

**A fresh look at the “world church”:
A snapshot from the October 2023 Synod**

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1. The synod on synodality is probably the most significant event in the life of the Catholic Church since Vatican II. I believe it will stand with the Second Vatican Council in shaping the way the Catholic Church lives through the third millennium. You will recall that on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Synod Bishops in 2015, Pope Francis, in his address, stated that the “path of synodality is what God expects of the Church of the third millennium”.
2. During the synod I tried to follow carefully what was happening and the commentary surrounding it. There was one article in particular that struck me – in the *National Catholic Reporter* on 18 October by Thomas Reese. Let me read you something from that article.

Covering the synod on synodality has been especially difficult. Pope Francis does not like the press, especially the Western media, which, he believes, only writes about issues of concern to the Global North.

Thus, at the 2015 synod on the family, the coverage focused on Francis’ intentions for divorced and remarried Catholics. Can they get annulments? Can they go to Communion? And can married couples practice birth control? There was little concern for the plight of refugee families, of human trafficking, of forced marriages or of families broken by the need for men to migrate to find work to support their families.

Likewise, at the synod on the pan-Amazon region in 2019, the Western media’s focus was on the possibility of ordaining married men to deal with the shortage of priests in rural communities in the Amazon, which many thought might open the door to married priests everywhere. Little attention was given to the Indigenous people in the region who were being displaced and killed in order to provide beef, lumber and minerals to the industrialized world. Nor did the importance of the Amazon rainforest as a consumer of carbon dioxide get much attention.

At the current synod, the media is no less fascinated by hot-button issues put on the agenda by Catholics in the church’s global listening sessions that kicked off the synod: blessings for gay couples, the prospect of married priests and women priests and deacons. For Francis, the synod is about a new way of being church, a path for overcoming divisions through conversations in the Spirit and a new way of making decisions in the church through discernment.

3. A few days later, Christopher Lamb (*The Tablet*, 21 October 2023, p.27), noted the experience of war that many synod members brought with them. This in the context of the Hamas bombings of Israel and Israel’s response in Gaza. But there are other wars that the global north or western media never mention. Christopher Lamb quoted

Archbishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya of Bamenda, Cameroon (a country that has experienced war since 2016) saying, “with the problems we have in Africa sometimes we feel isolated and abandoned”, but the Synod is “a chance for the voice of Africa to be heard”.

4. Comments like these gave me a way to think about what was happening and how there might be more to all of this than we are inclined to think. To put the question in its starkest terms, it would be: “Is colonialism still going strong in the church?” This could open up a whole area of enquiry around post-colonialism. I am not going to stray too far down that path, as I haven’t done enough reading on post-colonial theology. Moreover, people like me should not be doing post-colonial theology. Rather, I should be listening to those who do their theology out of a colonial or post-colonial experience.
5. Even if I am not going to stray too far down that path, there is another (and related) question that all this raises. Are we seeing a divide on display in the church between what is conveniently known as the global north and the global south? Using some of the language that we have heard during the synodal process, we could re-phrase the question and ask whether there is a continental divide in the church. So, are we faced with a further type of division in the church? Now, I don’t think this is new. What was new was that the synod gave the opportunity for it to be on display.
6. I want to suggest that there is another way of looking at this, and it is about the relationship between the idea of local church and universal church. This is an area that has been difficult to sort out. In the years after the Council the theological problem was about the relationship between local and universal. In the 1990s there was a public debate between Cardinals Kasper and Ratzinger on the topic, with Ratzinger giving priority to the universal church, and Kasper to the local church. While that was a fairly esoteric debate, at the popular level there was (and still is) a lot of confusion about these two expressions – local and universal. Some people still have the erroneous view that the universal church is Rome. But Rome is a local church, albeit one that has a particular role in the communion of churches.
7. The real question that emerged at the synod is about the communion of local churches. This is what I believe was being identified by Thomas Reese, even if he didn’t use this theological language. In one sense, it is the old question of unity and diversity. We should be interested in it because it is relevant if the church is going to be the sort of missionary church that Pope Francis continually calls us to be. In his very first major statement as pope, the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he wrote, “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, ...” (EG 27).

Vatican II and the world-church

8. I want to help us get a perspective on this issue (and challenge) by taking us back to the Second Vatican Council. A few years after the Council Karl Rahner wrote an essay with the title “Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council”. In it he put forward the thesis that the Council was the first assembly of the church as a world-church. Let me sketch his thesis.
9. Rahner divides church history into three epochs. He calls them theological epochs. The first is the very short period of Judaeo-Christianity. The second is the period when the church is in a particular cultural group, namely Hellenism and the European culture and civilisation. This is a long period going from about the third century until

the twentieth century. The third period is the period when the church's "living space" is the whole world. Rahner claims that this third epoch was on display at the Second Vatican Council. It is what he calls the world-church. He is careful not to claim too much in terms of the Council. Rather, he says that the Council represents the first tentative steps in being a world-church. The council was the first official realisation by the church of itself as a world-church.

10. If the Council made only tentative steps, then I think we need to think about where we are now, sixty years later. What is on display now? What sense do we make of it all now? I believe this calls for a re-reading of the Council's documents in the light of the insight from Pope Francis that synodality is what God desires of the church in the third millennium. Going back to Rahner's essay may help us begin to do this.
11. The main example he gives for a world-church is that for the first time the various cultures of the world were represented at a council. At Vatican I there were bishops from Africa and Asia, but they were missionary bishops. At Vatican II we begin to see a local hierarchy who speak with a uniquely local voice.
 - Furthermore, they were participants at an ecumenical council where they were not specifically acting as advisors to the pope, but in council with him and under him (*cum Petro et sub Petro*). This council was the supreme teaching and decision-making authority in the church.
12. But, says Rahner, there were also other signs indicating a new epoch.
 - Think of the *vernacular* liturgy. In other words, worship was grounded in the local culture.
 - Think also of the new approach to *mission* that appeared in the council's work. One of its main characteristics was enculturation. In other words, the dialogue of cultures and the opening up of new cultural forms of Christian life.
 - We might think too of decisions of the council about the relationship with *world religions* or *religious freedom*. For people, especially in Asia, this changed the way the church engaged with the local culture and society.
 - If we look at the developments in LG about *bishops* and *local churches*, this also led to a new understanding of the church as world-church. It opened up the possibility of seeing things in local terms and not simply with a European lens or within a specifically European mode of thinking. In practical terms, we saw, for example, the assembly of the Latin American Bishops Conferences (CELAM). Its meeting in 1968 in Medellin, Colombia, changed the way Catholics saw themselves as church in that continent which was almost exclusively Catholic.
 - Ideas from that conference spread far beyond Latin America and were noticed in other parts of the world. In other words, non-European ways of being the church and engaging in mission were being seen and heard across the world.
13. Now, we also have to admit that some of these openings were not always successful, and some of them were stifled and that the European worldview was still predominant and often mandatory. While this is true, it does not negate the fact that with the Second Vatican Council we see a theological evolution in the church's self-understanding. The Council marked the (official) beginning of something. As Rahner

puts it, those at the Council were involved in something that up to this point was unknown.

14. He goes on to make a further comment about the significance of this in the (theological) history of the church, saying that only once before has this happened and that was in that first period of Judaeo-Christianity:
 - “The transition from one historical and theological situation into an essentially new one happened only once before in the history of Christianity and is now set to occur for a second time in the transition from the Christianity of Europe (with its American appendages) to an actual world-religion.”

The transition of Judaeo-Christianity

15. Let’s look at that first transition. I want to do this not just to fill out what Rahner was saying, but because I believe it gives us important insights to help us understand where we are right now on the synodal journey.
16. The fundamental biblical text is Acts 15 and what is sometimes called the Council of Jerusalem. The issue was about Gentile converts to the “Way” of Jesus and whether they were bound by the Jewish Law. The mission of Paul and Barnabas was being challenged by certain people among the Judaeo-Christian community. The upshot was that Paul and Barnabas led a delegation from Antioch to Jerusalem to put the case for admitting Gentiles without binding them to the Jewish Law. When Paul and Barnabas arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the apostles and the elders and reported on all that God had done as Gentiles were being converted. There was an assembly in Jerusalem, which began with much debate before Peter stood up and gave a speech where he proclaimed that both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians will be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Then the whole assembly kept silence and listened to Paul and Barnabas as they told of the signs and wonders that God had done among the Gentiles. This was followed by a speech from James, the leader of the Jerusalem community. He reiterated what Peter had said, looked for Scriptural backing for the decision he was about to make. Then he said, “Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them ...” (Ac 15:19). Then the apostles and elders chose people from their community to go with Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch, taking a letter with them. Among other things, that letter states, “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...”.
 17. In the framework of Rahner’s epochs of the church, this was a significant moment not simply for its cultural and social significance, but for what was going on theologically. At its heart, this was a question of salvation and salvation history. The outcome was the abolishing of the nexus between circumcision and salvation and the declaration that salvation comes through the grace of the Lord Jesus. Peter declared that Christians will be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus.
 - We must acknowledge the significance of this moment. Remember that circumcision was at the centre of God’s revelation to Abraham. This was not something that human beings could change on their own authority.
 - Of course, no one at the Council of Jerusalem made a claim that human beings were changing revelation.
 - This is why what happens in Acts 15 is so significant. First, the church assembled to listen and discern. Second, a decision was made by the leader of

the church. Third, this decision was made with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

18. Then over a period of a few centuries the consequences of this decision were played out as further decisions were made.
- The abolition of the Sabbath.
 - The transfer of the centre of the church from Rome to Jerusalem. Rome became the *mater et caput ecclesiae*; Jerusalem was no longer the mother church. (We could spend a lot more time developing what was going on here and what its consequences were).
 - There was modification of moral teaching. Christians were no longer bound by much of the Levitical code.
 - A new canon of Scriptures emerges.
 - As an aside, it is also worth noting that we cannot say that any of this came from Jesus. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles.
19. Rahner notes that such transitions are usually not thought out and planned in theological terms; they don't come into effect after a lot of deliberate work. Rather, they are realised "more or less spontaneously", out of an intuition of the Holy Spirit and of grace. This is worth noting, because it reminds us that the sort of change that he is talking about, both in the early church and at Vatican II, happened and will happen slowly. It can't be rushed; there will be bumps along the way. It is ultimately about salvation and God's plan in and for the world.
20. I want to make another point – and this me, not Rahner. While Rahner speaks of a transition from a Jewish sect to Gentile Christianity as a caesura or break, historically and theologically it meant a break with Judaism. Today, especially after Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, we would see this as an unfortunate break. If you like, it is the first break the church experienced. We look forward to the day when Jews and Christians may once again be united as God's people.

Re-reading Vatican II: Local church

21. I would like now to undertake a re-reading of a few sections of Vatican II's dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. I will start with some sections about the idea of local church. I believe this is the key to understanding the world-church. It is also relevant to how synodality is understood and practised. I have already noted Rahner's comment that the emergence of the theology of local churches opened up a way for the emergence of the world-church. He began by talking about the visual impact of bishops from all over the world being present at the council. Now, "bishops" and "local church" are in a sense part of a similar vein of thought in the work of the council. At Vatican II the presence of bishops from around the world was a sign of local churches. In our own day, with the experience of synodality, we are getting a more complete picture of local churches. We are seeing more than bishops. We have a deeper sense of the church as the People of God.
22. This notion of the People of God is in fact the context for council's development of its theology of local churches. The first glimpse of local churches is in *Lumen gentium's* chapter two on the People of God. Not surprisingly, the starting point is a universalist view of the people of God – there is one people of God that is drawn from all the

nations on the earth. Recall how LG begins, “Christ is the light of the nations”. Now in chapter two we read:

- “All the faithful scattered throughout the world are in communion with the rest in the Holy Spirit, and so ‘the person who lives in Rome knows that Indians are his members’.” (LG 13)
 - This reference to Romans and Indians is a quote from the ancient church (John Chrysostom). It is pointing to the situation of the spread of the Christian faith in both easterly and westerly directions from Jerusalem. It has already gone as far east as India.
 - This is an era where the church was embedded in local cultures, but where there was also a sense of the communion that existed between all these local churches.
23. I should note that I think this fact points to what might be a slight weakness in Rahner’s thesis. Or maybe if not a weakness, then an incompleteness in his argument. The church was never purely European. Eastern Christianity flourished for some time, and it looked very different to western Christianity. Of particular note here would be Syrian Christianity. Eastern Christianity was much more vulnerable to attack and found itself under threat with the rise of Islam in the seventh century. But it survived – and in a way that looked very different to western Christianity.
- It is also worth noting that Vatican II marks the recognition of eastern Christianity in a way that was new. This recognition indicates the beginning of the breakdown of western hegemony. This too (i.e. relationship between east and west) was on the agenda at the synod in Rome last year.
24. The theology presented in LG 13, with its reference to the ancient diversity of the local churches, is very much a theology of communion. The individual churches never exist in isolation. They bring their gifts and their insights to other parts of the church and to the whole church. Through this interchange (communication) each of them grows to be more effective in its mission. And the whole church is enriched.
25. In LG this belongs to a section dealing with the four marks of the church that we profess in the Nicene Creed – one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Here we are dealing with the *catholicity* of the church. This is another word that creates much confusion. I remember learning as a child that the church is catholic because it is the same everywhere in the world. In other words, catholic meant universal. While there is some truth in this, it is quite inadequate. A better way to express it is to say catholicity is about wholeness or completeness. We can use it of each local church, thereby meaning that the local church is, in a certain sense, the whole church or that it possesses all that is necessary to be the church in this place. Catholicity is related to unity and diversity. That the church is “catholic” protects it from uniformity, but also from a complete breakdown of communion.
26. There is another section of LG that is relevant to this discussion. It is n.23.
- “By divine providence it has come about that various churches, founded in various places by the apostles and their successors, have in the course of time, become joined together into several groups, organically united, which while maintaining the unity of faith and the unique divine constitution of the universal church, enjoy their own discipline, their own liturgical usage, and their own theological and spiritual patrimony”.

- Now this section is referring specifically to the ancient patriarchal churches. It is dealing with the eastern Catholic churches. But I also think it gives important principles that might apply to local churches more broadly, even within the Roman rite. (It could also be developed in an ecumenical context.) I admit this probably needs to be tested, but I am proposing it in anticipation.

27. Here are the principles we can derive from this text about the theology of local churches.

- They can be truly regarded as apostolic. I.e. they receive and hand on the faith that comes from the apostles.
- They may be joined together with other similar local churches that have similar characteristics. This is most likely to be geographic. Remember that these ancient churches belonged to a particular territory. Now, in our own time we have seen this develop into what are now bishops' conferences. And again, even more recently, with the synodal process, we have seen the importance placed on regional groupings and also continental groupings.
- These various local churches are organically united. This is an important idea that is often misunderstood. For many, organically united suggests that the church is the same everywhere in the world. But the image is of a body which has different parts that together form the whole body.
- The point where we can speak of unity is in terms of faith. I need to come back to this later, because it is important. I also recall what I said earlier from Rahner, where he noted that the decisions of the primitive church about Gentile Christians were ultimately about the question of salvation. So, too, unity in faith is really about salvation.
- Finally, this quote lists what diversity looks like. There is diversity in church discipline. That is, there can be different disciplines in different localities or different parts of the world. Unity in faith does not preclude different local requirements or ways of life.
- There can be diversity in liturgical usage. As I said, this section of LG is referring specifically to the eastern churches, but might we see the principle applied more widely in the west? Already, there is some discretion to local bishops' conferences and even to local bishops regarding the liturgy, but it is minimal. You might have seen a couple of weeks ago that the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has approved the Mass of the Land of the Holy Spirit for use in the diocese of Broome. But it is still waiting for the *recognitio* from Rome.
- There is also diversity in theology. This too is an important point. We must distinguish theology from doctrine or dogma. Of course, in the medieval church there were very distinct schools of theology – think Dominican and Franciscan.
- Finally, there is diversity in spiritual heritage. Again, this is referring to the eastern churches which have their own patrimony. But we might think of it in terms of piety. Think of the diverse expressions of piety that flourish among our different migrant communities.

28. It is important to note that all these considerations about local churches are set in the broader framework of communion. In one way this shouldn't surprise us because it has long been accepted that *communion* is the fundamental idea that underpins all of the council's work. Local churches do not exist in isolation, but form part of a communion of churches.
29. This, I believe, overcomes the debate or tension between local and universal. The way the local versus universal debate is sometimes couched, it is a matter of the universal church having authority over the local church. But that is not what LG says. LG, as we saw, presented local church in terms of catholicity. Now, while there is a dimension of catholicity which has to do with universality, that is not its primary meaning. I said earlier that its primary meaning is about wholeness or completeness. So, in some sense, the test of the authenticity of a local church is that it embodies all that is necessary to be truly catholic.
30. From the other side of the coin, the question is about the autonomy of local churches. Some people would couch this in terms of the autonomy of the local church so that they are accountable to no one. That is not how LG sees things. The context for properly understanding this is communion and catholicity. A local church cannot exist except in communion with the other local churches.
31. The upshot of this approach is that we need to exercise caution about some ways of understanding and giving expression to a local church and to the relationship between local and universal.
- First, we should be wary when a local church takes on a certain nationalism, specifically excessive nationalism. The danger with this is that instead of incarnating the gospel in the local culture, the local culture can become what determines the understanding of the gospel. We see examples of this in history. Some that come to mind would be the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa which more or less made apartheid a religious doctrine. Another example is various churches in Germany during the Nazi regime. It is also a challenge that many Orthodox churches face because they are historically tied to a local place – and their theology of local church is more open to this sort of interpretation. It is not being tied to a place that is problematic, but when this becomes a form of extreme nationalism it is dangerous. This may well be the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church today. Of course, it is still possible for a church to be a true local church and not succumb to this form of extreme nationalism. We could think of the many Protestant churches that are autonomous in a particular place. In Australia, we could mention the Uniting Church of Australia, or the Lutheran Church of Australia. The tendency to want to become a national church is less likely to be a problem for the Catholic Church because of its present centralised structure. Well – centralised in a certain way!
 - Another danger is that where there is a strong universalist framework there can be a tendency towards uniformity. This is the challenge the Catholic Church faces – except in the East. Many would regard this as a real problem for us, but there are some signs that things are changing on this front.
 - The third danger in dealing with the local–universal balance is a false understanding of the universal. I used the phrase earlier, “a communion of churches”. If this is misunderstood, then the church might be perceived as a

federation. Now, this might sound attractive, but it tends to perceive the church in sociological terms and is theologically very weak. I will come back to this in a moment.

32. But before I do, I want to propose a way of dealing with the challenge in the Catholic Church, of getting the balance right between the autonomy of the local church and the communion of local churches. The temptation we face is to universalise at the expense of the local. We might recall the principle goes right back to the early church, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est* – Rome has spoken, the matter is settled. We have inherited this principle, and we use it (if not the words themselves) in our everyday conversation and our references to Rome or to the Pope. When we say this, we usually imply that Rome will say no.
33. There is no doubt that the Catholic Church throughout the world is dependent on Rome. Now, since the council this has been changing. (And in saying this, I don't mean that the pope is becoming less essential to the Catholic Church's understanding of what God has revealed about itself). But certainly, I recall from my childhood the claim that the Catholic Church was the same throughout the world. No matter where you went your experience would be the same, and an indication of this was that the liturgy was in Latin everywhere.
- When I say that it is breaking down, I can refer to those things I pointed to earlier (cf. Rahner) that are products of the council such as vernacular liturgy, or bishops' conferences.
 - But more recently, Pope Francis reformed the Roman curia. With this reform, the curia is specifically tasked with being at the service of the local churches.
34. Now, to get to my proposal. Let me put it in a few simple statements that build up the argument.
- The role of the pope, the bishop of Rome, is primarily to ensure the unity of the church. In other words, he is to maintain and strengthen the communion of the church.
 - Currently he exercises this by way of immediate authority over local churches. It is true that he intervenes rarely, but Vatican I gave him immediate jurisdiction.
 - Such an exercise of authority has, for all practical purposes, a centralising effect. It is a top-down model. It is the old pyramid that we used to hear about in our childhood catechesis. This is how people understood the expression, *Roma locuta est, causa finita est*.
 - Synodality offers us a different way of conceiving how the bishop of Rome might act. It offers us a framework that should be a more complete expression of the communion of the church. If we look at what the synodal process looks like, we see that it begins in local churches – even in small groups within the local church. This listening (in theory) to everyone is synthesised into a working document that will be the basis for conversation with a group consisting of some from a number of different local churches. This too is synthesised into some concrete proposals.
 - If the pope receives these proposals and has been listening to the conversation, he is in a better position to make a decision than previously. With this synodal

process, there is a sense in which the decision comes from the bottom up rather than from the top down.

- In the theological literature on synodality, we can read of the process as consisting of a movement from *all* to *some* to *one*. In terms of the whole church, the one is the pope.
- Now, think about *Roma locuta est*. When Rome speaks at the end of this synodal process we might expect a different quality of speech than if when the framework is universalist.

Re-reading Vatican II: sensus fidei

35. There is one other piece of the puzzle that we need to look at and that requires a re-reading of Vatican II. Let me take you back to Rahner and his comment that the change from Judeo-Christianity to Gentile Christianity and the decision that people were saved by the grace of Christ and not by circumcision, was a change that could not be made lightly or easily. Effectively, we saw something that impinged upon God's revelation. It went to the heart of what salvation means and how God acts. We saw the practical working out of this in the account of the Council of Jerusalem, where, amidst all the conversation, a point was reached where Peter spoke and made the declaration that Christians are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus.
36. This conciliar process was typical of decision-making in the early centuries of the church. The role of "Peter" in such processes was expressed succinctly by Pope Leo when he wrote to Council of Chalcedon that Peter has spoken through Leo. What was at stake at Chalcedon was faith in Jesus Christ. And this affected salvation and how it was understood and experienced. It might have been a matter of getting the words of the formula right, but the need for this was being felt in the market squares. For this reason, it was also about mission, as was the Council of Jerusalem.
37. So, the fundamental question is always around faith. This takes me back to LG, this time to art.12 and what it says about faith. This is the part that I am interested in:
- "The universal body of the faithful who have received the anointing of the holy one, cannot be mistaken in belief. It displays this particular quality through a supernatural sense of the faith in the whole people when 'from the bishops to the last of the faithful laity', it expresses the consent of all in matters of faith and morals."
38. This is the famous *sensus fidei*. It is about faith and the instinct for the faith. I believe that this teaching of Vatican II is coming into its own in a synodal church. Because it is about faith, it is also about salvation and how people experience it.
39. I like to make a distinction between having knowledge of the faith and living the faith. The *sensus fidei* is not so much about people having knowledge of the faith, as it is about people having an experience of the faith and a fundamental trust in God or in Jesus. I sometimes refer to it as "peasant religion". People without much formal education can still have an instinct for the faith. LG 12 tells us this is a gift of the Holy Spirit. This is probably why the ancient *Rule of St Benedict* has an admonition to listen to the most junior member of the community. And remember that in those days, the most junior member was likely to be a child.

40. The other aspect of LG 12 is that this instinct for the faith is oriented towards a consensus. In other words, Christian faith impels towards communion. This is where the Spirit leads us.
41. As we know, this will involve discernment. It also involves listening because the experience of faith will be different among different groups of people. This is what I would call – from my ecumenical experience – a receptive listening. It is about listening so that I might learn from others. In receptive listening my basic stance is not one where I seek to win a debate or where I formulate a rebuttal in my mind before the other person has finished speaking.
 - So, if I go back to where I began, with the news reports by Thomas Reese, the impression was that some people were so tied up with their own concerns that they did not hear the concerns of others.
42. If I can go back to Rahner's comment that the sort of change that we saw in the early church did not come about so much through lots of detailed "academic work", as it were, but rather "more or less spontaneously", out of an intuition of the Holy Spirit and of grace. Surely, this is what is going on when we talk about a *consensus fidei*. And it may happen slowly. Some local churches will move more slowly than others, but we still need to care for the communion of local churches.
43. My final comment. Ultimately, this is all about mission. It is about how the experience of salvation is taken to the world. And that is why it is important to speak of a world-church. Mission is local, but within the communion of the whole church throughout the world.