anchor for his book; the Commission on Faith and Order follows the biblical premises of the term. However, Comblin reflects that the term 'people of God' opens a door for ecumenism – not restricted only to Christians for Comblin, as is the case also with so many Latin American theological contemporaries – and helps to develop an ecclesiological self-understanding that challenges the Church. He is not alone in his thinking. Other Latin American theologians have dwelt on the ecclesiology of the 'people of God' and, like Julio de Santa Ana (formerly of the WCC), concluded that the poor challenge the church: 'Will the Church identify with this community of the poor … ?' (1979, 98). In other words, the theology of liberation challenges Orthodox theologians to transgress the Kantian – and therefore, curiously, Western philosophical framework – limits of space and time to explore other categories of boundaries or limits in ecclesiology.

The ecclesiological task, in light of these suggestions, is, how does the Church embrace and transgress its limits? The Final Report of the Special Commission, which chooses to focus on belonging to the fellowship of churches – both relating to each other and to the WCC – does not fully acknowledge this wider ecclesiological context. The ecclesiological task is not a theological question of churches relating to each other as churches in an organisation that has no ecclesial status, which is what the Special Commission presents. Rather, the underlying task is to address the understanding of ecclesiology set in a wider geopolitical context and to articulate the local Church in 'God's geography', to borrow Marcella Althaus-Reid's felicitous phrase.

Juan Luis Segundo provokes the Church to understand that,

> the much promoted 'unity of Christians', with its pastoral consequences, constitutes a clearly ideological element. The ideal of unity for liberation has been transformed into a unity to cover-up conflicts, to minimise them in the face of others declared more important, and to serve, in a hidden way, the maintenance of the status quo.   (1977, 186)

The Final Report leaves itself open to interpretations that ecumenical dialogue is used by churches to support their own already-existing limits to ecclesiology. A liberating ecclesiology and a liberating ecumenism promote the unity of the Church in the service of liberating praxis.

The Limits of the Church – Where is the Ecclesial?

Florovsky and Zizioulas reflect deeply on territorial limits of the Church while Althaus-Reid introduces reflection on non-territorial limits of the Church. But there is inevitably still a limit to be acknowledged for ecclesiology, which is influenced by St Cyprian's formulation: *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (Ware 1997, 247). Jon Sobrino[33] has developed an ecclesiology from the perspective of the theology of liberation, which seeks to subvert this classical formulation. Sobrino's theology, along with other theologians of liberation, can be understood as 'a radical search for the setting in which to find God' (2008, 77). It is a search for the action of God, which may be inside or outside the boundaries of the Church. Sobrino's context is both the Church of El Salvador and the poor of El Salvador. He affirms an ecclesiological principle to embrace the two: *Extra pauperes nulla salus* (2008, 75).

According to theologians of liberation, the setting for salvation – the classical concern of St Cyprian's affirmation about the Church - is among the poor. Leonardo Boff's classic study, *Church: Charism and Power* (originally published in 1981), highlights the ecclesiological significance of the poor as more than a sociological fact: 'Being poor and weak is not only a sociological fact, in the eyes of the faith it constitutes a theological moment; the poor, evangelically, signifies an epiphany of the Lord' (1982, 185). Sobrino also embraces this understanding of the poor to be the Church. It is a new limit for ecclesiology, and Sobrino acknowledges as much when he says: '[the] formula does not appear in either traditional or progressive theology, or even as a formula in liberation theology, although it is in accord with it' (2008, 75). The local Church, to borrow Zizioulas's formulation, is defined by Sobrino as 'the poor'. Sobrino does not explore if the poor belong to the canonical Church (through baptism, for example) or whether the poor are the charismatic boundary of the Church. For Sobrino, and many other theologians of liberation, this distinction has always been less important because Latin America has been interpreted as both Christian and poor simultaneously. However, by associating the

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[33] Jon Sobrino is a Jesuit, and a leading theologian of liberation living and working in El Salvador. In 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a Notification regarding some of his theological publications.

Church with the poor, Sobrino gives texture to Zizioulas's local Church and potentially critiques the local Church which does not manifest God's action through the poor.

A lot of literature has been produced on the poor in the theology of liberation. Gustavo Gutiérrez, during the defence of his doctoral thesis recorded in the book, *A Verdade vos Libertará* (2000), defends the presence of the poor simply because the poor are oppressed and Christian in the only continent in the world to have a Christian majority (2000, 23). In other words, the poor are an ecclesiological criterion because they are inside the Church and express the contradiction between being Christian and being oppressed. While many theologians have distanced themselves from Gutierrez's economic understanding of the poor as more complex approaches to the poor have been introduced, through the writing of Althaus-Reid and Petrella, for example, the basic affirmation about the presence of the poor in the Church has not shifted.

Even the migration of the term 'poor' towards 'oppressed' or 'victim', or to include gendering or ethnicity does not remove this underlying affirmation. There has undoubtedly been a move away from an exclusively class-based approach, such as that favoured by Gutiérrez, towards what Otto Maduro calls for the theology of liberation to recognise as, 'the profound plurality and complexity of oppressed peoples, as well as the enormous contrasts and conflicts present in families, communities, movements, organisations, initiatives and action by oppressed peoples' (2006, 397). This recognition has enabled the theology of liberation to consider ecclesiologies of location that are not necessarily territorial, that which John Zizioulas calls one of the two ecclesiological principles of the 'local Church' (1985, 247). It also helps the theology of liberation to critique any ecclesiology that purports to express the catholicity of the Church in a locality through Segundo's observation of contested elite and minority Christianity.

While Sobrino's formulation is provocative because it challenges the language of St Cyprian's classical definition that understands the church to be the mediator (the instrument and sign) of salvation and instead gives priority to the *pauperes* as the mediating salvific category, it draws deeply on an enduring theology of liberation ecclesiology. In 1987, the theologians Jorge Pixley[34] and Clodovis Boff[35] wrote a book entitled, *The Option for the Poor*. One of the chapters is dedicated to 'The Church of the

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[34] Jorge Pixley was born in the USA, but worked in Central America as a Baptist missionary. He was a professor of Biblical Studies at a number of Central American Seminaries and was influential in developing the hermeneutic used by base communities in Latin America.

[35] Clodovis Boff (brother to Leonardo) is a Brazilian theologian and member of the Servite Order who divides his time between teaching in Rio de Janeiro and working with Christian communities in the Amazon.

Poor'. Alongside other ideas in their chapter is the suggestion that, 'it is only a Church of the Poor that can really be a "catholic" Church' (1987, 161). The catholicity which the Church of the Poor introduces to ecclesiology is a local catholicity; a catholicity that does not express itself as a territorial location, but rather a soteriological location. The Church is present in God's action where the poor are gathered and committed to liberation (Boff and Pixley 1987, 147) This ecclesiological option for the poor is a theme that anchors much theology of liberation.

In other words, the sociological poor can be a limit to the theological community called 'the Church'. This is what both Boff and Sobrino build on. The church as event (*acontecimento*) (1982, 198) challenges ecclesiology to redefine the limits of the church. It shunts ecclesiology away from an Orthodox ecclesiology that looks to find sacramental and territorial space for others 'inside' the true Church. Instead, it encourages ecclesiology to seek the Church in geopolitics, thereby deepening the expression of plenitude or fullness. In the simple case of the 'church of the poor', this means crossing and entering into the boundaries or limits of the people of God and asking if the Church is present in God's action.

Julio de Santa Ana does some of this work in his book, *Towards a Church of the Poor* (1979). He begins his chapter on the challenge to the Church from the poor by using an ecclesiology that would be familiar to theologians such as Florovsky or Clapsis. Santa Ana is concerned to show that the poor are situated both inside the Church and outside the Church: '[The poor person] can be found both in as well as outside the Church' (1979, 98). However, he goes on to argue that the poor is an ecclesiological criterion: 'The Church which is not the Church of the poor puts in serious jeopardy its churchly character. Therefore, this becomes an ecclesiological criterion' (1979, 100). Santa Ana's distinction that the poor can be found both inside and outside the Church is possible because he continues to use other criteria, which exclude poverty, for ecclesiology. This differs from Sobrino, who is the most radical of the theologians of liberation to associate de facto the poor as the Church, whether they occupy or not the canonical or charismatic boundaries of the Church.

Summary

Orthodox ecclesiology describes a Church that can be both charismatic and local. The ecumenical movement has preferred to draw Orthodox ecclesiology into canonical debates,

marking the limits of the Church through geographical and hierarchical definitions of the Church.

The observations from Florovsky and Zizioulas establish points of dialogue with the theologians of liberation, most notably Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino. The work of Julio Santa Ana should not be ignored in this context, too. The theology of liberation proposes a more radical charismatic option for ecclesiology through the critique offered by the 'Church of the Poor', whereby the poor are a theological as well as a sociological category.

The points of dialogue are uneasy and will be explored more fully in the second chapter on ecclesiology towards the end of this thesis. However, at this stage the dialogue with Orthodox ecclesiology and the ecclesiology of the theology of liberation helps to recover absent epistemologies from ongoing ecumenical dialogues by re-reading orthodoxies, both ecumenical and ecclesiological, from a liberationist paradigm, and sets ecclesiology within the wider framework of contributions from critical theory.

Chapter 2 develops this process of recovery of absent epistemologies from ongoing ecumenical dialogues. It introduces a discussion of another part of the conclusion of the Final Report – social and ethical issues. Ecclesiology is fundamental to the developing perspectives (and tensions) around social and ethical issues in the WCC. It is by embracing Orthodox insights, particularly 'the symphony', that the ecumenical movement can move beyond hegemonic colonial projects and find a liberating praxis.

Chapter 2 – Social and Ethical Issues

Introduction

This chapter address the second part of the Final Report, following the ecclesiological introduction. It discusses the approaches to social and ethical issues by the churches through an introduction to Orthodox 'political theology' alighting on the writings of a diverse group of theologians. The contributions of Pantelis Kalaitzidis and Nikolas K. Gvosdev are assessed more specifically as their Orthodox thinking has implications for how churches could face social and ethical issues. At first sight the principle of conciliarity (or symphony) which pervades Orthodox approaches to social and ethical issues appears different from the Enlightenment settlement in Western and Protestant theology – and from the approach taken in the theology of liberation. It is suggested that at a deeper level the Christian inspiration in both models is similar: that is to say that conciliarity and Enlightenment political-religious philosophies are motivated by designs to Christianise society. It therefore becomes important for the ecumenical movement to understand this motivating theological basis as common to the churches social and ethical decision-making, even if it appears operationally different within the life of the churches and in different political systems.

Summary of the Special Commission

The Section of the Final Report on social and ethical issues reflects on some of the tensions within the ecumenical movement arising from different theological approaches by the churches to social and ethical issues. It can also appear, at first view, to be a reflection which is restricted to the statement of institutional policy. It appears to reaffirm earlier policy positions established by the WCC, particularly the 'Toronto Statement' and the 'Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches' (1997), stating that: 'The Council cannot speak for, nor require, the churches to adopt particular positions. It can, however, continue to provide opportunities for all the churches to consult with one another, and wherever possible for them to speak together' (2003, 9). While the policy position of the institution appears settled with regard to addressing social and ethical issues, similar to the previous section of the report focussing on ecclesiology, the Final Report asks a question to which it is unable to fully respond: '*Who* decides *what* and *by which means*?' (2003, 10).

This question is not exclusively a question of institutional policy. Rather it is a question that alights on wider issues and is again a question about ecclesiology. Furthermore, it is also a question about the appropriate use of the social sciences and hermeneutics in theological disciplines. For example, a most basic response to the question posed by the Special Commission could be that, *the Church* decides *social and ethical issues* by means of *Scripture, Tradition, liturgical life, theological reflection: all seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit*. Some of these words and suggestions even make it into the report (2003, 9). However, this basic response is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, as we have seen in chapter one, deciding who the Church is and who the Church is in relation to other churches is extremely difficult. Secondly, unveiling the hermeneutic deployed by a Church in its interaction with the world reveals a need to include, at the very least, the social sciences in the means or tools available to the Church. Some aspects of Orthodox theology would resist this necessity, while the theology of liberation would actively embrace this kind of approach.

The Final Report acknowledges the necessity to include the social sciences in theological work, particularly in the area of social and ethical issues. The Final Report states that discerning the will of God needs to: 'Tak[e] into account insights acquired from social and political analysis' (2003, 9). In this sense, the relationship between Church and World – or the Church and the *oikoumene*, which is the preferred term of the ecumenical movement – or even the relationship of the Church in the world, is a question beyond the narrow framework of the institutional policy of the WCC. It is a wider question which invites reflection on how ecclesiologies mediate, interpret and interact with their contexts. Furthermore, it is a question of where ecclesiology defines its context of action. In the specific case of social and ethical issues, for example, some churches in the ecumenical movement would be uncomfortable with discussions and proposals that focus on gender issues in the leadership of the Church. In this case, a church would develop an ecclesiology to maintain a distinctiveness between the ecclesial and political. On the other hand, calls for churches to lead the debate on ecological issues would find space within their ecclesiology for contributions from social sciences. In this case, ecclesiology embraces the ecclesial and the political. In both examples, however, the major question is the appropriate use of the social sciences in theology and hermeneutics.

The Final Report does not address in depth ecumenical social and ethical issues. Instead it alights on some of the working tensions around the WCC with regard to social and ethical issues. The Final Report recalls the role the WCC has played 'as an advocate for human

rights, and as a participant in people's struggles' (2003, 8). It notes the dissatisfaction raised by the Orthodox and othersabout 'issues they deem foreign to their life or inappropriate for a worldwide forum' (2003, 9). The Final Report acknowledges that the Special Commission took into account insights from social and political analysis. It is this latter perspective that this chapter discusses.

Orthodox theologians address social and political issues raised by this section of the Final Report in a variety of ways. The following section presents an outline of approaches by three Orthodox theologians, drawn from the Greek and Russian traditions. The chapter discusses Orthodox ecclesiology in dialogue with a presentation of political systems by Orthodox theologians. It suggests that Orthodox ecclesiology has a preferred political system which is different to the Enlightenment political settlement that can underpin ecumenical social and ethical issues. In other words, at stake is not so much tension around social and ethical issues as the Final Report suggests, but rather an ecclesiological approach to politics that has different premises for different member churches in the WCC. Subsequently, insights from the theology of liberation are presented and a dialogue is introduced with some of the interpretations of Orthodox theologians. Finally, the chapter concludes with some suggestions for a way ahead for addressing social and ethical issues in the ecumenical movement.

Political Systems and the Worldview of Orthodoxy

Hilarion Alfeyev is a leading bishop in the Russian Orthodox Church. His formal theological study included periods at the Moscow Theological Seminary and the Moscow Theological Academy. He later graduated from Oxford University under the guidance of Timothy (Kallistos) Ware. His work has included periods in the UK, Austria and Hungary, and as a church diplomat to the European Institutions in Brussels. He is now chair of the Moscow Patriarchate for External Church Relations. In an introductory volume to Orthodox Christianity (2011), Alfeyev states: 'The basic idea of this work is to present Orthodox Christianity as an integrated theological and liturgical system – a worldview' (2011, 9). An understanding of the worldview of the Orthodox Church is integral to understanding its approach to context.

According to Alfeyev, two factors appear to influence the Orthodox worldview above all else. One is the understanding that culturally and politically the Eastern and Western Church differs. This may be as simple as affirming that Greek was spoken in the East and Latin in the West (Alfeyev 2011, 108), or that the relationship between church and state

radically differed in Constantinople and Rome (2011, 107). While patriarchs at Constantinople belonged to the court of the Emperors, the Roman popes contested the court edicts, seeking to maintain their independence. Being part of the Emperor's court, 'the symphony', as Alfeyev calls it (2011, 109), has had a profound impact on the Orthodox worldview. Nikolas K. Gvosdev explores this in depth in his book, *Emperors and Elections: reconciling the Orthodox Tradition with Modern Politics* (2000). His study will be discussed below, but it is worth noting at this stage that 'the symphony' worldview articulated by Alfeyev and Orthodox theology inhibits drawing the sharp Church–world distinctions that are normally associated with aspects of Protestant theology, whereby the Church is a sign of God's Kingdom addressing the World beyond the Church.

According to Alfeyev, another factor influencing the Orthodox worldview is the fact that the Orthodox Church has a history of being under domination. This domination has taken place in different eras and in different ways, be it under the Byzantine Empire, through the skirmishes with the crusaders from Europe (Meyendorff 1982, 8), up to more recent oppression by the Communist state-led regimes and Muslim polities (Ware 1997, 145). In each case, the narrative propounded by the Orthodox Church is similar in response to each oppression: the world in the guise of political projects wreaks havoc on the Church through politicking and atheism. The influence of émigrés on twentieth-century Orthodox theology,[36] coupled with the fact that a number of leading Orthodox theologians were trained in Western institutions, are significant continuing reminders of the oppression suffered by the Orthodox Church in the twentieth century, as well as a pointer towards the importance of the Orthodox diaspora on Orthodox theology. It is precisely through the experiences of this Orthodox diaspora that oppression cannot be read and interpreted as one directional – from the world (the Byzantine Empire, the Crusaders, Communist state-led regimes) to the Church. The Orthodox Church has oppressed parts of its diaspora through exclusion or forgetting, as it has reasserted its role in post-communists states by advancing a particular ecclesial project which has had difficulty in embracing pluralisms. The 'broken canonical communion' (Alfeyev 2011, 279) in the 1920s and 1930s between Synod of Kiev and the Moscow Patriarchate and the 'broken Eucharistic communion' (Alfeyev 2011, 279) between the Church Abroad and the Moscow patriarchate post-World War II are examples of this difficult (and oppressive) relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and its diaspora.

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[36] This list could include theologians such as Georges Florovsky and Sergius Bulgakov, but could equally include the philosophers Nicholas Berdyaev or the writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Furthermore, Hilarion Alfeyev documents the (numerical) growth of the Russian Orthodox Church in the post-communist era highlighting the growth of parishes from approximately 7000 in 1989 to more than 27,000 in 2006 (Alfeyev 2011, 289). He also includes Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (in addition to parts of Central Asia) in his description of majority contexts for Russian Orthodox believers, and by implication also a part of a greater Rus (Alfeyev 2011, 290). This exclusion or forgetting of other identities and histories in (now) independent states, and subsuming them into the Russian diaspora is something that many people in the named states, not to mention the churches in those states, would contest. Georges Tsetsis[37] discusses the wider theological and ecclesiological implications for 'Orthodox space', particularly its understanding of catholicity in relation to this 'Orthodox space', when confronted by nationalisms. His thoughtful article illustrates some of the challenges and ambivalence of pluralism for Orthodoxy and will be returned to later in this chapter. (Tsetsis in Clapsis 2004, 155). Elizabeth Prodromou describes this ambivalence towards pluralism by Orthodox leaders as being a product of three crucial historical legacies:

> a historical long *durée* in which Orthodox churches, peoples or countries existed in contexts marked by the absence of democracy; second, institutional patterns of dysfunctional ecclesiastical behaviour related to the formal and informal interpenetration of institutions of church and state; and third, conceptions of national (and collective) identity that have been permeated and shaped over centuries by Orthodoxy.(2004, 30)

While it is appropriate for Alfeyev, Meyendorff and Ware to write about the oppression of the Orthodox Church, it also appears appropriate from Prodromou's analysis that Orthodoxy should examine its role as oppressor.

Orthodox theologians, like Alfeyev and Meyendorff, frequently focus on the limitations introduced by the experience of a church living under domination. The oppression by an external actor is often interpreted as limiting the pastoral action of the Church, and inhibiting the freedom of the Church to celebrate the liturgy. This gives rise to the charges of the twin evils of politicking and atheism, which the Orthodox Church strongly denounces. However, Pantelis Kalaitzidis, director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies in Greece, sees another possibility for the Orthodox Church. Oppression is a limitation but it also provides an opportunity for the Orthodox Church to examine itself as

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[37]   Georges Tsetsis is a former staff member of the WCC – he was deputy director of the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service. He also served as representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the WCC and Conference of European Churches. He is a priest of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and studied at Halki seminary in Istanbul and at Bossey Ecumenical Institute.

it describes the limitations imposed on it by oppressive external actors. Kalaitzidis formulates his reflection on the limitation as the Church not providing:

> an adequate public witness of its eucharistic and eschatological self-consciousness, of its experience of the active expectation of the reign of God, and of the implications this expectation has for the 'political' realm, viz. the Gospel commandments for social justice and solidarity with the poor, the marginalized, and the victims of history.   (2012, 9)

The oppression of the Church is understood to limit the Church. However, differently from Alfeyev's 'symphony' perspective, or from Meyendorff and Ware's concerns about the limiting of the Church by oppression, Kalaitzidis observes that the limiting of the Church by oppressive actors has not only negative effects on the Church it also impacts negatively on its interpretation of the Gospel commandments for social justice and solidarity with the poor, the marginalised and the victims of history. In other words, domination of the Church is critiqued by Kalaitzidis through the perspective of the poor. This is an important observation that provides an Orthodox hermeneutic in approaching the oppression of the Church and a reference in challenging any oppression by the Church. Indeed, following the worldview outlined by Alfeyev, the ecclesial context is the primary hermeneutic for the church. Kalaitzidis's observations follow this primary hermeneutic by situating the eucharistic and eschatological dimensions of the Church's witness first in his analysis. Any recourse to the social sciences and other disciplines by Kalaitzidis is put at the service of an already-accepted ecclesiological approach within Orthodoxy.

However, the theology of liberation reminds the church that living under domination can also be interpreted as a liberating moment, and indeed aspects of Kalaitzidis's reflection point to this too. This liberating moment in the context of oppression is explored more fully later in this chapter. However, it is prescient to note the contribution of Juan Luis Segundo to the debate:

> there is an essential methodological question to be faced by Latin American theology and, in general, any theology that has liberation in mind as a goal. Was the original Christian message aimed at masses as such, so that it must be thought out and propagated in those terms; or was it rather aimed at minorities who were destined to play an essential role in the transformation and liberation of the masses?   (1982, 209)

Segundo's observation ties in with Prodromou's observation of the use of Orthodoxy to create collective identities. Orthodoxy has frequently been used by the state elites to legitimate narratives for masses society (Prodromou 2004, 34). Segundo profoundly

questions this approach to ecclesiology. The interplay that he identifies between masses and minorities, and the role of the gospel message in society, influence Orthodox theologians and church leaders too. At times, the church has been willing partner in the state's political projects and it has sought to use its monopoly on historical narratives and formation of identity to maintain a mass appeal. According to Segundo's ecclesiology, this kind of approach practised by Orthodoxy – although not exclusively by Orthodoxy – potentially undermines a gospel message that addresses minorities and challenges oppression.

The Political Identity of the Church

Nikolas K. Gvosdev's book, *Emperor and Elections: Reconciling the Orthodox Tradition with Modern Politics* (2000), is a study investigating the 'faith identity' of Orthodox Christians and its relationship with contemporary 'political identity'. It is of interest because it recognises that Orthodox Christians have a political identity, as well as exploring the political identity of the Orthodox Church. In contrast to Stephen Runciman's approach, which draws the conclusion that Orthodoxy is not suited to the modern world because it does not embrace a form of Christianity that moves beyond theocracy, Gvosdev reflects in his concluding remarks that: 'Orthodoxy has never preached the creation of a theocracy' (2000, 143). Gvosdev is concerned with searching for a way to be a Christian who is fully Orthodox and fully democratic in the modern world. This reconciling role leads him to dismiss theocracy as a necessary consequence of Orthodox political commitments. However, at the same time, he is supportive of Dimitri Obolensky's opinion that, 'the political organisation of this world is part of God's universal plan and intimately bound up with the history of man's salvation' (Obolensky cited in Gvosdev 2000, 143). He is also open to admitting that the Church Fathers did not necessarily embrace a democratic tradition (2000, 4). The difficult relationship to autocracy in Orthodox history and politics has led some observers to conclude that Orthodoxy is more comfortable with theocratic politics: Gvosdev begs to differ.

According to Gvosdev, it is this nuanced theological understanding of politics which provides the Orthodox Church with a position whereby it does not possess a political thought in terms of a systematic doctrine of the world or government or society, but it does encourage political positions which it understands to correspond to the gospel (2000, 10). The political organisation of the world is part of God's plan. This is part of the theology of Orthodoxy, which he argues also chimes with Calvin's understanding that 'man is under twofold government' and the civil and religious are both part of 'a divinely established

order' (1960, 1485), and further that there is no one best form of civil government (1960, 1493). There are, however, further influences on Orthodox political positions, as Gvosdev admits. The most important, which is already mentioned above by Hilarion Alfeyev and is also addressed by Elizabeth H. Prodromou, is 'the symphony'. Gvosdev, for his part, interprets 'the symphony' as the ecclesial principle of conciliarity in action in politics. Conciliarity is a principle of self-governing communities, who elect leaders from within their community (Gvosdev 2000, 99). In politics, the Emperor is understood to be the laity elected to exercise civil authority in light of God's Kingdom (Gvosdev 2000, 80).

Gvosdev admits that often the Orthodox Church is viewed as authoritarian, an opponent of democracy (in the Middle East or post-Soviet countries), a preserver of a collaborationist past and a dangerous embodiment of nationalist sentiments. His defence is that such views are coloured by ignorance of the Orthodox Church in Western academic discourse, by hostility to all forms of religion in the modern world, and by a cultural prejudice – what Edward Said, in another context, would call Orientalism (2000, 16). The first of the three defences – ignorance of the Orthodox Church in Western academic discourse – places the emphasis of responsibility on 'the others'. It absolves Orthodoxy from the need for self-examination. However, his second defence – the hostility to all forms of religion in the modern world – turns its focus towards the Orthodox Church. Gvosdev ventures that the different relationship of the Orthodox Church to the Enlightenment – a more than European-wide movement led by thinkers like Emmanuel Kant[38] – and the fact that the Orthodox Church has historically been, 'a popular rather than elite religion, rooted most strongly in the masses' (2000, 24) influence how it is negatively viewed. Gvosdev interprets the Enlightenment as a profoundly negative influence on religious visions of the world and the practice of religious groups. It is a view echoed by other religious leaders in Orthodoxy who view European Christianity's dialogue with Enlightenment as one source of the weakening of the Church in Europe. This is a perspective which introduces polemics to the dialogues between East and West, in the opinion of John Jillons (Jillons in Cunningham & Theokritoff 2008, 277). Gvsodev is not the only thinker to question the influence of Enlightenment on religions and more specifically for our purposes on ecumenism.

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[38] The Scottish philosopher, Alexander Broadie, uses a form of this expression in his introductory essay to Enlightenment in the anthology, *The Scottish Enlightenment* (1997). Broadie states that the Enlightenment is more that European-wide and that it is related to a form of thinking rather than a context (1997, 3). He also goes onto argue that its religious scrutiny affected not only Chrstianity but also Judaism and Islam (1997, 6).

Gvosdev does not embrace the critical distance of the Frankfurt School, which is both influence by the Enlightenment and in critical dialogue with it. Helmet Peukert's reflection on the Enlightenment and Theology as Unfinished Projects, calls for a critique of religion that exposes the role of theology in legitimising certain forms of power: 'theology is suspected of having covered up and also legitimizing the mechanisms of accumulation and the unjust sharing of power' (Peukert 2005, 351). He also recognises that the same perspective can be applied to the Enlightenment tradition as a whole in relation to Christianity through a critique of 'the assumption that our enlightened rationality does not measure up to the consequences of its actions, so that, in the end, the repercussions of the expanding, competing and accelerating systems of action on a finite world cannot be comprehended, much less controlled' (Puekert 2005, 353). The Frankfurt School shifts Gvosdev's critique slightly by including a double critique; a critique of both theology and Enlightenment, which forces the church to consider its role not only in relation to the Enlightenment (Gvosdev's approach), but also the church's role in relation to theology (Peukert's approach).

Gvosdev draws attention to the excluding limitations of the Enlightenment by naming its anti-religious world view. However, he does not present a comprehensive theological answer to the Enlightenment critique of the Church's political actions because he does not develop the double critique of the Frankfurt School which Helmut Peukert represents. This also exposes Gvosdev's rationale that Orthodoxy is a popular rather than elite religion. He tries to argue that popular religion is a positive response to the Enlightenment's hostility to forms of religion. This is not dissimilar to work by theologians of liberation like Diego Irarrazaval who embrace the positives in popular Christianity to maintain a distance from colonising concept of Enlightenment Christianity (Irarrazaval in Fragoso *et al.* 2003, 501)In some senses, and given the Slavic context of some of Gvosdev's reflections, this can be interpreted as an Orthodox response to Marxist critiques of religion, which are rooted in Marx's materialist conceptions of religion developed in the Theses on Feuerbach (Tucker 1978, 144). Gvosdev rejects the Marxist disposition towards interpreting popular religion as a sign of alienation. He presents it, instead, as embodying the true essence of the people, which he sets against elitist Enlightenment- and Marxist-derived interpretations of religion. However, again, without the double critique, which includes theology, it is difficult to discern how this kind of mass religion can avoid aspects of oppression of minorities.

Other Orthodox theologians also use aspects of the terms deployed in Gvosdev's study to defend Orthodoxy from accusations that it is authoritarian, an opponent of democracy (in the Middle East or post-Soviet countries), a preserver of a collaborationist past, and a dangerous embodiment of nationalist sentiments. has written In his essay, 'Ethnicity, Nationalism and Religion', Greek Orthodox theologian Emmanuel Clapsis[39] writes: 'In the history of humanity and the Church, ethnic differentiation provided opportunities for peaceful co-existence but also for ethnic antagonism and conflicts' (2004, 167). He cites Constantinople, Beirut and Sarajevo as examples of 'cosmopolitan capitals of empire and great merchant cities' which have provided examples of peaceful co-existence and harmony in the past. Clapsis admits that collective identities and globalisation bring pressures to bear on difference; particularly differences which develop, or already possess, political aspirations. In addition, by citing Constantinople, Beirut and Sarajevo as examples of peace and harmony, Clapsis unveils the ignorance, hostility and cultural prejudice which some Western traditions can bring to bear on interpreting history and politics. Rarely would a Western academic reach for the examples of Constantinople, Beirut and Sarajevo to describe peaceful co-existence and harmony because the cities are so intertwined with an arguably Western narrative of conflict and division.

Clapsis is aware of the potential hazards of nationalism, particularly when linked with political aspirations. He describes this as being an awareness that, 'collective identities are inherently carriers of aggression … hav[ing] the potential to generate violence' (2004, 161). However, he does not think that the Orthodox churches necessarily foment nationalism, which he characterises as the most potent form of collective identity in the modern world (2004, 169). Instead, he suggests that nationalism can be a defensive reaction of groups who feel threatened by a homogenising and hegemonic modern world (2004, 169). Religious identity and affiliation may, or may not, inform political options in response to these dual threats.

Georges Tsetsis, contributing to the same book, with a chapter of the same title, is less optimistic than Clapsis in his analysis of the relationship between Orthodoxy and nationalism:

> An immediate victim of the ethno-nationalism following the gradual dismantlement of the
> Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and the subsequent creation of new nation states

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[39] Emmanuel Clapsis is a professor theology at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in the USA. He graduated from Union Theological Seminary, New York. He is a leading ecumenical figure in the Orthodox churches, having served as vice-Moderator of the Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC (1991–1998). He is a priest in the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

> in the Balkans was, undoubtedly, the Orthodox Church. Indeed, political aspirations, ethnic rivalries and the use of the religious factor in order to promote nationalistic ideas in the newly emerging states severely hit Orthodoxy and profoundly affected the very essence of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic (Orthodox) Church.   (2004, 154)

Tsetsis is clear that while nationalism might well be interpreted along the lines established by Clapsis as a defensive reaction to threats, the Orthodox Church has to take responsibility for promoting nationalistic ideas. In addition to affecting the essence of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic (Orthodox) Church, history has demonstrated that it also affected the essence of nation states and peoples in the Balkans and that religion was a factor in fomenting division and identity in bloody wars in that part of the world.

Tsetsis is clear that while it was an oppressed minority in the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox Church developed a supranational 'Orthodox nation' in harmony with its understanding of catholicity. The turn to 'national churches' and the identification with, and participation in, forms of narratives of nationalism introduced hostility to relationships with neighbours (including neighbouring churches), discords over jurisdiction, and was detrimental to the unity and mission of the Church (2004, 155). According to Tsetsis, this political decision also countered the theological decision of the Council of Constantinople in 1872, which considered nationalism a mortal blow to faith in one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church. The Council condemned 'racism, ethnic feuds, hatreds and dissensions within the Church of Christ, as contrary to the teaching of the gospel' (2004, 156). Tsetsis' observation, and the words of the Council of Constantinople, are echoed by the position advanced by Gvosdev in his study, namely that church political positions must correspond to the gospel. The church does not favour any one form of political system, for 'ultimately it is the people who must decide how they shall be governed and under what system' (Gvosdev 2000, 45). The recognition of the temporality of political systems, is one of the distinctions that the church makes in its political positions (2000, 39).

The roots of contemporary political options, however, were arguably sown during what Tsetsis calls the period of Orthodox commonwealth in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. This period reflected the unity of the Church in a vast geographical area, which has in Tsetsis' opinion succumbed to a contemporary fragmentation of Orthodoxy, which debilitates its action in a number of political and religious contexts. To address the seeds of the Orthodox commonwealth, it is necessary to consider more fully the already-mentioned concept of 'the symphony', which Orthodox theologians use to describe the relationship between church and state that arose during the Constantinian era. It is also necessary to

acknowledge that theologians of liberation and political theologians have particular reservations about 'Constantinianism', which has been interpreted as closely linking ecclesiastical and civil power (Fierro 1977, 48).

The Symphony – Politics and Theology from an Orthodox Perspective

The adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire brought theology and politics into a very particular relationship. The interrelationship between civil power (represented by the Emperor) and ecclesiastical authority (represented by the Patriarch) is a complex contribution to the history of the Church. While theologians of liberation critique, and celebrate, the demise of the 'Constantinian church' (Fierro 1977, 49), Orthodox theologians demonstrate a more sympathetic understanding of consequences of Imperial Christianity for the Church.

Caesaropapism (Meyendorff 1982, 51) is a vision of the Byzantine and Roman empire, and Church as one single society. It refers to Byzantine theories of relations between Church and State and Justinian's legal framing of the relationship (1982, 50). It is a distinctly different basis from post-Enlightenment understandings of separate spheres for church and state, although both models do bear similarities in understanding the role that religion has upheld as a cohesive force for the 'masses'. It was the emperor who could convoke and chair an ecumenical council. This was in order to ensure that any decisions could be legally enacted in the whole empire. The church councils, therefore, were important gatherings of political authority. Frequently, the decisions enacted were designed to strengthen the empire's external expansion and its internal cohesion. It was a model designed to challenge and overcome the fragmentary nationalisms latent in the empire. This perhaps underlines why it holds appeal to Orthodox theologians as they try to address questions of fragmentation, nationalism and national churches, all of which pose a challenge to articulation of a theology of the unity of the Church.

Equally, the Church did not necessarily develop a recognisable political theology, because while the empire and Church acted as one single society, Meyendorff admits that minority opinions remained. Interestingly, he notes that not a single ecumenical council was universally accepted by Christians. Sometimes these minority opinions were reflected in substantial opposition to the hegemonic project of empire and Church, as is in the case of Eastern Christians at Nicaea, and the challenges to and acceptance of the Constantinople Council by Alexandria and Rome (2001, 45). There was, in other words, almost always a group or groups opposing the enacted decisions of the empire. Meyendorff locates the

reason for this in his understanding that the Christian faith cannot be interpreted through a legally binding framework, in the way that imperial decrees were designed in order to try to implement a universal order in a vast empire. There is, according to Meyendorff, no recognisable political theology because while the emperor had a legal authority derived from the imperial order, he had no theological authority independent from the Church to define Christian dogma.

Conciliarity – or the symphony – is rooted in this understanding. If the church and state are one, then according to Orthodox theology, there is no separately defined political or theological sphere. This is also different from the earlier example offered from Calvin's Institutes, whereby there are twofold governments under the one God. Calvin's ecclesiology draws on biblical orthodoxy and he cites a number of New Testament passages to ground his examples, but it differs from Orthodox conciliarity by distinguishing ecclesial and civil governance, by distinguishing theology from politics. The symphony in Orthodoxy develops the unity of theology and politics, including their spheres of governance. However, Gvosdev notes that one of the difficulties for Orthodox churches today is that the former empires have disappeared, while the Church remains. He notes that a majority of Orthodox Christians live in states that would describe themselves as democratic and republican. They are no longer states in imperial governance systems. Moreover, even when Orthodox Christians have had the opportunity to return to an emperor – he cites Ethiopia and Greece as his examples – it has been rejected. According to Elizabeth H. Prodromou, the rejection in the Greek case has been based on an uneasy and contested renegotiation of church–state relations deriving from Greece's membership of the European Union and the effects of globalisation (2004, 33). Perhaps it is in Russia, with the cult of President Putin, where the symphony can be seen to exist in some modern form. However, the action of Pussy Riot, and the response to their punk prayer by authorities both political and religious, has demonstrated to some observers the dangerous pitfalls the symphony presents in oppressing creative minorities (Gessen 2014).

This raises an important question for theology. The Orthodox Church has an understanding of the symphony, which is perhaps rejected by people – in the form of populations or electorates – or which is no longer viable in modern state-led politically influenced reality – as opposed to imperial visions, or even participatory democracy projects. How does the Orthodox Church respond to this rejection and unviability? Gvosdev argues that it is necessary for the Orthodox churches to consider whether, 'the values of Orthodox Christianity [are] at odds with the ideology and practice of democratic rule?' (2000, 48). In

the 1990s, a leading bishop in the Orthodox Church, Metropolitan John, affirmed this to be the case,[40] stating that, 'the people could not be the source of political sovereignty in society' (2000, 49). He is not a lone voice. The suspicion of authority derived from the role of the people in a political society is not exclusive to Orthodoxy either. The Indian academic, D. L. Sheth, in his reflections on participatory democracy, which has people as a fundamental and active category, has noted that often political authority and sovereignty are derived from a passive understanding of institutional processes (elections, policy formation and implementation, etc.), with an excessive focus on institutional legitimacy – like that presented by the symphony in Orthodoxy – rather than a comprehension of a political evolution responding to historical and cultural contexts (cited in Santos, ed. 2003, 110).

The source of the opinion expressed by Metropolitan John is an interpretation of the symphony whereby the people are not part of the conciliarity of the Church. The Church is represented by priests and bishops, with their technical theological knowledge and their status as being set apart by, and for, God's work through ordination. In this interpretation, the people as imperial subjects or lay members of the church receive the conciliarity of the church, they do not participate in it. In some senses, it also reflects, although in a very different form, the idea expressed by Juan Luis Segundo that Christianity needs to decide if it is to be an expression of the masses or minorities. Conciliarity is an expression of a Christianity of the minorities (admittedly an elite minority of men and bishops) for Orthodoxy. It differs from Segundo's proposition to the extent that the minority in the conciliar symphony seeks to manage the masses. In other words it is directed at the masses through minority means. Segundo called for an altogether more radical approach, whereby Christianity abandons appeals to the masses to cultivate minority action and minority incarnation. Interestingly, the inspiration for both Metropolitan John's and Juan Luis Segundo's approach is the ecclesiological principle of s*ensus fidelium* – the common faith of the Church. It is only the application of the *sensus fidelium* that differs in each approach.

Metropolitan John's opinion also expresses a long-standing idea within parts of Christianity that the political model of empire is a necessary part of salvation history. Although the Byzantine and Roman empires faded, Empire did not perish and transitioned to Russia Empire (2000, 51). Gvosdev even notes that within Orthodoxy there is a fifteenth century Russian myth, 'The Tale of the White Cowl', which addresses the transfer of the Empire and Emperor from Constantinople to the Russian monarch (2000, 51). The empire,

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[40] Metropolitan John of St Petersburg.

in the first instance, is interpreted as a political system to advance the cause of the Church. Subsequently, other political systems from military dictatorship to democracy have been defended in the same way to advance interests of the Church. However, it is perhaps interesting to note that the figure of the Emperor enables the laity of Orthodox Church to designate the Emperor as their representative in the symphony (2000, 81). The conjoining of church and empire, in the figure of the emperor, also gives the laity a position in church decision-making that would otherwise be absent. The symphony model further encourages emperors to wield an authority that belongs to all laity, and on behalf of all laity in the church. In other words, even if the people as a whole cannot be the source of political sovereignty in a society influenced by Orthodoxy, it is imperative within the symphony that the laity exercises the authority reserved to the emperor. It need not be said that the people ('masses') and the laity are not necessarily one and the same in the symphony – an important nuance in understanding the interconnections and complementary roles between church–state, masses–minorities, and laity and clergy in the Orthodox vision.

Although Gvosdev presents the Orthodox contrast between autocratic monarchy and democratic republic sympathetically, and further demonstrates how the Orthodox Church can operate equally comfortably in either system, he is aware that what is at stake is not the appropriateness of operating a political system that complements Orthodoxy, but rather the allocation of the former imperial powers in each system:

> The Emperor is neither an enduring institution within the Orthodox world nor a necessary precondition for the existence and functioning of the Church. In the absence of any Emperor, different Orthodox churches in different states have had different ways of reallocating imperial powers. (2000, 84)

 It is in this way, Gvosdev can affirm that the Orthodox Church has never preached the creation of theocracy (2000, 143): the emperor is not a necessary precondition for the existence and functioning of the Church, therefore, a society need not be theocratically structured for the Orthodox Church to approve it. Instead, he suggests that Orthodoxy has within its tradition visions which can help it to engage in contemporary society, making positive contributions in a democratic or plural system. However, Orthodoxy's theocentric ecclesiology should not be overlooked as a source of some difficulties when faced with Enlightenment traditions, and more recently secularism and democracy. Secularism challenges the theocentric in 'the symphony' because it introduces the possibility that the elected civic authority is not a lay person in the church. Democracy challenges the theocentric in 'the symphony' because it introduces dissenting minority voices and

potentially seeks to give expression to those dissenting voices, presenting difficulties for temporal harmonies.

While Nikolas K. Gvosdev presents a comprehensive development of the political understanding of the Orthodox Church and defends a position that Orthodox ecclesiology does not favour a particular political system, it is the Greek theologian Pantelis Kalaitzidis who raises an interesting question in his book, *Orthodoxy and Political Theology* (2012), about political theology in Orthodoxy: 'Why, with few exceptions, has Orthodoxy not developed a "political theology"?' (2012, 53). Gvosdev's opinion that this is perhaps a Western concern; that political theology is a product of the Enlightenment traditions of the separation of church and state, and that holistic interpretations of society within Orthodoxy, which regard politics and theology as part of a single society, only offers a partial answer. Kalaitzidis chooses to respond to his own question by offering three suggestions. Firstly, Orthodox theologians who have read Western political theology tend to interpret it as a 'Christian-left' eschatology. This is reinforced within Orthodoxy by the writing and commitment of people like Nicholas Berdyaev, 'a Christian revolutionary and representative for the Socialist-Revolutionary Party' (2012, 61), and the previously mentioned, Sergei Bulgakov. It is reinforced beyond Orthodoxy by the example of the Christian-Marxist dialogues in the 1970s which, according to Kalaitzidis, 'co-opted the Christian message in the service of social and class struggle' (2012, 59). Orthodox theologians are wary of a political theology of the left because any underlying Marxism is interpreted as an atheist threat to the Church.

Secondly, Kalaitzidis suggests that the Orthodox Church seems to be trapped within an ethnocentric discourse (2012, 68). According to Kalaitzidis, this leads the church to an identification of the national and the religious in which the ecclesial and the national are a predefined coextensive community. As such, any political discourse proffered by Orthodoxy is expressed with reference to national struggle and the Kingdom of God is co-opted to a narrative of national salvation and commemoration of an ethno-religious past (2012, 68). This diminishes the eschatological nature of the Church and puts it at the service of a pre-determined ethnic community. This interpretation has particular resonance at a time when prior to the rise of the modern nation states a number of Orthodox churches lived under an atheist Empire which supressed national identity. In this interpretation, the suppression of national identity is understood to include the suppression of the Church. This predetermined suppressed community has church and national identity as coextensive.

Thirdly, Kalaitzidis concurs with other Orthodox theologians that the most influential theological movement in twentieth-century Orthodoxy was Georges Florovsky's proposed 'return to the Fathers'. Another way of expressing Florovsky's proposal is that it, 'de-Westernise[d] Orthodox theology' (2012, 75). The return to the Fathers was a return to Christian sources and a turn away from influences like philosophy and social sciences on theology. According to Kalaitzidis, this return to the Fathers polarised East–West ecclesial identities and cultivated an anti-Western and, consequently, anti-ecumenical project within Orthodoxy. This was perhaps not Florovsky's intention, as he was a renowned contributor to the ecumenical movement. However, with the rise of various theologies in the twentieth century, including the theology of liberation, the turn to internal sources within Orthodoxy and the Christian past enabled it to dismiss what it interpreted as specifically 'Western' theological developments.

The Symphony – A Critique

'Constantinianism' or conciliarism (the symphony), while bringing benefits to Christianity within the empire from the perspective of Orthodoxy, also introduced what other theologies interpret as negative effects such as the 'implacable suppression of pagan forms of worship' (Fierro 1977, 49). In other words, while the empire was seen to protect the Christian masses, it excluded other minority groups – at the instigation of the church, through the application of the symphony. Although the power of decision-making was exercised by a minority (civil authorities and bishops) on behalf of the masses, there was no protection built into the symphony system for other minorities who did not form part of the conciliar elite. This is one of the potential hazards which continues to confront Orthodox leaders in the contemporary world, and perhaps partly helps to explain the unease expressed by Georges Tsetsis in his analysis of the modern identification of nationalist sentiment and Orthodoxy. Orthodox churches, which form part of a 'new conciliarism', namely, a minority with decision-making power for the masses, need to find ways to offer other minorities who are not part of the symphony a place in their state or nation. In other words, the ethic of tolerance of minority groups (for example, religious minorities in the Balkans, LGBT people in Russia, or the political left in Greece) needs to be developed by Orthodox theology.

Alongside the question posed by the situation of minorities who do not form part of the symphony is the equally important observation raised by the theology of liberation that political theology needs to start with reality and not an ideal. Political theology, rooted in the symphony model – even if not explicitly – emphasises the underlying Christian

inspiration of the state and presupposes that Christians will hold the initiative in, or at least give a vision to, creating a better society. For the Orthodox churches in particular, this ideal is alluring after long periods of oppression and exclusion by leaderships which ideologically opposed the presence and influence of Orthodox religious perspectives. Indeed, Gvosdev's observation that Orthodox laity rejected a return to the imperial model in Greece and Ethiopia, is partly offset by the fact that the laity will still participate in politics as a majority Orthodox and thereby bring to the new political model 'Christian inspiration'. This concept, which actually continues to safeguard the role of religious teaching in society through the action of the laity, then enables the church to speak of Christian social and ethical perspectives, which it hopes will resonate in a mass democratic society. The Church acts as the conscience of the state or society in which it is inserted, as long as the state or society can recognise its Christian inspiration and its political leaders act as lay Christians (i.e. guided by the theology of the Church). In a plural society, with divergent or contested origins, as is increasingly the case in the modern nation state, an all-together different premise is required. The social and ethical issues facing societies may increasingly be minority interests in which the church is one more minority in the plurality. 'Who decides what and by which means?' (2003, 10), the question in the Final Report of the Special Commission, becomes an altogether more complex issue.

Ecumenical Social and Ethical Issues – A Critique

It has already been noted that Orthodox theologians argue that the relationship and conception of church–state relations are different in a church that lives in a state influenced by the Enlightenment than for other churches. The formal separation of church and state, with separate spheres, is not easily understood by Orthodox conceptions influenced by 'the symphony model'.

However, at another level, the role of the church in each conception is not too divergent. For example, in states where there is a formal separation of church and state, the action of the state is still often assumed to be a part of the wider Christian project of improving humankind. In other words, church and state are critical partners in developing the public good. In a different form, Orthodox churches (through the transfer of the imperial role to state actors) perform the same ritual: a state, based on Christian principles, acts towards creating a Christian future.

Within the ecumenical movement, one of the misunderstandings that has developed is that churches formally separated from the state have developed a different way of acting in the

public space from Orthodox churches. (It could also include the actions of minority churches in countries with plural church contexts, particularly in following decolonisation in the latter part of the twentieth century. The misunderstanding is not restricted to majority church contexts.) In truth, the political theology which underpins action by churches still has its roots in the understanding that any church (minority or majority) has a role to play in the public space. And in Western environments, although the public space is increasingly secular, it is still assumed to have Christian origins. This explains some of the anxiety about Islam in the West, and the wider recognition by philosophers, social theorists and theologians of the rising influence of religions on previously atheist states, for example, in the former Soviet Union (Calhoun 2011, 118).

This position, which affects the role of religion in the public space, is not a problem for a number of Protestant churches. However, it is one of the major critiques from Orthodox churches with regard to social and ethical positions assumed by Protestant churches. According to Orthodox critiques, Protestant churches weaken the fundamentals of the faith and are co-opted by secular societies through the adoption of sources such as the social sciences and hermeneutics. The second layer to this critique is that secularism, which is still the main motivator in this debate (Habermas 2008), is frequently interpreted through the lens of Orthodox experience of secular states, which is understood to derive from Marxism and therefore belong to a 'Christian-left' (Christos Yannaras cited in Kalaitzidis 2012, 55). Therefore, if churches embrace secular social and ethical issues, they are equally embracing forms of social and ethical issues derived from Marxism. For the Orthodox churches, Marxism is a memory of oppression and suffering, which included a negation of their religious existence.

However, there is another way to interpret social and ethical positions of the churches in the WCC, which even if they remain divergent – with regard to sexuality, for example – contribute to a wider public debate. A plurality of opinion reflects that the public space is being decolonised because there is not necessarily a hegemonic opinion derived from one privileged actor. According to Edward Said, 'the rapid occupation of real as well as public space – colonization – becomes the central militaristic prerogative of the modern state' (1994, 395). Where churches and other groups are able to articulate a social and ethical position in public that is divergent from the state, or from other dominant narratives, there is a recognition that, at least in part, there are minority groups unassimilated to the colonial project, which Said identifies. At this level, social and ethical engagement is clearly not derived from Marxism, as earlier interpretations by Orthodoxy of Christian political

theology would lead to conclude. An example of this might be the varied social and ethical positions of the churches regarding war. Rather, social and ethical engagement by the churches aids the understanding that public space can be shared by those who differ (or even by those who are unassimilated to structures of power).

Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis raise important defences of Orthodox 'political theology', which in turn have implications for social and ethical positions defended and advanced by Orthodox theologians. In their desire to distance themselves from any political theology that has been interpreted as the co-option of the Christian-left by Marxism, Orthodox theologians have failed to take into account emergent political theologies which contest the colonial project of Western discourse. This contesting of the colonial project is potentially one of the major contributions of the critique advanced by Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis, although both advance it in different ways. Gvosdev's study demonstrates that Orthodoxy has the resources within its ecclesiology to embrace different political systems, and that there is no particular predisposition to one form of political system. Kalaitzidis emphasises that Orthodox theology needs to construct a political theology rooted in reality, not an idealised past, and his political theology is developed in dialogue with theologies of liberation and Orthodox sources. This contextualising of ecclesiology by Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis is part of Orthodoxy's eschatology (2012, 138). In other words, Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis offer a critique to the social and ethical paradigms assumed by the Final Report of the Special Commission and the wider ecumenical approach to social and ethical issues.

The Final Report suggests that if social and ethical issues are not addressed from the same sources – Scripture, Tradition, liturgical life, theological reflection, and all seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as the Final Report of the Special Commission states, for example – and if these sources do not produce the same public position for the churches, then Orthodox theologians all too quickly dismiss the co-option of theology and the church by Marxist discourse, which in contemporary political debate means the 'atheist agenda'. There is also the inherent distrust of Enlightenment approaches to ethical and social issues in Orthodoxy due to the secular vision of society which is at the root of the Enlightenment. Marx, Freud and Nietzsche – all products of the Enlightenment – may introduce a hermeneutic of suspicion (Ricoeur, 2004) to the Enlightenment project. Viewed from the perspective of Orthodoxy, however, Marxism is still an Enlightenment discourse and any critical distance that it introduces to the Enlightenment is still, to the Orthodox, bound by an underlying separation of political systems from ecclesiology.

Summary

In this concluding section, and considering the need identified in the Introduction to this thesis that there should be a reassembling of the theology of liberation in facing absent themes, there are some suggestions for ecumenical social and ethical issues. Firstly, in a contested and decolonised public space which is not restricted to the state, the relationship between mass movement and minority vanguard[41] needs to be clarified. Juan Luis Segundo suggested that this was the 'essential methodological issue' facing theology (Segundo 1982, 209). Clearly, not all minority groups can be considered vanguard, and this includes Orthodoxy where it claims to be in a minority situation. In the area of social and ethical issues, frequently, it is minority groups that raise questions or issues for the masses. The current debates about sexuality in a number of societies demonstrate the minority vanguard planting a new discourse in mass society. Sexual minorities are considered a theology of liberation vanguard because the minority offers a subversive spirituality and a challenge to oppressive narratives (Althaus-Reid 2003, 2). The vanguard, as Segundo outlines, recognises that ecclesial boundaries can be an obstacle if the church chooses to hide behind ecclesial traditions and practice in the face of certain social or ethical challenges (1978, 117).

Secondly, there may be multiple minorities in a decolonising project, who do not necessarily agree with each other or use the same sources. Including minorities – their voice and presence – in ecumenical projects will be considered more fully in the next chapter. However, within the context of this chapter, it is important to consider how does a theology articulate itself across a boundary or a different system, when colonising narratives – such as the hegemonic ecumenical narrative, or an ecclesiology which addresses invented differences – break down? For example, ecumenical social and ethical issues have often used the church–state relationship to move an agenda forward. However, in a world where the state is only one among many potential actors, how does theology find a critical dialogue partner? In addition, what is the basis for discerning which minority is vanguard?

Thirdly, the interaction between culture and theology needs to be exposed, particularly in forms of Orthodox theology which try to resist and cover up the influence of culture on theology and ecclesiology. However, it should be remembered that a number of Western churches currently deploy 'human rights discourse' to advance their projects, particularly

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[41] I am drawing on the term as used by the theology of liberation, particularly Juan Luis Segundo, to describe a minority that can effect change. It is inspired by the practice of Ernesto Guevara's *foco* strategy in working with peasant communities. The *foco* strategy focussed on inserting a small, highly trained group of people into a community in order to train and transform that community, bringing it into the revolutionary struggle.

in the context of the European Union or the United Nations. Orthodox churches have demonstrated a preference for the use of ethnic narratives to advance their national interests, particularly in post-Soviet contexts. The sources of social and ethical discernment in the churches need more exploration and exposing in ecumenical debates. The narrow definition of sources in the Final Report – Scripture, Tradition, liturgical life, theological reflection, and all seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit (2003, 9) – excludes consideration of wider sources, which theologians from Orthodoxy like Clapsis, Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis point towards, and which theologians of liberation consider to be the basis of any social and ethical reflection by the Church.

Fourthly, as a methodological challenge, churches in the ecumenical movement need to consider making an 'option for the poor'. As I referred to in the Introduction to this thesis on absent themes, the 'option for the poor' is an absent methodological option because in current social and ethical issues the churches often try to advance a position that will benefit the coming of the Kingdom, in terms which are already delineated by the boundaries of the Church's pastoral action and theology. In other words, the churches currently choose social and ethical issues that reflect a perceived Christian interest. It is an ecumenical attempt to Christianise society. The 'option for the poor', developed in the theology of liberation, moves in a fundamentally different direction. On the one hand, it chooses not to become the dominant discourse, often remaining a minority voice, or marginal perspective, and frequently offering forms of critique to dominant narratives. It remains at the margins of the public space and embodies what Said would call 'the homeless wanderers, nomads, vagrants, unassimilated to the structures of institutional power' (1994, 402). It is important to link the 'option for the poor' from the theology of liberation with wider analysis from critical studies, in order that the 'option for the poor' is not reduced to only an economic definition and category of people. Some approaches taken by theologians of liberation, particularly 'first generation writers', can appear to reduce the 'option for the poor' to a reductionist class analysis in which the church is called to opt for the working and peasant classes. The work of Althaus-Reid, Petrella and Sung give more nuance to the 'option for the poor' by problematizing it beyond class analysis. It, therefore, becomes a more complex category in some later theology of liberation. In addition, the 'option for the poor' forces the Church to make choices in favour of issues that will not necessarily benefit the Church or the Christian interest. The epistemological premise is 'opting for the poor' interpreted as a gospel imperative and ethical theological position. It challenges the Church to give up its previous ecclesiological imperatives – the unity of the Church understood narrowly within the confines of Scripture and Tradition, for example –

and develop a commitment to social and ethical issues that is people-centred, even where 'people' remain beyond the boundaries of the Church. In other words, the church is encouraged to choose to support certain social and ethical issues which could cause it a degree of loss, in terms of influence in a given context and in terms of ecclesial identity.

To make the 'option for the poor' in ecumenical social and ethical issues poses questions to the underlying motives of the Church's action. In the case of the Orthodox Church, it potentially exposes the underlying motives of the symphony, as a form of political theology, something that Orthodox theologians insist is absent from Orthodox theology. It is also, perhaps, a culturally and historically specific response by ecclesiology, rather than an ecclesiological principle per se as theologians like Gvosdev suggest. The 'option for the poor' begins to distinguish between understandings of the public good and Christian good. It does this by challenging dominant theological narratives, which actually promote a sectorial interest. The example of the struggles in Orthodox ecclesiology to present an ecclesiology that is not ethnically or nationally driven is pertinent, and the observations of Clapsis, Tsetsis and Prodromou help to tease out potential differences between public good and Christian good, particularly for people and societies in post-Soviet contexts.

Chapter 3 – Consensus Model of Decision-making

Introduction

The introduction of the consensus model of decision-making in the WCC is perhaps the most visible change that arises from the work of the Special Commission. The Final Report itself holds out the hope that such a change will 'enhance participation' (2003, 12), while acknowledging that at issue are the links between culture and decision-making, minority and majority opinions, and participation and ownership of decision-making. The fleeting section of the Final Report, which alights on what might be called 'parity participation'(2003, 16) reminds us that this is not exclusively an institutional governance exercise, but is set in a wider context of debates about how to 'do democracy differently' (Love 2003, 75).

Frequently, the wider context associated with the WCC is the UN system. Political scientists acknowledge that in recent years the UN has come under increasing pressure from civil society groups to model a democracy that goes beyond its formal principle. The emphasis, as in the wording from the Special Commission, is on participation and participatory democracy. Danielle Archibugi (1998) offers the term 'cosmopolitan democracy' to describe this emphasis. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2005) prefers the term, 'subaltern democracy'. Both models incorporate the discourse of heterogeneity, which is helpful to the WCC, because it is not only an institution where churches express their internal democracy (their choice of representatives) and democracy among themselves (their decision-making together), or try to democratically manage the global ecumenical movement; it is a place where heterogeneous ecclesial realities engage with each other.

At Thessaloniki in 1998, the Orthodox churches had stated that the present structure of the WCC makes meaningful Orthodox participation difficult and even impossible for some (2003, 5). Cosmopolitan democracy or subaltern cosmopolitanism do not wholly resolve this participatory problem. Santos acknowledges that his vision of 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' faces difficult questions: 'How to ensure a balanced participation from movements and organisations from other parts of the world? How to maximise the fullness of this participation, in other words, how to make this participation a factor in internal democratisation?' (2005, 55). The questions, which for Santos are related to factors of

power and geography in 'subaltern cosmopolitanism', are equally applicable to the consensus model of decision-making in the WCC.

Experiences in Latin America, in the theology of liberation and the struggle of social movements, bring together some of these questions. If the Zapatista uprising in Mexico, in 1994, is an example of when 'history moves onto a stage where the powerful no longer write all the lines' (McNally, 2006, 1), it echoes the teaching of the theology of liberation that the expression 'people of God' associated with the 'option for the poor' conveys the idea of 'social struggle'. There is something to be recovered, something to be contested, and something to be resignified through the consensus model of decision-making. In David McNally's colourful expression, 'it is the oppressed of the world who represent democracy' (2006, 7).

The Orthodox have highlighted the dimension of struggle to participating in the ecumenical movement and the WCC. The consensus model of decision-making is a response to this struggle, which brings to the fore a counter-hegemonic ecumenism. This counter-hegemonic ecumenism is not about governance of the WCC, but it is about enhanced participation in the ecumenical movement, which is both ecclesial and social in its manifestations. It invites a shift of perspective from taking control of institutional levers of power to addressing the changes in the ecumenical movement which are not fully reflected in the governance structures of the movement. It is possible to understand the Orthodox struggle as a subaltern struggle, although it would in turn be appropriate for the theology of liberation and social movements to question if this form of subaltern struggle is necessarily counter-hegemonic.

Summary of Special Commission

The World Council of Churches, formed in Amsterdam in 1948, reflected the institutional models of its time. The Bretton Woods institutions (the UN, the IMF and the World Bank) emerged in the same post-war period, in an attempt by governments to structure an international response to the problems of conflict, peace and reconciliation. Other movements, including the ecumenical movement, followed the patterns emerging around the Bretton Woods consensus and established their own international institutions. In recounting 'the beginnings' of the modern ecumenical movement, reference is often made to Edinburgh 1910, lay movements in the churches, and the Ecumenical Patriarch's encyclical of January 1920, which called for a league of churches, similar to the League of

Nations.[42] The wider context stimulating both the 1920 encyclical and the impulse from missionary and lay movements towards ecumenism is the two world wars. John Nurser in his book, *For all Peoples and all Nations* (2005), states that he wants to 'explore the contribution of the World Council of Churches to the establishment of a "global order" in the United Nations Organisation' (2005, xiii). Nurser's book locates ecumenism firmly within (and contributing to) the post-World War II institutional models responding to peace and reconciliation. Perhaps it is not surprising that 50 years later, in a significantly different world that had experiences of post-colonialism, post-communism and the growing presence of non-state actors at a global level, the Special Commission would specifically address models of decision-making in the WCC and propose changes. The consensus model of decision-making, which is presented in the Final Report, is 'an attempt to implement the accepted ecumenical aim of enabling all representatives and member churches to be heard within a committed fellowship which accepts differences of theology, cultural and ecclesial tradition' (2003, 34).

The final report of the Special Commission recognises four principal challenges facing the WCC with regard to decision-making. Firstly, it recognises that different cultures deploy different models of decision-making. The Final Report suggests that the model of decision-making in the WCC reflected that of the dominant churches in 1948, which the Final Report names as 'Europe and North America' (2003, 27). Secondly, and related to the first challenge, the Final Report observes that different churches have different styles of decision-making. The two cases specifically identified in the Final Report are the contrasts between model types of decision-making procedures. It speaks of the adversarial 'parliamentary model' where a proposal is debated 'for' or 'against'. This is contrasted with more exploratory styles of proposals, where a proposal lists various options, or even opposite opinions, to bring people together (a so-called 'Conciliar model'), which the Final Report suggests is more familiar to some Orthodox churches, the Uniting Church of Australia and the Religious Society of Friends (2003, 29). Thirdly, the Final Report identifies a pressing need to address and include the voice of minorities in the decision-making processes of the WCC. The Final Report was particularly concerned with the minority Orthodox voice, which, it recognised, in a voting system of 50 per cent-plus-one, can easily be ignored, and which has been ignored in practice. This has provoked aspects of fear of participation in the WCC in Orthodox member churches and even reticence

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[42]   'The patriarchal letter laid down two fundamental conditions for rapprochement and fellowship: (1) the 'elimination of mutual mistrust and bitterness between different churches', and (2) the rekindling and strengthening of love among the churches … Its concrete proposals for joint endeavours in Christian witness and mutual assistance are predominantly practical' (Sabev, 1996, 10).

regarding ecumenical agendas, which are not seen to be reflective of Orthodox concerns. Fourthly, in a diverse fellowship of churches, the Final Report suggests that it is necessary to find ways to be more inclusive of all participants, which it describes as a framework for meetings that allows 'more room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection' (2003, 28).

While the Special Commission was concerned with the work of the WCC, the discussion its Final Report provokes includes themes familiar to the discussions facing many international organisations formed in the middle of the twentieth century. The link between culture and decision-making, the influence of majority and minority opinions and agendas, upon decision-making, and the participation and ownership of decision-making are documented in the UN system, for example. Maria do Céu Pinto's work documenting the work of the UN and assessing its continued and changing role in international affairs, states that, 'Reform of the UN is a recurring theme … Since the 1960s, a decade of change for the organisation, the proposals to improve its working have been constant' (2010, 271).[43] It can be inferred from Céu Pinto's observation that the discussion channelled through the work of the Special Commission of the WCC is not exclusive to the WCC. In addition to the UN discussions, changes to the 'World Order' have exposed other fora to similar methodological questions about decision-making. In a different, and more recent, context, it has also been an important topic of discussion in the emerging World Social Forum (WSF) as it considers how to practice democracy in relation to responsibility and representation (Santos 2005, 46) In the next section, reference is made to both these examples of the UN and the WSF with regard to global governance and participation.

Decision-making: The UN and the WCC

For some time now, the WCC has been engaged in an exercise to define its role in relation to a world in 'transition and transformation' (Sabev 1996, 15). In the late 1990s, the WCC adopted a policy document, *Towards a Common Understanding and Vision* (1997), as the culmination of a process of study and consultation aimed at addressing key concerns of the ecumenical movement as it moved into the twenty-first century. The twin approaches of 'deepening' and 'broadening' the fellowship of churches were key emerging pointers from the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) process for the WCC. The CUV process identified a need, which it described as a deepening of the fellowship and mutual accountability among member churches, as well as a need to broaden the fellowship beyond member churches. There is an internal and external dimension to this

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[43] Author's translation.

understanding developed by the CUV process. These twin approaches are addressed by the proposed consensus model of decision-making that emerges from the work of the Special Commission. The Final Report recognises that decision-making within the WCC and in the wider ecumenical movement needs to reflect the world in 'transition and transformation', to borrow the expression of the Orthodox theologian and ecumenical leader, Todor Sabev (1996, 15).

Formed around a newly emerging world order at the close of World War II, the United Nations was to structure global governmental interaction and stability until the close of the twentieth century. Rittberger and Zangl (2006) argue that the UN and other international organisations have contributed to a model of global governance that is able to 'encourage and stabilise international co-operation among sovereign states' (2006, 215). At the same time – and of interest to this chapter – the UN system has inspired the formation and work of other global structures – notably for the churches, the WCC – as John Nurser demonstrates in his book, *For all Peoples and All Nations* (2005). Nurser notes that the WCC under the general secretary Visser't Hooft, nurtured an opinion that the new UN system was the 'principle legitimiser of world organisations' (2005, 127). This opinion also gave the new WCC an agenda with which to work. It began by making a strong contribution to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, under the guidance of Sir Kenneth Grubb[44] and Otto Frederick Nolde[45] (2005, 126).

However, by the 1990s, serious questions were being posed to the global order represented by the United Nations, as well as to the UN institutions themselves. According to Danielle Archibugi (1998), the two most pressing issues for the UN to address as it moved into the twenty-first century were questions related to representation and democracy. The UN 'is the most complex and ambitious international organisation that has ever existed with an ethos of democracy' (1998, 245). At the same time, the UN has come under increasing pressure from civil society groups to model a democracy that goes beyond its formal principle. Duncan Green in his book, *From Poverty to Power* (2008), argues for an international approach to overcome equality that is based on 'men and women in communities everywhere who are equipped with education, enjoying good health, with rights, dignity and voice' (2008, 428). This people-centred approach should be supported

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[44] Grubb was the British son of missionary parents, a UK government civil servant (overseeing Latin America, following his connections to the region), and the chair of the WCC Churches' Commission on International Affairs from 1947–1968 (Nurser, 2006, 135).

[45] Nolde was an American academic with interests in theology and education who became the Protestant voice in the USA with regard to international affairs post-1945. He was director of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs from 1947–1969 and a close friend of the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles.

by what Green calls 'effective states' and a 'democratic system of global governance' (2008, 428). Green's proposal develops Archibugi's earlier thinking.

Archibugi had noted that 'the peoples' invoked in the UN Charter are actually excluded from the UN system. Instead, states and their diplomats represent 'the peoples' (1998). According to Archibugi, the UN charter invokes 'the peoples' of the world, however, in reality, it has consistently failed to engage 'the peoples', preferring instead an intergovernmental structure. State governments nominate diplomats to engage in the UN system, which is formally a process of intergovernmental dialogue and action. Its diplomats formally represent each state: the question of representation in the UN system is an ongoing debate.

The second issue that Archibugi highlights is democracy within the UN system. The UN has acted as a democratic forum of sorts – one country, one vote. Archibugi suggests that this UN democracy has three principle manifestations: democracy within states; democracy among states; and democratic management of global issues. In this way, the UN models procedural democratic practice in the institution and also encourages a democracy that transcends state boundaries. Archibugi calls this form of democracy 'cosmopolitan democracy', and he sees it as an expression that captures the diversity and complexity of decision-making in international fora (1998).[46]

Analysed from the perspective of a UN system, and therefore not necessarily theologically, the pertinent questions posed to, and raised by some within, the UN system are similar to those posed to the WCC and the ecumenical movement. Two of the substantial conclusions from the Special Commission relate precisely to representation and democracy. For example, the most tangible result from the Final Report of the Special Commission is the consensus model of decision-making now used in WCC meetings (2003, 12). In the opening paragraph of the section of the Final Report, which addresses the consensus model of decision-making, the Final Report states, firstly, that any change in procedures would 'enhance the participation of all members in the various meetings' (2003, 12). The principle argument for change relates to participation. It seeks to enhance participation at all levels, which bears a resemblance to Archibugi's proposed 'cosmopolitan democracy' in that it invites participation as an institution and also within its constituent parts. In the case of the WCC, the consensus model of decision-making enhances the participation in

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[46] Archibugi has continued to publish on 'cosmopolitan democracy', rebutting criticism of his theory and refining his concept. Currently he advocates a 'cosmopolitical democracy' as a development of his original concept. According to Archibugi 'cosmopolitical democracy' tries to account for heterogeneity within states and to advance the use of democracy at all levels of decision-making (2000, 143).

WCC meetings, but as the Final Report recalls, it also reflects cultures of decision-making in member churches. There is a diversity and complexity in decision-making addressed by the consensus model of decision-making.

The most common example cited in support of the consensus model of decision-making is the fact that the Orthodox member churches represent 25 per cent of the membership of the WCC and as a minority often felt marginalised by decisions in a system where securing 50 per cent plus one was enough to carry a decision. This disparity in 'voting power' is not, according to the Final Report, the central issue facing the WCC, rather it is one manifestation of deeper structural imbalances in the decision-making processes which excludes minority voices (2003, 28). The consensus model of decision-making proposed by the Final Report seeks to preserve and include minority voices and positions in decision-making processes. In addition, it proposes that the Orthodox member churches secure 'parity' participation in parts of the WCC, altering significantly ideas of representation prevalent in the WCC (2003, 32). The parity proposal in the Final Report draws on the concept that Orthodox churches' membership reflects a significant proportion of global Christianity in a way that membership of the WCC does not take into account. In other words, the proposal draws inspiration from factors outside the WCC governance structure.

Exploring the exercise of democracy within the context of the WCC and the wider ecumenical movement is a more complex theme and this will be studied in the following chapter. In the Final Report, no explicit mention is made of the word 'democracy'. Instead the former decision-making procedures of the WCC are set within contexts of decision-making that are based on European and North American church councils and secular bodies, including parliaments (2003, 27). Clearly, not all church councils and secular bodies, as well as parliaments, can be understood to be democratic. However, the model that has provided a framework for the new proposal from the Final Report for a move to a consensus model of decision-making – that which has been developed and used by the Uniting Church in Australia – is more explicit in naming specifically the desire to move away from what it calls the 'Westminster parliamentary system' (Tabart 2003, 2). The 'Westminster parliamentary system' is an example of democracy. Therefore, in light of political science, it is possible to explore what kind of democracy the WCC is proposing.

Democratic Participation in the WCC and the WSF

Janice Love, in a contribution reflecting on the work of the Special Commission, draws on political science to suggest that the Orthodox leaders, 'clearly wanted a greater share of power in an institution that had for some decades addressed an expanding agenda' (2003, 73). She suggests that two outcomes from the proposed changes to decision-making in the WCC are a potential loss of the 'prophetic voice' (2003, 75), what in other international institutions is called 'moving at the pace of the slowest wagon', and an opportunity to create a less adversarial and more democratic approach to Christian relations (2003, 75). She identifies a positive and a negative potential outcome from the proposed changes. However, Love offers an overall upbeat assessment of the changes proposed by the Final Report calling the churches to 'do democracy differently … to promote more just and peaceful relations' (2003, 75).

This preamble serves to demonstrate that the ecumenical utopia, embodied by the WCC, is situated in a wider historical context – a post-1989 world and a world where the UN system – loosely including organisations like the WCC – is itself under sustained scrutiny and questioning. However, the UN and the WCC are both multilateral membership organisations. Both have shared the use of exclusive decision-making models, and questions have arisen regarding their participatory processes. These questions have been brought into sharper focus by functioning alternatives, particularly the World Social Forum (WSF). It is also perhaps evident that the WSF proposal brings forward a vision for multilateral membership organisations that respond to a post-colonial world, which is different to the post-war world that birthed the UN and the WCC.

If it is true that the UN system is facing sustained questioning and the questions are being forged in different environments. The same can be said for the WCC. Indeed, many of the themes arising through the thinking of the Special Commission are reflected in other international debates within civil society organisations, and are being led by the World Social Forum. The WCC is itself a member of the International Organising Committee of the WSF (Santos 2005, 221). Therefore, as with the historical influence and relationship between the WCC and the UN, which was outlined earlier in this chapter, it seems appropriate to consider the relevance of some WSF debates on decision-making. The global system is changing and the WSF is emerging as a forum to debate these changes. The WCC and WSF are also, according to Santos, in some form of working relationship.

In his evaluation of the World Social Forum, Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues that the WSF is neither a hegemonic representative of a global movement and that no one person or group represents the WSF or can speak on its behalf (2005, 39). The self-understanding of

the WCC is not dissimilar to this WSF position. It cannot speak for the churches on ecclesial matters and is not itself a super-church (1997, 8). It is not 'the hegemonic representative', to use the words of Santos. This is the internal-looking institutional perspective. At the same time, the WCC now clearly understands itself as part of the ecumenical movement; a prominent part, but not a hegemonic representative that can speak on behalf of the ecumenical movement (1997, 9).

The emerging dynamics and conversations in the WSF could contribute to facilitating the conversations within the WCC, in a similar manner to the influence of previous debates within the UN on the WCC in formation. Interestingly, Boaventura de Sousa Santos understands the WSF as a 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' (2005, 35). It is diverse in its expression, embraces many different kinds of organisations and movements. It is participatory and proposes a counter-hegemonic globalisation, rooted in participation and protest. There is no hierarchical or centring authority. This is slightly different from the 'cosmopolitan democracy' that Archibugi presents in relation to the UN system. The 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' of the WSF expresses itself differently. Santos affirms that it, 'celebrates diversity … includes many different kinds of organisations, understands itself as a place of encounter where organisations and movements can freely interact, and as an incubator of new networks created by those who participate in [the WSF]' (2005, 38). The key difference between Archibugi's 'cosmopolitan democracy' and Santos's 'subaltern democracy' appears to be the recognition and inclusion of many different kinds of organisations. Archibugi's 'cosmopolitan democracy' perhaps has connotations of an elite and sophisticated democratic project. Santos 'subaltern democracy' embraces the anomalies of asymmetrical actors in civil society in a more comprehensive manner.

Santos is also willing to concede that his vision of 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' faces difficult questions such as: 'How to ensure a balanced participation from movements and organisations from other parts of the world? How to maximise the fullness of this participation, in other words, how to make this participation a factor in internal democratisation?' (2005, 55). Both questions raised by Santos are arguably applicable to the WCC. Indeed, perhaps similar questions are already being posed; only in ecumenical language. His questions are also addressed by Archibugi, although through a different lens. Archibugi argues for a democratisation of participation in decision-making. Santos's approach is to advocate that maximising the fullness of participation democratises decision-making. The implication of Archibugi's model is that the institution needs to take the initiative to democratise participation. It can perhaps be described as a reformist

approach. Santos's model begins with the people – or organisations and groups. Its bottom-up approach is perhaps a revolutionary road. The prioritisation of an institution-centred model of democratisation or a people-centred model of participation is an unresolved question in the proposals of the Final Report on a consensus model of decision-making.

The shifting global utopias, which influence the Final Report of the Special Commission, demonstrate, in the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Leonardo Avritzer that, 'there is no motive for democracy to assume only one form' (2003, 77). Democracy can take many forms. The adoption of the Final Report proposal to change decision-making procedures in the WCC, taps into this wider global discussion. However, to understand the changes as something broader than institutional management of the WCC (an area on which much of Jill Tabart's[47] reflection focusses (2003)), the following sections of this chapter will highlight some of the ongoing dialogues about global governance and decision-making processes.

The Practice of Decision-making

Robert Dahl's classic study of democracy, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (1971), highlights three necessary conditions for democracy: that citizens can formulate preferences; that citizens can signify preferences through public individual and collective action; and that citizens can have preferences weighed equally without discrimination.

Part of the frustrations with the WCC, expressed by the Orthodox member churches at a meeting in Thessaloniki in 1998, turns precisely on these three conditions: 'The present structure of the WCC makes meaningful Orthodox participation increasingly difficult and even for some impossible' (2003, 5). The Orthodox member churches express frustration with the Protestant nature of formulations in the WCC, feel unable to make an Orthodox contribution to the WCC, and consider themselves as a discriminated minority in the life of the WCC. Specifically, the Orthodox leaders meeting in Thessaloniki use the word 'participation' to convey their feelings of dissatisfaction and not, interestingly, a word which is more often applied to discussions of participation in the WCC, that of 'representation'. Moreover, the official title of the Special Commission refers to Orthodox *participation* in the WCC, not Orthodox *representation* in the WCC. Yet, subsequently, the work of the Permanent Committee and other governing committees of the WCC have

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[47] Jill Tabart is a physician who was President of the Uniting Church of Australia at the time of the introduction of consensus procedures to her church assembly. She helped to design and implement consensus procedures in international ecumenical organisations including the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the WCC. She has written a book reflecting on consensus in the churches, *Coming to Consensus: a case study for the churches* (2003).

tended to focus primarily on Orthodox representation in the WCC. This aspect of the discussion will be addressed in chapter four.

It is for this reason that, in this chapter, we are exploring concepts from political science regarding participation. To some extent, it can be understood to be the original 'complaint' from the Orthodox churches about the WCC, as recorded at Thessaloniki in 1998. It is also the wider underlying issue to the institutional focus that discussions around representation often bring to the fore. Moreover, as the twentieth century demonstrates, the emerging participatory trend has been interpreted as a call for more democracy.[48] The discussions in the WCC reflect this wider trend.

Robert Dahl's theory of polyarchy presents the conditions that should be the basis of any evaluation of democratic participation. It is necessary to acknowledge that Dahl's study focusses on state democracy. In the context of the WCC, obviously, the kind of democracy hoped for – while hopefully participatory – is not state based. According to Rittberger and Zangl, the WCC is an international non-governmental umbrella organisation (2006, 9). They describe this as meaning that the WCC is capable of fulfilling a role as collective actor and providing an arena for diplomacy, exchange of ideas, and co-ordination of strategies (2006, 6). It is this role of collective actor and arena for diplomacy, exchange of ideas and co-ordination of strategies that was questioned by the Orthodox churches' meeting at Thessaloniki.

The Final Report does acknowledge that democracy within the WCC has been influenced by different groupings. It identifies these groupings as perhaps including, among other things, ecclesial, political, economic and social alliances. In other words, while accepting tacitly the criticism that the Orthodox churches levelled at the WCC, the Final Report points to other different influences beyond the ecclesial factors identified by the Orthodox churches. The WCC obviously has an ecclesial basis and its democracy more often than not is influenced by primarily ecclesial concerns (2003, 28). However, it is an arena for diplomacy, exchange of ideas and co-ordination of strategies that sometimes does not follow ecclesial realities. While the first article of the WCC constitution articulates its ecclesial basis succinctly as a fellowship of churches, it is more diverse in practice

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[48] This affirmation is not necessarily reflected in 'democracy within states', but draws on the ideas expressed by Duncan Green (2008) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2003) whereby democratic participation in global institutions has been an ongoing theme, as has democratic management of the global world.

following the work of the Special Commission.[49] The definition of ecclesial for use in the WCC was significantly altered by the Final Report of the Special Commission.

The WCC is not only a place where churches express their internal democracy (their choice of representatives) and democracy among themselves (their decision-making together) and try to democratically manage the global ecumenical movement. It is, also, a place where differing ecclesial realities engage with each other.[50] The Final Report states:

> 'churches' … could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a region, or within the same confession, may determine to participate in the World Council of Churches as one church.   (2003, 34)

However, unlike in the UN state-based system, the basic unit of participation – church – is not necessarily legally defined in the same way for each member church, as the Special Commission demonstrates, and subsequent rule changes to the WCC Constitution confirm. The arena is cosmopolitan, in the sense developed by Archibugi.

To apply the term 'cosmopolitan democracy' or 'cosmopolitical democracy', in the context of the WCC, brings out different aspects of the concept from that envisaged by Archibugi in the context of the UN. And this is why it is also important to apply Archibugi's concept alongside that developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. In the WCC, cosmopolitan democracy can be understood to be an attempt to enable ecclesial groups in all their heterogeneity to formulate and signify preferences, followed by having these preferences weighed equally in a council where collective action (co-ordinated strategies) is then formulated according to the preferences. By incorporating the term 'cosmopolitan democracy' into ecumenical narratives, the WCC potentially challenges itself to open up to the heterogeneity of the ecumenical movement. It is an acknowledgement of both the heterogeneity of churches and the ecumenical movement. However, Archibugi's 'cosmopolitan democracy' should also include critical awareness of Santos's 'subaltern cosmopolitanism', to ensure that minorities' preferences can be weighed with an awareness of the potential asymmetry of the dialogues and exchanges in the WCC arena.

From Ecclesial-centred Ecumenism to People-centred Ecumenism

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[49] The inclusion of new categories of membership suggested by the Final Report – groupings of confessions, regions, or other models – is addressed more fully in chapter four.

[50] This brings to the fore Archibugi's concept of cosmopolitan democracy, which accounts for heterogeneity within states. In the case of the WCC, it allows consideration of the heterogeneity within and between churches.

At the WCC Assembly in 2006, the Moderator (Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia) reported on 'a new period of ecumenical history' (2007, 120). The first significant development that this Orthodox hierarch identified in this new period was that:

> institutional ecumenism began to generate indifference and even alienation, and ecumenism, as a movement pertaining to the whole people of God, started to acquire predominance. Ecumenism is steadily coming out from the narrow confines of institution and even going beyond the churches. Ecumenism is marginal for some churches, while it appears as a top priority for ecumenical agencies and action groups.   (2007, 121)

Aram I presented and interpreted this people-centred movement in binary opposition to institutional ecumenism. He suggested, too, that this was an ecumenism 'going beyond the churches' (2007, 121), however, he did not explore the ecclesial implications of this statement for the ecumenical movement, and for the WCC in particular, arising from this perceived shift.

Instead, Aram I describes the 'Churches Acting Together' movement as the example of this new people-centred ecumenism. To embrace people-centred ecumenism, or even to include it within the procedural framework of the WCC, would be an ambitious step, and it would require an ecclesiology beyond that currently practised in the WCC – and even in churches-together models, which still rely on mutual recognition by churches and participation and representation of church hierarchies. Nevertheless, it would potentially be a move demonstrating that the WCC is able to make the transition from the old world order – an institutional model of church representation and rapprochement – towards a new participatory and people-centred model.

The people-centred ecumenism, to which Aram I draws attention, has parallels with the 'peoples of the earth' debates in the UN. The UN founding charter, as already noted, makes reference to 'the peoples of the earth' in an ambitious vision for managing the global order, but its practice of state–state diplomacy falls short of this wider vision. Both the UN and the WCC aspire to be institutions that engage more fully the energy generated from the peoples in their cosmopolitan arenas. Aram I's valid perception at the WCC Assembly in Brazil can perhaps be developed into an expansive ecclesiological contribution, with the aid of the theology of liberation's understanding of the 'people of God'.

In Latin America, the theological expression 'people of God' has frequently been associated with the 'option for the poor'. Part of the reason for this is ideological. In Spanish, the word *pueblo* can be used to signify the poor, popular classes in Latin

American societies. Therefore, the 'people of God' is frequently interpreted as the 'poor people of God', or the excluded and the marginalised. (In borrowing the term from Boaventura de Sousa Santos, it refers to the subaltern peoples). This ideological slant served proponents of the theology of liberation in the post-1959 era. According to José Comblin, in Latin America, the word *povo* or *pueblo* signifies a group of the population that dwells in the countryside, the shanty towns, the indigenous peoples, the black population descendants of slavery, and the mixed races (2002, 90). But, above all, the expression 'people of God' associated with the 'option for the poor' conveys the idea of 'social struggle' (2002, 90). Comblin states that this aspect of the expression is not fully understood in the use of the word 'people' in European languages and neither is it incorporated into European forms of theology, which often look instead for the biblical roots of this expression.[51]

Aram I's use of the expression 'people of God' to distinguish from the institutional, and therefore ecclesial-centred, ecumenism also holds out the possibility articulated by José Comblin of a subaltern ecumenism rooted in the peoples' struggles. Many of those listening to Aram I's speech, particularly those from Latin America, have in their ecumenical formation the associations between 'people of God' and the 'option for the poor', between theological expression and social struggle. In other words, the model presented by Aram I – that of an energetic people-centred ecumenism and that of an alienating ecclesial-centred ecumenism – also has the potential to introduce or uncover the social struggles of and within ecumenism. It holds the potential to move the WCC and the ecumenical movement to a dialogue with contemporary forms of, what can loosely be called, world order; forms of participation and engagement with models of power in decision-making. In some ways it is not too dissimilar to what John Nurser traces in the 1948 emergence of the WCC, only the terms of reference have changed. The ordering is no longer centred around the UN system. It is inspired by being a place of encounter where people can freely interact, bringing in subaltern struggles and moving beyond narrow ecclesial concerns. This kind of people-centred ecumenism is also significantly different to other expanded visions of ecumenism, most notably the Global Christian Forum. Later in this chapter there is a critique of the Global Christian Forum. In the next section, the methodology of the theology of liberation is applied to people-centred ecumenism. It is necessary to consider what the theology of liberation calls the 'first step', and then to

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[51] The WCC Faith and Order document, *The Church: towards a common vision* (2013), demonstrates Comblin's point in a section headed 'The Prophetic, Priestly and Royal People of God'. The section traces the use of the expression 'people of God' though the Old Testament and New Testament, without reference to any other sources (like social struggle) for the expression.

assess examples of people-centred movements and their decision-making models in the world today.

People-centred Movements and Social Struggle

Marcella Althaus-Reid and Ivan Petrella introduce the papers from The World Forum on Theology and Liberation by reminding readers that: 'Liberation theologies were born with the promise of being theologies that would not rest with talking about liberation and instead would actually further liberation' (2007, x). The World Forum on Theology and Liberation, while practical, is also in dialogue with the World Social Forum and its demand for 'Another Possible World', as the contribution to the book from Luis Carlos Susin reminds the reader (2007, 3). The specific contribution of the theology of liberation is to provide a reflection on the practices emergent at the WSF and its contributing movements. David McNally's study of the global movements that contribute to the WSF agenda is presented below to bring the 'first step' from the theology of liberation into the necessary ecumenical reflections on people-centred ecumenism.

According to McNally, the 1994 uprising in the Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas, Mexico is an example of when 'history moves on to a stage where the powerful no longer write all the lines' (2006, 1). The Zapatistas and *subcomandante* Marcos appeared as the first post-modern revolutionary movement, in the sense that it moved revolutionary theories beyond traditional Marxist-Leninist understandings of peasant uprisings and the exercise of political power. The Zapatistas focussed on themes of dignity, participation, and creating an oppositional culture through the use of social media (Harvey 1998). Their actions and their words gave rise to a form of protest that was people centred.[52] The people-centred protest, captured in the words of the first Lacandon Jungle Declaration in 1994, emphasises the continuity of the struggle: 'we are products of five hundred years of struggle' (2001, 13). Furthermore, it underlines the search for participatory democracy: 'we ask for your decided participation … until the basic demands of our people have been met, by forming a government for our country that is free and democratic' (2001, 15). McNally comments of the Zapatistas: 'they had brazenly announced that it is the oppressed of the world who represent democracy' (2006, 7). It is a practical example of Santos's 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' and also an historical example of the theology of liberation's 'peoples' struggle'.

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[52] Marcos would always insist that it was people led. This is why he uses the title *subcomandante* (sub-commander). The *comandante* (commander) is the people and their struggle. It is also why he uses a mask, so that the peoples' struggle does not become identified with his face.

Through their struggle, the Zapatistas issued an invitation to an Intercontinental *Encuentro* for Humanity against Neo-liberalism in August 1996. Women, men, children and elders from five continents and 47 countries attended the first Encuentro (2001, 107). Marcos called it 'a reflected image of the possible and forgotten' (2001, 113). He is aware that the Encuentro opens a space for many worlds to exist, affirms those who would resist 'Power' and struggles towards the necessity of speaking and listening to those who would be forgotten. Others have seen it as a new experiment in participatory democracy (Ponce de León, 2001, xxiii). Juana Ponce de León suggests that the Zapatista experiment forges new political possibilities where efforts to create a democratic space can be debated and advanced. Others, like David McNally, view the Zapatistas as an expression of people-centred movements that protest hegemonic projects (2006, 289). McNally's Marxist class analysis of the Zapatistas presents them as reconciling one of the long-standing divisions in Latin American revolutionary movements by linking together rural and urban working classes and incorporating the solidarity of students and intellectuals. Moving in another direction, but continuing to affirm the subaltern struggle of peoples, Walter Mignolo describes the Zapatistas as expressing a local history critique of coloniality (2000, 84). This critique embraces aspects of Marxism and modifies it with Amerindian cosmology, language and epistemology. It moves the Zapatistas beyond an experiment that only resists colonial oppression to recognising its wider implication as enunciating fragmentation of the colonial as a universal project. The recognition in Mignolo is that the world of participation, struggle, people and democracy is a world beyond being an alternative to coloniality and is a creative articulation of fragmented coloniality or subaltern stories.

The World Social Forum embraces this Zapatista experiment along with other experiences from social movements and NGOs and, in the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, offers a 'utopian dimension' (2005, 15) to alternatives for the world. In another book, Santos sketches out this 'utopian dimension' to democracy by including counter-hegemonic conceptions of democracy that emerge in the second half of the twentieth century (2003, 50). Santos notes that counter-hegemonic democracy is not a natural system (this observation is also applicable to hegemonic democracy). It requires a language to organise society; to organise the relationship between society and the state, and this will be expressed through a structuring of institutions. In a counter-hegemonic democracy, Santos affirms that the indeterminate nature of democracy implies a positive rupture with tradition(s) in the ongoing search for consensus among participants. Therefore, Santos is suggesting that an extension of actors – shared by liberation movements and mobilisations

for democratisation – directly challenges the closed canon of hegemonic projects (2003, 59). The following section presents these two concepts in relation to the WCC.

Counter-hegemonic Decision-making in the WCC

Santos proposes that a counter-hegemonic democracy follows Habermas's proposal that individuals can problematise in public a private inequality (2003, 52). In this way, democratic participation cannot legitimise a governing system. Rather, it opens the possibility for diversity, plurality and minority discourse that has been deliberately excluded from certain models of representative democracy.

Returning to the introduction to this chapter, it presented John Nurser's reading of the WCC in formation (the period leading to the first assembly at Amsterdam, 1948, and the years immediately following the formation of the WCC) that supported the legitimising of the UN system through the commitment of the new ecumenical organisation to the Human Rights agenda and charter making its way through the UN system In turn, the WCC expected the UN system to legitimise its function within the newly emerging post-war order. This is an example of a hegemonic practice of decision-making in the WCC. The WCC described by John Nurser is looking for a role in the emerging post-war global governance system. By supporting the agenda of others – Nurser takes as his concrete example the commitment and work of individuals in the ecumenical movement to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the WCC is trying to establish its legitimacy as a global actor for the churches. It understands that participation is restricted to finding a legitimate role and function for a governing system, be it state based or ecclesial based, which is certainly an important aspect for consideration in a world recovering from a divisive war. However, following the work of theorists such as Habermas and Santos, and practical examples from social movements (the Zapatistas and the WSF), I believe it is possible to understand the proposals from the Final Report of the Special Commission as an invitation to, and an affirmation of, counter hegemonic decision-making in the WCC.

The consensus model of decision-making in the WCC reflects what Santos identifies as the 'institutionalisation of cultural diversity' (2003, 53).[53] The result is a 'dispute about cultural signification', which leads towards practices of 're-signification' (2003, 53). Examples of this can be found in the Final Report. Konrad Raiser's introduction to the Final Report states: 'The special commission has initiated a process that could lead to change in our institutional culture' (2003, 3). Those changes include: recognising that

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[53] Santos uses Williams's (1981) definition of culture as a dimension of all institutions, be it economic, social or political (2002, 53).

European and North American decision-making procedures need to be contested, and be contested by procedures from other churches and cultures (2003, 27); understanding that decision-making procedures are not about winning the majority vote, but about listening to minority opinions, which is understood in Habermas's terms as problematising in public an inequality (2003, 29); and, finally that practices of resignification are encouraged in the new model.

It is this final point that can cause most disquiet in the WCC among some participants. Sometimes reaction to the Final Report is reported as interpreting the Special Commission as an 'Orthodox victory', as the 'Frequently asked questions' section published in response to the Final Report in The Ecumenical Review demonstrates (2003, 47). Orthodox churches have been able to contest European and North American decision-making procedures and have been able to resignify the institutional culture – interpreted by the Orthodox and others as an inclusion of minority voices, opinions and perspectives in the WCC decision-making procedures. Indeed, the leading Coptic Orthodox bishop, Metropolitan Anba Bishoy of Damiette reflects this tendency in his article leading into the Ninth Assembly at Porto Alegre (2005, 88). However, it has also been contested by others who express concerns about cultural diversity, plurality and minority discourse, including the resignification of the hegemonic ecumenical narrative by the Orthodox churches. The proposed changes to 'ecumenical worship' (discussed in chapter five) suggested by Orthodox participants offer one example of this process of resignification of the institutional culture by Orthodox participants and highlight the ensuing unease at such proposed changes among other WCC constituencies. It also begs the question about the resignification of the ecumenical movement and the WCC as its institutional manifestation.

I believe that the resignification of institutional culture in the WCC, through the work of the Special Commission, is positive for the ecumenical movement. It has problematised, in public, existing inequalities in the ecumenical movement. It has reminded the ecumenical movement that its language and institutional options are not natural, but need to be continuously ruptured to ensure ongoing participation. Where there is still a debate to be had is in the projection of the Orthodox as a subaltern or minority church in the ecumenical movement. Clearly, in line with Mignolo's suggestion that local histories critique colonising projects, the Orthodox critique of the ecumenical movement is an example of subaltern resistance and presence. (The same may well be attributed to the Orthodox, when interpreted through Said's categories of an ecumenical movement that Orientalises the Orient. This is explored in chapter five). However, it is difficult to stretch this analysis to

that which is forwarded by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and the example of the World Social Forum or by the Zapatistas and the theology of liberation.

The Orthodox critique of the ecumenical movement cannot be understood as a counter-hegemonic project as promoted by the Zapatistas because it does not embrace a people-centred ecumenism. It does not present a liberating ecumenism, which the theology of liberation calls for in its historical praxis, because it resignifies cultures by projecting its own culture on to them. In other words, the Orthodox critique of decision-making procedures in the WCC is not a counter-hegemonic project, but an alternative and competing colonial project. This is rooted in an Orthodox ecclesiological approach that induces understandings that the WCC is a Church as canon movement (ecclesially centred) restricting the Church as charisma (people centred), which contests and critiques hegemonic decision-making.

In the same way, the Global Christian Forum (GCF), while sharing a very similar title to the World Social Forum, is not a counter-hegemonic project. It is seeking to bring together confessional families and Christian movements from the twentieth century. The movements are described as ecumenical, evangelical and Pentecostal (van Beek 2009, 5). The proposal of the Global Christian Forum is described by Huibert van Beek as, 'promot[ing] more significant, more inclusive relationships among participants … transcending the limitations of existing frameworks, to think new thoughts, dream new dreams, and glimpse new visions' (2009, 5).[54] Chapter one of this thesis described the Orthodox objection to promoting ecclesiology in the ecumenical movement through a confessional understanding. It also offered examples of conflicting understandings and uses of the word confessional by different ecclesiologies. In addition, the GCF reinforces existing frameworks in hegemonic ecumenism by dividing twentieth-century Christianity into three movements, all of which derive from Protestant ecclesiologies, and are not inclusive of Orthodox ecclesiology or Orthodox histories of the twentieth century. For example, the Christian movements of twentieth-century Orthodoxy might be exiles, émigrés and empires. Chapters two and four explore in more depth the influence of these movements for Orthodoxy.

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[54] The WCC Eighth Assembly decided to set in motion two 'contradictory' processes. The GCF originally proposes a 'people-centred' vision for the ecumenical movement, which was 'lost' as the focus shifted to evangelical and Pentecostal movements and groups. At the same Assembly, the Special Commission is established as a church-centred process for the ecumenical movement. A fuller exploration of the two processes, and particularly their relationship to each other (including their visions for the ecumenical movement), is beyond the scope of this thesis, but remains a task for the ecumenical movement.

The GCF is not a counter hegemonic project, similar to the WSF, because it is not a people-centred movement with a subaltern voice. It is an ecclesial-centred movement of ecumenical, evangelical and Pentecostal elites. Despite trying to transcend the limitations of existing frameworks, it actually promotes a model of encounter and engagement that reinforces hegemonic projects. It is dependent on the three movements participating, which in turn is dependent on the three movements entrenching their separateness. The aspect of social struggle, embedded in peoples' movements, and an ecclesiology that is people centred, is not present in the GCF.

The second aspect that Santos presented in his description of counter-hegemonic democracy was how the extension of actors can challenge hegemonic projects. According to Santos, it is not sufficient to widen participation (co-option) in a decision-making model for it to become more participatory. Rather, there needs to be a vision and practice that is beyond the institutional and that 'recreat[es] political forms' (2003, 63). This is at the heart of the Zapatista experiment and it is encouraged by a theology of liberation that roots itself in historical praxis. It is part of the rupture of tradition(s) and the resignification of culture that is present in subaltern democracy. In the case of the ecumenical movement and the WCC, models and signification of participation ought not to be focussed on the institution (WCC) and its decision-making procedures, but on the ecumenical movement and its participants and actions.

This, in turn, touches upon one of the most sustained criticisms of the consensus model of decision-making, that it is 'stifling the prophetic voice' (2003, 45) of the WCC. Consensus and prophetic actions are interpreted as binary opposites in the reception of the Final Report. Santos's theory, however, suggests another interpretation. Consensus models of decision-making, which problematise publicly minority inequalities (voices), to some extent, delegitimise an institutional prophecy, which can be viewed as hegemonic politics. If the institutional culture is resignified, the prophetic voice – as in the case of the Zapatistas and the WSF – is no longer attached to the language of the decision but instead to the ongoing search for consensus which challenges closed ecumenical canons and introduces 'subaltern cosmopolitanism' as an historical 'peoples' struggle'. Consensus models of decision-making include resignification of ecumenical action and theory, and can potentially lead to liberating forms of ecumenism which extend beyond institutional public policy statements, which is the traditional interpretation of WCC prophetic witness.

Summary

The dialogue between Orthodox theology and the theology of liberation helps to construct an ecclesiology that critiques the hegemonic colonial project of the WCC. It questions the model of ecumenism reflecting the UN system and responding to a post-war political settlement. This chapter has set the conversations in the ecumenical movement in the broader 'another possible world' movements influenced by people-centred approaches. It invites churches to transgress the canonical boundaries in the ecumenical movement by embracing critiques that can move beyond hegemonic colonial projects and find a liberating, people-centred praxis.

This chapter proposes developing the *movement* in the ecumenical and the ecclesiological through developing an ecclesiology from different peripheries of the Church. The next chapter introduces perspectives from cultural studies, including philosophy, in unmasking the hegemonic and the periphery in the ecumenical movement. This unmasking also includes a critique of the Orthodox contributions to ecumenism and ecclesiology which seek to supplant the WCC hegemonic project rather than counter the WCC hegemonic project.

Chapter 4 – Membership and Representation

Summary of Special Commission

Article I of the Constitution and Rules of the WCC states, 'The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches' (2013, 37). The Special Commission proposed a change to the concept of member church in the WCC:

> The term 'church' as used in this article could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a country or region, or within the same confessional family may apply to belong to the fellowship of the Council. (2003, 34)

The proposed change, as outlined in Appendix C to the Final Report, was incorporated into the Constitution and Rules of the WCC.

The proposal from the Special Commission seeks to respond to two, primarily Orthodox, concerns. Firstly, some churches in the WCC would like to expand its membership, recognising that large parts of Christianity, particularly those designated 'evangelical' or 'Pentecostal' are not members of the WCC, or participants in the ecumenical movement. Potentially, this could lead to a further minority context for Orthodox member churches because new member churches will most likely be Protestant, Pentecostal or evangelical churches.[55] There is little scope for the expansion of Orthodox members. Secondly, Orthodox member churches question how admission of numerically small churches promotes Christian unity, particularly in cases where other churches of the same denomination in the same country are already members of the WCC (for example, several Presbyterian churches in Korea), or where the applicant church is either the result of an ecclesial split or a church-dividing missionary activity.

This chapter will focus on the second of these Orthodox questions. The first question is concerned primarily with institutional policy. Wider solutions have been proposed in other sections of the Final Report, notably concepts of 'parity participation' and a consensus model of decision-making which was explored in chapter three. It is the second question,

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[55] For a fuller discussion of the distinctions and ambiguities of the terms Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal see José Miguez Bonino's book, *Rostos do Protestantismo Latino—Americano* (Faces of Latin American Protestantism) (2003). Miguez Bonino asks whether the 'faces' of Latin American Protestantism are distinct because they designate different subjects, or whether they are different 'masks' for the one subject (2003, 7).

which relates to a broader academic discussion about representation, recognition, and post-colonialism, that is the subject of this chapter.

The Final Report suggests changes to the WCC understanding of the term 'church'. This change also has implications for the understanding of the unity of the Church. It introduces some factors not immediately recognisable as part of the hegemonic ecumenical agenda as an aid to the definitions and use of term the Church. The first of these factors is the very difficult and varied relationship between church and state, which for the Orthodox Church includes considering the country in which the church gathers and the country in which the leadership of the church meets. The second, and inter-related, factor is the transition from 'missionary movement' to 'indigenous church' – or in Orthodox terms, an autocephalous church – and the shift from colonialism to decolonisation and to the post-colonial. The third factor introduces the recognition by the churches of a post-colonial world, where unity is no longer a colonising concept. In other words, the unity of the church cannot be reduced to a search for a mutual recognition among canonical hierarchs (either persons or councils), whereby at source, what is being reinforced is a hegemonic model of the church that does not belong with the diaspora or subaltern perspectives. The Orthodox opposition to applications from several member churches of the same confessional family in the same country can be interpreted as a contesting of the colonial understanding and construct of the churches. Frequently, the applications from churches of the same confessional family in the same country, a product of the 'missionary movement', is a consequence of colonial politics in ecclesiology. The Orthodox understanding of 'Orthodox space' and catholicity (Tsetsis in Clapsis 2004), (the unity of the church in a given territorial locality) challenges this political colonial ecclesiology. The second aspect to contesting colonial constructs is the expressed opposition in the Orthodox Church to proselytism, which too can be interpreted as contesting Western forms of expansionism through a form of ecclesial colonialism.

Todor Sabev, drawing on Orthodox experiences of Christian division, calls this the 'human element in the church' (1996, 58). Importantly, for Sabev:

> Most of these difficulties were prompted by theological divergences and non-dogmatic factors, inextricably linked together – as they have always been. Difference of cultural background, linguistic limitations, shifting terminology of subtle matters of faith, long isolation and problems of communication between the churches scattered in various regions of the world had repercussions on mutual understanding and church unity.   (1996, 58)

In addition to being a divisive factor, it ought to be remembered that this 'human element' has also influenced the search for Christian unity.

Sabev's observations, coupled with the work of the Special Commission and its proposals regarding membership and representation, can be usefully developed through a dialogue between theology and cultural studies. This chapter presents the work of some Orthodox thinkers who engage with this topic, notably Nicolas Berdyaev. It then presents the work of Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said and Walter Mignolo – a dialogue point with the theology and philosophy of liberation – before suggesting some alternative paradigms for understanding membership and representation in the ecumenical movement.

East and West

In his autobiography Nicolas Berdyaev[56] reflects on proceeding from different premises (1950, 248) during his exile in Germany and subsequent move into France: 'The two years of my life in Berlin were a prelude to my Western wayfaring, Germany being in every sense the boundary of the Russian East and European West' (1950, 250). In the European West, Berdyaev distinguishes between Russian émigrés and exiles. He draws the conclusion that assimilating Eastern and Western premises is a matter of recognising that the West is affected by a historical and cultural context – the 'when and how' – whereas the East – 'not having left the stage of barbarism' (1950, 251) – focussed on the 'what' (1950, 250).

Berdyaev's observations draw out the universalising tendencies of Western history and culture – its civilising designs and its rational projects. However, there are two further minor observations from his autobiography on exile in the West which are of interest. Firstly, in passing he mentions that in the same way that Germany and France is the West for Russians, Russia surely represents the West for India and China (1950, 252). This ought not to be confused with a geographical positioning of the countries, nor should it imply civilising designs on the non-Western, in each case, as inevitably, it can be both. Rather, Berdyaev chooses to locate his observation in a 'crisis of historical Christianity'; an inheritance from Christendom, with conflicts between 'personality and universal harmony, between individual and general, the subjective and objective' (250, 252).

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[56] Nicolas Berdyaev was a Russian philosopher who was committed variously to Marxism, Existentialism and Christianity. He has proved a major interlocutor of Russian and Orthodox essence in dialogue with major thinkers from the European Enlightenment, notably Jacques Maritain, Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel amongst others. His legacy is more contested in Russian Orthodox theological circles. But the leading Russian Orthodox bishop, Hilarion Alfeyev called Berdyaev: 'A major figure of the Russian religious renaissance and the most outstanding philosopher of Russia in the first half of the twentieth century' (2011, 248). His work coincides with the emerging ecumenical movement that became the WCC.

His second minor observation recounts the influence of groups closely identified with the missionary movement which shaped émigré and exiled Russian Orthodoxy in the West. The Young Men's Christian Association supported the creation of the Institute of Science in Berlin to carry on the work of the Moscow Academy of Moral Science and the religious-philosophical societies (1950, 247). It also helped to form the Russian Student Christian Movement (SCM) – although Berdyaev wryly observes that the Russian SCM was a misnomer, as it had no student members. This observation is of particular interest because it captures that the lay Christian movements, and not only church-led initiatives which were fundamental to the developing ecumenical vision, were an Orthodox as well as a Protestant reality in the years before the formation of the WCC.

The East–West division, which envelopes the framework of the Special Commission and the only book published in response to its work by Anna Marie Aagaard and Peter Bouteneff, is given a different premise by Berdyaev's philosophical reflections. The division is not one primarily of ecclesiastical history or identity politics as Peter Bouteneff argues in his contribution to the book, *Beyond the East–West Divide: The World Council of Churches and 'the Orthodox Problem'* (2001, 37). This is only a part of the question. Berdyaev raises the premise that it is from Eastern émigrés and exiles that a plurality of culture emerges within the West, which challenges its universalisms. For Berdyaev's existentialism, it is important to recognise that this challenge is not only a historical and cultural contextualisation, but has roots in what he calls a 'spiritual disquietude' (1950, 258) and the need to overcome 'a sense of remoteness' (1950, 264). (Although he does acknowledge that even in post-war Europe, the churches were burdened by historical considerations, which impeded mutual understanding). The sense of remoteness of which Berdyaev speaks is an interesting new perspective for the ecumenical movement. It alights not first on differences, but the conflict, pain and bitterness involved in being of the same essence.

The East as an Invention of the West

Berdyaev's reflections introduce themes of émigré and exile, and of East and West. Homi K. Bhabha[57] has written:

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced
> performatively … The borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be

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[57] Homi K. Bhabha is an Indian academic, born into the minority Parsi community. He now teaches at Harvard University, after having graduated from Oxford University. His interests range from literature to post-colonial studies, and include a contribution to cultural studies in which he posits theories parting from ambivalence.

consensual as conflictive; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity;
realign the customary boundaries between private and public, high and low, and challenge
normative expectations of development and progress. (2004, 3)

Berdyaev's autobiography demonstrates the consensual and conflictive between émigré
and exiled Russian people in Western Europe. At the same time, his thought invites a
realignment in understanding the customary boundaries between East and West as
something more than geopolitical. Berdyaev pushes towards a remoteness derived from
being of the same essence. Bhabha would describe this as the performative borderline
engagement, which may be conflictive or consensual. For both Berdyaev and Bhabha,
there is not the geopolitical need for a borderline, as Bouteneff describes, but rather a need
to explore why émigrés and exiles are of the same essence in different locations but
perform a sense of remoteness.

Bhabha's thinking is helpful in addressing some of this context: 'Are we trapped in a
politics of struggle where representations of the social antagonism and historical
contradictions can take no other form than a binarism?' (2004, 28). Often the work of the
Special Commission, but also the discourse of the ecumenical movement, succumb to this
binarism when it articulates an East–West ecumenical divide. The divide might be
presented as a series of essentialisms as John Meyendorff presents it in his brief
presentation of East–West differences in his book, *Catholicity and the Church* (1983). He
focusses on differences of language (the use of Latin in the Western Church) which
influence thought patterns, aesthetics, and theology (1983, 139). He locates the
Reformation as an internal Latin protest consequent of this language choice (1983, 49).
The divide might also follow representations of historical contradictions, which is the
choice of Peter Bouteneff in his summary of Christian disunity in, *Beyond the East–West
Divide*. Or it might focus on the social antagonisms, like the Sofia Consultation in 1981,
which highlighted items on the ecumenical agenda 'alien to Orthodox tradition and ethos'
(Tsetsis 1983, 71). In each of the binary narratives, it is notable that the discourse uses
singular concepts to describe difference – either political, or ecclesial, or cultural. Bhabha
argues that binarism distorts the articulation of difference, thereby hindering the
complexity of representations (2004, 29) . He advocates that it is in the borderline, in the
place where differences interact antagonistically or affiliatively that is the proper place to
develop a theory of difference. Berdyaev's already-noted experiences of émigrés and exiles
nuance, and challenge, the use of singular concepts.

This is both a useful and complicating suggestion for the WCC. It posits that there is a need for interactions to create meaning. This inverts the ecumenical process and assumptions, which work from a position of creating meaning from Scripture and Tradition (frequently singular categories) to then find ways of interacting as churches. Bhabha's understanding potentially revolutionises ecumenical commitment and theology because he suggests that it is necessary to create meaning from the point of interactions. Moreover, implied in this is that there is no meaning without interactions. In other words, the churches cannot 'signify' without ecumenism. It is the ecumenical movement that creates points of interactions between the churches. If, as Bhabha argues, meanings are created from interactions, an ecclesiology requires an interaction to 'signify' the church. The borderlines and boundaries, what Mignolo calls 'border-thinking' (2000, 64), become the location of significance for the ecumenical movement (or 'performance', as Bhabha might have it), if it follows Bhabha's concepts. 'Performance' (Bhabha 2010, 3) is the representation of difference. It is not necessarily pre-given tradition, but emerges from moments of historical transformation (2010, 3). Both the interaction and the moments of historical transformation are locations of significance for the ecumenical movement. Furthermore, the revolutionary offer to the ecumenical movement is that it is encouraged to begin with complex concepts and representations, which may not necessarily begin with affirmations of difference but with recognition of a spiritual disquietude in the essence of ecumenism. For example, why are we (the local churches) of the same essence and what are the implications for Church communion ? The unity of the church is potentially sought and expressed in the borderline and boundary interactions.

The work of the Special Commission contains a response to the East–West divide within the ecumenical movement. Indeed, since at least Sofia (1981), the Orthodox churches have been keen to stress to the ecumenical movement that Eastern and Oriental ecumenism needs to account for unity in time (the modern ecumenical movement) and unity in space (the tradition of the Church), as if the two were somehow distinguishable (1983, 68). George Florovsky's contribution to the Amsterdam Assembly, in his reflection, *The Church: Her Nature and Task* (1948) reminds us that this is not wholly a question that arises from the work of the WCC in response to decolonisation, but is part of the earlier ecumenical considerations. The interesting point to note, firstly, about the Sofia contribution is that it uses Western philosophical categories to explain an Eastern theological dilemma. Florovsky's contribution to the Amsterdam assembly is more nuanced, but it still speaks in a language that appeals to the intelligence of Western

philosophical categories: to use Berdyaev's observation, it asks contextual questions related to the European Enlightenment.

Both Berdyaev and Bhabha's thinking presents this approach with serious questions. Berdyaev's observations about difference invite further reflection on the essence of the difference that the ecumenical movement, and Orthodox Church in particular, is articulating. The boundary of ecclesial, political or cultural difference, which is often presented in Orthodox theological contributions to the ecumenical movement, needs further examination.

Likewise, Bhabha's suggestion that binarism does not fully encapsulate the hybrid borderline – the place where signification is derived in Bhabha's thought – is a direct challenge to an ecumenical movement and discourse searching for a unity in Scripture and Tradition. The Orthodox diaspora, comprising émigrés, exiles and ecclesiologies, as well as the ecumenical diaspora (which in Latin America includes people of other faiths and social movements beyond the canonical church[58]) may present a more helpful signifier for the ecumenical movement. In order to frame the questions posed by Berdyaev and Bhabha, the next section introduces the work of Edward Said.[59]

Orientalism – The West's East?

Said's classic book, *Orientalism* (2003),[60] and its main theses point to a basis for a provocative analysis of the work of the Special Commission, the ecumenical movement, and the self-understanding of the Orthodox Church. His basic affirmation is that the Orient is an imagined geography of the West. The East is a creation of the West, in order to delimit the Other to the 'beyond-us', the unknown; and to make it simultaneously ours, in the sense of being part of the Western imaginary (2003, 54). In the development of the field of studies, according to Said, the Orient need not be East of the West – as the inclusion of the Americas after Columbus's 'covering-up'[61] demonstrates – but it must be an expression of the familiar and the dissonant, sometimes interchangeably.

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[58] In Chapter 5 there is a fuller discussion of this 'ecumenical diaspora' in Latin America through an analysis of the use of the word macro-ecumenical. 'Ecumenical diaspora' is my term to describe people or social movements committed to the search for unity who would not necessarily describe themselves as Christian, or those people and social movements who 'signify' the search for unity in the borderline interactions.

[59] Edward Said was a Palestinian academic, born in Jerusalem, educated at Cairo and in the USA. He contributed to a number of US universities and was a prolific writer on Literature and Cultural Studies. He is perhaps more widely known for his role in the founding in 1999, with Daniel Barenboim, of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra for Israeli, Palestinian and other Arab musicians.

[60] Originally published in 1978.

[61] This is the preferred term of Enrique Dussel, which develops from his early theological-historical-philosophical reflections on the way to producing a 'Philosophy of Liberation'. The term conveys the

In the West's history, there is an archive which builds up the Orient as the 'complementary opposite' (2003, 58):

> These are the lenses through which the Orient is experienced, and they shape the language, perception and form of encounter between the East and the West. What gives the immense number of encounters some unity, however, is the vacillation … something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. (2003, 58)

If Said posits that the West builds up an archive which imagines the East, it is also possible that some parts of this East assimilate the Western imagination and enter into a binarism of the familiar and dissonant in a performative act (to recall Bhabha's observation). The performative act in the ecumenical movement can include observations from Orthodox theologians, like Zizioulas (2010), that the church cannot be understood in denominational or confessional terms, all the while maintaining that the Orthodox are somehow different from denominations and confessions The binarim is presented as Orthodoxy set against denominational or confessional, which invites other churches to consider Orthodoxy as a denomination or confession. This is a role of the ecumenical movement in imagining the East and also assimilating Western imagination into Eastern references . However, it is complicated by the fact that the East, which must be the imagined Other, is also partly the imagined self.

This chapter will explore this in two steps. Firstly, it will reread the work of the Special Commission, the ecumenical movement and the Orthodox Church using Said's Orientalism. Secondly, it will consider the ways in which the ecumenical movement and the Orthodox Church challenge Said's concept of Orientalism and it will focus on an ecumenism in the borderlines. Ecumenism in the borderlines (Bhabha) or border-thinking ecumenism (Mignolo) will also be explored more fully in chapter six, particularly its theological or ecclesial implications.

Ecumenism: Ecclesial Orientalism?

Said notes that, 'The orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true' (Said 2003, 160), which unveils the power relationship in delineating both the 'Western project' and the 'native voice'. The native voice is conveyed by the orientalist: it is not the

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imposition of European modernity on the Americas. He develops this preliminary analysis in his four-volume study, *Caminhos de Libertação Latino-Americana* (Latin American Ways to Liberation)(1985).

voice of the Orient – if, as is described below, the 'Orient' even exists.[62] The second observation, implied by Said's statement, is that the Orient cannot imitate (mimic) the West. It has its own internal signifiers, which are not necessarily interlocutors with a Western project.

The issues addressed by the Special Commission of the WCC are not primarily institutional questions which require policy solutions. The Orthodox Church, in assuming the role of the Other, beyond-us, unknown Christianity, is fulfilling within the ecumenical movement the role of being Orientalised. Using Said's concepts, the ecumenical movement is a Western project, and as a Western project it needs an Orient as its imaginary other. It needs a binarism expressed through singular ecclesial, cultural and political categories which clearly delimits the boundary of ecumenism. It has suited the ecumenical movement and the WCC to imitate the Orient in the form of the Orthodox Church in order to deepen its Western universalising project – perhaps even to be described as a colonising project. It has been content to deploy the language of East–West in ecumenical dialogues and publications, even in a post-1989 world where this term has lost its political and geographical locus. It has incorporated the Greek word '*oikoumene*' into standard ecumenical vocabulary to describe the ecumenical movement, even although WCC official languages from Europe (English, French, German and Spanish) all possess their own specific word to translate this 'beyond-us' word.

In responding to the publication of the Final Report of the Special Commission, Leonid Kishkovsky[63] has called the report a response to the crisis of populist anti-ecumenism in Orthodoxy (2005, 109) and suggested that the proposals from the Special Commission 'have offered a new way of being together on an equal basis' (2005, 111). Kishkovsky understands 'populist anti-ecumenism' to be a characteristic mood of the late twentieth century, which with the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe introduces public opinion to the decision-making of the churches. This public opinion does not necessarily account for the long tension within Orthodoxy relating to ecumenism, nor is it necessarily articulated in theological language. Kishkovsky's analysis has some truth

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[62] There are the added difficulties of the Orient describing itself from an ecclesial perspective. The term Orthodox cannot be strictly applied to the ecclesially divided Orient (Eastern and Oriental churches). This divide gave rise to an artificial nomenclature that was imagined and introduced by referring to 'Eastern' and 'Oriental' Orthodox Churches. The nomenclature is an attempt, theologically, to avoid the language of Chalcedonian and Non-Chalcedonian churches in allusion what Timothy Ware calls the 'fragmentation of Christendom … in the fifth and sixth centuries' (1997, 3). From the perspective of East–West debate, it does make sense.

[63] Fr Leonid Kishkovsky was born in Poland and migrated to the USA. He is a priest in the Orthodox Church in America and serves as the Director of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations. He has held a number of leading ecumenical positions in the USA's National Council of Churches, the WCC and ACT.

to it, but it misses the point. The Special Commission is not only a response to the populist anti-ecumenism in Orthodoxy, it is a reaction by the Orthodox churches to the Orientalising tendencies of ecumenism. The weakness of the Orthodox response to the Final Report is that after manifesting disquiet at the Orientalising tendencies of the ecumenical movement, it accepts that there is a way of being together that is more equal in the ecumenical movement. In other words, the work of the Special Commission profoundly affects ecumenism because it begins to identify that the ecumenical movement, and the WCC, is a Western movement that incorporates an East that the West imagines. The discomfort provoked by some Orthodox critique of the ecumenical movement resonates precisely because Orthodoxy refused to play the exotic Other in the ecumenical movement. It challenged the Western universalising tendency.

Other than an institutional analysis from Kishkovsky, which alights on topics such as parity, representation and membership, it is difficult to understand how his conclusion does not return the Orthodox Church to its Oriental role in the WCC, as the familiar yet dissonant Other. The Western ecumenical movement needs an exotic imagined Christianity to be able to articulate an ecumenical project that is apparently beyond a projection of itself. Kishkovsky's support for an equal future, rooted in an ecumenical narrative that can be construed as Western, is one that Heinz Joachim Held[64] noted too. However, he was quick to discern the more far-reaching potential consequences of the Final Report:

> there has been, probably for the first time in the history of the WCC, a thorough, patient but also frank and constructive debate between the Orthodox and the Protestant ecumenical ethos … there is every sign that … the WCC can move beyond its historically Protestant original influences to become an organ of the ecumenical movement … which also gives rights and space to other[s].   (2003, 57)

Held's contribution, while seemingly more expansive that Kishkovsky's still confronts the same Saidian problem. If the exchanges between Orthodox and Protestant signal a 'movement beyond' its original influences, surely this is undone by the fact that it will be the self-same ecumenical movement which will continue to offer rights and space to others? In other words, the ecumenical movement, if it follows the vision of the Final Report, will return the Orthodox to their Oriental role in the Ecclesial Orientalism of the Protestant churches. The basic terms of reference – the signifiers – are not challenged to change in the analysis of either Kishkovsky or Held. Orthodoxy continues to be

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[64] Heinz Joachim Held is a bishop of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany) and a former moderator of the WCC.

represented by Protestant Orientalism. And it is invited to participate, to be a part of, and to be a member of the ecumenical movement as the ecclesial imagination of the West.

The Borderlands of Ecumenism

The earlier comments referred to in Berdyaev's autobiography alight on a theme from the Final Report. Berdyaev acknowledges the important role played by Protestant lay movements in supporting Orthodox émigrés and exiles. He describes John Mott as, 'a sincere friend of Orthodoxy and of Russians… his aid and sympathy were of enormous consequence' (1950, 253). John Mott was head of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and a leading figure in the Protestant missionary movement. And he credits the Student Christian Movement as helping to disseminate his thought among Christians of the West (1950, 256). The borders between Protestant and Orthodox, East and West, are altogether more fluid than sometimes the ecumenical movement permits. The frequent need to represent Orthodoxy in the ecumenical movement, to demonstrate an essential difference expressed through singular concepts, overlooks the potential for the ecumenical movement to offer alternative signifiers, and introduce different essences. For example, the essence of ecumenism is probably not to be found in the 'gift' model favoured currently by the Roman Catholic Church, nor is it to be found in a common shared tradition (Kasper 2009, 197). These two approaches reduce the ecumenical movement to Orientalism in that recognising the gift of the other requires a recognition derived from self, and if there is to be a common tradition from Said's model, it can only ever be of the imagined commonality arising from the assimilation of the East by the West.

However, there is another possibility. Said's Orientalism is, in his words, a 'kind of Western projection on to and will to govern over the Orient' (2003, 95). He states further that: 'The West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor. The West is the spectator, the judge and jury of every facet of Oriental behaviour' (2003, 109), but if the Orient is the imagined world of the West, it is possible that neither East nor West exist. Enrique Dussel recalls that there is a double difficulty present in trying to deny a unity in civilisation and affirm a universal vision (1985, 9). Dussel is focussed on interpreting Latin America and his work, which is part of the theology of liberation and at the root of the new discipline of the philosophy of liberation, 'delinks from Western modernity's pretence to universality' (cited in Mignolo 2012, 27). Said's proposal appears to overcome the Western pretence to universality, but it only reinforces a kind of universal disunity, because it proposes a real and imagined world: West and East. It does not question, or reflect on the invention of the West, in the way that thinkers like Dussel or Mignolo attempt.

Dussel reflects that the encounter East and West, and in the case of Latin America, the Indian with the Spaniard, the American with the European, is a face-to-face meeting of the oppressor and oppressed. Dussel calls this the totality and the exteriority (1985, 15). It is the basic structure of the encounter in time and space. However, according to Dussel this encounter also has implications at the ethical-mythical level (1985, 11) – at what Berdyaev calls the essence. It is not only the Other that it changed in the face-to-face encounter, but the encounter reveals a proximity of essence. Dussel later develops this in his philosophy of liberation by introducing the category '*tengo hambre*!*'* (1995, 77), the 'cry of the oppressed', which is heard by the oppressor and demands an ethical-mythical response which meets a need precisely because '*tengo hambre*!*'* is a hermeneutic for the oppressor too. The essence belongs to both, while the reality only to one. The essence of the oppressed, according to Dussel, interpolates the context. Dussel's category '*tengo hambre*!*'* is important to the ecumenical movement for it places the Eucharistic question in a new interpretative framework. It invites the church to respond to an exteriority: not to administer to itself. It invites recognition of the Other through complex categories, which are not fully encapsulated in imagined East and West responses.

This basic philosophical category that Dussel elaborates has been accompanying the theology of liberation. Gustavo Gutiérrez uses a form of it in his work, *Onde dormirão os pobres?* (Where will the poor sleep?)(1998), where ecclesiology meets the poor with nowhere to sleep. It is used by Leonardo Boff in his eco-theology, which encourages Christianity to listen to the earth. And Otto Maduro considers it in his definition of 'epistemological humility', 'an effort animated by the idea that oppression, exclusion, domination, and exploitation often bring forth and stimulate … the production of "counter-knowledges" (knowledges and ways of knowing opposed to the dominant ones)' (2012, 87).

Orthodox 'ways of knowing opposed to the dominant ones' is a major contribution of the Special Commission to the ecumenical movement. It reminds the West that it is a hegemonic concept, with universalising tendencies. It is through the theology of liberation, in dialogue with the Orthodox, that the '*tengo hambre*!*'* cry of the Orthodox is not only heard by the ecumenical movement, but in turn deconstructs the imagined East and West. The ethical-mythical essence of the ecumenical movement is revealed to be a Western projection on to Orthodox ecclesiology and culture. At the same time, in a double movement – 'a double critique' in Mignolo's understanding (2000, 67) – the Orthodox contribution to ecumenism is to rethink it entirely from the perspective of local histories.

The significance of this point will be addressed in chapter six. However, it is helpful to understand a little more the double critique that Mignolo advocates:

> A double critique becomes at this intersection a border-thinking, since to be critical of both Western and [Eastern] fundamentalism, implies to think from both traditions and, at the same time, from neither of them. This border-thinking and double critique are the necessary conditions for 'another thinking', a thinking that is no longer conceivable in Hegel's dialectics, but located at the border of coloniality of power.   (2000, 67)

Mignolo proposes that the encounter at the border of coloniality of power is construed in terms of local histories meeting and no history prevailing, but another narrative emerging if it is to be as double critique.

The ecumenical movement has the potential to be critical of Western and Eastern Christianity's historical and cultural expressions, while at the same time offering another thinking of the ecclesial encounter in which traditions need not prevail, but in which a new borderline narrative emerges. It is likely, as Bhabha intimates, to be both antagonistic and affiliative, but not necessarily in a binary dialectic. Borderland ecumenism has the potential to liberate oppressed and imagined representations in the ecumenical movement.

Summary

The section of the Final Report, Representation and Membership, is frequently interpreted as a policy proposal for an ecumenical institution. This chapter has located the questions raised by the Final Report in a wider discussion loosely related to cultural studies, but incorporating philosophy and theology. The ecumenical movement, and the WCC, face continued dilemmas on the topics of representation, recognition, and post-colonialism. The Orthodox critique, taken up by the Special Commission, has brought these topics into sharper focus.

Todor Sabev insists that disunity is prompted by a difference of cultural background, linguistic limitations, shifting terminology of subtle matters of faith, long isolation and problems of communication between the churches scattered in various regions of the world. Nicolas Berdyaev sums this up philosophically as proceeding from different premises rather than the more customary interpretation of others of a difference in essence. He is careful to nuance these premises as more than just geopolitical (East–West) and in recounting his experiences as an Eastern exile in the West, there emerges a hybridity in notions of Orthodoxy, due to the influence of the missionary lay movements supporting Orthodox émigrés and exiles.

Berdyaev also introduces the sense of remoteness as a potentially interesting and new perspective for the ecumenical movement. It alights not first on differences, but the conflict, pain and bitterness involved in being of the same essence. While not advancing this philosophical basis, Homi K. Bhabha suggests that it is in the borderline engagements of cultural difference, which may as often be consensual as conflictive, that the significance of essence can be explored – a contested space.

However, Said and Dussel remind us that it is often an asymmetrical engagement. According to Said, the East is a creation of the West, in order to delimit the Other, the beyond-us, the unknown, and to make it simultaneously ours, in the sense of being part of the Western imaginary. And Dussel recalls that the engagement between East and West provoked a 'covering-up' of the East. It also introduced the fragmentation of the universalising premise of the West for in its interaction with the Other, the imperative to respond to the speech-act opens the way to multiple worlds existing beyond the universalism of one local history. The challenge from Said, Dussel and Bhabha to the ecumenical movement is to uncover in engagement.

Uncovering ecumenism (helped by inverting Dussel's categories) is the work of the Final Report of the Special Commission. It unmasks Western projections onto the Orthodox. And it simultaneously reveals Orthodox assimilations of Orientalism in the ecumenical movement. However, Mignolo holds out that another thinking is possible, which is not dialectical, binarism, Orientalism, or totalising. It is the liberation of the ecumenical representations, drawn from the borderlands of ecumenical engagement by ecclesiology. This includes liberating Orthodox projects, too. The Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement has been too quick to accede to an Oriental performance of imagined difference. This is part of the Eucharistic dilemma it faces. It accepts it is not Western and at the same time refuses to hear the voice of hybrid minorities or engage in borderland interactions, which respond positively to the '*tengo hambre*!' cry posited by Dussel from the exteriority of the canon.

The Eucharistic dilemma brings to the fore the spirituality of the ecumenical movement. The next chapter highlights the concerns and opportunities introduced by the work of the Special Commission in its critique of 'ecumenical worship' and its introduction of 'common prayer' to the ecumenical movement. The introduction of 'common prayer' is central to any understanding that the WCC is more than pan-Protestantism, even although this new approach to 'ecumenical worship' has been interpreted negatively. Chapter 5

chooses to see the radical potential in the proposed change by introducing the *mística* from different peripheries of the Church.

Chapter 5 – Common Prayer

Introduction

The Final Report of the Special Commission, in the section on common prayer, proposes to cease using the term 'ecumenical worship' in WCC gatherings of the ecumenical movement. This proposal provoked dismay amongst some parts of the ecumenical movement, and was interpreted as a step backwards in the ecumenical journey. Margot Kassmann, a leading German church figure and theologian, writing in response to the Final Report commented, 'The recommendations on worship cause me to sigh deeply and sadly' (2003, 68). The Special Commission proposed alternative language and concepts to replace 'ecumenical worship' with 'confessional and interconfessional common prayer'. In both proposals, recognised as provisional, the Special Commission was concerned with distinguishing the ecclesial nature of prayer, and indirectly protecting the prayer of the Church.

This chapter does not sigh deeply and sadly. It looks at some potential radical options, unforeseen in the Final Report, related to the suggestion to embrace confessional and interconfessional common prayer. It discusses the ecclesial nature of prayer in light of Orthodox and theology of liberation contributions, paying attention to the use of the different languages used in different parts of the ecumenical movement to describe prayer. The chapter describes the *mística* used in the Latin American ecumenical movements and suggests the potential development of the use of *mística* in the wider ecumenical movement.

Summary of Special Commission

The final theme to be considered from the Special Commission is the recommendation not to use the expression 'ecumenical worship' in WCC gatherings. There is an extensive appendix to the Final Report, which begins to describe two alternative expressions: Confessional Common Prayer and Interconfessional Common Prayer. The appendix to the Final Report suggests that the use of the expression 'ecumenical worship … has caused confusion about the ecclesial character of such worship, the ecclesiological status of the WCC, and the degree of unity that has in fact been achieved' (2003, 18).

The report calls for a recognition that the commitment to Christian unity, as expressed in the WCC, is a new reality for the churches.[65] It states that while praying together is 'at the very heart of every effort towards Christian unity' (2003, 11), it is also the most visible sign of challenges facing the churches on the way towards visible unity. Furthermore, it cites the confusion that can arise from translating the English word 'worship' into other languages, whereby the language used can imply reference to a Eucharistic service. In addition, it suggests that 'prayer' is a more appropriate term to clarify that the 'worship' is not that of an ecclesial body.[66]

The two alternative terms suggested in the Final Report deserve some elaboration. Confessional common prayer is understood by the Final Report to be 'the prayer of a confession, a communion, or a denomination within a confession' (2003, 20). It has three further characteristics: (1) it has a clear ecclesial identity; (2) it is offered as a gift to the gathering by a particular ecclesial group; and (3) it is conducted and presided over according to its own order. The Final Report acknowledges that the term is imprecise because not all churches would define themselves as a confession.

Interconfessional common prayer is understood by the Final Report to be prayer that is prepared for specific ecumenical events by an ad hoc group representative of the WCC. It has four characteristics: (1) it draws on past ecumenical experience; (2) it is the opportunity to pray together drawing on resources from a variety of traditions; (3) it should be based on ancient Christian order patterns (liturgy of the Word, Matins, daily offices, for example); and (4) all participants enjoy equal status – whether clergy or lay, male or female – as fellow pilgrims on the ecumenical journey.

At first glance, this section of the Final Report is negative in its proposal to refrain from using the term 'ecumenical worship' and to replacing it with the terms interconfessional common prayer or confessional common prayer. Quaker theologian, Eden Grace, who participated in the Special Commission, responded to the work in the Special Commission leading to this proposal by publishing an apology for 'ecumenical worship'. She traced the historical development of worship at WCC gatherings as well as reflecting on the

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[65] Scholars from different theological perspectives sometimes prefix the word 'modern' or 'contemporary' to the words 'ecumenical movement', when it is described in relation to the WCC. Brian Stanley's, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, (2009), and VanElderen and Conway's, *Introducing the World Council of Churches*, (2001), both provide context to the use of the prefix, which influences the Final Report of the Special Commission.

[66] The distinction that the Final Report tries to introduce is reminiscent of the language and approach of the Roman Catholic Church to ecumenism as set out in *Unitatis Redintegratio* whereby Roman Catholics are encouraged to participate in prayer services in ecumenical gatherings but not to worship ecumenically (1977, 460).

Orthodox critiques of 'ecumenical worship' (2002). The Final Report also offers an imprecise future language for WCC gatherings; for example, do prayer and worship convey the same precision of act in different languages and confessions/traditions? However, the Final Report notes that the language is 'provisional' (2003, 26) and it invites that further work be undertaken, particularly on the ecclesial nature of common prayer. The provisional nature of the section on common prayer is also influenced by the tensions it has generated in the ecumenical movement, particularly at WCC gatherings. A lot of effort was put into finding a solution to reduce the tension, but due to time constraints on the work of the Special Commission, and ongoing tensions in perceptions and understandings of 'ecumenical worship' and 'common prayer', the provisional language and arguably negative tone of this section of the Final Report remains as the legacy of the invitation to further work in this area.

This chapter seeks to accept this invitation from the Final Report and to develop an understanding of common prayer for the ecumenical movement. It deliberately interprets the potential of proposed change in language as a positive, while recognising the pain and tension that the topic has generated in the ecumenical movement. Since the 'remarkable achievement' (Wainwright 1983, 99) of *Baptism, Eucharist* and Ministry (1982), 'ecumenical worship' has come to be seen more ambiguously by some in the ecumenical movement, particularly Orthodox churches (Tanner 2005, 118). The pain of not being able to celebrate the Eucharist, of the contested place of the 'Lima Liturgy', and of the tension around interpretations of who – a movement, an ecclesial entity or the Church – offers liturgy, are ongoing topics for debate. This chapter does not seek to resolve these debates.

Firstly, it will consider the use of occasionally interchangeable descriptive terms in different parts of the ecumenical movement in the search for a more precise designation of the term 'common prayer'. It will consider how the current use of these terms aid or hinder understandings of common prayer. Secondly, it will reflect on the ecclesial nature of prayer, particularly in light of theology of liberation's intermingling of prayer and *mística*.

Ecumenism and Inter-ecclesial Prayer

The Final Report states, 'Worship lies at the centre of our Christian identity' (2003, 25) . Twenty years earlier the seminal document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), led to the production of a book which collected ecumenical reflections on Baptism and Eucharist. This collection contained an article by Orthodox theologian Ion Bria reflecting on 'The

liturgy after the Liturgy' (1983, 213). It was an Orthodox reflection on the context of the ecclesial liturgy, which is set within and reflects the liturgy of life. Bria argued that any ecclesial locus and celebration of the liturgy had to be set in a wider context of life and had to encourage the people to continue living the liturgy beyond the canonical ecclesial setting, in the routine of their daily life. He describes this as a double movement whereby 'the *cosmos* is becoming *ecclesia*' (1983, 215) – the inward movement – and 'as a nourishing of the Christian life not only in its private sphere, but also in its public and political realm' (1983, 216) – the outward movement.

Another Orthodox theologian, Olivier Clément, introducing the mystical roots of Christianity through a study of early texts and Christian leaders, begins his introduction to prayer by considering that it is an 'increase in the depth of existence', a 'perception of the mystery' and in a Christian sense a 'personal relationship has to be established with the living God' (1993, 181). For Bria and Clement, prayer is deeply related to the fullness of life.

In recent years, the WCC has become aware that it is set in a wider ecumenical movement. It has come to embrace the perspectives of ecology and has restated its ecumenical vocation as set within the *oikoumene*; the 'whole inhabited earth'.[67] In responding to Jesus' prayer that 'all may be one' (John 17: 11), it has become important to the ecumenical movement as expressed through the work of the WCC to understand 'one' as embracing the Church, the human family and the cosmos. This expanding of the ecumenical vocation – by the WCC – and the reflection of Orthodox theologians like Bria and Clement, which sets prayer in the context of life (not exclusively in liturgical forms of the church), has certain implications for the ecclesial understanding of prayer. If, as the Final Report suggests, common prayer in its interconfessional (or previously ecumenical worship) conception is not ecclesial, it raises the question who or what is at prayer if it is not the Church? Indeed, to recall the discussions on ecclesiology in chapter one of this thesis, even in an ecumenical gathering, who or what is ecumenical if it is not ecclesial?[68]

In different parts of the ecumenical movement, it is important to recognise that some terms are used interchangeably with the word ecumenical. Therefore, it is not always clear who is

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[67] D. Preman Niles (ed.), *Between the Flood and the Rainbow*, (1992), documents the WCC Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, which gave a theoretical framework to understanding Church unity from the perspective of creation.

[68] The ecclesial nature of the ecumenical movement is fundamental to the WCC understanding of ecumenism, in a way that other expressions of ecumenism do not necessary emphasize. The Global Christian Forum, for example, is privileging the hermeneutic of individual faith journey stories (testimony) in encounters between interested individual Christians. See van Beek, Huibert. *Revisioning Christian Unity: The Global Christian Forum*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009.

included or excluded. For example, many in the Orthodox churches, including their theologians, reserve the word ecumenical for the seven Ecumenical Councils recognised by the Church.[69] Reference to 'ecumenical' by Orthodox theologians is frequently a reference to these ancient gatherings and their canons. The modern ecumenical movement is rather referred to as an inter-Christian movement, or even by those who wish to be more precise, an inter-ecclesial movement.[70]

The churches in the WCC use different terms to describe the same movement of which they are a part – weighing it as inter-ecclesial or ecumenical. However, one might ask, is an inter-ecclesial movement the same as an ecumenical movement? The ecumenical movement, in the understanding of the WCC, implies a movement of churches in the search for visible unity.[71] However, by using the term inter-ecclesial, Orthodox churches are able to signify that the movement is not necessarily of churches. In other words, the movement is not recognised ecclesiologically by the Orthodox Church. This perhaps also explains why the Orthodox churches attach such importance to the 1950 'Toronto Statement', which curiously for an 'ecumenical' document refers to the 'inter-church relationships' (2001, 182). With regard to the Final Report, and its proposals for common prayer, it is a reminder that interconfessional common prayer has, for many member churches, no ecclesial status. Interconfessional common prayer can be offered in a gathering where Orthodox churches do not recognise another church's ecclesial status.

In another context, in Latin America, the term inter-ecclesial movement has a very different connotation from that applied by the Orthodox. The inter-ecclesial movement is a gathering of the basic Christian communities (CEBs[72]). Ivan Petrella defines CEBs as,

> lay-led grassroots groups composed of individuals from the lower strata of society that meet in homes, or community centres or church facilities to reflect on scripture and discuss its relevance to their lives and the social and political conditions of society.   (2006, 59)

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[69] In his first volume presentation of Orthodoxy, *Orthodox Christianity*, (2011), Hilarion Alfeyev discusses the ecumenical councils and their reception by different churches. After setting out the reception of the seven ecumenical councils by the churches, he clearly distinguishes between 'ecumenical' – a political term to describe the world of the Roman Empire – and contemporary inter-Christian dialogue (2011, pp58-64).

[70] For a fuller explanation of the difference between Church and ecclesia in Orthodox theology, see Chapter 1.

[71] Article I of the WCC Constitution states, 'The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches…' (2013, 37).

[72] CEB is the Portuguese and Spanish acronym for basic Christian communities (*Comunidade Ecclesial de Base* or *Comunidad Ecclesial de Base*). It is used throughout this chapter to remind the reader that it is a term from another context. It is also used in preference to the English translation because a number of alternative English translations exist and there is also an extensive discussion around the use of the term in English language publications.

In addition, there is a close relationship between popular sectors and their social movements. The inter-ecclesial movement in Latin America, therefore, brings together individuals who may or may not describe themselves as Christian. José Oscar Beozzo, in his article in the handbook for the 10th Interecclesial Meeting in Brazil calls this aspect of the movement, 'its citizenship responsibility, exercised outside in the world, through the promotion of justice, the development of civil society and the political and economic society' (Montagnoli *et al.* 2000, 8).[73]

CEBs bring together individuals from the lower strata of society (from popular sectors) and (in the interests of this chapter) the prayer is expressed as a *mística*. It may or may not be ecclesial, in the sense that it is a prayer belonging to the traditions of the Church. In a section below, there will be a fuller exploration of *mística* in Latin American inter-ecclesial meetings.

Remaining in Latin America, the term ecumenical is now sometimes used to describe a movement that is wider that the Church. It is used to describe an inter-religious movement. Pedro Casaldáliga and José María Vigil acknowledge that such an ecumenism does not deny its Christianity, but recognises that it 'transcends the borders of the Church, and also religion' (1994, 216). The more common term, which Casaldáliga had introduced at an Assembly of the People of God held in Quito, Peru in 1992 is '*macroecumenismo*'. The word appears as the title of a chapter in the afore mentioned book[74] and is described in the following way by Casaldáliga and Vigil: 'The first meaning of the word 'ecumenical' refers to dialogue, exchange and communion among Christians. Here we add the prefix 'macro' to refer to the widening of these dimensions beyond Christian borders' (1994, 192).[75] Again, at root is the implication that the Latin American macro-ecumenical movement is more than ecclesial. In the Latin American setting, the prayer may be religious or non-religious, it may be from another faith tradition or no faith tradition at all. In Latin America, the most developed forms of *macroecumenismo* acknowledge the practice of *mistíca* from Christianity and Candomblé (an example of religious and faith-based prayer) or even Christianity and social movements (an example of non-religious and non-faith-based prayer).

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[73] Author's translation.
[74] The book referred to forms part of an ambitious and unfulfilled project of the theology of liberation, which invited leading theologians from the Latin American continent to write a series of reflections on theology and liberation from different perspectives. The series, not translated into English, is known as *Coleção Teologia e Libertação* (Theology and Liberation Collection.)
[75] Author's translation.

In European theology, it is more common to understand this form of *macroecumenismo* as described by Latin Americans as the inter-religious or inter-faith movement. However, in Latin America, the role of the social movements is integral to the *mística* of *macroecumenismo* in a way that is not fully captured by current inter-religious or inter-faith dialogue in a European theological approach. The Brazilian theologian, Marcelo Barros explains it in the following way:

> Movements like the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* and the Via Campesina use the term *mística* to explain the internal strength or profound motivation that makes people give their life to the cause of the oppressed and in the search for land for all … Concretely, at meetings, the *mística* could be a session of motivation or community sharing that is undertaken at the beginning of each day. (2011, 34)[76]

I will return to a fuller discussion of *mística* in another section in this chapter. At this stage, it is sufficient to acknowledge that a *macroecumenismo*, which describes itself as beyond Christian borders, is also, in its Latin American expression, beyond religious borders.

Interestingly, for the purposes of this chapter, it is worth briefly asking that if interconfessional common prayer in WCC gatherings has no ecclesial status, is it possible to consider that the interconfessional common prayer draws on traditions that are not Christian? The term 'interconfessional' is ambiguous because Orthodox churches refuse to recognise themselves as a confession. According to John D. Zizioulas, the WCC, which 'strives to bring together churches understood mainly as *confessions*' (2010, 341) responds to a reality that arises in the seventeenth century. This has not been fully expressed or accounted for in ecumenical theology, in Zizioulas's opinion (2010, 342). A scholar like Gerhard Ebeling, would perhaps disagree with Zizioulas. Ebeling affirms that a 'confessional problem' has always existed in Christianity, and that the Reformation simply gave it recognition as a theological question (1968, 53). In addition, in some other theologies, confessional churches could be churches refusing to support a particular political movement – as in the case of churches and Christians in Germany in the twentieth century, who refused to participate in a Nazi state. Or, the word could be used to describe churches which break from an existing church over points of doctrine choosing the prefix 'confessing' to make a particular theological point; for example, the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.

Additionally, given that in some WCC gatherings, interreligious guests are now present – and remembering that the Final Report affirms that all participants at WCC gatherings

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[76] Author's translation.

enjoy equal status on the ecumenical journey (2003, 22), the 'journey of the whole inhabited earth' – is there scope for interconfessional common prayer that understands itself as inter-religious common prayer? Can WCC gatherings offer common prayer that draws on different religious traditions of the whole inhabited earth, but which have no ecclesial status? This reality of WCC gatherings offers a direct challenge to the terms of reference for interconfessional common prayer, as described in the Final Report, where there is an emphasis on 'patterns that churches have in common' (2003, 20). Or, as might be reflected from the foregoing discussing, that which is ecclesial or possesses ecclesial significance, but which is not ecclesial in status.

There is clearly no consensus on the use of different terms within the ecumenical movement. The two examples offered in this chapter for discussion – inter-ecclesial and *macroecumenismo* – point to the diversity of terms used by constituencies of the ecumenical movement. The Final Report does not explore or clarify this. Instead it advocates a stop to the use of the term 'ecumenical worship' in WCC gatherings, seeking to replace it with two alternatives that designate, on the one hand, an ecclesial gift to the ecumenical movement (confessional common prayer), and, on the other hand, a denial of ecclesial status to the prayer (interconfessional common prayer). The terms currently in use offer further ambiguity, particularly in light of the different meanings attributed to major ecumenical terms such as 'ecumenical' – including its prefix 'macro' – and 'inter-ecclesial'. Furthermore, in the background to this discussion is the need to clarify the understanding of the relationship between ecclesiology and prayer. This will be explored in the next section.

Prayer and Ecclesiology

In the spirituality of the theology of liberation, a basic but important distinction is made between the Church and the Kingdom of God: 'The Church is not the Kingdom, it is a servant of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is greater than the Church. It transcends it' (Casaldáliga and Vigil 1994, 209). This basic ecclesiological affirmation has been a part of the theology of liberation since its early days. Jon Sobrino's book, *Ressurreição da Verdadeira Igreja* (The Resurrection of the True Church) (1982) and Leonardo Boff's, *Eclesiogênese: a reinvenção da Igreja* (Ecclesiogenesis: The Reinvention of the Church)(2008, originally published in 1977) both make theological contributions that establish more deeply this basic affirmation. Sobrino notes that, 'What we want to affirm is that in recent years Christ has appeared in Latin America; to many Christians has been granted the grace of seeing him in "the poor" and these witnesses have converted … to configuring a

new form of being Church' (1982, 100). He goes onto affirm that, 'What it is possible to affirm positively about the Church of the poor is relatively simple at a theological level, the Spirit of Jesus is present in the poor and from the perspective of the poor the totality of the Church is re-created' (1982, 102).[77]

In a similar manner, in his book reflecting after the first meeting of CEB leaders in 1975 Leonardo Boff states:

> The term which best expresses [the experience of CEBs] is … reinvention of the Church. The Church is born from base communities, from the heart of the People of God. This experience questions the common way to understand the Church. It enables the discovery of the true font that brings the Church to birth and creation: the Holy Spirit.   (2008, 63)

The theological perspectives introduced by Sobrino and Boff highlight the close relationship between the spirituality of the people of God and the practice of the ecclesial community. It is really within the spirituality of the theology of liberation, in the CEBs and popular movements that this ecclesiological affirmation has been put into action and developed.

Within the writings of theologians of liberation, the basic affirmation which distinguishes between the Church and the Kingdom is frequently upheld, but the place of Church as servant of the Kingdom is equally upheld. Jorge Pixley and Clodovis Boff, perhaps in a publication representative of this tendency within the theology of liberation, offer the following reflection in understanding the 'option for the poor' as the church serving the Kingdom: 'Who makes (or ought to make) the option for the poor? In the first place, it is the institutional Church, in other words the official representatives of the Church: the Pope, bishops, priests … and lay leaders' (1987, 159). In other words, there is often within the writings of theologians of liberation no developed vision of the Kingdom of God, without the presence and participation of the Church. The Kingdom, while on the one hand affirmed as greater than the Church, is also often dependent on the vision of the Church in many ecclesiologies developed by theologians of liberation. There is not space to explore and develop this problematic (cyclical) linking of Church–Kingdom–Church in some aspects of the theology of liberation, with its obvious limitations in supporting the emerging praxis of CEBs, not to mention the Kingdom beyond the Church that Casaldáliga and Vigil, amongst others, point towards.

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[77] Author's translation.

However, if we bypass many of the historical (canonical) writings of theologians of liberation, and take seriously Ivan Petrella's basic proposition that the theology of liberation must do more than talk about liberation and act historically, then it is worth looking at the experience of CEBs and popular movements in the expression and development of their prayer life. Carlos Josaphat[78] writes about this praxis in a reflection about the *mística* of the struggle for land reform in Brazil: 'the *mística* of the land is already real and wholly present in the popular movements, the Homeless Movement and the Landless Workers' Movement, as well as being part of the conscience of many leaders and the public opinion which supports them' (2003, 527).[79]

This praxis has its roots in historical commitments and action in the theology of liberation. In the following section, the handbook for CEBs, prepared by José Comblin, will be presented. Following this introduction, the reflection will draw on the work of Leonardo Boff and Frei Betto, as they develop an understanding of prayer (*mística*) in dialogue with the experiences of CEBs and popular movements. The concluding remarks will refer to Marcello Barros, a leading proponent of the *mística* of *macroecumenismo* in Latin America.

The Prayer of the Poor

To promulgate the work of CEBs, José Comblin wrote a short course booklet, *Basic Course for Animators of CEBs* [*Curso Básico para animadores de CEBs*] (1987). This book has been republished multiple times and is widely available throughout Brazil. It is a guide for animators (note the Freirian language) who wish to develop the work, study and spirituality of CEBs. Each chapter is dedicated to a different topic and provides guidance on how to make the encounter work. It begins with prayer, presents a Freirian code to discuss the context of the people, suggests Bible texts to aid the reflection, and offers further questions for discussion.

According to Comblin's guide, the opening prayer is a simple moment of reflection, often with symbols and a liturgical prayer from the Roman Catholic Church. It can be led by a different participant member of the CEB. Comblin says, 'Prayer is the reception room that welcomes and situates the participants' (1987, 7) and his handbook offers biblical texts,

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[78] Carlos Josaphat is a Dominican monk. He collaborated with Paulo Freire on a number of educational projects in Brazil, after they met at school in Recife where he was the chaplain and Freire was a teacher. His later studies in France introduced him to friendship with a circle of theologians and thinkers including Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier. He lived in exile in Switzerland during the military dictatorship in Brazil, teaching theology at Fribourg University. On the eve of the military coup in Brazil he had published a book on The Gospel and Social Revolution.

[79] Author's translation.

church songs and church prayers that can be used during the opening prayer. In reality, however, the CEBs developed their own prayer life. Symbols from the community (not necessarily the church community) became important. Ademar Bogo,[80] in a reflection on values of militant practice, dedicates a section to the 'Value of Symbols':

> Symbols have a collective significance and are part of an ethic and service to constructing human dignity. More than ever, it is fundamental that in the imagination and social practice the importance of symbols is recovered and developed to defend against the process of alienation and depoliticisation of social relations.   (2001, 75)

Bogo's thoughts are emblematic of the importance of symbols to CEBs and social movements without them necessarily being explicitly religious symbols. Perhaps the most famous symbol is the patchwork cloth placed on the table in the centre by CEBs to represent the Bible as peoples' work, and equally to represent different aspects of the local community life.

As the CEBs developed, the prayers of the church were criticised for not fully expressing the search for liberation and CEBs began to write their own prayers drawing on influences as diverse as popular song and poetry, on slogans from social and popular movements, and on reflections of religious and popular movement leaders. The annual songbook[81] published by the 'Summer Course' run by CESEP,[82] which draws together people from all over Latin America including CEBs, social movements, government, church and academy is the clearest demonstration of this practice. The songbook contains church songs, folk music, pop songs and poems, all seeking to capture the 'spirit' of the main themes of their courses. The prayer life, while integral to each encounter, is not necessarily recognisable any longer as a Roman Catholic prayer, or even in a wider sense as a prayer of the church community.

The CEB prayer, however, does explore three of the four categories outlined in the Final Report of the Special Commission related to interconfessional common prayer (2003, 22): it draws on past community experience; it brings people together by drawing on resources from a variety of traditions; and all participants enjoy equal status – whether clergy or lay, male or female – as fellow pilgrims on the liberation journey. That it does not follow an exclusively ancient Christian form of prayer is due to the fact that CEBs have embraced

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[80] Ademar Bogo is a national leader of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* (The Landless Workers' Movement), a leading social movement in Brazil and partner of Christian Aid.

[81] The songbook is called 'The People Sing their Story'.

[82] CESEP (Ecumenical Centre for Service and Popular Education) was founded in 1982 to offer capacity-building courses to churches and social movements throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It has been funded by the WCC.

the other three categories fully and some Christian prayer was deemed to be at odds with, even counterproductive to, the search within community experiences, other traditions and equality of participants.

With the passage of time and the deepening of experience, something else curious has taken place. The word prayer is no longer used to designate the opening prayer in CEBs or gatherings of CEBs and popular movements: it only occurs in the cases where the Roman Catholic hierarchy is seeking to reassert its power. Instead, many have turned to the word *mística*. The following sections will sketch the understanding and use of the word *mística* in Latin America and consider its usefulness for the wider ecumenical movement.

The *Mística* of the Poor

In the 1990s two leading figures in the inter-ecclesial movement and the popular movements led a course in São Paulo, Brazil. Frei Betto[83] and Leonardo Boff[84] addressed a gathering of the 'Faith and Politics Movement' on the theme of *mística* and spirituality. It was on the eve of national elections in Brazil. In the book that was subsequently published (1999), Boff and Betto outline the usefulness of the term *mística*, showing how it is already in use among different sectors of the popular movement.

They begin with a question: 'What is the secret force that sustains [these] groups? Where do they find the hope to continue to dream, to resist, to continue to desire a more humane society ... ?' (1999, 10).[85] The answer to this question has, for Boff and Betto, four sources, which they outline in the opening chapter of their book. Firstly, there is the original utopia of Christianity of a fraternal, just and participative society, of inclusion for the poor, and awareness of the divinity of each human being. Secondly, there is the emancipatory ideal of the French Revolution with the vision of a participatory and popular democracy. Thirdly, there is the vision of socialism and Marxism, which is indignant in the face of misery and enacts revolution as an act of love. Fourthly, there is a radical humanism with an ethic of compassion and solidarity. Boff underlines that this kind of *mística* 'does not

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[83] Frei Betto is a Dominican monk and journalist. His commitment to the poor led to his imprisonment and torture by the Brazilian military dictatorship. He served in the government of President Lula (2002–2004), inaugurating the *Bolsa Família* (a cash transfer paid to families with children who are vaccinated and go to school. It is part of the Brazilian government's welfare programme to combat poverty), widely recognised by the international community as a pioneering project to reduce poverty and exclusion in Brazil. Perhaps his most famous book (translated into English) is *A Conversation with Fidel Castro*, in which he conducts an interview with the Cuban President on religion and politics.

[84] Leonardo Boff is a leading Brazilian theologian. He was a Franciscan monk and professor of theology in Rio de Janeiro. Following the publication of *Church: Charism and Power* (1981), he was investigated and censored by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He subsequently left the Church, although he has continued to write extensively on theology. He was given a chair at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and is a leading thinker on ethics and ecology.

[85] Author's translation.

mean losing sight of the response to questions, nor mystifying reality, but rather harvesting the most illuminating, that dimension which nurtures the vital energies beyond self-interest' (1999, 11).

It is by bringing together each of these four sources that CEBs and popular movements speak of *mística*. This is a term that can carry religious meaning, but equally can be devoid of religion. According to Boff and Betto, it is rooted in the recognition of the 'mystery of life' (1999, 11). Casaldáliga and Vigil point towards a spirituality that is 'most profoundly human' (1994, 27). It is also clear from the four sources that Boff and Betto are addressing what Orthodox theologians would call 'the Christian-left', when analysing non-Orthodox political contexts (see chapter two for a fuller discussion of this question). For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to note how the *mística* presented by Boff and Betto is already present in the popular movements: it is in their origins, no matter which of the four sources they more strongly favour. It is a part of their tradition. This approach returns liberation theology to one of its most basic methodologies. Theology is a second step (Gutiérrez and Segundo). Gutiérrez expresses this in his classic work, *A Theology of Liberation* (2001), in the following way: 'Theology must be critical reflection on humankind, on basic human principles' (2001, 55). And Juan Luis Segundo, picking up on Gutiérrez's thinking, formulates it as, 'every theological question begins with the human situation. Theology is "the second step" … commitment is the first step' (1982, 79).

Alongside this it is important to note that this *mística* radically develops the theology of liberation affirmation that the Kingdom is greater than the Church. The *mística*, as set out by Boff and Betto, works equally with or without the Church. It can just as easily be an ecclesial *mística* as well as a *mística* beyond the ecclesial. Marcelo Barros, in his own study of the *mística* in liberation struggles across Latin America in the twenty-first century, affirms that, '*Mística* is universal' (2011, 36): it is that which motivates a popular movement or a CEB (2011, 33).

The one outstanding issue that may be raised is that Boff and Betto describe the first of their four sources in Christian terms: the original utopia of Christianity of a fraternal, just and participative society, of inclusion for the poor, and awareness of the divinity of each human being. This could be interpreted as excluding other religious traditions from among their four sources of a Latin American *mística*. The other three sources offered by Boff and Betto are inspired by philosophical and political movements. However, a cursory knowledge of Christianity in Latin America and of the Christianity of the theology of liberation, with its 'option for the poor' in Latin America reminds us that the Christianity

of the poor, indeed of the Latin American Church, is 'pluri-religious' – it draws on many different spiritualties, humanisms and syncretisms (Irarrázaval 2003, 506). According to Frei Betto, 'The difficulty for the theology of liberation is in capturing the richness of spirituality of the poor' (1999, 44). According to Betto, amongst others, this difficulty is located precisely in the fact that the doctrine of the Church does not necessarily coincide with the *mística* as lived by the poor. (Simultaneously, *mística* offers a critique of the proposals from some of the theology of liberation, which does not undertake theology as a second step and so cannot accommodate the *mística* of the poor). This is perhaps why it is important that the theology of liberation recovers the original methodology developed by Gutiérrez and Segundo.

The *mística* of the poor, which is sometimes interpreted as popular devotion, in Latin America enfolds different religious traditions into Christian devotion. There is *Pacha Mama* from Peru ('Mother Earth', who in the form of mountains accepts penitence of the people) Boff and Betto 1999, 44). There is the indigenous vision of the *Tierra sin Males* ('Earth with no Evil', which is the a vision earth to come) (Agenda Latino-americana 2013). There are the rights and rituals from African spirituality (Candomblé) in which African Gods and Christian Saints have their complementary incarnation. Furthermore, there is even the sacramentalising of the market in neo-Pentecostal expressions of Christianity.[86] To speak of a Christian utopia in the context of the theology of liberation is to speak necessarily of an ecumenical Christianity (see earlier section in this chapter for a fuller explanation of the word ecumenical).

The *Mística* of the Ecumenical Movement

The theology of liberation has affirmed a *mística* that can be said to be of the churches, but equally as offering a challenge to the theology of the churches. If the Church is a servant of the Kingdom, and if the Kingdom can be articulated in terms other than Christian doctrine (as is suggested by Boff and Betto's four sources), the prayer of the Church is able to draw on traditions which are beyond its borders or experience. This is what the practice of the CEBs and the songbook from CESEP demonstrate. At the same time, the experience of the Church of the poor demonstrates that the Church can appropriate the *mística* that comes from the Kingdom, without necessarily 'Christianising' it, or making it serve ecclesial ends.

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[86] For a fuller presentation of this concept see Leonildo Silveira Campos's book, *Teatro, templo e mercado - organização e marketing de um empreendimento neopentecostal* (Theatre, Temple and Market: Organisation and marketing in a Pentecostal business) (1997).

This discussion may appear far removed from Orthodox perspectives. Paul Evdokimov[87] notes in passing in his classic book, *Orthodoxy* (2011): 'The term "mysticism" incidentally is western; Orthodoxy speaks of participation, pneumatisation or *theosis*' (2011, 116). While the origins and designations of the term – only serve to further highlight the earlier discussion in this chapter that different constituent parts of the ecumenical movement use different words to describe similar realities or even extract different meanings from the same word, Evdokimov accords the terms participation, pneumatisation, *theosis* and mysticism with the importance derived from the theology of liberation praxis, as described in this chapter: 'Mystical life is essentially life in the divine, and the divine in the East, chiefly means not power, but the source that gives rise to the new creature and the new life' (2011, 117). This search for new life in the divine, and not a thirst for power or authority, is important to set within the wider theological discussion of ecclesiology. Chapter one presented Florovsky's bold exposition of the canonical and charismatic Church and their relation to each other. This is still an unresolved question for Orthodox theology as far as Zizioulas is concerned:

> These views of Florovsky were so advanced that I myself found them difficult to accept … this position of Florovsky does not seem to have enjoyed a following, and the question still remains open whether Orthodox participates in the ecumenical movement not recognizing any ecclesiality in their non-Orthodox partners.   (2010, 323)

Zizioulas reminds his readers that recognising ecclesiality in other churches is also about recognising God's presence. Evdokimov makes the case for God's presence in the world and for an understanding of *mística* (participation, pneumatisation or *theosis*) that is God's gift. The theology of liberation would designate this gift God's Kingdom. Evdokimov's proviso that the *theosis* involves 'human sweat' (2011, 117) also echoes the theology of liberation understanding that the *mística* is lived.

The original suggestion of the Special Commission with regard to prayer takes on a slightly different hue when viewed from the perspective of the theology of liberation. The work of the Special Commission took care to define ecclesial prayer (confessional common prayer) and a prayer that had no ecclesial status (interconfessional common prayer). It took care to separate the prayer of the Church and the Church at prayer from the prayer of an ecumenical movement gathered by the WCC. The movement was carefully

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[87] Paul Evdokimov was a Russian theologian. He had a military career, which was interrupted by the Russian Revolution. He lived amongst the Russian émigrés and exiles in Paris and was a friend of Sergius Bulgakov and Nicolas Berdyaev. With the latter, he was one of the founders of the Russian Student Christian Movement. See chapter four for further references to this.

delineated as a non-ecclesial gathering in which the churches participated. A gathering of the WCC may have no ecclesial status, but it can be imbibed with ecclesial significance (Zizioulas 2010, 331). The implied theology is that only the Church can offer a prayer that is ecclesial in status. At this stage in the history of the ecumenical movement, while prayer is still considered to be an essential moment in the life of the ecumenical movement, it is not clear who or even what the prayer is, especially when it comes to interconfessional common prayer. If the ecumenical movement gathers the churches together, and yet when the churches pray in the ecumenical movement, it is not an ecclesial moment, it begs the question, what is the *mística* of the ecumenical movement? To borrow the question from Boff and Betto: what is the force that sustains the ecumenical movement?

To this is added another layer of complexity because frequently the WCC and the ecumenical movement state that they are responding to Jesus' prayer, 'may they all be one' (John 17 v 21). This introduces the paradox that the churches' *mística* in the ecumenical movement is Jesus' prayer. The source is a prayer which, through Trinitarian theology, is God's prayer. The paradox is that the churches gather in the ecumenical movement, drawing on the tradition of God's prayer – the charismatic boundary of the Church for Florovsky and the *theosis* of Evdokimov – but the Special Commission would prefer that this is not an ecclesial moment. This is actually a radical proposition. The church (ecclesia) responds to God's prayer in the search for visible unity, but, according to the Special Commission, this is not necessarily imbided with ecclesiological significance, which in turn is a withdrawal from Zizioulas's opinion that WCC gatherings can have ecclesial significance without ecclesial status. Zizioulas articulates this in the following way: 'The WCC cannot be turned into a Church, but it must acquire an ecclesial vision shared by all its member churches' (2010, 327).

This leads to the opening of some radical and interesting potential for the ecumenical movement. Its *mística* is God's prayer, but this *mística* need not have an ecclesial significance. This may be interpreted both negatively and positively. The negative interpretation is partly latent in the work of the Special Commission. Like the Eucharist, Prayer has been located, through time in the ecumenical movement, as an expression of the full unity of the Church. It is perhaps optimistically a sign of the growing acceptance of Orthodox understandings by the ecumenical movement. Mary Tanner describes it as 'those of us who are not Orthodox had to take on board that for you, the Orthodox, "worship" implies the liturgy, Eucharistic worship' (2005, 118). Therefore, the difficulties that present themselves to the ecumenical movement in praying together, or sharing the

Eucharist together, are part of the ongoing search for visible unity, incorporating Orthodox understandings of visible unity. According to Orthodox theology, a divided Church cannot pray (offer any form of liturgy) with its gathered divisions. Or, even more starkly, the Church cannot pray with integrity alongside ecclesial communities that are not fully recognised as the Church. As such, only the Church can pray; and only the Church can celebrate the Eucharist.

In recognising that the prayer at a WCC gathering has no ecclesial significance, it is a reminder to the churches present that not all the participating churches recognise the others as churches. It reminds the ecumenical movement that for all its attempts to root itself in Jesus' prayer, it is actually a movement of interest and not ecclesiology. It invites consideration that the ecumenical movement is composed of individual Christians who in turn make the ecumenical movement, and not the churches. This gives credence to the development of the Global Christian Forum as a new form of ecumenism, which explicitly brings together people and not churches (Van Beek 2009, 24).[88] Finally, it proposes, indirectly, that the churches do not need to be a part of a movement that has no ecclesial significance. This is a particularly forceful proposal for some churches who insist on the significance of ecclesiology on all ecumenical matters. This is the negative interpretation.

The positive interpretation is that a *mística* that does not have an ecclesial significance invites the churches to find the ecumenical movement not only within, but also beyond its canonically defined boundaries. It offers the potential to discover common ground with other global movements and to receive from different and distinct traditions, of faith and non-faith, God's prayer. An example of this is presented in chapter three, where the work of the WCC in the World Social Forum is discussed (the WCC has been a member of the international council of the WSF). The WSF is beyond the ecclesial canonically. But, for some theologians of liberation, it is a sign of the Kingdom. Luis Carlos Susin presents the link between the WSF and the theology of liberation as 'part of the new world context of ecological sensitivity, religious pluralism and social movements' (2007, 1). Such a step locates God's prayer beyond the canonical Church, and even beyond ecclesial significance. It asks the ecumenical movement to find other moments of significance and to take seriously a world in which ecclesiology does not currently embrace the fullness of humanity or the cosmos. It invites the ecumenical movement to interact with the wider

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[88] The Global Christian Forum proposal refers to eligible participants in the following terms: 'confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures … [p]articipants will mainly be representative of church bodies and ecumenical organisations of international significance. Some participants will also be individuals who are representative of and accountable to identifiable constituencies with a commitment to our common calling' (Van Beek, 2009, 24).

world, not to Christianise it, but to recognise it as a partner in the search for visible unity of the whole creation. It forces the Church to consider that it is not the only instrument in God's creation through which God acts to reconcile. A *mística* which has no ecclesial significance, but which draws on God's prayer, invites the churches out from within themselves.

In responding to the Final Report of the Special Commission, another consideration drawn from the theology of liberation is to question the binary proposal in the Final Report. As already mentioned, the Final Report stresses the need to clarify the ecclesial nature of prayer and the non-ecclesial significance of prayer. One is clearly of the Church, while the other is not, according to the Final Report. The *mística* that is practised by CEBs and popular movements interacts differently with the ecclesial nature of prayer. It does not offer either an ecclesial or non-ecclesial option. Instead, to recall Segundo's provocation to theology, it offers to explore and raise the questions rather than provide the answers (1982, 75). It looks to the participation in the Divine, to use Evdokimov's phrase (1979, 116), without necessarily making explicit the call of the Divine in recognisable religious language.

The *mística* of CEBs and popular movements explores the ecclesial and the beyond ecclesial. Even in the beyond-ecclesial, the nature of the prayer still has something constituting the ecclesial, even if it is not fully embraced by current understandings of the ecclesial at the disposition of the ecumenical movement gathered by the WCC. The *mística* does not seek to turn the beyond-ecclesial into the ecclesial. Instead, it recognises that something of the ecclesial can exist in the beyond-ecclesial, and needs to, if the *mística* is to be understood as God's *mística*. The struggle for land reform and the work of the *Movimento dos Sem Terra* in Brazil, is one example of this *mística*. The *Movimento dos Sem Terra* is beyond-ecclesial, but it articulates its wider struggle as a part of God's *mística* in relation to peoples and earth. It is also possible to suggest that WCC assemblies are beyond-ecclesial and the participants *mística* responds to God's *mística* and call o unity. In this interpretation, a prayer which does not have ecclesial significance is not necessarily a prayer without any ecclesial significance. It simply states that the prayer is not fully ecclesial. It is beyond ecclesial, but is where the ecclesial also can participate.

Summary

Drawing on the practical experience of the theology of liberation, this chapter has discussed the inherent difficulties in the use of different terminology in the ecumenical

movement. It has demonstrated that the preferred Orthodox term for the ecumenical movement, inter-Christian (or inter-ecclesial) movement, has a broader application in Latin America, where inter-ecclesial movements include non-Christians. Rather than narrowing the definition of who is in the ecumenical movement, the Orthodox terminology potentially expands it beyond the church when re-read from the perspective of the theology of liberation.

The ecumenical movement is rooted in prayer. Firstly, in Jesus' prayer, 'may they all be one' John 17 v21), and secondly in the prayer of the tradition of the ecumenical movement. The constituent parts of the movement around the globe – a movement which includes Orthodox churches and Latin American popular movements – hold this affirmation in common. The specific contribution from the theology of liberation is that God's *mística* – presence and Kingdom – is greater than the Church. The practical experience of CEBs demonstrates the importance of prayer and the vitality of non-ecclesial forms of prayer to the CEBs movement.

The *mística* of the CEBs challenges the ecumenical movement to consider the radical potential in the proposal of the Special Commission to discover the non-ecclesial significance of prayer as an opportunity to search for visible unity among the churches and beyond the Church. It is more than a question of recognition of different churches, but rather an invitation to recognise God's *mística* in action beyond the canonical Church.

There are inherent difficulties in grasping this radical option. Indeed, it is possible for some churches to belittle the importance of the ecumenical movement through an affirmation of its non-ecclesial significance. This approach is sketched somewhat sympathetically by the Orthodox ecumenist Leonid Kishkovsky, who in turn draws on the work of the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemann, when he calls it the 'feeling of being in a false position' (2005, 108) in relation to ecumenical Protestant suppositions. It is also acknowledged by Zizioulas when he notes that, 'ecclesiological agnosticism' is applied by some Orthodox to the ecumenical movement to protect Orthodox and Roman Catholics from a loss of ecclesial identity (2010, 322).

It is also possible for some to desire a return to 'ecumenical worship' as worship of the churches, without taking into account the plural nature of today's global movements. Eden Grace's article 'Worship in the Context of the WCC', which responds to the work of the Special Commission, announces itself as an 'affirmation … that the worship in the context of World Council of Churches meetings is genuinely spirit filled and worthy of a certain

apologetic' (2002, 3). She makes a strong case for the 'Protestant' defence. Unfortunately, her article restricts itself to exploring the ecclesial features of worship as the major ecumenical tradition, and this, in itself, does not move the discussion forward with reference to radical spaces in ecumenical tradition.

The *mística* that has been explored in this chapter as a contribution to the nature of prayer in the ecumenical movement draws specifically from practical examples from the theology of liberation. It is not always clear if such praxis is immediately transferable to an ecumenical global context. Boff and Betto, in their book on *mística* and spirituality (1999) remind the reader in a discussion about the socialist movement and the 'option for the poor' that the question is not whether or not the basic option serves the movement, but whether or not we make the basic option (1999, 52). The basic option for Boff and Betto is for the 'poor and oppressed' (1999, 52) and not for an ideological system which is likely to be transient. It is in this sense, ultimately, that the theology of liberation *mística* is presented to the ecumenical movement. It is not to serve the movement, but it is for the movement to make a basic option and explore the radical potential within the recommendations from the Special Commission.

Chapter 6 – Ecclesiology II

Summary of Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement

This penultimate chapter will revisit the preceding chapters and extract the ecclesiological implications from the Final Report of the Special Commission for a liberating ecumenism. The work of the Special Commission was conceived as a parity commission, with an equal number of Orthodox member churches of the WCC, and churches embraced by what Miroslav Volf calls one of the three ecumenical pillars: Protestant member churches. Volf offers two ecclesiological causes for the crisis of the ecumenical movement – a postconfessional Christianity marked by a more fluid sense of belonging, and a diminishing of the significance of some churches ecclesiologically and socio-politically. This chapter seeks to offer ecclesiological perspectives that can help to reinvent the ecumenical movement[89].

Miroslav Volf locates causes of the profound crisis in ecclesiology: 'Although ecumenical values have generally prevailed, the ecumenical movement as such finds itself in a profound crisis today' (Volf 1998, 19). Firstly, he sees a decline of rigid denominationalism and the emergence of a 'postconfessional Christianity' (1998, 19), and secondly, he determines that old Protestant denominations have a diminished societal and ecclesial significance, which reduces one of the three traditional pillars of the ecumenical movement (Protestants, Orthodox and Roman Catholics). According to Volf, ecclesiology is more fluid today than in the past, with individual Christians choosing both to belong to and to change membership of churches. At the same time, ecclesiology is losing its importance and impact through sociological factors such as numerical drain, and through political factors such as irrelevance of the message of the churches.

Liberating Ecumenism

The introductory chapter drew attention to absent themes in the theology of liberation. Jung Mo Sung suggests that this is due to two factors within the theology of liberation. Firstly, that frequently the theology of liberation epistemology is rooted in past

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[89]   This wording alludes to some of the contributions to ecumenism by the Scottish theologian Ian Fraser. Fraser worked for the WCC (alongside Paulo Freire) and his book, Reinventing Theology as the People's Work (1988), seeks to relocate theology and the theologian in the midst of the life of the people. It is an early (ecumenical) signpost to what in chapter three of this thesis is described as 'people-centred ecumenism'.

epistemologies. Sung gives the example of the continued use of dependency theory by theologians of liberation without there being a fuller exploration of its continued use to theology: 'Why did theologians of liberation not deepen their understanding of the concept of dependency? Why did they not accompany the debate that followed in the first years of this theory? Or why is the debate not present internally in the theology of liberation?'[90] (1994, 56). Secondly, and partly answering this first question, Sung suggests that the theology of liberation has established a canonical reading list with approved theologians, and situated itself inside re-readings of Vatican II. Marcella Althaus-Reid, among others, is critical of this epistemological shift within the theology of liberation and argues for the theology of liberation to rediscover the epistemological ground for the theology of liberation. She suggests a *caminata* (a way of doing theology) (Althaus-Reid 2004, 12) that disrupts theological productions, including the productions of the theology of liberation. In her own scholarship, she problematised the 'poor Latin American woman' of liberation theology by introducing sexuality to the economic category (2004). Previously, the epistemological grounding of the theology of liberation was explained by Gustavo Gutiérrez to be a critical reflection on praxis – on historical commitments of the presence and action of Christians in the world – which would 'go beyond the visible boundaries of the Church' (2001, 56). Sung, Althaus-Reid and Petrella all advocate this epistemological ground for the theology of liberation, one which goes beyond the visible boundaries of the Church.

Sung specifically notes the anomaly in his study that there is little theological reflection on the economy in the theology of liberation. That is not to say that there is not any reflection. He suggests that Hugo Assmann, Julio de Santa Ana and principally Franz Hinkelammert have offered reflections in this area, but that they are not cited by other theologians of liberation and do not appear in comprehensive bibliographies or histories of the theology of liberation (1994, 9).[91] Interestingly, each of those cited by Sung does not have a Roman Catholic priestly function post-Vatican II. Sung's perceptive analysis can be extended to ecumenism. There is little theological reflection on ecumenism amongst theologians of liberation (at least the canonical ones).[92] In their book, *Espiritualidade da Libertação*

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[90] Author's translation.

[91] Hugo Assmann and Franz Hinkelammert partly address the absence that Sung draws attention to in their book, *A Idolatria do Mercado: Ensaio sobre Economia e Teologia*. (The Idolatry of the Market: An Essay on Economy and Theology) Petropolis: Vozes, 1989.

[92] This refers to systematic reflection on ecumenism in reference works like *Mysterium Liberationis* (1993). As demonstrated by this thesis, a number of theologians of liberation engage in different ways with ecumenical concerns and potentially open new perspectives on ecumenism and its ecclesiological concerns. Perhaps the most notable contributions have been made by Julio Santa Ana, with his focus on ecumenical

(Spirituality and Liberation) (1994), Pedro Casaldáliga and José María Vigil alight on the theme in parts of the book, but it is not a book per se about ecumenism. Only Julio de Santa Ana has written a theology of liberation book on ecumenism, *Ecumenismo e Libertação* (Ecumenism and Liberation) (1991).[93] Santa Ana, while recognised as a contributor to the theology of liberation, is not part of the canon which Sung alluded to for two reasons: he is a Protestant theologian and he lives outside of Latin America.

His book, however, falls into the deficiencies in some theology of liberation highlighted by Jung Mo Sung and Marcella Althaus-Reid. Its epistemological approach is guided by ecclesial concerns in the twentieth century. It discusses the influence of protestant missionary organisations, the WCC, Vatican II and the Lutheran World Federation. It recounts the division of the East and West, and the internal Western division (recalling Bouteneff's summary of ecumenical history in his reflection on the work of the Special Commission). In other words, Santa Ana follows the hegemonic ecumenical narrative, which is perhaps a little odd for a theologian of liberation who is called to offer a critical reflection on praxis beyond the visible boundaries of the Church. Only in two small sections does Santa Ana's book consider what ecumenism might mean for the theology of liberation, but this is part of the fundamental problem with his book. It does not approach ecumenism – its history or content – with a liberation epistemology. He does not appear to follow Gutiérrez and Segundo by using theology as 'a second step'. He does not embrace some of the significant theology of liberation contributions on ecclesiology and instead opts for an ecclesial history of ecumenism that would be familiar to the confessional projects that he presents in his book – be they Roman Catholic, Lutheran or the WCC. Santa Ana does not present an ecclesial epistemology beyond the visible Church (in Gutiérrez's language) or beyond the canonical Church (to use Florovsky's language) which has emerged as important to theology of liberation ecclesiologies and that lifts up the category 'people of God' as the 'primary and most important' self-definition for ecclesiologies (Faus 2010, 259).

However, Santa Ana does discuss both 'a popular ecumenical project' (1991, 116) and the challenges in Latin America of Christianity's relations to other faiths and peoples – particularly the indigenous peoples (1991, 301). These are both important to theology of liberation epistemologies, but Santa Ana presents the two as appendages to the ecumenical

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social ethics, and José Miguez Bonino, with his interest in the dialogues between Christians and Marxists or Atheists or Politics.

[93] This book is published in the series *Teologia e Libertação* (Theology and Liberation), an unfinished publication project of theologians of liberation to offer 50 books on a wide variety of theological issues from the perspective of the theology of liberation.

movement rather than as epistemologies which critique the preceding ecumenical history and commitment in his book. Santa Ana considers a 'popular ecumenical project' to be absent from books and documents because it is based on the day-to-day practice of women and men in communities who unite, 'to construct a new social reality, which in some way is like a sign of the Kingdom'[94] (1991, 116). In Santa Ana's understanding, 'unity is not the absolute … the highest priority corresponds to the Kingdom … the Kingdom expresses the expectations of all those who do not occupy positions of power or privilege in the society, so that a new society emerges'[95] (1991, 116). Santa Ana's reflection implies that this absent theme of popular ecumenism, which epistemologically draws on the *comunidade* and the *pueblo,*[96] is not fully documented by the churches and is participative in a wider social struggle. His views echo that of other theologians of liberation and the praxis of popular movements as explored in chapter five of this thesis.

The churches, however, do document Santa Ana's popular ecumenical project. It is commonly referred to as the 'life and work' stream in the ecumenical movement. Yacob Tesfai documents well the distinctive contributions from 'life and work' and 'faith and order' in his book, *Liberation and Orthodoxy* (1996). Ecumenism inspired by 'life and work' focuses on liberation and justice (1996, 3), while 'faith and order' seeks to overcome 'divisions of the churches by reaching consensus in doctrine and agreement in the one unadulterated and true faith' (1996, 4). Santa Ana's popular ecumenical project, with its examples of the struggle against apartheid, the struggle against dictatorship in the Philippines or the stand against the *contras* in Central America (1991, 118), fits Tesfai's critique of an ecumenism searching for liberation and justice.

It also fits Sung's critique. Sung is critical of epistemologies that are rooted in past outdated epistemological debates without accompanying new developments in those fields. The continued use of past political options – the stand against apartheid, dictatorships and destabilising US foreign policies in Latin America – to continue to inspire popular projects in the ecumenical movement does not enable the theology of liberation of Santa Ana to reinvent ecumenism. He is not the only theologian to reflect on ecumenism who has faced this challenge, as other chapters in this thesis have demonstrated. Even in the examples of historical projects (Petrella 2006), Santa Ana's explanation betrays its ecclesial epistemology. In apparently discussing the work of the Pastoral Land Commission as an example of popular ecumenism, Santa Ana states, 'in the work of the Pastoral Land

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[94] Author's translation.
[95] Author's translation.
[96] See Introduction for an explanation of these Latin American words.

Commission, Catholics and Lutherans collaborated. Finally, the Anglicans in Rio Grande do Sul decided to participate'[97] (1991, 119). It leaves the impression that it is only an ecumenical project if the churches, and the churches as different denominations,[98] opt for the project.[99] In other words, the ecclesial epistemology of the ecumenical movement displaces the *comunidade* and *pueblo* perspectives in the work of the Pastoral Land Commission. This is something that is subsequently challenged by the rise of the MST (the Landless Workers' Movement) in Brazil, which maintains an emphasis on the liberation of landless *comunidades* and *pueblos*, without appealing to an ecclesial basis (Branford and Rocha 2002, 240).

Yacob Tesfai tries to overcome the difficulties that Santa Ana's work belies in his own reflections. He notes James Cone's definition of ecumenism: 'to insist on a definition of ecumenism that moved beyond the traditional interconfessional issues to the problems of poverty and the struggle for social and economic justice in a global context … to uncover the original and more comprehensive meaning of the term *oikoumene*' (1996, 142). Tesfai comments, 'This leads once more to the questioning of the ecumenical sources and foundations' (1996, 142). According to Tesfai, one of the major challenges posed to what he sees as a Western project is, 'the WCC [and the ecumenical movement] … has been conditioned by the historical circumstances in which it was born and has grown to maturity. But those circumstances have now changed' (1996, 144). Tesfai is arguing for a kind of 'post-colonial ecumenical movement', which he quotes as drawing on Harvey Cox's observation of the de-Europeanisation of Christianity and Dorothee Soelle's second reformation that comes from the poor (1996, 142). Tesfai is arguing for a need to change the location of ecumenical ecclesiology, not unlike the theologians of liberation, in order to reflect concrete projects of the ecumenical movement.

Santa Ana's theology of liberation reflection on ecumenism does not critique sufficiently the ecumenical sources and foundations. He does not offer a liberationist critique of visible or canonical church-dominated ecumenism, or the Western narrative of ecclesiastical history. In addition, his popular ecumenical project does not challenge the theology or

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[97] Author's translation.

[98] H. Richard Niebuhr's, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1971, originally published in 1929), has influenced theologians in Latin America, particularly those with Protestant roots like Santa Ana or Miguez Bonino in their descriptions of the Church in Latin America. Denominationalism is resisted by ecclesiology in Orthodoxy and European ecumenical theology.

[99] The Pastoral Land Commission was created by the Roman Catholic Bishops in the Amazon basin in Brazil in 1975 to draw attention to violent land conflicts in the region. It continually expanded its remit with regard to land issues in Brazil through the period of military dictatorship and was instrumental to the founding of the independent Landless Workers Movement (the MST) (Branford and Rocha 2002, 3–25).

ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement – it is already part of it. The popular ecumenical project of which he speaks is simply one more aspect in a wider Eurocentric narrative. However, there are seeds of hope in his acknowledgement of a people-centred practice. This practice, however, should not be co-opted (Althaus-Reid 2004) by the ecumenical movement's traditional streams. Althaus-Reid is wary of styles of theology being co-opted by hegemonic discourses. This co-option whereby hegemonic discourses accuse the new style of theology of betrayal in an attempt to limit the going beyond of the *caminata* can be subtle.[100] Neither should its epistemological influence be subject to an ecclesiological shift, whereby it is subsumed in the service of a church project or narrative. In Santa Ana's case the pitfall is that the potential of the people-centred practice is subsumed in a narrative of the history of the ecumenical movement from the perspective of the WCC.

Defining the Ecclesial in the Final Report of the Special Commission: Ecclesiologies

 'The one Church is made up of many Churches, and this is the very *esse* of the Church' claims Zizioulas (2010, 341). The essential unity of the Church is a fundamental for Orthodox thinkers. In his ecclesiological discussion of the limits of the Church, Georges Florovsky affirms that, 'what is valid in the sects is that which is in them *from* the church, which in their hands remains as the portion and sacred inner core of the church, through which they are *with* the Church' (1933, 126). Even where unity is not visible (the sects that Florovsky refers to are principally Protestant churches), the presence of the essence of the Church potentially expresses the unity of the Church. Beyond theology, the philosopher Nicolas Berdyaev has expressed essential unity as an explanation for our need to overcome a sense of remoteness (1950, 264).

The work of the Special Commission considered ecclesiology to be at its heart (2003, 7). It took as its starting point some essential differences.[101] The essential differences were demarcated as including: differences between Orthodox churches and other member churches of the WCC; a continued conceptual use of the concept of an East–West divide; differences between understandings of the liturgy and prayer in different churches; and discussion of representation (who represents the church) and participation (in whose name does the ecumenical movement act) in the search for unity. Most of the Final Report

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[100] The *caminata* is reference to Marcella Althaus-Reid's contention that the theology of liberation is a style or walk, not a piece of history (2004, 1). This is a helpful perspective that complements the need to rediscover *movement* in the ecumenical.

[101] This option by the Special Commission actually eschews Orthodox theological approaches, like that forwarded by Florovsky, which begins by affirming the essential unity of the Church.

located the essential ecclesiological differences raised by the discussion within an understanding of matters of structure and ethos of the WCC. Therefore, the proposals from the Final Report were institutionally inward facing, addressing the structure and ethos of the WCC rather than studying the Church.

The Final Report did not begin with the Orthodox theological principle of the essential unity of the church. It, therefore, did not ask the churches to consider their *esse* – their original kinship and the unity of their common past (Florovsky 1974, 161) – and their shared ecclesiology, including recognition of legitimate diversity of theological opinion (Zizioulas 2010, 342). The consequence of this decision to avoid considering the *esse* of the Church is that the Final Report does not explain in depth the essential differences, and in fact, it does not consider if the above list of essential differences in the work of the Special Commission is actually all that essential.

The first essential difference used by the Final Report – that which distinguishes between Orthodox churches and other member churches of the WCC – is influenced by a confessional definition of the Church. According to this approach, the Orthodox Church differs from the other confessional families in the ecumenical movement (the Protestant and the Roman Catholic Church would be other confessional families, for example, if Volf's three pillars of the ecumenical movement at the beginning of this chapter are to be followed). The confessional definition of the church has been widely used in Protestant theology, but it is not part of Orthodox or Roman Catholic ecclesiological self-understanding. Julio Santa Ana notes that it is the Lutheran confession that has given most attention to this understanding as a way forward for the ecumenical movement, giving rise to the term 'reconciled diversity' (1991, 101). At the same time, Santa Ana recognises that there is a plurality of confessional identity amongst Protestant churches. Moreover, while Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches may be grouped as confessions in this working model, he acknowledges that not all Orthodox churches accept the same creeds (or confessions), citing the Chalcedon Creed, which is not used by the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Coptic Church or the Syrian Orthodox Church, for example[102] (1991, 96).

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[102] The Orthodox churches examples given by Santa Ana in his book are difficult to identify because he uses only general designations – Armenia, Syria, and Copts. What he is describing, in highlighting creedal differences, is the separation between Eastern and Oriental churches. Oriental churches are sometimes 'referred to as non- or anti- or pre-Chalcedonian, Monophysite, Ancient Oriental or Lesser Eastern' (van Beek, ed. 2006, 60). The second difficulty with Santa Ana's description of Orthodoxy, given in the following terms, 'some of which do not accept the creed of Chalcedon' (1991, 96) (Author's translation), is that there is no Chalcedon creed, only a Council of Chalcedon. The Christological affirmation of Chalcedon fragmented the Church, or in Zizioulas's expression brought about a 'state of schism' (2010, 290). Since 'The Bristol Consultation' in 1967 there has been 'a remarkable measure of agreement' (2010, 288) between the Eastern and Oriental churches and the Council of Chalcedon is no longer considered an ecclesiological divisive issue

More widely, Santa Ana recognises that any confessional distinction is also layered with other differences within the confessions such as ethnicity, geographic location of the church, and the loyalty to leading hierarchs (1991, 97).

Orthodox ecclesiology resists this Protestant ecclesiology, which has tended to identify confessional families in the church and then to elaborate an ecumenical ecclesiology accordingly. Gennadios of Sassima says, 'Protestant churches … connect the notion of the church with denominationalism, which distinguishes between the one and the many in terms of the invisible and the visible church' (2012, 132). The Orthodox Church prefers to understand itself as both Catholic and local, invisible and visible (2012, 132). However, in ecumenical dialogue, like the work of the Special Commission, any distinction in the use of the word church – the Orthodox Church and other member churches of the WCC – is evidence of what John Zizioulas describes in the following way:

> the word 'church' does not carry the same ecclesiological meaning when applied by the Orthodox to their own Church as it does when applied by them to the non-Orthodox bodies. In the latter case, 'church' can mean anything from an 'incomplete' or 'deficient' ecclesial entity to an entirely non-ecclesial one.   (2010, 324)

Just as the Orthodox refuse to embrace a self-understanding of being a confessional family, so too, Orthodox theologians do not always mean church as church or an ecclesial entity when applying the word to others beyond their canonical boundaries.

The parity proposal, which suggests equal numbers of representatives from Orthodox member churches and other member churches in the WCC exacerbates the use of the confessional definition of the Church traditions, reflected in Miroslav Volf's perspective quoted at the start of this chapter. It hints at two major church confessions being in dialogue with each other, namely Protestant and Orthodox. While it uses a Protestant organising principle, it unveils an Orthodox understanding that all Protestant churches are essentially facing similar ecclesial relations with Orthodoxy. Protestants are separated sects – to recall Florovsky's language. This means that they may have something of the *esse* of the Church, or, as Zizioulas suggests, the Protestant churches may not be considered a church in any form by some Orthodox. Both of these Orthodox perceptions are actually rooted in an understanding that Protestant confessions of faith are historically conditioned and have departed from the consensus of the ecumenical councils.

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in Orthodoxy. The affirmation (and reception) of the first three ecumenical councils of the Church – Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) – has been the reference point in discussions of Church unity.

It is, however, John Zizioulas who notes that, 'the ultimate question … in the ecumenical movement is not the common confession of faith, as many people, including the Orthodox, would insist, but what sort of structure the local Church should have so as to be visibly united' (2010, 342). He draws this conclusion because he observes that Orthodox churches have reached almost full agreement on the substance of the faith, and what can be described as legitimate diversity, with different confessions,[103] but it has not led to restored unity. He also indicates that for the Orthodox, the confessional definitions of the Church are simply a development of the Anglican 'branch theory' from the nineteenth century, and further deceives the Church into speaking of its diversity in confessional terms, rather than its *esse*.

Although the Final Report takes confessional diversity as an essential difference, Orthodox theologians, and indeed other theologians, would disagree. Confessional diversity appears in the seventeenth century (Zizioulas 2010, 341) and is popularised through 'branch theory' (Ware 1997, 246). It is not an essential difference, ecclesiologically, for Orthodox theologians. It is also not an essential difference for theologians of liberation. The ecclesiology of the theology of liberation, too, resists confessional or denominational Christianity, but it does address what Jon Sobrino calls 'intra-ecclesial conflict' (1982, 205). This ecclesiology, which affirms the unity of the Church while not subscribing to a unity of tradition, the structurally aligned unity of the Kingdom and the Church, or the strengthening of the presence of the Church in the world, brings 'intra-ecclesial conflict' to focus on the following question: 'the key question addressed to the Church today, and which will condition all its intra-ecclesial conflict is this: does it want to merely announce Christ or do what Jesus did?' (1982, 209). This question has profound implications for how the Church understands its historical situation, according to Sobrino. If it emphasises the first dimension, which is announcing Christ, it will seek to understand history in order to incarnate the gospel message. If it chooses the second option, namely, doing what Jesus did, it will protest history through its incarnate actions. The basic ecclesiological point that Sobrino, and other theologians of liberation, make is that the unity of the Church is found in the praxis of the Church, which continues Jesus' mission in the service of the Kingdom. The Church and the Kingdom are not one in the same. Sobrino's ecclesiological observation critiques what might be called the invented divisions of the Church, which establish confessional families. However, while the theology of liberation ecclesiology purports to present an inclusive Church, Marcella Althaus-Reid has questioned the reality

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[103] Zizioulas cites agreements with Oriental churches and Old Catholics (2010, 342).

of a Church committed to the service of the Kingdom by noting the discomfort (disunity) when different races sit at the same table, or when the poor (unbathed and without clean clothes) participate in a church encounter. She argues that it is necessary to reread ecclesiologies of the theology of liberation, not from the perspective of including the excluded but to consider the praxis of the Church in relation to power struggles (2007, 26). It is this observation from the theology of liberation that would have benefited the Special Commission. The lack of ecclesiological reflection on the *esse* of the Church and the neglect of the praxis of the Church in relation to the Kingdom exposes the intra-ecclesial conflicts in a search for inclusivity – a parity commission – instead of addressing the relationships of power in the ecumenical movement.

Defining the Ecclesial in the Final Report of the Special Commission: Invented geographies and polities

The second essential difference used by the Final Report is the East–West divide. Timothy Ware writes about this difference in the following terms: 'Christians in the west, both Roman and Reformed, generally start by asking the same questions, although may disagree about the answers. In Orthodoxy, however, it is not merely the answers that are different – the questions themselves are not the same as in the west' (1997, 1). If Ware attributes the differences between Western Christians and Orthodoxy to the formulation of different questions, sometimes, Orthodox theologians even insist that the difference is cultural: 'The cultural alienation between east and west was caused to a considerable degree by the fact that Greek was spoken in the eastern Roman empire while Latin was used in the West' (Alfeyev 2011, 108). Gennadios of Sassima writes about the East–West difference and the challenge that it brings to the Orthodox in the ecumenical movement: 'One of the greatest difficulties facing the Orthodox Church is that its thought forms and terms of reference are different from those of the West' (2012, 133). These linguistic, cultural, philosophical and geographic distinctions – described as an essential difference between East and West – are frequently alluded to in the Final Report, and indeed wider ecumenical perspectives.

It is primarily descriptive of a geographical division, with political, cultural, sociological and ecclesial readings, which are then derived from this division. Nicolas Berdyaev, however, reminds us that the East–West boundary can shift depending on geographical location (1950, 252). In his example of being a Russian exile, finding exile in the West, he reflects that India might be considered Russia's East, but Russia (and India) are France's East. However, there are others who are more critical in relation to the East–West divide. Edward Said suggests that the East is an invention of the West's imaginary (2003, 54).

This colonial critique, finds currency in political science and theology. Samuel Huntingdon's, *The Clash of* Civilisations (2002), begins with an observation on how 'Western civilisation' has drawn the world since the 1500s:

> with the beginning of the modern era, about A.D 1500, global politics assumed two dimensions. For over 400 years, the nation states of the West … constituted a multipolar international system … Western nations also expanded, conquered, colonized, or decisively influenced every other civilisation. During the Cold War global politics became bi-polar. (2002, 21)

Huntingdon confirms, perhaps unintentionally, Said's critique. The East–West divide is a colonising distinction that relies on the West's power to invent the East. It is a critique to which theologians of liberation have dedicated extensive research with regard to the invention of Latin America by Roman Catholic missionaries and colonising projects. Enrique Dussel notes that to produce culture it is necessary to become conscious of your own culture. Unfortunately, for Latin America, this consciousness is developed and expressed as an awareness of inferiority to European culture (1997, 39). Dussel goes on to contest this in his later writings by constructing a Latin American theology, philosophy and history that is interpreted by Walter Mignolo as decolonising Western epistemology through, 'learning to unlearn in order to relearn and to rebuild' (Mignolo in Isasi-Diaz and Mendieta 2012, 26).

Theologians as diverse as John Zizioulas and Leonardo Boff have both questioned the use of a geographical definition of the Church, which is anything other than local. According to Zizioulas, the local Church is 'a Church of this or that city' (2010, 341). While reticent to develop reasons why subsequently the Church has divided into East and West, Zizioulas does cite 'mediaeval ecclesiological decadence in the West' (1985, 251) and the Reformation as potential sources of the difference that has crept into ecclesiological debates. His observation, however, is not to be mistaken for a defining ecclesiological difference or principle in his approach to ecclesiology.

Likewise, Leonardo Boff looks to a Church of the bases, of the people of God (1998, 63). Boff's perspective of the base community is a socio-economic category that focuses on the 'poor' or 'popular sectors'. This does not arise from a geographical conflict in the Church, but is an application by Boff of Sobrino's 'intra-ecclesial conflict'. The Church of the bases is the praxis of 'solidarity with the causes of the poor … in the face of an authoritarian state, defending the rights of the poor incarnated in the popular movements

and CEBs'[104] (1988, 63). In neither Zizioulas's nor Boff's ecclesiology is a definition of the Church characterised by the East–West divide an essential difference that informs their ecclesiological contributions.

Gennadios of Sassima has articulated one of the ecclesiological difficulties facing the participation of the Orthodox in the ecumenical movement as deriving from the Western presuppositions and antecedents:

> Since the ecumenical movement was primarily shaped by Western theological presuppositions and antecedents, Orthodox participants were, from the very beginning, forced to express their positions and points of view within a theological framework alien to, or at least different from, the Orthodox Tradition. This is especially true of ecclesiology. The Orthodox East has been challenged neither by the politico-ecclesiological controversies typical of the Western Middle Ages nor by the Reformation or the second Reformation. The Church always remained and remains free from the 'polemical' and 'definitional' ecclesiology which underlies Western thinking about ecclesiology, whether in its Roman Catholic or Protestant forms, and which conditions to a great degree the ecumenical debate on the church. (2012, 133)

This lengthy quote highlights a number of crucial and complex questions for ecclesiology. At present, it is the East–West divide that is the focus of interest in this section. In addition to highlighting that the ecumenical movement is Western, Gennadios of Sassima is careful to demonstrate that this is beyond Orthodox ecclesiology. He assumes the mantle of Eastern ecclesiology in facing a Western ecclesiological project. In doing so, he highlights the power struggle, as Marcella Althaus-Reid would describe it (2004, 11), inherent in Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement, but he does not ever make this power struggle explicit or allow it to assume influence in his ecclesiological argument. And yet, by describing ecclesiology in terms of East–West and situating differences within this framework, his ecclesiological observations return Orthodox participation to Said's critique. Gennadios of Sassima is Orientalising his church in order to defend it against an invention of the Western ecumenical project, that is to say, an Eastern ecclesiology. The church, and, therefore, ecclesiology, can only ever be local, according to Zizioulas. It would have been possible for the Final Report to offer a critique of the use of the East–West divide in the ecumenical movement, showing that it is not in fact an essential difference ecclesiologically. Again, it failed to do so, and instead actually contributes to

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[104] Author's translation.

continued ecumenical participation of the Orthodox in a Western colonising ecumenical movement.

The theology of liberation makes explicit such power struggles in ecclesiology. It is also tempered by the fact that it has arisen in response to being colonised and invented by the West. It has consistently refused to be identified as an alternative theological perspective within Western theology, preferring to present itself as a new way of doing theology. Phillip E. Berryman observes that the theology of liberation, 'arises out of a revolutionary praxis; it is centred not on the church but on society; it involves socio-economic analysis' (1976, 20). This way of doing theology is very different from that articulated by Gennadios of Sassima, but it is equally different from the Western presuppositions and antecedents that he criticises. Gustavo Gutiérrez had clarified this in a debate with Christian Duquoc at the defence of his doctoral examination. Responding to Duquoc's question about the differences between European and Latin American theology, Gutiérrez said,

> I believe there is a difference … while the principal interlocutor in modern Western theology is the non-believer, or the believer marked by non-belief and by the criticism of the Enlightenment, for the theology of liberation, the interlocutor is the non-person, that who is not considered a human being.[105] (2000, 38)[106]

Introducing an ecclesiological reflection that places Orthodox theology and the theology of liberation in dialogue, which is sometimes an uneasy dialogue, thereby demonstrates a further weakness in the ecumenical movement of contextualising ecclesiological dialogues on the basis of an East–West divide. The theology of liberation is neither Western nor Eastern, but it is a potential dialogue partner for Orthodoxy.

Defining the Ecclesial in the Final Report of the Special Commission: *Mística*

The third essential difference addressed by the Final Report is that between the 'ecumenical worship', which in some churches implies a Eucharistic service, and 'common prayer' – something to which all Christians are called. Although the ecumenical movement can cite a number of Christian leaders and seminal documents which call Christians to common prayer, it has been unable to convince Orthodox participants in particular that this

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[105] Author's translation.
[106] Gustavo Gutiérrez quotes Bonhoeffer, 'How to speak of God in an adult world?' as the paradigm for European theology (2000, 38). In a later book, he would formulate the question facing Latin American theology in the following terms, 'Where will the poor sleep?' (2003).

is a form of 'ecumenical worship' or 'ecumenical liturgy'.[107] Indeed the Final Report acknowledges that while

> d]ecades of experience of common prayer and spiritual sharing within the WCC constitute a heritage which cannot easily be ignored… praying together has also revealed many challenges along the way towards unity… it is in common prayer that the pain of Christian division is most acutely experienced. (2003, 11)

This double perspective, which seeks to hold together the heritage of the ecumenical movement and the reality of ongoing separation, is what has drawn the Special Commission to distinguish between 'ecumenical worship' and 'common prayer'. It hopes that by offering an understanding of two kinds of prayer – confessional and interconfessional – which are both distinct from 'ecumenical worship', that the ecumenical movement can overcome the discomfort and impossibility of praying together experienced by some Christians (2003, 20). The Final Report sets out what it considers to be essential differences between 'ecumenical worship' and 'common prayer'. The Final Report suggests that ecumenical worship has misleading liturgical connotations for the Orthodox. It implies, in some interpretations, an ecclesial character to worship and even potentially a Eucharistic service, which, according to Orthodox ecclesiology, 'can only be celebrated by the Church and shared by those in sacramental communion' (2003, 24).

However, the discussion in chapter five demonstrates that distinguishing essential differences ecclesiologically between 'ecumenical worship' and 'common prayer' – between liturgy and prayer – passes through a myriad of concrete options and praxis. Ion Bria, in light of the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry project of the WCC, argues for an understanding of liturgy which recognises that liturgy incorporates 'not only … the personal spiritual level, but also … a level of human historical and natural realities' (1983, 215).[108] This public and political dimension of the liturgy is perhaps also caught up in the influence that the theology of liberation exerted on aspects of the ecumenical movement at the time, for he goes on to write (as an Orthodox theology), '[the liturgy] is a stimulus in sending out the people of God into the world to confess the Gospel and to be involved in man's liberation' (1983, 215). Bria's perspective, incorporating theology of liberation

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[107] The so-called 'Lima Liturgy', once presided over by an Archbishop of Canterbury at a WCC gathering, has no ecclesial status for a number of churches in the WCC.

[108] Ion Bria is also writing after the World Mission and Evangelism Conference, *Your Kingdom Come* (1980), which focussed on Kingdom themes and was somewhat influenced by theology of liberation discourses, perhaps due to the leadership of its Director, Emilio Castro, who would go on to become the WCC general secretary. Emilio Castro was a Methodist minister from Uruguay. He was a strong advocate of human rights during the military dictatorships that swept Latin America.

perspectives into Orthodox comprehension, is an almost forgotten Orthodox contribution to the ecumenical movement, which could be an aspect of future responses to the work of the Special Commission. It is a vision for liturgy and prayer that challenges some of the assumptions which underpin the perspectives contained in the work of the Special Commission.

Bria's contribution is not the only basis of a challenge to the framework of the Special Commission. The praxis sketched in chapter five, drawing on the experience of popular movements, CEBs and the work of theologians of liberation in exploring *mística* – that which motivates peoples and movements and sustains their commitments – recognises that mysticism is not exclusively a Western term, as Paul Evdokimov suggests. But, equally, it is not clear that *mística* fully harnesses and harmonises the potential of participation, pneumatisation or *theosis* – terms more current in Orthodox theology, according to Evdokimov. However, as Sobrino says, this commonly expressed diversity in the Church could actually be articulated as '[t]he courageous acceptance on the part of the church of a genuine universality – cultural, social, and theological … [it] is another possible occasion of intramural conflict' (1990, 143). Conflict and disunity are painful and unavoidable, according to Sobrino: it is what makes the *mística* a praxis. Theologians of liberation look to the struggle as an anchor for praxis, recalling examples of the search for justice in the midst of dictatorship, the search for life in the midst of economic exclusion, and the search for sexual freedoms in oppressive institutions. The historical project that Petrella calls for is, in light of the ongoing struggles in the ecumenical movement over confessional and interconfessional common prayer, a necessary ambiguity. It poses a similar question to the framework suggested by the Final Report: is there an essential difference between praxis of liturgy and prayer in the ecumenical movement?

Perhaps the basic Orthodox affirmation distinguishing liturgy and prayer can be expressed as: liturgy is the Church at prayer, prayer is for the individual Christian. One has an explicit ecclesiological dimension according to the Orthodox, while one is dependent on Christian goodwill and good conscience. Whether this distinguishing is at all possible in an ecumenical movement, which while officially not ecclesial, must have some ecclesial recognition if it is to be a movement of the churches, is addressed more fully in the discussion in chapter five. The fact is that Latin American popular movements and CEBs are a part of the ecumenical movement, bearing what the theology of liberation would argue is an ecclesial expression (Boff 2008, 63). The Orthodox churches are in the same movement, and these expressions of the ecumenical movement – popular movements,

CEBs and Orthodox churches – embody some form of *mística* that explores participation in God and life, although the participation in God may not be made explicit or even be the preferred designation used by each ecclesial expression. The suggestion in the Final Report to differentiate between liturgy and common prayer, between what is ecclesial and what is not ecclesial, does not appear to be an essential difference when viewed through the lens of the praxis of the theology of liberation. Prayer is, arguably, essentially ecclesial too, if understood in relation to the 'people of God'. The essential difference outlined in the Final Report, with the proposal to use the expression 'common prayer' in the place of 'ecumenical worship' is perhaps not so essential after all. Indeed the Final Report admits that its proposals on 'common prayer' will require further work.[109] The discussion in chapter five offers some further reflection on the proposals and also critiques the solution of the Final Report which suggests a distinguishing between ecclesial and non-ecclesial prayer. It also, contrary to other reactions to the Final Report, embraces positive aspects – perhaps unforeseen – in the application of the terms interconfessional and confessional common prayer, which open the way to inter-religious prayers and non-religious prayers in which the Church can participate.

Defining the Ecclesial in the Final Report of the Special Commission: questioning hegemonic representations

Following on from some aspects of the discussions on liturgy and prayer, and another dimension of this essential difference, is the question of representation and, namely, who represents the Church in the ecumenical movement? The stories of the origins of the modern ecumenical movement are inspired by what can be called people-centred organisations such as: lay missionary organisations, the work of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); and by ecclesial-centred actions exemplified by patriarchal encyclicals and decisions of church assemblies and councils. Currently, the people-centred movements which inspired the formation of the WCC do not have full representation in the governing structures of the WCC. It has become an ecclesially centred organisation. Ecclesial in this sense identifies the Church and the ecumenical movement with the canonical boundaries of the Church and the exercise of episcopacy by hierarchs (both bishops and councils).

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[109] Despite this call for further work, the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration did not produce a substantive assessment or report on common prayer during its work 2006–2013.

The churches have argued that the movements (WSCF, YMCA, YWCA or even the Council for World Mission) are represented through the churches. Robin Boyd, in his sympathetic presentation of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) has noted that the SCM is 'a Church ahead of the Church' because, firstly, it is a voluntary organisation not imposed on students by church, academy or state. Secondly, it did not claim to be the Church. And thirdly, it was a truly ecumenical community critical towards the church and committed to God's Kingdom (2007, 180). This reading of the SCM as a 'Church ahead of the Church' brings to the fore the prophetic dimension of the ecumenical movement and highlights, like the theology of liberation, that the Kingdom is greater than the Church. While the churches might claim that movements are represented through their participation in the ecumenical movement, critics of the Final Report have focussed on the loss of the prophetic voice. In a section entitled Frequently Asked Questions, at the end of the Final Report, this is expressed in the following question: 'Will consensus decision-making stifle the Council's prophetic voice?' (2003, 45), is one of the frequently asked questions to the Final Report. There is also the challenge to the Church from any ecumenical praxis that is derived from the charismatic boundary, as observed by Florovsky early in the twentieth century: 'What is the validity of sacraments without communion, of stolen sacraments, sacraments in the hands of usurpers?' (Florovsky 1933, 127).

The essential difference that the WCC has come to uphold between churches and movements, which are then represented through churches, is, according to Boyd's observations, deficient. The movements – like the SCM – do not claim to be churches, but through their commitment to God's Kingdom and their independence from institutional representations, they do display both an ecclesial *esse* and a movement *esse*. The critique that movements, like the WSCF, offer to the WCC is that the ecumenical movement needs to be represented by more than the canonical church (hierarchs, and church assemblies and councils). It is not so much a question of the essential difference regarding who represents the Church in the ecumenical movement as a challenge to discern where and how the ecumenical movement participates in the Kingdom of God. As cited previously: in the words of Marcella Althaus-Reid, it is a question of power relations.

The ecumenical movement, more than an inter-church organisation, seeks to participate in the coming Kingdom of God. It is a vision that has expanded to encompass not only the Church, but reaches out to the whole human family and the cosmos. Julio Santa Ana notes that, 'the ecumenical movement initially followed the direction proposed by the Anglican Communion and the mainline Protestant denominations' (2006, 35). This was then

challenged by the modernisation of the Roman Catholic Church, post Vatican II, and its own engagement with the ecumenical movement. At the same time, the increase in the number of churches in the South and the post-colonial world posed questions to the direction of the ecumenical movement. The work of the Special Commission fits into this analysis by Santa Ana of the ecumenical movement. Power has shifted from Protestants in Europe and North America through the changes to Christianity in the twentieth century. The Final Report explicitly mentions the founding of the WCC in 1948 with a majority of its member churches located in Europe or North America (2003, 27) and it implicitly recognises the changes since 1948 that Santa Ana sketches.

The Final Report, however, does not make explicit the power struggles in Orthodoxy.[110] But, it is possible to see, through the work of the Special Commission, a critique that parts from Orthodoxy and is directed towards the hegemonic ecumenical narratives. In the Prolegomenon, I indicated that the Special Commission addresses issues fundamental to the ecumenical movement, in a way that is not possible in any other international forum. It offers up a critique of ecclesiology and the prayer life of the ecumenical movement. It challenges assumptions of continued hegemonic Protestant models of ecumenism or Eurocentric decision-making procedures. This is partly what Janice Love's upbeat assessment of the consensus model of decision-making tries to capture. The Final Report of the Special Commission is a search to 'do democracy differently … to promote more just and peaceful relations' (2003, 75). Although the Final Report, and subsequent reaction to it, do not explicitly address the power relations in the ecumenical movement, by reading the Orthodox proposals for, and discontentment with, the ecumenical movement which the Final Report conveys, it is possible to unveil a search to locate and name power relations in the ecumenical movement.[111]

That is not to say that Orthodox critiques embody the same sources of marginalisation that the theology of liberation looks for in the peoples' movements or in its understanding of the Church as the people of God. But there has been a marginalisation of the Orthodox in the ecumenical movement. Partly, as Edward Said's thesis on Orientalism demonstrates, this is expressed by the Western ecumenical movement inventing an Eastern presence in the ecumenical movement. This signals a presence of difference, which as Said notes, must

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[110] There have been, and continue to be, fairly strong disagreements between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox. Orthodoxy, as mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis, is nuanced in its expression and practical ecumenical commitment.

[111] An ongoing area of quiet contention is the financing of the WCC. In 2006, the year of the Ninth Assembly, a church congregation in an area of urban depravation in Glasgow made a financial contribution to the WCC of CHF 1,413. In the same year the financial contribution from the Serbian Orthodox Church was CHF 1, 500 (WCC Financial Report 2006, 43-44).

also bear a resemblance to what it is not in order to fulfil its role in the imaginary of the West. Likewise, in the search for unity of the Church the ecumenical movement has required a presence which witnesses disunity. The Orthodox provide one of the most readily available signs of disunity, as a church on the margins of Western church polities.

But equally, the Orthodox have adopted the role of exotic Other in the ecumenical movement; of Eastern provocateur, introducing a world that is at once known and unknown to the ecumenical movement. It has become the source for the spiritual heritage that is incorporated into the hegemonic narrative of ecumenical movement and there is just enough of the émigré and exile in the Orthodox narrative of the ecumenical movement to leave it as belonging to the hegemonic context, without it ever becoming fully European. The difference with the approach taken by the Orthodox in the work of the Special Commission is that differences rooted in the imagined East–West divide are articulated, not to confirm the world as it is – the hegemonic ecumenical narrative – but in order to deconstruct this narrative. It is clear, and even more so, after the work of the Special Commission, that without the Orthodox participation, ecumenism in the twentieth century would be reduced to a form of pan-Protestantism.

However, for the ecumenical movement to be able to move it is equally clear that the Orthodox betray their invented otherness by insisting on an essential difference between themselves and others in the WCC, and to insist on this difference in terms of 'confessional' or 'church family' concepts. These concepts are flawed. They also avoid the calls of theologians like John Zizioulas and Georges Florovsky to explore the further potential of an ecclesiology of the local Church. The ecclesiology of the local Church, which has also been developed in some form by the theology of liberation, demonstrates that any ecclesiology of the local requires a praxis and also an understanding of power relations that shape the Church. The Final Report does not do enough to encourage an ecclesiology of the local Church that begins with commonality rather than difference and which addresses itself to the conflict which arises between any praxis of the Kingdom, and a Church in the service of the Kingdom.

Defining the Ecclesial in the Final Report of the Special Commission: The Kingdom of God and the Church

Another manifestation of this essential difference is presented by the Final Report as participation: who participates in the ecumenical movement and in whose name does the ecumenical movement act? Volf's observation from earlier in this chapter is pertinent at

this point. To say that churches participate in the ecumenical movement and that it is in the name of the churches that the ecumenical movement acts is not to speak of the same church – the same unit of measure – in each instance. The Final Report explains this when it describes that, in the constitutional understanding of the WCC, the word 'church', 'could also include an association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of churches within a country or region, or within the same confession' (2003, 34). Theologically, John Zizioulas reflects that, 'some extremely conservative Orthodox would deny the use of the term "church" with reference to any other group outside the Orthodox Church' (2010, 323).

Miroslav Volf reminds the ecumenical movement that, certainly within Protestantism, there is a diminished societal and ecclesial significance for the Church (1998, 19). Furthermore, the Final Report offers a definition of church – including fellowships, groups and conventions – to which few churches would ascribe ecclesial significance. The suggestion in the Final Report partly draws on a recognition of this changing societal and ecclesial significance for Protestant churches in Europe and North America. However, it is also an acknowledgement of Zizioulas's comment. The churches which participate in the ecumenical movement need not be recognised as a church. Any such recognition is presented as having the potential to weaken the ecclesiological self-understanding of the Orthodox. The need, therefore, to 'elasticise' the word 'church' to encompass both these needs is one aspect of both Protestant and Orthodox ecclesiological self-understanding, which appears in the work of the Special Commission.

The second aspect, which illuminates the Final Report, is the need to accentuate an essential difference between the ecclesial participation – canonical church – and other forms of participation in the ecumenical movement; church aid and development organisations, seminaries and academies, and popular movements, for example. The ecumenical movement, expressed by the WCC, requests the participation of the canonical church. It does so as an embodiment of the *esse* of the Church. The institution of the Church, even where it has been diminished significantly, is still the essential difference for participation and recognition in the WCC and the ecumenical movement.

The theology of liberation partly challenges this differentiation. It challenges it through language that Marcella Althaus-Reid employs in her description of the Church as God's geography:

we could reflect on an ecclesiology made in theological defiance, considering that the body of Christ (the believers) is God's geography where the Holy Spirit is incarnated in everyday life. Therefore, we could either say that the alleged crisis of the church is a theological crisis or that the opposite is true; the theological crisis exists because the church has remained fixed to superseded structures of thought, and to a style of reflection which Christians cannot identify with anymore.   (2004, 107)

Althaus-Reid acknowledges that the theology of liberation began the process of exploring this ecclesiological defiance. For example, the commonly upheld theology of liberation affirmation that the Kingdom of God is greater than the Church demonstrates the search for a response to the Holy Spirit incarnate in everyday life. However, she stresses that the theology of liberation failed to overcome fixed ecclesiologies. Indeed, in any rereading of Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino – the major ecclesiological thinkers for the theology of liberation – it is quickly apparent that both engage in an internal Roman Catholic ecclesiological dialogue post-Vatican II, rather than addressing movements which might have something of God's geography about them. Chapter six of Boff's *Igreja: Carisma e Poder* (Church: Charism and Power) (1982) is dedicated to a discussion of the structures of Roman Catholic Church and it is clear that Boff's CEB is a *comunidade* that is Roman Catholic, in some form. Equally, Sobrino's *Ressurreição da Verdadeira Igreja* (The Resurrection of the True Church) (1982) situates the ecclesiological discussion within the broader Roman Catholic theological debates about 'new evangelisation' that emerge after Vatican II.

The fact that the ecumenical movement and Orthodox ecclesiology have not further explored the ecclesiological potential in either Georges Florovsky's distinction between a canonical and charismatic church or taken forward John Zizioulas's suggestion that any ecclesiology must be an ecclesiology of the local church, is an example of the Church, and ecumenical movement in crisis. It confirms Althaus-Reid's analysis of that the crisis is underpinned by churches and theologies, 'remain[ing] fixed to superseded structures of thought, and to a style of reflection which Christians cannot identify with anymore' (Althaus-Reid 2004, 108). This helps to explain and expose ongoing needs in the ecumenical movement to preserve ecclesiological self-understandings, which are rooted in both supposed essential differences – named as Orthodox and non-Orthodox – and invented geographies based on an imagined East and West narrative.

These brief observations on the ecclesiology of the Final Report of the Special Commission relate to one overarching question that faces the ecumenical movement: who

is the Church? Peter Bouteneff, in his reflection on the work of the Special Commission, raises this question and a number of ecclesiological questions related to it:

> Who is a member or part of the Church? Is the Church a body with clear-cut borders, with an 'inside' and an 'outside'? Is the Church a society consisting of the sum-total of all people who consider themselves to be followers of Christ? Is the Church the community of the baptized? Or can it even be said that the Church somehow includes every human being, and even all creation?   (2001, 15)

In its own way, the Final Report of the Special Commission responds to each of these questions and offers an ecclesiological vision for the ecumenical movement. It situates ecclesiological significance in the canonical Church. It recognises that the Church is the servant of God's Kingdom, but only to the extent that the Kingdom aligns with the already fixed, or perhaps eternal, references of the Church. It integrates the whole creation with the people of God and the Church, each with their own distinct role in the search for visible unity. But, it is in the search for unity that the borders, or boundaries, begin to emerge in the Final Report. The confessional differences are upheld despite the acknowledgement of their inadequacies in definition. The geographical East and West is consistently deployed, even although there is no clear consensus on what is East and what is West; let alone, what the divisions are that arise from this boundary. And the power struggles of the ecumenical narrative, an important and often unacknowledged source of division, are apparent in the Final Report of the Special Commission. The Orthodox, as a minority power in the ecumenical movement, deconstruct the hegemonic church project of the Protestant European and North American churches. It is through the contribution of the Orthodox to the ecumenical movement that this deconstruction becomes possible, and it is through the Orthodox participation that other narratives become possible.

However, by introducing a dialogue with the theology of liberation, the ecumenical movement is reminded that not all Orthodox deconstruction of the hegemonic project is necessarily liberating. The ecclesiology applied by the Orthodox through the work of the Special Commission does not embrace the liberating potential of Florovsky, or Zizioulas, or even Kalaitzidis. And it does not embrace insights from the theology of liberation or post-colonial critiques of modernist projects – of which the ecumenical movement in the form of the WCC is surely representative. Instead, the Orthodox critique of the ecumenical movement, focussing on institutional structural concerns, exposes the WCC, without ever offering a liberating ecumenical narrative. The potential is inherent in the contribution from the Orthodox, but God's geography has not been embraced by the ecumenical

movement in ecclesiological dialogues to the extent that an ecclesiology is then developed from the praxis of the Kingdom. The theological defiance, which Marcella Althaus-Reid draws attention to, is imposed on other ecclesiologies. It has yet to fully consider, ecumenically, the implications for a theological defiance that emerges from the Church and the ecumenical movement. The next section explores a defiant ecclesiology for the ecumenical movement.

From Absent to Defiant Ecclesiologies

The development of the Global Christian Forum is often presented as a form of ecumenism for the twenty-first century. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, writing the preface to Huibert van Beek's book that documents the emergence of the Global Christian Forum, accords it an importance as a response to a post-Western Christianity which is shaped by secularisation in the North, with the decline of Protestant churches, and the Pentecostalisation of the South, with its form of resurgent Christianity for cultures and societies (2009, vii). Huibert van Beek describes the Global Christian Forum as an attempt to bridge the gap between three movements that shaped Christianity in the twentieth century: the ecumenical (which in the vision of the GCF is understood to encompass the historic Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox), evangelical and Pentecostal movements.

The upbeat assessment of the Global Christian Forum by its supporters is rooted in two principles: it draws a representative gathering of Global Christianity (including Roman Catholic and Orthodox representatives); its methodology is based on representatives from global Christianity participating by sharing their own faith journeys with each other, rather than holding in-depth discussion on potentially divisive issues (van Beek 2009, xix). Interestingly, despite the Orthodox participation, and the fact that the Global Christian Forum emerged from the WCC project in the early 2000s, the Global Christian Forum shows little signs of the influence from the work of the Special Commission. In fact, it is probably possible to affirm that the Global Christian Forum is a Protestant response to Protestant problems, with Roman Catholic and Orthodox observers alongside this process. The GCF was specifically designed by the WCC to extend ecumenism to evangelical, Pentecostal, and independent churches, as well as ecumenical organisations and quasi-church groups (2009, 5). This kind of agenda is one that contrasts with the work of the Special Commission, where the Orthodox churches have expressed reticence about including new member churches because this would necessarily mean churches drawn from Protantism and further marginalise Orthodox participation in the WCC.

Sarah Rowland Jones criticises the WCC's praxis for being too centred on churches of the Reformation and Orthodoxy, noting that a large swath of Christianity – Roman Catholic, evangelical and Pentecostal – is absent from the ecumenical movement as embodied by the WCC (van Beek 2006, 4). This observation may be true sociologically, but it is not an ecclesiological principle – at least in the ecclesiological terms explored by the Special Commission, and examined in this thesis. The Global Christian Forum risks replacing a twentieth-century Protestant European and North American hegemonic ecumenical vision with a twenty-first century Protestant European and North American hegemonic ecumenical vision. It does not embrace the ecclesiological critique of ecumenism from Orthodoxy, and nor does it offer a significantly new post-colonial approach to ecclesiology. It is a revamped version of encounters of confessional families, something absent from Orthodox ecclesiology and the ecclesiology of the theology of liberation.

The continued absence of an ecclesiological encounter of the local Church with other local churches, proposed from both Orthodox ecclesiology and the ecclesiology of theology of liberation – albeit in differing ways – is an absence which the ecumenical movement – either through the WCC or the GCF – urgently needs to address. The Global Christian Forum does not address the critique derived from the theology of liberation for any ecclesiological praxis to recover *comunidades e pueblos* long absent from ecumenical projects. And it does not recover the movement in the ecumenical, which Konrad Raiser set out as a fundamental challenge to the ecumenical movement in a book published on the eve of the millennium when he said, 'the sense of ecumenical *movement* must be regained and the institutional captivity of ecumenism overcome' (1997, 89). This was mentioned in the introduction to this work. The GCF, far from being a future model for ecumenism which supersedes the WCC, is in fact welded to a similar hegemonic project, only it lacks an ecclesiology that will sustain Orthodox, and most probably Roman Catholic, engagement into the future.

If Orthodox ecclesiology has been absent from ecumenical hegemonic projects, as this thesis demonstrates through a reading of the Final Report of the Special Commission, the GCF confirms an ecumenical praxis that enforces this Orthodox absence. A major contribution to ecumenism from the Final Report of the Special Commission was to shift Orthodox ecclesiology to a theology of defiance of hegemonic projects. It was important to develop an epistemology from the perspective of the theology of liberation that contested hegemonic projects and invented concepts that constrain the movement of ecumenism. This was done through a critical reading of the ecumenical movement from Orthodox

perspectives. It is by embracing Orthodoxy that the ecumenical movement can move beyond hegemonic colonial projects and find a liberating praxis. This liberating praxis is informed by, although not restricted to Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy itself has demonstrated sufficiently that not all its ecclesiology is necessarily liberating, and nor is its praxis always committed to a liberating ecumenism. The reaction to Pussy Riot's 'Punk Prayer' by the Russian Orthodox Church and the refusal by church authorities to engage in a theological dialogue with the Pussy Riot, or to exercise mercy in light of the sentence given to the women demonstrates the dissonance between church and movement in Russia (Gessen 2014). The ongoing struggles between Moscow and Constantinople on questions of jurisdiction also expose an ecclesiology that is not committed to liberating ecumenism, and one that has dangerous political implications in countries like Ukraine. But the ecclesiological contribution and critique from Orthodoxy to the ecumenical movement pushes the ecumenical movement towards a post-colonial understanding of unity which is no longer a colonising concept. This is the defiant ecclesiology that emerges from absences in the ecumenical movement.

Defying Ecclesiological Boundaries

To say that the Church exists in time and space, but that it is not defined by time and space sometimes leads to an ecclesiological exploration of the Church visible and the Church invisible. When discussing the Church visible, theologians draw on the historic contexts of the Church and interpret its signs and symbols in an attempt to affirm a theology of the Church. In discussing the Church invisible, theologians draw on ideas of God and God's specific acts in the world. This distinction between visible and invisible Church is an example of local Church theology. The vision, while receiving affirmation in the Church, pertains to one or more localities.

The Church exists in time and space. Another local Church theology has explored this not in terms of the visible and invisible Church, but in terms of the periphery – a term from the theology of liberation – of the historicity of the Church. The periphery of the historicity of the Church is an invitation not only to disclose the hegemonic narratives, but rather to uncover the deliberately absent narratives. The historicity of the Church refers to the presence of the Church. The theology of liberation interprets the Church in relation to peripheries of hegemonic narratives: the Eurocentric history of the Church, for example. This is undertaken through an epistemology that Walter Mignolo calls 'border-thinking'. The use of the word periphery, and particularly its use in a thesis which draws on the theology of liberation, tends to suggest a centre. This is the duality present in some forms

of Latin American theology of liberation. The duality draws on Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory; a Marxist analysis of the development of the capitalist world system through colonialism and modernity. The emphasis in such theologies of liberation is arguably dictated by the interests of the centre. This is part of the critique that theologians like Aguilar, Althaus-Reid, Petrella and Sung make of the theology of liberations when they speak of changing epistemological locations for the theology of liberation. A liberation epistemology rooted in *comunidades* and *pueblo* cries out for reflection on absent themes and becomes a resistance to the centre. However, the inclusion of Mignolo's epistemology – which builds complexity into Wallerstein's world systems theory by moving beyond the descriptions and theories from inside the world systems theory (Mignolo 2000, ix)– as a theology of liberation epistemology helps to ensure that Jung Mo Sung's criticism of absent themes in the theology of liberation through the continued use of outdated critical tools is offset. Mignolo's interest is not the same as Wallerstein's. He is not researching the relationship of centres and peripheries to explain the structuring of power relationships. Mignolo is advancing an epistemology of peripheries, in which they all make a contribution to critiquing a global design through their own local history and then through their peripheral relation to each other. In the context of this thesis, the theology of liberation and Orthodox ecclesiology are peripheries to the global design of the hegemonic ecumenical movement. But in their interaction with the global design of the hegemonic ecumenical movement the peripheries simultaneously reveal that the global design is controlled by one kind of local history. In the case of the ecumenical movement, the European or North American Protestant church is revealed as dominating the hegemonic ecumenical project.

However, in Mignolo's border-thinking the exposure of this local history which controls the hegemonic narrative would not lead to a power struggle to supplant one local history with another.[112] At times, the Final Report of the Special Commission draws dangerously close to this ideal through its insistence on essential differences rooted in imagined geographies. The Final Report uses the terms 'churches within the tradition of Reformation', 'Orthodox', 'Christian traditions' (with reference to ecclesial traditions) (2003) to contrast sides in the debates, and it proposes a model of membership based on confessional or geographic (national or regional) local churches (2003, 16). This misuse of ecclesiology leaves open the way to a new colonising project by one local history over

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[112] Mignolo's concept is reminiscent of Paulo Freire's warning in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that the oppressed ought not to become the oppressor in any new praxis, although any liberation which does not address the dualistic structures of power – oppressed-oppressor – will influence the liberating outcome (1993).

other local histories. Mignolo's suggestion is that each local history both contributes to boundary formation and abandons the boundaries or borders, precisely because the boundaries are not fixed and invite new praxis to emerge. It is in the critiques of local histories towards the current praxis of the ecumenical movement that the potential for a new praxis emerges. But the new praxis is informed by the local histories in the form of the local church beginning a process of border-crossing. According to Mignolo, it is the peripheral boundaries that encourage the new praxis and possibilities. It is this new praxis, as an ecclesiology that defies global designs and hegemonic projects while also liberating ecumenical historical projects, which is taken up in this thesis through developing an ecclesiology from different peripheries of the Church.

The first periphery is Orthodox ecclesiology. Drawing on Edward Said, Mignolo affirms that, 'there cannot be an Orient, as the other, without the Occident as the same' (2000, 51). Mignolo is interested in demonstrating that it is the geography and genealogy of the Occident of Europe that constructs global projects. These projects are developed by colonising and modernising (the same interlinked process, according to both Mignolo and Dussel) its peripheries. The Occident is interested in the Orient to the extent that the Orient contributes to the global project or dominant narrative of the Occident. The epistemological challenge of border-thinking is to understand that the peripheries of the Occident have their own project(s) and narrative(s). It is important to recognise that the borderlands of the Occident have counter projects and different narratives, but equally that the peripheries have also been forgotten and are absent.

It is possible to apply Mignolo's concept of the global designs of local histories to reinterpret the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement is a global project of the Occident. It has sought to colonise and modernise churches, particularly those on the various peripheries (Orthodox, Africa, Asia, and Latin America, for example). It co-opts their ecclesiologies when it serves the global ecumenical project and deliberately forgets their existence when the peripheries offer a substantive challenge, or protest, to the ecumenical project or narrative.

At times, theologians from these peripheries have adopted and internalised the global ecumenical narrative and have spoken as, for example, 'Orthodox churches'. The most contingent example is the continued use of the East–West divide in referring to ecclesiology. This is a designation, which on the one hand alludes to the history of the Roman Empire, and on the other is implicated in the modernisation project of the Occident, and is given fullest expression in the Enlightenment and its narratives of progress, and in

the Cold War era when the whole world was forced to opt to be Eastern or Western in geopolitical terms. Many Orthodox theologians, in asserting their local history, will assert that the Enlightenment passed Orthodoxy by. Timothy Ware says that the 'cultural and religious upheaval which transformed Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries … affected in an oblique way' the Orthodox (1997, 1). Ignatius IV, Patriarch of Antioch and All East, in a lecture to students at the University of Athens in 1991 admitted that, 'Orthodox are often afraid of modernity' (2006, 222) because of its technological advances, individualism and violence, and this modernity is interpreted as a consequence of the Enlightenment.

The East–West divide is at the service of a discourse that wants to demonstrate that the ecumenical movement is more than Occidental churches, and more than an Occidental project. At the same time, the continued use of this terminology highlights that the Orthodox contribution to the ecumenical movement is as 'Eastern', exotic and other. It is to reflect what the Occident no longer is, and it is to be colonised by the ecumenical movement to modernise its ecclesiology, for example, through the ordination of women.

In Mignolo's conception, it should also be possible, however, for Orthodox churches and Orthodox theologians to articulate a counter or different ecumenical project, and, if the ecumenical movement can be decolonised or de-hegemonised, the lost Orthodox contributions should emerge. The presentation of Orthodox ecclesiology in chapter one should be read in this light. The potential in Florovsky's charismatic Church and in Zizioulas's local Church disrupts the colonising ecumenical movement and offers a way forward for ecclesiology that establishes the borderline interactions as a signifier which commits to reflect on the praxis of the Church.

The ecclesiology of the boundaries (Florovsky) and the ecclesiology of the local Church (Zizioulas), set alongside and in dialogue with the theology of liberation, open new ecclesiological perspectives. Normally, in a global project, the ecumenical movement as the controlling local history would mediate this dialogue, thereby supressing an emerging ecclesiology that did not serve its own global ecumenical project. By recovering the peripheries – Orthodox theologians and theologians of liberation – and through the encounter of the peripheries, a peripheral theology emerges which has its own significance. In other words, it is theology and ecclesiology at the periphery, interpolated by the periphery, which has the potential to be another ecumenical movement.

Some of this recovering of the peripheries has already begun in the missiological, if not directly ecclesiological, reflection of the ecumenical movement. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, which met in Manila in 2012, drafted the first full mission statement since 1982. It was subsequently approved as an official WCC statement at the WCC Central Committee meeting in Crete in 2012. The statement adopts the language of margins, critiquing 'cultures and systems which generate and sustain mass poverty, discrimination and dehumanization' (Keum 2013, 15), and calling for an understanding of the 'complexities of power dynamics' (2013, 15). It highlights that agency (in mission) comes from the margins and it proposes 'an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized' (2013, 15). The Latin American ecclesial contribution related to peripheries is not too distant from the 'mission from the margins' of the ecumenical movement, which is itself an attempt to find a post-colonial mission model.

The Ecclesial Beyond the Canonical

It is in the borderlands that ecumenism takes root. Julio de Santa Ana reflects: 'The search for a Christian Church which is really representative of the poor and shares their struggles and expectations, their sorrows and their hopes, must inevitably include the issue of Church order and Church structures' (1979, 173). Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas agrees, calling church structure the 'ultimate question' for the ecumenical movement (2010, 342).

Earlier chapters have presented some suggestions for an ecclesiology from the periphery. Zizioulas presents the ecclesiological challenge of the local Church. Segundo presents the contested ecclesiology of the local church through a presentation of mass and minority struggles. And, Sobrino presents an ecclesiology that takes the poor as the *esse* of the church. Such ecclesiologies are descriptive, but they do not address the 'ultimate question' for the ecumenical movement of Church order or structure.

This is partly because the ecclesiology of Zizioulas is an Orthodox ecclesiology. It does not fundamentally question the Orthodox paradigm of city-bishop-church. It does not, for example, recognise that the Church structure explained ecclesiologically arises from a political organisation of the city. Equally, Segundo and Sobrino betray their Latin American (Roman Catholic) paradigm with a basic understanding of 'poor' that articulates at the same time the fact that the majority of Latin America is poor and the majority is

Roman Catholic (Segundo 1990, 29). Boff does the same in his book *Ecclesiogênese: a reinvenção da igreja* (Ecclesiogenesis: the reinvent of the church) (2008), whereby the reinvention of the church that he proposes is actually a reinvention of the Roman Catholic Church. He tackles the questions of the sacramental nature of the church, the hierarchy and the communion of the church, and the role of lay people and women in the ministry of the church, but this is done with reference to 'internal' theological debates in the Roman Catholic Church post-Vatican II.

The observations from theologians as diverse as Zizioulas and Segundo have a contribution to an ecclesiology that is beyond the ecclesial canonically, but which maintains its ecclesial *esse*. The local Church is a contested space. The theology of liberation frequently recognises this contestation as being between the Church institutional and the Church event (Boff 2008, 95). The Church institutional carries the responsibility for Church order and structure even in some of the most developed ecclesiology of the theology of liberation, while the Church event is the peoples' movement, freer to express itself and give witness to the Kingdom. According to the theology of liberation, the Church institutional and Church event are simultaneously the Church. In other words, the Church event is as dependent on the Church institutional and vice versa.

This perspective of the local Church is far from a liberating vision. It does not conceive of the ecclesial beyond the ecclesial, rather it presents the ecclesial within an expanded understanding of the ecclesial. It also carries some of the motivations from Georges Florovsky's reflections on the Church boundaries described as canonical and charismatic. It is not too difficult to see Boff's Church event as the charismatic Church, and the Church institutional as the Church canonical. Both Boff and Florovsky, from different peripheries conceive of the Church ecclesiologically in remarkably similar ways, but both also actually conceive of the Church from within the institution or canon. The Church event and charismatic take form in relation to a centre. Mignolo's epistemology, as seen earlier, advocates for an ecclesiology of the periphery – the Church event and charismatic as the local Church. This is more radical than Zizioulas's proposal. It is also somewhat distant from even Boff's *ecclesiogênese*.

However, the local Church is also a contested space because it is incarnate in a context that is not necessarily ecclesial. It is present in a city-state (to acknowledge the contribution from Zizioulas), which is a political reality. The state, and particularly forms of the modern state, would seek to mediate a reasoned public debate (Habermas 2008, 119). The local Church contests its ecclesiology in this mediated environment, but as Habermas

acknowledges, it cannot do so only on reasoned ground (2008, 127). Faith is a constituent basis of the contestation of the Church. To turn Habermas's observations around, it is perhaps equally plausible to state that the Church contests ecclesially its contextualisation – it is the Church in time and space as an institution and event. However, the Church necessarily contests beyond its own ecclesiality its contextualisation, otherwise there would be a dissonance with the public space (mediated with reason) and no real contestation. In this vision of the local Church, the contested space is between the ecclesial and the beyond-ecclesial in a context that is non-ecclesially (in the example from Habermas, it is a politically defined sphere).

This is an important starting point for the ecumenical movement and for the ecclesiological questions that it faces. Ecclesiology, be it suggested by Orthodox theologians or theologians of liberation, has a political context. The important ecclesiological contest is not between ecclesiologies, but between ecclesiologies that go beyond canonical ecclesiology to articulate the *esse* of the Church. Zizioulas's local Church offers such a possibility, if it opens a praxis for a non-ecclesial ecclesiology of the locality as part of its ecclesiology. In Chapter 1, I demonstrated that Zizioulas's local Church was predicated on political (not ecclesial) conceptions of the gathered community in the city-state. If Zizioulas's local Church accounts for the Church event as responsible for the order and structure of the Church, then it is possible to find a liberating ecclesiology. Equally, if the theology of liberation can articulate the Church event as something beyond the Church, while retaining the *esse* of the Church, then it is possible to find a liberating ecclesiology.

An Ecclesiology Serving God's *Mística*

Volf notes that Zizioulas's local Church is at the same time the Church Catholic as far as it stands in communion with any other local Church (1998, 201). It is the presence of the Trinity which constitutes the Church. It is the communion of the Trinity, which delimits the unity of the Church (1998, 204). In some sense, this is the basis of a participatory ecclesiology. God participates in the Church and, to the extent that the Church participates in God, it has its ecclesial identity. It is an ecclesiology that serves God's *mística*.

In the introduction to this thesis, I explored the search for a 'first step' for the theology of liberation. It has shifted through different eras. Firstly, it was understood to be a commitment to the poor. This was replaced by a commitment to the use of social sciences in theological discourse. Ivan Petrella (2006) and Marcello Barros (2011) have more recently suggested that the commitment to historical projects is the first step, rooted in

mística, for any theology that liberates. Chapter six explored how the theology of liberation has affirmed a *mística* that can be said to be of the churches, but equally as offering a challenge to the theology of the churches. God's *mística*, far from delimiting the unity of the local Church as interpreted by Volf and Zizioulas in Trinitarian terms, exposes the boundaries of the Church to participation in the Kingdom. If, as the theology of liberation suggests, the Church is a servant of the Kingdom, and if the Kingdom can be articulated in terms other than Christian doctrine (as is suggested by Boff and Betto's analysis in chapter five), the local Church is susceptible to experiences and ecclesiologies which are beyond its canonical borders. This is what the practice of some of the CEBs, understood as 'local Church', presents to ecclesiology.

In this case, it is not sufficient for ecclesiology to suggest that the Church and God commune. It is necessary to demonstrate the presence of God's *mística*. For the experience of the Church of the poor demonstrates that the Church can appropriate this *mística* which comes from the Kingdom without necessarily 'Christianising' it or making it serve canonical ecclesial ends. The ecclesiology presuppositions of the Special Commission and the WCC in general are devoid of this perspective. The ecumenical movement, as expressed by the WCC, seeks to reconcile local Church, where the Church and God already commune. It does not offer an ecclesiology that accounts for God beyond the Church and it does not offer a purpose for the world that is beyond the reach of the Church.

Towards a Participatory Ecclesiology

The ecclesiological issues from the Final Report of the Special Commission are offered as an invitation to further exploration (2003, 8). The Final Report highlights, in particular, three areas for further study: how do churches understand visible unity?; the potential of baptism as a foundation for the ecumenical movement and the mutual recognition of baptism by churches; and the meaning of *koinonia* in the ecumenical movement.

From the perspectives developed in this thesis, also responding to the Final Report of the Special Commission, there are other interrelated questions which appear more pressing in the search for an ecumenism that liberates. How do churches express their commitment to God's Kingdom, which is understood to be greater than the Church? How can the charismatic boundary of the local Church offer an ecumenical praxis for ecclesiology? How does the recovery of absent themes provide a new historical project for the ecumenical movement, in which unity is no longer a colonising concept? The 'how' in each question is deliberate. Ivan Petrella has observed that in order that the theology of

liberation recover its commitment to historical projects, mediated in institutional contexts like that of the ecumenical movement, it is necessary to construct from a context. Like Marcella Althaus-Reid and Jung Mo Sung, he is asking for theology to engage the 'how' of the *comunidad* or *pueblo*.

The questions above could be reworded in order to avoid the attractive option for theology to construct an ecclesiology mediated by canonical ecumenical theologies and to express the praxis of the ecumenical movement. How do the *pueblo* express their commitment to God's Kingdom, which is understood to be greater than their *mística*? How can the *comunidad* offer an ecumenical praxis for ecclesiology? How does the recovery of absent *pueblos e comunidades* provide a new historical project for the ecumenical movement? By framing the questions in this way, there are two consequences. Firstly, it reveals a lack of historical projects in the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement. It has substituted local ecclesiologies for an ecclesiology derived from its hegemonic canon. It prefers questions related to unity, baptism, and *koinonia*; all distinctly abstract projects with little urgency from the perspective of the *pueblo*, but ecclesiological questions with a canonical church interest. This absenting of *comunidad* and *pueblo* of the local Church is written into the ecumenical canon through a methodology that does not ask 'how'.

Secondly, it demonstrates some of the content of a liberating ecumenical praxis. This content is not derived from canonical ecumenical ecclesiology. It is a reflection based on the commitment of a *pueblo* to God's Kingdom. It is a search for a praxis that deepens that commitment and it turns the commitment into a movement. It is, obviously, a participatory ecumenism rooted in *pueblos* and *comunidades*. It is, to borrow expressions from Orthodox ecclesiology, both local and charismatic. This affirmation might challenge the ecclesiology and the ecclesiological issues before the ecumenical movement, but this is exactly Petrella's point. If a theology (or ecclesiology) is to liberate, it cannot confine itself to any one perspective or *pueblo* or *comunidad*. The liberating implication of the Final Report of the Special Commission is that the ecclesiological critique of the ecumenical movement by the Orthodox invites consideration of other ecclesiological praxes.

An Orthodox Contribution to Liberating Ecumenism

The Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement is fundamental and the work of the Special Commission brings the possibility of reconciling two historical ecumenical movements: the life and work movement and the faith and order movement. The reflections in this thesis have tried, in some sense, to counter Yacob Tesfai's thesis that

liberation – which he interprets as a 'Third World Church' interrogation to the ecumenical movement – and Orthodoxy – which he interprets as doctrinal dialogues between confessions in the ecumenical movement – are counterpoints in the ecumenical movement. He does concede in the closing chapter to his book, '[d]octrinal orthodoxy can no longer ignore or leave out of sight the many historical developments that challenge the faith' (1996, 155).

It is the contribution from Orthodox critiques of the ecumenical movement, addressed in the Final Report, which finds resonance with other local churches in the ecumenical movement. The solutions proposed by Orthodox ecclesiology regarding these critiques are not always liberating. However, the search for solutions, as Petrella indicates, is a part of the 'how'. The initial Orthodox critique has opened a way to the 'how' for the ecumenical movement. Sometimes this is through unintended consequences as the discussion in chapter five on confession and inter-confessional common prayer demonstrates. The potentially liberating praxis of this proposal as a solution to ecclesial concerns about the status of ecumenical worship has been overlooked by influential figures tied to canonical and hegemonic ecumenism. Viewed from the perspective of the *pueblo* or *comunidad*, the proposal appears to offer new directions to the praxis of some local churches.

Sometimes it is through a sustained resistance to a colonising concept – the rejection of understanding the ecumenical movement as a grouping of confessional families, for example – that other ecclesiologies emerge. If the Church is not confessional, how does it describe itself in relation to others? The geographical and political implications of this question are addressed in different ways by Orthodox ecclesiology and the ecclesiology of the theology of liberation and more fully explored in chapter four, particularly in light of Nicolas Berdyaev's philosophy of the *esse* and Edward Said's theory of Orientalism. But, in both cases, their theologians are wrestling with the 'how'.

In exploring Orthodox contributions to the ecumenical movement, it has also been possible to recover absent ecclesiologies and to find potential praxis for the ecumenical movement. An ecumenism in the charismatic boundary of the Church – suggested by Georges Florovsky – would offer a very different praxis from the canonical model currently pursued by the Orthodox participants in the ecumenical movement. Equally, an ecumenical praxis rooted in the local church – suggested by John Zizioulas – is yet to fully emerge. It is yet to emerge at all if the local Church is understood as something other than 'national churches' (autocephalous, in Orthodox terms). The introduction of political concerns to a dialogue with Orthodox ecclesiology, led by Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Pantelis Kalaitzidis,

further demonstrates that Orthodox ecclesiology is not unitary and that it has the resources within its discipline for an ecclesiological praxis that engages with differing political realities. Gvosdev and Kalaitzidis, again in different ways, affirm a liberating ecclesiological praxis for Orthodox ecclesiology.

Conclusion

John Sobrino has described the formula, *extra pauperes nulla salus* (2008, 75) as
countercultural. It does not belong fully to the tradition of theology, which according to
Sobrino still prefers an ecclesiology along the lines proposed by the Church Fathers, *extra
ecclesiam nulla salus* (2008, 75). However, Sobrino argues, the formulation is not
necessarily against the tradition of theology; rather it radicalises the setting in which to find
God (2008, 77). It recovers a lost setting for theology – in the world of the poor. It then
goes on to contest theologies and ecclesiologies that exclude, becoming in this way
committed to the struggle of the presence of the poor in theology and ecclesiology. Finally,
Sobrino's formula, like the theology of liberation more generally, resignifies theology and
ecclesiology. In the most radical resignification of ecclesiology, the poor are the Church.

It is a radical resignification because the poor are the Church, not through bearing marks of
the ecclesial (like Baptism, for example), but through incarnating God's presence. Jon
Sobrino also notes that the Church that is not poor – the ecclesial hierarchies, councils,
conferences – have adopted the Church of the poor as a part of their 'ecclesiastical jargon'
(2008, 7). The radical resignification of the Church has been replaced in 'ecclesiastical
jargon' with what Marcella Althaus-Reid describes as a 'theme park theology'. The
theology of liberation, and its resignification of the Church, is accepted by the tradition of
theology and the Church because to produce theology is 'to continue with an
understanding and approval of the system of theological production' (2004, 130). In other
words, the recovery, contesting and resignification is a part of all theology, not a specific
contribution from the theology of liberation.

Jon Sobrino may well think that *extra paupers nulla salus* is countercultural, but it cannot
be countercultural as an ecclesiology when it is only applied as a replacement to *extra
ecclesiam nulla salus*. It is redrawing the boundaries, instead of transgressing those same
boundaries. In this case, theology and ecclesiology can acquiesce and include another
theological or ecclesiological perspective without fundamentally liberating ecclesiology. It
forms part of what Jung Mo sung calls the 're-reading of historical theological tracts'[113]
(1994, 270) and it is not necessarily a concrete historical project. It is, for example, still the
Church rather than the poor which will continue to produce theology in the countercultural
ecclesiology of Sobrino; And as history has shown, the theological production of poor

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[113] Author's translation.

theologians of liberation has displayed a strong tendency to seek ecclesial approval from hierarch, councils and conferences. Juan Luis Segundo was the first theologian of liberation to advert this tendency in his response to *Libertatis Nuntius* (1984). While Gustavo Gutiérrez and Karl Rahner scrambled to defend the orthodoxy of the theology of liberation in the face of ecclesial censure, Segundo chose to expose the ecclesiology being used by the Church to censure the theology of liberation (Segundo 1987).

The counter-cultural is actually to be found in the very act of doing theology. In the examples offered by Althaus-Reid and Segundo, the act of doing theology has a very specific location outside or beyond the Church. According to Marcella Althaus-Reid, the poor theologian is 'defined as independent of Church and state structures' (2004, 130). For Juan Luis Segundo the poor theologian 'takes their cue from flesh and blood human beings who are struggling with mind and heart and hand to fashion the kingdom of God out of the human materials of our great and oppressed continent' (1982, 241). Sobrino's formula provokes theology and ecclesiology, but it is in the commitment to the historical project – the struggles of the poor – that the radical resignification resides. This goes to the heart of Ivan Petrella's observation that the theology of liberation needs to offer concrete alternatives mediated through engagement with institutions, projects and peoples. The WCC, the ecumenical movement and the people of God are the institutions, projects and people with whom the theology of liberation has been engaged to offer concrete alternatives, in this thesis.

Reflecting back, it is surprising that ecumenism with its institutions, projects and peoples has been an absent theme from the theology of liberation. This surprise is exacerbated when consideration is given to the commitment of the theology of liberation to liberation struggles and the commitment of the ecumenical movement to struggles for liberation. The ecumenical movement has, at times, applied concepts from the theology of liberation to radicalise its options, particularly at the time of the Fifth Assembly in Nairobi in 1975.[114] Yet this has not necessarily led to a radicalising of the ecumenical movement's location. In other words, the ecumenical movement has found inspiration in the theology of liberation in order to support its already existing commitments – the search for unity through political, social and economic actions, for example – but it has not radicalised the location of the movement, which has become concentrated in the Church and in the interests of the

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[114] The Fifth Assembly, with the theme 'Jesus Christ Frees and Unites' advocated a number of liberation themes including Paulo Freire's education for liberation, struggles for liberation and human development. http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us/organizational-structure/assembly/since-1948 (accessed September 2014).

canonical Church. This is not the radical location of the historical commitment for the theology of liberation according to Segundo and Sobrino from amongst early theologians of liberation, and followed by Althaus-Reid and Petrella amongst new-generation theologians of liberation. The radical location ought to be in the historical commitment to the development of ecumenical projects in the midst of peoples' struggles.

With this in mind, The Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC may not appear an obvious location for the theology of liberation to examine ecclesiologies in the ecumenical movement. However, the ecclesiological critique that the Orthodox churches offer to the ecumenical movement, which are conveyed through the Final Report, can be interpreted in categories that appeal to the theology of liberation. The Orthodox adopt a subaltern voice with a particular relationship to Western categories and colonial projects. The Orthodox contest the Enlightenment tradition within Western Christianity and Western theology. The Orthodox also contest the hegemonic Protestant ecumenical project by resisting ecclesiological assumptions invented by Protestants, such as denominational or confessional understandings of the churches. The subaltern Orthodox voice helps to recover lost *comunidades e pueblos* and introduces new locations for the ecumenical movement.

And in a 'second step' the theology of liberation can incorporate epistemologies which are absent from its own liberationist epistemologies – post-colonialism, Orientalism, subalternism, for example – into a reflection on the ecclesiology of participatory movements. A subaltern Orthodox contribution to the ecumenical movement is not necessarily a liberating contribution to ecumenism. (The Russian Orthodox Church response to the Pussy Riot prayer and the subsequent trial of its protagonists is a contemporary demonstration of the limits to subaltern Orthodoxy). Subaltern Orthodoxy strongly critiques hegemony in the ecumenical movement, however, like Sobrino's formula, without an ecumenical praxis the Orthodox critique is at risk of leading to a situation where Protestant hegemony is supplanted by an Orthodox one. The critique of ecumenical hegemony, which can be derived from Orthodox ecclesiology, reminds the ecumenical movement that it is not possible to be ecumenical without Orthodox ecclesiology, and it forces the ecumenical movement to rethink its ecclesiology from its concrete historic commitment. In other words, the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement is invited to support the struggles of the movement.

At the same time, and in an example of double critique (Mignolo 2000), it is not enough to be Orthodox to be ecumenical. The theology of liberation resists this narrow approach to

ecclesiology. Instead, the theology of liberation proposes to the critiqued ecumenical hegemony the need to find ways to reassemble ecclesiology through the praxis of the ecumenical movement. The praxis of the ecumenical movement – with all the nuances that would include *macroecumenismo* and *mística* – is greater than the canonical inter-church dialogue and co-operation. This radical 'second step' addresses a number of concerns facing the ecumenical movement by reminding the movement that ecumenism is more than inter-church dialogue and co-operation. It is, to borrow a word from Leonardo Boff, an *ecclesiogênese* – the birth place of an ecclesiology. This *ecclesiogênese* is brought into being through reflection on the concrete alternatives for the ecumenical movement mediated through engagement with institutions, projects and peoples – through the praxis of a liberating ecumenism.

The praxis of a liberating ecumenism is explored in this thesis. Each of the chapters considers, in some way, the Orthodox ecclesiological critique of the ecumenical movement. Chapter one considers Florovsky's insight into the charismatic limits to the Church. It is a liberating ecclesiological contribution to the ecumenical movement which challenges the hegemonic search for canonical recognition and unity. An ecclesiology developed in the charismatic limit encourages an ecclesiological approach that is in dialogue with peoples' movements, inter-religious spirituality (described as a *macroecumenismo* to incorporate its socio-political aspects) and political systems. The ecclesiological questions that arise from this dialogue alongside Florovsky's Church charismatic gives a slightly different emphasis to the questions posed in the Final Report, 'Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?' and, 'How does your church understand, maintain and express your belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church?' (2003, 7). For example, the ecclesiological questions, developing reflections on practical commitments to historical ecumenical projects, might be projected as, what is ecclesial in peoples' movements? Or, what is the experience of the *mística* of the Kingdom in the praxis of the Church? Or even, how does the church practice the exercise of power, and in whose interests, in different political systems?

These questions are particularly important in light of John Zizioulas's contribution to ecclesiology. Zizioulas says that the local Church is incarnate in people, transcending cultures, and does not have a territorial definition. The location of the Church incarnate in people, along with Florovsky's Church charismatic, offers a liberating praxis for the ecumenical movement. The theology of liberation has suggested definitions of the local Church, which challenge the still-preferred canonical definition of the local. While

Zizioulas and the theologians of liberation will perhaps disagree on definitions of the local Church, they do at least offer an ecclesiology that challenges colonising definitions of the Church; be this through national, ethnic, confessional or canonical expressions of the Church. The local Church, with a charismatic boundary at the heart of its ecclesiology, invites the ecumenical movement to commit to it and through its commitment to develop an ecclesiology.

An ecclesiology developed with the local Church is a contested ecclesiology. It contests the ecclesial and political boundaries erected by political and theological elites who seek to exercise a particular form of power of exclusion and inclusion. The contested ecclesiology, rooted in the local Church, could be advocating 'the poor' as the Church, as described by Santa Ana in chapter one. It could equally be an ecclesiology emerging from the *pueblo* or the *comunidad*, as is often advocated by the theology of liberation. It might even be the citizens of a city or state, as Zizioulas or Meyendorff or Meeks note through the historical experience of the emergence of the local Church in the Greco-Roman city-states. The charismatic boundary of the local Church helps to decolonise this kind of ecclesiology. It recovers minority movements and subaltern churches and it replaces hegemonic ecclesiologies that are welded to particular forms of political power. It is the task of a liberating ecclesiology to reflect on this Church and to find new expressions of what Orthodox theologians have articulated as a symphony.

The symphony is a local Church ecclesiology that contests the Enlightenment traditions that seek to separate church and state ideas towards which the Orthodox churches harbour significant suspicion. However, the symphony also reveals how political elites can co-opt the local churches in order to bring a form of unity to an excluding political project. The relationship between a political elite, which uses the local Church as an instrument in the search for unity, and the population (mass of people) which affiliates with the ecclesiology of the local church, is potentially one of the major areas for rethinking a liberating ecclesiology in light of Orthodox ecclesiology and the theology of liberation. It offers a double critique (Mignolo, 2000) of the Enlightenment tradition that seeks to separate the civil and ecclesial, and the symphony that invites further consideration of the role of lay people in the search for unity and as agents of the ecumenical movement. The double critique also exposes the influences of culture or politics on the formation of ecclessiologies. And it opens the way to a political system that holds multiple minorities – the canonical Church along with other ecclesial expressions. This potentially decolonises a hegemonic search for unity based on exclusive elite decision-making. It encourages the

Church to make political decisions in the interests of the symphony rather than exclusively in advancing its own Christian principles. In the context of the symphony, this would be an 'option for the poor'. It is a political decision to pastorally accompany the minorities (not necessarily the canonical Church) in the exposure of power struggles and the decolonising of hegemonic unity projects, be they political or ecclesial. Both the ecumenical movement and local churches who participate in the ecumenical movement – like the Orthodox Church – are challenged to develop a practical ecclesiology in response to this decolonising of unity.

One practical expression of decolonised unity is the example of the World Social Forum, with its cosmopolitan subaltern democracy. It is a people-centred movement, which relies on participation in social struggles. Interestingly, this participation cannot and does not lead to a legitimating of the existing system. Any participation which did lead to participation within the existing hegemonic system would be interpreted as an alternative colonising project. Any ecclesiology that is committed to the people of God must be implicitly committed to social struggle; according to José Comblin in chapter three of this thesis. Therefore, it needs to offer an expression of how decolonised unity recovers lost minorities, contests the space, and then resignifies the historical project.

The consensus model of decision-making, interpreted as a form of cosmopolitan subaltern democracy, does just this. It institutionalises diversity through the introduction of decision-making procedures from outside the canonical ecumenical movement, which is usually expressed in terms of Europe and North America. The institution of the ecumenical movement, the WCC, is changed by the consensus model of decision-making. Its ethos and style are no longer necessarily Protestant.

The second influence of the consensus model of decision-making is that it prioritises minority voices. It prioritises numerical minorities like the Orthodox. It ensures that no colonising project can ignore the minority voice. It is unfortunate that because the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement has depended on the canonical Church, the further-decolonised unity that arises from an ecclesiology developed in the boundary of the charismatic Church or local Church – which are not synonymous – is not yet given full expression in the cosmopolitan subaltern democracy that is practised through the consensus model of decision-making. For example, because the canonical Church defines ecclesiological participation in the ecumenical movement, it is questionable to advance understandings of the Orthodox Church as a minority or fully subaltern voice. Chapter three demonstrates the links between people-centred movements and subalternism.

Orthodox ecclesiology does not develop from a commitment to people-centred movements, despite the fact that theologians like Florovsky, Zizioulas and Prodromou have raised ecclesiological questions about the canonical ecclesiology in force in Orthodoxy. Without a people-centred ecclesiology, the danger is that the Orthodox subaltern voice is actually an alternate colonial project in the ecumenical movement. The sense of struggle and a commitment to social struggles have the potential to be lost in a struggle to rebalance power relations in the ecumenical movement rather than resignify the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement.

The resignification of the historical ecumenical project is the consequence of the first three steps outlined above: a commitment to peoples' struggles; an institutionalising of diversity; and a prioritising of subaltern voices and participation. Chapter four describes how the ecumenical movement has moved through different historical phases, each of which have challenged ecclesiology. The missionary movements – often lay led by Western or Protestant organisations – which were instrumental to some forms of ecumenism, gave way to the rise of national or indigenous (or autocephalous) churches. This mirrored the political shifts in history from colonialism to decolonisation and into post-colonialism. However, Homi K. Bhabha is critical of the binarism used to describe these struggles. And the critique is applicable to the ecumenical movement. The missionary movements describe taking Christianity to the non-Western World. The national, indigenous churches or autocephalous churches respond to decolonisation by asserting their differences from the missionary churches. The binarism implicit in this history does not consider that it is the engagement that realigns the customary borders, according to Bhabha in chapter four of this thesis. It is this engagement – a commitment to ecumenism – that is the place from which ecclesiologies are to be developed affiliatively or antagonistically, according to Bhabha. This challenges current ecclesiological understandings in the ecumenical movement. In the model of colonial ecumenism, canonical churches interact with other churches, without a canonical ecclesiology being developed from engagement. Colonial ecumenism invites ecclesiological self-understandings to interact with each other. It privileges a dialogue between canonical traditions and ecclesiologies, rather than a search for signifiers for tradition and ecclesiology in the encounter with the 'other' at the borderlines of the ecumenical movement. The canonical churches in the ecumenical movement do not need other local churches in order to create ecclesiological meaning through interactions. It is possible, therefore to have an ecumenical commitment, without being ecumenical. The interest and commitment of the Church is simply to preserve its ecclesiological integrity and to seek the return of the lost or separated sheep to the fold; it

is not commitment to social struggle or ecumenical struggle, which would create and develop ecclesiologies based on engagements that realign customary borders.

Into this struggle, Enrique Dussel posits that the engagements that realign customary borders are actually located in the interpolation of the struggle of the Other. Dussel suggests a Eucharistic vision is at the source of the interpolation of the struggle of the Other – something supposedly at the heart of the ecumenical movement. The cry of the poor, *tengo hambre*! forces an ecclesiological response. It forces a response for two reasons: firstly, it is a cry of human struggle and the first act of ecclesiology, as demonstrated in this thesis, is to commit to peoples' struggles; secondly, the interaction between the cry and the hearer is a form of engagement, which necessarily brings forth a realignment of the boundary between the cry of human struggle and the ecclesiology of the Church. It is a Eucharistic challenge because it is a human cry for bread and wine. Does the ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement respond to this struggle?

A liberating ecumenism does, through an ecclesiology that develops an understanding of *mística* that realigns the customary borders between canonical and charismatic, between social movements and ecclesiology, between God's Kingdom and the Church. A liberating ecumenism is not simply the replacement of one colonial project with another: it is an invitation to do ecumenism differently. The Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC arguably moves the ecumenical movement towards a liberating ecumenism. The Orthodox critique is crucial to decolonising the search for unity. The continued Orthodox participation is fundamental to the movement remaining ecumenical. But the ecumenical movement needs an ecclesiology that, in the words of Marcella Althaus-Reid, responds to God's geography. It needs to commit to peoples' struggles and in doing so develop a committed ecclesiology that responds to concrete historical projects, mediated by institutions, projects, and people. The ecumenical movement in rediscovering the *movement* in ecumenical encourages the Church to develop an ecclesiology that moves towards a liberating ecumenism.

Epilogue

My final participation in the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration was in a non-descript *salle* in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. It was a European summer. The air was thick – there would be a storm later – and so too were the friendships forged through seven years of dialogue. After a while, these dialogues become predictable. There is a structure, carefully followed on each occasion, which seems designed to prevent anything of substance actually coming to the agenda to be fully discussed. In friendship, you learn the faith and foibles of participants; you become familiar with ecclesiology and its colonising tendencies, and you listen to commitments held dear and prejudices equally so.

In Geneva, the agenda was light; reminiscent of the empty corridors in the once bustling Ecumenical Centre. I could not quite decide if the light agenda was a sign of a task dispensed with due diligence by the Committee during its seven years work, or if there was a wider malaise evident in the distinct lack of ecumenical excitement through seven years' work. I could not help wondering what others who have walked those corridors would think: Paulo Freire, Julio Santa Ana and Jose Miguez Bonino; Georges Florovsky, John Zizioulas and Olivier Clément. What would their parity committee agree and develop in a seven-year period of work?

At Edinburgh in 1910, the missionary movement and the Church heard a speech from a relatively unknown Indian missionary, which has echoed through the ages of ecumenism: 'You have given your goods to feed the poor. You have given your bodies to be burned. We ask also for *love*. Give us FRIENDS!' (Stanley 2009, 125). V.S. Azariah expressed what the theology of liberation has called the voice of the poor. But he did it in a conference venue as a representative invited by the powerful missionary leaders.

Through the seven years of dialogue, I have listened carefully to the voices in the conference venues. Some have even claimed Azariah's inheritance. Bishops have embraced minority interests and spoken up and out for the marginalised. At the same time, some of those same bishops have continued to lend a deaf ear to the voice of women Christian leaders in the same dialogue space, but just when we are among friends (of course). I have also experienced 'exposure visits', to meet people, movements and churches at prayer. I have found welcome and hospitality in friendship, even at prayer. But I have not found the unity of the Church: and I am not even sure that I have found the ecumenical movement.

I think that I found a form of inter-church dialogue, and I think that I found friends. In this sense, the ecumenical movement has come a long way since V.S Azariah's address to the missionaries on the mound. But there is still an absence. I do not think that it is an epistemological absence, for I have found a praxis for ecumenism which is rooted in peoples' struggles for liberation. Perhaps it is a Eucharistic absence, but that would be a story for another book. For now, I am content to leave the conference of ecumenism and return to the *comunidad*. I no longer reside in a favela, and I no longer have a belonging with boundaries. The ecumenical movement, with its liberating Orthodox ecclesiology, has taught me in the subversive words of Gilberto Gil, *Cálice*![115]

Appendix I

Letter to Brazilian churches, 18 May 2006

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[115] Gilberto Gil is a Brazilian musician. His music was censured by the Brazilian Military dictatorship, leading him to innovate by writing words which had sounds of other words, conveying alternate meanings to bypass the censors. He served as Minister of Culture in President Lula's government (2003–2008). The Portuguese song title I cite to refers to the chalice. It sounds similar to the Portuguese word, 'cale-se', which means 'be quiet' or 'shut-up' or 'silence'. The interplay between silencing, dictatorship and church, brought into a Eucharistic focus by Gilberto Gil, shaped a generation of ecumenical commitment in Latin America. The chalice of the people continues as an ecumenical challenge.

Geneva, 18 May 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are shocked by the news we have received from your country during the last couple of days. The unprecedented violence unleashed in São Paulo by criminal gangs has resulted in the death of more than a hundred people, including members of law enforcement agencies. Valuable public properties have been wantonly destroyed. As your people face these tragic developments, we wish to assure you of our solidarity and our prayers.

As sounds of gunshots and violence resound, we hope that the call of the churches and civil society for peace and an end to violence will prevail. It is pertinent that churches are not only shocked by the actions of a criminal organization, but have also taken note of the inadequacy of the legal system and the overcrowding of prisons. Reforms have been difficult because of corruption, impunity and lack of political will.

We pray that the witness of the churches of Brazil may give hope and meaning to the people in these times of fear and terror. We lift up in our prayers those families who have lost their near and dear ones.

As we send this letter, the first Executive Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches after the Ninth Assembly in Porto Alegre is taking place in Geneva, Switzerland. The members of the Committee join us in offering their heart-felt condolences, through you, to the victims of these ghastly events.

We in the World Council of Churches are concerned at the increase of incidences of violence in your country and in the region. It is precisely for this reason that the focus of the Decade to Overcome Violence for the year 2006 is Latin America. We hope – together with the churches of the region – we can contribute to overcoming this scourge of violence that is destroying our societies.

May God give you the strength of the faith and of hope to be witnesses to His Love as you come together to promote a culture of peace and non-violence.

Your brothers in Christ,

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia

General Secretary

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann

Moderator

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