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## Editorial

R. Keelan Downton

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It is my great privilege to introduce the inaugural issue of this much anticipated journal. It represents the commitment of countless individuals and communions to empowering the next generation of ecumenists to make significant contributions to the challenging process of living into the unity for which Christ prayed. As a periodical edited by younger theologians and juried by senior scholars, it is not only a unique publishing venue for academicians from across the *oikumene* to share ideas in the early stages of their careers but also a place for others to sense the pulse of creative ecumenical thought beyond the institutions that benefit from immediate contact with these cutting-edge ecumenists. The articles in this inaugural issue include a fascinating combination of authors and topics that we expect will draw submissions from an even more ecclesially, geographically, and culturally diverse pool of contributors.

Kenneth Loyer's consideration of the place of Mary in Christian doctrine and piety in light of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* takes on particular significance following the World Methodist Council's affirmation of the *Joint Declaration* in July 2006 and the upcoming ten year anniversary of the document in 2009. After summarizing the *Declaration's* "emphasis on God's grace, the freedom of human response, and the subsequent renewal of life for the glory of God", he draws a parallel to the life of Mary as an exemplar of faith and calls attention to the idea of "primacy of grace" as a more constructive way to frame dialogue about Mary than whether or not she had sin from which she needed to be justified. He suggests that the Marian narrative provides a paradigmatic expression of divine and human action in justification and notes that attention to the Christological intent of the *theotokos* title makes it possible to hear assertions about Mary correctly as assertions about God and God's work. The piece turns on his argument that ecumenical discourse on both Mary and justification can be furthered by consideration of the ways they intersect and inform each other.

Joel Halldorf's reflection on worship at the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Porto Alegre, 2006) provides important follow-up to the Assembly in terms of the intersection he perceives between a WCC worship tradition and the recommendations of the *Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC*. He makes use of both to analyze three Assembly prayer services, asking pointed questions along the way. He concludes with a negative

assessment of worship at the Assembly, siding with the *Special Commission* in terms of caution over social/political issues but disagreeing with their critique of experimental forms.

Christopher Dorn considers the ways twentieth century liturgical and ecumenical movements influenced later changes in the eucharistic liturgies of Reformed churches with particular consideration of the liturgy adopted by the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in 1968. His article catalogs some of the interaction between liturgical reformers and ecumenists prior to 1968 and argues that the revised liturgy draws from the eucharistic prayers of the early church to prioritize *corporate action* in the Lord's Supper form over the pastoral exhortation modeled in Calvin's form. He interprets this observation as evidence of a general movement of Reformed churches towards focus on a common apostolic heritage.

Reviews by Ukrainian Catholic Adam A. J. DeVille (Reinhard Hütter's *Bound to Be Free*) and Episcopalian Rachel Lyle (Paul Avis's *Paths to Unity*) further broaden the ecclesial breadth of the contributors and round out the issue with optimistic and challenging analyses that look forward to further dialogue concerning the papacy and a "21st century Renaissance of the Ecumenical Movement."

Discerning readers will notice several themes within the major articles that may provide some indication of what younger ecumenists perceive as important for the future of Faith and Order discourse. First, all three articles are concerned in significant ways with the worship life of the church. This is most obvious in Halldorf and Dorn who both refer to WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 6, *Ways of Worship* (1951). Second, each of the three articles build on previous ecumenical activity by assuming that the discreet traditions they draw from are interrelated in complex ways through their ecumenical discourse. This is reflected not only in the substance of their work but also their ecclesial and academic locations. Loyer writes as a United Methodist about Lutheran-Roman Catholic perspectives on Mary. Halldorf makes use of the *Special Commission's* recommendations to assess WCC, Anglican, and Pentecostal prayer services from the context of his participation in Lutheran, Pentecostal, and Orthodox communities in Sweden. Dorn writes as a Reformed liturgist at a Jesuit university drawing from Reformed, Lutheran, and Benedictine sources. Third, all writers display a heightened consciousness of the individual Christian life *in relation to* the life of the entire church in contrast to the preoccupation with ecclesiastical forms apparent in much twentieth-century ecumenical literature. Loyer does not merely approach Mary as "a model of faithful living" and an example of common dependence upon God but describes her experience as a helpful lens for further (corporate) dialogue about justification. Halldorf is concerned to preserve either the specificity of individual moral responsibility or the interconnectedness of Christians at all times and in all places during corporate confession, eschewing models of confession that differentiate according to region or tradition. Dorn

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notes the liturgical movement's "pastoral concern for individual Christians" and writes, "the liturgy binds the lives of individual Christians to the one visible church". These shared foci may evidence a common existentialist influence, yet such consciousness is hardly monolithic. The contrast between Dorn's apparent desire for objective, corporate expressions and Halldorf's desire for expressions that cohere with the moral life of individuals and remain open to experimentation deserves serious attention and may not be confined to differences between Reformed and Pentecostal ecclesiologies.

Attention to how all three authors focus on worship, write from within complex personal and ecclesiological identities, and employ existentialist assumptions with a view towards participation in the life of the whole may well provide some intimation of what lies over the horizon. Might churches find a need to explore whether such layering of identities should be considered a sign of doctrinal dissolution or Spirit-led reception? Will focus on worship forms mean that aesthetics as a discipline becomes an increasingly important discussion for unity? Is there a looming divide between those who quote and utilize twentieth century ecumenical documents as their own and those who treat them as laudable but ultimately unsuccessful attempts to produce a shared theology? These questions, and many others, are suggestive of where ecumenical discourse may be headed in its second century. So without further proviso, and on behalf of the editorial board, I invite your critical engagement with the work of these fine younger theologians in the hope that our common efforts towards unity will continue in faithfulness to our gospel calling to the glory of God, the Trinity one in essence and undivided.

R. Keelan Downton  
Editor