REVIEW SYMPOSIUM

The Church Unfinished: Ecclesiology through the Centuries. By Bernard P. Prusak. New York: Paulist, 2004. x + 404 pages. $22.95 (paper).

FOUR PERSPECTIVES

I

Teachers of college theology have been experiencing the boundary line between theology and history becoming thinner and more permeable. Bernard Prusak has put together a textbook that is simultaneously a history of how the church has been understood and a sustained argument that the church has always been in a dynamic flux and must continue to change. At its heart the church is a champion of human freedom and creativity, and Christians of every age have struggled to respond faithfully to the particular challenges of the age in which they live. Today the church struggles with interpreting and implementing Vatican II, facing issues such as the developing ministries of women. The most important key to Christian fidelity lies in being open to new possibilities. Prusak sums up: "Now the question to ask is, would God create a process in which humans can choose among a surplus of possibilities for shaping a new future, but then completely predetermine the shape of the church for all time? It seems unlikely" (331).

This focus on change guides Prusak's selection and interpretation of his materials throughout. The incarnation is about how God in Jesus shares our human possibilities of creativity and love and reveals the fullness of those possibilities. Jesus' words and deeds and associations brought in the new and the unexpected. Those who remembered Jesus had to creatively rethink their memories of him in order to express them in the new post-resurrection situation.

The followers of Jesus should imitate him, not slavishly, but with a radical openness to God as well as to the marginalized. In discussing Jesus' founding of the church, Prusak emphasizes how the disciples needed to make their own creative decisions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit concerning how details were to be carried out. Ecclesial leaders of the present are called and empowered to make their own creative decisions, he argues, because the church must continually face the new.

Prusak's presentation of 30-110 A.D. draws upon the New Testament and other sources to trace the development of modes of authority leading up to the *mono-episkopos*. Throughout, his stress is on how little is actually known, on the variety of structures, and on the collegial style of Spirit-filled leaders making decisions as situations arose.

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He acknowledges the legitimacy and continuing importance of the decisions that were indeed made, but always in such a way to set the stage for emphasizing further the ability of present-day leaders to make new decisions.

For the period 110-600, Prusak maps out the growth of the church into a communion of communions. Drawing upon a wide range of patristic sources, he discusses the emergence of the church-wide episcopacy, the lay/clergy distinction, the adoption of Roman structures, the origins of monasticism, celibacy, and the papacy. Throughout he explains the historical context of the particular challenges that gave rise to each development. Augustine is portrayed as an influential transitional figure who appreciated deeply how the structures of the church are in the service of communion, yet whose vision was passed on in an institutionalized fashion forgetful of his sacramental depth. Concerning the role of women, Prusak ends his discussion of this period with an excursus on the role of women, offering an extended analogy with the development of the U.S. Constitution and how the quest for dignity and rights within a tradition can take many years to come to fulfillment.

Increasing institutionalism, juridicism, and clericalism frame much of the story from 600 to 1400 as the church becomes the empire-like Christendom. Each move toward power can be understood as a response to real problems. For example, the reliance on law and centralized power to counteract lay investiture was intended to preserve the freedom of bishops in their local areas. The upshot, however, was a juridicizing of the church such that the sacramental elements were subordinated to administrative concerns. The reality of the church as a communion was stood on its head. Episcopal authority took the place of the Eucharist as the source of church unity. Art, popular piety, new religious orders, and various reform movements took shape as ways of holding on to the gospel amid the pressures of church-state struggles for power.

The years 1400-1900 saw the rise of ecclesiology as a systematic discipline. It was often given to polemical defense of ecclesial power in response to the Reformation and various forms of conciliarism and nationalism. In the nineteenth century, Johann Adam Möhler and others began anew to emphasize the theological dimensions of the church. John Henry Newman championed a dynamic sense of Catholicism as he challenged concepts of the church as timeless and monolithic. Prusak devotes considerable attention to understanding the debates surrounding the limits of papal infallibility. He sees in *Rerum Novarum* an opening toward addressing the signs of the times.

Prusak next moves to Vatican II, especially *Lumen Gentium* and

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Gaudium et Spes. He emphasizes the presence in the documents of ecclesiologies in tension. Struggles over the meaning of *Lumen Gentium* reflect the difficulty of fitting together the church of the first millennium with the church of the second as they bear on today. Debates over *Gaudium et Spes* reflect a continued grappling with the modern world. Prusak notes how the church has embraced scientific claims rejected earlier and valorized concepts of human autonomy formerly under suspicion. He hopes for a future-oriented church open to further developments, with the role of women in ministry serving as his concluding example.

Prusak's ability to draw upon a wide range of primary sources in support of a vision that is simultaneously narrative and argument is impressive, to say the least. This work represents a much-needed synthesis of history and theology which will prove useful for courses in ecclesiology.

My assignment as lead reviewer is to summarize and then raise a few questions. I ask Professor Prusak if I am correct to interpret him as implying that those who are reluctant to make bold new decisions are either afraid of change or ignorant of history. Are there some Catholics who neither fear change nor ignore history but who would still oppose his emphasis on newness and the liberal agenda it implies? By putting so much effort into counseling the fearful and enlightening the ignorant, does he avoid wrestling with alternative historical narratives and counter-arguments of intelligent scholars who offer a more negative assessment of the state of modern culture and the need to adapt to it?

University of Dayton DENNIS M. DOYLE

II

Bernard Prusak certainly presents us with an historical *tour de force,* replete with rich documentation, in this survey of two thousand years of church history. Even though his method of organization is largely chronological, his selectivity from such a vast amount of material is governed by a number of recurring thematic motifs—communion, Eucharist, laity—and the thesis that the church has been and will continue to be shaped by human decisions amidst the pressures of historical forces. As far as possible, Prusak tells his story "from below" from the perspective of how ordinary people experience the church.

The amount of introductory material on Jesus and the early biblical witness is perhaps a bit unusual for most histories, especially since his concern is not to trace the various models of church in the various early Christian communities. Instead, he sets up his thesis by stressing the themes of the unexpected, openness to the future, pluriformity in

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church leadership patterns, inclusiveness, and interpretations of both Jesus and the church shaped by the manner and motivation of his death on the cross.

Communion, Eucharist, and laity are not the only themes, for Prusak also traces the development of ordained ministry in the church and shows how the church's self-perception has been shaped by the dominant political structures in which it finds itself embedded, becoming more monarchical within a monarchical society and more participatory in a democratic one. However, my brief comments will focus on how these three themes are illustrative of one pattern in this history.

Prusak moves beyond simply reiterating the maxim that "the Eucharist makes the church," and shows how various experiences of the Eucharist mirrors people's experience of the church. Thus in the early period, the Eucharist shaped, symbolized, and effected the people's experience of the church as a communion. The focus of ecclesial *koinonia* was "the table of the Lord" around which the people gathered. The Eucharist challenged them to inclusiveness, equality, and active participation in the community. When these principles were violated in the Corinthian community, Paul called them to account in the name of the unity of the Eucharist. When the experience of the Eucharist disintegrated, the *koinonia* of the community disintegrated with it.

The experience of the church as a communion was lost in the Middle Ages at the same time as the laity became passive observers in the Eucharist and a distinct "class" in the church. A hierarchical and pyramidal model of the church replaced the more communitarian model. However, this happened in response to historical forces such as the struggle to maintain the church's autonomy in its relationship to secular powers. A juridical emphasis in the church replaced the earlier sacramental identity of the church where the communion of churches was a communion of eucharistic communities. The equality of Christians around the table of the Lord was replaced by a stratified, hierarchical church. Particular churches were no longer primarily identified as eucharistic communities, but as practical units of spiritual jurisdiction and temporal administration (266). Ecclesiastical governance had few connections to service of a community of believers. Unity was achieved through law rather than through the celebration of the Eucharist. Power, education, and perceived holiness separated the elite of the church, comprised of clerics and vowed religious, from the group now identified as the laity. This shift was accompanied by a corresponding change in the experience of the Eucharist. Prusak observes, "Instead of transforming the faithful into the body of Christ through their communion, the seldom-received Eucharist was transformed into the greatest of the relics so revered by medieval Christians" (195).

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Vatican II retrieved a sacramental view of the church and retrieved a view of the church as communion. It also articulated a positive theology of the laity through a theology of the priesthood of all believers. Prusak fails to note that *Lumen Gentium* not only speaks of the laity's "more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy" (293, citing LG, 33), but also attributes to the laity their own proper apostolate which is theirs by virtue of their baptism and confirmation, an apostolate which is not simply a participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy (LG, 33). The centrality of the laity for an adequate understanding of the church is evident in the assertion that "the Church is not truly established, nor fully living, nor a perfect sign of Christ among humans, unless there is a mature, active laity working with the hierarchy" (298).

Prusak acknowledges that development within the church cannot simply discard what has gone before (303). He agrees with Walter Kasper that the continuity of tradition requires a synthesis of the first two millennia as we move into the third. However, he ends his volume by taking his cue from *Gaudium et Spes*, which affirmed a historical mentality as contrasted with a classicist one. He argues for a new vision of the church shaped both by human creativity and freedom and by the revelation of the trinitarian relationships in the vulnerability and defenselessness of the crucifixion of Jesus.

In the light of these themes, I pose the following questions to Professor Prusak:

(1) Reference to some of the demographic data of the church today would reveal more parish communities without a resident pastor, an inadequate number of seminarians in the pipeline, and, at least in developed countries, an aging clergy. These put a eucharistic model of the church at risk today. One can argue that the trinitarian model explicit in the eucharistic prayers and in Jesus' giving up the Spirit in his self-surrender to the Father in his crucifixion is a major loss in the current communion services in the absence of a priest, which are more Christocentric than trinitarian in emphasis. Given the parallels you draw between the model of church as communion and the experience of the Eucharist, what impact will altered experience of the Eucharist have on our experience and vision of the church and on a theology of the laity?

(2) What are the possibilities for community today in the church? Sometimes I wonder if we idealize and idolize our imagination of the early church as an intimate face-to-face community gathered around the Eucharist. Large suburban parishes can be pretty anonymous, and, given the priest shortage, the trend is for them to become even larger.

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Neighborhoods are sharing this same anonymity. It seems that the more we talk about communion, the less we experience it.

(3) There are powerful forces in the church today pulling both for centralization and for decentralization. Even though with its theology of the particular church Vatican II balanced the centralizing theology of Vatican I, we do not have viable structures in place to adjudicate this tension such as better-functioning synods of bishops or episcopal conferences empowered to make liturgical and other decisions for their local church. Globalization contributes both to fragmentation and universalizing in various ways—fragmentation through the multiplicity of various communities and the postmodern view of not allowing any one of them to become the norm or measure of the others, and universalizing tendencies through structures and organizations that transcend cultural boundaries, whether these be the Roman church or multinational corporations. In many ways modern communication makes the world in the third millennium very different from the first millennium when the communion model flourished. How can we experience communion rather than fragmentation or uniformity within these forces?

Marquette University SUSAN K. WOOD

III

When I was studying philosophy in seminary in the late 1960s, my Jesuit professor of metaphysics distributed a "codex" or textbook for the course that had been approved by the Roman authorities. As the course unfolded it became clear that the codex contained only the views he wished to prove wrong, the "*adversarii*," though he had omitted to inform the Roman censors of that small but significant detail. Class was a "cut and paste job" in which blank spaces were filled with his own opinions and refutations of the printed "authorities." Reading Bernard Prusak's *The Church Unfinished* reminds me of those days, because I suspect that behind this very fine account of the story of the Catholic Church through the centuries lies an even better course in which the understated and often simply implicit critiques of ecclesial practice in these pages are filled out and underlined. One occasionally wishes that the author would nail his colors a little more firmly to the wall. But in the end the mere telling of the tale has its own impact.

Prusak tells the story clearly, and I am not aware of a better short exposition of the developments in the church between 600 and 1400, which seems the strongest and in some ways the most important part of the book. The first chapter on the community around Jesus, for my

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tastes, substitutes a little too much imagination and not quite enough sociology for the dearth of actual historical fact. And the final chapters on Vatican II seem less informative, perhaps because this part of our history is relatively well-known. But the story of the church, from its emergence in the faith of the apostles to its condition on the eve of Vatican II, is told in an engaging and authoritative manner. It is an account of the force of historical circumstance and the growing self-understanding of the faith community which will be a valuable and empowering resource for its intended readership, whom I take to be college and seminary students and those laity who wish to know more. This is not, I think, a book for theologians or historians, though they would all profit from reflecting on the issues that lie hidden between the lines.

Reading between those lines, which such an implicit argument compels us to do, we can see a consistent pattern in the history of the church as Prusak describes it. He makes no secret of his wish for a return to at least some of the elements of the early church, and indeed focuses his treatment of *Lumen Gentium* on his judgment that the council fathers shared his historical tastes. But the pattern of ecclesial growth during the intervening 1300 years that Prusak reveals, however unintentionally, is a depressing one. Essentially, what we see time and time again is that the process of historical change has its own exigencies, and these inevitably lead to organizational changes in the church, whether this has to do with the role of bishops or the place of the papacy or growing centralization of authority. Developments like these are most often reflections of social and political developments. But the need to justify them results more often than not in theological rationalizations, too often of a self-serving kind. So, stressing the importance of the pope in order to check the excesses or failures of civil government may be a sensible move. But attaching a title like "Vicar of Christ" to the papacy as kind of slam-dunk power play for ever after seems both excessive and difficult to defend theologically. The story of the church told here is one of survival and growth, often healthy growth, despite the counterforce of human egotism and lust for power. Many doctrinal developments and theological amplifications are quite explicable and defensible, even if they result in sometimes dense complexity. But explaining how we get from the fishermen of Galilee to bishops with gold-inlaid gloves riding horses into battle, or medieval authorities burning alive those whose consciences move them to dissent is a much more difficult challenge.

The question at the heart of this book has to be that of the relation between the church of the first and second millennia. Prusak hints at

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this too, actually offering two challenging and quite different responses. In the red corner, being a cardinal, John Henry Newman, whom Prusak quotes—"[W]ere the Pope as indistinct a power as he was in the first centuries, and the bishops as practically independent, the Church would still be the Church"—in order to offer the comment that Newman's remark "raises the question whether the developments of the second millennium are *absolutely* essential to the Church" (268). In the other red corner, since he is also a cardinal, Walter Kasper opines that "the Catholic principle about living tradition makes it impossible simply to eliminate the tradition of the second millennium." Rather, what is required is "a creative synthesis of the first millennium and the second." Prusak notes that Kasper believes the synthesis should not and could not be the work of the Vatican Council itself, but "a matter for theology that comes afterward" (303). I do not see Prusak coming out in favor of either option. It is *his* gloss on Newman, so we should probably understand it to represent his thinking. On the other hand, he seems to be fairly supportive of the rather less radical approach of Kasper. Either way, this is surely the question raised by Prusak's careful exploration of the developments in the church of the second millennium. Is there anything at all there worth salvaging?

Perhaps it is possible to offer a more explicit reconciliation of Newman and Kasper than our author's reliance on suggestion allows for. Newman, of course, is not saying that nothing good came out of the second millennium of growth in the church. Rather, as Prusak recognizes, he offers the thought that there is nothing necessary about the development of Christendom and the acquisition of the trappings of a secular monarchy. The implication is clear. If it is not necessary, then we can certainly undo it if it seems advisable on theological or pastoral grounds. But can we not also say similar things about the second half of the first millennium? And is it not the case that many historians suggest that only before Constantine do we see the pristine Christian church? But before Constantine there were a couple of centuries of struggle with heresy, and it was the winners who wrote the history and claimed the title of orthodox. Is there somewhere we can draw the line? Was it with the death of the last apostle, or the Council of Jerusalem, or the expulsion of the Nazirites from the temple in Jerusalem? Kasper's point suffers from a similar problem. If he means that we need to see the development of the church as a whole, then fine. But if he really imagines a first millennium to be pitted against a second millennium, then the challenge he has to face is the same that Prusak's version of Newman must deal with.

The truth of the matter is that there was no moment when an evil

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genius took over the running of the church, certainly not around the year 1000. All along, the church has been the product of gospel teaching, good pastoral practice and sound theology, all modified by egotism, self-serving actions and the lust for power. I suspect there was some of it around on the first Pentecost. It has certainly been with us ever since, up to and including the present moment. Prusak admits as much when he quotes the trenchant observation of Michael Buckley that "[t]he will to power constitutes one of the strongest, yet unrecognized passions within human engagements, and the history of the Church indicates how ravaging and destructive an effect it can produce even while advancing under the flag of the most religious of vocabularies" (306).

So I want Prusak to come out of the closet and tell us what he *really* thinks about the relationship of the first and second millennia. His fine book makes clear that even the juridicization of church order in the first two centuries of the second millennium had some perfectly justifiable explanations. But I am waiting for his reflections on the process by which these developments acquired the mantle of divine inspiration. The church has always had leaders and presumably always will, and the form that leadership has taken in the post-apostolic age has most commonly been a sensible response to changing social circumstances. But what aspects of church order can be traced to the will of God and what aspects come from human inclinations is a very different matter. It seems probable, however, that a theological filter needs to be applied. For example, hierarchy may be a sensible approach to leadership, though its character ought to change as human attitudes to governance develop and, for example, democratic political systems acquire predominance in secular government. But how confidently can hierarchical models be assigned divine ordinance when Christian belief is faith in a trinitarian God? Communion trumps hierarchy, theologically speaking.

Prusak's emphasis on communion models at Vatican II is an important observation on the theological outlook of the council fathers. So is his vision of the council turning back to the apostolic and post-apostolic church in search of healthier ecclesial praxis than that of more recent times. He ends pretty much with the story of the council. But anyone who looks at the postconciliar church can see that the ecclesiology of the second millennium still rules the roost. Prusak's historical survey is an invaluable resource for addressing the really challenging question: what is there in the ecclesiology of the second millennium, before Vatican II, that is of any theological value whatsoever. Could this be a legitimate conclusion of Kasper's call to theolo-

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gians to "reconcile" the views of the two millennia? And where does Prusak stand?

Fairfield University PAUL LAKELAND

IV

As my colleague John O'Malley proposed in a recent article, one of the key hermeneutical questions, if not *the* key, in the ongoing reception of Vatican II is this: "Did anything happen?"[1] To ask "Did anything happen?" at Vatican II is to ask whether something new and distinctive or even discontinuous occurred in the overall event of the Council itself as well as in its documents. Vatican II remains contentious precisely because it raises the deeper historical and hermeneutical question of continuity and discontinuity, and does so not only in terms of how to "read" the Council but how to read the history of the Roman Catholic church. And Catholic theology, especially perhaps Catholic ecclesiology, has generally been uninterested in reading church history historically.

Bernard Prusak's *The Church Unfinished* is a testimony to the unfinished agenda of Vatican II, especially the council's willingness to acknowledge the historicity of the church and to fashion an ecclesiology and a practice of church that remains open to interaction with contemporary history and cultures. It is also a testimony to the reality of change in the life of the church, a necessary concomitant of its very historicity. Engaging discontinuity as a historical dynamic—even entertaining the possibility of discontinuity—is a destabilizing enterprise in any context, but especially in an institution that has constructed so much of its identity on the notion of being "always the same" (*semper eadem*). Those accustomed to historical consciousness and unfazed by discontinuity will welcome the book, and others who read the council and the long span of the church's history through the lens of continuity and unchangeability will be critical of it.

Prusak does a fine job of surveying in relatively brief scope (chapters 3-5) the sweep of the church's historical growth: the development of structures of ministry and governance, the evolving theological meaning and authority of these structures, juridical formulations that regulate them, and the sacramental-liturgical life that grounds them. These chapters are the historical center of the book, making extensive use of the primary sources and drawing on much post-Vatican II historical and theological scholarship, particularly that of key figures be-

[1] *Theological Studies* 67 (2006), 3-33.

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hind the council's theology and its first decades of implementation and reception. They are bracketed by two long chapters on the New Testament period at one end and two chapters at the other that explicate Vatican II's major documents and reflect philosophically and theologically on the eschatological future of the world church (with a very brief epilogue about women and the church). This structure raises questions about the methodology and genre of the book.

Methodologically, the New Testament chapters are more theology (or biblical theology) than history, although they do tell a story about the story that the New Testament communities told about Jesus and his followers and, later, about themselves. They yield a theological norm against which Prusak measures later history—the "Jesus movement" and those who through the centuries continued to follow "the way of Jesus." The "christological presuppositions of ecclesiology" (10) outlined in these chapters rest uneasily alongside the "historical ecclesiology" of chapters three through five, and leave unanswered the methodological question of the relationship of theological claims to historical realities. Together with the concluding two chapters, they also leave unanswered the question of genre: is this book theology or history? I would like to suggest that it may be an instance of that recently lionized entity (in the world of automobiles as well as post-colonial theory), a "hybrid." And as a hybrid it asks of the church both the historical question—*did* anything happen?—and the theological question—*will* anything happen?

Within this larger project, there are points at which I would differ with specifics of Prusak's interpretations. Two examples can serve to raise some further questions about method and style. In his discussion of a famous passage in *Against Heresies* (III.3.1-2) on the Roman church as handing on the apostolic tradition, he concedes too much to Irenaeus' statement that every church (i.e., "the faithful from everywhere") must necessarily agree with the Roman church (134). Here I think he misses the import of the sentence's conclusion, which roots Rome's faithfulness to the apostolic tradition in the presence of "those from everywhere" who have preserved the tradition there. Neither that sentence nor the paragraph as a whole implies that they have all learned it from Rome or that all must turn to Rome "to know the true faith." To the contrary, Irenaeus begins the paragraph by noting that the tradition of the apostles is made known in all the world and can be seen clearly in *every* church. For Irenaeus the Roman church is a great and well-known exemplar of what can be seen and known in every church—the succession of apostolic faith and teaching through its bishops—but it is not its source or norm.

The interpretive issue is that Prusak does not take sufficiently into

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account the rhetorical purpose of Irenaeus' argument in this passage and in the treatise as a whole, which is to establish a norm of faith and teaching (apostolicity) against gnostic teachers and systems. Irenaeus accomplishes this through a myth of origins about the apostolic tradition as "one and the same" everywhere, believed with unanimity by "everyone." Prusak seems to read this and similar assertions as history, not as the existential myth that they are. Future readers, whether historians or theologians, will need to give more consideration to the rhetoric of both historical and systematic ecclesiology.

A second example concerns the growth of papal power under Leo I and Gregory I (both "the Great"), which Prusak regards as "an unintended consequence of service" (179) in the wake of the Roman empire's disintegration in the West. While I would agree that neither bishop of Rome acted out of a calculated desire to gain secular power when he undertook civic and political actions that kept the city functioning in the face of attacking armies of Huns and Vandals (Leo) or the pressing need for someone to keep the aqueducts in repair and pay the army (Gregory), I cannot imagine that either could have been innocent of the near certainty that their stature and influence would increase thereby. Prusak reports how they characterized and exercised their authority within the church, but does not comment on the deliberately political way in which both bishops played the Roman and Petrine card in relation to bishops under their jurisdiction—which it turns out, they thought included *all* of them, even the other "patriarchal" bishops. Here it would have been helpful for Prusak to note that neither the Patriarch of Constantinople nor the other eastern bishops accepted these Roman claims. At the same time, more explicit attention to the eastern churches and their four patriarchal sees would have put the one western patriarch into more realistic perspective.

A further interpretive issue is the delicacy with which Prusak sidesteps issues of power in his historical narrative, presumably in the interests of even-handedness. A similar observation might be made about the discussion of the Great Schism and the conciliar movement (233-42) or of Vatican I and papal infallibility (254-66). This irenicism, however laudable, can obscure the historical, human, limited, political, and at times self-serving nature of the exercise of leadership and power in the church—whose ecclesiology Prusak proposes to survey "from below." By evening out differences and conflicts, his style makes for a narrative that might tend (unintentionally, I assume) more toward a story of continuity than change.

By way of conclusion, I want to return to the book's hybridity and reaffirm Prusak's overall project of explicating the history of change in the church as a means of arguing for its unfinished nature and thus its

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openness to further change in the present and future. And I want to ask a hybrid question: Is it mere historical coincidence that *The Unfinished Church* appeared in the same year as Roger Haight's first volume of *Christian Community in History*[2]—which Haight describes as both "historical ecclesiology" and "ecclesiology from below"—or is something *happening*?

Weston Jesuit School of Theology FRANCINE CARDMAN

AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

I am appreciative that the editors of *Horizons* gathered a group of distinguished reviewers for a symposium on *The Church Unfinished*. I thank the four participants, Dennis Doyle, Susan Wood, Paul Lakeland, and Francine Cardman for their insightful analysis. Their probing questions provide the opportunity to clarify my positions and to consider issues deserving more attention.

Before moving to the questions raised by the reviewers, some explanation of my methodological presuppositions seems in order. On page 229 of *The Church Unfinished*, I note that Thomas Aquinas' rich presentation of the church was integrated into his Christology and his treatment of sacraments, particularly the Eucharist. After ecclesiology's emergence as a distinct theological discipline, in the centuries after Aquinas, it became shaped not only by the polemical nature of the debates (e.g., about papal authority) to which it was reacting, but also by the over-compartmentalization of theology. That has given rise to my conviction that contemporary ecclesiology needs to be more upfront about articulating its foundational, theological underpinnings, particularly its Christological roots. The essential characteristics of the movement coming from Jesus need to be perennially "re-grounded" in the "characteristic Jesus" of the earthly ministry as remembered in the traditions that gave rise to the Gospels, and in the expectations that Jesus had for the disciples forming the movement that grew up around him. Ecclesiology must be embedded in an understanding of Jesus and his ministry, particularly as shaped by the biblical methodology officially accepted in Vatican II's Constitution on Revelation. That is the reason for my lengthy first chapter. Drawing upon a variety of sources, it emphasizes that, during his ministry, Jesus valued persons whom others considered irrevocably lost. He offered a new future to those who had no worldly reason to hope. His parables daringly proposed that a publican and a Samaritan might have a more genuine relation-

[2]New York: Continuum, 2004.

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ship with God than some professional religious leaders. He proclaimed a reign of God in which the poor, empty, and crying would be filled and laughing. Sharing a meal with him was likened to the celebration at a wedding. He proposed a way of living in which one risked turning the cheek or going the extra mile in order to create new possibilities in our human relationships. On the cross, he lived out what he had proclaimed, loving even his enemies. In the dark night of his vulnerability and defenselessness, he reaffirmed his trust in the saving Love who can overcome the hopelessness stemming from human history.[3] He thereby manifested God's love and compassion, and revealed that God is omnipotent in love. Such a memory of Jesus must reshape the church as the Body of Christ for our time. It provides a foundation from which to counter a past tendency to focus on ecclesial authority and jurisdiction rather than on a ministry of service, love, and compassion. I was pleased by Susan Wood's recognition that I set up my thesis by stressing the themes of the unexpected, openness to the future, pluriformity in church leadership patterns, inclusiveness, and interpretations of both Jesus and the church shaped by the manner and motivation of his death on the cross.

My book likewise traces the church's changing relationship to the Eucharist. The fourth and fifth chapters explain how changes in eucharistic practice during the medieval period profoundly impacted the theological understanding of church. Latin writers of the seventh to the ninth centuries still linked Eucharist and church as cause to effect. But as fewer and fewer faithful received communion, the Eucharist began to be considered as an end in itself, separated from its ecclesial effect. The previous emphasis on "all being united into the body of Christ" through the Eucharist (1 Cor 10:16-17) was gradually replaced by a focus on individual, personal union with Christ through reception of the sacrament. The seldom-received Eucharist would henceforth be less and less perceived as grounding the unity of the church. As a result—a point I want to stress—the idea that the church was the community of persons incorporated into Christ through the Eucharist faded into the background. The biblical and patristic vision of church as "the body of Christ," which had focused on eucharistic communities, each presided by a bishop (overseer) selected by the community and serving as a personal symbol of sacramental unity, was replaced by a concept of church as *corpus christianorum*, the corporate body of Christians as an organization unified by the authority of those who wielded *jurisdiction*. That organization was conceptualized as a pyramid, placing

[3]Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, tr. John Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 85-101 and 119-27.

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the pope at the top of a pyramidal system of authority. But my book is asking whether that development is or should be the final word.

My final chapter seeks to reestablish ecclesiology's crucial relationship with contemporary theological eschatology, which is no longer simply focused on death, heaven, and hell, but also includes a recognition of human responsibility for shaping the future. As I note on page 327, "Since the middle ages, 'antiquity' connoted something tested by time and tradition; what was old was authoritative and valued. Something 'modern' or 'new' was suspect; novel ideas and innovation were not welcomed."[4] By contrast, on page 334, I argue that, "as herald of a new creation, the community called Church must resist the temptation to turn its gaze inward, within its own walls, or over its shoulder, to the past. Succumbing would represent a loss of nerve in its mission of service to all times and places. A prophetic memory is aware that the past has never been perfect. To proclaim the good news of hope, the Church must ever nurture a critical openness to the future. In the words of Pope John XXIII at the opening of Vatican II: 'Divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations.'"[5]

Presently some maintain that Vatican II should solely be interpreted as being in total, unbroken continuity with the Catholic tradition. In that regard, John O'Malley asks "Is there any noteworthy discontinuity between the council and what preceded it? Did anything happen?"[6] One may further ask whether there can be anything new in the church. But, first, a more fundamental issue involves the manner in which one enters the fray. That leads me to one of the interpretive issues that Francine Cardman raises, namely, "the delicacy with which Prusak sidesteps issues of power in his historical narrative, presumably in the interests of even-handedness." She goes on to wonder whether, "[b]y evening out differences and conflicts, his style makes for a narrative that might tend (unintentionally, I assume) more toward a story of continuity than change." Lakeland, in a similar vein, declares that he wants "Prusak to come out of the closet and tell us what he *really* thinks about the relationship of the first and second millennia." Let me attempt to make clear "where I stand," in response to both Cardman and Lakeland.

I purposefully opted for irenicism and avoided shrill criticism in my approach. But my intentions and goals should not be underestimated. Precisely by laying out the ways in which the church, and

[4]See A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, tr. G.L. Campbell (London/Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 123-25.

[5]English text in *Documents of Vatican II*, eds. Walter M. Abbott & J. Gallagher (New York: Herder and Herder/Association Press, 1966), 712.

[6]"Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *Theological Studies* 67/1 (March 2006): 3-33, here 32.

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therefore the understanding of the church, have been shaped by historical developments over the centuries, I am, as the reviewers all note, raising the question of whether there can and should be more development. If what the church has become, and the ways it has been understood, are the result of development, is the church not open to *further development* and new possibilities?

Noting a tension between my quotes from John Henry Newman and Walter Kasper, Paul Lakeland asks me to clarify my view of the developments of the second millennium. In response, I turn to my discussion (on pages 301-02) of the fact that Vatican II balanced two concerns, renewal of the church and preservation of continuity. The reintroduced paradigm of communion was presented alongside, and in tension with, the pyramidal hierarchical paradigm that had developed during the church's second millennium. I then indicate my agreement with Hermann Pottmeyer's position that such juxtaposition must be counted as *progress*, "because by being complemented the older thesis is relativized as one-sided and bearings are given for further development in understanding of the faith"[7] Only after that do I cite Kasper's position about the need for a post-conciliar theological synthesis. I add that, although a Catholic approach to reform, as reflected by Trent and by Vatican II, cannot discard developments in leadership patterns during the second millennium of the church, it *can* seek to reshape them. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's recognition of the need to restate doctrines in differing historical contexts, found in *Mysterium Ecclesiae* (1973), can analogously be applied to structural development.[8] "The needed synthesis . . . is a task of reception, which is far from being a merely passive process."[9] Instead, it involves a creative retrieval of the ecclesiological tradition through a process of interpretation, translating the structures that met the needs of a past horizon into a form that responds to the contemporary situation. The kind of outcome that might be desired is suggested in two sentences from the last pages of my final chapter: "Our moment in history calls for a Petrine service which is effective because it is authoritative and convincing in a dialogical manner." "Surely, there is a need for committed and courageous bishops like Irenaeus in every time. [Quoting Josef Ratzinger:]'What the Church needs today, as always, are not adulators to extol the status quo, but [persons] whose humility and obedience are

[7]Hermann J. Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council," in *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo *et al.*, trans. & ed. Matthew J. O'Connell (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 38.

[8]Section 5, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 65 (1973): 402-04; English translation in *Catholic Mind* 71 (1973): 58-60.

[9]Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II," 38.

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no less than their passion for truth.'"[10] Concretely, this might mean that the church would make an effort to assimilate *some* "democratic" patterns of dialogue and consensus into the relationships between pope and bishops, and between bishops, priests, and the baptized faithful. It would include a concern for clarifying what the pope should receive from the bishops spread throughout the world, and for clarifying what the bishops should receive from their priests and people, and establishing the structures that would enable such outcomes.

The way that the called-for synthesis might be accomplished is far from being resolved. We appear to be in a post-conciliar impasse or even retrogression. That is precisely the reason why I think an eschatological emphasis is important. Joining others who see a critical need for a theology of history, my book proposes that the strategy for moving forward has to involve a fundamentally different way of thinking about possibility and the role of human agency for shaping the church under the guidance of the Spirit. The central point of my book is that a new underlying eschatological openness to possibility and the future has to be developed and find reception as a first step to overcoming some of the gridlock in moving toward a synthesis.

Lakeland also asks if there is anything at all worth salvaging from the second millennium. He notes that my book makes clear that even the juridicization of church order in the first two centuries of the second millennium had some perfectly justifiable explanations. But he then says he is waiting for my reflections on the process by which these developments acquired the mantle of divine inspiration. That is a most insightful and crucial question that also struck me as needing further attention when I finished the book. It is a research project that I have already begun.

Having provided a marvelously faithful overview of the themes in my book, Dennis Doyle asks if he is correct to interpret me as implying that those who are reluctant to make bold new decisions are either afraid of change or ignorant of history. He further asks whether there are some Catholics "who neither fear change nor ignore history but who would still oppose my emphasis on newness and the liberal agenda it implies" and whether I "avoid wrestling with alternative historical narratives and counter-arguments of intelligent scholars who offer a more negative assessment of the state of modern culture and the need to adapt to it."

In response, I wish to affirm that my book nowhere claims to counsel the fearful or enlighten the ignorant. It is my hope that a book that takes seriously the sweep of Christian history and tradition can resist

[10]Josef Ratzinger, "Free Expression and Obedience in the Church," in *The Church: Readings in Theology*, ed. Albert LaPierre et al. (New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1963), 212.

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being labeled as simply having a liberal agenda. The irenicism of my book, noted by reviewers in this and other journals, intended to leave room for and invite consideration and discussion. The call for openness to newness and possibility in the future of the church is not the expression of "a liberal agenda"; it arises out of my hope and love for the church. With regard to "counter-arguments of intelligent scholars who offer a more negative assessment of the state of modern culture and the need to adapt to it," I will make two points. First, neither I nor my book advocates adaptation to contemporary culture. The critical question is how the church is to speak to and find a hearing in culture. Second, I will bluntly say that neither I nor the book subscribes to a neo-orthodox pessimism about our time in history. In my faith perspective, ours is not simply an era of prevarication and ruin, since our time is no less redeemable than any other period in the history of the church. No era is immune to God's saving activity. My position is grounded in Christian hope. It is true that hope arises out of a certain darkness or crisis in life. It presupposes a certain unease or dissatisfaction with the way the world is.[11] As *Gaudium et Spes* pointedly declared, humanity's growing mastery over nature, as well as our shaping of the world's political, social, and economic order, is overshadowed by injustice, unfair distribution, and widespread hunger. The paradox of our world is that human freedom faces ever new forms of slavery, and human unity is threatened by racial and ideological antagonism and by the specter of war (sections 4 & 9). Nevertheless, humans have the freedom to turn themselves towards what is good and to work for it (sections 10, 13)—even within the church, I would add.

Susan Wood poses three questions which call for a much more profound response than I can provide in this context. But I will briefly respond to each.

1. Given the inadequate number of seminarians in the pipeline and an aging clergy in developed countries, which put a eucharistic model of the church at risk today, Wood asks what impact the altered experience of the Eucharist will have on our experience and vision of the church and on a theology of the laity.

I first recall Karl Rahner's words from over thirty-four years ago, in *The Shape of the Church to Come*,[12] which sadly fell upon deaf ears:

> Plans for the future must be made at the opportune time. If for instance we know that in ten years time we shall be able to provide only half of the existing parishes with a priest on the spot, we must

[11]Dermott Lane, *Keeping Hope Alive: Stirrings in Christian Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1996), 59.

[12]Karl Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, tr. Edward Quinn (New York: Seabury- Crossroad, 1974, [German edition 1972]), 50-51.

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> take incisive measures today in order to meet the state of affairs which will soon be with us. Such timely planning is necessary if only because opportunities and their preconditions are now present for what will be required later. If we go on as we have been doing these will disappear, since they will not have been tested in practice and subjected to experiments. If today, for instance, men who have proved themselves in their life, calling, and marriage, were perhaps ready to be ordained and to take on the leadership of a parish, their example could be beneficial for a time which is approaching when they will be absolutely necessary and when such a vocation will be completely taken for granted; but if it is attempted only after another ten or twenty years, there will be nobody who is prepared to take on the task.

It is now over thirty years later. Parishes are being consolidated into clusters and communion services are multiplying. Vatican II's efforts to restore the Eucharist to its central role as source and sign of unity is evaporating because of the inertia of the leadership refusing to reinstate ministerial lifestyles that once existed in the entire church and still do in the Eastern Churches. As a result, more and more assemblies of faithful do not gather around a table with bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ, through the eucharistic prayer addressed to the Father, through the Spirit, by one who presides in the name of the entire assembly (hence the plural "We"). The sacramental dynamism of a loaf and cup of wine becoming the body and blood of Christ so that those who receive them become the Body of Christ is being lost.

2. Wood asks, What are the possibilities for community today in the church? She also asserts that "[i]t seems that the more we talk about communion, the less we experience it in our ever larger parishes and in the anonymity of our neighborhoods."

In thinking about a response, I asked myself whether the parishes which I experienced growing up in northern New Jersey really provided more of a communal experience than what I find today. I find myself not ready to say yes without some reflection on the cultural Catholicism of that time. The reason is that I have experienced large but alive parishes that today provide a more prayerful and welcoming atmosphere. Much depends on the way the leadership shapes the community.

3. Wood notes that there are powerful forces in the church today pulling both for centralization and for decentralization. She observes that we do not have viable structures in place, such as better-functioning synods of bishops or episcopal conferences empowered to make liturgical and other decisions for their local church. She notes the

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various ways in which globalization contributes both to fragmentation and conformity and asks how we can experience communion within these forces.

My candid response is that the church will not be truly "reformed" unless bishops as a group find the courage to reestablish their genuine pastoral role in the church. Reestablishing the church as a Communion requires that bishops, not as isolated individuals but precisely in communion with one another and with their people, resist being reduced to administrative functionaries, a diminished role which has sometimes led them to be more concerned with preserving the good appearance of the church than with responding to the needs of their people with mercy and compassion. The bishop of Rome needs to be reminded of his role as protector of legitimate diversity by all the bishops who are in communion with him. Admittedly, the present system of selecting bishops makes them feel more accountable to those who selected them than to the people they serve.

Finally, I should say in passing that on page 293 I did note that section 33 of *Lumen Gentium* speaks of the laity having a vocation to build up the church and describes the "lay apostolate," commissioned by baptism and confirmation, as a participation in the saving mission of the church.

Francine Cardman suggests that my discussion of a famous passage in *Against Heresies* (III.3.1-2) on the Roman church as handing on the apostolic tradition concedes too much to Irenaeus' statement that every church (i.e., "the faithful from everywhere") must necessarily agree with the Roman church (134). She believes that I miss the import of the sentence's conclusion, which roots Rome's faithfulness to the apostolic tradition in the presence of "those from everywhere" who have preserved the tradition there. I wish to note that, on the same page cited, I do say: "In [Irenaeus's] perspective, the bishop of Rome taught in a way that reflected the genuine apostolic faith of all the churches, because his church gathered together or was in dialogue with persons from many different parts of the world. Thus, by listening to Rome, one heard the faith of the entire Church." But I agree with her call "to give more consideration to the rhetoric of both historical and systematic ecclesiology."

In discussing my treatment of the claims of Leo I and Gregory I, Cardman notes that it would have been helpful for me to note that neither the Patriarch of Constantinople nor the other eastern bishops accepted these Roman claims. She adds that more explicit attention to the eastern churches and their four patriarchal sees would have put the one western patriarch into more realistic perspective. I concur that my

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treatment would have benefited from such further expansion. That work is worth doing, and I hope it will be further pursued.

In closing, I agree with Cardman's description of my book "as a hybrid asking of the church both the historical question—*did* anything happen?—and the theological question—*will* anything happen?" In answer to her concluding question, I do hope that something is *happening*!

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