

Yves Congar, O.P.: Ecumenist of the Twentieth Century

Paul Raymond Caldwell
Marquette University

Recommended Citation

Caldwell, Paul Raymond, "Yves Congar, O.P.: Ecumenist of the Twentieth Century" (2012). *Dissertations (2009 -)*. 223.
https://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations_mu/223

YVES CONGAR, O.P.: ECUMENICIST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND THE
THEOLOGIAN OF VATICAN II

by

Paul R. Caldwell, B.S., M.P.T., J.D.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

December 2012

ABSTRACT

YVES CONGAR, O.P.: ECUMENICIST OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND THE THEOLOGIAN OF VATICAN II

Paul R. Caldwell, B.A., M.P.T., J.D.

Marquette University, 2012

While the name “Yves Congar” is recognizable by theologians and others there is a gap between recognition and familiarity: *awareness* that there was an Yves Congar is distinguished from knowing what *he stood for* and what *he did*. Eight years before Vatican II Congar was so distrusted by the Church that he was “distanced” from France for almost two years. Yet, several years after Vatican II he was elevated from priest to Cardinal in one day.

Congar’s *nouvelle théologie* of ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform, changed the face of the Church to the world. In this, Congar had an impact on countless human beings. Many of his works, however, required translation from French, some for the first time. In this dissertation, Congar’s Principles of Ecumenism were systematically organized.

Charges that the *nouvelle théologie* would lead back to Modernism were tested by inductive methodology, generally adapted at Vatican II over the more restrictive Neo-Scholastic deductive methodology. In this work, inductive methodology proved such claims to be meritless.

The contrast between deductive and inductive methodology resulted in clashes between the Vatican Curia and the progressive majority of Council fathers. Appointed to one preparatory subcommission at Vatican II, Congar actually served on five. In his works, Congar was always situated historically. An examination of the pertinent language of Vatican II documents which were integrated with Alberigo’s extensive *History of Vatican II*, Congar’s Vatican II journals and his statements to interviewers, confirmed Yves Congar’s substantial contribution to Vatican II and his influence on nine of the sixteen Vatican documents.

Congar contributed to the actualization of his Church and imbued it with a theology truly committed to ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. Yves Congar was easily among the great theologians of Vatican II and one of the great theologians of the twentieth century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Paul R. Caldwell, B.S., M.P.T., J.D.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our God for his mercy, my graced wife Lynn for her prayers, caritas and patience, my Director and advisor, Dr. D. Stephen Long, for his patience, tolerance, guidance and sage counsel through multiple drafts and meetings without number. I should also like to sincerely thank in advance my Committee, Dr. Wanda Zemler-Cizewski, Dr. Mark Johnson and Rev. Philip J. Rossi, S.J., Ph.D. for agreeing to serve as Members of my Dissertation Committee and having the dedication and taking the time to read this dissertation. I should like to express a special acknowledgment and thanks to Dr. Ralph Del Colle who was a member of my Committee throughout the writing of this Dissertation but whose untimely and sudden illness precluded him from continuing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	i
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: YVES CONGAR: THE MAN AND HIS TIMES.....	17
I. STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.....	17
II. YVES CONGAR: A CHILD OF WAR.....	18
A. Tree in the Ardennes.....	18
B. The Impact of the First World War on Congar.....	19
C. Yves Congar: A Priest Immersed in Life.....	25
D. The Early Years (10).....	27
E. Congar's <i>Journal de la Guerre</i>	31
1. Glimpses of the Dominican Congar in His Childhood Journal.....	31
2. Other Journals, Diaries and Works by Congar.....	33
3. Congar's Personal Experience of World War I.....	34
F. The Period of Formation and Education.....	41
1. Reflection and Vocation.....	41
2. Education.....	43
3. The Thomistic Heritage of Congar.....	46
4. Post-War Military Service.....	55
5. Dominican Studies and Influences.....	55
6. Crossroads.....	73
G. The Captivity of World War Two.....	77
H. The Time of Troubles.....	79
I. The Completion of the Race.....	87
CHAPTER TWO: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, MODERISM AND THE NOUVELLE THÉOLOGIE	90
I. THE CHURCH IN FRANCE AS AN AGENCY OF THE STATE....	90

A. Introduction: The Seeds of Opposition to the <i>nouvelle théologie</i>	90
1. Origins of French Church-State Relations.....	92
2. The Legacy of the French Revolution in Twentieth Century France.....	94
3. The Public Face of the Church.....	95
4. The Church as Agent of the State.....	96
B. Modernism and the <i>nouvelle théologie</i> of Yves Congar.....	108
1. A Survey of Modernism and the <i>nouvelle théologie</i>	108
2. Modernism and Rome.....	122
3. Modernism: Proponents, Opponents and Yves Congar.....	130
4. Congar's Theology of Revelation in Scripture and Dogm....	139
5. The <i>nouvelle théologie</i> as Initially Perceived by the Vatican	143
CHAPTER THREE: ECUMENISM AND UNITY; <i>RESSOURCEMENT</i> AND REFORM.....	150
I. THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS.....	150
A. The Face of the Church.....	150
II. CONGAR'S PERCEPTION OF THE ISOLATION OF ROME.....	152
B. Congar's Vocation of Ecumenism.....	155
1. Service within the Institution Which Is the Church; Graces and Special Graces	156
2. The Need for an " <i>ecclésiologie totale</i> ": Ecclesiology at the Service of the Truth of Christ	158
3. Truth, truths and Duty; The Hierarchy of Truths.....	160
C. <i>Ressourcement</i> : Restoration of a Renewed Ecclesiology.....	164
1. Unam Sanctam.....	165
2. Preparing the Ground for Reunion in Catholicity.....	167
D. Congar's Principles of Catholic Ecumenism.....	168
1. <i>Chrétiens désunis</i>	169
2. <i>Mortalium Animos</i>	171
E. Reconciliation in the Catholic Church of a Divided Christianity....	175
1. The First Ecumenical Principle: Reconciliation of Separated Christians.....	175

2.	The Second Ecumenical Principle: God is the Final Cause of the Unity of the Church.....	180
3.	The Third Ecumenical Principle: Christians Are Incorporated Together in Christ in the Oneness of the Church	180
4.	<i>Chrétiens désunis</i> as an Apologetic for the Catholic Church.....	186
5.	The Fourth Ecumenical Principle: The “Catholicity” of the One Church.....	187
F.	Unity in Diversity: <i>In una fide nihil officit sancta Ecclesiae consuetudo diversa</i>	193
1.	The Fifth Ecumenical Principle: Unity in Diversity - Unity in Diverse Customs and Opinions..	193
2.	Congar’s Proposals for Unity.	200
G.	Factors of Disunion.....	205
1.	Two Different Christianities?.....	205
2.	“Outside the Church there is no salvation.....	208
3.	The One Church of Christ Subsists in the Catholic Church... ..	210
4.	The Teaching Authority of the Church.....	211
H.	<i>Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l’Église</i>	212
1.	Reform in the Life of the Church	213
2.	Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church.....	220
3.	Reform without Schism: Congar’s Four Principles for True Reform in the Church: Maintaining What Has Been Held and What Has Been Given.	221
4.	Resistance to Reform: obedience <i>ad litteram</i> , Integralism and its Consequences.....	227
	CHAPTER FOUR: CONGAR’S INFLUENCE ON VATICAN II.....	232
A.	The Ecclesial Notion of the Church Immersed In History	232
1.	Introduction.....	232
2.	History and Inductive Reasoning.....	235
3.	Tracing Congar’s Influence at Vatican II.....	238
B.	The Dawn of VATICAN II.....	239
1.	Pope John XXIII Announces an Ecumenical Council.....	241
2.	The Man and the Hour.....	244
3.	The Council Commissions and the Curia.....	245
C.	The Convocation of The Twenty-First Council	251
1.	Congar’s Aspirations for Vatican II	252
2.	The Curia’s Initial Schemas.....	253
3.	The Commissions of Vatican II.....	254

4. Congar's Work on the Preparatory subcommittees	255
D. The Expectations for Vatican II.....	257
1. <i>Gaudet Mater Ecclesia</i> and the First Session of the Council...	258
E. Congar's Contribution to the Council Documents.....	260
1. <i>Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes</i>	261
2. <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.....	263
3. <i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.....	274
4. <i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> , Decree on Ecumenism.....	284
5. <i>Nostra Aetate</i> , Declaration on the Relation to non-Christian Religions.....	287
6. <i>Dei Verbum</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation...	290
7. <i>Ad Gentes</i> , Declaration on Mission Activity of the Church ...	294
8. <i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> , Declaration on Religious Freedom.....	297
9. <i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> , Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests	302
10. <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.....	306
EPILOGUE.....	311
CONCLUSIONS.....	313
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	327

INTRODUCTION

Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, O.P. was a humble cleric who attended Vatican II among more than twenty-five hundred others, mostly bishops and cardinals. Yet few of these Council fathers were elevated from priest to Cardinal in one motion as later was Congar. Fewer still can be properly called ecumenist, reformer, biblical scholar and Church historian.

Congar helped change the face of the Catholic Church to the world. As such, in one way or another he influenced countless people during the second half of the twentieth century to even this day. His impact at Vatican II and upon the ecclesiology of the Church was enormous. He has been called *the* theologian of the Second Vatican Council.

Before Vatican II, Congar served as Consultor for the Pontifical Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission. At Vatican II he was a recognized *peritus*, or expert, working on five of the ten Preparatory Commission subcommittees. With his mentor at Le Saulchoir, Père Marie-Dominique Chenu, he wrote the first draft of the Council fathers' "Message to the World," proclaimed nine days after the opening ceremony of Vatican II. Of the sixteen major documents of the Second Vatican Council, Yves Congar contributed to nine, including all four Constitutions (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Dei Verbum*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Guadium et Spes*), three of the nine Decrees (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, *Ad Gentes* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*) and two of the three Declarations (*Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*). Most importantly, Yves Congar materially contributed to the actualization of his Church so as to imbue it with a theology truly committed to ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. These four words capture the spirit of the man.

Early on Congar acquired the habit of rising early and working from eight in the morning to ten in the evening, a habit he would keep for the rest of his active life. He wrote a stream of countless articles, authored and edited at least sixty books and is the subject of many more.¹ Taken together, the pronouncements and writings by Congar and, to a much lesser extent, about Congar are the hermeneutical keys which unlock his true identity. In examining his ecclesiology, this dissertation seeks to present the identity of Yves Congar in the context of his ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform.

By examining Congar's ecclesiological theology of ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform, and by understanding the circumstances of his historical setting, including his childhood experiences during World War I, and his subsequent trials and triumphs, we gain an insight into the man who became Cardinal Yves Congar. Thus, we will examine his later experiences such as preparation for the priesthood, theological studies and as ordination as a Dominican priest. During World War Two he was imprisoned as a P.O.W. After the War, in large part because of his ecumenical activities, he was reprimanded, punished and exiled by the Church he loved. Yves Congar came through this travail to emerge as one of the truly great theologians of our time.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHAPTER ONE, YVES CONGAR, THE MAN AND HIS TIMES, AND CHAPTER TWO, CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, MODERNISM AND THE NOUVELLE THÉOLOGIE

¹ See the Bibliography for an extensive chronological list of Congar's books and articles covering the period from 1934-2012. Congar died in 1995, but scholars continue to publish his works with their own annotations, comments and notations. One of the most recent publications is *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert, O.P. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011). This is the first English translation of Congar's *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1950).

A. Chapter One. The question this dissertation asks is what can we learn from the ecclesiology of Yves Congar? This is a deep inquiry packaged into a few words. The answer requires first that we examine in detail *ressourcement* and the *nouvelle théologie* of Père Congar. For the present we may think of “*ressourcement*” as a renewal and return to the early sources of the life of the Church. The term, “*nouvelle théologie*”, is a compound, ambiguous one - some might still see it as pejorative one, labeling Congar and others associated with it.

Yves Congar had an almost universal interest in things Christian – the history of the Catholic Church - its Confessions, its liturgy, the Early Church Fathers, the Reformation and Martin Luther, and of course Thomas Aquinas. Congar was a biblical scholar as well as Church historian and theologian: his contributions to no less than nine Vatican II documents cover the broad ecclesial spectrum from liturgy; the Church *inter* and *extra se*; revelation, dogma and truth; the role of priests; and the royal priesthood of the believer, are peppered with biblical citations.

1. “The Child is the Father of the Man.” A subtheme of Chapter One is that Congar’s World War I experiences indelibly stamped the child who become the man, the priest who actualized and potentiated Church ecclesiology with a theology of ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. We can better understand and appreciate the theologian that the child became if we position Yves Congar historically in his time and circumstances, rather than look back at him from ours.² Sections A through D encompass

² Congar’s early years are described by him in the autobiographical part of *Chrétiens en dialogue: Contributions catholiques à l’Œcuménisme*, Unam Sanctam 50 (Paris: Cerf, 1964).

Congar's early years leading up to and including World War I.³ His childhood *Journal de la Guerre*, which had not been previously translated, unveiled a wealth of personal experiences written by the ten to fourteen year-old Congar. Among the most poignant of these is his record of the deportation of his father, Georges Congar, to a concentration camp in the Baltic for five years. After his father's liberation in July 1918 he elected to stay in Paris for "professional reasons." He never returned to his family in Sedan.⁴ Thereafter, there is no record that Congar mentioned his father again.⁵

In Congar's period of education and preparation we encounter the central formation of his ecumenical ecclesiology, particularly his love of truth, which animated the life of St. Thomas, as it would for Congar. At Le Saulchoir, Congar's mentor M.-D. Chenu infused him with a burning sense of history. There, Congar learned to situate Thomas Aquinas in his historic context, rejecting the handbook Neo-Thomistic approach previously taught him by Père Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange and Jacques Maritain in their weekend seminars at the Séminaire du Carmes at l'Institute catholique de Paris. Perhaps the most significant event at Le Saulchoir for Congar was the recognition of his vocation to ecumenism. This would become the centerpiece of his ecclesiology.

³ In 1975, Congar confirmed to his interviewer Jean Puyo that his childhood World War One experience was "very lasting and it will continue to mark me". Jean Puyo, *Jean Puyo interroge le père Congar: Une vie pour la vérité* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 10.

⁴ Stéphanie Audoin-Rouzeau and Dominique Congar, ed. *L'Enfant Yves Congar, Journal de la Guerre 1914-1918* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 245.

⁵ This was confirmed by my 2011 interview with one of my own mentors, Gerald Austin, O.P., who while studying in Rome, lived for several years in the same facility with Yves Congar.

2. The reasons for unbelief. Several years after Congar's ordination in 1930, in the face of dwindling Church attendance in France, Congar's publisher, Éditions du Cerf, commissioned a three year study of the reasons for unbelief, supervised by Congar. Congar's later conclusions were set forth in an article which he published in *La Vie intellectuelle*.⁶ They center about the "face" of the Catholic Church. Congar believed that tracing back to the sixteenth century, the face which the Church presented to the world was that of an inflexible, juridical-hierarchical institution. This was to be a focal point of Congar's ecclesiology over the years. In 1937, he published an expansion of these conclusions in *Christians Divided: Catholic Principles of Ecumenism* as the first volume of his Unam Sanctam series.⁷ Interestingly, Congar placed the word "ecumenism" in quotes for he said it was then an unknown term in Catholic ecclesiology.

In 1950, Congar wrote and published *True and False Reform in the Church*.⁸ In this seminal work, Congar argued for a *ressourcement* by a Church which had over the years become so inflexible due to man-made inorganic "structures" appended to it, that it was no longer able to effectively communicate with the world to which it sought to preach. Probably more than anything else, the publication of *True and False Reform in the Church* brought to a head Congar's "time of troubles" and culminated in a mandatory twenty month exile from France.

B. Chapter Two. Three themes which lead back to Congar's ecclesiology are identified here. The first is that the seeds of Rome's distrust of the *nouvelle théologie*

⁶ Yves Congar, "Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l'incroyance." *La Vie intellectuelle* 37 (1935): 214-49.

⁷ Yves M.-J. Congar des Frères-Prêcheurs, *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique*, Unam Sanctam 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1937). It was this three year study of the reasons for unbelief which inspired Congar to found the Unam Sanctam series.

⁸ *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, Unam Sanctam 20 (Paris: Cerf, 1950).

had been sown during the French Revolution, the Napoleonic era and the First, Second and Third Republics of France, each of which in their turn sought to subjugate the Church to the French State. As a consequence, the Vatican was wary of theological developments in France which did not originate from within the Church hierarchy. The second theme relates to the first and proposes that during the third through sixth decades of the twentieth century - in fact, until the election of Pope John XXIII, Rome saw the *nouvelle théologie* as leading to a dangerous resurgence of Modernism, the “synthesis of all heresies” and “the sum of all errors.” The third theme integrates the first theme and argues against the validity of the second.

1. French Church-State Relations. A series of oppressive laws directed against the Church in France is discussed in Chapter Two, Section A. A summary here will convey a sense of the times and lend credibility to Rome’s very real concerns for what would next come out of France. Early on in the French Revolution (1789-1799), the 1790 *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* redistricted bishoprics, abolished others and provided that priests and bishops were to be elected by voters designated by the Republic. No French church or person could acknowledge any bishop under the authority of a foreign power. In 1791, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* proclaimed that Catholicism was no longer the State religion. It ensured freedom of opinion for all, including religious opinion. The *Constitution of 1791* then expropriated certain church property, Catholic and Protestant alike.

Napoleon’s *Concordat of 1801* reestablished Catholicism as the Church of France, paid clerics wages and reopened seminaries. But there was a price: dioceses were again redistributed and Napoleon gained full power of investiture. In 1802, Napoleon’s

“Organic Articles” were summarily attached to the 1801 *Concordat*. This had the draconian effect of totally subordinating the French Church to the State.

One hundred years later the *Law of Associations of 1901* provided that 1) religious orders would no longer be recognized; 2) each former religious “organization” must be a) registered with, and b) governed by the State as a non-profit “cultural association”; 3) the activity of which would be monitored by citizens selected by the State. This would have eviscerated Catholic religious orders in France, which almost unilaterally chose instead for a twentieth century ‘flight to Egypt.’ In 1903, the Dominicans moved their *studium general* to Le Saulchoir in Belgium, near the French border.⁹ In late 1905, less than thirty months after Georges-Yves Congar was born, the Third Republic played its final card, declaring in the *Act of Separation of Churches and the State* that it would not recognize, pay salaries, or subsidize any religion in France. There was no longer a question of a “special relationship” between the State and the French Church, for the State intended to have no relationship at all.

2. Modernism. The distrust by Rome and Rome’s fears of a resurgent Modernism are not simply themes proposed herein: they embodied the Vatican’s worst fears. Rome distrusted this New Theology and its brash young proponents, who were mostly Dominicans and Jesuits.¹⁰ Moreover, the curial authority of the Vatican itself identified the *nouvelle théologie* with Modernism. Chapter Two, Section B shows that this identification was based upon incorrect suppositions and assumptions. This is the third theme-here - the response to the first two. The first theme which led to Rome’s

⁹ In 1930 Congar would complete his studies and be ordained there.

¹⁰ Cf. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, ed. *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: University Press, 2012), 1-2.

initial distrust and fear is refuted by systematically discrediting the second theme that the *nouvelle théologie* would inevitably lead to Modernism. This charge was a grave one and could have spelled serious trouble for the future of the *nouvelle théologie*, *ressourcement* and reform, and a reenergized ecumenism in the Church.

There is a long list of objections to Modernism, the primary ones being that it subordinated the Church to society, marginalized Christ, undermined and devalued Scripture and injected humanism into Catholic Tradition and biblical exegesis. It also held that Christianity could not lay claim to any absolute truth and espoused a continuing revelation and a dogmatic relativism which not only subjected dogma to change as science and culture evolved, but held that dogma was something that must change to continue to be relevant to the intellectual, moral and social needs of the times. In section B.3 of Chapter Two, “Modernism: Proponents, Opponents and Yves Congar,” these points were compared with Congar’s ecclesiology. The result is that any claim that the *nouvelle théologie* would inevitably lead to Modernism falls of its own weight – at least when compared with Congar’s ecclesiology. Nowhere, except in his historical-critical methodology (which Pius XII conditionally approved in 1943) and inductive reasoning (which Vatican II essentially later adopted), does the ecclesiology of Congar have any intersection with Modernism.¹¹ While Congar’s choice of words in his expression of a “progressive” revelation is unfortunate, as I explain, he does not embrace Modernism’s continuing revelation, but sees an unwrapping over time of the one revelation of God.

¹¹ Congar had from the beginning recognized that some parts of Modernism were useful, specifically its use of inductive methodology and its positioning of Christian events in their historic settings.

Finally, because of its potentially negative impact upon Congar, I directly addressed the seminal article Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., “La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?” (Where is the New Theology going?) Garrigou-Lagrange’s theological points were well-reasoned and cogent, as would be expected - but his scholasticism was not, which frankly weakened his hand. First, he incorrectly confuses two different articles by Jesuit Père Gaston Fessard; next, he criticizes Fessard for language which was actually written by Jesuit Père Jean (later Cardinal) Daniélou. Without citation of authority, Garrigou-Lagrange then fashions out of whole cloth the incorrect assertion that the *nouvelle théologie* had adopted a situational definition which relativized truth. By this point, confronted with Congar’s love for and devotion to truth - the Truth of Christ, this will ring rather hollow. In the end, Garrigou-Lagrange makes a raw claim, cleverly presented, but utterly devoid of proof or substance.

Against this backdrop it is certainly understandable that the Catholic Church would look with concern at the young French priest Yves Congar who to its ears proclaimed an unbridled ecumenism and an unfamiliar “New Theology” and who openly criticized the Church and sought to reform its “perfect society.”

CHAPTER THREE, ECUMENISM AND UNITY; RESSOURCEMENT AND REFORM; CHAPTER FOUR, CONGAR’S INFLUENCE OF ON VATICAN II.

A. Chapter Three. Congar sought a change in the everyday life of the Church by peeling away the man-made “structures” which had been superimposed on the Church over the centuries. This is the theme of the Chapter, which in turn leads to the overall thesis of the dissertation: what can we learn from the ecclesiology of Yves Congar?

Congar's use of the term "structures" does not mean a deconstruction of the Church's authority or portend an undermining of its hierarchy. Congar is not referring here to structures which are organic to the Church, such as its teaching authority, its apostolic authority, its hierarchy, the ordained priesthood, its ecumenical mission or the Eucharistic and liturgical ministries. Rather, Congar's "structures" are the artificial inorganic and exterior man-made additions which encumber the Church's ecumenical mission and result in what Congar, Chenu and Fêret called a "baroque theology." Prominent among these are extreme clericalism, which divides and separates the faithful from the clerics and prelates, the trappings of accrued ceremonialism – and of course, the juridical and excessive hierarchical face of the Church.

The approach to Chapter Three builds on Chapters One and Two, where we learned to know and perhaps even identify with the man, Yves Congar. If the twentieth century has an icon, Congar might well be it. He not only experienced the ups and downs of everyday life, but he encountered the extremes of the twentieth century: two World Wars, hunger, mass death and destruction, military occupation, the loss of a loved one, prison camps and even a death sentence.

After his release from German captivity in 1945, Congar and others experienced an Indian summer of freedom of expression and criticism. This would not last, for by 1947 Congar said that Rome was "frowning" at him. Before he was appointed *peritus*, before honor and recognition was heaped on his labors at Vatican II, before he was elevated to Cardinal Congar, there were the "dark years" - the years of distrust, official admonishment, discipline and even exile by the Church.

1. Ecumenism. Chapter Three brings us back to the 1930s when Congar was embarking upon his ecumenical vocation. It focuses on Congar's ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. After a revisit in Section A to the historic reasons for unbelief, Sections B and C move directly into Congar's vocation of ecumenism and his notion of *ressourcement*: the return to the Early Fathers, the Bible, the Early Councils, the liturgy and the magisterium as sources to restore and renew the ecclesiology of the Church. The goal here was to highlight Congar's service to Church ecclesiology, framing a discussion of his ecumenism with his recognition of the need for what he termed as an "ecclésiologie totale" – an ecclesiology not rooted in clericalism or seeking personal advancement within the hierarchy of the Church, but an ecclesiology in the uncompromised service of the Truth of Christ. This would lead to the first glimmers of "unity in diversity," discussed in greater detail in section F.

Chapter Three Sections D, E and F set forth and then systematize Congar's Four "Principles of Catholic Ecumenism," itemized by him in *Christians Disunited*.¹² These include: First Principle, Reconciliation Among Separated Christians; Second Principle, God Is the Final Cause of Unity in the Church; Third Principle, Christians Are Incorporated Together in Christ in the Oneness of the Church; and Fourth Principle, The "Catholicity" of the One Church.

For Congar at this time in his life, ecumenism meant a return of "dissident Christians" to the Catholic Church. In Chapter Three Congar distinguishes the Catholic and the non-Catholic "capacity for unity." The Fourth Ecumenical Principle, *Catholicity*, is defined as "the assumption of the many into the one previously given unity." He

¹² Yves Congar, *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique*, Unam Sanctam 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1937).

compares this with the lesser non-Roman ecumenism, which is “the introduction of a certain unity into a previously existing diversity.” Congar concludes that there is an internal Protestant ecumenism but not an internal Catholic ecumenism: the unity of the Catholic Church of “the many into the one previously given unity” has no need of ecumenism for *itself* because it *is* one.

B. Chapter Four. Despite Congar’s several references to the Malines Conferences of the late 1920’s, his preaching at the Paris Christian Unity Octave in 1936, and his understanding of “Catholicity,” at the time he wrote *True and False Reform in the Church* in 1950 he was focused more on evangelization than an attempt to establish a Catholic-non-Catholic relationship.¹³ This follows his conservative path in *Chrétiens désunis*. That will change at Vatican II and Congar helped change it. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, a document on which *peritus* Congar worked, proclaimed the “restoration of unity among all Christians” as one of its principal concerns.¹⁴ It is noteworthy that *Unitatis Redintegratio*, The Decree on Ecumenism (November 21, 1964), passed with an overwhelming majority vote.¹⁵

1. Vatican II. The Second Vatican Council was the destination toward which Congar’s ecclesiology had drawn him. At Vatican II the man and the hour met. Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, O.P. helped change the face of the Church to the world. That is the theme of Chapter Four. If not *the* theologian of Vatican II – which the sum of

¹³ Briefly, the Malines Conferences or conversations were a series of unofficial meetings in Belgium from 1921-1925 regarding reconciliation between Catholics and Anglicans.

¹⁴ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 1; Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, ed. *Ressourcement: A movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

¹⁵ Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 113.

Chapter Four supports and which I propose, Congar was certainly one of the most influential. As noted, he contributed to nine of the sixteen documents promulgated by Vatican II, including all four Constitutions, three Decrees and both Declarations.

When Congar first arrived in St. Peter's Basilica in early October, 1962, he was just one of many lost pilgrims surrounded by a sea of bishops and cardinals. Yet, when the Council closed on December 8, 1965, Père Yves Congar was recognized as one of the central figures in the ecumenical process which was the Second Vatican Council.

After a discussion of the call to Vatican II by John XXIII, we briefly scan the Pre-Preparatory Commissions before turning to the makeup of the Preparatory Commissions and the initial dominance of the Curia over these Commissions and the Council agenda. However, the Council fathers rather quickly regained control over their Council and Chapter Four provides some of the significant anecdotal details. The remainder of the Chapter is dedicated to Congar's participation in drafting, redacting and strengthening nine of the sixteen major documents promulgated at Vatican II.

2. Methodology. The problem encountered in connecting Congar to these nine Vatican documents was twofold. First, Congar made inconsistent statements over the years concerning the number and identity of the Vatican II documents on which he worked, as well as the number of preparatory committees on which he served. Second, aside from Congar himself there are few firsthand accounts of his participation and contribution to the Vatican II documents. My main sources here were Alberigo's five volume *History of Vatican II*, Alberigo's *A Brief History of Vatican II* and Congar's three different works on the topic, principally his *Mon Journal du Concile*.¹⁶

¹⁶ Joseph A. Komonchak, English version ed., *History of Vatican II*, 5 vols. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997); Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew Sherry

Using “bottom-up” inductive methodology and proceeding with no preset conditions or limitations, I was able to establish that in addition to Congar’s contribution to the October 20, 1962 “Message to the World” by the Council fathers, he served as an expert on at least five preparatory Commissions and contributed to nine of the sixteen major Vatican II documents. In order of promulgation, these documents are *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), *Unitatis Redintegratio* (The Decree on Ecumenism), *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relation to Non-Christian Religions), *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation), *Ad Gentes* (Decree on Mission Activity of the Church), *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom), *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World).

Section D, the largest part of Chapter Four, was devoted to an examination of these documents in chronological order. In my research I found no indication of a published scholastic inquiry specifically directed toward identifying the Vatican II documents on which *peritus* Congar worked. Essentially, this was new ground. With the caveat that in his *Journal*, Congar identified eight documents and to a greater or lesser degree identified parts on which he worked, the same comment might be made regarding the specific redactions Congar made to these documents. However, it is equally fair to say that familiarity with Congar’s ecclesiological focus as well as his writing style and oft-used terms and themes did permit some positive inductively-based conclusions.

(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books; third printing, October 2009); Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile*, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 2002); Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., *Vatican II: Le Concile au Jour le Jour*, 4 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1963-66); and Yves Congar, *Le Concile de Vatican II: son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, *Théologie Historique* 71 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984).

My methodology was to start with Congar's statements about these documents as the primary source. This is found in his list of documents he worked on at Vatican II set forth in *Mon Journal du Concile*.¹⁷ Additionally, Congar's comments to two interviewers, Jean Puyo in 1975, and Bernard Laurent in 1988, allowed me to integrate those statements with what Congar had previously written in his *Journal du Concile*. By this means I was able to identify specific document sections of Congar's work in eight of the sixteen Vatican documents. For one document, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, there were simply no particulars given by Congar. Yet, in his 1988 interview with Bernard Laurent, Congar confirmed that he did work on *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.¹⁸ Next, as described above, the content of now ten documents (including Message to the World) were examined for confirmation that they independently reflected Congar's ecclesiology.

First, I conducted a "close reading" of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. By this means I was able to systematically identify and detail fourteen paragraphs which dealt with renewal and reform of the liturgy, one which dealt with ecumenism and two with unity – all fitting nicely within the dimensions of Congar's *nouvelle théologie* ecclesiology of ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. This provided reasonable, if not dispositive, support for Congar's statement that he did, indeed, work on *Sacrosanctum*

¹⁷ Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile II*, 511. In this *Journal* entry of December 7, 1965, Congar identifies a total of eight documents on which he worked: *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, *Nostra Aetate*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Ad Gentes*, *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*. The first document promulgated by the Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was not on the list. Ibid.

¹⁸ Laurent, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 57.

Concilium. Of course, this remains to be proved with a certainty on another day, but I submit it as one of the reasonable and defensible conclusions of this dissertation.¹⁹

There were a total of eighty *periti*, including future cardinals and a future pope, appointed to the ten Preparatory Commission subcommittees. Congar initially was appointed as *peritus* to one subcommittee. Yet, we shall see that he worked as an expert on five of the ten subcommittees and made contributions, some of which were quite substantial, to nine of the sixteen principal documents promulgated by Vatican II.

By his expert service on five subcommittees and by his contributions to nine of the sixteen major documents of Vatican II, as well as his groundwork with Chenu on the “Message to the World”, Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, O.P. helped change the face of the Church to the world, thereby influencing millions of people, including many alive today. While Yves Congar was certainly one of the most influential experts at Vatican II and can quite fairly be called “the” theologian of Vatican II, his true legacy lies in his theological contribution to the ecclesiology of his beloved Church, immersing it in ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform.

¹⁹ Analogous to American law, the matter is not proved “beyond a reasonable doubt,” the highest standard in the law which is applied in criminal cases, but certainly meets the civil standard of proof by a “preponderance of the evidence.” In fact, there is no evidence to the contrary.

CHAPTER ONE

YVES CONGAR: THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

*A Father Congar - there is but one per century!*¹

Étienne Gilson

I. STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION

What can we learn from the ecclesiology of the French Dominican scholar-theologian, ecumenist and reformer Yves Congar? That is the question which this dissertation seeks to answer. First, however, we need to learn something about the man. Yves Congar was a unique and major figure in the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century. He is well-worth the time our journey will take, for Cardinal Congar will give us much more than the time we give him.

Yves Congar's life will prove to be iconic of the twentieth century, sharing its triumphs and tragedies. We begin this Chapter with his childhood experiences during

¹ My translation of “Un père Congar, il y'en a un par siècle!” This was the defining comment made by the French Thomistic philosopher Étienne Gilson (1884-1978) to Congar's advisor, Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P. Joseph Famerée and Giles Routhier, *Yves Congar* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 7. Unless otherwise noted, all translations herein are mine. To avoid confusion, I will at times note my translation.

Étienne Gilson had the credentials to make such a statement. He was a founder of the Institute of Mediaeval Studies at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, now known as the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. Romanus Cessario, O.P., *A Short History of Thomism* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 88. Gilson was also a member of the prestigious l'Académie française, as later would be Congar, the continuing group of forty intellectual “immortals” founded in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu. Famerée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 7. On his deathbed, Cardinal Congar whispered to those present that he wished to continue his conversations with Cardinal Richelieu.

World War I, a time when his father was exiled by the Germans, never to return. We then move to the period of his education and ordination, his conscription into the French Army and a lengthy captivity during World War II. After his release, Yves Congar entered into his “time of troubles” with Rome, only to be followed by his appointment as an expert at Vatican II, where the man and the hour would meet.

If it is true that lives of great people are often lives of great burden, then this is particularly true of great men and women of faith. Just so, was Yves Marie-Joseph Cardinal Congar: a man whose great accomplishments and misfortunes, public and private, reflected upon and often paralleled those of his own twentieth century. The great man Yves Congar would himself define ‘greatness’ only in terms of faithful submission to God’s divine plan:

Each one has his own part to play and his own path to follow in the sacred history which God writes. For each one the finest task is the one which has been allotted to him and it is in accomplishing it faithfully that he will be truly great, truly fruitful and ultimately happy.²

II. YVES CONGAR: A CHILD OF WAR

A. A Tree in the Ardennes.

Congar often referred to the personal impact of his origin in Sedan, France:

² Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P. *Dialogue Between Christians: Catholic Contributions to Ecumenism*, trans. Philip Loretz, S.J. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1966), 19. Congar’s mother had hanging on the wall in their home an embroidered plaque which read, “Know thyself,” an adage which she had learned from her teacher. As a lad during World War I, Yves Congar would often be sent by his mother on Sunday mornings to her former teacher’s home to explain and relate the Gospel read to him the night before. Jean-Pierre Jossua, O.P., *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God’s People* (Chicago: Priory Press, 1968), 11. One of his mother’s readings was to fortify the boy for the oncoming years, and Congar’s definition of ‘greatness’ calls it to mind: “the secret of happiness is to do one’s duty and to try and find one’s happiness in it.” Ibid.

I well recognize in myself a rather Briton or Celtic temperament, as was described by Renan in his very beautiful *Memories of Childhood and Youth*:³ a character a little mystical, and, at the same time, like a tree in the Ardennes, with a tendency to plant roots in a profound land. I am a Celt from the Ardennes!

I am profoundly marked. I am convinced that my appetite for history finds its source in this origin. Also, that which is far behind is a window to my view ahead. I see myself related to the little history of my native land. A small historical fray is often historically great: those of the wars of my country, those events of my Church. For me, history is always bound to these places. Space and time are inseparable in my eyes.⁴

B. The Impact of the First World War on Yves Congar.

It can seem surprising, in an intellectual bibliography, to return to the childhood years of a theologian.⁵ This is not surprising, however, in the case of Congar,

³ Congar refers here to Ernest Renan, *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1883).

⁴ Je me reconnais assez bien dans le tempérament breton, ou celte, tel que le décrit Renan dans ses très beaux souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse. Un caractère un peu mystique. Et un même temps, comme un arbre des Ardennes, ce penchant à s'enraciner, à se fonder dans une terre profonde. Je suis un Celt des Ardennes!

Je suis profondément marqué. Je suis convaincu que mon goût pour l'histoire trouve dans ce fait son origine. Aussi loin en arrière que porte mon regard, je me vois en lien avec la petite histoire de ma terre natale. Une petite histoire mêlée souvent à la grande: celle de guerres de mon pays, celle des événements de mon Église. Pour moi, l'histoire est toujours liée à des lieux. L'espace et le temps sont indissociables à mes yeux. Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité: Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 6-7. (my translation).

⁵ Joseph Famerée, and Giles Routhier, *Yves Congar* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 17, direct the reader on this point to the diary of the young Congar by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Dominique Congar, ed., *L'Enfant Yves Congar, Journal de la Guerre 1914-1918* (Paris: Cerf, 1997).

Perhaps Father Congar's most recognized autobiographical source is his fifty-one page Preface to *Dialogue Between Christians*, captioned "The Call and the Quest 1929-1963." Good bibliographies and autobiographical sources for Congar and his writings may be found in a number of sources. For the period 1924 (the date of Congar's first publication) to 1967, P. Quattrocchi's definitive "Bibliographie générale du Père Yves Congar" is re-presented in Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Le Père Congar. La théologie au service du peuple de Dieu* (Cerf, Paris, 1967), 213-272, published in English as *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God's People*, trans. Sister Mary Jocelyn, O.P. (Chicago: Priory Press, 1968), and lists 958 titles by year of issue. For the period 1967 to 1987, Aidan Nichols in *Angelicum* 66, No.3 (1989) continued this numbering system and lists titles by year and sequential number from 959 to 1790. However, this list omits at least one signature work by Congar: *Je Crois en l'Esprit Saint, III: Le Fleuve coule en Orient et en Occident* (Paris: Cerf, 1980). Other bibliographies which I would particularly note include Elizabeth T. Groppe, *Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 3, n. 12; and William Henn, O.F.M. CAP., *The Hierarchy of Truths According to Yves Congar, O.P.* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1987).

who not only returns frequently to his childhood in Sedan [footnote omitted], but observes that “the preparations in our lives commence early: the more distant are the stronger.”⁶ Congar is first of all a man rooted in a land and marked by certain experiences: one of which, very lasting indeed, is the First World War⁷

a. *The Child is father of the Man.* World War I was a turning point in Congar’s life.⁸ Having had such a profound effect upon the young Congar, it was imprinted upon the theologian he became. Reflecting upon this theme of childhood impressions almost a century before, Wordsworth (1770-1850) had penned that, “The Child is father of the Man.”⁹

World War I is the first great icon of disunity and discord of the twentieth century. The polarization of Slavic states and territories in the Balkans and entangled alliances in Europe was to bring on a conflict of the great European powers, which in turn brought down the horrors of death and destruction. Congar’s life during World War I and the ensuing Armistice was defined by the contrast between the implacable hatred and violence of war and the nascent forgiveness and ecumenicism of peace. The abrupt contrast between societies engaged in a seemingly endless war, then suddenly at peace,

⁶ *Chrétiens en dialogue*, 12. In a later work, Congar also refers to the “preparation in my childhood and youth” in *Entretiens d’automne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 99, subsequently published in English as Bernard Lauret, ed., *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology, Conversations with Yves Congar*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 77.

⁷ Il peut paraître étonnant, dans une biographie intellectuelle, de revenir sur les années d’enfance d’un théologien. Ce fait n’est cependant pas étonnant dans le cas de Congar qui, non seulement revient fréquemment sur son enfance à Sedan, mais observe que “les préparations commencent tôt dans nos vies. Les plus lointaines sont les plus fermes.” Congar est d’abord un homme enraciné dans une terre et marqué par quelques expériences: celle, dure, de la Première Guerre mondiale, certes Farmarée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 17 (my translation).

⁸ Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 17.

⁹ William Wordsworth, “MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD” in *Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, vol. 4, 1801-1805 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 59:

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky:
 So is it now I am a man;
 So be it when I shall grow old,

 The Child is father of the Man;

confused and disoriented the young Congar: it called out to him for some kind of reconciliation and deep answer. In time, Congar was to emerge from this chrysalis of war with a spiritual understanding that the implacable contradiction of peace emerging from war, goodness triumphing over evil, and unity resulting from division could be effected only through the working in time and through humanity of the Holy Spirit.

For the rest of his life, as a direct and proximate consequence of his personal experiences in the “Great War”, the reformer Yves Congar would stress unity in the form of Christian ecumenicism as part of the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. Congar understood that this ecclesiology must be both an ecumenical unity and an “ecclesiology in Truth” - a term which he held dear and would later comment on as a Thomist. In the end, the defining construct of Congar is not ecumenicism and unity or *ressourcement* and reform, but the Truth which embraces them all.¹⁰ This is the truth of Christ found “in the reality of the Church”. In contrast, Congar criticized he who used his personal “truth” as an ecclesial weapon:

The schismatic reformer is the one who would put the principle of truth not in the reality of the Church, but in his representation and his own judgment - and take as a slogan: remain firm [in your judgment] and determine everything by your own thought.¹¹

From the beginning Congar sought to reconcile Catholicism and Protestantism, without – and this must be emphasized, surrendering the rich Catholic deposit of faith. Yet, it was not an ecumenicism based upon a monopoly of Catholic Tradition, for that

¹⁰ At age 82, Congar would say, “Jean Puyo entitled his conversations with me, ‘A Life for the Truth.’ I would never have been so bold as to propose such a title, but I am happy that it was given.” Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, xi.

¹¹ Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l’Église, Unam Sanctam 20* (Paris: Cerf, 1950), 263 (my translation). Le reformateur schismatique est celui qui, ayant mis le principe de la vérité non dans la réalité de l’Église, mais dans sa représentation et son jugement, prend pour devise: rester soi-même et tout régler sur sa pensée.

would be no ecumenicism at all. Rather, he came to understand that which many had overlooked - the common grounds of Catholic Tradition with other Christian faith traditions. Within the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church itself Congar saw the need for reform and repeatedly emphasized the marks of “oneness” and “Catholicity” of the faith. He opposed liturgical developments which would artificially (i.e., non-biblically) distance the ordained priesthood of Christ from the priesthood of the believer, and the Church hierarchy from the Church laity, and thus unnaturally divide the body of Christ itself. In a parallel manner, Congar spoke out against an encroaching ornamentation of Church ecclesiology which emphasized the sacerdotal role of the Church, *qua* institution, and de-emphasized the role of the laity within the body of Christ. Congar saw this occurring in two ways in the post-Vatican I period: first, there was a creeping marginalization of the participatory role of the laity in the Church; second, he believed that particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, Church authorities increasingly saw the work of the Holy Spirit as operating wholly and only within the formal organization of the Catholic Church. In sum, Congar anticipated Vatican II in proclaiming a Church of participation, not power. As will be discussed subsequently, there were, and are, some very defensible reasons asserted by the Church for what Congar perceived as a progressive pneumatological pre-emption by the Church, vainly attempting as it were, to fence in the Spirit.¹²

We shift our attention now to the young Congar. Jean-Pierre Jossua, O.P., who personally knew Yves Congar and worked with him, succinctly expressed the notion of the impact on Congar of the violence of war: “Such things leave a mark on a man; those

¹² In Jn 3:8, Jesus tells Nicodemus, “The wind blows where it wills, and you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes; so it is of everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

who lived through World War II know it only too well.”¹³ French historian and author, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, the principal editor of young Congar’s *Journal de la Guerre*, characterized the boy as marked by war - “un enfant en guerre”:¹⁴

It is certain that one cannot evade the question of the impact of the [Great] War upon the intellectual and spiritual map of the route of Yves Congar after the end of the Great World Conflict. Nevertheless, the question that one would like to avoid, first of all, is the sufficient competence of the work [*Journal de la Guerre, 1914-1918*], because the risks of “the biographical illusion” are very evident here: can one look for the Dominican Yves Congar in his childhood journal? Can one perceive the theologian in what he wrote between ten and fourteen years of age?

And yet, it is he himself who leads us along this road, and directs us in such a manner that we cannot easily refuse to follow the path he points out. Here is what he wrote in 1978 in witness to the impact left on him by the Great War: “*The years of war 14-18, have marked me in a profound way. I know very well that people are not interested in me, but if one is interested, he must know that one cannot understand me if one does not take into account the experience encountered during these years*” (emphasis added).¹⁵

In his extensive 1975 interview by Jean Puyo, Congar was questioned concerning World War I, “Did this make a lasting effect on the child that you were?” Père Congar responded without hesitation, “Very lasting, and it will continue to mark me”¹⁶ In his

¹³ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 12.

¹⁴ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Dominique Congar, ed. *Congar Journal de la Guerre* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 257.

¹⁵ C’est bien pourquoi on ne peut esquiver la question de l’impact de la guerre, au plan intellectuel et spirituel, sur l’itinéraire suivi par Yves Congar après la fin du Premier Conflit mondial. Question qu’on aimerait éviter pourtant, faute de compétences suffisantes tout d’abord, et aussi parce que les risques de “l’illusion biographique” son ici trop évidents: faut-il chercher le dominicain Yves Congar son journal d’enfance? Peut-on apercevoir le théologien dans ce qu’il écrivit [écrivait] entre dix et quatorze ans? My translation.

Et pourtant, c’est lui-même qui nous conduit sur cette voie, et d’une manière si directive qu’on ne peut aisément refuser de suivre le chemin qu’il indique. Voici ce qu’il écrit sur la trace laissée en lui par la Grande Guerre, dans son témoignage de 1978: “Les années de guerre 14-18 m’ont marqué de façon profonde. Je conçois très bien qu’on ne s’intéresse pas à moi mais, si l’on s’y intéresse, on doit savoir qu’on ne peut me comprendre si l’on ne tient pas compte de l’expérience faite durant ces années.” Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 283. The first paragraph quotes the seventy-four year-old Congar writing in “*Enfance sedanais 1904-1919*,” *Le pays sedanais* 9, no. 5 (1978), 28 (my translation). The quote in the second paragraph which refers to the lasting effect that World War I had upon Congar is a quote taken by Audoin-Rouzeau from Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 7.

¹⁶ Puyo: “Ce fut pour l’enfant que vous étiez une période dure?”

closing remarks, Audoin-Rouzeau summarizes the impact of World War I on Yves Congar and closes with a short reference to that War as part of a collective, redemptive suffering by France:

The experience of war is principally documented by the very profound mark and very deep imprint it made on the intellectual, moral and spiritual formation of Yves Congar. The war certainly has hardened his Catholicism, which for many had an austerity and a sacrificial connotation which pre-existed 1914, as was practiced in many families at the beginning of the century. The suffering of the years of war was thus freely accepted: war was a sacrifice, an offering.

...
Sine sanguine non fit remissio. But there is no need of the testimony of the Bible. We know well, we others, that our mission on earth is to redeem France by blood (my translation).¹⁷

While the point here is the central influence that his life experiences, and in particular World War I, had upon Yves Congar, it is open to question whether the War had “hardened” Congar’s Catholicism, as Andoin-Rouzeau concludes. I have included this radical and mystical interpretation of World War I by Audoin-Rouzeau (and there were many others) as a kind of redemption of France by blood to emphasize that the concept was later rejected by Congar: “The life offering as sacrifice – it is not in the sense of mutilation or dying; to the contrary, it is in the measure by which one lives and is active that one makes an offer of his life; in this sense, each is the priest of his own

Congar: “Très dure et qui me marqua.” Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 10.

¹⁷ Document capital sur the marque très profonde et très somber imprimée par l’expérience de guerre à la formation intellectuelle, morale, spirituelle de Yves Congar. La guerre a certainement durci son catholicisme dont, pour autant, la connotation austère, sacrificielle, devait préexister à 1914, comme dans beaucoup de famille pratiquantes du début du siècle. La souffrance des années de guerre fut ainsi volontairement acceptée: elle était sacrifice, offrande. . . .

Sine sanguine non fit remissio. Mais il n’est pas besoin du témoignage de la Bible. Nous savons bien, nous autres, que notre mission sur la terre est de racheter la France par le sang.” Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 285-6, citing the French soldier-author, Ernest Psichari, in support of the notion that France by her suffering in the Great War was transformed into an imitation of Christ.

existence; it is the spiritual worship, the spiritual priesthood of each baptized Christian.”¹⁸ However, Audoin-Rouzeau does appropriately sum up Congar’s recollection of the First World War in one word: suffering. He adds that “It is striking to observe that it is this theme of suffering which has accompanied Congar in so many moments of his life, ‘the suffering which is transforming in communion, in love’, which the Master of the Dominican Order, Frère Timothy Radcliffe, made the center of his homily for the funeral of Cardinal Congar on June 26, 1995 (my translation).”¹⁹

C. Yves Congar: A Priest Immersed in Life

Whatever his troubles, Congar had a zest for the world and a love of life. He never separated life, the world and his experiences.²⁰ He resisted from his youth any notion of this - even that suggested to him by the pastor and mentor of his early years, Abbé Daniel Lallement, to whom Congar would later respond:

I was never able to enter into his kind of aversion for the world, the world of mankind, the land of mankind. . . . I wanted the breeze, a contact with life. . . . I never have consented 100% to his ideal of separation from the world, of negation of nature, of clausturation of an ecclesiastical life or clerical renunciation of life, . . . breaking ties with the life of men (my translation).²¹

¹⁸ “La vie comme offrande, comme sacrifice – non pas au sens de mutilier, de faire mourir; au contraire, c’est dans la mesure où on est vivant et actif que l’on fait offrande de sa vie; en ce sens, chacun est le prêtre de son existence; c’est le culte spirituel, le sacerdoce spirituel de chaque chrétien baptisé.” Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 166. Audoin-Rouzeau himself supports this point and wrote that this interpretation given by Congar in 1975 to Jean Puyo was “very different” and less pessimistic than his earlier position: “henceforth, he thinks that his life and work enabled him to come to a penetration of the faith.” My translation of “. . . il pense désormais que sa vie, son travail peuvent apporter à la pénétration de la foi.” Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 286.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 285. Il est frappant d’observer que c’est de ce thème de la souffrance qui a accompagné Yves Congar à tant de moments de sa vie, de la “souffrance qui est transformée en communion, en amour” que le maître de l’Ordre des Dominicains, le Frère Timothy Radcliffe, fait le centre de son homélie pour les funérailles du cardinal Yves Congar, le 26 juin 1995

²⁰ Famerée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 14.

²¹ Je n’ai jamais pu entrer dans son espèce d’aversion pour le monde, le monde des hommes, la terre des hommes. . . . Je désirais l’air, un contact avec la vie. . . . Je n’ai jamais consenti à 100%

Moreover, for Congar, on a personal level, “experience is indispensable as well as unforgettable. Each faith is truly a new experience - one becomes to some degree another man. One sees other things. He then is someone who will no longer be able to ever think or speak as before (my translation)”.²²

At the onset of his work on Congar, Bernard Lauret wrote that, “Few people during the last half-century have had so intensive a life as Fr. Congar - within the church and for the church.”²³ Although Congar often said that he did not want to talk about himself, knowledge of his extraordinary life experiences will better enable us to understand the eminent Catholic theologian, historian and reformer he was to become.²⁴ He once said that his clerical vocation was “like a love which feeds everything.”²⁵ As to this vocation, Congar repeatedly posited that a place must be made for the historical dimensions of not only events themselves but of the issues they raise:

History is a great school of intelligence and wisdom. Historical knowledge enables one to avoid making absolutes of what is relative, enables one to put

à son idéal de séparation du monde, de négation de la nature, de la claustration dans une vie ecclésiastique ou cléricale renoncée, . . . de brisement des liens avec la vie des hommes. Yves Congar, *Journal d'un théologien 1946-1956: présenté et annoté par Étienne Fouilloux; avec la collaboration de Dominique Congar, André Duval et Bernard Montagnes* (Paris: Cerf, 2000), 26.

²² . . . expérience est indispensable, elle est aussi inoubliable. Comme chaque fois que l'on fait vraiment une expérience nouvelle, on deviant à quelque degré un autre homme. On voit les choses autrement. Il en est qu'on ne pourra plus jamais penser ou dire comme auparavant . . . Yves Congar, “Appels et cheminements 1929-1963,” in *Chrétiens en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1964), 14.

²³ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 1.

²⁴ Famerée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 1. Akin to Famerée and Routhier's book, this dissertation seeks in part not only to present the work and ecclesial impact of Yves Congar the theologian, but in some small degree to permit the reader to understand Yves Congar and the theologian he became through his experiences, his encounters, his studies, his reflections, his hopes and his developing faith and ecclesiology.

²⁵ Ibid., 14 citing Yves Congar, “Appels et cheminements 1929-1963,” in *Chrétiens en dialogue*, 14.

things in their proper place, to sort out old tussles and ill-founded bones of contention.²⁶

D. The Early Years

Yves Marie-Joseph Congar was born George-Yves Congar on Wednesday, April 13, 1904 to Lucie Desoye and Georges Congar.²⁷ His place of birth was Sedan, a historic town of about 20,000 people – then and now, located in the Sedan gap, less than five miles north of a prominent crossing point of the Meuse River in the picturesque Ardennes region of northeast France.

²⁶ Yves Congar, *Challenge to the Church: the Case of Archbishop Lefebvre*, trans. Paul Inwood (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 70-71.

²⁷ There is some confusion as to Congar's date of birth. Aidan Nichols, O.P. states that Congar was born on May 13, 1904. *Yves Congar* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 1. This is the same date used by Elizabeth T. Groppe in "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999), 12, as well as in her subsequent book, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 15. In footnote 1 to his first chapter of *Yves Congar*, Nichols chiefly credits J.-P. Jossua, O.P., *Le Père Congar: la théologie au service du peuple de Dieu*, (Paris: Cerf, 1967), for his background information on Congar's childhood. Coincidentally, J.-P. Jossua wrote the introduction to the publication of Audoin-Rouzeau, *L'Enfant Yves Congar, Journal de la Guerre 1914-1918*. There, Jossua states only that Congar was born in 1904. However, in a 1967 French work, translated and published in English the next year, Jossua states that Congar was born on April 13, 1904. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 11. Likewise, Gabriel Flynn states that Congar was born on April 13, 1904. *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 4. In his "Présentation Générale" to Yves Congar: *Journal d'un théologien*, 13, Étienne Foulloux states likewise, "Yves Congar est né à Sedan le 13 Avril 1904." Finally, April 13, 1904 is the correct date for two primary source reasons: first, it is supported by valid documentation, and second it is stated dispositively by Yves Congar himself. As to the first, a facsimile of the purported actual birth announcement issued by his parents at Sedan on April 16, 1904 reads, "*Monsieur et Madame G. Congar ont le plaisir de vous faire part de la Naissance d'un Fils, George – Yves (13 Avril)*" (my translation: Mr. and Mrs. G. Congar have the pleasure to announce to you the birth of a son, Georges-Yves (April 13). Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 10. Further, at page 159 of the *Journal de la Guerre*, there is a copy of Yves Congar's *Personal Ausweis* (German occupation identity card) dated January 1, 1917, with his picture and the entry, "Geboren am: 13 Avril 1904". Most significantly, in a 1978 recollection of his youth in Sedan, Father Yves Congar wrote: "I was born on the 13th of April, 1904" ("Je suis né le avril 13 1904 . . ."). *Ibid.*, 252; Yves Congar, *Le pays sedanais* 9, no. 5: 27.

Congar's mother and father were sincere and faithful Catholics. He will later describe his family as living a "Christian life – serious, authentic and solid".²⁸ But Yves Congar had both a happy and sad childhood - happy until the onset of World War I, miserable thereafter until War's end.²⁹ Known to his family as "Yvonet" or "Vonet," Yves was the youngest of four children: three boys – Pierre, Robert and Georges-Yves, and one girl, Marie-Louise, who doted on the young Yves.³⁰ Yves father, Georges Congar, was rather reserved and stoic, reflecting his Celtic heritage of northwest France. Evidently with only mixed success, Georges Congar ran a local bank in Sedan which Yves' grandfather had founded.³¹ Yves's mother, Lucie Desoye Congar, traced her family roots back to the fourteenth century in a town in Belgium, not far from Sedan.³² Her father was a Sedan wool merchant who dabbled in local politics.³³ Lucie had a particularly far-reaching influence upon the adoring Yves. She would often read to the children in the evening and particularly on Saturday nights during the war years, 1914-18, always including in her readings the Gospel verses of Sunday's Mass.³⁴

Aidan Nichols, O.P. characterizes the family as French "lower bourgeoisie": conventional, conservative and patriotic.³⁵ Jossua, O.P. wrote that the family was middle

²⁸ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 15. But Jossua, who personally knew and often spoke with Congar, will describe the family as "not especially 'pious' ". Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 11.

²⁹ Famerée, and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 17; Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 7, 9-10, 12-13.

³⁰ There are pictures of Yves and his sister, Marie Louise taken on June 5, 1914, the day of their Confirmation, and the Congar family in Audoin-Rouzeau's *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 18, 11.

³¹ Congar said that his mother often was required to work long hours at home so that their financial difficulties would not impact upon the family life. In the evenings after the children had gone to bed he would see her light filter in under his door. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 8. In the same interview, he explained that the family had financial difficulties which were equally due to two factors: first, his father had little aptitude for managing his affairs, and second, his father's captivity during the War. *Ibid.*, 26.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁴ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 11.

³⁵ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 1-2.

class.³⁶ But according to Cardinal Congar's nephew, Dominique Congar, the Congar family was at least by appearance upper middle class:³⁷ "The family, very united, lived on a large family property situated at Fond-de-Givonne, one of the suburbs of Sedan, Ardennes [on the bank of the Meuse River] along the route leading towards Belgium, the route of the North, the route of the invasions" (my translation).³⁸ Congar stated that the family had moved there from Sedan in 1912.³⁹

At pages 28-29 of the *Journal de la Guerre*, there is a two page picture spread of the mostly burned out "Maisons du Fond-de-Givonne . . . en 1914". These seem to be the shells of substantial homes. Another centerpiece picture of the heights of Fond-de-Givonne appears in the *Journal de la Guerre* at pages 16 and 17. There is an additional centerpiece spread with two pictures of a large religious "procession on the family property at Fond de Givonne in 1917 or 1918" (my translation).⁴⁰ Finally, there is a

³⁶ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 11. See also Étienne Fouilloux, "Frère Yves Cardinal Congar dominicain. Itinéraire d'un théologien," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 79, no. 3 (Juillet 1995): 381, where it states that Congar was born on April 13, 1904 into an "average" family in Sedan.

³⁷ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 5.

³⁸ Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 9. "La famille, très unie, vivait dans une grande propriété familiale située au Fond de Givonne, un des faubourgs de Sedan, Ardennes, sur le route menant vers la Belgique, la route du Nord, la route des Invasions." Dominique Congar gives the address of this property as 85 Fond de Givonne. This same address appears in Yves Congar's *Personal-Ausweis* dated January 1, 1917, as well as on a military order to appear issued to Congar on June 5, 1918 by the local German Commandant. *Ibid.*, 159, 216.

³⁹ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 9.

⁴⁰ "Procession dans la propriété de la famille Congar au Fond de Givonne en 1917 ou 1918." Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 214-15. As a prelude to Chapter Two, it should be noted that this Procession of the Sacred Heart took place on Congar family lands because of the Law of December 9, 1905 which sanctioned the conduct of religious activities on public property in towns of differing faiths. Yves Congar writes about this religious celebration in his journal entry for June 1-3, 1917 and describes rather substantial grounds: "Again this year, the Procession of the Sacred Heart will be at our place, all one beautiful ardor we put on as a mark, because our work will not only benefit us, but also France, our country to which we wish greatness and victory: the meadow is hayed, the paths weeded, the garlands are made, the ornaments prepared as if the hand of a fairy had touched all these things with her wand." ("Cette année encore, la procession du Sacré Cœur se fera chez nous, tous et d'une belle ardeur nous nous

photograph in the *Journal de la Guerre* of the infant George-Yves with his nurse, which infers that this family, even with financial difficulties, at least presented itself as one of some means.⁴¹

Congar often commented that he grew up in a pluralistic and ecumenical atmosphere and the Jewish and Protestant children of his parents' friends were his frequent playmates.⁴² Nichols characterizes this as "an unusual thing for this period of the Third Republic."⁴³ This may be fair comment, for in the opinion of at least one French socio-political writer-lecturer, based upon perceived Jewish economic power and the racially divisive Dreyfus Affair, French Catholics at the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth were, sadly, almost unanimously anti-Semitic.⁴⁴ The existence of Yves' ecumenical playmates speaks well of his parents, and Congar himself alludes to these seminal childhood experiences as the very "seeds" of ecumenicism which "had been sown in me for many years, no doubt even from my childhood. Very soon, I

mettons à la tâche, car notre travail non seulement profitera à nous, mais aussi la France, à notre patrie que nous voulons grande et victorieuse: la prairie se fauche, les chemins se sarclent, les guirlands se font, les ornements se préparent comme si une main de fée avait touché sa baguette tous ces objets."). Ibid., 169-70. Congar describes another procession on the family property in his entry of August 15, 1917. Ibid., 175-76.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴² Puyo, *Un vie pour la vérité*, 73. Congar opined that the lack of tolerance for bigotry in his family resulted in the good fortune of having an unusual religious mix of playmates. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 4.

⁴³ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 1.

⁴⁴ Danielle Delmaire, "Antisémitisme des catholiques au vingtième siècle: de la revendication au refus," in *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Kay Chadwick (Liverpool: Liverpool University press, 2000), 26: "At the end of the nineteenth century, Catholics almost universally would proclaim themselves anti-Semites and their press denounced Jewish ritual crimes, cheating and economic power. At the end of the twentieth century, these beliefs were shared by only a tiny minority of implacably anti-Semite Catholics. Between the two [centuries], the cataclysm of the Shoah had overcome anti-Semitism and then anti-Jewish prejudices." ("A la fin du dix-neuvième siècle, les catholiques quasi unanimement se proclamaient antisémites et leur presse dénonçait les crimes rituels, la filouterie et la puissance économique des juifs. A fin du vingtième siècle, ces croyances ne sont pas partagées que par une infime minorité de catholiques irréductiblement antisémites. Entre les deux, le cataclysme de la Shoah a renversé bien des préjugés: l'antisémitisme puis l'antijudaïsme.")

discovered that a large number of circumstances and incidents had prepared me for it, some in an immediate and relatively specific manner, others more remotely – the first roots as it were.”⁴⁵

Congar did not come to his priestly calling directly. A medical doctor was a friend of the family and Congar recalls how at age nine he wanted to emulate him.⁴⁶ During the four years of the War, however, the Church had an increasing impact upon the young Yves: the life of the Congar family was centered about the parish, the only place where one could be at liberty to experience and celebrate the life of the faith community.⁴⁷

E. Congar’s *Journal de la Guerre, 1914-1918*

1. Glimpses of the Dominican Yves Congar in His Childhood Journal.

Dominique Congar writes that his grandmother, Yves’ mother, Lucie, had told each of the four Congar children to keep a “vacation diary” during their summer vacation of 1914, adding, “She never imagined that this initiative would find its conclusion more than eighty years later” (my translation).⁴⁸ In 1994 and 1995, nephew Dominique made a

⁴⁵ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 3.

⁴⁶ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 14. At age ten for his First Communion (May 24, 1914) Congar asked for a microscope. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2; Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 18. Because of the First World War, he did not receive it until 1918, but by then the young man was focused upon entering the priesthood. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 12.

⁴⁷ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 14.

⁴⁸ “Elle n’imagine pas que son initiative trouvera sa conclusion plus que quatre-vingts années plus tard.” Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 9. Congar’s nephew was referring here to the publication of this *Journal* in 1997, eighty-three years after the young Congar started it. Congar’s own title was, “Journal de la guerre Franco-Boche 1’914 -1’918.” It consisted of five notebooks, the first of which he started on July 27, 1914 and the last of which ended on November 8, 1918. This was supplemented by a “Note on the invasion and the war and the vocation of France”, written by Congar in 1923 or 1924, and evidently intended by him as a

number of visits to his declining “l’oncle Vonet” at Les Invalides, the national French military hospital.⁴⁹ During these visits, Cardinal Congar, far from his papers and books, would often revert back to the events of his childhood which he chronicled in his hand-written and illustrated *Journal de la guerre Franco-Boche 1’914-1’918*.⁵⁰ He recalls:

I was intrigued by this journal to which my uncle seemed to hold onto so often. It recorded, without doubt, great details - detailed analyses by a small boy of ten years of age, very lively, admiring of his brothers, “the Great Ones”, and very close with Mimi [Marie-Louise], sister and good friend (Mimi was born in 1902, Yves in 1904). Therein, when one spoke of the Ardennes - of the trees, the rivers, the mists, the snow and of his home at “85 Fond de Givonne”, my uncle came alive and recovered the tenderness of his adolescence. He left his armor of a gruff boar. . . [,] the emblem of the Ardennes (my translation).⁵¹

The young Congar’s diary “succeeded in giving an objective account of the war that was being carried on under his window It is full of the cultural stereotypes of his

preface to his *Journal*. Ibid., 245, 250. In 1974, Congar spoke again on the times of his *Journal*: “1914! I am ten years old. One thought that the war would not last but a few months. At the end of July, my mother told us – my brothers and my sister: ‘make your journal’”. I did mine regularly until the Armistice of 1918 (my translation of: “1914! J’avais dix ans. On pesait que la guerre ne durerait que quelques mois. Dès fin de juillet, ma mère nous dit, à mes frères et ma sœur: Faites votre journal. J’ai encore le mien, tenu regulieèment jusqu’à l’Armistice de 1918”). Congar, *Le pays sedanais* 9, no. 5: 28.

⁴⁹ Congar showed signs of physical debilitation as early as 1935. “Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P.,” *Theology Digest* 32:3 (Fall, 1985): 214: “The autumn of ’35 marked the onset of my illness.” Although his mind remained alert, eventually this progression would confine Congar to a wheelchair. In his later years he was cared for by his fellow Dominicans at the Couvent Saint-Jacques outside Paris. On October 9, 1984 his medical condition was such that, due in part to his status as a prisoner-of-war in World War II, he was hospitalized at Les Invalides, Paris where he remained until his death in 1995. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, ix, 8; Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 1.

⁵⁰ Evidently until his discussions with his nephew Dominique, at Les Invalides Congar rarely spoke of his *Journal*. The Prior Provincial wrote that only after Congar’s death were the five notebooks which made up his *Journal de la Guerre* discovered by his Dominican brothers. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, Introductory Notes. Congar’s *Journal de la Guerre, 1914-1918* was featured in an historical documentary series, “The World at War: World War I”, televised during the spring and summer, 2012.

⁵¹ Je suis intrigué par ce journal de guerre auquel l’oncle semble tenir beaucoup. Il a sans doute consigné force détails, détails analysés par un petit garçon de dix ans, très vif, admiratif de ses deux frères, “les Grands”, très intimé avec Mimi, la sœur bien-aimée (Mimi est née en 1902, Yves en 1904). Dès que l’on parle des Ardennes, des arbres, des rivières, des brumes, de la neige, de la propriété du “85 Fond du Givonne”, l’oncle s’anime et retrouve la tendresse de son adolescence. Il quitte sa carapace de sanglier bourru. . . . emblème des Ardennes Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 9.

times and reveals a very bright intelligence; it was here that the boy acquired some of the fundamental techniques required for keeping a diary: precision in dating, completeness in the telling of a story, the identification of one's sources and the relevance of impressions. He would not be slow in taking these up again when he was an adult."⁵²

2. Other Journals, Diaries and Works by Yves Congar. Père Congar would write in 1964 that, "I do not normally keep a diary and have only done so in two sorts of circumstances: when I have been privileged to undergo a new experience in contact with a new world or when I have become involved in events of historic importance (war, the crisis of 1954, the Council)."⁵³ Whatever Congar's good intentions, this is an understatement.⁵⁴ With great respect, I would note that Père Congar's diary disclaimer was honored more in the breach than in the observance: more often than not Congar *was involved* in "a new experience in contact with a new world" or "events of historic importance" - and was writing it down. Simply put, involvements in the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church and in ecumenicism with other Christian traditions were defining facets of the life of this future prince of the Church and Congar did not let them go undocumented.

⁵² Alberto Melloni, "The System and the Truth in the Diaries of Yves Congar," trans. by Clarence Gallagher, S.J., Gabriel Flynn, ed., *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs*, 32 (Louvain: Peeters, 2005): 278-79.

⁵³ The translation in the 1966 publication of *Dialogue Between Christians* differs slightly from the words Congar actually wrote in 1964: "Je n'ai pas tenu de Journal, auf parfois, en des occasions de deux sortes: quand il m'a été donné de faire une expérience nouvelle, d'entrer en contact avec un monde nouveau; quand j'ai été mêlé a des événements d'importance historique (guerre, crise de 1954, Concile)." *Chrétiens en Dialogue: Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme, "Appels et cheminements 1929-1963"* (Paris: Cerf, 1964), x. In the English translation, this is found in the Preface, "The Call and the Quest", to Yves Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 2. Melloni notes that this disclaimer language was then revised in Yves Congar, *Une passion: l'unité Réflexions et souvenirs 1929-1973* (Paris: Cerf, 1974) and represented in Cardinal Yves Congar, *Écrits réformateurs*, ed. J-P. Jossua (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 264.

⁵⁴ At times, Congar exaggerated and dramatized matters to make a point. We will see such statements in Chapter Two, such as his criticism of a "hierarchical, juridical" Church. On the one hand they at times overreached; on the other, they were just as often bluntly true.

In fact, in addition to no less than four travel diaries (covering a total of six years) and eight World War II diaries (covering five years), Père Congar maintained four important journals during the most significant periods of his life: *Journal de la Guerre* (1914-1918), *Journal d'un théologien 1946-1956*, *Mon Journal du Concile I* (1960-1963) and *Mon Journal du Concile II* (1964-1966).⁵⁵ Maintaining journals and diaries would be a substantial and continuing part of Père Congar's work, and he would spend a significant part of at least thirty years of his life writing them. To this effort must be added at least thirty-six books authored and seemingly countless articles penned by Père Congar.

3. Congar's Personal Experience of World War I.

a. *The Gathering Storm Clouds of War.* The first part of the boy's unique journal is, in effect, his perception of the onset of the First World War: the Battle of the Ardennes, August 21-23, 1914. His first entry, dated July 27, 1914, is rather prescient for a ten year-old:

Monday 27 July 1914. These days they already speak rumors of wars.⁵⁶
A Serb had assassinated the son of the king of Austria which now wants to

⁵⁵ Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*; Yves Congar, *Journal d'un théologien 1946-1956* (Paris: Cerf), 2000; Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile I* (Paris: Cerf, 2002); and *Mon Journal du Concile II* (Paris: Cerf, 2002). Père Congar kept as well diaries of his experiences of war and imprisonment dated 1939 and 1944. He also wrote a *carnet de guerre* dealing with the period September 2, 1939 to March 8, 1940 and five other notebooks describing his days as a prisoner of war covering the period from May 27, 1940 to January 14, 1942. Alberto Melloni, "The System and the Truth in the Diaries of Yves Congar": 279-80. Among the papers found at the Dominican Convent of St. James after the death of Cardinal Congar were travel diaries of his stays in England (1936-1939), Rome (1946), Spain (1950) and Palestine (1953-1954). *Ibid.*, 279.

⁵⁶ Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Duchess Sophie, were assassinated on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, by a member of the Black Hand, a separationist group secretly led by the Serbian military intelligence office. On July 5, 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm II pledged German support to Austria-Hungary against the Serbian government, even after a high-placed German official investigated the matter and publically declared that Serbia had no involvement in the royal deaths. On July 28, 1914, the day after Yves Congar made his first journal entry, Emperor Franz Joseph declared war on Serbia and Russia. The next day Russia began mobilizing her military forces, an event which once started could not be stopped. Imperial Germany declared war on Russia on August 1, 1914 and entangled alliances,

declare war against Serbia. This will make Germany, on Austria's side, fight with France, ally of the Serbs. The Dames of the Military [possibly officers' wives] were energized and there were lines at the banks, at the Caisse d'Epargne [a French national bank], people wanted to withdraw their money. Sedan has not been tranquil because of false news which circulates in the town. Pierre [Yves' oldest brother] was in Germany and we were worried. people cannot quite believe that a military war will take place not further than 2 kilometers away (my translation).⁵⁷

Two days later, Yves was a child again, writing down a bright boy's disjointed thoughts:

Wednesday, July 29, 1914. I am not at all reassured. I don't think of anything but war. I would like to be a soldier in battle. I believe that according to the declaration today, we should go collect flowers to make a cup of cough medication. No news about [my brother] Pierre. I have a colic (my translation).⁵⁸

b. *The German occupation of Sedan.* France was invaded by Germany on August 4, 1914.⁵⁹ Despite some first successes in the Battle of the Ardennes, in less than three weeks the ill-prepared and ill-led, red-pantaloned French were in disordered retreat.

treaties and national mandates for the maintenance of the "balance of power" caused the peace of Europe to fall like a house of cards.

⁵⁷ "LUNDI 27 Juillet 1914. Ce jour là on parlait déjà des bruits de guerres. Un serbe avait assassiné le fils au roi d'Autriche et celle-ci voulait déclaré la guerre a la Serbie. Ceci fait l'Allemagne de son côté se battraient avec la France, alliée de la Serbe. Les Dames Des Militaires étaient énervées il y avait queue aux Banques, à la Caisse d'Epargne, on voulait retirer son argent. Sedan n'était pas tranquilles par cause des fausse nouvelles qui circulaient dans la ville. Pierre était en Allemagne et on était inquiet. on ne croyait pas assez à la guerre les militaires ne devaient pas sortir plus loin du 2 km." Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 21. The editors of *Congar, Journal de la Guerre* reproduced his text with its "original spelling and syntax errors." Ibid., 15. In this chapter, I have translated texts as faithfully as possible to the language used by the young Congar, but have made some corrections and parenthetical insertions so that hopefully it will retain and convey the original meaning.

⁵⁸ "Mercredi 30 Juillet 1914. Je ne suis pas du tout rassuré. Je ne pense qu'à la guerre. Je voudrais être soldat et me battre. Je crois à la déclaration aujourd'hui on va cueillir des fleurs pectorals pour faire de la tisane pas de nouvelles de pierre. J'ai la colique." Ibid., 21.

⁵⁹ Above all, Germany wanted to avoid a two-front war which it would likely face against the Triple Entente Alliance of England, France and Russia. Unknown to the French, the Imperial German *Schlieffen Plan* envisioned an immediate mobilization and rapid invasion of neutrals Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. This was to be followed by a sweep through northern France to isolate the French Army, surround Paris, and eliminate the western front. The village of Sedan was an integral part of this plan, for it was within twenty miles of the "right-hook" pivot point of three German Armies and itself part of the hinge of the sweeping right wing "gate" to Paris. J.A.S. Grenville, *A History of the World in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000), 21.

By early September, 1914, the German army controlled the whole of the French Department of the Ardennes, which included Congar's village of Sedan. But even before that, German advance troops occupied Sedan by August 25, 1914. This military occupation continued uninterrupted for more than four years through December, 1918.⁶⁰ For the Congar family and Yves, who documented events in his journal, this was a time of death, famine, fear and crushed hopes. After the Armistice of November 11, 1918, both sides were suddenly stunned with the utter senselessness of the "Great War". But on August 25, 1914, at the start of it all, Congar would make what was to become a well-known journal entry, one which would echo time and again in his writings and in his life:

Tuesday, August 25, 1914. Here begins a tragic history: it is a sad and somber history which is written by a child who has always had a heart of love and respect for his country and a just hatred against an enormously cruel and unjust people (my translation).⁶¹

As to this entry, Congar's nephew, Dominique Congar would comment:

This visit [to his uncle Congar at Les Invalides hospital in January, 1994] was one of the first of the year; he is thinking about the War of '14. It's true, that happened eighty years ago this year. . . . Then he spoke to me of his childhood journal written at Sedan during the five years of war. From memory he cites to me his famous phrase of August 25, 1914: "Here begins a tragic history . . ." He will raise this matter many times in this book. Each time that he recalls these terrible events, he was moved and refused to speak of them further (my translation).⁶²

⁶⁰ Jeudi 7 [December 7, 1918] "The Huns abandon Sedan, Village anxious. They pillage the port of Nassau. . . . A strange silence, no one on the road." (My translation of "Les boches abandonnent Sedan. Ville anxieuse. On pille Nassau, le port. . . . Silence étrange, personne sur la route.") Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 247.

⁶¹ "Mardi 25 août 1914. Ici commence une histoire tragique, c'est une histoire triste et somber qui est écrite par un enfant qui a toujours au cœur l'armour et le respect pour sa patrie et la haine juste et énorme contre un peuple cruel et injuste." Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 30.

⁶² Cette visite est l'une des premières de l'année, il pense à la guerre de 14. C'est vrai, cela va faire quatorze-vingts ans cette année . . . Puis il me parle de son journal d'enfant écrit à Sedan pendant les cinq années de guerre. De mémoire il me cite sa fameuse phrase du 25 août 1914: "Ici commence une histoire tragic . . ." Il en sera question plusieurs fois dans ce livre. Comme chaque fois qu'il évoque ces événements terribles, il est ému et refuse d'en dire plus. *Ibid.*, 9.

While the Congar property was not destroyed during the War, a number of buildings in Sedan were bombed or deliberately burned, including homes and the chapel in the Congar family neighborhood of Fond de Givonne, as well as Sedan's Catholic Church, St. Etienne.⁶³ In an ecumenical gesture which singularly impressed the young Yves, Catholics were invited by the Protestant Reformed pastor, whose son was Yves' friend from school, to conduct their Catholic Masses in the local Reformed Church.⁶⁴ In 1975, Congar will state his conviction that this was the beginning of his ecumenical calling:

Puyo: Wasn't it at this time when your ecumenical vocation was born?

Congar: I am absolutely convinced of that. Then, the parish offered an intense religious life. We would count as much upon prayer to the protecting saints of France as we would upon cannons to secure victory. My curé [Abbé Daniel Lallement] was a very serious priest, a man of doctrine, an excellent

⁶³ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 14. Yves will often note in his diary that the Congar home and property was used to house German officers and troops. Above the photograph of St. Etienne's ruins which appears at page 31 of the published *Journal de la Guerre* is the following caption: "St. Etienne Church was deliberately burned down by the Germans upon their entry into the town on August 25, 1914" (my translation of "Église St.-Etienne incendiée volontairement par les Allemands à leur entrée dans la Ville, le 25 Août 1914."). Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 31. The ten year-old Yves is understandably unrestrained in his condemnation of the enemy in his journal, repeatedly using pejorative language to describe them: "But the Germans, the Boche, the cannibals, the thieves the assassins, the incendiaries burned by hand: our church, the Fond de Givonne chapel, [and the villages of] Glair[,] Longyon, [and] Donchery by incendiary rockets and many more others." (My translation of "Mais les Allemands, le Boches, les canailles les voleurs les assassins le incendiaries brulaient: Notre église à la main Givonne, la chapelle Fond de Givonne Glaire à la main longwy (sic) Longyon à la main, Donchery aux fusées incendières et beaucoup d'autres encore."). Ibid., 31. More than six decades later, Père Congar would still condemn the German action: "This [occupation] was on the part of the Germans, organized pillage." (My translation of "Ce fut, de la part des Allemagnes, un pillage organisé"). Congar, "Enfance sedanaise," 27.

⁶⁴ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2; Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 74. Congar sourced the history of mutual respect and accord between Protestants and Catholics in Sedan, "always a land of liberty", to the tolerant sixteenth century ruling princes who had become Protestant, but respected Catholics, who themselves respected Protestants. Ibid., 14. Farmerée writes that Sedan had been a great center of Protestantism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Joseph Farmerée, "Formation et Ecclésiologie du 'Premier' Congar" in *Cardinal Yves Congar 1904-1995: Acts du colloque réuni à Rome les 3-4 juin 1996 publiés sous le direction de André Vauchez* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 53. Congar adds that in 1642, Sedan again became Catholic when it was made part of France. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 14.

catechist. His homilies had been a great influence on me. I maintained the idea to be a doctor, but an interior work which came from God was accomplished in me. I don't doubt that (my translation).⁶⁵

c. *The deportation of Congar's father.* Full control of Sedan and the surrounding Sedan Gap was gained by the German Army on August 29, 1914. That same day, Congar writes that his father was taken hostage.⁶⁶ It is unclear when Georges Congar was released but as of November 17, 1914, he was still a civilian hostage and at risk of death.⁶⁷ By January 1, 1915, he probably had returned to the family, for there is a

⁶⁵ *N'est-ce pas à cette époque qu'est née votre vocation œcuménique?*

J'en suis absolument convaincu. Donc, la paroisse offrait une intense vie religieuse. Nous comptions autant sur la prière aux saints protecteurs de la France que sur les canons pour obtenir la victoire. Mon curé était un prêtre très sérieux, homme de doctrine, excellent catéchète. Ses sermons eurent une grande influence sur moi. Je conservais la pensée d'être médecin, mais un travail intérieur s'accomplissait en moi, qui venait de Dieu, je n'en doute pas. Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Saturday [August] 29 [1914] Pierre [the oldest son] leaves for Main Street because Father is a hostage." (My translation of "Samedi 29. Pierre part pour l'avenue parce que Père est otage."). Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 32 n. 38 gives the background of this event: upon entering Sedan, the Germans demanded payment of F200,000 by the village within two days. A few days later, an additional F500,000 was demanded. In footnote 39 to Congar's August 29, 1914 *Journal* entry, Audoin-Rouzeau states why the hostage status of Georges Congar may have continued: "In response to the population's attitude and to execute requisitions, hostages were enclosed day and night in the [town] Circle, in front of the tribunal in groups of ten, then six. A list of 145 men and a supplement of 50 was established toward this end. This system was first put in place at the end of January, 1915 . . ." (My translation of "Pour répondre de l'attitude de la population et de l'exécution des réquisitions, des otages furent enfermés jour et nuit au Cercle, en face du tribunal par groupes de dix puis de six. Une liste de 145 hommes et 50 suppléants fut établie à cette fin. Ce système fut appliqué jusqu'à la fin du mois de janvier 1915. . ."). Despite the conflicting language in Audoin-Rouzeau's footnotes 38 and 39, hostages were obviously taken in August, 1914 and Georges Congar must have been one of the first.

⁶⁷ See Congar's diary entry of November 17; 1914. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 49. Earlier entries by Congar confirm his father's continued hostage status as of September 2, 7, 12 and 30, October 3 and November 8, 1914. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 33-35, 37 and 47. Subsequent events would underscore the danger and the heavy burden this continued to place upon the Congar family. Yves Congar's diary entry of October 7, 1917 underscores the lingering effect of this three years later: "It is truly a sad shame, miserable, infamous, unspeakable, ignominious – in the end I cannot find an expression of sufficient strength: the Boches, this race that I hate with a terrible and profound hatred, let the civilian prisoners, whom they had dragged away from their families, die of starvation: go and see the tombs at the Sedan cemetery: . . it is not certain that they counted them [the dead hostages], for they are innumerable; my brothers have seen - their eyes clearly saw the prisoners rummaging through the dung on which the Boche bakers had thrown their garbage." (My translation of "C'est vraiment honteux malheureux, miserable, infâme, ignominieux, enfin je ne trouve pas

reference to “Papa” in Yves Congar’s diary entry for that day. In any event, Georges Congar did at some time return to the family and may have been released as early as

November 17, 1914. On January 6, 1918, he was again taken prisoner by the Second Reich and deported to Lithuania. Congar’s father would not be repatriated until July 23, 1918.⁶⁸ The boy’s journal exudes excitement and anticipation upon hearing news that returning hostages were near Sedan.⁶⁹ The next day, he wrote:

Tuesday, July 23, 1918. Return of the hostages - men and women! . . . I don’t know how to express my joy. We wait for Papa at the window. It is very rare that we would look down this road, but they return! They - one knows what this means, since six months one couldn’t speak of anything but Them. We look out the window but he doesn’t come quickly. Mrs. Triquelin has passed, but him? . . . Him? He is in France! (My translation).⁷⁰

d’expression assez forte: les boches, cette race que je hais, mais d’une haine terrible et profonde, laissent mourir de faim les prisonniers civils qu’ils arrachent a leur famille: allez voir les tombes au cimetière de sedan: . . qu’on les compte, non: ells sont innombrables; les grands ont vu, du leurs propres yeux vu des prisonniers fouiller un fouiller sur lequel des boulangers boches avient jeté leurs ordures!”) Ibid., 177. When his father was again taken hostage and deported from France to Lithuania in January, 1918, Yves feared his father would share this same fate. Ibid., 245. The duration and dire conditions of the German occupation of northern France and the deportation of hostages in the First World War explains the exodus from this region by French nationals in 1940. *Les Ardennes Durant la Grand Guerre 1914-1918* (Charlesville –Mézières: Archives départementales, 1994), 246.

⁶⁸ Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 15; Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 245. Audoin-Rouzeau states that at the onset of the War France refused to return passes to people from Alsace-Lorraine. In retaliation, the Germans took a number of ‘notables’ hostage, intending to send them to Baltic territories seized from Russia. On January 6, 1918, Georges Congar was one of twenty-two men who were sent by rail to Camp Mileygany in Lithuania. Conditions at this internment camp were bad and eight men died, including two of the men from Sedan. On January 12, 1918, twelve female hostages were deported from Sedan to Germany for the same reason. In the course of the disastrous consequences to the Germans of the Second Battle of the Marne in July, 1918, the Germans started to return civilian hostages: the women hostages came back to Sedan and were released on July 8, 1918 and the surviving men, including Père Georges Congar, returned to France on July 23, 1918. Ibid., 187 n. 232.

⁶⁹ Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 222.

⁷⁰ Mardi 23 Juillet 1918. Retour les otages hommes et femmes! . . ; je ne sais comment exprimer ma joie! On attend Papa à la fenêtre, C’est poutant bien rare que nous regardions sur la route, mais ils reviennent! Ils, on sait ce que cela veut dire, depuis 6 mois, on ne parle que d’Eux – nous regardons à la fenêtre, mais il ne vien pas vite: Mme Triquelin est passée, mais lui?... Lui? Il est en France! Ibid., 222.

The fourteen year-old Yves wrote his father a letter on December 16, 1918, evidently expecting him to physically return to the family eight days later.⁷¹ It contained some details of daily life for Yves, his sister, two brothers, mother and aunt and five other adults in part as follows:

My dear papa,

I have many things to tell you, but one letter will be too small and I shall wait for another 8 days; for now, I give you some details of the attic [possibly at the family home at 85 Fond de Givonne, possibly in Paris awaiting Georges Congar] and of the life that we led there. We have been here since the evening of Wednesday the 8th [of December].

Now that everything is finished, one believes in the struggle, one is filled with the joy of deliverance. . . . Since I have had the flu, but now I have recovered and filled with joy at your pending arrival.

And so, before truly embarrassing you, I embrace you from afar and with a great heart, signed

Your little Yvonie

Kisses from Marguit, from Bertha, and all the family (my translation).⁷²

If this letter was sent, there is no evidence that the young Yves ever received a response. According to Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Georges Congar was indeed liberated on July 23, 1918, but chose to stay in Paris for “professional reasons.”⁷³ In Preliminary

⁷¹ Four documents are annexed to *Congar, Journal de la Guerre*. This letter, Document no. 2, was found in the archives of the Dominicans and raises the question whether the letter was ever sent or, if so, whether it was returned to sender unopened.

⁷² Mon cher Papa.

J'ai bien des choses à te dire, mais une letter sera trop petite et je patienterai bien encore 8 jours; pour l'instant, je te donne quelques détails de la voûte et de la vie qu'on y menait. C'est le soir du vendredi 8 que nous y avons été.

Maintenant que tout est passé, on y croit à peine, on est tout à la joie de deliverance. . . . Depuis, j'ai eu la grippe, mais maintenant, je suis guéri et tout à la joie de ta prochaine arrivée.

. . . . Ainsi, avant de t'embrasser vraiment, je t'embrasse de loin et de grand cœur, signant
ton petit Yvonet

Baisers à Maguit, à Berthe, à toute la famille. *Congar, Journal de la Guerre*, 248-49.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 222.

Note 2 of the Annex to the *Journal de la Guerre*, in identifying this letter among other documents, Audoin-Rouzeau notes:

2. The letter of Yves Congar to his father dated December 16, 1918. (Yves had not seen his father for months, and this last deportation to Lithuania had greatly worried him. Liberated in July, 1918, Yves' father had stayed in Paris for professional reasons. After December 16, 1918 when the Armistice [of November 11, 1918] had been signed for more than one month, he never saw the Ardennes again) (my translation).⁷⁴

F. The Period of Formation and Education

1. Reflection and Vocation. Like many during the years of World War I Congar states that he lost his spiritual perspective for a time in a “sad emptiness.”⁷⁵ In 1918, he finally received his microscope, but for him this was now irrelevant and inconsequential, for his focus had turned to the distinct possibility of the priesthood.⁷⁶ Years later, Congar tells how, after the winter of 1918-19, he randomly rode his bicycle in the Ardennes countryside, to rediscover himself and reacquaint his senses with the woods and the silence in the heart of the forests.⁷⁷ By this means he was increasingly convicted with a sacerdotal calling. Congar wanted to be a priest; he wanted to preach. As Congar put it in 1975:

At the beginning of 1918 – perhaps already at the beginning of 1917 – I knew a very difficult period. I was invaded by a sort of incertitude; a very sad emptiness, with the feeling of no longer knowing anything, of no longer having perspective.

⁷⁴ Le letter d'Yves Congar à son père, datée du 16 décembre 1918. (Yves n'avait pas vu son père depuis des mois, et la déportation de ce dernier en Lituanie l'avait beaucoup inquiété. Libéré en juillet 1918, le père de Yves était resté à Paris pour des raisons professionnelles. Le 16 décembre 1918, bien que l'armistice fût signé depuis plus d'un mois, il n'avait pas encore revu les Ardennes). Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre Annex*, Preliminary Note 2, 245.

⁷⁵ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 15.

⁷⁶ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 12.

⁷⁷ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 15. See also Congar, “Enfance sedanaise”, 30 and Audoin-Rouzeau, *Congar Journal de la Guerre*, 255.

And it was in this darkness that I perceived for the first time in an extremely clear manner, a call. The call to preach . . . I wanted to preach conversion to men. I wanted to convert France (my translation).⁷⁸

Nine years earlier, Père Jean-Pierre Jossua described this sad time as predictive of future events in Congar's life:

This aspiration was born in a kind of lonely emptiness, an intense feeling of solitude which had lasted two or three months. Nor was the decision to be a source of comfort. For the first time the boy experienced a feeling which was to engulf him at moments of decision throughout his life, a feeling of dread, of withdrawal, a fear of not measuring up, of being overwhelmed by things, of not being as good as others – in particular, a fear of studies, of Latin. He was to experience this fear in 1921 when he entered the Institute Catholique, again in 1925 on beginning the Dominican novitiate, when he was a prisoner of war [1939-1945], and even as a *peritus* at the [Second Vatican] Council.⁷⁹

At first, Congar told no one of his priestly aspirations:

In the beginning, I kept this secret. Then I spoke about it to my mother. She didn't discourage me, but she didn't urge me on. She had given each of my brothers and me a [copy of Thomas A Kempis'] *Imitation of Jesus Christ*. We read a passage every evening. I loved to open it at random. One evening I fell upon a phrase where I believed I discerned a confirmation of my vocation, as a voice from God (my translation).⁸⁰

Congar commented that at the time of his call to the priesthood, he was totally ignorant that the Dominican Order of Preachers existed; only later was his Dominican vocation revealed to him.⁸¹ During his period of discernment Congar often visited the Benedictine Abbey of Conques, once again at the instance of his local cleric, Abbé

⁷⁸ Au début de 1918 – peut-être déjà à la fin de 1917 – je connus (sic) une période très pénible. Une sorte de d'incertitude m'envahit; un vide très douloureux, avec le sentiment de ne plus rien savoir, de n'avoir plus de perspective. Et c'est dans cette nuit que je perçus, pour la première fois, de manière extrêmement nette, un appel. L'appel à prêcher. . . Je désirais prêcher la conversion aux hommes. Je voulais convertir la France. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 15-16.

⁷⁹ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 12.

⁸⁰ Au début, je le gardai (sic) secret. Puis, j'en parlai (sic) à ma mère. Elle ne m'a pas découragé, mais elle ne m'a pas poussé. Elle avait donné à mes frères et à moi-même une *Imitation de Jésus-Christ*. Nous en lisons chaque soir une passage. J'aimais l'ouvrir au hasard. Un soir, je tombai (sic) sur une phrase où je crus discerner une confirmation à ma vocation, comme une voix de Dieu. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 16.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

Daniel Lallement.⁸² Here, he “drew his lifetime love for the Catholic liturgy”.⁸³ In fact, Congar gave serious consideration to joining the Benedictine order and would later remark:

I will never forget the date: August 5, 1919, Abbé Lallement took me for the first time to Conques for the Vespers of the Transfiguration. Each year since then, I celebrate in private my anniversary date, so decisive for my future existence. I had, in this modest community, a revelation of a religious life as a Benedictine monastic (my translation).⁸⁴

2. Education. From November 1918 to June, 1919, Congar completed one term of municipal college in Sedan, which Congar states “by reason of subsequent events didn’t count”.⁸⁵ In October, 1919, at the suggestion of Abbé Lallement, Congar entered the small diocesan seminary at Reims where in two years he obtained two baccalaureates. Still, these were two years which by Congar’s own account, also had little influence on

⁸² Ibid., 21. Paralleling his comment that growing up in the Ardennes had “profoundly marked” him, Congar would say of Abbé Lallement, who was a sub-deacon in Congar’s Sedan parish and later became a priest, that “His exigent, rigorous, even austere vision of Catholicism and spiritual life, of the sacerdotal vocation, marked me profoundly.” Ibid., 16. Elizabeth Groppe described Abbé Lallement as “A “man of the old French clergy, he wore a black rabat and his sermons were often commentaries on the catechism, the creed, or church history.” Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 16-17. It is likely that it is Abbé (later Father) Lallement, who is repeatedly referred to by Jossua as “Father X” in his work, *Yves Congar*.

⁸³ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2. In 1904, the small French Benedictine community near Rouen had fled under political pressure from the First Republic to Conques, Belgium, which Congar characterized as a “rather miserable” refuge in the Ardennes forest located across the Semois River from Rouen. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 21.

⁸⁴ Je n’ai jamais oublié la date: le 5 août 1919, l’abbé Lallement m’emmena à Conques, la première fois, pour les vêpres de la Transfiguration. Chaque année, depuis lors, je célèbre dans mon intimité l’anniversaire de cette date, décisive pour ma existence future. J’eus, dans cette modeste communauté, la révélation de la vie religieuse sous sa forme monastique bénédictine. Ibid., 21-22. Congar’s Benedictine ties were strong. Thomas Aquinas, of whom Congar would profess a lifelong following and admiration, had himself been a Benedictine oblate at Monte Casino for nine years before joining the Friars Preachers of St. Dominic. Yves Congar, *Faith and Spiritual Life*, trans. A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 71. Étienne writes in the “Présentation Générale” to Yves Congar, *Journal d’un Théologien*, 9, that Congar’s sister, Marie-Louise, would join a Benedictine Order.

⁸⁵ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 16-17.

his life.⁸⁶ He pondered whether he should continue and enter the “grand séminaire” with his seventeen or eighteen comrades from Sedan and enter the priesthood. Certain aspects of the life of a diocesan priest did not attract him, including one thing which seems a minor, superficial matter, but which Congar describes as if it were dispositive: he found the *soutane*, or cassock, which he must wear, repulsive. More significantly, he also pondered over certain Marian devotions which to him were unacceptable.⁸⁷

On October 26, 1921, Congar entered the newly-formed Séminaire des Carmes, the Carmelite school of formation for priests at l’Institut Catholique de Paris where he took philosophy courses.⁸⁸ Thereafter, during what Congar characterized as “prayerful and happy” and the “very happy and fervent years” of 1921 to 1924, he remained at the Carmes seminary.⁸⁹ There, he was soon reacquainted with now Father Lallement who had been sent there to teach.⁹⁰ It should be noted that while at Carmes, Congar contracted his first – and last, political infatuation: he joined the conservative, pro-monarchy l’Action française, an act which he would later regret.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Jossua characterizes them as “two mediocre years at the minor seminary.” Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 13.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Years later in preparation for his role as *peritus* at Vatican II, Congar will state that one of his purposes was to prevent an expansion of what he felt was an excessive, or as Congar put it, a “galloping” Mariology in the Church. At Vatican II there was pressure to devote a separate document on Mary and a plenary session of the Council considered the matter. Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, trans. Henry Traub, Gerard C. Thormann and Werner Batzel (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1966), 94-5. It was narrowly defeated in favor of incorporating a chapter on Mary (Chapter VII) in *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

⁸⁸ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 17.

⁸⁹ Yves Congar, *Challenge to the Church*, 13 and Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 73; Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2. Founded in 1919, the Séminaire des Carmes was the ‘University Seminary’ of l’Institut Catholique de Paris. Ibid.

⁹⁰ Famerée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 18.

⁹¹ A moderate excursus is in order here. While at first blush this discussion might seem to be a political detour in a theological work, the matter will turn out to have some significance in Congar’s life. The Action française movement began at the beginning of the twentieth century with Charles Maurras, who blamed the French Revolution “for the decay and corruption of the moral and political fiber of every people it had touched.” Eugen J. Weber, *Action française*;

Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 13. It found support among French Catholics, including some Dominicans, and others after World War I. L'Action française reflected a continuing clash between the French Catholic right and the sectarian left which traced back to the French Revolution. In his 1975 interview with Puyo, Congar commented that the Action française “fascinated a number of minds”, particularly the younger clergy who were often sympathetic to the movement. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 20; Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 14. In the same interview, Congar described the supporters of this movement, including himself, as “certain Catholics, a minority in France, who would maintain nostalgia for royalty; they had great difficulty in accepting the Republic and, in the end, all the legacy of the French Revolution. One cannot forget . . . [Marshal] Pétain . . . the man with a firm grip, the father at the head of the nation. . . . Incontestably, there is in Catholicism a certain ‘religion of the king.’ ” (My translation of “certains milieux catholiques, au moins en France, gardaient la nostalgie de la royauté; ils avaient beaucoup de mal accepter la République et, finalement, tout l’héritage de la Révolution française. Il ne faut pas oublier . . . Pétain . . . l’homme à poigne, le père à la tête de la nation. . . . Il y a dans le catholicisme, incontestablement, une certaine ‘religion du père’ ”). Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 80. J.-P. Jossua writes that “This movement aroused an attraction and a sympathy in Yves Congar, but no real passion.” Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 14. Aidan Nichols adds that Congar severed all ties with l'Action française in 1926 when Pope Pius XI condemned it as covert paganism. Nichols parenthetically adds that, “It seems likely that this painful experience of an incipient totalitarianism of the Right encouraged him to keep a safe distance from totalitarianisms of the Left so fashionable among the Parisian intelligentsia of the later 1960s.” Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2.

There is much more to the Action française than was discussed by Nichols. In fact, it will ultimately bear upon Congar’s ecclesiology. Basically, it had political and literary bases and sought to germinate a cultural revolution in France. Richard Peddicord, O.P., *The Sacred Monster of Thomism: An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2005), 88. Action française was a multi-faceted paradox: pro-Church, but initially condemned by the Pope; royalist, but rejected by royalty; patriotic but supportive of collaborationist Vichy France; a principle-based movement which nonetheless chose action over principle. The religious figures, particularly Catholics, who either opposed or supported this movement are the subject of a number of works. *Ibid.*, 89. Both Père Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (1887-1964) and Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), with whom we shall shortly be acquainted as critics of Père Congar, were long-time supporters of l'Action française.

The movement was initially criticized by French philosopher Maurice Blondel as more political than religious, “aristocratic and soothing for the privileged and beguiling or threatening for the lower classes”. Michael Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism: the politics of Charles Murras and French Catholics, 1890-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 156. Later, Blondel’s critique of Action française became sharper: “They pay homage to Catholicism, but in varying degrees and often without being aware of it, their purpose . . . is to rid it more effectively of the Christian spirit. . . . [Thus,] the faith which used to be a living adherence to the Mystery of Christ then ends by being no more than attachment to a formula for social order” Henri de Lubac, S.J. (1896-1991), citing Maurice Blondel, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*, trans. Edith M. Riley (London: Sheed & Ward, 1949), 157. It should be noted that the nationalist movement to which Action française adhered was used in Vichy France as a cohesive force by the anti-democratic, anti-republican Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain, the “hero of Verdun”. As a consequence, a new ‘special relationship’ between the Vichy French government and the Catholic Church was forged. *The Sacred Monster*, 97. Thus, allegiance to Vichy France was sworn by “bishops, by Catholics and by adherents of Action française, which had itself recently been rehabilitated by Pius XII”. Joseph A. Komonchak, “Theology and Culture at Mid-Century: the Example of Henri de Lubac,” *Theological Studies* 52 (1990): 597.

3. The Thomistic Heritage of Congar:

a. *Aeterni Patris (1879): the beginning of Neo-Thomism.* On August 4, 1879, eighteen months after Joachim Pecci, long-time bishop of Perugia, Italy and thereafter cardinal, became Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), he published *Aeterni Patris, the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy*. Later, Leo XIII himself characterized this Encyclical as seeking “The restoration in Catholic schools of Christian philosophy according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor.”⁹² By this means a reinvigorated and prioritized Thomistic philosophy was established in Catholic theology through the first half of the twentieth century. Victor B. Brezik, C.S. B. of the Center for Thomistic Studies, University of St. Thomas writes, “Christian Philosophy, particularly in the form of Thomism, was given a strong impetus a century ago when Pope Leo XIII issued his influential Encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*. . . . In time, the

As a matter of faith, Père Garrigou-Lagrange was a particularly powerful advocate of the Vichy government. Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 99. Garrigou-Lagrange’s uncompromising support of Marshal Pétain and Vichy France was such that he accused political opponents of Pétain, particularly supporters of General Charles de Gaulle, of mortal sin. Subsequently Père Garrigou-Lagrange would also accuse his old friend and eminent philosophical Thomist, Jacques Maritain, of doctrinal “deviation”. Komonchak, “Theology and culture at Mid-Century,” 601 n. 67, cites a letter dated December 19, 1946 from Jacques Maritain to Garrigou-Lagrange in which Maritain defends himself against Garrigou-Lagrange’s personal charge of “deviation” from Christian doctrine in opposing Generalissimo Franco of Spain: “Whatever our political differences may be you have no right to use them to cast suspicions on my doctrine. When you took the side of Marshal Pétain to the point of stating that to support de Gaulle was a mortal sin, I thought that your political prejudices were blinding you on a matter serious for our country, but I never considered suspecting your theology nor criticizing you for a deviation on a matter of doctrine.”

Finally, *Action française* should not be confused with *Action catholique générale pour les hommes*, founded in 1924 with the encouragement of Pius XI. Gabriel Flynn writes that Congar was active in *Action catholique* from 1925-1939. Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 4. For a more complete discussion (in French) of the repercussions within the Dominican Order by the papal condemnation of *Action française*, see Andre Laudouze, *Dominicains français et Action française* (Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1989), 93-121.

⁹² Leonard E. Boyle, O.P., “A Remembrance of Pope Leo XIII: the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*,” in *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards A Symposium*, ed. Victor B. Brezik (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981), 7.

impact accelerated the incipient Thomist renaissance of the nineteenth century into a veritable movement of studies, critical editions and publications which turned Thomism into a leading philosophy of the day.”⁹³ To use Victor Brezik’s understated characterization, *Aeterni Patris* made the “firm recommendation” that the focused study of Thomas Aquinas would thenceforth be normative for Roman Catholic theology.⁹⁴ *Aeterni Patris* reads in pertinent part:

The only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, who came on earth to bring salvation and the light of divine wisdom to men, conferred a great and wonderful blessing on the world when, about to ascend again into heaven, *He commanded the Apostles to go and teach all nations*, [fn1 omitted] *and left the Church which He had founded to be the common and supreme teacher of the peoples*. . . . [fn 2 omitted]. [T]he supreme pastors of the Church have always thought it their duty to advance, by every means in their power, science truly so called, and at the same time to provide with special care that all studies should accord with the Catholic faith, especially philosophy, on which a right interpretation of the other sciences in great part depends.

. . .

2. Whoso turns his attention to the bitter strifes of these days and seeks a reason for the troubles that vex public and private life must come to the conclusion that a fruitful cause of the evils which now afflict, as well as those which threaten, us lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have now crept into all the orders of the State, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses.

. . .

31. While, therefore, We hold that every word of wisdom, every useful thing by whomsoever discovered or planned, ought to be received with a willing and grateful mind, We exhort you, venerable brethren, in all earnestness to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas, and to spread it far and wide for the defense and beauty of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the advantage of all the sciences. . . . Let carefully selected teachers endeavor to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others. Let the universities already founded or to be founded by you illustrate and defend this doctrine, and use it for the refutation of prevailing errors. But, lest the false for the true or the corrupt for the pure be drunk in, *be ye watchful that the doctrine of Thomas be drawn from his own fountains*, or at least from those rivulets which, derived from the very fount, have thus far flowed,

⁹³ Victor B. Brezik, ed., Introduction, *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards A Symposium* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981), 2.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

according to the established agreement of learned men, pure and clear
(Emphasis added.)⁹⁵

Curiously, footnote [1] of *Aeterni Patris* cites Matthew 28:19, not Matthew 28:20, which contains the underlying apostolic teaching mandate that Leo XIII references in the Encyclical.⁹⁶

Father O'Boyle, O.P. of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto, writes of *Aeterni Patris* that:

There had been nothing like it before in the history of the church. Popes had praised Thomas and recommended him. Councils had consulted, cited and accepted him. But at no point, not even in the pontificates of the Dominican Popes Pius V and Benedict XIII, had any pope attempted to put Thomas on the pedestal on which Leo XIII now placed him, and to the exclusion, seemingly, of all others.

Nothing in the pontificates of Leo's predecessors since the French Revolution gave any inkling of what was to come. The papacy indeed felt keenly the depredations of indifferentism, rationalism, traditionalism, and ontologism in those beleaguered years, and resoundingly condemned one or other of these and similar movements . . . , and all of them together in the syllabus of Errors in 1864. . . .

Yet, for all of this, there should not have been any great surprise at the stunning move of Leo XIII. He was not an unknown . . . nor was his Thomism an overnight conversion.⁹⁷

b. *Leonine-Thomism*. Pope Leo XIII had proclaimed, in sum, that "the prince and master of all by far is Thomas Aquinas".⁹⁸ This is *Neo-Thomism*, which Leo XIII personally exemplified.⁹⁹ It was ostensibly built on the concept that *Being*, "the first and

⁹⁵ *Aeterni Patris*, Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the Restoration of Christian Philosophy to the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic World in Grace and Communion with the Apostolic See (August 4, 1879).

⁹⁶ Compare the text of *Aeterni Patris*, "He commanded the Apostles to go and teach all nations,(1) and left the Church which He had founded to be the common and supreme teacher of the peoples," with Matt 28:19 and 20: 19 *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*" See also *Aeterni Patris* n. 7, referring to the "prelude and help of . . . the Gospel teacher".

⁹⁷ Boyle, "A Remembrance of Pope Leo XIII: the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*," 11-12.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁹ Cessario, *A Short History of Thomism*, 25.

simplest concept of all, is an immediate perception of the Absolute Being, that God Himself is the guarantee of the validity of human ideas, and that all human knowledge implies an immediate intuition of uncreated truth.”¹⁰⁰ Somewhat inconsistent with this underlying principle, Neo-Thomism holds that the divinely inspired philosophy of Saint Thomas, not the varying philosophies of other men, should be the basis of all teaching. The Aristotelian-based deductive methodology of the *Summa theologiae*, was the Neo-Thomist key to unlocking all modern problems, article by article.¹⁰¹ Paradoxically, from the thirteenth century on this had developed into a belief that Aquinas’ use of Aristotelianism as the model for Christian reflection was definitive and valid for all time.¹⁰² It reflected the traditional scholastic approach of analyzing and distilling Thomas’ works so as to systematically build them into a theological fortress to maintain the Catholic faith and defend Catholic beliefs.¹⁰³ Thus, any deviation from this approach would at best be viewed by Neo-Thomists as error.

While this is one of the common themes of Neo-Thomism, as Groppe comments in *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*:¹⁰⁴

But, beyond the seminary walls, it was by no means a monolithic enterprise. There were different schools of Neo-Thomism and different traditions and emphases within different religious orders. Efforts to bring Aquinas into dialogue with modern intellectual currents also produced different Neo-Thomist strands, ranging from the post-Kantian transcendental Thomism of Pierre

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁰¹ It would appear that, at least at this time, there was no perceived incongruence between this position and understanding Scripture as the primal source of revelation, and no notion of the subsequent Vatican II theme of *ressourcement* (return to the sources), which Congar so emphasized.

¹⁰² Cf. Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew Perry (Orbis: Maryknoll, NY, 2009), 123.

¹⁰³ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 8.

¹⁰⁴ Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 113.

Rousselot, Joseph Maréchal and Karl Rahner to the ascetic and political writings of Jacques Maritain.¹⁰⁵

c. *Congar on Jacques Maritain and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange.* We may recall that Congar's former parish priest, Abbé Daniel Lallement - himself a strict Neo-Thomist, initiated Congar in basic Thomism.¹⁰⁶ Thereafter, as now professor Father Lallement introduced Congar to the inner circle of French Catholic theological philosopher, Jacques Maritain, a converted Protestant, and at the time a professor of the history of modern philosophy at Carmes and a rising Neo-Thomist, himself. Congar took courses on Thomas Aquinas taught by Maritain. As an enthusiastic member of Maritain's "Thomist fraternity", young Congar attended his lectures each month at Meudon as well as the Fall retreats of the 'Thomist Study Circles' held first at Versailles, then Meudon.¹⁰⁷ Although he had learned much from all this, Congar later explained why he eventually turned away from Jacques Maritain's Neo-Thomism, first praising, and then summarily dismissing him:

Basically I have disassociated myself a good deal from Maritain the philosopher. I recognize the greatness of Maritain and the depth of his spiritual life I recognize Maritain's considerable contribution to morality, ethics and the political philosophy of democracy. There is much fine and great [about] Maritain. But there was also this kind of Thomistic ontology, which in fact depended on Jean de Saint-Thomas [1589-1644]. For that is what he was doing at Meudon: he would read us a page of Jean de Saint-Thomas often very subtle, on points which he himself qualified with 'adamantine' distinctions, and he developed all this with such fervor and such seduction that we 'drank in' his words.

I dissociated myself from this approach. And it is a fact that Jacques Maritain did not have much sympathy with Le Saulchoir, where I went next.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ On the different schools and traditions of Thomism, see Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 167-95.

¹⁰⁶ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 70.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 73. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 73. Congar had previously criticized Maritain for his close identification with Action Française. "In Maritain's circle, everyone was Action Française, everyone had to some degree, the specific attitude of the A.F.: certain visions of the future, a

The annual Thomist Study Circle retreats were given at Maritain's request by his mentor and long-time friend, the Dominican Réginald Gontran-Marie Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964), arguably the leading Thomist of his day. Years later, Père Yves Congar would recall:

Interviewer: Did you know Garrigou-Lagrange very well?

Father Congar: Oh, yes. I belonged to a kind of intellectual fraternity, before I became a Dominican. It was a spiritual fraternity, a Thomist fraternity. In September, every year, we had a retreat that was preached by Garrigou-Lagrange. He impressed me very much with his profound grasp of the spiritual life, but most of all by his strong sense of affirmation. As a young man, I admired his positive spirit.¹⁰⁹

In his *Journal d'un théologien, 1946-1956*, Yves Congar gave a characteristically frank hindsight assessment of Père Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, with a distinct touch of sarcasm:

Because he [Garrigou-Lagrange], alone among the French Dominicans, totally, virginally faithful to Saint Thomas, by which he had a full Thomistic grace. Abbé Lallement had received a very profound imprint from him, had elevated me into the cult of Father Garrigou, on which, nonetheless, I no longer have the same view. Still, he made a profound impression on me. Some of his sermons filled me with enthusiasm and overwhelmed me with their clarity, their rigor, their fullness, their linear purity, their spirit of faith combined with an impressive intellectual vigor.¹¹⁰

massive simplism, a strong misjudgment of others, a brutal conviction of being right and knowing the truth, and finally sharing a group spirit without differences." My translation of, "Dans le cercle de Maritain, tout le monde était Action Française, toute le monde avait, à quelque degré, l'attitude spécifique d'A.F., faite, avec certaines clairvoyances, d'un simplisme massif, d'un solide mépris des autres, d'une conviction brutale d'avoir raison, d'avoir le vérité, enfin d'un esprit de groupe sans nuance." Congar, *Journal d'un théologien*, 34-35.

¹⁰⁹ Patrick Granfield, *Theologians at Work* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 245, cited in Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 87.

¹¹⁰ My translation of "Car il était estimé être, seul des dominicains française, totalment, virginalement fidèle à saint Thomas, et comme ayant une grâce thomiste intégrale. L'abbé Lallement, qui avait reçu de lui une empreinte très profonde, m'avais élevé dans le culte du P. Garrigou, que, cependant, je n'avais pas encore vu jusque-là. Il fit sur moi une impression profonde. Certains de ses sermons m'enthousiasmèrent et me comblèrent par leur clarté, leur rigueur, leur ampleur, leur pureté de lignes, leur esprit de foi allié à une rigueur intellectuelle impressionnante." Congar, *Journal d'un théologien, 1946-1956*, 35-6.

By way of brief background, unlike most Dominicans, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange received his philosophical orientation under the new education system of the Third Republic.¹¹¹ Later he studied under the Dominican Père Ambroise Gardeil (1859-1931), the founder of Le Saulchoir.¹¹² Garrigou-Lagrange was raised a Neo-Thomist, for the ordinances of *Aeterni Patris* had been the guiding Thomistic principles for twenty years when he was ordained. In 1905, Père Garrigou-Lagrange taught philosophy at the Dominican house of studies at Le Saulchoir. One year later he held the chair of dogmatic theology, an event which would re-orient his life from a study of philosophy to a focus upon St. Thomas.¹¹³ Père Benoît Lavaud, a former student under Garrigou-Lagrange at Le Saulchoir, would write of him:

So he commenced, as a professor, this profound delving into the works of St. Thomas and the masters of the Thomist school which he would follow all his life and which made him, in his turn, an eminent master of this school.¹¹⁴

Garrigou-Lagrange was concerned with theological questions raised after the Middle Ages and added to these the challenges to traditional Christian understandings such as those of René Descartes (1596-1650) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Nichols proposes that Garrigou-Lagrange, and thus the Neo-Thomists, gave as much attention to

¹¹¹ For more information on the theology of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange see Richard A. Peddicord, “Another Look at the Theological Enterprise of Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange”, *Angelicum* 82 (2005): 835.

¹¹² Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2010), 32. Mansini asserts that thus, at least to some extent, Gardeil was Garrigou-Lagrange’s master. Guy Mansini, OSB, “*What is a Dogma?*”: *The Meaning and Truth of Dogma in Edouard La Roy and His Scholastic Opponents* (Roma: Editrice Pontifica Università Gregoriana, 1985), 237-8.

¹¹³ Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 12.

¹¹⁴ My translation of “Il commença donc, comme professeur, cet approfondissement des œuvres de saint Thomas et des maîtres de l’école thomiste qu’il devait poursuivre toute sa vie, et qui fit pour lui, à son tour, un maître éminent de cette école.” M.-Benoit Lavaud, O.P., “Le Père Garrigou-Lagrange: In memoriam,” *Revue thomiste* (Avril-Juin 1964): 184. Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 12, has a slightly different translation, but without changing the sense, of my more literal translation.

commentaries on Thomas, such as the Dominican scholar Jean Capréolus (1380-1444), Dominican philosopher and theologian Cardinal (Tommaso de Vio Gaetani) Cajetan (1469-1534) and Dominican philosopher and theologian John of St. Thomas (1589-1644) as he did to the writings of Thomas himself.¹¹⁵ One might question this approach for *Aeterni Patris* directed scholars to “*be ye watchful that the doctrine of Thomas be drawn from his own fountains,*” but the proposition may be sustainable if only because these commentaries may be said to be strong “rivulets which, derived from the very [Thomistic] fount” as set forth in Leo XIII’s *Aeterni Patris*, 31.

In 1909, Garrigou-Lagrange was stationed at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome where he remained a celebrated fixture until 1959, lecturing on dogmatic theology in the *aula magna* (great court) of the Angelicum and holding the first chair of ascetical-mystical theology. There he gained prestige and influence and was often formally consulted on doctrinal matters by the Holy See. In 1960, he retired from teaching and from his offices as “qualificator” and “consultor” to the Vatican. As he had for both Pères Chenu and Congar, Pope John XXIII asked Père Garrigou-Lagrange to be a *peritus* for the Preparatory Theological Commission for Vatican II, but physically he was unable due to failing health. He died in Rome on February 15, 1964 and was publically honored by Paul VI.¹¹⁶

d. *Implications of Congar’s rejection of Neo-Thomism.* This exposure to Jacques Maritain and Père Garrigou-Lagrange was to have a lasting impact on Congar.

¹¹⁵ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2. Indeed, as set forth above, Congar confirmed that this is why he dissociated himself from Jacques Maritain. Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 73. But the Neo-Thomists were themselves in harmony with their own historical setting. The commentaries on Thomas by Cajetan, for example, were ordered by Leo XIII in 1879 to be incorporated into the text of the *Summa Theologiae* in the official Leonine edition of the complete works of Thomas Aquinas.

¹¹⁶ Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 22-3.

As noted, Jacques Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange, who by the time he gave his retreats at Carmes Seminary had been teaching for a number of years at the Angelicum in Rome, were staunch Neo-Thomists. They discouraged Congar from adopting what they viewed as the errors of modern thought.¹¹⁷ Congar later commented that Maritain's view of the "entire adventure of modern thought, all of its 'errors,' came from not having understood the 'the adamantine distinctions' of Father [Jean] Poincot (John of St. Thomas) [1589-1644]."¹¹⁸ Further, both Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange categorically rejected the historically-based approach which Congar would later embrace at Le Saulchoir in his study of Thomas Aquinas, characterizing it as antiquated "Paleo-Thomism". On his part, at Le Saulchoir, Congar disassociated himself from Maritain's dim view of the Dominican study house:

There were deep-seated reasons for that [Maritain's lack of sympathy with Le Saulchoir]: Le Saulchoir was the historical approach to St Thomas, not in order to relativize that which cannot be relativized but in order to put his thought in a period, since *everything is historical – absolutely everything*, including the Bible and Jesus. That is what made two different groups. And I myself, first by instinct and then thanks to the teaching of Chenu in particular and also Fêret – went in this direction, which I pursued in ecumenicism and the rest (emphasis added).¹¹⁹

This would be a paving stone in the path of Congar's time of difficulties to come. First, it started a focused lifelong study of Thomas Aquinas of whom Congar later professed to be

¹¹⁷ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 14.

¹¹⁹ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 73 (emphasis added.). In the same "interview" consisting of written questions put to Congar and his improvised oral responses, Congar made the statement, "Tradition is a living principle throughout the history of the Church, for everything is historical; I shall have occasion to return to this point later." *Ibid.*, 8. At Le Saulchoir, Pères Congar, Chenu and H.M. Fêret had unsuccessfully attempted to write a history of the Church based upon their emerging notion of *réssourcement*.

a “grateful and faithful follower”.¹²⁰ Second, and more to point, it would lay the foundation for great conflicts and difficulties in the clerical life of Yves Congar.

As a member of the Dominican Toulouse Province and Professor at the Angelicum, Père Garrigou-Lagrange joined other Vatican Dominicans in strongly rejecting the developing French “nouvelle théologie”, discussed in Chapter Two. Garrigou-Lagrange was already critical of the historic approach to Thomism of his former Angelicum student, Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P, and Chenu’s student, Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, O.P.¹²¹

4. Post-War Military Service. In 1924, upon completion of his studies at the Séminaire des Carmes, Congar was drafted for eighteen months of military service in the French army.¹²² He was stationed at the French military academy at Saint-Cyr and then at Bingen am Rhein, Germany, the latter being the home of the Benedictine Abbey (convent) of St. Hildegard.

5. Dominican Studies and Influences.

a. *Congar the Dominican.* During this time, Congar continued to reflect upon his sacerdotal life path: he had determined to become a “religious”, but should he join the

¹²⁰ Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 6; Douglas M. Koskela, *Ecclesiality and Ecumenicism: Yves Congar and the Road to Unity, Marquette Studies in Theology No 61* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 13.

¹²¹ Marie-Dominic Chenu has been called the pioneer of the school of historic Thomism. In sum, Chenu, Congar, Fêret and others at Le Saulchoir focused upon the actual thoughts expressed by Thomas within their historic context as opposed to the singular emphasis by Jacques Maritain, Garrigou Lagrange and other Neo-Thomists of the intricate philosophy developed from Thomas’ works. Christopher Meakin, “*The Same but Different*”? *The Relationship Between Unity and Diversity in the Theological Ecumenism of Yves Congar*, *Studia Theologica Lundensia* 50 (Lund, Sweden: Lund University Press, 1995), 31.

¹²² Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 8; Famerée and Routhier, *Yves Congar*, 18. This was not unusual for seminarians and clerics in France, since as discussed in Chapter Two, the Third Republic recognized neither church nor religious establishment. Similarly, Père Henri de Lubac was drafted into French military service in 1914. Rudolf Volderholzer, *Meet Henri de Lubac: His Life and Work*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 11. Congar would be called up again for military service in 1939.

Benedictines or the Dominicans?¹²³ His initial leanings were to be part of an austere Benedictine monastery, but after consulting with both Father Lallement and Father Louis, the Dominican provincial, Congar made his decision: he would join the *ordo prædicatorum*, the Order of Preachers. Taking the name of Marie-Joseph, he became a novitiate friar of the Dominican province of France at Amiens on December 7, 1925. Prepared as he was by Carmes, Congar had a “fervent and happy novitiate, free of problems, free even of any difficulties in adaptation”¹²⁴ Things would be harder for him at his next destination. In 1926, the young novitiate was sent to the Dominican house of formation for the priesthood which of necessity had been relocated from Flavigny, France to an estate outside Tournai, Kain-lez-Tournai (Fr., Kain-la-tombe), Belgium in 1903 as a consequence of tumultuous political changes in France.¹²⁵ From there it moved to the village of Le Saulchoir, in Belgium, which name was retained for the Dominican *studium* even after it returned to France.¹²⁶

b. *Influences and studies at Le Saulchoir.* One of the phrases which might be used to describe the exacting life at Le Saulchoir was “uncomfortable isolation”. Congar

¹²³ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 15.

¹²⁴ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 8. Cf. Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 5 and Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 23; Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 15.

¹²⁵ The original Dominican “study house” for the Province of France had been established in 1865 at Flavigny, Côte d’Or, as part of the restoration of the Dominican Order in France under Père Jean-Baptiste-Henri Lacordaire, O.P. (1802-1861). It was moved to Corbara, Corsica in 1884, then returned to France in 1894. In 1903, the Dominican *studium generale* was moved under political pressure due to the anticlerical laws of the French Third Republic to Le Saulchoir (Kain-lez-Tournai), a grand estate outside of Tournai, Belgium, and a few kilometers from the city of Lille and the French border. During the period, 1937-1939, the *studium generale* was moved back to France, situating in Etiolles, but still calling itself, “Le Saulchoir”. In 1971, it moved permanently to the couvent St.-Jacques, Paris, followed in 1972 by its library. In 1974, the faculty suspended their university teaching, although the extensive library remains available to the public for research. René Rémond, “Preface,” Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 7 n. 1. See also Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 18 and Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 2.

¹²⁶ Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 12.

described the climate as humid and unpleasant.¹²⁷ Le Saulchoir was essentially uninformed about matters outside its insular walls. Few guest lecturers visited and there was little contact even by the professors with the outside.¹²⁸ Moreover, a pervading austere mood at Le Saulchoir was famed by rigorous devotional mandates. It took Congar two months to acclimatize to the inflexible and rigid schedule of Le Saulchoir's fasts, devotions and recitations of the Office in his cell at night and in the early morning.¹²⁹ The number, quality and enthusiasm of Le Saulchoir's students was strong, however, and Jossua writes that along with H.M Fêret", with whom Congar would continue to work in later years, Congar was among the most brilliant students there.¹³⁰

It was at Le Saulchoir with its uniform rhythm of work interwoven with liturgical prayer that the young Dominican seminarian met and fell under the influence of Pères Ambroise Gardeil (1859–1931) and his successor, Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895–1990).¹³¹ Gardeil was Regent of Studies at Le Saulchoir from 1894 to 1911 and had long retired by the time Congar arrived. However, Congar said that he knew Gardeil well and that they had great affection for one another.¹³² Congar confirmed that his theological methodology was essentially formed by Gardeil's work, *Le Donné révélé et la théologie*

¹²⁷ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 29. Congar described the climate as "miserable, humid because of the presence of a pond - a veritable nest of mosquitoes." (My partial translation of "Le climate est pénible, humide en raison de la présence d'un étang, véritable nid à moustiques.") Ibid.

¹²⁸ Jossua does comment that there were a few compensating releases: students eagerly read the books and magazines which the *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* received. Regular correspondence was maintained with Dominican province missions. Congar himself was particularly interested in the Dominican mission to Norway and in the "Russian Seminary" at Lille. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 16. Later, Congar would write a number of articles for *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* and following in Chenu's footsteps, direct it for a number of years.

¹²⁹ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 15-18.

¹³⁰ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 17.

¹³¹ Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999), 52.

¹³² Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 34.

(*The Gift of Revelation and theology*), which for him constituted the breviary at Le Saulchoir.¹³³ One should note here for later reference that Père Ambroise Gardeil was a neo-scholastic and the teacher of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange at Le Saulchoir.¹³⁴ However, Guy Mansini, OSB opines that although Gardeil was to some extent the master of Garrigou-Lagrange, later Garrigou-Lagrange was to influence Gardeil “for the worse” in the core of Garrigou-Lagrange’s articles on common sense and dogma.¹³⁵ Thus, Gardeil’s positions regarding the accessibility and the truth of dogma were very similar and complimentary to those of Garrigou-Lagrange.¹³⁶ Yet, Congar later states in 1989 that like himself, Père Ambroise Gardeil “went beyond this somewhat cramped and essentialist Neo-Thomism, if one can describe it that way, and towards history and also towards openness.”¹³⁷ Gardeil also led Congar to French Catholic dialectical philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861-1949), whose new historical-critical approach to the Scriptures promoted a rationalistic interpretation of the faith. Aidan Nichols comments that Blondel’s concept of tradition struck Congar “particularly forcefully”.¹³⁸ As to Blondel’s

¹³³ Ambroise Gardeil, *Le Donné révélé et la théologie* (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1932); Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 27; Puyo, *Un vie pour la vérité*, 47. For Gardeil, God’s revelatory gift (donné) to man was the biblical and historical record of revelation.

¹³⁴ Guy Mansini, OSB, “‘What Is A Dogma?’ The Meaning and Truth of Dogma in Edouard Le Roy and His Scholastic Opponents” (Ph.D. dissertation Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1985) *Analecta Gregoriana*, vol. 237.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 238. The articles referred to are contained in *Le sens commun, la philosophie d’être et les formules dogmatiques* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1922).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹³⁷ . Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 74.

¹³⁸ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 5. Possibly because of his initial interest in Maurice Blondel, Congar became convinced that there was at least some merit to the Modernist approach, and in particular in its application of the historical method to Christian data. (However, Congar did not fully favor “historical-critical” methodology, which he thought sometimes diluted faith by its absolute anthropological emphasis.) The method led to a dialectical focus on the experiencing faith subject, whose needs often changed with time and events. Such an approach appealed to young Congar, for Blondel’s “reflections on the relation of history and dogma had tried to chart a course between Modernism, which Congar basically rejected, and what he dubbed ‘Veterism’: essentially closed mindedness to everything that historical study could offer to the better grasp of

influence on Congar, Congar's confirms the symmetry and relationship between his "révélation naturelle" and Blondel's "Primitive Revelation".¹³⁹

One can connect here the "Primitive Revelation" which is spoken of by the ethnologists or the apologists. Principal texts: Wis 13:1; Rom 1:19-21 (verb φανεροῦν [manifest]); Acts 17:24-29; secondary texts: Ps 19:2; Isa 40, 26; 1 Cor 1:21 [footnote omitted]. Saint Paul expressly tied his witness of a notification from God, not to a human project, but an act, an initiative from God, but which at this level appears to be the action of the creature. If this revelation is to be tied to Christ, then it is to Christ as uncreated Wisdom (my translation).¹⁴⁰

In addition to the direct influence of Father Gardeil, one of the lesser-known Thomist theologians, Father Marie-Benoît Schwalm (1860-1908), would indirectly influence Congar's ecclesiology. Years before Congar arrived at Le Saulchoir, Father Schwalm had written an article entitled, "The Two Theologies," for *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et theologiques*.¹⁴¹ Then and now, the *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et theologiques* seeks to pursue fundamental common ground between philosophical knowledge and theological discipline through the dual lenses of history and Church tradition. In his 1908 article, under a paragraph captioned, "The treatise on the Church from the scholastic point of view," Father Schwalm set forth questions of institutional

a revelation which, though supernatural and miraculous, was mediated by the texture of history. Blondel's concept of tradition struck him particularly forcefully." Ibid., footnote omitted.

However, Congar had great reservations about the theology of Alfred Loisy (1857-1940).

¹³⁹ Y.M.J. Congar, O.P. *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1962), 10-11.

Anticipating transcendent Thomism, Maurice Blondel emphasized an "intellectual dynamism" - a mutual bond between man's intellect and his will, which "will or action relates to a transcendent end" - the revelation of the reality of God. James C. Livingston, Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Sarah Coakley and James H. Evans, Jr., ed. *Modern Christian Thought*, vol. 2, *The Twentieth Century*, 201.

¹⁴⁰ On peut y rattacher la "Révélation Primitive" don't parlent les ethnologues ou les apologistes. Texts principaux: Sag., 13, I Rom., I, 19-21 (verbe φανεροῦν); Act., 17, 24-29; subsidiairement: Ps. 19, 2; Is., 40, 26; I Cor., I, 21 [footnote omitted]. Saint Paul rattache expressément cette attestation ou notification de Dieu, non à un projet de l'homme, mais à un acte, une initiative de Dieu, mais, à ce niveau, il s'agit de l'action créatrice. Si cette révélation doit être rattachée au Christ, c'est au Christ comme Sagesse incréée. Yves Congar, *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1962), 9-10.

¹⁴¹ Jossua cites "'Les deux théologies,' *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (1908), 674-ff." Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 24.

and social order which Gardeil and subsequently Congar would repeat in support of a sacramental and anthropological understanding of the ecclesiology of the Church.¹⁴²

Congar had copied a page from Father Schwalm's article which contained a distillation of themes and which, according to Père Jossua, gave Congar "lasting inspiration" and which would reverberate in Congar's ecclesiology in years to come. It may well have seemed to Congar that on this particular page God was talking directly to him:

Like every great work of doctrine, the future ecclesiology will synthesize the scattered acquisitions of centuries. Would that God might animate (if indeed he has not already done so) some young theologian to consecrate "the long hopes and the vast thoughts" with which youth is illuminated, to the patient and humble maturing of the hoped-for synthesis. This young theologian should preferably be a professor teaching these matters and hence steeped in the thought of the Fathers, of popes, of the theologians who were elaborators of the doctrine to be exposed – someone studious, recollected, knowing the real value of contemplation and of solitude, long-suffering, and generous. If it is true that every fine and fruitful life realizes in its maturity an enthusiasm of its twenties, what could be a worthier achievement of a professional and university ministry than this treatise on the Church, this treatise on the Son of God in his social dimensions?¹⁴³

Yves Congar considered both Gardeil and Chenu to be his masters at Le Saulchoir.¹⁴⁴ Above all others, however, Chenu was certainly to have the greatest impact on Congar and was to be a mentor and friend to Congar until Chenu's death. Père

¹⁴² As quoted by J.P. Jossua, O.P., Gardeil wrote, "If St. Thomas came back and saw the dogma of the Church as it has developed, I do not doubt that he would give it a large section in the third part of the *Summa Theologica* between the treatise on Christ and that on the sacraments." Father Schwalm and later Congar believed that disputes over the juridical order of powers did not surface in the Church until after Aquinas in the fourteenth century. Cf. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 19.

¹⁴³ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 20 citing Schwalm, "Les deux théologies," *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*. For additional background on Marie-Benoit Schwalm, see Peddicord, O.P., *The Sacred Monster*, 118-19.

¹⁴⁴ Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church*, 5; Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 47. Significantly, Père Gardeil, O.P. was also a Neo-Thomist. However, it should be noted that without further elaboration, Henn states that Père Chenu and then Père Heris were the two professors who most influenced Yves Congar at le Saulchoir. Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 9. Chenu studied in Rome at the Angelicum from 1914-1920, where Garrigou-Lagrangé supervised his thesis. Thereafter, Chenu was assigned to teach at Le Saulchoir in Belgium, where he soon opposed the non-historical exposition of Aquinas which the philosophically-trained Dominican Père Garrigou-Lagrangé championed. As Congar would do in his footsteps, Chenu read Thomas Aquinas with a strong emphasis upon his historical context.

Chenu's signature influence upon Congar was his unique ability to infuse the receptive young man with a burning sense of history. Jossua writes that "Father Chenu was extraordinary in awakening in others the vocation of the historian – historians who like himself would be attentive to the actuality of the past and to its repeated interrogation by the present."¹⁴⁵

Ironically, Chenu only taught Congar Greek and later the history of doctrines, but there was more than a student-teacher bond between the two. It was the meeting of two great minds who encouraged and potentiated each other in common interests. Together, and certainly with notable others, they would be immersed in the coming collision between Vatican II and the Church of Vatican I. Congar described Père Chenu in glowing terms as "the brilliant brother, generous, open to everything, sympathetic and cooperative, whether one was just stammering or doing research – then one met a master, a friend, an incomparable brother, unceasingly trying to understand the other, to help him to understand himself, to encourage and often to enrich his work."¹⁴⁶ Chenu introduced his student to the German Catholic historical ecclesiologist and theologian, Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838).

At Saulchoir, "isolated and in relative solitude,"

. . . [t]he young friar [Congar] read deeply in texts, whether classical, biblical, patristic or medieval. His concern to set Thomas within the context of the thirteenth century led to relations with the historian of medieval philosophy Étienne Gilson (1884-1979) but cooled the ardors of his friendship with the Neo-Thomists. The geographical and conventional isolation of Le Saulchoir deprived him of much human contact of a wider kind, save through correspondence with the missions of the Province. . . . Congar's master, Marie-Dominique Chenu . . . , had communicated an enthusiasm for the budding ecumenical movement Chenu suggested that a suitable model for a sympathetic Catholic contribution to

¹⁴⁵ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 17.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Jossua also suggests that, "Perhaps Chenu's most decisive influence [on Congar] was in making him aware of history." *Ibid.*

that movement might be the ecclesiolgist of the nineteenth-century German Catholic revival, Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838).¹⁴⁷

Möhler greatly impacted Congar's ecumenicism, particularly as regards Protestant and Eastern Christian theology. Like his mentor Chenu, the young Congar was enthusiastic about the budding twentieth century ecumenical movement which drew Protestants and Orthodox together at such gatherings as the Lausanne Faith and Order Conference of 1927.¹⁴⁸ In 1928, as part of his work towards his *lectorat*, the Dominican equivalent of a dissertation, Congar wrote a thesis on Johann Adam Möhler's favorite theme, the unity of the Church.¹⁴⁹ He would go on to base his *lectorat* on Johann Adam Möhler's ecumenical work, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (Unity in the Church).¹⁵⁰ Eventually Congar will publish the French translation of *Die Einheit in der Kirche* as the second volume of his *Unam Sanctam* series.

Contrary to the teaching of Neo-Thomists like Jacques Maritain and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, historical theology and the historical dimension of reality were emphasized as particular strengths in the Thomistic studies at Le Saulchoir. Every truth was seen as historically conditioned.¹⁵¹ Congar would later comment to his interviewer

¹⁴⁷ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 3. In 1970, Congar wrote that "Möhler can even today be an animator. That is what he was for me for more than forty years." Yves Congar, "Johann Adam Möhler: 1796-1838," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 150 (1970): 50-51.

¹⁴⁸ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Meakin, "The Same but Different?", 17. Henn in *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 9 n. 5 writes that J. Laubach in "Yves Congar" in *Theologians of Our Time* (Notre Dame, 1964), 166 gave the title of Congar's thesis as "The Unity of the Church in Thomas Aquinas", adding that in a letter dated December 8, 1986, Congar wrote without further clarification that that this title was not entirely accurate.

¹⁵⁰ Johann A. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche: oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus, dargestellt im geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1925).

¹⁵¹ From the historical sensitivity to Thomas he learned at Le Saulchoir, Congar later concluded that knowledge of any truth is based upon an *objective dimension* (truth about an object) and a *subjective dimension* (truth about that object as known by the subject – an historically conditioned truth). Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 3. Henn writes that Jossua holds that this led Congar to the

regarding this dichotomy and his allegiance to the historical-contextual understanding of Thomas Aquinas:

When I arrived at Saulchoir, I already had a little of Thomism behind me. I already told you: Abbé Lallement had initiated me. In the philosophical domain, Saint Thomas was certainly dépassé. His rational psychology, for example, his critique of knowledge (epistemology) was not sufficient. Father Roland Gosselin, our professor, commented on Descartes, Kant... Nonetheless, Thomism constituted the foundation of our intellectual formation. The *Summa* of Saint Thomas was our manual; we commented on it article by article. One could not do more today, with the possible exception of certain tracts.

I must make clear that Saint Thomas was put back into his historical context. We didn't consider him as some kind of oracle, dominant over time, who was enlightened [with] one faith for all, the great truths of the faith. This historic approach to the work of Saint Thomas was, in one sense, strongly different from the reading which was made in Jacques Maritain's group (my translation).¹⁵²

In rejecting Neo-Thomism, Congar had *de facto* not only dissociated himself from the powerful Garrigou Lagrange, but from the 'seductive' Jacques Maritain as well. It is not inappropriate to conclude that Congar understood that these decisions could have consequences.

c. *Vocation to ecumenicism; departure of Chenu.* Congar wrote, "I recognized my vocation to ecumenicism in 1929, when I had already directed my studies to ecclesiology (the subject of his thesis 'lectorat' chosen in the summer of 1928: The Unity

twin notions of unity within diversity and a hierarchy of truths. Ibid., 5 citing J.P Jossua, "L'oeuvre oecuménique du Père Congar," in *Etudes* 357 (1982, no. 2): 553-55.

¹⁵² Quand je suis arrivé au Saulchoir, j'avais déjà un peu de thomisme derrière moi. Je vous l'ai dit: l'Abbé Lallement m'y avait initié. Dans la domaine philosophique, saint Thomas était certainement dépassé. Sa psychologie rationnelle, par exemple, sa critique de la connaissance (l'épistémologie) ne pouvaient suffire. Le Père Roland-Gosselin, notre professeur, commentait Descartes, Kant... Cependant, le thomisme constituait la toile de fond de notre formation intellectuelle. La *Somme* de saint Thomas était notre manuel; nous la commentions article par article. On ne pourrait plus de faire aujourd'hui, à la exception peut-être de certains traités. Je dois préciser que saint Thomas était replacé dans son contexte historique. Nous ne le considérons pas comme une sorte d'oracle, dominant le temps, qui aurait éclairé, une fois pour toutes, les grandes vérités de la foi. Cette approche historique de l'œuvre de saint Thomas était, en un sens, fort différente de la lecture qui en était faite dans le groupe de Jacques Maritain. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 38.

of the Church)” (my translation).¹⁵³ On June 7, 1931, Père Congar passed his lectorat in theology.¹⁵⁴ When he returned to his room later that day he found a farewell note from Chenu who had already left for Ottawa, Canada to be part of the Institute of Medieval Studies.¹⁵⁵ After some initial pleasantries, Chenu ended his note with, “The end of the good old days!”¹⁵⁶

d. *Ordination.* Yves-Marie-Joseph Congar was ordained on July 25, 1930 on the Feast of St. James.¹⁵⁷ J.P. Jossua, O.P. writes, “I must stress that, from that day, Father Congar was first of all a priest of the Gospel.”¹⁵⁸ Congar prepared during the previous year for his ordination by studying “the theology of the eucharistic sacrifice . . . and the Gospel of St. John with the help of Père [Marie-Joseph] Lagrange and St. Thomas”.¹⁵⁹

J.-P. Jossua, O.P. confirms Henn and fleshes this in a little more adding that, “Brother

¹⁵³ Famerée, *Yves Congar*, 21: “J’ai reconnu ma vocation œcuménique en 1929, alors que j’avais déjà orienté mon travail vers l’ecclésiologie (subject de thèse de ‘lectorat’ choisi à l’été 1928; l’unité de l’Eglise).” See also, Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 20.

¹⁵⁵ Jossua writes that “Chenu had to go to Canada to open the Institute of Medieval Studies at Ottawa . . . , a school to which he was to give more and more of his time in the following years.” *Ibid.*, 20-1. This is probably a reference to a nascent medieval studies program at the University of Ottawa and should not be confused with the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, established in 1929 as part of the University of Toronto.

¹⁵⁶ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 20.

¹⁵⁷ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 3; “Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P.,” *Theology Digest* 32:3: 213.

¹⁵⁸ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 18. Jossua goes on to quantify Congar’s biblically-based pastoral work, “The number of sermons (or series of sermons), retreats, conferences (or series of conferences), over and above his regular teaching duties was to increase steadily over the years: 161 events from 1930 to the War; 553 events from his liberation in August, 1945, to his arrival in Strasbourg in 1957; and 947 events from December 1957 to August, 1965!” *Ibid.* Congar has also been described as “living a life immersed in Holy Scriptures.” Philippe Lécrivain, S.J., “Yves Congar (1904-1995): une vie imprégnée par les Ecritures,” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 106/1 (Jan-Mar 2005): 39. After reviewing the important events of Congar’s life as identified by J.-P. Jossua and E. Fouilloux, Lécrivain writes that with the passage of time Congar was increasingly “impregnated” by Scripture.

¹⁵⁹ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 9. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 2-3; *idem*, *Challenge to the Church*, 42. Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938) should not be confused with Père Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, previously discussed herein. Dominican bible scholar Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855-1938) had founded the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem in 1890. It was to the École biblique that Congar would first turn during the start of his Vatican-imposed exile from France in 1954.

Congar prepared for ordination by mediating on the Gospel of St. John (with the commentaries of St. Thomas and Father Lagrange), and on Father Masure's *The Christian Sacrifice*.¹⁶⁰ It was while reading the seventeenth chapter of St. John that his 'ecumenical' concern (which was to become primary in his life) took definitive shape."

I made a special study of both John's Gospel and Thomas Aquinas' commentary on it. I was completely overwhelmed, deeply moved by chapter 17, sometimes called the priestly prayer, but which I prefer to call Jesus' apostolic prayer on Christian unity: 'That they may be one as we are one.' My ecumenical vocation can be directly traced to this study of 1929.¹⁶¹

The ecumenical theme in John chapter 17 referred to by Congar is particularly explicit in verses 1, 2, 11, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 26.¹⁶² Christ's very premise and hope at the center of this theme is embodied in John 17:21. Congar's eyes were opened: he

¹⁶⁰ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 18. Canon Eugene Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice: the Sacrifice of Christ Our Head*, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1944).

¹⁶¹ Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church*, 7, citing Yves Congar, "Letter from Father Congar, O.P.," trans. by Ronald John Zawalla, O.P., *Theology Digest* 32 (1985): 213. There is inconsistency by Congar about the date of this special event. Here, writing in a letter dated March 7, 1985, Congar states that it occurred in 1929. But in 1964, Congar also identified this John 17 reading with his 1930 ordination. *Dialogue Between Christians*, 2-3. Groppe states that "the event took place on the eve of *Servo Domini*, the Dominican passion tradition of Holy Thursday, [which occurred on April 17,] 1930." *Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 18. Nichols places this same event "on the eve of his ordination to the priesthood on 25 July 1930 . . ." Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 3. Jossua also seems to place the event as a related part of Congar's ordination. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 18.

¹⁶² John 17:1, 2 (" . . . Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that he may give eternal life to all you gave him."); 11 (" . . . Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are."); 20, 21 ("I pray not only for them but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."); 22, 23 ("And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me."); 26 ("I made known to them your name and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in them.") NAB (emphasis added). Henceforth, unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations will be taken from the NAB.

determined thereafter to “work for the unity of all who believe in Jesus Christ.”¹⁶³ This realization was the work of a long preparatory process, for as Congar commented:

[T]he seeds of it had been sown in me for many years, no doubt even from my childhood. Very soon I discovered that a large number of circumstances and incidents had prepared me for it, some in an immediate and relatively specific manner, others more remotely – the first roots as it were.¹⁶⁴

e. *Congar the servant of the Truth.* Jossua’s statement as to Congar’s ecumenical realization can be integrated into the central theme of this work, the ecclesiology of Yves Congar. However, I underscore again that while ecumenism was a primary concern in his life, in the end, the defining construct of Congar is neither ecumenism, nor reform, nor ecclesiology, but the truth which embraces them all.¹⁶⁵ Congar was a Thomist and, as such, was a seeker of truth. In fact, Congar identified St. Thomas with truth, declaring, “The will to be the servant of Truth completely animated the whole life St. Thomas; this will in Thomas is like a spiritual essence”.¹⁶⁶ In this, Congar would later define “truth” structurally, almost ontologically:

¹⁶³ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 3. Congar encouraged all to pray as Jesus had prayed in John 17:11: “In this way, we make our own the intention and power of the prayer which our Savior offered on the eve of his Passion and every disciple of Jesus can join in a prayer which has become truly universal, truly ecumenical.” *Ibid.*, 21. This narrative farewell speech of Christ centered about Christian unity was a focus of William S. Kurz, S.J. in *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 116-18.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶⁵ In 1975, Congar said, “My Thomism is thus linked to these babblings [referring to Congar’s childhood dogmatic discussions with his young friend, the son of a Protestant pastor] of ecumenism! It was an ecumenism which was a little controversial, but an amicable and peaceful controversy.” (My translation of “Mon thomisme est ainsi lié à ces balbutiements d’œcuménisme! C’était un œcuménisme un peu controversiste, mais de controverse amicable, irénique.” Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 74.

In 1987, Congar was more poetic: “I have devoted my life to the truth; I think that it is really the woman in my life.” Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 71.

¹⁶⁶ This is my translation of “La volonté d’être le serviteur de la Vérité anime la vie de saint Thomas tout entière; elle en est comme la substance spirituelle.” These were the opening lines of a panegyric on Aquinas preached by Congar in the Church of the Institut catholique on March 7, 1936, published as “Saint Thomas serviteur de la Vérité,” *La Vie Spirituelle* 209 (March 1937): 259. See also Congar, *Faith and Spiritual Life*, 25, which translates the same language as, “It can

Puyo: *Can you quickly present the thought of St. Thomas?*

Congar: I can, if you wish, attempt to clarify it as that which has carried me. Like a Dominican, like a brother preacher, I had a veritable cult of truth. The motto of our Order is “Truth”. This is only an abstract, you will possibly think! Not so much! I have recently discovered this saying: “I have loved the truth like the love of a person.” I would be happily defined by this. I don’t ignore that this can contain danger. Pascal has said that one can make an idol of this same Truth. That is true. But the search for truth can inspire a life. This is what I believe I discern in the work of Saint Thomas; that explains my attachment to his thoughts.

First I’ve loved the rigor of his ideas. St Thomas has placed lightness in my spirit. I can say this, I believe, without being unaware of my limits. I love the manner in which Thomas approaches questions. He always seeks in all things to perceive the principle and the conclusion, the cause and the effect. The Truth is structured like a tree, with a trunk, some great branches and some small branches. Thomism – the truth – is the triumph of light (my translation).¹⁶⁷

f. *Teaching, continuing studies and ecumenism.* After ordination, Congar lost no time in acquainting his superiors with his desire to work for unity, predominantly expressed in an urge to work among Protestants.¹⁶⁸ Due at least in part because of his emerging interest in Martin Luther, Congar was permitted to travel and stay at the Dominican house in Düsseldorf, Germany from August to September, 1930.¹⁶⁹ There on

be said that a determination to be the servant of truth permeates St. Thomas’ life; it forms his spiritual essence.”

¹⁶⁷ Puyo: *Pouvez-vous présenter rapidement la pensée de saint Thomas?*

Congar: Je puis, si vous le voulez, tenter de préciser ce qu’elle m’a apporté. Comme Dominicain, comme Frère prêcheur, j’avais un véritable cult de la Vérité. La devise de notre Ordre est “Veritas”. C’est bien abstrait, penserez-vous peut-être! Pas tellement! J’ai découvert récemment ce mot de Mme Swetchine: “J’ai aimé la vérité comme un aime d’amour une personne.” Je le signerais volontiers. Je n’ignore pas ce qu’elle peut contenir de danger. Pascal a dit qu’on peut se faire une idole même de la Vérité. Cela est vrai. Mais la recherche de la Vérité peut inspirer une vie. C’est ce que j’ai cru discerner dans l’œuvre de saint Thomas; c’est ce qui explique mon attachement à sa pensée. J’ai aimé d’abord sa rigueur dans les idées. Saint Thomas a mis de la clarté dans mon esprit. Je peut le dire, je crois, sans méconnaître mes limites. J’aime la manière dont saint Thomas aborde des questions. Il cherche toujours à apercevoir, en toutes choses, le principe et la conclusion, la cause et l’effet. La Vérité y est architecturée, comme l’est un arbre, avec un tronc, de grosses branches, de petites branches. Le thomisme – la vrai – c’est le triomphe de la clarté. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 39.

¹⁶⁸ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. Congar comments that at this time at Saulchoir, there was considerable interest in Luther and that he himself realized that “there were depths in Luther which demanded investigation and understanding.” Ibid., 6.

September 17, 1930, “to show his feelings at that time,” Congar wrote a private petition to God. Groppe quite rightly concludes that this petition bears quoting at length - a conclusion with which I concur: first, because of its ecumenical and substantive content and second, because of its prophetic application to Congar’s own life:¹⁷⁰

My God, why does your Church always condemn? True, she must above all guard the “deposit of faith”: but is there no other means than condemnation, especially condemning so quickly? In the case of the Action Française, condemnation was *immediate*, and with no explanation: that only came a year later, and it was in dealing with reasonable people who only meant to act in the clear light of truth.

And the Sillon? There, for once, was an organization both successful and vigorous. Could it not have been put right and utilized? The Pope insisted that the movement should be split up by dioceses, but that is lethal to everything with us; it is the old framework and not so much a framework as old; division into diocese with the reins in the hands of each individual bishop is good; but only provided the bishops do not sleep and do not put people to sleep with a rumble of pious platitudes. My God, you know how I love your Church, but I see clearly that concerted action has force: I know that your admirable Church once played an immense and splendid part in civil affairs and in the whole of human life and that she now plays hardly any part at all. My God, if only your Church were more encouraging, more comprehensive; all the same!

My God, your Church is so Latin and so centralized. True the pope is the “sweet Christian on earth”; and we only live by Christ by remaining attached to him. But Rome is not the world and Latin civilization is not the whole of humanity. My God, who created man and could not have been worthily (or less worthily) praised in your creation except by both multiplying species and multiplying within the species, races and nations; my God, you have shown in this way a little of your glory as well as the riches of your creation, and particularly of rational creation; *my God, my God! who wished your Church, even in its cradle, to speak all tongues; not in the sense that she herself would vary the expression of the truth, still less the truth itself, but in the sense that the truth which the Church*

¹⁷⁰ The quotation presented by Groppe does omit certain language. The full quote included in this work comes from a manuscript dated September 17, 1930, which Père Congar found among papers previously written by him during his visit to the Dominican house in Düsseldorf, Germany. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 5 n. 3. The “Sillon” referred to by Congar relates to the Christian Democrats, a French Catholic political society formed during the pontificate of Leo XIII and subsequently condemned by Pius X in early September, 1910. See “The Pope Rebukes the French Sillon,” *New York Times*, September 18, 1910, np. This article may be found at <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?r=1&res=9BODEF1F39E333A2575BC1A96F9C946196D6CF>; Internet; accessed May 5, 2010.

alone possesses should be intelligible to every human ear. My God, enlarge our hearts! Grant that men may understand us and we may understand men, all men!

My God! I am only a wretched child (*adolescentulus et contemptus*); but you can dilate and enlarge my heart in proportion to the immense needs of the world. You know these needs better than I could say; my God, give us many labourers with great hearts. *Metemus non deficientes. Dum tempus habemus bonum ad omnes.* (“We shall reap if we persist. While we have the opportunity, let us work for the good of all.”)

Time presses – there is much work to be done! My God, make my mind consonant with your Church; your mother Church is all-embracing and all-wise, rich and discreet, immense and prudent. My God, let there be nothing more that is trite and commonplace. There is no time to waste on such things. My God, there is so much work; give us leaders; give me the soul of a leader. *The union of the Churches! My God, why has your Church, which is holy and is one, unique, holy and true, why has she so often such an austere and forbidding face* when in reality she is full of youth and life?

In reality, we are the Church’s face; it is we who make her visible; my God, make of us a truly living face for your Church! I long so much to help my brothers to see her true countenance. My God, the Hochkirche and even Lausanne to which she clings, they have errors, but the truth which they already hold and the truth to which they are already tending – are you going to let your Church close heavy and wrinkled eyelids upon it? Will you not rather kindle in her eyes that light of understanding and encouragement of which the Bridegroom has the secret, of which the mother above all holds the secret?

My God, so many great things, a task too heavy for human shoulders, help us. Enlarge, purify, enlighten, organize, inflame, make wise and stir up our poor hearts (emphases added).¹⁷¹

In the summer of 1931, Congar returned to Germany and toured local sites identified with the life of Luther, including Wartburg, Erfurt and Wittenberg.¹⁷² Aidan Nichols sums up Congar’s read of Luther: the young priest became “deeply affected by Luther’s stress on the primacy of grace, and of the Scriptures, though avoiding Luther’s accompanying negations of the role of charity, and of tradition.”¹⁷³ In October, 1931,

¹⁷¹ Congar, Preface to *Dialogue Between Christians*, 5 n. 3. In this last paragraph, Congar’s descriptive petition that the Holy Spirit purify and “inflame” him is rather strikingly reminiscent of the pneumatological visions of Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) and Rupert of Deutz (1075-1129) described in Wanda Zemler-Cizewski’s article, “‘The Lord, the Giver of Life:’ A Reflection on the Theology of the Holy Spirit in the Twelfth Century,” *Angelic Theological Review* 83:3 (Summer, 2001): 549-51.

¹⁷² Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 19; Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 6.

¹⁷³ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 3.

because Saulchoir had so few professors, Congar started to lecture there, taking Father Chenu's place teaching the introductory course in theology after Chenu departed for the Institute of Medieval Studies in Ottawa.¹⁷⁴

At this time, as touched upon before, Congar became more aware of the Catholic Modernist movement, particularly its intellectual leader, Alfred F. Loisy (1857-1940).¹⁷⁵ While Jossua writes - and I would underscore, that Congar had "a very strong critical reaction" to Loisy, yet, in reading his then recently concluded three-volume *Mémoires*, it occurred to Congar that "the mission for his generation was to bring together *in the Church* all that was good in the demands and problems posed by the modernists."¹⁷⁶ Part of one tenet of Modernism which resonated with Yves Congar was that divine revelation was a continuing reality. Congar will later refine this term to "progressive revelation" – a continuing deeper understanding of the one revelation, which understanding did not end with the death of the last Apostle.¹⁷⁷ As Jossua notes, Congar was now thinking "of the

¹⁷⁴ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 6; Jossua, Yves Congar, 20-21. Nichols says that Congar's first courses on theological propaedeutics at Le Saulchoir are substantially set forth in Congar's *La Foi et la théologie*. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 5.

¹⁷⁵ Modernism was a late nineteenth and early twentieth century reaction among some Catholics to the centrist authority of Rome and its refusal to connect scientific and social developments with interpretations of dogma. Its proponents in France included historians Louis Duchesne, Pierre Batiffol, the former Jesuit priest, Henri Bremond and Abbé Alfred Firmin Loisy. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 20. Alfred Loisy, a professor at l'Institut catholique de Paris was seen by many - and particularly the Neo-Thomists, as the founder and proponent of the "synthesis of all heresies" of Modernism, a phrase used by Pope Pius X in *Pascendi dominici gregis*, *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 40 (1907), 632. Exegetically, Loisy supported a historical-critical/relativist reading of the Bible. He was excommunicated by Pius X on March 7, 1908. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 23.

¹⁷⁶ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 21.

¹⁷⁷ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 21. Revelation as a 'continuing reality' should be distinguished from any modernist notion of a "continuing revelation," meaning that revelation could change dogma, a notion which Congar absolutely rejected.

application of critical techniques to the Christian deposit [of faith] and, in religious philosophy, of ‘the point of view of the subject’.”¹⁷⁸

From January to June, 1932, Congar was permitted to pursue further studies.¹⁷⁹ These “complementary studies” included a sociology course at l’Institut catholique in Paris taught by “Canon” Daniel Lallement.¹⁸⁰ In Paris, Congar also attended dogmatic lectures centered about Calvinistic thought given by French Reformed Pastor A. Lecerf and took Thomist philosopher Étienne Gilson’s course on Luther given at the Haut Etudes in the Institute’s Protestant Faculty of Theology.¹⁸¹ As a consequence, Congar noted that in the French Protestant thought of the time, there was “a clearly discernible tendency to return to the Reformers.”¹⁸² Congar felt that he had to reply to this:

It appeared to me that Protestantism was laboring under a number of misconceptions and that the very real sympathy I felt for it in several respects did not dispense me from the duty of criticizing them. I wished to engage in dialogue at this level and at the same time I wanted to combat and rectify certain prejudices and misconceptions and specious disputes which prevented Protestants from recognizing *the true face of the Church* and also perpetuated among Catholics a

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 9.

¹⁸⁰ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 7. The description of Lallement is by Congar writing in 1964, thirty-two years after the event; by 1932 Lallement may well have been ordained a priest. Jossua writes that Congar took this course in preparation for writing a work defining the mystery of the Church in terms of the categories of Thomas’ philosophy of society, but later concluded “that these [limited] categories [e.g., City of God, City of Man], with their rigor and their type of philosophical approach to reality, were not sufficient to give a complete account of the reality of the Church. A good deal of his later effort was directed toward ridding himself of these categories.” Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 22.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 21-2. At the Protestant Faculty of Theology, Congar also became acquainted with the Lutheran Oscar Cullman. Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 7. At this time in Paris there was also a Franco-Russian circle which Conger attended because it offered him the opportunity to meet in person with Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants. There, Congar made the acquaintance of Abbé A. Gratieux who taught a course at the l’Institut catholique on the Slavophil movement. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 7-8. Although Congar’s chief interest continued to be unity with Protestantism, this was to be the beginning of Congar’s continuing curiosity and respect for the Orthodox Christian faith and his efforts for unity between Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Cf. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 9.

¹⁸² Ibid., 7.

false idea of the Reformation and of Protestantism. The first move in any irenic approach is to start from the basis of *authentic information* (emphasis mine).¹⁸³

What Congar is clearly referencing here in his use of the words, “authentic information,” is the “Truth”. But the young Congar’s early attempts at ecumenicism created problems:

Because of this latter study [Gilson’s course on Luther with l’Institut catholique’s Protestant Faculty of theology] and because of his contacts with some Protestants, many Parisian Dominicans were scandalized, thinking that in authorizing all this father provincial was precipitating Père Congar into apostasy. He was forbidden to attend one of Loisy’s courses. But Cardinal Verdier, who had been his superior at the seminary, approved everything. Father Congar assisted at French–Russian friendship reunions and became acquainted with [French personalist philosopher] Emmanuel Mounier [1905-1950] at Maritain’s home. Then he returned to Saulchoir and prepared for his teaching of apologetics.¹⁸⁴

Congar’s first year of teaching at Le Saulchoir in 1932 was in apologetics, followed the next year by apologetics, alternating with theology. Here, Jossua interjects a 1966 postscript:

From this moment came Congar’s concern to construct a treatise on the Church, a concern which was to become a lifelong desire – then almost a regret as each passing year delayed the realization of his plan. Strictly speaking, instead of a considerable ecclesiological work, this plan has not yet been completed. Today, Father Congar admits that he congratulates himself for not having written it in the thirties or even after the [Second World] war: ‘It would have been miserable. Now I would do better, but shall I ever do it?’¹⁸⁵

The answer to Congar’s query is, yes, but it will not be so much written by him, but lived. It would be intertwined with and a rich deposit of what I shall characterize as his ‘living ecclesiology’ of continuing to establish an ecumenical dialogue with

¹⁸³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸⁴ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 21. Personalist philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950) emphasized a spiritual and faith involvement in social issues of the day to individually and collectively attain a Gospel-based, non-violent revolution to change the existing striated social order. His writings were embraced by the Catholic Worker Movement, in which Jacques Maritain and Jesuit theologian Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) were both involved.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 22

Protestants.¹⁸⁶ At Saulchoir Congar maintained contact with the friends he had met at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in 1932, through whom, in turn, he met the Swiss Reformed theologian Karl Barth.¹⁸⁷

6. Crossroads

a. *The reasons for unbelief; the Unam Sanctam series.* From this we arrive at what I submit are two significant crossroads in the life of Père Congar. First, in 1935, at the request of his colleagues at Éditions du Cerf, Congar compiled and published in *La Vie intellectuelle* the conclusions he drew from the three-year Cerf study as to the reasons for Christian unbelief in France. His article, “Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l’incroyance” (A theological conclusion to the inquiry concerning current reasons for unbelief), spoke of entrenched problems within the Church as the cause of current or contemporary unbelief.¹⁸⁸ His base conclusion was:

This led to the conclusion that as far as this unbelief depended on *us*, it was caused by a poor presentation of the Church. At that time, the Church was presented in a completely juridical way and sometimes even somewhat political.¹⁸⁹

Certainly, Congar had also employed stronger language: that the Church had been systematized as “pyramidal, hierarchical, juridical, put in place by the Counter-

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 7.

¹⁸⁷ After Barth completed three lectures in Paris, at Congar’s invitation he presented himself at a “small symposium” attended by Congar, Étienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain and others in May, 1934. Congar’s principal difficulty with Barth was “his exclusive sovereign causality of God in God himself without realizing that this causality injects something real *into us* and ultimately confers on us the capacity for con-causality with God!” Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 12. Congar also studied Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Catholic and Protestant Modernism. *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ “Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l’incroyance”, *La Vie intellectuelle* 37 (1935): 214. Congar’s *La Vie intellectuelle* is not to be confused with *La Vie spirituelle*, which was founded after the First World War by Père Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange and his Dominican confrere, Vincent Bernadot, to reflect on spiritual and ascetical Christian theology. Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 15.

¹⁸⁹ Gabriel Flynn, “The Role of Unbelief in the Theology of Yves Congar,” *New Blackfriars* 85 (July 2004): 429.

Reformation;”¹⁹⁰ that the Church’s ideas of God and faith and its “wholly juridical-hierarchical” image were largely to blame for unbelief;¹⁹¹ and finally, that the face which the Church presented to the world was determinative as to the possibility of reconciliation and reunion.¹⁹² The conclusions Congar set forth in *La Vie intellectuelle* and his subsequent thoughts on disbelief in France were revisited in late 1961, on the eve of Vatican II, when he reflected:

I brought this about, not only to formulate a summary interpretation, but to reflect upon what could be done. *It would appear to me that as much as faith or unbelief of men depended on us*, the effort has been turned into an endeavor to renovate ecclesiology. We must recover in the sources which are always alive in our profound tradition, a meaning and a vision of the Church which would truly make [one], the People of God – the Body of Christ – the Temple of the Holy Spirit. It is this conclusion which came out of the *Unam Sanctam* collection, (37 volumes to date) and the books which I myself have published: *Divided Christendom, True and False Reform in the Church, Milestones for a Theology of the Laity, Christ, Marie and the Church* and *The Mystery of the Temple*. After seven or eight years, I have come to a new conclusion: it is not only our idea and our presentation of the Church which must be renewed from their sources, it is our idea of God as the Living God and, facing Him, our idea of Faith. I will return to this further.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ “Elle mettait en cause le système pyramidal, hiérarchisé, juridique, mis en place par la Contre-Réforme.” Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 102.

¹⁹¹ Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 3.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ [J]e fus amené, non seulement à formuler une interprétation d’ensemble, mais à réfléchir à ce qu’on pourrait faire. *Il m’apparut (sic) que, pour autant que la foi ou l’incroyance des hommes dépendait de nous*, l’effort à faire était un effort de rénovation de l’ecclésiologie. Il fallait retrouver, dans les sources toujours vives de notre tradition profonde, un sens et un visage de l’Église qui fussent vraiment ceux Peuple de dieux - Corps du Christ – Temple du Saint-Esprit. C’est de cette conclusion que sont sortis la collection *Unam Sanctam* (37 volumes à ce jour) et les livres que j’ai publiés moi-même; *Chrétiens désunis, Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église, Jalons pour une théologie laïcité, Le Christ, Marie et L’Église, Le Mystère du Temple*. Je suis venu, depuis sept ou huit ans, à une nouvelle conclusion: c’est ne pas seulement notre idée et notre présentation de l’Église qu’il faut renouveler aux sources, c’est notre idée de Dieu comme Dieu Vivant et, lui faisant face, notre idée de la Foi. J’y reviendrai plus loin. Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., “*Vœux pour le Concile, Enquête parmi les chrétiens: catholiques*” (Requests for the Council: Inquiry among Christians - Catholics) *Esprit* (Nouvelle Série) 29 (December, 1961): 695. This article was a contribution by Congar, followed by others, including M.D. Chenu, O.P. (who penned the opening article) responding to questions which had been posed to the upcoming Vatican II Council by Orthodox, Anglicans and Reformed representatives regarding the Catholic position on the beginnings of unity or reconciliation.

Flynn thus correctly posits that Congar's later writings are clear that the Cerf study on the reasons for unbelief was "the inspiration for his major works on the Church and motivated him to institute a new ecclesiological series called *Unam Sanctam*."¹⁹⁴ He adds that while Christian unbelief was the "essential motive" for the *Unam Sanctam* series, and "stands as the focal point of Congar's ecclesiology", other motives included Congar's commitment to ecumenism, passion for the Church and concern for the world.¹⁹⁵

b. *Publication of Chrétiens désunis*. In 1937, Père Congar published *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique (Divided Christendom)*, the first volume of his *Unam Sanctam* series.¹⁹⁶ Notably, it was dedicated to the "Conversations de Malines."¹⁹⁷ Aidan Nichols adds, "Perhaps aware of the 'difficulties' these men had encountered in pursuing an unpopular course, Congar deliberately took care to gain credit for the cause of ecumenism by making himself respected simply as a theologian."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief*, 2.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ M.-J. Congar des Frères-Prêcheurs, *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique, Unam Sanctam 1* (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1937). In her dissertation, Groppe states that this first volume of *Unam Sanctam*, which was to eventually grow to seventy-seven volumes and constitute a notable contribution to theology, was intended to be another French translation of Johann Adam Möhler's *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, but delays in translation caused Congar instead to print a compendium of a series of lectures he had given at Sacré Coeur, Paris in January, 1936. Groppe, "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit," 22.

¹⁹⁷ The "Malines Conversations" were a series of continuing dialogues during the period 1921—1926 between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church. Initiated by Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier (1851-1926) of Belgium. Although they were admittedly not fully successful in replacing controversy with reconciliation, they did anticipate a step toward "aggiornamento" and away from a strict anti-Modernism stance by Rome and a dilution of the rigid "no-popery" mantra of Canterbury. R.H. Lahey, "The Origins and Approval of the Malines Conversations," in *Church History* 3, no. 3 (1974): 366-67. Congar greatly admired the ecumenism represented by the Malines Conversations and actively sought out those who participated, such as Abbé Paul Couturier (1881-1953) and the exiled Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960). Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

I hoped by means of studies of incontestable scientific and theological value, to gain the credit necessary to cover and support my views on ecumenicism and thus convert whatever kudos and prestige might accrue to my humble reason to the profit of the cause I served.¹⁹⁹

c. *Beginnings of ressourcement: the counter to “baroque theology”*. Congar would continue to teach at Saulchoir until 1939, and to become at the same time one of the emerging leading theologians of the French Church.²⁰⁰ During this period at Saulchoir he maintained his close friendship with Père Chenu and started a growing friendship with theologian and Church historian, Père H.M. Fêret. Congar’s confrere Jean-Pierre Jossua, O.P. writes that Chenu, Congar and Fêret had a common purpose: the “desire to liquidate ‘baroque theology,’ to return to the sources”²⁰¹ To them, the Church’s mission over the centuries since the Reformation had increasingly been burdened and impeded by the exclusive use of top-down teleologically-oriented deductive logic and excessive clericalism, and thus presented itself in strict, unattractive juridical and hierarchical terms. They sought Church revitalization by a ‘return to the sources’ (*ressourcement*) ecclesiology. “They had conceived the ambitious notion of writing a history of theology; with this in mind they took notes and exchanged ideas and references. Because of other demands, and the enormity of the task, “the work was never seriously undertaken”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., citing Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 11. As part of this initially successful personal crusade for credibility, in 1938 Congar was asked by Bishop Amann and agreed to write “Theology”, an article for *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, A. Vacant and E Magenot, ed., vol. 15/I (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1943). Father Congar spent a year writing the submission, much of which Bishop Amann edited as being too lengthy. Notwithstanding, the sixty-one page article subsequently became well-known in theological circles. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 23. In 1962, it appeared as “Le mystère Chretien” in *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée) 1962.

²⁰⁰ Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 8.

²⁰¹ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 22-23; see also Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 10.

²⁰² Cf. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 22-23.

Upon his release as a prisoner of war at the close of World War Two in Europe, Père Congar continued teaching at Le Saulchoir from 1945 to 1954.²⁰³

G. The Captivity of World War Two

On September 2, 1939, Le Saulchoir completed its two-year return of twenty-two professors and one hundred and twenty-five students from outside Kain-lez-Tournai, Belgium, where it had been since 1903, to Étiolles, France, about twenty miles south of Paris at the intersection of the Seine and Oise Rivers.²⁰⁴ War was declared by France against Germany the next day. As a consequence, Congar spent only eight days at Étiolles and would not return until the end of May, 1945, almost six years later.²⁰⁵ On September 10, 1939, Lieutenant Yves Congar left Le Saulchoir under military orders to report by November 1, 1939 to the “Mountain Fighters of the Pioneers” – a group of irregulars occupied with various assignments.²⁰⁶ He would be assigned to manage and command the men at a fuel depot in the north of Alsace.²⁰⁷ On May 27, 1940, after two days of combat, Congar was taken captive by German forces.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church*, 7.

²⁰⁴ Cf. “Preface de Réne Rémond,” in Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (n.p., 1937), 7.

²⁰⁵ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 85-86.

²⁰⁶ Congar describes the unit as, “Une espèce de prolétariat de l’infanterie; nous étions occupés à des travaux.” (A proletariat species of infantry; we were occupied with labor.) *Ibid.*, 86.

²⁰⁷ “Me voilà responsable d’une certain d’hommes, au nord de l’Alsace, et j’administrerais un depot d’essence!” *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Congar described his capture as follows: “We knew only two days of combat. I had seen that there was a man before me donned in enemy uniform, armed with a weapon firing over me. At that moment an instinct for life tears at all your thoughts. I didn’t think about death, yet a comrade has fallen by my side, and I saw tracer bullets to my right and left, at shoulder height - and then there would be captivity.” This is my translation of “Nous n’avons connu que deux jours de combat. J’ai vu ce que c’était que d’avoir devant soi un homme, revêtu d’un uniform ennemi, muni d’une arme et qui vous tire dessus. Sur le moment un instinct de vie vous arrache à toute

As a prisoner of war, Père Congar tried to assume the role of chaplain. He held a number of “conferences” and often preached to his fellow-captives. In the “spirit of patriotism and Christian convictions,” in nineteen of these “conferences” Congar stated in his interview with Puyo that he exposed the principles of Nazism and adds that he was ‘roughed up’ after each.²⁰⁹ With such treatment, he soon returned to his old dislike of the German authorities, so much so that he was eventually classified as a *Deutschfeinlicher*, or “enemy of Germany”.²¹⁰ J.-P. Jossua posits that as the consequence of all this, the

reflexion. J n’ai pas pensé à la mort, alors qu’un camarade est tombé à côté de moi et que je voyais les balles traceuses passer à ma droite et à ma gauche, à hauteur des épaules. Et puis ce fut la captivité.” Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 86. Father Congar was not released from German captivity until May 2, 1945.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 92. At both Colditz and Lübeck prisons, Père Congar preached against Nazi tyranny. He reacted to the evils of his imprisonment and the imprisonment of others by becoming “more closed, more hostile, more defiant.” Cited by Groppe in *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 180 n. 33 as the 1955 journal manuscript quoted in *Die Einheit*, “Frère Yves,” 389. See also “Frere Yves Cardinal Congar, Dominican: Itinerary of a Theologian,” trans. Christian Dupont, *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17 (1999): 73.

²¹⁰ Puyo, *Un vie pour la vérité*, 89. Jossua explains the *Deutschfeinlicher* classification as follows: “because he was anti-racist, anti-Nazi at heart - but not anti-German, he was considered as “hard” by the enemy and treated so as a consequence.” *Yves Congar*, 27.

Congar leaves us a few cameo appearances of his interaction with his captors: “And [in March, 1941,] we were taken to a new camp near Berlin. The Commandant called us together to lecture us: ‘I’ve reviewed your dossiers. You have very bad notations, but I have nothing against you. If you are reasonable, all will be well. Above all, don’t try to escape - for it’s the Motherland herself that advises against this.’ He then read a declaration to us – supposedly from the ‘Montherlant’, according to which it would be very bad to escape!” Puyo, *Un vie pour la vérité*, 88 (my translation).

On June 23, 1941, the Commandant told Congar that he and an old Ardennes seminary friend would be moved to another camp. Ibid. This second “camp” was Oflag IV-C, a *Sonderlager*, or high-security prison for troublesome allied officer prisoners. It was better known as Colditz, a medieval fortress located on a high cliff outside Leipzig, Saxony. In November, 1941, Congar was moved again to a new camp in Silesia, Poland with 5,000 other Allied officers. Ibid., 90. After an unsuccessful escape attempt with his comrades, he was returned to Colditz in July 1942, where he remained, attempting increasingly difficult escape attempts with others, until July, 1943. Ibid., 90-1. After the last attempt, which was partially successful, many of his group were recaptured and executed. In response, Congar became “dried up and withdrawn”. Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 27. Père Congar was then sent to Lübeck in northern Germany, an officers’ camp for Jews, Communists and recidivist escapees who were considered “particularly dangerous” by the Third Reich. In Congar’s second brush with death, Hitler personally ordered that these camp inmates be executed. Congar comments that it was the Red Cross which saved them. Puyo, *Un*

Père Congar who finally returned to Le Saulchoir in May, 1945 was a “stronger and freer man for the trials to come.”²¹¹

H. The Time of Troubles

In 1935, Congar started his journal, *La Vie intellectuelle*, directed to a Catholic audience and largely focused upon the reasons for contemporary disbelief and encouraging a renewal of ecclesiology. As well it also included articles on Protestantism and ecumenism. In 1937, Congar published *Chrétiens désunis* as the first volume of the *Unam Sanctam* series. He dates his troubles with Rome to this event.²¹² That same year approximately 600 to 700 copies of Père Marie-Dominique Chenu’s “little book”, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* were privately published for internal use within Le Saulchoir.²¹³ The work was based upon notes of a lecture given by Chenu at Le Saulchoir on March 7, 1936, on the occasion of the annual festival of St. Thomas Aquinas. To these were added complimentary chapters which opened Christianity to the reality of the *history* and not just the *metaphysics* of Thomas Aquinas.²¹⁴ While Chenu’s lecture notes were not originally intended by him for publication, as he later explained, “My [Thomistic] views [in this lecture] had impressed professors and students and they

vie pour la vérité, 91-2. The Lübeck camp was finally liberated by British forces on May 2, 1945. Later that month Congar returned to Le Saulchoir at Étioilles en Seine-et-Oise. *Ibid.*, 86.

²¹¹ Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 27.

²¹² Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 100.

²¹³ Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (Kain, Belgium: *pro manuscripto*, 1937), reissued by Giuseppe Albergio, J.P. Jossua, *et al.* *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 11.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

took my notes for publication” (my translation)²¹⁵. In *Une école de théologie* Chenu argued for “the importance of history in the study of philosophy and theology”.²¹⁶

William Henn describes how in *Une école*, Chenu parallels Congar in criticizing the “baroque scholasticism” of the day:

One is struck, in reading *Une école*, by the many resonances with Congar’s writing it contains, such as a critique of a baroque scholasticism in the form of a closed system of acquired truths, its appreciation of Möhler, Newman and Gardeil, its advocacy of an historical method which looks into and values various philosophies and theologies in light of their respective contexts, its emphasis upon return to the sources, its insistence on the temporal conditioning of every human grasp of truth and its desire to relate theology to the living concerns of contemporary human beings.²¹⁷

Une école was well-received within the rank and file of the French Dominicans but not so with its leadership. In February, 1938, Chenu was reprimanded and further distribution of the work interrupted, despite protestations and ground support within the Order.²¹⁸ Criticism of Chenu also came from the Angelicum by his former thesis director, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P.²¹⁹ Thereafter, the Dominican Master of the

²¹⁵ Ibid., 93. “L’exposé avait impressionné professeurs et étudiants at ceux-ci prirent mes notes pour les publier.” René Rémond’s “Preface: Histoire et théologie” to Chenu, *une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 7, citing (without page reference) Jacques Duquesne, *Jacques Duquesne interroge le P. Chenu. “Un théologien en liberté”* (Paris: Centurion, 1975).

²¹⁶ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 74.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 74-5.

²¹⁸ Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (New York; T&T Clark, 2010), 48.

²¹⁹ Garrigou-Lagrance was later to be characterized by the influential littérateur, François Mauriac, as “that sacred monster (*monster sacré*) of Thomism.” Richard Peddicord in *The Sacred Monster*, 2 n. 3 attributes this phrase to an interview by François Mauriac in *Le Figaro* (26 May 1966) cited by Bernard E. Doering, *Jacques Maritain and the French Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 95. According to Peddicord, Mauriac used the term “to express his disdain for Garrigou-Lagrance . . .” Yet, Garrigou-Lagrance’s pervasive influence on Neo-Thomism cannot be denied. Peddicord characterizes him as the most prominent Dominican Neo-Thomist theologian of the first half of the twentieth century. Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 1. Nichols speaks of the “massive, brooding background presence of ‘Garrigou’” at the Angelicum more than twenty years after Garrigou-Lagrance had retired. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Reason with Piety: Garrigou-Lagrance in the Service of Catholic Thought* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2008), xii. But Peddicord described his approach to the work of Garrigou-

Order, Father Martinus-Stanislaus Gillet (1929-46), and the Master of the Sacred Palace, Mariano Cordovani, O.P. (1936-50), proposed that Chenu was attempting to turn theology into a “cultural anthropology”²²⁰ Most significantly, Pius XII indirectly criticized Chenu for embracing a slippery “Semi-Modernism.” As a consequence, on February 4, 1942, Chenu’s *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* was considered so dangerous that it was placed on the Vatican’s *index librorum prohibitorum* by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, with the approval of Pope Pius XII.²²¹ But Père Chenu would be vindicated: eighteen years later, Pope John XXIII called him to be part of the Preparatory Theological Commission for Vatican II and appointed him *peritus* to the upcoming Council of over twenty-five hundred cardinals, bishops, theologians, officials

Lagrange in happier terms, as one “from a hermeneutic of appreciation . . . [.] “[and] that Garrigou’s vilification ought to be judged an unjust exaggeration.” Yet, he admits that, “by and large, Mauriac’s sentiment has held the day: Garrigou-Lagrange has been effectively identified with intellectual rigidity and ecclesiastical repression.” Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 2. As Peddicord puts it, we express our “unease about Garrigou’s fundamental stance as a theologian and . . . [have] questions about the role he may have played in the placing of strictures on the work of fellow Dominicans Yves Congar and M.-Dominique Chenu”. Ibid., xii.

The depth and breadth of the influence of Garrigou-Lagrange among his many notable students should not go unacknowledged. In addition to Père Marie-Dominic Chenu, among the numerous dissertators directed by Garrigou Lagrange was the Polish priest, Karol Wojtyla (who wrote on the understanding of faith as set forth in the writings of the Thomist, Saint John of the Cross). Ibid., 20, 214. The works which reflect the ties of Pope John Paul II to Garrigou-Lagrange are listed by Peddicord. Ibid., 101 n. 61. In 1959, due to his weakened physical condition, Garrigou-Lagrange retired from teaching at the Angelicum. Nonetheless, he was asked by Pope John XXIII to be part of the Vatican II Preparatory Theological Commission, an honor which he declined for health reasons. After the death of Garrigou-Lagrange on February 15, 1964, Pope Paul VI proclaimed, “We receive with lingering pain the death of the venerable Father Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, and it is with a profound emotion and great gratitude that the memory of this illustrious theologian is evoked.” This is my translation of “Nous apprenons avec une vive peine la mort du vénéré Père Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, et c’est avec une profonde émotion et une grande gratitude qu’en evocquant la mémoire de cet illustre théologien.” Peddicord, *The Sacred Monster*, 23 citing M.-Rosaire Gagnebet, “L’oeuvre du P. Garrigou-Lagrange: itineraire intellectuel et spiritual vers Dieu,” *Angelicum* 42 (1965): 31.

²²⁰ On March 22, 1940, *L’Osservatore Romano* published an article by Père Cordovani which was critical of Chenu. Although he was not named, Congar perceived this as a criticism of himself as well. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 29.

²²¹ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology*, 48; Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 8.

and observers from around the world to be held in Rome.²²² Moreover, in 1985, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir*, was reissued by Giuseppe Alberigo, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Étienne Fouilloux, Jean- Pierre Jossua and Jean Ladrière.²²³

On April 27, 1939, Pères Chenu and Congar were together summoned to Paris to appear before Master General Gillet who expressed the “serious difficulties” he had with *Chrétiens désunis* as well as Congar’s 1938 publication of the French translation of Möhler’s ecumenical work, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*, as the second volume of Unam Sanctam.²²⁴ According to Congar, while the publication of Möhler’s work was quickly resolved, concerns about *Chrétiens désunis* lingered.²²⁵ And there was more to come. As Congar was to say in 1964, “the tremors were to continue for many long years. We had been caught up in an atmosphere of mistrust from which we have not yet entirely emerged.”²²⁶ While he was in Silesia as a prisoner of war in 1942, Congar was “dumbfounded” to learn of the condemnation of Chenu’s work, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir*.²²⁷

²²² Edward P. Hannenber, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger, 2007), 1-2.

²²³ Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir*, reissue (Paris: Cerf, 1985). Étienne Fouilloux (1941-), then a professor of contemporaneous history of the twentieth century at the University of Lumière-Lyon, also wrote the Introduction (Présentation Générale) to Congar’s *Journal d’un théologien 1946-1956* (Paris: Cerf, 2000).

²²⁴ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 24, 28. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* was published in French as *L’Unité dans l’Église ou le Principe du Catholicisme d’après des Pères des trois siècles de l’Église*, trans. Andre de Lillienfeld, Unam Sanctam 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1938).

²²⁵ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 28. As a consequence, a revised version of *Chrétiens désunis* languished in the offices of two censors for two years and was never reissued. Meakin, “*The Same but Different*”, 18.

²²⁶ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 29.

²²⁷ Congar wrote in 1964, “Even today, after making many inquiries and hearing many details, I am left with so much that is contradictory and incomprehensible that I can only regard the whole affair as either a mistake or an unjustifiable piece of mischief. The results, however, endured. An individual [Père M.-D. Chenu] had been most iniquitously laid under suspicion, the most vital institutions of a whole Dominican province were left shaken and unbalanced for twenty years and all confidence and enthusiasm shattered. Others besides Père Chenu were involved in all this

In 1964, Congar publicly commented on his 1937 work, *Chrétien désunis*, writing, “I think that the chief advantage of *Chrétien désunis* was that for the first time it attempted to define ‘ecumenicism’ theologically or at least to put it in that context. . . . The word was a recent acquisition and quite a new one in the vocabulary of Catholic theology. Moreover, in the perspective of my book in which the problem of ecumenicism was interpreted with respect to catholicity, it was something of a tautology to speak of Catholic ecumenicism. . . . I would express myself differently nowadays and would not employ the term, ‘Catholic ecumenicism’ but rather ‘Catholic principles of, or approaches to ecumenicism.’”²²⁸

Although *Chrétien désunis* was “hailed by many as a landmark in Roman Catholic ecumenicism, Rome greeted the book with suspicion.”²²⁹ Not only was the French Dominican Master Gillet called before the Vatican to answer for it (as Chenu was called before Gillet to answer for Congar), but an article critical of *Chrétien désunis* appeared in the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*.²³⁰

In 1947, after the Liberation had put Yves Congar back in circulation, he was denied permission to publish an article defining the Catholic position on the Protestant

commotion, particularly my comrade, Père Fêret. I only remained relatively unscathed because of my imprisonment and because I was so far away. The ground I trod, however, had trembled and the tremors were to continue for many long years. We had been caught up in an *atmosphere of mistrust* from which we have not yet entirely emerged. This baleful affair weighed heavily upon the subsequent course of events to a degree which is difficult to estimate exactly, but which was certainly very burdensome indeed” (emphasis added). Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 29.

²²⁸ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 25.

²²⁹ Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 21. Congar later writes, “Even so, *Chrétien désunis* had a profound influence, as I have been able to confirm since then. Any number of priests and laymen and numerous bishops at the Council have told me that they owe to it either their awakening to ecumenicism or more often their conversion to a broader and more traditional sense of Church.” Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 25.

²³⁰ The reference is to an article by Fr. Mariano Felice Cordovani, O.P. Master of the Sacred Pontifical Palace (1936-50), in the Vatican weekly, *L’Osservatore Romano*. Cf. Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23.

ecumenical movement taking shape in the form of the World Council of Churches.²³¹ In 1948 Dominican General Master Gillet warned Congar against any further publications of *Chrétiens désunis*.²³²

In 1950, Congar wrote and published *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, Unam Sanctam 20 (Cerf: Paris, 1950). This is considered by some to be Congar's most significant work.²³³ In *Vraie et fausse réforme* Congar wrote of no abuses in the Church, herself, but found that while the Church was holy as a consequence of her divine origin, yet she could at the same time be sinful due to her human composition. Significantly, in this same work, Congar sought a 'return to the sources', or "*ressourcement*". He argued for a true reform - one which did not disrupt the continuity of the Church's history.²³⁴ As noted previously, Congar proposed reform of what he saw as inflexible structures of the

²³¹ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 36. Subsequently, it appears that in 1965, Congar attended the first meeting of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. Cf. Lauter, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 80.

²³² Congar was at the time working on a new edition of *Chrétiens désunis*. An English translation of *Chrétiens désunis* was also circulating at large, published as *Divided Christendom*, trans. M.A. Bousfield (London: Centenary Press, 1939). The finished version was taken away from Congar by the Father General in October, 1948 and not returned until August, 1950 when he was warned by the General Master against embracing a "false eirenicism" which could lead to an indifference to certain Catholic doctrines. At the same time Congar was advised of the immanent promulgation of *Humani generis*. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 35.

²³³ *Vraie et fausse réforme* was not a pirate publication but published quite openly in the Unam Sanctam series. Congar described the process of its creation: "I wrote the first draft of an account of my researches and submitted it to my friends for criticism. I took it up again and augmented it with an ecclesiological study of the sixteenth-century Reform. In 1950, it was finally published as *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, which cost me many vexations." Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 32. The book was not published in English until 2011. Nichols characterizes this work of Congar as a "courageous but careful call for ecclesiastical reform". Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 10. At the time of its publication, *Vraie et fausse réforme* had the *Nihil Obstat* of Le Saulchoir and Boulogne-sur-Seine (both on April 30, 1950), the *Imprimi Potest* of the Prior Provincial (May 5, 1950), and the *Imprimatur* of the Vicar General (May 18, 1950).

²³⁴ These themes in *Vraie et fausse réforme* had been anticipated by Congar in "Pensée orthodoxe sur l'unité de l'Église," *La Vie Intellectuelle* 29 (1934): 394: "The Church is not a small social group, isolated, a separate entity remaining untouched among the evolving realities of the world. The Church is in the world insofar as it believes in Christ, or, what comes to the same thing, it is Christ dwelling in the world and saving it by our faith." Miscited by Jossua, *Yves Congar*, 25. These themes of the 'Church in the world' are several times repeated by Congar in his Preface to *Chrétiens en Dialogue*.

Church which resulted in an inability to adapt to, and thus communicate with, the world to which it preached.²³⁵ In the end, Congar was prohibited from further issuing or authorizing any translations of the work, although after Vatican II another edition was published.²³⁶ But one reader of *Vraie et fausse réforme* was favorably impressed: the papal nuncio to Paris (1944-1953), Cardinal Angelo Roncalli, the future Pope John XXIII. A missionary who was visiting the papal nuncio relates that in the margin of his copy of Congar's book, he saw that Cardinal Roncalli had written, "A reform of the church –is it possible?"²³⁷

Meanwhile Congar continued his efforts to discuss and promote ecumenism. In 1952, in honor of the fifteenth centenary ecumenical celebration of the Council of Chalcedon (451) Congar wrote *Le Christ, Marie et L'Eglise*, wherein he related theological and ensuing ecclesiological disaccords to different interpretations of

²³⁵ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 10.

²³⁶ Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, 2d rev. ed., *Unam Sanctam 72* (Paris: Cerf, 1968). Until the 2011 English translation and publication by Paul Philibert, O.P., *Vraie et fausse Réforme* was hard to find. The Raynor Memorial Library at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin has one copy. John W. O'Malley, S.J. recalls his efforts in trying to locate a copy in Rome while writing his dissertation in 1963: "The task was more daunting than I had anticipated. The Second Vatican council was already in its second year, but the new atmosphere which it had already generated could not overnight repair the effects of the repression that followed in the wake of the encyclical *Humani generis*, promulgated in 1950, the same year *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église* was published. The encyclical *Humani generis* and its aftermath left Congar and his works highly suspect. After much searching, I finally found a copy of *Réforme* in the library of the Angelicum, the Dominicans' athenæum in the centre of the city. That copy was, as far as I could ascertain, the only one available in any library in Rome." John W. O'Malley, SJ, "Yves Congar as Historian of Ecclesiology" in Flynn, ed., *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, 229.

While until recently *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église* had never been published in English, parts of it were translated into English from two articles written in French by Yves Congar: "Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church", trans. Bernard Gilligan, *Cross Currents* no. 4 (Summer, 1951): 80-102 (taken from the conclusion of *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*) and "Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église", trans. Launcelot C. Sheppard, *Cross Currents* no.3 (Summer, 1953): 358-65 (taken from the Introduction to *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*). The 1953 *Cross Currents* article notes that the same article was also published in *Downside Review* (Summer, 1953), n.p.

²³⁷ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 8 n. 2.

Christological dogmatic confessions, drawing a comparison to the current Mariological disaccord between Protestants and Catholics.²³⁸ In 1953 he published *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (Milestones for a Theology of the Laity).²³⁹ He conducted an ecumenical lecture tour in the Middle East during 1953-1954. In 1954 he wrote *Neuf cents après* (After Nine Hundred Years), which dealt, inter alia, with reform and ecumenism.²⁴⁰ Congar returned in early 1954 to a France in the midst of the controversial ‘priest-worker’ movement’ – a movement which had the support of many French Dominicans, including Congar, in a time which Congar later characterized as “the crisis of 1954.” Rome had been watching the movement with increasing concern since the summer of 1953.²⁴¹ Upon his return to France Congar learned that the Master of the Dominican Order, Father Emmanuel Suárez (1946-1954), had forced the resignation of three Dominican priors-provincial in France. Chenu and others were reprimanded and transferred as well, so they could exert no further influence in the priest-worker movement.²⁴² On February 8, 1954, Congar was summoned before Master Suarez in Paris and advised that the situation was extremely grave: Rome was disturbed about the orientation of the French Dominicans and wished to apply corrective “measures”.²⁴³ A certain number of these Fathers, including Congar, particularly displeased Rome and

²³⁸ *Le Christ, Marie et L'Eglise* (Paris: Desclée de Brower, 1952).

On November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII issued *Munificentissimus Deus*, which confirmed as dogma the Assumption of Mary.

²³⁹ *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat*, Unam Sanctam 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1953).

²⁴⁰ *Neuf cents après in 1054-1954, L'Élise et Les Églises* (Belgium: Editions de Chevetogne, 1954).

²⁴¹ Cf. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 108.

²⁴² Meakin, “*The Same but Different*,” 19. Congar writes that on February 2, 1954, Chenu left Paris, his privileges of Master of Theology at Le Saulchoir suspended. *Journal d'un théologien*, 239.

²⁴³ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 108.

were to be “distanced”.²⁴⁴ In February 1954, facing the inevitable, Congar volunteered for and was granted assignment to the *École biblique* in Jerusalem, where during his ten month stay he wrote *Le mystère du Temple*.²⁴⁵ It may be recalled that the *École biblique* was founded by Père Marie-Joseph Lagrange, whose biblical commentaries on John 17 had helped Congar prepare for ordination. In November 1954, Congar was transferred to Blackfriars, Cambridge, where under the more strict supervision of the English Dominican prior-provincial, he was prevented from engaging in any ecumenical interface with the Anglican Church.²⁴⁶ Finally, after an almost twenty month absence Congar was permitted to return to France in December 1955 and resume limited pastoral duties and ministries.²⁴⁷

I. The Completion of the Race

After the death of Pius XII, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was elected Pope John XXIII on October 28, 1958. Soon thereafter, the Pope called a General Council and Père Yves

²⁴⁴ Along with Congar, these Dominican Pères included Chenu, Fêret and Boisselot. At first, Chenu was sent to Rouen with permission to return to Paris each month; Boisselot was sent to Dijon and was permitted to work with Éditions du Cerf upon condition that his name would never appear; Fêret finally found refuge in Dammarie-les-Lys, some thirty miles south-east of Paris. Cf. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 108-9. Congar writes in some detail of this “Chronicle of the ‘Great Purge’” in *Journal d’un théologien*, 232-9, summing up the shocking events as “A-B-S-U-R-D-E”.

²⁴⁵ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 108-9. *Le mystère du Temple ou l’Économie de la Présence de Dieu à sa créature de la Genèse à l’Apocalypse*, Lectio divina no. 22. (Paris: Cerf, 1958).

²⁴⁶ Chapter V of Congar’s 1937 *Chrétiens désunis* had been devoted to the Anglican conception of unity and the Anglican Church as “non-Roman Catholicism”.

²⁴⁷ Peter J Bernardi, S.J. writes that through the good offices of Archbishop Jean Weber, Congar returned to the Dominican convent in Strasbourg, France which he used as his “home base” for the next decade. Peter J. Bernardi, “A Passion for Unity: Yves Congar’s service to the church,” *America* vol.192, no. 12 (April 4-11, 2005): 10. Jean-Julien Weber, P.S.S. (Society of Priests of St. Sulpice) (1888-1981) was bishop of Strasbourg from 1945-62 and archbishop until his retirement in 1966. Thereafter he was Bishop Emeritus of Strasbourg until his death. He was a Vatican Father for all four Sessions of Vatican II.

Congar was named as *peritus* to the Preparatory Theological Commission and served on other Council subcommissions. In this service Congar contributed to no fewer than nine major documents of Vatican II, including four Constitutions (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Dei Verbum* and *Gaudium et Spes*); three Decrees (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, *Ad Gentes* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*); and two Declarations (*Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae*).²⁴⁸ Accordingly, he has been called “the theologian of Vatican II.”²⁴⁹

On November 26, 1994, Pope John Paul II made Yves Marie-Joseph Congar a prince of the Church. Cardinal Congar died on June 22, 1995 in the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, the French military hospital, having been being hospitalized since October, 1984, after suffering for decades from the slowly increasing and debilitating effects of loss of muscle control due to sclerosis.²⁵⁰ He was a knight of the French Légion d’honneur and had been awarded the Croix de Guerre. Congar’s passing marked part of the closure of the twentieth century golden age of conciliar renewal and ecumenicism.²⁵¹ As some measure of the man, Congar’s funeral Mass at Notre Dame Cathedral, his coffin draped with the flag of France, was concelebrated by three hundred priests, twenty-five bishops, three cardinals and the Dominican Master of the Order and attended by representatives from the Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Churches. He is buried at the tomb of the Dominican Order in the Cemetery

²⁴⁸ Aidan Nichols specifically mentions only seven, writing that Congar “worked on such major documents as” *Dei Verbum*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, *Unnitatis Redintegratio*, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Dignitatis Humanae*. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 8.

²⁴⁹ Gabriel Flynn writes that “[t]he far-reaching programme of ecclesial reform executed at this [Second Vatican] Council is the *de facto* consummation of Congar’s whole previous theological *oeuvre*.” Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 9.

²⁵⁰ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, ix.

²⁵¹ Included in this conciliar renewal and ecumenicism movement would be such luminaries as Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier († 1926); John Courtney Murray (†1967); Cardinal Augustin Bea (†1968); Cardinal Achille Liénart (†1973); Cardinal Jean Daniélou, O.P. (†1974); Henri Bouillard, S.J. (†1981); Karl Rahner, S.J. († 1984); Bernard Lonergan, S.J. (†1984); Hans Urs von Balthasar (†1988); Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P. (†1990); Cardinal Henri de Lubac, S.J. (†1991); Cardinal Johannes Willebrands (†2006); and Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P. (†2009).

of Montparnasse, Paris. Now he is, as he once wrote for us all, “secure in joy, under His gaze, forever.”²⁵²

²⁵² “Alors nous serons fixés dans la joie, sous son regard, pour toujours.” Yves Congar, “Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,” *La Vie Spirituelle* 45 (1945): 15.

CHAPTER TWO

FRENCH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, MODERNISM AND THE NOUVELLE THEOLOGY

A theologian should never lose sight of history.

-Etienne Fouilloux¹

I. THE CHURCH IN FRANCE AS AN AGENCY OF THE STATE

A. Introduction: The Seeds of Opposition to the *nouvelle théologie*.

In Chapter One we made the acquaintance of the child, then the man who became Cardinal Congar. The *nouvelle théologie* was the driving core of that man.² He sought a true renewal of Catholic ecclesiology through a return to base sources, or *ressourcement*. To position the *nouvelle théologie* in its historic setting, we must turn to the calamitous experience of the French Church from the eighteenth century through the sixth decade of

¹ Etienne Fouilloux (1941-) is professor emeritus of contemporary history at the Université Lumière-Lyon II where from 1991 to 1998 he was the director of the André-Latreille Center of Religious History, focusing on contemporary intellectual and spiritual history of Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox Christians of the twentieth century.

² The term, “nouvelle theologie,” was coined by Father Pietro Parente (later Cardinal and Secretary for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith) in a 1942 *Osservatore Romano* article which was critical not of Congar, but of his mentor, M.D. Chenu, and another Le Saulchoir Dominican, Louis Charlier. Marcello D’Ambrosio, “Ressourcement theology, aggiornamento, and the hermeneutics of tradition,” *Communio* 18 (Winter, 1991): 53. The term would be soon be picked up and memorialized in a pejorative sense by R. Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P. in “La nouvelle theologie, ou va-t-elle?” *Angelicum*, 23 (1946): 126-45.

the twentieth century.³ During much of this period, the Church encountered a continuing campaign to subordinate it to the French State. Whereas the royal regime identified with and protected the Church, Napoleon and the French Republics sought to subjugate her by bleeding her rights and privileges and attempting to marginalize her very identity. This, coupled with the onset of a dangerous Modernism in late nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century, added a gravitas to Rome's identification of the "nouvelle théologie" with a return to Modernism. In particular, the years 1937 through 1962 marked a time of transition which the Neo-Scholastic Church of Vatican I was ill-suited to meet, yet determined to oppose.⁴ Thus, there would be clashes between the Church and those seeking ecumenism and unity, reform and *ressourcement* within the Church.

In February 1942, Père M.-D. Chenu's book, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* was placed on the *Index Liborum Prohibitum* by Pius XII (1939-1958).⁵ Chenu was reprimanded, removed as rector and regent of studies at Le Saulchoir where he had served for ten years, transferred to Rouen, Normandy and permitted to return to Paris only once a month.⁶ On his part, Yves Congar, who with Chenu was often critical of the Church, would face over thirty years of strife in his quest for Truth through *ressourcement* methodology. In seeking a revitalization of the Church, in essence,

³ Cf. Etienne Fouilloux, *Une Église en quête de liberté. La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II (1914-1962)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998).

⁴ Cf. D'Ambrosio, "Ressourcement theology", 53.

⁵ Marie-Dominic Chenu, *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir* (Paris: Cerf, 1985). On February 8, 1942, this work was condemned and placed on the *Index Liborum Prohibitum*.

⁶ Cf. Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité: Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 108-9; Jürgen Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 48.

Congar was fighting for the relevance and credibility of Catholicism in France. In fact, he wrote of an analogous historic situation:

In the early days of the nineteenth century Catholicism in France was laughed at Priests were discredited and despised. Under the empire they had been made servants of the State; during the Restoration they became badly compromised with a government that aimed at imposing religious behavior by legal edicts. Matters could not become worse. For three years in 1830 it was impossible for a priest to go out in Paris in his cassock. A pitiful popularity was granted them, not as priests, but as good fellows, socially useful, preservers of the peace in village life.

Nevertheless, these priests . . . including the Dominican Father Jean-Baptiste-Henri Lacordaire [who re-established the Dominican Order in France], made the authentic image of a priest – the man of faith, the minister of Jesus Christ and his gospel, . . . a real figure in the world again. A priest no longer appeared as a man engaged in a curious, inoffensive and somewhat futile occupation, whose devotions were utterly remote from the dramatic happenings of the real world, but as a minister of the word, of a demand, a promise and a hope which God utters for the world.⁷

1. Origins of French Church-State Relations. Without a brief background and overview of French Church-State relations in twentieth century France, one would at best have a skewed understanding of the religious times in which Père Congar was immersed. Moreover, without this background it would be all too easy to pass unfair judgment upon the Church in its dealings with Yves Congar and others associated with The Nouvelle Theology.

The intertwined roots of Catholicism and France lie deep in French soil. From the baptism of the Merovingian Clovis I in A.D. 496, France earned the title of “the eldest

⁷ Yves Congar, *Faith and Spiritual Life*, trans. A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 98-99. The second paragraph of the quote by Congar is intriguing, for despite his self-defacing and modest nature, it seems to depict Congar himself - “the man of faith, the minister of Jesus Christ and his gospel, . . . a real figure in the world” Congar characterized Abbé Jean-Baptiste-Henri Lacordaire (1802-61) as “the restorer and almost the second founder of the order of Friars Preachers” in France. *Ibid.*, 97. The “Profile of Father Lacordaire”, in which this comment is found, was originally published in *Le Monde* (Paris), 1 December 1960 as a prelude to the one hundred year anniversary of the death of Abbé Lacordaire.

daughter of the church”.⁸ The mounted statute of the Frank ruler, Charlemagne (c.747 – 814), stands guard still outside Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and attests to the symbiotic and seemingly enduring relationship between the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire and later the French State. There were, however, a series of adverse and fundamental changes to French Church-State relations over the centuries. The downward spiral of relations reached a dramatic conclusion in Congar’s own twentieth century, when in December 1905 the Third Republic (1870-1940) declared that it neither recognized nor supported any religion in France and characterized Church dioceses, orders and parishes as individual “cultural associations” under State control.⁹

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church in France underwent other statutorily-mandated changes which affected key historical and political developments. As we shall see, all these changes hastened what Congar saw as an inwardly-turned siege mentality of the Church and formed the bases of a drastic reconfiguration of French Church-State relations and, I submit, impacted Rome’s perception and reception of Congar’s ecumenical theology and *ressourcement* ecclesiology. In large part due to the identification of the Church with the royal French

⁸ Elizabeth Therese Groppe, *Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 16. Other early Church figures such as Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (c. 120 – c. 202), Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers (c. 315 – c. 367) and St. Martin, Bishop of Tours and patron Saint of France (316-397), are all associated with Gallic relations with the Roman Catholic Church. They were followed by Catholic luminaries such as Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390-493), St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 – 1153), St. Jean d’Arc (c. 1412-31), St. Francis de Sales (1567 – 1622), St. Vincent de Paul (1581 – 1660) and St. Therese of Lisieux, “the Little Flower” (1873-97). The French abbeys of Citeaux and Clairvaux, and particularly the Benedictine Abbey at Cluny (est. 910) were seminal institutions for the spread of monasticism in the West, and thus the preservation of not only the Church, but western culture and learning. The University of Paris (est. c. 1170) grew from the modest Notre Dame cathedral school to the great center of western Christian thinking, where the likes of Albertus Magnus, Alexander Hales, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure studied and taught.

⁹ *Le Loi du 9 décembre concernant la séparation des Églises et de l’État* (Act of Separation of Churches and the State).

State, this reconfiguration of French Church-State relations drew energy from a spirit of anticlericalism which had festered in France even before the French Revolution. It was the culmination of a number of events, including sixteenth century Humanism of the Renaissance, the French Wars of Religion (1562-98) and, most directly, the libertine, anti-establishment, anti-Catholic spirit which permeated the French Revolution (1787-93).¹⁰ As to this last point, French historian, writer and jurist Adrien Dansette (1901-1976) would write:

With the Revolution, the State ceased to be Catholic and Catholicism ceased to be obligatory. The institutions and services for which the Church had the responsibility, in particular teaching and charity are secularized - that is to say they passed to the State and the separationists, i.e., those who ceased to be Christians . . . (my translation).¹¹

2. The Legacy of the French Revolution in Twentieth Century France. Congar sketched out a troubling heritage of humanism and rationalism in mid-twentieth century France and the reaction of the Church to them:

Yes, Man has become the center and the reference-point for everything. With the French Revolution, and after it, the movement, which at first affected only the cultivated classes, had its social expression. . . .

¹⁰ “Pour comprendre et faire comprendre ce qu’a été la Révolution, il faut s’être pénétré de son esprit.” To understand and make understandable what the Revolution had been, it is necessary for one to penetrate its spirit (my translation). Pierre Caron, *Manuel Pratique pour l’étude de la Révolution Française*, nouvelle éd. (Paris: Éditions A. J. Picard et Cie, 1947), 17. Significant to Rome’s general negative reception of Congar’s ecumenical theology and *ressourcement* ecclesiology, it should be noted that opposition to the Church and its clericalism were emblematic trajectories of the French Revolution. Thus, years later French statesman of the Third Republic, Léon Gambetta (1838-82), would use as a rallying cry, “le cléricalisme – voila l’ennemi” (clericalism – *there* is the enemy!). *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2011), “anticlericalism”; available from [http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/27867/anticlericalism_\(France\)](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/27867/anticlericalism_(France)); Internet; accessed September 13, 2011.

¹¹ Avec la Revolution, l’État cesse d’être catholique et le catholicisme cesse d’être obligatoire. Des institutions et des services don’t l’Église avait la responsabilité sont secularisés, c’est-à-dire qu’ils cessent d’être chrétiens, en particulier l’enseignement et la bienfaisance Adrien Dansette, *Destin du Catholicisme Français* (Paris: Flammarion, 1957), 29. For a fuller presentation in English of the origins and history of the conflicts between the Church and modern France, see Adrien Dansette, *Religious History of Modern France*, 2 vols., trans. John Dingle (New York: Herder & Herder, 1961).

It's clear that the Church could not accept Man as the reference point for Man, nor the rationalist rejection of any transcendental and supernatural intervention. She therefore engaged in a tough 'combat for God' Involved in formidable attacks, sometimes even to the point where her very existence was threatened, the Church locked herself up as if in a besieged castle, while all the time carrying out a powerful restoration of her internal forces¹²

In contrast to this adverse heritage of humanism and rationalism, the twentieth century Church in France was seen by some as continuing to reflect a powerful and entangled Church-State relationship embodying *le principe de catholicité* put in place by Louis XIV (reigned 1643-1715): “*une foi, une loi, un roi*” – One Faith, One Law, One King. Before the royal component of this mantra is dismissed, recall that Congar described the supporters of Action Française, including himself in his youth, as “certain Catholics, a minority in France, who would maintain nostalgia for royalty; they had great difficulty in accepting the Republic and, in the end, all the legacy of the French Revolution.”¹³

3. The Public Face of the Church. Congar would speak of the “baroque scholasticism” which he and his Dominican confreres Chenu and Fêret perceived in a Church embodying a hierarchical “closed system of acquired truths.”¹⁴ He concluded that the public face which the Church presented during most of the twentieth century was an unfavorable “wholly juridico-hierarchical Church.”¹⁵ To this, it should be added that even the more limited clericalism of the pre-Vatican II Church of the twentieth century

¹² Congar, *Challenge to the Church: the Case of Archbishop Lefebvre*, trans. Paul Inwood (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976), 54-5. Congar also quotes therein from comments made by Paul VI at the closing of the fourth session of the Vatican II Council on December 7, 1965: “The religion of God made Man has met up with the religion (for there is such a one) of Man who makes himself God.” *Ibid.*, 62.

¹³ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 20.

¹⁴ William Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths According to Yves Congar, O.P.* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1987), 74-5.

¹⁵ Cf. Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 3.

continued to set apart the clerics from the laity, with priests celebrating the Latin Mass behind the altar rail, backs turned to the laity, present - at least in France, in dwindling numbers. It would seem that the Cathedrals there were venerated more as landmarks of a grand past than as places of divine worship. The troubling reality of this erosion of the faithful in the French Church precipitated Congar's lengthy 1935 article, "Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l'incroyance" (A theological conclusion regarding the inquiry as to the present reasons for unbelief).¹⁶

4. The Church as Agent of the State. In an interview recorded in *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, the eighty-three year-old Congar reflected that, "The Church had been traumatized and deeply wounded by the French Revolution, Napoleon and the Napoleonic wars, the dismantling of the principalities and kingdoms of Europe on Napoleon's initiative and the weakness of Catholic intellectualism" ¹⁷ To see this more clearly we need to trace the footprints of pertinent legislative enactments of Republican and Imperial France.

a. *The footprints of indifference*. A pervasive indifference toward the Church was the deliberate legacy of Republican France. As a consequence, State-sanctioned subordination and marginalization of religious organizations would attempt to turn the French Church into an agency of the State. This accelerated under Napoleon Bonaparte

¹⁶ *La Vie intellectuelle* 37: 214-49. Groppe reports that three years later this article was published in English in two parts as "The Reason for the Unbelief of our Time: A Theological Conclusion," *Integration* (August-September 1938): 13-21 and *Integration* (December 1938-January, 1939): 10-26. Elizabeth T. Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20 n. 24. Gabriel Flynn also cites these two articles in his bibliography, giving a slightly different period for the first. Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 237. Because of the focus of the *La Vie intellectuelle* study, Congar specifically limited the conclusions in his article to the French Church.

¹⁷ *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*, Bernard Lauret, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 74.

and thereafter would continue even into the twentieth century. It started with an innocently named piece of legislation of the pre-revolutionary French National Assembly passed on July 12, 1790, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (*Constitution Civile du Clerge*). Of all the events of pre-revolutionary, revolutionary, Imperial and Republican France, this single piece of legislation was arguably the most damaging in its long-term effect upon the French Catholic Church. This “Constitution” was in reality a nationwide dragnet which scooped up, redefined and reorganized the structure of the Catholic Church in France and subordinated Catholic bishops and priests and other Christian faith leaders to the interests of the State. Catholic clergy refusing to take an oath of primary allegiance to the French State, the so-called “non-jurist” priests, first lost their ecclesial offices and in the long run, some lost their lives as well.¹⁸

Under the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the National Assembly redistributed and consolidated what were thought to be inefficient and uncoordinated provinces of Catholic bishoprics into eighty-three roughly equally populated departments, or *dioceses*, each parsed into ten metropolitan districts. Other bishoprics were abolished and all ecclesial titles and offices not specifically set forth in the Constitution of the Clergy were abolished. In contradictory language, the Constitution declared that no French church,

¹⁸ This was a terrible and dangerous period for the Catholic Church which had been so-closely identified with royal France. In 1792, just before the Jacobin “reign of terror” (1793-4), all remaining priests who had not sworn primary allegiance to the State were hunted down and deported. As a barometer of the times, Notre Dame Cathedral was vandalized and plans were afoot (although never carried out) to reduce Chartres Cathedral, the traditional coronation site for French kings, to rubble. Still, the mandated secular oath for the clergy was not without opposition. In the Loire region of western France where support for the Church had been particularly strong and resilient, groups of Catholic loyalist counter-revolutionaries, known during the bloody War of the Vendée uprising (1793-6) as *les Chouans*, protected their priests with their “Catholic and Royal Army” from the increasing presence of Republican police and espionage units. Cf. Aidan Nichols, O.P. *Catholic Thought Since the Enlightenment* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1998), 24.

parish or citizen could acknowledge the authority of a bishop “whose see shall be under the supremacy of a foreign power . . . in France or elsewhere; without prejudice, however, to the unity of the faith and the intercourse which shall be maintained with the visible head of the universal Church”¹⁹ Any potential investiture dispute with Rome was settled by State fiat with an added dash of faux democracy: all parish priests and those “eligible to a bishopric” were to be elected by majority ballot of the “designated electorate” – persons selected by the National Assembly from the principal town of the department. The elected bishop would thereafter “not apply to the pope for any form of confirmation” but thereafter notify him in writing “as testimony to the unity of faith and communion maintained with him.” Before consecration, a bishop was required to take an oath to care for his diocese flock and “to be loyal to the nation, the law, and the king, and to support with all his power the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the king.”²⁰ Finally, priests, bishops and other clergy were to be “supported by the nation” – i.e., paid as provided by the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* and provided with suitable dwellings by the Republic.²¹

One hundred and twenty-two years later, in an excerpt from an article written in 1912, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* provides a unique insider’s perspective of the Church’s quite understandably bitter recollection and characterization of the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* and the effect it had upon the Church in France:

¹⁹ The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, July 12, 1790, Title I, Articles I, II, IV and VI. This document may be found in English in James H. Robinson, *Readings in European History*, vol.2 (New York and Boston: Ginn, 1906), 423 et seq..

²⁰ Civil Constitution of the Clergy, Title II, Articles I, II, VII, XIX and XXI. At this time a constitutional monarchy was still under consideration and was, in fact, made a part of the Constitution of 1791. Subsequent events by Louis XVI were deemed treasonous by the National Assembly and doomed the fate of a truly royal France, an event, as we have seen in Chapter One, which was lamented by Action Française members and others well into the twentieth century.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Title III, Articles I-XII.

On 6 February, 1790, the [National] Assembly . . . subordinated religion to the State; moreover, . . . many of them were jurists imbued with Gallican and Josephist ideas.²² Finally, . . . *while the old regime protected the Catholic Church and made it the church exclusive*, . . . the constituents planned to enslave it after having stripped it of its privileges. . . .²³

On August 26, 1791, little more than a year after the passage of the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*, the National Assembly adopted the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen)*.²⁴ This *Déclaration* affected the French Church on several levels: first, while it recognized the existence of a Supreme Being, the *Déclaration* declared that Catholicism was no longer the State religion; second, it established the right to personal “religious views”, extending rights which Catholics had long held to the previously disenfranchised Protestants and Jews; and third, it abolished the special privileges of nobility and clergy, mandating equality for all men. Previously (in November, 1789), the National Assembly had voted to pay the mounting national debt of France by nationalizing Church lands then not solely

²² “Gallicanism” was born of an alliance of French prelates, the crown, the ‘Parlement de Paris’ and especially the theological faculty of the Sorbonne. It was bred by religious polemics at a time when rival popes sat in Avignon and Rome. David J. Sturdy, *Louis XIV* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 79-81. *Gallicanisme* suborned the power of the pope to the authority of the general councils of the Church, French bishops and the French State. It was finally sanctioned by Vatican I in 1870. Aimé-Georges Montimort, *Le Gallicanisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973), 5.

“Josephism” refers to the broad program of Church reform and the concomitant radical suppression of the Catholic Church in Austria-Hungary, primarily under Emperor Joseph II from 1780-1790. During this period, papal authority was limited, Church wealth was curbed, monasteries were closed and brotherhoods abolished. As in France, new dioceses and parishes were created by the state, seminarians were required to attend state-run schools and toleration was extended to Protestants and Jews. Derek Edward Dawson Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 179-80.

²³ *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) (emphasis added), available from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13009a.htm>; Internet accessed November 10, 2010.

²⁴ As did the American Declaration of Independence upon which it was based, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen* set forth a statement of principles rather than a legally-binding Constitution. It proclaimed not “liberty, equality and fraternity”, but liberty, equality, the inviolability of property and the right to resist oppression.

dedicated to religious worship. On September 3, 1791, the National Assembly went a step further and passed the *Constitution of 1791*, Title I of which declared that “property held for the expense of worship . . . belongs to the nation and is at its disposal at all times.”²⁵

Next came the usurpations of the Napoleonic era. Admittedly, the indifference of the French populace to the Church was countered for a time by the ‘restoration’ of the Napoleonic First Empire, during which there was a brief *rapprochement* of the French State with Rome. But things were more apparent than real: Rome would soon regret Napoleon’s restorative attention, for the Emperor simply tried to add the French Church to his portfolio of conquests.²⁶ Vatican relations with Napoleon subsequently deteriorated to the point of near-extinction over related matters.²⁷

²⁵ An English version of the *Constitution of 1791* (September 3, 1791) can be found at <http://sourcebook.fsc.edu/history/constitutionof1791.html>; Internet; accessed September 13, 2011.

²⁶ When Pope Pius VII (1800-23) and Napoleon Bonaparte signed the *Concordant of 1801*, the intent, at least of the Church, was to end the breach caused by the *réformes* and confiscations of the French Revolution. Catholicism was again declared the chief religion of France. Seminaries were re-established and the French State would provide funds to pay clerics’ salaries. But the Concordat would never live up to its name. It had a price: bishoprics and dioceses were again redistributed and Napoleon was given the virtual right of investiture of bishops. In 1802, “Organic Articles” were unilaterally attached by Napoleon to the Concordat without consultation or consent of Rome. Bypassing the Vatican, these Articles were summarily presented to both the *État* Tribunal and the French legislature by Napoleon, who in effect directed that they were to be considered *ex post facto* as an inseparable part of the 1801 Concordat. Both Rome and the French Church soon experienced them as the draconian enactments they really were. On May 24, 1802, Pope Pius VII objected and formally declared that the Organic Articles had been published and promulgated without his knowledge or approval, and that without modification they were wholly unacceptable.

Title I of the Organic Articles dictated relations between the Catholic Church and the French State, prohibiting or limiting publication and execution of any papal document in France, the exercise of ecclesiastical functions in France by any representative of the Pope or the holding there of either a National Council or Diocesan Synod. Title II defined the powers of “ministers of public worship” and their seminaries, the rules and regulations of which had to be submitted to the French State for approval; the ancient *Declaration of the Clergy of 1682*, which had extended the principles of Gallicanism over the Pope, was required be taught in seminaries; the number of priests to be ordained were fixed each year by the State; moreover, priests of important parishes could be appointed by a bishop only with the consent of the State. Title III micromanaged public

In the 1880's, the Third Republic (1870-1940) put in place a series of politically revanchist laws abolishing the vast majority of religious congregations and purporting to end or at least dilute the Napoleonic Concordat which had both privileged and restrained the Catholic Church within France for nearly a century. Still, the Church survived. But more storm clouds loomed ahead for the Catholic Church in France: the *Law of Associations of 1901*.

b. *The Flight to Egypt*. Information regarding the facts of the 1903 move of the Dominican *maison d'études*, from Flavigny, in Burgandy, France to Le Saulchoir, Belgium is sparse. Chenu wrote in 1937 only that, "The expulsions of 1903 interrupted from the onset the religious and intellectual life at Flavigny. After various episodic events, the *studium general* of the Dominican Province of France would [leave Flavigny and] install itself near Tournai [Belgium], a few kilometers from Lille, at Saulchoir,

worship: there was to be one catechism; public religious processions were forbidden in towns of differing faiths (thus the religious parades on the Congar family grounds during World War I); and priests were to be dressed "in the French fashion and in black". Title IV reset the boundaries of dioceses and parishes, as well as the uniform salaries of all ministers of religion.

²⁷ In 1808 as a consequence of the rejection of the Organic Articles by Pius VII, imperial French troops invaded the Papal States, which since the time of Charlemagne had principally been governed by the Vatican. They were proclaimed the "Roman Republic" over which Napoleon placed his new-born son as king. Pius VII refused to recognize this Roman Republic or its infant ruler and excommunicated the occupying troops. One month later, the unfortunate Pius VII fell prisoner to the French and was exiled to Fontainebleau where he was forced to sign a second Concordat, more one-sided than the first. Pius VII eventually escaped and renounced it. He was rescued by the Allies in 1814 and the Papal States were substantially returned to the Vatican by the Congress of Vienna of 1814-15, which also restored certain European monarchies. The Concordat of 1801, however, still technically remained in effect in France until 1905. However, by 1868, with certain exceptions, these extraordinarily intrusive and controlling "Organic Articles" were generally honored in France more in the breach than in the observance. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "The Organic Articles"; available from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01756a.htm>; Internet; accessed March 9, 2010.

where the work there spoke out with a tenacity enhanced by the resistance to the isolation of exile (my translation and emphasis).”²⁸

The reason for the departure from France of religious orders was the Law of Associations of 1901. Since the public persona of the Third Republic of France (1870-1940) was social stability and parliamentary order, it maintained all legal niceties while it steamrolled over the Church. With the establishment of the Third Republic, old differences between clerics and anti-clerics resurfaced. On July 1, 1901 the Republic put in place its Law of Associations.²⁹ One international attorney described this as “the most important Act of legislation passed in France during the year 1901 Many [religious] Orders refused to comply with the Law, and were consequently suppressed.”³⁰ While technically the 1901 Republican law expelled no one, its *de facto*, if not *de jure* provisions did cause non-abiding religious and certain other organizations to cease to exist as legal creatures – admittedly, a terminal consequence.³¹ It did as well place severe restrictions on the exercise of certain functions by approved religious “*associations cultuelles*” remaining in France. Moreover, it should be noted that Article

²⁸ Les expulsions de 1903 interrompirent à nouveau la vie religieuse et intellectuelle à Flavigny. Après diverses péripéties, le *studium generale* de la province de France s’installa à quelques kilomètres de Lille, près de Tournais, au Saulchoir (1904), où le travail reprit avec une ténacité accrue par le résistance à l’isolement de l’exile. Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P. *Une école de théologie: le Saulchoir*, 112.

²⁹ *Journal Official* (the official French legislative record), July 2, 1901, 4025-27.

³⁰ George Barclay, Esq., L.L.B., “Review of Legislation. 3. France,” in *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, New Series* 4, no.2 (1902), 185, 187.

Article 1 of the 1901 Law of Associations provided that: “An association is an agreement by which two or more people in a permanent way join their knowledge or their activities with a goal other than that of partaking of the profits. Regarding its validity, it is run by the general principles of law applicable to contracts or liabilities.” By this seemingly bland language, all religious orders were suddenly legally defined as “associations” (*associations cultuelles*) and required to be registered with and thus governed by the State. Conformity with the provisions of the law was required within three months and failure to do so resulted in dissolution of the association. *Ibid.*, 186. Père Chenu states that the “expulsions” from France to Le Saulchoir (which included other religious orders as well), did not occur until sometime in 1903.

³¹ The Law of Associations of 1901 caused a diplomatic break between France and the Holy See.

4 of the Law of Associations was openly and unabashedly “aimed at the religious authorities which acquired unlimited power over their members”, as were Articles 11, 13, 14, 16 and particularly, Articles 15 and 17, either by specific reference or by transparent implication.³² It is helpful to this work that attorney Barclay in his 1902 “Review of Legislation” set forth a historic summary of royal Edicts, Ordinances and legislation designed to increasingly limit and control the power of the Church within French national borders:

This subject already preoccupied earlier legislators dating back to Louis IX [1226-79], who in a famous decree (*les Etablissements de St. Louis*) of 1270 limited the powers of the Church respecting mortmain [perpetual ownership of real property] and the freedom of association. He also made the existence of religious bodies dependent upon royal authority. Edicts of 1560, 1659, 1749 and 1768 [as well as the Declaration of 1682] contained the same conditions. From 1480 the tendency has been to keep the Church separate from politics. An Ordinance of 1483 prohibited the existence of religious associations which had become political. The Assemblée Constituante in 1790 granted absolute freedom of association on condition of obedience to the public laws Since then, this right has been gradually restricted, until in 1843 an association of more than twenty people was declared illegal unless authorized by the government. This law [as of early 1902] is still in force. (Art. 291, Penal Code).³³

c. *The waning “special relationship between the Church and the French*

State. With this history, one way to see the historic “special relationship” between the

³² *Ibid.*, 186. Articles 15 and 17 were especially onerous and intrusive, requiring an inventory of all “association” real and personal property, a financial list of receipts and expenses, membership roster to include name, religious name(s), nationality, date and place of birth and date of entry into the Order. There were severe sanctions for failure to respond. Compliance with the Law of Associations was technically required within three months upon penalty of dissolution and liquidation of all property. While the short term of compliance was extended, there is no indication that the sanctions were lessened.

There are many similarities between the American Constitution and the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* - the 1791 French *Déclaration of the Rights of Man* was modeled on the American Declaration of Independence. However, neither the French *Declaration of Rights of Man* nor the *Constitution of 1791* had an analogous Bill of Rights under which religious orders could claim legal relief from the 1901 Law of Associations. Second, unlike the United States, France had not yet adopted the legal fiction of the corporation (*société*) as a “person” with all the privileges and legal rights appurtenant thereto.

³³ Barclay, “Review of Legislation”, 186.

Church and secular France is as a long series of embraces broken by sudden eruptions of discord, only to be reconciled less and less over time. Another is to question whether France and the Church ever truly had an enduring “special relationship,” but simply a series of self-serving and superficial endorsements by one side or the other. For Congar, I suggest that the former is the better understanding, for in a 1987 interview with Bernard Lauret, Congar commented:

Now there is not the least doubt that France was created by Christianity, particularly by the Catholic Church – I would add, the Roman Catholic Church: the link between France and Rome is extremely deep.³⁴

In any event, from ecclesial and historical perspectives, the Saulchoir event may probably best be understood by Catholics as a contemporary ‘flight to Egypt’ - a fully-justified and self-imposed Dominican exile to escape expropriation of the mendicant work of God by the Third Republic of France. It was a wise move as well, for the Republic’s subsequent enactment, the Law of July 7, 1904, effectively barred religious “congregations” remaining in France from teaching there. There is some irony here: an inverse parallel with Congar’s future banishment from France by Rome. Here, religious orders had opted to leave France in a ‘flight to Egypt’ to avoid the destruction of their mission by the French State; Congar was ordered to leave France in a ‘Babylonian exile’ by the Vatican because of his ecumenical mission. Yet, both were to eventually return to France and continue their work.

On December 9, 1905, less than twenty months after Georges-Yves Congar was born, the Third Republic passed the *Act of Separation of Churches and the State (Le Loi*

³⁴ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 26.

du 9 décembre concernant la séparation des Églises et de l'État).³⁵ As its Creed, this Act solemnly pronounced, “The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion” (my translation).³⁶ The Act of Separation is perhaps the most significant piece of legislation effecting and affecting Church-State relations - as opposed to affecting the Church, in France, exceeding even the Civil Constitution of the Clergy of July 12, 1790. It officially severed any remaining vestiges of ecclesial-secular ties. Despite its name, the key to understanding the Act of Separation is *recognition*: the Act itself was based on the unrealistic notion and the rather unbalanced principle that the French State would no longer *recognize* the existence of any church or religious establishment, particularly including the Catholic Church, ironically itself a State on the world stage. Rather, the Act of Separation would recognize and unilaterally deal only with local parish *associations cultuelles*, to be formed for the purpose of worship.³⁷ This

³⁵ The full French text of this law may be found at <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/eglise-etat/sommaire.asp>.

³⁶ “La République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte.” Title I, Art. 2, Act of Separation of Churches and the State (December 9, 1905).

³⁷ Two days after it passed, Pius X (1903-14) protested against this Act of Separation of Churches and the State in his Allocution of December 11, 1905. In a subsequent Encyclical of August 10, 1906, “*Gravissimo Officii*”, Pius X responded in kind with a counter ban: he prohibited the formation in France of any *association cultuelle* or other “associations” for the purpose of worship.

The Vatican had two main concerns, both centering about control: first, that such “associations” would furnish the Third Republic with a ready-made pretext to interfere with the conduct of the Church, which was not recognized in France as a unified entity of national parishes, but merely as a coalition of individually-licensed state cultural associations; second, that these associations would present the laity with the temptation to control, as opposed to the opportunity to participate in, the religious life of the local parish. The Act of Separation of 1905 would cause a rupture of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and France which would not be healed until 1921. Walter Littlefield, “Pope and France Resume Long-Broken Diplomatic Relations,” *New York Times*, June 12, 1921, Special Features, 80. But see the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2010) which states that the break in diplomatic relations occurred as a consequence of the Law of 1901. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010, “Émile Combes.” available from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/127315/Emile-Combes>; Internet; accessed November 11, 2010.

was a baseless legal fiction, true enough, but it was armed with the full force and might of the law of the Third Republic.

Under the Act of Separation of 1905, religions could continue to provisionally function, but State clerical salaries for Catholic and Protestant priests and ministers and other religious figures were terminated. Following a familiar pattern, in the event that appropriate “associations” were not timely formed, Title III, Article 16 provided that:

The law will process a supplementary classification [i.e., inventory] of buildings which serve public worship (cathedrals, churches, chapels, temples, synagogues, archbishoprics, bishoprics, presbyteries and seminaries), in which shall be included everything in these buildings that represents, together or in part, historic or artistic value. . . . Church archives and libraries in the archbishoprics, bishoprics, major seminaries, parishes, branches and their dependencies shall be inventoried, and those recognized as property of the State shall be restituted [i.e., expropriated] (my translation).³⁸

In 1906 these inventories led to sporadic protests throughout the nation, a few of which turned deadly. This evoked the spectacle of “*les deux France*” - an image of a nation at war with itself, not seen since the divisive Dreyfus Affair of the 1890s.

d. *The delegitimization of the Church; Secularism.* The *de facto*

delegitimization of the Church had a profound impact upon the entire French Christian population – the Catholic component of which constituted an overwhelming majority of the people then, as today.³⁹ By defining the French State in “combative and separatist

³⁸ “Il sera procédé à un classement complémentaire des édifices servant à l'exercice public du culte (cathédrales, églises, chapelles, temples, synagogues, archevêchés, évêchés, presbytères, séminaires), dans lequel devront être compris tous ceux de ces édifices représentant, dans leur ensemble ou dans leurs parties, une valeur artistique ou historique. . . . Les archives ecclésiastiques et bibliothèques existant dans les archevêchés, évêchés, grands séminaires, paroisses, succursales et leurs dépendances, seront inventoriées et celles qui seront reconnues propriété de l'État lui seront restituées. Title III, Art. 16, loi de Séparation.

³⁹ According to the website of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, last reviewed July 10, 2010, the population of France is 63.4 million persons, of whom 90% are Catholic. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “Travel & living abroad”; available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/...profile/.../france/-htm>; Internet; accessed

language” as a secular (*laïque*) Republic, the Act of Separation proclaimed the birth of a pluralist France and what was thought to be the final end of any “special relationship” between France and the Catholic Church.⁴⁰ The 1905 Separation law arose from a *laïcité*/secularism which had developed in France from the ground up. With the 1905 Act of Separation there remained two camps in France: (1) the *laïques*, or separationists, who embraced the enactment as a continuation of the Revolution, a bright line in the inevitable socio-political evolution of France, and (2) loyal Catholics and even some “reformers” who saw emerging before them a new Babylonian exile.⁴¹

French *laïcité* was an important development and was almost certainly present in some form in French–Vatican ecclesial relations of the twentieth century. More to point - and to the purpose of this discussion, is that it will play a role in the parochial life of Père Congar the theologian. *Laïcité* is difficult to translate: it can mean separation of Church and State, certainly, but it can also mean neutrality, indifference or even opposition by the State.⁴² In Article 10 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, the

September 15, 2010. This does represent a downward movement of the French Catholic profile over the past half-century, as Dansette (1901-1976) wrote in 1957 that only three percent of France was non-Catholic. Adien Dansette, *Destin du Catholicisme Français*, 17.

⁴⁰ Chadwick, *Catholicism, Politics and Society*, 1.

⁴¹ For an excellent article on the laicization of France in the early twentieth century, from which part of this discussion has been a font, see Émile Poulat, “La *laïcité* en France au vingtième siècle” in *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth Century France*, ed. Kay Chadwick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 18-25.

⁴² French historian and sociologist Poulat (1920-) writes, “French *laïcité* is often defined as *neutrality* or indifference of the State with regard to religion: or again, in reference to the Law of 1905, by the *separation* of the churches and the State. These two definitions, despite the authorities which support them, are insufficient, superficial or, in part, erroneous”. My translation of “La *Laïcité* française est souvent définie comme *neutralité* ou indifférence de l’État à l’égard des religions; ou encore (en référence à la loi de 1905) par la *séparation* des Églises et de l’État. Ces deux définitions, malgré les autorités qui les appuient, sont insuffisantes, superficielles ou en part erronées.” *Ibid.*, 19.

French National Assembly on August 25, 1789 proclaimed the right to individual expression of opinions, “even religious ones.”⁴³

These significant historic developments can help us to understand and put in perspective the Vatican’s seemingly obdurate resistance to twentieth century trajectories of French theology such as *la nouvelle théologie*, its *ressourcement* and even ecumenicism. Now we turn to Modernism and Church concerns about what it perceived as a phoenix-like reappearance of the heresies of Modernism in twentieth century France in the form of the *nouvelle théologie*.

B. Modernism and the *nouvelle théologie* of Yves Congar

1. A Survey of Modernism and the *nouvelle théologie*. By appreciating Rome’s understanding of Modernism, we will see more clearly just how distant Yves Congar (and some others placed within the *nouvelle théologie* grouping) stood from its objectionable tenets. Modernism had its roots in France.⁴⁴ It drew considerable attention within the Roman Catholic Church during the period from the late nineteenth century through the first decade of the twentieth century. Church opposition to what it saw as a dangerous

⁴³ The First Republic’s *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, proclaimed by the National Assembly on August 26, 1789 (formally adopted on August 26, 1791) was reaffirmed by the Fifth Republic’s Constitution of 1958. Article 10 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* reads: “No one may be disturbed on account of his *opinions, even religious ones*, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established Law and Order” (emphasis mine). This stands in contrast to the institutional approach towards the free exercise of *religion* taken by the United States Congress in the First Amendment to the Constitution one month later.⁴³ The American emphasis is first upon *separation* of Church and State, and then upon the *free exercise of religion*, while the French focus is solely upon *personal liberty*, which includes the *freedom of religious opinions*.

⁴⁴ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 22.

resurgence of Modernism then regained momentum in the 1940's and 1950's, truly subsiding only at Vatican II.

Historically, Catholic “modernists” were dissatisfied with what they perceived as a fossilized Roman Catholic theology, which exercised syllogistic logic using deductive reasoning to erect “a static skeleton of Christian dogma whose members were rigidly connected, one with the other, by logical terms functioning exclusively with the forces of Aristotelian dialectic.”⁴⁵ Modernism sought a fundamental and radical overhaul of the ecclesiology of the Church - a reevaluation of the fundamental relationship between theology and science and theology and culture, as well as a reorientation and reconsideration of biblical exegesis. In the aggregate, the paradigmatic changes proposed by the modernists brought on such controversy that the situation was collectively referred to by the Vatican as the “Modernist crisis”.⁴⁶

Among Modernism's early proponents was French philosopher Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) who proposed a new historical-critical approach to Scripture and a rationalist interpretation of the faith. At much the same time, mathematician-turned-philosopher Édouard Le Roy (1870-1954) stressed ‘becoming, change, and novelty’ in the subjective experience of reality as opposed to traditional Western philosophical stress on ‘being, permanence, and uniformity’.⁴⁷ With them should be counted two modernist

⁴⁵ Gustave Weigel, S.J., “The Historical Background of the Encyclical *Humani Generis*,” *Theological Studies* 12 (1951), 213.

⁴⁶ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 24.

⁴⁷ In 1909, after teaching mathematics for years, Édouard Le Roy became a disciple of French “process” philosopher and modernist Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and oriented his activities towards philosophy and metaphysics. Le Roy was made a member of the French Académie des Sciences in 1919. In 1921, he succeeded Bergson to the chair of philosophy at the College of France. Marie-Thérèse Perrin, *Laberthonnière et ses amis, Théologie historique* 33 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975), 14. In 1945, after publishing a number of works on philosophy and science, Le Roy was made a member of the esteemed l'Académie française, again taking Bergson's chair.

French priests, the theologian and historian, Lucien Laberthonnière (1860-1932), and Catholic philosopher and former Jesuit, Henri Brémont (1865-1933), whose troubled reception by Rome foreshadowed what was to come years later for Pères Chenu, Congar and others.⁴⁸ Of course, at the head of this list we should find Alfred Firmin Loisy (1857-1940), who at the time of his death in 1940 had become the acknowledged “father”

He was a friend of Alfred Loisy and Père Lucien Laberthonnière and a great admirer of the Jesuit Père Teilhard de Chardin. Ibid. Additional information (in French) on Le Roy may be obtained from the biographical site of l'Académie française available at <http://www.academie-francais.fr/immortels/base/academiciens/fiche.asp?param=586>, accessed March 16, 2011.

⁴⁸ Lucien Laberthonnière (1860-1932) was ordained as a priest in 1886 and in 1891 was “incorporated” into the Congrégation de l'Oratoire – Congregation of the Oratory of Jesus and Mary Immaculate. Paul Beillevert, ed. *Laberthonnière: l'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 15-16. Laberthonnière was a longtime close friend of Maurice Blondel, although their relationship later distanced as a consequence of what Laberthonnière perceived as Blondel's concessions to Neo-Thomist criticism. Laberthonnière focused his philosophical research on the fundamentals of the faith and denounced the impact of Greek idealism upon Christian thought. In the course of this, he came to embrace a pragmatic view of religious truth which he developed into a philosophy of moral dogmatism and which subsequently would be rejected by Rome. He was the author of a number of works, in two of which, *Essais de philosophie religieuse* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1903) and *Le Réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1904), he expounded his moral dogmatism. Together with the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne* which Laberthonnière directed, these works were placed on the Vatican's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. However, Laberthonnière's conception of faith not as submission to ecclesial authority but as an “experience of life” which through divine grace permitted man to participate in divine life seems to have anticipated in part both the charismatic movement and Vatican II. For a trove of Laberthonnière's correspondance to his contemporaries and friends, see Perrin, *Laberthonnière et ses amis*.

We briefly encountered historian of literature and literary critic Henri Brémont in Chapter One. He was an Officer of the Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur and in 1923 was made member of l'Académie française. A friend of both Blondel and Loisy, Père Brémont studied for his novitiate with the Jesuits in England, but was ordained in France in 1892. He later served as editor of the Jesuit journal *Études* until 1905 when he left the Jesuit Order. From 1905 to 1913 abbé Brémont worked with Père Lucien Laberthonnière on the subsequently banned journal, *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*. Brémont's truly monumental work, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1925-1929) was issued in eleven volumes followed by what has been characterized as a twelfth volume issued separately in 1929 as *Introduction à la philosophie de la prière* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1929). Additional information (in French) on Henri Brémont may be obtained from the biographical site of l'Académie française available at <http://www.academie-francais.fr/immortels/base/academiciens/fiche.asp?param=539>, accessed March 14, 2011.

of Catholic Modernism.⁴⁹ Loisy held that the Church had failed to respond to and was fundamentally disconnected with developments, issues and questions of contemporary scholarship and modern society. He advocated radical and unorthodox changes which would subordinate and conflate Catholic dogma with ongoing scientific advances and philosophical developments.⁵⁰

The modernists were not really a formal group or school, although they informally exchanged research, critiques and publications. They had essentially five planks: the first, principally identified with Alfred Loisy, was that revelation did not end with the death of the last Apostle but was a continuing reality; the second held that dogma was not immutable, since ecclesial formulations could and had developed in

⁴⁹ Cf. Friedrich Heiler, *Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus* (Munich: Erasmus-Verlag, 1947), 7. Mettepenningen writes that Loisy had such a great influence upon Modernism that prior to 1907 modernist tenets were called “Loisysme”. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 23.

⁵⁰ In 1893, Alfred Loisy was dismissed from his teaching post at l’Institut catholique, the same year that Leo XIII issued *Providentissimus Deus* (November 18, 1893), which warned against a one-dimensional rationalist biblical exegesis and condemned the rejection or dilution of the tradition of divine biblical inspiration. Thereafter, Loisy suggested in his 1902 work, *L’Évangile et l’Église* (Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1902), that the New Testament presented a weak and somewhat confused version of the words of Jesus. He wrote that “The gospel conception of the Son of God is no more [than] a psychological idea signifying a relation of the soul with God” Loisy, *The Gospel and The Church*, trans. Christopher Home (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 96. Loisy was a continuing critic of the Church (“Jesus announced the kingdom of God, but it is the Church which came.” My translation of “Jésus annonçait le royaume, et c’est l’Église qui est venue.”). He was censured by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1903. *La Censure d’Alfred Loisy (1903): les documents des Congrégations de l’index et du Saint Office, Fontes Archivi Santi Officii Romani* 4 (Rome: Libreria editrice Vaticana, 2009). From the publication of *Providentissimus Deus*, Loisy fell into increasing and finally insurmountable disfavor which resulted in his excommunication by Pius X on March 7, 1908. Despite this, he continued to seek a synthesis between Catholicism and modern scientific knowledge. Cf. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, vol. 1, *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, 365-71.

Loisy was a prolific writer who influenced a number of others, including French philosopher Édouard Le Roy. Loisy’s views on Old Testament and New Testament exegesis are respectively set forth in his *La Religion d’Israël* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1910), *Études évangéliques* (Paris: Picard, 1902) and *Remarques sur la littérature épistolaire du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, Éd. Nourry, 1935). For additional information on Loisy’s contribution to Modernism, see Émile Goichot, *Alfred Loisy et ses amis* (Paris: Cerf, 2002); Harvey Hill, *The Politics of Modernism: Alfred Loisy and the Scientific Study of Religion* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002) and idem, “French Politics and Alfred Loisy’s Modernism”, *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (1998) 67: 521-36.

interpretation and content within the Church; third, modernists neither made a definitive distinction nor applied a mutually-exclusive condition between nature/reason and supernatural/revelation, essentially ascribing equal importance to the immanent and the transcendent; fourth, they concluded that inductive reasoning could be used with or in lieu of the more narrowly-structured deductive reasoning.⁵¹ Fifth, they sought the incorporation of historical-critical methodology into biblical research.⁵²

a. *Modernism as the “synthesis of all heresies” and the “sum of all errors”.*

Modernism was characterized in 1907 by Pope Pius X (1903-14) as the “synthesis of all heresies” and almost forty years later by Père Garrigou-Lagrange and others as the “sum of all errors”. Modernism was the sole or central subject of no less than three papal Encyclicals: *Providentissimus Deus* (Leo XIII, November 18, 1893), *Pascendi dominici gregis* (Pius X, September 8, 1907) and *Praestantia Scripturae* (Pius X, November 18,

⁵¹ This is more significant than might first appear and actually provides a kind of litmus test for the Neo-Scholastic approach of Neo-Thomism. Logical thought processes use several broad methodologies, including deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning and abductive reasoning. It is the first two with which we are concerned here. Deductive reasoning “descends” from greater to lesser: applying a general theory in specific situations from which a conclusion or particular truth can be drawn, but strictly within the bounds of the general theory or theorem. Inductive reasoning, which can be regarded as the inverse of deductive reasoning, “ascends” from lesser to greater: from observation to a theory or generalization which explains the observation. Thomas Crumley, C.S.C. *Logic: Deductive and Inductive* (New York,: Macmillan, 1934), 28.

One signature of Neo-Scholasticism, of which Neo-Thomism was a subset, was the assumption that theological thought must proceed deductively from absolute first principles using Aristotelian syllogisms and deductive logic to reach a conclusion. In deductive methodology a *theory* is narrowed to a *hypothesis* which is tested by *observation* which in turn results in data to *confirm* or *oppose* the original theory. Note, however, that if an initial proposal or inquiry does not fit within the fence-line of the base theory, it must be rejected. Thus, Neo-Thomists Père Garrigou-Lagrange and philosopher Jacques Maritain rejected out-of-hand the notion of situating Thomas Aquinas in his historic time, castigating it as “paleo-Thomism”. Inductive methodology starts out more subjectively, from the narrow base of specific *observation(s)* to detect a *pattern*, which leads to a tentative *hypothesis*, which in turn leads to general conclusions or a *theory*. By its very nature, deductive reasoning is much more restrictive, being tied to a theory or principle, while inductive reasoning is initially more inclusive and open-ended.

⁵² Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 21.

1907), and was a principle topic of a fourth, *Humani generis* (Pius XII, August 12, 1950). Moreover, Modernism was the singular concern and object of condemnation in the ‘Syllabus of Errors’ decreed by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office in *Lamentabili sane exitu* (July 3, 1907, approved and confirmed by Pius X on July 4, 1907), and the sole focus of *The Oath Against Modernism* (September 1, 1910), promulgated by Pius X. This Oath was required to “be sworn by all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious supervisors, and professors in philosophical-theological seminaries”.⁵³ Later, in the fourth, fifth and part of the sixth decade of the twentieth century, Rome was to substantially identify and equate what we now call the “*nouvelle théologie*” with Modernism.

Modernism is examined herein as it existed as a theological movement; one which Congar believed had *some* positive values. Even though it cost him dearly, in this Congar was quite correct, for the Modernist emphasis upon historical-critical methodology, for example, “gave significant impetus to ‘the golden age of biblical

⁵³ *The Oath Against Modernism*, given out by Pius X on September 1, 1910, included language whereby, inter alia, the attestant personally swears that “I . . . entirely reject the heretical misrepresentation that dogmas evolve and change from one meaning to another different from the one which the Church held previously[,] . . . submit and adhere with my whole heart to the condemnations, declarations, and all the prescripts contained in the encyclical *Pascendi* and in the decree *Lamentabili*, especially those concerning what is known as the history of dogmas. . . . I also condemn and reject the opinion of those who say that a well-educated Christian assumes a dual personality –that of a believer and at the same time of a historian Likewise, I reject that method of judging and interpreting Sacred Scripture which, departing from the tradition of the Church, . . . embraces the misrepresentations of the rationalists

Finally, I declare that I am completely opposed to the error of the modernists who hold that there is nothing divine in sacred tradition, or what is far worse, . . . that a group of men by their own labor, skill and talent have continued through subsequent ages a school begun by Christ and his disciples. I firmly hold, then, and shall hold to my dying breath the belief of the Fathers in the charism of truth which certainly is, was, and always will be in the succession of the episcopacy from the apostles. . . .

I promise that I shall keep all these articles faithfully, entirely, and sincerely, and guard them inviolate, in no way deviating from them in teaching or in writing. This I promise, this I swear, so help me God.”

research' as well as generating a crisis within fundamental theology."⁵⁴ Years later, Cardinal Ratzinger would write of a resulting new era of exegesis.⁵⁵ Yet, as large a topic as Modernism was, it pales in comparison with the sweeping effect and enduring influence that the *nouvelle théologie* would eventually have upon the ecclesiology of the Church as a consequence of Vatican II.

b. *La tarasque*. The *nouvelle théologie* is often referred to as a "movement", yet, it had no fully unified theological platform, no itemized program, no formal organization and, at least in the beginning, no particular organ of public voice.⁵⁶ It is for

⁵⁴ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie* 22-3. In contrast, the Pontifical Biblical Commission formed by Pope Leo XIII in 1902 at first sought to determine the truth of scriptural passages by applying a question and answer format. *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵⁵ In his Preface to *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger wrote:

In the history of interpretation the rise of the historical-critical method opened up a new era. With it, new possibilities for understanding the biblical word in its originality opened up. Just as with all human endeavor, though, so also this method contained hidden dangers along with its positive possibilities. . . . The application of a "profane" method to the Bible necessarily led to discussion. Everything that helps us better to understand the truth and to appropriate its representations is helpful and worthwhile for theology. . . . Everything that shrinks our horizon and hinders us from seeing and hearing beyond that which is merely human must be opened up. Thus the emergence of the historical-critical method set in motion at the same time a struggle over its scope and its proper configuration which is by no means finished as yet.

In this struggle the teaching office of the Catholic Church has taken up positions several times. First, Leo XIII, in his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* of November 18, 1893, plotted out some markers on the exegetical map. At a time when liberalism was extremely sure of itself and much too intrusively dogmatic, Leo XIII was forced to express himself in a rather critical way, even though he did not exclude that which was positive from the new possibilities. Fifty years later, however, because of the fertile work of great Catholic exegetes, Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of September 30, 1943, was able to provide largely positive encouragement toward making the modern methods of understanding the Bible fruitful. The Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, of November 18, 1965, adopted all of this. It provided us with a synthesis, which substantially remains, between the lasting insights of patristic theology and the new methodological understanding of the moderns. The Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, trans. by John Kilgallen and Brendan Byrne (Boston: Pauline Books, 1993), 27-8. This was presented to Pope John Paul II on the feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist, April 23, 1993, Rome.

⁵⁶ In his *History of Theology*, trans. H. Guthrie (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 11, Congar dismisses the notion that the "new theology" was an organized school of thought. Similarly, Jürgen Mettepenningen refers to the term, *nouvelle théologie*, as a "collective expression", or a

this reason that it is well-nigh impossible to set forth a definitive agenda for what was later to become known as the “nouvelle théologie”. Perhaps the best-known French theologians identified with the nouvelle théologie, Dominican Yves Congar and Jesuit Henri Marie-Joseph Sonier de Lubac (1896-1991), disclaimed its very existence.⁵⁷ In 1950, in a letter to his Dominican Master General Emmanuel Suarez (1946-54), Congar compared the nouvelle théologie to *La tarasque*, “a monster that does not exist, although its traces can be found wherever we look.”⁵⁸ Likewise, Henri de Lubac described the nouvelle théologie as a myth and something that never existed.⁵⁹ However sincere as these denials by Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac were, they should not lead one to the conclusion that there simply was no such thing as a loose collective notion of a *nouvelle théologie*.⁶⁰ It certainly was seen to exist in the communal mind of Rome and we recognize it to this day in the English-speaking world as “The Nouvelle Theology”. Moreover, it was roundly criticized by Pope Pius XII and the Vatican Curia and as a consequence, Dominican and Jesuit superiors under direction from Rome carefully scrutinized the writings and activities of their members for taints of this *nouvelle*

“cluster concept”. Jürgen Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie-New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 6, 7.

⁵⁷ Yet, it must be noted that there were close personal relations between the Dominicans at Le Saulchoir and the Jesuits at Fourvière. de Lubac himself confirmed that a joint program had been tentatively planned by himself, Congar, Chenu and others (possibly the Jesuit Jean Daniélou and the Dominican Henri Fêret) to publish a multi-volume theological treatise “conceived in another spirit and upon another plan than the manuals then in use.” Henri de Lubac, *Mémoire sur l’occasion de mes écrits* (Namur: Culture et vérité, 1989), 144, cited by D’Ambrosio, “Ressourcement theology, *aggiornamento*, and the hermeneutics of tradition.” *Communio* 18: 532.

⁵⁸ Congar January 16, 1950 letter to Emmanuel Suárez, Archives de la province dominicaine de France. Congar makes a similar comment to Jean Puyo in *Une vie pour la vérité*, 99.

⁵⁹ Henri de Lubac, *Entretiens autour de Vatican II: Souvenirs et Réflexions* (Théologies), Paris: France Catholique, 1985, 12.

⁶⁰ Cf. Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 6.

théologie.⁶¹ Most importantly, *la nouvelle théologie* essentially theologically framed and defined the post-World War I metamorphosis of what Yves Congar viewed as an ossified and defensive Church of Vatican I to the vibrant and receptive Church of Vatican II.⁶²

c. *Henri de Lubac's Surnaturel*. In 1946 at age fifty, Henri de Lubac would publish his seminal work, *Surnaturel: études historiques* (Supernatural: historic studies).⁶³ The substantial influence of de Lubac's *Surnaturel* and the concomitant impact it had upon Catholic theology generally and *la nouvelle théologie*, specifically, did not occur in isolation but as a major addition to the cumulative activities and works of others, particularly including Jean Daniélou (with whom de Lubac had previously founded the Jesuit series patristic collection, *Sources chrétiennes*), Marie-Dominic Chenu

⁶¹ Mettepenningen writes that Étienne Fouilloux, arguing from the historical perspective, held that the expression, *nouvelle théologie*, could only be used “to uphold the negative or preconiliar connotation of the nouvelle théologie, reserving the expression for the Roman interpretation thereof.” Ibid., citing Etienne Fouilloux, “‘Nouvelle théologie’ et théologie nouvelle (1930-1960)” in Benoît Pellistrand, ed., *L’histoire religieuse en France et Espagne*, Collection de la Casa Velazquez 87 (Madrid: Casa de Velazquez, 2004), 417. Fouilloux advocated the use of a parallel term, *théologie nouvelle*, to describe the collection of positive, non-Roman ideas on the topic. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie-New Theology*, 6.

⁶² As we have seen, Congar, like Dominic Chenu, would not infrequently describe what he saw as the contemporary baroque scholasticism of the Church as a hierarchical “closed system of acquired truths.” William Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 74.

⁶³ Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques*, 2 vols., *Théologie* 8 (Paris: Aubier, 1946). This seminal publication under the direction of the Jesuit Faculté de Théologie du Scholasticat à Lyon-Fourvière resulted from a directed study under Jesuit scholar J. Huby wherein de Lubac sought to lay some foundational theology to the academic philosophy of Maurice Blondel. On the theological theme of the relationship between nature and grace, Étienne Fouilloux characterized *Surnaturel* as an orthodox masterpiece. Étienne Fouilloux, “Henry de Lubac at the Moment of Publication of *Surnaturel*,” cited in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*, ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., trans. Robert Williams and Rev. Matthew Levering (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009), 19. For de Lubac’s own account of the background of *Surnaturel* see his *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings*, trans. Anne Elizabeth Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), originally published in French as *Memoires sur l’occasion de mes écrits* (Namur, Belgium: Culture et Vérité, 1989). For additional information and relatively recent writings on *Surnaturel*, see the articles in Bonino, *Surnaturel*.

and Yves Congar.⁶⁴ In *Surnaturel*, Henri de Lubac inquired into the mystery between human nature and the divine supernatural, contrasting God's gratuitous gift of salvation with man's free will to receive or reject it. He emphasized the immanent reality of the supernatural and man's intrinsic and concomitant natural desire for it. At the same time he contrasted the supernatural with an abstract idea of an ahistorical "pure nature." De Lubac argued that neo-scholasticism's notion of a pre-existing "pure nature" - a nature wholly independent of any historical dimension upon which God's grace is superimposed, was based in large part upon the writings of Tommaso de Vio Gaetani Cajetan (1469-1534), and constituted a distortion of Thomas' thinking.⁶⁵ Henri de Lubac saw that the artificial segregation of the natural from the supernatural by the Neo-Thomists inevitably led to a contrary image of a gratuitous, if not specious, supernatural grace which was separate and apart from an ahistorical concept of "pure nature".⁶⁶ This supernatural grace is then drawn into history and grafted onto a finite pure nature. Thus, it is at odds with its own ahistorical metaphysical definition. To de Lubac, these

⁶⁴ Because of "the centrality and fundamentality of the theological theses de Lubac put forward", Guy Mansini, O.S.B. holds that *Surnaturel* is one of the most influential and "pivotal" works of the twentieth century, standing with the "little book" of Marie-Dominic Chenu, *Une école de théologie: Le Saulchoir*. Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "The Abiding Theological Significance of Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel*," *The Thomist* 73, 4 (2009): 593, 596-7. Mansini adds that like Yves Congar's earlier *Chrétiens désunis* (1937), which marks a "before and after" in Catholic ecumenical theology, *Surnaturel* goes even further in marking "a before and after in Catholic theology as a whole." *Ibid.*, 594. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza writes that, "Though it is a technical and historical book, de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946), more than any other book, it exemplifies *la nouvelle théologie*." James C. Livingston et al., *Modern Christian Thought*, 2d ed., vol.2, *The Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 203. Mansini agrees and holds that de Lubac was at the very center of *la nouvelle théologie*. Mansini, "Henry de Lubac's *Surnaturel*": 597.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 594; cf. Christopher J. Walsh, "Henry de Lubac and the Ecclesiology of the Postconciliar Church: An Analysis of His Later Writings (1965-1991)" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1993), 29. Fiorenza writes that *Surnaturel* argued that the neo-scholastic separation of the natural from the supernatural caused "much of the malaise of contemporary Christianity. . . ." Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 2d ed., vol.2, *The Twentieth Century*, 203.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

handbook abstractions resulted in a theology which separated grace from life, artificially defining a gratuitous superficial grace which would not build upon human nature but rather be extrinsically imposed upon nature to make us “what we were not.”⁶⁷ Bonino writes that in this rejection of what he believed were the excesses of Neo-Thomism, de Lubac in essence turned “St. Thomas against the Thomists of his time.”⁶⁸ I should emphasize that de Lubac understands an *intrinsic* as opposed to an *extrinsic* relationship between nature and grace, which constitutes another bright-line difference between advocates of the *nouvelle théologie* and the Neo-Thomists. This will be used by Père Garrigou-Lagrange to argue against the *nouvelle théologie* in his provocative and influential article, “La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?” (“The New Theology – Where Is It Going?”).⁶⁹ Garrigou-Lagrange’s conclusion was that the Nouvelle Theology would inevitably lead to Modernism.⁷⁰

d. *The “dark years”*. The years 1946 to 1947 were marked by freedom from captivity and control for Congar - a theological Indian summer in which he anticipated there would bloom a liberated and revitalized creative ecclesial climate – “a grand moment of the Church of France”. But during this same time Rome was beginning to look anxiously at developments within the French Church:

⁶⁷ Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), 27.

⁶⁸ Bonino, *Surnaturel*, viii.

⁶⁹ Both positions provoked both interest and critical discussions. The “livre récent du P. H. de Lubac, *Surnaturel* (Etudes historiques)” was specifically and critically named by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange in “La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?”, *Angelicum* 23 (1946): 132. Antonio Russo held that this criticism of de Lubac “accelerated a process which would be unleashed by the Papal Encyclical *Humani generis*.” My partial translation of “L’œuvre suscite un notable intérêt mais provoque aussi une série de critiques et accélère un processus qui débouchera sur l’encyclique *Humani generis*” (emphasis added). Antonio Russo, *Henri de Lubac: Biographie*, translated into French from Italian by Angiolina Di Nunzio (Paris: Brepols, 1997), 254.

⁷⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, “La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?”: 126.

Little by little, towards the years '46-'47, we were given a life of rather exceptional moments in an ecclesial climate of reclaimed liberty - really, liberation – a marvelous creativity upon the pastoral map. Abbés Godin and Daniel had been the initiators of this movement with their book, *France, nation of mission?*, published around 1943 . . . There had followed Michonneau, Boulard, Loew, the publication of Perrin, *Journal of a Worker-Priest in Germany*, and then the worker-priests. I love to recall this grand moment of the Church of France. But elsewhere at that time the Church came to have eyes which were foreign to an enlightened institution – to the point that Rome frowned. Today, we know with a certainty the source - that Rome had looked with suspicion at the application of sociology to the Christian religion.⁷¹

⁷¹ Peu à peu, vers les années 46-47, il nous fut donné de vivre des moments assez exceptionnels, dans un climat ecclésial de liberté retrouvée, vraiment, de libération, de créativité merveilleuse sur le plan pastoral. Les abbés Godin et Daniel avaient été les initiateurs de ce mouvement, avec leur livre *La France, pays de mission?*, publié vers les années 43 . . . Il y eut ensuite Michonneau, Boulard (sic), Loew, la publication de Perrin, *Journal d'un prêtre-ouvrier en Allemagne*, et puis les prêtres-ouvriers. J'aime évoquer ce grand moment de l'Église de France. D'ailleurs, à cette époque, elle passait aux yeux de l'étranger pour une Église pilote, au point que Rome fronçait les sourcils. Nous savons aujourd'hui de source sûre, que Rome a vu avec méfiance l'application de la sociologie à la religion chrétienne. . . . Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 98-9.

In this comment to Puyo, Congar mentions Abbés Henri Godin (1906-1944) and Yves Daniel, two of the founders of the French “priest-worker” (prêtre-ouvrier) movement, which sought to bring Christianity back into the workplace. It first developed as the Young Christian Workers or J.O.C. (Jeunesse Ouvrières chrétiennes) from Pius XI's call for Catholic Action for the Laity. Godin and Daniel's controversial book, *La France, pays de mission?* (n.p., 1943), was closely identified with the priest-worker movement. Rome was never comfortable with this development and in 1952, fearing Communist infiltration, Pope Pius XII directed the movement closed and ordered the priest-workers out of the factories. For more information on the priest-worker movement, see Maisie Ward, *France Pagan? The Mission of Abbé Godin* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949). Part II of this book contains Ward's admittedly loose translation of *La France, pays de mission?* Ward, *Mission of Abbé Godin*, vii.

Although the name “Boulard” appears several times in this part of Jean Puyo's interview, Congar may well be referring to Jesuit Père Henri Bouillard (1908-1981), at the time a professor of fundamental theology in the Faculté de Théologie at l'Institut catholique de Paris. Père Bouillard was also the secretary of the Jesuit *Théologie* series (of which Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* was volume 8). Bonino, ed., *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*, 3. In 1967, Pères Bouillard and Jean Daniélou (later Cardinal Daniélou and a member of l'Académie française) founded the Institut de Science et Théologie des Religions at l'Institut catholique de Paris. Henri Bouillard was himself a prominent figure in the developing *nouvelle théologie*. His *Conversion et grâce chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, (Paris: Aubier, 1944), a study of conversion and grace in Thomas Aquinas, was the first volume of the *Théologie* series published by Éditions Aubier for the Jesuit theology faculty at Lyon-Fourvière. Therein Bouillard analyzed in three parts the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas and found them wholly compatible with both those of Thomas' predecessors and his contemporaries. This freed Thomas from restrictive thirteenth century interpretations and subsequent handbook positions endorsed by the Neo-Thomists - which Bouillard argued would be unrecognizable by Saint Thomas. Yet, as we shall see, Bouillard was used as a foil by Garrigou-Lagrange in his 1946 *Angelicum* article condemning the *nouvelle théologie*.

One event potentiated and two events brought on Congar's self-styled *les années sombres* – the dark years. First, was the 1937 publication by Congar of *Chrétiens désunis*; second, was the publication by Garrigou-Lagrange of his 1946 *Angelicum* article, “La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?”, wherein he concluded that the nouvelle théologie would inevitably lead back to Modernism.⁷² Third, in 1950 Yves Congar's *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* with its embrace of *ressourcement* ecclesiology was published as the twentieth volume of his *Unam Sanctum* series.⁷³ As a consequence, Congar was headed for indirect criticism in *Humani generis*, the August 12, 1950 “Encyclical of Pope Pius XII Concerning Some False Opinions Threatening to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine”⁷⁴ Congar describes the palpable tension:

⁷² Réginald Garrigou Lagrange, “La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?” *Angelicum* 23 (July-December, 1946): 126.

⁷³ Henn notes that during the same year (1950), Congar also published “Mentalité ‘de droite’ et intégrisme” (Mentality of ‘the right’ and integralism), *La vie intellectuelle* 18 (1950): 644, in which Congar explains his meaning of ‘integralism’ which he identifies with religious conservatism as “an attitude, a certain way of holding Catholic positions, which is characterized as by a distrust for human subjects and history and which results in an overemphasis on church authority.” Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 13 n. 17.

⁷⁴ Of particular note in *Humani generis* are paragraphs 7 (extreme historicism), 11 and 12 (enthusiasm for imprudent ‘eirenism’), 13 (opinions detrimental to ecclesiastical authority), 14 (minimalizing the meaning of dogma), 18 (neglect of the exclusive Teaching Authority of the Church), 27 (reducing *ex ecclesiam nulla salus* to a meaningless formula) and 41 (bishops and Superiors General to be vigilant that false opinions not be not advanced in schools, conferences or writings).

Thirteen years before, in 1937, Congar had completed *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un “oecuménisme” catholique* (Paris: Cerf, 1937). Since 1947, Congar had been working on a new edition of *Chrétiens désunis* because it was long out of print and was in his words, “in constant demand”. [An English translation, *Divided Christendom*, trans. M.A. Bousfield (London: Centenary Press, 1939) was in circulation, however.] Congar makes an interesting entry on the implementation of Pius X's 1907 encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, in which Generals of Orders are directed to watch for and suppress traces of Modernism (see *Humani generis* par. 41), and expressing a concern about the upcoming *Humani generis*: on October 2, 1948, the Dominican Father General Emmanuel Suárez (1946-54) “asked me to submit the book to him for censorship so that he might be in a better position to defend me. . . . [F]or nearly two years I had no news of it in spite of several urgent letters. It was not until 17 August 1950 that Father General

We can situate the first manifestations of the anxiety of Rome at the end of the summer of 1947. We had begun to receive a certain number of warnings, and then threats, concerning the priest-workers and ecumenicism. I was refused [travel] permissions for which I asked (I never ceased to solicit permission from my superiors each time that it was necessary); this is why I could not participate in the ecumenical meetings at Amsterdam in 1948, [which] . . . become the birth of the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

The same suspicions were directed towards the Pères of the Church who had themselves been affected during the same period, . . . men like de Lubac and Daniélou – who could not be suspected of Modernism! But distrust was in the air; no one could escape it; warnings multiplied. One learned, in a vague manner, that the Roman community suspected you, and was disturbed about this or that. The offensive against that which some called the “new theology”, represented by Fourvière and Saulchoir, was brought to Rome by Father Garrigou-Lagrange I put together a defense dossier which I had titled *La tarasque*! The *tarasque* is a very dangerous animal – but imaginary. To my eyes the dangers which Rome saw just about everywhere were not real. But it is necessary to acknowledge that a number of our present problems made their appearance in the 50’s: the crisis of the clergy, the appearance of little groups and a relatively new intellectual orientation (my translation).⁷⁵

gave me back my manuscript and, in the light of his knowledge of the imminent publication of *Humani Generis*, he earnestly put me on my guard against any ‘false irenism’. One of the two censors he had designated readily gave his *nihil obstat*; the second demanded some alterations. Father General never gave me any details of the alterations desired. Changes were necessary - but what changes? I was not told.” Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 35. Congar finally concluded that Father Suárez “wished me to make changes in the light of *Humani Generis* and to limit the role of the Roman censors to [in] determining whether the text, as I proposed it, was satisfactory.” Ibid. In the end, Congar decided that with the founding of the World Council of Churches (in Amsterdam in August, 1948 – a meeting which Congar was not permitted to attend), even an updated *Chrétiens désunis* “no longer corresponded to the ecumenical state of affairs” Ibid.

From all this one can fairly draw several conclusions: first, Vatican concerns about Modernism were alive and well during the period 1948-50; second, the *nouvelle théologie* was now identified - at least by some in Rome, with Modernism; and third, despite a demand for the book, it is likely that General Suarez did not want an updated *Chrétiens désunis* published by a member of his Order. O’Meara, O.P. states that Master Suarez had been directed by Cardinal Pizzardo, Prefect of the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities (1939), later Secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office (1951-59), to search out Dominican seminaries where “so-called theologians with brilliant phrases and generalizations” were teaching falsehood. Thomas F. O’Meara, “Reflections on Yves Congar and Theology in the United States,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, no. 2 (Spring, 1999): 92-3 citing François Leprieur, *Quod Rome condamnè* (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 41-45.

⁷⁵ C’est à la fin de l’été 1947 que l’on peut situer les premières manifestations d’inquiétude de Rome. Nous avons commencé à recevoir un certain nombre d’avertissements, puis des menaces concernant les prêtres-ouvriers, l’œcuménisme. On me refusa les permissions que je demandais (je n’a jamais cessé de solliciter la permission des mes supérieurs chaque fois qu’il était nécessaire); c’est ainsi que je ne pus participer à la rencontre œcuménique d’Amsterdam, en 1948, . . . puisque c’est d’elle que devait naître le Conseil œcuménique des Églises.

2. Modernism and Rome. By appreciating the Vatican's understanding of Modernism, we will see more clearly just how distant Yves Congar stood from the objectionable tenets of The New Theology. Rome quite rightly perceived Modernism as a dangerous threat to the Catholic Christian faith. Thus we can begin to appreciate the gravity of charges later made by Garrigou-Lagrange against the *nouvelle théologie* and its proponents when he proclaimed it would lead to Modernism.

a. *The Gravity of the Charges of Modernism*. As to the Vatican's understanding of Modernism, Mettepenningen writes:

One might be inclined to describe the situation at this juncture as a clash of good intentions: the Modernists set out to bring Catholic thought up to date, while the magisterium considered it its duty to condemn any mindset that posed a threat to the continued existence of the doctrine of the faith. The magisterium, however, did not give the ideas of the Modernists the chance to develop. Put bluntly, the Modernist movement was robbed of any chance of survival before it could reach maturity and the Church's authorities used everything at its disposal to achieve this end.⁷⁶

But the description of Modernism by Pope Pius X (1903-1914) in *Pascendi dominici gregis* as the “synthesis of all heresies” sounds a good deal more serious than a clash of good intentions - and it was.⁷⁷ To appreciate the position of the Vatican at the time it promulgated *Pascendi dominici gregis* in 1907, we need to go back to November

De même était suspecté le retour aux Pères de l'Église qui s'effectuait à la même époque, . . . hommes comme de Lubac et Daniélou – qui ne pouvaient être suspectés de monderisme! Mais la méfiance était dans l'air; personne n'y échappait; les mises en garde se multipliaient. On apprenait, de manière imprécise, que les milieu romans vous suspectaient, s'inquiétaient de ceci ou de cela. . . L'offensive contre ce que certains appelaient la “nouvelle théologie”, représentée par Fourvière et le Saulchoir, était menée à Rome par le Père Garrigou-Lagrange . . . J'avais constitué un dossier de défense que j'avais intitulé *La tarasque!* La tarasque est un animal très dangereux . . . mais imaginaire! A mes yeux les dangers que Rome voyait un peu partout n'étaient pas réels. Mais il faut reconnaître que nombre de nos problèmes actuels faisaient leur apparition, dès les années 50: la crise du clergé, l'apparition des petits groupes, une orientation intellectuelle relativement nouvelle . . . Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 99-100.

⁷⁶ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 21-2.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Pascendi dominici gregis* 39.

18, 1893. On that day, Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) issued his encyclical letter on the Study of Holy Scripture, *Providentissimus Deus* (Most Provident God), which set forth rules for scriptural study and proclaimed the divinity of the canonical books against “the Rationalists, true children and inheritors of the older heretics” and their “detestable errors”⁷⁸ *Providentissimus Deus* warned against a one-dimensional rationalist biblical exegesis and condemned rejection of the scholastic tradition of divine biblical inspiration.⁷⁹ On October 30, 1902, Leo XIII responded to any continuing critique of neo-scholasticism by issuing the apostolic letter, *Vigilantes Studiique*.⁸⁰ By this document the Pontifical Biblical Commission was established.⁸¹

⁷⁸ *Providentissimus Deus* 10.

⁷⁹ The warnings and condemnations contained in *Providentissimus Deus* describe much of Alfred Loisy’s theological program, which was viewed by the Vatican as an attempt to deconstruct the doctrine of the faith. On November 17, 1893, the day before *Providentissimus Deus* was promulgated, Loisy was relieved of his teaching duties at l’Institut catholique de Paris. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 23. To Loisy, *Providentissimus Deus* was a haunting echo of Trent and Vatican I and he refused to remain silent. Ibid. From this point on, Loisy fell into increasing, and finally, insurmountable disfavor because of his continuing opposition to traditional understandings of dogma and the divine inspiration of Scripture. Loisy went so far as to suggest in *L’Évangile et l’Église* (Paris: Picard, 1902), that the New Testament presented a weak and somewhat confused version of the words of Jesus, commenting that, “The gospel conception of the Son of God is no more a psychological idea signifying a relation of the soul with God than is the gospel conception of the kingdom.” Loisy, *The Gospel and The Church*, trans. Christopher Home (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 96. This book and a second equally objectionable work by Loisy, *Autour d’un petit livre*, 2d éd. (Paris, A. Picard, 1903), were known because of their red jackets as the “two red books”.

⁸⁰ *Vigilantes Studiique Memores Acta Sanctae Sedis XXXV* (1902-3); see also Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 23. As historical backdrop, in 1879 Pope Leo XIII had issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* which positioned Thomas Aquinas above all other scholastics and mandated the study of his works in seminaries and Catholic schools of higher education, thus establishing the real beginning of Neo-Thomism.

⁸¹ The opening phrase of this apostolic letter, *Vigilante studiique memores*, translates as “Be mindful of vigilant studies”; five years later, Pope Pius X proclaimed in *Pascendi dominici gregis* 45, that “We will and ordain that scholastic philosophy be made the basis of the sacred sciences.”

The Pontifical Biblical Commission was described in *Praestantia Scripturae* (*The Excellence of Scriptures*, Pius X, 1907) as “composed of several Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church distinguished for their learning and wisdom, to which Commission were added as consulters a number of men in sacred orders chosen from among the learned in theology and in the Holy Bible, of various nationalities and differing in their methods and views concerning exegetical studies” For information on the growth and development of biblical research and

On July 4, 1907, Pope Pius X approved and confirmed the decree issued the previous day by the Office of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, *Lamentabili sane exitu* (With Turly Lamentable Results), in which some sixty-five objectionable propositions attributed to Modernism were listed and condemned. Two months later, Pius X issued his seminal papal Encyclical, *Pascendi dominici gregis* (Feeding the Lord's Flock, *Acta Sanctæ Sedis* 40, 632, September 8, 1907), in which Modernism itself was condemned. Moreover, we are reminded that Pius X therein defined Modernism as the "synthesis of all heresies".⁸²

b. *The subordination of the Church.* A survey of *Pascendi dominici gregis* reveals at least three categories of major focus and concern regarding Modernism: first, the subordination of the Church; second, the marginalization of Christ; and third, the pressing need to suppress Modernism.⁸³ These concerns both define the threat which Modernism posed for the deposit of faith and show the gravity of the charges asserted against the *nouvelle théologie* by the claim that it would inevitably lead to Modernism.

its interweave with the Pontifical Biblical Commission, see the doctoral dissertation of Joseph G. Prior, *The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis in Tesa Gregoriana, Serie Teologia* 50 (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2001) and François Laplanche, *La crise de l'origine: La science catholique des Évangiles et l'histoire au XXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2006).

⁸² Mettepenningen uses the phrase, 'the collection of all heresies'. *Nouvelle Théologie*, 4. While *Pascendi dominici gregis* is peppered some twenty-eight times with singular and plural forms of the word, "error", curiously, the familiar mantra of Garrigou-Lagrange defining Modernism as the "sum of all errors", often attributed to this Encyclical, is not found there. Rather, paragraph 39 of the Encyclical, under the heading, "*Modernism and All the Heresies*", defines Modernism as the "synthesis of all heresies". Therein, Pius X writes, "We have had to give this exposition a somewhat didactic form and not to shrink from employing certain uncouth terms in use among the Modernists. And now, can anybody who takes a survey of the whole system be surprised that We should define it as the synthesis of all heresies? Were one to attempt the task of collecting together all the errors that have been broached against the faith and to concentrate the sap and substance of them all into one, he could not better succeed than the Modernists have done." *Pascendi dominici gregis* 39.

⁸³ The approved English version of *Pascendi dominici gregis* is available at the Vatican web site, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/encyclicals/documents/hf_p_x_enc_19070908, Internet; accessed March 22, 2011.

Modernists hold that nothing is stable or immutable in the Church. Their notion of a changing dogma and a continuing revelation was roundly condemned in the *Syllabus of Errors* of Pius IX (1846-1878). *Pascendi dominici gregis* notes that this condemnation was repeated by Vatican I (28).⁸⁴ For Modernists almost everything in the Church is subject to the laws of evolution (26): faith is subject to science (17, 25) and dogma - all of which evolves (13) and thus must be harmonized with science and history (38). To Modernists, Sacred Scripture is not divinely inspired, and thus not sacred at all, but “a collection of experiences, . . . those extraordinary and striking ones which have happened in any religion” (22). By this error, the authority of the Church itself is made subject to individual religious conscience (23).

c. *The marginalization of Christ.* Modernists see two Christs: the real one and the imaginary one of faith (31). As to the former, they placed themselves in the person and position of Christ and then attributed to him what they would have done in like circumstances (30). Moreover, they believe that The Church and its Sacraments were not instituted by Christ (20).

d. *Suppression of Modernism.* In *Pascendi dominici gregis* Modernists and those “imbued with Modernism” were excluded by Pius X from directing or even teaching at seminaries and Catholic universities (48). Bishops were required to prevent and prohibit writings “infected with Modernism” from being read or published (50, 52, 53). Those modernist works that succeeded in being published were to be removed from the dioceses (51). Priests were only rarely permitted to gather together, and then only upon condition that there would be no mention of Modernism or laicism (54). A “Council of Vigilance” was instituted in each diocese to regularly meet and “watch most carefully for every trace

⁸⁴ Paragraph numbers of *Pascendi dominici gregis* are in parentheses.

and sign of Modernism . . .” (55). Every three years the Bishop was to furnish the Holy See with a “diligent and sworn report on all prescriptions”. Finally, a like obligation was imposed on the Generals of all Religious Orders (56).

e. *Distinguishing Congar’s intersections with Modernism.* In fairness it should be acknowledged that part of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange’s claim was tangentially near the mark in that Yves Congar did find some positive intersection with a few limited aspects of Modernism, such as the use of inductive reasoning in historical-critical methodology.⁸⁵ Congar also found attractive what he eventually termed “progressive” revelation, which was actually a huge distinction from the modernist notion of “continuing” revelation. While this will be discussed later in more detail, it must be made clear *ab initio* that Congar’s notion of a “progressive” understanding of God’s immutable truth was substantially nuanced and included not a series of new revelations, but rather an unwrapping over time of the deeper meaning of the New Testament’s one revelation in Christ.⁸⁶

In sum, Père Garrigou-Lagrange’s explicit conclusion that the *nouvelle théologie* will inevitably lead to Modernism will prove to be entirely incorrect. Here we might pause for a moment to appreciate the significance of the events which are unfolding.

⁸⁵ It may be recalled that Neo-Scholastics, and thus Neo-Thomists, used deductive reasoning - strictly adhering to a theory, moving to a hypothesis which was a subset of that theory, then proceeding to observations and finally, conclusion(s). Since the entire inquiry was conducted within the confines of the base theory it led over the centuries to a certain rigidity within the Church which Congar and his close confrères at Le Saulchoir described as a ‘baroque scholasticism’ in a Church embodying a hierarchical “closed system of acquired truths.” Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 74-5.

⁸⁶ The Catholic faith is clear that Jesus Christ is the “Mediator and Fullness of All Revelation”. *Dei Verbum* I, 2 (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, November 18, 1965). The biblical grounds for this are abundant: Mt 11:27; Jn 1:14, 17; 14:6; 17:1-3; 2 Cor 3:16; 4:6; Eph 1:3-14; 2:18; Heb. 1:1-2 and 1 Pt 1:14. It is thus dogmatically accepted that “God has said everything in his Word. . . . There will be no further Revelation.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), arts. 65, 66.

What is happening here is the insertion of fresh thoughts and insights – what we have packaged in English as ‘The Nouvelle Theology’ - into what later would become part of mainstream Catholic consciousness. Indeed, this is a bright-line event in the ecclesiology of the Church: we are witnessing the beginning of the metamorphosis of the Church of Vatican I into the Church of Vatican II, a metamorphosis for which Yves Congar materially helped create the paradigm.

f. *Rome’s condemnation of Modernism.* As background, on November 18, 1907, the fourteenth anniversary of Leo XIII’s *Providentissimus Deus*, Pius X issued his Papal Encyclical *Praestantia Scripturae* (The Excellence of Scripture) the first paragraph of which upheld and approved decisions of the Biblical Commission, actually censuring and applying sanctions “against those who neglect to observe the prescriptions against the errors of the modernists” The fourth and fifth paragraphs of *Praestantia Scripturae* appear to be hand-crafted to address Modernism’s extreme biblical exegesis and set forth the ultimate penalty for disobedience:

All are bound in conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Commission relating to doctrine, which have been given in the past and which shall be given in the future, in the same way as to the decrees of the Roman congregations approved by the Pontiff; nor can all those escape the note of disobedience or temerity, and consequently of grave sin, who in speech or writing contradict such decisions. . . .”

Moreover, in order to check the daily increasing audacity of many modernists who are endeavoring by all kinds of sophistry and devices to detract from the force and efficacy not only of the decree “Lamentabili sane exitu” (the so-called Syllabus), issued by our order by the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition on July 3 of the present year [1907], but also of our encyclical letters “Pascendi dominici gregis” given on September 8 of this same year, we do by our apostolic authority repeat and confirm both that decree of the Supreme Sacred Congregation and those encyclical letters of ours, *adding the penalty of excommunication against their contradictors*, and this we declare and decree that should anybody, which may God forbid, be so rash as to defend any one of the propositions, opinions or teachings condemned in these documents he falls, ipso

facto, under the censure contained under the chapter "Docentes" of the constitution "Apostolicae Sedis," which is the first among the excommunications latae sententiae, simply reserved to the Roman Pontiff. This excommunication is to be understood as *salvis poenis*, which may be incurred by those who have violated in any way the said documents, as propagators and defenders of heresies, when their propositions, opinions and teachings are heretical, as has happened more than once in the case of the adversaries of both these documents, *especially when they advocate the errors of the modernists that is, the synthesis of all heresies*.⁸⁷

On September 1, 1910, Pope Pius X promulgated The Oath Against Modernism, which was required "To be sworn to by all clergy, pastors, preachers, religious supervisors, and professors in philosophical-theological seminaries." In essence it required adherence to *Pascendi dominici gregis* and *Lamentabili sane exetu*. On September 15, 1920, Benedict XV issued his Encyclical, *Spiritus Paracletus*, which recognizes that canonical books – "written as they were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – have God as their author". It reads in applicable part:

Thus he [St. Jerome] asserts that the Books of the Bible were composed at the inspiration, or suggestion, or even at the dictation of the Holy Spirit; even that they were written and edited by Him. Yet he never questions but that *the individual authors of these Books worked in full freedom under the Divine afflatus* [divine breath, inspiration], each of them in accordance with his individual nature and character. Thus he is not merely content to affirm as a general principle -- what indeed pertains to all the sacred writers -- that they followed the Spirit of God as they wrote, in such sort that God is the *principal* cause of all that Scripture means and says; but he also accurately describes what *pertains to each individual writer*. *In each case Jerome shows us how, in composition, in language, in style and mode of expression, each of them uses his own gifts and powers; hence he is able to portray and describe for us their individual character, almost their very features*; this is especially so in his treatment of the Prophets and of St. Paul. This *partnership of God and man in the production of a work in common* Jerome illustrates by the case of a workman who uses instruments for the production of his work; for he says that whatsoever the sacred authors say "Is the word of God,

⁸⁷ *Praeantia Scripturae* (emphasis added). On March 7, 1908, less than four months after the promulgation of *Praeantia Scripturae*, Alfred Loisy was excommunicated by Pius X. Loisy writes that he learned about this from the newspapers. Cf. Alfred Loisy, *Memoires pour server a l'histoire religieuse de notre temps*, 3 vols. (Paris: Nourry, 1930-31). Thereafter, Loisy continued to seek a synthesis between Catholicism and modern scientific knowledge. Cf. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, vol. 1, *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, 365-71.

and not their own; and what the Lord says by their mouths He says, as it were, by means of an instrument” (emphasis added).⁸⁸

Note the “instrument” here is not a lifeless stylus, but man - inspired by the Holy Spirit, true enough, but nonetheless a living creature of free will and habits, a man of certain character, gifts and powers, immersed in a unique time and culture with specific mores, preferences and idioms of communication. This language of *Spiritus Paracletus* may well have encouraged and provided support for Pope Pius XII, who on September 30, 1943 issued *Divino afflante Spiritu* (*With the Help/Inspiration of the Holy Spirit*), which permitted the limited use of historical-critical methodology for biblical studies. *Divino afflante Spiritu* was issued on the approaching fiftieth anniversary of Leo XIII’s November 18, 1893 Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*.⁸⁹

We have previously considered the young Congar’s critical acceptance of certain facets of Modernism; his description of an historically contextual understanding of Thomas Aquinas is worth repeating here for it relates to a topic we have touched upon -

⁸⁸ *Spiritus Paracletus* was promulgated on the 1500th anniversary of the feast of the scholar and Doctor of the Church, Hieronymus, canonized St Jerome (c. 347-420), to whom Pope Damasus (366-84) entrusted the correction of the *Vetus Latina*, resulting in the production of a common version of the Bible, the *Vulgate*, for universal use within the Church.

⁸⁹ *Divino afflante Spiritu, Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXV (1943), 297-422. Mettepenningen writes that “It was only in 1943, with the promulgation of Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*, that the door was opened to a historical-critical approach to the Bible.” However, Pius XII cites Benedict XV’s 1920 encyclical, *Spiritus Paracletus*, in support of his decision to permit historical-critical methodology: “it is worthy of special mention that Catholic theologians, following the teaching of the Holy Fathers and especially of the Angelic and Common Doctor, have examined and explained the nature and effects of biblical inspiration more exactly and more fully than was wont to be done in previous ages. For having begun by expounding minutely the principle that the inspired writer, in composing the sacred book, is the living and reasonable instrument of the Holy Spirit, they rightly observe that, impelled by the divine motion, he so uses his faculties and powers, that from the book composed by him all may easily infer ‘the special character of each one and, as it were, his personal traits.’ [28] Let the interpreter then, with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research, endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed”.

If Benedict XV did not open the door for historical-critical methodology, he certainly seems to have left it ajar for Pius XII.

continuing revelation, the first assertion of Modernism. Congar writes “I must make clear that Saint Thomas was put back into his historical context. We didn’t consider him as some kind of oracle, dominant over time, who was enlightened [with] one faith for all, the great truths of the faith.”⁹⁰ Congar was in agreement with Marie-Dominic Chenu and Henri de Lubac that revelation as a reality ultimately had a historical context and that, therefore, dogmatic formulations also reflected traces of these historic contexts.⁹¹ This is quite different from the modernist understanding of the mutability of dogma and a continuing revelation. To expand on this, it also bears repeating that in 1907 Pius X commented in *Pascendi dominici gregis*, 11-13, 26 and 28, that for modernists in a living religion everything is subject to change: dogma, Church, worship, the Bible, even faith itself. For them, nothing is stable; nothing is immutable in the Church. Thus, “Dogma [for them] is not only able, but ought to *evolve* and to be changed.”⁹² Pius X argued against this heretical modernist notion of ecclesial and theological evolution by which dogma changed over time in response to its historic-cultural setting, and by this might completely change from one definitional content or meaning to a markedly different content or meaning.

3. Modernism: Proponents, Opponents and Yves Congar.

a. *Modernism and Neo-Thomism.* At the ground level, Modernism was a reaction among certain Catholics and some non-Catholics to what they felt was the expansion of centrist authority by Rome. As a result of the implementation in 1879 of *Aeterni Patris, On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy*, Neo-Thomism flourished in

⁹⁰ Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 38.

⁹¹ Cf. Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 12.

⁹² *Pascendi dominici gregis* 13.

the Church. Hand-in-hand with this surge of Leonine Thomism came the growth of neo-scholasticism, which Jürgen Mettepenningen in hindsight view describes as “exclusive and all-pervading” and as providing the seedbed for the Modernist Crisis:

The vicious circle created by the magisterium on the one hand, which granted scholasticism the highest authority, and neo-scholasticism on the other, which constituted the Church’s only intellectual conceptual framework, was reinforced by an ambitious handbook tradition and the republication of prominent scholastic thinkers. The circle provided little room for creativity and renewal within Catholic theology. Against such a background, little if any innovation and spirit can be detected in Catholic theology, with the exception of the dynamism radiated by Modernism.

While the [last decades of the nineteenth century were] . . . characterized by the resurgence of Thomistic ideas, it was also a time when the growing independence and secularization of science became an important factor, especially the independence of religious sciences. This evolution could be observed particularly in France⁹³

b. *Yves Congar and Alfred Loisy*. This leads us back to Alfred Loisy. We may recall that Loisy advocated a broad range of so-called “reforms” within the Church. He espoused a radical approach to Christian understanding which at its core sought to inject Humanism into both Catholic Tradition and biblical exegesis so as, in his own words, “to adapt Catholicism to the intellectual, moral and social needs” of the times.⁹⁴ Admittedly, Loisy had some indirect influence upon Yves Congar insofar as Loisy saw divine revelation as a continuing reality which did not end with the death of the last Apostle. As

⁹³ Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie-New Theology*, 20.

⁹⁴ Alfred Loisy, *Simple réflexions sur le décret du Saint-office Lamentabili sane exitu et sur l'encyclique Pascendi dominici gregis* (Ceffonds, France, Près Montier-en-Der Haute-Marne: chez l'auteur, 1908), 13. Loisy was a prolific writer who influenced a number of others, including French philosopher Édouard Le Roy. Loisy’s views on Old Testament and New Testament exegesis are respectively set forth in *La Religion d’Israël* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1910), *Études évangéliques* (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1971) and *Remarques sur la littérature épistolaire du Nouveau Testament* (Paris, Éd. Nourry, 1935). For additional information on Loisy’s contribution to Modernism, see Émile Goichot, *Alfred Loisy et ses amis* (Paris: Cerf, 2002); Harvey Hill, *The Politics of Modernism: Alfred Loisy and the Scientific Study of Religion* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002) and idem, “French Politics and Alfred Loisy’s Modernism,” *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 67 (1998): 521-36.

previously discussed, Congar will distance and distinguish this by describing a *progressive* understanding of the completed one public revelation of God through Christ. From his notion of a continuing revelation, Loisy extruded a need to continually and radically adapt and change dogma to conform to changes in culture, society and science - the heretical concept of dogmatic relativism to which Congar never subscribed. Loisy advocated the injection of a kind of *situational relativism* into dogma to achieve a continuing reshaping of the faith so it might better fit and be assimilated into the age and culture in which it was being interpreted.⁹⁵ Loisy put it thus, “in reality all Catholic theology, even in its fundamental principles [of] the general philosophy of religion, Divine law, and the laws that govern our knowledge of God, come up for judgment before this new court of assize”⁹⁶ Obviously, this clashed head-on with the Catholic orthodox understanding of dogma as a statement of faith based upon divine revelation and as constituting the highest Tradition within the Church.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ I use “relativism” here as denying the existence of absolute values, either universally or in regard to some particular event or instance of being. Modernist relativism was certainly not limited in France to Loisy. Moreover, there were those outside of France holding similar convictions, including in particular German Lutheran theologian and scholar Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), who proposed that the Christian church must re-examine its claims to absolute truth in each generation. Troeltsch taught at Bonn and Heidelberg and vigorously argued his entwined philosophies of religion and history as set forth *passim* in *The Social Teaching of Christian Churches*, 2 vols., trans. Olive Wyon (Louisville: KY, John Knox Press, 1992).

⁹⁶ Loisy, *Simple réflexions*, 24. As an aside, Loisy’s analogy to a “new court of assize” is hardly helpful to his point and, in fact, unveils a radical and discomfoting side of Modernism: the Crusaders’ *Assises de la Cour des Bourgeois* (Assizes of the Court of the Bourgeois) essentially imposed harsh Roman provincial law upon native Christians (generally, converts from Islam) in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem during the occupation of the twelfth century.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), art. 88. In contrast to the “tradition” within the Catholic faith, which can, has and will continue to change, the unchanging “Tradition” of the Church is part of the one and the same singular *depositum fidei* contained in the canon of Scripture summoned by St Vincent de Lérins’ formula, “quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus”, and the apostolic Sacred Tradition. *Ibid.*, arts. 80, 84, 97 and 174.

Unlike Loisy, Yves Congar never suggested that dogmatic formulations changed. Quite to the contrary, he firmly held that dogma was “divinely revealed in one authentic formulation” with a “meaning determined one time for all by our Mother the Holy Church”.⁹⁸ Congar did, however, situate the possibility of a “progressive” and deeper understanding over time of the significance and depths of the truth within a specific dogmatic formulation as a *dévoilement* or “unwrapping” of the economy of God.⁹⁹ This does not place Congar at odds with Catholic orthodoxy, for while there may be no further public revelation, it remains for Christian faith over time to gradually grasp the full significance of past revelation:

There will be no further Revelation

66. “The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ”²⁸. Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.”¹⁰⁰

²⁸. *Dei Verbum* 4; cf. *1 Tim* 6:14; *Titus* 2:13.

c. *Modernism and the nouvelle théologie*. As we have seen, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church strongly opposed Modernism as a subversion of Catholic tradition as well as an attack upon the institution of the Church and her deposit of faith. It was perceived, first, as nothing less than an attempt to culturally and socially edit and redact the divinely-inspired Word of God and, second, as

⁹⁸ This is my translation and joinder of two of Congar’s separate statements, “comme divinement révélée en une formulation authentique” and “le sens déterminé une fois pour toutes par notre Mère la Sainte Église”, so as to provide a précis of Congar’s explication of dogma and dogmatic formulations in his work, *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclee, 1962), found respectively at 54 (Thèse VII) and 62 (Thèse VIII).

⁹⁹ Again, Congar generally used the term, “progressive” revelation”, - possibly for the purpose of clarity as well as to later distance himself from the taint of the concept of a “continuous” revelation.

¹⁰⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, art. 66.

an alteration of “the manner of promulgation, the object, the stability, and the truth of dogma - its mystical treasure of divinely-given supernatural knowledge”.¹⁰¹ Together, these two errors constitute the gravamen of all the charges against Modernism. It is important to mark them well for they will be the measure of the base charge against the *nouvelle théologie* that it would lead to Modernism.

Whether Congar is wholly correct that the offensive against the *nouvelle théologie* “was brought to Rome by Père Garrigou-Lagrance”, it is certainly fair to acknowledge that Garrigou-Lagrance added a gravitas which weighted the criticism against it.¹⁰² Russo agreed, writing, “Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, who had great personal influence within the Roman Curia and with the Pontiff, appropriated it in an article entitled, ‘La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle,’ initiating a series of fiery discussions. From this moment, the expression [*la nouvelle théologie*] has a connotation of danger, of non-Catholicism, and of destruction. Polemics developed not only within two religious

¹⁰¹ *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914) “Modernism: Catholic and Modernist notions of dogma compared” available at www.newadvent.org/cathen/10415a.htm, Internet; accessed December 17, 2010.

¹⁰² Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 99. It is ironic that qua-protagonists Garrigou-Lagrance and Pères Congar had important character traits and leitmotifs in common, the most important of which was their passion for the truth. Dominican M.-Benoît Lavaud (1890-1979) wrote of Garrigou-Lagrance, “Père Garrigou-Lagrance had long been a vigorous polemicist, but with the passing of years he calmed down greatly, without losing his reasoned attachment to his chosen positions nor his opposition to the eclecticism that dulls the sharp edges of thought. . . . He communicated the delight and the love of truth that he lived.” Lavaud, “Le Père Garrigou-Lagrance: In memoriam,” *Revue thomiste* 64 (Avril-Juin 1964), 188. See also Jean-Hervé Nicolas, “In memoriam: Le Père Garrigou-Lagrance,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 11 (1964), 394: “He loved truth too passionately; error appeared to him as the most serious of evils.” Translations by Richard Peddicord as cited in *The Sacred Monster of Thomism*, 18, 231. Peddicord adds, “There was, however, an important distinction in Garrigou’s praxis. When it came to doctrinal errors in a book or an article, Garrigou could become vehement in his denunciations; when it came to being face-to-face with a person who held erroneous positions, a different Garrigou came to the surface. In that setting, ‘the profound goodness of his heart’ informed his intelligence and kept him from any such vehemence. *Ibid.*, 231.

orders, Jesuit and Dominican, but also and above all between two directions of thought” (my translation).¹⁰³

In an opening salvo of his *Angelicum* article, “La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?”, Garrigou-Lagrange criticized the nouvelle théologie and cited with disapproval positions taken by Jesuits Henri de Lubac in *Surnaturel* and Père Gaston Fessard (1897-1978) purportedly in two of Fessard’s articles which appeared in the Jesuit journal, *Études*.¹⁰⁴ Garrigou-Lagrange then inquires, “And where is this new theology, with these

¹⁰³ “. . . le père Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, qui jouit d’une grande influence personnelle dans la curie romaine et auprès du pontife, se l’approprie dans un article intitulé ‘La nouvelle théologie, où va-t-elle?’, amorçant toute une série de discussions ardentes. À partir de ce moment, l’expression a une connotation de danger, de non-catholicisme, de destruction. Les polémiques se développent non seulement entre deux ordres religieux, les jésuites et les dominicains, mais aussi et surtout entre deux directions de pensée.” Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 149-50.

¹⁰⁴ It seems to have been Garrigou-Lagrange’s plan to conduct an indirect attack by means of questioning de Lubac and Fessard’s credibility, since the two had by implication been so tied to the *nouvelle théologie*. The argument would run thus: if the credibility of de Lubac and Fessard can be shown to be tainted, then so too would be the *nouvelle théologie* itself, since both are presented by Garrigou-Lagrange not only as adherents, but as two of its masters.

At first blush the criticisms of de Lubac and Fessard might seem marginal, disconnected and irrelevant, but they were anything but that. Garrigou-Lagrange states that Henri de Lubac had written in *Surnaturel*, 254, that “St. Thomas had never proclaimed the distinction, later concocted by a certain number of Thomistic theologians, between ‘God the author of the natural order’ and ‘God the author of the supernatural order’ . . . as if the natural beatitude . . . in the case of the angel(s) would be the result of an infallible and perfect activity.” Garrigou-Lagrange, “La nouvelle théologie”: 132. This question of the supernatural source of the beatitude of angels might strike one as a superficial issue, akin to the query of the number of angels who might fit on the head of a pin, but in fact it goes to the heart of the Neo-Thomistic embrace of “pure nature”, that is to say, human nature in its created reality, distinguished as a reality from God, devoid of any gift of grace or glory, yet in its pure natural state unsullied by the sin spoken of by Thomas in *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 85, a.3. Cf. Mansini, “The Abiding Theological Significance of Henri de Lubac’s *Surnaturel*”, *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 600, citing Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., “Nature and Grace in Thomas Aquinas,” in Bonino, *Surnaturel: A Controversy*. As discussed previously, proponents of the *nouvelle théologie* rejected the neo-scholastic and Neo-Thomistic notion of an extrinsic grace imposed on ‘pure nature’, and emphasized instead the intrinsic orientation of nature to grace, Thomas’ *desiderium naturalis visionis dei* – the natural human desire for a supernatural end, the beatific vision.

Père Gaston Fessard is described by Russo as a “fervent admirer” of Maurice Blondel (who found commonality with the modernist rejection of Tradition). Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 52. Thus it is not surprising that Garrigou-Lagrange would choose to criticize Fessard. Lagrange based his attack upon two *Études* articles. The first article appeared in *Études* 247 (November, 1945): 268-70, and was Fessard’s book review on Jesuit Père Joseph de Tonquédec’s, *Une*

new masters who inspire it, going? Where is it going if not down the road of skepticism, fantasy and heresy?”¹⁰⁵ In the end he gives the answer to his own question by declaring, “It’s going back to Modernism.”¹⁰⁶

In support of this conclusion, Père Garrigou-Lagrange quotes a position which Jesuit Henri Bouillard had taken in 1944 and which read, “When the intellect evolves, *an immutable truth* cannot be maintained absent the grace of a simultaneous and correlative evolution of all the concepts now within or tied to this same truth. *A theology which is not current is a false theology.*”¹⁰⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange seizes this admittedly extreme position and questions how Bouillard can avoid the conclusion that the theology of

philosophie existentielle: L’existence d’après Jaspers, Bibliothèque des Archives de Philosophie (Paris: Beauchesne, 1945). Evidently, Garrigou-Lagrange faults Fessard there for reason of a glancing blow he delivered against Neo-Thomism, describing it in unflattering terms as “the happy dulling of the senses which protects this ‘canonized’ Thomism – or as [poet] Péguy said, ‘buried’, while devoted thoughts still lived on in its name – a contradiction . . .” *Études* 247: 270, cited in Garrigou-Lagrange, “La nouvelle théologie”, *Angelicum* 23: 133. Père Garrigou-Lagrange presents no theological or substantive factual argument here but evidently relies on his presumption, possibly flowing from *Aeterni Patris*, that any criticism of Neo-Thomism is itself *a priori* error. In the second article, which Garrigou-Lagrange purportedly identifies with “the same review in April, 1946” [*Études* 248] Fessard is reproached for writing that “the decisions of the [Pontifical] Biblical Commission were a safeguard but not an answer”. Ibid. Here Garrigou-Lagrange would seem to raise a serious issue since per Pius X’s 1908 Encyclical, *Praestantia Scripturae*, statements of the Biblical Commission regarding Scripture must be wholly accepted upon pain of censure. Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 23. Yet, Garrigou-Lagrange’s well-reasoned objections are stuck down by his own scholasticism: the *Études* 248 (April, 1946) edition does indeed have an article written by Gaston Fessard, but it is captioned, “Le Parti Communiste Peut-Il Être Un Parti National?” (The Communist Party – Can It Be a National Party?), and obviously contains none of the language attributed by Garrigou-Lagrange to Fessard. In fact, the text to which Garrigou-Lagrange objects was written not by Fessard, but by Jean Daniélou, S.J. in “Les orientations présents de la pensée religieuse” (Current Trends of Religious Thought), *Études* 249 (April, 1946): 6-7.

¹⁰⁵ “Et où va-t-elle aller cette théologie nouvelle avec les maîtres nouveaux dont elle s’inspire? Où va-t-elle si non dans la voie du scepticisme, de la fantaisie et de l’hérésie?” Garrigou-Lagrange, *Angelicum*, “La nouvelle théologie”: 134.

¹⁰⁶ “Où va la nouvelle théologie? Elle revient au Modernisme.” Ibid.: 143.

¹⁰⁷ “Quand l’esprit évolue, *une vérité immuable* ne se maintient que grâce à une évolution simultanée et correlative de toutes les notions, maintenant entre elles un même rapport. *Une théologie qui ne serait pas actuelle serait une théologie fausse.*” Ibid.: 126 (emphasis by Garrigou-Lagrange). Recall that Père Henri Bouillard was a member of the Jesuit Faculty of Theology at Lyon-Fourvière and Secretary of the *Theology* series, of which Henri de Lubac’s *Surnaturel* was volume 8.

Thomas Aquinas must therefore also be false - and how that conclusion in turn can stand in light of repeated papal commendations of Saint Thomas' teachings.¹⁰⁸ Admittedly, this is troublesome. Next however, without citing the source for his orphaned, italicized quote of Bouillard, Garrigou-Lagrange seeks to conflate a "new definition of truth" with the *nouvelle théologie*, writing:

Isn't it the new definition of truth which finds itself under the new definition of theology: "*Theology is nothing but a spiritual or religious experience which has found its intellectual expression.*" . . . One recalls that on December 1, 1924, the Holy Office condemned 12 propositions extracted from the philosophy of action, among which there was no. 5 - the *new definition of truth* . . . Several, without taking care, are today going back to these errors.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Garrigou-Lagrange, "La nouvelle théologie": 126-7.

¹⁰⁹ "N'est-ce pas la nouvelle définition de la vérité qui se trouve sous la nouvelle définition de la théologie: *La théologie n'est autre qu'une spirituelle ou expérience religieuse qui a trouvé son expression intellectuelle.*" . . . On se rappelle que le Saint Office condamna le 1er décembre, 1924, 12 propositions extraites de la philosophie de l'action, parmi elles il y avait, n.5, la nouvelle définition de la vérité . . . Plusieurs, sans y prendre garde, reviennent aujourd'hui à ces erreurs." Ibid.: 131 (emphasis added).

While Garrigou-Lagrange does not identify Congar or Chenu by name, he names and criticizes philosopher Maurice Blondel, the deceased Dominican Père Marie-Benoît Schwalm, (1866-1908) and Jesuit Pères Henri Bouillard, Henri de Lubac, Gaston Fessard (1897-1978) and Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1995). In a rebuttal to Garrigou-Lagrange, Monsignor Bruno de Solages, S.J., then a professor at l'Institut catholique de Toulouse wrote, "There arrived here an article by R.P Garrigou-Lagrange in which, under the title of 'The New Theology – Where Is It Going?', he accused a group of seven or eight French theologians, philosophers and scholars - arbitrarily designated by him, of Modernism." ("Il vient d'arriver ici un article du R.P. Lagrange, qui, sous le titre, 'La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?' accuse de Modernism un group constitué arbitrairement par lui de sept ou huit théologiens, philosophes et savants catholique française.") Bruno de Solages, "Pour l'honneur de la Théologie: Les contre-sens du R.P. Garrigou-Lagrange," *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique* (Avril-Juin, 1947): 65.

Garrigou-Lagrange responded to de Solages with a follow-up article, "Vérité et immutabilité du dogme" (Truth and Immutability of Dogma), *Angelicum* 24 (1947): 124-39. There, Garrigou-Lagrange objects to Solages' personal attack upon him, writing, "As in our first article, we place ourselves uniquely from the point of view of ideas, and speak from there as little as possible about persons. St. Thomas proceeded likewise and generally would not name the theologians of his time – and when he could not tolerate their opinions, he would satisfy himself to say: 'Some say . . .'" ("Comme dans notre premier article, nous nous plaçons uniquement au point de vu des idées, en parlent le moins possible des personnes. Ainsi procédait S. Thomas, qui généralement ne nommait pas les théologiens de son temps, dont il ne pouvait admettre les opinions, il se contentait de dire: 'Quidam dicunt . . .'"). Ibid.: 124. Notwithstanding, after this disclaimer Père Garrigou-Lagrange "regretfully felt obliged" to repeatedly name Maurice Blondel, "with whom we had . . . good relations", as well as Jesuit Père Henri Bouillard, as

For Garrigou-Lagrance, the *nouvelle théologie* embraced a companion *nouvelle vérité* which together constituted “very grave error” and led to a danger to the faith.¹¹⁰ If truth could change like a weathervane in the temporal winds of society and science then so could dogma. In support, Garrigou–Lagrance pointed to a similar comment recently made by Pius XII:

His Holiness, Pius XII, said recently in a speech published on September 19, 1946 by *l’Osservatore Romano*: “More things have been said, but not enough to explore with reasoning the “new theology” which is always going forward in a windy circle, never arriving. If it is necessary to embrace such an idea, *what will become of the never-changing, immutable catholic dogma, what of the unity of faith and stability?*” (my translations).¹¹¹

malfeasant modernists. Ibid., 124-9, 131-33, 138. Henri de Lubac and Gaston Fessard, a professor of fundamental theology at l’Institut catholique de Paris, are also named again. Ibid.: 134-35.

In Chapter One it was noted that because of his initial interest in Maurice Blondel, Congar may have been persuaded that there was merit to the historical approach, but little of the theology, of Alfred Loisy. Moreover, in fairness it is not wholly surprising that Garrigou-Lagrance would accuse Maurice Blondel by name. Blondel openly opposed the manual tradition of the Neo-Scholastics and influenced Pères Henri Bouillard and Gaston Fessard. Blondel, *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Illyd Trethowan (London: Harvill Press, 1964), 14. In a philosophical signature work, Blondel wrote of man’s innate and volitional desire for something beyond the natural, which is the supernatural. Maurice Blondel, *L’Action*, vol. 2, *Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine* (Paris: Alcan, 1936-37).

Finally, although Garrigou-Lagrance likens his conduct to Thomas Aquinas, the circumstances of St. Thomas and Garrigou-Lagrance are easily distinguished. Thomas’ environment was a scholastic one, and his purpose was to enlighten and teach, not criticize and condemn. Even as noted by Garrigou-Lagrance, those with whom Thomas disagreed were addressed only in general terms, such as “Quidam dicunt”, and his logic was devoid of personal accusations and polemics.

¹¹⁰ Garrigou-Lagrance, “La nouvelle théologie”: 130, 144. This argument against a “new truth” is perhaps the most penetrating line of reasoning put forth by Garrigou-Lagrance in his twenty-page *Angelicum* article. It evokes, *sub silencio*, Jesus’ pronouncement in John 18:37-8: “For this I was born and came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my word.” Pilate said to him, ‘What is truth?’”

At this time Père Garrigou Lagrange had been teaching dogmatics and lecturing on Thomism at the Angelicum in Rome since 1909. Lagrange maintained that the distinction made by Modernism between theological proposition and anthropological reality, which he then tied to the *nouvelle théologie*, would result in the annihilation of dogma. “The modernists, it was claimed, had undermined the infallibility of the Scriptures and were now determined to do the same with the Church’s Tradition.” Karim Schelkins, *Catholic Theology of Revelation on the Eve of Vatican II: A Redaction History of the Schema De fontibus revelationis (1960-62)* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill (2010), 49.

¹¹¹ Sa Sainteté, Pie XII disait récemment dans un Discours publié par *l’Osservatore romano* du 19 Sept. 1946: “Plura dicta sunt, at non satis explorata ratione, “de nova theologia” quae cum

Thus, Père Garrigou-Lagrange's base objections to the *nouvelle théologie* echoed and merged with the Vatican's base objections to Modernism - and now to the "nova theologia". They may be summed up in two of the foundations of dogma: *truth* and *immutability*.¹¹²

4. Congar's Theology of Revelation in Scripture and Dogma.

a. *Truth and progressive understanding of the immutable truth revealed.*

Congar's theology of divine revelation in Scripture and dogma stands in contrast to the slash and burn theological methodology of revelation embraced by Modernism. To see this we should first understand what Congar means by "revelation". To illustrate this, in *The Word and the Spirit* we find that Congar distinguishes the condemnatory language of *Lamentabili sane* (July 3, 1907), the Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists, regarding the positions taken by Alfred Loisey and George Tyrrell, from his own position on revelation:

Is revelation closed? Since the appearance of the decree *Lamentabili* on 3 July, 1907, Catholic treatises *De Revelatione* have had to include a paragraph on the closure of revelation with the death of the last apostle. The statement that was rejected was formulated in the following way: *Revelatio, objectum fidei catholicae constituans, non fuit cum Apostolis completa*, 'Revelation which constitutes the object of Catholic faith was not complete with the Apostles' [*Lamentabili* 21]. The Decree was opposed to the idea, suggested by Alfred Loisey, that revelation was situated in the religious intuitions of humanity, in a perception, growing and becoming more perfect with time, of the relationship between man and the unknown God [footnote omitted]. It also rejected George Tyrrell's mystical view that revelation appeared to an inner datum, a call or a prophetic message that continues to be heard in the consciousness of believers [footnote omitted]. Tyrrell admitted, however, [as opposed to Loisey,] that the revelation given by Christ and the apostles, independent of all later theological

universis semper vol-ventibus rebus, una volvatur, semper itura, numquam perventura. Si talis opinio amplectenda esse videatur, *quid fiet de numquam immutandis catholicis dogmatibus, quid de fidei unitate et stabilitate?*" Ibid. 134 (emphasis by Garrigou-Lagrange).

¹¹² This conclusion is reinforced and underscored by the title of the follow-up *Angelicum* article by Garrigou-Lagrange: "Vérité et immutabilité du dogme", *Angelicum* 24 (1947).

reflection, already contained everything that was necessary for the fullness of the life of faith, hope and charity. With the death of the last apostle, Tyrrell insisted, the regulative and classical period of Christian inspiration closed, not in the sense that revelation - which is to some degree a privilege of each man - ceased suddenly, but in the sense that all later revelation has to be checked and verified in order for it to be brought into agreement in spirit with the apostolic revelation [footnote omitted]. This is very close to the correct position adopted later, for example, by Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx¹¹³

b. *The truth of revelation.* Thus, for Congar the *truth* of revelation is not situated in Loisey's "religious intuitions of humanity" or Tyrrell's mystical notion of a believer's "inner datum", but it is sourced to God's initiative - a communication by God disclosing something about God.¹¹⁴ William Henn writes, "This is a major theme in Congar's understanding of revelation and, subsequently, of theology: revelation and theology entail a sharing of *God's own knowledge*."¹¹⁵ In an extensive pre-war article written by Congar for *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Congar - the man who loves truth as one loves a person, identifies revelation with *religious truth or positive revelation of which the church has charge*, together with *the graces* [of the church] *to teach that truth*:

*There is a religious truth; there is a revelation proceeding from God, a religious truth or positive revelation of which the church has charge, with the charismata or graces appropriate to that charge of teaching: graces of truth.*¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Yves M.J. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1986), 55-6. Originally published in French as *La Parole et le Souffle*. Paris: Desclée, 1984.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 105.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ This text appeared in "Théologie," an extensive article written by Congar before leaving for military duty in World War II and which appeared in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Vol. XV (1938-39), n.p. In his Preface to *A History of Theology*, Congar states that after returning from captivity in May, 1945, "I was surprised to see that the editor had discarded about two-fifths of my text." *A History of Theology*, trans. by Hunter Guthrie, S.J. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 7. In the latter work Congar let some of the changes stand but in other instances restored the deleted passages. *Ibid.*

c. *Scriptural revelation.* Congar held that this self-disclosure by God of his Word is the *prima veritas*, the First Truth, of revelation.¹¹⁷ This is another major theme in Congar's theology of revelation. God's Word is necessarily theocentric and implicitly rejects anthropocentric relativism and rationalism such as embraced by Modernism. Holy Scripture gives us "an interpretation of . . . all things, visible and invisible - an interpretation of the life of men and of human history *from the point of view of God.*"¹¹⁸ "The work of revelation and of salvific teaching (*sacra doctrina*) is coextensive with human history."¹¹⁹ But as Henn notes, for Congar this biblical revelation is progressive:

Sacred scripture is the *progressive revelation* of the plan of God concerning man and concerning the world. One does not understand the parts unless they are taken together, because they do not have sense except as particular moments or instances of an overall design which constitutes precisely the unity of this very whole.¹²⁰

d. "*Progressive*" revelation and its three stages. We need to be clear what Congar means and how he situates his term, "progressive revelation". I will start by again stating what it is not. It is not *continuous new* revelation, for were the Church to be guided by such a notion – i.e., revelation made out of wholly new cloth, it would no longer be the Church but a fragmenting series of groups, each adhering to some unique interpretation of a biblical text or "public" revelation. Similarly, were the same notion applied to dogma we would not have ecclesial unity of the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" but epistemological, liturgical and sacramental anarchy. What Congar

¹¹⁷ Yves Congar, *La foi et la théologie* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1962), 7. *La foi et la théologie* was used by Congar as a teaching manual. Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 104-5.

¹¹⁸ Henn in *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 105, citing Yves Congar, "What Can We Find in the Scripture?" in *Le vie del Dio vivo* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1965), n.p. (emphasis mine).

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 108. The cite at n. 25 refers to Yves Congar, "Le sens de 'l'economie' salutaire dans la 'théologie' de S. Thomas d'Aquin (Somme théologique)," in *Festgabe Joseph Lortz*, ed. Erwin Iserloh (BadenBaden: Grimm, 1957).

¹²⁰ Ibid., 108 citing Congar, "What Can We Find in the Scripture?", 14 (emphasis added).

means by his term of “progressive revelation” is that mankind can only approach and understand the fullness of God’s divine self-revelation in the Word over the ages.

Congar characterizes this in a subheading of Chapter I of *La foi et la théologie*, as the “*Économie du dévoilement de Dieu*” – the economy of the unwrapping of God.¹²¹

Congar sees three historical stages in the progressive revelation of God’s truth, or “unveiling of our eyes”: (1) “*natural revelation* corresponds [to] the unveiling which is the use of reason,” . . . (2) “*revelation through the prophets* corresponds [to] the unveiling of faith; . . .” and (3) “the *revelation of the glory of God* corresponds [to] the vision of the blessed” [beatific vision].¹²² Congar holds that the full progress of this revelation of what now we see through a glass darkly will be completed only at the eschaton, thus implicitly adding that our understanding of God’s full revelation will be incomplete until then.¹²³

e. *The revelation of dogma.* In *La foi et la théologie* Congar sets forth twenty theological theses with which he systematically deals. Two of them, Theses VII and VIII, are foursquare on point regarding dogma:

Thesis VII. By the word “dogma” we mean to set forth a truth held by the Word of God, written or transmitted, which the Church proposes for belief as divinely revealed in one authentic formulation, be it through solemn judgment or at the least through its ordinary and universal magisterium.

Thesis VIII. It is always necessary to preserve as to these sacred dogmas the meaning determined one time for all by our Mother the Holy Church.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Congar, *La foi et la théologie*, vii.

¹²² Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 109 (emphasis added).

¹²³ Ibid. Cf. 1 Cor 13:9-12: For we know in part and prophesy in part. 10. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12. For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. The quoted verses are taken from the KJV, which I use here for its lyricism.

¹²⁴ This is my translation of:

Thèse VII. Par le mot “dogme” on entend l’*énoncé* d’une vérité contenue dans la parole de Dieu, écrite ou transmise, et que l’Église propose à croire comme divinement révélée en une formulation authentique soit par un jugement solennel, soit du moins par son magistère ordinaire et universel. Congar, *La foi et la théologie*, 54.

Note, however, that an integration of Congar's understanding of "progressive revelation" into the dogma of "no new revelation" can only take place without schismatic consequences in a highly centralized and hierarchical institution - which centralization is one of the base complaints of modernists against the Catholic Church. As part of his proof, Congar accurately identifies Modernism with the error of denying any enduring meaning to religious language and assertions.¹²⁵ While Congar firmly holds to the Catholic dogmatic principle of no further revelation, we should remind ourselves that this is nuanced with regard to the progression of our understanding of what has been revealed but not yet fully understood. Another way to put this in focus is to think of it as a parallel to our understanding of the kingdom of God – 'now, but not yet'.¹²⁶

5. The *nouvelle théologie* as Initially Perceived by the Vatican. It is time to examine the emerging *nouvelle théologie* of the 1930s through the 1960s in France through the eyes of the Vatican. As we have seen, the path of Church-State relations with France had proved to be a risky and rocky undertaking by Rome. From the period of the first King of France, Philip II (1190-1223), the warp and woof of Rome's political relations with France had been ripped, rewoven, repaired and torn apart with apparent finality by the Revolution, only to be patched here and there with new French fabric on old venerated Roman clothe. We have also seen how the repression of the Church and the physical violence visited upon many of its clerics during the French Revolution had by the first

Thèse VIII. Il faut toujours maintenir aux dogmes sacrés le sens déterminé une fois pour toutes par notre Mère la Sainte Église. Congar, *La foi et la théologie*, 62.

Slightly different, yet compatible translations appear in Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 143.

¹²⁵ See generally, Congar, *La foi et la théologie*, 55-9.

¹²⁶ Mathew 3:2, 4:17, 4:23, 10:7, 24:14; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:42 and 10:9.

part of the twentieth century evolved into a civil indifference, an indifference which engendered wide-sweeping French Republican legislation transparently aimed at the emasculation and marginalization of the Catholic Church, and other faith traditions as well, on French soil.

a. *Painful Struggles: three encyclicals and an Oath.* We may call to mind that in 1893, Leo XIII issued his papal Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* on the subject of biblical inerrancy. Thereafter, on July 3, 1907, Pope Pius X signed *Lamentabili sane exetu*, approving the Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists, issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in which sixty-five objectionable Modernism propositions were listed and condemned. Scarcely two months later, on September 8, 1907, the Church published the papal Encyclical, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, by which it sought to suppress Modernist heresies in response to what it saw as the emerging Modernist crises. Thereafter, the anti-Modernist oath of 1910 had presumptively eliminated Modernism within the Catholic tradition.¹²⁷ Notwithstanding, relations between the Vatican and the French Republic were uneasy at best and were described by the 1914 *Catholic Encyclopedia* as follows:

[T]he pontificate of Pius X [1903-14] has had to carry on painful struggles. In France the pope had inherited quarrels and menaces. The “*Nobis nominavit*” question was settled through the condescension of the pope; but the matter of the appointment of bishops proposed by the Government, the visit of the [French] president to the King of Italy, with the subsequent note of protestation, and the resignation of two French bishops, which was desired by the Holy See, became pretexts for the Government at Paris to break off diplomatic relations with

¹²⁷ Promulgated on September 1, 1910 by Pius X, the Oath Against Modernism was to be sworn to by all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious superiors, and professors in philosophical-theological seminaries. By this oath, the declarant bound himself to completely oppose “the error of the modernists” and to “wholly submit to the condemnations, declarations, and prescripts” of the 1907 encyclical, *Pascendi dominici gregis*, and the 1907 papal decree, *Lamentabili sane*, particularly including “those concerning what is known as the history of dogmas.”

the Court of Rome. Meanwhile the [1905] law of Separation had been already prepared, despoiling the Church of France, and also prescribing for the Church a constitution which, if not openly contrary to her nature, was at least full of danger to her. Pius X, paying no attention to the counsels of short-sighted opportunism, firmly refused his consent to the formation of the *associations cultuelles*.¹²⁸

In the 1930s through the first part of the 1960s, just as the French Church was reenergizing her presence in France, the Roman Curia believed it saw a renewal of Modernism in a series of waves of “*la nouvelle théologie*” espoused by emerging French theologians, including Dominicans Marie-Dominic Chenu and Yves Marie-Joseph Congar as well as Jesuits Henri de Lubac and Jean Guenolé-Marie Daniélou.¹²⁹ At the same time, Dominican Garrigou-Lagrange – whose voice was certainly not the only one in Rome critical of the *nouvelle théologie*, was promising from his chair at the Dominican study house in Rome that this “new theology” would surely lead the Church back to Modernism - a very serious charge, indeed. The Church reacted decisively to these events, and it was not just the Dominicans who felt the stern and corrective hand of Rome, for the Jesuits and others did as well.¹³⁰ Antonio Russo comments on these

¹²⁸ *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914) “Modernism: Catholic and Modernist notions of dogma compared” available at www.newadvent.org/cathen/12137a.htm, Internet; accessed March 23, 2011.

¹²⁹ Years later, Congar, de Lubac and Daniélou, each of whom came under Vatican criticism and scrutiny, would be made Cardinals of the Church.

¹³⁰ In a letter to Jesuit Auguste Valensin (1879-1953), Maurice Blondel metaphorically reveals a scenario which was first familiar to the French Dominicans, then the French Jesuits: “The Society of Jesus is subjected to the yoke of a growing Neo-Thomism, and they are handed over, bound hand and foot, and tied to an ever-pregnant tyranny” (my translation of “La Compagnie de Jésus, subissant [subissait] le joug croissant d'un certain néothomisme, est livrée pieds et poings liés à une dictature toujours plus pregnant”). Auguste Valensin, *Correspondance Maurice Blondel et Auguste Valensin*, Vol. III: *Extraits de la correspondance de 1912 à 1947 avec Texte annoté par Henri de Lubac* (Paris: Aubier-Éditions Montaigne, 1965), 100-101.

Commenting on this passage, de Lubac acknowledged that Blondel had good reason to level this criticism. In de Lubac’s view Rome was embarked upon a perilous course which would result in grave consequences to the Jesuits: “This Neo-Thomism gave life to a powerful Neo-Scholastic bloc concerning the understanding and the study of the works of Saint Thomas” (my translation of “Ce néothomisme donne ainsi vie à un puissant bloc néoscholastique en ce concerne la compréhension et l’étude de l’œuvres de saint Thomas. Henri de Lubac, *Lettres de monsieur*

times with the dry understatement, “However, the dominant cultural climate during these years [1912-1947] among the French “scholasticats’ was not at all propitious to innovations.”¹³¹

Lest we go too far in this and override objectivity with sympathy, we might pause for a moment to consider the defensive position imposed upon Rome by this most recent development in France. I submit that a vigorous resistance and opposition by the Catholic Church to the programs of Yves Congar, M.-D. Chenu and like-minded others, such as Henri de Lubac, in this circumstance was entirely predictable. We need only return to what is now still fresh in our mind - as it surely was then in the institutional mind of the Vatican - the disastrous impact upon the Church of the dragnet ecclesial changes in France barely four decades past, not the least of which was the 1905 Act of Separation of Churches and the State. If we add to this what the Church - which was then, I submit, essentially the Church of Vatican I - *perceived* as a parallel campaign of continuing and dangerous theological assaults upon the traditionally absolute, ahistorical and immutable deposit of faith by French clerics proclaiming a shadowed form of Modernism under the mantle of the *nouvelle théologie*, then opposition by Rome to this development is also entirely understandable.

Etienne Gilson au père de Lubac (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 37 n. 5. As a consequence, on July 20, 1920 the General of the Jesuits, Père Ledochowski, addressed a letter to the provincial members of the Society prohibiting the promulgation of a thesis by Père Pierre Rousselot [who had a great influence upon de Lubac] entitled “The Eyes of Faith” (finally published in 1947), censuring another Member of the Society for adhering to Rousselot’s positions, and dismissing Rousselot and yet another disciple of Rousselot from their teaching chairs at Ore Place (Hastings). Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 48-9.

¹³¹ My translation of “Cependant, le climat culturel dominant pendant ces années parmi les scholasticats française n’est pas du tout propice aux innovations”. Antonio Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 48.

b. *The réalité of the “nouvelle théologie”*. “*Plus ça change, plus c’est la même*” – the more things change, the more they are the same. Distilled to basics, the ‘Modernist Crisis’ was loosely analogized by Étienne Gilson to the choice which had to be made in Christian Medieval Western thought between asceticism and Aristotelian Greek Humanism.¹³²

Of the two opposing tendencies within Christian thought, radical asceticism with its negation of human nature expressed in the *contemptus mundi*, and Humanism with its acceptance of [human] nature . . . – was the one to stifle the other, or could they be reconciled? To sacrifice Greek humanism to asceticism meant a break in the intellectual and moral continuity of mankind, a break in the unity of our interior life by opposing religious life in its most passionate form to the human ideal at its noblest. The sacrifice of Christian asceticism to Greek Humanism meant the neglect of the Divine gospels, the withering of the deepest springs of interior life, and ultimately a civilization of empty and formal elegance, characteristic later on of certain aspects of the Renaissance. St. Thomas . . . makes his choice both for the Greek naturalism and Christian supernaturalism, [and] fuses both in an indissoluble synthesis, and postulates, or rather guarantees, *the perfect development of natural man and of reason* in the name of the supernatural and of Revelation (emphasis added).¹³³

If, arguendo, Thomas Aquinas resolved this choice by a synthesis of the two positions, it is ironic that almost eight centuries later two separate underlying emphases of Thomism - neo-scholastic and historic, would be in tension in the persons of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange and Yves Congar and would, in time, persuade Garrigou-Lagrange that the *nouvelle théologie* should be identified with and equated to the worst heresies of Modernism.

The term “*nouvelle théologie*” was probably a deliberately pejorative one put in place to label and isolate those who were seen as its proponents.¹³⁴ Certainly it was used

¹³² Cf. Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas*, ed. G.A. Elrington, O.P., trans. Edward Bullough (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1937), ix.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ix-x.

¹³⁴ Henn opines that Garrigou-Lagrange invented the phrase, “*la nouvelle théologie*”. *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 11. Whether this is correct or not, the pejorative sense of the notion was

as such by Garrigou-Lagrange. It was employed with this connotation as well by conservative centrist forces within the Roman hierarchy who opposed the *nouvelle théologie* as a revanchist form of Modernism which they thought had been given last rites in 1907 with the papal Encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* and buried in 1910 with the Oath Against Modernism.

On September 17, 1946, in his address to the 29th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in Rome, Pope Pius XII both condemned and dismissed the notion of a “nova theologia”, commenting that it had been widely and sufficiently discussed and that it was time the matter was brought to an end.¹³⁵ Days later the Pope delivered a similar message to senior Dominicans in Rome, advising them to pay less attention to distractions of a “new theology” and more heed to Thomistic studies within their Order.¹³⁶ In 1968, making reference to both addresses Congar wrote:

It is true that Pius XII had used the expression “new theology” in his discourse of September 1946 to the general Congregation of the Jesuits. The tenor of this discourse had been repeated to the general chapter of the Dominican Fathers (without a repetition of the expression “new theology”). Shortly after these two discourses the [1950] Encyclical *Humani Generis* specified the precise

used by the Roman Curia in propaedeutic discourse on at least one occasion. On March 7, 1940, Pope Pius XII’s personal theologian, Padre Mariano Cordovani, O.P. (1883-1950), who had been regent of the Angelicum from 1927-38 and was later Master of the Sacred Palace, employed the phrase “modern theology” speaking to candidate priests gathered at the Angelicum for the Feast of Saint Thomas. He went on to warn the young priests-to-be against the dangers of the emerging “nuove tendenze teologiche”. Jürgen Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 4.

Padre Pietro Parente (later employed the same phrase two years later in an article which appeared on the front cover of the 9-10 February 1942 Vatican Newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*. Ibid. 147 n. 6. As to this, Mettepenning comments, “It is hardly accidental that the title of Parente’s contribution to *L’Osservatore* echoed Cordovani’s opinion.” Ibid., 4. By 1959, Padre Parente was “the right hand of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani at the head of the Holy Office.” Ibid. In 1965, Archbishop Parente was made Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

¹³⁵ ‘Il venerato Discorso del Sommo Pontefice alla XXIX Congregazione Generale della Compagnia di Gesù’, *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 38 (1946), 385, cited by Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 147 n. 9.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 4. The papal address, ‘Fervido Discorso del Sommo Pontefice ai Capitolari dell’Ordine dei Frati Predicatori’, *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 38 (1946), 385-89, appeared in the September 23-24, 1946 issue of *L’Osservatore Romano*. Mettepenning, *Nouvelle Théologie*, 147 n. 10.

points about which the Holy Father foresaw the danger of certain “novelties.” The dangers denounced arose from excessive concessions made to modern philosophies, dialectic materialism, existentialism, historicism, or – as is very evident today – irenics. They fostered a distrust of the use of reason in apologetics and theology, a weakening of speculative theology and of the value of dogmatic formulas, a neglect of the ordinary magisterium, and a failure to return to scriptural and patristic sources.

Today the crisis has passed, if indeed there was ever a crisis.¹³⁷

As we have seen, although he is characterized as part of the *nouvelle théologie* movement, Congar himself associated and identified his mission with the larger notion of *ressourcement*.¹³⁸ *Ressourcement* was a concept and a concern to which both Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac gravitated. In their loosely connected thought both Congar and de Lubac sought to move away from the strictures of Neo-Scholasticism and its handbook Neo-Thomism and return to scriptural, magisterial and patristic sources. It was *ressourcement* theology which drew Congar to his ecclesiology of unity and ecumenism, and reform and renewal. These ideas would bear fruit in the form of sweeping changes at Vatican II. It is Congar’s ecclesiology of ecumenism and unity, and renewal and reform to which we shall now turn.

¹³⁷ Yves Congar, *A History of Theology*, 11. Congar does not get any more specific here than he did in his interview with Jean Puyo. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*. But Henn writes that Congar understood that *Humani Generis* “was directed against his own work” (i.e., *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église*). Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 13. *Humani Generis* twice critically uses the term “irenicism” as causing Catholic authors to fall into error. Similarly, “historicism” is condemned as tainting both dogma and philosophy. Cf. Yves Congar, *Essais œcuméniques* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1984), 28.

¹³⁸ Congar’s 1950 *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église* stressed a *ressourcement* ecclesiology which embraced ecumenism and unity, renewal and reform. We have discussed the difficulty in defining the term in English. It means not only a return to one’s roots and sources, but encompasses the notions of reform, *aggiornamento* and perhaps most importantly, healing.

CHAPTER THREE

ECUMENICISM AND UNITY; *RESSOURCEMENT* AND REFORM

For Roman Catholics, Yves Congar is not simply an ecumenist – he is, in a unique way, the person and the theologian who led Catholics into the ecumenical movement begun by Protestants, a movement which has furthered the unity of Christians with remarkable rapidity and originality even as it has removed the hostility of centuries.

- Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P.¹

I. THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

Throughout his clerical life, Yves Congar sought ecumenism and unity of all Christians with the Catholic Church and reform and a return to the sources, or *ressourcement*, within the Church. Yet, until Vatican II his was a voice crying in the wilderness.

A. The Face of the Church. In 1953 Congar wrote:

If only the human face of the Church could be renewed and made so that she appears more clearly as the Church of Christ! In short, certain changes are considered necessary in the forms of life and the *structural elements* [footnote omitted] of the Church, that is in the style of catechetics and preaching, and consequently in the formation of the clergy, in the exterior forms of worship, in the conduct of parishes, in certain forms assumed by the visible Church (out-of-date pomp and display). All of this [change must be effected] in the light and under the inspiration of a re-scrutiny of sources – the scriptures, the patristic

¹ Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P. "Ecumenist of Our Times: Yves Congar," *Mid-Stream* 27, no. 1 (1988): 67.

fathers, the magisterium, the early Councils, the spirit of the early liturgies, the important documents of the magisterium.²

Congar was not objecting to the dogma, sacraments and hierarchical constitution of the structure of the Church. He sought a change in the life of the Church by a return to the Bible and Early Church sources such as the liturgy and the magisterium. He sought a reform of certain man-made “structural elements” and exterior forms of worship, appended by man to the Church over the centuries. This would include what he characterized as the baroque theology and extreme clericalism of the Church, its isolationism and reticent ecumenism, its excessive ceremonial pomp, its separation of clerics and the Mass from the faithful and, above all, the unattractive absolutist juridical-hierarchical face it presented to the world. This is the key to the reform which Congar proposed - and as the thesis of this Chapter, I submit that this was never fully understood by the Roman Curia until well into Vatican II: Congar was a voice crying out in the wilderness, driven by the Holy Spirit.³

Père Yves Congar saw the “baroque theology” of the Roman Catholic Church in the first half of the twentieth century as essentially that of the mid-sixteenth century

² Yves M.J. Congar, “Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l’Église”, translated by Lancelot C. Sheppard *Cross Currents* 3 no. 4 (Summer, 1953): 363. In a footnote to this passage, Congar explains that the admittedly vague term, ‘structural elements,’ has nothing to do with the hierarchical structure of the Church or its dogma and sacraments. Rather, Congar employs the term to denote realities which over the years had accreted to the life of the Church. Congar, *Cross Currents* 3: 365, n. 4. These *structural elements* of the Church thus became incidental forms of “realities which belong to the life of the Church, yet which are of human origin, subject to the dictates of man.” Citing J. Follet, “Qu’est-ce qu’un réform de structure?” (What is a reform of structure?), *Chronique sociale de France*, 1946: 23-42. Congar states that it is the “social reality constituted by human intervention” in the Church for which he seeks change. Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 363, 364-5, n. 4; Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, 55.

³ Matt 3:3: For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’ ” NKJV

Counter-Reformation which had been developed in polemics with Protestant Reformers.⁴

To Congar's eye, centuries of manning a defensive theological perimeter against the Protestant Christian community had led to an absolutist juridical-hierarchical public image of the Church.⁵

II. CONGAR'S PERCEPTION OF THE ISOLATION OF ROME

Thomas O'Meara, O.P. comments that divided churches come with divided theologies, adding, "The isolation of Rome furthered an uncritical attitude of distance or skepticism towards ecumenism."⁶ To Congar, this attitude compromised the building up of the body of Christ, which commandment for him was the consummate goal of all ministries.⁷ In the spring of 1962, on the threshold of Vatican II, Congar no doubt deliberately commented on the ecumenical consequences of the unfavorable clerical "face" of the Church:

⁴ "Baroque théologie" was a term coined by Congar and his confreres Marie-Dominic Chenu and Henri-Marie Fêret at Le Saulchoir to describe the consequences of this development. Cf. Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité: Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 45-6. Similarly, Congar saw the Protestant Reformation itself as a reaction to what were primarily Western medieval developments such as scholasticism; the accretion and assertion of papal power; and the pervasiveness of canon law over the life of the faithful, where both the City of God and the City of man were ruled by law, one divine, and the other imitating divinity. Cf. Meakin, "The Same but Different"? *The Relationship Between Unity and Diversity in the Theological Ecumenism of Yves Congar*, *Studia Theologica Lundensia* 50 (Ph.D. diss. Lund University, 1995), 130. Thus, there is a concrete commonality and continuity between the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation and Congar's call for reform within the Church.

⁵ Yves Congar, "Le sacerdoce du Nouveau Testament: mission et culte," (The Priesthood of the New Testament, Mission and Worship) in Jean Frisque and Yves Congar, ed., *Les Prêtres, Unam Sanctam* 68 (Paris: Cerf, 1968): 256.

⁶ O'Meara, "Ecumenist of Our Times: Yves Congar," *Mid-Stream* 27, no. 1 (1988): 69.

⁷ Mark 16:15-16: He [Jesus] said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned."

. . . [T]he face which the Catholic Church presents to the world determines to a large degree the chances of reunion of all the Christian Churches

And isn't it true that a certain screen of convention and respectability has separated [the Catholic churchman] from the genuine reactions of man? In my opinion, it is in this that the alarmingly ritualized part of our clerical life—its dress, habits of life, vocabulary, etc.—has its most serious defect. This hinders us, and the more so as we rise in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, from contact with men in those moments when they express themselves most freely. In front of [clerics], they scarcely ever do this. The Church is the victim of her priestly caste, of the categories of thought, life and *expression* which she has inherited from the centuries of the Roman Empire and of Christendom, and which she still wears as the Swiss guards still wear the helmets designed by Michelangelo⁸

The 'face of the Church' was a recurrent theme for Congar. We know that decades

before, in the spring of 1930 after his ordination, he would pen a heart-felt cry to God:

The union of the Churches! My God, why has your Church, which is holy and is one, unique, holy and true, why has she so often such an austere and forbidding face when in reality she is full of youth and life?

In reality, we are the Church's face; it is we who make her visible; my God, make of us a truly living face for your Church!⁹

a. *The reasons for unbelief.* By 1935, Congar had concluded that the negative "wholly juridico-hierarchical" public face of the Church was the principal reason for unbelief of its teachings.¹⁰ Commencing in 1932, a three year study had been conducted by Congar's publisher, Les Éditions du Cerf, for the Dominican journal *La Vie intellectuelle* regarding the reasons for unbelief within the Catholic Church in France.¹¹

⁸ Yves M.J. Congar, "The Council in the Age of Dialogue", trans. Barry N. Rigney, *Cross Currents* 12 no. 2 (Spring 1962): 145-7 (emphasis by Congar).

⁹ This excerpt of the full quote set forth in Chapter One is part of a manuscript found among Congar's papers and which dates to his post-ordination trip to Germany in 1930. The document itself is dated September 17, 1930. Congar wrote that "I reproduce it here to show my feelings at that time." Yves Congar, O.P., *Dialogue Between Christians* (London: G. Chapman, 1966) 5 n. 3.

¹⁰ Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 3.

¹¹ Congar, "The Council in the Age of Dialogue", 147. *La Vie intellectuelle* was one of France's most influential Catholic journals, published during the years leading up to and following World War II, 1928-40 and 1945-56. Founded in 1928 by the Dominicans at the request of Pius XI and with the support of philosopher Jacques Maritain, it was dedicated to a reinvigoration of Catholic social thought. It stood against Modernism and the French Catholic political action groups, the Republican and socialist-leaning Sillon and the right-wing l'Action Française. Its mantra was *ni*

As an editor of *La Vie intellectuelle*, Congar had been asked by his coworkers at Cerf to complete the study with a theological conclusion.¹² In preparation for this, Congar states that he “read all the articles published during those years on the subject, pursued it with my students in a seminar, and formulated my conclusion.”¹³ This conclusion, which was limited to the French Church, was set forth in a thirty-six page article in *La Vie intellectuelle* entitled, “Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l’incroyance” (A theological conclusion regarding the inquiry as to the present reasons for unbelief).¹⁴ Thereafter, Congar also inaugurated a series of articles and reports dealing with ecumenism and Protestantism in *La Vie intellectuelle*, which O’Meara comments was “something utterly new.”¹⁵

Congar’s fresh and original ideas soon resulted in requests to appear and speak at a number of ecumenical meetings and gatherings.¹⁶ O’Meara writes:

droite, ni gauche (neither right, nor left). Pères Chenu and Congar were frequent contributors to *La Vie intellectuelle*. The journal was published by Éditions du Cerf, which itself was established in 1929 by the Dominicans. Richard Francis Crane. Review of “*La Vie intellectuelle: Marc Sangnier, le thomisme et le personnalisme*” by Jean-Claude Delbreil, *The Catholic Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 2010): 854.

¹² Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 3; O’Meara, *Ecumenist of Our Times: Yves Congar*, 70.

¹³ Yves Congar, “Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P.,” *Theology Digest* 32 no. 3: 213. This letter was written on March 7, 1985 by Congar in response to a request from his colleagues in the United States who were conducting a seminar on his theology.

We should not forget that Congar had spent much of his time both before and after his ordination in ecumenical studies and dialogue. As previously noted, he had been permitted to make several trips to Germany in the 1930s to study Luther at Wartburg, Wittenberg and Erfurt. During this period he associated with French Calvinist theologians. In Paris he became acquainted with the theology of Karl Barth. There, he also participated in a French-Russian Orthodox ecumenical discussion group. Cf. O’Meara, *Ecumenist of our Times: Yves Congar*, 70.

¹⁴ Yves Congar, O.P., *La Vie intellectuelle* 37: (July 25, 1935): 214-49. Three years later this article was published in English in two parts as “The Reason for the Unbelief of our Time: A Theological Conclusion,” *Integration* (August-September 1938): 13-21 and *Integration* (December 1938-January, 1939): 10-26. Gabriel Flynn also cites these two articles (giving a slightly different period for the first article) in his bibliography. Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 237.

¹⁵ O’Meara, *Ecumenist of our Times: Yves Congar*, 70.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

[T]he theological response to Protestants was not simply apologetic but theological; the lives as well as the writings of Protestants demanded a response of understanding on the part of the Catholics but also a “conversion” to appreciating the evangelically faithful riches of other churches. This ministry led to a climax in 1936/1937.¹⁷

b. *The corporate responsibility for unbelief.* Some years later, in a 1962 *Cross Currents* article, “The Council in the Age of Dialogue”, and in his subsequent 1984 *Theology Digest* letter to an American study group, Congar’s strident criticism of the “baroque” theology of the Vatican had markedly moderated.¹⁸ While he still found fault with the clericalism of the Church, Congar realized there was a corporate, or group responsibility for unbelief - a responsibility which lay not just within the Church upper hierarchy but within the whole body of Christ. What Congar will emphasize as part of the remedy is a grass-roots renewal of ecclesiology: “It seemed to me that since the belief or unbelief of men *depended so much on us*, the effort to be made was a renovation of ecclesiology.”¹⁹ But as a predicate to all this, we need first to consider the seeds of Congar’s ecumenicism.

B. Congar’s Vocation of Ecumenism

¹⁷ Ibid. Congar preached a particularly moving series of sermons at Sacre-Cœur Basilica in Paris in January of 1936 as part of the Unity Octave during the Week of Christian Unity. These sermons would form the substance of *Chrétiens désunis*. Congar took his ideas to the 1937 ecumenical conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh and that year he worked them into a book, *Chrétiens désunis*. Yves M.-J. Congar des Frères-Prêcheurs, *Chrétiens désunis: Principes d’un “œcuménisme” catholique*, Unam Sanctam 1 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1937). *Chrétiens désunis* was published in English as *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. M.A. Bousfield, O.P. (London: Centenary Press, 1939). It is perhaps the first contemporary theology of ecumenism from a Roman Catholic perspective.

¹⁸ Congar, “Letter from Father Yves Congar,” 213-14; Congar, “The Council in the Age of Dialogue”, *Cross Currents* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 147-8.

¹⁹ Ibid., 147 (emphasis mine).

Ecumenicism has been my concern, I would even say my vocation for a very long time; it is a vocation that I can date quite precisely from 1929, though it has antecedents, kinds of preparation in my childhood and youth of which I have spoken elsewhere. I even ask myself, often, if I have been faithful to this vocation and this grace.²⁰

The dating by Yves Congar of his ecumenical vocation to 1929 nearly coincides with the *nouvelle théologie* movement. It was sourced principally in France through the activities of the Dominicans and Jesuits, but also found a voice in Germany and Belgium during the period from 1930 to the early 1960s. This movement was in part a reaction to the secularism which was rooted in French Humanism and energized and spread by the French Revolution.²¹ Gabriel Flynn praises Congar as “the foremost French theologian of this epoch” and “one of the chief architects of an exceptional renewal of Roman Catholic ecclesiology in the twentieth century,” adding:

He contributed to the recovery of the biblical images of the Church which emphasize its mystical nature rather than the hierarchical and societal aspects that had been given such prominence in the previously dominant post-Tridentine ecclesiology. Congar’s vision for ecclesial renewal led to a profound transformation of the Roman Catholic Church, its relationship with the other Christian Churches, and the world.²²

1. Service within the Institution Which Is the Church; Graces and Special

Graces. Like Congar, we must take care not to envision an ecclesial mysticism or charismatic movement which so trumps the institutional form of the Church that it would cause division within the Church itself.²³ Congar never stood for a charisma which

²⁰ Yves Congar, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*, Bernard Lauret, ed., trans. John Bowman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 77.

²¹ Cf. Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 1, citing Gustave Weigel, S.J., “The Historical Background of the Encyclical *Humani Generis*,” 217 and Etienne Fouilloux, *La Collection “Sources chrétiennes” : éditer les Pères de l’Eglise au XXe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 115-16.

²² Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 1.

²³ The central authority for the sociological appeal of the charismatic in an institutional setting is Max Weber (1864-1920), whose major works, particularly his three volume *Collected Essays on*

consumed the hierarchy. His *ecclésiologie totale* – an ecclesiology at the service of the Truth of Christ, requires unity, not separation. Whatever his criticisms, Congar saw the Church as an “institutional activity willed by God, determined by Him in its essential structure”²⁴ Citing 1 Cor 7:7, Congar spoke out against the “false problem” between charisms and institution/institutional functions.²⁵ He holds that ‘charisms’ are different gifts flowing from one single grace and are purposed for the particular vocation of the Christian who receives it.²⁶ In other words, he reminds us that the Holy Spirit’s various gifts are freely given, *gratis datae*, not to raise up *individuals* (which is Weber’s charismatic leader analysis) but for the common good - “for the building-up of the *Church* or the life of *the Body of Christ*” (emphases added).²⁷ From the post-apostolic era continuing to recent times, however, per Congar, these charisms given by the Holy Spirit came to be misunderstood as *special graces* extraordinarily and miraculously bestowed upon certain persons for special individual circumstances – miracles and

the Sociology of Religion, describe the sensitized appeal of the charismatic and its leader and the desire to participate in the charismatic act and be part of the group. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922-23). See also *Max Weber On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), xxii.

²⁴ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 99.

²⁵ 1 Cor 7:7: “Indeed, I wish everyone to be as I am, but each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another;” Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Experience of the Spirit*, vol. 1 (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.* In 1979-80, Congar will return to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, arguing for a recovery of a lay *pneumatological anthropology* (*une anthropologie pneumatologique*) which he claimed had been unfortunately pre-empted by an excessively zealous hierarchical Church in a *pneumatological ecclesiology* (*une ecclésiologie pneumatologique*). Thus, Congar would write that “The Holy Spirit has sometimes been forgotten.” Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit I*, 159. Using Congar’s terms, Elizabeth Groppe describes Congar’s understanding of “the eclipse of the Holy Spirit from ecclesiology” through the Church’s teaching authority. Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4. See also Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, “The contribution of Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit,” *Theological Studies* 61 (September, 2001), 451.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-6. Cf. 1 Peter 4:10: As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.

healings, etc.²⁸ In a footnote, Congar cites Leo XIII's Encyclical, *Divinum Illud Munus* (On the Holy Spirit, May 9, 1897) as an example of this interpretation.²⁹ At the same time, German Protestants spoke of the opposition between “free charisms and institutional functions.”³⁰ Even Catholics who rejected this notion accepted a divisive tension between special gifts of grace and the mission of the institutional Church.³¹ Congar then notes that these charisms, in the sense Paul used them, “have made a remarkable return to modern Catholic theology,” and were spoken of by Pius XII in his 1943 Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (*The Mystical Body of Christ*).³²

2. The Need for an “*ecclésiologie totale*”: Ecclesiology at the Service of the Truth of Christ. Congar's renewal of Roman Catholic ecclesiology is part of his *ressourcement* ecclesiology referenced in Chapters One and Two. We will later see it embodied in Yves Congar's 1937 *Chrétiens désunis* and particularly in his 1950 *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*.³³ In Chapter Two the meaning of the French word, “*ressourcement*”, was defined to include not only a return to Christian roots and sources, but also to encompass the ideas of *aggiornamento* and healing - and most significantly, reform and healing. To this should be added the corollary sense of the French reflexive

²⁸ Congar, *Holy Spirit*, 36. Congar also references Origen, Irenaeus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Leo XIII as supporters of this interpretation.

²⁹ Interestingly, the language Congar cites is not found in *Divinum Illud Munus*. In section 9 of that encyclical, Leo XIII emphasized “the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just” with gifts not to aggrandize the individual but which are “excited in our minds and hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost . . . who invisibly vivifies and unites the Church.”

³⁰ Congar, *Holy Spirit I*, 36.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi* (*The Mystical Body of Christ, the Church*, June 29, 1943) 17 and 47. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1997), hereinafter *CCC*, seems clearly to embrace both interpretations. *CCC* art. 2003, speaks of *special graces* sometimes given extraordinarily such as the gift of miracles or tongues. However, whatever their character, graces are oriented toward sanctifying grace and “are intended for the common good of the Church.” Ibid.

³³ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis* (Paris: Cerf, 1937); Yves M.-J. Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église*. Unam Sanctam 20 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1950).

verb, *se ressourcer* – to return to one’s origins and roots, to recharge, refresh and renew one’s spirit. Congar concluded that to accomplish this *ressourcement* - which embraced ecumenism and unity, and renewal and reform, required an “*ecclésiologie totale*”. By this term Congar means that the hierarchical Church must undergo a Spirit-led ecclesiastical renewal and reform which would understand and inform the reality of the Church, not solely as a hierarchical (or as he would later describe it as a “hierocratic” clerically-dominated institution), but as the Church of the people of God and the body of Christ. But we must be clear that Congar does not suggest that the Church hierarchy be dismantled, but rather that its rigid clericalism be reformed to better serve the body of the faithful.³⁴ This is Congar’s “total ecclesiology”, an ecclesiology at the service of the Truth of Christ - and to be a Christian is to belong to this active fraternal communion.³⁵

³⁴ In response to a question posed to him by Bernard Lauret regarding reconciliation among Christian Churches, Congar deflected the focus to clericalism and used the term “hierocratic” in summoning up visions of the lingering effects of clericalism in the Church and the lay antidotes to it: secularization and laicization. In doing so, Congar expressed frustration with the Church’s historic use of the supernatural so as to sustain an unbridled and controlling clericalism in contravention of what he termed “empirical common sense” in “the world of human realities” and the predictable consequences thereof:

But this Christianity and this monasticism have been monopolized by the Church, and by a Church which became increasingly clerical and even ended up by being very theocratic and even hierocratic (theocracy being the domination of God and hierocracy - domination of priests). That was very serious because it provoked a reaction: I would like to call it a reaction of empirical common sense against a supposedly ‘supernatural’ explanation. It was ridiculous to explain an invasion of rats by saying that people had not been going to mass. And it was ridiculous to explain a sickness as being a consequence of blasphemy, because in reality there are secondary causes, real causes, specific causes. So at a particular moment in every realm of life those knowledgeable in the world of human realities rebelled against the claim of the clergy and above all the senior hierarchy that they had a right to dominate and control everything and ultimately to stifle research into earthly truths. The process of secularization, which asserted itself with science at the end of the sixteenth century, was able to reinforce a process of declericalization which had preceded it (from the Middle Ages on) and which was accentuated by the secularization of politics in the nineteenth century. . . .

This laicization raises serious questions for us, because of a certain [resulting] gulf between Christianity and the rest of human life. Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 23-5.

³⁵ Cf. John 18:37: So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Thus, Yves Congar thought Karl Rahner’s use of the

3. Truth, truths and Duty: The Hierarchy of Truths. Previously we discussed that as a direct result of his childhood experiences in World War One and from his encounters with Protestant fellow prisoners of war in World War Two, Congar would stress unity in the form of Christian ecumenism as part of his view of the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church.³⁶ We might also recall that his Dominican *lectorat* dissertation was based on Johann Adam Möhler's ecumenical work, *Die Einheit in der Kirche* (Unity in the Church).³⁷ But most significantly, while preparing for his ordination Congar was struck by the ecumenism of the seventeenth chapter of John:

It was while meditating upon the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel that I clearly recognized my vocation to work for the unity of all who believe in Jesus Christ. Ever since the days immediately following my ordination, I have often repeated that prayer, especially when celebrating the votive Mass *pro unitate*

I have said that it was then that I *realized* my ecumenical vocation, but the seeds of it had been sown in me for many years, no doubt even from my childhood. . . .

. . .

I am convinced that, as the result of a profound logic and stemming from the circumstances described above, my vocation has always been

term, "anonymous Christian," was inappropriate: for Congar, to be a Christian one must be a conscious, active part of the body of Christ.

³⁶ This would include the young Congar's pre-World War I experiences with Jewish and Protestant playmates, the children of his parents' friends, and the Catholic families attending Mass in a local Protestant chapel for six years during the War. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 6-7, 93; Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 77. Congar commented that while he was a P.O.W during World War Two he had met "marvelous Protestant friends", adding, "On my part, I adopted that attitude with my Protestant friends that I had always had about ecumenism: for example, always look for the main common denominator, the points on which it was possible for us both to understand." ("Pour ma part, j'adoptais l'attitude que j'ai toujours eue dans l'œcuménisme avec mes amis protestants par exemple; chercher au maximum le commun dénominateur, les points sur lesquels il était possible de se comprendre.")

³⁷ Johann A. Möhler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche: oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus, dargestellt im geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (The Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism Shown in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Hundred Years) (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald Verlag, 1925).

at one . . . and the same time and for the same reason priestly and religious, Dominican and Thomistic, ecumenical and ecclesiological.³⁸

a. *First glimmers of unity in diversity.* Congar's ecumenism would lead him to a fuller view of Catholic ecclesiology and a layered understanding of and hope for Christian ecumenical unity – a unity in the Truth of Christ.³⁹ At this point in his life Congar believed that such Truth is found not just in the Catholic Church, but also in the unity of the body of Christ in the church universal - which to Congar *is* the *one* Church. Harking back to his ordination days, Congar would say:

In John 17 Jesus prays for all those who keep his own words through the words of the apostles. And that is basically his Church. So I ask myself whether one cannot extend this notion of Church beyond the confessional form of the church, however profound and holy it may be. It may be, for example, the Roman Catholic Church; or the Orthodox Church, which is also holy and venerable.⁴⁰ I am convinced that there is one Church, but is it not larger than what we can see? Since then I have finally asked myself whether we should not ask ourselves again about this text in John 17. For it says: 'That they may be one as we are one', and in Greek the *as* is *kathos*, which does not simply denote an imitation but expresses the source of our own unity. Now the Father, the Son and the Spirit are three hypostases which are distinct as such, but have the same substance and are as one in the other. I think that the term *perichoresis* or circumincession is very important in theology: the persons are as the one in the other. *So I ask myself to what degree one should not accept a unity which itself encompasses difference, but differences which, by a dialogue which continues to be extremely open, would be as one in the other, i.e., would not close in on themselves. . . .*⁴¹

³⁸ Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P. *Dialogue between Christians: Catholic Contributions to Ecumenism*, trans. Philip Lorenz, S.J. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 3-4, 5. Originally published in French as *Chrétien en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme*, Unam Sanctam 50 (Paris: Cerf, 1964).

³⁹ Congar would write of the seventeenth chapter of John that it is "sometimes called the priestly prayer, but which I prefer to call the apostolic prayer of Jesus on Christian unity: 'That they may be one as we are one.'" Yves Congar, "Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P.," *Theology Digest* 32 no. 3 (1984): 213.

⁴⁰ In 1982, Congar would confess, "More than fifty years of careful study, numerous contacts and a good deal of reading have led me to the firm conclusion that at the sacramental level, i.e., where the supernatural mystery is expressed in our world, East and West are the same church." Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1984), 73.

⁴¹ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 79 (emphasis mine).

Congar tied this devotion to Christ's Truth and a nuanced notion of a lower tier of recognized truths, such as historical biblical truths, pastoral truth and political truths, with a concomitant right to dissent or disagree. He concluded that "one has the right to disagree when one has the duty to, and the duty can only be that of the truth."⁴² Thus, in Congar's eyes one has the *duty* to dissent and speak out when truth has been compromised.

b. *The hierarchy of truths.* This brings us to an encounter with the Catholic notion of the "hierarchy of truths".⁴³ At first blush, this might lead one to the erroneous conclusion that in Catholic theology, some things are "more true" than others and its corollary that one truth can be "less true" than another. But in the deposit of Christian faith, truth is truth: there are no half-truths or partial truths. What is fair comment is that in Catholic doctrine some truths are more central than others to the Truth of Christ.

Congar puts it nicely with an allegory:

Catholic doctrine is organized rather like a tree, the smallest branches of which are connected to the trunk by others. The trunk is Christ, God incarnate, the Redeemer, and therefore the principle of grace Everything is attached to one foundation (a trunk), which is the mystery of Christ the saviour⁴⁴

On December 8, 1986, writing from Les Invalides, Paris where he had been hospitalized for over two years, Congar spoke of the ecumenism in Christian commonality and the hierarchy among truths:

I am . . . impressed by the fact that the concrete life of believers belonging to confessions which hold different doctrinal positions is so often the same. For example, Orthodox or Catholic pneumatology; the communion in the body and blood of Christ among Protestants and ourselves; pastoral consecration and episcopal ordination.

⁴² Ibid., 76.

⁴³ See generally, William Henn, O.F.M. CAP. *The Hierarchy of Truths According to Yves Congar, O.P.* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1987).

⁴⁴ Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, 128.

[W]hat is meant by “the truth” . . . is reality; more precisely, it is the representation I make of reality and seek to render adequate to that reality. It is in this effort that I have spent my life. If there exists a hierarchy among truths, it is first of all in the realities. Certainly it is only there because the Uncreated Spirit of God (“Veritas prima”) has conceived the realities to be in such a way. The hierarchy of truths is implanted in the realities by divine knowledge. We can recognize it by our natural knowledge and by the faith which receives Revelation. The only adequate faith is that of the Church, which is the assembly and communion of the faithful.

This Church, diverse and organic at one and the same time, *lives the faith in the circumstances of our time and the cultural conditioning of space. From this comes the historicity of the recognitions and expressions of truth* which pertain to its life of faith. . . . [T]he arranging of truths in an order rests upon and takes its point of departure from the foundation of the Christian mystery. That gives a certain value to the notion of . . . the fundamental truths . . . within the organic and living faith of the Church.

One finds the expression “hierarchy of truths” in the Council’s Decree on Ecumenism [*Unitatis Redintegratio*]. This notion should clearly find application in the practice of ecumenism (emphasis added).⁴⁵

Congar was always drawn to what unites and what he has done here is to recognize the drawing together of fundamental Christian truths. Despite doctrinal differences the lives of believers of Catholics and non-Catholics is “so often the same”.⁴⁶ From this Congar infers that certain central truths have been independently embraced by other Christian confessions - so much so that the Christ-life of their faithful is often indistinguishable from that of the Catholic. This is a critical insight into Congar’s ecumenism. To this he adds that since the “hierarchy of truths” was expressed in the Vatican II Council’s Decree on Ecumenism it must have an ecumenical dimension. For example, might it not be applied as an argument for “reconciled diversities”, or unity in diversity? If there is indeed a spectrum of Christian truths, some admittedly more central

⁴⁵ This is a quote of selected text from Congar’s *Preface* to Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, ix-xi. We shall return to this topic in the Chapter 4 discussion of the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (November 21, 1964), specifically section 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

than others, then Congar would urge us to seek to find those truths we have in common and by which we can claim a certain unity.

C. *Ressourcement*: Restoration of a Renewed Ecclesiology

In Congar's 1984 letter to his American colleagues he admitted a responsibility of the entire Church for "a poor presentation of the church" – which in an upbeat measure he proposed could be cured by a return to the sources or *ressourcement*:

It was clear to me that, *insofar as it depended on us*, the cause of unbelief was largely related to a poor presentation of the church, to a not very attractive, even repulsive, appearance, one that was wholly juridical-hierarchical. Something would have to change. *Our contribution obviating those reasons for unbelief would be a truly traditional presentation of the life of the church, one based on the great inspirations of the first centuries . . . i.e., on the sources*. You see at once that my theology, to the extent that one can speak of my theology, is linked specifically to a study of the sources, with a great reliance on those sources: . . . *scripture, the fathers, the liturgy, the great councils, and the very life of the church, the Christian community* (emphases mine).

Finally, all these things came together: my interest in ecumenism, which of course presupposed an ecclesiology, and my interest in a new ecclesiology.⁴⁷

This emphasis by Congar upon our corporate responsibility is a refocus away from placing blame solely on Rome to one which includes the body of Christ, particularly its ordained members. In turn, this means a common responsibility and interest by the body of Christ in a renewed ecclesiology based upon *ressourcement*, Congar's antidote for a "baroque" Church.

⁴⁷ Congar, "Letter from Father Yves Congar," *Theology Digest*: 213-14. Congar's invocation of a "new" ecclesiology as a consequence of a return to the sources was problematic: the better fit for Congar's stated end would prove to be a "renewed" ecclesiology, a term he later used almost exclusively.

1. Unam Sanctam. For years after it was completed, the 1932-35 lodestar study of the “reasons for unbelief” continued to have a significant impact upon Congar. In its wake in 1937 he founded Unam Sanctam, a series of published works dedicated to the restoration and renewal of ecclesiology by a return to the historic roots of both Scripture, the Church fathers and great councils, liturgy and the life of the Church community.⁴⁸ Elizabeth Groppe notes that the first volume of Unam Sanctam “included a flyer which introduced the series and set forth its goal. This announcement was not signed by Congar but as was observed, it certainly bears Congar’s stamp and expresses his theological vision. Copies of this prospectus are very difficult to find, so van Vliet reproduced the full text in the appendix of *Communio sacramentalis*.” For the same reasons, I include it below.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 2. Bear in mind that the 1937 inaugural publication of Éditions du Cerf’s Unam Sanctam series was Congar’s *Chrétiens désunis (Divided Christendom)*. As an aside, the Unam Sanctam series may well have been named after Boniface VII’s 1302 papal Bull, *Unam Sanctam* (One God, One Faith, One Spiritual Authority), which emphasized the unity of the Church.

⁴⁹ Groppe, *Yves Congar’s Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 179 n. 29, citing and providing the text of the flier as translated and reproduced by Cornelis van Vliet in *Communio sacramentalis: Das Kirchenverständnis von Yves Congar – genetisch und systematisch betrachtet (Sacramental communion: The Understanding of the Church by Yves Congar – considered genetically and systematically)* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1995), 61 n.132, as follows:

UNAM SANCTAM. These words of the creed are the title of a collection of studies on the Church, published by Editions du Cerf. The idea for this collection was born from a double concern. On the one hand, when one reflects on the great problems of Catholic life and expansion, on modern unbelief and indifference, and *finally on the reunion of separated Christians*, one is led to think that the amelioration of the present state of affairs, *in so far as it depends on us*, requires that a large, rich, vibrant, fully biblical and traditional idea of the Church penetrate Christianity: first the clergy, then the elite Christians, then the entire body. On the other hand, an incontestable *renewal* of the idea of the church is manifest on all sides where, as it is normal, the impulse of interior and apostolic life precedes theology. Naturally the desire is born to respond to the need that one has perceived, to serve a movement that is manifestly sustained by the Holy Spirit. These two aspects at root call forth the same response: an intellectual effort directed to a truly broad, living and serious theology of the Church. This is the work that, for its part, without belittling the merit of other similar publications, *Unam Sanctam* wishes to pursue.

Flynn notes that Congar himself expressed the belief that *Unam Sanctam* had prepared the way for Vatican II.⁵⁰ In point of fact, ecumenicism and thus *ressourcement* was indeed a special focus of the *Unam Sanctam* series.⁵¹ Gabriel Flynn proposed that Congar envisioned a renewed ecclesiology (*ecclésiologie totale*) of the Catholic Church which “razed the bastions” of post-Tridentine conservative ecclesiology and embraced a careful but effective true reform.⁵² I underscore that Congar’s developing theology of the Church was essentially formulated in response to the problems which spawned unbelief, principal among which for Congar was the “juridical-hierarchical face of the Church.” This reform was then comprehensively synthesized into the notion of a “total ecclesiology” or *ecclésiologie totale*.⁵³ As we shall see in Chapter Four, Vatican II was

This intention shapes the character and breadth of the effort. *Unam Sanctam* does not conduct pure history, nor apologetics, nor current analysis, nor liturgy, nor practical ecumenicism; although all this obviously concerns the Church and can not, for this very fact, be entirely foreign to her. *Unam Sanctam* rather *intends to make known the nature or if you will the mystery of the Church; historical works can here have their place, and even liturgical and missiological considerations, and also studies concerning separated Christians and the problem of their reunion*, in so far as such research serves a richer and more profound knowledge of the Church in her intimate nature and in the mystery of her life. In particular as theology, according to its own law, lives only through an intimate and organic contact with its spiritual origin (*donné*), one applies oneself to make a serious study of the sources from which one derives an authentic knowledge of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church: the Holy Scripture, the Fathers, the liturgy, the life of ecclesiastical institutions, etc.

Introduction to *Unam Sanctam* [1937], reprinted in van Vliet, *Communio sacramentalis*, 285-87 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁰ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 2, citing Yves Congar, “Reflections on being a theologian,” trans. Marcus Lefébure, *New Blackfriars* 62 (1981): 405.

⁵¹ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 141.

⁵² Cf. Gabriel Flynn, “Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform: A Renewal of the Spirit” in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32 (Paris: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 101. Flynn acknowledged that the phrase and the concept of “razing the bastions [of the Church]”, was borrowed from the pre-Vatican II work of Hans Urs von Balthasar in *Schleifung der Bastionen: von der Kirche in dieser Zeit* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1952), which dealt with the themes of laity in the Church and the relationship of the Church to the world. Flynn cites the translation of this work, *Razing the Bastions: On the Church in This Age* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993) in *Yves Congar’s Vision of the Church*, “Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform”, 101.

⁵³ Cf. Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 1-2.

the perfect venue in which this would play out for Congar. For this reason, Flynn submits that Yves Congar “holds an eminent place in the history of Church reform [H]is extensive involvement as *peritus* at Vatican II helped to make reform of the Church the order of the day in practically every domain.”⁵⁴

But before he was appointed *peritus* to Vatican II, Congar would walk a rocky road: his ecumenism and notion of *ressourcement* would first be the source of his troubles, and finally, his vindication.

2. Preparing the Ground for Reunion in Catholicity. The first issue of Congar’s *Unam Sanctam* would be *Chrétiens désunis* which set forth his principles for a Catholic ecumenism. In 1937, Congar optimistically proposed that two goals needed to be met to actualize reunion of non-Catholics with the Church: first, to untangle the “critical and distorted” ideas of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church; and second, to unite Christendom by means of a completely more effective “catholicity”:

Reunion will never become for them a thing to be desired until the Church is seen to be the catholicity of the whole Christian inheritance, wherein they will retain their own spiritual treasures intact, enriched and transfigured in the fullness of communion.⁵⁵

Congar was convinced that separated non-Catholic brethren would remain such so long as joining the Church seemed no more than an absorption of their communion into another, but first checking their “special values” outside the door.⁵⁶ He knew that reform would not be acceptable without showing them a full and joyous liberty, yet compatible with authority – “a faith which is expressed in ecclesiastical orthodoxy without ceasing to

⁵⁴ Flynn, “Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform”, 99.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

be a spontaneous mystical and inward reality.”⁵⁷ He was also concerned whether reform was even possible – whether Catholics in practice present just another exclusive “ism,” - “a meager and insipid kind of Catholicism”.⁵⁸ Thus, he wondered if Christendom is divided first among Catholics.⁵⁹ Can the Anglican find in the Catholic Mass the “wholehearted devotion and adoration” that he lives during *his* Mass? Does the Orthodox find in Catholic theology a continuance of *his* profound search for truth? Does the apostolic work of the Church reflect and replicate the depth, breadth and stature of the Pentecostal? Such questions can only truly be unanswered anecdotally, but Congar stressed the need for positive answers if there was to be reunion of these separated faithful with the Catholic Church:⁶⁰ Yet, if all these questions could be answered:

[T]his would be nothing less than a reform in the Church. It would, and why should we be scared of that? The Church is always reforming herself; it is the way she keeps her life, and at any moment the intensity of her effort to reform is the index of her vitality. Let us make no mistake the movement began under Pius X . . . was to some extent effected but not arrested by the War, and whose motto is “*Instaurare omnia in Christo*” [Restore all in Christ], is a movement of reform. What else is the liturgical movement; or the missionary effort inaugurated by Benedict XV and developed by Pius XI; the Catholic Action movement, the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy; in particular the splendid work of the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* [Christian Youth Workers]? What else is the inward revival of Catholic theology in the sense of a more serious study of the sources, of the Eastern tradition, of a deeper contemplation of the mysteries, and a deliberate detachment from theological limitations due to the Counter-Reformation? All this is reform. . . . But observe, since it directly affects our argument, the similar direction of all these movements, which shows that they have a common origin; *they are all a return to the sources*⁶¹

D. Congar’s Principles of Catholic Ecumenism

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 271-2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 272.

⁶¹ Ibid. (emphasis mine).

1. *Chrétiens désunis*. In 1937 Yves Congar's *Chrétiens désunis* was published as the first volume of his *Unam Sanctam* series.⁶² It set forth Congar's early principles of ecumenism, what he then referred to as "Catholic ecumenicism," and was to have a profound influence and effect within the Church. Years later Congar would write, "Our destinies are largely determined by circumstance".⁶³ Yet from 1937 on, Congar's destiny was shaped less by circumstances than by his own ecumenicism with which he drove head-on into a conservative and defensive Church, still concerned about a resurgence of Modernism and a deconstruct of her dogmas, Traditions, hierarchy and faith. Congar never really appreciated that. He wanted to change the "unattractive face" which he thought an ossified, "juridical-hierarchical" Church presented not only to its faithful, but to the world. By a return to Biblical truths, the early Church Fathers, Traditions and liturgy, "the great councils", and reducing the clerical-hierarchical separation of much of the Church from the people, he saw an answer to the reasons for unbelief and an opening for truly meaningful ecumenical dialogue with non-Catholic members of the body of Christ. He wanted to clear the air in the Church: he sought an enlivened, reinvigorated Church with a renewed ecclesiology, a Church which no longer distanced and isolated herself and her clerics from the faithful. But it must be made clear that Congar never sought to change the Church's dogma, sacraments, Tradition or hierarchical constitution. On its part, it seems that Rome never really understood that. Thus, Congar would write that "visible work in the cause of ecumenism became very difficult for me after the

⁶² Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, *Unam Sanctam* 1 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1937).

⁶³ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 22.

publication of *Chrétiens désunis*. . . . I was therefore obliged to serve ecumenism in a more diffuse and indirect manner.”⁶⁴

During the intervening years between the publication of *Chrétiens désunis* in 1937 and the opening of Vatican II in 1962, Congar sought to find some ecumenical common ground between Catholics and non-Catholics, some yeast for the Christian unity called for by Christ. Yet, it was not until Vatican II that Congar’s ecumenical work was recognized and many of his ecumenical principles implemented. Before then, commencing from 1937 on, Congar was increasingly watched, cautioned, reined in and then constrained in his activities and even in his place of residence by the Vatican and the Master-General of his own Order.

To put things in perspective for all this we must go back in time to January 6, 1928. On that day, two and a half years before Yves Congar’s ordination, Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) issued his papal Encyclical *Mortalium Animos (On Religious Unity)*. *Mortalium Animos*, literally meaning “the souls of mortals,” set forth the Church’s position on ecumenism: it was certainly not against ecumenism based upon divinely revealed truths, but it strongly opposed any concessions in the name of ecumenism which it believed would corrupt those truths or misinterpret Scripture. In sum, the Church held that “the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ.”⁶⁵ The irony here is that Yves Congar, whose ecumenical activities were increasingly seen as problematic in the eyes of the Church, then held exactly the same view.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *Mortalium Animos* 10.

2. *Mortalium Animos*. From a Protestant perspective, *Mortalium Animos* set a stern tone and enunciated a univocal formula which remained the official template within the Catholic Church for ecumenical unity from 1928 until Vatican II. Employing absolutist terms, invoking hierarchical principals and using language which rang less with evangelism and ecumenism than with a concern for the reemergence of a phoenix-like Modernism, Pius XI declared in *Mortalium Animos* that some are “easily deceived by the outward appearance of good when there is a question of fostering unity among all Christians.”⁶⁶ To illustrate the tenor of the times and illuminate the extraordinary and courageous ecumenism exercised by Père Yves Congar, listed by paragraph below in summary form is what I consider to be eight central positions and prohibitions in *Mortalium Animos*:

4. Beneath the enticing words and blandishments of pan-Christians who seek that all Christians should be as “one” lies hidden *a grave error by which the foundations of the Catholic faith would be destroyed*.
7. In John 17:21, *Christ merely expressed a desire and a prayer for unity, which still lacks fulfillment*.⁶⁷
8. *It is unlawful for Catholics to support or work for a false Christianity* which is quite alien to the one Church of Christ. Divinely revealed truth must be defended.
9. This promotion of charity and unity among all by pan-Christians seems to pursue the noblest of ideas, *but in fact tends to injure faith. John himself forbade any intercourse with those who professed a mutilated and corrupt version of Christ’s teaching. Unity can only arise from one teaching authority, one law of belief and one faith of Christians*. A variety of opinions regarding dogmatic truths cannot clear the way toward unity, but only lead to indifferentism and modernism.
10. *The Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics*. The union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ.

⁶⁶ *Mortalium Animos* 3.

⁶⁷ But see the Apostolic Letter of Pope Leo XIII, *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae* (The Reunion of Christendom, June 20, 1894) in which the Pope declares in the fifth paragraph:

We feel drawn to follow the example of Our Redeemer and Master, Jesus Christ, Who when about to return to Heaven, implored of God, His Father, in earnest Prayer, that His disciples and followers should be of one mind and one heart: I pray . . . that they may all be one, as Thou Father in Me, and I in Thee: that they also may be one in Us.

11. In this one Church of Christ no man can be or remain who does not *accept, recognize and obey the authority and supremacy of Peter and his successors*. If, as they state, they long to be united with us, why do they not hasten to us? The Catholic Church alone keeps the true worship, is the fount of truth, the house of Faith, the temple of God: if any man enter not here, or leaves here, he is a stranger to the hope of life and salvation.

12. The *separated children must submit to the teaching and the governance of the Apostolic See*.

13. If these latter [separated children] humbly beg light from heaven, there is no doubt that they will recognize *the one true Church of Jesus Christ* and will unite with us in perfect charity (emphasis added).⁶⁸

The eight chapters of *Chrétien désunis* variously position Congar's principles for "Catholic ecumenism."⁶⁹ Years later, Congar will discard the term, "Catholic

⁶⁸ Compare a full reading of these selected texts of *Mortalium Animos* with the language of section 4 of Paul VI's Encyclical, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism, November 21, 1964) issued thirty-six years later at Vatican II:

The term "ecumenical movement" indicates the initiatives and activities planned and undertaken, according to the various needs of the Church and as opportunities offer, to *promote Christian unity*. These are: first, every effort to *avoid expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult*; then, "dialogue" between competent experts from different Churches and Communities. At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, *everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions*. In addition, the way is prepared for *cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience*; and, wherever this is allowed, there is *prayer in common*. Finally, all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and accordingly to *undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform* (emphasis mine). *Unitatis Redintegratio* 6 reminds us that "Christ summons the Church to continual reformation as she sojourns here on earth." The movement of the Church of *Mortalium Animos* to that of the Church of *Unitatis Redintegratio* reflects this.

While I point out great differences, there is at the same time an underlying continuity, which can only underscore the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. What Pius XI declared in 1928 in his encyclical *Mortalium Animos* was of course true, as was Paul VI's 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*. Both were in part a reflection of their times, but that was only the *formal* cause of this developing continuity. For Congar, the *final* cause of unity lies in the Church's unwrapping of Romans 17, Congar's *dévoilement*, or unwrapping of God's one revelation over time.

⁶⁹ A full survey and expansion all Congar's ecumenical concerns and principles voiced in *Chrétien désunis* is beyond the scope of this work. I shall identify his major principles of "Catholic ecumenism" at this early point in his life. Congar will subsequently change some of these ecumenical principles and develop others. He published *Chrétien désunis* in 1937 at age

ecumenicism”, finding it too limiting.⁷⁰ As to the initial favorable public reception and impact of *Chrétien désunis*, a self-effacing Congar would write in 1964:

At the time I was still too close to scholastic Thomism and to my study of Schleiermacher and Protestant liberalism.⁷¹ Sometimes I was too ready to classify, categorize and pass judgment. The missionary dynamism of the ecumenical movement also escaped me though it is difficult to see how it could have been otherwise. In spite of the origins of the movement, it was not so obvious then as in the second phase which did not begin until after the conferences of 1937 when my

thirty-three and did not publish *Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, until 1950, thirteen years later. In 1964, Congar commented that he was very conscious of the limitations and defects of *Chrétien désunis*. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 24-5.

⁷⁰ “I would express myself differently nowadays and I would not employ the term, ‘Catholic ecumenicism’ but rather ‘Catholic principles of, or approaches to, ecumenicism. [Note: This is the very term used in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism.] For there is only *one* ecumenism, a single ecumenical movement, even if those who participate in it conceive of it differently. That depends upon solidarity and in some sort on the concatenation of ruptures which have occurred and the questions raised by them as a whole. It also depends on the *unity of the ecumenical grace* which has been granted in our times. Those who have had direct, personal experience of the movement realize that these diverse reasons for unity must be duly respected. One’s view of things and appreciation of them is completely different according to whether one has had that experience or not, in other words, whether one really knows them or not. Sometimes those who have no acquaintance with them are called upon to judge, and do not hesitate to do so.” *Ibid.*, 25-6.

⁷¹ It is not clear whether Congar is criticizing Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) here. The reference to his study of Schleiermacher most assuredly includes Schleiermacher’s work on ‘communion ecclesiology’, which for both Schleiermacher and Martin Luther before him was central to their focus on the church as a fellowship of believers united with each other through their fellowship with God. The dual-fellowship to be attained in ‘communion ecclesiology’ was of such a manner that the institutional structure of the church, while still necessary, deferred to the fellowship of the believers, united together through communion with God. Dennis M. Doyle, “Möhler, Schleiermacher, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology,” *Theological Studies* 57, no.3 (1996):469.

We will see a hybrid form of this ‘communion ecclesiology’ in Congar’s later notion of the “oneness” of the Church and our “oneness” with the body of Christ through incorporation with Christ by means of the sacraments, the Cross and our baptism. Johann Adam Möhler, the subject of Congar’s lectorat/dissertation at Le Saulchoir, also dealt with communion ecclesiology in Möhler’s *Die Einheit in der Kirche*. This seminal work influenced not only Congar, but Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner and Walter Kasper in their own versions of communion ecclesiology. Doyle, *Theological Studies* 57, no.3: 468. Although Congar’s lectorat on Möhler would subject him to criticism in 1937, years later Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, characterized Möhler as “the great reviver of Catholic theology after the ravages of the Enlightenment.” Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenicism and Politics, New Essays in Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 4. John Paul II also drew upon communion ecclesiology in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* (The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World, December 30, 1988).

book [*Chrétien désunis*] appeared.⁷² On several theological points also the book called for more precision and elaboration which I tried to supply later (the ideas of catholicity, the contribution which others may bring to reunion, etc.)

Even so, *Chrétien désunis* had a profound influence, as I have often been able to confirm since then. Any number of priests and laymen and numerous bishops at the Council have told me that they owe to it either their awakening to ecumenism or more often their conversion to a broader and more traditional sense of the Church. . . . I think that the chief advantage of *Chrétien désunis* was that for the first time it attempted to define ‘ecumenism’ theologically or at least to put it in that context. I was still putting that word in inverted commas because of my scruples about tradition and philology. I am a great believer in the importance of words and of the moment of their first appearance and the circumstances leading to their adoption. The word was a recent acquisition and quite a new one in the vocabulary of Catholic theology. Moreover, in the perspective of my book in which *the problem of ecumenism* was interpreted with reference to catholicity, it was something of a tautology to speak of Catholic ecumenism. The inverted commas of the title [‘Catholic ecumenism’] reflect these various considerations.⁷³

As to Congar’s mention of “the problem of ecumenism”, recall that on April 27, 1939, Congar and Chenu were summoned to Paris to discuss “very serious difficulties” that Dominican Master General Martinus-Stanislaus Gillet (1929-46) had with *Chrétien désunis*.⁷⁴ In March, 1940, Père Mariano Cordovani, O.P. who was both the Master of the Sacred Palace in Rome and Pope Pius XII’s personal theologian, also made critical comments in the press which Congar took quite personally.⁷⁵ Congar writes that “the problem of *Chrétien désunis*” persisted even after his six-year P.O.W. imprisonment, such that, “In December, 1947, I was refused permission to publish an article on the position of

⁷² The “conferences of 1937” to which Congar makes reference here most likely constitute the 1937 Christian unity octave held at Sacré-Coeur (the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre, Paris) where Congar led eight ecumenical conferences, well-attended by the students from the Protestant Faculty of the Catholic Institute of Paris. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 17. Significantly, Congar added that “those Montmartre conferences re-edited, [and] formed *Chrétien désunis*.” Ibid.

⁷³ Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 24-6 (emphasis mine).

⁷⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁵ Congar writes that Cordovani’s comments, which were published on March 22, 1940 in *L’Osservatore Romano*, were clearly “a criticism of me”. Ibid., 29.

the Catholic Church with regard to the ecumenical movement.”⁷⁶ Congar writes that from at least autumn of 1946 he had “entered into the danger zone of suspicion and supervision, together with my best friends and collaborators.”⁷⁷ Yet, the Spirit could not be quenched.

E. Reconciliation in the Catholic Church of a Divided Christianity

1. The First Ecumenical Principle: Reconciliation of Separated Christians.⁷⁸

a. *The first component: division and discord.* The first of three components to Congar’s First Ecumenical Principle, his base Principle for Catholic ecumenism, lays in his recognition of discord among Christians.⁷⁹

b. *The second component: Christ’s prayer for unity.* The second component of Congar’s base Principle for Catholic Ecumenism is made up of two keys which unlock the first component:

Yet, Christ died to unite in one single body the children of Israel who had been dispersed.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid., 28, 36.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁸ I distinguish between Congar’s *principles for ecumenism*, set forth in Congar’s 1937 *Chrétiens désunis* as discussed in this Section and passim, from Congar’s *principles for reform*, which Congar details in his 1950 *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, presented in Section H herein.

⁷⁹ “There are those around us, who professing themselves to be of Christ, yet are separated in different bodies, estranged from each other, and mutually reproaching one another with the accusation of failing to mind the spirit and authentic intentions of He who all, notwithstanding, acknowledge as Lord.” (Ceux qui, autour de nous, se réclamant du Christ, sont répartis en différents corps étrangers les uns aux autres, et s’adressent mutuellement l’accusation d’avoir failli à l’esprit et aux intentions authentiques de celui que tous, cependant, ils avouent pour le Seigneur.) Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 1.

⁸⁰ Alors que le Christ est mort “pour réunir en un seul corps les enfants d’Israël qui étaient dispersés”. Ibid., 2. Congar refers here to John 11:52: “. . . et non pas pour la nation seulement, mais encore afin de rassembler dans le unité les enfants de Dieu dispersés” (and not only for the nation, but more in order to gather together in unity, the dispersed children of God). *La Bible de Jérusalem*, traduction française sous la direction de l’École biblique de Jérusalem, nouvelle édition (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000).

Here, Christ prayed for all, that all might be one: “Holy Father guard in your name those who you have given me”⁸¹

The implications of Congar’s emphasis upon unity as the *foundation* and the Gospel of John as the *text* for ecumenism would certainly not have been lost on him.⁸² Despite the criticisms, warnings and prohibitions set forth in *Mortalium Animos*, Yves Congar seemed driven by an outflowing of the Holy Spirit to proceed boldly upon his ecumenical vocation.⁸³ This was not an isolated event. Congar wrote his *lectorat* on the Catholic theologian, historian, and early ecumenicist, Johann Adam Möhler. He found positive things to say about Alfred Loisy, and even Modernism. We also know that after his ordination Congar repeatedly, if unsuccessfully, petitioned his superiors that he might attend ecumenical gatherings, including the 1948 inaugural meeting of the World Council of Churches. While on vacation from lecturing at Le Saulchoir, the young Père Congar shocked fellow Dominicans by attending lectures on Calvin at the Protestant Faculty of

⁸¹ Alors que le Christ a prié pour tous, pour que tous soient un: “Père Saint, gardez dans votre nom ceux que vous m’avez donnés. . . .” Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 2. This is a paraphrase of John 17:11 as it appears in the Jerusalem Bible: “Père saint, garde-les dans ton Nom que tu m’as donné.”

⁸² Of course the Gospel of John with its high Christology was not the sole proclamation of our oneness in Christ, as Congar the biblical scholar well knew. In 1956, drawing upon Pauline texts Congar makes the ecumenical point:

This Church is, in the first place, the Body of Christ; it forms, with him, a single entity, a single beneficiary of the good things of God – “the Gentiles are to win the same inheritance, to be made part of the same body, to share in the same divine promise, in Christ Jesus” (Eph iii. 6). We are with Christ a single body, we are members of this body (Rom. xii 3 sq.; Eph iv. 13 and 25 sq.; Col. iii. 15 sq.). St Paul goes on to say that we are a single person in Christ (Gal. iii. 28).

Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Church: Studies by Yves Congar*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Baltimore: Helicon, 1960), 68. Congar expands upon this theme in Chapter VII of *Chrétiens désunis*, “Que sont au regard de l’unique Église les dissidents et les “Églises” dissidentes?” (Who are the dissidents and the dissident “Churches” in the eye of the one Church?)

⁸³ Almost four decades later, *peritus* Congar would influence the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*. For example, the very caption of Chapter I, “Catholic Principles on Ecumenism”, reflects Congar’s language written in 1964, the same year of *Unitatis Redintegratio*: “I would not employ the term ‘Catholic ecumenism’ but rather Catholic principles of, or approaches to ecumenism.” Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 25.

Theology at the Catholic Institute of Paris;⁸⁴ during the same period, he requested but was refused permission to enroll in one of Alfred Loisy's classes at the Catholic Institute of Paris. Congar studied Orthodoxy, Anglicanism and Protestantism, particularly Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist faith traditions, and read deeply into their confessions of faith. He traveled twice to Germany and stayed there for extended periods to visit sites identified with Martin Luther.⁸⁵ Congar, his mentor Chenu, and others at Le Saulchoir were openly critical of the "baroque scholasticism" of the Church, with now familiar language as a juridical-hierarchical "closed system of acquired truths".⁸⁶ Congar was a strong supporter and a theological advisor to the French worker-priest movement until its dismemberment by Rome; he was also active in promoting the Christian Unity Octave.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God's People*, trans. Sister Mary Jocelyn, O.P. (Chicago: Priory Press, 1968), 21.

⁸⁵ Congar had a great interest in Martin Luther and considered him to be one of the great figures of Christianity and one of the most significant of reformers. Christopher Meakin, "*The Same but Different*": *The Relationship Between Unity and Diversity in the Theological Ecumenism of Yves Congar*, *Studia Theologica Lundensia* 50 (Ph.D. diss. Lund University, 1995), 125. Congar wrote more about Luther than any other reformer. *Ibid.* Notwithstanding, it puts things in perspective to note that despite Congar's great personal interest in Luther, the *New York Times* reported that he opposed the annulment of Martin Luther's excommunication [which dated back to January 3, 1521, by Leo X's *Decret Romanum Pontificem*] simply for the sake of ecumenism. Wolfgang Saxon, "Yves Congar, French Cardinal, Is Dead at 91; Vigorous Ecumenist and Promoter of the Laity," *New York Times* 24 June 1995 available from <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/06/14/obituaries>; Internet; accessed May 25, 2011.

⁸⁶ Henn, *The Hierarchy of Truths*, 74-5.

⁸⁷ The Christian Unity Octave was based upon the concept of unity through prayer. It goes back to a Pentecostal movement in mid-eighteenth century Scotland. In 1894 Pope Leo XIII issued his Apostolic Letter *Praeclara gratulationis publicae* ecumenically invoking Christ's prayer of unity from John 17. The Unity Octave continues today as evidenced by the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout the year 2012*, jointly prepared and published by The Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, *Key Dates in the History of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*.

In 1908, Episcopalian Fr. Paul James Francis Watson initiated the observance of the "Church Unity Octave." Over a period of two centuries it became a great success, notably in France. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity states that the Prayer for Christian Unity Octave is a time "to express the degree of communion which the churches have already received and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will." *Ibid.* Congar took part in

Congar wrote and published a number of critical ecumenical works, prominent among which are *Chrétiens désunis* in 1937 and *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église* in 1950. Finally, until his enforced silence and self-described 'exile' from France from February 1954 through December, 1955, Congar travelled extensively in Catholic and Protestant circles speaking about and promoting ecumenism.

There seem to be two quite opposite explanations for all this: first, it was a pattern of remarkably aberrant, irresponsible, irreverent, and even disobedient behavior by a very young priest, a loose theological cannon firing in the very face of the conservative Roman Catholic Curia, or – and this is my point, these were extraordinary and emboldened actions to which a fearless Congar was led or driven by the Holy Spirit in anticipation of Vatican II.⁸⁸ His was the “voice of one crying out in the wilderness.” Matt 3:3 (NKJV).

c. *The third component: God's ecumenical work must be carried out by man.*

This is the third and final part of Congar's First Principle of Ecumenicism. Christians today are divided into different groups - a number of which, to borrow from Congar, are “not always on good terms with one another.”⁸⁹ But Congar poses a question which

one celebration and presided over several others, for he writes, “I was invited to conduct the Christian unity octave at the Sacré-Coeur in Paris in January, 1936.” Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 19. (Meakin writes that it was during the first Unity Octave in Paris that the initial symptoms occurred of what would eventually become a debilitating neurological illness for Congar. Meakin, *The Same but Different*, 21.) As to its theological significance for Père Congar, it should also be noted that he preached the Christian unity octave in nineteen camp “conferences” conducted in at least four different German P.O.W. camps where he was incarcerated during World War Two, adding that during them he often preached ecumenically. Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 92.

⁸⁸ Cf. Is 40:9: . . . Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God!; Matt 4:1: Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert . . . ; Mark 1:12: At once the Spirit drove him [Jesus] out into the desert . . . ; Heb. 13:6: “The Lord is my helper, [and] I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?”

⁸⁹ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 1, footnote omitted.

moves in a distinctly radical direction – he asks, not can we unite, but had we any right to be resigned to these divisions in the first place?⁹⁰ Surely, Holy Scripture reminds us that we are here to do God’s will, to spread God’s Truth.⁹¹ To this, Congar adds, “True, God alone can rebuild Jerusalem. But if only God can do what is beyond all human powers, it is still true that He will not do it apart from His creatures, and that *if anything is to be achieved, it must, while indeed a work of God, be carried out by man* (emphasis mine).”⁹²

d. *Congar’s First Ecumenical Principle restated.* Congar’s three points: (1) division and discord among Christians, (2) Christ’s prayer for unity, and (3) the great commission by Christ that this mandate be carried out by the body of Christ, blend into a three-part construct: (1) recognition or *statement of the problem*, (2) a group responsibility or *mandate for action*, and (3) a *proposal for solution*. Together, they may be restated as follows:

Statement of the Problem.

Many profess to be members of the body of Christ, yet are separated in different groups, estranged from each other, mutually reproaching and accusing one another of failing to mind the spirit and do the will of Christ the Lord.

The Mandate.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁹¹ See, e.g., John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me;” John 7:16-18: Jesus answered them and said, “My teaching is not my own but is from the one who sent me. Whoever chooses to do his will shall know whether my teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on his own seeks his own glory, but whoever seeks the glory of the one who has sent him is truthful, and there is no wrong in him. . . . ;” John 8:32: “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free;” Luke 22:42: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done;” Matt 6:7: “. . . your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven;” Matt 8:21. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. . . .”

⁹² Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 2. In support of his point, Congar cites here a quote repeated by Leo III in *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae* of a charge by fifteenth century Cardinal Bessarion to the hierarchs of the Greek Church: “What answer shall we give to God when He comes to ask why we are separated from our brethren; to Him who to unite us and bring us into one fold came down from heaven, was incarnate and was crucified?”

Jesus died to gather the dispersed people of God so that the whole nation, the whole body of Christ would not die.⁹³ Christ prayed for all, that all might be one: “Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are.

The Solution

The joinder of the body of Christ into one, which is the will of Christ, must be promoted and carried forward in the power of the Holy Spirit by the body of Christ itself.

2. The Second Ecumenical Principle: God is the Final Cause of the Unity of the Church. Congar reasoned that because there is only one God, there is only one Church, and the life which we experience in the body of Christ is in reality an experience of the Oneness with and of God.⁹⁴ “The Church is in a sense an extension or manifestation of the Blessed Trinity, the mystery of God in man; . . . , coming from God and returning to God, taking up humanity into Himself.”⁹⁵ Congar thus joins with the Fathers and the theologians of the Church that the final cause of the unity of the Church is in God Himself.⁹⁶

3. The Third Ecumenical Principle: Christians Are Incorporated Together in Christ in the Oneness of the Church. This was most important to Congar, who wrote:

The Lord has said: ‘The Father and I are one’. And it is also written of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: These three are one. Who then would be able to believe that this unity, born of the divine stability and homogenous with the

⁹³ John 11:46:53 – 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and said, “What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. 48 If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation.” 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year said to them, “You know nothing, 50 nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people so that the whole nation should not perish?” 51 He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not only for the nation, *but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God.* 53 So from that day on they planned to kill him (emphasis mine).

⁹⁴ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 51-2. Subsequently, Congar will describe this “Oneness” as the *Una Catholica*. Ibid., 112.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 56.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

heavenly mysteries, could be torn and shattered by opposing wills in disagreement within the Church?⁹⁷

This ideal of the Oneness of the Church is a major theme and constitutes what I characterize as the third principle of Congar's ecumenicism. Yet at the same time it must be recognized that Congar's ecumenicism is very Catholic, and to understand Congar in this we must define "the Church" in Catholic terms. Congar wrote that, "[t]he unity of the Church is a communication and an extension of the unity of God."⁹⁸ Perhaps most significant in its contemporary impact upon ecumenicism is Congar's foundational embrace of the central and unique *oneness* of the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church".⁹⁹ This principle is part of the four "marks" of the Church, so underscored in *Mystici Corporis Christi*.¹⁰⁰ The children of this Church of oneness, then, have the duty to respect her authority and obey her laws.¹⁰¹ The Catholic Church has confirmed herself as this "one" Church, the "true Church of Jesus Christ – which is the One, Holy, Catholic

⁹⁷ Le Seigneur a dit: 'Le Père et moi nous sommes un.' Et il est écrit aussi du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit: Ces trois sont un. Qui donc pourrait croire que cette unité issue de la stabilité divine et homogène aux mystères célestes puisse être déchirée dans l'Église et brisée par l'opposition de volontés en disaccord? Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 59.

⁹⁸ "L'unité de l'Église est une communication et une extension de l'unité même de Dieu." Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 59.

⁹⁹ The Nicene-Constantinople Creed (381) is the confessional source of this defining statement of the Catholic Church: "This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic." CCC, art. 811.

¹⁰⁰ "For nothing more glorious, nothing nobler, nothing surely more honorable can be imagined than to belong to the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, in which we become members of *one* Body as venerable as it is unique; are guided by *one* supreme Head; are filled with *one* divine Spirit; are nourished during our earthly exile by *one* doctrine and *one* heavenly Bread, until at last we enter into the *one*, unending blessedness of heaven. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, par. 91 (emphasis mine).

¹⁰¹ "As her children, it is our duty . . . to respect the authority which she has received from Christ . . . Thus we are commanded to obey her laws and her moral precepts" *Mystici Corporis Christi*, par. 92.

and Apostolic Roman Church”.¹⁰² It is through this visible Church populated by mankind that Christ as its Head imparts his graces.¹⁰³ In this Church there is found the “truth”, which refers to and confirms the authority of the Church in exclusive and hierarchical terms and the unity of the Church in the Truth of Christ.¹⁰⁴

For Congar, part of the truth of the Church is her ecclesial tradition. He writes that this “tradition” involves three elements: “a deposit handed on, a living teaching authority, [and] a transmission by succession.”¹⁰⁵ He held that in its general sense, tradition is the very principle of salvation which “begins by a *divine* transmission of tradition.”¹⁰⁶ By this, Congar refers to the “handing over” (παραδιδοναι) of the Son to humanity by the Father as described by St. Paul in Romans 8:31-32.¹⁰⁷ Significantly – and this must be emphasized, Yves Congar also recognized these truths in other Christian traditions. This recognition by Congar is itself a truth uncovered by him and one which he will integrate into his ecumenism by positioning the one true Catholic Church which as a

¹⁰² Ibid., paragraphs 96 and 13, respectively. Congar writes, “In its totality, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church is this one very special reality which unites men by means of one supernatural life proceeding from God and from Christ.” (Au total, l’unité de l’Église, une, sainte, catholique et apostolique, est celle d’une réalité très spéciale fait des d’hommes unis par une vie surnaturelle procédant de Dieu et du Christ.) *Chrétiens désunis*, 108.

¹⁰³ *Mystici Corporis Christi*, paragraphs 6, 90 and 12, respectively.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., paragraphs 63, 65, 69 and 92. Truth is a key concept in *Mystici Corporis Christi* and the words “true” and “truth” appear no less than thirty-five times therein.

¹⁰⁵ Yves M.-J. Congar, O.P., *Tradition and Traditions: An historical and a theological essay* (London: Burns & Oates, 1966), 24.

¹⁰⁶ Yves Congar, *Tradition and the Life of the Church*, Faith and Facts Books 3 (London; Burns & Oates, 1964, 15).

¹⁰⁷ Jonathan Robinson, “Congar on Tradition” in Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32 (Louvain: W.R. Eerdmans, 2005): 333. The Greek text of Romans 8: 32 reads: ος γε του ιδιου ουκ εφεισατο αλλα υπερ ημων παντων παρεδωκεν αυτον, πως ουχι και συν αυτω τα πανρα ημιν χαρισεται (He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up [handed him over] for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?) Nestle-Aland, *Greek-English New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001; emphasis mine).

fundamental Truth hands over its apostolic deposit of faith to succeeding generations, in the midst of the truths of other Christian Churches.

a. *The Catholic Church as the bonum commune.* This Church into which Congar would seek to join all is, at the same time, an absolutely unique society of human beings pursuing the common good, the *bonum commune*, wherein “the various human beings called to this grace are united to the Blessed Trinity . . . to form a divine-human entity, mystically one: not a union of two natures in one Person, but the communion of many persons [incorporated in Christ] in the same divine life.”¹⁰⁸ Congar posits that this divine life is not given to us in the same way it is in heaven, and is but a “faint foretaste of our inheritance” given “in a human mode adapted to the condition of sinful men”.¹⁰⁹ This is a life where ideally humans live together to help each other, a life Congar describes as “a collective life of mutual help.”¹¹⁰ He proposed that each association or group within the Church should be and properly is a ministry of the Holy Spirit purposed to accomplish the oneness of souls incorporated in Christ in God.¹¹¹ This is so because we are being prepared by God for full heavenly citizenship by our membership in “a Church in the form of a Society, embodied in physical realities of teaching [and] ruling, a Church which is both active and militant.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 52, 58, 62 and 64. Congar’s description of “the various human beings called to this grace” is somewhat problematic in its seeming selectivism since the grace to which we are called here is the Church in which Congar has previously held that *all* are members by virtue of their valid baptism by any Christian faith tradition.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 65, 64.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 67. Congar cites here to 2 Cor 5:6: Now the one who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a first installment.

b. *Members incorporated together in Christ.* Congar recognizes the Church as a society of human beings whose members have this common incorporation in Christ by means of three events: (1) the *sacraments*, (2) Christ's *passion and resurrection* and (3) our *baptism*, which actualizes the first two:

Now – this is extremely important - this incorporation in Christ is begun and accomplished by a contact with Christ which is clearly of a sacramental order. What does this sacramental order mean? [It means both] an order of reality and gestures which in their nature are sensitive and social: where we expresses our faith in Christ the Saviour, with whom we join by virtue of an efficacious special attachment by the Lord to the symbolic act of the unique and historic event of Redemption and salvation constituted in Jesus Christ – dead-and-resurrected-for-us. The sacraments are not properly spoken of as new acts, but rather [presented] in the mode of symbolically real spiritual celebration[s] with the same presence [of Christ] as in the (Eucharistic) substance where [he is present] at least by virtue of the sanctification (baptism) of the mysterious redeeming Jesus Christ. The baptism of a Christian adds nothing to Christ; it is not, in relation to his passion and resurrection, literally a new redeeming act; it only puts this passion and resurrection into actual and effective beneficial contact with the Christian; it expressly encompasses [all] this in the salvific act of Christ, accomplished for [this Christian] and makes actual for this soul the fruit of reconciliation and the life won by the passion, as well as the communion with the Blessed Trinity in the name of which he was given [to be baptized].¹¹³

¹¹³ Or- ceci est extrêmement important -, cette incorporation au Christ s'inaugure et se consommé par un contact avec le Christ qui est d'ordre proprement sacramentel. D'ordre sacramentel, qu'est-ce dire? Un order de réalités et de gestes sensibles et sociaux dans leur nature, où s'exprime notre foi en Christ sauveur et qui, en vertu d'une efficacité special attachée par le Seigneur à leur symbolism, nous abouchent au fait unique et historique de la Redemption et du salut constitués en Jésus-Christ –mort-et-ressuscité-pour-nous. Les sacrements ne sont pas a proprement parler des acts nouveaux, mais sous le mode d'être spirituel d'une célébration symbolico-réelle, la présence même en sa substance (eucharistie) ou du moins en sa vertu sanctifiante (baptême) du mystère rédempteur de Jésus Christ. Le baptême d'un chrétien n'ajoute rien au Christ, il ne constitue pas, par la rapport à sa passion et à sa resurrection rédemptrice, un geste proprement nouveau; il met seulement cette passion et cette resurrection au bénéfice actuel et effectif du chrétien, il englobe expressément celui-ci en la geste salvifique du Christ, accomplie pour lui, et fait advenir pour cette âme le fruit de réconciliation et de vie que procure la passion, ainsi que le communion avec la sainte Trinité au nom de laquelle il est donné. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 75-6.

Congar's statement that the baptism of a Christian adds nothing to Christ is at the same time deep, perplexing and in a sense true, but enigmatic. It begs expansion. Is not baptism the sign and embodiment of our death and resurrection with Christ? Do we not by this means receive the Holy Spirit, become a member of the body of Christ, and thus add to the Church? Was this not the very purpose of Christ's Incarnation, his passion and resurrection? Is not the Mystical

c. *The Mystical Body of Christ is the Apostolic Church.* Congar goes on later in the same text to note the essential distinction between the people who existentially (and incorrectly) identify themselves with the Church only in a social, organizational or corporeal sense from those who recognize their incorporation into the Mystical Body of Christ, which *is* the Church.¹¹⁴ From this he makes two significant observations:

(1) The Lord Jesus Christ willed that His incorporated members should, as such, constitute a people, with its appropriate entity [the Church]. And thus it was such that the first generation of Christians understood Him: *the Mystical Body is essentially a Church.*

(2) This saving incorporation with Christ and salvation in Him are only possible through membership in a group without which the faith would not be preached or the sacraments given: *the Church is essentially apostolic or hierarchic.*¹¹⁵

By this language, Congar holds that the Church, while a community of spiritualized human beings, a *bonum commune* joined in the mystery of the one life of the Mystical Body, *unum corpus, multi summus*, is both *apostolically* and *hierarchically*

Body of Christ, the Church, spiritually strengthened by the addition of a single soul? Is it not affected by the loss of even one soul? Can there be a Mystical Body of Christ without members? Could there be a Church without the body of Christ? Is there not a mystical relationship between the two – the resurrected Christ and His Church, which is His Mystical Body, to which the human is joined? While as Congar quite correctly states the baptism of a Christian is not a new act in relation to Christ's passion and resurrection, it is most assuredly a new or at least a unique act with regard to that newly-baptized and the Church, the bride of Christ into which he is baptized. Finally, while it is surely true that man or woman cannot *add* anything to God, is it not also true that each can freely *give* something to God, something for which the Incarnate Christ died? Does not the baptism of one soul truly add to the mystical body of Christ?

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 70. See also *Mystici Corporis Christi*, par. 1: "The doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, was first taught us by the Redeemer Himself." The footnote to this first line of *Mystici Corporis Christi* is "Cf. Col 1:24" (Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister . . .). The cryptic phrase, "what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ," does not infer a limitation or defect in the passion of the Cross, but either denotes a mystical union between St. Paul and Christ, wherein Paul's suffering becomes Christ's suffering, or refers to the apocalyptic notion of a series of messianic woes sourced to Matthew 23: 29-32 and Mark 13:8, 19-20 and 24, all of which must be fulfilled before the second coming. NAB, St. Joseph edition, n. to Col 1:24.

¹¹⁵ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 70-1 (emphasis mine).

from one First Cause, the *effective* cause – Jesus Christ, who founded the Church.¹¹⁶ He then returns to John 17, tying the destination of ecumenical efforts to this same *Ecclesia in Christo*:

We can now begin to see how literally we must understand the prayer of our Lord ‘that they may be one *as we are* . . . that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee . . . that they also may be one in us, that they may be one in us as we are one, I in them and thou in me.’ These words must be taken literally in the fullest meaning in which they can be applied to creatures – after all, the Lord who said them knew what he was saying.¹¹⁷

4. *Chrétiens désunis as an Apologetic for the Catholic Church.* Only at the close of Chapter II of *Divided Christendom* does Congar truly make clear that he has been speaking throughout in an ideal manner of the Catholic Church, studied, however, “from above downwards . . . where all is clear and luminous.”¹¹⁸ But looking at the Church “from below upwards”, he confesses:

[W]e see the Church as we actually know her, to perceive all too easily the weakness and shadows arising from what is human: all the inadequacy, all the slowness in fitting herself to her earthly task.¹¹⁹

a. *The Church of “Dissident” Christians.* Congar’s view of “dissident Christians” presents a baseline upon which he will construct his last ecumenical

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 58-9.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 59. Congar explains the supernatural essence of *Ecclesia in Christo* thus: In order that the *Church de Trinitate* could be *Ecclesia ex hominibus*, it behoved that *Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine*, should become *homo factus ex Maria Virgine. Ex hominibus* and *de Trinitate* are only linked in *Christo*, for there is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ (1 Tim ii.2). Ibid., 60. [Note: Congar’s correct citation should be to 1 Tim ii.5 and may well be a clerical error.]

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 89.

¹¹⁹ In a footnote to this entry, Congar adds: “It must, however, be observed that those who see the Church only from the outside make the mistake of taking for legalism, naturalism, imperialism, and purely human action, what is merely due to the exigencies of the mystical body acting and expressing itself in human form in this world.” Ibid. This is among the most succinct apologetical summaries of the Church Congar ever made, yet there is no evidence that it had any ameliorating effect upon Rome’s negative reception of *Chrétiens désunis*.

principle.¹²⁰ Congar identifies two major poles among dissident Christians – Protestant and Orthodox. He writes that “Protestants do not believe in the real gift, actually real, of divine life to human nature; this life is only promised, really promised to be sure, [but only] present eschatologically.”¹²¹ The Protestant Church may “proclaim and promise” and - like John the Baptist, point to Christ, but still may not experience the realities of the new Covenant and the heritage of God.¹²² For them, an institutional Church is non-existent: the faithful are but a community of those who heard the promise of Christ. Congar argues they have forgotten that ever “since John the Baptist, God is incarnate.”¹²³ For Congar, Orthodox theologians hold a completely opposite, but still erroneous view: to them, divine life has been so completely given that heaven has entirely descended to earth whereby they almost see themselves in the present as living in glory in a supernatural enjoyment of God.¹²⁴

5. The Fourth Ecumenical Principle: The “Catholicity” of the One Church. Who then is truly a Catholic, i.e., universal, Christian? One might expect that at this point Congar’s inquiry would be brimming with references to non-Catholic Christian traditions

¹²⁰ Congar, “L’Église des Chrétiens dissidents”. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 111. M.A. Bousfield translates the final sub-heading of the Conclusion to Chapter II of *Divided Christendom* as, “*The Church as regarded by dissident Christians.*”

¹²¹ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 112: “Les protestants ne croient pas au don réel, actuellement réel, de la vie divine à la nature humaine; cette vie est seulement promise, réellement promise d’ailleurs, et eschatologiquement présente.” Again, for whatever reason, Bousfield translates “Les protestants” as “Extreme Protestants”. Congar did use “extreme” in the preceding sentence, but not as applied to Protestants.

¹²² Ibid. This is the earliest instance where I have found that Congar can be understood as referring to Protestant *Churches*, a term which Rome would not apply until Vatican II.

¹²³ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 113: “Il oublie que, depuis Jean-Baptiste, Dieu s’est incarné.” What Congar may be referring to is the missional baptism of Christ by John the Baptist. However, even in that sense the language he used is difficult. CCC art.456 makes clear that “With the Nicene Creed we answer by confessing: For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary and was made man.”

¹²⁴ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 92.

and confessions, finding common themes and threads so as to move towards at least a partial commonality among divided Christians. But that is simply not the case. With the one significant exception of non-Catholic “œcumenism”, Congar limits his discussion here to the “Catholicity” and the universality of the Catholic Church which he sums up in a phrase reminiscent of royal France: “*One Lord, one Faith, one baptism*”.¹²⁵ This omission of non-Catholic Christian traditions in the search for fertile common grounds is, frankly, difficult to understand. One might ask what direct value, then, is Congar’s discussion of Catholicity? Moreover, how can Yves Congar be so marked for his ecumenism? The answer to both questions is to be found in Congar’s distinction between the unique “Catholicity” of the Catholic Church which *inter se* has no need of ecumenism, on the one hand, and non-Catholic “œcumenism” on the other. Congar’s central point is that it is the Catholicity of the Church, its Oneness, which makes it the destination of non-Catholic ecumenism. In this reunion, Christ is the centerpiece of his logic, the *efficient cause* of the return to God, which return is the *final cause* of Christ’s sacrifice.¹²⁶

a. *Christ as the efficient cause of the Church’s Catholicity: the final goal, or cause of the Church’s Oneness is the return through Christ of all humanity to God.*

Congar sees the quality of “Oneness” as “the law which governs the relation of what is diverse and multiple to unity,” and which leads to reunion.¹²⁷ He succinctly explains:

The Catholicity of its Head is the principal cause of the Catholicity of the Church. The one Church cannot but be Catholic: its unity comes from Christ and through Him from the Father. Its oneness is given by God precisely to restore into unity all the diversity of His creation; its Catholicity is precisely this capacity to

¹²⁵ Ibid., 100. Recall, *Une foi, une loi, un roi* (one faith, one law, one king).

¹²⁶ I have used Aristotle’s four causes to clarify this point. Congar did not use them in his argument.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 93.

save, to fulfil, to bring back all humanity. The Church is Catholic exactly as she is one, in the same degree and by the same principle. The High Priestly Prayer [of John 17] is the charter of Catholicity as of unity. “The glory that thou gavest me have I given to them, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in oneness” (John xvii. 22-3). This is the same as St. Paul’s doctrine of the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form, the Christ fulfilling all things, and making them one spiritual unity in Him.¹²⁸

Congar holds that “it is of the essence of the Church spiritually to be one” because God is One.¹²⁹ Further the Church itself is “an institutional activity willed by God”, a gift from God, and a fellowship of the faithful founded “in the sharing of the divine life in Christ by grace, faith and charity.”¹³⁰ Similarly, because Christ is one, His mystical Body is one - and there is no salvation except by incorporation in the one Lord.¹³¹ Citing Thomas Aquinas, Congar holds that the “exterior constitution” of the Church, having been established by the Lord Himself “can never be changed”.¹³² It is quite true that

¹²⁸ Ibid., 98-9. Congar may be referring here to Eph 1:9-10, 22-3: 9 that he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him [Christ] 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth. . . . 22 and he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.

¹²⁹ *Chrétiens désunis*, 100.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 99.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² “In fact, this exterior constitution of the Church, the organ of her unity and catholicity, is a thing fixed by the Lord Himself and by His apostles, and it can never now change [fn. omitted]. This constitution concerns itself with the institutions of unity in faith, grace and common life which are respectively the magisterium, the priesthood and the [ecclesial] government. It implies for the magisterium a criterion which positively determines a *collective life in truth*; for the priesthood, the law of apostolic succession; for the government, the institution of both the indefeasible Apostolic See and the Episcopate” (emphasis added). Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 125. (“En fait, cette constitution extérieure de l’Église, organe de son unité et de sa catholicité, est une chose fixée soit par le Seigneur lui-même, soit par les Apôtres, et nul n’y peut rien changer maintenant. Cette constitution intéresse les organes d’unité dans la foi, dans la grâce et dans la vie commune que sont respectivement le magistère, le sacerdoce et le gouvernement [footnote omitted]. Elle implique pour le magistère un critère positivement déterminé de vie collective dans la vérité; pour le sacerdoce, la loi de la succession apostolique; pour le gouvernement, la double et imprescriptible institution du Siècle apostolique et de l’épiscopat.”) Ibid.

Congar’s footnote to the first sentence of this text is a recitation of an excerpt from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, Q. 64, Art. II, Reply Obj. 3: “Apostoli et eorum successores sunt vicarii Dei quantum ad regimen Ecclesiae constitutæ per fidem et fidei sacramenta. Unde, sicut non licet eis constituere aliam Ecclesiam, ita non licet eis tradere aliam

Congar criticized the Catholic Church as a juridical-hierarchical institution mired in a post-Tridentine mind-set - and in this respect advocated reform by means of *ressourcement*, yet here he clarifies that the Church can never embrace fundamental constitutional changes – i.e., alterations of its organs of unity of the faith, dispenser of grace and its collective life in Christ’s Truth.

b. *Catholicity and ecumenism distinguished.* In an enlightening exposition, Congar distinguishes “Catholicity” from “ecumenism”:

Apart from a respect for this human form of [Catholic] unity, there might be “œcumenism,” but not true Catholicity, because Catholicity is the assumption of the many into *the one previously given unity*; Catholicity assumes a unity which is strictly ecclesiastical, which is to say a social unity of members. Whereas “ecumenism” is the introduction of a certain unity into *a previously existing diversity* – oneness in multiplicity (“unity in diversity,” as the Germans say); this is a mirage of Catholicity for those among the existing [non-Catholic] “Churches” [quotation marks are Congar’s] who do not recognize the Church of Jesus Christ, His Spouse, visibly one with the unity which Christ has willed and prepared for His Church. But without this [full] unity, it is not Catholicity of which one speaks, for *Catholicity is the universal capacity for unity*; at best, “œcumenism” is, inversely, *the capacity for unity latent in the diversity of Christian groups: a common denominator* that one will certainly hold out to expand and increase [unity] as much as possible, but in any event, we could not consider this as a “Catholicity” (emphasis added).

In other words, there can be, and there is a non-Roman “œcumenism” – this is not the same as ecumenism which is non-Roman [for there is no need of internal Roman œcumenism] but there cannot be a “non-Roman Catholicity”.¹³³

fidem neque instituere alia sacramenta.” “The apostles and their successors are the vicars of God in governing the Church which is built on faith and the sacraments of faith. Wherefore, just as they may not establish another Church, so they may not themselves hand over another faith nor institute other sacraments” (my translation). It also may be helpful to refer to the translation of the full text in *Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas*, 1st American ed., trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, vol. 2 (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), 2368: “The apostles and their successors are God’s vicars in governing the Church which is built on faith and the sacraments of faith. Wherefore, just as they may not institute another Church, so neither may they deliver another faith, nor institute other sacraments: on the contrary, the Church is said to be built up with the sacraments which flowed from the side of Christ while hanging on the Cross.”

¹³³ Hors le respect de cette forme humaine d’unité, il pourra y avoir “œcuménisme”, il ne pourra y avoir vraiment catholicité. Car la catholicité est l’assomption du multiple dans une unité antérieurement donnée; elle suppose une réalité proprement ecclésiastique, c’est-à-dire sociétaire, de l’unité. Tandis que l’œcuménisme est l’introduction d’une certaine unité dans une diversité antérieurement donnée (“die Einheit in der Mannigfaltigkeit”, dissent les Allemands [footnote

c. *The two-fold law of the interior life of the Church, the divine-human dichotomy.* “The divine law is the communication of divine life by assumption into unity: the human law is the communication of life by division and dispersion (emphasis mine).” Congar reasons that since the Church is both from men and from the Trinity and in Christ (*ex hominibus et ex Trinitate in Christ*) she is situated among dispersed humanity so that she may reassemble it into her unity.¹³⁴ By his very nature, man divides, differentiates and disperses.¹³⁵ Congar adds that while this division and disbursement by man is a law of nature and in itself good, it is corrupted by sin, which divides and causes conflict and the destruction of order.¹³⁶ For Congar, the Church is the “meeting point”, the intersection of these divine and human laws and, as such, she reflects human law in differentiation and dispersion with one caveat: the Church, being “divine in her essence, incorporates this human material”, the faithful of the Church,

omitted]); il est le mirage de catholicité de tous ceux qui ne reconnaissent pas, parmi “*les Églises*” existantes, l’Église de Jesus Christ, son Épouse, visiblement une de l’unité visible que le Christ a voulue et préparée pour elle. Mais, sans cette unité, en vérité, ce ne’est pas de *catholicité* qu’il faut parler, puisqu’elle est la capacité universelle de l’unité: c’est d’*œcuménisme*, qui est, a la inverse, la capacité d’unité latent en la diversité des groupes chrétiennes: un common dénominateur que l’on tendra, certes, à enrichir et à accroître le plus possible, mais qu’en tout état de cause on ne saurait considérer comme une “catholicité”, à moins de prendre le problème exactement à l’envers.

Autrement dit, il peut y avoir et il y a un “œcuménisme” non-romain; il n’y même d’œcuménisme” que non-romain. Mais il ne saurait y avoir de “catholicité non romaine.” Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 125.

The unique definitional distinction between “Catholicity” and “ecumenism” here are pure Congar and really don’t trace to *Mortalium Animos*. Interestingly, in a footnote at the end of this text Congar added: “Some members of the œcumenicist movement would agree, it seems, to a centre of unity, even to a papacy, but only of ecclesiastical institution. But what if the papacy which alone is historically the organ of unity and can effectively continue to be that organ, traces its own origin to the Gospel?” Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 101.

¹³⁴ Cf. *Chrétiens désunis*, 101-2.

¹³⁵ Cf. Gn 1:27-28, 12:1, and 8:15-17.

¹³⁶ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 102.

“into the unity of God in Christ.”¹³⁷ As to the Catholicity of the Church in her various ethnicities, while Congar concedes that the Church peopled by humanity is conservative and slow to adapt to new conditions, he adds that she has a virtual worldwide presence which underscores her universality. It is not surprising, then, that the Catholic Church has an international representation within its own administration. Additionally, “every country has its own background and customs, its own clergy and institutions.”¹³⁸ Yet, with regard to a proposal for an ecumenical confession of faith, even Congar the ecumenist draws a line in the sand:

The notion of a Church spiritually one and confessionally diverse implies a failure to recognize the essential and organic link which binds together *the Church as a confessional entity* with *the Church as a spiritual and mystical unity of life*. Though the second [the Church as a spiritual and mystical unity of life] goes beyond the apparent limits of the first [the Church as a confessional entity], this, by its very nature, is the actual realization of the *latter* [the Church as a confessional entity], so that the ideal is the visible manifestation of their perfect equation.¹³⁹ The idea that the mystical Body has no proper and visible form wherein its oneness is uniquely realized and expressed, and the corresponding idea of a “confessional” realization of the mystical Body, of which the principle is that it is *not* purely and simply its expression, completely denies that theology of unity [Catholicity] which we have tried to express (emphases added).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ibid., 103. However, the Church “conforms exteriorly to this differentiation and dispersion of humanity, to create dioceses and parishes according to natural human groupings in order to carry the life from the centre to the furthest limits of her membership.” Ibid.

¹³⁸ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 105-6.

¹³⁹ This admittedly confusing text can be unraveled by understanding that by “*the latter*” in line five, Congar is referring to “*the first*” in line four (the Church as a confessional entity). He is saying that the Church as a spiritual and mystical unity of life is the actualization of the Church as a confessional entity, and that there can be no substantive variance between the two.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 107-8. To this Congar adds:

A great diversity of religious experience – of ways of feeling or living the Christian life and of interpreting the religious objective – is not only legitimate but desirable in the Church. And such diversity is not lacking; . . . yet it cannot be appreciated except from within, and those who regard it from without are as often shocked and surprised as edified. Where shall we find greater variety than among our saints; and what a testimony to catholicity is given by the manifold spiritualities, all blessed by the Church, of the great religious Orders! *But all this is within a unity of faith; each of these ways of feeling and living is a path on the same road to God, one life with different emphasis on diverse values* – the rainbow hues of what St. Peter called the variegated grace of God (n. omitted). Ibid., 110 (emphasis added).

F. Unity in Diversity: *In una fide nihil officit sancta Ecclesiae consuetude diversa.*¹⁴¹

1. The Fifth Ecumenical Principle: Unity in Diversity – Diverse Customs and Opinions. Congar notes a “firm tradition” in the Church that so long as there is a unity of faith, diversity of customs and opinions within the faith are legitimate.¹⁴² But in light of diversity in customs and opinions, which often lead to division, a unity of faith can only be maintained by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth.¹⁴³ In *Diversity and Communion*, Congar cites early examples such as Justin (ca. 150), who tolerated Christians continuing to observe certain precepts of the law of Moses, and St. Irenaeus (ca. 202), who prevailed upon Pope Victor from excommunicating those in Rome and elsewhere who celebrated Easter on different dates.¹⁴⁴ Augustine himself saw “the diversity of customs as one of the reasons for the beauty of the church”.¹⁴⁵ Congar suggested that in 1979 John Paul II “made variety a quality of unity” through the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Congar understands this as, “If there is unity of faith, a difference of custom does no damage to the Holy Church”. Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1984), 25. By tradition, this was Pope Gregory’s (540-604) comment to Augustine of Canterbury (d. 605), sent by Gregory the Great to convert the non-Christian Germanic tribes of seventh-century England. Augustine had questioned the Mass and ecclesial customs in this part of England which so differed from the Roman liturgy and customs practiced in France.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁴³ Cf. John 14:16-17; 16. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to be with you, always, 17 the spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it because it remains with you, and will be in you.”

¹⁴⁴ But Congar also commented that “since Easter is the centre of Christianity, unanimity in its, *celebration* [as opposed to *when* the Lenten fast is broken] is a powerful sign of unity” Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, 19 (emphasis added).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

It is fundamental for this dialogue to recognize that the richness of this unity in faith and spiritual life must be expressed in the diversity of forms. Unity – whether on the universal level or at the local level - does not signify uniformity or the absorption of the one group by the other. It is rather at the service of all groups, to help each one to give better expression to the gifts which it has received from the Spirit of God.¹⁴⁷

a. *Reunion as membership in the One Catholic Church.* In Chapter VIII of *Chrétien désunis*, Congar voices a “very profound conviction” that there will indeed be an ultimate reunion of all Christians and, like the unity of the Church, it must and will be the work of the Holy Spirit:

God will make use of whoever He wills, in the time and in the manner which He wills it. . . . We know nothing and should do nothing but seek to support reunion. For this is totally supernatural work. . . . One thing only is required of us - and that is our hands would be good and compliant instruments with which, if we feel called, we must effectively prepare ourselves to be truly useful instruments for the time He wishes our service.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ *To the Coptic delegation*, June 22, 1979. *Revue Irénikon*, (1979), Tome 52. 377-n.p. Six days later, John Paul would expand this message in an address to an Orthodox delegation to Rome:

I can assure you that, first of all, the Catholic Church wishes with a fervent desire a dialogue towards the reestablishment of full unity, in all frankness and honesty, with regard to her orthodox brothers, in a spirit of obedience to the Lord who founded his one, unique Church and who wholeheartedly wishes unity in order that she would be a sign and the norm of the intimate union with God and the unity of all humanity, and the efficacious instrument of preaching the Kingdom of God among men. *Speech of Pope John-Paul II to an Orthodox Delegation to Rome, Thursday, June 28, 1979.* (Je puis vous assurer que l'Église catholique aborde ce dialogue avec un fervent désir du rétablissement de la pleine unité, en toute franchise et honnêteté à l'égard de ses frères orthodoxes, dans un esprit d'obéissance au Seigneur qui a fondé son Eglise une et unique et qui la veut pleinement unie afin qu'elle soit signe et moyen de l'union intime avec Dieu et de l'unité de l'humanité tout entière, et l'instrument efficace de la prédication du Royaume de Dieu parmi les hommes. *Discours du Pape Jean-Paul II à Une Délégation Orthodoxe à Rome, Jeudi 28 juin 1979.*)

¹⁴⁸ Dieu se servira de qui il voudra, dans le temps et de la manière qu'il voudra. . . . Nous ne le savons pas et devons pas chercher à le supputer. Pour cette œuvre toute surnaturelle. . . . Une seule chose est requise de nous: c'est que nous soyons dans ses mains de bons et docile instruments et qui, si nous nous y sentons appelés, nous nous préparions effectivement à être, pour le moment où il voudra se servir de nous, des instruments véritablement utiles. Congar, *Chrétien désunis*, 309-10.

By “reunion”, Congar means reconvening within the Church the movement which leads to “the state of living and perfect membership of the One Catholic Church.”¹⁴⁹ Non-Catholic Christians - Congar’s *le point de depart* for any reunion, maintain their unity by adherence to positive spiritual values.¹⁵⁰ Congar recognizes these spiritual values to actually be Catholic values which belong to the Church where they are found in their completeness. They are developed, however, in communion with others, since the Church is complete *in unity*. This is opposed to separated Christians (those who per Congar also are members, although imperfect ones, of the Church).¹⁵¹ The Catholic Church, Congar’s *le point de arrive*, is the object toward which the reunion movement is directed: this is the Catholic unity, *Una Catholica* – the unity of Fullness in the Mystical Body of Christ.¹⁵² Without exclusion of any genuine Christian value, the one Church embraces them all in the body of Christ.¹⁵³ Congar adds, “when we go and say that the end of the reunion movement is Catholic unity or the unity of Fullness, it must be grasped that this union already substantially exists: the Church of Jesus Christ is presently and really Catholic.”¹⁵⁴ In point of fact, the Church cannot be otherwise, for she is innately Catholic. By this innate Catholicity, Congar defines the Church’s supernatural capacity to embrace humanity in all its Christian multiplicity and variety. Yet, at the same time it must be admitted and acknowledged that because there still are dissident Christians and

¹⁴⁹ Congar *Divided Christendom*, 250.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.; Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 311.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 314; Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 250-2.

¹⁵² Ibid., 252. “The point at which the reunion movement is connected is Catholic unity, that is to say the unity of fullness” [of the Mystical Body of Christ]. (Le point où doit aboutir le mouvement de réunion, c’est l’Unité catholique, c’est à dire l’unité de la Plénitude.) Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 314.

¹⁵³ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 252.

¹⁵⁴ Ce que nous venons de dire que sera la terme du mouvement de réunion, une Unité catholique ou unité de Plénitude, il faut tenir que, substantiellement, cela existe déjà: l’Eglise de Jesus-Christ est, présentement réellement catholique. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 315.

dissident forms of Christianity, the Fullness of the Body of Christ is not yet completely and explicitly Catholic.¹⁵⁵ The supernatural capacity of the Church is unlimited but the realization of its actualization (sa réalisation actuelle) of unity is imperfect.¹⁵⁶ For this reason, surprisingly Congar admits that a full actualization of Catholicity, a perfect reunion of all Christendom, will never happen.¹⁵⁷ The historic separation of Christians, which Congar attributes largely to the division of humanity by ethnic and cultural groups, deprives the Church of her full Catholicity, both ethnically and culturally.¹⁵⁸

b. *Revitalizing the values of “dissident” Christians.* Yves Congar expresses another principle:

We have the foundational conviction, not only based upon a priori principles, but by an experience often encountered and re-encountered, that the strong and often interesting values by which our separated brothers oft-times seek to frame and animate their religious life are in reality found in the treasure of the Catholic Church and, from this point of view are not lost to them.¹⁵⁹

Congar proposes that such values of dissident Christians can be revitalized by the Holy Spirit so as to greater actualize “the unsearchable riches of Christ”. On the other

¹⁵⁵ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 253-4.

¹⁵⁶ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 315; Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 254.

¹⁵⁷ Congar writes, “Under this aspect of the realization of her actualization, the Catholicity of the Church evolves more or less, and one could say a priori that the Church is not presently perfect and without a doubt never will be.” (Sous cet aspect de sa réalisation actuelle, la catholicité de l’Église comporte du plus et du moins, et l’on peut dire à priori qu’elle n’est pas présentement parfait et ne le sera sans doute jamais.) Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 315-6. This does seem to pragmatically limit Congar’s initial statement of a “very profound conviction” of the ultimate union of all Christians to the Parousia. The exception to this may be Congar’s expectation that one day there will indeed be a complete union with the Eastern Churches because of “Two things of inestimable value which we have in common – the Eucharist, itself the sacrament of unity, and the cultus of our Lady.” Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 273.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 254. Congar admits that a Church can be considered fully Catholic only in its inherent dynamic potentialities and its inward substance: in actual practice the Catholicity of the Church, like the Church itself as the body of Christ composed of humans, is imperfect. *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Nous avons la conviction fondée, non seulement sur les principes à priori, mais sur une expérience bien souvent fait et renouvelée, que les valeurs souvent fort intéressantes où nos frères séparés cherchent l’armature et l’animation de leur vie religieuse se trouvent réellement dans le trésor de l’Église catholique et, de ce point de vue, ne lui manquent pas. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 316.

hand, he adds that certain “authentic values, albeit distorted and confused, have become embodied in “dissident” Christian communities.¹⁶⁰ This dissidence does not of course destroy the Church but does detach members and in that sense makes the one Church “less *actually* Catholic.”¹⁶¹

c. *Reunion as a return to the one existing Catholic Church; the reunited Church.*

Even though Congar strained at the leash without success to attend the inaugural meeting of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in August, 1948, and other subsequent meetings, it is noteworthy that eleven years earlier he had substantially rejected a very base theory upon which a confederation such as the World Council of Churches was founded:

[The question of reunion] . . . fixes the degree and the sense in which we can admit or reject what the participants in the Ecumenical Movement conceive of as the goal of their endeavors – the reunited Church. Their idea is that no existing Church is simply *the* Church, and that therefore reunion cannot be the absorption of one Church in any other, but that there are elements of truth and inalienable values in every Christian confession which each must receive and learn from the others, so that the reunited Church will be something quite new, richer than any of the already existing Christian bodies.

We have already explained at length why we cannot subscribe to this theory. But we see now why we may readily acknowledge that it contains a substratum of truth which commands our assent. For us, indeed, the Catholic

¹⁶⁰ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 256. Congar continues, “From this point of view it may therefore be said that what is true in, for instance, the Lutheran or Wesleyan setting, is a loss to the Catholic Church of to-day, and calls by its very nature for reintegration in it.” Ibid. But Congar also commented that noted Protestant theologian, J.D.G. Dunn, in the diversity of the New Testament writings found unity in the New Testament canon itself, and that “this diversity should be taken into consideration in ecumenical matters.” J.D.G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: an inquiry into the character of earliest Christianity*, 2d ed. (London: SCM Press, 1990), n.p. To this, Congar added, “Obviously there is a unity in Christianity and in the New Testament. . . . The substance and truth of the unity of the church is made up in and by Jesus Christ.” Congar, *Diversity and Communion*, 10-11.

However, one of these “confused” values embodied in dissident Christian communities specifically noted by Congar is the rejection by Protestant theologians of the idea of original unity in the Church. Congar responds that not only was there was unity in “the fundamental dogmas of the *regula fidei* and the baptismal confession of faith” but also “in what may be termed the sacramental nature of the church.” Ibid., 21.

¹⁶¹ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 256-7.

Church is *the* Church – simply and without qualification – and consequently reunion must be a “return” to this one existing Church. . . . Nevertheless, we fully recognize that there are, in varying ways and degrees, elements of truth and inalienable Christian values in all the various denominations . . . but we must go on to add that these truths and these values demand, by their very nature, to be reintegrated into the complete and unique corpus of truth, into the Church One and Catholic. . . . Outside the Church truth is indeed to be found, but in a state which we must regard as abnormal and hazardous, because [it is] isolated from the totality of Catholic truth and lacking the Catholic authorization and guarantee. None the less, it may well be that we have much to learn from our separated brethren in their exemplification of Christian ideas and values which we have perhaps neglected. Lastly, although we are unable to believe that any reunion movement can legitimately end in the creation of a new Church, and that we must insist that the one Church of Christ is something already existing, we believe that we may give an exact and legitimate meaning to the assertion that the “reunited Church” will be something more rich, more complete, than any existing Christian body, not excluding the Catholic Church herself in the actual and explicit realization of her inherent, unchangeable Catholic capacities.¹⁶²

In his 1950 papal Encyclical, *Humani Generis*, Pius XII identified the Catholic Church with the “one true Church” where is found the “whole truth” which refers to and confirms its authority in exclusive and hierarchical terms.¹⁶³ As we have seen, for Congar, the Catholic Church was also *the* Church and reunion was a “return to this one existing [Catholic] Church”. Still, Père Congar’s vision for reunion by means of reintegration of “elements of truth and inalienable Christian values” of dissident Christians into the “complete and unique corpus of truth” of the Catholic Church was more enthusiastic in 1937 than was the reserved and cautious position of the Vatican. It takes visionaries like Congar to continually reinvigorate and help situate the Church so

¹⁶² Ibid., 257-8 (emphasis Congar’s; underscoring mine).

¹⁶³ “. . . let them not think, indulging in a false ‘irenism,’ that the dissident and erring can happily be brought back to the bosom of the Church, if the *whole truth* found in the Church is not sincerely taught to all without corruption or diminution.” *Humani Generis*, par. 43; “And . . . this sacred Office of Teacher in matters of faith and morals must be the proximate and universal criterion of truth for all theologians, since to it has been entrusted by Christ Our Lord the *whole deposit of faith* -- Sacred Scripture and divine Tradition -- to be preserved, guarded and interpreted . . .” Ibid., par. 18; “Holy Scripture [must be explained] according to the mind of the Church which Christ Our Lord has appointed guardian and interpreter of the *whole deposit of divinely revealed truth*.” Ibid., par. 22 (emphasis mine).

that the faithful of the Body of Christ may carry forward in their time and circumstances the changeless faith as others before them have done in theirs. At the same time, for reasons which it considered quite substantial and valid, Rome saw certain ecumenism ongoing at that time as unbridled and leading to false or imprudent eirenism/irenism. Its reasons for this were definitively set forth on August 12, 1950 when Pope Pius XII issued *Humani Generis*.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ *Humani Generis* provides in appropriate part:

11. There are many who . . . through an imprudent zeal for souls . . . advocate an “eirenism” according to which, by setting aside the questions which divide men, they aim . . . at reconciling things opposed to one another in the field of dogma. . . .

12. . . . But some through enthusiasm for an imprudent “eirenism” seem to consider as an obstacle to the restoration of fraternal union, things founded on the laws and principles given by Christ and likewise on institutions founded by Him . . . the removal of which would bring about the union of all, but only to their destruction.

13. These new opinions . . . are put forward rather covertly by some . . . [yet] tomorrow are openly and without moderation proclaimed by others . . . causing scandal to many, especially among the young clergy and to the detriment of ecclesiastical authority. . . . Moreover, these opinions are disseminated not only among members of the clergy and in seminaries and religious institutions, but also among the laity, and especially among those who are engaged in teaching youth.

14. In theology some want to reduce to a minimum the meaning of dogmas. . . .

. . . .

18. Unfortunately these advocates of novelty easily pass from despising scholastic theology to the neglect of and even contempt for the Teaching Authority of the Church itself, which gives such authoritative approval to scholastic theology. . . . What is expounded in the Encyclical Letters of the Roman Pontiffs concerning the nature and constitution of the Church, is deliberately and habitually neglected by some The Popes, they assert, do not wish to pass judgment on what is a matter of dispute among theologians, so recourse must be had to the early sources, and the recent constitutions and decrees of the Teaching Church must be explained from the writings of the ancients.

19. Although these things seem well said, still they are not free from error. It is true that Popes generally leave theologians free in those matters which are disputed in various ways by men of very high authority in this field; but history teaches that many matters that formerly were open to discussion, no longer now admit of discussion.

. . . .

42. Let the teachers in ecclesiastical institutions be aware that due reverence and submission . . . must [be] profess[ed] towards the Teaching Authority of the Church. . . . [and] the minds and hearts of their students.

43. . . . finally, let them not think, indulging in a false “irenism,” that the dissident and erring can happily be brought back to the bosom of the Church, if the whole truth found in the Church is not sincerely taught to all without corruption or diminution.

2. Congar's Proposals for Unity. Congar positions “three outstanding possibilities for Catholic effort towards unity”.¹⁶⁵

a. *The right psychological approach*. There is a need to first acknowledge and then expunge the prejudices and secret resentments which have built up between Catholics and non-Catholics over the centuries. Often these have been spawned by events and feelings inherited from our various religious heritages – and on this point, Congar points out that Catholics are no better than anyone else.¹⁶⁶ Catholics and Protestants alike must examine their prejudices with a charitable focus on seeking truth and knowledge. The goal is not victory over separated brethren but a Christian love for them and all they have which is good: for Congar this requires gentleness without weakness and humility without compromise.¹⁶⁷ He then turns his attention to Catholics, the principal audience to which *Chrétiens désunis* is addressed, asking:

Even though our Church is right and his is wrong, how can I tell, when I am with my separated brethren, whether the Lord does not love him best? And if he lacks the whole truth, and even holds grievous error, it is probably quite without guilt, while if we hold the truth it is certainly through no merit of our own. . . .¹⁶⁸

Congar makes three pragmatic ecumenical points here: first, Catholics must be intensely loyal to and never compromise their fundamental beliefs; second, they must

¹⁶⁵ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 261.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. However, Congar does bluntly comment on a need for Protestant reform, for “the categories and judgements generally accepted among Protestants on the subject of the Catholic Church are simply fantastic. All the old stock-in-trade about faith and works, the Pope and politics, the religious life, is combined with modern charges of sacramental ‘magic,’ Mariology, the worship of the saints, tyranny over conscience, the denial of reason, the suppression of thought, and so on: every bit of it needs revision and most of it should be abolished altogether.” Ibid., 261-2.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 262-3.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 263.

never conceal anything about their faith. Third, they must explain their faith in “able and sane apologetic” terms, yet at the same time refute error and present the truth:

All may be summed up in this – the cultivation of an attitude which is evangelical, fraternal and friendly, the outlook of a member of a great fellowship and not of a unit in a system.¹⁶⁹

b. *A return to the sources of the interior life.* For Congar, the superficial life of the man who lives the letter of the law rather than its spirit has no ability to unify. While only Jesus Christ, the most profound life of all, has the universal capacity to unify: in Christ and in the Church we have a contact with this capacity; indeed, “the Church . . . very largely depends on us.”¹⁷⁰ In describing the path to the reunited Church, Congar sees the flowering of personal *ressourcement*:

It is quite true that in the Church the outward imparts the inward; dogmas teach and increase faith, sacramental rites teach and augment the inward gift of grace, and so on. But it is also true that dogmas are an outcome and an expression of faith, and *all institutions and forms of worship are an outcome and an expression of the inward Christian life under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.* To find the Church in its completeness we may proceed from the outward form to the inward life, which is the normal way for a Catholic born within the institution and impelled by the grace of God to find in it the sources of spiritual life. But it is also possible to proceed from the inner realities to their outward and visible expression, and *this is obviously the most likely way for world-wide reunion.*¹⁷¹

Not surprisingly, Congar sees reunion less as an institutional movement (if he sees institutional involvement at all) than as a work and a responsibility at the lay level.

This begins with the personal *ressourcement* of the individual Catholic:

The call to unity is . . . for Catholics a call to the interior life. . . . To prepare for reunion, they need to widen and intensify a movement of *return to the sources of the interior life*, to that spirit of which institutions are the external forms and expressions. *The inward life in Christ where we all are . . . [is] nearer to each other than we are on the institutional plane, [and] will develop its own form of*

¹⁶⁹ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 263-4.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 266 (emphasis mine).

*unity, and . . . will recover for us the forms of a common faith, worship and an ecclesiastical life.*¹⁷²

Congar sees a Spirit-led bottom up mystical ecumenical movement: one which begins in the inner life in Christians, the mystical body of Christ where both Catholic and non-Catholics reside closer to one another than in any institutional plane. It then intertwines and develops its own form of unity under the Holy Spirit's guidance, to come forth in the time and manner as the Spirit wills in a reunited Church - which Congar submits will be richer and more complete than the Church is now.¹⁷³ This inner submission to the Holy Spirit for unity is a powerful insight into the argument for and plausibility of a united ecumenical people of God and one which, quite frankly, Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox seem to have either overlooked or set aside.

c. *Congar's Conclusions.* In 1937 Yves Congar was very optimistic about the ultimate union between Catholics and Eastern Christians. He believed that a "genuine desire for understanding and fellowship" had overcome most differences between East and West and true unions of the faithful had already been effected.¹⁷⁴ He pointed out that Catholics and Orthodox have in common two things of inestimable value: the Eucharist and the "*cultus* of Mary" – a reverence or veneration of Mary.¹⁷⁵ As to Protestants, Yves Congar takes a less optimistic view and observes that "the outlook is very different" and

¹⁷² Ibid (emphasis mine).

¹⁷³ Ibid., 258.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 273.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. It should be acknowledged that a basic problem that Protestants have with Catholic Mariology, and which is almost always a stumbling block in ecumenical discussions, traces to this "*cultus*" of Mary, an expression used by Congar several times in *Chrétiens désunis*. First, as an aside, the term, "cult", does not carry a positive connotation in modern culture. The diverse meanings the term may embrace range from devotion/veneration, on the one hand, to worship, on the other. While many Protestants express a spiritual attitude toward Mary, they do so with what they perceive as a fundamental theological difference. Over the centuries, Catholics have repeatedly explained that they are devoted to and venerate Mary, *Theotokos*, but neither worship nor give adoration to her (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sections 957, 1173 and 971), while Protestants have just as often replied that it looks like worship to them.

“vast changes” are required before a reunited Church may be truly contemplated.¹⁷⁶

Congar’s incisive base point here is that Protestants often see things in opposition whereas they are, in fact, in harmony:

It is a sad and tragic spectacle to see Protestants, for instance, bending their religious energy to separate what the efficacy of the two-fold action of God, in creation and redemption, perpetually reconciles and unites: to see them making pure religion consist in desiring grace alone, that is, without man’s free co-operation, believing that God works only when man is impotent

Reunion will only become possible when Protestantism has got rid of these fundamental oppositions, which, with the intention of doing Him honor, yet belittle and defame the creative operations of God.¹⁷⁷

The path which Congar envisions for reunion with Protestants lies in the fact that the Reformers handed down many orthodox articles of Christian faith by which Protestantism lives today - particularly faith in the Incarnation, which Congar sees as “the key to the whole mystery of the Church and the sacraments.”¹⁷⁸ However, in 1987, fifty years after publication of *Chrétien désunis*, nearing the end of his life and nearer still to the close of his active ecumenical work, Congar admitted to his interviewer, Bernard Lauret, that true ecumenicism, the Truth of Christ found in the reality of the “one Church”, was a rare and elusive commodity:

I must say that today, when it comes to ecumenicism, most of the time I keep asking myself questions. . . . Finally, it is clear that after centuries of controversies, polemics, explanation, we have not convinced one another. We have not convinced the Protestants, or even the Anglicans or the Orthodox, of our position over the primacy of the Pope. The Protestants have not convinced us over *scriptura sola*, nor will they, and so on. Granted, at present we are engaged in dialogue, and this dialogue often takes us a long way; I am a super champion of

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. Congar sees Protestantism as presenting a quite dissimilar position from differences within the Early Church and the schisms of the first millennium: Protestantism does not deviate from central Christian theological doctrines such as the Trinity, the Immanence of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the divine procession, but proffers a salvific relationship between man and God independent of any mediation or grace conferred by the Church. Meakin, *The Same but Different*, 129.

¹⁷⁷ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 274.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

dialogue, of which I have been one of the promoters and in which I have been much involved. But in one sense the result of the dialogue has been, if not to ‘imprison’, at least to confirm each party in its own tradition. In fact each party affirms its identity in the dialogue and maintains it.¹⁷⁹

Yet, in that same year, in *Entretiens d’automne* (*Conversations in Autumn*, translated the following year as *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*), Congar voices a more hopeful view:

I would put the need to be open to the profound value of others, of all the others, and most particularly of the Confessions of *Christian Churches*. So I have made a fairly thorough study of Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Luther; here – and I would also add in Wesley, the Methodists and the Baptists – there are depths which we have not investigated among ourselves, which we have yet to realize.

That was, in fact, my argument in *Chrétien désunis* in 1937. It was not very welcome to Rome at the time because I said that we also had to accept others, and in those days that was hardly recognized. In fact this insight is not sufficiently implemented even today, though it has been accepted in principle since the Council. We are often left with a kind of peaceful co-existence: we are friends, we visit one another as if we were going to a kind of second, weekend home, but that is not enough. The whole of the theology must be penetrated by this dialogue: the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, anthropology, ethics¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Congar, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 77-8. Indeed, by the very names they have taken to call themselves, Christian traditions both proclaim their individual identity and pronounce and stake out their unique emphasis and individuality within Christianity: Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Southern Baptist, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Lutheran, Lutheran Missouri Synod, Methodist, Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, Conservative Presbyterian - the list goes on. They thus define themselves within the Christian community *by their differences or distinctions* from other Christian faith traditions. Congar himself commented on the fragility of *Una Catholica* in the face of “uncontrollable [adverse] religious temperaments.” Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 113.

¹⁸⁰ Congar, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 31-2 (emphasis mine). By way of hindsight, Koskela wrote what is now the obvious - that the publication of Congar’s *Chrétien désunis* in 1937 “signaled the increasing influence of the ecumenical movement.” Douglas M. Koskela, *Ecclesiality and Ecumenicism: Yves Congar and the Road to Unity*, Marquette Studies in Theology 61 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008), 42. The point here, which will be expanded upon in the next Chapter dealing with Vatican II, is that Congar’s ecumenism significantly helped prepare the way for the ecumenical spirit of Vatican II.

It is noteworthy that the introductory language of Article 1 of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (1964), the Decree on Ecumenicism, first characterizes Protestant denominations as “Christian communities” and then criticizes them in their divisions, which “openly contradicts the will of Christ”. In 1937, Congar gave a brief nod to this in *Chrétien désunis*, 245: “The Catholic Church has therefore always made a great difference, in her dealings . . . between the Protestant confessions and the Orthodox Churches. This is indicated in the use of the word “Church” for the latter, though never for the former.” It is of striking importance that Article 15 of *Lumen*

We might close this discussion on Congar's ecumenical hopes for unity on another positive note: the recognition that in the end, reunion can only come about through the omnipotence of God, which for us should be the object of both hope and prayer:

Ædificans Jerusalem DOMINUS:
Dispersiones Israelis CONGREGABIT¹⁸¹

G. Factors of Disunion

1. Two Different Christianities? In *Chrétiens désunis* Congar sets forth a number of major factors which contributed to the division of Christianity. This was done not in a negative sense, or as historical markers, but as a guidepost of past errors to be avoided in future ecumenical efforts. Surprisingly, unlike the divisions up to the East-West Great Schism of 1054, Congar's factors are for the most part non-theological. For example, he argues that historically the Christian East and West were less divided by theology than by sociological factors and politics such as language differences and politically-driven animosities.¹⁸² The adverse impact of Humanism was also divisive as

Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church to which Congar had substantial input - issued on November 21, 1964 - the same day as *Unitatis redintegratio*, would describe Protestant denominations as 'churches'. This was a significant move by Pope Paul VI and one which carried with it an enduring ecumenical effect.

¹⁸¹ "Build Jerusalem, LORD: GATHER together the dispersions of Israel." This is the Alleluia of the Votive Mass *Pro unione Ecclesiae tempore schismatis* in the Dominican rite. Congar, *Christendom Divided*, 275.

¹⁸² Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 3. Congar points to the Latin emphasis on law and order and thus, conformity, as opposed to the Byzantine sense of individuality and their concern "with personal matters, particular customs, and often with intrigue". *Ibid.*, 7- 8.

Père Congar argues that the issue of the primacy of the bishop of Rome "was reconciled with the canonical independence of the East in a *modus vivendi* which till the [Great Schism of the] eleventh century governed the relations between Rome and the East and might have lasted till our own day, ensuring the Catholic communion of which the apostolic see had been made the guardian." *Ibid.*, 11-12.

was obviously the effect of the Protestant Reformation.¹⁸³ Finally, Congar counted as definitively divisive the unfortunate yet pervading notion that in the past non-Catholics didn't count, being regarded by Catholics as "second-rate Christians, to be more or less despised."¹⁸⁴

Still, despite Congar's hard position concerning what he described as the "weak and false Christian life" of Protestants, he nonetheless retained an ecumenical outlook. Congar understands that the Protestant child is "Catholic by the grace of his baptism" - as by this logic are all validly-baptized Christians. This is one of Congar's most profound

¹⁸³ Ibid., 14. As discussed, Luther, who for Congar was the central figure of the Protestant Reformation, proposed an entirely different soteriological construct: one which reconfigured the divine-human relationship by, in essence, removing the Church from the dialogue. For Congar, the role of the Church in the life of the faithful members of the Body of Christ was central. Ibid., 18. Other divisive political and sociological factors identified by Congar include political-ecclesial rivalries, the divorce of Henry VIII, religious and civil wars, and rampant clerical abuses. Ibid., 15-23.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 25. Yet, in his 1937 *Chrétiens désunis*, Congar seems early on to have fallen prey to his own criticism in describing "theologically-deprived" Protestants:

Our little Protestant [child] has received by baptism the seal of Christ (baptismal character), sanctifying grace, infused faith and charity; he is, by these living principles, interiorly disposed for the profession of the true faith Much later, when he grows up, [the fact that] that he will not is an anomaly as regards his baptism. Catholic by the grace of his baptism, our little Protestant will in fact be engaged in an objectively weak and false Christian life in a confessional or ecclesiastical order which is not the full and true life of the Church of Christ. Instead of encountering the true faith - the totality of truths through orthodox teaching, faith will be realized in a materially imperfect manner, which is more or less gravely erroneous. Instead of finding the grace of various Christian sacraments, so as to raise up and nourish charity, this baptized [child] will be deprived. (Notre petit protestant a reçu à son baptême le sceau de Christ (caractère baptismal), la grâce sanctifiante, la foi et la charité infuses; il est, par ces principes vivants, intérieurement fait pour la profession de la vraie foi, Que plus tard, lorsqu'il grandira, il n'en soit pas ainsi, c'est une anomalie par rapport à son baptême. *Catholique par la grâce de son baptême*, notre petit protestant sera engagé de fait dans une vie chrétienne objectivement amoindrie et fautive, dans un ordre confessionnel ou ecclésiastique qui n'est pas la pleine et vraie vie de l'Église de Christ. Au lieu de que sa foi rencontre, par un enseignement orthodoxe, la totalité de ses véritables objets, elle se réalisera matériellement d'une manière imparfaite et plus ou moins gravement erronée. Au lieu de trouver, pour éduquer et nourrir sa charité, la grâce des divers sacraments chrétiens, ce baptême en sera privé.) Ibid., 289 (emphasis mine).

insights.¹⁸⁵ Note also that Congar holds that while the dissident may never enjoy all the benefits received by Catholics, still, the “good dissident is better than the bad Catholic”.¹⁸⁶ Congar concludes that “our Church is always better than us, and that the Protestants are often better than their Church”¹⁸⁷ But Congar also sees a dark lingering division endemic to Protestantism in that each Christian faith community has “followed its own lines and evolved in its own way.”¹⁸⁸ Consequently, many retain a distinct and lingering distaste for Catholicism:

It is unbelievable, it is heartrending, but it is true - what our separated brethren, Orthodox or Protestant, think, explicitly or tacitly, about us and about post-tridentine Catholicism. And all this culminates in a grievance which often turns to hatred and sums up all the rest – Rome, the Pope. The anti-Roman complex to which we have alluded before is the centre, psychologically if not ideologically, of our separated brethren’s motive for separation. They do not want Rome or the Pope, which stand to them for everything that we have outlined above. Such to them are the marks of the Church and it has evolved since the *irremediable separations*.

Protestantism also has evolved on its own line, so divergent, so tragically errant, that it is now practically impossible for us to meet and difficult even to discuss things together. . . .

. . .

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. Congar will use this later to mitigate the strictures of *Extra Ecclesium nulla salus*.

¹⁸⁶: “The personal case of the good dissident is obviously preferable to the personal case of the bad Catholic, but to tell the truth, both are abnormalities.” (Le cas *personnel* de bon dissident est évidemment bien préférable au cas *personnel* du mauvais catholique; mais a vrai dire, tous les deux sont anormaux [anormal].) Ibid., 293.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. “It remains, however, that, if the first [the Catholic] is less good, his Church is right and offers him all the means to become a saint; while if the second [the Protestant] is better, his church is in error and cannot offer him this because its help is incomplete or misleading. For this reason, in sum, it is the norm that our Church is always better than us, and that Protestants are often better than their “Church”: a paradox often found in nature that the advantage is given to us by God, but sometimes more *personality* in the religious life is given to them by Him.” (Il reste cependant que, si le premier est moins bon, son Église pourtant a raison et lui offre, par elle-même, tous les moyens de devenir un saint; tandis que, si le second est meilleur, son Église est dans l’erreur et ne lui offre, par elle-même, que de secours incomplets ou trompeurs. C’est pourquoi il est, en somme, assez normal que notre Église vaille toujours mieux que nous, et que les protestants valent souvent mieux que leur “Église”; que par un paradoxe bien fondé en nature, Dieu agisse d’avantage chez nous, et qu’il y ait parfois chez eux plus de *personnalité* dans la vie religieuse.) Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Jgs 21:25: In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

[I]n passing we will merely note the gravity of this evolution from the point of view of the causes of division. It has made the gulf between us and Protestantism practically impassable. No longer is it a matter of different elements of the same Christianity but of two different Christianities.¹⁸⁹

It seems what chiefly keeps our separated brethren from reincorporation with us in unity, over and above historic causes and the accumulations of misunderstanding, bitterness and prejudice, is the fear that their religious values, those things which they hold most deeply and in which they realize their union with Christ, must be denied and sacrificed, left, so to speak, outside the door of the Church in which we invite them to reunite with us in God.¹⁹⁰

This is another profound insight and, as is so typical of Congar, he cuts to the pragmatic core of the theological problem: unity requires a base commonality. Here, Congar is struggling with the weight of the complete and total commonality which the Church requires. Not until Pope John XXIII calls Vatican II and takes the initiative of characterizing the Council process as one of cooperation toward re-establishing a “single flock,” rather than the Vatican I resolve to remain in the past, could there be a two-sided discussion of “unity among the churches” and the appointment of a Secretariat for Christian Unity among the VII preparatory Commissions.¹⁹¹

2. “Outside the Church there is no salvation.” The characterization by Congar of the “irremediable” divisions between Catholics on the one hand, and Orthodox and Protestants, on the other, may seem surprising, but perhaps less so in view of the historic

¹⁸⁹ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 34-5; idem, *Chrétiens désunis*, 41-2 (emphasis mine). Congar’s term, “irremediable separations” (les irrémédiables séparations),” is, again, problematic. These words, written in 1937, certainly are not emblematic of his subsequent and persistent ecumenical development and his efforts at Vatican II and thereafter.

¹⁹⁰ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 40. Still, Congar underscores the Catholic orthodox belief that “our Church is *the* Church and never can we regard it as a separated group, such as the Greek or Anglican Church.” Ibid., 26.

¹⁹¹ Alberto Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, trans. Mathew Sherry (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), x, 7.

Catholic position that “Outside the Church there is no salvation”.¹⁹² Congar may have seen a way around this by tallying all validly baptized Christians as Catholic, but that was not the position of the Church during the period 1908 - 1930, when a shortened version of the *Catechism of Pius X* (1903-1914) was published.¹⁹³ The present 1997 second edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has much more receptive language.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Article 846 of the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides, “Outside the Church there is no salvation”. Article 847 makes clear that this “is not aimed at “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation.”

¹⁹³ Pope Pius X proclaimed his cause was the zealous defense of Roman Catholicism. The *Catechism of Pius X* was published in 1908 in a question and answer format reminiscent of the 1885 Baltimore Catechism. This *Catechism* was republished in a shortened version in 1930 under the papacy of Pius XI. Recall that Pius X had authored and promulgated the Syllabus of Errors [against Modernism], and the Encyclicals, *Lamentabili sane exitu* and *Pascendi Dominici gregis* in 1907 and issued The Oath Against Modernism in 1910. His efforts to review canonical law resulted in the Code of 1918. Pius X was canonized in 1954.

In the *Catechism of Pius X*, the *Ninth Article of the Creed* provided in appropriate part:

9 Q. State distinctly what is necessary to be a member of the Church?

A. To be a member of the Church it is necessary to be baptised, to believe and profess the teaching of Jesus Christ, to participate in the same Sacraments, and to acknowledge the Pope and the other lawful pastors of the Church.

12 Q. The many societies of persons who are baptised but who do not acknowledge the Roman Pontiff as their Head do not, then, belong to the Church of Jesus Christ?

A. No, those who do not acknowledge the Roman Pontiff as their Head do not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ.

15 Q. Can there not be several Churches?

A. No, there cannot be more than one Church; for as there is but one God, one Faith and one Baptism, there is and can be but one true Church. . . .

27 Q. Can one be saved outside the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church?

A. No, no one can be saved outside the Catholic, Apostolic Roman Church, just as no one could be saved from the flood outside the Ark of Noah, which was a figure of the Church.

29 Q. But if a man through no fault of his own is outside the Church, can he be saved?

A. If he is outside the Church through no fault of his, that is, if he is in good faith, and if he has received Baptism, or at least has the implicit desire of Baptism; and if, moreover, he sincerely seeks the truth and does God's will as best he can such a man is indeed separated from the body of the Church, but is united to the soul of the Church and consequently is on the way of salvation.

¹⁹⁴ **“Outside the Church there is no salvation” CCC 846** “How are we to understand this affirmation, often repeated by the Church Fathers? [Footnote omitted]. Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body.”

3. The One Church of Christ Subsists in the Catholic Church.¹⁹⁵ Congar thinks this “Catholic Doctrine of the Church” of sufficient importance to discuss it in one of the opening segments of *Chrétiens désunis*.¹⁹⁶ He confirms that, “As Catholics, we believe that our Church is *the Church . . .*”¹⁹⁷ Perhaps this is because, like papal authority, the magisterium and confessions of faith, which are all subsumed within this Catholic Doctrine of the Church, this faith belief is non-negotiable. Even Congar’s indelible ecumenicism does not exclude St. Cyprian’s *Sallus extra ecclesiam non est*.¹⁹⁸ But as we have seen, this is “nuanced” by Congar with a huge distinction that renders all members of Christian Churches and ‘Christian-faith traditions’ Catholic by the sanctifying grace of their valid baptism. The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in their 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* 3, picked up on Congar’s insight and will put it this way: “For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion

¹⁹⁵ The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* 8§2 provides: “This is the *one Church of Christ* which in the Creed is professed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after His Resurrection, commissioned Peter to shepherd, and he and the other apostles to extend and direct with authority, which He erected for all ages as “the pillar and mainstay of the truth.

This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him, although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.” (Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, *subsistit in* Ecclesia catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata (13), licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniuntur, quae ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.) Ibid. (emphasis mine; footnotes omitted). See also CCC art. 816

¹⁹⁶ Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 27, *Nos Divisions . . . Dans Leur Durée* (Our Divisions . . . in Their Duration and Continuance); Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 24.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 26.

¹⁹⁸ Cyprian of Carthage (d. 278) Letter LXXII *Ad Jubajanium de haereticis baptizandis*. This is often expressed as *Extra Ecclesium nulla salus* (“Outside the Church there is no salvation”). CCC art. 846.

with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect.”¹⁹⁹ Still, one must consider this topic as a hurdle for ecumenical endeavors in general and Congar’s in particular, for whatever distinction Congar might draw, the towers of papal primacy and the one Church of Christ which “subsists in” the Catholic Church remain quite difficult for many non-Catholic Christians to pass through. But these matters which are obstacles to non-Catholics are dogma for the Church and may not be simply set aside to achieve an ‘irenic ecumenism.’ For example, as Congar confirms, for Catholics, the primary authority of the Pope is a truth which can neither be relinquished nor compromised:

The Roman Primacy had heretofore and over all been exercised in the order of the doctrinal life of the universal Church; the Holy See of Rome, doubly founded by Peter and Paul, and was made the Church of Peter over all, and thus was assured a unique apostolic character, intervening in the life of the various churches above all as guardian of doctrine and of the unity of the faith.²⁰⁰

4. The Teaching Authority of the Church. I have previously underscored that Congar loved truth, the Truth of Christ. To this we now incorporate the truths contained in the Tradition, the magisterium, and finally, the teaching authority of the Catholic Church regarding the deposit of faith. But as has been admitted this also presented a conundrum for Congar, a difficult pragmatic and ecclesial complication for his ecumenical vocation. To appreciate this we must pause and look back in time from the heady ecumenical spirit of Vatican II to June, 1943, when in the midst of the Second

¹⁹⁹ Art. 3 goes on to hold that even in spite of differences that exist and even serious obstacles to full ecclesiastical communion, “it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ’s body [footnote omitted], and have a right to be called Christian, and are so correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church” [footnote omitted].

²⁰⁰ Le primat romain s’était jusqu’alors exercé surtout dans l’ordre de la vie doctrinal de l’Église universal; le Siege de Rome, à qui le double fondement de Pierre et de Paul, et par dessus tout le fait qu’il était la *Cathedra Petri*, assuraient une apostolité d’un caractère unique, intervenait dans la vie des différentes Églises surtout comme gardien de la doctrine et de l’unité dans la foi. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 32.

World War, Pius XII issued his Encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi*. When Pius XII wrote of “the wonderful union existing among Christians” he did so in the context of the central role of papal authority as defender of “truth, justice and charity”.²⁰¹ Moreover, he confirmed in *Mystici Corporis Christi* his papal role as “Teacher of the Universal Church . . . with the light of truth”²⁰² This core theme of the special Teaching Authority of the Catholic Church was revisited and expounded upon again by Pius XII in his Encyclical *Humani Generis*.²⁰³ As set forth in section F, herein, Congar’s response to this ecumenical conundrum was “unity in diversity”.

H. *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l’Église*

After reading Congar’s 1950 *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l’Église*, Avery

Cardinal Dulles (1918-2008) commented:

²⁰¹ “We have seen Our children in Christ, in whatever part of the world they happen to be, one in will and affection, lift up their hearts to the common Father, who carrying in his own heart the cares and anxieties of all, is guiding the barque of the Church in the teeth of a raging tempest. This is a testimony of the wonderful union existing among Christians; but it also proves that, as Our paternal love embraces all peoples, whatever their nationality and race, so Catholics the world over, though their countries may have drawn the sword against each other, look to the Vicar of Jesus Christ as to the loving Father of them all, who with absolute impartiality and incorruptible judgment, rising above the conflicting gales of human passion, takes upon himself with all his strength the defense of truth, justice and charity” (par. 6).

²⁰² “We have thus far, as Teacher of the Universal Church, illumined the mind with the light of truth *Mystici Corporis Christi*, par. 91.

²⁰³ “[T]he word of God [is] contained in Sacred Scripture as the foundation of religious teaching. But at the same time it is a matter of regret that not a few of these, the more firmly they accept the word of God, . . . the more severely do they spurn the teaching office of the Church, which has been instituted by Christ, Our Lord, to preserve and interpret divine revelation” (par. 8); “Unfortunately, these advocates of novelty easily pass from *despising scholastic theology* to the neglect and even contempt for the Teaching Authority of the Church itself This Teaching Authority is represented by them as a hindrance to progress” (par. 18); “For, together with the sources of positive theology God has given to His Church a living Teaching Authority to elucidate and explain what is contained in the deposit of faith only obscurely and implicitly” (par. 21); “This deposit of faith our Divine Redeemer has given for authentic interpretation not to each of the faithful, not even to theologians, but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church” (par. 21) (emphasis added).

More than a decade before Vatican II the French Dominican Yves Congar wrote a book with the title *True and False Reform in the Church*. The work was considered controversial in its day, but has, I think, been vindicated as thoroughly orthodox. It is still in my opinion the most searching theological treatise on the subject.²⁰⁴

1. Reform in the Life of the Church. As the beginning of the Introduction to

Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église Père Yves Congar wrote:

The Church will always present [herself] The Church has always been active in reforming herself. At least since that classical period where, with the great councils, the Fathers and the settling of her liturgy, the Church in some way defined its type of being; its history is like a rhythm of movements of reform. This fact has struck all historians of the papacy and the Church, Catholics as well as Protestants.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Avery Cardinal Dulles, "True and False Reform," *First Things* (August/September 2003): 16.

²⁰⁵ L'Église sera toujours présentée L'Église a toujours été en activité de se réformer elle-même. Au moins depuis de cette période classique où, avec les grands conciles, les Pères, la fixation de sa liturgie, l'Église a en quelque sorte défini son type d'être, son histoire est comme rythmée par des mouvements de réforme. Le fait a frappé tous les historiens de la papauté et de l'Église, catholiques aussi bien que protestants. Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, Unam Sanctam 20 (Paris: Cerf, 1950), 11, 19.

A Spanish translation of *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, was published three years later as *Falsas y verdaderas Reformas en la Iglesia*, (Madrid: Institute de Estudios Politicos, 1953). In 1968 there was a second revised French edition of *Vraie et Fausse Réforme* published in Unam Sanctam 72 (Paris: Cerf, 1968). Finally, after sixty-one years an English translation has been published: *Yves Congar, O.P.: True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philbert (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011). Prior to this, only selections from Congar's Conclusions to *Vraie et Fausse Réforme* had been published: in 1951 as "Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church", trans. Bernard Gilligan, *Cross Currents* no. 4 (Summer, 1951): 80-120, and in 1953, when parts of Congar's Introduction to *Vraie et Fausse Réforme* were chosen by him for his article, "Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église", trans. Launcelot C. Sheppard, *Cross Currents* 3 no. 4 (Summer 1953): 358-65. It seems appropriate to conclude that this material was considered by Père Congar to be among the more important parts of his book and excerpts from these two articles form part of the basis for the discussion which follows. The translations by Gabriel Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church* have also been of material assistance herein, particularly in the section 3 "Reform without Schism: Congar's Four Principles for True Reform in the Church", presented in this Chapter.

Examples of some of the historic periods of reform in the life of the Church presented by Congar in *Vraie et fausse Réforme* include those of the monastic religious orders seeking to return to the base ideals of their origins; papal reforms of abuses or defects - Congar particularly noted Gregory VII and Innocent III; the founding of mendicant orders such as the Jesuits, Dominicans and the Franciscans; Orders of Councils proposing reforms, particularly the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and the Council of Trent (1545-1653); and the "tidal wave of Protestantism" (which Congar held overshadowed the sixteenth century Catholic reforms). Congar, "Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église", *Cross Currents* 3, no. 4: 358; Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, 19.

a. *The decisive years of 1945-1947.* After the close of World War II, with the sudden unshackling of free speech in continental Europe there began a series of parallel expressions of ideas which reflected that many were in fundamental agreement regarding the need for Church reform. Congar defined such “reform” broadly, as any movement in the Church seeking to advance a legitimate position through “fresh scrutiny on the sources and vital principles of the life of the Church”.²⁰⁶ He added that many of these books and articles, most of which appeared in 1946-47, were pointedly critical of the Church.²⁰⁷ The Church laity and clergy also spoke out – in Congar’s words, the laity often bemoaned the “outmoded, unsuitable, ineffective and ‘bourgeois’ nature of parochial pastoral work.”²⁰⁸ Although as a practical matter clergy rarely (Congar says “never”) speak with the directness of the laity, their complaints, while coached in moderate terms, were much the same and, like some other post-war publications, reflected a common desire for liturgical reform.²⁰⁹ From the start, liturgical reform was closely identified with and parallel to the *ressourcement* movement for a return to the sources - the Bible and the Church Fathers, and included concerns for a revival of preaching, catechetics and pastoral methods in the parishes.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 21; Congar, *Cross Currents* 3, no. 4: 358.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. Congar refers to and cites Loys Mason, *Pour une Église* (Geneva: Bordas, 1947); M. Dupouey, “L’Eglise va-t-elle émigrer” (Is the Church Emigrating?), *Esprit* (May, 1946): 703; and E. Mounier, “L’agonie du Christianisme” (The Agony of Christianity), *Esprit* (May, 1946): 717.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 24; Congar, *Cross Currents* 3: 359.

²⁰⁹ Because the liturgy is so closely connected to the doctrine of the Church, it remains to this day a principal focus and concern of the Vatican. In fact, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (December 4, 1963), was the first document approved by the Vatican II Council fathers. Thus, Congar writes in 1950 that it should not be a surprise that the Holy See would seek to control both the initiative and the direction of liturgical reforms. He prophetically cited the changes made to the 1945 Psalter as foreshadowing “the beginning of a movement which would include a reform in both text and arrangement of the breviary and in the fairly near future . . . , celebration of certain sacramental rites and, perhaps, the Mass of the catechumens, in the vulgar tongue.” Ibid., 360; Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 27.

²¹⁰ Ibid.; Congar, *Cross Currents* 3: 360.

b. *The Reformation: consequences of criticism of everything Catholic.* Until the Middle Ages criticism in the Church was rarely encountered. Then, at the very time when the the western world was almost uniformly Catholic, some works by bishops, monks, priests and others on Church reform appeared. Congar cites as an extreme example Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which was populated at all levels of hell with some of Dante's religious contemporaries, including Popes Nicholas III, Boniface VIII and Clement V.²¹¹ At the same time, the Church was respected and recognized as *the* Holy institution founded by Christ. The Reformation changed all that, for with it came an aftermath of Protestant censure of "everything Catholic" (Congar's characterization), from Pope to mendicant monk – the sum of which had very palpable and lingering negative consequences for Christian reunion:

The reformation, as an undercurrent to its radical attack on the doctrine of the Church, evolved a whole body of criticism of everything Catholic, monastic life, the priesthood, and especially of the papacy; it was a merciless criticism, regardless of the truth; unfortunately nearly all its propositions still remain embedded in the Protestant mentality and give rise to those complexes which constitute the most serious psychological obstacles to reconciliation.²¹²

Congar's bitter description of the Reformation seems somewhat out of character for the reformer he was, but it serves to underscore the basic faith character of the man. Congar was a Catholic seeking reform in the Church – not a reformer who happened to be Catholic. If we listen to Congar's words here carefully, they anticipate something which might be otherwise missed – a portent of the Vatican's subsequent reaction to his own criticism of a "juridical-hierarchical Church with a closed system of acquired truths."

²¹¹ Ibid., 361.

²¹² Ibid.; Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 30.

c. *Ecclesial and religious reform.* Simply put, this is reform leading to the dual truth of man's worship and his relationship with God. Congar rightly expresses that modern man has an "irrepressible need of sincerity, especially in matters of worship and in his relations with God."²¹³ We expect to find deep and sincere worship at the altar - not some perfunctory rite existing and celebrated for its own sake.²¹⁴ As Congar will later write, it is the very *truth* of the Christian reality which is at stake here, the *truth* of man's relationship with God - that God and man are inseparable.²¹⁵ Congar's position was that in the Catholic Church there were too many things which over the years had become forgotten or no longer honored – thus producing impotent 'rites', liturgical rituals complete in themselves which have no need of us, except as an sterile stylized presence:

As [Paris worker priest] Abbe Michonneau has rightly observed, men do not live by rites and our parishes are unattractive because 'our Christianity appears as a ritualism which changes nothing in the life of those who practice it.' In our wonderful and holy Catholic liturgy, as it is often performed, there are too many things whose original meaning is no longer really honored and which have been reduced to the state of an atrophied organ, ritualized vestiges of an action which originally was the real deed of a man or a living community.²¹⁶

Hard on the heels of that language in *Cross Currents* comes the following:

What has been said concerning the actions of worship may, with proper allowances, be repeated in the sphere of doctrine, not as it is in itself but as it ought to be in us, as it ought to be put forward by us to others so that it should not remain merely a truth *in itself* but become a truth with its living roots in men's consciences fitted to be the sustenance of their actual lives. Again, the same could be said to some extent of . . . all these forms which are as it were the epidermis of the Church, that by which it is seen and touched, which like the rites of worship always incur the risk of existing for their own sake, in separation from the living Gospel, and by that very fact represent no more than a sociological crust somewhat resistant to the sap of Christianity.

In all of this, it should be understood, what is really at stake is the truth of the Christian reality, the truth of the religious relationship of man with God. . . .

²¹³ Ibid., 50; Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 362.

²¹⁴ Ibid.; Cf. Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 50, 52.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 52. This parallels Congar's understanding that we are one in the body of Christ.

²¹⁶ Ibid.; Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 362.

Thus, latent in the movement for *ecclesiastical reform* there is a concern for *religious reform* . . . as an enduring obligation.²¹⁷

These telling words strike at what Congar describes as the “structure” or “structural elements” of the church, its man-made trappings with which the Church had been festooned over the years. Doctrine is criticized by Congar not for what it is but for what man has done or failed to do with it. Likewise, Congar charges that liturgical rites of worship in a clerically-centered Church run the risk of being separated from their biblical roots and become essentially more form than substance.²¹⁸

d. *Reform and the need for ressourcement in the life of the Church.* In an explicit and direct criticism, Congar proposed that the contemporary Church had in some ways become irrelevant. In *True and False Reform in the Church* he writes that the Catholic faithful need the Gospel and want to remain in the Church, yet at the same time they have the feeling “that certain forms of the concrete pastoral life of the Church are inadequate to the needs of the times and are concealment rather than an expression of the Gospel.”²¹⁹ He goes on:

In our days the outward forms of the Church seem, to many people, to cut them off not only from the Gospel and God but also from the very mystery of God. The Christian world forms a screen in front of Christianity. Some . . . have considerable difficulty in recognizing the Gospel in this historical setting which hides its living reality and makes it appear incongruous. Frequently, then, it is from without and, as it were, from the exterior appearance, that the fundamental values of the Gospel and of the Church herself are discovered afresh. . . . This discovery is made in new forms of expressing faith and worship re-invented by returning to origins and remaining in close dependence on them. [This] cannot be disregarded without ignoring the very clear guidance of the Holy Spirit at the present time.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Ibid., 362; Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 52 (emphasis mine).

²¹⁸ Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 362

²¹⁹ Ibid, 55; Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 363.

²²⁰ Ibid.

e. *Reform and renewal in the Holy Spirit*. This warning against ignoring the Holy Spirit presages Congar's distinction between what thirty years later he will term as "pneumatological ecclesiology" and "pneumatological anthropology".²²¹ Congar argued that in the late nineteenth century into the twentieth century, "the years of famine", there had been a neglect by the Church of the biblical truth that God and humanity are inseparable – a neglect which resulted in a practical disengagement between anthropology and theology, artificially compartmentalizing man from God.²²² In truth, it is of course the Holy Spirit who leads us to true reform and presses women and men to the ends which the Spirit seeks for the Church in their time. Moreover, this ecclesial attempt to compartmentalize the Holy Spirit dilutes what is a basic truth for Congar: there is never an affirmation about God which does not concern man.²²³

By way of overview, in the medieval scholasticism of the West, the notion of one Body, one Head, *unum corpus, unum caput*, came to dominate ecclesiology. This was made part of the universality of the Church with the Pope as the *unum caput*, the Vicar of Christ. While Congar certainly held fast to this belief, he argued that the hierarchical Church had essentially divided the activity of the Spirit into a pneumatology consisting of two separate spheres: the pneumatology within the ecclesiology of the Church and the

²²¹ We have discussed that Elizabeth Teresa Groppe focused on the pneumatological theology of Congar which reintroduced the integration of the indwelling of the Spirit in the person (*une anthropologie pneumatologique*) with the work of the Spirit in the Church (*une ecclésiologie pneumatologique*). Groppe, *Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 4; *idem*, "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999), 59. In *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury, 1983), Congar focused on the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ and was sharply critical of the lack of emphasis by the Church of the essential role the Holy Spirit plays in the life of the Church.

²²² In her dissertation Abstract for "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit", Groppe writes that Congar believed that the divorce of spiritual anthropology from the ecclesiology of the Church constituted a betrayal of Catholicism's biblical, patristic and Thomistic heritage.

²²³ Congar, "Council in the Age of Dialogue," *Cross Currents* 12: 150.

Holy Spirit active in the inner life of the believers. Congar argues that however active the Holy Spirit might be in the inner life of believers, in the eyes of the Church it “did not . . . constitute a pneumatology.”²²⁴ This resulted in what Congar saw as a *de jure* (but of course not *de facto*) “domination” of the Spirit’s economic mission by the Church (ecclesiological pneumatology), which marginalized recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit outside the hierarchy of the Church (anthropological pneumatology).²²⁵ With this sort of systemization, the work of the Spirit in the body of the faithful was really neither accorded attention nor credit by the Church.

In 1979, Yves Cardinal Congar wrote in *Je crois en l’Esprit Saint* (I Believe in the Holy Spirit):

The Holy Spirit has sometimes been forgotten. It is not difficult to find examples of this. Karl Adam’s *Das Wesen des Katholizismus* (1924) was rightly held in high esteem during the first half of this century. Yet we find in it: . . . “the certitude of the Catholic faith rests on *the sacred triad: God, Christ, Church*” (emphasis mine).

. . .
Regrettably, in the formulae suggested [above] . . . there is an insistence on man and on Christ as a ‘man for others’, but a rather disturbing absence of any reference to the Holy Spirit and the Church²²⁶

Congar proposed that the ecclesiology of the Church itself had developed “substitutes” for the Holy Spirit, such as seeing the Eucharist in an essentially christological perspective without a concomitant understanding of the role of the Spirit who brings

²²⁴ Yves M.J. Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), 2, 114-15, 122; Cf. Yves Congar, *The Wide World, My Parish: Salvation and Its Problems*, trans. David Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 37.

²²⁵ Congar, *Word and Spirit*, 2, 122. Cf. Yves Congar, *The Wide World, My Parish: Salvation and Its Problems*, trans. David Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 37.

²²⁶ Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Experience of the Spirit*, vol. 1, “Forgetting the Holy Spirit,” trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury, 1983), 159-60. As one example of this, the Eucharistic Prayer for ordinary times, the *canon actionis* of the Catholic Mass, references God twenty-two times, Jesus Christ twenty-six times, but the Holy Spirit only six times. *Lex orandi, lex credenda*.

about Christ's presence.²²⁷ In 1998, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger wrote that becoming a true Christian – *i.e.*, becoming *communio* through *caritas*, can only happen through the Holy Spirit.²²⁸ This, of course was three years after Congar's death but it nonetheless represents a key intersection between the ecclesiology of Yves Congar and Josef Ratzinger who had worked together as *periti* at Vatican II.

Again, where Congar sought reform in the Church was in the “forms of life” - his “structural elements” – the often superfluous and artificial man-made forms, regulations and trappings which the Church had accumulated over time. However, Congar disclaimed any intention of tearing down the Church hierarchy, although he did gratuitously add that “many consider it excessive.”²²⁹ In fact, at times Congar even defended it, noting that since the Gregorian Reform, the organization of the Church enabled it to politically survive, ensured worthy nominations to clerical and prelate offices and advanced both clerical morals and the ecclesiastical life.²³⁰

2. Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church.

a. *The four senses of the word, “Church.”* Congar is informed by four meanings or senses for the Church: first, the Church as *institution* composed of its elements of trinitarian faith, its confessions and sacraments; second, the Church as a *congregation of the faithful*; third, the Church as *hierarchy*; and fourth, the Church as *union of the formal divine principle and the material human principle* – *Ecclesia de Trinitate et Ecclesia ex omnibus in Ecclesia in Christo*, the Church of the Trinity and the Church of all (the

²²⁷ Ibid., 162. Congar suggested that an overemphasis upon Mary and the Pope had also at times been substituted for the Holy Spirit. Ibid., 160-64.

²²⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, “The Holy Spirit as Communio: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine”, *Communio* 25 (Summer, 1998): 327.

²²⁹ Ibid., 303; Congar, *Cross Currents* 33: 363.

²³⁰ Ibid.

congregation of the faithful) in the Church of the Incarnate Word.²³¹ It is important to understand and mark that only in the third sense of the Church – the hierarchical Church, did Congar seek reform in its forms of life or “structures.”²³²

3. Reform without Schism; Congar’s Four Principles for True Reform in the Church: Maintaining What Has Been Held and What Has Been Given.

a. *The First Principle: Primacy of Charity and of the Pastoral.* “The Church must before all else safeguard its very being and the integrity of its principles.”²³³

Essential to the tradition of Catholicism is the dogmatic principle that there must be a “general disposition of maintaining what has been held, and of ensuring regularity before everything else.”²³⁴ Congar comments that an imperfect but stable order is often better than change.²³⁵ Putting this in everyday perspective, he adds that Jesus did not say, ‘I am custom’, but “I am the Truth,” for custom without truth is nothing but the seniority of error.²³⁶

Like the ecumenist Johann Adam Möhler, the subject of his *lectorat* at Le Saulchoir, Congar believed that one central theme of reform within the Church must include respect for the Church and willingness by the reformer to work within the Church.²³⁷ This entails both good theology and good ecclesiology: a love of the Church

²³¹ Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 92-100, “Plusieurs sens du mot ‘Église’”.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, *Cross Currents* no. 4: 80.

²³⁴ Ibid., 81. By “regularity,” Congar may be speaking of continuity in the practice and content of the deposit of faith. This, then, touches upon the canon of St. Vincent of Lérins (c. 400), written in his *Commonitorium* as the litmus test for orthodox Catholic doctrine, much discussed at Vatican II, “Magnopere curandum est ut id teneatur quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est”. (Great care must be taken to hold to that which is believed everywhere, always and by all.)

²³⁵ Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, *Cross Currents* no. 4: 80.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 190.

and a will to work for internal change without compromising her truths or disrupting her unity.²³⁸ It was the very point of the warning made by Pius XI to the German Third Reich in 1937, which demanded the establishment of a German National Church: “Every true and lasting reform has ultimately sprung from the *sanctity* of men who were *driven by the love of God and of men.*”²³⁹ A reform without charity and holiness results in separation from the Church.²⁴⁰ “The fundamental question is whether reformers are prepared to accept the concrete reality of the Church or jettison it in preference for their own thought cast as an infallible criterion for reform.”²⁴¹

b. *The Second Principle: To Remain within the Communion of All.* True reform demands a communion with the whole Church, a joinder of truth and unity.²⁴²

It is not only in the total body that one finds the total truth; but also in the communion of the total body that one takes hold of a truth which is far superior to that which he is able to understand or to formulate there personally. It is not difficult to comment here on the meaning of Ephesians 3:18-19.²⁴³

Congar wrote that understanding the truth of Scripture in its fullness requires a communion with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.²⁴⁴ Drawing from this and

²³⁸ Cf. Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 191.

²³⁹ Pius XI Encyclical, *Mit brennender Sorge* (literally, “With Burning Concern”), par. 20. (On the Church and the German Reich, March 14, 1937) (emphasis mine).

²⁴⁰ Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 252-3, cited by Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 191.

²⁴¹ Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, citing *Vraie et fausse réforme*, 263. Except as noted, translations from *Vraie et fausse réforme* in this subsection are by Gabriel Flynn. See also Yves Congar, “L’Eglise une, sainte, catholique et apostolique,” *Mysterium Salutis* 15 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), .91, n. 84.

²⁴² Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 192.

²⁴³ Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, 266; this is my translation of “Ce n’est que dans le corps total que se trouve la vérité total; mais aussi dans la communion du corps total chacun tient une vérité très supérieure à ce qu’il peut en comprendre ou en formuler personnellement. Il ne serait pas difficile commenter en ce sens Ephésiens, III, 18-19.” Ephesians 3:17-19 (NAB) reads: (17) and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love, (18) may have strength to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, (19) and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁴⁴ Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, 266.

recognizing a “necessary law of tension” between the hierarchy and those on the margins of the Church so as to prevent dangers of heresy and disunion, Congar would require that all “reform initiatives which come from the periphery must seek the recognition of the hierarchy”.²⁴⁵ The hierarchy “itself is prophetic and knows not to extinguish the spirit”, although Congar adds that the periphery, too, is guided by the Spirit.²⁴⁶ Thus, in *True and False Reform in the Church* Congar optimistically and ideally states that there will be a harmonious relationship between the hierarchy and the Holy Spirit:

The institution saves the inspiration; the law protects the life; in the body of Christ, which is the Church, the spirit finds itself a body, and, in animating this body, is conserved by it.²⁴⁷

c. *The Third Principle: Patience: Respect for Delays.* This was the reform principle with which Congar was most personally familiar. To Congar, the lack of this virtue could turn reform into schism.²⁴⁸ It is a truism that change always accompanies reform. From personal experience Congar counsels:

One can call on reformers not to be too impatient only by asking the guardians of the tradition not to be too patient, to be sensitive to the demands that risk exploding one day, because of having been repressed for too long. . . .

The . . . reformer has . . . to take initiatives and to avoid the *via facti* [Flynn translates this *fact of life* as *realpolitik*], to open the ways of development and to respect the exigencies of *unity* and *continuity*, of which the hierarchy is the interpreter and the guardian. A double fidelity to which he has to give himself up entirely and loyally, accepting to live in himself a sort of distension and agonizing struggle . . . up to the day when, the new thing being officially recognized by the

²⁴⁵ Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 192-3. Congar holds that this tension is necessary so that the Church hierarchy can make an adequate response to the call for reform *and* the voice of the Holy Spirit. *Ibid.*, 193.

²⁴⁶ Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 285-6.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 292.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 306. Congar names Martin Luther as the icon of this misfortune, remarking that the impatient reformer “unfortunately compromises the true with the false; and wishing to speed development, he succeeds in slowing it down.” *Ibid.*, 318. From his own encounters, Congar writes that what is required by the reformer is “love and prayer . . . patience, purity and deep fidelity”. *Ibid.*, 315, 316-17.

unity and appearing as a true development of principle, he will know the intense joy of a consecration of the ‘spirit’ by the ‘mission’.²⁴⁹

In writing and “publishing” *True and False Reform in the Church*, Congar was motivated by zeal to renew the Church, not animus to attack her. It was not so long before that he had been freed from captivity and Congar wanted the same fresh winds to blow through and renew his beloved Church. We see that his underlying themes in *True and False Reform* had been that only with a heart of charity in communion with the body of Christ, and with patience and respect for delays, could there be true renewal by a return to the sources - a true *ressourcement*. Yet, as we know, this is not how his work was received by the Roman Curia. There is another irony here: Congar, who liked to understand things in their historic perspective, failed to perceive that perspective in the eyes of the Church. On its part, the conservative Church of Vatican I during the first six decades of the twentieth century was resistant to open its windows, thinking that the winds of “irenic ecumenism” and “irresponsible reform” could blow away the very deposit of faith which it was commissioned to protect.

d. *The Fourth Principle: True Renewal by a Return to the Principle of Tradition.*

Congar’s fourth principle of reform is, in fact, the most important. It is his guiding principle, *ressourcement*, starting with a return to the principles of Catholicism:

The great law of Catholic reform will then be to begin by a return to the principles of Catholicism. It is necessary firstly to ask questions of the tradition, to immerse oneself in it again: understanding that ‘tradition’ does not signify that which is ‘routine’ or ‘past’. Certainly, tradition comprises an aspect of the past; it is, in part, the treasury of texts and the realities of the past of the Church; but it is certainly more than that. It is essentially the continuity of development since the initial gift and the integration of all the forms that this development has taken and presents at the moment.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 194, citing Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, 332 and 325 (emphasis added).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 195, citing Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme*, 335-36.

By “tradition”, Congar does not intend to re-present a stagnant Church frozen in the past, but means to include the thought of the Church today – the faith, prayer and piety of its people “under the regulation of the ‘magisterium’”, as well as Scripture, the Church Fathers, Church doctrine and liturgy - “all that is precious in the sources”.²⁵¹ Not only is tradition the handing on from one generation to another of the *truth* of the Church, but it is explaining, living and defending this truth. True reform is a compliment to these functions. In contrast, false reform is a mechanical or superficial “reform” which works no real change or addition to the “structural elements” of the Church: it compliments nothing of ecclesiastical substance.²⁵² For Congar true reform requires two major adjustments. The first is a movement away from a false intellectual approach which places reason over tradition; the second is a concomitant return towards a re-centering on Christ in his paschal mystery.²⁵³ This will imbue a deeper love of God but at the same time “requires a return to the profound tradition, to the very soul of the Catholic principle.”²⁵⁴

It is by an in-depth work in a biblical line, a patristic line, a pastoral and apostolic line, a very pure contemplative line, it is by a new intensification of the love of God and of others that such a programme will be accomplished.²⁵⁵

Flynn adds that Congar sees the need for “perpetual” reform within the Church:

[Congar’s] principles for reform, founded on the notion of Catholic fidelity, provide guidelines for a renewal of the church which, by preserving what is best in the tradition, help to avoid further injury to its unity and Catholicity. Without denying the importance of structural and organizational change, Congar

²⁵¹ Ibid., 336; Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 195.

²⁵² Cf. Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 339, 342.

²⁵³ Cf. Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 195.

²⁵⁴ Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 341.

²⁵⁵ Flynn, *Congar’s Vision of the Church*, 195, citing Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme*, 341.

is concerned to realize a Church renewal that contributes to a more profound Christian faith.²⁵⁶

Emphasizing unity and a mission to the world, Congar's *ressourcement* theology also embraced a renewed ecclesiology in a Church seeking to erase the old problem of the harsh juridical-hierarchical face which to Congar the Church presented to the world.²⁵⁷ Congar understood that ecumenism opens our eyes to see a spiritual world which "does not uproot us from our own, but changes the way we look at many things".²⁵⁸ As we know, Congar proposed that a successful ecumenical program presupposes and requires as its predicate not a new ecclesiology but a renewed one.

In *Vraie et fausse Réforme* Congar revisits his old theme of "Catholicity of the one Church" set forth in detail in *Chrétiens désunis*. This is presented in a form of unity in diversity - accepting a limited diversity rather than demanding pure uniformity, focusing on an ecumenical approach to find common ground without compromising confessions of faith. As Flynn points out, this was to be the approach of Vatican II, and as I shall submit in the next Chapter, it shows Congar's handprint on that Council:

This was also the view of Catholicity found in Vatican II [in *Lumen Gentium* paragraphs 8 and 28]. It can be plainly seen that Congar's application of Catholicity to the Church is part of his concern to show that the Roman Catholic Church is the realization of the messianic community willed by God. The Church realizes its Catholicity by a universal evangelism.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 197.

²⁵⁷ This was confirmed for Congar by the 1935 three-year Les Éditions du Cerf study as the primary source of Christian unbelief in France. *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁵⁸ Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 142, citing the essay "Experience et Conversion Œcuméniques" in Yves Congar, *Chrétiens en dialogue: Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 123-39. Unfortunately, this essay is unavailable in the English publication, *Dialogue Between Christians: Catholic Contributions to Ecumenism*, trans. Philip Lorentz, S.J. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966).

²⁵⁹ Flynn, *Congar's Vision of the Church*, 196.

Still, Congar's 'universal evangelism' comes with an important tenet – it is only the Catholic Church which has Catholicity and which can realize this Catholicity by maintaining that its many are part of the pre-existing one. Thus, 'Catholicity' is distinguished from ecumenism, where we recall that a common denominator is sought to be found among many different Christian churches. The most apt description of this is the German notion adopted by Congar of "unity in diversity". Congar builds on this ecumenical principle by proposing that the members of this unity can only fairly criticize one another if they first recognize that there are or may be truths in the positions they seek to criticize. Congar holds that these common truths should be the base for Catholic apologetics, for he submits that "the true apologetic is, in fact, ecumenism."²⁶⁰

4. Resistance to Reform: Obedience *ad litteram*, Integralism and its Consequences.

a. *Obedience ad litterem*. Congar holds that there is a great inertial force in the Church: "Catholics, particularly churchmen, are educated and trained to an obedience *ad litteram*," which in essence means whole submission to Church authority and tradition – that which in the Church is *given*. But Congar proposes that this imperative can easily result in unquestioned obedience, lack of initiative and timidity on one side and excess on the other.²⁶¹ He then sets forth an extraordinarily down-to-earth, if biting, critique of obedience *ad litteram* and the response by clerics and their superiors at the ground level to reform in the Church:

Pushed to its extreme limit, it would end up by conceiving religion as something completely ready-made, entirely determined from on high and extrinsic to the personal decisions of conscience, and the *Sentire cum Ecclesia* would become a mechanical docility complying with complete and meticulous regulations, admitting no margin for personal decision or adaptation. This would

²⁶⁰ Flynn cites, Yves Congar, "L'Église une, sainte, catholique et apostolique," *Mysterium Salutis* 15 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 179.

²⁶¹ Cf. Congar, "Attitudes Towards Reform", 82.

be degradation and almost a caricature of the real *Sentire cum Ecclesia*, and of the true meaning of tradition; rather it would be a flat fidelity in which the mind of Catholicism would be only very superficially honored.²⁶²

This restricted mindset reveals to Congar a lack of confidence in the truth and strength of principles, a need to avoid risk and a sentiment of weakness, even fear. He writes that, “It is for lack of skeletons that certain animals have to be enclosed in shells.”²⁶³ Congar decries the fact that Catholic clergy, submerged in a protocol of authority, regimentation and isolation, living in an artificial, hierarchical world, are reluctant to change and have “above all the tendency to seek security in what has already been accepted and to like ‘ready-made’ recipes.”²⁶⁴ This contains truth, of course, but one wonders if here Congar has not made an overstated point at the expense of the constant “marks” of the Church - one, holy, catholic and apostolic. This does not mean that the Church cannot change: the Church in some manner is always changing its tradition, for example, but it is at the same time always the same in its universality, dogma and Tradition.

b. *The consequences of systematic rejection of demands for reform.* First, it must be recognized that Congar readily understood that the Church could not be expected to tolerate every “reform” that comes its way:

The bad disposition of reformers who are secretly resolved to be right against the whole Church makes the most positive attitudes of acceptance and understanding quite useless. There must be in the [Church] structure an open disposition towards life, in order to be ready to welcome it, but on the part of life there must also be a similar attitude to the structure, in order to accept its regulations.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 88-9.

As a result of a series of chronicled historic episodes, Congar posits that the Church came to suspect, then distrust individual conscience, subjective devotion, mysticism, and evangelical spontaneity until even religious liberty itself was seen as an enemy.²⁶⁶ An embattled Church opposed schismatic Protestants to the point that “today [she] resembles a mother who can find soft words for only one of her sons, while the other, the one who really has the greatest need of her solicitude, finding nothing but lack of understanding in her, hardens in his obstinacy and leaves home”²⁶⁷ The failure of the Church to fulfill its full potential is related by Congar directly to this huge loss of creative force to the Church.²⁶⁸

Instead of a deep fidelity to tradition, which, through the work of discernment and assimilation we have mentioned, leads to an adaptive development, there is a static kind of fidelity, without dimension for the future, making only for an attitude of “anti-innovation”.²⁶⁹

This consequence to the Church of too rigid a framework can be historically traced. As an example, Congar refers to John Wesley’s biographers who noted that he wanted to be a reformer of morals, not a reformer of abuses within the Anglican

²⁶⁶ In support of these claims, Congar presents a rather lengthy text from W. Foerster, *Autorité et liberté*, no translator (Lausanne, Switzerland, 1920), 155-58, in Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, 89.

By way of an interesting side note Congar cites Foerster with evident approval that had the East-West schism been avoided there would have been no Protestant Reformation and infers that Russia would have been spared its revolution:

It is permissible to believe that except for this first schism Protestantism would not have had the occasion to be born, for the Church of the Renaissance would have found in the vitality of Slavic intensity a corrective for her own superficiality. For her part, the Orthodox Church would have found in her contact with the Church of the West a corrective against Czarist absolutism. This would not have been lacking in its repercussions on Russia’s political life and would have spared her certain social convulsions.” Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, 90.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Church.²⁷⁰ Congar adds there would be no Methodist “Church” today had the Anglican Church accepted Wesley “instead of refusing to accept him, and exhausting him”, so that he “found no place in the sclerotic body of the Established Church for a purely evangelical ministry.”²⁷¹ Similar examples may be drawn from the history of the Catholic Church.²⁷²

c. *Do not extinguish the Spirit.* But in all this, there must be a steady equilibrium:

It is necessary, therefore, that a balance be maintained between creative forces and stability, between demands and tradition. The advice to Timothy, “keep free from profane novelties in speech and the contradictions of so-called knowledge” (1 Tim., VI, 20) is answered by the reminder, “Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. But test all things; hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. V. 19-21).²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 90. Congar cites to one source, A. de la Gorce, *Wesley, maître d'un Peuple* (1703-1791) (Paris: np, 1940) as lending some support for this statement.

²⁷¹ Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, 90. The quotes around the reference to the Methodist “Church” are Congar’s. Congar believes that Wesley was less focused on dogmatism than unity of heart among Christians, citing Wesley, “If thine heart is as my heart, take my hand.”

²⁷² Here a dramatic Congar warns of secession from within the Church by quoting Père Jean-Baptiste-Henri-Dominique Lacordaire (1802-1861). Lacordaire was a great pulpit orator (“God and Freedom”) an unrepentant liberal (“J'espère mourir un religieux pénitent et un libéral impénitent” – I hope to die a religious penitent and an impenitent liberal) and a member of l’Académie française. He was considered by some to be one of the precursors of modern Catholicism. The rather incendiary quote regards the threat of the pent-up forces of the youth of Lacordaire’s time, ignored by an inert Church, who:

Vainly seek the home where their ardor might be sustained, purified, and put to use in a common work, in a Catholic way. They languish in isolated exaltation; they feel themselves perishing without profit for God. What a profound misfortune is the loss of so many intelligent men capable of carrying on an action for good! . . . Minds which have not been given an outlet in the normal way, will sooner or later meet each other in their unhappy quest; they will band together with an unhealthy delight, and will be stirred up by the feeling of their present force and the remembrance of their past inaction. Some day this lawless society, which has been preparing itself for a long time, will fall like a thunder-bolt upon a Church without doctors.²

² *Considérations sur le system de M. de Lammenais*, 28-9, cited by Th. Foisset, *Vie de R.P. Lacordaire*, vol. 1 (Paris: n.p., 1870) 81-2.

²⁷³ Congar, “Attitudes Towards Reform”, 91.

Finally, in this chapter we have come to know Yves Congar as a conservative Catholic ecumenical reformer: a conservative in the pure sense of the word, seeking ecclesial reform but retaining dogmatic ecclesiastical elements and the best of the ‘structural elements’ of the Church. As a reformer he sought change in the Church not for its own sake, but in order to return to the sources of the faith and to encourage all toward active participation in the one Church. While Congar was challenged, criticized, disciplined and even exiled for a time by Rome, his understanding of reform and *ressourcement* was so insightful and significant that later he would be referred to as an architect of the contemporary Church, the theologian who led Catholics into the ecumenical movement and Vatican II.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Gabriel Flynn, ed. “Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform: A Renewal of the Spirit” in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32. (Louvain: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005): 99.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONGAR'S INFLUENCE UPON VATICAN II

In the struggle of minds at Vatican II, his was the most influential, and his thought is enshrined in its pivotal documents. Congar, in fact, viewed his theology as an integral part of that Council, a point he expresses succinctly as follows: "If there is a theology of Yves Congar that is where it is to be found."¹

- Gabriel Flynn

A. THE ECCLESIAL NOTION OF THE CHURCH IMMERSED IN HISTORY

1. Introduction. The thesis proposed by this chapter is that at Vatican II, Yves Congar potentiated the actualization of a Church immersed in history whose theology was truly committed to ecumenism and unity, and ressourcement and reform. In this chapter we shall address Congar's contributions to Vatican II, including the "Message to Humanity", and to nine of the Council's sixteen major documents, including all four Constitutions, three of the nine Decrees and two of the three Declarations of Vatican II, each of which substantially impacted upon the ecclesiology of the Church.²

¹ Gabriel Flynn, ed. "Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform: A Renewal of the Spirit," in *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*, Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32 (Louvain: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005), 101, citing Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile*, ed. and notes Éric Mahieu (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 511; see also idem, "Letters from Father Yves Congar, O.P.," trans. Ronald John Zawilla, *Theology Digest* 32 (1985): 215.

² Congar was not always consistent in identifying the Vatican II documents on which he worked. As a result, it was necessary to verify these documents. This was done using inductive methodology, comparing Congar's published personal recollections in the interviews of him by Jean Puyo in 1975 and Bernard Lauret in 1987, together with entries in his own contemporary

When Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) called the Second Vatican Council of *aggiornamento*, the Church which came was the Church of Vatican I. Many were reserved and less than enthusiastic about *aggiornamento*, particular the Curia, which was generally also opposed to the whole idea of an ecumenical council. For them, Vatican I had left the Church as it should be as the “perfect society.” Indeed, if there was to be a council, then it should be a short one, for there was little which needed change.

We will see that at Vatican II, Yves Congar helped change the face of the Church to the world. It would no longer classify itself as the “perfect society” but as part of a people on a faith pilgrimage through time and history. Yet, at the opening of Vatican II, many of the Council fathers identified with the Church of Vatican I, an inwardly turned

journal which he maintained during Vatican II, later published as the two volume *Mon Journal du Concile*.

In his *Journal*, maintained from 1960-66, Congar by name or topic specifically identified eight Vatican II schema on which he worked: “*Lumen gentium*; *De Revelatione* [*Dei Verbum*]; *De œcumenismo* [*Unitatis Redintegratio*]; *Nostra Aetate*; Schema XIII [*Gaudium et Spes*]; *De Missionibus* [*Ad Gentes*]; *De libertate religiosa* [*Dignitatis Humanae*]; and *De presbyteris* [*Presbyterorum Ordinis*]. Congar, *Mon Journal*, vol. 2, 511. Omitted from the list is *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the first document to be approved by Vatican II. In his 1975 interview with Jean Puyo, Congar stated that he was engaged in the preparation of “most of the great conciliar texts,” specifically mentioning four by name: *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes*, *Dei Verbum* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, and three by schema theme: ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), religious liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*) and the Declaration on relations with non-Christians (*Nostra Aetate*). Again, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was not named. Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité: Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 149. In 1987, a second interview of Congar was published. Bernard Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), originally published in French as *Entretiens d’automne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 57 (hereinafter in this note, “FYCT”). In the Lauret interview, Congar said that he worked on six Vatican II documents: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, FYCT 57; *Lumen Gentium*, FYCT 14, 51, 52, 59, 63 and 66; *Nostra Aetate*, 16; *Gaudium et Spes*, FYCT 45, 53; *Ad Gentes*, FYCT 14, 59; and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, FYCT, 10.

On a related matter, in his 1987 interview with Lauret, Congar commented that he had “worked in four or five commissions, sometimes several at once – and this work ended up with texts.” FYCT 6. This is an extraordinary statement and I have found it in no other texts. It appears that Père Congar was asked to participate and contribute as an expert, whether officially or unofficially, in the subcommission/subcommittee working sessions of up to five separate Vatican II Commissions.

Church which was quite satisfied with itself, but still looking warily over its shoulder for any remaining vestiges of Modernism. What the world then saw, and what the Church of Vatican I surely wanted it to see, was the order and majestic power of the Church – what Yves Congar had characterized as the juridical-hierarchical face of the Church to the world.

In contrast, Congar's notions of "*nouvelle théologie*" and "*ressourcement*," together were a 'back to the basics' movement seeking a return to the sources of the Bible, the early Councils, patristic writings of the Church Fathers and the liturgy of the Early Church. On its part, the Curia and others soon saw this *nouvelle théologie* and *ressourcement* as inevitably leading the Church down a destructive path to Modernism.

Congar perceived that the Church had become burdened, and at the same time consumed, with the man-made trappings with which it had been festooned over the centuries, the pomp and ceremony, the clericalism, the exclusivity, the development of an imperial and defensive Curia, the focus on the Church as a State, "excessive" Mariology and the general distancing and separation of a hierarchical Church from its faithful. He proposed a reform of these non-organic, man-made "structures" of the Church.

Quite predictably, the Catholic Church was resistant, defensive, wary and suspicious of such changes. Thus, it had checked, chastened and disciplined the likes of reformers such as Pères Marie-Dominique Chenu, Henri Fêret, Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniéleou, and Yves Congar. The Vatican felt that these "reformers" left unchecked would turn the Church upside down. Now, these same individuals had been variously summoned to attend Vatican II as Consultors, advisors and experts.

The thesis proposed by this chapter that Yves Congar potentiated the actualization of ecumenism and unity and *ressourcement* and reform within the Church has been noted before; here it is the central point of discussion. The forthcoming dialogue entailed some difficulties which may not at first be apparent. The first is a general lack of emphasis and familiarity with French theologians as compared with their English and German - speaking counterparts. We are simply more comfortable with those theologians and philosophers with whom we share a common language – English first and next, more often than not, German. It is hoped that this work will add in some small way to an increased appreciation of and scholarship into twentieth century French theologians in general and Yves Cardinal Congar, in particular.

2. History and Inductive Reasoning. When it is mentioned, Yves Congar's name is often greeted with a pleasant conversational nod; yet, quite understandingly most of us are really not all that familiar with Yves Congar and his contributions to the ecclesiology of the Church. For this reason we begin our examination of Congar's contributions to Vatican II by means of inductive reasoning. Vatican II historicist Giuseppe Alberigo argues that with the adoption of inductive reasoning at Vatican II came the acceptance of history as the medium in which Christianity was born and continues to live and breathe.³ Again, we might recall that *inductive* methodology moves from *observations* of events to establish a *pattern*, leading to a *tentative hypothesis* so as to establish a *theory*.⁴ In this chapter one sub-theme being proposed is that Yves Congar had a great impact upon a number of documents of the Second Vatican Council. Deductive reasoning here will

³ Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew Sherry (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 123-4.

⁴ One of the things which Congar thought was positive and could be taken from Modernism was inductive reasoning. This may be said to be the inverse of the deductive reasoning of Neo-Scholasticism, which Congar saw at the base of an ossified Neo-Thomism.

simply not suffice.⁵ Inductive reasoning necessitates an inquiry into the historical circumstances of the relevant documents, which statement itself has papal grounding under Pius XII's encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu*.⁶ Of this, Giuseppe Alberigo writes:

The urgency of a profound critical revision of Catholicism's attitude had already found a timid sort of expression in Pius XII's teaching that the Church should look to history. With his successor, this effort of readjustment took on unexpected momentum and immediacy. The papal declaration opening the Council [*Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, Mother Church rejoices] emphasized the permanent relationship Christ has with human history, a relationship that is intensified in history's critical moments.⁷

I might qualify Alberigo's statement on one point: he submits that in *Divino afflante Spiritu* Pope Pius XII made only a "timid" venture into historical-critical methodology. There was little timidity in Pius XII and he was hardly making a tentative gesture in *Divino afflante Spiritu*: Pius XII not only taught that we should look to history to help us to more deeply and accurately interpret Holy Scripture, he explained that this exegetical inquiry should now include the character, circumstances and times of the writer, and his sources and idiomatic forms of expression, as well.⁸

⁵ Deductive reasoning starts with a mind-set - a proven theory, or in the case of Neo-Thomism, an established scholastic principle, which here would be that Yves Congar increased the realization of a Church whose theology was truly committed to ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform - the chapter thesis. But deductive reasoning cannot be rightly used to prove this thesis, or that of any other chapter herein, for it would necessitate beginning the inquiry with a conclusive presumption of the validity of what is proposed to be proved. Thus, we turn to inductive methodology.

⁶ Pope Pius XII's September 30, 1943 encyclical, *Divino afflante Spiritu* (With the Help/Inspiration of the Holy Spirit), Acta Apostolicae Sedis, XXXV, widened biblical exegesis by permitting the use of "textual criticism" to "expand, explain and translate biblical texts into the vernacular" and to "cultivate and seek the aid of profane sciences which are useful for the interpretation of the Scriptures." *Divino afflante Spiritu* 10.

⁷ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 124.

⁸ "Moreover, we may rightly and deservedly hope that our time also can contribute something towards the deeper and more accurate interpretation of Sacred Scripture. For not a few times, especially in matters relating to history, were scarcely at all or not fully explained by the commentators of past ages, since they lacked almost all the information which was needed for a clearer exposition." *Divino afflante Spiritu* 31.

Giuseppe Alberigo tied Pius XII's exegetical incorporation of history into the ecclesial notion of "history as a friend", noting that inductive reasoning embraced history and recognized that "Christianity lives and breathes within (and not outside of, or despite) the chronicle of human events."⁹ On October 11, 1962, in his address to the Council fathers at the opening Vatican II, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, described as one of the most complete presentations of the Pope's vision of the Council, John XXIII emphasized this relationship between the Church and history. He proclaimed that Christ himself had a permanent relationship with human history: "After nearly two centuries, the most serious situations and problems that humanity faces have not changed; for Christ always occupies the central place of history and of life: men adhere to him and to his Church . . ." (my translation).¹⁰ With this language, the Church confirmed the relevance of the historical condition of humanity and humanity's bond to the Church in the world.

Vatican II was to radically reform and open up the defensive, inwardly-turned Church of the last four hundred years. John XXIII had answered the question he himself had penned years before as the papal nuncio to Paris on a page of his copy of Congar's *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans L'Église*.¹¹ Reform in the Church was possible!

"Let the interpreter then, with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research, endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources, written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed." *Divino afflante Spiritu* 33.

⁹ Giuseppe Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 123-4.

¹⁰ Giuseppe Alberigo, ed. and Joseph A. Komonchak, ed., *History of Vatican II*, 5 vols. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995-2006), hereinafter "Komonchak", vol. 2, 15; "Discorso del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII 11 October 1962) I.5: "Dopo quasi venti secoli, le situazioni e i problemi gravissimi che l'umanità deve affrontare non mutano; infatti Cristo occupa sempre il posto centrale della storia e della vita: gli uomini o aderiscono a lui e alla sua Chiesa. . . ." Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this Chapter are mine.

¹¹ Yves Congar, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1950). We may recall that in this work Congar wrote that the Church was holy because she was established by Christ, but could also be sinful because she was composed of human beings. Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 10. Congar sought reform not of abuses within the Church – for he claimed none, but of the man-

3. Tracing Congar's Influence at Vatican II. Pope John XXIII's agenda of *aggiornamento* caused some adjustment in the ecumenical impetus of the Church. This is reflected in the language of *Ad Gentes*, the Decree on Mission Activity of the Church (December 7, 1965), one of the Vatican II "schemas" or drafts on which Congar worked:

Now God, in order to establish peace or the communion of sinful human beings with Himself, as well as to fashion them into a fraternal community, did ordain to intervene in human history in a way both new and finally (sic) sending His Son, clothed in our flesh, in order that through Him He might snatch men from the power of darkness and Satan (cf. Col. 1:13; Acts 10:38) and reconcile the world to Himself in Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19).¹²

Charting Congar's intersections with the ecclesial history of the Church at Vatican II does entail some limitations. First, his two sets of Vatican II diaries, published in French as the two-volume *Mon Journal du Concile*, and the smaller but four-volume *Le Concile au Jour le Jour* (The Council from Day to Day), constitute the prime sources for this inquiry.¹³ But before we begin, let us hear Congar's self-appraisal at the end of his toils at the Council. On December 7, 1965, the day before Vatican II closed, Congar reflected on his work, praised God and privately shared his difficulties, insecurities and limitations with his private *Mon Journal du Concile*:

Looking at things objectively, I have done much to prepare for the Council: to develop and spread the ideas that the Council has consecrated. At this same Council I worked a lot. I could almost say "I labored more than all", but without doubt it would not be true In the beginning, I was too timid. I went

made "structures", the administrative "face" and appendages of the Church by which she seemed to be - and often was, turned inward to herself rather than outward to her people.

¹² *Ad Gentes* 3. The word, "finally" in the Vatican English translation may well be a misprint. The Latin word used is "definitive," which might be better translated here as "definitive" or "final": Deus autem ad pacem seu communionem Secum stabiliendam fraternamque societatem inter homines, eosque peccatores, componendam, in historiam hominum novo et *definitivo* modo intrare decrevit mittendo Filium suum in carne nostra, ut homines per Illum eriperet de potestate tenebrarum ac Satanae [9] et in Eo mundum Sibi reconciliaret.[10] (emphasis mine).

¹³ Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile*; Idem, *Vatican II. Le Concile au Jour le Jour*, 4 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1963-66). Congar later wrote the single volume *Le Concile de Vatican II: son Église, peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, Théologie Historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984).

through a long period of suspicion and difficulties. Likewise, in my spirituality I seemed to feel a certain sense of timidity. In effect, I have led all my life in line with and in the spirit of John the Baptist, a friend of the bridegroom. I have always held dear that it does not mean anything to grab what we can, but to be happy with WHAT WE ARE GIVEN. This is for each, that which is his “logic of worship”, his spiritual sacrifice and his way of sanctification. I have taken, then, that which was given me; I endeavored to do well [here Congar inserts a question mark] that which was asked of me. I have taken very little – too little – initiative, I believe. God has filled me. He has given to me profusely, infinitely beyond [my] non-existent merits. As for the Council, I was involved in much work, beyond that of a general influence of [one’s] presence and word.”¹⁴

In his humility Yves Congar would not often detail in his *Mon Journal du Concile* the role he played in the redaction of the initial schemas for Vatican II. However, using secondary sources, particularly including Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak’s *History of Vatican II* and Alberigo’s *A Brief History of Vatican II*, I have been able to flesh in and provide some detail of Congar’s work as *peritus*, or expert, at Vatican II.

B. THE DAWN OF VATICAN II

The Second Vatican Council is a bright line in the narrative of the history of the Church. Vatican II marked the end of three separate but successive eras. It ended the faint hope of some for a revival of medieval Constantinian Christendom; it opened up a defensive Church lingering from the Post-Reformation era, and moved it away from the

¹⁴ À voir les choses objectivement, j’ai beaucoup fait pour préparer le concile, élaborer, rayonner les idées que le concile a consacrées. Au concile même, j’ai beaucoup travaillé. Je pourrais presque dire “*Plus omnibus laboravi*”, mais ce ne serait sans doute pas vrai . . . Au début, j’ai été trop timide. Je sortais d’une longue période de suspicion et des difficultés. Même ma spiritualité a agi sur moi dans le sens d’une certaine timidité. En effet, j’ai mené toute ma vie dans le ligne et l’esprit de Jean Baptiste, *amicus Sponsi*. J’ai toujours estimé qu’il ne fallait pas s’emparer de quoi que se soit, mais être heureux de CE QUI NOUS EST DONNE. C’est cela, pour chacun, son “*logikè latreia*”, son sacrifice spirituel, sa voie de sanctification. J’ai donc pris ce qui m’était donné, je me suis efforcé de bien faire (?) ce qui m’était demandé. J’ai pris très peu – trop peu, je crois, - d’initiatives. Dieu m’a comble. Il m’a donné à profusion, infiniment au-delà de mérites rigoureusement inexistants. Au concile même, j’ai été mêlé à beaucoup de travaux, au-delà d’une influence généralé de présence et de parole. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 510-11.

distrustful and fearful anti-Modernist Church of Vatican I.¹⁵ At Vatican II the Church essentially abandoned the tightly structured, teleological top-down deductive methodology of Neo-Scholasticism for the experientially and historically-based bottom-up approach of inductive methodology.¹⁶ Finally, as both Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger commented, the Second Vatican Council transformed what had essentially been Western Christianity into a World Church.¹⁷ The use of experience-based and history-based inductive reasoning in Vatican II is nowhere more manifest than in the Preface to Paul VI's encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965). The Preface first paragraph is addressed to:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of

¹⁵ Cf. Introduction by Belgian Cardinal Léon Joseph Suenens to volume 2 of *Renewal of Religious Structures*, ed. L.K. Shook, C.S.B. (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 7.

¹⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo writes:

It is impossible to deny that the traditional deductive method had been eclipsed, however incompletely. The progress already made in theological studies before the Council had an influence on this process, overcoming the suspicion of heterodoxy that had followed it. The Council's repeated use of an inductive approach amounted to a sea change that was sometimes opposed but was irreversible nonetheless.

. . . . For a number of centuries the courageous and farsighted innovation that Thomas Aquinas had introduced in the Middle Ages with the acceptance of "pagan" Aristotelianism as a basis for Christian reflection had paradoxically been seen as definitive and valid for all time. The risk of a continual reduction of doctrinal propositions to abstract formulas, with the dramatic impoverishment of the Christian message it brought, was ignored in the name of Neo-Scholasticism. *Brief History of Vatican II*, 123.

¹⁷ Karl Rahner, S.J. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican Council II," *Theological Studies* 40, issue 4 (1979): 718; Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, trans. Henry Traub, S.J., Gerard C. Thormann, PhD and Werner Barzel (New York: Paulist Press, 1966), 13-14.

salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.¹⁸

1. Pope John XXIII Announces an Ecumenical Council. On October 28, 1958 Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, born November 25, 1881, and less than one month shy of his seventy-seventh birthday, was elected as the two hundredth and sixty-second Pope. He grew up in the humble surroundings of an Italian family of share-croppers of limited means.¹⁹ Cardinal Roncalli's advanced age was perhaps a silent signal of what was expected of him - and perhaps what was not expected of him, especially by the Roman Curia.²⁰ His was meant to be a transitional papacy, a "return to normalcy", a time of rest after what Giuseppe Alberigo describes as the "long and dramatic" reign of Pius XII (1939-58).²¹ To some, including Congar, Chenu, de Lubac and others, this might be described as the repressive nineteen year reign of Pope Pius XII. Yet, less than three months later, on Sunday, January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII announced in plain terms his "decisive resolution" to gather the Church together in an ecumenical council:

¹⁸ This was anticipated by John XXIII who set forth the three stages of Catholic social action of "look, judge, act" in his encyclical, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 53 (1961), pp. 401-464, no. 236.

¹⁹ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 3. During Vatican II, Giuseppe Alberigo was a counselor to Italian Cardinal Lecaro of Bologna. Alberigo also wrote and edited the foundational five volume treatise on Vatican II, published in English as *History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, English version ed. Joseph A. Komonchak (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995-2006).

²⁰ Shortly before his election as pope, Roncalli himself expressed that he wanted to slow down. Like Congar, from his seminary days onwards he kept a series of diaries. In his September 22-24, 1958 entry, the future pope wrote that, "My advanced age means that I should now be much more chary in accepting engagements to preach outside my own diocese. I have to write everything down first, and this is a great effort, besides the constant humiliation of feeling my own insufficiency. May the Lord help me and forgive me." John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*, trans. Dorothy White (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 294. What is coming for Cardinal Roncalli reminds one of the protestations of Moses to God in Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10 and 13.

²¹ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 1-2. "They call me a transition Pope. It's true, but the continuity of the Church is made up of transition after transition." Pope John XXIII cited in *Renewal of Religious Structures, introduction by Paul-Emile Cardinal Léger*, ed. L.K. Shook (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 9.

Trembling a little with emotion but at the same time humbly resolute in my purpose, I announce to you a double celebration which I propose to undertake: a diocesan synod for the City [of Rome] and a general counsel for the universal Church.²²

The Pope confirmed that this was all done entirely on his own initiative.²³ From the beginning, John XXIII emphasized the ecumenical nature of this Council, declaring “the celebration of the ecumenical Council was not only for edification of the Christian people, it was also an invitation to separated communities in the quest for unity” to join countless other souls from every quarter of the world.²⁴ His stunned audience was a small group of cardinals who had gathered in Rome to conclude the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the historic Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls in Rome.²⁵

The location, date and audience were surely not selected by chance. John XXIII purposed to open up a walled-in Catholicism from what was later characterized by Vatican II historian Giuseppe Alberigo as “an immobility that had seemed overwhelming and suffocating during the last years (from 1950 [the year of issuance of *Humani*

²² Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 1; Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 1.

²³ Even the inner circles of the Curia had no real foreknowledge of John XXIII’s intention to call an ecumenical council. One consultant for the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office at the Vatican (forerunner to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) said that the Congregation was agitated and could not understand how the Pope could have announced a council without consulting them. *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁴ John XXIII, *Journal of a Soul*, 322; Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 1. Non-clerics were also present at Vatican II as Catholic and non-Catholic observers. As to these, Congar commented on the change in the roles they played from Vatican I to Vatican II, and in “the accounts that they rendered to their Churches; in sum, the appreciation they expressed concerning the work and the texts of the Council.” Yves Congar, *Le concile de Vatican II*, 91 (“... les comptes rendus qu’ils ont fait à leur Églises, enfin l’appréciation qu’ils ont exprimée du travail et des textes du concile.”)

²⁵ The cardinals at the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity had been selectively contacted only a few days before and advised that the Pope would be present at the closing of the Week of Prayer, and asked that they also attend. On his part, John XXIII expressed the opinion that these attending cardinals reacted to his announcement in “impressive, devout silence.” Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 1-2, 6.

Generis] onward) of Pius XII.”²⁶ The location of the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls for John XXIII’s announcement of an ecumenical council presented an allegory for the hoped for openness of Vatican II.²⁷ The pronouncement of this Council coupled with the announcement of an ecumenical quest for unity of the Church with separated Christian communities, signaled not the end but the continuation of prayer for Christian unity which the cardinals thought they had just concluded.²⁸

The notation by John XXIII in his diary that his announcement was greeted by the cardinals with “impressive, devout silence”, may well have been the silence to which Fr. Richard McBrien would later comment, “perhaps . . . [reflected] not only their surprise but their disapproval as well.”²⁹ Cardinal Augustin Bea, a member of the Vatican Curia and former confessor to Pope Pius XII, later confirmed that within the Curia, “reactions to the announcement of Vatican II have not been very promising and are sometimes indeed cold and opposed to it, and there is an impression that there is some kind of wish to discredit the Council as ‘non-ecumenical’ from the onset.”³⁰

²⁶ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, ix.

²⁷ This was no doubt meant as a symbolic gesture by John XXIII. The Aurelian Walls had been commissioned and for the most part built by Emperor Aurelius in the second half of the third century A.D. to protect Rome from attack from invading Germans and Vandals. These imposing Walls enclosed the seven hills of Rome, the Campus Martius - a district where Roman notables left their mark with impressive structures, and one more common district on the right bank of the Tiber. It served as an ever-present reminder of Roman power and might. John XXIII chose to make his announcement of what was to become Vatican II outside these protective walls.

²⁸ The forerunner of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was the Church Unity Octave, in which Congar was so active in the late 1930’s in Paris. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, ix.

²⁹ National Catholic Reporter, “John XXIII calls the council”, January 20, 2009, available from <http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/john-xxiii-calls-council>; Internet; accessed 13 November, 2011.

³⁰ Stjepan Schmidt, S.J., *Augustine Bea, the cardinal of unity*, trans. Leslie Wearne (New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992), 294. Cardinal Augustin Bea (1881-1968) was a German Jesuit who would become President of a newly-created curial Commission for Promoting Christian Unity, later named the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, which position Bea held until his death. Previously he had been professor and then Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (1930-49) and was the confessor of Pope Pius XII from 1945-58. He was elevated to

Congar himself thought that from a theological point of view the Council came twenty years too soon.³¹ His notion was that in twenty years ideas and bishops would have changed – and only then there would be an episcopate composed of men possessed of ideas of great biblical scope and traditional ideas of ressourcement which possessed a “missionary conscience” for ecumenism and a true understanding of pastoral realities.³² Publically, John XXIII’s proclamation of a Council was greeted by a worldwide groundswell of excitement and expectation of profound change - although there were different projections of just what would be the final outcome.³³ In the end there would indeed be change, but it would not come easily.

2. The Man and the Hour. At Vatican II the man and the hour would meet.

There, Congar realized the fruits of his ecumenical labor and hardship – the actualization of a Church whose ecclesiology was truly committed to both ecumenism and unity, and ressourcement and reform. Together with his confrères Marie-Dominic Chenu and Henri de Lubac, Congar had been in the forefront of theological and ecclesiastical renewal in France.³⁴ Two years before the Council commenced he was appointed a *Consultor* to the important Pontifical Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission.³⁵ Now he truly had the opportunity to influence the ecclesiology of the Church.³⁶

cardinal in 1959. Cardinal Bea was himself an ecumenicist and would play a significant positive role at Vatican II.

³¹ Komonchak, ed., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 5.

³² Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 4.

³³ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 4.

³⁴ Alan Woodrow, “Diary of an Insider,” *The Tablet* (26 October, 2002): n.p. available from <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/3940>; Internet; accessed November 15, 2011.

³⁵ Père Yves Congar was named as a *Consultor* to the Pontifical (Pre-) Theological Commission in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (hereinafter AAS) 52 (1960), 841. Henri de Lubac was also so named. Ibid.

³⁶ As will be discussed in some detail in this Chapter, the nine Vatican II documents (in chronological order by date of passage) to which Congar would contribute include *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, *Nostra Aetate*, *Dei Verbum*, *Ad Gentes*,

3. The Council Commissions and the Curia.

a. *The Pre-Preparatory and Preparatory Commissions of the Council.* To understand the difficulty initially encountered by the Council fathers at Vatican II some background information regarding them is in order. *Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum* was announced on January 25, 1959 and named the Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, to be called “Vatican II”.³⁷ John XXIII’s emphasis of the term, “Ecumenical”, is noteworthy, as is the naming of the Council “Vatican II” – thus, it was a new Council and a new face of the Church, and neither a continuation nor a completion of Vatican I which had been indefinitely suspended by Pius IX in October, 1870.³⁸ On the Feast of Pentecost, May 17, 1960, in an unexpected move John XXIII established the Central “Antepreparatory [Pre-Preparatory] Commission.”³⁹ On June 5, 1960, he explained in the second paragraph of *Superno Dei*, “so that the first work was done with care and

Dignitatis Humanae, Presbyterorum Ordinis (of which Congar confirmed he was a principal redactor) and *Gaudium et Spes*. In 1984, Père Congar stated his opinion that of these nine Vatican II documents on which he had personally worked as *peritus*, six had truly become part of the life of the Church: *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Lumen Gentium, Unitatis Redintegratio, Dei Verbum, Gaudium et Spes* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

In addition, Nichols states that Congar had written part of the Council fathers “Message to the World” which was read to the plenary Council on October 20, 1962. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Yves Congar* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 7-8.

³⁷ Apostolic Letter, *Superno Dei* (The Supreme God, June 5, 1960). As soon as Vatican II was announced, Congar started to formulate ideas as to how the Council should function both in the world and the Church. At the end of July, 1960, to record his impressions of the progress and to document the proceedings of the Council, Congar started his personal *Mon Journal du Concile*.

³⁸ As a prelude to the Curia’s resistance and attempts to control the Council, there was another interpretation of “Vatican II”: many – and we might fairly include conservative Curial Cardinal Ottaviani and Central Preparatory Commission member French Archbishop Marcel François Lefebvre (1905-1991) in this group, were awaiting the resumption of Vatican I and presumed that Vatican II was that event. It was almost immediately apparent, however, that this was not the intent of John XXIII. Archbishop Lefebvre never accepted Vatican II as valid. After Vatican II, Yves Congar roundly criticized Archbishop Lefebvre’s ultraconservatism in *La crise dans l’Église et Mgr Lefebvre* (Paris: Cerf, 1976), published in English as *Challenge to the Church: The Case of Archbishop Lefebvre*, trans. Paul Inwood (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976). In the end, Lefebvre was excommunicated in for ordaining four bishops in his new Society of Pope Pius X in the face of the express prohibition of Pope Paul VI.

³⁹ Komonchak, ed., *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 44.

diligence, we appointed a [Central] Pre-Preparatory Commission of the Ecumenical Council composed of hand-picked Cardinals of the Roman Curia and chaired by our beloved son, Domenico Cardinal Tardini, our Secretary of State.”⁴⁰ As noted, soon after John XXIII announced Vatican II, Père Congar was appointed as a *Consultor* to the Pontifical Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission. In late 1960 the Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission officially started its work in Rome. Yves Congar still had no idea of the role he was supposed to play: moreover, the guideline documents the Curia had prepared for the Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission made extensive references to Leo XIII and Pius XII and certainly did not presage what would follow.⁴¹

A total of six Pre-Preparatory Commissions, which included the Pontifical Pre-Preparatory Central Commission, were established by Pope John XXIII on November 14, 1960.⁴² At the head of each of the six Pre-Preparatory Commissions was a Curial Cardinal.⁴³ Ten Preparatory Commissions were then established in accord with the

⁴⁰ Die vero XVII mensis Maii insequentis, in festo Pentecostes, ut labores praevis accurate naviterque fierent, constituimus Commissionem Antepreparatoriam pro Concilio Oecumenico, ex lectissimis Curiae Romanae Viris, cuius moderamen dilectio Filia Nostro Dominico S. R. E. Cardinali Tardini, a publicis Ecclesiae negotiis, commisimus. John XXIII, Moto Proprio, *Superno Dei* (June 5, 1960).

Alberigo comments that the naming of Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tardini and not someone from the “feared – and by some, hated - Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office,” then headed by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979), prevented an initial complete monopoly by the Holy Office over the Council. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 11.

⁴¹ Yves Congar, *Mon Journal I*, v-vi.

⁴² The translated English names of the Pre-Preparatory Commissions can be somewhat confusing. Congar identifies these six “Commissions préparatoires” as (1) Commission centrale préparatoire (Pre-Preparatory Central Commission); (2) Commission théologique préparatoire (Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission, the Commission to which Congar and de Lubac were appointed Consultors); (3) Commission préparatoire pour les Églises orientales (Pre-Preparatory Commission for the Eastern Churches); (4) Commission préparatoire de la discipline des sacrements (Pre-Preparatory Commission of the Sacraments); (5) Commission préparatoire pour les missions (Pre-Preparatory Commission for Missions); and (6) Commission préparatoire de la liturgie (Pre-Preparatory Liturgical Commission). Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 583.

⁴³ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 13. *Superno Dei*, par. 2, describes these Cardinals as the “best men of the Roman Curia” (ex lectissimus Curiae Romanae Viris). Unaquaelibet Commissio

guidelines of John XXIII's *Moto Proprio*, *Superno Dei*.⁴⁴ There would also be a Central Committee to monitor and coordinate the work of the ten Council Preparatory Commissions and their subcommittees/subcommissions. These ten Council Preparatory Commissions would discuss the thematic matters within their purview chosen, as John XXIII stated, in view of the “*wishes and warnings* of the congregations of the Roman Curia” which had been proposed by the curial Cardinal who was the President of their Commission.⁴⁵ In other words, in the beginning the Curia firmly controlled the six Preparatory Commissions and the ten Council Preparatory Commissions. Specifically, each Preparatory Commission would be concerned with a particular theme identified in *Superno Dei* and would study and conduct investigations into the matters and issues therein. The ten Council Preparatory Commissions were each composed of sixteen voting members and eight expert non-voting experts, all headed by a President, who himself would be from the Sancta Romana Ecclesia, the College of Cardinals of the Church. In practice, each of the initial fourteen voting members would also be from the Vatican Curia.⁴⁶ The subcommittees of the Preparatory Commissions were eventually

suum habeat Praesidem et certum membrorum numerum. Praeses erit unus ex S. R. E. Cardinalibus. Membra autem ex Episcopis et viris ecclesiasticis praeclaris deligentur. *Superno Dei* 3.

⁴⁴ In order, the ten Preparatory Commissions were the (1) Theological Commission; (2) Commission of Bishops and of governing dioceses; (3) Commission for the discipline of clergy and the Christian people; (4) Commission of the Religious; (5) Commission of the Sacraments; (6) Commission of the Sacred Liturgy; (7) Commission of Studies and Seminaries; (8) Commission on Oriental Churches; (9) Commission on Missions; and (10) Commission of the Apostolate of the Laity in all things regarding catholic, religious and social matters. Apostolic Letter, *Superno Dei* (The Supreme God, June 5, 1960).

⁴⁵ Ad apparandum Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum alterum instituuntur *Commissiones*, quae Praeparatoriae appellantur in idque tendunt ut res seu materias per Nos selectas studio et pervestigationi subiciant, rite perspectis sacrorum Antistitum votis atque Dicasteriorum Curiae Romanae *monitis et propositis*. *Superno Dei* *Superno Dei*, paragraphs 1, 2 and 10 (emphasis mine).

⁴⁶ Giuseppe Alberigo, who was present during the actual implementation of *Superno Dei*, writes that in actual practice these ten Preparatory Council Commissions were “vested with the

made up of ten appointed, non-voting experts, or *periti*, such as Yves Congar, Marie-Dominic Chenu, Joseph Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, John Courtney Murray and Jean Daniélou.

Although John XXIII may not have intended that the Curia would control Vatican II, these initial appointments situated the Curia, which historically had been concerned only with the daily business and management of the Church – and not the control of an ecumenical council, in just such a position.⁴⁷ Consequently, those like Congar who sought renewal and reform and a reinvigorated ecumenical program, faced a conservative and entrenched Roman Curia which as the “Court” of the bishop of Rome had been part of the organizational structure of the Church for almost a thousand years. Now it had been interwoven into the very fabric of Vatican II. On its part, the Curia truly saw itself - as it had in Vatican I, as the protector of the Tradition and the deposit of faith of a besieged Church. Writing in hindsight the year after Vatican II concluded, Father Joseph Ratzinger, a *peritus* and the theological advisor at the Council to Cardinal Joseph Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, penned the following:

As we look at the Council in retrospect, one thing is certain. There was at the start a certain discomfoting feeling that the whole enterprise might come to nothing more than a mere rubber stamping of decisions already made, thus impeding rather than fostering the renewal needed in the Catholic Church. Had this happened, the Council would have disappointed and discouraged all those who had placed their hopes in it; it would have paralyzed all their healthy

competencies of the Curial congregations and led by the [Curial] Cardinals who led the respective congregations.”

⁴⁷ Alberigo writes, “Not even the analogous commission named by Pius XII to prepare for a future council had been so completely monopolized by the Curia.” Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 11. Thus, Congar would write that “little by little the hopes raised by the proclamation of the Council were obscured as though by a thin layer of ashes.” *Ibid.*, 10.

The surprising exception to the unbridled expansionism of the Curia was Curia Cardinal Augustin Bea, S.J. who would prove to be a powerful and effective opponent of the Curia’s attempt to control the Council Commissions, its experts and later the Vatican II Council itself. Yves Congar was most complimentary of Cardinal Bea. Schmidt, *Augustine Bea*, 537, 538, 727 and 729.

dynamism and swept aside once again the many new questions people of our era had put to the Church.⁴⁸

Since Vatican I the Church had officially perceived itself as the “perfect society” built upon the revelation, inspiration and works of the Early Church Fathers and its Councils, particularly the Councils of Trent (1545-63) and Vatican I (1869-70). Although Vatican II historian Giuseppe Alberigo will often paint the Roman Curia in dark hues, the Curia’s innate conservative rationale was certainly defensible. Had not the Church been established by Christ who declared Peter its apostolic head? If there could be no salvation except through the Church, the perfect society, why then should there be change? Moreover, in the Curia’s expectation if this Council were to actually proceed (and there was sparse support for it within the Congregations of the Curia), it should be a short one, for there was little else which needed to be said about the Church.⁴⁹ Alberigo cites from a letter sent by “an authoritative observer” to Archbishop Montini (who was soon to become Pope Paul VI):

The Rome that you know and were exiled from [by Pius XII’s decision to remove Montini from Rome and send him almost four hundred miles north to Milan] shows no sign of changing, even though it seemed that it must sooner or later. After their initial fright, the old buzzards are coming back. Slowly, but they’re coming back. And they are coming with thirst for new carnage and fresh revenge. That macabre circle is tightening around the *carum caput* [literally, “dear head” - John XXIII]. Without a doubt, they are back.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, 19. Fathers Congar and Ratzinger would later work together at Vatican II on Council Commission subcommittees as *periti*. Ratzinger had some interesting life experiences in common with Congar. When he was appointed *peritus*, Ratzinger had been teaching courses in Bonn on fundamental theology based principally on the Church Fathers rather than using the Neo-Scholastic format so dominant at the time. He, also like Congar, was familiar with and even lectured on Protestant theology - which we have seen was unusual for a Catholic theologian-priest at the time.

⁴⁹ In the view of not just a few Curial cardinals, the imposing number of pages of schemas to be sent out to the world’s bishops during the summer of 1962 was a “safe way to bring Vatican II to a quick conclusion” Komonchak, ed., *History of Vatican II*, vol.1, 2.

⁵⁰ Letter of Giuseppe De Luca dated August 6, 1959 to Giovanni Battista Montini in Paolo Vian ed., *Carteggio [Correspondence] 1930-1962* (n.p.: Brescia, 1992), 232, cited by Alberigo in *Brief History of Vatican II*, 5.

b. *Institutional isolation.* Alberigo presents the pontificate of John XXIII as being characterized by an “institutional isolation.”⁵¹ This was certainly an unintended consequence of the people’s Pope, but we can trace its beginnings. Soon after the call for Vatican II, in response to John XXIII’s request for input by all the bishops, the Curial Pre-Preparatory Commission proceeded to compile a list of pre-selected topics which would be the subject of a questionnaire to be sent out to the Council bishops. Again, this task was placed under the overall purview of the Secretary of the Secretariat of State Cardinal Domenico Tardini (1888-1961). As noted, significantly – and one might suggest, deliberately, it was not given by John XXIII to Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, who was then Secretary of the senior and powerful Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office.⁵² Yet, when Cardinal Tardini opened the first meeting of the Pre-Preparatory Commission on June 30, 1960, he thanked John XXIII on behalf of the Curia “for being willing to entrust the task of concrete preparation for the Council to representatives of the sacred congregations of the Roman Curia.”⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Established by Pope Paul III in 1542 as the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, after 1904 it was renamed by Pius X as the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, of which Cardinal Ottaviani had been the Secretary since 1959. As such, he traditionally acted on behalf of the Pope in day-to-day matters. In 1965 the Supreme Congregation was renamed Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The following year, Cardinal Ottaviani was made Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In 1988, the term “Sacred” was dropped. Now, as at the time of Vatican II, it remains the most senior of the nine Vatican Congregations and perhaps the most active, since as *Congregatio pro Doctrina Fide* it is charged with overseeing the doctrine of the Church. These Congregations are The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, The Congregation for the Oriental Churches, The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, The Congregation for the Causes of Saints, The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, The Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, The Congregation for Catholic Education (in Seminaries and Institutes of Study) and The Congregation for Bishops.

⁵³ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 48.

Because of the widespread adverse reactions by Council fathers to the notion of a Vatican drafted questionnaire, which had in essence become a curial document which determined and defined the topics to be discussed at Vatican II, the questionnaire was abandoned and the matter was completely opened up to the Council fathers.⁵⁴ In response, over two thousand replies and suggestions from cardinals and bishops all over the world poured into the Vatican in the winter, spring and early summer of 1960. John XXIII makes reference to this in the fifth paragraph of *Superno Dei*:

The Pre-Preparatory Commission has fulfilled with maximum diligence a function entrusted to it. For this, the recommendations and wishes of the sacred bishops inquiring about Council events, being more than two thousand in all, with expressions of joy and congratulation, which I have made known and brought to the attention of the departments of the Sacred Roman Curia, which have processed them in a clear order and used them to great advantage to Church affairs in developing the proposals presented (my translation).⁵⁵

C. THE CONVOCATION OF THE TWENTY-FIRST COUNCIL

On December 25, 1961, John XXIII's Apostolic Constitution *Humanae Salutis* (The Salvation of Men) was signed, formally convoking an ecumenical General Council of all the world bishops together at St. Peter's Basilica on October 11, 1962 and citing Christ's words to his disciples as his 'hour' approached, "Confidite, ergo vici

⁵⁴ During the summer of 1960 the questionnaire sent out to the putative Council fathers essentially sought their approval of the Curia's proposed agenda for Vatican II.

⁵⁵ *Commissio Antepreparatoria maxima cum diligentia munus sibi demandatum explevit. Eadem enim, a sacrorum Antistitibus consilia et vota de rebus in Concilio tractandis postulavit, responsionesque omnes, quae plus bis mille numerantur, et sunt maximo gaudio et faustissimo omine datae, Sacris Dicasteriis Curiae Romanae, claro ordine digestas, notas fecit. Sacra autem Dicasteria multum sane utilitatis ex hisce consiliis et votis haurire potuerunt, indeque sua proposita et monita Nobis exhibuerunt. Denique ecclesiasticae et catholicae Studiorum Universitates, pari aemulatione ductae, vota et studia protulerunt de rebus Ecclesiae maxime profuturis.*

mundum.”⁵⁶ Vatican II thereby became the twenty-first Ecumenical Council of the Church.

Councils are generally called in times of crisis and the crisis here was secularized man himself: the human race had so distanced and compartmentalized itself into intransigent political and nationalistic trenches with military tripwires that they were in danger of falling by misstep into the first nuclear world war.⁵⁷ At the same time many became increasingly distanced from what they saw as a hierarchical Church which seemed irrelevant to contemporary times and events and indifferent to the everyday concerns of mankind.

1. Congar’s Aspirations for Vatican II. Twenty-one days after Vatican II was announced, Congar published an authoritative article on the tradition of ecumenical and general Councils.⁵⁸ Because of limitations imposed upon him by the pontificate of Pope Pius XII the paper was unsigned.⁵⁹ In his anonymous article Congar focused on conciliar renewal and reform and expressed hope that Vatican II would not be a continuation of Vatican I, candidly writing in his *Mon Journal du Concile*:

A certain number of us had quickly seen in the Council a possibility for the cause, not only of unionism but of ecclesiology. We had perceived it as an occasion which one must exploit to the maximum, so as to accelerate the recovery of the true value of “episcopate” and “church” in ecclesiology, and to make substantial progress from the ecumenical point of view. Personally, I committed myself to the task of stoking public opinion so that it would expect and demand much. I did not weary of saying wherever I was that perhaps only 5% of what we ask will be passed. All the more reason for increasing our demands. The pressure

⁵⁶ “Take courage, [for] I have conquered the world.” John 16:33. What then follows is the ecumenical 17th chapter of John.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Humani Salutis* 3.

⁵⁸ Yves Congar, “Les conciles dans la vie de l’Église,” *Informations catholiques internationales*, no. 90 (February 15, 1959). This was probably in response to the January 25, 1959, announcement by Pope John XXIII of his intention to call a general ecumenical council.

⁵⁹ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 35.

of Christian public opinion must compel the Council to be a real Council and to accomplish something.⁶⁰

2. The Curia's Initial Schemas. In the summer of 1962, more than two years after the issuance of *Superno Dei* and the submission of their proposals, bishops around the world, the putative "Council fathers", received curial outlines of seven proposed *schema* or working drafts: on revelation, the deposit of faith, the moral order, the liturgy, the family, social communications and Church unity. In light of their expectations arising from John XXIII's happy pronouncement of *aggiornamento*, with the exception of the schema on the liturgy, these outlines were not well received.⁶¹ The bishops did not feel that these schemas reflected the openness and the ecumenical goals which had been embraced and proclaimed by the Pope. Yves Congar and others were also pessimistic about the schemas.⁶² The impression was that on the precipice of Vatican II's first

⁶⁰ Nous sommes un certain nombre à avoir le vu tout de suite dans le concile une possibilité pour la cause, non seulement, de la unionisme [footnote omitted], mais d'ecclésiologie. Nous y avons perçu une occasion, qu'il fallait exploiter au maximum, d'accélérer la récupération des valeurs de Épiscopat et *Ecclesia* [footnote omitted], en ecclésiologie, et de faire un progrès substantiel au point de vu œcumenique. Personnellement, je me suis appliqué à activer l'opinion pour qu'elle attende et demand beaucoup. Je n'ai cessé de dire partout: il ne passera peut-être que 5% de ce que nous aurons demandé. Raison de plus pour majorer nos demandes. Il faut que la pression de l'opinion publique des chrétiens force le concile à exister vraiment et à faire quelque chose. Yves Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 4. But see the somewhat different translation in Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 1, 36.

Note that Congar uses the word, "unionism" for "unity" in the first sentence. In a footnote he commented that "[T]his was the word in usage in the last Council to describe the activity of Catholics in favor of the unity of Christians: Vatican II will prefer the term, 'ecumenism', and will specify that this be used in the Decree, "*Unitatis Redintegratio*." (Ce mot était en usage, avant le dernier concile, pour désigner l'activité des catholiques en faveur de l'unité des chrétiens: Vatican II préférera le terme d'ecuménisme et en spécifiera le contenu dans le décret *Unitatis Redintegratio*.) Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 4, n. 5.

⁶¹ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 15.

⁶² M.-D. Chenu reports this from a meeting with Congar and Hans Küng. Jean Daniélou told Chenu that the schemas were "doctrinal schemas, devoted to academic discussions and lacking any evangelical perspective and any sense of the needs of the present time." Joseph Ratzinger thought the Preparatory schemas were incapable of speaking to the Church. Karl Rahner expressed disappointment that they contained nothing which could be salvaged. Edward Schillebeeckx and Henri de Lubac were of a similar mind as the others. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.1, 2.

session they were being presented with not only the Curia's agenda for the Council, but *de facto* asked to walk within the fence line of the Curia's position on each of these matters. This fear was so pervasive that Cardinal Suenens of Belgium and Canada's Cardinal Paul Émile Léger traveled to Rome to openly express their candid concerns to Pope John XXIII.⁶³

3. The Commissions of Vatican II. Even after this, some non-curial cardinals and bishops would complain that the Curia's initial submissions to the six Pre-Preparatory Commissions failed to engage John XXIII's vision of interacting with the modern world and seemed not to include much ecumenicism.⁶⁴

Although the vision created by John XXIII was for a new and open Council, not a continuation of Vatican I, Congar soon discovered that room for maneuvering was very limited. True, one could recognize that the pre-Council consultations and studies of the various bishops were starting to bear fruit: ten Preparatory Commissions, two Secretariats and a Central Commission would be eventually be instituted.⁶⁵ But with the sole exception of the creation of Cardinal Bea's Secretariat for the Union of Christians, as we have seen, the Commissions themselves would be headed by main cardinals of the corresponding Roman curial dicasters. Congar, who from life experiences had a tendency at times to see the dark side of things, was not at first optimistic.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., 16. Cardinal Léon-Joseph Suenens was very close to Pope John XXIII and often acted as a liaison between the Pope and the Council. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 29, 36.

⁶⁴ Cf. Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 13. This would seem to confirm that there had been substantial correspondence between John XXIII and various bishops prior to the proclamation of *Superno Dei*.

⁶⁶ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 16-17. Since both Congar and de Lubac had been sanctioned by Rome and "distanced" for a time, they arrived at St. Peter's under a cloud, but for the most part this soon cleared. Congar writes, "There was Lubac and me. Unquestionably, we cleared our Catholic names there, at least in official spheres, because layers of life and reality never follow the

4. Congar's Work on the Preparatory subcommittees. Two years later, at Vatican II, Congar was appointed as *peritus* to the subcommission of the Preparatory Theological Commission.⁶⁷ Seventy draft schemata compiled by the various Curia Commissions (included those previously sent to the bishops and objected to by them) were initially presented to the ten Preparatory Commissions. Father Joseph Ratzinger, also a *peritus*, was distressed at the sheer volume of the schemata and feared that they would overwhelm and compromise the mission of the Council:

The [Curia Pre-] Preparatory commissions had undoubtedly worked hard, but their diligence was somewhat distressing. Seventy schemata had been produced, enough to fill 2,000 pages of folio size. This was more than double the texts produced by all previous councils put together. How were the fathers to wade through this verbal wilderness? How was the Council to distill from all this material a message meaningful and intelligible to contemporary man? Was it not much more likely that the Council would ultimately issue a fearsome kind of dogmatic super-compendium which would weigh down any future work like a heavy milestone?⁶⁸

In abstract philosophical language which relied heavily upon papal defensive pronouncements, these seventy schema emphasized the status quo and made not even a

repeated discredit coming from Rome.” (“Il y avait Lubac et moi. Incontestablement, cela nous dédouanait dans l’opinion catholique, au moins dans les sphères officielles – car les couches vivant et actives réelles n’ont jamais suivi l’indication répétée de discredit venue de Rome.”) Ibid., 18. Still, Congar would encounter some lingering hostility: “At the Council, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Michelle Pellegrino, without mentioning me by name, clearly referred to me when he said: ‘there are theologians who once had sanctions against them and were even exiled, and who now are experts to whom we listen’; he told me that he had me in mind (he said the same thing to Fr. Chenu). I personally was always obedient to the legal measure which affected me and I gave myself a set period for reflection on the soundness of the position of those who were against me or the criticism that they formulated. There is a need for a breathing space, for withdrawal and even for patience but one has the right to disagree when one has the duty to, and the duty can only be that of the truth.” Congar writes that Cardinal Ottaviani sometimes would reproach him or say something either good or bad about what he wrote in *True and False Reform in the Church* - but he would never compliment Congar personally. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 313.

⁶⁷ AAS 54 (1962), 783. Marie-Dominique Chenu was also appointed *peritus* to a Vatican II Preparatory Commission.

⁶⁸ Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights*, 19-20.

nod towards the biblical, liturgical and theological questions then circulating among the Council fathers.⁶⁹

Only with great difficulty did the bishops by a series of nominations of persons within their own ranks to head the various Preparatory commissions change the composition from their initial configuration in the Preparatory phase. By this means they reoriented the direction of the Commissions and the Commission documents away from Curia control.⁷⁰ Undeterred, the Curia would continue its attempts to influence, if not dominate, Vatican II. But objectively we must remember something here: however things appeared to the Commission *periti* and later to the Council fathers, it was John XXIII who had initially placed the Curia in virtual control of Vatican II. Recall also that by direction of Pope John XXIII on May 17, 1960 – two months before Congar attended his first Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission meeting, the Pre-Preparatory Commission voting membership of the Ecumenical Council, chaired by Vatican Secretary of State Tardini, was composed solely of hand-picked members of the Roman Curia. As Pope John XXIII writes in his own hand in *Superno Dei*, this was done “so that the first work was done with care and diligence.”⁷¹ Moreover, in practice the Pre-Preparatory Central Committee was composed of curial Cardinals and at the head of each Preparatory Commission would be one of these Cardinals. The proposition that a Cardinal on the Central Committee would Chair each Preparatory Commission and set

⁶⁹ Edward P. Hannenberg, *Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press), 3.

⁷⁰ Cf. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 10-15.

⁷¹ In the second paragraph of his Apostolic Letter, *Superno Dei*, John XXIII writes, “Later, on May 17 [1960], on the Feast of Pentecost, so that the first work was done with care and diligence, We appointed a Pre-Preparatory Commission for the Ecumenical Council composed of the best men of the Roman Curia

the agenda for discussion therein established by John XXIII in *Superno Dei* is worth a review:

Therefore, with the present Apostolic Letter, given this *Moto Proprio* decree, We establish the following:

1.- To prepare for the Vatican Ecumenical Council, [ten] other Preparatory Commissions are established to study and conduct investigations of the matters chosen by us, and after proper examination and *in view of the vows of the sacred Bishops and the proposals and warnings of the departments of the Roman Curia.*

3. - Each commission shall have a Chairman and a number of members. The President will be a Cardinal from the Sacred Roman Church. Members will be chosen from bishops and select great churchmen.

It was clear that the Roman Curia would initially greatly influence, if not control Vatican II. In fact, under John XXIII's successor, Paul VI, the Curia's influence would actually initially increase before it finally waned.

The positions taken by the Curia were not without support, particularly among the bishops from Italy, Ireland and Spain. These constituted a small minority, however, and while in concert with the Vatican Curia they could delay change – sometimes for years, they could not forever forestall the great majority of Council fathers who saw the need in the Church for responsible change and renewal. Eventually sixteen major Vatican II documents were each approved by an overwhelming majority, resulting in the four Constitutions, three Decrees and nine Declarations which we have today.

D. THE EXPECTATIONS FOR VATICAN II

The supremacy of the Word of God and the commitment to ecumenical communion were not really fully and harmoniously integrated by the Church with the centrality of the liturgy and the Eucharist before Vatican II. After Vatican II that

changed. The Church went out to the people – the altar rails were removed and the priests were sent to live among the people. During Mass, which the priest co-celebrated with the people, he now faced the congregation and spoke in their tongue, not in Latin. But although these things had changed, Congar was right: ecumenical unity was problematic. As we shall see, the realities of Vatican II would reflect this.

1. *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* and the First Session of the Council. On October 11, 1962, the Council was opened by Pope John XXIII. His powerful opening declaration, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, which he was said to have written personally, criticized the conservative and defensive notion held by some in the Church.⁷²

They see in modern times nothing but prevarication and ruin. They keep saying that as compared with past ages, ours is getting worse, and they behave as if they have learned nothing from history, which is nonetheless a teacher of life, and as if in the time of the preceding ecumenical Councils everything represented a complete triumph for Christian ideas and for a rightful religious liberty. But We think We must disagree with these prophets of doom, who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were immanent.⁷³

As regards the gospel, the “good news” of Scripture, John XXIII declared that without compromising the Catholic faith, the Church and those in the Church must dedicate

⁷² *Allocutionnis PP XXIII in Sollemni SS. Concilii Inauguratione*, AAS vol. LIV (1962), n. 14, pp.786-96. The opening document of Vatican II, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, is most certainly not the document to which Aidan Nichols refers when he writes, “At the Second Vatican Council itself, he [Congar] helped write the ‘message to the World’ at its opening” Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 7-8. Congar devotes the better part of six pages to the Council’s opening ceremony on October 11, 1962 and makes no mention that he contributed to *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 105-10.

As previously stated, the unnamed document to which Aiden Nichols refers is *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes*, which we shall shortly encounter. Nichols’ statement that the document Congar helped write was presented at the opening of the Council is understandable for the caption of *Nuntius ad omnes* proclaims that it was “Issued at the Beginning of the Second Vatican Council.” Still, this is somewhat misleading, since the document is dated October 20, 1962, more than a week after the October 11 opening of Vatican II. *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes*, AS I/I, 230-32.

⁷³ Pope John XXIII’s presentation of *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* was reported by Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, 15.

themselves to holding to the truths of the Church and at the same time immerse themselves in dealing with the demands of the age:

Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but earnestly and fearlessly to dedicate ourselves to the work our age demands of us The salient point of this Council is not, therefore, a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has been repeatedly taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a Council was not needed. But from renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church . . . the Christian, Catholic and apostolic spirit of *the whole world expects a leap forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formulation of consciences* (emphasis mine).⁷⁴

The First Session of the Council continued until December 8, 1962.⁷⁵ During this First Session, although no votes were taken, a number of topics were debated by the Council fathers, including the liturgy, revelation, the Church's social communication of itself with the world, and ecumenicism.⁷⁶ Although John XXIII did not dictate the path which the Council fathers were to take, a major theme was nonetheless addressed to the union of Christ with his Church which he saw as an opportunity for "a wider and more objective understanding" of the possibilities to embrace human society with welcoming and pastoral friendship, not judgment and condemnation.⁷⁷ John XXIII emphasized that Vatican II was to be a Council of mercy, not severity and condemnation, for:

The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter which must be taken into consideration – with patience if need be while weighing everything in the

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁵ While Congar disapproved of the pomp and ceremony of the opening of the Council, he gives us a memorable cameo experience of the inaugural ceremony. He and another wandering, lost priest, Père Camelot, were misdirected to seating reserved for bishops, and just as they were settling into their comfortable in their chairs, they were summarily and unceremoniously ejected by an enormous, unsympathetic guard who Congar later described as a "boogeyman." Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 105. Cf. Matt 13:57.

⁷⁶ Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14; Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 22.

forms and statements of a teaching activity which is predominantly pastoral in character.⁷⁸

For John XXIII, this pastoral teaching was at the very center, the heart and means of conveying the Christian message to the world – the “good news.” But an additional dynamic within this message might not be immediately apparent: we know that Angelo Giuseppe Cardinal Roncalli as papal nuncio to Paris was familiar with and read Congar before he became pope. We also know that he had written in the margin of one of the pages of his copy of Congar’s *Vrai et fausse Réforme dans l’Église*, “A reform of the church: can such a thing be possible?” Thus it is not surprising that the language of Pope John XXIII in *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* resonates with Congar’s notion of renewal and reform.

E. CONGAR’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

While more than a nod of credit for the ecumenical renewal and return to the sources by the Catholic Church signaled by Vatican II must be given to the likes of Marie-Dominic Chenu, Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Henry Bouillard, Hans Urs von Balthasar (although not present at Vatican II) and John Courtney Murray, still, American Cardinal Avery Dulles dubbed Vatican II as ‘Congar’s Council’.⁷⁹ What we shall do now is examine the Vatican II documents, some in greater detail than others, to which Congar contributed.

⁷⁸ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, 17

⁷⁹ Cf. Flynn, ed., *Ressourcement*, 219. In empirical support of Cardinal Dulles’ opinion, in the extensive five volumes of Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, the only individuals with more page references than Congar are Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, and (in vol. 1 only) Pericle Cardinal Felici (1911-1982), then Archbishop and Secretary of the Roman Curia.

1. *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes*. On October 20, 1962, the fathers of the Council with the endorsement of John XXIII issued *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes*.⁸⁰ This was the “Message to the World” of which Aidan Nichols writes that Yves Congar had contributed.⁸¹ Congar’s October 20, 1962 *Journal* entry confirms this contribution:

After that, the [Council] Secretary announced that he will read *Nuntium ad universon homines mittendum* [Message to be sent to all people]. I listened to this text from a project in which I had been actively involved. Here and now I set forth what I jotted down then: it is more dogmatic than the Chenu project – at least we preceded the social part with a kind of kerygmatic Christianity which is more ecclesiastical, more biblical. It is too lengthy. Man is presented in terms of only slight solicitude. It is a happy instance of restoration of the Church and the Christian life so that they both might be more conformed to Christ.⁸²

The document or “Chenu project” to which Congar refers was originally the idea of M.-D. Chenu with input from Congar. It basically proposed that the purpose of the Church was to serve the world, not control it.⁸³ Chenu and Congar had intended the document as a restatement of the Council purpose – an antidote to the badly received seven schemas

⁸⁰ *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes, Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Vaticani II* (hereinafter AS) I/I, 230-32. Congar misidentifies this as *Nuntium ad universos homines mittendum*. *Journal du Concile I*, 125; Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.2, 50. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Yves Congar*, 7-8, states that a “message to the World,” to which Congar contributed, was presented at the opening of Vatican II, (October 11, 1962). In fact, on October 11, 1962, John XXIII inaugurated the ecumenical Council of Vatican II with his address *Gaudet Mater*. The “Message to the World” of the Council fathers was given on October 20, 1962. The English texts of these Vatican II documents may be found in Walter M Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).

⁸¹ Nichols, *Yves Congar*, 7-8.

⁸² Après cela, le secrétaire annonce que il va lire un “*Nuntium ad universos homines mittendum*” [Message à tous les hommes]. J’entends ce text au projet duquel j’ai été mêlé activement. Je recopie ici, tells que je griffonne sur-le-champ: c’est plus dogmatic que le projet Chenu; du moins, on a fait précéder la partie sociale par un sorte de kérygmatic chrétienne; c’est plus ecclésiasticisé; plus bibliquisé. C’est trop long. L’intérêt aux hommes est une peu exprimé aux termes de sollicitude. Il y a une instance heureuse sur la rénovation de l’Église et de la vie chrétienne, pour qu’elles soient plus conformes au Christ. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 125.

⁸³ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, 52. The text approved by the Council fathers had been redacted by French Cardinal Liénart and French archbishops Guerry, Ancel and Garrone. Chenu complained that his project had been thus “drowned in holy water.” *Ibid.*, 53. Nonetheless, the text retained the basic emphasis by Chenu and Congar of the Church’s sympathy for the world.

circulated to the Council fathers by the Curia during the summer of 1960. Although there were parts of this Message with which Congar was not fully pleased, it is not difficult to see his fingerprints of ecumenism, unity, renewal and reform of the Church in this

Message to the World:

May the Face of Jesus Christ Shine Out

In this assembly, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we wish to inquire how we ought to *renew ourselves*

We as pastors devote all our energies and thoughts to the *renewal of ourselves* and the flocks committed to us, so that there may radiate before all men the lovable features of Jesus Christ

God so Loved the World

The Spirit too has been bestowed on us by the Father, that the living life of God, and *the brethren, who are all of us one in Christ*. . . . Hence, *the Church too was born not to dominate but to serve*

The Love of Christ Impels Us

Coming together in unity from every nation under the sun *let our concern swiftly focus first of all on all those who are especially lowly, poor and weak*. . . .

Two Issues of Special Urgency Confront Us

The Supreme Pontiff, John XXIII, in a radio address delivered on September 11, 1962, stressed two points especially [peace and social justice]. There is no one who does not hate war, no one who does not strive for peace with burning desire. But the Church desires it most of all because she is Mother of all.⁸⁴

Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes was a significant statement by the Council fathers. It informed the world of what was to take place in Rome: a confirmation that Pope John XXIII's initial announcement of the reason for calling the Council, *aggiornamento*, also included ecumenism and unity and renewal and reform of the Church. In a number of Vatican II documents which will follow we shall see that ecumenism and unity and renewal and reform had become basic to the very mission of

⁸⁴ *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes* (literally, Message to all men and nations; emphasis added). "Message to Humanity" Oct 20, 1962 available from http://www.catholicphilosophy.com/sys-tmpl/startof_vaticanii2/index.html; Internet: accessed January 17, 2012.

Vatican II. Congar's own terse comment on *Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes* in *Mon Journal* was that the Church had now finally determined to become pastoral.⁸⁵

2. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (12/4/63). On December 4, 1963, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, was brought before the Council for a vote. The result was 2,147 for (placet) and 4 against (non-placet).⁸⁶ Despite strenuous opposition, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was little changed from its initial draft and was the first document to be approved by the Council fathers.⁸⁷ Giuseppe Alberigo writes that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy began a movement of renewal. Its effect was direct and immediate in the widespread interest it generated among the faithful.⁸⁸ Work on the proposed draft, or *schema*, of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* would seemingly have been the role of the Preparatory Commission for the Sacred Liturgy. Yet, Congar clearly states that he worked on *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.⁸⁹ Moreover, he added that he “worked in four or five commissions, sometimes several at once – and this work ended up with texts.”⁹⁰ Thus *ex-officio* and perhaps even *non-ex-officio*, Congar played a role in drafting and redacting a number of Council documents.

⁸⁵ Congar, *Le Concile au Jour le Jour*, 39. Twelve years earlier, Congar had conditioned pastoral ministry in the Church upon the Truth of Christ. “The Church, in effect, is unable to be Catholic, and therefore missionary, with only a pastoral missionary plan, for there must also be a plan of ideas and truth.” (“L’Eglise, en effet, ne doit pas être catholique, donc missionnaire, seulement au plan du ministère pastoral, mais aussi au plan des idées et de la vérité.”) Yves M.-J. Congar, *Vraie et Fausse Réforme*, 246.

⁸⁶ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 56.

⁸⁷ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 587; Hannenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 15.

⁸⁸ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 59.

⁸⁹ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 57.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 6. This important statement by Congar serves to validate his reputation as a highly valued *peritus* by the Council community and underscores the significance and importance of his contributions to Vatican II. Congar will later state “While for a time I was suspect and criticized in Rome, in the same way I became recognized as an expert on five commissions. . . .” Franco Prcela, O.P., “Pioneer of Church Renewal: Yves Congar (1904-1995),” trans, Thomas O’Meara, *Wort und Antwort* 36:3 (1995), n.p. cited by Paul Philibert, O.P. in Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), xii.

a. *Would the Council govern itself? Sacrosanctum Concilium* is important for another reason: as the first of the sixteen major Council documents, it was the first concrete consequence of the Council's power to govern itself. At first, this was an open question. From the beginning, the Council fathers had naturally broken into informal conferences by language and geographic areas. The progressive French-Belgian conference was fairly united and had ties to the German group but no one was quite sure how the Council itself would coalesce. Nothing was certain: would Vatican II truly usher in the *aggiornamento* sought by the now-deceased John XXIII, or would it morph into a continuation of Vatican I? In his journal entry for December 4, 1963, Congar wrote that he did not sleep the night before the vote on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* because he was so "preoccupied by this situation of the Council."⁹¹

We know that Pères Congar and de Lubac had each been appointed to the subcommittee of the Theological Preparatory Commission along with six other *periti*. Curia bishops and cardinals initially made up the sixteen voting members of each of the ten working Preparatory Commissions.⁹² Had this remained in effect, the Vatican Curia would have been the main source of the Council's agenda – and that surely was the Curia's agenda. Obviously, this would have affected every document presented to the Council by the working Commissions. But as we shall see this control would not last.

⁹¹ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 586.

⁹² Each Commission consisted of twenty-four persons divided into two groups, sixteen voting members and eight appointed non-voting experts, or *periti*. The initial voting members were Curial bishops and by default became the Curia nominees for permanent membership on each of the ten Commissions.

Because of its close connections to the Holy Office, the Theological Preparatory Commission was among the most influential and closely observed Commissions: their *periti* were called upon for comments and opinions on schema and often asked to prepare texts. Komonchak writes that work by this Commission began in July, 1960 – earlier than most. *History of Vatican II*, vol.1, 176-7.

b. “*The Extraordinary Second Day of Vatican II.*”⁹³ As a matter of great importance, the election of the sixteen permanent members of each of the ten Preparatory Commissions was scheduled for October 13, 1962, two days after the Council opening.⁹⁴ While the French, Belgian and German congregations had probably engaged in discussion about this, other Council fathers may well have expected such a vote to be preceded by discussion and debate.⁹⁵ However, after Mass that morning, the Council fathers who had gathered in the central nave of the Basilica of St. Peter were startled by a summary announcement by Secretary of the Roman Curia and Secretary General of the Council, Archbishop Pericle Felici (1911-92), that election of the nominations for the Preparatory Commissions would begin “immediately.”⁹⁶ There was confusion and disorder in the Council hall. There were no nominations for the Preparatory Commissions other than the one hundred sixty nominees temporarily placed there by the Curia.⁹⁷ Moreover, there had been rumor that Cardinal Ottaviani, Secretary of the

⁹³ This is the title of Chapter III of Komonchak’s *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, 26.

⁹⁴ After the opening ceremony on October 11, 1962, each Council father was given a packet of information prepared by the Curia which included a list of those attending the Council, conciliar regulations, individual identification cards and ten selection cards for the vote for permanent members of the Preparatory Commissions. Each selection card had sixteen blank lines – one for each member to be nominated. Also included was a list of the one hundred and sixty curial bishops, identifying on which Preparatory Commission they served. *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 28. Congar describes the event: the Secretary General of the Council [Felici] mounted the podium and invited the several thousand bishops present to vote favorably for the Curial nominees now sitting on the Commission. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 113.

In 1960 Archbishop Pericle Felici (1911-1982) was made Secretary of the Roman Curia and later a curial Cardinal. He was Secretary General of the Central Preparatory Commission of the Second Vatican Council and was Secretary General of the Second Vatican Council at the time of his announcement.

⁹⁷ Yves M-J. Congar, O.P. *Le Concile au Jour le Jour*, vol. 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1963), 31. It is unknown whether Vatican II conciliar regulations prohibited the Curial nominees from voting for themselves. But even if so, their cumulative tally alone would have totaled a very large number of votes. These one hundred sixty Curial nominees would assumedly be casting votes as a block. That would not be true for the Council fathers who would be voting individually or by congregations for their candidates.

Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office, had prepared and selectively circulated a list of “shadow commissions” made up of appointees which the Holy Office considered “safe.”⁹⁸

What Archbishop Felici now proposed was that that each of these one hundred and sixty Curial nominees for the ten Preparatory commissions be made permanent. He was greeted with stunned silence.⁹⁹ Many, if not most, of the bishops had not yet met or discussed among themselves their preferences for nominees for the Commissions from their own ranks.¹⁰⁰ The consequence of this vote was clear: the Council fathers were being asked that as their very first act, they hand over the Council agenda to the Roman Curia.

Silence was followed by confusion in the Basilica hall.¹⁰¹ While the bewildered bishops were docilely getting ready to vote for the only nominees, the seventy-eight year old French Cardinal Archille Liénart (1884-1973), one of the six “presiders” over the Council sessions, stood up from the bench of the Presidents. Prominently holding a piece of paper in his hand, he asked that the election of commissioners be postponed a few days, so that bishops from the different nations present would have time to get to know one another.¹⁰² This would assure collegiality, liberty and mutual trust - for as he noted, the constituency of the voting membership of the Preparatory Commissions was most important. More to point, this would delay what now appeared to be the inevitable

⁹⁸ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.2, 27.

⁹⁹ Cf. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 113.

¹⁰⁰ Even Cardinal Montini (the future Paul VI) of the Italian congregation later wrote to his diocesan clergy, “All the names, how are we to know them and how are we to choose them?” Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, 28.

¹⁰¹ Separated bishops tried to communicate with each other using the masters of ceremonies as intermediaries, but there simply was insufficient time. Just copying down one hundred and sixty names of nominees would have consumed a good deal of time. *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

approval of the one hundred sixty Curial nominees as permanent members of the ten Preparatory Commissions.¹⁰³

Cardinal Liénart then suggested an additional solution: since episcopal conferences existed in forty-two countries, each of the conferences could nominate their own members for permanent membership in the various Preparatory Commissions. The conferences would indicate their authority by naming the head of their national group, thereby paving the way for the replacement of Curial nominees with nominees of Council fathers for the Preparatory Commissions.¹⁰⁴ The proposal was greeted with lively and prolonged applause, which may have been the first appearance of a common conciliar consciousness. German Joseph Cardinal Frings (1887-1978) then rose from the bench of the Presidents to state that on behalf of the German and Austrian Cardinals, he approved the French motion.¹⁰⁵ After consulting with the other Council presidents at the table, Cardinal Eugène Tisserant (1884-1972), long-time Dean of the College of Cardinals, announced that he joined in the proposition. The summary election was called off: elections would take place three days later on Tuesday, October 16, 1962.¹⁰⁶

c. *The first vote of the Council fathers.* The next day, Sunday, October 14, 1962, Congar received a communique from Archbishop Pietro Parente (1891-1986), then

¹⁰³ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 113-14.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* The sheet of paper that Cardinal Liénart had in his hand as the apparent episcopal authority for this initiative from the French bishops had been drafted (and signed) by one person, Archbishop Garrone (1901-1994), elevated to Cardinal years later. *Ibid.*, 113. By his bluff Cardinal Liénart had succeeded in giving the Council fathers time to organize and nominate members from their own ranks for the appropriate Preparatory Commissions.

assessor of the Supreme Sacred Congregations of the Holy Office.¹⁰⁷ It was principally addressed to Italian, Spanish and Irish bishops and set forth a list of the Curial bishops who would be “elected to the theological commission.” It had evidently been delivered to Congar by mistake.¹⁰⁸ Congar wrote in his *Journal*, “If this [list] is accurate, it would announce a fatal conflict between the Curia and the Church. Two Churches in one unique body!”¹⁰⁹ On October 16, 1962, a Council vote was taken based on the lists submitted by the various bishops’ conferences: the elected bishops were predominantly from northern Europe –but not many from Italy, Ireland or Spain. Many of the Curia’s nominees for the Preparatory Commissions had pointedly not been elected.¹¹⁰

After the vote was counted, Cardinal Ottaviani admonished the Council that it could not change a rule without the Pope’s approval. The “rule” to which Ottaviani made reference was his previous proposal that the one hundred and sixty bishops receiving the highest number of total votes be placed on the ten respective commissions – and that would superficially certainly have seemed to make some sense.¹¹¹ However, an election rule had indeed been changed by the Pope. Before the election, at the behest of certain cardinals from the Council fathers, Pope John XXIII had acceded to the majority will of the Council fathers and added a caveat to the election regulations which provided that

¹⁰⁷ On December 7, 1965, the day before Vatican II formally closed, Archbishop Parente was made Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He was elevated to Cardinal in June, 1967.

¹⁰⁸ Yves Congar writes in his *Journal*, “I received a communique from the Holy Office listing the bishops to be elected to the theological commission. It was directed to the Italian, Spanish and Irish bishops, perhaps others, but not to the French, Germans or Dutch” Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 114-15.

¹⁰⁹ “Si c’est exact, cela annoncerait le fatal conflit entre la Curie et l’*ecclesia*. Deux Églises dans le cadre de l’unique!” Ibid., 114-15.

¹¹⁰ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 24.

¹¹¹ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 125. The obvious advantage in the “rule” was that local delegations might well have initially only voted for their candidates while the Curia members and conservative Council fathers would vote as a uniform group.

nominees who received the highest number of votes *in their particular election* (une majorité relative) would prevail over those with an absolute cumulative majority of the total number of votes cast in all the elections.¹¹²

Thereafter, the German and French delegations, now known together as the “northern group”, agreed upon a planning session to prepare for future engagements with the Curia.¹¹³ From October 22 to November 13, 1962, the Council debated liturgical reform both as a schema and by individual chapters. In these matters there was always a great majority in favor, in spite of the tenacious resistance of a Curia-led minority.¹¹⁴

d. *Scripture as the rule of faith of the Church.* Scarcely two weeks had passed when, on November 4, 1962 (more than a year before *Sacrosanctum Concilium* would be passed), Congar noted in *Mon Journal* his disappointment that the Council continued to work with superficial, thin and only partially definitive texts sent to them by the Curial

¹¹² Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 118-19, 125. To Congar’s dismay, on the evening of October 16, 1962, one French newspaper carried the headline, “French bishops in revolt!” Ibid., 119. More accurately, on October 11-13, 1962, far from a revolt, there had been a spontaneous cooperation by the French, Germans and others to thwart the Curia’s attempt to disenfranchise the Council fathers regarding nominees to the various Preparatory Commissions, and thereby secure their supervision not only of the day-to-day activities of the Church but the control of an ecumenical Council as well.

¹¹³ In the afternoon of October 19, 1962, a meeting organized by German Archbishop Volk of German and French bishops and theologians took place at the House of the Mother of God in Rome. The topic was how to stop the nuanced Curial tactics which sought to control theological schemas which were to be presented. Congar writes that present among the Germans and Austrians were Archbishop Hermann Volk of Mainz; Archbishop Joseph Reuss of Berlin; Archbishop Alfred Bengsch of Mainz; Bishop Leon Arthur August Elchinger of Strasbourg; Father (later Bishop) Johann Weber; Bishop Paul –J. Schmitt of Metz; Father Karl Rahner, S.J.; Father (later Cardinal) Alois Grillmeier, S.J., professor of dogmatics and head of the theology department in Frankfurt; Father Otto Semmelroth, S.J., professor of dogmatics, Frankfurt; and Joseph Ratzinger (later Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Pope Benedict XVI), private *peritus* to Cardinal Frings. The smaller French group was represented by Archbishop Gabriel-Marie Garrone of Toulouse, Archbishop Emile Guerry of Cambrai; Archbishop Alfred-Jean-Félix Ancel of Myrina, Greece; Henri Ronder, S.J., professor of theology at Lyons; and Pères M-M Labourdette, Yves Congar and Marie-Dominic Chenu. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 122-3.

¹¹⁴ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 25.

Central Commission - to which Congar attached little importance in their initial form. For example, the schemata *On the Church*, *On the Laity* and *On Ecumenicism* had few references to Scripture and for these reasons Congar thought they actually would encumber progress.¹¹⁵

As part of his ecclesiology, Congar positioned Scripture at the very heart of the Church.¹¹⁶ For Congar, Scripture was the rule of faith of the Church from which it drew its apostolic authority, its sacraments and apostolic ministries.¹¹⁷ Thus, he held that Scripture could not be segregated or separated from the Catholic Church since they are not exterior to each other.¹¹⁸ For this same reason, neither can Scripture be separated from Church tradition. Congar, therefore, rejected the Protestant notion of *sola scriptura*. However, the *authority* of the Church comes not from Scripture but is sourced to Christ who established the Church which itself is guided by the Holy Spirit:

The authority of the Church does not come from Scripture, but from the Lord who instituted it and who assures its [proper] exercise through his spirit: a reality to which Scripture bears witness.¹¹⁹

Congar was astonished that there was not more criticism of the texts coming out of the Central Commission. He suspected that his comments and those by other members of the Theological Preparatory Commission were in vain and were simply not being sent on to the Central Commission.¹²⁰ He wrote in his *Journal* that he and his fellow “experts” seemed to have little worth.¹²¹ This objection was not only held by Congar, de

¹¹⁵ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 181.

¹¹⁶ Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 188.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church*, 189.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹²⁰ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 181.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Lubac and others who sought a redrafting of these texts. Other *periti* did as well, but none of them could vote. However Père Congar might ventilate in his *Journal*, he would heed his own advice: patience and respect for delays was one of his four principles for Church reform.¹²² Congar held that with patience, reform would come slowly; without it, reform could turn to schism.

e. *Congar's influence on Sacrosanctum Concilium.* While Congar identifies *Sacrosanctum Concilium* as one of the Vatican II documents on which he worked, he gives us no particulars.¹²³ As pointed out, there was not much change in the text of this document from start to finish, since it both set out the need for liturgical reform as well as its guiding principles.¹²⁴ This may be sourced to Pius XII who had essentially defined the trajectory of the liturgy in *Mediator Dei* (On the Sacred Liturgy, November 20, 1947) toward a more full and active participation in the Mass by the faithful, a “holy priesthood” in whom Christ is present in them as He is in the Church (in the bread and cup, in the celebrating priest and the prayers and petitions of the faithful).¹²⁵

A close reading of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, nonetheless, does reveal nineteen paragraphs which resound with Congar's *ressourcement* ecclesiology of renewal and reform and unity and ecumenism.¹²⁶ Fourteen paragraphs of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) deal with renewal and reform:

¹²² The others are the primacy of charity and the pastoral, to remain within the communion of all, and true renewal by a return to the principle of Tradition. Congar, *Vraie et fausse réforme*, 247.

¹²³ Lauret, *Conversations with Yves Congar*, 57.

¹²⁴ Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 15.

¹²⁵ Still, Pius XII was wary of a dangerous humanism leading the faithful astray and warned against false teachings that “the glorified human nature of Christ really and continually dwells in the ‘just’”, *Mediator Dei* Art. 203.

¹²⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium* Articles 1, 4, 10, 14, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 34, 36.1, 36.2, 37, 42, 43, 54, 63, 79 and 101.2 (emphasis added).

SC 1. This sacred Council . . . desires . . . *to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change*; . . . The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the *reform and promotion of the liturgy*.

SC 4. The Council also desires that, where necessary, the *rites be revised carefully in the light of sound tradition, and that they be given new vigor to meet the circumstances and needs of modern times*.

SC 21. In order that the Christian people may more certainly derive an abundance of graces from the sacred liturgy, holy Mother Church desires to *undertake with great care a general restoration of the liturgy itself*. For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. *These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it*.

In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; *the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community*.

SC 23. *That sound tradition may be retained, and yet the way remain open to legitimate progress*. Careful investigation is always to be made into each part of the liturgy which is to be revised. This investigation should be theological, historical, and pastoral.

SC 24. *Sacred scripture is of the greatest importance* in the celebration of the liturgy.

SC 27. It is to be stressed that whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for *communal celebration* involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, *this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, so far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and quasi-private*.

SC 30. To *promote active participation*, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes.

SC 34. The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and *unencumbered by useless repetitions*

SC 36.2. But since *the use of the mother tongue*, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, *frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended*. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants

SC 43. Zeal for the *promotion and restoration of the liturgy* is rightly held to be a sign of the providential dispositions of God in our time, as *a movement of the Holy Spirit in His Church*. It is today a distinguishing mark of the Church's life, indeed of the whole tenor of contemporary religious thought and action.

SC 54. In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their *mother tongue*.

SC 63.a) The *vernacular language may be used* in administering the sacraments and sacramentals, according to the norm of Art. 36.

SC 79. The sacramentals are to undergo a revision which takes into account the primary principle of enabling the faithful to participate intelligently, actively, and easily; the circumstances of our own days must also be considered. When rituals are revised, as laid down in Art. 63, new sacramentals may also be added as the need for these becomes apparent.

SC 101.2. The competent superior has the power to grant *the use of the vernacular* in the celebration of the divine office, even in choir, to nuns and to members of institutes dedicated to acquiring perfection, both men who are not clerics and women. . . .

One deals with ecumenism:

SC 37. Even in the liturgy, *the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community*; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit.

Two deal with unity:

SC 1. *This sacred Council has several aims in view: . . . to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ*; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church.

SC 10. . . . *For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper.*

The debate on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* began on October 22, 1962 during the First Session of Vatican II. It was to occupy almost half of the Session.¹²⁷ On October 30, 1962, the seventh day of the debate, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani rose to the podium to give one last condemning speech against the document for setting in motion changes that he argued would confuse and scandalize the faithful.¹²⁸ Nonetheless, on December 4,

¹²⁷ Hahnenberg, *Concise Guide*, 15.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 16. Cardinal Ottaviani's objections, including charges of a "revolutionary Council," were so numerous that he ran out of time. When advised of this fact Cardinal Ottaviani refused to step down and his microphone was cut off by order of the President's table, to the resounding applause of the Church fathers who did not agree with his characterizations of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Ottaviani sat down, humiliated, but still true to what he believed was an unwavering defense of his Church.

1963, on the last day of the Second Session, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was approved with 2,162 *placet*. 46 *non-placet* and 7 abstentions.¹²⁹

3. *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (11/21/64). The schema *de Ecclesia* was the forerunner of *Lumen Gentium* (Light of the Nations), the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.¹³⁰ This schema was heavily discussed and debated by the Council and Congar devotes at least twelve pages of *Mon Journal* to the matter.¹³¹ As to his participation, Congar writes that he worked on “the first redaction of many sections of Chap I [the Mystery of the Church] and paragraph nos. 9, 13, 16, and 17 of Chap. II [On the People of God] plus some particular other passages.”¹³² While a number of issues came up, Père Congar was extensively involved in two that involved significant change. The first dealt with how non-Catholic Christian communities were to be addressed – a matter that had proved to be both deflating and problematic in Catholic-Protestant dialogues. The second centered about the relationship between Holy Scripture and Tradition in the Catholic Church. This latter issue would become a battleground between the Curia and conservative bishops on one side and the majority progressive bishops on the other. The outcome will prove, I submit, to be among the most important decisions made at Vatican II – and Yves Congar was in the middle of the fray.

a. *Non-Catholic ecclesial communities as “Churches.”* Not long after Vatican II, ecumenical theologian Kilian McDonnell, OSB wrote:

Up to Vatican II the Roman church recognized that there were individual non-Catholic Christian believers, but, with regard to what were considered the dissident groups of the West, did not attribute any theological or ecclesial reality

¹²⁹ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 209.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 330.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 207-17, 329.

¹³² Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511.

to the denominations as such. In the pre-Vatican framework there was no official Roman recognition of the ecclesial nature of Protestant denominations.¹³³

As a consequence, during Vatican II the Church neither at first recognized nor characterized any Protestant denomination as a ‘church’.¹³⁴ The first preliminary draft of *de Ecclesia* “explicitly restricted the word ‘church’ so that it would not apply to Protestant denominations” As justification it added, “that is why rightly only the Catholic Church is called Church.”¹³⁵ The second draft of *de Ecclesia* followed suit: article 9 therein did not employ the term “church” when referring to non-Catholic Christian denominations.

These initial drafts reflected the position taken by the Curia and one with which a pre-Vatican II Congar agreed, at least in practice.¹³⁶ Before Vatican II, whether constrained by conscience or the Curia, Congar’s initial application of the term, “Church”, to Protestant “faith communities” was at best rare. I have encountered only a single instance where one could make a counter-argument. In *Chrétiens désunis* one finds the following language, which in context almost certainly pertains to Protestant Churches: “Also the *Church* in her sensitive and social human reality, can like John the Baptist proclaim and promise, shout out and and point to the Lamb of God”¹³⁷

Certainly this was deliberate language and *Chrétiens désunis* was the appropriate work in which it would appear. By Congar’s own admission, *Chrétiens désunis* had a

¹³³ Kilian McDonnell, “The Concept of ‘Church’ in the Documents of Vatican II as Applied to Protestant Determinations,” in *Eucharist and Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, ed. Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 308.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 330.

¹³⁷ “Aussi l’Église en sa réalité humaine, sensible et sociale, peut bien annoncer et promettre, être, comme Jean-Baptiste, l’appel qui retentit et le doigt qui montre l’Agneau de Dieu” (Emphasis added). *Chrétiens désunis* (Paris: Cerf, 1937), 112.

“profound influence Any number of priests and laymen and numerous bishops at the Council have told me that that they owe to it either their awakening to ecumenism or more often their conversion to a broader and more traditional sense of the Church.”¹³⁸ Still, it appears that Congar almost never applied the term, “Church,” to non-Catholic Christian communities until Vatican II. Thereafter Congar used, “Church,” ecumenically and often. By 1987, for example, Congar states “I would put the need to be open to the profound value of others, of all the others, and most particularly of the Confessions of Christian Churches.”¹³⁹

In 1964, *Lumen Gentium* Article 9 incorporated a more conservative stance. It reads in appropriate part: “God gathered together as one those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and established them as *the Church* that for each and all it may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity” (emphasis added). The operative logic here is that since there was only one Church established by Christ, there may be only one true “Church.” Congar devotes a number of pages of his *Mon Journal du Concile* discussing the Curia’s position on the matter.¹⁴⁰ In fact, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani and Archbishop Pietro Parente of the Holy Office argued that the Theological Preparatory Commission should defend the schema *de Ecclesia* before the Council.¹⁴¹ At this pronouncement, as a matter of principle, Canadian Paul-

¹³⁸ Yves Congar, O.P. *Chrétiens en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l’Œcumenisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1964), 25.

¹³⁹ Congar, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, trans. John Bowdon (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 31. Originally published in French as Yves Congar, *Entretiens d’automne* (Paris: Cerf, 1987).

¹⁴⁰ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 207-17.

¹⁴¹ As an example of the Curia’s role in the Preparatory Theological Commission’s sub-committee which was reading *de Ecclesia*, Congar writes in *Mon Journal du Concile* that the Holy Office had from the beginning sought to impose its views upon the Council and now it was

Émile Cardinal Léger (1904-1991), who headed the Preparatory Commission, and Cardinal Browne, the vice president of the Preparatory Theological Commission, threatened to quit the Council were this to be the case.¹⁴²

We know that Yves Congar wrote his *lectorat* thesis on Johann Adam Möhler's ecumenical theme, the unity of the Church. Moreover, Congar anticipated Vatican II in proclaiming a Church of participation, not power: a "broader and more traditional sense of the Church."¹⁴³ We also know that Congar would stress unity in the form of Christian ecumenicism as part of the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. As a component of that unity, Yves Congar came to apply the term "church", then "Church", to non-Catholic Christian denominations.

After a month of discussion by the Council, in October, 1963, a revised article 9 of *de Ecclesia*, which became Article 15 of *Lumen Gentium*, emphasized common

attempting to do so with the subcommittee of the Preparatory Theological Commission. *Ibid.*, 208.

It was at this critical point that Congar came to head the Preparatory Theological Commission subcommittee. Jean Daniélou, the lead of the subcommittee, was himself on three other Preparatory Commission subcommittees and called Cardinal Browne to ask that his replacement be Yves Congar, to which Browne agreed. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 332. [Cardinal Browne may well be the Italian Cardinal Michael Browne, O.P., who as a bishop was the Master General of the Dominicans from 1955-1962.] Congar adds that the Holy Office was "beaten" on this, although a small minority still persisted.

On his part, Cardinal Ottaviani, in another bid to hold sway over the Council agenda, had declared on two occasions that all experts approved by the Holy Father to be on the mixed Bea-Ottaviani Preparatory Commission (Cardinal Bea was Chair of the The Secretariat for Christian Unity) should also be able to attend sessions of the Preparatory Theological Commission. *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Congar writes that Cardinal Léger responded to Ottaviani and Parente thus: "Is it my quality of [Preparatory] Commission membership that I must give up my freedom of speech to the Council? In this case I forthwith shall quit the Commission. . . . I had believed to come to the Commission as a collaborator; I find myself before a tribunal of judges." ("Est-ce que ma qualité de member de la Commission m'enlève ma liberté de parole au concile? En ce case, je quitterais toute de suite la Commission. . . . je croyais venir dans un commission comme un collaborateur; je me trouve devant un tribunal des juges . . .") *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁴³ Yves M.-J. Congar, *Dialogue between Christians*, trans. Philip Lorenz, S.J. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 25. Originally published as *Chrétiens en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l'Écuménisme* (Paris: Cerf, 1964).

grounds with other non-identified Christian “Churches or ecclesiastical communities.” In ecumenical language which stands in marked contrast to the stern tenor of the first paragraph of Article 1 of *Unitatis Redintegratio* (ironically issued the same day as *Lumen Gentium*), the amended text of *Lumen Gentium* Article 15 expands some fundamental ecclesiastical elements found in both Catholicism and other “Churches or ecclesiastical communities.”¹⁴⁴

Greater than the admittedly limited application of the term, “Church,” was the persistent base theological question whether any ecclesiastical community which did not trace its roots to the apostolic succession could even be a part of the Church established

¹⁴⁴ Cf. McDonnell, *Eucharist and Ministry*, 307. Article 15 of Chapter II, “On the People of God”, *Lumen gentium* reads:

The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. For there are many who honor Sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and a pattern of life, and who show a sincere zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, the Son of God and Saviour. They are consecrated by baptism, in which they are united with Christ. *They also recognize and accept other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesiastical communities.* Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the Holy Eucharist and cultivate devotion toward the Virgin Mother of God. They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits. Likewise, we can say that *in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit* [note: this is pure Congar], for to them too He gives His gifts and graces whereby He is operative among them with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood. In all of Christ’s disciples the Spirit arouses the desire to be peacefully united, in the manner determined by Christ, as one flock under one shepherd, and He prompts them to pursue this end. Mother Church never ceases to pray, hope and work that this may come about. She exhorts her children to purification and renewal so that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the earth” (emphasis added; footnotes omitted).

Fr. McDonnell makes several points regarding *Lumen Gentium* Article 15: although it focused on non-Catholic groups in the West, the *relatio* for article 15 makes clear it applies also to Orthodox groups of the East, which were the initial focus of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism. The phrase “or ecclesiastical communities” was added so that article 15 would apply not only to separated Christians as individuals but also to their communities; and finally, article 15 notes that “the recognition of the ecclesial nature of groups other than the one to which one belongs is the operating principle of the ecumenical movement: ‘it is precisely in this supposition that the underlying principle of the ecumenical movement is to be found’” [footnote omitted]. McDonnell, *Eucharist and Ministry*, 308-9.

by Christ. As previously discussed, Congar short-circuited this dilemma by holding that valid baptism incorporates the baptized into the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁵

b. *The relationship between Scripture and Tradition.* The Roman Curia insisted that Tradition be placed ahead of Scripture in importance within the ecclesiology of the Church. This posed a near-impossible impediment to ecumenism with non-Catholic Churches. Congar strongly opposed this and wrote that in support of this position the Roman Curia, through Archbishop Pariente, put on its boldest face of confidence, to absolutely affirm Tradition over Scripture.¹⁴⁶ In his opposition to this Congar joined an overwhelming majority of the Council fathers, in general, and a large majority of the French bishops and *periti*, in particular. The wellspring of these majorities may be seen as two-fold. The first was a general support among the progressive bishops for John XXIII's *aggiornamento* within what was seen as a static Church – seeking responsible change where change was truly required so that the faithful might worship in their times and circumstances as faithfully as those before them did in theirs. The second was the momentum generated by the Council itself. The signature event here was the passage of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on December 4, 1963, the last day of the Second Session – and, as previously noted, the first document approved by the Council. Giuseppe Alberigo is in agreement that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy began a movement of renewal the

¹⁴⁵ Congar had proposed this as part of the ecclesiology of the Church in 1935 in *Chrétiens désunis*: “Thus, the Protestant child is ‘Catholic by the grace of his baptism’” *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. M.A. Bousfield (London: Centenary Press, 1939), 289. By this logic *all* validly-baptized Christians are members of the Catholic Church.

¹⁴⁶ “Les Romains (Pariente) voulaient absolument affirmer la plus large contenance de la Tradition que l’Écriture.” Congar, *Journal du Concile I*, 328.

effect of which was direct and immediate in the widespread interest it generated among the faithful.¹⁴⁷

Ten months before, on Saturday, February 23, 1963, Congar received what he describes as a “heart-felt” telephone call from French Bishop Leon Elchinger telling him of some most unfortunate Council events.¹⁴⁸ Bishop Elchinger had received a letter from Père Henri de Lubac who had just returned to Rome and was most pessimistic about developments: the schema of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *de Ecclesia*, placed Tradition above Scripture and had to be changed.¹⁴⁹ Elchinger tells Congar of another letter he had received – one from Cardinal Suenens confirming this development as well as advising of a major procedural problem: French theologians and bishops were evidently being routinely bypassed and ignored.¹⁵⁰

But accord first needed to be established among the French delegation and *periti*. On Friday, March 1, 1963, Congar noted in his *Journal* that he had received a note from Père Daniélou asking that he return to Rome forthwith.¹⁵¹ There were serious problems. When Congar arrived back at the Séminaire français in Rome, Archbishop Gabriel-Marie

¹⁴⁷ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 59.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 328. At the time Congar was in Offenburg, Germany to participate in previously arranged Lenten services and conferences.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Congar, *Journal du Concile I*, 328. Recall that Congar had expressed the fear this was happening. Congar adds that Elchinger advised him that certain bishops who supported *de Ecclesia* were “demolishing” the proposed text [of the Preparatory Theological Commission] and redesigning another. Père Jean Daniélou had complained to Bishop Elchinger that he had to ferret out information on this matter like a journalist. As head of the *periti* of the sub-committees, Daniélou had redacted texts the way he wanted them, but as a consequence there had been two complaints against him filed from the Curial Secretariat of the Episcopate by one “canon Thils.” Congar infers that canon Thils had also previously re-arranged and published Congar’s own texts without his permission. *Ibid.* Cannon Thils may well be the Belgian Gustave Thils (1901-2000) Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Fundamental theology and author of over a dozen works covering a grand sweep of theology to include ecclesiology, morality, exegesis, spirituality and theology of non-Christian religions. Available from http://www.kathpedia.com/index.php?title=Gustove_Thils and http://www.editionsducerf.fr/html/fiche/ficheauteur.asp/n_aut=7744; Internet: accessed Feb 12, 2012.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 329.

Garrone of Toulouse, a leading Council father, confirmed that the French delegation had been battling among themselves all week about the precedence and authority of Scripture versus Tradition. As it happened, the evening Congar arrived an informal vote was taken among the Dominicans: thirty against and only four or five for the Curia's *de Ecclesia* proposition.¹⁵²

c. *Congar's influence on Lumen Gentium: Tradition and Scripture.* The Preparatory subcommission work on what was now *Lumen Gentium* continued until June, 1963.¹⁵³ The twelve chapters of *De Ecclesia* were distilled to the five chapters of *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁵⁴ One truly significant change in *Lumen Gentium* was that the social philosophy of the Church as the "perfect society" was essentially jettisoned.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, Chapter I of *Lumen Gentium* was as much about the mystery of salvation as it was about the mystery of the Church; the juridical role of the Church was de-emphasized and made secondary to both.¹⁵⁶ Chapter II of *Lumen Gentium* essentially recaptured the Old Testament understanding of the laity as the People of God on pilgrimage; moreover – and very significantly, all Christians were fundamentally equal by virtue of their valid baptism.¹⁵⁷ Chapter III recovered the sacramental nature of the ministry of the bishop and rejected what Alberigo characterized as the "exaggerated personal and a distorted monarchical dimension of the papacy."¹⁵⁸ Chapter IV continued the Chapter II

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 33.

¹⁵⁴ The Chapter I, The Mystery of the Church; Chapter II, The People of God; Chapter III, On the Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate; Chapter IV, The Laity; and Chapter V, The Universal Call to Holiness in the Church.

¹⁵⁵ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 33-4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 289.

¹⁵⁸ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 34. Some background may be helpful here. Historically, the Curia-influence on the Preparatory Theological Commission had been so intrusive on Council

discussion on the People of God, emphasizing the Christian vocation to holiness and de-emphasizing the focus on religious orders.¹⁵⁹ Finally – and most significantly, Scripture and Tradition were not bifurcated but regarded part of the unity of God and his revelation. If there was to be precedence, it was to Holy Scripture:

17. As the Son was sent by the Father,(131) so He too sent the Apostles, saying: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world.” (132) The Church has received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth. (133) Wherefore she makes the words of the Apostle her own: “Woe to me, if I do not preach the Gospel,” (134) By the proclamation of the Gospel she prepares her hearers to receive and profess the faith. She gives them the dispositions necessary for baptism, snatches them from the slavery of error and of idols and incorporates them in Christ so that through charity they may grow up into full maturity in Christ.

. . . .
28 . . . Priests are consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful and to celebrate divine worship, so that they are true priests of the New Testament. (66*) Partakers of the function of Christ the sole Mediator, (178) on their level of ministry, they announce the divine word to all.¹⁶⁰

Here in Chapter II of *Lumen Gentium*, the Council fathers repeat Christ’s mandate that the Scriptures must be proclaimed to “to the ends of the earth” so that the hearers

proceedings that in October, 1964, seventeen Council Cardinals sent a letter to Paul VI asking that “the rights of the Council be respected and that it be permitted to carry on its work normally.” Ibid. This was to bring on *settimana nera*, the “Black Week” of the Council. On Saturday, November 14, 1964, Paul VI responded with a folder which contained a *Nota explicative praevia* (interpretive note) which set forth his recommended text for *Lumen Gentium* Chapter III, “Hierarchical Structure of the Church and in Particular on the Episcopate,” dealing with the bishops’ relations with the Pope. It was signed by the Curia Secretary General Archbishop Felici and also included a *Nota bene* evidently prepared by the Curia. The Council response was not favorable, for the Black Week revealed their vulnerability and lack of independence. Cf. Alberigo, *Short History of Vatican II*, 71-6. At this point the Council reacted strongly and by this means were reassured that “the forces put in motion by Vatican II were so powerful that the events of the Black Week were not capable of stopping them.” Ibid., 77. This is an overstatement: under canon law Paul VI could have simply directed the Church fathers not to address a particular issue – but that, in turn, may have unleashed a worldwide political and theological firestorm.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ *Lumen Gentium* 17 and 28.

may “receive and profess the faith” and be incorporated into the body of Christ. Priests are specifically consecrated “to announce the divine word to all.” By this language the centrality of Scripture to the faith is emphasized. Tradition is not mentioned. But this does not mean that Tradition is thereby diminished, for Congar emphasizes that:

There are those truths which the Church has defined, which are necessary to believe and which one does not find formally in Scripture, made implicitly, but only virtually: the number of seven sacraments, the Assumption, for example, or the Immaculate Conception. They are only in Tradition – I explain in vain because 1) this is not the main issue for me: it is more important to define the PROPER MODE of tradition compared to Scripture; 2) one cannot accept the fiction of non-written doctrine, communicated verbally by mouth to ear . . . etc.¹⁶¹

Congar made this entry in *Mon Journal* on March 11, 1963 after a long meeting at the Vatican with Archbishop Parente from the Congregation of the Holy Office.¹⁶²

Archbishop Parente had asked for the meeting with Père Congar to discuss the validity of the Curia’s position regarding Tradition and Scripture as set forth in its schema, *de Ecclesia*. They talked for an hour and a half, Parente attempting to persuade Congar, arguing that the Church fathers were not theologians – they had not studied theology, as had he and Congar, and were novices in these matters. Parente confided that he spoke to Congar in friendship – as one friend to another.¹⁶³ Parente’s obvious motivation aside,

¹⁶¹ “Il y a des vérités que l’Église a définies, qu’il est nécessaire de croire, et qui ne se trouvent pas formellement dans l’Écriture, fut-ce implicitement, mais seulement virtuellement, le nombre de sept sacrements, l’Assomption, par exemple, ou l’Immaculée Conception. Elles sont dans la seule Tradition – Je explique en vain que 1) c’est ne pas pour moi la question principale, mais celle-ci est beaucoup plus de définir le MODE PROPRE de la tradition comparée à l’Écriture; 2) on ne peut admettre la fiction d’une doctrine non écrite et communiquée verbalement de bouche à orielle . . .etc. Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 348.

The language of the last sentence refers to non-apostolic tradition handed down orally, which the Church rejects. Congar neither mentions nor refers here to the Oral Apostolic Tradition of the Church.

¹⁶² On the next to last day of Vatican II, Parente was appointed Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In June, 1967 he was elevated to Cardinal.

¹⁶³ Congar, *Mon Journal I*, 347-49.

this confirms the high esteem in which Congar was held even by the Curia. Congar, however, remained unmoved.

The first vote by the Council fathers was 1,368 against to 822 in favor of the schema *de Ecclesia* as it was first presented.¹⁶⁴ On Saturday, November 21, 1964, one week to the day of Paul VI's "Black Week" interpretive note - and the last day of the Third Session of Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, was solemnly approved with 2,151 for and only 5 opposed.¹⁶⁵ That evening Congar wrote in his *Journal*:

We have here, in effect, arrived at the end. . . . For some mystical reason I decided this morning to go to St. Peter's in order to participate in the grace of the event of the Council in its most decisive moment. There is no dogma [at issue] this time. . . . But there will be two great acts of proclamation of *De Ecclesia* [*Lumen gentium*] and *De œcumenismo* [*Unitatis Redintegratio*] and I want to participate in the splendor at the summit as I have participated in the sweat and the tears at the base.¹⁶⁶

4. *Unitatis Redintegratio* (To Restore Unity), Decree on Ecumenism (11/21/64).

The Decree on Ecumenism moved the Church from its position of near isolationism as expressed in *Mortalium Animos* to a very real engagement with ecumenism. As might be expected from its name, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (To Restore Unity) is another Vatican II document in which we can hear Congar's voice. A précis of the history of *Unitatis Redintegratio* reflects that a total of three schemas were presented: one by Cardinal Bea, the Secretary for Christian Unity; a second by the equally active Preparatory Theological Commission, the subcommittee of which Congar was now the leading *peritus*; and a third

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 209.

¹⁶⁵ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 82.

¹⁶⁶ Nous voilà en effet arrivés à la fin. . . . C'est pour une raison mystique que je me suis décidé à aller ce matin à Saint Pierre: pour participer à la grâce et à l'événement du concile en son moment le plus décisive. Il n'y a pas le dogme, cette fois. . . . Mais il y aura les deux grandes actes de proclamation du *De Ecclesia* et du *De œcumenismo*, je veux y participer au sommet comme j'y ai participé à la base et dans l'éclat, comme j'y ai participé dans les sueurs et dans les larmes.

brief schema on the Virgin Mary by Cardinal Ottaviani for inclusion in the final document.¹⁶⁷

a. *Toward the restoration of unity among all Christians. Unitatis Redintegratio* was issued on November 21, 1964, the same day as *Lumen Gentium*. The first paragraph of Article 1 of *Unitatis Redintegratio* dedicates the Church to the “restoration of unity among all Christians”:

The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communities present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ himself were divided [footnote omitted]. Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature.

To emphasize and fulfill this “restoration of unity” language, the second paragraph repeats it and directs the Church to an ecumenical movement toward unity:

But the Lord of Ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of grace on our behalf He has been rousing *divided Christians* to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity . . . , for the *restoration of unity* among all Christians. *This movement toward unity is called “ecumenical.”* Those belong to it who invoke the Triune God and confess Jesus as Lord and Saviour, doing this not merely as individuals but also as corporate bodies. *For almost everyone regards the body in which he has heard the Gospel as his Church and indeed, God’s Church. All however, though in different ways, long for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal . . .* (emphasis added).

b. *The cautious position of the Church regarding ecumenism.* The fifth paragraph of *Unitatis Redintegratio* reminds us that “The attainment of union is the concern of the whole Church, faithful and shepherds alike.” This ecumenical mandate of Vatican II stands in contrast to what was, quite frankly, at best a lukewarm position of the Church as the “perfect society” towards ecumenicism during much of the twentieth

¹⁶⁷ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 28.

century in the years leading up to Vatican II. As discussed in the previous Chapter, the cautious ecumenical posture of the Church was epitomized by Pius XI's 1928 *Mortalium Animos*, which characterized Christ's mandate in John 17:21 "that they all may be one" as an unfulfilled "wish." It warned those who are "easily deceived by the outward appearance of good when there is question of fostering unity among all Christians." We might now put in proper perspective the criticism of the young Père Congar in 1939 by his Dominican Master General Gillet for "irenic ecumenism," and particularly for Congar's 1937 publication of *Chrétiens désunis*.¹⁶⁸

c. *Congar's influence upon Unitatis Redintegratio*. In fairness we might recall also Congar's remark in 1964 in *Chrétiens en dialogue: Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique* that "it was something of a tautology to speak of Catholic ecumenism."¹⁶⁹ In fact, through the work of what Gabriel Flynn denotes as the "*Ressourcement* Movement" the Church now proclaimed in *Unitatis Redintegratio* the "restoration of unity among all Christians" as a the principal concern of the Second Vatican Council.¹⁷⁰ As Alberigo comments, at Vatican II, "Everyone had changed, or was in the process of changing."¹⁷¹

Other than his statement that he worked on *Unitatis Redintegratio*, we have no specifics from Congar as to his contribution to the Decree. However, it should again be noted that the very caption of Chapter I, "Catholic Principles on Ecumenism," tracks

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Congar, *Dialogue Between Christians*, 24-6. As noted in Chapter Three herein, the criticism, suspicion and supervision of Père Yves Congar by the Vatican authorities persisted from 1946 through and even after his "exile" from February 1950 to December 1952.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷⁰ Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, ed., *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2012), 16; *Unitatis Redintegratio* 1.

¹⁷¹ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 41.

Congar's language in *Chrétien en dialogue*.¹⁷² We do know that Article 3 of *Unitatis Redintegratio* echoed Congar's profound insight regarding baptism and will put it this way: "For men who believe in Christ and have been truly baptized are in communion with the Catholic Church even though this communion is imperfect."¹⁷³ We know also that even before his imprisonment as a P.O.W. in 1941 and the opening of Vatican II, Congar continually sought to find common ground between Catholics and non-Catholics, so as to bring to a reality the Christian unity called for by Christ.

Toward the end of the Third Session of Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Decree on Ecumenism was approved with an overwhelming majority vote of 2,137 in favor and 11 opposed.¹⁷⁴ It was formally promulgated on November 21, 1964.

5. *Nostra Aetate, Declaration on the Relation to Non-Christian Religions (10/28/65)*. The Declaration *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), the smallest of the sixteen major Vatican II documents, traces its roots to Pope John XXIII's June 5, 1960 creation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity under Cardinal Augustin Bea.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Congar, *Chrétien en dialogue*, 25-6. Admittedly, it is difficult to positively determine whether Congar influenced his Preparatory Commission's draft language, or whether his 1964 *Dialogue Between Christians* simply followed the language which the Vatican II fathers adopted. Since he was among the most influential experts at Vatican II and his Preparatory Theological Commission worked on *Unitatis Redintegratio*, I would submit that it is more likely that the Chapter I heading was contributed by Congar.

¹⁷³ Art. 3 goes on to hold that even in spite of differences that exist and even serious obstacles to full ecclesiastical communion, "it remains true that all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are members of Christ's body [footnote omitted], and have a right to be called Christian, and are so correctly accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church" [footnote omitted].

¹⁷⁴ Hannenberg, *Concise Guide*, 113.

¹⁷⁵ Together with *Unitatis Redintegratio* and *Dignitatis Humanae*, *Nostra Aetate* was one of three Vatican II documents generated by Bea's Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Congar worked on all three. For the general background of *Nostra Aetate*, see the article by Thomas Stransky, C.S.P., "The Genesis of *Nostra Aetate*," *America the National Catholic Weekly*, October 24, 2005, n.p. Father Stransky was an original staff member of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity (1960-70). Available from

a. *Responding to “the community of all peoples.”* Heavily relying upon New Testament Scripture, *Nostra Aetate* recognized that in an age when “day by day mankind was being drawn closer together and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger,” it was time to respond to “the community of all peoples” by opening the doors of the Church so that there might actually be dialogue with non-Christian faith communities respecting each other’s identity and rituals.¹⁷⁶ The Council recognized that humanity had but one final goal, God the Father.¹⁷⁷ Although the Declaration mentions Hinduism, Buddhism and the Moslems, pointedly the fourth paragraph which deals with the Jews and “the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham’s stock,” is the longest.¹⁷⁸

b. *Congar’s influence upon Nostra Aetate.* Congar wrote in his Journal, “I have worked on this. The introduction and the conclusion are mine.”¹⁷⁹ Three groups of bishops took exception to *Nostra Aetate*. Conservative, traditionalist bishops continued to oppose any dialogue, ecumenical or otherwise, by the Church with non-Christian religions in general and Judaism in particular.¹⁸⁰ The Arab world and the Eastern bishops were opposed to any stance by the Church which would favor Jews. Lastly, a smaller but quite vocal group of bishops, the *Coetus Internationalis Patrum* (Assembly of International Fathers) objected to the removal from the schema text of any condemnation

<http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?articleid=4451>; Internet: accessed February 11, 2012.

¹⁷⁶ *Nostra Aetate* 1.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1, 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2, 3, and 4.

¹⁷⁹ Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511: “y ai travaillé; le proemium et la conclusion sont à peu près de moi.”

¹⁸⁰ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 212.

of the Jews for deicide.¹⁸¹ In May 1965, five months before *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated, Congar perceived the incendiary problem which was developing. In fact, because of the exceptions which had been taken, the Council of Presidents refused to proceed with a vote on the underlying schema.¹⁸² In response, on May 4, 1965 Congar submitted a new text for *Nostra Aetate*.¹⁸³ Unfortunately, he does not provide us with the actual language he submitted to the Preparatory Theological Commission, but comments, “I put on paper a very brief general declaration which would replace the actual Declaration on non-Christian religions, because in my opinion, neither the Paul VI-Bea solution nor the solution of [the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity secretary] Willebrands would be satisfactory (in their form).”¹⁸⁴ We simply do not know whether Congar’s text was wholly or only partly incorporated into the final language of the fourth chapter of *Nostra Aetate*. The reference in the redacted final text to scriptural authority and “the truth of the Gospel” does, however, have a distinct touch of Congar:

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in his passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, *as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures*. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the Word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to *the truth of the Gospel* and the spirit of Christ (emphasis mine).

¹⁸¹ The subsequently excommunicated French Archbishop Marcel Lefèbvre was present at all four Sessions of Vatican I and was a prominent member of the conservative *Coetus Internationalis Patrum*. A draft dealing with Church relations with the Jews had been inserted in the schema text at the direction of the Coordinating Commission. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 72. This had the effect of transferring the controversial topic from Cardinal Bea’s Secretariat on Unity to the Preparatory Theological Commission.

¹⁸² Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 77.

¹⁸³ Schmidt, S.J., *Augustine Bea*, 518.

¹⁸⁴ “. . . je mets sur le papier un projet de très brève déclaration global qui remplacerait l’actuel Déclaration sur les religions non chrétiennes. Car, à mon avis, ni la solution Paul VI-Bea, ni la solution Willebrands ne peuvent satisfaire (cf. feuille *hic*).” Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 367.

We do know that on October 15, 1965, some five months after Congar's "brief general declaration" was submitted, the Church fathers approved *Nostra Aetate* with, however, a total of 243 opposing votes.¹⁸⁵ *Nostra Aetate* was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965.

6. *Dei Verbum, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (11/18/65)*. *Dei Verbum* (The Word of God), combined pastoral and doctrinal trajectories into the economy of God's revelation. In his December 4, 1963 address to the Council at the close of Session Two, Paul VI said that he still awaited a response from the Council on the question of revelation.¹⁸⁶ As a consequence, commencing in early July 1964 comments started to flow in during the Council's 1963-1964 intersession period. Most were positive, but at the same time the number of emendations (totaling 2,481) proposed by various groups reflected disagreement among the Council fathers in a number of areas: some praised the lack of condemnations of errors, other complained that errors should be identified and condemned; some found the schema language too precise, others found it insufficiently academic; some felt that the schema would encourage rash exegetical work, others held it would discourage exegetes.¹⁸⁷ Distilled from all this was a common consensus that the schema on revelation still needed work on its third draft. In fact, there was a huge amount of work yet to be done.

a. *The Dei Verbum subcommission*. Regarding his own participation, Père Congar comments, "have worked in chapter II and paragraph 21 was one of my first

¹⁸⁵ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 220-21. This election was a close call: fifty-eight more negative votes would have doomed the document, which Congar's submission may well have saved. Because of the uncertainty involved there were rumors flying about that Paul VI had conditioned the promulgation of the Declaration on the Relation to Non-Christian Religions that it not have more than 300 votes cast against it. Ibid, 221.

¹⁸⁶ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.3, 372.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 375.

redactions.”¹⁸⁸ This terse summary needs some expansion. On March 7, 1964, the Doctrinal Commission began a first step toward the composition of what was to become *Dei Verbum* by establishing a subcommittee composed of seven Council fathers and nineteen *periti* chosen from the German, French, Dutch and Belgian groups. Among the nineteen selected were Yves Congar, Joseph Ratzinger and Karl Rahner. This subcommittee then broke up into two groups. The first group, consisting only of Congar and Rahner, addressed the introduction and what was then the first chapter, “Revelation and Tradition.” The second group dealt with the chapters on scripture.¹⁸⁹ From April 20 to April 25, 1964, the two-man subcommittee of Congar and Rahner revised the schema text. By early June, 1964, the work of was completed and a list of the schemas to be discussed by the Council during the Third Session had been approved by both the Doctrinal Commission and Cardinal Bea for the Secretariat on Unity and sent out to the Council fathers.¹⁹⁰ The schema on revelation was first on the list.¹⁹¹

After their initial work was done, Yves Congar and Karl Rahner were then tasked with the enormous job of integrating the work of both subcommittees into texts on scripture and tradition.¹⁹² Their Articles 7 and 8 of *Dei Verbum* Chapter II interrelate and integrate Scripture and tradition rather masterfully. Scripture is seen as the source of all saving truth, moral teaching and the living tradition of the Church. Yet, it is by sacred

¹⁸⁸ “*De Revelatione*: ai travaille dans the chap. II et le no 21 vient d’une première redaction de moi.” Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ From June 3 to June 5, 1964, the Doctrinal Commission had read and approved what were now the six chapters on the schema on revelation. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.4, 219.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., vol. 3, 376-7.

¹⁹² Ibid; See *Dei Verbum* 3.

Tradition that the canon of Scripture is known and more profoundly understood.¹⁹³ In Chapter II, Article 9 and 10 of *Dei Verbum*, Congar and Rahner in eloquent language set forth the binding relationship between sacred Tradition, Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church:

9. Hence there exists a close connection and communication between sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tend toward the same end. For Sacred Scripture is the word of God entrusted by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, and hands it on to their successors in its full purity, so that led by the light of the Spirit of truth, they may in proclaiming it preserve this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it more widely known. Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence.

10. Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the word of God. . . .

But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This teaching office is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been handed on, listening to it devoutly, guarding it scrupulously and explaining it faithfully in accord with a divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it draws from this one deposit of faith everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

b. *Congar's role in the revised schema on revelation.* The revised schema on revelation, *Dei Verbum*, which we have seen was substantially written by Congar and Rahner, was generally well-received by the Council. In the beginning of October, 1964, during the middle of the Third Session, Cardinal Léger, the head of the Central Commission, praised this redacted schema on revelation as being well tuned to the spirit of the Bible as well as avoiding any debate on the so-called "two sources" of

¹⁹³ The Gospel is "the source of all saving truth and moral teaching (7) . . . and the living tradition [of the Church], whose wealth is poured into the practice and life of the believing and praying Church. . . . Through tradition the Church's full canon of Sacred Scripture is known and more profoundly understood and unceasingly made active in her . . . (8).

revelation.¹⁹⁴ Congar certainly agreed with the great majority of the Council fathers who understood the oneness and unity of God’s plan for man and his revelation to man and opposed the Curia’s assertion of “*duo fontes*” of revelation. These fathers also recognized a need to recover the priority of Holy Scripture as opposed to the scholastic post-Tridentine emphasis upon Tradition.¹⁹⁵ Citing Congar, William Henn would tie this to Congar’s comment on inquiry into truth:

To avoid an exaggerated view of the magisterium, it helps to remember several points. First of all the Church has no power to create truths. ‘Neither [the pope] nor the Church has the least creative power in the matter of revealed truth. Ultimately, in the order of truth, only the truth itself has authority.’¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.4, 210. Recall that the relationship between Tradition and Scripture as sources of revelation in the schema *de Ecclesia* was a lengthy and zealously debated topic at the Council. On November 14, 1962, the Council began a series of debates on the sources of the one revelation of God, with much input from the Preparatory Theological Commission. The Curia having been rejected on its proposition for the pre-eminence of Tradition over Scripture during the Second Session had then proposed in the Third Session that there were two sources, or “*duo fontes*,” of revelation – Tradition and Scripture. This “two source theory” was introduced into the debate by the Curia with the support of conservative bishops as *modus* 40-D in a draft of *Dei Verbum*. However, once this was recognized, French Cardinal Liénart and many others vociferously opposed the proposed addition on the bases that it had no biblical support. In fact, it was a theory which had not previously appeared in the first fifteen hundred years of Church teaching and at the same time was too simplistic and veiled the fundamental truth that revelation was a cohesive whole with one divine source. Cf. Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 31. For a more in-depth discussion of this matter see Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 300-59.

At first, even Congar did not fully perceive the danger in the nuanced language of *modus* 40 D, but thereafter opposed it in personal notes he sent to several Council fathers and experts at the last meeting (October 18, 1965) of the Doctrinal Commission which was then debating the relationship between Scripture and Tradition. *Ibid.*, 303 n136, 306, 320, 329. Cardinal Bea was aware of Congar’s opposition and had researched the matter of *duo fontes*. He prevailed upon Paul VI to retain the simple formula: the scriptures “teach the truth faithfully without error.” *Ibid.*, 331. Paul VI, while mindful of not wanting to trigger a new “Black Week”, nonetheless took that risk and published a beautifully caligraphed letter for public posting to the Council fathers to “consider the opportunity of improving some points in the schema on revelation” Evidently to ensure that he got the message, a personal copy of the letter as a “private note” was hand-delivered to Cardinal Ottaviani, one of the two reporters on the schema and a supporter of the Curia’s *duo fontes* theory. *Ibid.*, 330-34; see also, Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 434-40, 444-46.

¹⁹⁵ Congar also thought it wrong that the advocates of the equality of oral tradition and Scripture proposed that tradition was entrusted not to the Church but to the magisterium, the teaching authority of the Church. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 331.

¹⁹⁶ Henn cites Yves Congar, “Après ‘L’Infallible’ de Hans Küng,” *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 58 (1974): 243-54. William Henn, O.F.M. CAP, *The Hierarchy*

c. *A dangerously false truth.* Distilled to its essence, then, Congar saw in the position taken by the Curia of “two sources” of revelation as a false truth - a falsehood not deliberately so by its proponents, but one which by its acceptance and promulgation by the Council would make it all the more dangerous to the faithful of the Church. Père Congar had always followed the rule which he had laid out for himself that when an untruth is encountered one not only should, but must speak out in dissent. As we have seen, in its final form *Dei Verbum* rejected with finality the notion of two fonts of revelation. *Dei Verbum* 10 makes clear that “Sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God.” *Dei Verbum* 4 provides that “Jesus perfected revelation and we now await no further new public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ”

While the amended text on *Dei Verbum* had been distributed to the Council fathers on November 20, 1964, it was not until almost a year later, on October 29, 1965, that a vote was called in the Council hall.¹⁹⁷ In the end, after all the resistance by the Curia and other conservative Council fathers, of the 2,344 votes cast all but six approved the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.¹⁹⁸

7. *Ad Gentes (To the Nations), Decree on Mission Activity of the Church*
(12/7/65).

of Truths According to Yves Congar, O.P (Roma: Editrice Pontifica Università Gregoriana, 1987), 148.

¹⁹⁷ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol 5, 275 and 339.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 359. In an unrelated matter, on the day that *Dei Verbum* was proclaimed, Paul VI announced the beginning of the beatification process of Pius XII and John XXIII. Congar wrote: “this announcement saddens me. Why this glorification of popes by their successors? Will we never abandon these old Roman habits? At the moment of proclaiming the *aggiornamento*, they perform actions not in accord with it.” Ibid., 362, citing and translating Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 478.

a. *God intervenes in human history.* The Vatican II Decree *Ad Gentes* (To the Nations, December 7, 1965) states that in order to establish Communion with man, God “did ordain to intervene in human history” by sending his Son to save mankind from the power of Satan.¹⁹⁹ Thus by the Council’s inductive logic, Christ was born into time and history.²⁰⁰ *Ad Gentes* confirms and emphasizes for the Church the continuation by Christ of his salvific mission to humanity.

b. *An important change of direction.* *Ad Gentes* is regarded as one of the exceptional achievements of Vatican II.²⁰¹ The Decree on mission activity represented an important change of direction for the Church. From the mid-sixteenth century to the latter part of the nineteenth century one unfortunate consequence of Catholic missions in the New World and elsewhere was often the aggrandizement of empires.²⁰² This led to what Alberigo describes as a “deep crisis” in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resulting from the emergence of new nations, national identities and the upsurge of non-Christian religions.²⁰³ One of the important changes made by *Ad Gentes* was to eliminate the lingering latent Eurocentric bias of the Church: *Ad Gentes*, *Nostra Aetate* and *Dignitatis Humanae* are related in this sense. *Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate* also have in common a sense of the charge of evangelization of these nations and relating the Church to the non-Christian world.²⁰⁴ Toward this end it is very significant that *Ad Gentes* 6

¹⁹⁹ *Ad Gentes* 3.

²⁰⁰ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 124.

²⁰¹ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 447.

²⁰² Cf. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 447.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ “In fact there are times when, after a happy beginning, she [the Church] must again lament a setback, or at least must linger in a certain state of unfinished insufficiency. As for the men, groups and peoples concerned, only by degrees does she touch and pervade them, and thus take them up into full catholicity. The right sort of means or action must be suited to any state or situation.” *Ad Gentes* 6.

embraced Congar's notion of "unity among Christians" and his understanding that "all the baptized are to gather into one flock"

c. *Congar's work on Ad Gentes*. The original schema before the Council was *De Missionibus*, which had five chapters.²⁰⁵ Alberigo states that this schema had been edited by Father Johannes Schütte (1913-1971), the Superior General of the Society on the Divine Word, who was part of a special subcommission of five members aided by ten experts, who included Yves Congar and Joseph Ratzinger.²⁰⁶ Congar states quite clearly that the redaction of the first chapter of *Ad Gentes* was done entirely by him, with but limited input from Ratzinger.²⁰⁷ In the six pages of Chapter I, "Principles of Doctrine", Congar is revealed as a gifted and orthodox Catholic theologian with a deep appreciation of Church history, as well as being a well-versed scriptural scholar.²⁰⁸ The discussion of Congar's redacted text, which had been sent to the Church fathers in June 1965, began on October 7, 1965.²⁰⁹

In November 1965 a vote on the amended text for *Ad Gentes* was taken with 2,162 positive votes and only 18 negative votes cast against it.²¹⁰ The day of its passage,

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 429. These schema five chapters, book-ended by a Preface and a Conclusion, were "Doctrinal Principles", "Missionary Work", "Missionaries", "The Organization of Missionary Activities", and "Cooperation." The final Decree was also framed by a Preface and Conclusion and had six Chapters the headings of which fairly closely tracked *de Missionibus*: "Principles of Doctrine" (Congar's Chapter), "Missionary Work Itself", "Particular Churches" (a new chapter), "Missionaries", and "Planning Missionary Activity" and "Cooperation."

²⁰⁶ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 102; Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 446.

²⁰⁷ Congar, *Journal du Concile*, 511: "le chapitre I est de moi de A à Z, avec emprunts a Ratzinger pour le no 8." (Chapter I is mine from A to Z, with borrowings from Ratzinger for no. 8). Congar was certainly closer to this than Alberigo and it is thus likely that Congar took Schütte's edited Chapter I schema and redacted it into its final form which was accepted by the Council.

²⁰⁸ *Ad Gentes* 5.

²⁰⁹ "The new schema, essentially the work of Congar with the support of Ratzinger and [Jesuit Joseph] Neuner, had easily won the approval of the Coordinating Commission and was sent to the fathers in the middle of June, 1995. . . . [E]ven a man as critical as Father Rahner' had accepted the text with enthusiasm." Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 427.

²¹⁰ Cf. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 445.

Congar, who had intensively worked on schema section numbers 1-3 most of the day, commented after dinner with Pères Chenu and Peuchmaurd that, “It is a very long and demanding work that requires one to carry on with care.”²¹¹ As was the procedure, the text was then presented to Pope Paul VI who then re-presented it to the Council for approval on December 7, 1965. The final vote tally was 2,394 placet and 5 non-placet - the highest number of “yes” votes ever cast by the Vatican II Council.²¹² At its passage, Congar described it as “A great document that provides [Catholic] theology with the *means* to be fully evangelical.”²¹³

8. *Dignitatis Humanae, Declaration on Religious Freedom.*

a. *A bitterly contested text.* *Dignitatis Humanae* (Dignity of Man, 12/7/65), was the most bitterly contested document of Vatican II.²¹⁴ While the vast majority of Council fathers favored religious freedom, the underlying schema, *De libertate religiosa*, had a long history at the Council of being opposed by bishops from Italy and Spain for reason that it was thought to endanger the prerogatives established by their respective Concordats with the Church.²¹⁵ The Italian and Spanish bishops did not stand alone.

²¹¹ “C’est un travail très long et très astreignant, qu’il faut mener avec soin.” Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 477. Subsequently, Congar would be co-editor with Peuchmaurd in Yves M.-J. Congar and M Peuchmaurd, ed., *L’Église dans le mode de ce temps, constitution pastorale Gaudium et spes* (Paris: Cerf, 1967).

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 353, translating and citing Congar, *Journal du Concile II*, 478. By this, Congar was explaining that *Ad Gentes* confirmed the biblical foundation and roots of the Catholic faith. Cf. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 356.

²¹⁴ Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 147.

²¹⁵ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 112; Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 147. These Concordats were agreements between sovereign states and the Holy See on religious matters. Both Italy and Spain’s Concordats with the Church granted them a number of state-protected privileges and entitlements. The bishops from those two countries feared that if *Dignitatis Humanae* were to pass, these contractual rights would be lost and the Church and its faithful would suffer. Ibid., 149. On his part, Congar wholeheartedly approved *Dignitatis Humanae* and had difficulty seeing why it had repeatedly stalled in the Council. Alberigo notes that, “In his article in *Documents episcopats*, Congar wrote: ‘It seems that the schema ought to be

Cardinal Ottaviani, speaking for the Curia, and a number of conservative Council fathers harbored a more deep-seated theological problem: they saw the schema as treating religious truths and falsehoods alike and thus placing the one true religion and false religions on the same level.²¹⁶ The question was no longer whether the Church was willing to change, but rather would change be beneficial to the whole Church?

b. *Freedom for all people.* The Declaration on Religious Freedom was a profound and innovative outreach by Rome. It recognized the validity of freedom of both the individual conscience and a collective religious conscience, motivated by conscience and a sense of duty.²¹⁷ By its language, *Dignitatis Humanae* recognized the dignity of all humans and established religious liberty (again, motivated by a sense of duty), not just for Catholics, but all people. Moreover, the Declaration on Religious Freedom did not limit itself to the freedom of the Church as against political authorities, but recognized the importance of a “responsible freedom” of individual personal conscience, even in the face of ecclesiastical authority.²¹⁸ It reflected and substantially deepened the teaching

very widely accepted since it takes its stand on the foundation of *immutatis a coactione* [immunity from coercion] and leaves room for the assertion of the objective eternal law, the duty of seeking the truth, the oneness of the true Church, and even the possibility of a confessional state.” Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 69 n 68.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 72. Cardinal Ottaviani wanted the Declaration on Religious Freedom to begin with a statement that “[T]he Catholic Church has a true, innate, objective right to its freedom, because it has a divine origin and a divine mission.” He and others also argued that there were two kinds of rights involved: a natural right common to all human beings and a supernatural right possessed only by Christians, and in particular the Catholic Church. Yet, Alberigo writes in the *History of Vatican II* that it was precisely this double standard from which the Council fathers sought to extricate the Church. Ibid., 73.

²¹⁷ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 110; *Dignitatis Humanae* 1.

²¹⁸ The opening sentence of *Dignitatis Humanae* 1 reads: “A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the conscience of contemporary man [citing John XXIII’s April 11, 1963 encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, AAS 55 (1963), 279 and Pius XII’s radio message of December 24, 1944, AAS 37(1945), 14.], and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty.” See also Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 622.

which had been anticipated by Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*.²¹⁹ The Declaration on Religious Freedom was designed to end an era where the Catholic faith was defended by concordances with the various secular states which, inter alia, insulated the Church from charges against it, particularly those of modern science.²²⁰ Paul VI commented that *Dignitatis Humanae* was of “cardinal importance. It establishes the attitude of the Church for many centuries. The world awaits it.”²²¹

The December 7, 1965 Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*, has a strong relationship with *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, as well as a looser relationship with *Nostra Aetate*, the 1965 Declaration on the Relation to Non-Christian Religions. But *Dignitatis Humanae* has another dimension: together with three other documents, *Ad Gentes* (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church), *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of the Church) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), it had perhaps the greatest impact upon the world. Despite the long delay in the promulgation of these four documents (each was approved on December 7, 1964), together they heralded a momentous ecumenical event. Perhaps it is no coincidence that on this same day the long-standing mutual excommunications (since 1054) between Rome and Constantinople were lifted.²²²

²¹⁹ Ibid., 456; Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 110.

²²⁰ Cf. Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 111.

²²¹ Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 415: “Le pape a lui [referring to Mgr. De Smedt who had presented a fifty minute presentation on *Dignitatis Humanae* to Paul VI] dit: ce document est capital. Il fixe l’attitude de l’Église pour plusieurs siècles. Le monde l’attend.”

²²² *Mutual Lifting of Excommunications between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I* (December 7, 1965).

c. *Congar's role in Dignitatis Humanae.* Congar played a significant role in the drafting of *Dignitatis Humanae*.²²³ On September 15, 1964, the day after the start of the Third Session of Vatican II, debate on religious freedom resumed from where it had been left during the Second Session.²²⁴ Together with the Jesuit John Courtney Murray, Yves Congar had been appointed expert to the first working group of several created under a special subcommission of Cardinal Bea's Secretariat for Unity, which had initially proposed the *De libertate religiosa* schema. After a prodigious amount of work by these groups during the short period of time from September 27 to October 5, 1964, the document coalesced so as to result in the proposed final schema for *Dignitatis Humanae*. This is the previously-referenced text which Paul VI had praised during Belgian Bishop Jan-Baptist de Smedt's presentation to him. But the health of both Murray and Congar had suffered greatly under the enormous workload placed upon them: Murray became so ill that on October 4, 1964 he had to retire from the work, leaving only Congar, whose health had fared little better.²²⁵ This had an important consequence: the Declaration's

²²³ Congar knew that the passage of *Dignitatis Humanae* required the cooperation by all parties involved and writes of this "cooperation by all, most particularly to the theological part and the introduction which is by my hand" (*De libertate religiosa*: cooperation à tout, plus particulièrement aux nos de la partie théologique et au *proemium* que est de ma main.") Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511.

²²⁴ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 63.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 114. On October 5, 1965, Congar wrote in his *Journal*, "Today I can stand up –that's right: merely stand up - only with great difficulty. The meetings in St. Peter's have tired me out to an unbelievable extent. I cannot move my right leg; I have no strength at all. Every day I am always without energy or strength, like a tree that has been struck by lightning and is no longer alive, but is broken, except for a centimeter of bark and wood through which a minimum of sap makes its way. Just the same, it produces apples or plums. But how hard it is to do so!" Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 422 cited and translated in Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 114.

initial focus on Church–State and freedom shifted to Congar’s interest in human dignity, which together with freedom became the defining principles of the Declaration.²²⁶

In addition to writing the introduction to *Dignitatis Humanae*, Congar authored many of its theological trajectories.²²⁷ The first paragraph of the introduction to *Dignitatis Humanae*, which Congar wrote, is replete with his language and concepts:

A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man [fn omitted] and the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a *reasonable freedom not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty*. The demand is likewise made that *constitutional limits should be set to the powers of government, in order that there be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person and of associations* [recall the oppressive Third Republic’s *Law of Associations* of 1901]. . . . This Vatican Council takes careful note of these desires in the minds of men. It proposes to declare them to be greatly in accord with *truth and justice*. To this end it, it searches into the *sacred tradition and doctrine of the Church—the treasury out of which the Church continually brings forth new things that are in harmony with the things that are old* (emphasis added).²²⁸

Thereafter the schema *De libertate religiosa* went through numerous drafts and several opposition voting delays before it was finally came before the Council for vote on November 19, 1965. In light of the opposition it had encountered, the final vote was surprising, almost breath-taking: 1,997 for and only 224 against. This was greeted with warm applause by the Council fathers. The Curia had proved to be much weaker than their fierce objections and delaying maneuvers made them out to be. The unexpected strength of this vote restored the confidence of the Council fathers and opened the door for them to complete their work on *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Gaudium et Spes*, two of

²²⁶ For more on the contemporary perspective of John Courtney Murray, S.J. at Vatican II, see his article, “On Religious Liberty: Freedom is the most distinctly American issue before the Council,” *America* (November 30, 1963): 704-6.

²²⁷ Cf. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511. As an appointed expert to a subsequent working group on *Dignitatis Humanae*, Congar also had to “touch up” article numbers 9 and 11 of the document. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 114.

²²⁸ *Dignitatis Humanae* 1.

the six documents which Congar later identified as truly having been integrated into the life of the Church.²²⁹ At the end of the Fourth and final Session of Vatican II, it also illustrates the unfortunate intransigence and hardened positions between the majority of the Council fathers and the Curial authorities.²³⁰ *Dignitatis Humanae* was promulgated by Paul VI on December 7, 1965, the day before Vatican II formally closed.

9. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (12/7/65).

After the vote on the Declaration of Religious Freedom, the work of the Council assembly focused on proposed amendments to the remaining two schemas, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Order of Priests) and *Gaudium et Spes*.²³¹ On December 2, 1965 the schema *De Presbyteris*, on the ministry and life of priests, came before the Council for discussion. *De Presbyteris* has been described by Giuseppe Alberigo as the least clearly defined schema to be presented to the Church fathers, noting that it did not establish a new image for priests, but rather re-presented and underscored their traditional image.²³² At first, *De Presbyteris* made an unfavorable impression on the Council fathers and was rejected by them in November, 1964 after a short debate.²³³ A subcommission which included *peritus* Congar was formed to revise it to conform to what would now be the sixth schema in *De Presbyteris*' lineage to be considered.²³⁴ The result was that this schema was sent out to the Council fathers in June, 1965, in hopes of laying the

²²⁹ Congar, *Le concile de Vatican II: Son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps de Christ*, 103-4. These documents are *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium*, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, *Dei Verbum*, *Gaudium et Spes* and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

²³⁰ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 106.

²³¹ Congar noted that there were nearly 9,700 proposed amendments to *Presbyterorum Ordinis* alone, only some of which were repetitious. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 482.

²³² Ibid., 231. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 465.

²³³ One of the principal difficulties with the first schema was the "Scholastic definition of priesthood" centering around and bracketed by the Eucharistic consecration. Ibid., 483.

²³⁴ Cf. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511.

groundwork for less contentious discussions during what was hoped to be the Fourth and final Session of Vatican II.

a. *The question of celibacy.* To the public, celibacy was the burning issue of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, with such opposition voiced that it was called by some in the Council as the “assault on celibacy.” There was thought that the upcoming debate would be explosive: Paul VI had himself expressed concern and issued a letter in defense of the “ancient, sacred, and providential law” which was read to the plenary Council on October 11, 1965.²³⁵ In contrast to the “Black Friday” which occurred during the deliberation of *Lumen Gentium*, the reception by the Church fathers to Paul VI’s interventionary letter was for the most part positive.²³⁶ Congar attended an informal meeting of thirteen bishops and five designated experts to deal with celibacy in connection with *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.²³⁷ Paul VI had proposed that an explicit vow of celibacy be taken by members of the presbyterate and the diaconate and renewed annually each Holy Thursday. However, because the Pope’s proposal was suggestive only, it was included with other proposed substantive changes and subsequently derailed.²³⁸

While the universal priesthood of the people of God, the “holy and royal priesthood of the faithful” (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 2) was part of Congar’s ecumenical

²³⁵ Ibid., 232-3.

²³⁶ Ibid., 234. Congar believed the intervention by Paul VI on this particular issue was fully legitimate: “Canonically, the Council could not debate that which the Pope submits to it. The Pope can, therefore, retire this or that question which is on the agenda for the day.” (“Canoniquement, le concile ne peut débattre que de ce que le Pape lui soumet. Le Pape peut donc retirer telle ou telle question de l’ordre du jour.”) Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 430.

²³⁷ Ibid., 238.

²³⁸ Ibid., 256. On October 7, the Melkite (Byzantine rite Catholic) Patriarch of Antioch, Maximus IV Sayegh, an invited observer to the Council Sessions, had advised Congar of his intent to intervene on behalf of the “Oriental Practice”, which had both celibate and non-celebrate priests. Congar had doubts about the Patriarch’s proposal and its propriety and passed along a warning to French Bishop Ancel (1898-1984). Ibid., 425. Evidently the matter went no further.

argument, it should be made clear that Congar always distinguished between the ministerial relationship of the special and unique ministry of “*priests*, on one side, and *the people of God*, on the other. . . .”²³⁹ In other words, while he would criticize the unnecessary man-made “structures” of the Church, Congar was always keenly aware that the ordained priesthood was absolutely necessary.

b. *Congar’s contribution to Presbyterorum Ordinis*. Congar did substantial work on the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests.²⁴⁰ In fact, he would prove to be its principal redactor. For months before the start of the Fourth Session Congar was immersed in the schema *De presbyteris*.²⁴¹ His succinct journal entry reads:

De Presbyteris: it’s a redaction three quarters by Lécuyer–Onclin–Congar. I redid the Preface and nos. 2-3; did the first redaction of nos. 4-6; have revised nos. 7-9, 12-14; and in the Conclusion [and Exhortation] of which I have drafted the second paragraph.²⁴²

The Preface to *De presbyteris*, which Congar rewrote, defines priests with a unique and ecumenical mission: “Priests by sacred ordination and mission which they receive from the bishops are promoted to the service of Christ the Teacher, Priest and King.”²⁴³ They share in Christ’s ministry whereby the Church is built up into the three-fold People of God, the body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. *Presbyterorum*

²³⁹ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 459.

²⁴⁰ For a complete history of *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Komonchak principally refers to J Lécuyer, “History of the Decree,” in *Commentary*, 4: 183-209.

²⁴¹ Congar’s *Journal* entry for Wednesday March 24, 1965 reads: “Work on *De presbyteris* morning . . . and evening. During the [Session] interval I am preparing text which has been corrected in numerous drafts by me and a text on mission and presence in the world.” (“Travail *De presbyteris* matin . . . et soir. Dans l’intervalle, je prépare le texte corrigé des nombreux rédigés par moi et une text sur mission et présence au monde.”) In subsequent notes for the following Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Congar details more work on the schema, closing on Saturday morning with the comment that his work on *De presbyteris* was finished. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 348-9.

²⁴² Ibid., 511: (My translation of “c’est un redaction aux trois quarts Lécuyer –Onclin–Congar. Ai refait le *proemium*, les nos 2-3, ai fait le première redaction des nos 4-6; ai fait la révision des nos 7-9, 12-14, et celle de la conclusion dont j’ai rédigé le second alinéa.”). Ibid., 254.

²⁴³ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 246.

Ordinis numbers 2 and 3 comprise Chapter I, “The Priesthood in the Ministry of the Church.” While Congar’s focus in the Chapter is on the ordained priesthood, in article number 2 he makes room for his ecumenical message that “*all* the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood” and the Pauline message that “there is *no* member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole body” (emphasis added). In *Presbyterorum Ordinis* number 3, Congar emphasizes that while priests are not conformed to the world they must live in it – “they are not to be separated from the people of God,” for “they cannot be of service to men if they remain strangers to the life and conditions of men.” This is a message against a juridical Church bound in clericalism and distanced from the faithful. Together, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* numbers 4-6 and 7-9 make up the whole of Sections I (Priests’ Functions) and II (Priests’ Relationships with Others), which in turn constitutes the bulk of Chapter II, “The Ministry of Priests.” Numbers 12 through 14 make up the entirety of Section I (The Vocation of Priests to the Life of Perfection) of Chapter III, “The Life of Priests.” Congar worked on them all.

At the end of September 1965, an informal working group for *De Presbyteris* was gathered consisting of French, Canadian and Argentinian bishops and a small group of experts, again including Congar.²⁴⁴ Although the group was not together long, some of its ideas were retained – including the understanding of the priest as a minister of Christ centered on the Pauline teaching of Romans 15:16, as well as the need for the holiness of the priest – thus the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life.²⁴⁵ Added to these were the

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 238.

²⁴⁵ Romans 15:16: to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in performing the priestly service of the Gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the holy Spirit.

complimentary missionary vectors of the priest's vocation.²⁴⁶ The Council debate on *Presbyterorum Ordinis* ended on October 26, 1965. That same day Congar met with non-Catholic Council observers and explained this schema to them, engaging in what they characterized as a “stimulating and marvelous debate.”²⁴⁷ On December 7, 1965, the day before Vatican II closed, *Presbyterian Ordinis* and *Gaudium et Spes* were approved by the Council.

10. *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope, 12/7/65) was the only document composed entirely during Vatican II.²⁴⁸ Known initially as “schema XIII,” it was the final document to be considered and adopted – the Council’s last words to the world.²⁴⁹ It presented a two-part plan examining the Church in its inner life and in its relation to the world. A speech by Paul VI at the United Nations in October 1965 had embraced a world-wide mandate for Vatican II.²⁵⁰ Paul VI made manifest what John XXIII had outlined two months before his death in his April 11, 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* - the establishment of universal peace in truth, justice, charity and liberty.

Together with *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* stands as one of the two pillars of the Church, embodying many of the great monuments of the Second Vatican Council.²⁵¹ If *Lumen Gentium* is doctrinal and internally directed, *Gaudium et Spes* is primarily pastoral and externally directed. Thus, the Dogmatic Constitution on the

²⁴⁶ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 238, 245.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 245.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 113.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 472.

²⁵⁰ Paul Sextus’ speech itself was an ecumenical event which the Council fathers thought significant enough to be made part of the acts of the Council. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, 391.

²⁵¹ Hahnenberg, *Documents of Vatican II*, 56.

Church explains the nature of the Church, *inter se*, while the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World explains its mission, *extra se*, to the world – what Congar long before had categorized as the “face” which the Church presented to the world.

It was hoped by many that *Gaudium et Spes* would herald and establish change from what had been a withdrawn and defensive Church to a Church which moved out into the world and engaged it in a true dialogue.²⁵² This represented a paradigm shift, a radical self–metamorphosis of the face of the Church: a Church not of the world, but in it and responsible for its salvation. By its opening words in *Gaudium et Spes* the Church determined to address and identify with the world’s problems with generosity and *caritas*:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

a. *Reflections on Ecclesiam Suam*. As much as *Pacem in Terris*, Paul VI’s Encyclical Letter to the Church fathers, *Ecclesiam Suam* (I Am the Church/Paths of the Church), was a prelude to *Gaudium et Spes*. Published on August 6, 1964, it focused attention on the “dialogue between the Church and the modern world”, candidly admitting that “the actual image of the Church is never as perfect, never as lovely, as holy or as brilliant as that formative idea would wish it to be.”²⁵³ Certain excerpts from *Ecclesiam Suam* contain specific guidance to the Council fathers regarding renewal, reform and engaging with the world for the upcoming Third Session. However, the most compelling reason for inclusion here is that the language is so strikingly close to

²⁵² Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 78. Expectations were high and *Gaudium et Spes* was definitively described as the “masterpiece” of Vatican II. Ibid. *Gaudium et Spes* 4 described itself as being “involved in a new stage of history.”

²⁵³ *Ecclesiam Suam* 14 and 10.

Congar's oft-expressed notions that were it not for Pope VI's signature it could have been written by Yves Congar.²⁵⁴

The atmosphere at the Second Vatican Council had much changed from the first hopeful yet contentious days of an as yet undefined *aggiornamento*. When the Council opened on October 11, 1962, the Curia had both the power and the intent to expropriate the agenda of what it saw as an unnecessary - and what it intended to be, a very short Council. Although the Curia never relented, less than two years later, on August 6, 1964, Pope Paul VI, who was initially more favorably disposed toward the agenda of the Holy Office, himself was encouraging and urging the Church fathers forward to renewal and reform and engagement with the world.

b. *Congar's contribution to Gaudium et Spes*. The first four pastoral Chapters concerned "the teaching on the human person, on the world in which the human lives, and on the Church's responsibilities to these realities."²⁵⁵ One would expect that this is a document on which Congar would have worked and that is the case, for in a terse *Journal* entry he tells us that he worked on Chapters I (The Dignity of the Human Person) and IV

²⁵⁴ 3. Consequently, we propose to ourselves in this encyclical the task of showing more clearly to all men the Church's importance for the salvation of mankind, and her heartfelt desire that *the Church and mankind should meet each other and should come to know and love each other*.

11. Hence there arises the unselfish and almost impatient need for *renewal, for correction of the defects which this conscience denounces and rejects*, as if, standing before a mirror, we were to examine interiorly the Image of Christ which He has left us.

To find the contemporary duty, so clearly incumbent upon the Church, of correcting the defects of its own members and to leading them to greater perfection; *to find a way to achieve wisely so sweeping a renovation*, this is the second thought which burdens our heart and which we would like to reveal to you in order not only *to find greater courage to undertake the necessary reforms, but also to secure from your collaboration both advice and support in so delicate and difficult an undertaking*.

12. Our third thought, certainly shared by you, follows from the first two and concerns the *relationships which the Church of today should establish with the world* which surrounds it and in which it lives and labors (emphasis added).

²⁵⁵ Alberigo, *Brief History of Vatican II*, 113.

(The Role of the Church in the Modern World).²⁵⁶ Council debate on *Gaudium et Spes* started in mid-September, 1965. On September 23, Archbishop Garrone presented the highly edited text of schema XIII to the Council.²⁵⁷ This precipitated a sixteen day debate through October 8. The German Council fathers were quite critical of schema XIII, while the French, including Congar, were generally more positive.²⁵⁸ The Council conducted an extraordinary number of votes on schema XIII.²⁵⁹ Paul VI pressed for the completion of *Gaudium et Spes*, to the point of again intervening and proposing language regarding celibacy and birth control, what was being referred to as “marital chastity”.²⁶⁰

The editorial work flowed from nine separate subcommissions to the central subcommission and thence to the editorial committee under Archbishop Garrone. On two separate occasions, November 19 and again on November 22, 1965, the work of the subcommission on the human person, of which Yves Congar and Jean Daniélou were members, was approved in this process and the proposed texts were put before the Council.²⁶¹ Even as the subcommission was turning in its redactions on schema XIII, however, Congar again voiced his fear that that at the end of the process the editorial Commission was paying too little attention to the work of the subcommissions.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511: “Schema XIII: I worked there: Chap I, IV.” (Schema XIII: y ai travaillé: Chap I, IV.)

²⁵⁷ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 386.

²⁵⁸ Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 396.

²⁵⁹ Between November 15 and 17, alone, thirty-three separate votes were taken on schema XIII. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 364. Hahnenberg writes that no other Vatican II document entailed so many far-reaching changes as schema XIII. *Documents of Vatican II*, 58.

²⁶⁰ Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol. 5, 233, 375.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

²⁶² Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 467-68.

By now it should be clear that as Congar plainly expressed, the work of the experts was often a thankless, exasperating and futile task.²⁶³ But the path of great men and women of the Church is often a rock-strewn one. Père Yves Congar lived his life in faithful service of the Truth of Christ. Now it is time to return him, in gratitude, to his resting place among the great theologians of the twentieth century.

²⁶³ “We are exhausted with preparing interventions [revisions] for the bishops; the latter have agreed to present them, but in the end they do not give them; as a result we have no basis in the commission for introducing this or that idea. We can introduce it only if at least one father requests it. We work therefore through one father, we spend time composing a text for him It is discouraging at times, how much work has been for naught. I am thinking also of the two texts on the Church in the World, the one composed at Rome in 1963, and the one produced at Malines in September of the same year. And so many others! I could have written three books in the time I have given to those works that fell into the abyss of nothingness.” Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, vol.5, 377, translating and citing Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 460.

EPILOGUE

At the start of this Chapter, it was proposed that Yves Congar had written part of, participated in and influenced all four Constitutions, three of the nine Decrees and two of the three Declarations of Vatican II. I submit that this has now been substantiated. Initially appointed to one, Congar said that he worked as *peritus* on four or five subcommittees. In this Chapter it has been documented that he worked on the Message to the World and nine major Vatican II documents. He was appointed to the Pontifical Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission and the Preparatory Theological Commission. Yet he participated in the work of no less than five Commission subcommittees.¹ We need no longer rely on superlative descriptions of Congar by third parties: we have inspected and discussed - sometimes with perhaps too much detail, Congar's labors at Vatican II. But here it was perhaps better to prove too much than too little. I submit that Yves Congar may indeed be aptly called "the" theologian of the Second Vatican Council.

But more importantly, and central to the theme of this dissertation, Yves Congar's *nouvelle théologie* potentiated the actualization of a Church truly committed to

¹ In sum, in 1960 Congar was appointed Theological Consultant to the Pre-Preparatory Theological Commission. In 1962 he was appointed by John XXIII as *peritus* to the subcommission of the Preparatory Theological Commission. In the end he was lead *peritus* to this subcommission. Congar wrote part of the Council's 1962 *Message to the World Nuntius ad omnes homines et nationes*. He wrote part of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, and thus was a presumptive member of the preparatory subcommission for Sacred Liturgy. He wrote substantial parts of Chapters I and II of *Lumen Gentium*, contributed to *Unitatis Redintegratio* and wrote the Introduction and Conclusion to *Nostra Aetate*. Congar and Karl Rahner did such a huge amount of work on the Introduction and Chapters I and II of *Dei Verbum* that their health suffered. Congar wrote Chapter I to *Ad Gentes* with input by Ratzinger. As a member the subcommission for *Dignitatis Humanae* together with John Courtney Murray, he played a significant role in its drafting. Again the health of both suffered, Father Murray having to retire as a consequence. As for *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Père Congar with several others redacted the Preface, Chapters I, II and II and the Conclusion. Finally, Congar tells us that as a member of the subcommission on the human person he worked on Chapters I and IV of *Gaudium et Spes*.

ecumenism and unity, *ressourcement* and reform. He was a prominent member of the class of great theologians of the twentieth century. His impact upon Vatican II and his concomitant influence on the ecclesiology of the Church he loved was nothing less than substantial. His life was iconic of the twentieth century, sharing its triumphs and tragedies. Ecumenist, reformer and scriptural scholar, Yves Congar became a prince of the Church which had first marked and marginalized him. He was always steadfast in his devotion and obedience to his Church. In his incisive, crisp theology he helped change the face of the Church to the world. Cardinal Congar – there is one like him a century.

CONCLUSIONS

Two base questions must be addressed here. First, what have we learned in this dissertation about the ecclesiology of Yves Congar? Second, has what we have learned made a contribution to the sum of theological knowledge? In many ways, this is the most important part of this work, for it encapsulates and constitutes the sum of the previous chapters - a précis of what precedes it which postulates a judgment on the dissertation it concludes. My approach is not to engage in a chronological review, but to set forth and summarize the major conclusions which I have drawn from what I consider to be the central topics of the dissertation.

1. The Foundation of the Ecumenism of Yves Congar.

a. *Yves Congar, a Child of War.* Chapter One posits that Yves Congar's ecumenical vocation was born from the wreckage of the First World War.¹ This first Chapter makes a unique and positive contribution for several reasons. The source for the multiple quotes and references in Chapter One, Section D, was the young Congar's *Journal de la Guerre* which he maintained during the First World War.² The record by a young Congar of his World War I experiences sets forth a seminal and formative period, for the War affected him and would continue to do so for the rest of his life. This point was either not made or not pressed home in the other works about Congar which I reviewed. They either omitted the period altogether or covered it sparsely.

¹ Jean Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité: Jean Puyo interroge le Père Congar* (Paris: Centurion, 1975), 14; Bernard Lauret, ed., *Fifty years of Catholic Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 23-5; Cf. Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Yves Congar* (Wilton, CN: Morehouse Barlow, 1989), 2.
² Stephanie Audoin-Rouzeau and Dominique Congar, ed. *L'Enfant Yves Congar, Journal de la Guerre 1914-1918* (Paris: Cerf, 1997).

b. *The Child is Father of the Man*. As a consequence, young Congar's *Journal de la Guerre* makes an important contribution to understanding both the theologian he would become and the substance of his ecclesiology. The translations are mine, for the 1997 French publication of *Journal de la Guerre* has not been translated into English. Thus, portions of a significant part of Congar's early life which heretofore have been overlooked are now unlocked and translated, resulting in a contribution to future theological studies of Yves Congar.

2. French Church-State Relations, Modernism and The Nouvelle Theology.

a. *The Rocky Trail of Church-State Relations in France*. As early as the fifth century A.D., France had a series of distinct relationships with the Church. From that time to the present, French Church-State relations were variously precarious, intimate, calamitous, indifferent and finally, essentially non-existent. It would not be unfair to conclude that the Church was more often victim than the Church militant and triumphant in these relationships. It is important to understand this history for the its absence cannot but lead to a lack of appreciation of the times in which Père Yves Congar and the Church he loved were immersed, thereby risking a misjudgment of both.

3. Ecumenism and Unity, Ressourcement and Reform.

a. *The Church of Vatican I and the Ecumenical Priest*. Until Vatican II, the Catholic Church of the twentieth century was the Church of Vatican I: hierarchical, inwardly turned and defensive - the "perfect society" grounded in clericalism, deductive methodology and neo-scholasticism and cautious of what it deemed to be false reform, "irenical" ecumenism, and above all a resurgence of Modernism. Rome agreed with its Curia and Garrigou-Lagrange that this New Theology would lead back to Modernism.

All this is quite understandable – but quite wrong. Yves Congar was not a Catholic seeking reform but a reformer who happened to be Catholic – and indelibly so. He sought to change the face of the Church - a stern face which he concluded was the reason for increasing unbelief. Congar never suggested that the Church hierarchy be dismantled, but rather reformed to better serve the body of the faithful. This is Congar’s “total ecclesiology”, an ecclesiology at the service of the Truth of Christ - and for Congar to be a Christian is to belong to this *ressourcement* community of renewed ecclesiology.

b. *Unity in the form of ecumenism.* Chapter Three presents unity in the form of ecumenism as an integral part of Congar’s ecclesiology of the Church. Congar’s notion of *ressourcement* saw unity through ecumenism, and renewal and reform of the man-made “structures” which inhibited and opposed all this. In his early years Père Congar was indirectly criticized by the Vatican for his ecumenical activities. Soon thereafter he was sanctioned by the Dominican Master General for his “irenic ecumenism,” very possibly to preempt further action by Rome. Continuing up to Vatican II, Rome continued its tepid attitude of distance and skepticism towards such irenic ecumenism. At Vatican II, Yves Congar was vindicated, for in its November 21, 1964 Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Second Vatican Council announced that restoration of unity among all Christians as one of its principal concerns.³ The pronouncement of Christ’s prayer in John 17 for unity and oneness is the key to Congar’s ecclesiology and its significance cannot be overstated.

c. “*Principles of Catholic ecumenism*”. What I did next was to systematize Congar’s four “Principles of Catholic ecumenism” set forth in his 1937 work, *Chrétien*

³ *Unitatis Redintegratio* 1, Decree on Ecumenism (November 21, 1964). Since Congar’s “hierarchy of truths” was ecumenically referenced in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, it too had an ecumenical dimension.

désunis.⁴ As far as can be ascertained, this had not been done before. Congar's First Ecumenical Principle is the mandate for reconciliation of separated or what he then referred to as "dissident" Christians. Christ's ecumenical prayer in John 17, again, the biblical foundation for Congar's ecumenism, must be carried out by man and in this fundamental sense God and man are inseparable. Congar's Second Ecumenical Principle returns to God as the final cause of unity. The Third Ecumenical Principle is the Oneness of the Church (Congar's "Catholicity") as a society of human beings incorporated together in the mystical Body of Christ through Christ's passion and resurrection and the sacraments, particularly baptism. Congar's Fourth Ecumenical Principle portrays ecumenism as a component of evangelization: it is the Catholicity of the Church - its Oneness, which makes it the destination of ecumenism for non-Catholics.⁵

But Congar holds that "Catholicity", the incorporation of the many into one, has no need of ecumenism, which he defines as the search for common ground among the diverse. Problematically, in *Chrétiens désunis* Congar makes no mention of the teachings of Christ which are held in common with non-Catholics as a basis for union. We should remember, however, that *Chrétiens désunis* was written in 1937 as an apologetic for the Catholic Church in Congar's quest for unity. During his P.O.W. imprisonment of World War II and thereafter Congar would stress unity in the form of ecumenism as part of his ecclesiology of the Church. I propose that this helped him appreciate "glimmers of unity in diversity", a layered understanding of Christian ecumenical unity – a unity of all in the Truth of Christ.⁶ This was Congar's Fifth Ecumenical Principal. All of this is a fresh

⁴ Cf. Yves Congar, *Chrétiens désunis, Principes d'un œcumensime catholique*, Unam Sanctam 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1937), 2.

⁵ Cf. Congar, *Chrétiens désunis*, 100.

⁶ Yves Congar, "Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P.," *Theological Digest* 32 no. 3: 213.

exposition of Père Congar's ecumenism and contributes to a deeper understanding of Congar and his lifelong quest for unity.

4. The Church and the Curia. Congar proclaimed a Church of participation, not power. We learned that he sought reform in the Church so as bring the laity and hierarchy together, each with distinct roles in the body of Christ. The Vatican Curia is also brought into the equation, for it frowned on Congar's ecumenical publications as it had his ecumenical activities.⁷ I argue that the Church, and here by this I mean the Roman Curia, found these works particularly offensive for describing faults within the "perfect society" of the Church of Vatican I. Congar syllogistically reasoned that the Church was made up of men, man was sinful and, therefore, the Church sinned. Congar here repeatedly points to the negative juridical-hierarchical public face of the Church as the principal reason for unbelief. I submit that as direct and proximate consequence of his admittedly strong criticism of the Church, Father Congar was exiled from France and placed under surveillance and control from February, 1954 through December, 1955; further, he was prohibited from writing or publishing anything which had not been first presented to Rome for approval. I believe I am the first to publish this conclusion, for while Congar's two year absence from France may be gingerly mentioned in passing without comment, I have not found the incident characterized in this manner anywhere else.⁸

I submit that Congar's "exile" is of consequence for two reasons: first, it made sense from the Vatican point of view as a control measure for what it saw as an

⁷ These would include Yves Congar, "Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l'incroyance," *La Vie intellectuelle* 37 (1935); Congar's 1937 *Chrétiens désunis*; and his 1950 *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, Unam Sanctam 20 (Paris: Cerf, 1950).

⁸ M.-D. Chenu, Henri de Lubac, Henry Fêret and others were also "distanced" from their situations by Rome, but none under such severe conditions as Congar.

unpredictable and unrestrainable priest. Second, it puts this punitive action by the Church into perspective: Congar was sanctioned and exiled essentially for recognizing and making public faults that the Church would later correct by its metamorphosis from the Church of Vatican I to the Church of Vatican II.

The Second Vatican Council was to radically reform and open up the Church. There the Catholic Church moved away from the defensive, inwardly focused Church of Vatican I which still lingered from the Post-Reformation period - a wary and cautious Church which was most fearful of a resurgence of Modernism. At Vatican II it no longer saw itself as the “perfect society” but identified with the pilgrim people of God moving through time and history - the Church founded by Christ, not of the world, but historically immersed in it. Significantly, at Vatican II the Church also essentially abandoned the deductive methodology of neo-scholasticism for the bottom-up and more inclusive inductive methodology. By this, the Church opened itself up to reasonable change and reform. In sum, at Vatican II the Church acknowledged its historical condition and its bond with a historically situated humanity.

5. Congar’s Participation at Vatican II. Vatican II was the great and defining event of the twentieth century for the Church. It is a bright line still. Congar played such an important role that he has become known as *the* theologian of Vatican II.⁹ However, there was a loose end here: an uncertainty regarding specifically which documents *peritus* Congar actually worked on. Unfortunately, he had given inconsistent statements in two interviews conducted some years after the Council. There seemed to be no definitive published record extant – and there was no practical access to Vatican records of which expert worked on which Vatican II document - if such records still existed.

⁹ American theologian Cardinal Avery Dulles described Vatican II as “Congar’s Council.”

My task was to identify and retrieve available information on this rather long-standing logjam. If Congar was indeed “the” theologian of Vatican II, then there should be supporting documentation of his work somewhere. The first place I turned was to the source, Yves Marie Joseph Congar. He had written a two-volume journal and a (smaller, yet) four-volume journal of his Council activities as well as a book about Vatican II.¹⁰ Other important resources were the two books on Vatican II written by its historian, Giuseppe Alberigo.¹¹ Additionally, were the two interviews Congar gave to Jean Puyo and Bernard Laurent in 1975 and 1988, respectively, wherein together he identified nine Vatican documents on which he had worked.¹²

In reading Congar’s faithful daily accounts in *Mon Journal du Concile*, it was not uncommon to learn that he had the lead or even the sole role in editing an entire chapter - the first chapter of *Ad Gentes*, for example, or in redacting a number of sections within a chapter. The prime source for this detailed and qua-forensic work was Congar’s two volume *Mon Journal du Concile*, which contained a wealth of information. Near the end of volume II of *Mon Journal*, Congar gives a very terse synopsis of the Council documents on which he worked and what he did.¹³ By using the activity dates for the various Vatican II documents set forth in Alberigo’s *History of Vatican II* and his *Brief History of Vatican II*, I was able to go back to the chronological entries of Congar’s *Journal* and read in Congar’s own words what work he did on which document on those

¹⁰ Yves M.-J. Congar, *Vatican II: le Concile au Jour le Jour*, 4 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1963); Yves Congar, *Mon Journal du Concile*, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 2002); and Yves Congar, *Le Concile de Vatican II: son Église, Peuple de Dieu et Corps du Christ*, *Théologie Historique* 71 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1984). None of these works have been translated into English.

¹¹ Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, ed. *History of Vatican II*, 5 vols. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995 and Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, trans. Matthew Sherry (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 3d printing, 2009).

¹² Puyo, *Une vie pour la vérité*, 14; Laurent, *Fifty years of Catholic Theology*, 23-5.

¹³ Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 511.

days. Another important discovery came from the 1988 Lauret interview wherein Congar revealed that he had worked on “four or five” Commissions.¹⁴ In 1995, Congar stated that he was “recognized as an expert on *five* Preparatory Commissions.”¹⁵ In Chapter Four, I confirmed that he worked as *peritus* on no less than five Council subcommittees/subcommissions.

Over time, I compiled data from Congar’s *Journal* which concretely established that in addition to the Council fathers’ *Message to the World*, Congar had worked on nine of the sixteen major documents of Vatican II: he had written part of, participated in and influenced all four Constitutions, three of the nine Decrees and both Declarations.¹⁶ Moreover, I could now extract and detail much of the work Congar did on these documents. I found nothing during my research to indicate that this had ever been done before - certainly there was no reference to such in the number of published works on

¹⁴ Lauret, *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology*, 6. Congar identified the *ten Council Commissions* as follows: Commission doctrinale, Commission des évêques et du gouvernement du diocèses, Commission des Églises orientales, Commission de la discipline des sacrements, Commission de la discipline du clergé et du peuple chrétien, Commission des religieux, Commission des missions, Commission du liturgie, Commission des séminaires, des études et de l’éducation catholique and Commission pour l’apostolat des laïcs. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 583-84.

¹⁵ Franco Prcela, O.P., “Pioneer of Church Renewal: Yves Congar (1904-1995),” trans, Thomas O’Meara, *Wort und Antwort* 36:3 (1995), n.p., cited by Paul Philibert, O.P. in Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, trans. Paul Philibert (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), xii. Congar identified the *six Preparatory Commissions* as Commission central préparatoire, Commission théologique préparatoire, Commission préparatoire pour les Églises orientales, Commission préparatoire de la discipline des sacrements, Commission préparatoire pour les missions and Commission préparatoire de la liturgie. Congar, *Mon Journal II*, 583. This statement by Congar that he “was recognized as an expert on five Preparatory Commissions” is either an error or a misstatement. The six Preparatory Commissions were in session prior to the convening of the Council. Congar was, in fact, appointed as a Theological Consultant to one of the Preparatory Commissions, the very influential Theological Preparatory Commission (Commission théologique préparatoire). Here, however, Congar is almost certainly referring to the ten Council Commissions of which it turns out that he worked with or was a member of at least five subcommittees.

¹⁶ As Chapter Four makes clear, Congar also dealt with the schema *Votum* [promise to God] *De matrimonii sacramento*.

Congar which I reviewed. I believe that this presents a significant contribution to the study of Congar. We might also recall that with one exception (Volume I) in Alberigo's extensive *History of Vatican II*, other than John XXIII and Paul VI, no one was referenced more than Yves Congar. The conclusion I draw from all this is that Yves Congar might indeed be aptly called "the" theologian of the Second Vatican Council. I also submit that the multiple translations from French to English of Congar's comments in *Mon Journal du Concile* and other documents adds to the base of theological knowledge.

6. Vatican II and the Curia. Chapter Four states that there was not much initial enthusiasm within the Roman Curia for the proposed Second Ecumenical Council, the Council of *aggiornamento*. The Curia saw no reason for change. Had not Vatican I accomplished everything? Was not the Church the "perfect society"? Thus, it saw no need for an ecumenical council - and if there was to be one, then the Curia maintained that it should be of limited scope and short duration.

a. *A major change of direction for the Church*. The Vatican II agenda of reform and renewal of Pope John XXIII presented a major change of direction for the Church. When it became clear that Vatican II was truly going to occur, with the innocent acquiescence of Pope John XXIII, the Curia positioned itself to create the agenda for the six Pre-Preparatory Commissions and to control the ten Preparatory Commissions. The Curia grip on the Council would be removed only by the persistence and creativity of a majority of the Council fathers in changing the membership of the ten Commissions to substitute their own members for the one hundred and sixty Curial nominees.

b. *Congar helped change the face of the Church to the world.* Yves Congar had been appointed by John XXIII to the preparatory subcommission of the Theological Preparatory Commission of the Second Vatican Council. This subcommission would prove to be one of major significance and influence. Nonetheless, the Curia was an ever-present conservative rallying force at Vatican II. Together with its Italian, Irish and Spanish Council father allies, the Curia opposed each of the nine documents on which Congar worked as *peritus* for reason that they deemed any change in the Church to be unnecessary and unwarranted. Yves Congar worked extensively on the various schemas, sometimes to the breaking point and literal exhaustion. Giuseppe Alberigo's *History of Vatican II* goes into this in detail and I presented some of it so as to realistically represent the tensions and dynamics at the Council.

In the beginning, nothing was certain. Even in the last days of the Council, there was still some uncertainty as to which documents which had queued up would be promulgated: *Dignitatis Humanae*, *Ad Gentes*, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* and *Gaudium et Spes* were not approved until December 7, 1965, the last day of the Fourth and final Session of Vatican II. My experience has been that these matters had been generally presented only in the most summary form elsewhere. I submit that the details, facts and circumstances of the broad spectrum of Congar's work as an expert at Vatican II have added another dimension to Church history and Congar's contribution to Vatican II.

7. *The nouvelle théologie: ressourcement and reform.*

a. *The nouvelle théologie.* Congar's *nouvelle théologie* and his *ressourcement* are intertwined: the two terms are nearly interchangeable. Both have been called a "movement," yet, neither had a unified theological platform, an itemized program, or a

formal organization. The same principal theologians are identified in each: Dominicans Yves Congar; his mentor, Marie-Dominique Chenu; Henri-Marie Fêret; and Jesuits Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou, and the former Jesuit Hans Urs von Balthasar. Congar, de Lubac and von Balthasar all disclaimed the existence of the *nouvelle théologie*: de Lubac declared it a myth and Congar compared it to the *tarasque*, an imaginary monster, yet whose traces can be found everywhere. Certainly Rome thought it existed: it was criticized in the 1940s by Pope Pius XII and the Curia, and as I pointed out, by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange - a very respected and influential Dominican in Rome.

In his *nouvelle théologie* Congar sought a renewal of Catholic ecclesiology by a return to base theological sources, or *ressourcement*. This *nouvelle théologie* framed and defined the change in the twentieth century of what was essentially the defensive and withdrawn Church of Vatican I to the vibrant and receptive Church of Vatican II.

In 1947 Père Garrigou-Lagrange, a Vatican “insider” who had directed Karol Józef Wojtyła’s dissertation and who had held the Thomas Aquinas chair at the Angelicum in Rome for a number of years, leveled a very serious charge against the *nouvelle théologie*: it would inevitably lead to Modernism. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church had strongly opposed Modernism as a radical subversion of Catholic Tradition and faith which sought to marginalize the divinity of Christ, subordinate the institution of the Church to the social norms of the times and relativize the deposit of faith. As a consequence, Church concerns about a resurgence of Modernism, or the “Modernist crisis,” continued into the fourth, fifth and even sixth decades of the twentieth century.

Although Congar was not named by Garrigou-Lagrange, he was so identified with the *nouvelle théologie* that the gravity of the charge against it certainly fell to some degree on him. For this reason, in Chapter Two I examined Modernism in detail as a diptych against Congar's *nouvelle théologie* to determine if there was any basis for Garrigou-Lagrange's charges. They proved to be baseless: Congar's *nouvelle théologie* stood for none of the objectionable tenets of Modernism. My argument against Père Garrigou-Lagrange proposes to rebut these charges point by point. No one it seems had used this approach. It is submitted that this makes a contribution in the sense of preemptively defusing any residual criticism of Congar that might subsequently arise based upon Garrigou-Lagrange's claims.

b. *Ressourcement and Reform*. Congar was a Catholic seeking reform in the Church, not a reformer who happened to be Catholic. Congar himself associated and identified his mission with *ressourcement*. His principles for reform as distinguished from his principles for ecumenism are set forth in his 1950 work, *True and False Reform in the Church*. There is a discernible concern for religious reform latent in Congar's ecclesiology. Congar believed that the Church has always been active in reforming itself and in fact its history is a veritable rhythm of reform - in its great councils, in the teaching of the Church Fathers and in changes to the liturgy. For Congar, reform is any movement within the Church which seeks to advance a legitimate position through *ressourcement* – a fresh scrutiny on the “sources and vital principles of the life of the Church.”¹⁷ From the start, Congar's ecclesiological and liturgical reform was in close communication with and parallel to the *ressourcement* movement - a return to the

¹⁷ The quoted language is taken from Congar's article, “Vraie et Fausse Réform dans l'Église,” trans. Launcelot C. Sheppard, *Cross Currents* 3 no. 4 (Summer 1953): 358.

sources: to the Bible, the writings of the Church Fathers, the Early Church liturgy and the magisterium of the Church.

8. Truth and the Ecclesiology of Yves Congar. Congar was a Thomist and as such a seeker of truth. In the end, the defining construct of Yves Congar is neither unity nor ecumenism, nor reform nor *ressourcement*, but the Truth of Christ which embraces them all. This is the essence of the ecclesiology of Yves Congar.

What can we learn from Yves Congar? The eight categories of conclusions herein encapsulate the salient points of his ecclesiology. We know that Congar held that the negative face of the Church bequeathed by Vatican I to the first six decades of the twentieth century was the lynchpin of unbelief. The whole Church can and has learned from this: its response was Vatican II. We learned that we could change the face of the Church and Yves Congar's *nouvelle théologie*, his ecclesiology of *ressourcement* and reform, helped lead the way. The closed, defensive Church of Vatican I has become the open and receptive Church of Vatican II. Again, Congar played such a prominent role in this he can truly be called *the* theologian of Vatican II. From Congar's dedication to the truth we can also learn to persist and prevail against that which is wrong or false. In fact, Congar states that it is our duty to do so. My final point is that Congar's teaching on ecumenism, the Church of participation, not power - Congar's participation in Vatican II and his efforts to change the face of the Church - what is called his *nouvelle théologie*, and his love of truth all relate and can be distilled into his deep concern for the restoration of unity, the prayer of Christ in John 17.

In closing, I recall Congar's heartfelt and moving prayer to God which he wrote long ago, found after his death by his Dominican confrères in Congar's little box of personal treasures at le Saulchoir:

My God! I am only a wretched child (*adolescentulus et contemptus*); but you can dilate and enlarge my heart in proportion to the immense needs of the world. You know these needs better than I could say; my God, give us many labourers with great hearts. *Metemus non deficientes. Dum tempus habemus bonum ad omnes.* ("We shall reap if we persist. While we have the time, let us work for the good of all.")

Bibliography

- Abbott, Walter M. *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966.
- Adam, Karl. *The Spirit of Catholicism*. New York: MacMillan, 1936. Originally published in German as *Das Wesen des Katholizismus*. Düsseldorf: n.p., 1924.
- Albergio, Giuseppe, ed. and Joseph A. Komonchak, ed. English version. *History of Vatican II*, 5 Vols. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995-2006.
- _____. *A Brief History of Vatican II*, Translated by Matthew Sherry. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.
- _____. *Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas*, 1st American ed. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Vol. 2. New York: Benziger Bros., 1947.
- Anderson, Gerald H. *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- Archives départementales. *Les Ardennes Durant la Grande Guerre 1914-1918*. Charlesville –Mézières, 1994.
- Ashton, John, ed. *The Interpretation of John*, 2d ed. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997.
- Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphanie and Dominique Congar, ed. *L'Enfant Yves Congar, Journal de la Guerre 1914-1918*. Paris: Cerf, 1997.
- Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *Razing the Bastions: On the Church in This Age*. Translated by Brian McNeil. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993. Originally published in German as *Schleifung der Bastionen: von der Kirche in dieser Zeit*. Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1952.
- Barclay, George Esq., L.L.B. "Review of Legislation. 3. France." *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, New Series* 4, no.2 (1902): 185-87.
- Beales, Derek Edward Dawson. *Prosperity and Plunder: Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Beillevert, Paul. *Laberthonnière: l'homme et l'œuvre*. Paris: Beauschene, 1972.
- Benoit, Pierre. "Préexistence et Incarnation." *Revue biblique* 77 (1970): 5-29. Reprint. *Exégèse et Théologie* IV (1982): 11-61.

- Bernardi, Peter J. "A Passion for Unity: Yves Congar's service to the church." *America* Vol. 192, No. 12 (2005): 8-11.
- Blanchette, Olivia. *Maurice Blondel: A Philosophical Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2010.
- Blondel, Maurice. *L'Action*. Vol. 2, Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine. Paris: Alcan, 1936-37.
- _____. *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*. Translated by Alexander Dru and Illyd Trethowan. London: Harvill Press, 1964.
- Boersma, Hans. *Nouvelle théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Bonino, Thomas, O.P., ed. *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*. Translated by Robert Williams and revised by Matthew Levering. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009.
- Bouillard, Henri, S.J. *Conversion et grâce chez Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Théologie 1*. Paris: Aubier, 1944.
- _____. *The Logic of the Faith*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967. Originally published as *Logique de la foi; esquisses, dialogues avec la pensée protestante, approches philosophique*. Théologie 60. Paris: Aubier, 1964.
- Boyle, Leonard E. O.P., "A Remembrance of Pope Leo XIII: the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*." In *One Hundred Years of Thomism: Aeterni Patris and Afterwards A Symposium*, ed. Victor B. Brezik, 7-22. Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1981.
- Bremond, Henri. *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*. Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1925-29.
- _____. *Introduction à la philosophie de la prière*. Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1929.
- _____. *The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi): Introduction, Translation and Notes*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1970.
- Bugnini, Annibale. *The Commentary on the Constitution and on the Instruction on the Sacred Liturgy*. New York: Benziger Bros., 1965.
- _____. *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948-1975*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990.
- Burke-Sullivan, Eileen C. Review of *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, by Elizabeth Teresa Groppe. *Theological Studies* 66 (June 2005): 462-64.

Carlyle, Thomas. *The French Revolution : a history*, rev. ed. New York: P.F. Collier, 1900.

Caron, Pierre. *Manuel Pratique pour l'étude de la Révolution Française*, nouvelle éd. Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard et Cie, 1947.

Cassario, Romanus, O.P. *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas*. Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990.

_____. *A Short History of Thomism*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005. Originally published in Italian as *Il Thomismo e I Thomisti. Per una Storia d'Occidente. Chiese e Società*. Guy Bedouelle, ed. Milan, Italy: Jaca Book Spa, 2003.

Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. Revised in accordance with official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II. Washington, D.C.: United States Council of Catholic Bishops - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000).

_____. *Together in God's Service: Toward a Theology of Ecclesial Lay Ministry: papers from a colloquium*. Washington, D.C: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Subcommittee on Lay Ministry, Committee on the Laity, 1998.

Chadwick, Kay, ed. *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth Century France*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Chenu, Marie-Dominique, O.P. "Position de la théologie," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 24 (1935): 252-np.

_____. *une école de théologie: le Saulchoir*. Paris: Cerf, 1985. Originally published as *Une école de théologie: le Sauchoir* (Kain, Belgium: pro manuscripto, 1937).

_____. *Aquinas and His Role in Theology*. Translated by Paul Philibert, O.P. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002. Originally published in French as *St. Thomas d'Aquin et la théologie*. Paris: Éditions du Sueil, 1959.

_____. "The Church's Conciliar Life and the Sociology of Faith." *Cross Currents* 12, no.2 (Spring, 1962): 132-42. Originally published in French as "Vie conciliaire de l'Église et sociologie de la foi." *Esprit*. (Nouvelle Série) 29 (December, 1961): 678-89.

_____. "La parole de Dieu." In Vol. 1, *La foi dans l'intelligence*. Paris: Cerf, 1964: 115-138.

_____. Jacques Duquesne interroge le P. Chenu. "Un théologien en liberté. Paris: Centurion, 1975.

Note: the following works by Yves Cardinal Congar are listed chronologically by date of original publication:

Congar, Yves. "Pensée orthodoxe sur l'unité de l'Église." *La Vie intellectuelle* 29 (1934): 394-414.

_____. "Une conclusion théologique à la enquête sur les raisons actuelles de l'incroyance." *La Vie intellectuelle* 37 (1935): 214-49.

_____. "Saint Thomas serviteur de la Vérité." *La Vie spirituelle* 209 (March 1937): 259-79.

_____. *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*. Translated by M.A. Bousfield. London: Centenary Press, 1939. Originally published in French as *Chrétiens désunis. Principes d'un "œcuménisme" catholique*. Unam Sanctam 1. Paris: Cerf, 1937.

_____. "The Reason for the Unbelief of our Time: A Theological Conclusion [Part I]." *Integration* (August-September 1938): 13-21.

_____. "The Reason for the Unbelief of our Time: A Theological Conclusion [Part II]." *Integration* (December 1938-January, 1939): 10-26.

_____. *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*. Unam Sanctam 8. Paris: Cerf, 1941.

_____. *The Mystery of the Church*. Translated by A. V. Littledale. Baltimore: Helicon, 1960. Originally published in French as two separate books: *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*. Paris: Cerf, 1941, and *La Pentecôte-Chartres 1956*. Paris: Cerf, 1956.

_____. *A History of Theology*. Translated by Hunter Guthrie, S.J. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968. Originally published in French as "Théologie" in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. Vol. XV. Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1943: 341-502.

_____. *True and False Reform in the Church*. Translated by Paul Philibert, O.P. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011. Originally published in French as *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*. Unam Sanctam 20. Paris: Cerf, 1950. Published in Spanish as *Falsas y verdaderas Reformas en la Iglesia*. Madrid: Institute de Estudios Políticos, 1953. *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*, 2d rev. ed., Unam Sanctam 72 (Paris: Cerf, 1968). Published in English as *True and False Reform in the Church*. Translated by Paul Philibert. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011.

_____. "Mentalité 'de droite' et intégrisme," *La vie intellectuelle* 18, 1950: 644-66.

- _____. "Attitudes Towards Reform in the Church". Translated by Bernard Gilligan. *Cross Currents* no. 4 (Summer, 1951): 80-102.
- _____. *Le Christ, Marie et L'Église*. Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952. English translation published as *Christ, Our Lady and the Church*. Westminster: MD: Newman Press, 1957.
- _____. *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat*. Unam Sanctam 23. Paris: Cerf, 1953; 2d ed., 1954; 3d rev. ed., 1964.
- _____. "Vraie et Fausse Réforme dans l'Église". Translated by Launcelot C. Sheppard. *Cross Currents* 3, no.4 (Summer, 1953): 358-65
- _____. *Falsas y verdaderas Reformas en la Iglesia*. Madrid: Institute de Estudios Políticos, 1953.
- _____. *The Catholic Church and the Race Question*. Paris: UNESCO, 1961. Originally published as *L'Église catholique devant la question raciale*. Paris: UNESCO, 1953.
- _____. "L'Esprit-Saint dans l'Église." *Lumiere et Vie* 10 (1953): 51-73.
- _____. *La Pentecôte-Chartres 1956*. Paris: Cerf, 1956.
- _____. *Lay People in the Church*. Sussex: The Ditchling Press., 1957. Originally published in French as *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat*. Unam Sanctam 23. Paris: Cerf, 1953; 2d ed., 1954; 3d rev. ed., 1964.
- _____. *After Nine Hundred Years: The Background of the Schism Between the Eastern and Western Churches*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1959. Originally published in French as "Neuf cents ans après. Notes sur le 'Schisme Oriental' 1054-1954", as part of *1054-1954, L'Église et Les Églises*. Paris: Éditions de Chevetogne, Belgium, 1954.
- _____. "Le sens de 'l'economie' salutaire dans la 'théologie' de S. Thomas d'Aquin (Somme theologique)." In *Festgabe Joseph Lortz*. Edited by Erwin Iserloh. BadenBaden: Grimm, 1957.
- _____. *Le Mystère du Temple ou l'Économie de la Présence de Dieu à sa créature de la Genèse à l'Apocalypse*. Lectio divina no. 22. Paris: Cerf, 1958.
- _____. *The Mystery of the Temple or the Manner of God's Presence to His Creatures from Genesis to the Apocalypse*. Translated by Reginald F. Trevett. Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962. Originally published in French as *Le Mystère du Temple ou l'Économie de la Présence de Dieu à sa créature de la Genèse à l'Apocalypse*, Lectio divina no. 22. Paris: Cerf, 1958.

- _____. *Si vous êtes mes témoins. Trois conférences sur laïcat, Église et monde*. Paris: Cerf, 1959.
- _____. *Laity, Church and World: Three Addresses by Yves Congar*. Translated by Donald Attwater. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1960. Originally published in French as *Si vous êtes mes témoins. Trois conférences sur laïcat, Église et monde*. Paris: Cerf, 1959.
- _____. *Vaste monde, ma Paroisse. Verité et dimensions du salut*. Paris: Cerf, 1959.
- _____. *The Wide World, My Parish: Salvation and Its Problems*. Translated by David Attwater. Baltimore: Helicon, 1961. Originally published in French as *Vaste monde, ma Paroisse. Verité et dimensions du salut*. Paris: Cerf, 1959.
- _____. "Les conciles dans la vie de l'Église." *Informations catholiques internationales*, no. 90 (February, 1959): 17-29.
- _____. "The Council, the Church, and the 'Others.'" Translated by Elizabeth Hughes. *Cross Currents* 11, no.3 (Summer, 1961): 241-54. Originally published in French as "Le Concile, L'Eglise et ... "Les Autres." *Lumiere et Vie* 45 (1959): 69-92.
- _____. *Tradition and Traditions: An historical and a theological essay*. Translated by Michael Naseby (Part One) and Thomas Rainborough (Part Two). London: Burns and Oates, 1966. Originally published in French in two volumes entitled *La Tradition et les traditions: Essai historique*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1960. Reprint, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- _____. "L'ecclésiologie de la Révolution française au Concile du Vatican, sous le signe de l'affirmation de l'authrité." In *L'ecclésiologie au XIX siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1960): 77-114.
- _____. "*Vœux pour le Concile, Enquête parmi les chrétiens: catholiques.*" *Esprit* (Nouvelle Série) 29 (December, 1961): 691-700.
- _____. *Les Voies du Dieu Vivant. Théologie et vie spirituelle*. Paris: Cerf, 1962.
- _____. "The Council in the Age of Dialogue." Translated by Barry N. Rigney. *Cross Currents* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1962): 144-51.
- _____. *Faith and Spiritual Life*. Translated by A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Republished with *The Revelation of God* in French as Part II of *Les Voies du Dieu Vivant. Théologie et vie spirituelle*. Paris: Cerf, 1962.
- _____. *L'Épiscopate et L'Église universelle*. Unam Sanctam 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962.

- _____. "La Hiérarchie Comme Service Selon le Nouveau Testament et les Documents de la Tradition." In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle. Unam Sanctam* 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 67-99.
- _____. "Quelques Expressions Traditionnelles du Service Chrétien." In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle. Unam Sanctam* 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 101-5.
- _____. "De la Communion des Églises à Une Eccésiologie de L'Église Universelle." In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle. Unam Sanctam* 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 227-69.
- _____. *La foi et la théologie*. Tournai, Belgium: Desclee, 1962.
- _____. *The Revelation of God*. Translated by A. Manson and L.C. Sheppard. New York; Herder and Herder, 1968. Originally published with *Faith and Spiritual Life* in French as *Les Voies du Dieu Vivant. Théologie et vie spirituelle*. Paris: Cerf, 1962.
- _____. *Sacerdoce et Laïcat devant leurs tâches d'évangélisation et de civilization*. Paris: Cerf, 1962.
- _____. *Christians Active in the World*. Translated by P.J. Hepburne-Scott. New York: Herder and Herder, 1968. Originally published in French as part of *Sacerdoce et Laïcat devant leurs tâches d'évangélisation et de civilization*. Paris: Cerf, 1962.
- _____. *La Tradition et les traditions: Essai théologique*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- _____. *Tradition and the Life of the Church*. Translated by A.N. Woodrow. London: Burns and Oates, 1964. Originally published in French as *La Tradition et la vie de l'Église*. Paris: Cerf, 1963.
- _____. *Ecumenicism and the Future of the Church*. Translated by Geraldine F. McIntosh. Chicago: Priory Press, 1967. Chapters 1 through 6 originally published in French as *Aspects de l'Oecuménisme*. Brussels: La Pensée Catholique, 1962. Chapter 7 originally published in French as *L'Aviner de l'Église*. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- _____. *Sainte Église. Etudes et approches eccésiologiques*. Unam Sanctam 41. Paris: Cerf, 1963.
- _____. *Pour une Église servant et pauvre*. Paris: Cerf, 1963.
- _____. "La tradition et la vie de l'Église" in *Première Partie - Je Sais, Je Crois*. Encyclopédie du Catholique au XXe Siècle. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- _____. *Tradition and the Life of the Church, Faith and Facts Books* 3. London: Burns & Oates, 1964. Originally published in French as *La tradition et la vie de l'Église* in

- Première Partie - *Je Sais, Je Crois*. Encyclopédie du Catholique au XXe Siècle. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1963.
- _____. *Power and Poverty in the Church*. Translated by Jennifer Nicholson. Baltimore: Helicon, 1964. Originally published in French as *Pour une Église servant et pauvre*. Paris: Cerf, 1963.
- _____. *Vatican II. Le Concile au jour le jour*. 4 Vols. Paris: Cerf, 1963-66.
- Congar, Yves, OP, and Daniel J. O'Hanlon, SJ, ed. "Sin in the Holy Church of God." In *Council Speeches of Vatican II*. New York: Paulist Press, 1964: 45-6.
- Congar, Yves. *Chrétiens en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme*. Unam Sanctam 50. Paris: Cerf, 1964.
- _____. *Dialogue Between Christians: Catholic Contributions to Ecumenism*. Translated by Philip Loretz, S.J. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966. Originally published in French as *Chrétiens en dialogue. Contributions catholiques à l'Œcuménisme*. Unam Sanctam 50. Paris: Cerf, 1964.
- _____. *Jésus Christ, notre Mediateur et notre Seigneur*. Paris: Cerf, 1965.
- _____. *Jesus-Christ*. Translated by Luke O'Neill. New York: Herder and Herder, 1966. Originally published in French as *Jésus Christ, notre Mediateur et notre Seigneur*. Paris: Cerf, 1965.
- _____. "What Can We Find in the Scripture?" In *Le vie del Dio vivo*. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1965.
- _____. "La théologie au Concile: Le 'théologiser' du Concile." In *Situation et tâches présentes de la théologie*. Paris: Cerf, 1967: 41-56.
- _____. *Le sacerdoce chrétien des laïcs et des prêtres*. Brussels: La Pensée Catholique, 1967.
- _____. *Situation et tâches présentes de la théologie*. Paris: Cerf, 1967.
- _____, ed. *L'Adaptation et la Rénovation de la vie Religieuse: Décret "Perfectae caritatis"* Latin Text and Translation into French by J.M.R. Tillard. Commentaries under the direction of J.M.R. Tillard and Y Congar. Preface by Yves M.J. Congar, O.P. Unam Sanctam 62. Paris: Cerf, 1967.
- _____. "Cette Église que j'aime," *Foi Vivante*, no. 70. Paris: Cerf, 1968: n.p.
- _____. "À mes frères." *Foi Vivante*, no. 71. Paris: Cerf, 1968: n.p.

- _____. "Le sacerdoce du Nouveau Testament: Mission et 70culte." In *Les Prêtres, Unam Sanctam* 68, ed. Jean Frisque and Yves Congar, 233-256. Paris: Cerf, 1968.
- _____. *This Church That I Love*. Translated by Lucien Delafuente. Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1969. Originally published in French as "Cette Église que j'aime," *Foi Vivante*, no. 70. Paris: Cerf, 1968.
- _____. "L'Écclesiologie du haut Moyen Age." *Archives des sciences sociales des religions* 27 (1969): 168-70.
- _____. *Blessed is the Peace of My Church*. Translated by Salvator Attanasio. Denville, NY: Dimension Books, 1973. Originally published in French as *Au milieu des orages. L'Église affronte aujourd'hui son avenir*. Paris: Cerf, 1969.
- _____. *L'Église de saint Augustin à l'époque moderne*. Paris: Cerf: 1970.
- _____. "L'Église une, sainte, catholique et apostolique." *Mysterium Salutis* 15. Paris: Cerf, (1970): n.p.
- _____. "Johann Adam Möhler: 1796-1838," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 150 (1970): 47-51.
- _____. *Ministères et communion ecclésiale*. Paris: Cerf, 1971.
- _____. "Pneumatology Today." *The American Ecclesiastical Review* 167 (1973): 435-49. Originally published in French as "Actualité d'une pneumatology." *Proche orient chrétien* 23 (1973): 124-n.p.
- _____. *Une Passion: l'Unité. Réflexions et souvenirs 1929 – 1973*. Paris: Cerf, 1974. Originally published in French as "Une passion: l'unité. Réflexions et souvenirs, 1929-1973," *Foi Vivante*, no. 156. Paris: Cerf, 1974.
- _____. "Après 'L'Infallible' de Hans Küng." *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 58 (1974): 243-54.
- _____. *Une peuple messianique. L'Église, sacrement du salut. Salut et liberation*. Cognitatio fidei 85. Paris: Cerf, 1975.
- _____. *Challenge to the Church: The case of Archbishop Lefebvre*. Translated by Paul Inwood. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1976. Originally published in French as *La crise dans L'Église et Mgr Lefebvre*. Paris: Cerf, 1976.
- _____. "Le blasphème contre le Saint-Esprit." *Le experience de l'Esprit. Mélanges Schillebeeckx*. Cerf: Paris, 1976, 19-29.

- _____. "Enfrance sedanaise 1904-1919," *Le pays sedanais* 9, no. 5, 1978: 27-31.
- _____. *Eglise Catholique & France modern*. Paris: Hachette, 1978.
- _____. *Je crois en L'Esprit Saint I: L'expérience de l'Esprit*. Paris: Cerf, 1979.
- _____. *Je crois en L'Esprit Saint II: Il est Seigneur et Il donne la vie*. Paris: Cerf, 1979.
- _____. *Je crois en L'Esprit Saint III: Le Fleuve de Vie coule en Orient et en Occident*. Paris: Cerf, 1980.
- _____. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. 3 Vols. Translated by David Smith. New York: Seabury, 1983. Originally published in French as *Je crois en L'Esprit Saint*, 3 Vols. Paris: Cerf, 1979-80.
- _____. "Reflections on being a theologian." Translated by Marcus Lefébure. *New Blackfriars* 62 (1981): 405-9.
- _____. *Diversity and Communion*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SMC Press, 1984. Originally published in French as *Diversités et communion. Dossier historique et conclusion théologiques*. Paris: Cerf, 1982.
- _____. "Une pneumatology ecclésiologique." In *Initiation à la pratique de la théologie*. Vol. 2. Publiée sous la direction de Bernard Lauret et François Refoulé. 5 Vols. Paris: Cerf, 1982-83, 483-516.
- _____. *Martin Luther, sa foi, sa réforme: études de théologie historique*. Paris: Cerf, 1983.
- _____. "Esprit de l'homme, Esprit de Dieu," *Foi Vivant*, no.206. Paris: Cerf, 1983: n.p.
- _____. *The Word and the Spirit*. Translated by David Smith. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984. Originally published in French as *La Parole et le Souffle*. Paris: Desclée, 1984.
- _____. *Le Concile de Vatican II: son Église, people de Dieu et Corps du Christ*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1984.
- _____. "Letter from Father Yves Congar, O.P." Translated by Ronald John Zawilla. *Theology Digest* 32: 3 (Fall 1985): 213-16.
- _____. *Fifty Years of Catholic Theology: Conversations with Yves Congar*. Edited and introduced by Bernard Lauret. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia:

Fortress, 1988. Originally published in French as *Entretiens d'automne*. Paris: Cerf, 1987.

_____. *Écrits réformateurs*. Edited by J-P. Jossua. Paris: Cerf, 1995.

_____. *Journal d'un théologien: 1946-1956: présenté et annoté par Etienne Fouilloux; avec la collaboration de Dominique Congar, André Duval et Bernard Montagnes*. Paris: Cerf, 2000.

_____. *Mon Journal du Concile*: ed. and notes Éric Mahieu. 2 Vols. Paris: Cerf, 2002.

_____. *Yves Congar: Essential Writings*. Selected with an introduction by Paul Lakeland. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010.

_____. *At the Heart of Christian Worship: Liturgical Essays of Yves Congar*. Translated and edited by Paul Philibert. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *La Censure d'Alfred Loisy (1903): les documents des Congrégations de l'index et du Saint Office*. Fontes Archivi Santi Officii Romani 4. Rome: Libreria editrice Vaticana, 2009.

Connolly, James M. *The Voices of France*. New York: Macmillan, 1961.

Corbon, Jean. *Path to Freedom: Christian Experiences and the Bible*. Translated by Violet Nevile New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969. Originally published in French as *L'expérience chrétienne dans la Bible*. Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1963.

_____. *The wellspring of worship*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. New York: Paulist Press, 1988. Originally published in French as *Liturgie de source*. Paris: Cerf, 1980.

Crane, Richard Francis. Review of *La Vie intellectuelle: Marc Sangnier, le thomisme et le personnalisme* by Jean-Claude Delbreil. *The Catholic Historical Review* 96, no. 4 (October 2010): 854-6.

Culpepper, R. Alan and C. Clifton Black. *Exploring the Gospel of John*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1966.

D'Ambrosio, Marcellino. "Ressourcement theology, *aggiornamento*, and the hermeneutics of tradition." *Communio* 18 (Winter 1991): 53-55.

_____. *Henri de Lubac and The Recovery of the Traditional Hermeneutic*. Ph.D. diss., the Catholic University of America, 1991.

- Daniélou, Jean. "Les orientations présentes de la pensée religieuse." *Études* 249 (April, 1946): 5-21.
- Dansette, Adrien, *Religious History of Modern France*, 2 Vols. New York: Herder & Herder, 1961. Translated by John Dingle. Originally published in French as *Histoire religieuse de la France contemporaine*, Paris: Flammarion, 2 Vols. 1948.
- _____. *Destin du Catholicisme Français, 1926-1956*. Paris: Flammarion, 1957.
- Delbreil, Jean-Claude. "*La Vie intellectuelle*": *Marc Sangnier, le thomisme et le personnelisme*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2008.
- Dégert, A. *Gallicanism*. New York: Robert Appleton, 1909.
- Dejaifve, Georges, S.J. "Primauté et Collégialité au Premier Concile du Vatican." In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle. Unam Sanctam 39*. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 639-60.
- Del Colle, Ralph. *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit-Christology in Trinitarian Perspective*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Delmaire, Danielle. "Antisémetisme des catholiques au vingtième siècle: de la revendication au refus." In *Catholicism, Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Kay Chadwick: 26-46. Liverpool: Liverpool University press, 2000.
- _____. "The Church" In *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*. Edited by John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, Iain Torrance. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 247-66.
- De Mallerais, Bernard Tissier. *Marcel Lefebvre, une vie*. Étampes: Éditions Clovis, 2002.
- Donneaud, Henri. "Une vie au service de la théologie." *Revue Thomiste* 92 (1992), 17-51.
- Doyle, Dennis M. "Möhler, Schleiermacher, and the Roots of Communion Ecclesiology." *Theological Studies* 57, no. 3 (Sep. 1996):467-80.
- Drilling, Peter J. "Common and Ministerial Priesthood, *Lumen Gentium*, Article Ten." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53 (1987): 80-87.
- Dulles, Avery S.J. *Models of the Church*, expanded ed. New York: Doubleday, 1987.
- _____. "True and False Reform." *First Things* (August/September 2003): 14-19.
- Dunn, James D.G. *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: an inquiry into the character of earliest Christianity*, 2d ed. London: SCM Press, 1990.

- Dunn, Patrick J. *Priesthood: A Re-Examination of the Roman Catholic Theology of the Presbyterate*. New York: Alba House, 1990.
- Dupouey, M. "L'Eglise va-t-elle émigrer." *Esprit* (May, 1946): 703-16.
- Duquesne, Jacques. Jacques Duquesne interroge le P. Chenu. "Un théologien en liberté." Paris: Centurion, 1975.
- Durken, Daniel, O.S.B., ed. *Sin, Salvation and the Spirit*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979.
- Durrwell, François Xavier, C.S.s.R. *The Resurrection: A Biblical Study*, 3d ed. Translated by Rosemary Sheed. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960. Originally published in French as *La Résurrection de Jésus, mystère de salut*. Paris: Xavier Mappus, 1950.
- _____. *In the Redeeming Christ: Toward a Theology of Spirituality*. Translated by Rosemary Sheed. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963. Originally published in French as *Dans le Christ rédempteur*. Paris: Xavier Mappus, 1960.
- _____. *Theologians Today*, ed. Martin Redfern. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1972.
- _____. *Holy Spirit of God: An Essay in Biblical Theology*. Translated by Sister Benedict Davies, O.S.U. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2006. Originally published in French as *l'Esprit Saint de Dieu*. Paris: Cerf: 1983.
- _____. *Christ Our Passover*. Translated by John F. Craghan. Liguori, MO: Liguori, 2004. Originally published in French as *Christ Notre Pâque*. Montrouge, France: Nouvelle Cité, 2001.
- Egret, Jean. *The French PreRevolution, 1787-1788*. Translated by Wesley Camp. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977. Originally published in French as *La Pré-Révolution française*. n.p.: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962.
- Eicher, Peter. "Revolution and Church Reform: Ecclesiastical Power after the French Revolution," *Concilium: Religion in the Eighties*, vol. 201, ed. Claudes Geffré and Jean-Pierre Jossua. Edinburgh: Y&Y Clark, 1989: 89-106.
- Eisenstadt, S.N., ed. *Max Weber On Charisma and Institution Building*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Emery, Kent, Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow, eds. *Christ Among the Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998.

- Farmerée, Joseph. *L'ecclésiologie d'Yves Congar avant Vatican II: histoire et Église; analyse et reprise critique*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992.
- _____. "Formation et Ecclésiologie du 'Premier' Congar". In *Cardinal Yves Congar 1904-1995: Acts du colloque réuni à Rome les 3-4 juin 1996 publiés sous le direction de André Vauchez*. Paris: Cerf, 1999: 53-70.
- Famerée, Joseph and Giles Routhier. *Yves Congar*. Paris: Cerf, 2008
- Femers, Frank. *The Crucial Questions*. New York: Newman Press, 1969.
- Fessard, Gaston. Review of *Une philosophie existentielle: L'existence d'après Jaspers*, by Joseph de Tonquédec, S.J. *Études* (November, 1945): 268-70
- Flynn, Gabriel. *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004.
- _____. "The Role of Unbelief in the Theology of Yves Congar." *New Blackfriars* 85 (July 2004): 426-43.
- Flynn, Gabriel, ed. "Yves Congar and Catholic Church Reform: A Renewal of the Spirit." In *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32. Louvain: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005: 99-133.
- _____. "Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Learning – Reflections in Dialogue with Yves Congar and B.C. Butler." In *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, ed. Paul D. Murray. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Flynn, Gabriel and Paul D. Murray, ed. *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Fouilloux, Etienne. *La Collection "Sources chrétiennes": éditer les Pères de l'Eglise au XXe siècle*. Preface by Jean Pouilloux. Paris: Cerf, 1995.
- _____. and Christian Yves Dupont. "Friar Yves, Cardinal Congar, Dominican: History of a Theologian". *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, no 2 (Spring, 1999): 62-90. Originally published in French as "Frère Yves Cardinal Congar dominicain. Itinéraire d'un théologien," *Revue des sciences philosophique et théologiques* 79, no.3 (Juillet 1995): 379-404.
- _____. "Henry de Lubac at the Moment of Publication of *Surnaturel*." In *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*, edited by Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P. Translated by Robert Williams and Rev. Matthew Levering. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009: 3-20.

- Galot, Jean. *The Theology of the Priesthood*, Translated by Roger Balducelli. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984.
- Gagnebet, M.-Rosaire. "L'oeuvre du P. Garrigou-Lagrange: itineraire intellectuel et spiritual vers Dieu," *Angelicum* 42 (1965): 7-31.
- Gardeil, Ambroise. *Le Donné révélé et la théologie*. Paris: Cerf, 1932.
- Garrigou-Lagrange, Réginald. *Le sens commun, la philosophie d'être et les formules dogmatiques*. Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1922.
- _____. "La nouvelle théologie où va-t-elle?" *Angelicum* 23 (July-December 1946): 126-45.
- _____. "Verité et immutabilité du dogme". *Angelicum* 24 (1947): 124-39.
- Gershoy, Leo. *The French Revolution 1789-1799. The Berkshire Studies in European History*. New York: Holt, 1956.
- _____. *The Era of the French Revolution 1789-1799*, reprint. The Anvil Series, ed. Louis L Snyder. Malabar, FL: Krieger, 1984.
- Gilson, Étienne. *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, rev. ed. Edited by Rev. G.A. Elrington, O.P. Translated by Edward Bullough. London: B. Herder Book Co., 1937. Originally published in French as *Le thomisme: Introduction à la philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin. Études de Philosophie Médiéval*. Strasbourg: Vix, 1919.): n.p. 7th reprint, 6th ed. Paris: Vrin, 1997: 153-89.
- Godin, Henri and Yves Daniel. *La France, pays de mission?* n.p., 1943. Reprint. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1950.
- Goichot, Émile. *Alfred Loisy et ses amis*. Paris: Cerf, 2002.
- Granfield, Patrick. *Theologians at Work*. New York: Macmillan, 1967.
- Groppe, Elizabeth Teresa. "Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit." Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999.
- _____. "The Contribution of Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 62 (September, 2001): 451-78.
- _____. *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*. American Academy of Religion Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Gy, Pierre-Marie, O.P. *The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology, 2003: The Reception of Vatican II Liturgical Reforms in the Life of the Church*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2003.

Halleux, André de. *Revue théologique de Louvain* 6 (1957), 13-44.

_____. *Patrologie et Oecuménisme: Recueil d'Etudes*. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Louvaniensium 93. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990.

Hannenbergh, Edward P. *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II*. Cincinnati: St Anthony Messenger Press, 2007.

Hart, David Bentley. *The Beauty of the Infinite*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003.

Heiler, Friedrich. *Der Vater des katholischen Modernismus*. Munich: Erasmus-Verlag, 1947.

Henn, William, O.F.M.CAP. *The Hierarchy of Truths According to Yves Congar, O.P.* Rome: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1987.

Hill, Harvey. "French Politics and Alfred Loisy's Modernism". *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* (1998) 67: 521-36.

_____. *The Politics of Modernism: Alfred Loisy and the Scientific Study of Religion*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 2002.

Ivereigh, Austen, ed. *Unfinished Journey; The Church 40 Years After Vatican II; Essays for John Wilkins*. London: Continuum, 2003.

Jossua, Jean-Pierre, OP. *Yves Congar: Theology in the Service of God's People*. Translated by Sister Mary Jocelyn, O.P. Chicago: Priory Press, 1968. Originally published in French as *Le Père Congar: la théologie au service du peuple de Dieu*. Paris: Cerf, 1967.

_____. "L'oeuvre oecuménique du Père Congar." *Etudes* 357 (1982, no. 2): 543-55.

_____. "In Hope of Unity". In *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32. Louvain: W.B. Eerdmans, 2005, 167-81.

_____. "'Credo Unam Sanctum Ecclesiam' – The Relationship Between the Catholic and the Protestant Principles in Fundamental Ecclesiology", ed. Paul D. Murray. In *Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning*, ed. Paul D. Murray. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

- Kizhakkeparampil, Isaac. *The Invocation of the Holy Spirit as Constitutive of the Sacraments According to Cardinal Yves Congar*. Rome: Editrice Pontifica Universita Gregoriana, 1995.
- Komonchak, Joseph A. "Ecclesiology and Social theory: A Methodological Essay." *Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 45, no.2 (April 1981): 262-83.
- _____. "Theology and Culture at Mid-Century: The Example of Henri de Lubac." *Theological Studies* 52 (1990): 579-601.
- _____. "Introduction: the Papal Vision of the Council". In *History of Vatican II*. Vol I. English version ed. Joseph A. Komonchak. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996: 167-79.
- _____. "Thomism and the Second Vatican Council". In *Continuity and Plurality in Catholic Theology: Essays in Honor of Gerald A. McCool, S.J.* Edited by Anthony J. Cernera. Fairfield, CT: Sacred Heart University Press, 1998: 53-73.
- _____. "Augustine, Aquinas or the Gospel *sine glossa*? Divisions over *Guadium et spes*." In *Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years after Vatican II*. Edited by Austen Ivereigh. New York: Continuum, 2003: 102-18.
- Koskela, Douglas M. *Ecclesiality and Ecumenicism: Yves Congar and the Road to Unity*. *Marquette Studies in Theology No 61*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2008.
- Laberthonnière, Lucien. *Essais de philosophie religieuse*. Paris: Lethielleux, 1903.
- _____. *Le Réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec*. Paris: Lethielleux, 1904.
- Lahey, R.H. "The Origins and Approval of the Malines Conversations." *Church History* 3, no. 3 (1974): Cambridge: 366-384.
- Lakeland, Paul. *The Liberation of the Laity*. New York: Continuum, 2003.
- Laplanche, François. *La crise de l'origine: La science catholique des Évangiles et l'histoire au XXe siècle*. Paris: Albin Michel, 2006.
- Laudouze, Andre. *Dominicains français et Action française*. Paris: Editions ouvrières, 1989.
- Lavaud, M.-Benoît. "Le Père Garrigou-Lagrange: In memorium." *Revue thomiste* 64 (Avril-Juin 1964): 181-99.
- Leeming, S.J., Bernard. *The Vatican Council and Christian Unity*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966.

Lefebvre, Georges. *The Coming of the French Revolution*, Bicentennial ed. Translated by R.R. Palmer . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Lécrivain, Phillipe, S.J. “Yves Congar (1904-1995): une vie imprégnée par les Ecritures.” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 106-1 (Jan-Mar 2005): 39-50.

Livingston, James C. *Modern Christian Thought*, 2d ed. Vol. 1. *The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.

_____. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, Sarah Coakley and James H. Evans, Jr. *Modern Christian Thought*, 2d ed. Vol.2. *The Twentieth Century*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.

Loisy, Alfred. *Études évangéliques*. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1902. Reprint, Frankfurt: Minerva, 1971.

_____. *The Gospel and the Church*. Translated by Christopher Home. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976. Originally published in French as *L'Évangile et l'Église*. Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1902.

_____. *Simple réflexions sur le décret du Saint-office Lamentabili sane exitu et sur l'encyclique Pascendi dominici gregis*. Ceffonds, France, Près Montier-en-Der (Haute-Marne): chez l'auteur, 1908.

_____. *La Religion d'Israël*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1910.

_____. *Remarques sur la littérature épistolaire du Nouveau Testament*. Paris, É. Nourry, 1935.

Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. Translated by members of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. London: J. Clarke, 1957.

Long, D. Stephen, *John Wesley's Moral Theology: The Quest for God and Goodness*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2005.

Lubac, Henri de, S.J. *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomism*. Edited by Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P. Translated by Robert Williams. Translation revised by Matthew Levering. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2009. Originally published in French as *Surnaturel: Études historiques. Théologie* 8. Paris: Aubier, 1946.

_____. *Corpus mysterium. Le Eucharistie et l'Église au Moyen Age*, Second Edition, Revised. Paris: Aubier, 1949.

_____. *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. Translated by Edith M. Riley. London: Sheed & Ward, 1949.

- _____. *The Mystery of the Supernatural*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1967.
Translated by Rosemary Sheed. Originally published in French as *Le mystère du surnaturel*. Paris: Aubier, 1965.
- _____. *Lettres de monsieur Etienne Gilson au père de Lubac*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986.
- _____. *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances That Occasioned His Writings*. Translated by Anne Elizabeth Englund. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993. Originally published in French as *Memoires sur l'occasion de mes écrits*. Namur, Belgium: Culture et Vérité, 1989.
- _____. *Carnets du Concile*. Paris: Cerf, 2007.
- MacDonald, Timothy Ignatius. "The Ecclesiology of Yves Congar: Foundational themes." Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1982.
- Madiran, Jean. *Le council en question: Correspondance Congar-Madiran sur Vatican II et sur la crise de l'Eglise*. Grez-en-Bouère: D.M. Morin, 1985. Originally published in *Itinéraires* 296 (September- October 1985), n.p.
- Maloney, Francis J. *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John*. Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Mansini, Guy O.S.B. "The Abiding Theological Significance of Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel*." *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 593-619.
- Mason, Loys. *Pour une Église*. Geneva: Bordas, 1947.
- Maritain, Jacques. *The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time*. Translated by Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968. Originally published in French as *Le paysan de la Garonne: Une vieux laïc s'interroge à propos du temps présent*. Desclée de Brouwer, 1967.
- McBrien, Richard P. "I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The role of Pneumatology in Yves Congar's Theology. In *Yves Congar Theologian of the Church*, ed. Gabriel Flynn. *Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs* 32. Louvain: W.R. Eerdmans, 2005: 303-27.
- McClory, Robert. *Faithful Dissenters: Stories of Men and Women Who Changed the Church*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000.
- McCool, Gerald A. *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1989.

- _____. *The Neo-Thomists*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press. Association of Jesuit University Presses, 1994.
- McDonnell, Kilian. "The Concept of 'Church' in the Documents of Vatican II as Applied to Protestant Determinations". In *Eucharist and Ministry: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV*, ed. Paul C. Empie and T. Austin Murphy, 307-24. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979.
- Meakin, Christopher. "*The Same but Different*"? *The Relationship Between Unity and Diversity in the Theological Ecumenicism of Yves Congar*. Studia Theologica Lundensia 50. Sweden: Lund University Press, 1995.
- Melloni, Alberto. "The System and the Truth in the Diaries of Yves Congar." Translated by Clarence Gallagher, S.J. In *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*. Edited by Gabriel Flynn. *Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs*, 32. Louvain: Peeters, 2005: 278-302.
- Menozi, Daniele. "The Significance of the Catholic Reaction to the Revolution," *Concilium: Religion in the Eighties*, vol. 201, ed. Claudes Geffré and Jean-Pierre Jossua. Edinburgh: Y&Y Clark, 1989: 76-86.
- Messenger, Ernest Charles. *Rome and Reunion: A Collection of Papal Pronouncements*. London: Burnes, Oates and Washbourne, 1934.
- Mettepenningen, Jürgen. *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II*. London: T&T Clark, 2010.
- Möhlér, Johann A. *L'Unité dans l'Église ou le Principe du Catholicisme d'après des Pères des trois siècles de l'Église*. Translated by Andre de Lillienfeld. Unam Sanctam 2. Paris: Cerf, 1938. Originally published in German as *Die Einheit in der Kirche: oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus, dargestellt im Geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1925).
- _____. "Revolution, Religion and the Future: German Reactions." In *1979 – The French Revolution and the Church*. Edited by Claude Geffré and Jean-Pierre Joshua. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989: 43-50.
- Montimort, Aimé-Georges. *Le Gallicanisme*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973.
- Mounier, E. "L'agonie du Christianisme." *Esprit* (May, 1946): 717-30.
- Mouroux, J. *L'expérience chrétienne. Introduction à une théologie*. Paris: Aubier, 1952.

- Murray, Paul D., ed. *Receptive Ecumenicism and the Call to Catholic Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Nicolas, Jean-Hervé. "In memoriam: Le Père Garrigou-Lagrange." *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 11 (1964): 390-95.
- Nichols, O.P., Aidan. *Yves Congar*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989.
- _____. "An Yves Congar Bibliography 1967-1987." *Angelicum* 66, No.3 (1989): 422-466.
- _____. *Catholic Thought Since the Enlightenment*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1998.
- _____. *Reason with Piety: Garrigou-Lagrange in the Service of Catholic Thought*. Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2008.
- Nugent, S.D.S. Robert. "Yves Congar: Apostle of Patience." In *Australian eJournal of Theology* 4 (February, 2005): n.p.
- O'Meara, Thomas F., O.P. *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997: 91-105.
- _____. "Reflections on Yves Congar and Theology in the United States." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, no. 2 (Spring, 1999): 91-105.
- _____. "Ecumenicist of Our Times: Yves Congar." *Mid-Stream* 27, no. 1 (1988): 67-76.
- Peddicord, Richard. *The Sacred Monster of Thomism : an introduction to the life and legacy of Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2005.
- _____. "Another Look at the Theological Enterprise of Reginald Garrigou-LaGrange", *Angelicum* 82 (2005): 835-48.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition, Vol 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- _____. *The Christian Tradition, Vol.3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- Perrin, Marie-Thérèse. *Laberthonnière et ses amis. Théologie historique* 33. Paris: Beauchesne, 1975.

- Philbert, Paul J, O.P. "Yves Congar: Theologian, Ecumenist, and Visionary." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, no.2 (Spring, 1999): 116-120.
- Pope John XXIII. *Journal of a Soul*. Translated by Dorothy White. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965. Originally published in Italian as *Giornale dell'Anima*. Bologna: Edizioni de Storia e Letterature, 1964.
- _____. *Discorsi Messaggi Colloqui del S. Padre Giovanni XXIII*. (Città del Vaticano, 1960-67).
- Pope Pius X (Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto). *Pascendi dominici gregis. Acta Sanctæ Sedis* 40 (1907): 593-650.
- Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli). 'Il venerato Discorso del Sommo Pontefice alla XXIX Congregazione Generale della Compagnia di Gesu', *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 38 (1946): 381-85.
- _____. 'Fervido Discorso del Sommo Pontefice ai Capitolari dell'Ordine die Frati Predicatori'. *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 38 (1946), 385-89
- Potterie, Ignace de la, S.J. "La notion de témoignage dans saint Jean," *Sacra Pagina* II (Paris and Gembloux, 1959), 193-208.
- _____, and Stanislaus Lyonnet, S.J. *The Christian Lives by the Spirit*. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1971. Translated by John Morriss. Originally published in French as *La vie selon l'Esprit, condition du Chrétien*. Paris: Cerf, 1970.
- Poule, Émile. "La laïcité en France au vingtième siècle." In *Catholicism, Politics and Society in the Twentieth-Century France*, ed. Kay Chadwick, 18-25. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.
- Prcela, Franco O.P. "Pioneer of Church Renewal: Yves Congar (1904-1995)." Translated by Thomas O'Meara. *Wort und Antwort* 36:3 (1995): 130-33.
- Prior, Joseph G. "The Historical Critical Method in Catholic Exegesis." Ph.D. diss., Pontifical Gregorian University. *Serie Teologia* 50. Rome: Tessa Gregoriana, 2000.
- Prouvost, Géry. *Thomas d'Aquin et les thomismes*. Paris. Cerf, 1996.
- Rahner, Karl, S.J. "Quelques Reflexions sur les Principes Constitutionnels de L'Eglise." In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle*. Unam Sanctam 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 542-62.
- _____. *Theological Investigations*, Vol.X: "The New Image of the Church." Translated by David Bourke. New York: Seabury Press, 1977, 3-29.

- _____. "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican Council II," *Theological Studies* 40, issue 4 (1979): 716-27.
- Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*. New York: Paulist Press, 1966.
- _____. Preface to "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," *Origins* 23, no. 29 (1994): 497, 499-524.
- _____. *Church, Ecumenicism and Politics, New Essays in Ecclesiology*. New York: Crossroad, 1988. Originally published in German as *Kirche, Ökumene und Politi*. Balsomo, Italy: Cinisello, 1987.
- _____. "The Holy Spirit as Communion: Concerning the Relationship of Pneumatology and Spirituality in Augustine." *Communio* 25 (Summer, 1998), 324-37.
- Redfern, Martin, ed. *Yves M.-J. Congar, OP. Theologians Today*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1972.
- Renan, Ernest. *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1883.
- Robinson, James H. *Readings in European History*, vol.2. New York and Boston: Ginn, 1906.
- Robinson, Jonathan. "Congar on Tradition". In Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church*. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs 32. Louvain: W.R. Eerdmans, 2005: 329-55.
- Russo, Antonio. *Henri de Lubac: Biographie*. Traduit de l'italien par Angiolina Di Nunzio. Paris: Brepols, 1997.
- Schmidt, Stjepan, S.J., *Augustine Bea, the cardinal of unity*. Translated by Leslie Wearne. New Rochelle, NY: New City Press, 1992. Originally published as *Agostino Bea – cardinal dell'unità*. Rome: Citta Nuovo, 1967.
- Schwalm, FNU, O.P. "Les deux théologies," *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (1908), 674-??
- Shelkins, K. *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr Gérald Philips, secrétaire adjoint de la Commission Doctrinale*. Instrumenta Theological 29. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.
- Shook, L.B., C.S.B. *Renewal of Religious Structures*. Vol. 2, Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968.

- Solages, Bruno de. "Pour l'honneur de la Théologie: les contre-sens de R. P. Garrigou-Lagrange." *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* No. 2 (Avril-Juin, 1947): 65-84.
- Stransky, Thomas C.S.P., "The Genesis of Nostra Aetate," *America the National Catholic Weekly*, 24 October, 2005, n.p.
- Sutton, Michael. *Nationalism, Positivism and Catholicism: the politics of Charles Murras and French Catholics, 1890-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- The Pontifical Bible Commission. *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*. Translated by John Kilgallen and Brendan Byrne. Boston: Pauline Books, 1993. Originally published in French as *L'interprétation de la Bible dans l'Église*. Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993.
- Thils, Gustave. " 'Postestas Ordinaria' " In *L'Épiscopat et L'Église universelle*. Unam Sanctam 39. Paris: Cerf, 1962: 689-707.
- Tillard, J.M.R. and Y. Congar, ed. *L'Adaptation et la Rénovation de la vie Religieuse*. Translated by J.M.R. Tillard. Paris: Cerf, 1967.
- Torrell, Jean-Pierre. *Le Christ en ses mystères: la vie et l'œuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*. Tome 2. Paris: Desclée, 1999.
- _____, O.P., "Nature and Grace in Thomas Aquinas." In *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomistic Thought*, ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P. Translated by Robert Williams and Rev. Matthew Levering. Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2009: 155-88.
- Troeltsch, Ernst. *The Social Teaching of Christian Churches*, 2 Vols. Translated by Olive Wyon. Louisville: KY: John Knox Press, 1992. Originally published in German as *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*. Tübingen: n.p., 1912.
- Valensin, Auguste. *Correspondance Maurice Blondel et Auguste Valensin: Extraits de la correspondance de 1912 à 1947*. Vol 3. Texte annoté par Henri de Lubac. Paris: Aubier-Éditions Montaigne, 1965.
- van Vliet, Cornelis. *Communio sacramentalis: Das Kirchenverständnis von Yves Congar – genetisch und systematisch betrachtet*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1995.
- Vatican II. Concile Œcuménique. *Documents Conciliaires*. 5 Vols. Paris: Centurion, 1965.
- Vaucher, André, ed. *Cardinal Yves Congar 1904-1995: Acts du colloque réuni à Rome les 3-4 juin 1996 publiés sous la direction de André Vaucher*. Paris: Cerf, 1999.
- Vorgrimler, Herbert, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*. 5 Vols. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967.

- Walsh, Christopher J. "Henry de Lubac and the Ecclesiology of the Postconciliar Church: An Analysis of His Later Writings (1965-1991)." Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1993.
- Ward, Maisie. *France Pagan? The Mission of Abbé Godin*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1949.
- Weakland, Archbishop Rembert G. "Images of the Church: From 'Perfect Society' to 'God's People on Pilgrimage'". In *Unfinished Journey: The Church 40 Years after Vatican II*. Edited by Austin Ivereigh. New York: Continuum, 2003: 78-90.
- Weber, Eugen J. *Action Française. Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962.
- Weber, Max. *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. 3 Vols. Tübingen: Mohr, 1922-23.
- Webster, John and George P. Schnier, ed. *Theology After Liberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Wedig, Mark, O.P. "The Fraternal Context of Congar's Achievement: The Platform for a Renewed Catholicism at 'Les Editions du Cerf'" (1927-1954), *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, no.2 (Spring, 1999): 106-116.
- White, Thomas Joseph O.P. "The Precarity of Wisdom: Modern Dominican Theology, Perspectivalism and the Tasks of Reconstruction." In *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments and the Moral Life*, ed. Matthew Levering and Reinhard Hütter. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010:92-126.
- Whitehead, Kenneth D, ed. *After Forty Years: Vatican II's Diverse Legacy*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2007.
- Williams, A.N. "The Future in the Past: the Contemporary Significance of the *Nouvelle Théologie*". *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no.4 (October, 2005): 347-61.
- Wood, Susan K. *Spiritual Exegesis and the Church in the Theology of Henri de Lubac*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.
- Wordsworth, William. "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold." In *Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. Vol. 4, 1801-1805. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1911.
- Zemler-Cizewski, Wanda. "The Holy Spirit in Medieval Thought: Some Examples in the Individual, Ecclesial and Scholarly Areas." In *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction*

to the Current Study of Pneumatology, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001: 163-72.

_____. “‘The Lord, the Giver of Life’: A Reflection on the Theology of the Holy Spirit in the Twelfth Century.” *Anglican Theological Review* 83:3 (Summer 2001): 547-56.