

## Preface

*Mission and Dialogue* is the programmatic title of the first volume in the new *One World Theology* series devoted to missiology and the universal Church. Instigated by *missio* in Aachen, this series is intended to serve as a universal Church forum. The volumes in the series will provide a platform for an exchange of ideas on theological issues in which representatives of the different continents are invited to present their views on specific topics. The forum aims to foster dialogue between the local churches and contribute to a dialogue among local churches on equal terms.

The distinguishing feature of *One World Theology* is that theological issues will be addressed not from a single perspective but from various angles. Hence a single anthology will comprise different points of view on the *quaestiones disputatae*, the contrast between them deriving not least from the context in which they are rooted. The hallmark of *One World Theology* is unity in diversity. It is specifically intended that the authors should present and accentuate their views in different ways and perhaps even contradict each other within a single volume. This will stimulate a lively debate that can extend the boundaries of theology, strengthen the Church as a learning community and contribute to its catholicity.

The first volume in the new *One World Theology* series consists of five chapters. In the opening chapter the authors offer systematic-theological reflections on the relationship between mission and dialogue. The initial contribution distinguishes between inclusivist, exclusivist and pluralist approaches to dialogue. The concept of dialogue is subsequently considered in systematic terms and with respect to the Bible, following which consequences are drawn for mission undertaken on the basis of dialogue. The debate then commences with José María Vigil's article *Mission is dialogue and*

*only dialogue*, which takes a critical look at exclusivist and inclusivist approaches. The author argues that they should be seen in their historical context and subjected to a critical analysis. Considering the relations between different religions from an Asian perspective, Joseph Nedumkallel points out that the religious experience and the spiritual dimension constitute a crucial bridge between religions. This can serve as a point of departure for inter-religious dialogue grounded in the realisation that all religions are essentially characterised by the elements that unite rather than separate them. In his examination of inter-faith dialogue from an African perspective Joseph Kato Bitole addresses the need for dialogue especially among people in Africa, a continent rent by divisions. He says that dialogue is a specific feature of the Jewish-Christian legacy, the Christian faith being distinguished, in particular, by the way in which Christians establish and nurture relations with those around them.

The authors contributing to the second chapter of this volume focus their attention on inter-religious dialogue. Looking at the topic through Asian eyes, Francis X. D'Sa draws attention to both the increase in secularisation and the emergence of a 'sacred secularity'. Drawing on Raimon Panikkar, he explains that the whole cosmos is a living reality and that secularisation should, therefore, not be seen as the opposite of religiousness. The issue is not one of confrontation or dissociation but rather of mutual understanding, respect and acceptance. Christian Troll continues with thoughts on the relationship between mission and dialogue in the context of encounters between Christians and Muslims. He emphasises that mission, dialogue and preaching are terms used to describe separate activities and that there is no reason why they should not exist side by side. He highlights the need in both the Christian and the Muslim world to reflect on the different interpretations of mission and *da'wah* in both inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue. Diego Irarrázaval, meanwhile, explores the relationship between the Christian faith and Latin American cultures. He argues that restrictive, exclusive approaches must be overcome, as must essentialist and dichotomous relations, if an integrative understanding between autochthonous and Christian concepts is to be reached. In his opinion, special importance attaches to popular religious belief, which has the status

of a theologumenon and reflects the *sensus fidei*. Approaching the subject from an African perspective, Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi states that belief in God is taken as a matter of course in traditional African religions. Faith is more the result of feeling than analysis; it is not so much a cognitive conception as a guiding principle in life. For Mvumbi the challenge is to effectuate a dialogue that can bring together these different approaches to the understanding of religion and establish a relationship between them.

The next chapter deals with the dialogue between the universal Church and the local churches. Alexander P. Zatyryka Pacheco begins by pointing out that the Church, like every other organisation, has to resolve the tension between the desire for identity and the need for adaptation. An organisation can only have a future if it succeeds in harnessing this tension and turning it into a source of strength and energy. Zatyryka sees both the universal Church and the local church as being servants of proclamation. He claims that the service they perform must be mystagogical and that the local churches have a special responsibility to develop mystagogies. Michael Amaladoss from India points out that the universal Church cannot simply be identified with the Church in Rome. Taking the liturgy as an example, he deals with what, from an Asian standpoint, are unsuccessful attempts to develop a lively dialogue and stresses that pluralism should not be equated with relativism. He proposes coordination and dialogue between the local church and the universal Church, instead of the development of a dominant centre, as points of departure for a “different kind of globalisation”. Ignace Ndongala Maduku looks at the development of basic ecclesiastical communities in the archdiocese of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). He feels that the main challenge for the Church hierarchy is to transform the basic communities into laboratories of prophetic activity so that the Church can “lay the ground for a humane society”. The article on *The universal Church as the network principle of the Church* focuses on the strained relationship between homogeneity and heterogeneity. Drawing on ecclesiological positions adopted by Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper, it links this ecclesiological dispute with the question of revealed theology, on which the understanding of contextualisation or a perennial principle in theology rests. In view of the need to reconcile these positions it is proposed that the universal Church should be seen to a greater extent

as a formal (less than a material-normative) communicative principle in the Church, to which the local churches owe their universal Church dimension.

In the fourth chapter theologians from different continents examine the state of dialogue between the local churches. Beginning with the missionary epistle of the German bishops *His Salvation to All Peoples*, Ludwig Schick goes on to portray the universal Church as a community of learning, solidarity and prayer. Referring to specific examples and experiences, he demonstrates the extent to which a vibrant dialogue between the local churches can help to enrich the universal Church. Orlando B. Quevedo from the Philippines recalls the Asian vision of lively local churches, which entails dialogue with the cultures of the people (inculturation), the different religious traditions (inter-religious dialogue) and the poor (integral liberation). He points to the lively history of dialogue in the FABC and, referring to the processes of dialogue within the Church in the Philippines, illustrates that the dialogue between the local churches can help to enrich both the local and the universal Church. Looking at the Church in a globalising world, Anselme Titianma Sanon advocates a dialogue between local churches that connects with a “dialogue with the cultures” in the local churches. In the final contribution in this chapter Michael Huhn outlines the genesis of the Latin American Episcopal Conference CELAM, which served as a model for the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences) and SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar). Referring to the example of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, he shows how local churches join hands and exercise mutual solidarity.

In the final chapter of this first volume in the *One World Theology* series the authors outline the pastoral consequences arising from a dialogical interpretation of mission. Recalling the approach taken by Adolf Exeler, a pastoral theologian from Muenster and the founder of comparative pastoral theology, Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst highlights some key elements of missionary pastoral work. Drawing on his practical experiences of the universal Church in the bishopric of Limburg, he illustrates the consequences for a diocese if it regards itself as a community of learning, prayer and solidarity within the universal

Church. Albert Peter Rethmann distinguishes between inculturation and related terms, such as adjustment, adaptation, accommodation, indigenisation, contextualisation, etc., and emphasises their correlation with the Christian belief in incarnation. He explains that the concept of inculturation is based on the integrative, critical and stimulating function of belief and suggests that the concept of inculturation should relate not just to the *missio ad extra*, but also and in equal measure to the *missio ad intra*. From an African perspective Pius Rutechura says that dialogue in missionary work must help Christians in Africa to rediscover the cultural values of the continent, hold these values in high esteem, promote community life and play an active part in overcoming the barriers between people. He regards the major challenges as the fundamental option for the poor, monitoring of secular leaders, the role of the Church in reconciliation, justice and peace, and ecumenical cooperation. Finally, Wendy M. Louis examines the pastoral consequences of a dialogical understanding of mission. In doing so, she pays tribute to the special importance of the Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adultorum (OICA) and shows that small Christian communities have both a missionary charisma and the capacity to engage in dialogue.

The authors in this first volume of the *One World Theology* series – many of them are long-standing partners of *missio* – have agreed to participate in a universal Church dialogue, the vitality of which rests on the juxtaposition of diverse perspectives, the presentation of varying arguments and, in some cases, the emergence of differences in interpretation. This conceptual multiplicity is programmatic for the new series of books. *One World Theology* feels beholden, in the best sense of the word, to a universal Church catholicity that is characterised by a lively theological dialogue rooted in the two fundamental Pauline principles of all Christian catholicity. May the dialogue promote the building up of the Church and be guided by the very essence of our faith: Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, which must be at the heart of every Christian dialogue.

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# MISSION AND DIALOGUE

Approaches to a Communicative Understanding of Mission



Edited by

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