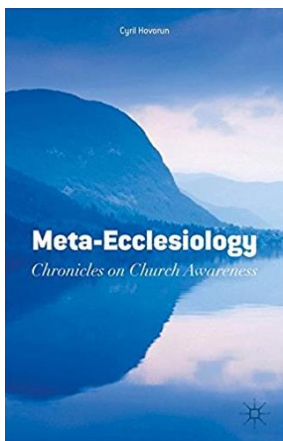


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Review

Cyril Hovorun, Meta-Ecclesiology. Chronicles on Church Awareness

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Reviewed by

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Cyril Hovorun is a scholar in Patristics. His first monograph *Will, Action, and Freedom: Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* was published in 2008. He has recently been working in the field of ecclesiology and public theology. He has lectured and published extensively on modern



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church issues and the situation in Ukraine.

The author wrote this book in memory of Metropolitan Volodymyr Sobodan of Kiev and Ukraine (1935-2014) and during his stay at Yale University where he took advantage of a generous bibliography tied to the ecclesiological issue.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the fact that ecclesiological perception varied according to the historical context and whom church members lived. The central theme of the evolution of this book refers to the awareness that the Church has in history that can be assigned increased meta-ecclesiology. As it is distinguished on the entry of the book, meta-ecclesiology relates to the development of existing theories regarding the consciousness of the church and also the ecclesiological reflection. The book examines methodically different theories about the evolution of the Church. These theories reflect the understanding that its members have had in various historical eras. The author demonstrates the fact that church perception varied dependently on historical circumstances.

In his *introduction*, the author analyzes etymological and metaphorical the concept *ἐκκλῆσία* from a Christocentric and ecclesiocentric perception and realize expertise of the four attributes of the Council of Nicaea (325): one, holy, catholic and apostolic, showing that within first four centuries the term *Catholic*, means nonsectarian. It is underlined the role that Augustine has played in emphasizing the relationship between the state and the Church in his fundamental ecclesiological treatise *City of God*. Hovorun analyses also the ecclesiology of Patriarch Photius which debates with Occidental Church on three principles: papal primacy, doctrine, and ritual. The Middle Age introduce into the issue of hierarchy and clergy in church and coincides with the consolidation and centralization of ecclesial structure in East and West. In the West, this

centralization is associated with papal authority especially after the Vth Lateran Council (1512-1517).

In the East, the patriarchal system is also identified with the leadership of the patriarch and Pentarchy system that replaces the established synodal system. The process of emancipation strictly hierarchical begins in East when occurs a forced Church not being ecclesiastic once with Ottoman conquest (1453) and the establishment of the capital of the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople, historical turn coinciding with the collapse of the Byzantine Empire. In Western witness to the clerical emancipation through the inclusive ecclesiology of Thomas Aquinas who promotes the ecclesiology in relation to the hierarchy and the papacy vertically and horizontally accentuates the role of congregation inside the church. For all that, Reform brings along an ecclesiology revolution. The centrality of the church in Reformed theology emphasized by the high number of treatises dedicated to distinct Church. The project of the emancipation of Luther concentrates on breaking down three obstacles: between clergy and laity, between ecclesial and secular strength, between laics and Bible. Thus as a response to emancipation which distinguishes between invisible and visible Church, Council of Trent (1545-1563) adopts another alternative, that of the distinction between the defender Church and that victorious. In Eastern, Church continued even under the rule of Muslim summon, to enhance the relationship with the state on the one hand and on the contrary they were trying to establish diplomatic relations with the High Gate, for the independence authority of Patriarch, seen as a spiritual leader and political, as a *millet bass*. In the course of time, so-called phanariots, Greek laymen, who served at the court of Sultan come to play a major role in the life of the Church. This closed group will exercise a major role in the choice of the patriarch and metropolitans. The Enlightenment

that brought along the secularization process has manifested by a radical emancipation of states toward the church. The modern secular system has influenced the modern ecclesiology particularly by German idealism represented by philosophers like Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. Theologian Johann Adam Mohler in the West and Alexey Khomyakov, in the East, changed the trajectory or direction of traditional ecclesiology. While Mohler establishes the principle of communion as part of the constitute core of ecclesiological theology, Khomyakov develops the principles of sobornicity or conciliarity. In the nineteenth century, the political process launched by Enlightenment, the French Revolution and American republicanism lead to a redistribution of political authority of the monarchy to people. Now the Church reconsider its partnership with political institutions as appropriate relations with the new Balkan states. Church of the East now identifies itself with adopting the idea of nationalism and national identity. Also, the same tendency is openly in West. Church of Rome encourages the movement pro-papal and develops the role that the papacy has in what concern the authority of ecclesiology centered by the papacy. Vatican Ist Synod (1869-1870) confirms this change (update).

The twentieth century can be considered theologically, the century of ecclesiology. It can be observed fundamental approaches of Orthodox ecclesiology used by reflections sociology of Vladimir Solovyov, Pavel Florensky and Sergei Bulgakov who identifies Church with the wisdom of God. Catholic ecclesiology settles Christ-centered and Worship Church. German theologians Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, consider worrying the tendency to consider Church more than Christ or excluding Him. The development of their ecclesiology is in contrast to the Church as

an empowering claimed by the liberal theology or historical excessively criticism. Paul Tillich, Jürgen Moltmann, and latest Miroslav Wolf continue this vein as building an ecclesiology with the foundation of triadology, pneumatology, and eschatology.

New ecclesiology concentrates on the phrase asserting that Eucharist makes the church inside the Eucharistic community. This builds a connection bridge between theologians catholics, Orthodox, anglicans, and Protestants. Ecclesiological transconfessional language has brought a contribution to an ecumenic ecclesiology which is debated by World Council of Church and the Commission Faith and Order and brought up the idea of an ecclesiology of hope.

Postmodernism brings his notable contribution regarding the change of reflecting of the Church. Feminism, pacifism, postliberal theories and radical movements have developed diversified ecclesiological speeches.

Chapter II entitled **Apostles Times: Discipleship and Fellowship**, approaches ecclesiology from the perspective of New Testament, Paul the Apostle and the evangelists. Church less Christo centric and charismatic and more independent and hierarchic. It is the beginning of an era in which it is perceived even more organized and institutionalized.

Chapter III entitled **Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Symphony and Hierarchy**, develops the post apostolic ecclesiology which is illustrated by the frequency when of the term church, with its derivatives in latin and greek. The author has built a graphic which underlines the intensity of term started with one until the fifteenth century. It also speaks of the criterion of Church's unity on post-apostolic parents as Ignatius bishop of Antioch, Irenaeus, Tertullian who introduced the word ecclesia in Latin lexicon, Cyprian, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea. Another important aspect represents incarnation of

ecclesiology in the context of disputes arian and on consubstantiality Son with Father who contributed to shaping an ecclesiological vision represented by Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Basil of Caesarea and Cyril of Alexandria which culminates with embodiment ecclesiology. West ecclesiology is representative by the outstanding figure of Augustine of Hippo (354-430) considered perhaps the greatest ecclesiologist of the Western Church. Augustine in his apologies against the donatists from North Africa noticed that church nature is one saint and universal. For him, the Eucharist ensures the unity of its members and that are all body of the Church. Another debated issue is the primacy which, as remarks, Jay N. D. Kelly was promoted by papacy itself. Thus Pope Leo I (in office 440-461) deliberates the theological principles of the papacy as he will do half of a century after Pope Gregory Ist. Late East Church opposes by the voice of Patriarch Photius whose dispute with Pope Nicholas 1st, rest in history as a reference.

The first western theologian who writes in a systematic way about Church and its role in society is Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who by developing Augustinian theology perceives the Church as the mystical body of Christ, his theology beeing one including type. He accentuates the role that the Christian love must have in supporting the unity of Church, showing when its members watch over for one another and manifest compassion, certify the fact that Church is one for all. In promoting papal primacy, Juan de Torquemada develops the idea of a hierarchical ecclesiology or essentially monarchical, mentioning that authority inside the church comes from the pope to his members and not opposed.

The reformations: Emancipation is the fourth chapter of this work of synthesis which develops the Protestant ecclesiology from the great reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin and Richard Hooker. In the entry of this chapter, the author makes

reference to a possible ecclesiology contribution of pre-reformators. Thus William of Ockham (c. 1289-1349) and Marsilius of Padua (c.1275-1342) continue the idea of a Church that belongs to all the faithful, while John Wyclif (c. 1330-1384) promotes the idea of independent national churches of the papacy. Jan Hus (c. 1372-1415) criticizes the papacy, the practice of simony and indulgences, asserting that Church is a spiritual entity, fraternity of Saints or the body of Christ. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a key figure of reform leads to another level the fight against the Church of Rome. He emphasizes the centrality of Christ and justification without the need of good works of faith, trying to break down the bridge between clergy and laity, concerning the text 1 Peter 2: 9 referring to the priesthood of believers received under Sacrament of Baptism. Another problem is related to existing wall between the ecclesiastic power and the secular one, militating for laity to read and interpret Scripture. His ecclesiology contribution can be summed in a few main ideas: connection or inherent bond between church and the word of God that Church can not exist without Word; Word and Spirit create Church, and this creation is a continuous process or continuous creation; Church is the communion of saints *Communio Sanctorum* of all holy, devoutly or believers who are guidable by Holy Spirit.

John Calvin (1509-1564), approach the ecclesiology more systematic than Luther. Notably, it develops the distinction between the spiritual Church and the empiric.

For it is the Church of electors. Otherwise God would threaten the unity of those who gather in Church. Also, this unity can not abide, only by piety and discipline. Each member has the power of four pantries, pastors, doctors, presbyters and deacons, an important aspect of maintaining order and unity.

Richard Hooker (c. 1554-1600) is considered the leader of the English Reformation. In his main work *Of the Laws of*

Ecclesiastical Polity makes a distinction between invisible and visible Church. On the one hand, Church is the mystical body represented of true members united in an invisible way. On the contrary, it is a sensible known company. Polity, statal organization poses to Hooker the key distinction between the visible and invisible church, order itself being of divine nature. The essential visible structure of the Church is represented by sacraments, the Sacrament of Baptism is seen as an entrance to the invisible Church.

The reform has forced the Church of Rome to focus on the ecclesiology and its reformation. Thus the Council of Trent (1545-1563) represents the collective voice that articulates this new position in Catholic ecclesiology around two poles: visible/invisible, Church - hierarchy/laity. The response against protestant offensive is represented by the distinction between fighter Church and victorious. If reformists manifest their concern about the duality of the Church and coexistence of faithful members and sinners, Trent council proclaims the same faith for all and participation in the same sacraments. A convergent point with Protestant reform is not strictly related to understanding the Church hierarchically, but as Christian Commonwealth and the Congregations of Faithful. Trent council anathematize all those who argue that Catholic Church does not have a hierarchy of divine orders formed of bishops, priests, and deacons.

Chapter Vth entitled **Enlightenment: Rediscovering the Ecclesial Self** - emphasize the crucial role that Enlightenment played in the development of ecclesiology. Enlightenment created a rational and secular space which has given the Church new intellectual instruments to rediscover itself. Works of Kant, Hegel and Schleiermacher, created the secular framework where the Church was reconsidered in a radical way. The new philosophical systems, methodological approaches contributed

to the enabling of an ecclesiological synthesis. The author represents through a statistic graphical, the references to Church in the modern era which increase once with the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Romantic ecclesiology represented in philosophy by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) was construed as a theological system of knowledge that combines scientism, pietism, and patriotism. Most important role plays pietism, whose source is Christ, and Church has the role of mediator and makes accessible to people the experience of God's love. For the German philosopher, Church is an empiric reality. Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853) the founder of the theological school of Tübingen, utilize romantic philosophy principles to develop their ecclesiology considered as organic. Johann Adam Mohler (1796-1838) construe its ecclesiology in dialogue with Schleiermacher.

In the orthodox field, romantic philosophy inspired the Russian theologian Alexey Khomyakov (1804-1860). He defines the Church as the revelation of Holy Spirit in the mutual love of christians leading to Father by Word embodied who our Lord Jesus Christ is. Referring to Spirit, love, freedom, he falsifies the original meaning of the concept of catholicity. This error is debated and observed widely by the author. Remarkable changes happened once with the opening of the local synods in Orthodox Russia after the fall of monarchy between (1917-1918). These synods have played a major role in understanding the nature and mission of the Church. New historical paradigm and government policy will focus on a few relevant coordinates:

1. Emancipation of the Church toward the state.
2. The enhancement of the dialogue with secularized society.
3. Admission of changes in structure and life of the Church.
4. Emphasizing the central role of the communities in the life of the Church.

5. Recognize the role of the laity.

6. Servant and hierarchical character of holy order.

Victorian Ecclesiology has developed in two large centers, Cambridge which developed an aesthetic ecclesiology and Oxford which was focused on a theological ecclesiology. Notable representatives are John Ruskin (1819-1900) an enthusiastic architect, John Neale (1818-1866) a romantic sacramentalist, Benjamin Webb (1819-1885) a romantic ritualist and Alexander Hope (1820-1887) a romantic conservative.

Vatican Ist synod (1869-1870) brings back the issue of papal primacy. Pope function becomes a key tool in terms for emancipated Europe, secularized and rational after 1848. Thus, the doctrine of Pope infallibility became the strongest idea of authority in West church. Infallibility radicalism was induced by the Enlightenment which dramatically redistributed authority in intellectual, social and political spheres. The eclesial structure of the Church is also exposed to dangers, because of this redistribution of authority, such as Gallicanism, politico-theological, which argues that authority of the pope must be counterbalanced by bishops authority and more of that by kings. This was preached in essence by bishop and preacher Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704) from Louis XIV's court. Vatican Ist Synod was considered the most emphatic, antimodernist, anti republican and antinationalist emergence, which the Church of Rome has organized. Nowadays, it is also seen as problematic for many Catholics. In this context, it arose neoclassicism built on the scholastic theology of Thomas Aquinas and adapted to intellectual changes of the nineteenth century, in a confrontation with relativism and positivism. In ecclesiological terms, neoclassicism prefers to see Church as a hierarchical structured perfect society, but not democratic.

Chapter VIth of the **Century Ecclesiology: Exploring the Gap Between Evidence and Established Concepts**, treats the

change of perception about Church and the inauguration of the twentieth century as a century of ecclesiology, as the German Protestant theologian Otto Dibelius has appreciated, since 1927. Cardinal Avery Dulles argues that this century is one of the ecclesiology revolutions which is distinguished by approaching the six major models: the community disciples institution, mystic communion, sacraments, evangelism, and ministry.

Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) will try to reconsider an essence of Christianity based on a new historical perception about Church. He builds this image through the method of historical criticism and in the spirit of positivism from the nineteenth century. Rudolph Sohm (1841-1917) will address the ecclesiological issue sociologically, inspired by the influence he had upon him, Max Weber (1864-1920), considered the pioneer of sociology. Roman Catholic theologians were especially interested in the synthesis of sociology and ecclesiology, as Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009) and Bernard Lonergan (1904-1984).

A key figure of the phrase sociological ecclesiology was Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), whose central idea was based on the universality of Church. He believed that true universalism has to be the expression of the active social position of the Church. Pavel Florensky (1882-1937) wrote a book in this genre entitled *The Pillar and the Ground of The Truth*, and he approaches an ecclesiology more aesthetical than philosophical or theological. Looking forward to presenting a new view of the church, theologian Sergey Bulgakov (1871-1944) evokes in *The Bride of The Lamb* a remarkable ecclesiological innovation that defines the Church as the fulfillment of God's eternal plan on creating, deification, sanctification, glorification and socialization of creation. Bulgakov also analyzes the ecclesiology and looks forward juridical and government policy.

German Protestant theology of this period is focused on bringing Christ to the center of ecclesiology breeding the Christocentric ecclesiology, of which extensively discussed Karl Barth (1886-1968), Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). Barth is considered one of the largest Protestant theologians from Calvin till now, who develops its ecclesiology from the perspective of fundamental theology related to the transcendence of God, creation, reconciliation, redemption and autonomy of human being. Neo-orthodoxy of Barth, it is based on the theological way to return to the center of ecclesiology Christ, but nevertheless, he managed only partially salvation of Church of historical criticism.

Imbued with rationalism, the last part of the nineteenth century was embodied by neo-kantianism and positivism about emotions and human intuition which beneath philosophical aspect led to the birth of a previous life philosophy or *Lebensphilosophie*. Catholic theology was focused on a reconsideration of ecclesiology in this current philosophical spirit developing a *Lebensekklesologie*, by theologians as Romano Guardini (1885-1968) and Karl Adam Borromeo (1876-1966).

An ecclesiological intense with life philosophy was initiated by Catholic theologians in the years '30 through a new approach method called *novel théologie* that led to a new ecclesiology. There were distinguished three phases or periods: (1) Thomistic renouncement, (2) theological renouncement, (3) the internationalization of the movement and (4) its assimilation during Vatican II. The most influential Catholic ecclesologist before Vatican II was Dominican Yves Congar (1904-1995) inspired by his neo-scholastic criticism by Johann Adam Mohler and Alexey Khomyakov, who accentuates the consideration of returning to the sources of the Christian tradition of the first

millennium and the parents of the church during this period. Jesuit Henri de Lubac (1896-1901) is also a significant figure in the new theological movement.

Karl Rahner (1904-1984) the most productive and systematic theologian of this new generation discuss the need for reconsideration the nature and the place which the Church occupy in the modern world. The church is not seen as ontological or ecclesiological monophysitism, but in a pluralistic context, real and historical. Rahner suggested looking at the church and structures from both above and below. Unlike other theologians of the new generation, Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) did not want a change regarding institutions of the Catholic Church but epitomized of interpreting the differences. His ecclesiological program is concentrated on changing the angle of contemplation regarding ecclesiological Catholic structure. Vatican Synod IInd will become the milestone relating to the development of Roman-Catholic ecclesiology in the twentieth century. The two official documents *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* lay the following ecclesiological points: (1) collaboration between episcopal conferences and the Holy See, (2) the bishop as servant, (3) priestly ministry and the formation of priests, (4) laity and lay ministries, (5) the Eucharist (6) mission, and (7) the new evangelization.

Neopatristic ecclesiology represented in the Russia Orthodox Church return to Parents of the Church and the Eucharist for a neo-patristic synthesis initiated of Russian theologian George Florovsky (1893-1979), by a famous motto: Back To The Father! He sees this synthesis as a reconnection of church tradition with modernity in an organic way. This approach has aroused the interest of Catholic theologians as if is the case of Cardinal Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) considered a key figure

regarding the rediscovery of Christian identity in the Catholic space by called *aggiornamento*.

Another special approach of Catholic ecclesiology is that of the type spirited after years '60 represented by theologians as Gustafson, Schillebeeckx or Käsemann discussing the need of social ecclesiology. In the orthodox field, Father Stăniloae Dumitru (1903-1993) who reconsidered patristic Church from Trinity and patristic perspective, Nikos Nissiotis (1924-1986) who approached the ecclesiological missionary issue and ecumenical and Metropolitan Ioannis Zizioulas (b. 1931) whose doctoral thesis discussed the need for a Eucharistic ecclesiology and personalist.

Chapter VIIth entitled **Transtraditional Ecclesiologies**, treats the issue of traditional ecclesiology to throw bridges regarding Church traditions after it has found the fact that Reform was not sufficient to deal with contemporary challenges. This was determined by German Protestant theologians.

For Lutheran German-American theologian Paul Tillich (1886-1965), Church is the house of systematic theology. The concept of church is one type pneumatology, being the creation of the Spirit. This size does not exclude the Christological which for him is central, only that Christ is not Christ without the Church. As Saint creative spirit and as a historical emergence Church is itself New Being. In fact, this is the central theme of Tillich's theology that affirms: the Church is the historical embodiment of the New Being created by Incarnation. The New Being therefore excluded any doctrine of the Church which conceives it to be brought into existence by religious decisions. The New Being is the prius of the Church just as it is the prius of Christian Experience (p. 126).

Jürgen Moltmann reformed German theologian (b. 1926) interposes ecclesiology in different theological perspectives: first, eschatological and messianic, liberationist and politically.

His perspective has as a foundation the theology of Karl Barth, Ernst Bloch, Abraham Heschel and Karl Rahner. An important role in shaping his trinitarian theology have had Dumitru Stăniloae and Vladimir Lossky. For Moltmann, Church is a place in history, where the eschatological future has already begun. Through Christ, Church is breathing God's coming. The relationship between persons of the Trinity constitutes the ecclesiological model of solidarity. The Trinitarian preferences of Moltmann lead Him to some sacramental implications. The Eucharist should not be an open table, from every one of that partake, including even the unbaptized.

Miroslav Volf (b. 1956), a Croatian theologian and disciple of Moltmann, continues the work of his master, bringing his contribution to a synthetical ecclesiology by analyzing Trinity theology proposed by Moltmann, the community ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger and the personalism of John Zizioulas. Volf base on an ecumenical ecclesiology and asserts that reevaluation of the church year is meaningful only as an ecumenical project.

Eucharistic ecclesiology became very popular in the Orthodox background in the twentieth century. The preference for this type of ecclesiology was caused by the economical crisis and government policy in the Balkans and the collapse of the Russian empire. These phenomena led to a powerful emigration of Orthodox people to Western Europe. Here in diaspora, the Orthodox communities, on the one hand, identifies through the religious identity and on the contrary by national identity. According to the dictum, *The Eucharist makes the Church*, uttered by Catholic theologian Henri de Lubac since 1953, John Romanides (1927-2001) considered Eucharist as the basis of ecclesiology. Nikolay Afanasyev (1893-1966) is regarded as the first protagonist of Eucharistic ecclesiology who essentially thought that Eucharist is the future of the community. John

Zizioulas develops this thesis from a personalist point of view. The church is *Imago Trinitatis* where the relationship between Son and Father is the savior foundation of person status of the ecclesial body.

Ecumenical Ecclesiology arose before 1910 when few Protestant Churches, at the Missionary Mondial Conference in Edinburgh discussed the missionary strategy of Church's mission. The biggest problem with the ecclesiology remains its poor perception about confessional traditions.

In chapter VIIIth entitled *Postmodernity: Appreciating Plurality*, the author analyzes the types of ecclesiology that divide Christianity. A liberation ecclesiology is promoted by theologians like, Johann Baptist Metz (b. 1928), Gustavo Gutierrez (b. 1928) and Leonardo Boff (b. 1928) which proposes a reinvention of Church. Feminist ecclesiology is seen as evidence of women's movement and cringe of the question: Why do we have to interfere with ecclesiology? Activists reject entirely the patriarchal structure of the Church. Feminist ecclesiology is essentially about reclaiming the Christian church as space where women's discourses of faith is a conscious choice possible to claim and reclaim church being for women. Another ecclesiology of the same type is postliberal theology arose at Yale University. The term post liberalism arises once with a doctoral dissertation of Hans Frei (1922-1988) with George Lindbeck (b. 1923) who suggests that religion represents a form of expression. This language consists of comprehensive interpretive schemes. Usually, narratives embodied in myths and heavily ritualized, which structure the human experience of self and world understanding (p.143).

Chapter IXth entitled: **Discerning Changeable and Unchangeable in the ecclesiastical „Self”** synthesise author's conclusions regarding the book and an appendix. The originality of this work lies in the comprehensiveness taking

into account as it does the east-west in ecclesiology. I hope that this coherent review will convince the reader to interpret the current work regarding the ecclesiological issue approached from a historical parallel of development between Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic and Protestant.