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Two Amendments to Jacques Dupuis' Ecclesiology

Andrew Prevot

In post-Vatican II Catholic ecclesiology, questions of the church's role in salvation and its relation to other religions have been approached in part by drawing a distinction between the church and the kingdom of God. Jacques Dupuis' theology exemplifies this trend. He treats the kingdom as a mystery of justice and mercy coextensive with the historical and eschatological scope of God's saving activity, whereas he understands the church as a limited sacramental community of baptized Christians whose mission is to be a historical sign and instrumental cause of the kingdom. Dupuis' understanding of the difference between the kingdom and the church supports his idea that other religions can be seen from a Catholic theological perspective as "ways of salvation."¹ Since the kingdom is constitutive of God's saving presence within and beyond history, and since its existence is not limited to the boundaries of the church, Dupuis argues that the traditional "exclusivist" and "ecclesiocentric" teaching that "there is no salvation outside the church" needs to be discarded. In its place, he proposes an inclusive "Christocentric" and "regnocentric" theory, in which the saving power of God's kingdom—which is always mediated both by the missions of the Son and the Spirit and through the diverse contexts of human experience—is not only present outside the church but also within other religions. Because they mediate the kingdom, these religions can be seen as "ways" or "participated mediations" of salvation, even while they remain external to the church.²

Although it has much to commend it, Dupuis' discussion of the kingdom and the church has not escaped controversy. The Notification on Dupuis issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2001 suggests that Dupuis' theology may not do enough to safeguard the intrinsic connection between the church and salvation. The CDF does not condemn any of Dupuis' propositions in this document, but it does seek to clarify "notable ambiguities."³ In particular, the CDF states that one must believe that "the Church is sign and instrument of salvation for all people."⁴ Apparently, then, the Congregation perceives in Dupuis' work some potential to obscure the church's identity both as universal sign and universal instrument of

salvation. Moreover, in *Dominus Iesus*, the Congregation expresses concern that some theologians have begun to challenge the “intimate connection between Christ, the kingdom, and the Church.”⁵ Although Dupuis is not mentioned by name here, it would not be unreasonable to question whether—and, if so, to what extent—his way of parsing the distinction between church and kingdom is vulnerable to this criticism.⁶

In this essay, I shall propose two amendments or modifications to Dupuis’ ecclesiology in response to these points of doctrinal and theological contention. (Of course, there are many other contentious issues which have been and could be addressed elsewhere.) The first modification involves broadening Dupuis’ understanding of the church’s role as the “universal sacrament of salvation.”⁷ Although Dupuis suggests that the church can signify the kingdom for those who do not belong to it as its members, his ecclesiology would be more consistent with Catholic teaching if it also affirmed the universal scope of the *instrumental causality* which the church exercises by virtue of its sacramental identity. The second modification consists in retrieving the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of the church, not only as a *historical* sacrament of salvation, but also as an *eschatological* reality awaiting its fulfillment. This retrieval of the eschatological dimension of the church can preserve Dupuis’ distinction between the church and the kingdom, insofar as these are historical realities, while at the same time erasing any suggestion that one could belong to the kingdom in the eschaton without in some way belonging to the eschatological church.

The Eucharistic dimension of Vatican II’s ecclesiology establishes the theological warrant for both of these amendments to Dupuis’ proposal. With respect to the first modification, the church’s Eucharistic offering of the sacrifice of Christ to the Father for all people can be seen as a universal instrumental cause of the salvation of those outside the church. With respect to the second modification, one can affirm the eschatological unity of the kingdom and the church by acknowledging the presence of this unity already as an inchoate mystery in the historical church, especially in its reception of the Eucharist. Highlighting the universally causal and eschatological aspects of Vatican II’s teachings regarding the church’s celebration of the Eucharist reaffirms the intrinsic bond existing between the church, the kingdom, and salvation which the CDF suggests is not sufficiently clear in Dupuis’ theology, and it does so without disturbing the essence of his argument. Other religious paths outside the church can be participated mediations of the saving presence

of Christ in the Spirit and of the historical emergence of the kingdom while, at the same time, benefiting from the *universal instrumental causality* of the Eucharistic liturgy and being oriented toward a final union in the *eschatological church* which continues this liturgy for all eternity.

We shall proceed by examining more closely the ecclesiological aspects of Dupuis' theology, primarily with reference to his most recent work *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*.⁸ Then we shall return to the Eucharistic ecclesiology of Vatican II in order to retrieve an understanding of the church in its universally causal and eschatological aspects. Finally, we shall take up the concerns raised by the Notification and *Dominus Iesus* once again in order to make the case that a doubly modified version of Dupuis' ecclesiology both leaves his argument for the salvific value of other religions essentially intact and allows it to accord more readily with Catholic doctrine.

1. The ecclesiological aspects of Dupuis' Christo- and regnocentrism

Dupuis describes Christ as the unique and universal mediator of salvation.⁹ By contrast, he thinks of the church as "a derived, related mystery" that stands in need of a "radical 'decentering'" so that our understanding of salvation can be "'recentered' on the mystery of Jesus Christ."¹⁰ He views this movement of de- and re-centering as a necessary "paradigm shift" from a "narrow ecclesiocentric approach" which excludes non-Christians from the saving activity of God to a "broader Christocentric perspective"¹¹ which explicitly includes those outside the church in God's plan of salvation.¹² Dupuis argues that the missions of the Son and the Spirit were already at work before the incarnate Son, Jesus of Nazareth, gathered together the disciples who would become the first members of the church.¹³ This pre-ecclesial divine activity can be discovered both in God's covenant with the Jewish people¹⁴ and in the planting of the preparatory seeds of the Word throughout all the nations.¹⁵ Moreover, in the years following the birth of the church, these missions have not been confined to its visible presence but have continued to touch the lives of those who are "outside" the ecclesial Body of Christ.¹⁶ Thus, although God's historical economy of salvation is always intrinsically Christological and pneumatological, this economy is limited neither "temporally" or "spatially" to the mystery of the church. At bottom, Dupuis' paradigm shift from ecclesiocentrism to Christocentrism is

nothing other than this awareness that the Son and the Spirit are at work both “before” and “outside” the church’s historical existence.

Dupuis argues that the saving activity of God in the Son and the Spirit is constitutive of the kingdom of God. He explains that the historical emergence of the kingdom includes liberation from various forms of “enslavement and oppression,”¹⁷ but its final end consists in the eschatological “realization of God’s plan of salvation.”¹⁸ Thinking of the integral whole of God’s liberating and saving presence both within and beyond history in terms of the kingdom is what Dupuis means by “regnocentrism.” In this sense, regnocentrism is essentially Dupuis’ Christocentrism by another name.¹⁹ Through his adoption of a regnocentric perspective, Dupuis simply repeats the “paradigm shift” away from ecclesiocentrism in a slightly different form: just as the saving activity of God is not confined to the church, neither is the kingdom restricted to any ecclesial boundaries. Moreover, because the kingdom which is constituted by God’s saving activity is “temporally” and “spatially” greater than the church, Dupuis rejects the traditional idea of the “Ekklesia ab Abel” and other “extended” concepts of the church which attempt to equate it absolutely with the kingdom.²⁰ Instead, he favors a position that he believes is a more accurate representation of the ecclesiology of Vatican II: namely, that the church is not coextensive with the kingdom but is rather a “universal sacrament of salvation” and a “necessary” “sign and instrument” of the kingdom in history.²¹

For its members (those who are baptized as Christians),²² Dupuis argues that the church’s sacraments “constitute a true mediation of the action of Jesus Christ in the ecclesial community.”²³ This sacramental mediation of Christ is not only a sign of salvation for the church but also, in scholastic terminology, an exercise of “instrumental efficient causality in the strict sense”:²⁴ i.e., an action of grace performed by God through the church with the effect of drawing its members together into the “unity of the Spirit.”²⁵ Dupuis grants that, as a “universal sacrament of salvation,” the church bears “witness” to the mystery of the kingdom by universally signifying the grace of Christ for those who do not belong to the church, but he does not believe that it explicitly “carries out an activity of universal mediation” for non-Christians “in the strict theological sense” of instrumental causality.²⁶ Hence, he takes the expression “universal sacrament of

salvation” to imply that the church is a universal *sign* of salvation, but not an instrumental efficient *cause* for anyone except its members.

Yet Dupuis qualifies this apparent rejection of the church’s universally instrumental mediation of the kingdom in three ways. First, he argues that, while one need not deny the possibility of some “‘implicit mediation’—albeit difficult to conceive,” by which the church would instrumentally cause the salvation of non-Christians, there is nothing in the understanding of the church as a universal sacrament of salvation which requires one to believe in an *explicit* mediation.²⁷ Second, though not implying any *instrumental* causality, Dupuis nevertheless treats the intercessory prayers of the church for the salvation of all people as indicative of a different kind of causality which is “not of the order of efficiency but of the moral order and of finality.”²⁸ Third, Dupuis makes the claim, with reference to Vatican II and *Redemptoris Missio*, that those who are not members of the church by baptism are nevertheless “‘oriented’ toward it, inasmuch as in it is found the fullness of the means of salvation.”²⁹ He explains that this “fullness of means” is found within the one true church, which “subsists in the Catholic Church,”³⁰ and which is “‘indissolubly united’ to Christ as his Body.”³¹ Hence, although Dupuis does not ascribe to the church an explicitly instrumental mediation of salvation for those “outside,” he nevertheless maintains that all those who are saved are potentially the recipients of an implicit and/or morally causal mediation and are in any case universally oriented toward the church because of its completeness.

Despite these qualifications, Dupuis ultimately claims that, for Christians, the church both signifies and instrumentally causes the grace whereby they are united to Christ in the Spirit; whereas for non-Christians, the church does not function universally as an instrumental cause of their salvation.³² This way of parsing the universal sacramentality of the church differently for members and non-members (excluding its instrumentally causal aspect from the latter) contradicts the official teaching that the church is not only a sign but also an instrument of salvation for all people.

Moreover, although Dupuis argues that non-Christians are “oriented” toward the church, he tends to consider the church almost exclusively as a “sacrament of the Kingdom in history,”³³ a historical sign which cannot be “an end in itself.”³⁴ The church appears to have no constitutive place in the eschaton.³⁵ Rather, as

a historical, “de-centered” reality, it can only be one among many ways to participate in the kingdom in history, even if it is, as he affirms, the most complete or normative one.³⁶ Dupuis describes the eschaton, not as the fulfillment of a distinctly ecclesial mystery, but as “a convergence between the religious traditions,” in which “all things” will be recapitulated “in Christ.”³⁷ He foresees it as a “final perfection” of “the Reign of God,” but not uniquely of the church.³⁸ Hence, Dupuis’ Christo- and regnocentric shift away from ecclesiocentrism continues unchanged in his eschatology, with the consequence that the church and the kingdom are not only distinct in history but also finally distinct in eternity (if anything of the church remains). Ultimately, for Dupuis, the church will be one among many religious communities that have converged to form the perfected kingdom, rather than a perfected reality consisting of all the redeemed members of the kingdom. As with Dupuis’ exclusion of instrumental causality from the church’s universal sacramentality, the predominantly historical focus of his ecclesiology causes problems for a unified understanding of the relationship between the church, the kingdom, and salvation—in this case by leaving the eschatological dimension of this relationship underdetermined.

2. Two amendments in light of Vatican II’s Eucharistic ecclesiology

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council describe the “Eucharistic sacrifice” as the “fount and apex of the whole Christian life.”³⁹ Although they depict the church in many ways, one of the central images is that of the “Mystical Body of Christ” which “subsists in the Catholic Church.”⁴⁰ The council teaches that the unity of this Mystical Body is “strengthened in Holy Communion” by the sacramental Body of Christ which the priestly people of the church both offer to the Father and receive into their own living bodies in the midst of their Eucharistic celebration.⁴¹ A closer examination of this Eucharistic aspect of Vatican II’s ecclesiology supports two modifications of Dupuis’ proposal: a retrieval of the church as a *universal means* of salvation and as an *eschatological reality* finally inclusive of all human beings in the kingdom.

The first modification consists of reasserting the instrumentally causal function which belongs to the church as the “universal sacrament of salvation.” As Francis Sullivan notes in his discussion of Vatican II in *Salvation Outside the Church?*, “for the church to be the universal sacrament of salvation, it is not enough that it be a sign; it must also serve as an instrument of salvation.”⁴² Unlike Dupuis, Sullivan does not think

that the council's understanding of the church's universal sacramentality excludes its instrumental causality from those who are non-Christians. Sullivan does not limit the church's universal role to its act of signifying the kingdom, nor to an implicit mediation which is "difficult to conceive," nor to a non-efficient order of "final causality." Instead, he cites *Lumen gentium*'s teaching that the church is used by God "as an instrument for the redemption of all"⁴³ to support his idea that the church explicitly exercises a universal mediation of salvation in the strict sense of instrumental causality.

For an example of this universal instrumentality, Sullivan turns to Vatican II's teaching regarding the church's Eucharistic liturgy. He affirms that "what is made present in the celebration of the Eucharist is the unique sacrifice which obtained the grace of redemption for the whole world."⁴⁴ In other words, the sacrifice that is present and offered at the Eucharist is for all people. It is not a private, Christian affair. Sullivan argues that, as a "priestly people,"⁴⁵ the members of the church, both ordained and lay, offer Christ's redemptive sacrifice to the Father not only for themselves but also, as the official Eucharistic Prayers of the post-Vatican II church make clear, "for all your people, and all who seek you with a sincere heart"⁴⁶—hence, for Christians as well as non-Christians. Sullivan concludes that

it is not inconsistent with these prayers, or with the doctrine of Vatican II which they reflect, to believe that through the church's unique role as a priestly people, offering the Eucharistic sacrifice to the Father along with her divine head, the church plays an instrumental role in the hidden work of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of those 'whose faith is known to God alone.'⁴⁷

It seems, then, that Vatican II provides sufficient ground for modifying Dupuis' theory in the following way: through its Eucharistic liturgy, the church not only signifies but also *instrumentally mediates* salvation in the strict sense for *all who are saved*, whether within or outside the church.

The second modification consists of drawing attention to the eschatological dimension of the church. Vatican II offers an image of the church not only as a historical reality but also as it is present in the everlasting glory of heaven. Once again, the church's constitutive connection with the Eucharist is central to this aspect of Vatican II's ecclesiology. The council affirms that "our union with the Church in heaven is put into effect in its noblest manner especially in the sacred Liturgy,"⁴⁸ and it is in "celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice" that "we are most closely united to the Church in heaven."⁴⁹ The council teaches that through its celebration of the Eucharist the church is not only a historical sign and instrument, but also the everlasting

“kingdom of Christ” which is present now only “in mystery.”⁵⁰ This mysterious presence of the kingdom of Christ, as it exists historically in the “unity of all believers who form one body in Christ,” is “expressed and brought about” in the “sacrament of the eucharistic bread” which they share.⁵¹ Yet not only Christians but all people “are called to this union”⁵²—i.e., to this very Body of Christ, which is now present in the church only as mystery, but which will ultimately be revealed in glory as a communion inclusive of all the people in the kingdom of heaven. Although the perfection of this communion in the Body of Christ is an eschatological reality, Vatican II still calls it “the Church.” Moreover, its continuity with the church in history is manifest in the mystery of the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the faithful receive the nourishment of Christ’s “own Body and Blood”⁵³ which incorporates them into his everlasting Mystical Body, and they join the heavenly chorus in “one song of praise.”⁵⁴

In contrast to Dupuis, the council reaffirms the patristic teaching regarding the “Ekklesia ab Abel,” but it does so only within an eschatological frame of reference: “at the end of time,” the church “will gloriously achieve completion, when, as is read in the Fathers, all the just, from Adam and ‘from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,’ (2*) will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church.”⁵⁵ One need not reject Dupuis’ historical distinction between the kingdom and the church in order to accept this eschatological image of the church from Abel, which would include all human beings in the heavenly kingdom. Nor, for that matter, should one dismiss Dupuis’ “paradigm shift” from ecclesiocentrism to Christo- and regnocentrism, insofar as this shift takes place in history. For both Dupuis and Vatican II agree that the “pilgrim church,”⁵⁶ existing in its present historical form and remaining in need of “growth and continual sanctification,”⁵⁷ cannot “find in itself its own reason for being”⁵⁸ but must look forward to and strive for “the City that is to come.”⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Vatican II’s teaching does imply that any legitimate departure from ecclesiocentrism will be bounded by history, for at the end of time, Christ, and his church, and his kingdom will all be central, for they will be one unified reality: one Body, continuing an everlasting worship of “God and ‘the Lamb who was slain.’”⁶⁰

This understanding of the eschatological and heavenly dimension of the church, already present historically in mystery, especially in the Eucharist, does not imply that the church will make its way into

eternity unchanged. On the contrary, many aspects of the church are thoroughly connected with its role in history.⁶¹ The hierarchical, juridical, and institutional features are particularly likely to disappear in the heavenly glory, for there will be no need for bishops and priests to act *in persona Christi*, nor for there to be any other authority save the Lordship of Christ, who will have subjected all things to himself.⁶² Yet, although these “hierarchical organs” of the church are confined to history,⁶³ its identity as a communion of members in the Body of Christ, nourished by the liturgical celebration of the Paschal mystery, will not cease at the end of time but will rather continue in a perfected form for all eternity. Thus, Vatican II justifies a second amendment to Dupuis’ ecclesiology: the eschatological fulfillment of the kingdom is not described adequately as a “convergence of religious traditions” but must be seen, perhaps in addition to this, as a continuation and completion of the life of the church, understood in this context not as a historical sign and instrument but as a communion of members in the Body of Christ, gathered together in the Holy Spirit to celebrate forever the redemptive sacrifice of their Lord.

3. A renewed rapport between Dupuis’ amended ecclesiology and Catholic doctrine⁶⁴

Through the first modification, the CDF’s teaching that “the Church is sign and instrument of salvation for all people”⁶⁵ is upheld by reasserting the instrumentally causal aspect of the church’s universal sacramentality.⁶⁶ As we have seen, this instrumental causality belongs to the church at least in part by virtue of its intimate Eucharistic union with Christ, who is the sole Mediator. Because other religions do not celebrate the Eucharist by offering the redemptive sacrifice of Christ to the Father for the whole world, they do not share this universal mediatory role, which the priestly people of the church exercise in a complete way through their union with Christ. But this does not keep Christ from being at work in these other religions by the power of the Holy Spirit. These religions, therefore, are not excluded from participating in the mediation of God’s saving activity in ways that are real and indispensable for many people.⁶⁷ By virtue of its Eucharistic liturgy, the church can universally mediate the salvation non-Christians while allowing room for the lived experience of other religious traditions to play an “incomplete, but no less real” mediating role in their redemption.⁶⁸ Thus a strong sense of Dupuis’ “participated mediations” can be preserved at the same

time that one amends his position regarding the church's universal instrumental causality to make it more consistent with Catholic doctrine.

The second modification may appear to come dangerously close to rehabilitating the classical teaching of *ex ecclesiam nulla salus*.⁶⁹ But if any such rehabilitation were possible, it could happen only by replacing the traditional "exclusivist" meaning with an "inclusivist" intention, which explicitly incorporates the participated mediations of other religions: it would henceforward be correct to say that "there can be no salvation outside the church" only if both "salvation" and "church" are understood in their *eschatological*, rather than their *historical*, sense. One can affirm with Dupuis that the historical emergence of the kingdom and the saving activity of God can be found both outside the church and within other religions while simultaneously maintaining that, at the end of time, all those who are saved will be gathered into the communion of Christ's body which is the church in its heavenly glory. Adopting an eschatological perspective allows one to make an ultimate identification of the church and the kingdom which appears to support the CDF's teaching regarding the "intimate connection between Christ, the kingdom, and the Church."⁷⁰ And although Dupuis does not make this eschatological identification explicit, modifying his position to include it does not adversely affect his argument regarding "participated mediations"; nor his sense that the pilgrim church is not an "end in itself" but rather the normative way of signifying and manifesting the kingdom in history; nor even his idea that, in some sense, the eschaton will be characterized by a convergence of religions, insofar as the members of these diverse communities will be brought together into the heavenly kingdom of Christ without losing the personal identities or divinely granted "religious elements"⁷¹ which they acquired through various religious traditions. These positions are in no way contradicted by affirming the eschatological finality of the church. Rather, they are supported by being more closely allied with Catholic doctrine.

In short, therefore, a certain kind of sacramental and eschatological ecclesiocentrism need not be incompatible with the main tenets of Dupuis' Christo- and regnocentric perspective. Nor should the ecclesiological aspects of Dupuis' position, with these amendments, be perceived as though they were necessarily in conflict with Catholic teaching regarding the church's intimate connection with salvation and

the kingdom. By retrieving the universally causal and eschatological aspects of Vatican's Eucharistic ecclesiology, one can solidify Dupuis' paradigm shift and endorse his awareness of God's saving activity in other religious traditions in a way that is more consistent with the official Catholic understanding.

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¹ Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), 168.

² *Ibid.*, 185.

³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification on the Book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* by Father Jacques Dupuis, S.J." (2001), Preface.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ *Dominus Iesus*, 18.

⁶ The CDF agrees with Dupuis that some distinction in history between the kingdom and the church is possible, since "the action of Christ and the Spirit outside the Church's visible boundaries must not be excluded" (*ibid.*, 19). Yet the question to be asked here is whether Dupuis' way of formulating this distinction implies too much separation.

⁷ *Lumen gentium*, 48.

⁸ This work will be analyzed instead of *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997) because it contains Dupuis' most recent account of his theological proposal, as he explains in the Introduction (*Christianity*, 1-2).

⁹ *Christianity*, 169.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹¹ For Dupuis, "Christocentrism" implies that God's saving activity in the world is always mediated, not only through the mission of the Son, but also through the distinct but inseparable mission of the Holy Spirit (*ibid.*, 83). Hence, Dupuis' Christocentrism entails both a Christological and pneumatological focus.

¹² *Ibid.*, 77.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁹ For Dupuis, regnocentrism is not equivalent to non-Christic theocentrism, as it is for some (*Christianity*, 79).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 206.

²² *Ibid.*, 207. "Membership," in this sense, extends as far as the various "degrees of communion" discussed in the documents of Vatican II, but no further (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3). Those who are not in any degree of communion with the church, by some form of implicit or explicit baptism, are not included among its members. Dupuis would maintain the possibility that those who are "outside" the church in this sense are nevertheless capable of being "within" the kingdom—i.e., included in the saving activity of God, mediated by the Son in the Spirit.

²³ *Christianity*, 210.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 210.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 210. It is difficult to see exactly what Dupuis means by this distinction between "explicit" and "implicit" mediation, insofar as he addresses the latter term only by calling it "difficult to conceive." Thus, it is not clear what difference this distinction makes to Dupuis' apparent exclusion of instrumental causality from the church's universal sacramentality.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 211. In his earlier work, Dupuis explains this distinction between efficient and final causality in terms of "descending" and "ascending" mediations of the church: because they are "ascending," intercessory prayers would not be efficiently causal, even in an instrumental sense, but only morally causal (*Toward*, 350). Yet it is not clear why these distinctions should be so tightly mapped onto one another, nor in particular why "ascending" prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit and essential to the church's Eucharistic liturgy could not be seen as instrumental mediations of God's grace for the whole world.

²⁹ *Christianity*, 208.

³⁰ *Lumen gentium*, 8.

³¹ *Christianity*, 209.

³² *Ibid.*, 216.

³³ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 216.

³⁵ Dupuis does call the church an "eschatological community" (*ibid.*, 189), but this expression should be understood with reference to the historical church's universal signification (and instrumental causation for its members) of the eschatological kingdom, and not with reference to any ultimate eschatological *identification of the church with the kingdom*. This interpretation is supported by Dupuis' explicit rejection of the idea of an "eschatological church" in his earlier book, in opposition to the views of Avery Dulles and B. Mondin (*Toward*, 357).

³⁶ Dupuis affirms that "the religious practices and sacramental rites of other religions are not on the same level as the Christian sacraments deriving from Jesus Christ" (*Christianity*, 188), but he adds that we "must attribute to them a certain mediation of grace" (*ibid.*, 189). According to his terminology, other religions constitute "participated mediations" of grace, which are "incomplete, but no less real," whereas the church "openly and explicitly" offers its members a "complete mediation" of grace (*ibid.*).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 194.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Lumen gentium*, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Francis Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* (New York: Paulist, 1992), 157.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 158; *Lumen gentium*, 9.

⁴⁴ Sullivan, 159.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 158; *Lumen gentium*, 10.

⁴⁶ Sullivan, 160. Although we have only quoted Eucharistic Prayer 4 here, Sullivan makes the same case for the other prayers.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Lumen gentium*, 50.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3. Although this passage has been read to support an absolute identification of the kingdom and the church in history, Dupuis argues compellingly that after *Redemptoris Missio* a historical equation of the two is no longer officially warranted (*Toward*, 338ff), though I would add that the eschatological teaching appears to be unchanged (cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, section 20 and footnote 29).

⁵¹ *Lumen gentium*, 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁸ *Christianity*, 216.

⁵⁹ *Lumen gentium*, 50.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶¹ This would include the sins of the church in history: the violence that it has authorized against persons of other faiths, along with its general complicity in specific situations involving horrific evil and widespread suffering.

⁶² *Lumen gentium*, 28.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁴ For an analysis of the continuities and discontinuities between the ecclesiological doctrine of Vatican II and *Dominus Iesus*, see Richard P. McBrien, "Dominus Iesus: An Ecclesiological Critique," *Centro Pro Unione* 59 (Spring 2001): 14-22.

⁶⁵ Notification, 6.

⁶⁶ The CDF describes certain "kingdom-centered" theories which undervalue "the Church in reaction to a presumed 'ecclesiocentrism' of the past" as "contrary to Catholic faith" because they treat the church only as a sign (*Dominus Iesus*, 19). This amendment makes Dupuis' regnocentrism much less susceptible to this charge.

⁶⁷ This view still maintains some tension with the CDF's contention that other religions cannot be seen as ways of salvation "complementary" to the church (Notification, 6). However, this teaching seems fraught with ambiguity: what does "complementary" mean in this context? More clarification is needed on this subject.

⁶⁸ *Christianity*, 189.

⁶⁹ Sullivan's *Salvation* includes a comprehensive account of the development of this doctrine.

⁷⁰ *Dominus Iesus*, 18.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 21.