

Unity to the Greater Glory of God. Promising Paradigms in Current Ecumenism¹

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Rather than lamenting a crisis of the Ecumenical movement the author suggests that the reader look at promising paradigms that become apparent within the present changes and challenges of World Christianity. He identifies six promising trends, as Christians of different traditions recognize partners in common witness beyond their own church traditions (1), evangelical and Pentecostal churches rise in significance (2), ecumenism becomes increasingly shaped by biographical experience and personal encounter (3), a spiritual ecumenism for the witness in the world emerges (4), the reality of martyrdom deepens the sense of Christian unity (5) and the search for the truth of the Gospel is not given up (6). In their overlapping and sometimes contradictory evidence these paradigms prove Ecumenism to be alive and, therefore, changing its face.

Keywords: *ecumenism; future; evangelicalism; Pentecostalism; witness; martyrdom; truth*

Introduction

It has become more or less common to speak of a crisis of the Ecumenical movement, at least to argue that the movement has seen better days and acted in a more effective and promising way in the past. The current state is, as it were, measured by a point somewhere back in history and people's laments rise. Is there an "Ice age" in the Ecumenical movement? Whatever one may think about this, I am not going to join the lamentations, nor do I intend to take a look into the rear-view mirror. I prefer to look ahead, by following the trajectories of a number of developments that can be realized today. I take it for granted while doing this that the Ecumenical movement needs to be seen in its current plurality. There is no one single movement, but a variety of movements pointing to and working towards the unity of the Church already given in Jesus Christ, and these movements can be discerned in various shapes and on different levels.

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