

George Kalantzis and Marc Cortez, eds. *Come, Let Us Eat Together: Sacraments and Christian Unity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. 243 pages. \$18.19.

If Katherine Sonderegger is right in describing the current state of ecumenical work as standing on Mount Nebo “spying that land of unity” but without ever crossing the Jordan, then *Come, Let Us Eat Together* offers a significant scouting report of the specific challenges, possibilities, and pathways toward the promised land (112). Featuring 13 essays written by scholars from Catholic, Orthodox, Mainline Protestant, and Evangelical perspectives and edited by George Kalantzis and Marc Cortez, *Come, Let us Eat Together* reflects the proceedings and papers from the 2017 Wheaton College Theology Conference. Marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the conference provided space for presentations focused on two issues not always at the forefront of evangelical theology: the sacraments, and visible church unity. The resulting volume is both painfully honest and provocatively hopeful.

Several essays cover the familiar terrain of ecumenical impasse with regard to Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant sacramental theology. These essays clarify for an evangelical audience the immovable barriers to sacramental unity and full communion. For Thomas G. Weinandy, fundamental differences between Catholic and Protestant understandings of ordination reveal a vast gulf between the two communities at the Lord’s Table. Protestants, Weinandy laments, will not say “Amen” to the priest operating *in persona Christi* in the Eucharist, and so the table remains divided. Exploring possibilities for sacramental unity from an Orthodox perspective, Bradley Nassif repeats Metropolitan Kallistos Ware’s insistence that Christian reunion must be preceded by full agreement in the faith. Starting from what he calls a “Eucharistic ecclesiology,” Nassif suggests that the problem of ecclesiological division is centrally a problem of Eucharistic division, for “the bread creates the body” (99). Claiming both historical continuity and practical integrity, Nassif calls Protestants and Catholics back to the early church fathers, and into the Orthodox fold. While honest and clear, such essays offer few glimpses of unity and focus more on the obstacles keeping ecumenists on Mt. Nebo.

Another set of essays engage the biblical witness to the Eucharist. Amy Peeler explores Paul’s instruction to a divided Corinthian church, emphasizing the Christocentric and cruciform elements of the practice. Cherith Fee Nordling connects narratives of ascension to the practice of Eucharist to clarify the eschatological tension displayed in the practice of a divided church, while Matthew Levering identifies a similar focus on the agency of the resurrected Christ in the Emmaus narrative of Luke 24. These essays tend to clarify the contradictions of current practice—it is the one Christ who hosts us at the one table—but fall short of any proposal for Eucharistic unity in a divided church. They richly describe the land of unity but do not illuminate a path forward.

However, when authors situate themselves in the spaces between traditions, theologies, and practices, *Come, Let Us Eat Together* offers cautious ecumenical hope. D. Stephen Long, for example, interrogates his own journey from a United Brethren baptism to inclusion in the Methodist Church to clarify the “practical messiness” of any ecclesiology (68). Cautioning against idealist understandings of church and sacrament, Long articulates an Anabaptist vision of catholicity. D. Zac Niringiye similarly situates questions of unity in the contextual and political dimensions of ecclesial practice and theology. He describes Anglican and Catholic dialogue in Uganda to clarify how the political and nationalist divisions of European Christendom were exported into his own context and mapped onto local ethnic divisions. He concludes that initial

steps of ecclesial and political cooperation witness to unity that is not yet possible at the Eucharistic table.

In the closing chapters of the book, Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen offer theologically creative approaches to bridge ecclesial traditions. Gavrilyuk reimagines Orthodox Eucharistic theology in light of eschatological hope, suggesting, along with Sergei Bulgakov, a “dogmatic minimalism” for shared participation in light of God’s promised unity for the church (174). Kärkkäinen situates the problem of sacramental unity within the question of ecclesial recognition, demonstrating how the Protestant concern for “*pure* gospel and *right* administration of sacraments” can offer a constructive means for mutual recognition across ecclesial traditions (229). While not charting a whole path down from Mt. Nebo, these essays do provoke readers into new patterns of thought and action.

As one might expect from a book of essays based on a conference, *Come, Let Us Eat Together* unevenly engages the central question of ecclesial and sacramental unity. This means that those who seek a collaborative and comprehensive vision for church unity may struggle to build connections between the disparate proposals. But for those hoping to understand the problems and possibilities of this question from across the ecumenical spectrum, *Come, Let Us Eat Together* can be a rich partner in conversation.

Scott J. Hagley, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA