

The Church and the churches: ecclesiological reflections at the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

A Igreja e as igrejas: reflexões eclesiológicas sobre a XI Assembleia do Conselho Mundial de Igrejas

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Abstract

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is a fellowship of churches. However, membership of the fellowship of churches does not imply (tacitly or otherwise) ecclesiological recognition of other member churches. This “ecclesiological tension” has been addressed in a number of ways through the years by the WCC, most notably through the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. Since the 9th assembly in Porto Alegre (2006), ecclesiological matters have appeared in assembly statements, and more substantially in the working agenda of Faith and Order. The convergence document, *The Church: towards a common vision* was received by the WCC Central Committee and sent to the member churches for discussion and response in 2013. The responses were presented and discussed at the 11th assembly in Karlsruhe (2022). This article offers a personal reflection on the ecclesiology and the WCC.

Keywords

World Council of Churches. Ecclesiology. The Church: towards a common vision. Orthodoxy. Georges Florovsky.

Resumo

O Conselho Mundial de Igrejas (CMI) é uma comunhão de igrejas. Porém, membresia da comunhão de igrejas não implica (nem tacitamente) reconhecimento eclesiológico das outras igrejas-membro. Esta “tensão eclesiológica” tem sido abordada de várias maneiras durante os anos pelo CMI, de forma notável no trabalho da Comissão Especial sobre a Participação Ortodoxa no CMI. Desde a nona assembleia em Porto Alegre (2006), assuntos eclesiológicos apareceram em mensagens da assembleia, e de forma mais substantiva na pauta de trabalho da Comissão de Fé e Ordem. O documento de convergência *A Igreja: uma visão ecumênica* foi recebida pelo Comitê Central do CMI e enviada às igrejas para discussão e respostas em 2013. As respostas foram apresentadas e dialogadas na décima primeira assembleia em Karlsruhe (2022). Este artigo oferece reflexões pessoais sobre eclesiológica e o CMI.

Palavras-chave

Conselho Mundial de Igrejas. Eclesiológica. A Igreja: uma visão ecumênica. Ortodoxia. Georges Florovsky.

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INTRODUCTION: PROLEGOMENON – FROM THE FAVELA TO FAITH AND ORDER

I travelled to my first World Council of Churches meeting from a *favela* in São Paulo. In 2006, I was living in São Paulo, studying theology. The Church of Scotland included me on its delegation to the 9th assembly in Porto Alegre because I was living in Brazil. I have been involved with the WCC in different ways since 2006. At the 11th assembly in Karlsruhe, I find myself assisting with the work of Faith and Order on the Church. Let me briefly describe this ecumenical pilgrimage from the *favela* to Faith and Order.

Paraisópolis is one of the largest *favelas* – slum areas of the city – in São Paulo. It is home to about 80.000² 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 house at the end of a narrow alleyway (*beco*) off *Rua Ernest Renan*. The small house was at the top of the third flight of improvised concrete stairs. Across a 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 homemade 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 have memories of 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 facing *machismo* from their husbands, fathers and sons, and prevailing social prejudices. There was also the sporadic sound of gunfire.

I tell this personal prolegomenon because as my first WCC meeting approached there was a curfew in place as the police blockaded and invaded the *favela*. This was in response to a wave of violent attacks that had swept through the city. There were restrictions on entry and exit. Inhabitants 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.

² The União de Moradores e Comerciantes de Paraisópolis estimates the population to be between 80.000 and 100.000. The Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística estimates the population to be around 42.000, but it divides the territory differently from the União de Moradores e Comerciantes de Paraisópolis, leaving out large areas of territory considered to be Paraisópolis.

The violence in São Paulo received extensive coverage in the Brazilian media. On 15th May 2006, the *Folha de S.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 other people, while 49 people suffered serious injury (FOLHA DE S.PAULO, 2006).

The news of the violence in São Paulo reached the deliberations of the WCC executive committee, under the influence of its Brazilian moderator, reverend Walter Altmann from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil. I played no part in drafting the 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.³ 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 family was still under curfew in Paraisópolis, with bullets ricocheting through the air and finding stonework or (God forbid) people.

At those first WCC meetings, I was elected to the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration. This committee inherited the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. It is a parity committee. There are seven members from Orthodox member churches of the WCC, and seven members drawn from other member churches of the WCC. The working agenda – often technical and bureaucratic – actually addresses the ecclesiological tensions present in the WCC since its founding. The committee considers matters related to ecclesiology, prayer, and social and ethical issues, amongst other topics. Ecclesiology – questions related to fellowship, mutual accountability and freedom – informed the work of the committee, and very often overlapped with the work of Faith and Order.

Although the WCC is a fellowship of churches, it was only at the 9th assembly in Porto Alegre that the WCC made a formal statement on the nature of the fellowship and nature of the Church.⁴ Over the years, the WCC has convened a number of meetings – mainly, although not exclusively – under the leadership of Faith and Order with a working agenda on ecclesiology. The work of Faith and Order on the nature of the Church gained greater intensity with the discussion paper on *The nature and mission of the Church* (2005).

1 THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Published in 2005, *The nature and mission of the Church* noted that in 1927 the “Faith and Order movement identified the unity of the Church as the very reason for its existence”

³ 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>. Accessed on: 28 Aug. 2022.

⁴ Mary Tanner, a Church of England theologian, former moderator of Faith and Order and former president of the WCC was instrumental in crafting the statement *Called to be the one Church* (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 110).

(WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, 2005, p. 7). The 1991 Canberra statement at the 7th assembly, *The Church as koinonia: gift and calling*, profoundly shaped future dialogue and ecumenical conceptions of the unity of the Church. However, the more directed and intense work of the Faith and Order Commission on the nature and mission of the church was suggested in the 1990s at Santiago de Compostela. That decision led to the convergence document *The Church: towards a common vision* (WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, 2013); 30 years of ecumenical dialogue.

Over the years, the WCC Faith and Order Commission has helped to shape common understandings of the unity of the Church. At the same time, a number of member churches – Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic⁵ – have offered their own particular perspective on the unity of the Church. These contributions have also furthered the ecumenical dialogue on the nature of the Church. Nowadays, it is quite common for churches to use the concept of “fellowship” (*koinonia*) as a major theological organising principal in discussions about the nature of the Church. “Fellowship”, as affirmed by the Canberra statement (1991), is often set within the models of unity that have been proposed by different churches: mutual recognition by the Anglicans (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 71), reconciled diversity by the Lutherans (SANTA ANA, 1991, p. 101) and bilateral agreement by the Roman Catholics (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 72).⁶

The proposed models, and the concept of fellowship, have had to engage with political themes – not necessarily a Faith and Order subject, at first sight – related to understandings of the local Church in relation to the Church Catholic. Protestant ecclesiologies and ecumenical proposals have tended to understand the unity of the local Church as a fellowship of churches within national or regional geographies. Roman Catholic proposals have tended to emphasize the fellowship among global Church families or communions. The Orthodox Church has contributed to the Faith and Order discussions since 1927. Although part of a multilateral theological dialogue, the Orthodox Church tends towards the Roman Catholic proposal of a fellowship of Church families (*typoi*, in the words of Johannes Willebrands (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 94). Yet, differently from other Church communions, it has not forwarded formal proposal for unity of the Church. Instead, the Orthodox Church often points towards the 1920 encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarch, which speaks of “rapprochement between the various Christian churches and fellowship” (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 73), through the creation of a league (fellowship) between the churches (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 75). Individual Orthodox

⁵ I mention here only some of the major contributions to models of unity. In addition to other “confessional” visions, there are obviously other theological and ecclesiological proposals that have contributed to the ecumenical movement’s self-understanding of the unity of the Church.

⁶ 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 (2009).

theologians have made fruitful personal interventions regarding the unity of the Church, notably Georges Florovsky, Sergius Bulgakov and John Zizioulas. The article focuses on the contribution of Georges Florovsky.

2 THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES: GEORGE FLOROVSKY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH

In order to discover the ecclesiological understanding of the Orthodox Church, and its commitment to unity and the ecumenical movement, it is necessary to turn to an important 1933 essay by the theologian Georges Florovsky.⁷ Although Bulgakov and Zizioulas each make important contributions to the ecumenical movement, Georges Florovsky's influential 1933 article still stands as the "broadly held view" amongst Orthodox theologians who consider the unity of the Church (AAGAARD; BOUTENEFF, 2001, p. 38). Alongside Florovsky's essay, it is necessary to consider the two major ecclesiological questions proposed by the Special Commission. "Ecclesiological issues embrace all of the matters under the consideration of the Special Commission" (FINAL..., 2003, n. 7). Two basic ecclesiological questions can be posed to the fellowship of churches: "Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology?" (FINAL..., 2003, n. 8); and, "How does [a Church of the Reformation] understand, maintain and express belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church?" (FINAL..., 2003, n. 8).

The Special Commission suggests a need for exploring further 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), in order to resolve some of the ecclesiological tensions within the ecumenical movement. By distilling the ecclesiological tensions in this way, the Special Commission summarises the major ecclesiological agenda in the ecumenical movement from 1927-2013. It also reflects aspects of the ecclesiological questions explored by Georges Florovsky in his essay, *The limits of the Church* (1933).

Georges Florovsky's essay is still considered to be a major reference for Orthodox ecclesiology in relation to other churches. His essay continues to be cited by Orthodox theologians in contemporary publications reflecting on ecclesiology, including the work of Peter Bouteneff (2001), Petros Vassiliadis (2004), and John Zizioulas (2010). Peter Bouteneff 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"* (AAGAARD; BOUTENEFF, 2001). Bouteneff appreciates Florovsky's contribution because:

⁷ Georges Florovsky (1893-1979) was an archpriest and leading theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church. He is closely identified with the "neo-patristic synthesis" in Orthodox theology and was a major contributor to ecumenical dialogues. He was a contributor at the Amsterdam assembly (1948).

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 (AAGAARD; BOUTENEFF, 2001, p. 39).

Broadly speaking, 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" (BULGAKOV, 1988, p. 87), affirms Sergius Bulgakov.

This is an affirmation that demonstrates continuity with the ecclesiology of the influential Russian thinker Alexis Khomiakov from the nineteenth century, and whose position Florovsky tried to broaden. Khomiakov was a lay person who wrote many treatises on ecclesiology. He defended Orthodoxy as the one true Church and criticised the Roman Catholic Church as a local Church that accepted heretical teaching (ALFEYEV, 2011, p. 239). Khomiakov's opinion is that "dogmatic innovations" were introduced to the Roman Catholic Church, including the *filioque* and papal infallibility (ALFEYEV, 2011, p. 239). The "dogmatic innovations" placed the Roman Catholic Church outside the unity of the Church because it accepts teachings not authorised by the ecumenical councils (ALFEYEV, 2011, p. 240). Equally, Khomiakov dismissed Protestantism as an exercise in rational faith, which rejects the tradition of the Church and clings to arbitrary mysticism (ALFEYEV, 2011, p. 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, and on Georges Florovsky.

The second reference point, distinguishing between the canonical and charismatic limits of the Church, provides a useful starting point for further consideration in this article. By asking the question "how does the activity of the Spirit continue beyond the canonical border of the Church?" (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 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" (CLAPSIS, 2000, p. 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. The Roman Catholic Church, and Protestant churches, are denied canonicity, but they are given space in the charismatic boundary. However, 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 1950.⁸ 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. [...] Membership in the World Council of Churches does not imply that a Church treats its own conception of the Church as merely relative” (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 419-420).

The *Toronto Statement* is often interpreted as a fundamental ecclesiological document in the WCC, and Georges Florovsky was one of the main drafters of the document. There is a recognition by Orthodox ecclesiology (and its commitment to the ecumenical movement) that the Holy Spirit is active in the ecumenical movement. In such terms, it is possible for Orthodox ecclesiology to affirm that one potential 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 transgressing boundaries and limits or, as post-colonial theorist Walter Mignolo says, “border-thinking” (MIGNOLO, 2000, p. 18).

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, Anglo-Saxon Protestant” (ISASI-DIAZ; MENDIETA, 2012, p. 6). By engaging Georges Florovsky’s canonical and charismatic boundaries through the lens of critical studies, an important observation emerges. Ecclesiological tensions are not so much tensions between tightly defined canonical and charismatic boundaries (each drawn differently by member churches), but an expression of what is happening ecclesologically at these boundaries and between these boundaries.

The third reference point is the relationship between charism, “other” and Church. The charism of the Church appears demonstrably to provide the space in Florovsky’s ecclesiology for other churches. However, we might ask, 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 the theology of liberation, although it is probably used in a slightly different way to that of Florovsky. Leonardo Boff uses it as an alternative organising principle for the Church (BOFF, 1982, p. 234). He says, “the charism is a

⁸ The full document is available at: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/1950/toronto-statement>. Accessed on: 28 Aug. 2022.

manifestation of the presence of the Spirit in the members of the community” (BOFF, 1982, p. 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” (BOFF, 1982, p. 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 essay restricts itself to describing a sacramental space for Christians beyond the canonical limits of the Church. Furthermore, by distinguishing between canonical and charismatic limits he invites the question: can a Church be fully 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? Can the charismatic Church be the Church fully when it does not necessarily equate to the canonical Church?

While Georges Florovsky’s essay explores the limits of the Church and to some extent the limits of the ecumenical agenda of the Orthodox churches, there is no theological consensus amongst Orthodox theologians on the limits of the Church. Indeed, the questions raised in the previous paragraph find different responses within Orthodoxy ranging from outright rejection of “sects” and “schismatics” to some form of ecclesial recognition, or even to some tacit acceptance (primarily in the case of the Roman Catholic Church) of recognition of the Church. The work of the Special Commission, and Faith and Order demonstrates an awareness of the need to search further for a theological solution to nature of the Church, and the unity of the Church.

The Faith and Order Commission has taken up the three reference points set out by Florovsky’s essay in the convergence document *The Church: towards a common vision*. The document seeks to remind the ecumenical movement that the Church cannot be identified exclusively with any one ecclesiological tradition (WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION, 2013, p. viii). This affirmation echoes Florovsky’s observation about the canonical and charismatic boundaries of the Church. Any theological definition and description of the Church needs to account for the charismatic, not only canonical Church. The convergence text also seeks to promote mutual ecclesiological recognition by the churches. It respects the *Toronto Statement*, but challenges the churches to a mutual ecclesiological recognition. This is also a challenge to Florovsky’s third reference point. Florovsky, and ecumenical ecclesiology more generally, tends to favour mutual recognition in terms of what a Church recognises in the other of itself (the issue of canonicity). In the case of Florovsky’s position, the first impression is of a suggestion of a search for what is Orthodox in the other churches. In other words, recalling the contributions of critical studies, a challenge to mutual ecclesiological recognition is remembering that the search for mutual recognition is not

only a search for Orthodox ecclesiology in other churches, but for an ecclesiology that considers canonical and charismatic boundaries.

Florovsky's ecclesiology, distinguishing between canonical and charismatic boundaries and observing that they are not necessarily one and the same, is an important (and subtle) affirmation that both can still the Church. On closer reading, it appears that Florovsky is actually challenging Orthodox ecclesiology to discover that which is sometimes overlooked by its emphasis on canonical boundaries, and ecclesiological boundaries in light of the canonical boundaries. The charismatic boundary is part of the ecclesiological self-understanding of the Orthodox Church, just as it informs the ecclesiology of other churches in the ecumenical movement. The challenge for Faith and Order is to move the conversation from mutual recognition of the canonicity of the Church (whereby each Church is looking for itself in the ecclesiology of the other), to mutual recognition of the charism of the Church (whereby each is looking for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the other Church).

An aspect of Florovsky's essay that brings this tension to the fore is the discussion of the validity of the sacraments of "a sect in the Church" (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 117). Interesting to note, Florovsky locates a sect within the Church, and in the charismatic boundary of the Church. He tries to explore the themes of unity and catholicity of the Church alongside separation and solitariness the sect. He also touches upon a theological theme 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" (FLOROVSKY, 1974, p. 161).

Florovsky presents a reading of the Church fathers in which he acknowledges that the Church has given a permissive understanding historically to the recognition of the reality of rites performed outside the canonical Church. He gives two examples: the Church has received adherents not through baptism, and it has received clergy in their existing orders (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 118). In other words, baptism and ministry, by what Florovsky calls "sects", that which is beyond the canonical boundary of the Church, have been recognized historically by the Church during the patristic period – one of the major projects of the ecumenical movement, and the Faith and Order Commission, has focused on mutual recognition of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982).

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" (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 119). This is a key insight from Florovsky's reflection. According to Florovsky's ecclesiology, "sectarian" space in the Church is situated between these boundaries. Florovsky invites a prioritising of 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 (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 126). The baptism, eucharist and ministry of the Church are central to delimiting the Church, in a way that other theological approaches would challenge, particularly new and emerging ecclesiologies that we will address in the next section.

The main thrust of Florovsky’s ecclesiology argument is a helpful contribution to understanding how the Orthodox churches mutually recognise those Christians and churches who are outside its canonical limits. However, at this point, it is relevant to consider an observation made by Gennadios of Sassima in an ecumenical dialogue with Evangelicals. He noted that an exact and exhaustive definition of the Church is not possible for Orthodox ecclesiology. Moreover, he goes on to make a point (curiously in harmony with critical studies and decolonial theology) that:

One of the greatest ecumenical difficulties facing the Orthodox Church is that its thought forms and terms of reference are different from those in the West. Since the ecumenical movement was primarily shaped by Western theological presupposition 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 (SASSIMA, 2012, p. 133).

Gennadios of Sassima highlights that ecclesiological tensions in the ecumenical movement may not only be between canonical and charismatic interpretations of the Church, but may have linguistic-theological permutations.

Therefore, while Florovsky’s essay prioritises questions and perspectives related to the tradition of the Church, this theological language is received differently when interpreted by the theological categories and concepts of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches, and new and emerging churches. Florovsky’s sacramental ecclesiology, far from recognising other churches (as is his intention), underlines the need for recognising Orthodox ecclesiology in other churches: “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” (FLOROVSKY, 1933, p. 126). Gennadios of Sassima puts it more directly: “[Orthodox ecclesiology] asks all divided Christians who have tasted the power of God’s goodness and grace to unite with it” (SASSIMA, 2012, p. 147). The nature and unity of the Church is closely allied to the tradition of an Orthodox ecclesiology for both Florovsky and Gennadios of Sassima.

3 FAITH AND ORDER: THE CHURCH, AND NEW AND EMERGING CHURCHES

An aspect of the work of Faith and Order during the reception process of *The Church: towards a common vision* (2013-2022) has been the recognition that large parts of global Christianity did not have an opportunity to engage with the ecclesiological conversation over the last 30 years (1990s-2013). Faith and Order has identified regions (Africa, Asia and Latin America), confessional families (Evangelical, Pentecostal, Independent churches), and movements (online churches, new monasticism, etc.) in order to have an ecclesiological conversation with some of the fastest growing parts of global Christianity. The regions, families and movements are designated as new and emerging churches. The terminology is imprecise, and does not necessarily offer clarity, but its intention is to forge new ecumenical dialogues. To this end, I use this term in this section of the article.

A major convergence between the ecclesiology of *The Church: towards a common vision* (2013) and the ecclesiology of new and emerging churches has been an exploration of understandings of pneumatology and ecclesiology. The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians and the life of the Church has given rise to two major observations. Firstly, the Holy Spirit is the charism of the Church. This is not a new observation for ecclesiology, and the observation repeats Florovsky's point in his 1933 essay. However, by articulating clearly the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit, the reception process of *The Church: towards a common vision* amongst new and emerging churches moves the dialogue firmly into Florovsky's charismatic boundary of the Church. This is an altogether new place for ecumenical conversations about the nature and unity of the Church. The WCC, as a fellowship of churches, has preferred dialogues demarcated by canonical boundaries.

The second observation from the reception process amongst new and emerging churches has been the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit as spirituality. By articulating firmly the Holy Spirit as the charism of the Church, the charismatic boundary becomes more prominent in ecumenical dialogues. However, by interpreting the work of the Holy Spirit as spirituality, new and emerging churches refuse the sacramental ecclesiological turn of Florovsky. The charismatic boundary is not only a place of confirmation of canonicity (as proposed by Florovsky's search for the sacraments in the charismatic boundaries). Instead, new and emerging churches claim the charismatic boundary is where Christian spirituality and ecclesial spirituality can be explored and lived.

This relationship between pneumatology and ecclesiology as described by new and emerging churches in the reception process, therefore, can function within Florovsky's helpful ecumenical proposal. However, it can move ecclesiology beyond Florovsky's ecclesiological tensions of the charismatic boundary functioning in the service of canonical boundary through a sacramental ecclesiology. The new question now for the work of Faith and Order on

ecclesiology is one of the Holy Spirit. It is an ecumenical dialogue in the charismatic boundary of the Church on the spirituality of the Church.

CONCLUSION

At the 1973 Faith and Order consultation in Salamanca, José Miguez Bonino observed that classical ecclesiological questions, such as the one explored in this article, “what are the limits of the Church?” were being radicalised in Latin America by the question, “what is the Church for?” (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 95). Bonino wryly noted that, in Latin America, the wider public already took for granted the “fellowship of churches” and eventual unity of the Church. Instead, in the context of dictatorships across the region, with some Christians being persecuted, imprisoned or disappeared because of their faith, while other Christians practiced torture, repression and censorship in the name of Christian faith, Bonino stated that the meaning of Christian faith – its place and significance – was the ecclesiological agenda in Latin America. Prolegomenon and ecclesiology.

The recent work by Faith and Order with new and emerging churches in Latin America may just be moving Faith and Order towards what Bonino insisted was a major ecclesiological issue. What is the meaning of Christian faith in a polarised Church – where some are disappeared while others torture – and in polarized societies? The emphasis on pneumatology and ecclesiology – the Holy Spirit as the charism of the Church, and the work of the charism as spirituality – may well direct Faith and Order into the charismatic family of the Church, to use Bonino’s term (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 96), or even the charismatic boundary of the Church, to use Florovsky’s term. Either way, prolegomenon, pneumatology and ecclesiology emerge as key references for what Bonino called “the struggle for the future of the Church” (KINNAMON, 2016, p. 99). The ecumenical movement and new and emerging churches in Latin America face Bonino’s challenge in the terms set out by Florovsky. ✨

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