

IN CHRIST THERE IS NO EAST OR WEST: HOW AN EASTERN WAY OF THINKING HELPED TO HEAL CHURCH DIVISIONS AT VATICAN II AND BEYOND

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Abstract

This paper argues that an “Eastern way of thinking”—holistic, experiential, paradox-friendly, and communal—helped Vatican II shift Catholic ecclesiology from a juridical model of unity toward a sacramental, Eucharistic communion, enabling new Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. Through seven examples, including ressourcement, pneumatology, liturgical theology, and religious freedom, it shows how the Council retrieved patristic and Eastern sources and calls for continued reception, broader cultural participation, and theologians to “speak so they can be heard.”

Keywords: Vatican II; Eastern theology; communion ecclesiology; ecumenism; ressourcement; pneumatology; reception

1. Introduction

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) marked a decisive turning point in Catholic ecclesiology and ecumenism. Among its most consequential shifts was the church’s changed posture toward the Christian East, especially the Orthodox churches: from a

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predominantly juridical vision of unity, often framed in terms of "return," toward a sacramental and communal vision that made genuine theological dialogue possible. Vatican II did not resolve the East-West schism. Yet it reshaped the intellectual and spiritual framework within which healing could occur, allowing Catholic-Orthodox engagement to begin with shared sources and sacramental realities rather than polemical labels.

In this paper, I argue that an "Eastern way of thinking" helped the Council to make this shift. By "Eastern" I do not mean geography. What counts as "east" depends on where one stands. Rather, I use the term as shorthand for a set of habits of perceiving and articulating Christian reality that have been especially preserved and expressed in Eastern Christian theology and spirituality. Five characteristics are particularly relevant for the Council's work: a holistic and relational approach (embedded in context rather than abstracted from it); trust in experiential and intuitive knowledge (especially the knowledge carried by worship and ascetic practice); a both/and logic capable of sustaining paradox; tolerance of uncertainty and local diversity; and a preference for harmony and balance as higher goods than mastery or standardisation. No culture monopolises this way of thinking; it appears across places and periods, and it can be retrieved within Western traditions as well.

These characteristics matter because they describe a different "grammar" for approaching unity. A legalistic imagination tends to define unity primarily in terms of external conformity and reliable institutional control; a communal imagination begins with the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ, constituted by the Holy Spirit in baptism and the Eucharist. The Council's retrieval of patristic, liturgical, pneumatological, and communal categories rebalanced Catholic ecclesiology and made possible a more realistic encounter with the Orthodox East. My goal is to show, through seven examples, how this "Eastern" sensibility helped move Catholicism from an authority-centred model of unity to a sacramental, communion-based vision, thereby making Orthodox-Catholic dialogue possible in a new way.

In theology, this disposition is often manifested in a more symbolic, liturgical, and mystical mode of expression, in contrast to approaches that are primarily scholastic or juridical. Symbol and ritual are not mere "illustrations" of doctrine; they are a way doctrine is known and lived. Because the early church's theological language was formed in

worship and in pastoral conflict rather than in later system-building, it often sounds closer to Eastern registers. Vatican II's retrieval of patristic and liturgical sources, therefore, had the effect of "de-centring" later polemical habits and reopening the possibility of shared interpretation.

The examples that follow are not presented as a strict causal chain. Not every point can be treated at equal length, and the Council's development cannot be reduced to a single influence. Rather, the seven examples function as a case study of how traditions develop through retrieval: the Council recovered deep strands from the undivided Church and integrated them with Catholic structures, often by sustaining paradox rather than forcing premature resolution.

2. Example 1: Rediscovering the Normativity of the Early Church (*ressourcement*)

A major prelude to Vatican II was *ressourcement*—a "return to the sources" expressed in renewed patristic studies, biblical scholarship, and the liturgical movement. The premise was not nostalgia but realism: the Church's faith cannot be reduced to one theological system, however influential. By the nineteenth century, theology was sometimes treated as an accumulative discipline, as if newer syntheses necessarily superseded earlier ones. In many contexts, the scholastic system was perceived as "state of the art" and simply taught as such. *Ressourcement* theologians such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and Jean Danielou insisted instead that Scripture and the Fathers must be studied in their original contexts and that this process can never be "finished."

An "Eastern" sensibility is visible here in two ways. First, it resists treating theology as a stack of propositions detached from the life of prayer and the practice of the church. It does not assume that later conceptual clarifications automatically improve upon earlier witnesses. A return to the sources is therefore not anti-intellectual; it is an insistence that the church's memory remains a living resource. Second, because the time of the Fathers is also the time when East and West shared deeper communion, the "return to the sources" implied renewed attentiveness to the Eastern liturgical and spiritual traditions, which in the first part of the twentieth century were frequently viewed by Catholic theologians—sometimes romantically—as living witnesses to Christian origins. *Ressourcement* re-opened the possibility of speaking a shared theological language, locating points of similarity in a shared inheritance rather than in negotiating competing modern

systems. When Catholic and Orthodox Christians begin from the Fathers, questions can be posed within a common horizon rather than from mutually exclusive polemical frameworks. In this sense, *ressourcement* embodies an "Eastern" instinct for wholeness: doctrine, worship, spirituality, and ecclesial life form an integral reality, and renewal must attend to the whole rather than to isolated mechanisms.

3. Example 2: Rediscovery of Pneumatology

A second conciliar retrieval concerns pneumatology. Eastern theology consistently emphasised three aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit's freedom, continuous activity, and community-building in constituting the church as the Body of Christ. When this pneumatological dimension is muted, unity can be imagined primarily as organisational reliability secured by legal mechanisms. The church's visible centre can shift from Eucharist to office, and ecclesial life can be interpreted mainly through categories of jurisdiction rather than through categories of communion and charism.¹ The contrast can be sketched by noting how easily a legal model reduces the church's communal realities to offices: pope, bishop and pastor. The holders of these offices—hierarchically ordered clergy—comprise the acting and necessary part of the church, while the rest of the baptised faithful appear primarily as isolated subjects of authority that simply assent to the teaching and receive spiritual goods from "the church" so conceived. In this vision "the church teaches" becomes shorthand for "the hierarchy teaches."

Vatican II's pneumatological renewal challenged that reduction. By reasserting the Spirit's active presence in the whole People of God, it made room for the ecclesial significance of the faithful's shared life, gifts, and responsibility—a point that also undergirds the Council's ecumenical respect for Christians not in full communion. To clarify, Vatican II did not deny the importance of the institutional dimension, but it re-situated it within a Spirit-filled communion. *Lumen Gentium* 12 explicitly states: "The Holy Spirit distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank," and it describes charisms as gifts given for the renewal and building up of the church. The significance of the sentence lies in its subject: the Spirit acts in the whole church.

This pneumatological retrieval also supports the Council's concern for collegiality and shared ecclesial discernment. If the Spirit is truly active in the whole body, then authority and reception belong

¹ This vision of ecclesial organization was codified in the 1917 CCL.

together: teaching is offered, heard, tested, and appropriated within the church's common life. Such a both/and structure resonates with Eastern emphases on conciliarity and synergy. The point is not to deny Petrine ministry or episcopal authority but to locate these ministries within a living communion that listens for the Spirit's work across the baptised people.

Finally, renewed pneumatology makes room for recognising that the Spirit in its freedom can be active beyond visible Catholic boundaries. Ecumenical rapprochement depends on the conviction that the Spirit has not abandoned those who are not in communion with the Catholic Church. Vatican II's language of charisms and gifts supports a more open, less anxious ecclesiology—one capable of seeking unity without imagining that grace is monopolised by one side.

4. Example 3: Liturgical Thinking in Ecclesiology

A third example is liturgical theology. Eastern Christianity has long insisted that academic theology is a secondary reflection on what the Church does in worship, whereas liturgy is a primary locus of theology.² Vatican II embodied this principle in conciliar process itself. When the Council began, bishops were presented with drafts of multiple documents. Most of them—except for the in its first promulgated constitution, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*,— were either rejected or sent for extensive revision at the first session. It was noted that one of the reasons for these revisions, especially to the draft *De ecclesia*, was recognition that the ecclesiology implicit in the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy required reworking other texts to match it.³

What was the main ecclesiological statement or statements in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*? The main concern of the Constitution is its insistence on the active participation of the worshipping assembly. The constitution mentions “active participation” fourteen times as a refrain.⁴ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14 frames it as a fundamental aim of

² Jean Daniélou's work on the bond between Scripture and liturgy exemplifies this retrieval: doctrinal meaning is not grasped only by conceptual explanation but also by participation in the Church's worship, where symbols and rites transmit truth in a holistic way.

³ Godfrey Diekmann, “The Constitution on Liturgy in Retrospect,” *Worship* 40, no. 7 (1966) 408–421, at 411.

⁴ Frederick R. McManus, *Liturgical Participation: An Ongoing Assessment*, Washington, DC: The Pastoral Press, 1988, 10.

liturgical renewal. The fullest description of active participation given in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 48:

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers, they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all. [SC 48]

Josef Jungmann emphasised that this participatory ecclesiology is not an optional devotional improvement but a rediscovery of the church's nature as a community of priestly people.⁵ The liturgy, therefore, becomes a description of how the church is born as communion through the Spirit. Here, an "Eastern" disposition appears in the Council's trust in symbolic and communal knowledge: the church learns what it is by doing what it is.

The Constitution makes this ecclesiology visible in SC 41, which describes the "pre-eminent manifestation" of the church as the communal celebration of the Eucharist presided over by the bishop: "in a single prayer, at one altar, at which there presides the bishop surrounded by his college of priests and by his ministers." It makes it possible to say that unity is fundamentally Eucharistic, as that ecclesial life is most fully visible where the church gathers for the Eucharist.

This "eucharistic ecclesiology" clarifies why the Eucharist is called "communion": communion is not simply a feeling of togetherness; it is participation in Christ's self-offering and in the life of the Spirit, which draws persons into unity with God and with one another.

At the same time, the Council had to integrate this renewed eucharistic ecclesiology with existing structures of authority. Here the Eastern tolerance for paradox and gradual reception was indispensable. The Council did not attempt to resolve every implication at once; it allowed the development of ecclesiological vision to continue after the Council rather than ending with the

⁵ Josef A. Jungmann, "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. I, New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, 1-80, at 17.

Council. This willingness to let theological “dominoes” fall in time is itself a hallmark of the Council’s East-aware retrieval.

5. Example 4: Accepting the Paradox of Catholicity and Particularity of the Church

A fourth conciliar development is the Council’s willingness to sustain paradox, where earlier theology often sought a single, exhaustive model. Eastern theology is frequently comfortable with both/and affirmations. Vatican II’s ecclesiology bears this stamp in its treatment of the Church of Christ as at once local and universal. Consider the three senses of the word “church” in conciliar documents. The first sense (1) is that of the One Church of God in Christ. Where can this Church be found in historical reality? *LG* 26 gives a clear answer:

This Church of Christ is truly present in all legitimate local congregations of the faithful which, united with their pastors, are themselves called churches in the New Testament. For in their locality, these are the new People called by God, in the Holy Spirit and in much fullness. In them, the faithful are gathered together by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, that by the food and blood of the Lord’s body, the whole brotherhood may be joined together. In any community of the altar, under the sacred ministry of the bishop, there is exhibited a symbol of that charity and ‘unity of the mystical Body, without which there can be no salvation’. [*LG* 26]

This text strongly affirms the local church (2), gathered around its bishop and the Eucharist, as a real manifestation of the One Church. At the same time, Catholic life continues to presume a universal communion historically focused around communion with the bishop of Rome. In fact, all existing churches are hierarchically structured communions of (3) of the local churches (2). Vatican II does not resolve this tension by reducing local churches to mere administrative districts or by treating the universal church as a purely invisible reality. Instead, the Council affirms both local fullness and universal communion, leaving a certain unsystematised space that later theology must inhabit. The result can feel unresolved, but this is precisely the point: the Council chose to hold together a mystery rather than collapse it into a single model.

This “paradox-friendly” approach becomes especially visible in the Council’s renewed esteem for Eastern Catholic Churches. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* begins by affirming that the Catholic Church “holds in high esteem the institutions, liturgical rites, ecclesiastical traditions and the established standards of the Christian life of the Eastern

Churches," and that in them "there remains conspicuous the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers." Such language suggests that diversity is not a regrettable deviation from unity but a legitimate form of catholicity. Ecumenically, this offers an alternative to the logic of absorption: unity is envisioned as communion that preserves real diversity. If legitimate diversity belongs to the church's catholicity, then unity cannot require uniformity in rite, discipline, theological style, or even in the institutional structures of teaching and governance.

6. Example 5: From Legal Unity to Communion

The recognition of the Eucharist as the primary source and manifestation of ecclesial unity had deep ecumenical consequences. When unity is described eucharistically, it becomes possible to recognise real ecclesial life where the Eucharist and apostolic succession are present. This shift resulted in one of the Council's most visible ecumenical achievements: recognition of the full ecclesial reality of the Orthodox churches.

A fifth example is the Council's move from a legal model of unity toward the language of communion. *Lumen Gentium* 1 famously describes the church as "in Christ like a sacrament - a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all people." This sacramental grammar is decisive: it places the church's mystery before its organisation and suggests that structures exist to serve communion rather than to create it. Unity is approached in the grammar of baptism and Eucharist rather than first in the grammar of jurisdiction.

This re-framing has concrete ecumenical consequences in *Unitatis Redintegratio*. In describing relations with the Eastern Churches, the decree states: "These Churches, although separated from us, possess true sacraments, above all by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are linked with us in closest intimacy." The wording is striking: it recognises sacramental reality and genuine ecclesial life outside full communion with Rome. The decree also acknowledges that those born into separated communities "cannot be accused of the sin involved in the separation," and it urges respect and affection.

A decisive shift occurs here in how separation is interpreted. Earlier polemical patterns often spoke as if ecclesial reality simply ceased outside juridical submission. Vatican II instead speaks of real, though imperfect, communion grounded in baptism and sustained by

sacramental life. This does not minimise the pain of division; it clarifies what is at stake. If the Orthodox Churches possess “true sacraments,” then the path to unity must be the restoration of full communion between Churches that already share much, not the “return” of a community imagined as sacramentally empty. This conciliar move converges with eucharistic ecclesiology that was developed on the eve of the Council by an Orthodox theologian and church historian Nicolas Afanasiev. Afanasiev argued that the universal Church exists in and through local eucharistic assemblies and that primacy must be understood as a ministry of communion – a “presiding in love” – rather than domination.⁶

The Council’s new framework also had symbolic historical expression. On 7 December 1965, Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I issued a joint declaration withdrawing the mutual excommunications associated with 1054. This act did not restore full communion, but it embodied the Council’s renewed style: repentance, fraternity, and the purification of memory. It signaled that the path forward would be a mutual journey of healing rather than a conquest of one side by the other.

7. Example 6: Primacy of Conscience and Religious Freedom

A sixth example concerns conscience and freedom. The Council’s renewed anthropology finds one of its clearest expressions in *Gaudium et Spes* 16, which describes conscience as the “most secret core and sanctuary” of the human person, where one is “alone with God” whose voice echoes in the depths.

In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience, when necessary, speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it, he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner, conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbour. [GS 16]

⁶ Nicholas Afanasiev, “The Church Which Presides in Love,” translated by Katherine Farrer, in John Meyendorff (ed.), *The Primacy of Peter*, London: The Faith Press, 1963, 57–110, at 58–60. This essay was specifically mentioned in the preparatory documents of Vatican II with recommendation for the Fathers of the Council to read it as an example of the merging eucharistic ecclesiology.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church later synthesised this teaching: "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognises the moral quality of a concrete act," and in all that one says and does, one is obliged to follow faithfully what one knows to be just and right.⁷

The Council's insistence on conscience also carries a distinctively relational emphasis. Conscience is not a private refuge from the church; it is the point at which the human person stands before God and is bound to truth in love. The Council can therefore insist simultaneously on the dignity of conscience and on the responsibility to seek truth. In the context of divisions, such language discourages coercive approaches to unity and encourages a pedagogy of persuasion, witness, and patient formation.

This interior and personalist account of conscience becomes socially and juridically consequential in *Dignitatis Humanae*. The declaration states: "The human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all persons are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power." It grounds this right in dignity and insists that truth does not coerce: "Truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power" [DH 1].

If truth persuades rather than coerces, then ecumenical unity cannot be pursued through domination, state power, or cultural absorption. Healing must involve interior conversion and the free embrace of communion. Here, an Eastern orientation toward synergy—the cooperation of divine grace and human freedom—provides a theological grammar that fits the Council's anthropology. Unity is not manufactured by force; it is received as a gift, cultivated through repentance, persuasion, and patient fidelity.

8. Example 7: Mechanism of Decision-Making in the Church

A seventh example concerns the Council's style and its implicit theology of authority. John W. O'Malley argued that Vatican II introduced a new vocabulary and literary form—words such as "charism," "dialogue," "cooperation," and "friendship"—and that

⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, n. 1778.

this change implied a redefinition of how authority is to be exercised.⁸ The Council did not present itself primarily as a legislative tribunal that imposes solutions; it sought to persuade, invite, and renew. O'Malley described this shift as a move away from a purely juridical model toward a model "largely based on persuasion and invitation." O'Malley describes the Council's shift as a "language-event" that both expressed and induced an inner conversion in the church's priorities. This matters for ecumenism because a new style of speaking makes new relationships possible. A communal style does not abandon doctrinal clarity; it changes the posture from control to invitation. Such a posture also fits an "Eastern" preference for harmony: not the avoidance of truth, but the pursuit of truth in a manner that aims at communion rather than victory.

This shift parallels Eastern instincts about conciliarity. In the early centuries of the church, the authority of councils was gradually recognised through the church's worship and life. Vatican II's dialogical style resonates with this tradition, in which unity is preserved through shared confession, worship, and the slow work of reception rather than through purely juridical command.

9. Beyond Vatican II: Ecumenical Reception and Continuing Dialogue

Vatican II did not resolve the doctrinal disputes dividing East and West. Questions regarding the exercise of primacy, the Filioque, and the reception of councils remain serious obstacles, and full Eucharistic communion has not been restored. Yet the Council decisively altered the framework in which healing could be pursued. Through *ressourcement*, renewed pneumatology, liturgical theology, paradox-friendly ecclesiology, respect for conscience and freedom, communion ecclesiology, and a dialogical approach to authority, Vatican II integrated strands of the undivided tradition that had long resonated with Eastern Christian life.

While the Council did not end division, it created conditions for sustained Catholic-Orthodox theological dialogue. In the decades following the Council, the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church engaged themes central to Eastern theology: Eucharist, communion, conciliarity, and primacy. These post-conciliar dialogues

⁸ John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008, 11-12.

show why Vatican II's contribution cannot be measured only by the number of "solutions" it offered. The Council changed the conditions of possibility for unity by reshaping Catholic ecclesiology. It made it normal to speak of the church first as mystery and sacrament, to locate unity eucharistically, and to see legitimate diversity as belonging to catholicity. That shift allows the hard questions – primacy, synodality, the relationship between local churches and universal communion, and the contested history of the second millennium – to be approached without first denying the other side's ecclesial reality. It also helps Catholics to receive Orthodox critiques as invitations to purification rather than as threats. The result is a slower but more honest form of healing: patient theological clarification accompanied by spiritual conversion and renewed habits of encounter.

The Council's legacy remains unfinished. But its East-aware horizon continues to shape the Church's path: unity pursued as communion in the Spirit, enacted in Eucharistic life, sustained through a humble willingness to learn, and protected by a respect for the freedom and dignity of the human person. In that horizon, healing becomes possible – not as a one-sided correction, but as a shared pilgrimage toward the fullness of Christ. In this sense, Vatican II's "Eastern" retrieval was not merely a diplomatic tactic aimed at external reconciliation. It was a renewal of Catholic self-understanding. When Catholicism speaks again in the language of mystery, Eucharist, Spirit, and communion, it becomes capable of recognising in Orthodoxy not only a separated partner but a bearer of gifts needed for the church's own catholicity.

10. Concluding Remarks

This paper was designed as a case study in how traditions can and should develop and dialogue without losing integrity. What did we learn from this study? I want to share three actionable takeaways.

The first takeaway concerns the general attitude toward the history and documents of Vatican II. On January 7, Pope Leo XIV gave two talks: one at the weekly general audience and the other to the cardinals at the start of their consistory. Both talks were focused on the reception of the Vatican II, reminding us, in the words of St. John Paul II, that the Council was and is "the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century." Therefore, we cannot forget about the Council, cannot put it behind us no matter how uncomfortable we are with its teachings. It is part of the "return to the sources" for all students of theology. While local practice still lags conciliar vision, and sometimes

even contradicts it, we need to be patient in realising that proper reception takes time and effort. I invite theologians and pastors to continue the work of integrating structure and Spirit, law and liturgy, universality and local diversity, authority and conscience. The search for harmony is not a vague ideal; it is a concrete ecclesial task grounded in baptism and Eucharist and sustained by the Spirit who “blows where he wills.”

The second takeaway directly follows from the first one: it concerns the practice of reception in the church, or, more specifically, who should be “doing” reception. While the Council did not directly address this question, there is one idea that runs through all its decisions and documents, big and small: a desire to restore the dignity of the royal priesthood of all baptised faithful and to empower them to discover and fulfil their vocation in the church. So, while we do not yet have a clear, functioning mechanism for conciliar reception, we know that no reception is complete until it has been prayerfully tested by all the baptised. We all have a role to play, and the “active participation” mentioned above spills over from the liturgical life into all of Christian life. We are all implored by the Council not to be dormant cells in the Body of Christ.

The third takeaway concerns the future of theology. The call to “think with the East” is not a claim that “Eastern thinking” is universally superior or that Western theological achievements should be abandoned. Both Eastern and Western ways have their strengths and weaknesses. Before Vatican II, the problem was not that the Catholic theology was thinking in a “western way” - that was only natural. The problem was that it was thinking only in a Western way and, on top of that, held its way of thinking as superior. Today this way of thinking that was so triumphantly effective in the past exposes its shortcomings. But in theology, a set of ideas, Eurocentric in origin and in forms of expression, still dominates the sphere of ideas as well as the library shelves. The whole continents and diverse cultures remain unheard and unknown, often treated as a curious but parochial and non-essential part of Christian vision. However, in the world that is round, centre and periphery are matters of perception and, ironically, in today’s world, it is Eurocentrism that is parochial. Without knowing it, the Eurocentric theological minority is starving for the insight that may come, for example, from Indian context with its incredible ability to thrive in uncertainty and diversity. We have no idea what new riches we will uncover if the call for “active participation” will be applied not only to individual Christians but to

whole communities and cultures. In the words of Ethiopian eunuch to Phillip (Acts 8:31), how can I understand unless someone guides me? Therefore, I want to finish with a personal appeal to "eastern" theologians, paraphrasing the famous quote from Matthew 7:7 "seek, and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you" - by adding: speak so you can be heard.