

Donald Bolen, Nicolas Jesson, Donna Geernaert, *Towards Unity. Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation*, introduction by Cardinal Walter Kasper. New York/ Mahwah NJ, Paulist Press, 2017; 382 pp. (ISBN 987 0 8091 5349 7).

Five centuries after Reformation, both Catholic and Protestant theologians are constantly writing and publishing on this topic, in the attempt to find common points and to walk towards unity. After that, last year, the mentioned moment determined the publication of a common document of the two Churches (*From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. Report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity Including Common Prayer*, 4th edition. Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt and Bonifatius Presses, 2017), which is, in our opinion, a big step into the dialogue between the two churches.

This year, in New York there was issued a volume of studies entitled *Towards Unity. Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation*. Edited by Donald Bolen, Nicolas Jesson, and Donna Geernaert, with an introduction signed by Cardinal Walter Kasper, the volume brings together 18 interesting studies and an evocation. The last one (pp. 377-382), signed by Anthony J. Farquhar, is about the Archbishop John A. Radano, an important personality of this dialogue, in the memory of whom this book is dedicated. Of course, there must be mentioned that at the beginning of the book there is also a short biographical note (p. 9-11) which briefly presents his activity and underlines his ecumenical contributions.

In the foreword of the book (pp. 21-25), Archbishop Donald Bolen evokes some personal experiences regarding his relationship with ecumenism and he highlights the main contributions from the book. Then, Cardinal Walter Kasper (pp. 27-32) is offering a briefly overview of the Ecumenical Movement, correlating also its efforts for the unity with the topic of the book. He also evokes the personality of the Monsenior John A.

Radano (pp. 31-32), and speaks about the way how the pontificate of pope Francis contributed to the development of the dialogue with Reformed Churches and showing that:

“Looking to the future, the pontificate of Pope Francis fills us with new courage and hope. Pope Francis has started a new phase in the ongoing process of the reception of Vatican II, placing particular emphasis on its ecumenical orientation. Significant aspects of Francis’s pontificate have already emerged: his pastoral motto «walking together» (*camminare insieme*); his insistence on the conversion of the Church, including the papacy; his idea of a Church oriented towards the peripheries (*chiesa in uscita*); the proeminence that he brings to the synodical structure of the Church; his insistence to the *sensus fidelium*; his vision of unity as reconciled diversity; his personal contacts with the ancient Eastern churches and with the mainline Reformation churches; and his outreach to the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. All of these will have enormous impact on the future of the ecumenical movement and after an ecumenical winter can fill us with new ecumenical enthusiasm” (pp. 30-31).

His words are followed by the text of Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy (pp. 33-50), president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, between 1991 and 2001, who speaks there about his experience. Then, in the article entitled *Artisans of Reconciliation: Catechesis of Memory and Freedom* (pp. 51-70), Jeffrey Gross, speaks about the *Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification* and other main-points of the Reformed-Catholic dialogue, marking its today evolution also in relationship with Evangelicals (pp. 62-64), Baptists (pp. 60-62), Pentecostals (pp. 64-65), Anabaptists (pp. 65-66). His thoughts are followed by an interesting article of Mary Tanner (pp. 70-81), and a challenging, but well-oriented text of James F. Puglisi about the synodality and its necessity (pp. 82-92).

Then, Geoffrey Wainwright (pp. 93-117), speaks about the Methodist-Catholic dialogue and its evolution today, and William G. Rusch (pp. 118-134), about the Apostolic common frame and its importance for the dialogue (also insinuated, but, not enough developed in the latest document of the World Council of Churches on the Interreligious dialogue topic: *Who Do We Say That We Are? Christian Identity in a Multi-Religious World*. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 2016). His article is followed by the one of Margared O’Hara (pp. 135-155) about the ministry

Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation

and his perception in the two Christian traditions, and the one of Donna Geernaert (pp. 156-172) about the three ecclesiological and theological keywords: Reign of God, *Koinonia* and Church, their meaning and the importance of their consensus.

The Brazilian theologian Odair Pedroso Mateus is also present in the book with an approach about the *specificity and challenge of reformed ecumenicity* beyond the confessionalism (pp. 173-195, with an interesting analysis of the main documents of the topic from the ecumenical space), while the Mennonite perspective on the Ecumenical movement (p. 196-226) is presented by Hermut Harder and Larry Miller. Pentecostal perspective is also emphasized in the text of Cecil M. Robeck Jr. (pp. 226-252). It is followed by an interesting meditation about the ecumenism as a pilgrimage (pp. 253-262), of Bert B. Beach and by a Reformed theological approach of Henry A. G. Blocher about the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* of Pope John II (pp. 263-281).

Then, an interesting radiography of the Ecumenical Movement (pp. 282-301), with its strengths and weaknesses is presented by William Henn, while Gunter Gassman is speaking about the contribution of *Faith and Order* commission of World Council of Churches to the development of the concepts of Christian Unity and their common understanding (pp. 302-322). After that, Thomas F. Best is dealing with the idea of mutual accountability (pp. 323-343), seen as a possible future evolution of the Ecumenical Movement (yet just a desiderate), Denton Lotz offers an interesting overview on the Baptist-Evangelical Discussion with the World Council of Churches (pp. 344-356), and Huibert van Beek is presenting the main points of the Global Christian Forum and its aims (pp. 357-375).

As we can see, thanks to the diversity of authors and perspectives, the book entitled *Towards Unity. Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation*, is more than a simple commemorative publication. On one side, it brings the Catholic perspectives on the main topics of the Reformation. On the other, it shows the Reformed ones. It also offers an overview of the evolution of Catholic-Reformed dialogue and highlights the contribution of the Ecumenical Movement in the strengthening relationships, proximity and better understanding between Catholics, Protestants, Baptists, Pentecostals and other Christian confessions, and it proposes new ways of development of its.

Ecumenical Dialogue 500 Years after the Reformation

Therefore, we consider that the volume is not only bringing a scientific contribution on this topic, but also a practical one and it surely honours Monsignor John Radano in whose memory the book is dedicated, by showing that his contribution in the Ecumenical Dialogue and Reformed-Catholic one were not in vain.

Iuliu-Marius Morariu