



The Church as Societas Perfecta in the Schemata of Vatican I

Patrick Granfield

Church History, Vol. 48, No. 4. (Dec., 1979), pp. 431-446.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0009-6407%28197912%2948%3A4%3C431%3ATCASPI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>

Church History is currently published by American Society of Church History.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/asch.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Church as Societas Perfecta in the Schemata of Vatican I

PATRICK GRANFIELD

Over the course of a century, the self-understanding of the Roman Catholic Church has undergone a dramatic change, as seen, for example, in the contrasting ecclesiologies of the last two ecumenical councils. The following juxtaposition of representative texts from Vatican I and Vatican II reveals this radical shift.

Vatican I (Schemata)

“We must believe that the Church of Christ is a perfect society” (*Supremi pastoris*, 10).

“The Church is an assembly of the faithful of Christ, a true society, yet far holier than any human society” (*Tametsi Deus*, 2).

Vatican II (Constitution)

“The Church, by her relationship with Christ, is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind” (*Lumen Gentium*, 1).

“The Church, or in other words, the kingdom of Christ now present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God” (*Lumen Gentium*, 3).

These brief excerpts illustrate how Vatican I emphasized a societal view of the Church as contrasted with the sacramental perspective of Vatican II. To understand this development better, it is necessary to analyze the underlying societal ecclesiology of Vatican I. It should be noted, however, that such a theology of the church was not invented at Vatican I. In fact, it is commonplace today to characterize the ecclesiology that reigned from Trent to the middle of this century as perfect-society ecclesiology.¹ A survey of theological manuals and papal pronouncements over the last four hundred years indicates the centrality and the longevity of the societal idea. Its origins, however, are ancient, going back to the Fathers, especially Augustine.² By the Counter-Reformation period, theologians generally favored this descrip-

1. The two following examples are typical. Avery Dulles in *Models of the Church* (Garden City, N.Y., 1974) writes: “Catholics, therefore, are commonly thought to be committed to the thesis that the Church is most aptly conceived as a single, unified ‘perfect society’” (p. 8). Richard P. McBrien in *The Remaking of the Church* (New York, 1973) speaks of the pre-Vatican II period as one in which the Church saw itself “as an institutionalized *societas perfecta*” (p. 5).
2. For a concise treatment of the use of “society” in ecclesiology see Francis X. Lawlor, “Society (in Theology),” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 13:394–395.

Mr. Granfield is associate professor of systematic theology in The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

tion of the Church.³ Since that time it has developed systematically and gained almost universal acceptance in Roman Catholic circles.

My purpose in this article is to examine the concept of the Church as society in the documents of Vatican I. The term "society" does not appear in the final, approved text of the council. But it is a principal theme in two major schemata on the Church:⁴ *Supremi pastoris*, submitted by the Theological-Dogmatic Preparatory Commission and *Tametsi Deus*, the revised schema prepared by Joseph Kleutgen, S.J.⁵ Although not official conciliar statements, the schemata or drafts were proposals prepared by theologians for the council fathers. An analysis of them illuminates both a dominant strain of nineteenth-century ecclesiology⁶ and the remarkable ecclesiological developments reflected in the changed viewpoint of Vatican II.

THE SCHEMA SUPREMI PASTORIS

On May 24, 1866, Pius IX established the Theological-Dogmatic Preparatory Commission.⁷ Its members were theologians (diocesan and religious priests) from various nations;⁸ its task was to prepare the several dogmatic schemata that would later be discussed at the council.⁹ The

3. John N. Figgis notes that in the Counter-Reformation "the Jesuits developed the notion of the Church as a *societas perfecta* over against the other *societas perfecta*" (*Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius: 1414-1625* [Cambridge, 1923], p. 64).
4. There were also ten "unofficial" schemata submitted by individual bishops. In many of them the concept of "societas" was central. They can be found under the title of *Proponuntur Integra Schemata* in J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 53 vols. (Paris and Leipzig, 1901-1927), 51:863-916, hereafter referred to as Mansi.
5. The text of *Supremi pastoris* is in Mansi, 51:539-553, the adnotationes in 51:553-636, and the observationes in 51:731-863. The text of *Tametsi Deus* by Kleutgen and his *Relatio* are also in Mansi, 53:308-332.
6. Other directions of nineteenth-century ecclesiology are treated in Roger Aubert, "La géographie ecclésiologique au XIXe siècle," in Maruice Nédoncelle, et al., *L'ecclésiologie au XIXe siècle, Unam Sanctam* 34 (Paris, 1960): 4-76 and Edgar Hocedez, *Histoire de la théologie au XIXe siècle*, 3 vols. (Brussels and Paris, 1947-1952).
7. Mansi, 49:237-240. For the history of Vatican I in all its phases see: Roger Aubert, *Vatican I* (Paris, 1964); Cuthbert Butler, *The Vatican Council*, 2 vols. (London, 1930); Evgenio Cecconi, *Storia del concilio ecumenico Vaticano scritta sui documenti originali*, 4 vols. (Rome, 1872-1879); and Theodor Grandérath and Konrad Kirch, *Geschichte des Vaticanischen Konzils*, 3 vols. (Freiburg i. Br., 1903-1906).
8. Twenty-five members were on the commission: 15 Italians, 4 Germans, 1 Austrian, 2 French, 1 Spaniard, 1 Englishman, and 1 American. See also Umberto Betti, *La costituzione dogmatica "Pastor aeternus" del concilio Vaticano I* (Rome, 1961), pp. 7 ff; and Roger Aubert, "La composition des commissions préparatoires du premier concile du Vatican," in Erwin Iserloh and Konrad Repgen, eds., *Reformata Reformanda: Festgabe Hubert Jedin* 2 vols. (Münster, 1965), 2:447-482, and James Hennesey, "National Traditions and the First Vatican Council," *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 7 (1969):491-512.
9. The commission also prepared three other schemas: on the Catholic doctrine against the error of Rationalism; on the Roman Pontiff; and on Christian marriage. See Mansi, 49:749-750.

commission took for its basis in drafting the schema on the Church the Syllabus of Errors and the encyclical, *Quanta cura*.¹⁰ The four theologians who contributed significantly to the schema on the Church were Philip Cossa, Franz Hettinger, Giovanni Perrone, S.J., and Clemens Schrader, S.J.¹¹ They were all respected theologians and Ultramontanes in varying degrees.

Supremi pastoris, or, according to its official title, *Primum schema constitutionis de ecclesia Christi*, was distributed to the fathers six weeks after the opening of the council on January 21, 1870, at the thirteenth general congregation. It consisted of fifteen chapters, twenty-one canons, and seventy lengthy “adnotations” which explained the text, the errors of the authors that were condemned, and the biblical, patristic, and theological sources that supported the text. Although this schema was never discussed as a whole on the council floor,¹² the fathers did submit written “observations” on the first ten chapters.

The aim of *Supremi pastoris* was “to explain the more important elements of the true Catholic doctrine concerning the nature, properties, and power of the Church and to condemn in the appended canons the errors opposed to this teaching.”¹³ Many of the fathers objected to the scholastic tone of the text and argued for a more traditional conciliar terminology that would reflect the biblical and historical foundations of the Church.¹⁴ Bernadou of Sens, for example, complained of the diffuse style of the text which “was filled with terms taken from the books of German scholastics.”¹⁵ He asked for more concise language.

An anti-Protestant polemical tone is evident in this schema, particularly in

10. Mansi, 49:621.

11. For further biographical data on these theologians see William F. Dewan, “Preparation of the Vatican Council’s Schema on the Power and Nature of the Primacy,” *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses* 36 (1960):33–37. Also, on Hettinger, see *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 6:2324–2325; on Perrone, *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 12:1255–1256 and *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 11:146; and on Schrader, *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 14:1576–1579 and *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 12:1178.

12. Only chapter 11 and the later *caput addendum* on papal infallibility were publicly debated. They were eventually joined and rearranged to form *Pastor aeternus*. A detailed commentary on *Supremi pastoris* can be found in Fidelis van der Horst, *Das Schema über die Kirche auf dem Vatikanischen Konzil* (Paderborn, 1963). Also see Johannes Beumer, “Das für das erste Vatikanische Konzil entworfene Schema *De Ecclesia* im Urteil der Konzilvater,” *Scholastik* 38 (1963):392–401.

13. Mansi, 51:539. The translation of the documents is my own. English versions of part of *Supremi pastoris* can be found in John F. Clarkson, John H. Edwards et al., *The Church Teaches* (St. Louis, 1955), pp. 87–94; Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, *Papal Teachings: The Church* (Boston, 1962), pp. 809–823; and Josef Neuner and Heinrich Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y., 1967), pp. 211–220.

14. See the remarks of Schwarzenberg of Prague (Mansi, 51:733); Tranóczy of Salzburg (Mansi, 51:734); David of St. Brieuç (Mansi, 51:739); Caixal y Estradé of Urgel (Mansi, 51:740); and Riario Sforza of Naples and thirteen others (Mansi, 51:741).

15. Mansi, 51:739.

the adnotationes.¹⁶ We find frequent use of such expressions as *heretici*, *novatores*, *hostes ecclesiae*, *perversae errores*, and *secta fanatica*. In addition almost no reference is made to Orthodox ecclesiological thought.¹⁷

Supremi pastoris used a variety of images drawn from Christian tradition to refer to the Church: *sponsa electa*, *sponsa Christi*, *gens sancta*, *populus acceptabilis*, *perfecta civitas*, *regnum Dei*, and *civitas Dei*. But while scattered throughout the text, these terms never assumed a foundational character. The two principal terms employed were Body of Christ and society.

Chapter 1 of the schema was entitled: "The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ." One can clearly discern here the influence of Johann Adam Möhler, Carlo Passaglia, Matthias J. Scheeben, and Clemens Schrader.¹⁸ The adnotationes gave five reasons why the term was chosen: it is used frequently in scripture; it expresses the most important aspect of the Church, its divine essence; it is polemically useful against the Protestants who claim that Catholics consider only the external dimensions of the Church; it gives a balanced view of the external and internal elements of the Church; and, finally, it reminds the faithful of an idea that is little known but is important in this materialistic age.¹⁹

In spite of this strong argumentation, the theology of the Body of Christ did not permeate the rest of the Constitution. It was used in the text and canons only fifteen times and was not a central, unifying theme. Furthermore, many of the fathers were opposed to it. The French bishops in particular found it "too abstract and mystical,"²⁰ claimed that it belonged rather to mystical theology,²¹ and argued that one could not construct a schema on the Church on a metaphorical term.²² Cardinal Trevisanto, Patriarch of Venice, along with thirteen other bishops (twelve Italians and

16. American Protestants were sensitive to the polemical tone of Vatican I. See J. Ryan Beiser, *The Vatican Council and the American Secular Newspaper* (Washington, 1941) and James H. Smylie, "American Protestants Interpret Vatican Council I," *Church History* 38 (1969):459-474.

17. The Orthodox Church was mentioned only once, in a negative way, in the notes to Chapter 11 on the primacy of the pope. See Mansi, 51:598.

18. Passaglia taught Scheeben at the Roman College and collaborated with Schrader on various projects. For a discussion of Schrader's understanding of the Mystical Body based on his course at the University of Vienna in 1866 see Heribert Schaaf, *De corpore Christi mystico sive de ecclesia Christi theses: Die Ekklesiologie der Konziltheologen Clemens Schrader, S.J.* (Freiburg, 1959).

19. Mansi, 51:533.

20. Ramadié of Perpignan (Mansi, 51:741). Also Ketteler of Mainz (Mansi, 51:745).

21. David of St. Brieuç (Mansi, 51:755).

22. Ramadié of Perpignan (Mansi, 51:760); Lyonnet of Albi (*ibid.*); and Dupanloup of Orléans (*ibid.*).

one Brazilian) questioned the prudence of using “the doctrine of the Mystical Body which the Jansenists used to introduce their own errors.”²³

The term “societas,” however, played a much more significant methodological and theological role in the schema than the Body of Christ.²⁴ It was used fifty-four times (in the majority of instances it refers to the Church, but it also refers to human society in general or to civil society) and was found in all but four of the chapters. Aside from this numerical frequency, the idea of society functioned as a controlling idea throughout the schema. It was a constant point of departure and was used as a theological fulcrum for a description of the “nature, properties, and power of the Church.”

The societal image in *Supremi pastoris* was reflected in four major themes: the Church as a true society, a perfect society, a visible society and a salvifically necessary society. They appear not only in the schema but in adnotationes and the observationes as well.

1. Chapter 2 affirmed that Christ founded a religion which is a *true society*. According to the will of Christ, “outside that society there would be no true religion of Christ.”²⁵ Adnotatio 4 observed that the principal intention of this chapter was to declare “that the Church was instituted by Christ as a society, universal in time and place.”²⁶ This same theme is expanded in chapter 3:

We teach and declare that all the qualities of a true society belong to the Church. This society is not left by Christ unfinished and formless. But just as it has its existence from him, so too it has received its form and constitution according to his will and his law.²⁷

These statements, according to Adnotatio 4, are directed against the Protestants (J. H. Boehmer and S. Pufendorf) and the Rationalists (D. C. Decher). The Protestants are said to hold that Christ revealed a religion but did not found a society. Jesus, in other words, preached a doctrine which has

23. Mansi, 51:761. For further information on the theology of the Mystical Body and Vatican I see J. Madoz, “La Iglesia cuerpo místico de Cristo según el primer esquema ‘De Ecclesia’ en el concilio Vaticano,” *Revista Española de teología* 31 (1943):159–181 and Auguste Kerkvoorde, “La théologie du Corps mystique au XIX^e siècle,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 67 (1945):417–430.

24. The use of “societas” in the schema may be attributed to the influence of Perrone. According to Jerome Hamer, “Perrone was the prime author of the whole of the first ten chapters” (*The Church is a Communion* [New York, 1964], p. 15). Perrone was certainly responsible for paragraph 5 of the Syllabus of Errors (see Mansi, 49:622) which referred to the Church as a perfect society (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, 2919). Schrader, however, edited the entire schema. His influence is certainly present in chapter 1: “The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ.”

25. Mansi, 51:540.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 555. Canon 1 reads: “If anyone shall say that the religion of Christ exists and is expressed in no particular society founded by Christ, but that it can be properly observed and practiced by each one after his own manner, without taking into account whether there be a society which is the true Church, let him be anathema” (Mansi, 51:551).

27. *Ibid.*, p. 540.

been called the Christian religion, but he is not the author of a society. The Rationalists believed that religion, while it appeared most perfectly in Christ, is nothing more than an exemplary moral life dependent on the virtues of truth, love and freedom. These virtues, however, can be practiced independently of any religious society and are found to some degree in all religions.

Many fathers, while not denying that the Church is a society, questioned the advisability of using that image. Fogarasy of Transylvania, for example, felt that it was *minus adequata*, since it was not consonant with its divine institution.²⁸ Ketteler of Mainz argued that the philosophical definition of society was a “weak and abstract foundation” which did not do justice to the historical institution of the Church.²⁹ A similar view was expressed by Dinkel of Augsburg and twenty-four other bishops who said that “the basis of the schema was not sufficiently drawn from the divine origin and nature of the Church but rather from a doctrinaire notion of human society.”³⁰ As a result, the majesty of the Church cannot be explained. Finally, D’Ambrosio of Muro³¹ and Caixal y Estradé of Urgel³² suggested that the term “regnum” be substituted for “societas.”

2. Chapters 3 and 10 discussed the Church as a *perfect society*. In chapter 3, entitled “The Church is a true, perfect, spiritual, and supernatural society,” we read:

The Church is not a member or a part of any other society whatsoever nor can it be confused with or mixed with any other society. But it is so perfect in itself that, although it is distinct from all other human societies, it also far surpasses all of them.³³

The same chapter teaches the spiritual quality of the Church as a society. Since “this society rests on the Holy Spirit,” and since its members “are united with one another by the bonds of the same Spirit,” then “the Church is a spiritual society and totally of the supernatural order.”³⁴

Adnotatio 5 rejected the teaching of the *novatores* who deny that the Church is a legal and perfect society independent and distinct from civil society and the opinion of those who affirm that the Church is more like a freely organized college of equals, is subject as a part of civil society, or that

28. *Ibid.*, p. 746.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 745.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 734.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 738.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 774.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 540. Canon 10 reads: “If anyone shall say that the Church is not a perfect society but a collegium, or that it is within civil society or the State in such a way that it is subject to secular power, let him be anathema” (*Ibid.*, p. 552). Dupanloup of Orléans rejected the entire canon, since “the concept of perfect society is uncertain; the word collegium is obvious only to a few” (*Ibid.*, p. 860). Chapters 13, 14, and 15 treated in detail the relationship between the Church and civil society.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 540.

its origins are unclear and not distinct, in its earliest days, from the Jewish synagogue. The list of those holding one or many of the above positions included Pufendorf, Boehmer, Grotius, Burmann, Quinet, and a general grouping of Socialists, Rationalists, Humanitarians, and all *democratiae universalis assertores*.³⁵

The observations of the fathers centered on three points; the use of the term “spiritual,” the meaning of “perfect,” and the relationship of the Church to the larger understanding of society.

The first problem was minor. Callot of Oran said that the use of “spiritual” could mean that the Church is only a society of the just and this is false.³⁶ Gastaldi of Saluzzo suggested that the word “spiritual” be deleted, “since the enemies of the Church would use it as an opportunity to despoil the Church of all corporeal things.”³⁷

The second questions elicited much more response. Several fathers felt that the text’s use of “perfect” was equivocal, since it could mean either completeness or excellence.³⁸ The text, it was argued, was not clear when it said that the Church “far surpasses” all other societies. Ginoulhiac of Grenoble noted that “every human society is perfect *“in semetipsa et in genere suo.”*³⁹ The Church, then, is perfect according to its own special kind of perfection. In that sense it can be said to surpass other societies. Ramadié of Perpignan clarified the matter by proposing a definition of a *societas perfecta* as “that which is complete and independent in itself, fully sufficient in its own order to attain its proposed end, and not subject to any other society in those things which pertain properly to it.”⁴⁰

The third issue concerned the Church and the larger society. Fauli of Grosseto urged that the text be changed from “the Church is not a member or a part of any other society whatsoever,” to “the Church is not a part of civil society.”⁴¹ Likewise, Clifford of Clifton thought that the text should indicate the independence of the Church from the state but not the independence of individual members of the Church from the state in those areas which pertain to it. This would be made clearer, he suggested, by adding that “those who are members of this spiritual society may also be members of human societies.”⁴²

Chapter 10, “The Power of the Church,” also viewed the Church as a perfect society but from a different perspective. It began by stating that “the

35. *Ibid.*, p. 560.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 775.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 778.

38. Callot of Oran (*Ibid.*, p. 775), Dupanloup of Orléans (*Ibid.*, p. 777), Ginoulhiac of Grenoble (*Ibid.*, p. 779).

39. *Ibid.*, p. 779.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 776.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 770.

42. *Ibid.* On the role of the English bishops see Frederick J. Cwiekowski, *The English Bishops and the First Vatican Council* (Louvaine, 1971).

Church of Christ is not a society of equals (*societas aequalium*) as if all the faithful in it had the same rights, but is an unequal society (*societas inaequalis*).⁴³ This is true, the text explained, not only because there are clerics and lay people in the Church but also because only some are given a divinely authorized power to sanctify, teach, and rule. This power of the Church is twofold: a power of orders and a power of jurisdiction. The latter is “absolute and perfectly complete, legislative, judicial, and coercive.”⁴⁴ The chapter concluded with the strongest possible affirmation: “Hence, we must believe (*credenda*) that the Church of Christ is a perfect society.”⁴⁵

The adnotaciones explained how the above position is rejected by the *novatores*. Boehmer, Pufendorf, the Puritans, and the Cathari viewed the Church as a society of equals, a *collegium*, with no single group having special power to rule. Grotius, Boehmer, and Luther denied the bishops’ power to sanctify, teach, and rule and held that there is no supreme power in the Church that demands obedience. Finally, Boehmer, Grotius, M. Jurieu, Pufendorf, Henry VIII, and Marsilius of Padua rejected totally or severely limited the power of jurisdiction.⁴⁶

The fathers also found semantic problems with the terms “*societas aequalium*” and “*societas inaequalis*.” Allou of Meaux and seventeen other bishops, for example, said that these “*vocabula peregrina*” should be left to the schools. They suggested the term “*societas hierarchia*.”⁴⁷ Ramadié of Perpignan thought that such words were foreign to ecclesiastical usage,⁴⁸ and Bernadou of Sens said that the words were coined by German jurists and should be avoided.⁴⁹ Lyonnet of Albi also insisted that “the Church is not a society of equals in the German sense, but that in the Church, as in any society wisely ordered, there are leaders and teachers.”⁵⁰ Finally, Grimardias of Cahors argued that in every true and perfect society there is subordination; some rule and others obey.⁵¹

3. Chapters 4 and 5 developed the theme of the Church as a *visible society*. Canon 3 affirmed: “If anyone shall say that the Church of the divine promises is not an exterior and visible society, but is an entirely interior and invisible one, let him be anathema.”⁵² Chapter 4 taught that the Church is

43. *Ibid.*, p. 543.

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*

46. Canon 11 reads: “If anyone shall say that the Church is divinely instituted as a society of equals, that the bishops truly have an office and a ministry, but not a proper power to govern which belongs to them by divine right and is to be freely exercised by them, let him be anathema” (*ibid.*, p. 552).

47. *Ibid.*, p. 837.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 840.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 834.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 835. Raess of Strasbourg said that no perfect society is egalitarian (*ibid.*, p. 836).

51. *Ibid.*, p. 836.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 551.

not formed by merely internal bonds which unite the faithful to Christ through the Spirit. There are also visible and external bonds which make the Church, which is a spiritual and supernatural society, “conspicuously evident”⁵³ as a visible society. In the Church there is a visible teaching authority, a visible priestly office, and a visible governing body. Thus: “The whole body of the Church is visible. Not only the just or the predestined belong to it, but also sinners who are joined to it by profession of faith and by communion.”⁵⁴

The adversaries against whom this teaching was directed included Wyclif, Hus, Calvin, Luther, M. Jurieu, Quesnell, and the Waldensians. Robert Bellarmine was quoted at length in defense of the schema’s position. A now familiar passage of his appeared: “The Church is an assembly of men (*coetus hominum*) as visible and palpable as the assembly of the Roman people, the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice.”⁵⁵

Many of the comments of the fathers dealt with minor stylistic changes, but some raised substantial issues. Lyonnet of Albi, for example, said that the Church, because it consists of a body and a soul, is unlike merely human societies. He continued: “To its soul belong the just of whatever condition or age. To its body belong those who profess the same faith, participate in the same sacraments, and who are subject to the same pastors, of which the Supreme Pontiff is the highest.”⁵⁶ It is this second kind of belonging that manifests the visibility of the Church. This same Bellarminian view was expressed by Place of Marseilles⁵⁷ and Eberhard of Trier.⁵⁸

Chapter 5 related the visibility of the Church to its unity. The Church of Christ as “a visible and conspicuous society”⁵⁹ is the Church of the divine promises; no society that is separated from it in faith and communion can be said to be a part or member of it. The reason for this is that the Church is an “undivided and indivisible body, which is the very Mystical Body of Christ.”⁶⁰ Consequently, this same Church “cannot be said to be diffused and distributed among the various denominations called Christian.”⁶¹ This chapter taught implicitly that the Roman Catholic Church and the true Church of Christ are identical. Chapter 10 affirmed explicitly that “this true and blessed Church of Christ is none other than the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church.”⁶²

53. *Ibid.*, p. 540.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 541.

55. *De controversiis (De ecclesia militante)*, Tom. 2, L. 3, c. 2 (Naples, 1857), vol. 2, p. 75.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 780.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 782.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 784.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 541.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*, p. 543.

The adnotationes to chapter 5 rejected three heretical positions. Condemned first are those who follow the Augsburg Confession (1530) which taught that there were two churches, one visible and one spiritual. They affirm that the Church is visible inasmuch as it is composed of men; they deny that it is visible inasmuch as it is the true Church of Christ to which belong the divine promises. The second heresy is that of the Anglicans who argued that the unity of the universal church can be formed from many particular churches, even though they are presently separated from one another in faith and communion. This is a reference to the Branch Theory of some nineteenth-century Anglicans. Edward Pusey's book, *Eirenicon*, is quoted in French.⁶³ The third heresy is that of the fundamentalists and latitudinarians (M. Jurieu is mentioned) who held that the church of Christ is composed of all those Christian denominations who have preserved the fundamental Christian truths. They deny, however, that the visible church is found in any one, specific denomination. In responding to these three heresies, Suarez and Bellarmine were cited extensively.

The principal comments of the fathers focused on the confusion over the body/soul understanding of the Church and the question of membership. Thus, Grimardias of Cahors said that non-Catholic societies belong neither to the body nor to the soul of the Church. Private heretics and schismatics, however, belong to the soul of the Church. "The Mystical Body of Christ," he concluded, "is formed by all those who belong to the soul of the Church."⁶⁴ Dupanloup of Orléans contended that the Mystical Body of Christ is broader than the external, visible body of the Church. It includes all the just, those who without fault are outside the communion of the Church, those who lived before the foundation of the Church, and all holy souls who have died.⁶⁵ Callot of Oran added another category: the unjustly excommunicated who belong to the soul of the Church and, hence, to the Mystical Body of Christ.⁶⁶

4. Chapter 6 considered the church a *salvifically necessary society*. It taught that "the Church is not a free society, as if it were indifferent to salvation whether it were known or ignored, entered or abandoned. The Church is absolutely necessary."⁶⁷ The adnotationes explained that the major error opposed to this teaching is that of indifferentism. This heresy affirmed that any form or society of the Christian religion is equally good and salvific and hence, in order to attain salvation, it makes no difference to which one of the various Christian societies one belongs. M. Jurieu is said to have held this opinion and the principal argument against him is presented

63. See John R. Griffin, "Dr. Pusey and the Oxford Movement," *The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 42 (1973):137-153.

64. Mansi, 51:785.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 786.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 785-786.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 541.

by the encyclical, *Mirari vos*, of Gregory XVI (1832). There indifference is described as “that widespread and dangerous opinion, sown by the perfidy of the wicked, according to which it is possible, by the profession of some sort of faith, to procure the soul’s salvation.”⁶⁸

The comments of the fathers concerned the statement in the text that “the Church is not a free society.” It was thought that the word “free” was used in an uncommon, inaccurate, and simply wrong sense.⁶⁹ Lynch of Charleston made the strongest argument. “The word ‘free,’” he wrote, “is given a meaning which is not Latin, nor, as far as I know, can it be easily understood in any modern language.”⁷⁰ In fact, he claimed, the Church *is* a free society for several reasons. It is ruled by laws and customs which enable men to enjoy freedom; its members are free through Christ’s liberating act; it is open for all to enter; and it is not harassed from the outside.

Supremi pastoris, although never officially promulgated at Vatican I, did influence subsequent ecclesiological studies, especially with respect to the societal concept of the Church. This theme, for example, was found in *Immortale Dei* (1885), *Sapientiae christianae* (1890), and *Satis cognitum* (1896) of Leo XIII and in *Mystici corporis* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947) of Pius XII. Likewise, many manuals of ecclesiology published in this century stressed the idea of the Church as society. Thus, Joachim Salaverri, writing a few years before Vatican II, stated: “The Church is a perfect society and absolutely independent with full legislative, judicial, and coercive power.”⁷¹

Having analyzed the use of “societas” in the first schema on the Church, our next task is to examine how this concept was used in the other major schema on the Church drafted by Joseph Kleutgen.

THE SCHEMA *TAMETSI DEUS*

On April 27, 1870, the *Deputatio de fide* decided that *Pastor aeternus*, consisting of four chapters on papal primacy and infallibility, should be entitled *Constitutio dogmatica prima de Ecclesia Christi*.⁷² It was distributed to the fathers on May 9, 1870. There was also to be another constitution on

68. Found in Heinrich Denzinger and Adolf Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* 36th ed. (Freiburg, 1976), 2730.

69. Observations made by Dinkel of Augsburg (Mansi, 51:796), Callot of Oran (*ibid.*, p. 793), and Ramadié of Perpignan (*ibid.*).

70. Mansi, 51:790. On American participation in the council see James Hennessy, *The First Council of the Vatican: The American Experience* (New York, 1963).

71. Michael Nicolau and Joachim Salaverri, *Sacrae theologiae summa*, 3rd ed. (Madrid, 1955), 1:826. Salaverri refers to both schemata of Vatican I (p. 830).

72. See Theodor Granderaath, *Constitutiones dogmaticae sacrosancti oecumenici concilii Vaticani ex ipsis actis explicitae atque illustratae* (Freiburg, 1892), pp. 110–111. Also see Jacques Gadille, “La phase decisive de Vatican I: Mars-Avril 1870,” *Annunarium historiae conciliorum* 1 (1969):336–347.

the Church which was to be called *constitutio secunda*.⁷³ The task of drafting it was given to Joseph Kleutgen, S. J. His mandate was to rewrite the original schema, *Supremi pastoris*, in light of the comments of the fathers. Hence, its formal title was: *Schema constitutionis dogmaticae secundae de ecclesia Christi secundum reverendissimorum patrum animadversiones reformatum*. It is commonly known as *Tametsi Deus*.

A gifted philosopher and theologian and a major figure in the German Neo-thomistic revival of the nineteenth century, Kleutgen was well prepared to undertake this work.⁷⁴ Although he did not participate in the preliminary work of Vatican I, he attended the council as the personal theologian of the Bishop of Paderborn. Moreover, he was familiar with the workings of the council since he was the principal redactor of the revised schema *de fide catholica*, which later became the *Constitutio Dei filius*.

Tametsi Deus consisted of ten chapters and sixteen canons.⁷⁵ Appended to it was a *Relatio* by Kleutgen,⁷⁶ in which he explained his methodology and gave a detailed commentary. Kleutgen's schema, however, had no impact on the council proceedings. The Franco-Prussian war began on July 19, 1870, and the council did little work after that time.⁷⁷ The schema, as a result, was never reviewed by the *Deputatio de fide*, was never distributed to the fathers for comments, and, hence, was never discussed on the council floor. In fact, it was all but forgotten for over fifty years until, in 1927, it was published in Mansi.⁷⁸

Contemporary scholars, however, recognize the value of Kleutgen's text. Joseph Lecler, for example, writes that it is useful in helping us "understand the state of the theology of the Church at the time of the Vatican Council."⁷⁹ Jerome Hamer, in a similar view, notes that "the document of Fr. Kleutgen is the least deformed echo we have of the common convictions of a very

73. Mansi, 53:238.

74. Biographical information on Kleutgen can be found in Franz Lakner, "Kleutgen und die kirchliche Wissenschaft Deutschlands im 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 57 (1933):161-214; *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 8: 2359-2360; and *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 8:212. On Kleutgen's methodology see Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York, 1977), pp. 167-215.

75. Mansi, 53:308-317. I know of no English translation of *Tametsi Deus*. A theological commentary on Kleutgen's schema can be found in van der Horst, *Das Schema* and J.-P. Torrell, *La théologie de l'épiscopat au premier concile du Vatican, Unam Sanctam* 37 (Paris, 1961):247-279.

76. Mansi, 53:317-332.

77. *Pastor aeternus* was enacted on July 18, 1870. During the summer there were three general congregations (87, 88, 89), but little was accomplished. The council was suspended on October 20, 1870. Two days later, on October 22, Martin John Spalding, Archbishop of Baltimore, wrote Cardinal Barnabò, the Prefect of the Congregation *de propaganda fide*, suggesting that the council be transferred to Malines in Belgium. No action was taken. See Grandérath, *Geschichte des Vaticanischen Konzils*, 3:539-541.

78. It is not found in the *Collectio Lacensis*.

79. "L'oeuvre ecclésiologique du concile du Vatican: Une tache inachevée," *Études* 307 (1960):301.

considerable part of the assembly at the moment it separated.”⁸⁰ Finally, Antoine Chavasse contends that “even though it was not defined, this new schema is one of the major sources which the theologian must examine.”⁸¹ For our study of the Church as society, it is extremely useful.

Tametsi Deus is shorter, better organized, and more balanced than *Supremi pastoris*. Kleutgen was sensitive to the criticisms of the fathers concerning the earlier schema and attempted to satisfy their requests. His language was clear and concise, and he avoided scholastic jargon. Although the concept of society had a reduced role in this schema, it still had significant methodological importance. The sections on the members of the Church, the episcopacy, the magisterial and jurisdictional power of the Church were an improvement over the first schema. The document in general, however, still evidenced the limitations of nineteenth-century ecclesiology. Roger Aubert correctly observes that “for the twentieth-century reader, nevertheless, this schema is far from giving full satisfaction.”⁸²

Tametsi Deus used four principal terms to describe the church: “corpus” (ten times), “coetus” (seven times), and “regnum” (five times). In most instances, however, they are employed in an identical sense: to convey a sociological understanding of the Church. Kleutgen was clearly influenced by Robert Bellarmine. He cited Bellarmine’s definition of the Church as *nunc satis communis*.⁸³

The Church is the assembly of men (*coetus hominum*) brought together by the profession of the same Christian faith and joined in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff.⁸⁴

The fourth image used was the Body of Christ image. In his explanatory *Relatio*, Kleutgen referred to the displeasure that many of the fathers found with this symbolic description of the Church and said that he would modify that approach. He did so apparently with some reluctance, for he noted that he would still use this image, “since it is used frequently and expressly in Scripture and is most fitting to signify the properties of the Church.”⁸⁵

Chapter 2 of the schema, entitled “The Church Instituted by Christ is an Assembly of the Faithful,” continued: “The Church is an assembly of the

80. “Le corps épiscopal uni au Pape, son autorité dans l’Eglise, d’après les documents du premier concile du Vatican,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 45 (1961):25.

81. “L’ecclésiologie au concile du Vatican,” in Maurice Nédoncelle, Roger Aubert et al., *L’ecclésiologie au XIX^e siècle*, p. 245.

82. “L’ecclésiologie au concile du Vatican,” in Bernard Botte, Henri Marot et al., *Le concile et les conciles* (Gembloux, 1960), p. 260.

83. Mansi, 53:317.

84. *De controversiis (De ecclesia militante)*, see note 55 above. According to Kleutgen, “this definition does not exclude *occult* heretics from the Church as long as they *profess* the true faith; it does, however, exclude schismatics even if they are not heretics” (Mansi, 53:317).

85. Mansi, 53:319.

faithful of Christ, a true society, yet far holier than any human society; it is rightly called the city of God and the kingdom of heaven.”⁸⁶ In his *Relatio* Kleutgen explained that this description is opposed to any heterodox notion of the Church and should meet the demands of the fathers for a concise definition. He accepted the common understanding of society as “a multitude of men joined to a certain end by moral bonds, that is, by rights and laws.”⁸⁷ In this sense, he insisted, the Church is a “vera societas.” He also pointed out that, lest the use of the term “society” suggest a merely human society, he had added more biblical images to bring out the fully divine and supernatural character of the Church. Thus, he hoped to avoid the calumny that “Catholics neglect the internal and spiritual aspects when they describe the Church.”⁸⁸

Chapter 9 calls the Church a perfect society and defines it:

A society, distinct from every other assembly of men, which moves towards its proper end by its own ways and reasons; which is absolute, complete, and sufficient in itself to attain those things which pertain to it; and which is neither subject to, or joined as a part, or mixed and confused with any other society.⁸⁹

In his *Relatio*, Kleutgen defended his use of the term “society.” He adverted to the objections of some of the fathers who had expressed displeasure with a treatise on the Church that used the idea of society as proposed by philosophers and jurists. This, he said, is avoided in the revised schema. Then he went on to plead his case. The terms “vera societas” and “perfecta societas,” he argued, have a common, accepted meaning among learned men. For this reason, he continued, “it is expedient that in the constitution it be declared in so many words that the Church is a true and perfect society.”⁹⁰ Moreover, such usage is not foreign to ecclesiastical tradition, since Augustine “often” used the term. Kleutgen cited a passage from the *City of God*:

It is not unsuitable and incongruous to speak of a society of men and angels; so that there are not four cities or societies rightly so-called—two namely of angels and two of men—but rather one of the good, the other of the wicked, each one composed of angels and men.⁹¹

86. *Ibid.*, p. 309. Canon 1 reads: “If anyone shall say that the religion founded by Christ is not truly a church or society in which the faithful can commonly profess their Christian religion, but that this can be practiced and observed by each one separately, let him be anathema” (*Ibid.*, p. 316).

87. Mansi, 53:319.

88. *Ibid.* Canon 4 is relevant here: “If anyone shall say that the Church, to which was made the divine promises, is not an external and visible assembly of the faithful, but a spiritual society of the predestined and the just known only to God, let him be anathema” (*Ibid.*, p. 316).

89. Mansi, 53:315. Thus, Canon 13: “If anyone shall say that the Church is not a perfect society by its own right, but that it is subject to civil power, let him be anathema” (*Ibid.*, p. 317).

90. Mansi, 53:318.

91. *Ibid.* Citation is from *De civitate Dei*, L. 12, c. 1 (*Corpus christianorum Series Latina* [Turnhout, 1955], vol. 48, p. 355). Lawlor, “Society,” p. 394, gives other quotations from Augustine which are appropriate in this context. Augustine used society in a Trinitarian

CONCLUSION

Supremi pastoris and *Tametsi Deus* epitomize apologetic ecclesiology. They both attempted to meet the real or imagined challenges threatening the unity of the Church and to defend the Roman Catholic communion as the only true Church of Christ. Reacting to a theology of the Church presented by the Protestant Reformers, these documents, historically conditioned as they were, reflected a classicist worldview which stressed immutability, indefectibility, and visibility. The concept of society, formulated in a legalistic manner, lent itself to this purpose. Motivated by polemical concerns, this methodology resulted in a truncated and imperfect vision of the Church. The contemporary Christian finds it anachronistic and an inadequate expression of the full reality of the Church as seen in scripture and tradition.

The major failure of the ecclesiological schemata of Vatican I, and also of *Pastor aeternus*, was its ineffective treatment of the balance that should exist between the Church as a juridical reality and the Church as a theological reality. The concept of "societas" developed the first dimension but was not capable of doing justice to the second. The inevitable result of this preoccupation with structural elements was a deficient ecclesiology. The outward, visible aspects of the Church loomed so large in this methodology that its interior, Spirit-nature was neglected.⁹²

The history of ecclesiology might well have taken a different direction earlier in this century, if the Body of Christ theology of Möhler, Passaglia, Schrader and others had been incorporated comprehensively into the council documents or even if the societal theme had been used in the more spiritual sense of the early Church Fathers. This, however, is conjecture. It should not be forgotten that the majority of the participants at Vatican I favored a strongly institutional view. The schemata clearly reflect, for the most part, the dominant theological position.⁹³

The Church as presented in the schemata of Vatican I comes into sharper focus when contrasted with the ecclesiology of Vatican II, which reflected a radical change in the self-understanding of the Church. Emphasis has shifted

framework. Thus: "The society of the unity of the Church of God, outside of which there is no forgiveness of sins, is, as it were, the proper work of the Holy Spirit (the Father and the Son, to be sure, working together with Him), because the Holy Spirit Himself is in a certain sense the society of the Father and the Son" (Serm. 71:20.33, *PL* 38:463). Also: "The society by which we are made the one Body of God's only Son, is the Spirit's role" (*Ibid.*, *PL* 38:461).

92. For a discussion of this point in Ultramontane ecclesiology see Heizmann-Josef Pottmeyer, *Unfehlbarkeit und Souveränität* (Mainz, 1975), pp. 346–388.
93. Roger Aubert says that if the two schemata had been discussed by the council, "the discussions would have undoubtedly improved one or other specific details, but the text would have retained its character which was insufficiently biblical, too sociological, too juridical, and without adequate concern for communitarian aspects" (*Le concile et les conciles*, pp. 261–262.).

dramatically from the sociological to the biblical; from the jurisdictional to the sacramental; from the sectarian to the ecumenical; from the papal to the episcopal; from the hierarchical to the collegial. This has not been accomplished without considerable anguish, confusion, and even division. The key to any future ecclesiological development rests in the ability to balance the multi-faced aspects of the Church without destroying its uniqueness. The task remains to move from theory to the lived ecclesial experience mandated by Vatican II.