

**BETWEEN CATHOLICITY AND UNIVERSALITY:
THE ECUMENICAL JOURNEY TO THE REDISCOVERY OF A ROBUST
CATHOLICITY**

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ABSTRACT

Like identical twins raised in different environments, two words with the same etymological root, can diverge significantly in meaning after long use in different semantic fields, without losing entirely their family resemblance. This is the case with the concepts “Catholic” and “Universal.” From this point of view, the recent decision of the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana to replace ‘Catholic’ in the Apostle’s Creed with ‘Universal’ not only rehashed an old issue that commanded much attention in the 1960s but also presumed correspondence in meaning between two concepts with divergent connotations and denotations. The result, in my opinion, is a loss in theological meaning and depth gained through ecumenical dialogues. Using the historical approach, the rediscovery of catholicity in the ecumenical dialogues would be explored. This will be complemented with the interpretation of catholicity vis-a-vis universality as regards their ecclesiological fittingness. In this way, the nuanced understanding of catholicity will be presented which goes beyond the identification of one denomination as the Catholic Church as well as a merely geographical understanding of the concept.

Keywords: Catholic, Catholicity, Universality, Presbyterian, Ecumenism

INTRODUCTION

In a letter addressed to all Presbyteries and titled, “Replacement of the Term ‘Catholic’ in the Apostles’ Creed,” the General Assembly Council of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, wrote that the Council, “after careful consideration and discussion, decided that the term ‘**Holy Catholic Church**’ as used in the Apostles’ Creed be replaced with ‘**Holy Universal Church.**’ The document gave the reason for this change. According to it, “this modification aims to address the ambiguity that could arise from the modern use of the word ‘Catholic’ and to make the intended meaning clearer to all members of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. This change reflects our commitment to ensuring that our beliefs and practices are understood by all.”⁵²

The line in the Apostles’ Creed about believing in the Holy Catholic Church has been a scandal, understood in the etymological sense of a stumbling block to the Churches that emerged from the Reformation. The Lutherans had substituted “Christian” for “Catholic” in the Creed because of an understanding of Catholicity in terms of authenticity. Thus any authentic Christian is thereby Catholic. John Calvin associated catholicity with unity in Christ and thus argued that the Church is catholic because there cannot be two or three Churches of Christ unless Christ is divided.⁵³ More common, however, is the identification of catholicity with universality. According to Claude Welch, in “the classical Protestant confessions, ..., while the phrase of the Apostles’ Creed regularly has its place, the epithet catholic rarely receives more than passing mention.... Further,

⁵² See Appendix A.

⁵³ John Calvin, *Institutions*, IV.1.2, cited in Claude Welch, “Catholicity,” *Ecumenical Review* 16:1 (1963) 34 [33-42]

the term as appropriated is either explicitly or implicitly taken to mean, quite simply, universal - spread out over the world.”⁵⁴ This was at the World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal 1963. It is at this conference that the Faith and Order reflection on catholicity began.⁵⁵ Writing in 2011, nearly half a century after, John St-Helier Gibaut, an Anglican priest from Canada, argues that it is imperative that the concept and reality of catholicity be rediscovered by the Protestant churches through ecclesial reception of the Faith and Order teaching on it.⁵⁶ The Presbyterian Church of Ghana is, however, pulling in the opposite direction.

This article will explore the history of the recovery of catholicity in the ecumenical discussion with particular attention to the rich and nuanced meaning gained therein. As a second step, the shifts in emphasis and understanding in the Roman Catholic tradition will be highlighted. Finally, the inadequacy of universality as a replacement for catholicity will be noted. Hopefully, the article will show that the choice by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is based more on sociological rather than theological considerations and that there will be a greater appreciation of catholicity as one of the marks of the Church together with unity, holiness and apostolicity.

Catholicity in the Ecumenical Movement – A Historical-Theological Exploration

The four marks of the church of Christ are unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity - *unam, sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam ecclesiam*. This is professed in the Creed. As long as Christians identified themselves as one, there was no problem, especially with a sociological understanding of the unity of the church. The Great Schism between East and West in 1054 and the further splintering in the Protestant Reformation necessitated a deeper understanding of the unity of the Church as both a gift and a task. As a gift, the unity of the Church is based on Jesus Christ. This subsists despite divisions. As a task, the Church must work towards doing her part in response to Jesus’ prayer: that they may be one (*ut unum sint*) (Jn 17:21). This is the originating impulse for the ecumenical movement. Division within Christianity also brought about complication concerning who or what is catholic. This complication is brought out in this rather long quote from Diarmaid MacCulloch:

Who or what is a Catholic? This Greek word has become one of the chief battlegrounds in western Latin Christianity, for it is used in different ways which outside observers of Christian foibles find thoroughly confusing. The word “Catholic” is the linguistic equivalent of a Russian doll. It may describe the whole Christian Church founded two thousand years ago in Palestine, or the western half of the Church which split from mainstream eastern Christianity a thousand years ago, or that part of the western half which remained loyal to the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) after the sixteenth century, or a Protestant European Christian who thought that the Bishop of Rome was Antichrist, or a modern “Anglo-Catholic” faction within the Anglican Communion. How can the word describe all of these things and still have any meaning? . . . The Reformation introduced many more complications to the word; in fact there were very many different Reformations, nearly all

⁵⁴ Claude Welch, “Catholicity,” *ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁵ John St-Helier Gibaut, “Catholicity, Faith and Order and the Unity of the Church,” *Ecumenical Review* 63:1 (2011) 178 [177-185].

⁵⁶ John St-Helier Gibaut, *ibid.*, 185.

of which would have said that they were simply aimed at recreating authentic Catholic Christianity.⁵⁷

During and after the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church presented herself as possessing catholicity and thus being the authentic Church established by Jesus with a history that goes back to the apostles. This self-understanding of the Roman Catholic Church disqualified the Protestant Churches of catholicity. Besides, the presence of the term ‘Catholic’ in the self-identification of the Roman Catholic Church reinforces her as the sole claimant to catholicity which other Protestant Churches lack, at least in their names. This seems to be the sociological reason behind the decision of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Before the Ecumenical movement, other Protestant groups had other strategies for side-stepping this challenge.⁷ This is the context in which the World Conference on Faith and Order, Montreal, 1963, took place and kicked off reflection in the ecumenical movement on catholicity. At the session dedicated to ‘‘catholicity’’, papers were offered by Russian Orthodox Archpriest Vitaly Borovoy and American Methodist Professor Claude Welch. The introduction to the session was given by Lukas Vischer, a member of the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches. We shall engage these three papers to glean the perspective and direction they gave to the discussion on catholicity in the ecumenical context.

In his short and dense introduction, Vischer noted that despite the tendency in Protestant circle to substitute other words for catholicity, ‘‘we must not, therefore, avoid this term; we must rather attempt to grasp anew what is meant by it, and to free it from the impoverishment and reduction which it has suffered in the course of the history of the Church.’’⁵⁸ He noted that the ecumenical encounters have broadened the selfunderstanding of the Churches so much so that ‘‘they have recognized that the gift of the presence of Christ in his Church implies a richness far greater than could be expressed in the life of their particular church; and they have made the liberating discovery that dialogue and fellowship with other churches made available to them aspects of the truth revealed in Christ of which they had not previously been aware in quite the same way.’’ Vischer thus stakes out the Christological basis of catholicity.⁹ Finally, he presented catholicity as both a gift and a task. ‘‘Catholicity is a dynamic term. The Church of Christ is not merely catholic, but is in process of becoming so....’’⁵⁹

Vitaly Borovoy expounded on the Christological basis of catholicity to show that catholicity is the most important element in the definition of the essence of the Church as such, and is the most important criterion of the true and real church, especially in the historical circumstances of divided Christendom. The early Church recognized this. Thus, they considered being Christian and being

⁵⁷ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe’s House Divided*, quoted in John St-Helier Gibaut, *ibid.*, 177. ⁷ Paul S. Minear, a Protestant rhetorically asked: ‘‘What do we mean when we express our faith in the catholic church? Where answers are given in Protestant circles, they are frequently too casual, or too vague, or too parochial, or too docetic to survive the first breath of criticism.’’ Paul S. Minear, ‘‘Catholicity in Practice,’’ *Ecumenical Review* 15:1 (1962) 39 [39-44].

⁵⁸ Lukas Vischer, ‘‘The Meaning of Catholicity, Preface’’ *Ecumenical Review* 63:1 (1963) 24 [24-25]. ⁹ ‘‘When we speak of catholicity, we confess the one Lord, who is the Lord of the whole world, who embraces all things, but who is also at all times the corner-stone on which the Church is built.’’ Lukas Vischer, *ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁹ Lukas Vischer, *ibid.*, 25.

catholic like a name and a surname, the combination of which is needed to identify a person. St. Augustine, for example, confessed “*Catholicus Christianus sum*” – I am a Catholic Christian.⁶⁰ The centrality of catholicity to ecclesiology notwithstanding, it must be recognized that a denominational and confessional approach would stall the discussion. Borovoy therefore proposed a return to the Church. This mirrors the methodological choice made in Roman Catholic theology called *ressourcement*, which we shall see in the next section.

With this return to the Church fathers, Borovoy noted that catholicity is not found in the Scriptures. The first use of the word is found in St. Ignatius of Antioch’s letter to the Smyrneans where he insisted that “where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.” This implies that primarily, the Church is catholic because “she is united by love as the “Body of Christ” with her divine head in one indissoluble whole.”⁶¹ The etymology of the word Catholic, clarifies this link. It is derived from the Greek, *kath’holou* meaning “in general,” “on the whole,” “universal.”⁶² It is the union of the Church with Jesus which is the basis of the wholeness or universality of the Church. Every Christian is an individual and every Christian community is local or particular. However, being Catholic, being united with Jesus the Lord, every Christian and every Christian community is in communion with every other Christian and every other Christian community thanks to this union with Jesus Christ. The Church is therefore not constituted by the individual members rather the individual Christian or Christian community derives its being and worth from belonging to the whole. As St. Augustine put it: “the Church is one, which our forefathers called catholic, in order that it should be made clear by her name, for she is a single whole.”⁶³ All who believe in Jesus Christ, who are made one in Jesus Christ himself wherever they may be, belong to this single whole. It is from this point of view that catholicity implies universality and wholeness both in the quantitative and qualitative senses. The Christian faith unites all believers worldwide and each Christian or Christian community mirrors the whole of Christianity. Catholicity is also the basis of mission. Jesus is the Lord of creation. It is the task of the Church to bring all creation to an acknowledgement of his lordship and bring them to the catholic unity. Thus, catholicity is both a gift and a challenge as Lukas Vischer had pointed out.

Claude Welch’s contribution highlighted some of the insights already gained in the reflection of Vischer and Boromoy. Like them, he underlined thickly the Christological roots of catholicity while giving a nod to the Holy Spirit in his effort to ground openness to the new as part of fidelity to the whole that catholicity commands. According to him, “catholicity requires the repudiation of the sectarian spirit.” This is in line with openness to the whole, because “reflecting the freedom and inclusiveness of the work of Christ and the Spirit, catholicity finds expression in humble and unself-centred welcome of the manifold operations of grace wherever they appear, within or outside any identifiable community of Christians.”⁶⁴ We shall see the rediscovery of this idea by

⁶⁰ “As the first name and the surname mean the full name of a person, so the cognomen ‘catholic’ gives fullness to the nomen ‘Christian’.” Vitaly Borovoy, “The Meaning of Catholicity,” *Ecumenical Review* 63:1 (1963) 26 [26-32].

⁶¹ Vitaly Borovoy, *ibid.*, 29

⁶² John St-Helier Gibaut, *op. cit.*, 178.

⁶³ Vitaly Borovoy, *ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁴ Claude Welch, *ibid.*, 41.

Roman Catholics and its expression in *Nostra aetate*, the Vatican II Council's "Declaration on the Relation of the Church with non-Christian Religions."⁶⁵

The first engagement of the ecumenical movement with catholicity in Montreal yielded abundant fruit as seen above. At that conference, Protestant groups staked their claim on catholicity as a mark of the Church and not simply of the Roman Catholic Church. From 1966-1968, a Joint Theological Commission of the Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church reflected on the theme of "Catholicity and Apostolicity." Thereafter, the World Council of Churches Uppsala Assembly in 1968 dealt with the theme, "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church."⁶⁶ In the 1987 Faith and Order publication, which is an exposition of the ecumenical understanding of the Nicene Creed, *Confessing the One Faith*, catholicity was treated. Catholicity was also treated in the document prepared by the Faith and Order Department for the 2006 World Council of Churches Assembly in Porto Alegre.⁶⁷ In sum, since after the Montreal Conference of 1968, Protestants, at least at the level of the World Council of Churches and in theological discussions, have lost the discomfort they felt with the concept of catholicity. The rediscovery of its theological richness through an exploration of the Church Fathers, not only resulted in the discontinuation of the diversionary tactics of translating catholicity with universality, but also brought new perspective in the Roman Catholic theological thinking as seen in the Vatican II Council. The decision of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is like losing ground already gained through painstaking and ongoing ecumenical labour not only by the Protestant groups but also by the Roman Catholic Church.

Reception of Catholicity in the Roman Catholic Church

Vatican II Council is a landmark in the life of the Roman Catholic Church and can be seen as the outcome of a reception of catholicity. In reaction to the Reformation, the Church was seen as a "perfect society" in the sense that it is not subordinate to any other institution and lacks nothing of what is required for its institutional completeness.⁶⁸ Catholicity is seen as a possession of the sociologically identifiable group – the Roman Catholic Church. By identifying the Church of Christ as a "perfect society" – the Roman Catholic Church – all other ecclesial bodies were excluded. Openness to truth even outside the confines of the Roman Catholic Church and to the world was also foreclosed. The connotation of wholeness and universality in the concept of the catholicity of the Church was seen in terms of geographical spread. This is seen in the Igbo catechism: *ihe bụ na Nzukọ bụ Katọlik bụ na ọ bụ ozuru mba ọnyị*. The church saw herself as ranged against the world in reaction to the errors of modernism. No wonder, Protestants shunned the narrow understanding of catholicity and engaged in different language games to bypass it in the Creed. These changed in the Vatican II Council. These changes can be interpreted as fuelled by a new reception of the catholicity of the Church in the Roman Catholic Church.

At the heart of the shifts that shaped the direction and reflection at the Vatican II Council is a new openness to seeking the wholeness of the truth even beyond the confines of the institutional church.

⁶⁵ Vatican II Council, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*" no. 2.

⁶⁶ For the Report see, Edmund Schlink, "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church: A Report of Section I of the Uppsala Assembly," *Ecumenical Review* 21:2 (1969) 98-115.

⁶⁷ For the history of the meetings that reflected on catholicity see, John St-Helier Gibaut, *ibid.*, 178-184.

⁶⁸ Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church (Expanded Edition)* (New York: Doubleday, 2002) 18.

This is discernible in the address of Pope St. John XXIII⁶⁹ on the first day of the Vatican II Council on October 11, 1962. First is openness to the world. He did this on two counts – a rebuttal of the anti-modernist approach which saw modern life and culture as simply degenerate and an insistence that through “bringing herself up to date where required, and by the wise organization of mutual cooperation, the Church will make men, families, and peoples really turn their minds to heavenly things.”⁷⁰ According to the Pope, the salient point of the Council was not to discuss one article of faith or another, but in response to the “Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world ... [to] step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought.”⁷¹ Second is the commitment to the promotion of the unity of the Christian and of the human family. This entails a commitment to the promotion of unity among Roman Catholics, ecumenical relations with other Christians, and dialogue with non-Christians.

The discussion on the Church by the Fathers of the Vatican II Council showed clearly the shift that had taken place in the ecclesiological reflection in the Roman Catholic Church. The schema *De Ecclesia*, drafted by the preparatory Theological Commission was severely criticised. This resulted in a replacement schema authored by Gerard Philips, who went on to become the adjunct secretary of the Theological Commission. This replacement schema was not an isolated event. During the Council, such replacement schemas, articulated from a more patristic, ecumenical, historically sensitive and less Scholastic, manualist-inspired theological orientation, gained access into the discussions of the Council.

The first chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, presents her as a mystery and traces her origins to the Trinity and the triune God’s redemptive relationship with the world and humanity. It used several images drawn from Sacred Scripture to depict the Church – “the sheepfold, the sole and necessary gateway to which is Christ,” “the Jerusalem which is above,” “our mother,” “the Body of Christ,” “the bride of Christ,” “the cultivated field.” In number 8 of the chapter, the Council Fathers focused on identifying this Church in history. It warned that the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches, are not to be thought of as two realities. On the contrary they form one complex reality which comes together from a human and a divine element in analogy to the incarnation. “This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside its visible confines. Since these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards Catholic unity.”

In her Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* no. 3, the Vatican II Council asserted that the Holy Spirit has not refrained from using the separated Churches and communities as means of

⁶⁹ The influence of the ecumenical movement on Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, who later became Pope John XXIII is attested to by his friend, Lambert Beauduin. See J.A. Komonchak, “Pope John XXIII and the Idea of an Ecumenical Council”, online at <https://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/john-xxiii-idea-of-a-council.pdf> (2011), 11 pages, accessed June 20, 2024.

⁷⁰ John XXIII, “Opening Speech to Vatican II Council,” https://vatican2voice.org/91docs/opening_speech.htm (accessed June 19, 2024)

⁷¹ John XXIII, *ibid.*

salvation. However, it is the articulation of the relationship between the Church of Christ and the earthly Church in *Lumen Gentium* number 8 which is the theological fulcrum for a new understanding of catholicity of the Roman Catholic Church. Precisely, the choice of “subsists in” (*subsistit in*) rather than “is” (*est*) captures the shift. The Council did not identify the Church of Christ exclusively with the Roman Catholic Church. Rather, it affirms that the elements of the Church are pre-eminently verified in the Roman Catholic Church without claiming that it is exhausted therein. That is why in the next sentence, the Council affirmed that elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church. In other words, for ecumenical openness, the Council Fathers chose “subsists in” rather than “is” to express the relationship between the Church of Christ and the earthly Church.⁷² This shift in understanding of the relationship is due to a reception of catholicity of the Church, achieved through the theological labours of the Catholic theologians, who before the Vatican II Council, favoured a theological method that took them back to the early Fathers of the Church. In this way, they were able to get their theological imagination recharged by a vision broader than Scholasticism shaped by the Counter-Reformation polemics.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has a section on “the Church is Catholic.” It notes that the Church is Catholic in two senses. First, the Church is catholic because Jesus Christ is present in her and second because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race. It then raised and answered the question: “who belongs to the Catholic Church?” It answered that all are called to this catholic unity of the People of God. Among these are those who are fully incorporated into the society of the Church and all others who are baptised and honoured by the name Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not preserved unity or communion under the successor of Peter. All other human beings, irrespective of religious affiliation, are invited to the catholic unity because salvation comes from Jesus Christ.⁷³ As must have been clear, in the understanding of catholicity before Vatican II Council, only Roman Catholics would qualify to be Catholics. All other people would be accounted for as outside the pale of salvation.

Finally, the implementation of the directives of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the 2001 document of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments on literal translation of liturgical texts from the Latin Editio Typica projects better the nonexclusive identity between the Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. For example, before *Liturgiam Authenticam*, the Igbo translation of “et unam, sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam ecclesiam” is “*ekwe m n’otu Nzuko nsọ Katolik, na apostolik.*”

Literally, this means, “I believe in the one Holy Catholic Church which is apostolic. This gives the impression of an identity between the Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. When the new Igbo rite came into effect on June 5, 2019, the line in the Creed was translated as: “*ekwe m na Nzuko, nke dị otu, dị asọ, buru katolik na apostolik*” (I believe in the Church, which is one, holy, catholic and apostolic). The Church is the subject qualified by the four marks without any commitment to this Church being the Roman Catholic Church. Granted, people may without reflection identify this Church with the Roman Catholic Church. But it is easier to show that even

⁷² For more on the history behind this choice of expression see, Karim Schelkens, “Lumen Gentium’s ‘Subsistit in’ Revisited: The Catholic Church and Christian Unity After Vatican II,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008) 875-893.

⁷³ Vatican, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice 1992) 225-231.

if the Roman Catholic Church possesses the outlined gifts in a preeminent way, other ecclesial communities are not excluded from possessing them too, even if to different degrees. It is therefore easier to see the terms catholic and catholicity as broader than the Roman Catholic Church. These are all evidence of and aid towards new reception of catholicity in the Roman Catholic Church.

From Universality to Catholicity – Swimming Upstream

As seen above, before the Faith and Order Conference, in Montreal, 1963, staked a claim on catholicity, Protestant groups either ignored that term in the creed or replaced it with other terms such as “Christian” or “universal.” This shift in Protestant thinking can be traced back to the ecumenical movement which also rubbed off on Roman Catholic theologians and resulted in a new reception of catholicity which opened the Roman Catholic to the world, to other Christians and to all humanity. By opting to replace ‘catholic’ with ‘universal,’ the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, seems poised to swim against the theological current, though Protestant groups had swapped ‘universal’ for ‘catholic’ in recent history. Swimming against the current is not necessarily wrong. But, if the replacement concept is not as theologically adequate as what it is meant to replace, then, there is reason to justify the choice to stick out on one’s own. We want to show in this section, that although ‘catholic’ and ‘universal’ are, etymologically related in Greek and Latin respectively, they are like identical twins raised up in different environments. They have therefore acquired different denotations and connotations that make them specialised.

The etymological meaning of ‘universal’ is the ‘whole.’ It is composed of two words – ‘unus’ – one and ‘verto, -ere, versum’ – to turn. Literally, it is to be turned into one, combined into one. Universum, therefore, stands for the one, the whole, the totality towards which all the diversity of things are turned and subsumed. It is a concept that developed to relate the diversity of things to an originating source or a principle of intelligibility. This is the philosophical meaning of the word and it was used in contrast to the particulars, the diversity of things. This contrast gave rise to the challenge of accounting for the ontological status of universals. This question was heavily debated during the Middle Ages and nominalism was one of the extreme positions taken regarding the ontological status of universals. However, the general usage of universals rarely has any reference to the rarefied debate in philosophy. To many, universal or universality is whatever pertains to the universe – universe understood in terms of everything that exists – the earth, the sun, the moon, the planets, etc.

Having seen the semantic field of the term, ‘universal’, its appropriation for ecclesiological use seems like swimming upstream. Universality evokes globalization. A universal Church implies a Church that actually or potentially embraces the whole universe or all peoples. This draws attention to geographical spread. Catholicity also has this implication. But catholicity does not evoke globalization as immediately as universality. Even then, it is the strand of meaning of globalization as moving beyond local boundaries that is applicable to the Church. Globalization as the neoliberal economic vision with unhindered flow of capital or the compression of time and space through technology introduces values and intentions that run contrary to the mission of the Church.⁷⁴ Economic globalization aims at the ascendancy of a neoliberal capitalistic order. The asymmetrical power relationship between the different parts of the world and of peoples is replicated regarding culture. Those with more resources and who control information communication technologies

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Turner, “Catholicity and Globalization” *New Blackfriars* 86 (2005) 127 [127-129].

saturate the life space with their culture products, images and ideations. Other groups must then assimilate or appropriate what has been offered. These show that globalization raises challenges to the Church's mission. Its close association with universality colours the later and makes it less appropriate to express the catholicity of the Church, despite the common etymological meaning of catholicity and universality.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ anticipated the division among his followers along denominational lines and prayed that all may be one (Jn 17:21). The consciousness that this division is a scandal dawned only recently, many years after the Reformation. This gave birth to the ecumenical movement. Despite Jesus' prayer which is a sort of charter for the movement, and the theological fruits of such ecumenical encounters, the effort suffers hiccups in some lands and climes. These hiccups are not due solely to doctrinal considerations, but mainly to local socio-political and cultural factors as well as the theological orientation of ecclesiastical leadership at historical conjunctures. This is what could have happened in Ghana that made the Presbyterian Church of Ghana to seek to replace the word in the Creed. This is a weighty decision which implies opting out of the ecumenical journey.

The case of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is not isolated. Such hiccups on the ecumenical journey are commonplace. For example, in 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a series of responses on Vatican II Council ecclesiology, which seemed to close the ecumenical gap opened up by the formulation that the Church of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church. They claim identity between the Church of Christ and the earthly Church. Such events are supposed to redouble the efforts at ecumenical dialogues guided by the understanding of catholicity as implying the belonging together of all in the Church of Christ, where all share the means of sanctification and are challenged to make their contribution to the spread of the kingdom of Christ.

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