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## Unity through Diversity Ecumenical Theses and Questions of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI

**Abstract:** Christian unity is desired by Christ Himself and, consequently, it is also a continuous imperative of Christian conscience and particular care on part of each pope. The starting point of J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's thought and teaching is clear distinction between seeking unity through human strategy and the way to unity ultimately accepted as the gift of God Himself. Consequently, it paves the way for thinking about Christian schism in the context of "Divine retribution," that is, the situation where God still acts and attracts to Himself. Such a perspective protects against vanity and ambition to organise the world as if according to "God's way," but — in practice — without God. Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI copes with ecumenically tempting notions-proposals (e.g., pluralism) that lead to an apprehensive forgetting of one's own identity. His lodestars are: Christ — the Truth — longing — patience — suffering — good — conversion.

**Keywords:** ecumenism, unity, *communio*, dialogue, Christocentrism, truth, *logoi spermatikoi*, *praeparatio evangelica*, modernity

"At the beginning of his ministry in the Church of Rome which Peter bathed in his blood, Peter's current Successor takes on as his primary task the duty to work tirelessly to rebuild the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers" — we read already in the "First Message" from 20 April 2005 delivered to the college of cardinals in the Sistine Chapel addressed not only to "venerable brother cardinals," but also to "dear brothers and sisters in Christ" and "all men and women of good will."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. HÜNERMANN, Th. SÖDING: Introduction. In: J. RATZINGER: *Słowo Boga. Pismo — Tradycja — Urząd*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Kraków 2008 [hereafter: SBPTU], p. 13.

Ecumenism is a dimension of Christian and ecclesiastic *communio* which Peter is obliged to serve, so to speak, *ex definitione*, *ex officio* and at any price: offering his own blood and any possible effort. The service to the unity is understood by Benedict XVI broadly, which has been proven by his practical moves during his almost eight years of pontificate. Not only does it encompass “rebuilding [...] the unity of all Christ’s followers” (which is ecumenism in the strict sense, inter-Christian ecumenism; it is this ecumenism which, in the strict sense, is “the primary task” of the Holy Father),<sup>2</sup> but it does it in a broader sense — inter-religious dialogue, and in the broadest sense — an attitude that unites everybody and everything, the entire reality around the Truth, in line with the conciliar understanding of sacramentality of the Church, the irreducible component of which is, according to *Lumen gentium*, being “the sign and the tool of the entire mankind.”<sup>3</sup>

Ecumenism is for J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI both an important and fascinating issue. I firmly believe that this is the key issue for understanding the essence of what is really new, fresh and creative in his message with respect to modern and post-modern thought (in the classical sense of the term). Creative novelty of theological works of J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI is outstanding, when juxtaposed with what in “modern” and “post-modern” theories (the notions no longer correspond directly to the already obsolete content) is *passé* in the face of the dynamically changing spiritual position of our world and time... Nothing ages quicker than compulsive and egotistical attempts to find novelty that enslaves everything, including the truth (which can be clearly seen in post-modern attempts to preserve the youth — it makes one laugh, embarrassed, sad...). The ecumenical dimension of Logos-oriented, sense-giving Christology and communal ecclesiology of J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI shows clearly freshness and originality of this thought.

Partly because his movements in the area of ecumenical dialogue have been perceived for many years by some commentators as controversial to say the least major documents of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith signed by the Prefect, such as *Letter to the bishops of the Catholic Church on some aspects of the Church understood as communio* “*Communio notio*” from 28 May 1992 and *Declaration “Dominus Iesus” on the unity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church* from 6 August 2000 were seen by many, as Ratzinger himself admits, as “ecumenical train derailment.”<sup>4</sup> Such opinions (most of them concerned his position

<sup>2</sup> SBPTU, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> SOBÓR WATYKAŃSKI II: *Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele ‘Lumen gentium’*, No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> T. ROWLAND: *Wiara Ratzingera. Teologia Benedykta XVI*. Trans. A. GOMOLA. Kraków 2010, p. 163.

of the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) were at best misdirected (I presume that most of them were without prejudice, although this has not always been the case in the heat of the debate), often short-sighted and sometimes under the irresistible influence of the liberal spirit of the times (under reckless masks there are facial features known too well to theology: the crooked smile of Mephistopheles). This is mainly thanks to Ratzinger's civil courage — he never subdues to the temptation of cowardly irenic compromises for the sake of peace of mind and firmly defends the doctrine against all types of relativity.

His standpoint has always been and still is clear: equal personal dignity of the participants of the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue is indisputable, however this does not apply to the status of the doctrinal content represented or proclaimed by them. Moreover, the position of the founders of religions is not equal to the position of Jesus Christ. Tracey Rowland explains it by a popular metaphor: they say that “God is like an elephant (Catholics grabbed its trunk, Protestants its ears, Buddhists its tail, Muslims its rear legs, etc., however none of the religions gets a picture of the entire elephant)”<sup>5</sup> — relativistic theories try to justify religious pluralism not only *de facto*, but also *de iure*. Ratzinger emphasises (many a time and in various ways) that the liberal model of the dialogue is unacceptable for Christians.<sup>6</sup> The impassable frontier is the truth. Rowland: “Catholics can see the entire elephant, not only its trunk and ears.”<sup>7</sup>

Also, when in 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed with the leaders of the Lutheran community, bishop George Anderson, the then leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, said: “It was Ratzinger who untied the knots.”<sup>8</sup> Because it has never been a matter of doubt for him that ecumenism is an imperative of a Christian conscience (which in Poland is repeated so strongly after John Paul II and his encyclical *Ut unum sint* by Archbishop Alfons Nossol<sup>9</sup>), what follows is a patient conversation, listening to arguments of the other side, which quite often brings a new and richer light to the areas of the truth that so far “have not been sufficiently exposed.” Respect for the conscience of the others are an indispensable moral duty of every Catholic. But not con-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, pp. 160—161.

<sup>6</sup> J. RATZINGER: “Dialogue, Communion and Martyrdom: Thoughts on the Relation between Intra-ecclesial and Intra-religious Dialogue.” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 27 (2000), p. 817 (quoted after T. ROWLAND: *Wiara Ratzingera...*, p. 163).

<sup>7</sup> T. ROWLAND: *Wiara Ratzingera...*, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem (the author quotes: J.L. ALLEN JR: “Ratzinger credited with saving Lutheran pact.” *National Catholic Reporter*, 10 September 1999).

<sup>9</sup> A. NOSSOL: *Ekumenizm jako imperatyw chrześcijańskiego sumienia. Przez dialog i pojednanie ku ekumenicznej jedności*. Opole 2000.

formistic, compulsive concordism<sup>10</sup>: “progress [in the ecumenical dialogue — J.S.] reached as the consequence of oblivion is deceptive, and unity that does not like the truth is not going to survive”<sup>11</sup> (“Einheit, der die Wahrheit ärgerlich ist, hält nicht”<sup>12</sup>; the original version sounds even stronger: unity, [for] which the truth is irritating...).

## 1. “Logic” of decomposition and the mystery of unity

Fractures and schisms and all the forms exemplifying the lack of unity amongst Christians are profound. As far as the beginnings of Christianity are concerned, Ratzinger often refers to the emblematic case of gnosis. To divide the Bible into spiritually incompatible testaments, to separate the Bible from the Church, Scriptures, and the Tradition, to split Christians into the wise and the barbarians, and eventually to see two Gods, the good one and the bad one, and — perhaps most importantly — to see in the splitting division the critical rational factor, the key to understand and sort out the reality, and what follows the appropriate model of life — this is gnosis in its essence, anti-ecumenical heritage and the effect of sin and the sin itself. The greatest of the Fathers knew it only too well: The Church is Christ’s seamless tunic — unity is its indispensable characteristic feature<sup>13</sup> (Cyprian of Carthage); by breaking up the flock, preachers of false teaching prove to be cruel wolves that ravage the flock of Christ<sup>14</sup> (Eusebius of Caesarea). But most of all Irenaeus of Lyon,<sup>15</sup> Justin, and many, many others. Ratzinger makes a thought-provoking and sharp comment on the depth of the phenomenon of hermeneutics and the existence of division in the gnostic context: “[...] whoever has been fascinated by the ‘logic’ of division, will always have problems with putting things together again.”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> P. MILCAREK: *Przedmowa*. In: *Sakrament i misterium. Teologia liturgii*. Trans. A. GŁOS. Ed. M. KOZA. Kraków 2011, pp. 18—19.

<sup>11</sup> *Formalne zasady chrześcijaństwa. Szkice do teologii fundamentalnej*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Poznań 2009 [hereafter: FZCh], p. 321.

<sup>12</sup> *Theologie Prinzipienlehre. Bausteine zur Fundamentaltheologie*. Donauwörth 2005 [hereafter: ThP], p. 250.

<sup>13</sup> *Ojcowie Kościoła. Od Klemensa Rzymskiego do Augustyna*. Poznań 2008 [hereafter: OK], p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> OK, p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> *Śludzy waszej radości. Chrześcijaństwo, apostołstwo, kapłaństwo*. Trans. T. JAESCHKE, K. WÓJTOWICZ. Wrocław 1990 [hereafter: SWR], p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> SWR, p. 99.

However, in his opinion, the core of the phenomenon goes even deeper: the primal fault, metaphysics and theology that in the Bible is expressed in the story of Babel.<sup>17</sup> It is God who scattered sinful mankind. It is Him who possesses free omnipotence, entirely independent from the world, and therefore it is Him who limits the power and capacity of men. The idea of *cosmopolis* in the “Babelian,” Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Mongolian, Napoleonic, communist or “EU-ropean” form cannot be achieved in its full form solely by human efforts.<sup>18</sup> Unity of the gift of God, a sovereign gift of sovereign God, eschatological hope the final fulfilment of which remains in God — it is not a utopia that we can fix ourselves, our tower, “whose top may reach unto heaven” (Genesis 11.4). “A man cannot himself, intrinsically, bestow or return unity to the world, since he is subdued to division due to the sovereign will of God.”<sup>19</sup> And it is only the latter, received as the gift, that restores communion. Its quintessence, beginning, and fulfilment is the mystery of Christ, which in its very nature and content is the mystery of unity<sup>20</sup> that saves mankind from sin and its disintegrating effects, mystery of the theandric communion that unifies God with people and therefore everybody with everyone.

What is suitable to men is humbleness of his freedom, humbleness of receiving the Divine gift of unity. And the road to this humbleness leads through: faithfulness to the truth, honest search for it, effort to “probe with the eyes of love its internal scope” (in order not to confuse it, for example, with historical “overgrowth,”<sup>21</sup> or to strangle it with timid compromise<sup>22</sup>) honest pursuit for consent, giving up violence, *metanoia*, conversion of the heart, purification of memory.<sup>23</sup> And most of all: getting closer to Christ, to His mystery, which is getting closer to the very heart of ecumenism, the mystery of unity.<sup>24</sup> For unity can only be

<sup>17</sup> A. NICHOLS: *Myśl Benedykta XVI. Wprowadzenie do myśli teologicznej Josepha Ratzingera*. Trans. D. CHABRAJSKA. Kraków 2006, p. 196.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 197. Cf. D. DELILLO: *Cosmopolis*. Trans. R. Sudół. 2nd edition. Warszawa 2012.

<sup>19</sup> *Die Einheit der Nationen: eine Vision der Kirchenväter*. Salzburg 1971, p. 21 (quotation after: A. NICHOLS: *Myśl Benedykta XVI...*, p. 196); *Kościół — Ekumenizm — Polityka*. Edited and translated by L. BALTER et al. Poznań—Warszawa 1990 [hereafter: KEP], pp. 191—192.

<sup>20</sup> Henri de Lubac believed that this is, according to “the Church Fathers” the essence of Christology. Cf. M. NICHOLS: *Myśl Benedykta XVI...*, p. 199.

<sup>21</sup> FZCh, p. 268.

<sup>22</sup> FZCh, p. 321.

<sup>23</sup> FZCh, p. 286.

<sup>24</sup> S. KOZA: *Chrystus w centrum pojednania i dialogu*. In: *Chrystus naszym pojednaniem*. Papers prepared by the Ecumenical Institute of the Catholic University of Lublin to commemorate teaching and academic activities of bishop Professor D. Sc. Alfons Nossol at the Catholic University of Lublin, edited by P. JASKÓŁA, S. KOZA, Opole 1997, pp. 241—248.

given to us by eschatologically “returning” Christ. “By walking towards Him we are approaching unity.”<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Thorn of otherness — *felix culpa?*

But how should it look like in practice? In other words: *was sollen wir tun, wenn es so steht*<sup>26</sup> (what shall we do in such a situation)<sup>27</sup>: theological, historical, civilisation- and cultural-wise? What next, and how to proceed with ecumenism? How should it look like in the future? What ecumenism should look like today?

Among various contemporary answers to the question, the closest to Ratzinger/Benedict XVI approach has been offered by Oscar Cullmann: *Einheit durch Verschiedenheit*<sup>28</sup> (“unity through diversity”<sup>29</sup>; other possible translations of the word *Verschiedenheit* — ‘otherness, plurality, distinctiveness’). Both Cullmann and Ratzinger/Benedict XVI offer several versions of the phrase — *Einheit durch Vielfalt*, *Einheit in der Verschiedenheit*, *versöhnte Verschiedenheit*<sup>30</sup>: unity through variety, unity in diversity, reconciled diversity<sup>31</sup> — which do not change the major sense of the suggested answer.

The split is wrong, especially if it leads to hostility and leaner Christian testimonial; but on the other hand there is “the dimension of God’s design,”<sup>32</sup> “some sort of divine ‘necessity’”<sup>33</sup> — which seems to be in accord with the message of the aforementioned biblical story of confusing languages in the land of Shinar and scattering the men (Genesis: 11. 1—9), as well as the mysterious words of Saint Paul addressed to Corinthians: “there have to be differences in among you” (1 Corinthians 11,19a).<sup>34</sup> The divisions are “somehow” (we do not understand it using solely our human,

<sup>25</sup> *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*. Trans. W. SZYMONA. Kraków 2005 [hereafter: KPWW], p. 246.

<sup>26</sup> *Kirche — Zeichen unter den Völkern. Schriften zur Ekklesiologie und Ökumene* (Gesammelte Schriften, t. 8/1—2). Freiburg—Basel—Wien 2010 [hereafter: K-ZudV], p. 734.

<sup>27</sup> KEP, p. 191.

<sup>28</sup> K-ZudV, pp. 734—736.

<sup>29</sup> KEP, pp. 191—193.

<sup>30</sup> O. CULLMANN: *Einheit durch Vielfalt*. Tübingen 1990<sup>2</sup>; K-ZudV, pp. 734—736, 743.

<sup>31</sup> KPWW, p. 236; KEP, pp. 191—193.

<sup>32</sup> KEP, p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> KPWW, p. 236.

<sup>34</sup> KEP, p. 191; KPWW, p. 235.

inborn logics) “indispensable for our purification.”<sup>35</sup> We do not understand, or we understand only vaguely, but we have spiritual intuition, memory of wholesomeness of the fruits of trust in “God’s inconceivable decrees” in other situations of human fate and the history of mankind, and most of all humility of remaining with God in faith, and the silhouette of Jesus’ back against the light when you follow Him. The light to which He is leading us. Of course we are not talking about perverse fostering of evil: we must do everything that is within our human power and use all the good will we possess to achieve unity and be worthy of it — “so that the whip of divisions would no longer be needed.”<sup>36</sup> However we are not able to do it by ourselves, using our human powers: it is beyond our power to simply cancel the divisions...

For the time of cancellation of the division and disappearance of “the obligation” mentioned in the Pauline letter is to be decided upon by God himself. God who knows everything, who judges and forgives.<sup>37</sup> But for the time being, if “[...] we take away the poison of hostility from the division and if thanks to our mutual acceptance diversity will no longer bear impoverishment but new richness of mutual listening and understanding, the division may reach the transitional state to *felix culpa*, before it becomes totally removed.”<sup>38</sup>

So for the time being we should search for (and find!) “unity by diversity,” which means taking the venom away from the division, use fruitful elements of the division and positive aspects of diversity<sup>39</sup> — of course we should do it to eventually annul the division and transform it into merely otherness that does not hurt any more. Most of all we cannot cancel the division “by all means,” in a hurry and by ourselves (without patience in the face of God’s actions), for the price of the truth.

What is at stake here, therefore, is an exceptional type of communion and “communication”: to suffer the thorn of otherness and transform in this way the division into mutual giving, *communio*. To suffer

<sup>35</sup> KPWW, p. 236.

<sup>36</sup> KPWW, p. 236.

<sup>37</sup> KEP, p. 192.

<sup>38</sup> KEP, p. 191.

<sup>39</sup> Here are two examples and at the same time illustrations of the German context of the issue. Ratzinger asks rhetorically: “[...] was it not good in many ways for the Catholic Church in Germany and somewhere else that right next to it there was Protestantism with its liberalism and its devotion, with its divisions and high spiritual requirements? It is true that in the times of religious wars the division was almost exclusively antagonism; however later it contributed to some positive aspects on the both sides [...] on the other hand — can we imagine solely Protestant world? Isn’t it so that Protestantism, with all its claims, has, precisely as a protest, such a complete point of reference in Catholicism, that without it the entire system would be inconceivable?” KEP, p. 192.



the thorn patiently: without the desire to impose on others things that still undermine the very essence of their identity (e.g., accepting papacy by Protestants and inter-communion by Catholics).<sup>40</sup> Respecting things that “force” the both sides to maintain the division does not postpone unity, on the contrary: it reduces aversion, increases love and therefore proximity.<sup>41</sup> Ecumenism in its essence cannot be “smoothing habits,” a search for compromise between traditions, but should be a profound question about the truth and shared search for it. Traditions must be respected, but it cannot be located on the level of the truth of the Revelation.<sup>42</sup>

That is the ecumenical model of “unity through diversity”: mutual acceptance of the division and meeting with each other in this situation (of the division).<sup>43</sup> Internal integrity that rejects both the attitude of false concordism and disregard for brethren who hold different beliefs. This is very characteristic of thinking and arguments of J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI: faith is a gift, it is greater than ourselves. It should be looked after by authentic search for the truth; we cannot create (the shape) of faith by ourselves and reign over it. To put it another way, we should approach the issues of faith and religion in the way that does not dominate them (according to our own preference) but wishes to be humbly subdued to them. When we do so, the light that shines through faith and religion will not be dimmed. The light that is bigger than us and able to brighten up our reality and show us the way.

Let us listen to J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. Here is the conclusion of his *Afterword (Nachwort)*<sup>44</sup> written in 1987 and appended to the earlier (1983) interview given to the international Catholic magazine *Communio*:

The division — as long as the Lord allows for it — may also be fruitful, may lead to greater riches of faith and in this way pave the way to the Church that is both diverse and united, the one that today still remains beyond our mental grasp, in which nothing of the positive accomplishments of history will be lost, wherever the accomplishments might come from. Maybe this separation is needed, so that we might reach this total fullness the Lord is waiting for.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> KEP, pp. 193—194.

<sup>41</sup> KEP, p. 194.

<sup>42</sup> KEP, pp. 182—186. “Our disputing fathers were as a matter of fact much closer to one another, for in spite of all the contradictions they knew, that they can be servants of only one truth, which should be seen by all of us as great and pure, as it has been designed by God.” KEP, p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> KPWW, p. 236.

<sup>44</sup> K-ZudV, p. 956.

<sup>45</sup> KEP, pp. 157—158.

### 3. What kind of dialogue?

Dialogue and the good that springs from it cannot be replaced by the ideology of dialogue, and these two cannot be confused.<sup>46</sup> Dialogue is the way to discover the truth, it is love of the other and truth; it is assistant in revealing to the other the hidden depth of things he/she feels vaguely and what he/she realised in his/her own religious experience and what in the encounter with Jesus Christ (that is with the definite and full Revelation of God) is subject to purification, completion and fulfilment. Meanwhile, the ideology of dialogue is understanding and practising dialogue within the meaning and shape of liberal-and-leftist “correctness,” which is radically different from the dialogue exhibited by, for example, the Second Vatican Council.<sup>47</sup> Dialogue is equated here with relativistic thinking ideologically subdued to the rules of post-Enlightenment egalitarianism. Thinking which puts faith on the same level as convictions of others and consists in an exchange of relative and equivalent ideas and positions. The aim is not a shared search for truth, but merely integration of views and cooperation. “Dialogue” understood in such a way is supposed to replace the “mission,” and the Enlightenment ideology of equality is meant to take the place of conversion<sup>48</sup>: the effort to draw one’s own heart and the heart of the other towards the Truth.

This may have a lot in common with the radical version of ideological-and-cultural *aggiornamento*, but very little to do with a real Christian identity or service to the human community. For sooner or later giving up the truth turns against the *communio*, the one with God and with people. In *Granice dialogu*<sup>49</sup> (in German, in *Gesammelte Schriften: Die Church und die Vielfalt der Religionen*<sup>50</sup>) Joseph Ratzinger quotes “very wise words,” as he himself evaluates them, uttered by Jacques-Albert Cuttat.<sup>51</sup> They concern the issue that they both call *die subtilste luziferische Versuchung*<sup>52</sup> — “the most subtle luciferic temptation.” But those words also concern love, the union of all in love of the true God and protection of this love:

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *Wiara — prawda — tolerancja. Chrześcijaństwo a religie świata*. Trans. R. ZAJĄCZKOWSKI. Kielce 2004 [hereinafter: WPT], pp. 86—89 („Modlitwa wieloreligijna i międzyreligijna”).

<sup>47</sup> KPWW, p. 191.

<sup>48</sup> KPWW, p. 191. Compare WPT, pp. 20—21.

<sup>49</sup> *Granice dialogu*. Trans. M. MIJALSKA. Kraków 2000 [hereafter: GD] — This item is an independent from WRiJP Polish translation of the same book (*Die Vielheit der Religionen und der eine Bund* from 1998).

<sup>50</sup> K-ZudV, p. 1019.

<sup>51</sup> The quotation after J.A. CUTTAT: *Begegnung der Religionen*. Einsiedeln 1956, p. 84.

<sup>52</sup> K-ZudV, p. 1129.

To strive to ensure that thanks to reunification of religions humanity becomes happier and better, is one thing. To beg with a burning heart for unity of all people in love of the same God, is another thing. The former is probably the most subtle luciferic temptation that seeks to lead the latter to disaster.<sup>53</sup>

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The question concerning the future of ecumenism for J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI is the question about forces of the contemporary Christianity and the contemporary Church that will be decisive for their future.

Two attitudes object the implementation of the ecclesial unity *communio*. One of them is “confessional chauvinism,” which — notwithstanding the appearances — does not look for the truth, but follows its own habits. It holds on tightly to itself and is attached mainly to “the issues that are precisely against the other.”<sup>54</sup> The other one is indifference in important matters of faith. The truth is seen as an obstacle and the criterion of unity is *Zweckmäßigkeit*<sup>55</sup> (“convenience,”<sup>56</sup> but it seems the term “pragmatism” would be more suitable here) and by this criterion the covenant concerning external affairs is made — which is pregnant with new divisions.<sup>57</sup>

For Christians a solution of “modern” ecumenical issues and all the other ones cannot be either tightness of a heart and mind, which is “contracture of self-esteem” or pragmatism for the price of betrayal of the truth; that is neither a confessional ghetto, nor “very enthusiastic acceptance of the new.”<sup>58</sup> “Razing the Bastions,”<sup>59</sup> advocated already in 1952 by Hans Urs von Balthasar was (and still is) an urgent and necessary task indeed, but it does not mean that there are no things that we should protect from razing, or that the Church — I am reading these words over and over again and the reading is always a thrill — “should now owe her life to powers other than those that gave birth to her: blood and water from the wounded side of the crucified Lord (John 19. 31—37).”<sup>60</sup>

<sup>53</sup> WRiJP, p. 104; GD, p. 116.

<sup>54</sup> FZCh, p. 275.

<sup>55</sup> ThP, p. 214.

<sup>56</sup> FZCh, p. 275.

<sup>57</sup> FZCh, p. 275.

<sup>58</sup> FZCh, p. 524.

<sup>59</sup> H. URS VON BALTHASAR: *Burzenie bastionów*. Trans. J. ZAKRZEWSKI, E. MARSZAŁ. Kraków 2000.

<sup>60</sup> FZCh, p. 525.

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## Unité par variété. Thèses et questions œcuméniques de J. Ratzinger/Benoît XVI

### Résumé

L'unité des chrétiens est le désir du Christ même et, par là, l'impératif continu de la conscience chrétienne et un souci singulier de chaque nouveau pape. Le point de départ de la réflexion et de l'enseignement de J. Ratzinger/Benoît XVI est la distinction nette entre les démarches entreprises pour obtenir l'unité par l'intermédiaire de la stratégie humaine et la voie vers l'unité que l'on considère en définitive comme le don de Dieu lui-même. En effet, cela fait penser à la scission chrétienne comme à « la volonté de Dieu », à la situation où Dieu continue à agir et dirige les gens vers Lui. Une telle perspective protège contre l'orgueil et l'ambition d'organiser le monde en quelque sorte « à la manière divine », mais sans Dieu. J. Ratzinger/Benoît XVI réfléchit sur les notions-propositions œcuméniquement tentantes (par exemple le pluralisme) qui conduisent à une omission craintive de l'identité. Ses fils conducteurs sont : le Christ — la Vérité — la nostalgie — la patience — la souffrance — le bien — la conversion.

**Mots-clés :** œcuménisme, unité, *communio*, dialogue, christocentrisme, vérité, *logoi spermatikoi*, *praeparatio evangelica*, modernité

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## L'unità attraverso la diversità. Tesi e quesiti ecumenici di J. Ratzinger/Benedetto XVI

### Sommario

L'unità dei cristiani è il desiderio di Cristo stesso e pertanto è l'imperativo incessante della coscienza cristiana e la preoccupazione particolare di ciascun pontefice che si avvicenda. Il punto di partenza della riflessione e dell'insegnamento di J. Ratzinger/Benedetto XVI è la distinzione chiara tra il prodigarsi per l'unità attraverso la strategia umana e il cammino verso l'unità che viene considerata in definitiva un dono di Dio stesso. Ciò apre conseguentemente il pensiero sullo scisma cristiano come “volontà di Dio”, situazione nella quale Dio continua ad agire e conduce verso di sé. Tale prospettiva previene dalla superbia e dall'ambizione di organizzare il mondo in un certo qual modo “secondo i canoni di Dio”, ma comunque senza Dio. J. Ratzinger/Benedetto XVI si misura con concetti-proposte allettanti dal punto di vista ecumenico (come ad es. il pluralismo) che portano ad un'omissione timorosa dell'identità. I suoi punti di riferimento sono: Cristo — la Verità — la nostalgia — la pazienza — la sofferenza — il bene — la conversione.

**Parole chiave :** ecumenismo, unità, *communio*, dialogo, cristocentrismo, verità, *logoi spermatikoi*, *praeparatio evangelica*, modernità