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Ingun Montgomery und Manfred Stolpe zum 80. Geburtstag

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MIKKO KETOLA

The Reception of Vatican II in Finland 1959–1967

Catholicism in Finland after the Second World War

At the time of the Second Vatican Council, Finland was a country of around 4.5 million people. In 1960, the Evangelical Lutheran Church comprised 92.4 percent of Finns, 1.4 percent belonged to the Finnish Orthodox Church, and 0.7 percent were members of other religious communities. The Roman Catholic Church in Finland was comparably small, with around 2,200 members or only 0.0005 percent of the population. The Catholic Church in Finland was, however, a growing church, even if growth was very slow.

Although the number of Catholics in Finland was minimal, the Church's visibility was steadily growing year by year. At the end of the Second World War, the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood started an English primary school in Helsinki. In 1952, a large new building for the school was completed and, two years later, a second Catholic church in Helsinki was inaugurated in close proximity to the school. The church was dedicated to Saint Mary.

In 1946, the Holy See decided to establish a research and cultural centre, run by the Dominican Order, in Helsinki. The centre, Studium Catholicum, opened its doors in 1949. A French Dominican, André Bonduelle, became the centre's first director. This happened some 700 years after Dominicans first settled in Finland. In 1956, the Dominicans started to publish a theological and cultural journal called *Documenta*. Articles were mostly written in either Finnish or Swedish. Martti Voutilainen was ordained as the first Finnish Dominican priest in 400 years in the Church of Saint Mary in 1961.

In February 1955, the Holy See restored the Finnish Catholic hierarchy, raising the country from mission status to the rank of a diocese. Bishop Gulielmus Cobben, formerly Vicar Apostolic, became its first Ordinary. *The New York Times* observed that the Pope had thus completed »the process of strengthening the Catholic Church in Scandinavia«. From 1953, the vicariates of Denmark, Norway and Sweden had each been elevated to the status of a diocese.¹

This occurred in the same Spring that Finland celebrated the eight hundredth anniversary of the introduction of Christianity to Finland. The main event of the jubilee was a celebration on Ascension Day in the Turku Cathedral. No representatives from the Roman Catholic Church attended. The time was not yet ripe for joint celebrations including Christians from different denominations.

Through the eyes of an outside observer, it seemed that the Finns were »opposed to Catholicism in every way« and very proud of being »the most Lutheran

¹ The New York Times, 19 March 1955.

nation in the world«. The British Catholic writer, Ann D. Green, analysed the Finns' spiritual nature and their attitudes toward Catholicism in the British Catholic magazine *The Tablet*. Her article is worthy of a more extensive analysis, but suffice it here to present a few examples of her observations. On her visit to Finland, Green learnt that »Catholicism is seen as a tyranny based on an absurdity« and that there was »a fervent national feeling that dreads ›domination by Rome‹«. Prejudice was so overwhelming that »one cannot speak of indulgences without using a word meaning ›sale of indulgences‹«. If one converts to Catholicism, one will »face a lifetime of incomprehension and distrust«. Still, there was hope for future glory for Catholicism, because »the intellectual sceptics and young agnostics have begun to declare that, should they ever accept any faith, it would be Catholicism«.²

Pope John's announcement causes fear and confusion

By the end of the 1950s, many Finnish churchmen and theologians had become quite alarmed about the strengthening presence of the Catholic Church in Finland. Some Helsinki pastors considered the English school to be a real danger because around 80 percent of children at the school were from Lutheran families. They were worried that the school's Religion classes would potentially poison the children with Catholic ideas. Professor Osmo Tiililä, Professor of Dogmatics and an authority for the more conservative Lutheran believers, warned that more heed should be paid to the Catholic propaganda. He did not believe that the Catholic Church would succeed in converting great numbers of people, but he worried that those with higher education and members of the intellectual elite might be tempted not just for religious but also cultural reasons.³

When Pope John XXIII announced in 1959 that an ecumenical council would be held in the Vatican, the news caused considerable confusion in the Finnish newspapers for a brief period. Several assumed that the term »ecumenical« indicated that all Christian Churches were invited to participate in order to unite all Christians under the Pope. Some journalists were under the misapprehension that there had been also Christians from all church denominations at the First Vatican Council. However, two theologians who were more than familiar with the actual facts of the matter, Docent Seppo A. Teinonen and Dr Martti Parvio (Private Secretary to the Archbishop), very quickly and publicly corrected the misunderstandings that had been circulating. Once the correct meaning of »ecumenical« had been explained, discussion moved on to other issues, such

2 Ann D. Green, Catholicism in Finland. The Paradox of a Minority, in: *The Tablet*, 17 January 1959.

3 Cf. Antti Laine, Vuosien 1959–1960 salainen tutkimus roomalaiskatolisen kirkon lähestymisestä Suomessa [The Secret Survey Concerning the Missionary Work of the Roman Catholic Church in Finland 1959–1960], in: *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* (2009), 98–111.

as a comparison between the ecumenism represented by the World Council of Churches and the nature of the Pope's call for unity among all Christians.⁴

Aarre Lauha, editor of the main church newspaper *Kotimaa* and Professor of Old Testament Studies, urged students of Theology to pay serious attention to the ominous increase in Catholic propaganda in Finland. Lauha did not realistically think the Catholic Church could be entertaining fantasies about the Finnish people's swift conversion to Catholicism. »But Rome has time«, he noted. In his view, Rome intended to eliminate the Finns' deep-seated suspicion against the Catholic Church little by little. Coming generations could then find the means to make the »Ultima Thule« a province of the Catholic Church once again. Lauha considered it only natural that there was much reserve on the evangelical side towards the Pope's wish to establish Christian unity. He recalled that Rome had been asked repeatedly to join ecumenical cooperation, but these pleas had failed because the Catholic side had demanded that the other side first acknowledge the Pope's supremacy.⁵

The accumulated concern of the Lutheran bishops in Finland eventually resulted in mandating the ecclesiastical central organisation, Suomen kirkon seurakuntatyön keskusliitto (the Central Union of Parish Work in the Finnish Church), to conduct an inquiry into the missionary work of the Roman Catholic Church in Finland. The work was assigned to just one man, Pastor Esko Rintala, who was to explore »to what extent, in which circles and for what reasons« people were converting to Roman Catholicism. The execution and results of the inquiry were to be kept secret from the wider public; the circulation of results was limited to the leadership of the Finnish Lutheran Church in manuscript form only. The decision to conduct the inquiry was not recorded in the protocols of the Enlarged Bishops' Conference which was the ecclesiastical organ responsible for the inquiry.⁶

The inquiry consisted of two questionnaires which were sent to Lutheran parishes in four major cities, Helsinki, Turku, Tampere and Jyväskylä. The first questionnaire was intended to gather information about people who had actually converted and their reasons for making this decision. The second questionnaire concerned the perceptions and image people held of the Catholic Church. Rintala also interviewed a number of converts, and read journals published by the Catholic Church in Finland. The inquiry's results proved to be quite meagre, and thus reassuring. The number of converts was much lower than anticipated. The

4 Cf. Tatu Kotilainen, Vatikaanin II konsiilin vastaanotto Suomessa 1959–1966 [The reception of Vatican II in Finland in 1959–1966]. Unprinted master's thesis in Church History, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki, 2009, 14–24. Kotilainen's thesis concentrates heavily on analysis of the Finnish newspapers.

5 Mikko Ketola, Esimiehen avausanat Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikokouksessa, 19.01.2009 [Chairman's opening words at the annual general meeting of the Finnish society of church history, 19.01.2009], in: *Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja* (2009), 16.

6 Laine, Vuosien, Loc. Cit. (Note 3), 102.

Lutheran Church was losing far more people to the Advent Christian Church, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Free Church than to the Catholic Church. Most converts to Catholicism were young people in the age group of 20–25, which was the same age group that Lutheran parish workers had trouble in reaching. In most cases, the reason for converting was that the person had become a genuine Catholic believer. Aversion to Lutheranism had only motivated a few people. The concern that educated people in particular were susceptible to Catholicism's message had proved to be exaggerated, since there were also many working class members among the converts. In Rintala's opinion, the Roman Catholic Church had become attractive in post-war Finland because more and more people were travelling to the of southern European Catholic countries, and general literature, the press, radio, television and cinema were providing interesting and positive views on Catholicism.⁷

Among Finnish Lutheran Church bishops, E. G. Gulin, the Bishop of Tampere, was by far the most enthusiastic about the coming of the Council. Gulin was a veteran of ecumenical endeavours and also known for his outreach to workers. In April 1962, he was putting the finishing touches to his book *Christendom's Way* (*Kristikunnan tie*) 1957–1962 which was a review of major events and developments within the various Christian Churches. A third of the book was dedicated to expectations for the Second Vatican Council and how the Lutheran Church viewed the Catholic Church. Gulin was clearly impressed with Pope John XXIII's personality. Another positive factor for Gulin was that the Catholic Church had maintained good contact with the working class – or better than the Protestant Churches, at the very least.⁸

Gulin had had a bad experience in 1951 with Pope John's predecessor, Pius XII. On his way to Greece, Gulin had been caused to make a stopover in Rome, which gave him the idea of visiting the Vatican and possibly meeting Pope Pius XII. An audience was arranged by Göran Stenius, who was the charge d'affaires at the Finnish embassy to the Vatican. With several other people, Gulin participated in the Pope's private audience, dressed in civilian clothing, and he was introduced to the Pope as »Protestanto, Finlandia«. Gulin deeply resented this description because, to him, it felt as if he had essentially been presented as an enemy of the Catholic Church.⁹ It is possible that Gulin may have now felt that he could attend Pope John's audience in Bishop's dress and correctly be presented as a fellow bishop.

In explaining the nature of the coming Council, Gulin referred, in the first place, to the Danish theologian K. E. Skydsgaard's book *Konzil und Evangelium* (1962) and Hans Küng's *Konzil und Wiedervereinigung* (1960). Gulin believed the apparently wide-spread rumour that Pope John XXIII had originally planned to invite all Christian Churches to negotiate a reunion, but the cardinals had put

7 Cf. Loc. Cit., 103–104.

8 Cf. E. G. Gulin, *Kristikunnan tie* [Christendom's Way] 1957–1962, Helsinki 1962, 72–75.

9 Jenni Krapu, E. G. Gulinin ekumeeninen työ ja ajattelu, Helsinki 2009, 154–155.

pressure on him to relinquish this plan. Gulin was, for some reason, under the impression that the preparatory commissions appointed by the Pope did not include any members of the curia at all. We now know the exact opposite was true. As far as Gulin was concerned, the fact that most worried Lutheran observers was that the Catholic Church had a mistaken view of the sources of revelation and tradition was held in even higher regard than the Bible.¹⁰

Seppo A. Teinonen and the Finnish Journal of Theology

The most significant Finnish participant at the Council was Dr Seppo A. Teinonen who was an academic lecturer of Missiology at the University of Helsinki. As a theologian, he had a very international orientation and he was familiar with contemporary developments not only in the Roman Catholic Church but within the sphere of every ecumenical organisation. He was fluent in several languages, including Latin. At the Council, he acted as an official observer for the Lutheran World Federation. He wrote long reports for the *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* (*Finnish Journal of Theology*), first about preparations and expectations prior to the Council and, subsequently, one after each period of the Council. The reports were a mixture of journalistic eloquence and highly competent theological analysis. Together they made up 165 pages of the Journal. At the conclusion of the Council, Teinonen published his reports as a bound edition with a print run of only 25. *Vaticanum secundum* was not to be sold publicly, but was distributed to experts and a few libraries. One copy was delivered to the Secretariat for Christian Unity. Nowadays, it is a much sought-after rarity among Finnish theologians.

Teinonen's reports contained more than just descriptions and explanations of the discussions and the finalised documents during the four periods of the Council; they also covered the events and developments unravelling between the periods. In addition, he observed the way journalists were able to procure information, including also Vatican officials' attitudes towards journalists, which were initially quite condescending and evasive. There is no doubt as to where Teinonen's sympathies lay. In the following, I shall pay particular attention to Teinonen's own personal opinions and experiences.

Teinonen referred to dozens of authors in his reports and he observed that the literature concerning the Council had, by the third period, become a veritable flood. In his initial reports, Teinonen referred most often to three authors; Xavier Rynne, Robert Kaiser and Hans Küng. Rynne was a *nom de plume* for Redemptorist Francis X. Murphy, Professor of Church History at the Pontifical Lateran University, who reported for *The New Yorker*. These reports were also published as books under the title *Letters from Vatican City*. Kaiser was a correspondent for *Time Magazine* and his book *Inside the Council* (1963) became a bestseller. Of Küng's books Teinonen referred especially to *Konzil und Wiedervereinigung* (1960).

10 Cf. Gulin, *Kristikunnan*, Loc. Cit. (Note 8), 77.

Even *Helsingin Sanomat*, the biggest daily newspaper in Finland, published an interview of Küng, conducted by George Armstrong in Rome. The article focussed on the fact that Küng was an avowed opponent of the use of Latin in the Catholic Church.¹¹

Although there were many other significant authors whose works stand out above others, including Yves Congar, René Laurentin, Antoine Wenger and Konrad W. Kraemer, Teinonen considered Rynne to be the most significant Council author. The main reason behind this evaluation was that, despite the curia's admonitions to journalists, Rynne had »courageously exposed« the inner workings of the Council and the curia's measures to the wider public. Teinonen claimed that, in the end, American bishops had only learned what had really happened in the first Council period from Rynne's book. By the third Council period it was commonly suspected that Murphy was the man behind Rynne, but nobody was able to prove this definitively. It was only years later that Murphy actually confirmed the fact. It is said that he was »obliged to deny his authorship more times a week than Peter denied Jesus in his entire life.«¹² Teinonen evidently admired Rynne as a fellow journalist, and credited him with ending »the news blackout« at the Council. Thanks to Rynne, more and more Roman Catholic theologians and observers dared to publish material that belonged, to a lesser or greater extent, to the sphere of Council secrecy.¹³

Teinonen assumed that most of the journalists at the Council were – like him – theologians from different churches whose aim was to follow the discussions at the Council as closely as possible. They used their personal contacts and other means to access both open and closed events and »it was not rare to see them holding documents stamped secret«. Teinonen was of the view that this form of extra-conciliar theological activity had much the same kind of impact on the course of the Council as outside political pressure.¹⁴ He did not explain what he meant by »outside political pressure« but he was probably referring to the pressure exerted on the Middle Eastern Bishops by their home countries in connection with discussions on the Church and the Jews.

Teinonen expressed his conviction that a genuine *aggiornamento* was indeed taking place in the Roman Catholic Church. An attempt was being made to reinterpret »the traditions of Romanity, Western Middle Ages and Latin theology in a new fashion within the 20th century's universal and ecumenical framework«. In his view, this development should not be called a revolutionary reformation but »a reformistic renovation« which did not disavow its own tradition but tried to explain it in a way which could result in major changes. Teinonen pointed out that the reforming process had already started long before Pope John XXIII's reign. The council had accelerated this progression, making it visible to everyone.

11 Cf. Kotilainen, Vatikaanin, Loc. Cit. (Note 4), 67.

12 Arthur Jones, Another luminary lost: F. X. Murphy dies at 87, in: National Catholic Reporter, 03.05.2002.

13 Seppo A. Teinonen, Placet iuxta modum, in: Teologinen Aikakauskirja (1965), 81–82.

14 Loc. Cit. (Note 13), 92.

It had made it abundantly clear that the Church of Rome was not an institution irreversibly stuck in its own positions, nor was it »a massive monolith intolerant towards diversity and reforms«. On the contrary, the Church is »a dynamic whole full of possible avenues of development and reformistic tensions«. The Roman Church was no longer the unreformed church of the Reformation period and, in dealing with it, one could not merely regurgitate the Reformation period's old Protestant polemic. Teinonen predicted that many theology textbooks would have to be revised if the Council continued on its chosen path.¹⁵

At the end of the second period, the Council approved the constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum concilium*, commonly regarded as one of the Council's most important achievements. Teinonen regarded it as a highly significant reform document which, in every respect, reflects not only the Catholic liturgical movement's ideas, but also the biblical movement's thinking. The emphasis of both movements can be seen in the prominence placed on the Bible's significance. In Teinonen's view, the constitution had been inspired by the ecumenical spirit; for this reason Mariology had a very minimalistic role in it. Despite the promising content of the constitution Teinonen could not consider it »a reformatory« document, describing it instead as only a »reformistic« document. With its help, Rome was reforming itself on the basis of its own traditions. Nevertheless, »separated brethren« could note with a sense of satisfaction that reforms were taking place and that Rome had taken a big step on the way towards unity.¹⁶

In his last report on the Council, Teinonen observed that it was still too early to evaluate its results or consequences in detail because publication of the documents and their analysis would take years. However, he was ready to agree with the claim expressed by Hans Küng and Peter Meinhold that the Council had, in many respects, been able to achieve what the reformers had been aiming at 400 years ago. A new era of ecumenism had dawned and theology must again, and without prejudice, go deeply into the old controversies in order to heal the division of Christendom.¹⁷

The Finnish Journal of Theology was not the only forum where Teinonen was active. He often wrote in the Finnish Ecumenical Council's magazine *Näköala* (Perspective). From 1963–1966, he wrote six short articles on primarily the same themes as his reports in the Finnish Journal of Theology. In 1963–1968, Teinonen wrote an annual review of events in other churches and ecumenical organisations for the annual Church Calendar, which had a wide distribution within the Lutheran Church. The Vatican Council featured prominently in these articles during the years it was assembled.

Teinonen was virtually the only Finnish theologian who wrote about the Council in a theological journal. The only other main commentator was Raimo

15 Seppo A. Teinonen, Mirabile spectaculum, in: Teologinen Aikakauskirja (1963), 393.

16 Seppo A. Teinonen, Dignissimus fratrum consessus, in: Teologinen Aikakauskirja (1964), 196.

17 Cf. Seppo A. Teinonen, Felix concilii exitus, in: Teologinen Aikakauskirja (1966), 156–157.

Harjula who was preparing his doctoral thesis in the early 1960s on Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, under the guidance of Teinonen. Harjula's thesis was, in fact, a pioneering study, as it was the first doctoral thesis on contemporary Catholicism to be written by a Finnish theologian. Harjula's thesis was approved at the University of Helsinki in 1966.¹⁸ Harjula wrote for a journal called *Teologia ja kirkko* (Theology and Church), a conservative rival to the Finnish Journal of Theology, which was edited by Teinonen's teacher, Professor Osmo Tiililä. Harjula described Pope John's intentions for the Council, as far as they were known, and listed the main reasons why there were certain suspicions on the Protestant side towards the Council. In Harjula's view, the most significant of these doubts was the question whether there had been any progress in the Catholic doctrine of justification since Trent. »There could be no compromise over the purity of the Gospel«, Harjula warned.¹⁹ Although Harjula was Teinonen's student, he was much more reserved than his teacher when it came to ecumenical openness.

»Rome and we«

Teinonen's article collection *Vaticanum secundum* was only circulated among a few selected targets, but he finally published a scholarly treatise on the Second Vatican Council with a normal print run in 1966. The work *Rooma ja me. Vatikaanin toiseen konsiiliin liittyviä dogmatiikan kysymyksiä* [Rome and we. Dogmatic questions raised by the Second Vatican Council] was based on a series of lectures Teinonen had given at a seminar on Dogmatics organized by the Union of the Finnish Clergy the previous year. The book was published by the Finnish Theological Literature Society.²⁰ The book's bibliography listed most of the monographs and articles Teinonen had referred to in his reports in the Finnish Journal of Theology, but Rynne's and Kaiser's books were missing, evidently because of their popular and non-scientific character.

Rome and we was reviewed in the Finnish Journal of Theology by Professor Osmo Tiililä, Teinonen's colleague in the Faculty of Theology. Teinonen himself had been editor of the Journal since the beginning of 1965. Tiililä, who was quite familiar with the Council literature, placed Teinonen's work in the same category as Edmund Schlink's *Nach dem Konzil* which had been published in the same year as Teinonen's book. The two works had a similar structure; they gave a detailed account of the most significant documents and then evaluated them. Tiililä commended the book as an excellent guide to the Council's results and proof

¹⁸ Raimo Harjula, *Roomalaiskatolisen kirkon ja Kristuksen mystillisen ruumiin identiteetti Pius XII:n mukaan* [The identity of the Roman Catholic Church and the mystical body of Christ according to Pius XII], Helsinki 1966, 200.

¹⁹ Raimo Harjula, *Tuleva Vatikaanin kirkolliskokous* [The coming Vatican council], in: *Teologia ja kirkko* (1961), 174–182.

²⁰ *Rooma ja me. Vatikaanin toiseen konsiiliin liittyviä dogmatiikan kysymyksiä* [Rome and we. Dogmatic questions raised by the Second Vatican Council], Helsinki 1966, 122.

of independent thinking. Tiililä stated that he himself had concentrated almost exclusively on reading Catholic theology during the past year in order to fill gaps in his theological knowledge.²¹ This admission may possibly have alarmed some of Tiililä's colleagues in the Faculty. The alarm was justifiable, because Tiililä had left the priesthood and the Lutheran Church in 1962 as an act of protest against the Church leadership. He believed that the Church concentrated too much on temporal matters. Year by year, he became more fascinated with the Vatican Council and the Catholic Church, and, after retiring from the university in 1967, he seriously entertained the thought of converting to Catholicism. In the end, nothing eventuated, and Tiililä died in 1972.²²

In his review, Tiililä paid most attention to the book's chapters on the Bible and tradition, and ecclesiology. He was happy to note that the use of the Bible had risen to a new level in the Catholic Church: »It is being used more and more, it is given to the hands of the people (unlike previously), it is being appealed to throughout theological literature and – what is most significant – it is trusted. Rome has not given birth to Robinsons; they belong to – mirabile dictu! – Protestantism.«²³ The reference to »Robinsons« was meant to bring to the readers' minds the British Bishop, John A. T. Robinson, whose controversial books *Honest to God* and *The New Reformation* had been published in Finnish in 1965.

Tiililä's review was not just about Teinonen. The other theologian who clearly fascinated Tiililä was Hans Küng. Tiililä thought that Küng had »said much that could be said again after Vatican II« in his book *Rechtfertigung*. Tiililä asked whether Küng had become an »enfant terrible« in the Catholic Church because of his comparably quite Protestant thinking. Tiililä felt this suspicion was proved by the fact that Küng had been passed over when authors were being invited to contribute to new Catholic theological handbooks such as *Mysterium Salutis*. Tiililä commended Küng's latest work *Die Kirche* as being »surprisingly evangelical« and a healthy dose for »us one-eyed experts who can't seem to get our head around the fact that we are experiencing a new and epoch-making turn.«

In Tiililä's view, proof of the speed at which changes were happening in the Catholic Church could be seen in the section on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the constitution *Lumen gentium*. In his opinion, it was significant that the so-called minimalists – who had opposed Pius XII's »extremely far-reaching Mariology« and especially the anticipated doctrine on the Blessed Virgin Mary as Co-Redemptrix – had been in a majority at the Council, even if that majority was very slight.²⁴

Tiililä concluded his review with the following image: »When all kinds of old sola-scriptura men and maximalists gradually fade into history, we shall see young broad-minded theologians congregate in their conferences, bridging the

²¹ Cf. *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* (1967), 388.

²² Cf. Timo Junkkaala, Osmo Tiililä – protestantti [Osmo Tiililä – A Protestant], Kauniainen 2004, 716–728.

²³ *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 1967, 391.

²⁴ Cf. *Loc. Cit.*, 393.

chasm which still exists between the Christian Churches. The old diehards will be horrified, but why are they not horrified at the present disunity between them?»²⁵

Teinonen's book was also reviewed by André Lemaire OP, a French Dominican, who had resided at the Studium Catholicum in Helsinki since the early 1950s. Like Tiililä, Lemaire paid special attention to what Teinonen had to say about the relationship between the Bible and tradition, and ecclesiology. He identified many areas where he could agree with Teinonen. But Lemaire began his review with critical observations about Teinonen's views on Mariology. He noted that Teinonen – »like all Protestant theologians« – condemned the Catholic »popular Mariolatry«. Lemaire admitted that this criticism, which many Catholic theologians also exercised, was legitimate. However, there was a large amount of genuine evangelical adoration for Mary in the Catholic Church that Teinonen did not seem to appreciate. Lemaire was glad that some Protestant groups – such as Taizé – had rediscovered »the part that Mary had in God's divine plan«. Lemaire hoped that Mariology would become a distinct issue for ecumenical activities and discussion. Lemaire made another critical point regarding Teinonen's use of the word »Rome«. He pointed out that, like most Finnish theologians, Teinonen used the terms »Roman Church«, »Roman Catholic Church« and »Catholic Church« without distinction, even though they actually had notably different meanings. In Lemaire's view, the term »Roman Church« could only be used with reference to the local Church in Rome. If the meaning referred to the Church lead by the Pope, one or other of the latter two terms should be used.²⁶

Teinonen admonishes the Lutheran clergy

In October 1967, Teinonen was a guest speaker at the synod meeting of the Helsinki diocese clergy under Bishop Aarre Lauha. Lauha was the former editor of the church newspaper *Kotimaa*, and had sounded a warning in 1959 on the Catholic Church's plans to lure Finns to Catholicism. In his own speech to the assembly, Bishop Lauha described the Vatican Council's impact on the inner life of the Catholic Church, and her relations to the other denominations, as the most significant thing that had happened in the joint history of Christianity since the »hammer-blows of Wittenberg«. Lauha expressed his hope that Pope Paul would dare to follow in his predecessor's footsteps, despite his cautious nature. Lauha pointed out that it was often down to just one man to »release the hidden forces and make the still waters flow«.²⁷

Synod meetings were held at five-yearly intervals, and the last one in October 1962 had coincided with the first session of Vatican II. A lot had happened during those five years and Teinonen had been asked to give a talk on the chal-

25 Loc. Cit., 394.

26 André Lemaire, »Rooma ja me«, in: Teologinen Aikakauskirja (1966), 4.

27 Protocol of the statutory clergy meeting of the Helsinki Diocese clergy in Helsinki on 17–19 October 1967, Helsinki 1968, 230.

lenge that the Council now posed to the Lutheran Church. In reality, the actual main theme of the synod meeting was the relationship between Christians and Communists, for which Pastor Leino Hassinen had been commissioned to write a synod book, *Christianity and Communism*. The book was sent in advance to participants, and there was a thorough discussion at the meeting on the subject. It is pertinent to note that whereas both Catholicism and Bolshevism had been perceived within Church circles as being major threats to Finnish independence in the 1920s,²⁸ at the end of the 1960s it was possible to analyse both phenomena without aggression or too much prejudice, even at a meeting of Lutheran clergy.

It was natural for Teinonen to start with a scholar's viewpoint. He was amazed about the extent to which Protestant theology had ignored Catholic theologians' contributions, and the length of time this had continued. He presented the example of the Finnish Professor, Antti J. Pietilä, whose magnum opus, *Christian dogmatics I–III* (1930–1932), was well known among all the assembled clergy. In Pietilä's bibliography of the most important dogmatic sourcebooks, only two Catholic works were recorded that had been published since the 18th century. Even so, this lack of expertise had not stopped him from passing judgement on Rome and her possible entry into ecumenical cooperation. In Teinonen's experience, Pietilä was not alone among many other Lutheran theologians in thinking that Roman Catholicism represented »syncretistic, partly even pagan sectarianism, repression of conscience, unbiblical traditionalism, papal deviation from true Christianity, monolithic pressure to conform, liturgical ritualism, image worship, magic, and enslavement of theology«.²⁹

Teinonen said it was no wonder that Protestant theology had not been able to identify the serious nature of the changes that were emerging in the Roman Catholic Church, and how profound was the role that serious Catholic theology had in creating the necessary prerequisites for decisive reforms. While busy ignoring Catholic theology, Protestant theology had been alternatively looking for answers in »idealism, liberalism, individualism, spiritualism and ecclesiological Docetism«. In Teinonen's opinion, it was obvious that clarifying the conditions for such a reconciliation – or return – was one of the most crucial tasks for contemporary Lutheran theology. Rome was asking the Lutheran Churches whether they remained true to the Bible and their symbolic books. Were the Lutherans ready to follow their own principles, i.e. the earliest tradition of the Church, in their church political and ecumenical programme?³⁰

When explaining the substance of the Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, Teinonen pointed out that, in contrast to the Catholic Church's earlier negative stance towards the ecumenical movement, the Vatican Council had unreservedly taken a stand in favour of ecumenical efforts, and it held every

28 Cf. Mikko Ketola, *Sisällissodan vaikutus kirkkohistorian kirjoitukseen* [The impact of the civil war on writing church history], in: *Sisällissota ja kirkko* [The civil war and the Church] 1918, Helsinki 2009, 202.

29 Protocol 1967, Loc. Cit. (Note. 27), 236.

30 Loc. Cit., 237.

Catholic responsible for supporting these efforts. The Pope's apology to the separated brethren must not be seen as merely a new form of ecclesiastical tactics and diplomacy, but should be understood as being wholly serious and inseparable from the Council's wider endeavours. It stemmed from Catholicism's »innermost faith«. The Council had presented »an unselfish and genuine Christian challenge, which Protestantism, and especially Lutheranism, had been unable to respond to«. Teinonen wanted »the clerus synodalis« to ponder the extent to which not responding to the apology might be a symptom of »a schismatic-heretic tendency« within these Churches.³¹

Unfortunately, the printed protocol of the meeting gives us no hint about the reactions to Teinonen's lecture, although it can be safely assumed that it was most likely difficult to sympathise with Teinonen's very positive and optimistic view of the direction the Catholic Church had taken, at least for many older clergy. It would appear that no time was reserved for discussion. However, the protocol mentions that a group of theology students attended, specifically to hear what Teinonen had to say, which indicates that the consequences of the Second Vatican Council resonated with the youngest generation of Finnish theologians.

Conclusions

The Second Vatican Council changed many minds about Catholicism in Finland. Before the Council, Lutheran Finns seemed to be »opposed to Catholicism in every way«, as one outside observer put it. Many Lutheran churchmen were alarmed by the increased visibility of the Catholic Church in Finnish society and feared that Catholic propaganda was luring innocent Lutheran children away from the true faith. The World Council of Churches represented the only genuine ecumenism, and the Catholic Church did not belong to this. It was no wonder, then, that the announcement of a new ecumenical council caused great confusion in Finnish society and within the Lutheran Church. For a time, almost everyone thought the Pope was trying to get all Christians to join some sort of World Church, under his own leadership. The confusion cleared up quite quickly and matter-of-fact information started to rule the day. In a sense, reception of the Council in Finland was a one-man show. The lecturer in Missiology, Seppo A. Teinonen, participated in the Council as an official observer representing the Lutheran World Federation. He spoke several languages and was easily able to get hold of confidential documents. Consequently, he wrote long reports for the Finnish Journal of Theology and shorter ones for other publications, in which he combined journalism and theological expertise. Teinonen's influence on Finnish theologians and especially the younger generation has been huge. Through his writings, they gained a reliable and up-to-date understanding of what was happening in the Catholic Church and where Catholicism was heading. He urged them to be open-minded and to think

ecumenically. For many students of Theology, Teinonen was the decisive impetus for specialized study in Catholic theology.

On a positive note, relations between the Lutheran and Catholic Churches in Finland took a new path after the Second Vatican Council. Attitudes and stances had changed for the better, and there was far less fear of the Pope revealing himself as an anti-Christ.

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31 Loc. Cit., 240.