

Confessing unity A Reformed perspective on ecumenism¹

Michael Weinrich

In our ecumenical endeavours we face a quandary. There are not just differences in theological doctrine and different traditions of church life and thought: there are almost as many different ecumenical visions within ecumenism as there are church traditions involved.

In fact, this is scarcely surprising. Ecumenism is a question of ecclesiology. It is closely connected with the churches' different self-understandings of themselves as church. It is chiefly their ecclesiologies that divide the churches. We may expect to find very similar differences, therefore, in the understandings of ecumenism that spring from these ecclesiologies and the different self-descriptions to which they give rise.

I try in what follows to outline the ecumenical vision from a Reformed viewpoint. In the foreground stand the theological grounding of this vision and its intimate connection with Reformed ecclesiology.²

A confessing church

The calling and promise of the church always lie far beyond anything that can be seen in historical reality, even in the most perfect form of the church. The church does not live of itself, and can be a living church only by constantly listening anew to what God is saying, and shaping its life and form in response. The oft-quoted phrase *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* refers the church beyond itself, not back to itself – pointing to the word of God to which it must listen and respond and to which it is accountable. Because the church is essentially the creation of the divine word (*creatura verbi divini*), it must constantly seek to be just that.

This insight into the essentially relative nature of the church implies a particular approach to the formal *confessions* of the church. Just as, within history, no church can be fully what it is called to be, so too no confession can respond fully to God's call. Hence, in the Reformed tradition, it is assumed that confessing the faith not only is not completed, but never will be complete. This is not to disdain the ancient creeds of the church. They are, rather, highly valued: they serve as theologically grounded and historically tested guides to orient our own confessing. Precisely as such, however, they remain secondary and subordinate: they cannot relieve today's church of its responsibility to confess the faith here and now.

On this understanding, the church confesses, not by taking over the tradition, but primarily by responding to God's word within the horizon of the specific

challenges facing the church at this time and in this place. As the church's confession is directed not just to itself but also and above all to the world, clarity is crucial. The church is taking a public position in which it tries to make clear where it stands. If, instead of making the Barmen Declaration (1934), the church in Nazi Germany had merely recalled the Apostles' Creed, it would probably not have been able to convey the explosive effect of the concrete stance it was adopting. The same goes, for example, for the Belhar confession (1982) in relation to racism in South Africa. The church's existence as a *confessing* church ranks above its self-consciousness as a *confessional* church. The confessing event – confessing as a vital act – has priority over its confessional or denominational identity.

This brings us to a fundamental option of Reformed ecclesiology, with far-reaching consequences. The church recognizes no central hierarchy nor can it rest on a clearly defined body of doctrine. The congregation is not the smallest cell of a church to which it is subordinate, but sees itself as the seed from which a church grows – as the church in nucleus. This congregationalist enzyme has a catalytic effect on Reformed ecclesiology, enabling it to enter into the most varied living conditions with their different challenges. Openness in principle in formulating confessions is intended to give the churches flexibility in their specific contexts. It is a recognition that if confessions are not to evaporate into abstract generalities, they must always be spoken “in a relatively manageable space... by a concretely responsible community”.³ This is why we Reformed do not have a universal (world) confession. Instead, we allow a real legitimacy to diversity – a diversity constrained by its common basis in the biblical witness (itself very diverse), which suffices to secure the catholicity that the Reformed, indeed, value very highly. In the Reformed horizon, ecumenism is conceived in terms not of homogeneity, but of a biblically based catholicity.

A “traditioning” church

This insistence on confessing rather than confession is confirmed by further choices of emphasis. It is clearly reflected in the ways of dealing with the tradition of the church.⁴ Note that this is not a theoretical debate about whether or not importance is to be attached to tradition. All churches depend permanently on their tradition, without which they would have no common basis of communication to enable them to reflect in a meaningful way on the decisions required of them in their current situation. That granted, a great variety of approaches to tradition may nonetheless be imagined.

The Reformed churches think of tradition less as a treasure to be preserved, a heritage to be safeguarded, than as a source of encouragement and empowerment. Tradition is respected not for its own sake or because of its inspired character, but because it provides an indispensable and therefore inspiring tool for the continuing life of the church here and now. The emphasis

is on the future rather than the past, on *proving the value* of tradition rather than *preserving* it. Tradition is not the stronghold of an unchanging identity, but the challenge to keep renewing identity; protecting and safeguarding tradition cannot be our chief concern. The criteriological function of tradition is less important than its instrumental role. It is important, in the first place, not because it is a more or less sensitive authority for monitoring and controlling doctrine today, but because it helps the church – by giving it the instruments it needs to tackle, calmly and serenely, a mission that did not just begin with the church of today, but that it is called to continue here and now.

To echo the wording used above in relation to confession and confessing, we may say that the Reformed church's concern is not *tradition* but "*traditioning*", the continuing of tradition. It does not understand itself as a traditional church, but sees itself challenged to be a confessing church in ways that it must itself decide responsibly and, by so doing, continue the tradition. It understands itself as part of a living tradition that is capable of reacting to the changing questions and challenges facing the church. In this, it neither assumes that the decisions of the past are in principle theologically sound nor takes the arrogant view that it can do everything better. It allows for inadequacies and even mistakes in the tradition, as well as for its own shortcomings. However, it feels no need to go back over these inadequacies in detail, but instead looks in the other direction. It asks about contemporary relevance, which cannot be assumed automatically and for which it always bears a share of responsibility.

Tradition is not a safe haven in which to ride out the storms when doubts arise. Far from it: it is always only the starting point – sometimes perhaps even a questionable one – from which the church ventures forth to proclaim its own message loudly and clearly in the new way that is required by changing conditions.

To make the problem a little clearer, let me come back to the approach to the confession. When we speak of the confession of faith, we think first of the treasured and venerated formulas of the ancient church. It is almost impossible to mention the creeds without falling into a view of the past as reliable. It is no coincidence, it seems to me, that conservative Christians like to present themselves as (the true) guardians of the faith. But laying retrospective claim to the creeds does justice neither to the nature of the historical creeds nor to the confessing dimension that belongs to the nature of the church. It is true also of the formulation of the ancient creeds that, in the first place, the church had to respond to a definite contemporary challenge. To pick up our earlier distinction: when the church formulated confessions, it never did so primarily in order to *preserve* tradition but rather to *prove* its worth in a particular conflict that had to be resolved, and only then and on that basis to preserve it. What is obviously true of the Theological Declaration of Barmen (the Barmen confession) – that here we have a church reacting to a concrete historical challenge – is true of

almost all the confessions in church history. The perspective, always, is one of *proving the faith*, taking sides and pointing the way, which could not be done properly merely by reciting tradition but required the church to make its own act of confession, by trying to formulate publicly the responsibility laid upon it at that time. Only in retrospect do confessions become tradition. While they are being formulated, the concern is what is seen as the present responsibility with a view to the future. We would understand the creeds of the past much better if, in each case, we were aware of the concrete challenge to which it was responding, the dispute it was trying to resolve or the specific danger or temptation it sought to avert, so that we might have some idea of the dramatic events underlying the confessions that today we have largely reduced to liturgical recitation.

Reciting the confession in worship has become liturgically problematic. Even though it may not be the intention of the church to bow down before tradition, the church's past appears to be seen as more reliable than, say, the reading from the Old Testament or the letters of the New Testament. In the practice of worship with which I am familiar, the congregation remains seated for these readings but stands for the confession of faith and the reading of the gospel (or rather, a text from the gospels). Christian education still ensures that almost all members of the congregation know the creed *by heart*, but – as countless conversations have shown – that is not to say that they understand it *in their hearts*. In the Reformed understanding, this points to a problem that goes directly to the living substance of the church. If there is nothing in its traditioning that moves it forward, it runs the risk of turning tradition into a museum piece that may be revered but no longer has anything substantial to offer to the life of the church.

A teaching church

Closely linked with the questions of confession and tradition is the problem – equally contentious in the ecumenical movement – of authority. How a church understands the concept of authority determines the significance it attaches to its doctrine and the form in which it presents its teaching. It is, as we know, controversial among the churches whether their teaching should be expressed in dogmas, and what form it is appropriate for these dogmas to take. To be sure, all confessional families refer to theological teaching as dogmatics, but this obscures the fundamental differences that lie behind the common usage. What is chiefly in dispute here is how far it is possible, necessary or even obligatory to fix the truth of Christian faith in doctrinal formulations that are at least relatively durable and therefore authoritative.

The more authoritative they are, the more prescriptive these formulations become. However, authority is not inherent in the pronouncements as such; in each case, it has to be attributed to them by an authorized agency. It is the

church that declares certain pronouncements to be binding, and thereby intimates that it wants to let itself be measured by these standards. This presupposes an understanding of the church according to which it is authorized to issue such decrees.

Once established, such authoritative pronouncements continue in force because they cannot subsequently be repealed. If it were possible to revise their content, their binding character would from the outset be restricted, which in turn would deprive them of their decisive authority. It follows that, once the path of authority laid down in doctrinal decrees has been chosen, doctrine by its very nature can only be completed and extended and further differentiated, but never critically reviewed, let alone corrected.⁵ Theology, on this path, can maintain the flexibility that is needed to apply doctrines to each concrete situation only by great artistry – not to say sophistry – in interpreting and combining doctrines, while adhering to the letter of the text. A degree of casuistry is unavoidable: it is the logical consequence of an understanding of the truth shaped by legal thinking.

This shows that, if the ecumenical discussion among the churches is always dominated in each case by the strictest understanding of authority, it is not just a methodological problem. If, for example, the Roman Catholic Church has raised the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* to the status of binding doctrine for itself by signing it – which remains an outstanding event, whatever reservations there may be about the declaration itself – this is due entirely to the painstakingly negotiated wording of the text. There could be no question of revising the anathemas of the 16th century. All that could be done was to examine whether there were things that could be said in common about the doctrine of justification, going beyond the anathemas, which still remain valid.

If the Lutheran World Federation wanted to fall in line with the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of authority, it would effectively have to accept the 16th century anathemas, at least implicitly. Not requiring it to do so is a tacit acknowledgement from the outset that the Lutheran side is guided by a different understanding of authority from the Roman Catholic side.⁶

From a Reformed viewpoint, this raises a fundamental problem. We recognize no way to guarantee authority, apart from the criterion of evidence. A controversial point of doctrine cannot be settled by reference to a fixed body of doctrine, but in each new case has to be clarified afresh in the light of the facts. In disputed cases, even church doctrinal decisions cannot simply be defended by reference to any text; the content of the dispute has to be presented and the objective evidence for making the choice put forward for discussion. Of course, a decision has to be reached at some point and then a reference to tradition may prove convincing, but only if the matter recalled can be confirmed in the changed conditions. In this sense, the Reformed tradition also makes extensive use of the church's theological tradition and confessions in clarifying issues; but there

is no timeless requirement that formulations, simply as formulations, should be thrown onto the scales. They can be used only if they prove themselves in the new situation.

This is why there have been so many, often highly controversial tussles over doctrine in the Reformed tradition, disputes that have led time and again to a parting of the ways within the church. To the extent that human wilfulness has certainly also been in play, this state of affairs is to be deplored. On the other hand, however, the simple fact of a diverse church landscape is not to be decried in principle, so long as we do not lose sight of the modesty already discussed with regard to our being the church,⁷ and remain aware that the catholicity of the body of Christ goes far beyond the boundaries of our church, and could not in any case be institutionalized, not even by a united world church.

With regard to doctrine, the Reformed church is not a *doctrinal church* but a *teaching church* and as such must always also be a *learning church*. The church's teaching is at the service of today's preaching of the gospel and does not take place in the framework of a doctrinal structure that has to be preserved and constantly extended. Like theology, it is a "function of the church's praxis" (Karl Barth) that refers to a constantly changing reality and is therefore itself constantly changing. We delude ourselves if we think that clinging to the letter of the doctrinal decisions of the past can provide a reliable basis of stability in the midst of this change, or even a handle to hold on to. If anything, the opposite is true: the stability of the content depends on our being able to speak it in new ways – someone who always says the same thing will through time be saying something different. On this line of argument, the authority of doctrine correlates with how best, in our human understanding, the church may fulfil its responsibility for its particular mission at a given time. This responsibility can never be adequately fulfilled without recourse to existing doctrine; equally, it cannot be met by simply repeating set doctrinal formulations.

Reformed catholicity

Now we turn explicitly to Calvin. The decisive reason for Calvin's relaxed attitude to the actual plurality of the many regional churches lies in his understanding of catholicity and hence of the "holy singular" of the church. To put the point briefly, for Calvin the "profession of the faith" stands for the catholicity of the church. He had in mind the Apostles' Creed. Wherever this is said, the universal church can be seen, even when it may be said by only one person.⁸ The church here is strictly the church that is not at the disposal of human beings, which does not mean that there are no human beings in it, otherwise it would make no sense to speak of church at all. The church here is seen from the point of view of its divine foundation. This catholicity defies any institutionalization and places the latter on an essentially subordinate level. This catholicity is the catholicity of the faith that holds the body of Christ

together and the historical confession of that faith, for example in the Apostles' Creed. Every time the creed is spoken – here or there or worldwide – this is an audible sign of the catholicity of the church. Fortunately, only God can see into the hearts of those whose lips make this confession; it must suffice for us, in perceiving the catholicity of the church and hence recognizing it as church, that, according to what we declare, we agree on the fundamental tenets of the faith.

By not specifically naming the Apostles' Creed, Calvin wants to avoid the impression that the church believes in its confession. There are fundamental and therefore indispensable elements of the Christian faith, as set out in the creed; but, for the sake of God's honour and glory, the church must guard against canonizing them. Our commitment to God must be clearly seen to stand above our commitment to our insights about God. Calvin's extensive and entirely consistent dogmatic and catechetical efforts at clarification show that this is not meant to give *carte blanche* to theological charlatanism. On the other hand, his determined commitment to the unity of the church shows that the demand for the catholicity of the church is not just a cheap and empty phrase with no consequences.

Calvin expressly warns against an excess of zeal for the greatest possible homogeneity in the church's doctrine and order. The greater the emphasis on uniformity, the more the concern for form comes to predominate, even to the point of idolatry. It would be scandalous, Calvin said, if in matters where the Lord has left us freedom, so that we have all the more opportunities to build up the church, we should strive slavishly for sameness, instead of seeking the true edification of the church.⁹ What the church receives and must constantly receive afresh is always more important than what the church has or what form it takes. Like Luther, Calvin insists that the most important thing of all is for the church to continue under God's word.¹⁰ It is crucial that the church should seek constantly to communicate with God and his word, and not try to substitute this communication by maintaining a body of doctrine, whatever form this may take. What makes a church catholic is not what it has achieved, but its unflinching trust in what it must always receive anew. Catholicity, in the sense used by the Reformers, stands for the faithfulness of a God who does not leave his church – the universal company of those who confess his name – abandoned and alone.

There are above all two ecumenical reasons to support Calvin's understanding of catholicity, also in view of the human aspect of the church. *First*, with regard to the church's teaching and form, it opens up the necessary room for manoeuvre in the different regional conditions – today, no doubt, we would speak of contextuality and inculturation.¹¹ Calvin was prepared to recognize a multiplicity of small individual churches “disposed in towns and villages according to human need”.¹² The problems begin only when attempts

are made to interpret this purely practical local delimitation theologically in an exclusive sense. The reproach levelled against the church centred in Rome is precisely that it has artificially attached to its local delimitation a claim supposedly grounded in theology, so that catholicity is now captive to human pretensions and has effectively become sectarian. *Second*, this definition of catholicity strongly resists putting our trust in pure doctrine and so attacks the fiction of a certainty attained by means of theological doctrine. Since for Calvin, too, right doctrine is “God’s doctrine” and as such is aimed at life, the church remains dependent on a living relationship with God. It is God and not any human church authority that “rules” the church that is the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”.

These considerations show that, on a Protestant understanding, it is theologically untenable to identify catholicity with a definite form of church, let alone a definite historical constitution of the church. In view of the now almost undeniable confessionalization of all the churches – including the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches – it remains to ask whether the ancient church’s concept of a visible catholicity has not become historically obsolete, so that today it works only as an anti-ecumenical symbol.

Confessing unity

In the ecumenical context, the idea of the invisible or hidden church as the church in which we believe regularly gets a raw deal. Evoking the hidden church may of course indicate a certain negligence towards the visible church and our responsibility for it. But the fact of the matter is that, even on close inspection, what the church is really about does not become visible. We can only believe that what is visible is indeed the *one, holy, universal* and *apostolic* church. None of these attributes can be identified directly with one clear form of representation. We do not read off the evidence for the requirements we attach to visibility from the external appearance of the church, but from what we understand this appearance to represent and, in the best case, reflect.

Visibility in the theological sense, in principle, cannot be what can actually be seen. That is why Karl Barth speaks about “a very special visibility” as a spiritual event.¹³

What is really at stake in the emphasis on the visible church cannot, by its very nature, become directly visible. It is faith, going beyond the external appearance, that endows the concretely visible church with the appropriate attributes. What is there to be seen can be seen only by the eyes of faith, which always see more than the eyes in our head.¹⁴

The true body of Christ remains hidden, and it is as such that it is real, as real as the risen Christ. He is the inaccessible reality of the church, the reality that allows and requires us to see in the actually existing church a reflection of the true church that has to be taken seriously and, in this sense, the true church

itself. There can be no question of looking for another church beside or behind the visible, historically constituted church. On the one hand, no church can make immediately visible what its existence as church is really all about. On the other hand, what the faith of Christ's church confesses can show itself nowhere else except in the church as it appears in history, even when we can scarcely point it out. This is precisely what Calvin had in mind in speaking so emphatically about the visible church.¹⁵

Reformed ecclesiology holds fast to the concept of the hidden church within the visible church for specifically ecumenical reasons – not least for comfort and encouragement in its determined commitment to the visible church.¹⁶ The problem of institutionalizing the church is in no way simply secularized. It has to do with the human side of the constitution of the church, which is not insignificant theologically. It is important that the church confesses the foundational divine side of the church's constitution, namely the election of the church effected in Christ, and tries as far as possible to keep this in sight in all its endeavours. In the visible church, seen from this point of view, are vested all the promises for the church that we confess in the creed, and without which the church has no importance at all.

The decisive reason for standing by the Reformers' option, as I see it, is that this is the only way to underline the priority in principle of the church founded in and by Jesus Christ over our attempts to make it manifest in history. This implies the very fundamental ecumenical insight that the body of Christ does not follow along behind, confirming our attempts to realize the church after the event, as it were. It is always out ahead, and it is we who lag behind with our reservations.¹⁷ Just as the risen Christ is always out ahead of us mortal men and women, so that we have every reason to believe although we cannot see him, so too his body, the body of the risen Christ, is always out ahead of us – irrespective of all the conceivable possibilities of claiming a theological difference between the two.

Against this background, speaking in a theological perspective about the church means *confessing the church*. The church can dare to be only because its being is given to it – anything else sooner or later must face the question about the source of the confidence that allows us to strut the stage. This surely cannot be a self-confidence that permits us, as it were, to anticipate God and look for his approval. It can only be the confidence that the risen Lord lives today, that he was raised from the dead not just spiritually but, according to the witness of the New Testament, in the body (not in the flesh!) – impossible as it may be for us to imagine this “transformed” bodily presence (cf 1 Cor 15.35ff). The church's calling is always already its being constituted, so that the church can only speak of its calling in the same way as it speaks of its constitution in Christ. Only as a constituted, chosen church is it a called church. Its constitution is not the consequence of a perceived calling, to be fulfilled by human beings. On the

contrary, according to biblical logic, the calling is a consequence or implication of the constitution that has already taken place.

From this, the consequences for the ecumenical vision in the Reformed understanding are easy to guess. No church is in a position to lay down the conditions for church unity, so to speak, of its own accord. Rather, the unity of the church is one of the essential marks – already emphasized in the confessions of the ancient church – of what can be confessed as the body of Christ. Here too the first and fundamental thing is *confessing unity*. It is always out in front of us. This applies, to borrow Harding Meyer's language, not only to the ecumenical indicative, but also to the ecumenical imperative.¹⁸

Hence it follows that the mutual recognition of the churches as churches cannot be just the outcome of the often difficult efforts to reach an understanding, but should precede and shape them. In this horizon, it is theologically odd to see the unity of the church formulated in the confession as realized only in one's own church. Rather, we need the special eyes of faith, as mentioned above, to see beyond the obvious. Faith can see the church wherever God's reconciling action in Christ is confessed. In principle, the fundamental concern underlying our efforts at understanding cannot be whether we can forward the unity of the church – in whatever way – by making it visible (in the sense of obvious). Our overriding concern must be how seriously we ourselves take our own confession of the one church.

In this there can be no question of constantly looking back to the particular traditions of the different churches. Everything turns on how serious we are in allowing our confession to authorize us to go forward confidently into the future, in the knowledge that, in looking towards the other churches, our faith in the insight that we have been given in Christ will not desert us.

It is we who obscure the visibility of the church, and not some enigmatic way of God. It is our lack of faith that blinkers us so that we can only see our own church. All our expectations with regard to more visibility should be directed towards the hope of a stronger faith that will enable us to see "more" than what is staring us in the face. If the unity of the church is to be made more visible in history than it has been up till now, the only path to follow is one which recognizes unity not only as a precondition but also as an actual reality. All other paths will always bring us back to ourselves and our own wilfulness.

Notes

1. This is a revised and expanded version of my article "Kirche bekennen" in *Ökumenische Rundschau* 52 (2002), pp.145-156.
2. For more on the subject, Michael Weinrich, *Kirche glauben: Evangelische Annäherungen an eine ökumenische Ekklesiologie* (Wuppertal: Foedus-Verlag, 1998); also my article "The Openness and the Worldliness of the Church" in Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Hendrik M Vroom and Michael Weinrich, eds, *Reformed and Ecumenical* (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), pp.1-23.

3. Eberhard Busch, "Die Nähe der Fernen – Reformierte Bekenntnisse nach 1945" in Michael Welker and David Willis, eds, *Zur Zukunft der Reformierten Theologie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag, 1998), pp.587-606, at p.590. In English, "The Closeness of the Distant: Reformed Confessions after 1945", in David Willis and Michael Welker, eds, *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp.512-531, at p.515.
4. It is important in this context to remember that, in the Protestant understanding, Holy Scripture is not part of the church's tradition, but is set over the church as its fundamental source of guidance and critical standard (*fons et iudex*).
5. On this, Michael Beintker, "Das Problem der Revidierbarkeit kirchlicher Aussagen in ökumenischen Dialogen" in Michael Weinrich, ed, *Einheit bekennen: Auf der Suche nach ökumenischer Verbindlichkeit* (Wuppertal: Foedus-Verlag, 2002), pp.49-75.
6. Admittedly, it is hard to say what that Lutheran understanding of authority is, because basically it agrees with the path of authoritative doctrinal statements.
7. See the section on the confessing church, above.
8. *Institutio* IV 1,9.
9. *Opera Selecta* I, p.432.
10. *Institutio* IV 2,4.
11. Cf for example, Mercy A Oduyoye and Hendrik M Vroom, "One Gospel – Many Cultures. Case Studies and Reflections on Cross-Cultural Theology", in *Currents of Encounter* 21 (Amsterdam/New York, 2003).
12. John Calvin, "Reply to Cardinal Sadolet" (1593) in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, Library of Christian Classics, trans JKS Reid (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Westminster Press, 1954) pp.219-256. Calvin here (p.230) goes so far as to place the papal church on a level with the Anabaptists, because neither follows the word of God, but puts individualistic positions in the foreground.
13. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), p.654.
14. This double way of looking at the church is similar to what happens with nature, which can also be seen in two ways. What we can see is nature's outward form with all its fascinating power. When we speak of nature as the creation, however, we depend on the eyes of faith, which here too see "more" than can actually be seen, because they know of the Creator.
15. See Michael Weinrich, "Welche Kirche meinen wir? Die Theologie und die verfasste Kirche" in Jürgen Ebach, Hans M Gutman and Magdalene L Frettlöh, eds, *Bloß ein Amt und keine Meinung? - Kirche*, Jabboq 4, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), pp.214-272, at pp.240-259.
16. The dialectical tension between visibility and invisibility has, incidentally, been one of the basic elements in ecclesiology since the time of Augustine.
17. Cf Mk 10.32.
18. Harding Meyer, *Ökumenische Zielvorstellungen*, Ökumenische Studienhefte 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp.17ff.