

Justification and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement. Edited by William G. Rusch. Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2003. 149 pp.

This book is a disappointing inventory of ecumenical attitudes towards the Lutheran—Catholic agreement. Behind the line runs a muted debate about a suggestion of Michael Root that the bilateral consensus between Lutherans and Catholics might become multilateral (50)—a kind of axial agreement bringing in other ec-

umenical partners across the fault line of the sixteenth-century divide. Episcopalian R. William Franklin politely but firmly declines: not the doctrinal content achieved, but rather the model of differentiated consensus used by Lutherans and Catholics to overcome the rift over the Lord's Supper, which has separated Canterbury and Rome (37). Surely Root's suggestion does not exclude using the model of "differentiated consensus" on other disputed matters. But in fact, resistance to the doctrinal content of the Lutheran—Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) is more than occasionally visible in this collection of papers presented after the signing of JDDJ in 1999.

The contributions are from varying perspectives and are of varying quality. Chapter 8, "Beyond Justification: An Orthodox Perspective," by Valerie A. Karras is in both tone and substance an amateurish anti-Augustinian rant, for example, "the partisans of the Reformation, as thoroughly as medieval Latin theologians, dogmatized a particular soteriology" (111). Particular disdain, untempered by comprehension, is directed toward Lutheran partisans: "Human beings are not restored to communion with God through an act of spiritual prestidigitation where God looks and thinks he sees humanity, but in fact is really seeing his Son" (112). This caricature stands side by side with Michael Root's incisive and nuanced observation: "The Joint Declaration avoids a merely external and forensic understanding of justification. . . by understanding faith as itself unity with Christ and thus a form of regeneration. . . even if that regeneration is not itself the Christian's righteousness" (49).

From a Pentecostal perspective, Frank D. Macchia makes a critique similar to Karras's, though he realizes that "the doctrine of justification in both Augustine and Luther was more complex than the forensic model" (135). Macchia argues that "righteousness is 'reckoned' to us in faith, not because Christ's 'merits' have been transferred to us, but rather because the future new creation to be experienced in the resurrection has already laid claim to us. . ." (142). He thus favors justification by regeneration in anticipation of perfection, rather than by the sinner's faith in the grace of Christ's deed of mercy on his or her behalf. By contrast Anglican

Henry Chadwick concludes his erudite if somewhat unfocused reflection on JDDJ with the decisive claim that "acceptance before God is both remission and renewal, both forgiveness and recreation. Throughout the entire process the believer is under the grace and Spirit of Christ," as in Augustine's famed remark, cited from the *City of God*: 'in this life our righteousness consists more in the forgiveness of sins than in perfection of virtues.' (32).

Other contributors offer insights more helpful than uncomprehending opposition between justification through Christ and renewal by the Spirit. In Roman Catholic Walter Kaspar's words, JDDJ "puts justification in the framework of the christological and trinitarian confessions of the undivided Church" (17, *pace* Karras' criticism of B. Lohse 111–12). Reformed theologian Gabriel Fackre has the most nuanced discussion, neatly pointing to the fit between Calvin's trinitarian exposition of justification (66) and JDDJ's "narrative" of "the trinitarian-christological foundation" of the differentiated consensus now achieved (69), which issues in a series of useful "admonitions" to all the traditions (77ff). Roman Catholic Iris Cassidy focuses on the critical Annex to JDDJ — which succeeded in reconciling the initially critical Eberhard Jüngel (alluded to by Root, 50–53). Cassidy shows how *simul iustus et peccator* can be acknowledged by both parties when the criteriological point of the justification doctrine is to 'orient all the teaching and practice of our churches to Christ' within 'the overall context of the church's fundamental Trinitarian confession of faith' (93ff). That new, common understanding of justification as criterion now challenges Lutherans and Catholics to achieve clarity on the relation of the Word of God to church ministry, doctrine and life on the way to full communion (95).

George Lindbeck's reflection is telling: "The primary need in our day is for doctrinally normed and community oriented catechesis, life, and worship analogous, though not identical, to the practices that enabled churches to survive and grow amidst the religiously pluralistic and wholly non-Christian cultures of the first centuries." To continue in sixteenth-century polemics, in a vain attempt to hold onto an antiquated confessional identity under the tacit assumptions of "Christendom," turns a blind eye to "the lone-

liness, anomie, depression and meaninglessness characteristic of purportedly autonomous and self-actualizing individuals inhabiting the globalizing consumerist society of twenty-first century capitalism" where churches in any case can "no longer chiefly rely on ordinary familial and communal processes of socialization to transmit and sustain [Christian] identity" (11). Ecumenical convergence and new evangelization of post-Christian societies turn out to be one and the same thing. This is not surprising since the disunity of the churches has been a basic factor in the de-Christianization of the West. The future of the ecumenical movement is the future of Christianity itself, if the justification of the ungodly at once unites each person to God in Christ and through Christ to each other.

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