

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

We are entering a new phase in the search for unity in the Church. For more than thirty years pioneering conversations have been going on between pairs of churches or communities, and multilaterally. These have put forward solutions to old disagreements which have shown a remarkable closeness, and which are beginning to make possible the building of a new 'ecumenical' theology. By exploring the methods used by ecumenists, G. R. Evans indicates which obstacles exist in the face of unity, and illustrates how these might be overcome successfully. By making judicious use of interdenominational archival material, and drawing apposite conclusions – from this, and from the appropriate secondary literature – the author provides a timely resource for all those interested in recent ecumenical progress.

When it comes to taking actual steps towards unity there is often a drawing-back from the final commitment. This study examines the way the methodology of ecumenical theology is being taken into the lives of the churches, from the point of view of the experience which has been reported so far. Dr Evans shows that finding the methodology as we go along, the discovery of the process, is part of what must happen now and that it is not enough to engage in common action but we must work steadily on a shared theology, as we move into the future.

Method in Ecumenical Theology is the third of a trilogy of Dr Evans's books addressing questions relating to ecumenical dialogue; the others are *Problems of Authority in the Reformation Debates* and *The Church and the Churches*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

METHOD IN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

METHOD IN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY

The lessons so far

G. R. EVANS



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521553049

© Cambridge University Press 1996

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1996

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Evans, G. R. (Gillian Rosemary)

Method in ecumenical theology: the lessons so far / G. R. Evans.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 55304 0 (hardback)

1. Christian union. 2. Church – Unity. 3. Ecumenical movement.

4. Theology – Methodology. I. Title.

BX8.2.E83 1996

262'001'1 – dc20

95–2048

CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-55304-9 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2008

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction: the ‘winter of ecumenism’?	i
1. What is ecumenical theology?	19
2. Changing attitudes and stages in ecumenism	40
3. Communication and dialogue	66
4. Ecumenical language	89
5. Historical method	114
6. The process in close-up	148
7. Ecumenical reception	182
Conclusion	219
<i>Index</i>	229

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

This study was partly prompted by the conversation with J. M. R. Tillard from which there also grew the germ of the idea for the *Festschrift* in his honour published a few months before this book. I do not know whether he will approve of what I have written here, but I would like him to know how profoundly I, like all who write on ecumenical subjects, am in his debt.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

At a recent small meeting of representatives from Eastern and Western Europe which was brought together as a forum for the exchange of ideas on European cultural identity I found myself the object of the profound concern of one of the delegates. It was obvious to him that I shared his faith. 'If you have seen the light why do you not join us?' he argued. I told him that I did indeed share his faith, but that I did so within the Anglican Church. I should feel equally at home in other churches too. But for me as an individual to become a Lutheran or Roman Catholic or Reformed or Orthodox would not help the cause of unity, because it would do nothing to bring the existing separated churches together. I argued that my job was to stay where I happened to be, and work for the mutual understanding without which there can be no meeting and no convergence. I could, as it were, come alone, or in company, and it seemed to me that Christ's intention is that Christians should meet in company.

From his point of view there was only one true Church and, although I saw it to be the true Church, I was refusing to belong to it. From mine, too, there is only one Church, and I am already in it just as he is. Ecumenists will recognise the encounter. It takes place, with variations, between Christians of all sorts of traditions when they first confront the ecumenical imperative.

It underlined how much there is still to do in the winning of minds to the patient processes of learning to listen on which all ecumenism is founded. But in its way it marked progress, because in that conversation I became, for one individual who had never thought ecumenically before, a fellow-Christian with my heart in the right place, even though one who puzzlingly saw the implications of what was required by that position differently. From such tiny beginnings ecumenical growth begins. The minute and intimate and perhaps at the time frustrating encounter is not to be despised. Ecumenical method may

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Preface

come to take a large and eventually quite systematic view of the way forward. But it is still experimental, and experiment is experience.

In this study I have tried to review the present position in ecumenical methodology from the point of view of the experience which has been reported so far. Behind the abstractions lies a wealth of trial and error in the lives of hundreds of individuals who have become caught up despite themselves in what must for any Christian be the great cause of fulfilling the Christ's stated intention that his Church should be one.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

A–O, Moscow	Anglican–Orthodox, <i>The Moscow Statement</i> (1976)
A–R	Anglican–Reformed
ARCIC I	The First Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission
ARCIC II	The Second Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission
ARCIC <i>AI</i>	ARCIC I, <i>Authority in the Church I</i>
ARCIC <i>E</i>	ARCIC I, <i>Eucharistic Doctrine</i>
ARCIC <i>M</i>	ARCIC I, <i>Ministry and Ordination</i>
<i>BEM</i>	<i>Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry</i> , the Lima Report of the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, 1982
B–R	Baptist–Reformed
<i>Churches Respond to BEM</i>	<i>World Council of Churches, Churches Respond to BEM</i> , (Geneva, 1986–), Vols 1– .
Congar, <i>Divided Christendom</i>	Y. Congar, <i>Chrétiens désunis</i> (Paris, 1937), published in English as <i>Divided Christendom</i> (London, 1939)
Congar, <i>Dialogue between Christians</i>	Y. Congar, <i>Chrétiens en dialogue</i> (Paris, 1966), tr. P. Loretz and published in English as <i>Dialogue between Christians</i> (London, 1966)
Frere, <i>Malines</i>	Walter Frere, <i>Recollections of Malines</i> (London, 1935)
<i>Growth</i>	<i>Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversation on a World Level</i> , ed. H. Meyer, L. Vischer (London/Geneva, 1984)
Halifax, <i>Malines</i>	<i>The Conversations at Malines. Original Documents</i> , ed. Lord Halifax (London, 1930)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-55304-9 - Method in Ecumenical Theology: The Lessons So Far

G. R. Evans

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

List of abbreviations

Lambeth	Conferences cited from the Lambeth Conference Reports
L–RC	Lutheran–Roman Catholic
M–RC	Methodist–Roman Catholic
Nichols, <i>Congar</i>	A. Nichols, <i>Yves Congar</i> (London, 1989)
P–RC	Pentecostalist–Roman Catholic
Stacpoole	<i>Vatican II by those who were there</i> , ed. A. Stacpoole (London, 1986)
Stormon	<i>Towards the Healing of Schism: the Sees of Rome and Constantinople: Public Statements and Correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate 1958–1984</i> , ed. E. J. Stormon (New York, 1987)
UR	Vatican II, <i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i>
Vatican II	<i>Documents of the Second Vatican Council</i> , ed. Flannery (revised edition, Dublin, 1988)