

‘Remember that you are Catholic’ (Augustine of Hippo): Questioning the paradigmatic use of terms in ecumenical exchange.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the paradigmatic use of terminology in ecumenical dialogue and exchange. In particular I will investigate the ways in which the term, ‘Catholic’ has been used in contemporary ecumenical exchanges and dialogues. I will seek to analyse the paradigms underlying the use of this term, and ask if through a process of re-reception, new paradigms for understanding terms in ecumenical exchange might possibly emerge. A particular worked example will focus on Cardinal Kasper’s use of ‘Catholic’ in his address to the House of Bishops of the Church of England in relation to the ordination of women to the Episcopate. In conclusion I will suggest that the conceptual understandings set out in the Porvoo and Meissen Agreements may possibly suggest a way forward for the re-reception of ‘catholicity’ in ecumenical exchange.

In his address to the House of Bishops of the Church of England in June 2006, Cardinal Walter Kasper posed questions about the implications of a decision by the Church of England to ordain women to the episcopate. He argued that a decision to go ahead with the ordination of women to the episcopate would be understood by the Roman Catholic Church as seeing, ‘the Anglican Communion as moving a considerable distance closer to the side of the Protestant churches of the 16th century.’¹ Kasper was implicitly suggesting something about the status of the ‘catholicity’ of the Church of England. The official Roman Catholic understanding of the Church of England is highly ambiguous. On the one hand Kasper refers to the ‘special place’ of the Anglican Communion among the ‘ecclesial communities’ of the West.² While on the other hand admitting that the issues relating to the condemnation of Anglican Orders in the papal bull *Apostolicae curae* in 1896 still await ‘a conclusive resolution’.³ Nonetheless Kasper would seem to be inviting the Church of England to do as Augustine of Hippo had done in a sermon, to, ‘Remember that you are Catholic...’⁴ In his

¹ Cardinal Walter Kasper, *The Mission of Bishops in the Mystery of the Church: Reflection on the question of ordaining women to Episcopal office in the Church of England*, printed in, *Women in the Episcopate? An Anglican – Roman Catholic Dialogue*, GS Misc 885, The General Synod of the Church of England, 2008, p. 21

² Kasper, *The Mission of Bishops*, p. 21

³ Kasper, *The Mission of Bishops*, p. 20

⁴ Augustine of Hippo, *Sermons*, 52.2

sermon Augustine invited his hearers to remember their ‘catholicity’ in relation to belief in the doctrine of the Trinity. Kasper is inviting his hearers to reflect on ‘catholicity’ in relation to holy orders. This is something rather different. I would suggest that here the question of a hierarchy of beliefs needs to be invoked. Is the question of ordination of the same ‘order’ as belief in the doctrine of the Trinity? Surely the former is second order matter while the latter is a first order matter. The appeal to ‘catholicity’ is being made on very different grounds, and indeed the conceptuality surrounding ‘catholicity’ itself is surely very different.

The category ‘Catholic’ is not uncontested in the Christian Tradition. The use of ‘Catholic’ as the ‘identifier’ of the Roman Catholic Church ensures that this will remain the case for the foreseeable future. So any appeal to ‘catholicity’ needs to be carefully introduced and situated. For instance it continues to be the case that the liturgical usage of the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* [EKD] eschews mention of the German word *Katholisch*, because of its identification with the Roman Catholic Church. In the Apostles’ creed Luther’s usage is retained, so that ‘the holy catholic Church’ is rendered, ‘*die heilige christliche Kirche*’ and for ‘One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church’ in the Nicene Creed, ‘*die eine, heilige, allgemeine und apostolische Kirche*’, is to be found.⁵

So what is it that Kasper invites the House of Bishops of the Church of England to consider? The text of the address is crafted around a construction of ‘catholic’ around a Cyprianic, and possibly Ignatian understanding of ‘unity’ and ‘episcopacy’.⁶ To this traditional modelling of catholicity is added a further construct in relation to the question of the gender of those ordained to the episcopate. In other words the Cyprianic understanding is focused on a particular interpretation of resemblance or family likeness of those inhabiting the episcopate in terms of gender.

How is Kasper’s use of ‘catholic’ to be understood and situated? In order to answer this question I will appeal to the work of Kasper’s fellow Cardinal, Avery Dulles.⁷ Historically ‘catholic’ was used to refer to universal extent or to adherence to a specific tradition or

⁵ See: *Evangelisches Kirchen Gesangbuch*, 1984

⁶ Kasper, *The Mission of Bishops*, p. 18

⁷ Avery Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

affiliation.⁸ The paradigmatic usage of ‘catholic’ and ‘catholicity’ in ecumenical discussion has been developed by the World Council of Churches [WCC]. The statement of the 4th Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala in 1968 suggested that ‘catholic’ might be qualitative rather than quantitative. In 1948 at the foundation of the WCC ‘catholicity’ was used to refer to the whole Church, rather than to parts of the Church so ‘self-named’. At Uppsala it was understood that the Church is and should be catholic in all elements and aspects. So rather than focusing on geographical extent, ‘catholic’ was used at Uppsala to refer to ‘the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, the integrity, and the totality of the life in Christ’ (no.7). It has also come to be understood that ‘catholic’ and the other three marks of the Church can designate the diversity of the Church and churches, suggesting what is acceptable diversity and what is not acceptable. Rather than being a ‘steady state’, catholicity can be understood as both divine gift and human task. In this sense catholicity is seen as a means of developing human aspirations for peace, justice and community, and that the Church is also an instrument of the coming unity for humankind. In this conceptuality ‘catholicity’ is about the overcoming of any excessive commitment to party or nation.

In *The Catholicity of the Church*, Dulles distils five possible understandings or types of ‘catholic’ or ‘catholicity’, each of which may be seen in terms of a particular paradigm. The five understandings are presented in what might be seen as an ascending hierarchy, from the least to the most complex: firstly to be ‘catholic’ is to share in a universal community, which has cosmic implications and transcends time and place. In other words ‘catholic’ is opposed to ‘sectarian’. Secondly catholic may be understood as that which is universal as opposed to what is local or particular. Thirdly catholic may be used to indicate what is true or authentic as opposed to false or heretical. In other words catholic can be used as the equivalent of ‘orthodox’. Fourthly ‘catholic’ can be used to indicate a type of Christianity which emphasises visible continuity in space and time, and uses social and institutional structures, such as, creeds, sacraments, and the historic episcopate to express such continuity. Finally catholic can be used to indicate a Church which is in communion with the See of St Peter.⁹

In terms of Dulles’ five types of ‘catholicity’ it would seem evident that the type which Kasper is using in his address to the Bishops of the Church of England is type four. ‘The type

⁸ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, p. iv

⁹ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, p. 185

of Christianity that attaches particular importance to visible continuity in space and time and visible mediation through social and institutional structures...’¹⁰ The appeal to such a construal of what it means to be catholic is echoed in the work of John Zizioulas, who argues that each celebration of the Eucharist gathered around the bishop is an instantiation of the catholic church.¹¹ Here the debate concerning the relationship between the local and the universal Church emerges, along with the question of which has the priority over the other. I am not wishing to discuss this matter in this paper, but simply to indicate that in terms of the five types of Dulles, Zizioulas’ understanding could also be categorised as sitting within type four. Zizioulas’ construal of this paradigm of ‘catholicity’ is very different from that of an official Roman Catholic construct, yet both may be said to be forms of the Cyprianic model.

In an endeavour to craft new paradigms for the use of ‘catholic’ and ‘catholicity’ in the context of ecumenical dialogue, and agreed texts, I want to investigate if it might be possible to create a construct parallel with the construal of apostolicity in the Meissen and Porvoo agreed statements.¹² An analysis of the Meissen (1988) and Porvoo (1993) agreed statements reveals that while the texts were ground breaking in the construal of ‘apostolicity’ each document has very little to say about ‘catholicity’. In each document the discussion of ‘communion’ in effect replaces a discussion of ‘catholicity’. Is this a possible way forward or is this some kind of evasion? The lack of explicit treatment of ‘catholicity’ probably relates to the problematic status of the concept and word ‘catholic’ in the context of Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe. What is revealed by an analysis of each text is that the exploration of the Church as ‘communion’ provides evidence for a conceptuality of ‘catholicity’ that is a re-reception of the Cyprianic conceptuality set out in Kasper’s address. The use of ‘communion’ in Meissen and Porvoo agreed statements demonstrate a thoroughgoing kinship with the Cyprianic model of church, eucharist and bishop. This again demonstrates that a Cyprianic model may be given different paradigmatic forms.

¹⁰ Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church*, p. 185

¹¹ John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, (1985)

¹² *On the Way to Visible Unity: A Common Statement*, Meissen, London: Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, 1988; *The Porvoo Common Statement*, London: Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, 1992

One version of the Cyprianic model is simply and concisely expressed in the Meissen text, which states that

[8] ... the sharing of one baptism, the celebrating of one eucharist and the service of a reconciled, common ministry. This common participation in one baptism, one eucharist and one ministry unites 'all in each place with 'all in every place' within the whole communion of saints. The whole Church is present in every celebration of the eucharist, thus uniting the local and the universal Church. Through the visible communion the healing and uniting power of the Triune God is made evident amidst the divisions of humankind.

A similar form of the model is to be found in the Porvoo text, which is more elaborate but clearly echoes a common understanding with that of the Meissen agreement:

24. The maintenance of unity and the sustaining of diversity are served by bonds of communion. Communion with God and with fellow believers is manifested in one baptism in response to the apostolic preaching; in the common confession of the apostolic faith; in the united celebration of the eucharist which builds up the one body of Christ; and in a single ministry set apart by prayer and the laying on of hands. This unity is also manifested as a communion in love, implying that Christians are bound to one another in a committed relationship with mutual responsibilities, common spiritual goods and the obligation to share temporal resources. Already in the Acts of the Apostles we can discern these bonds: *'Those who received [Peter's] word were baptized... And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common'* (Acts 2: 41ff).

These two instances provide the grounds for a convergence of understanding of the conceptuality of 'catholicity' on the basis of a re-received Cyprianic combining of eucharist, church community and ordained ministry of *episkope*. These instances of the model express a synthesis of the elements which has become paradigmatic for subsequent bilateral dialogue statements. Such understanding is reiterated in the ARCIC text *Church as Communion* (1991)

in particular in paragraphs 34-41.¹³ In paragraph 34 the text states that universal extent and the Eucharist are elements of ‘catholicity’:

34 ... The Church is also catholic because its mission is to teach universally and without omission all that has been revealed by God for the salvation and fulfilment of humankind; and also because its vocation is to unite in one eucharistic fellowship men and women of every race, culture and social condition in every generation.

The relationship between the Eucharist and ‘catholicity’ is explored further in paragraph 36, where the relationship between the local and global instantiations of the Church is set out.

36 ... At every eucharistic celebration of Christian communities dispersed throughout the world, in their variety of cultures, languages, social and political contexts, it is the same, one and indivisible body of Christ reconciling divided humanity that is offered to believers. In this way the eucharist is the sacrament of the Church's catholicity in which God is glorified.

Finally in paragraph 45 the ministerial element of catholicity is set forth. In this Anglican – Roman text there is a much more fulsome statement of the ministry of episkope, reflecting the shared tradition of the historic episcopate in each communion. This paragraph clearly sets out a Cyprianic view of ‘catholicity’ in all its implications and richness.

45 ... For the nurture and growth of this communion, Christ the Lord has provided a ministry of oversight, the fullness of which is entrusted to the episcopate, which has the responsibility of maintaining and expressing the unity of the churches (cf. 33 & 39; Final Report, Ministry and Ordination). By shepherding, teaching and the celebration of the sacraments, especially the eucharist, this ministry holds believers together in the communion of the local church and in the wider communion of all the churches.

Having examined three bilateral texts I want also to analyse the latest Faith and Order multi-lateral text on ecclesiology, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2005).¹⁴ A number of

¹³ Church as Communion, The Second Anglican / Roman Catholic International Commission, 1991

¹⁴ The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement, Faith and Order Paper 198, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005

paragraphs in the text examine ‘catholicity’, and offer understandings in relation to universal extent, diversity and also a Cyprianic understanding. Paragraph 12 expresses an understanding of catholicity as universal extent:

12. ... The Church is catholic because God is the fullness of life “who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4), and who, through Word and Spirit, makes his people the place and instrument of his saving and life-giving presence, the community “in which, in all ages, the Holy Spirit makes the believers participants in Christ’s life and salvation, regardless of their sex, race or social position”.

Paragraph 16 defends Christian diversity:

16 ... Diversity appears not as accidental to the life of the Christian community, but as an aspect of its catholicity, a quality that reflects the fact that it is part of the Father’s design that the story of salvation in Christ be incarnational. Thus, diversity is a gift of God to the Church.

The document also explores where the integrity of the Gospel may be compromised and how this affects the catholicity of the Church:

55. The essential catholicity of the Church is confronted with divisions between and within the Christian communities regarding their life and preaching of the Gospel. Its catholicity transcends all barriers and proclaims God’s word to all peoples: where the whole mystery of Christ is present, there too is the Church catholic. However, the catholicity of the Church is challenged by the fact that the integrity of the Gospel is not adequately preached to all; the fullness of communion is not offered to all. Nevertheless, the Spirit given to the Church is the Spirit of the Lordship of Christ over all creation and all times. The Church is called to remove all obstacles to the full embodiment of what is already its nature by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Nature and Mission of the Church also examines and expounds a Cyprianic understanding of the Church. Paragraph 65 sets out a vision of the Church in terms of baptism, eucharist and ministry. The word ‘catholic’ does not occur, no doubt because of the sensibilities raised by its use. Nonetheless in this and in paragraph 88 there are the clear lineaments of a Cyprianic ‘catholicity’.

65. The communion of the Church is expressed in the communion between local churches, in each of which the fullness of the Church resides. The communion of the Church embraces local churches in each place and all places at all times. Local churches are held in the communion of the Church by the one Gospel, the one baptism and the one Lord's Supper, served by a common ministry. This communion of local churches is thus not an optional extra, but is an essential aspect of what it means to be the Church.

If paragraph 88 is read as qualifying and expounding 65, then a fulsome vision of a Cyprianic catholicity may be discerned:

88. The chief responsibility of the ordained ministry is to assemble and build up the Body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating baptism and the Eucharist and by guiding the life of the community in its worship, its mission and its service. Essential to its testimony are not merely its words, but the love of its members for one another, the quality of their service to those in need, a just and disciplined life and a fair exercise of power and authority.

These four ecumenical texts provide evidence for a growing consensus around a Cyprianic view of the catholicity of the Church. This places Kasper's understanding of what it means to be 'catholic' in a broad contemporary ecumenical context and highlights the difficulty of contesting the position of the Church of England simply by an appeal to a Cyprianic model of catholicity. Rather what is inherent in Kasper's challenge to the Church of England is not so much a Cyprianic modelling of the conceptuality of 'catholicity' but rather the question of the gender of those to be ordained *per se*. Kasper's question to the House of Bishops of the Church of England asks about the relationship of 'catholicity' and 'order' [episcopacy] to gender. Contemporary ecumenical consensus suggests that these questions should not be reduced to a polarisation of Catholic over against Protestant. Rather the question which confronts both Kasper and the Bishops of the Church of England is a question of hermeneutics; a question of the model and method of hermeneutics to be applied to the conceptuality of 'catholicity', 'order' and 'gender' as they stand in relation to one another at the present juncture. The Faith and Order paper *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels* (1998) raised the question of whether it is possible to find a way to hold together different or competing

interpretations.¹⁵ It sought to address the possibility of reconciling ‘criteriological differences’,¹⁶ which is at the heart of the issue, which Kasper seeks to address. Alasdair MacIntyre has explored a variety of models for reconciling diverse and competing traditions or schools of thought in his work, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition*.¹⁷ The three models which he analyses, Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition, are rooted in a chronological or diachronic idiom, whereas I would suggest that what is needed for the analysis and development of contemporary ecumenical dialogue and exchange is a synchronic approach, in addition to a diachronic idiom.

The possibility of re-construing the term ‘catholicity’ as expressed in a variety of Cyprianic models, will require the consideration of the method or methods to be employed in seeking to set out its paradigmatic function. A helpful consideration of methodology can be found in the work of John Passmore,¹⁸ who sought to analyse the development of philosophy according to three different methods. He states, ‘It is hard to find a wholly satisfactory way of naming them, but let us call them the polemical, the cultural, and the elucidatory.’¹⁹ He divides the ‘elucidatory’ in to three further approaches: doxographical, retrospective, problematic.²⁰

The methods may be summarised as follows. A cultural approach to the Cyprianic model would elicit the questions: how does a particular instance of the model reflect the culture in which it emerged? This approach would interpret all components of a Cyprianic model in relation to the social and theological setting from which it emerged. A polemical approach raises questions such as: Does it make sense? Is it true? It looks for strengths and weaknesses and for the truth or falsity of the arguments used.

As regards the elucidatory methods, the doxographer might ask: ‘What has been practised and how is such practice related to other parallel practices?’ Such an approach would also

¹⁵ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, Faith and Order Paper 182, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1998

¹⁶ *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels*, paragraph 12, p. 12

¹⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Gifford Lectures 1998), Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990

¹⁸ John Passmore, *The Idea of a History of Philosophy, History and Theory* (Supplement), 1965, IV, 1-32

¹⁹ Passmore, *The Idea of a History of Philosophy*, p.5

²⁰ Passmore, *The Idea of a History of Philosophy*, p. 18

look for connections between different practices. The focus of this method is not so much the context of the practice; but how a contemporary practice relates to previous and other contemporary practices.²¹ Doxography has been widely used as a method by philosophers and theologians, but has severe limitations. When dealing with ancient literature gaps in chronology mean that arguments are constructed on limited evidence, or from a surviving text, which may be elevated beyond its actual importance.²² Another limitation is that doxography often ignores the context of a practice. It tends to add up of instances of historical practice, which does not necessarily prove the significance of a practice.²³ When what is preferable is the careful weighing of evidence. Doxography need not be excluded but needs to be supplemented by other methods. A second form of elucidation is retrospective method. This seeks to assess and place a practice. It compares practices with historical sources rather than contemporary ones. Retrospective method may be seen in terms of the ‘history of ideas’, where certain moments are identified as peaks. Such ‘comparison’ may distort the interpretation of evidence by suggesting that practice at certain periods e.g. of Ignatius of Antioch and Cyprian of Carthage have greater weight than is inherently the case.

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Clearly retrospective method with its history of ideas is very different from ‘cultural histories’ which focuses solely on the contemporary context. Passmore argues that there are inherent weaknesses in cultural and retrospective histories. They sit at opposite extremes from one another. In cultural histories successive practices remain unrelated to one another, while in retrospective history practices are assembled together too tightly in a continuous pattern.²⁵ He prefers the problematic approach, which he summarises as the analysis of the construction of systems.²⁶ He expounds the notion of the development of ideas around the suggestion that certain types of problems recur, sometimes in different ‘shapes’. Philosophers look for and suggest ‘solutions’ to these problems. It may be that through

²¹ Osborn, *The beginning of Christian philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 198,1 p. 277

²² Osborn, *The beginning*, p. 278

²³ Osborn, *The beginning*, p. 279

²⁴ Osborn, *The beginning*, p. 285

²⁵ Passmore, *The Idea*, p. 23

²⁶ Passmore, *The Idea*, p. 27

careful analysis of the practices of different periods and places that an advance in understanding may be discerned. In a problematic approach the following questions emerge: ‘What problem is a certain practice trying to address?’ ‘How did this problem arise?’ ‘What new methods of tackling the problem are inherent in an emerging practice?’²⁷ In a problematic approach to the analysis of the Cyprianic model, the quest would be to identify the ‘problems’ or needs to which it is given as the solution. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a detailed account of the emergence of the Cyprianic model of episcopacy and its re-reception in ecumenical dialogue in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. But the methods set out above do offer the possibility of corroborating and enhancing the emerging ecumenical consensus around ‘catholicity’ expressed in a Cyprianic model.

In conclusion I will briefly address the question of gender in relation to ministry and episcopacy. Kasper argues at least implicitly that a Cyprianic model requires that those who are ordained as bishop must be male, in order for there to be a recognition of the family likeness of the model. In response to this I would argue that the ecumenical reception of the Cyprianic model demonstrates a consensus of understanding of the family likeness which does not rest upon the gender of the bishop or minister. What underlies Kasper’s articulation of the Roman Catholic perspective on ‘catholicity’ and episcopacy are questions surrounding the construction of gender, and the particular question of whether women are truly human. Issues of theological anthropology and gender are focused in the construal of the Person of Christ in the Chalcedonian ‘definition’ which states that Christ is ‘perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, truly divine and truly human’.²⁸ Some have argued that Christ’s true ‘humanity’ relates to his gendered existence as male. The Christian Tradition has often been confused concerning the status of gender in relation to these claims. An important instance of such confusion is to be seen in the work of Aquinas, where within the same question in the *Summa Theologiae* he indicates two contrary understandings:

ST 1.Q.93 Art. 4

²⁷ Passmore, *The Idea*, p. 29

²⁸ te/leion to\n au)ton e)n geo/thti, te/leion to\n au)ton e)n a)nqrwpo/thti, Qeo\n a)lhqwj, kai\ a)/nqrwpon a)lhqwj

The image of God, in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found both in man and in woman. Hence after the words, "To the image of God He created him," it is added, "Male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). Moreover it is said "them" in the plural, as Augustine (Gen. ad lit. iii, 22) remarks, lest it should be thought that both sexes were united in one individual. But in a secondary sense the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature. So when the Apostle had said that "man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man," he adds his reason for saying this: "For man is not of woman, but woman of man; and man was not created for woman, but woman for man."

ST 1.Q.93 Art.6

Therefore we must understand that when Scripture had said, "to the image of God He created him," it added, "male and female He created them," not to imply that the image of God came through the distinction of sex, but that the image of God belongs to both sexes, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction of sex, but that the image of God belongs to both sexes, since it is in the mind, wherein there is no sexual distinction. Wherefore the Apostle (Colossians 3:10), after saying, "According to the image of Him that created him," added, "Where there is neither male nor female".²⁹

Inevitably such ambivalence in the Tradition leads to misunderstanding of the status of women to this day. What is required in answer to Kasper's question to the House of Bishop's of the Church of England, is not much an answer in relation to the paradigmatic use of 'catholicity' as an answer in relation to the construal of gender within different Christian traditions in order to facilitate ongoing ecumenical dialogue.

²⁹ *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Second and Revised Edition, 1920. Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Online Edition Copyright © 2008 by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/> (accessed 04.03.2009). The reference is to Galatians 3.28, rather than as indicated Colossians.