

## HOW SHOULD *DE ECCLESIA* BE TREATED IN SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY?

All of us are aware of the prodigious amount of writing on the Church in these days. The Council, the ecumenical movement, the biblical, patristic, and liturgical studies have all contributed to this situation and helped to make *De Ecclesia* a most difficult, unwieldy, almost intractable subject. The purpose of this paper is to present some background for further discussion as to how *De Ecclesia* should be treated in scientific theology. The background I would like to present is: first, an historical survey of ecclesiology; secondly, a brief consideration of the ecclesiology found in modern, yet traditional, manuals; and finally, some of the new approaches, including one of my own.

### AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ECCLESIOLOGY

Karl Rahner called attention to the potentialities of the history of dogma for theology when he criticized modern writings in this field for not approaching "the past with a real question, one which is still open to the test of the facts," and for not interrogating the past closely enough "to hear it with all the overtones with which it once resounded, overtones which at that time were not perhaps the explicit formulations of a scientific theology, but rather the echoes of preaching, faith and Christian life."<sup>1</sup> In our brief survey we make no pretensions of carrying out his proposal, but at least we can be open to its possibilities. The importance of a history of ecclesiology in particular was recently brought out by Professor M. Nédoncelle of Strassbourg who remarked: "A theology of the Church cannot be constructed *a priori*; nor can it depend only on expressions of early tradition, decisive as such expressions may have been and remain. It must take into account two thousand years of development."<sup>2</sup> With his remarks in mind our objective here is to see the present

<sup>1</sup> K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (London, 1961), 8.

<sup>2</sup> M. Nédoncelle, "Avant-propos," in *L'Écclesiologie au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1960), 7.

status of ecclesiology in proper perspective, to see how *De Ecclesia* has been treated in centuries past. But in particular we want to see some of the main reasons for the traditional presentation of *De Ecclesia* that we find in modern seminary manuals as well as justification for some of the recent remedial efforts by ecclesiologists.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE PATRISTIC PERIOD TO THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The ecclesiology of the Fathers has often been described as more a doctrine lived than one theologized and formulated.<sup>4</sup> What are some of the main ecclesial insights we can gather from their writings? The answer to such a question would require a separate study; moreover, much work remains to be done, especially along the lines suggested by Rahner above. In general it has been observed that before the time of Augustine the Fathers envisaged the Church as an empirical, visible society as well as a spiritual, even pre-existent,

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this survey some of the sources that have been helpful and to which references are made are:

H. Bacht, "Ekklesiologie: historische Grundlinien," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (hereafter referred to as *LTK*), 1959, vol. 3, 781-84.

Y. Congar, O.P., "Bulletin de l'ecclésiologie," *Révue des sciences phil. et théol.*, 31 (1947), 272-96.

———, *Lay People in the Church*, Westminster, Md., 1957 (hereafter, *Lay People*).

———, *The Mystery of the Church*, London, 1960.

———, "L'Ecclésiologie de la révolution française au Concile du Vatican sous le signe de l'affirmation de l'autorité," in *L'Ecclésiologie au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1960), pp. 77-114 (hereafter, "L'Ecclésiologie . . .").

H. De Lubac, S.J., *The Splendour of the Church*, N.Y., 1956.

S. Jáki, O.S.B., *Les tendances nouvelles de l'ecclésiologie*, Rome, 1957.

J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 2nd ed., London, 1960.

M.-J. Le Guillou, O.P., "L'Eglise," in *Catholicisme* (1952), vol. 3, 1408-30.

F. Malmberg, *Ein Leib—Ein Geist, vom Mysterium der Kirche*, Freiburg, 1960.

J. Ranft, *Die Stellung der Lehre von der Kirche im dogmatischen System*, Aschaffenberg, 1927.

E. Stirnimann, O.P., "La chiesa nella problematica presente," in *Problemi e Orientamenti* (Milan, 1957), vol. 1, 143-169 (a good classified bibliography given).

G. Weigel, S.J., "Catholic Ecclesiology in our Time," in *Christianity Divided, Protestant and Roman Catholic Issues*, ed. D. Callahan et al. (N.Y., 1961), 177-191.

<sup>4</sup> Jáki, *op. cit.*, 171, 177; Kelly, *op. cit.*, 190.

reality. But in both East and West there was no rich ecclesiology.<sup>5</sup>

In the West after Nicea, the Donatists questioned the nature of the Church's holiness. In answering them, Optatus and Augustine significantly deepened Western ecclesiology. Augustine in particular made a contribution to this subject: with his concept of Christ's triple mode of existence as Word, God-Man, and Church, yet constituting a single, spiritual person; with his concept of the Church's unity in faith and especially love; and finally with his concept of the Church's inclusion of sinners and just.<sup>6</sup> Congar sees as the master-idea of this ecclesiology a movement of interiorization—a dynamic tendency from the sign to what it signifies and contains, from the structure to what it protects, from the *communio sacramentorum* to the *communio sanctorum*.<sup>7</sup> Adam, Mersch, and Vetter in their studies of Augustine's ecclesiology recognize and single out its vital communitarian aspect, the place given to the Trinity as its eternal source, and the role of grace as its essence. Because of Augustine's stress on grace, however, the theandric nature of the Church, the hierarchy, and the importance of Christ's humanity receive less attention and occasion the later "Augustinian problem" of ecclesiology raised by Luther and the Jansenists.<sup>8</sup>

#### EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The influence of St. Augustine prevailed in the centuries that followed. His emphasis on grace led his followers to see the external aspect of the Church as entirely "relative" to its inner aspect, as being "in the service" of it, as "sacrament" of it. The external aspect, they regarded as belonging to the category of means of grace whereas the Church's end was the community of grace.<sup>9</sup> A number of ecclesial questions were discussed in this period but in terms of the symbolic theology current at the time. The contemplative method

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, *op. cit.*, 191, 202-205, 401-406; J. Daniélou, S.J., *Théologie du Judéo-Christianisme* (Paris, 1958), vol. 1, 339; Jáki, *op. cit.*, 179.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, *op. cit.*, 413-17.

<sup>7</sup> Y. Congar, O.P., *Vraie et fausse réform dans l'église* (Paris, 1950), 81-86.

<sup>8</sup> Jáki, *op. cit.*, 179-84.

<sup>9</sup> Malmberg, *op. cit.*, 96, citing Congar, "Ecclesia ab Abel," in *Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche. Festschrift für Karl Adam* (Düsseldorf, 1952), 79-108.

of this theology fell into disfavor shortly before the beginning of the scholastic period. There was at this time, according to De Lubac, a radical change in mentality.<sup>10</sup> Symbolic theology was rejected for a more dialectical theology. Along with this rejection went many of the values of the earlier method of theology, including the synthetic idea of the Body of Christ with its dynamism of the physical Body of Christ leading by way of the sacramental Body to the formation of the ecclesial Body. The close mutual relation of the Eucharist and the Church were obvious then.

The term "mystical" which used to refer to all three forms of the Body of Christ—physical, sacramental, and ecclesial, henceforth referred only to the ecclesial Body. The close relation of Eucharist and Church began to be lost. This precision of the term "*mysticum*" was especially occasioned by the 11th-century controversy involving the nominalist, Berengarius. In their answer to him the dialectical theologians of the time emphatically distinguished the sacramental Body from the ecclesial Body of Christ. Disdain for symbolism, the watering down of the ecclesial reality, and the bent for speculation all contributed to this development in ecclesiology.<sup>11</sup>

#### SCHOLASTIC PERIOD AND LATE MIDDLE AGES

All the elements of an ecclesiology can be found in the writings of the great scholastics but no separate treatise as such. After remarking that St. Thomas wrote no such treatise, Congar said in this regard:

. . . all I say here about St. Thomas is equally true of St. Bonaventure, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great and the other scholastics of the epoch. Excluding certain delicate distinctions which do not affect the general structural outlines, all these scholastics offer the same ecclesiology as St. Thomas.

<sup>10</sup> H. De Lubac, S.J., *Corpus mysticum. L'Eucharistie et l'église au moyen-âge*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1949), esp. chap. 10. Malmberg, *op. cit.*, 106, n.226, thinks that De Lubac's description of this change of mentality is too strong. Even though insights were lost with the demise of symbolic theology, other values, especially precision, were gained.

<sup>11</sup> See Congar, "Corps mystique," in *Catholicisme* (1952), vol. 3, 213.

In short, before the "first treatises on the Church," no other method was known.<sup>12</sup>

Congar even feels that St. Thomas acted deliberately in omitting a tract on *De Ecclesia* since so much of his thought was ecclesial.<sup>13</sup>

In the 13th century a two-fold pressure focused attention on the institutional aspect of the Church. On the one hand, there was the theological elaboration of excommunication, of sacramental powers, of pontifical powers, and of infallibility; on the other hand, there were the errors of the Vaudois, the Albigenses, the Poor of Lyons, and the conflict between Pope Boniface and Philip the Fair. These circumstances provided the *Zeitgeist* for what have been called the first treatises of *De Ecclesia*. H. X. Arquilliere's edition in 1926 of James of Viterbo's *De regimine christiano* (1301 or 1302), is distinguished as "the oldest treatise on the Church." It was promptly followed by similar works—Giles of Rome's *De ecclesiastica potestate* and the *De potestate regina et papali* of John of Paris. These writers were theologians, but as these titles indicate their only concern was the Church's power and government.<sup>14</sup>

Two other issues occasioned further stress on the external aspect of the Church.<sup>15</sup> The first was the counteraction to the exaggerations of the Franciscan "Spirituals" and the subsequent ecclesiologies of Ockham (1349-42), Wyclif (1378-79) and Hus (1413) which they greatly influenced. The Carmelite, Thomas Netter, answered them (1415-29) with his ecclesial treatise "*Doctrinale antiquitatum. . .*" Secondly, John of Paris suggested that the council be an arbiter between the pope and the king. This suggestion germinated in the 1400's and Conciliarists came to regard the council as superior to the pope. John of Turrecremata's *Summa de ecclesia* (1489) answered their views. As Congar well said, the treatise *De Ecclesia* was built like the Jewish Temple after the Exile—with sword in hand.<sup>16</sup> It is easy to see how a variety of circumstances narrowed the scope of ecclesiology from the time of Berengarius on.

<sup>12</sup> Congar, *Myst. of Church*, *op. cit.*, 98.

<sup>13</sup> *Idem*, 117, and *Lay People*, 37.

<sup>14</sup> Le Guillou, *op. cit.*, 1427; see also Congar, *Lay People*, 32-37.

<sup>15</sup> See Congar, *Lay People*, 37-38; also Jáki, *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Cited by Jáki, *op. cit.*, 7.

## THE REFORMATION AND POST-TRIDENTINE PERIODS

The Reformation only furthered the trend that was underway.<sup>17</sup> Luther, influenced by a nominalistic interpretation of Augustine and by Hus' heretical spiritualism, pushed to extremes the distinction between the interior and exterior aspects of the Church. The result was that he identified the exterior aspect of the Church with the natural order corrupted by original sin. He and his followers identified the Church with its interior elements, as a strictly invisible society. Hence, Protestantism left standing hardly a stone of the Church's institution. The magisterium, priesthood, sacraments, primacy, etc., were rejected or at least depreciated. Churchmen retorted with the new treatise, *De ecclesia apologetica*. Congar considers Stapleton (1598) and Bellarmine (1621) as the initiators of this treatise which sought to show, especially by means of the *via notarum*, that the Roman Catholic Church was the true Church and had authority to judge controversies.<sup>18</sup> Protestant subjectivism was countered with Catholic objectivism and individualism with a strong affirmation of the Church's hierarchical character.<sup>19</sup> These emphases would have been a good contribution to ecclesiology if they were not so one-sided. Grea characterized this period of ecclesiology accurately when he said it was more concerned with manning and strengthening the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem than with showing the faithful the way to the heart of it.<sup>20</sup>

Continued emphasis was given to the apologetic trend, first, by Jansenism's misinterpretation of St. Augustine. This made the interior aspect of the Church all the more suspect. Secondly, Congar has shown how the influence of the Protestant Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Melancthon), of the Jurists (Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf),

<sup>17</sup> See Congar, *Lay People*, 38, and also Jáki, *op. cit.*, 8-9.

<sup>18</sup> See Congar, "L'Éclésiologie . . ." *op. cit.*, 85-86.

<sup>19</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, O.P., "Sources of Current Religious Attitudes," *Theology Digest*, 9 (1961), 137.

<sup>20</sup> Cited by De Lubac, *Splendour of the Church*, *op. cit.*, 61. See also Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate* (N.Y., 1955), vol. 1, p. xxvi. We should also keep in mind, as Jáki points out, *op. cit.*, 9-10, that there were also at this time some treatises on the Church which gave attention to its mystery aspect, e.g., A. Pigge, F. Toledo, and F. Suarez.

and Philosophers (Spinoza, Locke, Rousseau, Kant) all conspired to form a new concept of law, of state, and of the Church's position in this new society. This spirit of individualism, of autonomy of conscience made religion not only a personal, but a private, matter. From it came Gallicanism in France, Febronianism in Germany, Austria, Tuscany, and after 1760 Josephinism which was associated with episcopalianism in Germany. Congar shows how this spirit of "liberalism" and of "laicism" determined the problematic of the tract *De Ecclesia* in the 18th and early 19th century. Moreover, the laicism and absolute statism of this time heightened the idea of the Church itself as a perfect autonomous society. The object of *De Ecclesia* then was to show the Church to be a perfect society with authority, especially with infallibility. Christ was referred to only as the Founder of this society, and the Holy Spirit as the guarantee of its infallibility.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Various circumstances continued to call attention to the external authoritarian character of the Church.<sup>22</sup> To some extent this can be seen in the election of the authoritarian-minded Popes, Pius VIII (1829-30), Gregory XVI (1831-46), and Pius IX (1846-78). Moreover circumstances attending and consequent upon the Revolution turned the attention of many to the pope for leadership. There was also the restoration of the Roman College in 1824 to the Jesuits and the professorship of ecclesiology to Perrone (a friend of Gregory XVI) who laid stress on the Church's authority in his teachings. The scepticism and traditionalism of the time favored recourse to a stable divine magisterium. By 1850 the success of ultramontaniam was assured and its influence already long evident in the manuals of *De*

<sup>21</sup> See Congar, "L'Ecclésiologie . . ." *op. cit.*, 86-91; see also Jáki, *op. cit.*, 10-11. We might note in passing that it was in the 17th and 18th century that the treatise *De vera religione* was added to *De Ecclesia* as an attempt to meet the objections of rationalism, theism, and libertinism of the age. The existence of a personal God, the possibility and necessity of revelation, miracles and the fact of revelation were established with arguments from reason (Gotti, Sardagna, Gazzaniga). See A. Gaboardi, "Teologia fondamentale, il metodo apologetico," in *Problemi e Orientamenti* (Milan, 1957), vol. 1, 713.

<sup>22</sup> Congar, "L'Ecclésiologie . . ." *op. cit.*, 95-106.

*Ecclesia*. The Church's teaching authority also increasingly dominated the once (before the French Revolution) more liberal magisterium of theologians, a domination that was climaxed with the crisis of modernism.

In this same period, however, we cannot overlook the restoration of a sacramental notion of the Church. J. Möhler (1796-1838) is usually recognized as initiating this renewal. No doubt his forerunners (Sailer, Gügler, Drey), the German romantic movement, and his patristic research influenced him.<sup>23</sup> In his first important work, *Unity* (1825), he underscored the living experiential aspect of the Church, but perhaps too much so since it left the way open to Schleiermacher's idealistic pantheism. His *Symbolism* (1832) corrected any misunderstanding by making the Incarnation the point of departure for his ecclesiology, balancing the interior and exterior aspects of the Church. Theologians of the Roman College, led back to the Fathers through Petavius and Thomassin, followed the directions of Möhler's ecclesial teachings. And as Congar described the development there: "*Möhler genuit Passaglia, Passaglia genuit Schrader; Passaglia et Schrader genuerunt Scheeben et Franzelin. . .*"<sup>24</sup> It was Schrader, working with Franzelin, who redacted for the Vatican Council the first Schema of *De Ecclesia Christi*, containing many of Möhler's ideas.

We find this general trend begun by Möhler continued not only in his own school at Tübingen but in the writings of the layman, F. Pilgram, and others who followed after him, M. Scheler, R. Guardini, A. Rademacher, and N. Monzel. John Henry Newman, working independently of Möhler and with a more platonic mentality, likewise affirmed the concrete, living concept of the Church. Though Newman wrote no systematic treatment of the Church, a glance at Otto Karrer's collection of Newman's ecclesial writings shows that most of the themes of modern ecclesiology can be found therein. It was this tradition of Möhler and Newman and followers

<sup>23</sup> See J. R. Geiselman, "Les variations de la définition de l'église chez Joh. Adam Möhler," in *L'Ecclesiologie au XIXe siècle, op. cit.*, 141-95. See also Jáki, *op. cit.*, 23-25.

<sup>24</sup> Congar, "L'Ecclesiologie . . ." *op. cit.*, 107.



that countered the 19th century Naturalism of Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Comte's Positivism.<sup>25</sup>

FROM THE VATICAN COUNCIL TO *Mystici Corporis*

The Vatican Council might have seemed to have rejected the sacramental notion of the Church and to some extent did when it rejected all but chapter XI of the fifteen chapters in Schrader's Schema.<sup>26</sup> Congar, however, has pointed out that the Schema's sacramental ecclesiology provided a framework and basis for the teaching on the primacy and infallibility. The pope's authority is seen from the viewpoint of the unity of faith and communion. Thus in recognizing the pope's authority as not only the center, but the principle and foundation of unity in the Church, the Council did not deduce the infallibility of the Church from that of the pope; rather it situated the infallibility of the pope *in* that of the Church and the function of the pope *in* the Communion of the Body.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, it was the theme of authority that prevailed at the Vatican Council as far as the treatises of *De Ecclesia* were concerned. Papal primacy or "hierarchology," the image of the visible Church as a system, an organization, dominated the presentation of ecclesial teaching in the manuals. R. Aubert has said that after the Vatican Council ecclesiology produced almost nothing original for the next fifty years.<sup>28</sup> The anti-Modernist period helped to assure this dearth. It was between the two World Wars that sacramental ecclesiology

<sup>25</sup> See Jáki, *op. cit.*, 35-60. For O. Karrer, see his *Kardinal Newman: die Kirche*, I-II, Einsiedeln, 1945-46.

<sup>26</sup> The Fathers at the Council were mainly concerned with the Church's authority. To some of them "*Corpus Christi mysticum*" as a title for the Church seemed too metaphorical or too equivocal since it might refer only to those in the state of grace and so be heretical. Some also recalled the Jansenists' abuse of this term at Pistoia (DB 1515). Almost all the Fathers wanted a more "Bellarminian" designation for the Church. See Congar, "L'Ecclesiologie . . ." *op. cit.*, 108; De Lubac, *Splen. of Church*, 61-62; and Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 146-47.

<sup>27</sup> Congar, *idem*, 109-11.

<sup>28</sup> R. Aubert, "La géographie ecclésiologique au XIXe siècle," in *L'Ecclésiologie au XIXe siècle*, *op. cit.*, 12-13. See also H. Holstein, "Le problème de Jésus dans l'enseignement de l'Apologetique depuis le début du XXe siècle," *Bulletin du comité des études*, 5 (1961, #35), 327.

developed most. But in passing we should call attention to Leo XIII's encyclicals: *Satis Cognitum* (1896) which paralleled the first Schema of 1870 in using the Incarnation as a point of departure for explaining the Church's unity of visible and invisible elements; and *Divinum Illud* (1897), which speaks of the uncreated Holy Spirit as the Soul of the Church.

Between the two wars, as Fr. Bluett's bibliography shows, writings on the Mystical Body reached a high point about 1937.<sup>29</sup> There are many reasons for this development. The encyclical, *Mystici Corporis* (1943), lists some of them: the liturgical renewal, more frequent reception of Holy Communion, devotion to the Sacred Heart, and Catholic Action. But to this list could be added other causes for this development: the quickening of biblical and patristic studies, the ecumenical movement (which took concrete form between 1920-30), the Christo-centric spirituality of Marmion and others, new recognition of the laity by the pope, renewal of historical theology, developments in missiology, the codification of canon law (1918), regard for the Church-world relation seen in the institution of the feast of Christ the King (1925), a growing sense of community life, and Leo XIII's teachings on the Holy Spirit as soul of the Church—to name some of the more important factors. Moreover, the long list of studies on the nature of the Church collected by Fr. Bluett contained works which erred either by excess or defect.<sup>30</sup> These studies in particular provoked the encyclical *Mystici*

<sup>29</sup> J. Bluett, "The Mystical Body: a Bibliography," *Theological Studies*, 3 (1942), 262: "In 1920 the period of phenomenal growth began. In the first half of the 1920s the amount of literature equalled that of the twenty previous years. And in the second half of the decade the output was doubled. The first half of the 1930s saw a volume of literature five times that of the corresponding years of the preceding decade. The crest of the acceleration seems to have come in 1937. Thereafter growth continued, but at a more moderate rate." Jáki, *op. cit.*, 16, thinks "*les tendances nouvelles*" reached their apogee about 1930.

<sup>30</sup> For a more annotated list of these studies, see the excellent bibliography of E. Mura, "La dottrina del corpo mystico," *Problemi e Orientamenti* (Milan, 1957), vol. 2, 396-405. See also Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 149, nn.36-37; Malmberg, *op. cit.*, 30-31. The latter points out some of the more significant resemblances between the encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*, and Tromp's *Corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia, I, Introductio generalis*, Rome, 1937. See Jáki, *op. cit.*, 73-77, for some of the errors in the writings which preceded the encyclical.

*Corporis* of 1943 which closed an era and formed the foundation for a new point of departure. This foundation was re-affirmed by *Humani Generis* in 1950.

*De Ecclesia* IN TRADITIONAL MANUALS

The preceding survey explains for the most part the origin and formation of *De Ecclesia* in most contemporary seminary manuals. We can conclude from the survey that both the mystery and institutional aspects of the Church have had periods of florescence. Since the end of the Middle Ages, however, the external, societal, authoritarian, hierarchical character of the Church has dominated ecclesiology. Moreover, this aspect of the Church has been developed in a negative way—as a reaction *against* various errors. As necessary as this external aspect may be, it cannot be divorced from the inner mystery which gives it life, meaning, its proper and only setting. Yet this is what has happened. It is true that the mystery aspect of the Church has received more and more attention since the time of Möhler. Nevertheless, despite this trend, despite all the factors of the ecclesiological renewal and *Mystici Corporis*, the manuals have continued to present, with few exceptions, a one-sided external treatment of the Church with special stress on the authoritarian character of the Church.

Many of the modern manuals have tried to make allowance for these new developments in ecclesiology, but for the most part they are still inadequate. I. Salaverri's *De Ecclesia Christi* treats the social constitution of the Church, the magisterium and its sources in over three hundred and fifty pages and allots less than one hundred pages to the supernatural character of the Church.<sup>31</sup> T. Zapelena's *De Ecclesia Christi* in two volumes does devote the second volume to *De Ecclesia, apologetico-dogmatica*.<sup>32</sup> Even though he recognizes the need for a more extensive treatment of the dogmatic aspect of the Church, less than half of this volume is devoted to the dogma of the Church as such (or in other words two hundred pages

<sup>31</sup> *Theologia fundamentalis, Sacrae theologiae summa*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1952), vol. 1, 495-1097.

<sup>32</sup> *Pars apologetica*, 6th ed. (Rome, 1955), 591; *Pars altera, apologetico dogmatica*, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1954), 619 pp.

out of about twelve hundred pages). His work is certainly an improvement over most other manuals, but still it is ponderously apologetic. The treatise of Iragui-Abarzuza, O.F.M.Cap., which appeared in 1959 devotes about one-seventh of its exposition on *De Ecclesia* to the supernaturality of the Church.<sup>33</sup> This overly apologetic approach to *De Ecclesia* is not at all uncommon in our manuals today.<sup>34</sup> Father Weigel described the present situation very well when he wrote:

. . . it would have been too hard for the older theologians to reconstruct their treatises completely after the appearance of *Mystici Corporis*. Some continued their old efforts and added a supplement on the Church as the Mystical Body. This, however, was hardly an organic vision. Outlines for the newer ecclesiology were being offered in Europe by many theologians, but even to this moment there is no set ecclesiology in Catholic circles. To use the words of Koster, a Dutch Dominican theologian, ecclesiology is in the making.<sup>35</sup>

While ecclesiology is "in the making" we must continue to adapt and supplement the traditional manuals of our seminaries.

The main failings of these traditional presentations stem from their overly negative or defensive tenor and their shortsighted view of the mystery of the Church. We see this, for example, in the limited view taken of infallibility and the primacy. Rather than see these truths in terms of the unity of faith and communion, in the broader perspective of the Church's unity, they are often narrowly defined and apologetically explained as personal prerogatives of the pope (see n. 27 above). The more basic idea of the "episcopal

<sup>33</sup> *Theologia fundamentalis, Manuale theologiae dogmaticae* (Madrid, 1959), vol. 1, 637 pp. Out of over 350 pages on *De Ecclesia*, a little over fifty pages treat the dogma of the Church.

<sup>34</sup> Jáki, *op. cit.*, 12-13, has pointed out this same failing in the works of J. Bainvel (1926), J. V. De Groot (1906), G. Paris (1929) and A. Vellico (1940). Van Noort's 5th ed. of *De Ecclesia* (1954) does not even include a chapter on the Mystical Body. Tanqueray's 25th ed. of *De Ecclesia* (1947) in a treatment of a little over three hundred pages allows a little more than fifty pages to the supernatural gifts of the Church. It seems that whenever *De Ecclesia apologetica* is conjoined with *De Ecclesia dogmatica*, the latter becomes a mere appendage to *De Ecclesia apologetica*.

<sup>35</sup> Weigel, *op. cit.*, 180.

foundation" of the Church is generally overlooked altogether. Rarely is attention given to the place of the Church in the history of God's plan so that rarely can more particular considerations of the Church be seen in the broader perspective. Then too we should be mindful of the distorted notion of the Church which a one-sided presentation is apt to leave in the minds of seminarians. It is hardly one that would stir up love and reverence. The newer approaches to *De Ecclesia* are attempting to remedy these and other defects of traditional treatises.

#### NEWER APPROACHES TO THE TREATMENT OF *De Ecclesia*

Before any consideration of new approaches, there is perhaps a more fundamental problem that deserves attention: the present systematic arrangement of dogmatic theology. For as Professor Ratzinger of Innsbruck has remarked: ". . . it is the whole theological system, not merely *De Ecclesia*, which needs re-thinking."<sup>36</sup> Rahner has also called attention to this problem.<sup>37</sup>

As regard our present question of *De Ecclesia* in particular, however, the first difficulty we face is the position of this treatise in the total picture of dogmatic theology. In *Die Stellung der Lehre von der Kirche im dogmatischen System* (Aschaffenburg, 1927), J. Ranft has studied the history of ecclesiology from the Fathers to the 20th century and draws the conclusion that it belongs after the tract, *De Christo Redemptore*, and before *De Sacramentis*. Among his reasons for this position he mentions: the relation of Christ to the Church as its Founder, its Head, its Spouse, and the mystical nature of their unity, the Church as bearer of the fruits of the redemption, and the sacraments as rooted in the mystery of the Church. Journet, Gardeil, Congar, Stirnimann, Jáki, Bartmann, Schmaus, Lang, Semmelroth, Rahner, Bouillard, *et al.*, would agree with this position of *De Ecclesia* in the division of the dogmatic treatises.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> J. Ratzinger, "Kirche, systematisch," *LTK* (1961), vol. 6, 174.

<sup>37</sup> Rahner, *op. cit.*, 199; see also 1-37 for some of the re-thinking he suggests.

<sup>38</sup> See Jáki, *op. cit.*, 252-53; Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 156-157; A. Lang, *Fundamentaltheologie, Der Auftrag der Kirche* (Munich, 1958), 5; O. Sem-

*De Ecclesia Apologetica*

The division of dogma suggested above means that *De Ecclesia apologetica* would be quite removed from *De Ecclesia dogmatica*. This is not the case in our traditional manuals; however, it is the trend in Germany and elsewhere too, to make *De Ecclesia apologetica* the conclusion of fundamental theology. The purpose of fundamental theology so organized is to serve as a propaedeutic to dogma, as criteriology is to philosophy. Its specific objective is to show, not the nature of the Church, but that the Church exists and is God's authentic spokesman on earth.<sup>39</sup>

As regards the methodology for this apologetic tract on the Church, in general it would continue to be much the same. The *Via Historica* (Christ founded a visible, hierarchical, monarchical, infallible society) and the *Via Empirica* (the moral miracle of the Church today) would be the main arguments for the existence of the Church as God's spokesman on earth. In view of G. Thils' careful study of the notes of the Church,<sup>40</sup> and the need for economizing time, it

melroth, "Ekklesiologie, wissenschaftstheoretische Überlegungen," *LTK* (1959), vol. 3, 787—he would situate Mariology after *De Sacramentis* and before *De Gratia*, the Blessed Mother being the "Urbild" of redeemed mankind; H. Bouillard, "Plan d'un cours d'apologetique," *Bulletin du comité des études*, 5 (1961, #35), 449.

Since this arrangement of dogma would remove *De Ecclesia dogmatica* from its usual transitional position between fundamental theology and special dogma, I would like to propose *De Fide* as a transitional treatise. It is excellently suited to meet fundamental theology's need for a subjective apologetics (see n.41 below) and at the same time serve in its analysis of faith as a fine introduction to theology, concluding with *De locis theologicis*, a study of the sources of faith. H. Bouillard's suggestion, *op. cit.*, 450, of situating *De Fide* before fundamental theology offers advantages, but can it be reconciled with the notion of fundamental theology (see n.39 below)?

<sup>39</sup> See the discussion regarding this point in the following: H. Lais, "Apologetik," *LTK* (1957), vol. 1, 723-24; A. Lang, *Fundamentaltheologie, Die Sendung Christi* (Munich, 1957), 1-31 and in *Der Auftrag der Kirche*, *op. cit.*, 1-9; M. Schmaus, *Die Lehre von der Kirche* (Munich, 1958), 18-26; E. Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 150-156; H. Bouillard, "Le sens de l'apologetique," *Bulletin du comité des études*, 5 (1961, #35), 311-312, 326. Besides Bouillard, see also R. Garrigou-Lagrangé, *De Revelatione*, 3rd ed. Rome 1929, Vol. 1, 39-68, regarding a dogmatic or theological fundamental theology.

<sup>40</sup> G. Thils, *Les notes de l'église dans l'apologetique catholique depuis la Réforme*, Gembloux, 1937.

would seem better to mention the *Via Notarum* only in passing. Besides, these notes can be studied much more profitably from a theological viewpoint in *De Ecclesia dogmatica*.

Some recommendations that are commonly made as regards this apologetic treatment of *De Ecclesia* are that it be less polemic and more positive, less concerned with past errors and more concerned with providing a foundation for theology. While traditional, it should still keep up to date with scriptural studies and face the serious problems of our day. One of the difficulties with many treatments of the *Via Historica* is a refusal to face the facts of history with the result that historical arguments are over-simplified, even superficial and specious. The idea of any historical development in the Church's understanding of herself is usually ruled out. For example, the impression is sometimes given that the monarchical episcopacy and primacy should be perfectly obvious to all from Pentecost on. Moreover, the arguments of the two *Viae* cannot pretend to give absolute certitude or a demonstration of faith, but only moral certitude, a rational basis for the credibility of our faith. In this regard, we might add that more attention should be given to subjective apologetics. It is true that the mind comes first, but apologetics must also take into consideration the heart, the psychological and religious elements involved in understanding in general and conversion in particular.<sup>41</sup>

#### *De Ecclesia Dogmatica*

How then will this strictly dogmatic subject be treated? Its methodology presents a problem. For as Jáki said:

... of all the objects of theological reflection, the Church has the most numerous and diverse aspects: it is at one and the

<sup>41</sup> See n.38 above where reference is made to *De Fide* as a possible means of giving attention to this question of subjective apologetics. However, for some of the elements involved in such a study, the following might be consulted with profit: especially N. Dunas, O.P., "Les problèmes et le statut de l'apologetique," *Rev. des sciences phil. et theol.*, 43 (1959), 643-80; R. Aubert, *Le problème de l'acte de foi*, 3rd ed., Louvain, 1958, or his summary article, "Questioni attuali intorno all' atto di fede," *Problemi e Orientamenti* (Milan, 1957), vol. 2, 655-709 (with annotated bibliography); Y. Congar, "The Idea of Conversion," *Thought* 33 (1958), 5-20; De Broglie, "The Preambles of Faith," *Theology Digest* 7 (1959), 47-52.

same time terrestrial and celestial, temporal and eternal, present and eschatological, human and divine, active and contemplative, collective and individual, personal and supra-personal, united in love and regulated by laws, visible and invisible. To be accurately conceived, it requires a system that will balance all these aspects.<sup>42</sup>

The new developments to which we have referred already and all that tradition (biblical, patristic, apologetic, canonical) has to offer should be kept in mind. Some theologians have attempted to work out a methodology adequate to this complex reality. Among the more important attempts, we might mention Journet, Schmaus, and Rahner.

C. Journet of Fribourg, Switzerland, has approached the Church from the viewpoint of the four causes (which, following Gardeil, *c.* 1885, can be related to the four notes of the Church). His first two volumes include the treatment of: I—the efficient cause; II—the material and formal causes.<sup>43</sup> Journet has condensed these two volumes into one, *Théologie de l'Église* (n.p., 1958). In this summary version, an introductory chapter briefly explains the mystery of the Church and its place in salvation history. Then in more detail he treats the Church in its trinitarian relation to Christ, its visible Head and the Holy Spirit, its invisible life, and in its first perfect realization, the Blessed Virgin Mary. He then proceeds to study the Church from the viewpoint of its four causes. First, the apostolic hierarchy, the efficient cause, prolongs in time the work of Christ, our Redeemer, Who in turn was sent by the Father. Whenever Journet inquires into one of the four causes of the Church, he always regards the corresponding note, in this instance apostolicity, first as mystery and then as miracle (or as property and as note). Secondly, the formal cause of the Church is, according to Journet, two-fold. There are the uncreated Holy Spirit (treated above) and the created graces and gifts. This created soul of the Church is studied in its

<sup>42</sup> Jáki, *op. cit.*, 263.

<sup>43</sup> C. Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, vol. 1, *The Apostolic Hierarchy*, N.Y., 1955 (French ed., 1941); and *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, vol. 2, *Sa structure interne et son unité catholique*, Paris, 1951. Regarding Gardeil, see Jáki, *op. cit.*, 254.



nature, its development and the communion it effects. Holiness is then considered in relation to this formal cause of the Church.

After this consideration of the formal cause, Journet studies the material cause of the Church—the Church's Body—in its nature and properties, the functions of its members, its relation to the profane world and finally in regard to its membership. This explanation of the Body of the Church introduces an analysis of the property and note of Catholic Unity. In concluding these reflections on the ecclesial mystery, he gives various definitions of the Church in terms of its uncreated and created causes.

The final cause of the Church, God as Supreme Good in general, will be studied in the third volume of his projected work. The fourth and last volume will examine the preparation of the Church to meet Christ and its completion in purgatory and heaven.

Journet's work is quite complete and, in fact, even too comprehensive for classroom purposes. There are so many tangential considerations that it almost becomes a point of departure for considering all of theology. In this respect it makes excellent supplementary reading and discovers some of the unsuspected richness of the Church. His scholastic method, however, with its definitions, distinctions, and conceptualizations sometimes makes tedious reading. It is perhaps this same method that led him to present some considerations which are still in a state of development as if they were settled doctrine. In particular, most theologians would not agree with his representation of the soul of the Church as created and uncreated. Also a good number do not accept his two-fold distinction of order and jurisdiction in place of the three-fold distinction of Christ's functions (teach, rule and sanctify). While some regard Journet's effort as the best so far (P. Nicolas, E. Stirnimann), others are of the opinion that it does not lend itself to an integration of biblical data.<sup>44</sup>

M. Schmaus' monumental treatise (1958), organizes the problematic of the Church in three concentric circles: (1) its origin which conditions (2) its divine-human nature and from which (3) ema-

<sup>44</sup> See Jáki, *op. cit.*, 254-55 and E. Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 157-58.

nates its mission.<sup>45</sup> In treating the origin of the Church, he considers it from the viewpoint of its origin in God (theological causality), its historical preparation (the causality of salvation history), and its foundation by Christ (its Christological causality). Thus in a limited way he introduces the Church by showing its place in the history of God's plan. His history becomes somewhat apologetic in its lengthy explanation of Christ's foundation of the Church. But this is understandable since in his preface he makes clear the ecumenical intent of his work. He sees this treatise as a basis for dialogue with non-Catholics.

Passing from the first to the second circle of his considerations means passing from an historical to an essentialistic view of the Church. In the second part Schmaus studies the nature of the Church, first by examining three of the main biblical images of the Church (People of God, Body of Christ, Spouse) and then its relation to the Holy Spirit. These Christological and pneumatological reflections underlie and serve as a point of departure for a study of the Church's visibility, its hierarchical, monarchical, and jurisdictional structure, and the plenitude of its four properties. For the third problem regarding the mission of the Church, Schmaus gives attention first to its general mission, the honor and glory of God, and then to its specific mission, the salvation of mankind. In the realization of this second mission, he treats first the nature and interrelation of the Church's supernatural powers and then the functioning of these powers through the sacraments and the word of God. This latter leads him to the question of infallibility in the Church in general and in the Pope in particular. We might note in passing that all of the considerations of the hierarchical activity and infallibility are treated in terms of the spiritual benefit from them, as services for salvation (*Dienst am Heil*). Moreover, the ministry of the word for him is not reduced to magisterial doctrine but includes the dynamic aspect of the word as a proclamation of salvation. A chapter on the necessity of the Church for salvation concludes the work.

Schmaus' work, like that of Journet, is too extensive to be a

<sup>45</sup> M. Schmaus, *Die Lehre von der Kirche* (Munich, 1958), 933 pp. including 46 pages of classified single-spaced bibliography.

manual. However, its organization is simpler and more manageable than Journet's. Like Journet's, it would make first-rate supplementary reading. It has synthesized most of the recent studies on the Church and has given valuable new insights into the wonder of the Church. Moreover, throughout the work the author has retained an inspirational religious attitude toward his subject. Generally his presentation is straight-forward and does not become involved in controversies. But his style is often too prolix—about two-thirds of the encyclical *Satis Cognitum* is quoted in three passages of four or five pages each. Another criticism is the omission of any treatment of missiology. Otherwise, his work is highly regarded for its comprehensiveness, its use of biblical and patristic sources, and its up-to-dateness.

In the first volume of his *Schriften zur Theologie* (Einsiedeln, 1961), Karl Rahner has included a tentative outline of a more inclusive treatise of the whole of dogmatic theology. Regarding this sketch he remarks: "All this sketch is intended to do (however much laborious reflection it has involved) is just to show in its own way . . . the abundance of undeveloped themes which await the dogmatic theologian."<sup>46</sup> In this unconventional schema he places ecclesiology after the treatise on Christ-Redeemer. Then in his treatment of the Church, he considers the relation of Christ to it and its basic structure as the sacrament of Christ. In consequence of this structure he shows, thirdly, the sacramentality of the Church in its essential offices; this includes a view of the more exterior form of Christ's truth, will and grace (*De sacramentis* is included here). Then he examines, fourthly, the inner form of the Church, e.g. her saints and graces of holiness. This section is balanced by a fifth section on the place of sinners in the Church. After five sections of an essentialistic consideration of the Church he concludes with a final existential (or historical) appreciation of the Church in God's plan.

This schema of Rahner and those of Journet and Schmaus are only three of the more important attempts to meet the challenge of contemporary ecclesiology. There are others<sup>47</sup> and there will be more

<sup>46</sup> K. Rahner, cited from the English translation, *Theological Investigations*, *op. cit.*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> See Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 159-60; Mura, *op. cit.*, 396-405; Jáki, *op. cit.*, 253-55; O. Semmelroth, "Towards a Unified Concept of the Church," *Year-*

in the years to come because the subject is so vast that almost every approach fails in one respect or another. Stirnimann concluded his study (1957) of this question with the remark: ". . . noi rimaniamo ancor inceppati nella difficoltà iniziali."<sup>48</sup> ("We are still impeded by initial difficulties.")

But in concluding I would like to present another schema which appeals to me. It is drawn to some extent from the attempts of others (especially Schmaus and Rahner), from personal attempts to deal with the problems of ecclesiology, and from discussions with confreres.<sup>49</sup> After a brief historical survey of ecclesiology, this treatise would open with an historical (or existential) consideration of the Church in God's plan. It would not be too detailed but point out the highlights and be enough to show the Church as a living reality with a past and a future (for example, something along the lines of Hasseveldt—*The Church: a Divine Mystery*, Congar—*Mystère du temple*, De Bovis—*What is the Church?*). Such a consideration helps greatly to bring out the vitality and dynamism of the Church, especially when its destiny is considered. Fr. Congar remarked in this regard: "I am more and more convinced that it is just such a clear understanding of the Church's situation between the Old Testament and the last times, that is, in the broad movement that extends from the promises to their complete fulfillment, that can give ecclesiology a balance and its true dimensions."<sup>50</sup> He also said in this same context that it is the eschatological sense that is most wanting in post-Tridentine ecclesial treatises.

*book of Liturgical Studies*, vol. 2 (1961), 85-102 (a sacramental approach); and Latourelle in "Some Directions for Theology," *Roman Echoes*, ed. by J. Wildeman and C. Murphy (n.p., 1961), 27: "A good distinction between the first and other years [of theology] would be the following: in the first year we study the basic Christian reality, the Word of God. As a mystery, it would be the dogmatic aspect; as a fact, it would be the apologetical aspect; as it is given to a special society, it is the Church; in its different expressions, it is Scripture and Tradition. So there is a great unity in this year; we study the basic Christian reality the Word of God. So, I think this year has its own unity: it is something different from the other years in which we study the content of revelation."

<sup>48</sup> Stirnimann, *op. cit.*, 161.

<sup>49</sup> I would like to mention my confreres Frs. Robert T. Callahan, S.S., and Peter F. Chirico, S.S., in particular.

<sup>50</sup> Congar, "Bulletin d'ecclésiologie," *op. cit.*, 275.

After this existential or historical look at the Church a more static or essentialistic consideration would be made of it as continuing Christ's work of redemption in the world today.<sup>51</sup> The underlying idea in the development of this part is that the Church is a prolongation of Christ in time—(1) in his divine-human nature, and (2) in his activity (in keeping with the principle, *actio sequitur esse*). And so this part would include, first, a somewhat static study of the nature of the Church in its relation with Christ and the Holy Spirit. The study of the Christological and pneumatological nature of the Church would be made from the more important scriptural images and their elaboration by the Fathers, from the liturgy, and from the magisterium, especially *Divinum Illud, Satis Cognitum*, and *Mystici Corporis*. The Church's nature could be further examined by reflecting on it from the viewpoint of its four causes and notes (to see it in broader and richer perspective), personalism (to see the personal relations involved vertically and horizontally), philosophical categories (to help make precise the realities involved and their inter-relations), the *Ursakrament* (to see its sacramental nature), and the Blessed Mother (to see in her the first realization of the Church).

In the second part of this essentialistic consideration, we study the action or missions of the Church. Its first mission is God's honor and glory and the second, man's salvation. In carrying out this second mission of saving mankind, bishops, the pope, the laity are involved more or less in teaching ruling and sanctifying within the Church itself. This three-fold function of these personages would then be studied (the role of the laity being thus definitely included),<sup>52</sup> as an active realization of the Church's mission to her members. In the consideration of the ministry of the members of the Church, more attention would be given to the role of preaching in its

<sup>51</sup> Regarding the Church as the divine-human continuation of Christ, see the interesting survey article of some twenty years ago by S. Tyszkiewicz, S.J., "Où en est chez nous la doctrine de la divino-humanité de l'église?" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 7 (1941), 370-405.

<sup>52</sup> Time probably would not permit, but perhaps at this point something could be said about the theology of the diocesan and parochial church. See R. Aubert, *La théologie catholique au milieu du XXe siècle* (Paris, 1954), 90-91.

various forms of realizing the Church's mission. Moreover, the Church's mission to mankind extends not only to the sacral world of her own members but to the profane world as well. Here the Church's mission regarding the State, the non-baptized (Missiology), and Protestants (ecumenical movement) could be considered. Throughout this essentialistic treatment of the Church the Christological basis, the pneumatological vitality and the eschatological direction of the Church should be kept in mind. This would help to relate the essentialistic consideration of the Church to the correlative existential consideration.

One of the main purposes of this schema is to present the Church as a living reality, a prolongation of Christ in the world. It is in a developmental stage and needs further revision, but I believe all the main elements are there. Its loose structure (for example, in the reflections on the nature of the Church) permits some features to be mentioned only in passing or considered in detail depending on the class time available. But the structure seeks to include all the important aspects so that all the elements might be seen in their proper perspective, even if they are not treated. There is inevitable overlapping in its divisions. But where this is the case, there need be no repetition in one or the other mention of the subject except for a brief reference, possibly to show the matter in a new light. The general plan of this schema is simple to grasp. But for it to become alive and meaningful to the seminarians, its relation to Christ, the Holy Spirit and its final destiny must be frequently recalled to mind.

The above schemas are a possible answer to the question: How should *De Ecclesia* be treated in scientific theology? By relegating *De Ecclesia apologetica* to fundamental theology, we are able to give the dogmatic aspect of the Church the attention it deserves. In this way perhaps we can open some of the doors to the mystery of the Church and enable seminarians to come to a deeper love for her, a love that will be translated into action as they in turn make her known and carry out her mission in the world today.

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