

the other end ‘conservatives’, we are assured, have no living experience of Jesus because of their ‘shallow discipleship’ and lack of contact with ‘the originating experience of the Christian community’.

Norris constantly and rightly emphasises the importance of the Fathers in Newman’s intellectual development, conversion and theological epistemology. But admiration for the Fathers presents very different aspects depending on which side of Norris’s division between the fixed deposit and never ending story one places oneself. For it is precisely those elements in the patristic writings that the Fathers themselves found most frustrating and sought most earnestly to eliminate (a certain philosophical eclecticism and terminological instability) that so many moderns most admire. John Henry Newman is doomed to suffer the same reverse engineering in Norris’s presentation. Newman passed from a flirtation with the British empiricists to the confession that Aristotle is ‘the oracle of nature and of truth’. His intellectual journey began when he ‘came under the influence of a definite creed and received into [his] intellect impressions of dogma’ and its destination was a point at which he found himself with ‘no further history of [his] religious opinions to narrate’. Needless to say this is not the reason for which many of his contemporary admirers profess their enthusiasm and Thomas J. Norris is no exception.

Whatever one’s view of his case, one might object that in order to engage critically with Norris, indeed in order to engage this text even treated as an uncontroversial presentation of Newman (which it is not), one requires a level of theological literacy that would already equip the reader to dive straight into most of Newman’s major works directly. It would be less disingenuous therefore if Norris were to present his glosses on Newman as the arguments they are in essay form, rather than dressed up as an introduction for the initial inquirer.

As Norris explains, Newman’s conversion centred on the triumph of the principle of catholicity over that of antiquity. Not that Newman rejected the completeness of the revelation given to the Fathers but he rejected his own initial attempts to unpick both the theology of the ‘reformers’ and that of Trent and re-stitch it from its patristic elements. (Norris’s enthusiasm for this latter project seems to lead him to misrepresent the purpose of Tract 90). For Newman, the theology of the reformers could be discarded, but to do the same with later Catholic teaching would be to deny God’s providential protection of his Church: ‘securus judicat orbis terrarum’. The fact that Newman was more comfortable with a holistic concept of ecclesiastical infallibility than with its abbreviation into an Ultramontane positivism only reinforces the impossibility of allying Newman with any return to the sources that would entail the rejection of an intervening era of the Church’s history. For this reason one must judge that, while introductory works on Newman are much needed, Norris’s contribution does more to distort than to unfold the riches of its subject.

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HARVESTING THE FRUITS: BASIC ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH IN ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE by Cardinal Walter Kasper, *Continuum*, 2009, pp. xv + 207, £9.99 pbk

This is a timely publication. Some forty-odd years after the first hopeful dialogues were held between the Catholic Church and four other Christian world communions – Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches – Cardinal Walter Kasper has gathered together the fruits of the many documents resulting from these dialogues. The intention is to prevent the loss of what has been gained at a time when the ecumenical movement appears

to have shed some of its early enthusiasm and momentum, and to chart what still remains to be done. The book, which has been put together by members of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, consists mainly of four chapters dealing respectively with: Jesus Christ and the Holy Trinity; Salvation, Justification and Sanctification; The Church; and The Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. Under each of these headings the book's authors have skilfully synthesized the appropriate materials issuing from each of the sets of dialogues, beginning usually with what the Catholic Church and its four dialogue partners hold in common, even when expressed in different language, before moving on to areas where the degree of agreement is less clear and finishing with those areas where disagreement continues to be a regrettable reality. The spirit animating the discussions is a genuine remorse, felt by all the participating Churches, over the divisions within the Christian communion.

The first chapter deals with the Trinity and Christology, areas of fundamental importance, where there is a strong degree of consensus since the Reformers adhered to the decrees of the early Church Councils. This is a point of vital importance since it almost constrains the discussions to express their agreement in Trinitarian terms, leaving behind the temptation felt by each, no doubt, to express their beliefs in terms suited to their own historical evolution; it helps bring the discussion down to basics, as when we read that 'Communion with the Triune God is the very life of the Church; communion with the mission of God's Son and Spirit is the very mission of the Church' (p. 19). This also has the beneficial effect of keeping the discussions close to the words of scripture, although difficulties of hermeneutics and criteriology emerge as the discussion develops.

The second chapter celebrates the basic consensus achieved on the issue of justification, one of the central points of division between Catholics, on the one hand, and Lutherans and Calvinists, on the other, at the time of the Reformation. This consensus was achieved by long and patient dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans over many years and shows what can be done when polemics are put aside and the focus is kept relentlessly on the rich resources of the Old and the New Testaments. It is heartening to read that the mutual condemnations, by Catholics of Lutherans and by Lutherans of Catholics, at the time of the Reformation no longer apply to the teachings of either Church as set out in the *Joint Declaration on Justification* (p. 38). Some interesting differences of emphasis between the Protestant participants are noted, such as that between the Lutherans and the Methodists, with the former preferring to speak of *justification* and the latter to speak of *sanctification*. While these differences do not indicate any real disagreement they do point to how the discussion might be moved forward in the future, enabling the Churches to find unity around new formulations.

The euphoria over the consensus on justification is followed, in chapter three, by the thorny issue of the Church. Here each of the four dialogue partners takes issue with the Catholic Church over one or other of its claims. However, even here the discussions have yielded strong areas of agreement on such matters as the Trinitarian basis of the Church and on the Church's salvific mission; there has even been an outbreak of sacramental language with reference to the Church in all four dialogues, a point picked out as 'an important ecumenical breakthrough' that could have far reaching consequences in further dialogues, and which has been assisted by 'the increasingly common understanding of the Church as communion' (p. 71), a theme known to be dear to the heart of Walter Kasper.

From there the discussion moves to the more contentious issue of the ministry of the whole People of God before tackling the nature of the ordained ministry itself, on which there is a surprising degree of agreement between Catholics and Anglicans in particular (pp 102–110). In the eyes of the authors of this book, however, this particular dialogue received a fundamental setback with the

Anglican decision to ordain women. A convergence towards a common understanding of *episcopate* is reported to have surfaced in all four dialogues and this is closely allied to the shared perception that *episcopate* needs to be exercised in a collegial fashion (p. 123f). It is stated, for example, that collegiality is expressed on the Reformed side by 'the synodical polity', and on the Catholic side by the episcopal college, 'the understanding of which is in process of further development'. This last clause might strike many Roman Catholics as somewhat optimistic in the light of their experience of how authority in their Church is exercised at the present time.

Indeed, there is an element of mutual exhortation just below the surface of this fascinating book, as Catholics drop strong hints to the others on a variety of issues and the others, notably the Anglicans, hint diplomatically about their interest, for example, in the idea of the *reception of doctrine by the faithful* currently being developed by Catholic theologians. Both sides occasionally convey the feeling that if only the other lot would just loosen up a bit on this or that issue then things could move forward much better. For the most part the language used to express disagreements is polite and decorous: we read of how Anglicans 'hesitate' on the issue of papal infallibility (p. 140), of how Methodists are 'reticent' on some other point, and there are many occasions when it is said that 'further dialogue is necessary'. It comes as all the more surprising, therefore, to come across the word 'repugnance' repeated several times by the Reformed Church in its response to the use of the term 'infallibility' by the Catholic Church – but much better to have this clear statement than too much of the coy and diplomatic.

While this is a most valuable book, it is not an easy read. With reference being made to dialogues on similar issues over many years with four different partners, there is inevitably a good deal of repetition; at the same time the differences in degrees of agreement between the Catholic Church and the other four can make it difficult to form a clear view of how things stand with any one of them, for example on an issue such as the duration of the Lord's presence in the eucharist. The authors have done much to help the reader, however, with clear headings and sub-headings and very useful summaries at the end of each chapter. The final chapter entitled 'Some Preliminary Conclusions' is particularly helpful both for celebrating what has so far been achieved and in identifying the problem areas where further dialogue is needed.

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AGAINST THE TIDE: LOVE IN A TIME OF PETTY DREAMS AND PERSISTING ENMITIES by Miroslav Volf, *William B. Eerdmans*, Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2010, pp. xii + 211, £11.99 pbk

Miroslav Volf is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School and is already well known internationally for his contributions to theology. Yet to introduce him seems to be the clearest explanation of what this book is trying to achieve. A collection of short articles, almost invariably no more than three pages in length, spanning over a decade's work is a fresh way to present the thoughts of this leading theologian. In previous books, Volf focused on forgiveness and reconciliation in societies that seem stripped of grace. The publication of *Against the Tide: Love in a Time of Petty Dreams and Persisting Enmities* draws together many of the lessons of these previous explorations and presents them in fresh contexts across a number of topics including culture and politics, giving, mission, other faiths, and evil. The background picture Volf presents is that of a world characterised by selfishness. Indeed Volf is quite