

Urszula Nowicka

Oltre la divisione : L'intuizione ecumenica e il dialogo interreligioso : A Pacini : Milano 2011

Ecumeny and Law 1, 199-202

2013

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Oltre la divisione. L'intuizione ecumenica e il dialogo interreligioso,
A. Pacini, Milano 2011, 288 pp.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (J 17:20—21). Christ prayed during the Last Supper. Nevertheless, by the pure human businesses, which have dominated God’s will, original Christian unity is missed, and the diversity of East Churches seems to have easy acceptance. There are two different attitudes towards it, represented by a modern individual: On the one hand, it meets with rejection and contempt, and what is more, in the most extreme cases, even with the persecution of those who profess other religions; on the other hand, religious indifference and relativism, which are blurring all kinds of differences, can be found in often repeated statement that there is only one God, and it makes no differences in which form He is worshiped. None of these attitudes is correct and none of them is the true witness of proper understanding of existing differences.

Ecumenism is an attempt to answer existing divisions and Jesus Christ’s prayer for unity. It is defined as an aim to restore all Christians to unity, according to different ecclesiastic needs and given moment’s conditions, but always through the dialogue. As John Paul II used to say: Ecumenism is the grace of truth, which cannot be achieved in other way besides the dialogue and common prayer.

Oltre la divisione. L'intuizione ecumenica e il dialogo interreligioso, published in Milan in 2001, edited and prefaced by Andrea Pacini, is dedicated to ecumenism. The book comprises articles by eight authors.

The birth of ecumenism, first on the evangelical ground in the Catholic Church, and then in the Orthodox one, is the theme of the first

part of this definitive work on the topic (pp. 15—103). Ricardo Burigana points out the great evangelic protagonists of the period in question (pp. 17—47), especially Nathan Soderblom, a Swedish Lutheran bishop, and a Dutch theologian, Wilhelm A. Visser't Hooft, leading the reader through the path of ecumenism, starting from First World Ecumenical Committee, which was held in Edinburgh in 1910, and is thought to be the leading event for the modern ecumenical movement, to the 1948, when the World Council of Churches was established during the First General Assembly in Amsterdam. The Catholic Church did not have its own representatives in this body (there were 551 delegates, 147 churches from 44 countries, according to the author of the text), but ecumenical efforts are not really conspicuous in the proceedings of the Assembly.

The second article, written by Andrea Pacini, is devoted to the Catholic Church's roots of ecumenism (pp. 49—73). The author analyses the acts of unification made by Pope Leon XIII, regarding Orthodox Church as well as the Evangelical one. The author also acknowledges the influence of Benedictine Monasticism, especially Lambert Beauduin's contribution to the development of ecumenism. Pacini ends his considerations by presenting the popes: Pius XI's and Pius XII's magisterium. The last article of part one, authored by Adalberto Mainardi, renders the birth of ecumenism in Orthodox Church (pp. 77—103). The author discusses another important point in development of this movement, starting from 1900, and, on the one hand, showing the active involvement of the Orthodox Church in the ecumenical dialogue, and on the other hand, the difficulties and restrictions connected with it.

Part two (pp. 105—202) describes the maturation stage of ecumenical movement (*La maturazione del movimento ecumenico*). As the first part, this one is also divided into three separate articles, which are dedicated to three Christian denominations and the most renown of their ecumenical protagonists. To start with, Angelo Maffei puts a special emphasis on the figure of Pope Paul VI, whose pontificate started during the Second Vatican Council. Author writes about Pope's humble demeanour and the ability to acknowledge the Catholic Church's guilt for the religious persecutions and splits. The author analyses fragments of Paul VI's encyclicals, and he stresses the fact of the mutual removing of the excommunication by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Atenagoras. Valeria Martano presents the patriarch's consistent ecumenical involvement and his constant dedication to it. Finally, Matthias Wirz writes about brother Roger's, the famous founder of Taizé ecumenical testimony, his teaching, life and practice. This article helps the reader to find the main, typical feature of ecumenical movement maturation, that is interpenetrating and cooperation between theological point of view, personal experience as well as the one caused

by formal and institutional Church activity. Part three (pp. 209—279) of the book goes beyond the typical understanding of ecumenism, which is indeed very interesting. This part is dedicated to the issue of international dialogue with Hinduism and Buddhism (*Esploratori del dialogo interreligioso*). The first article (pp. 205—225), written by Giuseppe Rizzardi, is dedicated to life and work of Louis Massignon, a French scientist and a connoisseur of Muslim culture and religion, who has made a great contribution to the greater Catholic Church tolerance towards Muslims. The next article, written by Paolo Trianni, presents life and philosophy of two French clerics: Jules Monchanin, a Catholic priest, and Henri Le Saux, a Benedictine monk, the founders of the first Christian monastery that respected ascetic traditions of India, whose activity contributed to the development of dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism. Antoni Montanari, a renown expert on Far-East spirituality describes the dialogue with Buddhism (pp. 255—279). It seems to be a shame that there is no reference to the dialogue with the fifth of the biggest monotheistic religions of the world — Judaism.

The academic value of the work in question cannot raise any objections. Paying tribute to those who dedicated their lives to struggle for unity is important not only for historical knowledge, but for future actions as well. Nevertheless, the title of the publication indicates a more comprehensive content. First of all, the omission of Pope John Paul II is quite disappointing (there are only few aspects of his activity enumerated in the introduction to the thesis). He was a great ecumenist, whose gestures, words and deeds, especially at the beginning of his pontificate, were the evidence of a great opening towards other religions and the expression of the desire for unity and world peace. It would also be valuable to indicate the most important actions of the Roman Curia Dicasteries (especially ecumenical documents published by them), permanently involved in dialogue with other churches and religions (the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and other numerous committees). However, their omission does not diminish the value of this thesis, which needs to be treated as a historical one. If so, it would seem legitimate to indicate this in the book.

The content of each of the individual chapters should satisfy not only the average reader, but in addition, every expert in ecumenical movement's theory and practice. Authors, who developed the above mentioned issues, ponder upon them with true erudition, and what is even more impressive, with great objectivity. They are not afraid of tackling difficult issues, and criticizing matters which deserve it. The work can be perceived not only as a source of information on ecumenism, but also about the life and spirituality of this movement's greatest champions. Skilful intermingling

of these two aspects is undoubtedly another advantage of this publication. Therefore, it is difficult to imagine dealing with ecumenical activity (whether still studying or delving into the essence of the practice), without careful reading of this thesis.

Urszula Nowicka