

# Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament

Herausgegeben von  
ANATOLY A. ALEXEEV,  
CHRISTOS KARAKOLIS und ULRICH LUZ  
unter Mitarbeit von  
KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR

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# Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament

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Herausgegeben von

Anatoly A. Alexeev, Christos Karakolis  
und Ulrich Luz

unter Mitarbeit von

Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr

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## Vorwort

Die vom „Liaison Committee for Eastern Europe“ der „Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas“ organisierten west-östlichen Europäischen Neutestamentler-Konferenzen haben bereits eine Tradition. Nach der ersten Konferenz in Neamț (Rumänien, 1998) und der zweiten im Kloster Rila (Bulgarien, 2001) war die dritte ursprünglich für das Jahr 2004 geplant, musste dann aber, weil die nötigen Geldmittel fehlten, auf das folgende Jahr verschoben werden. Sie fand vom 24.–31. August 2005 in den Räumen der „St. Petersburg Christian University“, einer baptistisch orientierten, für alle Konfessionen offenen theologischen Hochschule statt, deren Rektor, Prof. Dr. Alexander Negrov, zu diesem Band auch einen Aufsatz beisteuerte. Die Verantwortung für die inhaltliche Durchführung der Konferenz lag wesentlich in den Händen von Prof. Dr. Anatoly A. Alexeev, dem Leiter des Biblischen Instituts, das an der Philologischen Fakultät der St. Petersburger Staatlichen Universität aus der „Bibliotheca Biblica“ der SNTS hervorgegangen ist.

Der Zweck dieser immer in einem orthodoxen osteuropäischen Land stattfindenden Konferenzen ist ein mehrfacher: Einerseits sollen sie dazu helfen, Kontakte zu knüpfen und Kollegen in Osteuropa aus ihrer immer noch großen Isolation zu befreien. Wichtig sind dabei nicht nur die Kontakte zwischen osteuropäischen und westeuropäischen Kolleginnen und Kollegen, sondern auch diejenigen von Osteuropäern untereinander. Gerade in einem so riesigen Land wie Russland sind solche Kontakte nur beschränkt möglich und doch dringend nötig. Inhaltlich geht es um den Dialog zwischen orthodoxen Neutestamentlerinnen und Neutestamentlern mit katholischen und evangelischen einerseits und um den Dialog zwischen osteuropäischen und westeuropäischen Neutestamentlerinnen und Neutestamentlern, welche von sehr unterschiedlichen Kontexten geprägt sind, andererseits. Dass sich beides in komplexer Weise überlagern kann, lernten wir in eindrucklicher Weise durch die Gesprächsbeiträge z.B. von „westlichen“ – etwa griechischen oder finnischen – Orthodoxen oder „östlichen“ Protestanten – etwa russischen Lutheranern oder Baptisten oder eines rumänischen Pfingstlers. Die Atmosphäre des Gespräches war sehr offen. Nicht nur die selbstverständlichen „innerwestlichen“, sondern auch „inner-orthodoxe“ Differenzen wurden offen ausgesprochen.



Das Thema der Konferenz war „Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament“. Für uns alle hatte dieses Thema programmatischen Charakter. Wir leben heute in einer Zeit der Stagnation der ökumenischen Bewegung. Dafür gibt es viele Gründe – einer der wichtigen ist die veränderte Situation der orthodoxen Kirchen in den ehemals kommunistischen Ländern Osteuropas. In manchen von ihnen hatte in kommunistischer Zeit der ökumenische Dialog die kirchliche Basis kaum berührt. Im Gegenteil: Die Teilnahme der orthodoxen Kirchen jener Länder an der ökumenischen Bewegung wurde in den sechziger Jahren des letzten Jahrhunderts vom kommunistischen Staat erlaubt, ermöglicht, kontrolliert und benutzt. Nach dem Sturz des kommunistischen Regimes war „Ökumene“ für viele eine „Er rungenschaft“ der kommunistischen Zeit und entsprechend suspekt. Dazu kam, dass Osteuropa, insbesondere Russland in den Jahren seit der Wende mannigfachen westlichen Einflüssen ausgesetzt ist, nicht nur säkularen, sondern auch religiösen, z.B. missionierenden Neuprotestanten, die manchmal kaum zu wissen scheinen, dass es in Russland seit vielen Jahrhunderten eine christliche Kirche gibt. In dieser Situation ist das Misstrauen vieler orthodoxer Kirchen gegenüber allem Westlichen – und dazu gehört auch die Ökumene – groß und der Wille und die Fähigkeit, sich damit auseinanderzusetzen, klein. Der Rückzug auf die eigene Tradition legt sich dann nahe, eine in vielen osteuropäischen Kirchen – nicht nur orthodoxen! – verbreitete Erscheinung.

Unsere Konferenz verstand sich bewusst als ökumenisch. Dies kam nicht nur in ihrem Thema zum Ausdruck. Das ökumenische Anliegen bestimmte auch die Gestaltung der Konferenz: Bewusst wurde den Gesprächen in Gruppen und im Plenum viel Zeit eingeräumt. Wir verstanden eine ökumenisch ausgerichtete Exegese so, dass wir unsere unterschiedlichen kirchlichen Traditionen nicht aus der Beschäftigung mit der Bibel ausklammern, sondern bewusst für sie fruchtbar machen wollten. Sie wurden in unseren Gesprächen immer wieder thematisiert. Die exegetische Arbeit selbst erwies sich in den Gesprächen über die Referate und in der ganzen Konferenz als ein ekklesialer Vorgang. Zu den Anliegen der Konferenz gehörte auch, dass wir einander an den unterschiedlichen Gottesdiensttraditionen unserer Kirchen Anteil nehmen ließen. Ein kurzer Gottesdienst am Morgen und am Abend, abwechselnd nach verschiedenen orthodoxen und westlichen Traditionen gestaltet, bildete den Anfang und den Schluss jedes Tages. Eine Teilnahme an der Liturgie in der Gemeinde unseres Kollegen Alexander Sorokin – mit einem wunderbaren Chor – und eine Begegnung mit seiner Gemeinde standen auf dem Programm des Sonntags.

Zum Schluss bleibt uns die schöne Aufgabe des Dankens. Unser herzlicher Dank gilt zunächst einmal all denen, die unsere Konferenz mit großem

Einsatz ermöglicht haben. Es sind dies von der Staatlichen Universität St. Petersburg unser Mitherausgeber Prof. Dr. Anatoly A. Alexeev, Direktor der „Bibliotheca Biblica“ und des Bibelwissenschaftlichen Instituts, und seine Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter, unter ihnen vor allem Dr. Tatjana Tkachova und Dr. Alexander Sizikov. Danken möchten wir auch der Rektorin der Staatlichen Universität St. Petersburg, Frau Prof. Dr. L. A. Verbitskaya, und dem Dekan ihrer Philologischen Fakultät, Prof. Dr. S. I. Bogdanov, ohne deren Interesse und Unterstützung die Konferenz nicht möglich geworden wäre. In der St. Petersburg Christian University gebührt ein besonderer Dank ihrem Rektor, Prof. Dr. Alexander Negrov, und seinem Mitarbeiter Dr. Kent Eby, der als unermüdlicher und begabter Organisator fast alle unserer vielfältigen Probleme lösen konnte. Einen herzlichen Dank verdienen auch die Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter der St. Petersburg Christian University, welche unsere Konferenz durch Besorgen von Visa, Abholen der Konferenzteilnehmerinnen und -teilnehmer vom Flugplatz, Kochen und Putzen und hilfreiche Unterstützung für alle „Anfänger“ im kyrillischen Alphabet und in Russland überhaupt und durch vieles andere zu einer wunderbaren Erfahrung werden ließen.

Danken möchten wir aber auch allen Institutionen, welche unsere Konferenz finanziell unterstützt haben. In Russland hat uns der „Russische Staatliche Wissenschaftsfonds“ unterstützt. In Deutschland haben uns das Diakonische Werk der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, das Diakonische Werk der Evangelischen Kirchen in Mitteldeutschland, das Austauschprogramm des Diakonischen Werks der EKD und die Stiftung Renovabis, die Solidaritätsaktion der deutschen Katholiken mit den Menschen in Mittel- und Osteuropa, unterstützt. Aus der Schweiz erhielten wir Unterstützungen der Stiftung für historische und ökumenische Theologie in Bern, der Christkatholischen Kirche und des Katholischen Dekanates Bern. Zusätzlich haben uns zwölf reformierte Kirchgemeinden aus den Kantonen Bern und Freiburg mit kleineren oder großen Beiträgen unterstützt. Wir hatten viel Geld nötig, weil alle Teilnehmerinnen aus Russland, den GUS-Staaten und den meisten anderen osteuropäischen Staaten ihre Reise und die Aufenthalts- und Kongresskosten gar nicht selbst hätten bezahlen können. Allen Spendern sei ganz herzlich gedankt.

Schließlich gilt unser herzlicher Dank all denen, welche sich um die Publikation dieses Bandes verdient gemacht haben. Es sind dies der Herausgeber der Reihe „Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament“, Prof. Dr. Jörg Frey, sowie Ionuț-Adrian Forga in Jena, der für die Erstellung der Druckvorlage verantwortlich war, und die Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter des Verlages Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen.

Ein ganz besonderer Dank gilt Prof. J. D. G. Dunn in Durham, der in diesem Band das Englische aller Autoren, deren Muttersprache nicht Englisch ist, liebevoll korrigiert und verbessert hat.

Bern

Ulrich Luz für die Herausgeber

*Einheit der Kirche in der  
neutestamentlichen Ekklesiologie*



# One Church – Many Churches

by

JAMES D. G. DUNN

## Introduction

In my study of *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*<sup>1</sup> I did not analyse the various understandings of the church as such, preferring to focus on various key aspects of ecclesiology (ministry, patterns of worship and sacraments). The first edition, however, was written in a day when it was still customary in scholarly circles to speak of ‘the primitive Church’ or ‘the early Church’, as though ‘the early Church’ was a single entity, and as though different features discussed could all be attributed without any or much qualification to ‘the early Church’. And *Unity and Diversity* was an attempt to dispel such an over-simplified and usually idealised image of ‘the apostolic age’ and thus also of ‘the early Church’. But it was only some years after the first edition that I offered some analysis, in an ecumenical context, on the different forms of ‘church’ which we actually find in the NT.<sup>2</sup> The sections of that essay may give sufficient indication of how the analysis worked out: ‘Discipleship: Following Jesus; The Mother Church: Loyal Conservative; The Pauline Ideal: Charismatic Community; The Pastoral Epistles: Early Catholicism; The Lukan Alternative: Enthusiasm and Catholicism; The Johannine Alternative: Pietism; The Matthean Church: Law-Abiding Brotherhood; Fragmentary Reflections Elsewhere’. A revised version of the essay could possibly have served for the St Petersburg Conference, but the main thrust of that earlier essay would have remained much the same, and it can be referred to by those who wish to follow up that particular line of analysis.<sup>3</sup> The same applies to

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<sup>1</sup> London 1977, <sup>2</sup>1990, <sup>3</sup>2006.

<sup>2</sup> Models of Christian Community in the New Testament, in: A. BITTLINGER (ed.), *The Church is Charismatic: The World Council of Churches and the Charismatic Renewal*, Geneva 1981, 99–116; reprinted in my *The Christ and the Spirit: Vol. 2. Pneumatology*, Grand Rapids 1998, 245–59.

<sup>3</sup> The essay concluded (258–9):

my later essay, 'Unity and Diversity in the Church: A New Testament Perspective', which now appears as an Appendix to the third edition of *Unity and Diversity* (SCM, 2006).<sup>4</sup>

In this case it seems more appropriate to focus more closely on the concept of 'church' itself as used in the NT, and on the principal issues bound up in the early Christian descriptions of themselves as 'church'. That I think will pose the issue of unity and diversity in the basic conceptuality of 'church' as sharply as is appropriate to the occasion, without making the point overly dependent on particular readings of different NT texts.

## 1. The use of ἐκκλησία

It is not clear when the word ἐκκλησία became a technical term in the NT or in the first century. In at least several cases NT usage still reflects the contemporary usage of ἐκκλησία for a popular assembly of citizens enti-

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"There is no single model of Christian community which emerges from the New Testament as *the* New Testament Church. We see different churches in different situations (inevitably?) reflecting something of the dominant characteristics of their environment: the church at Corinth mirrors the libertarian abuses of Corinthian society, just as the church in Jerusalem and the church of Matthew mirror the Law-centredness of Jewish society. We see already, in both Jerusalem and the Pauline churches, evidence of the now familiar historical sequence: the transition from first generation community – enthusiastic, loosely structured, innovative – to a second generation community with a developing hierarchical structure and a growing consciousness of tradition and the need to preserve rather than to innovate. We see already what has become the most regular way of escape from a too rigid institutionalization, in the pietism of John and probably Hebrews. All these are what we might call *sociological truths*, the fact of life and social relationships – truths we cannot ignore and must always live with.

But we also see *theological principles* which must always provide the motivating starting point from which we move out to challenge merely sociological pressures, the yardstick by which we measure the quality of our community, the vision by which we live and which we refuse to conform to the pattern of this world. Here the challenge of Jesus' call to discipleship and Paul's vision of charismatic community should particularly be mentioned, as being those models of community which show the least influence of these same sociological pressures. Of the various elements in these two models worthy of consideration, not least is their eschatological character. That is to say, part of what gave them their challenging quality was their focus on the present and unconcern to organize for the future. May it be that the model of Christian community which emerges from the New Testament with most force today is the one-generation model: the church which organizes for the future may simply be ensuring that the future will be so burdened with the past that it cannot bring to reality Christian community in the present."

<sup>4</sup> Originally a public lecture delivered at the Gregorian University, Rome, in March 1990, published in *Gregorianum* 71 (1990), 629–56, and reprinted as an Appendix to my *The Partings of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism*, London/Philadelphia 1991, 260–80.

tled to vote.<sup>5</sup> Thus in 1Cor 11,18, it would probably be more historically justified to translate συνερχομένων ὑμῶν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ as ‘when you come together in assembly, as a congregation’, rather than ‘in the church’. And the two usages in Hebrews are likewise probably more accurately translated ‘congregation’ or ‘assembly’, as most modern commentators agree: Heb 2,12 – ‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers, in the midst of the congregation (ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας) I will praise you’ (citing Ps 22,22); Heb 12,22–23 – ‘You have come to ... the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering and assembly (πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ) of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...’. We should probably see a parallel at this point with the term συναγωγή, which is now also often better translated as ‘assembly’ or ‘congregation’, in the Gospels denoting a village gathering or town assembly, as also in James 2,2.<sup>6</sup> The confrontation or conflict between ‘church’ and ‘synagogue’ did not yet emerge, certainly in these terms, in the first century.<sup>7</sup>

Also instructive is Luke’s use of what seem to have been early attempts to define or categorise the first Christians – ‘the way (ὁδός)’, the first believers as those ‘belonging to the way, both men and women’,<sup>8</sup> or as a ‘sect (αἵρεσις)’ (Acts 24,14; 28,22), ‘the sect of the Nazarenes’ (Acts 24,5) – though Luke’s own talk of ‘the church in Jerusalem’, ‘the churches in Syria and Cilicia’ etc.<sup>9</sup> probably indicates that the transition from ‘assembly’ to ‘church’ was already well under way by the latter decades of the first century.

So far as the theology of ‘church’ is concerned, however, there are two features which call for special attention.

<sup>5</sup> So in Acts 19,39; see further LSJ and BDAG, ἐκκλησία. It was occasionally used also for business meetings of clubs; see e.g. W. A. MEEKS, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, New Haven 1983, 222 n. 24.

<sup>6</sup> See further my *Jesus Remembered*, Grand Rapids 2003, 302–6. In the LXX συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία are both used to translate the Hebrew עֲדָתָא, denoting the ‘assembly or congregation’ of Israel (W. SCHRAGE, συναγωγή, TDNT 7,798–852 [here 802]). עֲדָתָא was presumably the term used by the earliest, Aramaic-speaking Christians.

<sup>7</sup> But the antithesis is already active in JUSTIN, *Dial.* 134,3 and the beginnings of the polemic are elsewhere evident in the second century (details in SCHRAGE, TDNT 7,838–40).

<sup>8</sup> Acts 9,2; see also 19,9.23; 22,4; 24,14.22; cf. 18,25–26; 2Pet 2,2; possibly reflected in 1Cor 12,31.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Acts 8,1; 9,31; 11,22; 15,3.41; 20,17.



## 2. The church of God

The first is the likelihood that Paul chose the term ἐκκλησία not because he thought of the gatherings of his converts in a Mediterranean city as somehow the equivalent of the town assembly or citizens' meeting. It is much more likely that he was influenced by the fact that ἐκκλησία appears in the LXX (about 100 times) as the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew קהל ('assembly')<sup>10</sup> – most notably in the fuller phrases קהל-יהוה ('the assembly of Yahweh') or קהל-ישראל ('the assembly of Israel').<sup>11</sup> For a Jew like Paul, ἐκκλησία almost certainly had a heavy theological resonance – denoting God's people coming together as his people. This is presumably why he uses the phrase 'the church of God' or its equivalent so frequently for the congregations which his mission had established.<sup>12</sup> In his understanding, they were the local equivalents of Israel's gathering for worship. Similarly Paul's less frequent talk of 'the whole church' almost certainly echoes the frequent reference in the Jewish scriptures to 'the whole assembly of Israel'.<sup>13</sup> Just as the only two Gospel occurrences of ἐκκλησία (Matt 16,18; 18,17), if they were first spoken in Aramaic, would have used קהל with the same overtones. It is true that the LXX translate קהל-יהוה with ἐκκλησία κυρίου ('the assembly of the Lord'),<sup>14</sup> and that Paul makes no direct scriptural link between his own usage and that of the scriptures.<sup>15</sup> But since κύριος almost always referred to 'the Lord Jesus Christ' in Paul's letters, he presumably wanted it to be clear that the focus of the *ekklēsia theou*'s worship was the one God of Israel.

Given this data, there can be little doubt that Paul assumed and took it for granted that 'church' was to be understood as the continuing (presumably eschatological) manifestation of the קהל-יהוה, the קהל-ישראל. The two-fold reference to his persecution of 'the church of God' (1Cor 15,9; Gal

<sup>10</sup> In Acts 7,38 Stephen speaks of Moses as 'the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness (ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ)'.

<sup>11</sup> קהל-יהוה – Num 16,3; 20,4; Deut 23,1–3.8; 1Chron 28,8; Neh 13,1; Mic 2,5; equivalent in Lam 1,10 and Sir 24,2; also Judg 20,2 ('the assembly of the people of God'). קהל-ישראל – Exod 12,6; Lev 16,17; Num 14,5; Deut 31,30; Josh 8,35; 1Kgs 8,14.22.55; 12,3; 1Chron 13,2; 2Chron 6,3.12–13.

<sup>12</sup> 'The church of God' – Acts 20,28; 1Cor 1,1; 10,32; 11,22; 15,9; 2Cor 1,1; Gal 1,13; 2Thess 1,4; 1Tim 3,5.15; 'the churches of God' – 1Cor 11,16; 1Thess 2,14; 'the church in God' – 1Thess 1,1; 2Thess 2,1.

<sup>13</sup> The bulk of the references in n. 10 above.

<sup>14</sup> But 1QM 4.10 uses the phrase קהל-אלה ('assembly of God'), clearly understanding it as a synonym.

<sup>15</sup> J. ROLOFF, ἐκκλησία, EDNT 1,411.

1,13) almost certainly reflects the shock which Saul the persecutor experienced when he realized that what he was persecuting out of zeal for God was actually ‘the congregation of God’, those whom God had called into assembly. That this ‘church of God’ included Gentiles and should include Gentiles as such (not just as proselytes) was of course the chief cause of dispute and opposition from other Christian Jews. But for Paul it was evidently of first importance that the earliest Christians understood themselves in direct continuity with the קהל-ישראל, the קהל-ישׂראל.

The point is reinforced over and over again in Paul’s letters by the way he simply applies language distinctly indicative of Israel’s identity to his converts, Gentiles as well as Jews. I could spend much time documenting the point, but perhaps it will suffice if I simply mention a number phrases used: (1) ‘those who call upon the name of the Lord’,<sup>16</sup> a phrase which certainly has the ring of a self-description in one or two passages and reflects the influence of Joel 2,32 (LXX 3,5);<sup>17</sup> (2) ‘saints (ἅγιοι)’<sup>18</sup> likewise only makes sense as a way of claiming participation in the heritage of Israel;<sup>19</sup> (3) ‘the elect’, ‘the chosen’ (people/ones),<sup>20</sup> a central term in Jewish self-understanding,<sup>21</sup> including not least the Dead Sea sect;<sup>22</sup> (4) ‘those who love God’ (Rom 8,28),<sup>23</sup> similarly;<sup>24</sup> (5) ‘the called (οἱ κλητοί)’<sup>25</sup> as the Qumran covenanters also saw themselves;<sup>26</sup> (6) ‘seed of Abraham’.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Acts 9,14.21; 1Cor 1,2; 2Tim 2,22.

<sup>17</sup> Acts 2,21; Rom 10,12–14.

<sup>18</sup> Paul regularly addresses his readers as ‘saints’ (Rom 1,7; 1Cor 1,2; 2Cor 1,1; Phil 1,1; also Eph 1,1). The spasmodic occurrence in Acts (Acts 9,13.32.41; 26,10; cf. 20,32; 26,18) may provide an insight into its early usage.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Saints’ (= those set apart/‘sanctified’ to God) is a self-designation for the people of Israel peculiar to the tradition of Israel (e.g. Ps 16,3; 34,9; Dan 7,18; 8,24; Tob 8,15; Wis 18,9; 1QSB 3,2; 1QM 3,5; see further ABD 3,238–9).

<sup>20</sup> Paul speaks of believers as the ‘elect (οἱ ἐκλεκτοί)’ occasionally (Rom 8,33; Col 3,12; but also 2Tim 2,10; Tit 1,1); but note his use of the closely related ἐκλογή (‘selection, the selected’) in Rom 9,11 and 11,5.7.28 (also 1Thes 1,4).

<sup>21</sup> 1Chron 16,13; Ps 105,6; Is 43,20; 45,4; 65,9.15.22; Tob 8,15; Sir 46,1; 47,22; Wis 3,9; 4,15; Jub 1,29; 1En 1,3.8; 5,7–8; 25,5; 93,2.

<sup>22</sup> 1QpHab 10,13; 1QS 8,6; 1QM 12,1.4; 1QH 10[= 2],13; CD 4,3–4.

<sup>23</sup> Also ‘beloved by God’ – Rom 1,7; 9,25; Col 3,12; 1Thess 1,4; 2Thess 2,13; cf. particularly Ps 60,5 and 108,6.

<sup>24</sup> Exod 20,6; Deut 5,10; 6,5; 7,9 etc.; Josh 22,5; 1Kgs 3,3; Neh 1,5; Dan 9,4; CD 19,2; 1QH 16,13.

<sup>25</sup> Rom 1,6–7; 8,28.30; 1Cor 1,2.9.24; 7,15.17–24; Gal 1,6; 5,8.13 etc.; also Jude 1 and Rev 17,14 (K. L. SCHMIDT, καλέω, TDNT 3,494; see further BDAG, καλέω 4).

<sup>26</sup> 1QM 3,2; 4,10–11; cf. 1QSa 2,2.11; 1QM 2,7; CD 2,11; 4,3–4.

<sup>27</sup> Rom 4,1.13.16.18; Gal 3,29.

More controversially, in the climactic chapters of Paul's greatest letter, to the Romans, he seems to redefine 'Israel', not to *exclude* ethnic Israel but to *include* non-Jews: 'those whom God called, not only from Jews but also from Gentiles', the not-my-people now my-people, the not-beloved now beloved (Rom 9,25, quoting Hos 2,25);<sup>28</sup> the image of the people of God as a single olive tree, from which branches have temporarily been broken and into which uncultured braches have now been grafted – not the one tree uprooted, and replaced by another, but the one tree signifying the unbroken one people called by God (Rom 11,17–26); and the concluding vision of a common and united worship offered up by all the nations, all the peoples, drawing on the shared hopes of Torah, Psalmist and prophet (Rom 15,9–12, citing Deut 32,43 [LXX], Ps 117,1 and Is 11,10 [LXX]).<sup>29</sup>

The point I am making is that Paul's talk of 'the church', 'the church of God', is one of his key expressions of a much broader and deeper theme in his ecclesiology. It was clearly Paul's understanding that the church is constituted as 'church' insofar as it embodies those features which until that time had been assumed to be distinctive of Israel. If we want to speak about the unity of the church, of 'one church', the one 'church of God', then we simply cannot ignore or marginalize this crucial feature. For Paul, constitutive of the definition, identity and self-understanding of the church was its continuity with the people of God of earlier generations. That is to say, what makes the church one is the oneness of the God who calls and the oneness of the people whom he calls. The church's 'Israel-character' is a central and essential feature of its unity.

Having said this, of course, we at once have to go on to note that the theological ideal of 'church' was from the beginning an ideal which faced the onslaught of social reality. Again I need only illustrate briefly.

There were the tensions already alluded to, between traditional Christian Jews and Christian Jews like Paul, or pre-eminently Paul. Paul agreed with the 'pillar' apostles in Jerusalem (Gal 2,9) that the gospel could be characterized both as 'the gospel of the uncircumcision' and 'the gospel of the circumcision' (2,7), without apparently compromising 'the truth of the gospel' (2,5). The oneness of the gospel could find expression in varied expressions, depending on the context of mission. But he also insisted that the integrity of the gospel was fatally compromised by other attempts to express it (1,6–9), and by failure to live in accord with it, notably the withdrawal of Peter and the other Christian Jews from the common table (and eucharist) (2,11–16). He designated such as 'false brothers' (2,4), that is, presumably Jewish believers who had been baptized in the name of Christ

<sup>28</sup> Note how central to the first part of the discussion of Israel (Rom 9–11) is the divine call (καλέω) (9,7.12.24–25).

<sup>29</sup> For further detail see my Romans (WBC 38), Dallas 1988, *ad loc.*

and had confessed Jesus as Lord! Did he regard them as part of ‘the church of God’? Likewise, those who questioned his version of the gospel and proved to be ‘trouble-makers’ in the Galatian churches were presumably Christian Jewish missionaries, who saw mission to Gentiles as a form of proselytisation. Did Paul regard them as simply misguided members of ‘the church of God’, or as only ‘pretend-Christians’, superficial believers, or as apostates, or what?

Similarly in 2Cor 10–13 we encounter ‘super-apostles’ who proclaim Jesus and the gospel, and those who designate themselves as ‘apostles of Christ’ but who are in Paul’s view only ‘false apostles’ (2Cor 11,4–5.13). The same questions can hardly be avoided.

Paul attempted to maintain the unity of the church by organizing the collection among his Gentile congregations for the benefit of ‘the poor among the saints at Jerusalem’ (Rom 15,25–28; also 1Cor 16,1–4; 2Cor 8–9). When most cities round the Mediterranean had their own systems of welfare provision, this was a remarkable feat to have engineered. Paul saw it as evidence of the reciprocity of grace (χάρις) among believers, the expression of their common sharing (κοινωνία) in the one Spirit,<sup>30</sup> the acknowledgment of the spiritual debt which Gentile believers owed to their Jewish heritage and co-believers (Rom 15,27). But what happened to the collection? Paul was evidently very worried lest it prove not acceptable to the saints (in Jerusalem) (15,31). And Luke’s failure to do more than allude to it (Acts 24,17) leaves us wondering whether in the event it proved unacceptable to James and the Jerusalem elders. At all events, the collection evidently failed to resolve the tensions between the mother church in Jerusalem and the churches of the Gentile mission. The unity of the one church was the object of unresolved struggle between those who understood its mission in traditional proselytisation terms and those who saw that the boundaries of the church of God were in process of being redrawn.

We see the same tensions elsewhere in the NT. The ἀποσυνάγωγος of John’s Gospel indicates that just as Paul understood some Jewish branches to have been lopped off from the one olive tree (Rom 11,17–24), so others saw it as necessary to exclude Jews who confessed Jesus as Messiah from the synagogue, the assembly of Yahweh (John 9,22; 12,42; 16,2). And Hebrews draws a very negative inference for Israel’s covenant with Yahweh from the assertion that Christians were now participating in the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Heb 8,6–13): ‘In speaking of “a new covenant”, he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear’ (8,13) – the earliest expression of Christian

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<sup>30</sup> In 2Cor 8–9 note the frequent use of χάρις (particularly 8,1.4.6.7.19) and κοινωνία (8,4; 9,13). On the significance of the terms see my *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Grand Rapids/Edinburgh 1998, 319–23, 707–8 and 561–2, 616–7.

‘supersessionism’. In contrast, Paul made a point of asserting that ‘the covenants’ were *still* Israel’s (Rom 9,4) and that as God’s ‘beloved on account of the election’, all Israel would be beneficiaries of Isaiah’s equivalent of Jeremiah’s new covenant (11,26–28, citing Is 59,20–21). Already in the NT, Paul’s understanding of the one gospel and his vision of the one ‘church of God’ through the ages were suffering from a multiplicity of divergent interpretations.

Nor should we forget that when the term ‘Christianity’ was actually coined, as first attested by Ignatius, it was done so with a strong element of contrast, even antithesis with ‘Judaism’: ‘It is outlandish to proclaim Jesus Christ and practice Judaism. For Christianity did not believe in Judaism, but Judaism in Christianity (Magn 10,3); ‘If anyone should interpret Judaism to you, do not hear him. For it is better to hear Christianity from a man who is circumcised than Judaism from one who is uncircumcised’ (Phil 6,1). In this, we should note, the coining of the term Χριστιανισμός follows the pattern of the coining of Ἰουδαϊσμός. For Ἰουδαϊσμός was evidently coined in 2Macc (2,21; 8,1; 14,38) to define the uprising within Judea, nationally and religiously inspired, against Ἑλληνισμός (2Macc 4,13) and ἄλλοφυλισμός, ‘foreignness’ (4,13; 6,24). Ironically, both ‘Judaism’ and ‘Christianity’ first come to linguistic expression as a way defining themselves as *not* something else: Judaism as not Hellenism, Christianity as not Judaism. This linguistic curiosity has had lasting effect on Christian self-understanding in relation to Judaism – Christianity as something wholly other from Judaism, Christianity as superseding Judaism, Christianity as knowing itself, being most true to itself, precisely by distancing and distinguishing itself from Judaism. The consequences for the history of Christian anti-semitism are too well known to require further documentation, even though in western Christianity we have only recently wakened up to their full horror.

Equally serious from the perspective of the present discussion, that bifurcation and antithesis is then read back into the NT and the continuity and ‘one-church-ness’ which Paul saw to be so crucial in his letter to the Romans is lost to sight. It is true that in the only two references to ‘Judaism’ in the NT (Gal 1,13–14) Paul implies that his life ‘in Judaism’ belongs to the past. But in that passage he is using ‘Judaism’ much more narrowly than we use it today, to denote the virulently nationalist ‘Judaism’ of 2 Maccabees and of his practice as a Pharisaic ‘zealot’. It is also true that periodically in NT scholarship the discontinuity between OT and NT, between Second Temple Judaism and the mission(s) of Paul (and Jesus) is seen to far outweigh the continuity that Paul elsewhere prizes so highly. In the latest expression of this emphasis it is argued that Paul’s apocalyptic perspective excludes any *heilsgeschichtliche* (even complementary) per-

spective.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, Romans 9–11 as the most carefully considered expression of Paul's theology provides a sufficient answer. For there he largely abandons the language of 'Jew' and 'Gentile/Greek', with their clearly implicit national and religious distinctions, and focuses rather on the one, unifying term, 'Israel' – Israel as the people who respond to God's call at all stages of history, Israel as the vehicle of God's saving purpose for his creation at large. It is this oneness of 'Israel' which lies behind, and indeed is integral to Paul's understanding of the one church, 'the church of God'.

Which leaves us back with the theological issues posed by the historical failure of Paul's vision (so far) to be realized. Was the one church of God, of Jew and Gentile, irrevocably split between the competing claims to the heritage of Israel during the second Temple period which we now distinguish as 'Christianity' and '(rabbinic) Judaism'? Should Christianity regard Judaism as needing to be evangelized or reconciled, as essentially a quite other religion, or rather in terms of an extension of the current ecumenical challenge facing the (essentially and/or potentially) one church? And what, incidentally, should both sides/partners make of the increasing numbers of messianic Jews who now uncomfortably fill the gap between Christianity and Judaism left by 'Jewish Christianity'? On these and other points, the Pauline ideal of 'one church' constantly rebukes us, just as Jesus' teaching on ideal human relationships constantly rebukes us (Matt 5,21–48). The fact remains, if Paul is right, that if we let go this ideal, or cease trying to reclaim it, we lose sight of as well as hold on one of the fundamentally constitutive and defining elements of the 'church'.

### 3. Church and churches

The second feature of the NT use of ἐκκλησία worthy of note is the tension between singular and plural, as again attested particularly in Paul's letters.<sup>32</sup> For given the constitutive importance of 'the church of God' for Paul, it is a striking feature of his usage that he speaks so frequently of 'the churches' (plural) including 'the churches of God'.<sup>33</sup> Whereas the LXX usage is almost always singular, Paul evidently had no problem with conceiving 'the assembly of God' as manifested in many different places at the same time – the churches (of God) in Judea, in Galatia, in Asia, or in

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<sup>31</sup> J. L. MARTYN, *Galatians* (AB 33A), New York 1997; IDEM, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul*, Edinburgh 1997.

<sup>32</sup> In the following paragraphs I draw heavily upon my *Theology of Paul*, 540–1.

<sup>33</sup> See n.11 above.

Macedonia.<sup>34</sup> Each gathering of those baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus was 'the assembly of God' in that place.<sup>35</sup> This is all the more striking when we recall that Paul also speaks of 'the church in (someone's) house' – the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, of Nympha, and of Philemon.<sup>36</sup> The point is that wherever believers met for fellowship and worship Paul thought of them as in direct continuity with the assembly of Israel, they were the assembly of God. Even as scattered in the diaspora, they were gatherings of one and the same people of God.

This brings to the fore the apparently contradictory fact that the early Paul does not seem to have thought of 'the church' as something world-wide or universal – 'the Church'.<sup>37</sup> Rather, his conception was of 'church' as a particular assembly in some place, or as a group of individual assemblies in a region.<sup>38</sup> There are some texts in the early Pauline letters which are regularly taken as an allusion to 'the Church (universal)', but I am less sure that that is what Paul intended.

The singular usage, 'the church' (as in Gal 1,13) is sometimes read in this light. But as already indicated, Paul's persecution of 'the church' implies his recognition of the Jerusalem church's central role as the eschatological focus of the assembly of Israel, not a claim to persecute the world-wide Church. In 1Cor 10,32 ('Do not become an offence, whether to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God') the sequence indicates that by 'the church of God' Paul had in mind the church in Corinth (10,23–33).<sup>39</sup> The local church met not as only *part* of 'the church of God', but *as* 'the church of God' in the city where it met. And in 1Cor 12,28 ('God appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers...') Paul is probably presupposing his characteristic conception of a church – one founded by one or more apostles, and enjoying the ministry of prophets and teachers; that is, God appointed in each church, as he did in Corinth, apostles (Paul and Apollos), prophets and teachers.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> 1Cor 16,1.19; 2Cor 8,1; Gal 1,2.22; 1Thess 2,14. Similarly Acts 15,41; 16,5; and the seven churches of Revelation 1–3.

<sup>35</sup> Rom 16,1.23; 1Cor 1,2; 6,4; 12,28; 14,4.5.12.23; 2Cor 1,1; Col 4,16; 1Thess 1,11; 2Thess 1,1.

<sup>36</sup> Rom 16,5; 1Cor 16,19; Col 4,15; Phm 2.

<sup>37</sup> English usage allows me to make the distinction between '(local) church' and '(universal) Church'.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. J. BECKER, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*, Louisville 1993: 'The universal element that is concretized in each congregation is not the church but the Christ at work in the gospel' (422–3).

<sup>39</sup> Pace ROLOFF, EDNT 1,413.

<sup>40</sup> See further my *Jesus and the Spirit*, London 1975, 262–3; J. HAINZ, *Ekklesia: Strukturen paulinischer Gemeinde-Theologie und Gemeinde-Ordnung* (BU 9), Regensburg 1972, 251–4; K. KERTELGE, *Der Ort des Amtes in der Ekklesiologie des Paulus*, in: IDEM, *Grundthemen paulinischer Theologie*, Freiburg 1991, 216–34 (here 228–9).

It is only in the later Paulines that ἐκκλησία is used with a clearly more universal reference. Col 1,18 and 24 provides the transition to the consistent use in this sense of Ephesians.<sup>41</sup> The recognition of this as a late (or later) development in Pauline theology should not be overdramatized. Paul had no thought of his churches as a set of independent foundations. His conception of ‘the church of God’ and regular appeal to what was done in ‘all the churches’ would rule that out.<sup>42</sup> The greetings in his letters indicate that there was a constant flow of communication between his churches,<sup>43</sup> and I have already emphasised the evident importance to Paul of the collection, as an expression of the unity of Jewish and Gentile churches. So it would hardly be appropriate to say that Paul disapproved of the usage in Ephesians, even if it may have been written by a later hand, as most western scholars believe to have been the case. What can and should be said, however, is that so far as Paul was concerned, the ‘church-ness’ of each individual Christian assembly did not depend on its being part of some universal entity (the Church). Its reality and vitality as church depended most immediately on its own direct dependence on Christ and continuity through its founding apostle(s) with the assembly of Yahweh.

This brings us to the most crucial aspect of all: the relation of the church, of each church, with Christ. This is most powerfully expressed in the distinctively Pauline understanding of the church as ‘the body of Christ’ – most notably in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, but also, significantly in Colossians and Ephesians.<sup>44</sup> The reason why Paul drew upon this image of church as ‘body’ is clear. It expresses a very distinctive kind of unity (organic unity): of unity *in and through* diversity. Hence the repeated emphasis:

- for as in *one* body we have *many* members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are *many*, are *one* body in Christ, and individually members of one another (Rom 12,4–5);
- for as the body is *one* and has many members, and all the members of the body, though *many*, are *one* body, so it is with Christ (1Cor 12,12);
- the body does not consist of one member but of *many* (1Cor 12,14);
- as it is there are *many* members, yet *one* body (1Cor 12,20).

Here indeed is a theological conception of unity and diversity; the reason why Paul makes so much of the image of ‘body’ is precisely because the

<sup>41</sup> Eph 1,22; 3,10.21; 5,23–25.27.29.32.

<sup>42</sup> 1Cor 7,17; 11,16; 14,33; 2Cor 8,18; 11,28; 2Thess 1,4.

<sup>43</sup> See e.g. M. B. THOMPSON, The Holy Internet: Communication between Churches in the First Christian Generation, in: R. BAUCKHAM (ed.), The Gospels for All Christians, Grand Rapids 1998, 49–70.

<sup>44</sup> Rom 12,4–5; 1Cor 12,12–13.14–27; Col 1,18.24; 2,19; 3,15; Eph 1,22–23; 2,15–16; 4,4.12.15–16; 5,23.30.



body embodies the unity in diversity which he saw as integral to his concept of church. It is a vision of oneness which is precisely not sameness (1Cor 12,17–20); of oneness not challenged by the diversity of its members; indeed, of oneness which is only possible because of the difference and diversity of the participants in that oneness; of oneness that depends for its effectiveness as one on the different members practising their different functions.

This strongly suggests that Paul derived his imagery of the body from the similar emphasis made in their use of the same image by the political philosophers of the time. For clearly attested in contemporary literature is the image of the city or state as a body (the body politic) to express the interdependence of the different ethnic, political, trade and religious groups. If the city or state was to remain stable and to thrive it was essential for the many different citizens and interest groups to cooperate, to work together for the good of the whole – just as the health of a body depends on its various members working together for the good of the whole.<sup>45</sup>

Of course Paul's use of the body imagery is distinctively Christian: his talk is of the body of *Christ*. So that the constitutive element of the church as body is that it embodies Christ, is the means within three-dimensional reality by which Christ continues to communicate with three-dimensional beings.<sup>46</sup> Which is also to say that the *unity* of the body is constituted by Christ: as the many form one body, so also the Christ (1Cor 12,12). We might even say that the unity is the unity of the Trinity: the charisms are various, but it is the same Spirit who inspires; the ministries are various, but it is the same Lord who is served; the functions are various, but it is the same God who energizes all of them in everyone (1Cor 12,4–6). But the unity *in diversity* point is the same. The oneness of Christ's manifestation today comes to expression in the diversity of the one body and its effectiveness depends on the proper functioning of the diversity in mutual and coordinated interdependence. The oneness is the oneness of the same *χάρις* (the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ) which manifests itself in the diversity of the *charismata* (12,4.9), the oneness of the Spirit (of Christ) which constitutes the body as one (12,11.13).

Before developing the Pauline use of this description of the church as the body of Christ, we should perhaps pause to juxtapose the two terms or images of the church thus far discussed – Israel and the body of Christ. I

<sup>45</sup> See particularly LIVY, *Historia* 2,32; also EPICTETUS 2,10,4–5; further in E. SCHWEIZER, *σῶμα*, TDNT 7, 1038–9. M. M. MITCHELL, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, Louisville 1993, observes that the body was 'the most common *topos* in ancient literature for unity' (161).

<sup>46</sup> For this aspect of Paul's concept of the body see my *Theology of Paul*, 56–60.

take it to be no mere coincidence that in Romans Paul turns from his discussion of Israel (Rom 9–11) more or less immediately to his talk of one body in Christ (12,4–5). Is this Paul's way of confirming that the redefinition of Israel which he offered in chs. 9–11 consists also in a refocusing of what it is that constitutes the church of God? The eschatological people of God should no longer find their locus in a geographical territory, their identity no longer in their ethnic make-up (Ἰουδαῖος, someone from Ἰουδαία), but in the Messiah/Christ of Israel's hope. The unity of the one church of God is not simply in terms of continuity with the church of God in its earlier manifestations, but much more now in the climactic manifestation of the same grace that called Israel into existence, the grace and Spirit of the Christ which constitutes the body of Christ as such.

The only other point which calls for attention in this paper is the fact that the Pauline letters talk of the body of Christ in interestingly different contexts.

In 1 Corinthians the body of Christ is the church in Corinth. 'Now you (believers in Corinth) are the body of Christ (in Corinth)' (1Cor 12,27). The church in Corinth was evidently quite a small group who could meet in a single house, the house of Gaius, 'host to the whole church (in Corinth)' (Rom 16,23); that is, a church of about 40 or so persons. So Paul envisaged the dynamism of the body as it functioned in such a group: the diversity consisting in the range of the various charisms and ministries allotted to each by the one Spirit (1Cor 12,11). No single member or function could so dominate as to make other members merely recipients or their charism(s) or service(s) redundant (12,14–26); as every organ in the body has a function indispensable to the well-being of the whole body, so every member had his/her own charism or ministry (Rom 12,4–5). 1Cor 12,14–26 in particular is a remarkable depiction of 'the ministry of the whole people of God', with the clear implication that the body of Christ (in Corinth) could not show itself to be truly one, and could not function properly without the active participation of all the charisms by which the one *χάρις* came to expression.

In Romans, however, we know that there were a number of churches, that is, presumably of house churches like the one which met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16,5).<sup>47</sup> If so, then Paul's further talk of the body of Christ ('one body in Christ') in 12,4–5 presumably embraces these several churches. There was a single embodiment of Christ in Rome, the body of Christ, which incorporated the several congregations which met in

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<sup>47</sup> Other congregations are probably indicated in the groupings which follow: 16,10b.11b.14.15. The tensions addressed in 14,1–15,7 may well imply that the different congregations had different social compositions, some with more Jewish believers, others with more Gentile believers.

Rome. The unity remained the same, but the diversity now included a variety of churches. In which case the message of the body imagery is as before: that Christ could only be effectively embodied in Rome when the different churches recognized and lived out their mutual interdependence. The corollary for ecumenical relations in a city where several different congregations meet today is much more far-reaching than most seem to appreciate. For it means that no single congregation constitutes the body of Christ in that city, and that the witness and mission of the church is fatally compromised when the different congregations fail to act together as members of the one body.

In Colossians the theology of the body has taken a dramatic step forward. For in the poem or hymn of Col 1,15–20, the image of body now seems to reflect the very ancient thought of the cosmos as a body.<sup>48</sup> In the hymn/poem this body is now identified as the body of Christ, the body of which Christ is the head; and the further bold step is taken of identifying this body as ‘the church’ (1,18). Yet, at the same time, Colossians retains the imagery of a mutually integrated body (2,19) and speaks of the church in the house of Nympha and the church of the Laodiceans (4,15–16). Presumably, then, the church under Christ’s headship is being understood as a microcosm which mirrors (or should mirror) the divinely ordered cosmos. And the implication of the body-imagery is the same as before: that neither cosmos nor church can function properly, as a body is designed to function, without a recognition and enactment of the mutual interdependence of each on each.

Ephesians elaborates the implicit vision of Col 1,18 in a mind-blowing way: God ‘has put all things under his (Christ’s) feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all’ (Eph 1,22–23). Here the church is certainly conceived in universal terms, rather like, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2, the stone ‘cut from the mountain, not by hands’, which, having broken in pieces the kingdoms of this world, grows to become a great mountain which fills the whole earth (Dan 2,35.45). In Eph 2,15–16 the vision is given more precision: the purpose of Christ’s death was to create the two (Jews and Gentiles) into one new ἄνθρωπος in himself and to reconcile both in one body to God. Here Paul’s vision of ‘the church of God’ as in-

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<sup>48</sup> Most often cited are the *Timaeus*, where PLATO speaks of God constructing ‘the body of the whole’ (31b,32a) and of ‘the body of the cosmos’ (32c), and the Orphic fragment 168, which describes Zeus as the ‘head’ of the cosmos. In PHILO, humankind, like the world, ‘consists of body and reasonable soul’ (*Heres* 155); heaven in the cosmos is like a soul in the body (*Abr.* 272); and the Logos is the head of this body, of all things (*Somm.* 1,128; *Qu. Exod.* 2,117). Bibliography in my Colossians and Philemon (NIGTC), Grand Rapids 1996, 94–5.

cluding all whom God calls, Gentiles as well as Jews, is finely merged with his complementary vision of the church as the body of Christ. The body is one insofar as it is the means by and the place at which the dividing wall of commandments and ordinances is broken down (2,14–15) and the hostility between races and peoples is brought to an end, ‘thus making peace’, members of the one ‘household of God’ (2,16–19).

Somewhat surprisingly, given the scope of the vision of the one body of Christ in chs. 1–2, Ephesians nevertheless retains the earlier image of the body of Christ, with gifted ministries essential to the well-being and up-building of the body (4,12). And even more than Colossians, Ephesians retains the understanding of the mutual interdependence of the members of the body – ‘the whole body joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love’ (4,16). If we may assume that Ephesians saw these various uses of the body as making a single coherent ecclesiology, we have to say that the body of Christ is one only when its diversity functions properly. That is, the universal Church is only one insofar as it is the place where reconciliation between peoples happens, where there is a mutual recognition of the ministries of the whole people of God, and where the oneness of Christ’s body is expressed by the working together, in mutual interdependence, of the diversity of the churches. That is a challenge which both the one church and the many churches need to hear.

Need I say more?

## Postscript

The paper as presented above was not intended as a complete discussion of the subject, even of the aspects on which it focused. It was intended rather to stimulate debate and discussion, in the course of which I would have been able to clarify or elaborate points of unclarity and to fill out any obvious gaps. Unfortunately visa problems prevented me from attending the Conference itself. However, I was able to participate in a degree in the discussion following the paper by e-mail. This gave the advantage that my contributions to the discussion could be more measured than would have been the case in the ‘heat’ of discussion, so that the questions e-mailed to me and my responses can serve the role of filling out the paper. I therefore include the questions put to me and my responses in the hope that they will compensate in some measure for the deficiencies of the paper itself. The Postscript may therefore have the added advantage of giving readers some sense of the discussions at the St Petersburg Conference.

A. *Questions of English Speaking Group 1*

1. In your paper there appears to be an implicit contradiction of the church as Israel (which has nothing to do with Christ) and the Church as the body of Christ, which is constituted by Christ.
2. You did not speak about the Eucharistic body of Christ in your paper. What is the relation between the Eucharistic body of Christ and the body of Christ which is the church?

1. I am not quite sure if I understand the point being made here. My key observations are: Ἐκκλησία as used in the NT (Paul in particular) almost certainly echoes the regular use of the term in LXX; that at least implies a desire on the part of the NT writers to bring out a strong sense of continuity with the קהל-יִשְׂרָאֵל. And when we add in the deliberate use of terms for the new churches which expressed Israel's special elect status with God, and Paul's understanding of what it means to be 'Israel', then I think it hard to avoid the conclusion that some high degree of continuity between the Israel of God's election and the churches being founded by the mission of Paul and others is intended in the use of the term ἐκκλησία.

I find the way the question is worded confusing – 'the church as Israel (which has nothing to do with Christ)'. The קהל-יִשְׂרָאֵל as such can be said to have 'nothing to do with Christ'; but קהל / ἐκκλησία finds continuity (some might say eschatological fulfilment/completion) precisely as the church of Christ = the body of Christ, precisely because Christ is the Messiah of Israel's hopes (from a Christian perspective). The question I pose is rather: given this last theological claim, is the קהל-יִשְׂרָאֵל totally and completely fulfilled in/completed by/transformed into the body of Christ, without remainder? Or is the קהל-יִשְׂרָאֵל caught in the already/not yet tension, and so is not and will not be complete until the coming of Messiah? This was the way I framed the issue in ch. 19 of my *Theology of Paul the Apostle*, and I would welcome feed-back on it.

2. Yes, I did not comment on the eucharistic body of Christ, but was fully aware that I had not done so and thought it might be better to make the points I did without the further complication of reference to 1Cor 10,16. My hope was that the discussion would bring in this dimension, as A.2 has! The reason why I did not go into 1Cor 10–11 is because the debate as to whether *soma* refers to the eucharistic elements or to the gathered community is a lengthy one, which might detract too much from the points I wanted to make. Again, I have dealt with it in *Theology of Paul* ch. 22. Briefly, (a) I think Paul's use of the 'body' imagery in Rom 12 and

1Cor 12 shows clearly that he is drawing on the then familiar socio-political imagery of the city/state as a body. (b) The fact that the tradition of Jesus' last supper uses the same language ('body') allows Paul to integrate the two uses by stressing that it is the communal *sharing/participation* in the one bread which most clearly expresses, symbolizes and manifests the oneness of the community as the body of Christ.<sup>49</sup> From this I conclude that while the σῶμα as eucharistic body is, of course, integral to Paul's theology (and practice) of the body of Christ, it is not the whole of that theology. The fact that 1 Cor 12 can be argued so thoroughly without reference to the eucharist underscores that the effectiveness of the imagery is not finally dependent on the eucharistic dimension of the imagery.

I am conscious that this way of putting it will not be satisfactory for those with a strong eucharistic tradition, but I think my way of putting it expresses the challenge to that way of putting it which arises from Paul's own formulations. The theology of the church as 'the body of Christ' is first and foremost Paul's, and my concern is that our traditional and contemporary theology of 'the body of Christ' should properly reflect the full range and nuances of Paul's teaching.

### *B. English Speaking Group 2*

3. How far can diversity go?
  4. How seriously do you consider the question of finding a middle way (or a convergence) between Christianity and Judaism?
3. That is the question. And that has been the question which has bedevilled (is that the right word?!) the whole of the Church's history. We agree, of course that Arians were/are out. But what about Nestorians, or Messalians, or The Brethren of the Common Life, not to mention the Radical Reformers of Western Christianity's Reformation, or Seventh Day Adventists?

My main points in *Unity and Diversity of the NT* are:

- The NT canon canonizes both the diversity and the limits of that diversity;
- As Christ is the centre and core (the unity within the diversity), then we have to recognize that there is an almost invisible circumference round Christ which some groups may pass beyond. To change the metaphor, Christ is like a sun round which planets circle; what keeps them 'Christian' is the fact that they remain within the gravitational pull of Christ; but some escape that gravitational pull into 'free' space. Thus, most would judge that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, not to men-

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<sup>49</sup> See my *Theology of Paul* § 22,6.