

LUMEN GENTIUM'S "SUBSISTIT IN" REVISITED: THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY AFTER VATICAN II

KARIM SCHELKENS

The article contributes to the ecumenical debate on the relationship between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, a debate that followed upon the 2007 publication of a series of Responses on Vatican II ecclesiology by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The author seeks to develop a critical understanding of subsistit in that is both historically and theologically sound. An in-depth study of the redaction of Lumen gentium no. 8 leads to the conclusion that the council did not understand the Latin verb subsistere in terms of essence (esse).

ON JULY 29, 2007 the Catholic Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) issued a series of Responses to Some Questions regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church.¹ Every question in this document involves the reception of the Second Vatican Council and a fortiori the reception of Vatican II's ecclesiology. One key to understanding the CDF's document is the discussion surrounding the statement in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* no. 8, where it is said that "haec ecclesia subsistit in ecclesia catholica." Among those concerned for ecumenical theology, this phrase is known and appreciated for its openness to acknowledge other Christian communities as churches containing elements of sanctification and truth, rendering them part of the one Church of Christ. The issue at stake now is clearly laid out in the CDF's

KARIM SCHELKENS received his Ph.D. and S.T.D. from the Catholic University of Leuven and is currently a research fellow of the Research Foundation—Flanders. Specializing in contemporary church history with a focus on Vatican II, the history of exegesis, and theology of revelation, he recently coedited *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council* (2008) and edited the *Cahiers conciliaires de Mgr. G. Philips, secrétaire adjoint de la commission doctrinale* (2006). Works in progress include: an article on the role of Bishop James Henry Griffiths in Vatican II's Mixed Commission on Revelation; an edition of the council diaries of Ukrainian-Canadian Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk; and a monograph entitled *Catholic Revelation Theology on the Eve of the Second Vatican Council* (Brill, 2009).

¹ This and all other references to church documents are to the official English versions available on the Vatican Web site: <http://www.vatican.va>.

answer to the second question, “What is the meaning of the affirmation that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church?” The CDF states: “In number 8 of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* ‘subsistence’ means this perduring, historical continuity and the permanence of all the elements instituted by Christ in the Catholic Church, in which the Church of Christ is concretely found on this earth.”² Although the CDF later refers to the so-called elements of the Church, here it states that “the word ‘subsists’ can only be attributed to the Catholic Church alone, precisely because it refers to the mark of unity that we profess in the symbols of the faith (I believe . . . in the ‘one’ Church); and this ‘one’ Church subsists in the Catholic Church.” This response, then, indicates the direction taken by the response to the third question: “Why was the expression ‘subsists in’ adopted instead of the simple word ‘is’?” Answer: “The use of this expression, which indicates the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church.” The CDF’s use of the phrase “full identity” (*plenam identitatem*) suggests it believes both that *subsistit* means *est*, and that one ought to read *Lumen gentium* in the latter sense. This answer has raised some debate within ecumenical circles, and Roman Catholic ecumenists such as Jared Wicks have attempted to explain the terminology.³ Still, further investigation is in

² Note the use of the substantive form, which is not used in any of the Vatican II documents. See Javier Ochoa Sanz, *Index verborum cum documentis concilii Vaticani secundi* (Rome: Commentarium pro Religiosis, 1967) 480: “Subsidia, subsisto, subsistens.” The verb *subsistere* occurs several times in other Vatican II documents as indicating continuing existence. See, e.g., *Gaudium et spes* no. 10, *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 4, and *Dignitatis humanae* no. 1. Only the latter two occurrences actually draw upon *Lumen gentium* no. 8, whereas the first one—derived from the Malines draft no. 5, redacted by G. Philips on September 22, 1962—does not have ecclesiological importance. See Archive Philips 878 (the Archive is located in the Center for the Study of Vatican II at the Catholic University of Leuven; an inventory was published by Leo Declerck and Wim Verschooten, *Inventaire des papiers conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips, secrétaire adjoint de la Commission Doctrinale*, *Instrumenta Theologica* 24 [Leuven: Peeters, 2001]).

³ See Jared Wicks, “Questions and Answers on the New Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Ecumenical Trends* 36 (2007) 2–8. In questions and answers nos. 8 and 9 of this highly relevant contribution, Wicks explains the “full identity” phrase through an elaborate analysis of the adjective “full” (*plena*). Yet, such explanations avoid the real issue, which is not so much the interpretation of the emphatic “full” as the meaning and significance of “*identitas*.” Wicks rightly refers to the 2000 CDF declaration *Dominus Iesus*’s use of “full,” but there it is used in the phrase “fully exists” (also recently pointed out by Francis A. Sullivan, “The Meaning of *Subsistit in* as Explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Theological Studies* 69 [2008] 116–24, esp. 119, which makes no reference to Wicks). Now, the Latin substantive *identitas*—hardly ever used in classical Latin—is common among Scholastic authors as implying “sameness.” For

order. Below I trace the discussion back to its conciliar roots by first examining the context of the CDF document, then by scrutinizing the redaction history of the schema *De ecclesia* up to the *subsistit* phrase.

HERMENEUTICAL BACKGROUND: CONTINUITY VS. DISCONTINUITY

Lately, the domain of Vatican II studies—in particular among church historians—has become very complex.⁴ In the postconciliar era, the study of the council (its documents, their genesis, the roles played by bishops, theologians, pressure groups, etc.) went through various phases qualified by an evolving general ecclesiastical context. Massimo Faggioli points out that there are two large periods to be distinguished in the domain of post-Vatican II studies.⁵ Although one can see a reception of the council going on during Vatican II itself, I can largely subscribe to Faggioli’s analysis. The first postconciliar period of reception, he argues, immediately

instance, in Albert Blaise, *Lexicon latinitatis mediæ aevi: Praesertim ad res ecclesiasticas investigandas pertinens*, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975) 450, the lemma *identitas* makes reference to Thomas Aquinas’s statement in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics*, “ibi possumus identitatem dicere, ubi differentia non invenitur” (*De physico*, Lib. 4, Lec. 23). Wicks leaves this problem unaddressed, and it is hard to understand the CDF’s 2007 “identification” of the Catholic Church with the Church of Christ other than in a relationship of “essence,” of “being.” Given the fact that I do not fully share Wicks’s analysis—though I fully support his intentions—I disagree with his claim that the CDF, in its Responses, is not aligning itself with, but rather is “quietly distancing itself from the main thesis of A. von Teuffenbach and from points urged by K. Becker” (see Wicks, “Questions and Answers” 4–5, questions 5 and 6).

Finally, other interesting Roman Catholic reactions are those of Peter De Mey, “Eine katholische Reaktion auf Antworten auf Fragen zu einigen Aspekten der Lehre von der Kirche der römisch-katholischen Kongregation für die Glaubenslehre,” *Ökumenische Rundschau* 56 (2007) 567–71; Sullivan, “The Meaning of *Subsistit in*”; Gérard Remy, “L’Église du Christ et les Églises: Réflexions sur un document romain,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 130 (2008) 594–609; and Peter Neuner, “Was ist Kirche im ‘eigentlichen Sinn,’” *Bulletin ET* (forthcoming, 2008). Also of interest is the contribution by Christopher Malloy—following the interpretation offered by Becker and against Sullivan—in his “*Subsistit in*: Nonexclusive Identity or Full Identity?” *Thomist* 72 (2008) 1–44, in which he concludes “(a) that Vatican II does not mitigate the traditional doctrine on the full identity of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church and (b) that therefore on this point there is no warrant for a hermeneutic of rupture” (44).

⁴ On the study of the reception of Vatican II, it is particularly interesting to study the recent publications of Gilles Routhier; see, for example: *Vatican II: Herméneutique et réception*, Héritage et projet (Québec: Fides, 2006); and, *Réceptions de Vatican II: Le Concile au risque d’histoire et des espaces humains*, Instrumenta Theologica 27 (Leuven: Peeters, 2004).

⁵ Massimo Faggioli, “Concilio Vaticano II: Bollettino bibliografico (2000–2002),” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 24 (2003) 335–60, at 335.

proceeds from the council, covering the decades 1965 to 1985. From a bibliographical viewpoint this period features both chronicles (e.g., Xavier Rynne, Yves Congar, and Robert Rouquette) reporting on the council's four sessions and commentaries on the conciliar documents. The most famous example is the three-volume *Das zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Dokumente und Kommentare*.⁶ Many monographs also appeared, most of them dedicated to one of the four conciliar constitutions. It is striking that most commentaries were authored by participants in the council. Particularly noteworthy for my purposes is Gerard Philips's acclaimed commentary and Charles Moeller's notes on *Lumen gentium*.⁷

The second period of reception runs from 1985 to 2000 and is characterized—mainly due to the historical distance and greater availability of primary sources—by the publication of mostly historiographical studies.⁸ Many colloquia investigated the history of the council, and a constant flow of publications treated the redaction history of various conciliar documents. The availability of new sources led to critical source-editions, such as conciliar diaries and the publication of inventories of archives.⁹ A decisive moment in this stage is the project of a broad *History of Vatican II* under the direction of the late Giuseppe Alberigo.¹⁰ The generation of Vatican II protagonists who took the lead in the first years after the council gradually disappeared and were replaced by scholars who, by the end of the 1980s, were aware that the ecclesiastical context of their day was strikingly different from that of the 1960s. Vatican II scholars recognized changes occurring both on the local level and on the level of the church's leadership, and this could not help but affect Vatican II historiography. Moved by a concern for the doctrinal and pastoral heritage of the council and clearly

⁶ Translated as *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, 5 vols., ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Crossroad, 1967).

⁷ Gerard Philips, *L'église et son mystère au IIème Concile du Vatican: Histoire, texte, et commentaire de la constitution Lumen gentium*, 2 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1967–1968); Charles Moeller, "Le ferment des idées dans l'élaboration de la Constitution," in *L'Église de Vatican II*, 3 vols., Unam sanctam 51 a–c, ed. Guilherme Baraúna and Yves Congar (Paris: Cerf, 1966) 2:85–120.

⁸ On this point see Hermann Joseph Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council," in *The Reception of Vatican II*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre Jossua, and Joseph A. Komonchak (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1987) 27–43.

⁹ For surveys of such publications see Karim Schelkens, "The Centre for the Study of the Second Vatican Council in Leuven: Historical Developments and List of Archives," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 82 (2006) 207–31; and Massimo Faggioli and Giovanni Turbanti, eds., *Il concilio inedito: Fonti del Vaticano II*, Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose: Fonti e strumenti di ricerca 1 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001).

¹⁰ Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, eds., *History of Vatican II*, 5 vols., (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995–2007).

intending to prevent unilateral receptions of Vatican II’s teaching, the *Istituto per le scienze religiose* (Bologna) started shaping Vatican II historiography. From the very outset of the *History of Vatican II*-project, as early as December 1988, Alberigo and his colleagues insisted on the interpretation of the council within the framework of an *histoire événementielle*.¹¹ Volumes such as *L’evento e le decisioni* and *Per la storicizzazione del Vaticano II*¹²—although far from manifesting a single point of view—tended to contribute to Alberigo’s hermeneutical preferences as developed in his article “Critères herméneutiques pour une histoire de Vatican II.”¹³ In interpreting Vatican II the focus now lay on the council as a moment of discontinuity in recent church history, a focus attributable to several factors.

On the one hand, the newly available sources were predominantly those documenting the role of the so-called council majority. These sources tended to direct scholars toward a hermeneutical stress on rupture rather than on continuity. Such a tendency foregrounds certain events and terminology (e.g., John XXIII’s opening speech for the council, the decision to set up a mixed commission on revelation during the council’s first session, and the demand for *aggiornamento*) as the keys for understanding the entire conciliar process. On the other hand, one notices a growing awareness among commentators of the fact that conciliar documents were compromise texts¹⁴ and that, as such, they could lead to conflicting interpretations. And so I arrive at the most recent controversy.

Since about the year 2000, the problem of finding an apt hermeneutic for Vatican II has shifted into an atmosphere of controversy, due to the ques-

¹¹ On this point see John W. O’Malley, “Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) 3–33. This article was republished, along with contributions of Joseph Komonchak, Stephen Schloesser, and Neil Ormerod in *Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?* ed. David G. Schultenover (New York: Continuum, 2008). See also John O’Malley’s just-published one-volume history of Vatican II, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2008).

¹² Maria Teresia Fattori and Alberto Melloni, eds., *L’evento e le decisioni: Studi sulle dinamiche del Vaticano II*, Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose, n.s. 20 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Giuseppe Alberigo and Alberto Melloni, eds., *Per la storicizzazione del Vaticano II* (Bologna, 1993), a special issue of *Cristianesimo nella storia* 13 (1992). Both collections of articles display a variety of not-entirely congruent hermeneutical options.

¹³ Giuseppe Alberigo, “Critères herméneutiques pour une histoire de Vatican II,” in *À la veille du concile Vatican II: Vota et réactions en Europe et dans le catholicisme oriental*, *Instrumenta Theologica* 9, ed. Mathijs Lambrigts and Claude Soetens (Leuven: Peeters, 1992) 12–33.

¹⁴ See Laurent Villemin, “L’herméneutique de Vatican II: Enjeux d’avenir,” in *Vatican II et la théologie: Perspectives pour le XXIème siècle*, *Cogitatio fidei* 254, ed. Philippe Bordeyne and Laurent Villemin (Paris: Cerf, 2006) 247–62, esp. 247–49: “prendre comme un fait, pour son interprétation, que le texte de Vatican II est un compromis” (247).

tioning of the Bologna approach. Building upon Faggioli's analysis, I propose to discuss a third phase of conciliar reception.¹⁵ In the wake of a broad debate among scholars on the necessity of a retheologizing of the council, critical assessments were offered by a number of historians and authors connected to the Roman Curia directed against the Bologna approach. Where the Bologna scholars held that the council should be described as a discontinuous moment in recent church history, the opposite is being claimed by authors such as Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, Professor Walter Brandmüller, and Cardinal Camillo Ruini. Marchetto has written various articles and books on the reception of Vatican II, consistently claiming that Catholic historians must approach history from the viewpoint of salvation history, thereby installing a systematic-theological principle as the basis for historiographical research.¹⁶ When it comes to church history, such a principle entails insisting on the continuous development of Catholic doctrine leaving sparse room for discontinuity or rupture, let alone contradiction.¹⁷ In large part, however, Marchetto's writings on Vatican II consist of critical reviews of historical studies,¹⁸ in which he proves himself a perennial critic of the Bologna endeavors.¹⁹ Marchetto's position seems

¹⁵ Of course, since 2000 much more has been published than the writings of Marchetto *cum suis*. Excellent works have been devoted to Vatican II, for example: Günther Wassilowsky, *Universales Heilssakrament Kirche: Karl Rahners Beitrag zur Ekklesiologie des II. Vatikanums*, Innsbrucker theologische Studien 59 (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2001); Massimo Faggioli, *Il vescovo e il concilio: Modello episcopale e aggiornamento al Vaticano II*, Testi e ricerche di scienze religiose, n.s. 36 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005); Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 2007). Among publications of primary source editions I would point to council diaries such as: *Yves Congar: Mon journal du concile*, 2 vols., ed. Éric Mahieu (Paris: Cerf, 2002); and *Henri de Lubac: Carnets du concile*, 2 vols., ed. Loïc Figueureux (Paris: Cerf, 2007).

¹⁶ After a diplomatic career as papal nuncio in Mauritius, Tanzania, and Belarus, Marchetto was appointed secretary to the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

¹⁷ See Agostino Marchetto, "Il Concilio Vaticano II: Considerazioni su tendenze ermeneutiche dal 1990 ad oggi," *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 38 (2000) 275–86; published simultaneously as "Das II. Vatikanische Konzil: Hermeneutische Tendenzen von 1990 bis heute," *Annuario historiae conciliorum* 32 (2000) 371–86.

¹⁸ Agostino Marchetto, *Chiesa e papato nella storia e nel diritto: 25 anni di studi critici*, Storia e attualità 16 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002); Agostino Marchetto, *Il Concilio Ecumenico Vaticano II: Contrappunto per la sua storia*, Storia e attualità 17 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005).

¹⁹ Routhier, *Vatican II: Herméneutique et réception* 326, lists the theologians who have attended to conciliar hermeneutics and writes: "J'ose à peine ranger dans cette catégorie les réflexions récentes d'A. Marchetto, qui ne proposent pas de critères herméneutiques, mais critiquent l'interprétation que donnent du concile certains historiens et théologiens."

to receive the support not only of Ruini but also of Brandmüller (who is both director and cofounder of the *Annuarium historiae conciliorum* and the President of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences).²⁰ Of course, the opposition between the Alberigo research group, on the one hand, and the Marchetto-Ruini-Brandmüller line, on the other, is not as clear-cut as I present it here.²¹ Many other and rather more nuanced approaches to the problematic have been offered in recent history. It is only for the sake of argument that I restrict myself to the conflict between Rome and Bologna. Even then I must add that no researcher in Alberigo’s group would have claimed that Vatican II was entirely discontinuous from past history just as scholars such as Brandmüller would hardly claim that Vatican II was entirely continuous. The main characterization of these two directions of thought is the mutual exclusivity of their presuppositions. The tensions between them rest both on their acceptance or their denial of historical reasoning with respect to salvation history, and on the question of what role historical-critical methodology ought to play in theology. Finally, it should be noted here that Benedict XVI has suggested a hermeneutic of “reform.” Although this suggestion may seem to offer a fruitful *via media*, his concept of reform within continuity draws heavily upon a systematic-theological generalization of history²² which, not unlike the position of Marchetto, always runs the risk of falling short of doing justice to the actual course of events. I cannot fully address this point here; suffice it to say that the pope’s suggestions deserve serious further study.²³

²⁰ See Camillo Ruini, *Nuovi segni dei tempi: Le sorti della fede nell’età dei mutamenti* (Milan: Mondadori, 2005).

²¹ Here Wicks is especially helpful. He observes that there is continuity in Vatican II on the level of the “great topics and convictions of earlier Church teaching,” yet there is a clear discontinuity between Vatican II and Pius XII, given that the council introduced various new formulations, such as “subsistit in” (“Questions and Answers” 7, Answer 11).

²² On Vatican II’s place in history, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. Sr. Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987) 367.

²³ On this see Ulrich Ruh, “Hermeneutik: Benedikt XVI. äußerte sich grundsätzlich zur Deutung des Konzils,” *Herder-Korrespondenz* 60 (2006) 58–59; Giovanni Marchesi, “Benedetto XVI e il Concilio Vaticano II,” *Civiltà Cattolica* 3736 (2006) 381–90; Mario Toso, “Benedetto XVI, grande interprete del Concilio Vaticano II,” in *“Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia”: Sui “sentieri” del Concilio Vaticano II*, ed. Manlio Sodi (Rome: LAS, 2007) 7–12. Recently the issue was thoroughly discussed by Joseph A. Komonchak, “Benedict XVI and the Interpretation of Vatican II,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 28 (2007) 323–38. See also the recent volume *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (New York: Oxford University, 2008), which presents itself as following Benedict XVI’s proposal of December 22, 2005.

THE GENESIS OF VATICAN II'S "SUBSISTIT IN"

In my second part I examine the debate at closer range. As indicated, the CDF's Responses call for a multilevel approach. On the macro-level, I hope I have clarified that they are to be read against the background of the ongoing debate regarding conciliar hermeneutics, an insight absent from the most recent commentaries. The Responses apparently promote and propagate a "hermeneutics of continuity," their opening question and answer sounding like this: "Did the Second Vatican Council *change* the Catholic doctrine on the Church? . . . The Second Vatican Council neither changed nor intended to change this doctrine, rather it developed, deepened and more fully explained it."²⁴ Even when admitting the notion of development of doctrine one finds in the Responses little appreciation for discontinuity (and certainly not contradiction) in church history. This reveals the underlying and very complex debate on the matter of defining the precise role, place, and function of historical thinking within Catholic theology.

At a second microlevel, then, the question remains as to how *subsistit in* is to be understood within the context of Vatican II and whether the CDF's interpretation remains valid from the viewpoint of historical-critical reconstruction. Put within the larger context as sketched above, the CDF appears to be not merely interested in the interpretation of *subsistit*, but rather uses *Lumen gentium* no. 8 as a *pars pro toto* in defence of its underlying hermeneutical principles. A recent statement of Benedict XVI to a plenary CDF meeting seems to sustain this option, although the pope's speech remains quite cautious in not presenting *subsistere* as *esse*.²⁵ However, this issue cannot be addressed without referring to the work of Karl Josef Becker and Alexandra von Teuffenbach. The viewpoints of these authors are closely connected, given that von Teuffenbach's doctoral dissertation on *Lumen gentium* no. 8—which offers an excellent overview of relevant primary sources—was written under Becker's direction. Von Teuffenbach and Becker defend a hermeneutic of continuity, albeit in a nuanced way. Their work is currently in the eye of the storm for, it seems, it has been adopted by the CDF.²⁶ Indeed, von Teuffenbach's disserta-

²⁴ CDF, Responses to Some Questions (emphasis added).

²⁵ Benedict XVI, Discorso ai partecipanti alla sessione plenaria della congregazione per la dottrina della fede, January 31, 2008.

²⁶ In this light we cannot, on the one hand, neglect Becker's role as a consultor to the CDF. On the other hand, it needs to be admitted that Becker was reserved about using John Paul II's *Ut unum sint* no. 11 on the Church of Christ being present in other Christian communities. Also he left no room for the use of *Unitatis redintegratio* no. 3 about these communities as "means of salvation," whereas the CDF's third response refers to both *Lumen gentium* no. 8 and *Unitatis redintegratio*

tion,²⁷ an article on *subsistit* written by Becker in 2005, and the CDF’s subsequent responses appear to be interconnected.²⁸ However, it remains to be determined to what extent their ideas about continuity affected their interpretation of Vatican II’s ecclesiology and, more specifically, of *subsistit in*.

I begin by carefully considering the reconstruction offered by von Teuffenbach (adopted by Becker) of the evolution of Vatican II’s use of *subsistere*, which is, to date, the most detailed and sound reconstruction.²⁹ The story runs as follows: in the initial conciliar document on the Church, the notion of the “Church of Christ” and the Roman Catholic Church were virtually identified.³⁰ Then, in fall 1963, during the council’s second session, the verb *esse* somehow was transformed into *subsistit*. The latter terminology would remain untouched until the promulgation of *Lumen gentium* in

no. 3, stating that the Spirit does not refrain from using the separated churches and communities as a means of salvation. See Karl Joseph Becker, “Ecclesia Christi—Ecclesia Catholica,” *Studia missionalia* 55 (2006) 63–83.

²⁷ Alexandra von Teuffenbach, *Die Bedeutung des subsistit in (LG 8): Zum Selbstverständnis der katholischen Kirche*, Theologie (München: Herbert Utz, 2002).

²⁸ Karl Joseph Becker, “An Examination of Subsistit in: A Profound Theological Perspective,” *L’Osservatore Romano* (weekly English edition), December 14, 2005, 11. Astonishing on this account is that the article by Becker draws substantially on von Teuffenbach’s work, yet never acknowledges it. Also interesting is Sullivan’s reaction to this article: “A Response to Karl Becker, S.J., on the Meaning of *Subsistit in*,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006) 395–409. This article was written before the publication of the Responses, yet it points toward the proof texts used by Becker, which a posteriori appear to be the same as those of the CDF’s responses and the ones used by von Teuffenbach.

²⁹ Becker was right to notice that in *Lumen gentium* no. 8 the use of *subsistere* did not imply its carrying the “ontological sense of the scholastics.” This rules out statements such as those by Joseph Ratzinger, “The Ecclesiology of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*,” in *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005) 123–52, at 147; and Cardinal Avery Dulles, “Letter to the Editor,” *America* 197.9 (October 1, 2007) 43. See Becker, “Ecclesia Christi” 79: “The Scholastics knew *subsistere*, but not *subsistere in*. And *subsistere* meant for them *existere in se, non in alio*.” On Ratzinger’s interpretation of the verb, see Paolo Gamberini, “‘Subsistit’ in Ecumenical Ecclesiology: J. Ratzinger and E. Jüngel,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 72 (2007) 61–73.

³⁰ For this draft see *Acta synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, I/4 (Vatican City: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970–[1978]) 15, where article 7 reads: “Docet igitur Sacra Synodus et sollemniter profitetur non esse nisi unicum veram Iesu Christi Ecclesiam, eam nempe quam in Symbolo unicum, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam celebramus, quam Salvator sibi in Cruce acquisivit sibi que tamquam corpus capiti et sponsam sponso coniunxit, quamque post resurrectionem suam Petro et Successoribus, qui sunt Romani Pontifices [sic], tradidit gubernandam; ideoque sola iure Catholica Romana nuncupatur Ecclesia.”

1965. Although some commentators have criticized von Teuffenbach's interpretation of historical facts, her overall reconstruction has met with general approval.³¹

In reaction to von Teuffenbach and Becker, I will consider historical details that enlighten our comprehension of Vatican II's text on the relationship between the Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church: During the first session of the council, the doctrinal schemas drafted by the preparatory Theological Commission (presided over by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, with Sebastian Tromp as secretary) were severely criticized. Much of this criticism was influenced by the drafting of so-called "replacement schemas," often featuring a less Scholastic-, manualist-inspired theology. One of these replacement drafts was written by the Leuven theologian Gerard Philips, who in December 1963 would become the adjunct secretary of the Doctrinal Commission. Contrary to what von Teuffenbach and Becker implicitly proposed, it should be noted that Philips did not play *cavalier seul* in drafting the text. Rather, he was asked to do so by Cardinal Leo Jozef Suenens, and consulted other theologians such as Congar, Carlo Colombo, Karl Rahner, Joseph Ratzinger, and Gustave Thils. Philips wrote the draft in October 1962 and translated it into French the following month. The origins of this draft can be retraced on the basis of Philips' personal notes taken during the council.³² His draft in its second French version contains the following passage:

This heavenly church, animated, unified and sanctified by the Spirit, is a community of grace and love, set up in this world as an organized society, *namely* the Catholic Church which we call Roman.³³

³¹ See, among others, Günther Wassilowsky, "Zur Relevanz historischer Konzilsforschung für die Interpretation des Ökumenismusdekrets," in *Unitatis Redintegratio: 40 Jahre Ökumenismusdekret: Erbe und Auftrag*, ed. Wolfgang Thönissen (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2005) 19–32, at 31–32; Karl Lehmann, "Zum Selbstverständnis des Katholischen: Zur theologischen Rede vom Kirche," Eröffnungs-Referat des Vorsitzenden der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz bei der Herbst-Vollversammlung der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz am 24. September 2007 in Fulda, http://www.dbk.de/imperia/md/content/pressemitteilungen/2007-2/2007-068_2-eroeffnungs-referat-lehmann_anhang.pdf (accessed September 15, 2008); and Wicks, "Questions and Answers" 2–8.

³² Karim Schelkens, *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips, secrétaire adjoint de la commission doctrinale*, Instrumenta Theologica 29, intro. Leo Declerck (Leuven: Peeters, 2006).

³³ See Archive Philips 434: "Cette Église céleste, animée, unifiée et sanctifiée par l'Esprit, est une communauté de grâce et d'amour, constituée en ce monde comme une société organisée, à savoir l'Église Catholique que nous appelons Romaine."

This, however, is not the translation of Philips' initial draft, which contained merely this: "In revelatione enim tum 'Ecclesia' tum 'Corpus Christi' non de sola communitate in terris peregrinante intelliguntur, sed Ecclesia est in perpetuum duratura et in gloria consummanda. Communitas in terris identica est cum Ecclesia

This draft reads: *à savoir*/namely. No verbs are used, that is, neither *esse* nor *subsistere*. Moreover, one should refrain from a hasty reading of this phrase in terms of a full identification since Philips’s personal notes on this particular phrase—dating from November 1962—contain the following comment, already inviting a certain openness in the relationship between the church of the New Testament (as professed in the Creed) and its concrete visible appearance in the Catholic Church, due to an ecumenical awareness:

By inserting the passage “the Catholic Church which we call Roman,” we wish to indicate where the true church is found, without putting on the same level the properties inherent in the church—as indicated in the Creed—and the church’s concrete designation by reason of its union with the Roman Pontiff.³⁴

Philips’s schema *De ecclesia* was not discussed in the aula during the first session. Consequently, the phrase *à savoir* evolved during the first intersession. On February 26, 1963, a subcommission of seven bishops within the Doctrinal Commission adopted Philips’s draft as the basis of a revised schema for the council’s next session.³⁵ Thus, *à savoir* was the first step toward *Lumen gentium*’s *subsistit*. Nevertheless, it was decided that, in its further redaction, the commission would bear in mind drafts made by

coelesti, cuius realem anticipationem constituit” (Archive Philips 419). The Latin original of Philips’s French version is found in Archive Philips 421, Schema constitutionis de Ecclesia 6, art. 6: “Haec igitur Ecclesia coelestis, a Spiritu Sancto animata, unificata et sanctificata, est communitas gratiae et amoris, quae his in terris in societate organice constituta, Ecclesia nempe Catholica quae Romana est, velut incarnatur, ut fide, spe et caritate homines ad regnum coeleste in gloria Dei perducatur.”

³⁴ Archive Philips 433: “Par l’incise ‘l’Église Catholique que nous appelons Romaine’, nous voulons indiquer où se trouve la véritable Église, sans mettre sur le même plan les propriétés inhérentes à l’Église, énumérées dans le Credo et sa désignation concrète par l’union au Pontife Romain.” Precisely this remark will be the reason why Philips changed (in handwriting) the “que nous appelons Romaine” into “à savoir l’église catholique sous la conduite du Pontife Romain et des Évêques en union avec lui.”

³⁵ Becker states that Philips’s draft was “finished on February 26 and handed to a subcommittee of the Doctrinal Commission as a basis for the work of the Council” (Becker, “Ecclesia Christi” 67). This is not entirely accurate, since Philips’s text was ready earlier (see Archive Philips 592). Rather, at the February 26 meeting the subcommittee decided to use Philips’s draft as a basis for further redaction. On this meeting see also Bp. André Marie Charue’s council notes (Leo Declerck and Claude Soetens, eds., *Carnets conciliaires de l’évêque de Namur A.M. Charue*, Cahiers de la Revue théologique de Louvain 32 [Louvain-la-Neuve: Faculté de théologie, 2000] 90–91): “Je fais admettre Philips comme président du groupe des experts. Y sont nommés sept periti, un par évêque: Philips (Namur), Rahner (Vienna), Daniélou (Toulouse), Gagnebet (Browne), Naud (Montréal), Balic (Parente). J’ai obtenu de Mgr. Schröffer qu’il prenne Thils. Ils ont comme mission: 1) Donner un texte; 2) Base Philips.” See also Schelkens, *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips* 93: “Celle-ci a décidé . . . qu’on prendrait comme base mon texte (vu que les autres projets, même celui rédigé par Mgr. Parente, en étaient en quelque sorte dépendants).”

Archbishop Pietro Parente, and also those prepared by theologians from Chile, France, and Germany. In March 1963, the Doctrinal Commission had its plenary meeting, at which time the Philips draft was discussed and no changes were made. Hence, in March 1963, in anticipation of the council's second session to begin the following September, a hastily made revision of Philips's draft incorporating terms and formulations from other drafts mentioned above is sent to the Coordinating Commission. No. 7 of this draft reads:

Thus this Church, true mother and teacher of all, constituted and ordained in this world as a society, *is* the Catholic Church, directed by the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops in communion with him, although outside its full structure many elements of sanctification can be found, which, as elements proper to the Church of Christ, impel toward unity.³⁶

For the first time a clear identification of the true Church of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church is present, and there is no evidence whatsoever of discussion on this point. It appears that Philips's *à savoir*, which had been the translation of the Latin *nempe*, was simply altered to suit the construction of the entire sentence, and, as such, the text would be distributed—for the first time ever—among the council fathers for discussion in the aula. Nevertheless, the use of *esse* was not, in Philips's mind, a crucial issue, otherwise the French version of the text would have already contained the verb *être*.³⁷ In the first days of October 1963 the text was discussed in the aula. According to both von Teuffenbach and Becker, no observations were aimed directly against the use of *est* in *De ecclesia* no.7, implying that *est* was generally accepted by the council fathers. Although several reactions are mentioned in von Teuffenbach's work, they did not deal with *est* as such and one after another were discarded as not crucial.³⁸

³⁶ *Acta synodalia* II/1, 219–20, art. 7: De Ecclesia in terris peregrinante 11 reads: "Haec igitur Ecclesia, vera omnium Mater et Magistra, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, *est* Ecclesia catholica, a Romano Pontifice et Episcopis in eius communione directa, licet extra totalem compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis inveniri possint, quae ut res Ecclesiae Christi propriae, ad unitatem impellunt" (emphasis original).

³⁷ Regarding Philips's draft, see von Teuffenbach, *Bedeutung des subsistit* in 320–25.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 358–62, where interventions by the following are mentioned: Jan Van Dodewaard, Augustin Bea, Raúl Silva Henríquez, Arthur Elchinger, Marcus McGrath, and the Italian episcopal conference. Of these, only Henríquez is discussed at length: he is said to have wrongly connected the question of church membership with the identification-theory, and subsequently argued that the identification cannot be upheld: "Die Frage der Gleichstellung scheint jedoch für Silva Henríquez gekoppelt mit der Frage der Mitgliedschaft, mit der es jedoch nicht verbunden ist" (361).

At this point, some historiographical remarks are required. After the debate in the aula in early October, the schema was sent back to the Doctrinal Commission for revision on the basis of criticisms. Within this Commission, it was Subcommittee I (responsible for the revision of the schema's chapter 1 and for the revision of biblical quotations) headed by Bishop André Marie Charue that was responsible for adapting the text according to the wishes of the council fathers. In his excellent study on the case, Francis Sullivan mistakenly put Gerard Philips on the subcommittee.³⁹ Nevertheless, Philips had influence through his file-card system. Every intervention of council fathers, oral or written, was entered onto file cards and ordered by paragraph to give Philips an overview of who wanted what. From this database (kept in the Leuven archives) I can prove that there were more reactions than those mentioned by von Teuffenbach and Becker, which is quite interesting, given that the subcommittee responsible for revising chapter 1 had used these file cards. So, in addition to the few observations discussed by von Teuffenbach, some others should be mentioned. A first set of additional responses was offered by council fathers: such as Cardinal Jaime de Barros Camara, the Episcopal Conference of Venezuela, Agostino Sepinski, Cardinal Thomas Cooray, Bp. Herculanus Van der Burgt, Bp. Attilio Barneschi, and Bp. Arturo Tabera Araoz. Admittedly, their interventions do not seem to have raised many difficulties; however, another intervention does seem important. Subcommittee I included these members: Bp. Charue, Bp. Georges Pelletier, Bp. Jan van Dodewaard, and (later on) Bp. Joseph Maria Heuschen.⁴⁰ Therefore, I should point to the intervention made in the Aula by Bp. van Dodewaard of Haarlem,⁴¹ on October 2:

In no. 7, dealing with the pilgrim Church on earth, the visible and invisible elements of the Church are not elaborated in a satisfactory way. The text does not bring out sufficiently the sacramental unity existing between the community of love and grace and the structured set of means of salvation, nor is it clear enough on the distinction between these two. Therefore I would like to change no. 7 as follows: . . . This Holy Synod believes and solemnly professes that the Church of Jesus Christ, which we

³⁹ See Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker” 399: “there is good evidence that Philips and his subcommittee saw those terms as equivalent.”

⁴⁰ For an account of its members and sessions, see Archive Charue, Vatican II: Subcommittee Theologica I (Archive Charue is located in the archives of the diocese of Namur, Belgium). The subcommittee's *periti* were Beda Rigaux, Lucien Cerfaux, Joseph Clifford Fenton, Salvatore Garofalo, and Giorgio Castellino. See also Alberto Melloni, “The Beginning of the Second Period: The Great Debate on the Church,” in *History of Vatican II* 3:110–11. An official account of the subcommittee's members is given in *Acta synodalia* II/1 75 and V/2 484.

⁴¹ Becker, “An Examination of *Subsistit in*” n. 31, where van Dodewaard is mentioned.

celebrate in the Creed as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, is unique. . . . This universal means of salvation *is found* in the Catholic Church, directed by the Roman Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him. Nevertheless, outside its full structure many elements of truth and sanctification are to be found.⁴²

Precisely to safeguard the elements of truth and sanctification in the other churches it is necessary to distinguish between the Church of Christ as the *medium universale salutis* and the Catholic Church as its concrete form of realization in view of being a universal medium for salvation. Therefore van Dodewaard claimed that *hoc medium universale salutis invenitur in Ecclesia Catholica*. This comment on the full identification is seriously concerned to safeguard the ecumenical openness of the phrase.⁴³ Precisely this intervention was discussed and later accepted by Subcommission I of the Theological Commission in November of that year, resulting in the new article drafted by the same van Dodewaard⁴⁴: “Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, *adest* in Ecclesia Catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis inveniantur.”⁴⁵

The subcommission states that the Church of Christ is found in the Catholic Church, yet it changed *invenire* to *adesse*. The main reason for this change was not the need for a more ontological terminology; rather it was the simple fact that the subcommission wanted to avoid repetition—the verb *invenire* had been used twice in van Dodewaard’s proposal.⁴⁶ In its

⁴² *Acta Synodalia* II/1 433–35: “Sub n.7, ubi agitur de Ecclesia in terris peregrinante, elementum visibile et invisibile Ecclesiae minus feliciter elaboratur. In textu non satis constat unitas sacramentalis inter amoris et gratiae communitatem et compaginem mediorum salutis, et, ex altera parte, distinctio inter duplicem illum respectum. Proinde n. 7 uti sequitur mutare velim: . . . Credit Sacra Synodus et sollemniter profiteretur unicum esse Iesu Christi Ecclesiam, quam in Symbolo unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam celebramus. . . . Hoc medium universale salutis *invenitur* in Ecclesia catholica, a Romano Pontifice et episcopis in eius communione directa, licet extra totalem compaginem elementa plura veritatis et sanctificationis *inveniri* possint” (emphasis original). Text also found in Archive Edward Schillebeeckx, 8E. The conciliar archive is kept in the Leuven Center for the Study of the Second Vatican Council.

⁴³ Lehmann repeatedly stressed this point: “Zum Selbstverständnis des Katholischen” 7–8, 11–12, 14.

⁴⁴ Archive Philips 970. In *Relatio Submissio I* (drafted by Rigaux) 3, we read with regard to the entire art. no. 7 (11) that “textus novus huius articuli ab E. van Dodewaard confectus est.”

⁴⁵ See Archive Philips 971, which contains the draft of art. no. 8 resulting out of Submissio I’s discussion, and annotated by Rigaux (*relator* for that subcommission). In the same Archive reference, we have a *relatio* by Philips based on Rigaux’s report on the subcommission.

⁴⁶ Archive Charue, Vatican Council II: Submissio Theologica I.

accompanying *relatio* for the council fathers, the Doctrinal Commission explains the selection of *adesse* as a better means of showing that the Church—which is perpetually united with Christ and his salvific actions—is concretely *found* on this earth in the Catholic Church.⁴⁷ Also due to the redaction of other elements of the schema, this had now become paragraph 8 instead of 7. All of the above implies that Cardinal Karl Lehmann was correct in insisting on the fact that the *subsistit*-phrase is intimately linked to, and should be read in the light of, the statements on the elements of the Church, and it underscores his statement that *subsistere* implies a certain “disclosure” in the relationship between the Christian church and the Catholic Church. One could already make the same claim with regard to *invenire* and *adesse*, which, to the subcommission, appeared to be interchangeable.

This conclusion calls for some critical remarks on von Teuffenbach and Becker’s interpretation of the further redaction phases of the draft. After the discussion of *De ecclesia* in the aula and its revision (*est* to *adest*) by Charue’s Subcommittee I,⁴⁸ the text was again debated by the plenary Doctrinal Commission. At that level, on November 26, 1963, secretary Tromp proposed a change from *adest* to *subsistit* in response to a proposal by Heribert Schaaf to return to *esse*.⁴⁹ In fact, the issue did not seem to raise any further problem, and it took the commission only a few minutes to come to the final redaction of this now disputed phrase: “Haec Ecclesia, in hoc mundo ut societas constituta et ordinata, subsistit in Ecclesia Catholica, a successore Petri et Episcopis in eius communione gubernata, licet extra eius compaginem elementa plura sanctificationis et veritatis inveniantur, qua ut dona Ecclesiae Christi propria, ad unitatem catholicam impellunt.”⁵⁰

However, it is interesting that the *Relatio Generalis* of 1964 motivated the change from *est* to *subsistit* in exactly the same way as the earlier

⁴⁷ Archive Philips 971, *relatio* no. 8: “De Ecclesia visibili simul ac spirituali (= antiquus no. 7): Intentio autem est ostendere, Ecclesiam, cuius descripta est intima et arcana natura, qua cum Christo Eiusque opere in perpetuum unitur, his in terris concrete inveniri in Ecclesia Catholica. Haec autem Ecclesia empirica mysterium revelat, sed non sine umbris, donec ad plenum lumen adducatur.”

⁴⁸ Here too Becker is wrong in claiming that both the change from *est* to *adest* and from *adest* to *subsistit* came from members of the Commission, and not from the bishops, since van Dodewaard’s intervention (as a crucial step between *est* and *adest*) had indeed been a public one. See Becker, “An Examination of Subsistit in” 11.

⁴⁹ Again, von Teuffenbach’s reconstruction of this change (*Die Bedeutung des subsistit in* 382–86) is excellent.

⁵⁰ *Acta synodalia* III/1 176–78.

change from *est* to *invenire/adesse*.⁵¹ Becker seems to imply that this was due to a redactorial slip by Philips:

The text of the *Relatio Generalis* still refers to the first modification (from *est* to *adest*). In all likelihood, therefore, the redactor had not noticed that the last modification introduced by the Commission (from *adest* to *subsistit*) should have required a revision of the text of the *Relatio* corresponding to the new terminology.⁵²

It is, however, highly unlikely that Philips would have made such a mistake.⁵³ On the contrary, I should stress that the continuity in the motivation for the change from *est* to *adest* and then from *adest* to *subsistit*, combined with the importance of van Dodewaard's *invenire*, signifies that all three verbs: *invenire*, *adesse*, and *subsistere* were used to elaborate a distinction between the Church of Christ and its concrete realization in the Catholic Church. The crucial move in this redaction history would be pre-

⁵¹ *Acta synodalia* III/1167 offers the *textus prior* and the *textus emendatus*, containing the *est* and *subsistit*, whereby the *textus emendatus* italicizes *subsistit*. On p. 176, the clause quoted above is repeated: "Intentio autem est ostendere," followed by the passage (italics original):

Ideo magis dilucida *subdivisio* proponitur, in qua successiva agitur de sequentibus:

- a. Mysterium Ecclesiae *adest* et manifestatur *in concreta societate*. Coetus autem visibilis et elementum spirituale *non sunt duae res*, sed una realitas complexa, complectens divina et humana, media salutis et fructus salutis.
- b. Ecclesia est unica, et his in terris *adest* in Ecclesia Catholica, licet extra eam inveniantur elementa ecclesialia.
- c. Manifestatio mysterii in Ecclesia catholica fit simul in virtute et debilitate, scilicet etiam in conditione paupertatis ac persecutionis, peccati et purificationis, ut Ecclesia assimiletur Christo, qui tamen fuit sine peccato.
- d. Ecclesia autem omnes illas difficultates devincit per virtutem Christi et caritatem, qua mysterium licet sub umbris revelat, donec ad plenum lucem perveniat.

⁵² Becker, "An Examination of Subsistit in" 11. The same argument is found in Becker, "Ecclesia Christi" 81.

⁵³ Both Declerck, principal archivist of the Philips papers, and I as editor of Philips's council diaries would stress the fact that Philips purposely left this motivation unaltered. Also on this point see Declerck's note in "*Dignitatis Humanae*": *La libertà religiosa in Paolo VI: Colloquio internazionale di studio: Brescia 24–26 settembre 2004*, Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto Paolo VI 29, ed. Renato Papetti and Rodolfo Rossi (Brescia: Istituto Paolo VI, 2007) 316–17: "Dans le nouveau De Ecclesia, soumis aux Pères à la 2e session, on pouvait lire encore (dans le no.7): Haec igitur ecclesia est Ecclesia Catholica. Parce que plusieurs Pères avaient critiqué cette expression, la sous-commission I de la commission doctrinale avait proposé d'écrire 'adest in'. Quand ce texte de la sous-commission fut discutée à la commission doctrinale plénière, le 26 novembre 1963, l'expert allemand H. Schauf voulait retourner à 'est'. C'est alors que le P. Tromp proposa d'écrire 'subsistit in'. Tout le monde était rapidement d'accord. Remarquons que la Relatio, qui accompagnait le nouveau texte, n'a pas été changé et disait: 'Ecclesia est unica et his in terris adest in Ecclesia catholica, licet extra eam inveniantur elementa ecclesialia.'"

cisely the council’s distantiating from a full identification of the Church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church instigated by van Dodewaard’s step from *esse* toward *invenire*.⁵⁴ The intermediate changes from *invenire* to *adesse* and from *adesse* to *subsistere* are less important since they all bear the same mark: an ecumenically motivated awareness of the importance to avoid a description of the relationship between the universal Church of Christ and the Catholic Church in terms of exclusivity.⁵⁵

CLOSING REMARKS

First, I have tried to make it clear that more is at stake here than the interpretation of a single verb. On a macrolevel the *subsistit*-debate cannot be properly understood without seeing that the underlying questions harken back to questions raised already during preconconciliar crises such as the Modernist and the *nouvelle théologie* debates. The way Catholic theology deals with its own history is at stake here.

The macrodebate has its consequences for the microdebate. The fact that various theologians tend to equate the meaning of *subsistit* and *est* when interpreting Vatican II clearly follows from their particular hermeneutical position. Becker and von Teuffenbach connect the shift from *esse* to *subsistere* exclusively with Sebastian Tromp.⁵⁶ Two things should be pointed out here. First, as a closer look at the origins of “*esse*” in Philips’s drafts reveals that it did not have the weight given to it by these authors. Second, the strict interpretation of *subsistit* as *est* based on an insistence on Tromp’s personal theological views is far too narrow from both a methodological and theological point of view. Apart from the historical evidence I have offered against that case, this simply cannot be maintained as a proper way of dealing with conciliar documents. To connect conciliar teachings with particular persons is to lose sight of the very nature of the conciliar magisterium: such a line of inquiry loses sight of the fact that council documents are approved through the voting of the entire episcopal body of a church. Thus, apart from any hermeneutical debate, it should be properly taken

⁵⁴ See Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker” 399–401.

⁵⁵ I would stress the fact that in the contemporary debate on *subsistit* too little attention is being given to the general conciliar debate on the *membra ecclesiae*. In this regard one should read the words of Cardinal Bea in his “Il cattolico di fronte ai problemi dell’unione dei cristiani,” *Civiltà Cattolica* 112/1 (1961) 113–29. Contrary to what present-day authors Becker and von Teuffenbach imply, the German cardinal stated that the separated brethren are “per dirlo anche in maniera positiva, in virtù del battesimo stesso, *soggetti e membri della Chiesa*. Anche questo effetto del battesimo non viene tolto dall’eresia e dallo scisma” (125). Interesting notes on this debate are also found in Willebrands’s council diary.

⁵⁶ The same methodology is adopted by Cardinal Avery Dulles in his “Nature, Mission, and Structure of the Church,” in *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* 28.

into account that the bishops ultimately voted for *subsistere* and not for *esse*, and that this final vote implies their agreement with the arguments offered in the last *relatio*.⁵⁷

On the other hand, this vote does not imply that *Lumen gentium* no. 8 should be interpreted all too freely. In agreement with Lehmann's statements on the subject, I ought to point out that, after the November 1963 change to *subsistit*, theologians such as Yves Congar, Pierre Duprey, and Henri-Marie Féret tried to move the council to adopt a more open stance, but without success.⁵⁸

Another interesting account of the text is that by Charles Moeller, a peritus during the council and then secretary to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Commenting on *Lumen gentium* no. 8 he writes in 1977 to Cardinal Suenens:

You give the impression that the same theologians are affirming that the Church of Christ subsists in the same way in the Anglican Communion and the Protestant Churches as it does in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. If they [theologians] do this, they surely are not faithful to the thought of Vatican II.⁵⁹

All of the above leaves us with a conciliar doctrine that is balanced and, precisely for that reason, of great interest for today's theological effort. Catholic theologians are to remain between the Scylla of stating that the Church of Christ subsists in other churches as it does in the Catholic Church, and the Charybdis of claiming that the Church of Christ is exhausted in the Catholic Church, a claim that would falsely interpret Vatican II's doctrine on the elements of the church and of church membership.⁶⁰ To

⁵⁷ See Sullivan, "A Response to Karl Becker" 402; and the account in Otto Hermann Pesch, *The Ecumenical Potential of the Second Vatican Council*, Père Marquette Lecture (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2006), where the author stated that "contra factum non valet argumentum" (40).

⁵⁸ Their efforts succeeded in that Patriarch Maximos IV handed in several *modi* on the issue only to have them denied. See Archive Philips 1823–1824 (Annexe III); and Yves Congar, *Mon journal du concile* 2:88–89, 131, 133, 140, 230–31.

⁵⁹ "Vous donnez l'impression que les mêmes théologiens affirment que l'Église du Christ subsiste de la même manière dans la Communion anglicane et les Églises protestantes que dans l'Église catholique et l'Église orthodoxe. Si certains le font, ce faisant ils ne sont sûrement pas fidèles à la pensée de Vatican II." Charles Moeller to Leo Jozef Suenens, July 4 1977, Archive Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens, Private Papers, box 40 (in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Mechelen-Brussels, Belgium).

⁶⁰ See also the International Theological Commission's publication of *Themata selecta de ecclesiologia occasione XX anniversarii conclusionis Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, Documenta 13 (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985) 50–53, esp. 50: "De facto, necessarium est perspicere unitatem theologicam Ecclesiae et pluralitatem historicam Communionum christianarum. . . . Concilium sibi proposuit simul statuere praesentiam Ecclesiae Christi in Ecclesia catholica et exsistentiam, extra

safeguard against this interpretation, I endorse the apt translation of *subsistit* given by Philips, which accords with the two *Relationes* I discussed above. He was, after all, the key author of *Lumen gentium*; he deliberately rejected extreme options⁶¹ and, at the end of the day, declared himself satisfied with the approved document.⁶² Significantly, in his commentary on the Constitution Philips remained faithful to van Dodewaard’s intention, writing: “The text does not state ‘the Church of Christ is the Catholic community’; it even leaves out the adjective ‘Roman,’ which figures in the Tridentine profession of faith. . . . One may presume that much ink will flow over the Latin expression ‘*subsistit in*’ (the Church of Christ is found in the Catholic Church).”⁶³

visibilia Ecclesiae catholicae saepta, elementorum seu bonorum spiritualium, per quae Ecclesia Christi aedificatur et vivificatur.” Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, while head of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, expressed a similar view. In a discourse delivered at the “National Workshop for Christian Unity” in Atlanta, in May 1987, published in Johannes Willebrands, *Una sfida ecumenica: La nuova Europa*, Koinonia 1 (Verucchio: Pazzini, 1995) 83–98, Willebrands stated the following on *subsistit*: “Nella formula ispirata dalla Humani Generis e soprattutto dalla Mystici Corporis, l’est era esclusivo. . . . *Subsistit in*, al contrario vuole indicare che la Chiesa, che nel Credo profesiamo una, santa, cattolica ed apostolica, si trova in questo mondo nella Chiesa Cattolica, pur oltrepassando i limiti visibili di quest’ultima.”

⁶¹ On the schema De Ecclesia and its development in 1963, Philips wrote in his journal: “Je ne pourrai donner satisfaction ni à la gauche, ni à la droite, et je suis exposé aux coups des deux côtés. Mais les gens qui m’entourent mettent leur confiance en moi, et petit à petit les autres aussi sont impressionnés par mon exposé paisible” (Schelkens, *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips* 99).

⁶² On May 24, 1965, Philips wrote: “Quand je relis maintenant *Lumen gentium*, j’ai moi aussi, comme le dit Mgr. Parente, l’impression que ‘È però una bella pagina!’” (Schelkens, *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips* 142).

⁶³ “Le texte ne porte pas: L’Église du Christ est la communauté catholique; de même il omet l’adjectif ‘romaine’ qui figure dans la profession de foi tridentine. . . . Il est à présumer que l’expression latine: *subsistit in* (L’Église du Christ se trouve dans la Catholica) fera couler des flots d’encre” (Philips, *L’Église et son mystère au IIème Concile du Vatican* 1:119).