

Eucharistic Sharing: Bridge towards Unity – Barrier to Unity?

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The churches proclaim their belief in ‘the one holy catholic church’ in the statements of faith. Likewise, most churches declare in their theological statements that the Eucharist is central to their life and liturgy. Many churches also declare that they have a commitment to the collaborations and ecumenism – presenting a unified witness before the world of loving communion rather than bickering competition. Few would dare to declare that they did not pray ‘that they may all be one’ in the words of John 17:21.

The paradox is that the practices and claims about the eucharist is probably one of the greatest sore points between the churches and, in effect, these positions prevent progress in ecumenism by postponing it so far into an ideal, utopian future as to being meaningless.

After a century of ecumenical explorations, common statements, and high-profile embraces between church leaders, is it now time to look again at whether the Eucharist is a reward of achieved union in theological vision – if such could be possible – or whether it is a practice of the actual churches which could foster new relationships within the Christian family around a common table? On the other hand, is the cost of rejecting intercommunion too high in terms of its destruction of Christian witness?

It is always easier to repeat the past than to find new paths to the future – but the future is always a foreign country and part of the work of theologians is to point out possible paths. This special issue of Review of Ecumenical Studies (RES) is dedicated to gathering materials that focus upon finding ways in which we could respond to the desire of many Christians for eucharistic sharing such the Eucharist is the common factor of a more uniting Church.

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Contributions will be published in German or English and are to follow editorial guidelines:

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