

Shaping Reception: Yves Congar's Reception of Johann Adam Möhler

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Yves Congar is recognized as a key representative and heir of the nineteenth century Catholic Tübingen School, in general, and more specifically, of Johann Adam Möhler.¹ And for good reason. Congar's vast theological output is nearly bookended with works dedicated to Möhler.² The name and thoughts of the young Tübingen theologian are peppered throughout the long career of the French Dominican. The second volume in Congar's *Unam Sanctam* series was a new translation of Möhler's first major work, *Die Einheit in der Kirche*.³ Even more than this, by Congar's own admission, Möhler had been a theological source and inspiration to him throughout his theological career.⁴ In the volume *The Legacy of the Tübingen School*, Thomas F. O'Meara's essay well documents the influence of Möhler on Congar, and the efforts of the latter in rehabilitating the thoughts and insights of the former, noting how Congar functioned as "an advocate, channel, and a theological amplifier" for Möhler.⁵ O'Meara illustrates how Congar found in Möhler a theological resource that had the ability to transcend the stagnant theology of the manualist tradition, and in returning to the early church fathers, had rediscovered a theology

¹ Stefan Warthmann, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule: Zur Geschichte Ihrer Wahrnehmung* (Stuttgart: FranzSteinerVerlag, 2011), 365. See also Pablo Sicouly, "Yves Congar und Johann Adam Möhler. Ein theologisches Gespräch zwischen den Zeiten," *Catholica* 45, no. 1 (1994), pp. 36–43.

² See Yves Congar, "La Pensée de Moehler et 'ecclésiologie orthodoxe,'" *Irénikon* 12 (1935), pp. 321–29; Congar, "La Signification œcuménique de l'œuvre de Moehler," *Irénikon* 15 (1938), pp. 113–30; Congar, "Sur l'évolution et l'interprétation de la pensée de Moehler," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 27 (1938), pp. 205–12; Congar, "Johann Adam Möhler 1796–1838," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 150 (1970), pp. 48–51.

³ Johann Adam Möhler, *L'Unité dans l'Église, ou le principe du catholicisme: d'après l'esprit des pères des trois premiers siècles de l'Église*, trans. Pierre Chaillot (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1938).

⁴ Congar, "Johann Adam Möhler 1796–1838."

⁵ Thomas F. O'Meara, "Beyond 'Hierachology': Johann Adam Möhler and Yves Congar," in *The Legacy of the Tübingen School: The Relevance of the Nineteenth-Century Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald J. Dietrich and Michael J. Himes (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 173–91.

imbibed with vitality, pneumatological in its scope, that contained the potential for revitalizing the life of the church. If the Second Vatican Council may be considered Congar's council,⁶ then in so far as he was influenced by Möhler, in a mediated way, Vatican II was also Möhler's council.

That Möhler exercised a profound influence on Congar cannot be denied. Neither can it be disputed that Congar helped to resuscitate Möhler's thought for contemporary ecclesial consciousness, allowing him to serve as a legitimate theological resource. But what does it mean that Congar is representative of the legacy of Möhler? Certainly the communication and transference of ideas, thoughts, methodologies, and resources come into discussion. But the issue of representation also raises the question of who is Möhler? Or better: what Möhler—or aspects of Möhler—is represented? To identify a person as an heir and representative of another's thought, opens conversation of whether such representation is faithful or illegitimate.

The question of the constitution of representation is extremely important in considering the relationship between Congar and Möhler.⁷ A defining feature of this relationship is the subject of ecclesiology. As Warthmann notes, “Die Ekklesiologie Möhlers ist als erkenntnistheoretische *Denkform für Congar der hermeneutische Schlüssel für seine Gesamtinterpretation der Theologie Möhlers, des, maître irremplaçable.*”⁸ If Warthmann is correct—and many commentators believe that ecclesiology is the key—the discussion hinges on Möhler's and Congar's respective *Kirchenbegriffen*. What constitutes their ecclesiological thoughts, and how does their thinking relate to each other?

The subject of representation is problematized. Problematization only increases in light of recent scholarship. There is no consensus as to what is the central ecclesiological idea or concept that Congar takes from Möhler. Organic vitality, *Kirche als Communio/Gemeinschaft*, pneumatological-ecclesiology, *la vie de l'Église*, while certainly all related, each indicate subtle distinction and nuance. Yet the greatest challenge to answering the question of the relationship of representation is the issue of ecclesiological development. As others have

⁶ Gabriel Flynn, “*Ressourcement*, Ecumenism, and Pneumatology: The Contribution of Yves Congar to *Nouvelle Théologie*,” in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*, eds. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, pp. 219–35 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁷ By O'Meara's own admission, it is not certain whether or not Congar was faithful to Möhler's thought: “If we ask what Congar drew from Möhler—others can inquire as to whether he was fully faithful to the German theologian . . .” O'Meara, “Beyond ‘Hierachology,’” p. 178.

⁸ Warthmann, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule: Zur Geschichte Ihrer Wahrnehmung*, p. 365. (Emphasis original)

noted,⁹ Congar and Möhler make similar ecclesiological movements, however, in contrasting directions. Möhler transitions from a robust pneumatological ecclesiology in *Einheit* (1825), to a strong incarnational model in *Symbolik* (1832–1838). Congar transitions from an earlier incarnational ecclesiology, as seen in works such as *Chrétiens désunis* (1937) and *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc* (1953), to the Spirit-ecclesiology of the three-volume *Je crois en l'Esprit-Saint* (1979–1980). Discerning the meaning of this development for Congar is further complicated by the fact that the early portion of his career, which corresponds with his incarnational ecclesiology, is the period where he publishes Möhler's pneumatological *Einheit*, and advocates that this text, and not the incarnational *Symbolik*, will “bring forth better knowledge of the essence—or if you will—the mystery of the Church.”¹⁰

The answer to the question of representation further eludes observation considering that the older and more mature Congar appears to circumvent and ignore—if not objects to—the later and more mature thought of Möhler. Can one posit that Möhler's thought is carried on if the latter half of his thought is set aside? By way of explanation a few possibilities are feasible. (1) Congar does not believe that the different ecclesiological thoughts of Möhler are mutually exclusive. Or that there is a unifying principle between the two works. Therefore, while favoring the Möhler of *Einheit*, Congar still represents Möhler's central ecclesiological principle. (2) Congar transitions from considering *Einheit* and *Symbolik* as harmonious ecclesiologies—or at least not contradictory—to interpreting them as exclusive. Consequently, his own development corresponds to this changing posture towards Möhler.

⁹ Alain Nisus, *L'Église Comme Communion et Comme Institution. Une Lecture de L'ecclésiologie Du Cardinal Congar À Partir de La Tradition Des Églises de Professeurs* (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 2012); Alain Nisus, “L'Esprit Saint et L'église dans L'œuvre d'Yves Congar,” *Transversalités* no. 98 (April 01, 2006), pp. 109–155; Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Bradford E Hinze, “The Holy Spirit and the Catholic Tradition: The Legacy of Johann Adam Möhler,” in *The Legacy of the Tübingen School: The Relevance of the Nineteenth-Century Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Donald J Dietrich and Michael J Himes (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), pp.75–94.

¹⁰ These words appear in the first published volume of the series *Unam Sanctam*, as a description of the ecclesiological program of the entire series. Although written anonymously, van Vliet believes that there is no question regarding Congar's authorship. See Cornelis Th.M. van Vliet, *Communio Sacramentalis. Das Kirchenverständnis von Yves Congar—genetisch und systematisch Betrachtet* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald Verlag, 1995), pp. 285–88. Also, in 1938, Congar writes that *Einheit* continues to function for contemporary theologians as a source for a living and dynamic view of the church. See, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 27 (1938), reprinted in Congar, *Sainte Église. Études et approches ecclésiologiques* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1963), pp. 509–10.

Both of these explanations are possible, but there are problems with them. The first option appears less likely given some of the later developments within Congar's own ecclesiological thinking, particularly regarding the ecclesial hierarchy, which will be discussed below. The second explanation seems more probable, but does not sufficiently address Congar's ongoing devotion to *Einheit*, even in his early period. It is possible that Congar saw no need to publicize *Symbolik* given that this work was well received and highly influential in the so-called *Römische Schule*.¹¹

A more plausible explanation is that Congar, in his promotion of *Einheit*, was attempting to reshape the hitherto theological reception of Möhler. While *Symbolik* was well received by many and established Möhler as an apologist of the Roman See, his *Einheit*, on the other hand, still solicited Modernist accusations. In retrieving this earlier text, Congar is attempting to broaden the existing theological sources of Möhler for contemporary ecclesiology. This explanation does not entail an exclusivist reading of both texts, therefore explaining why Congar, even when he favored an incarnational ecclesiology, would promote Möhler's more pneumacentric ecclesiology. Congar's ecclesiological shift is therefore interpreted as the eventual recognition that Möhler's two ecclesiological structures are not symbiotic. Ultimately, Congar realized that Möhler's pneumatological and incarnational ecclesiologies could not be synthesized as is. In order to support this reading, I argue that Congar's own ruminations over the church's hierarchy and the shape of the church, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, led him to forego his earlier language of the "law of incarnation,"¹² in place of a pneumatological ecclesiology. Consequently, Congar's status as a representative of Möhler's legacy, while true, requires further qualification. The French Dominican is more than a passive recipient of the thought of the nineteenth-century Tübingen theologian. Congar's aim is to reshape Möhler's legacy for the church.

I. SHIFTING STRUCTURES

Yves Congar lived nine decades. His writings spanned six of the nine. To say that Congar was prolific would be to understate the quantity of his literary output. The upshot of such a period provides numerous opportunities for a theologian to continue to return to the same subjects, but with different perspectives, considerations, and even questions. This longevity permits a theologian to reconsider, and

¹¹ Warthmann, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule*, pp. 409, 418–20.

¹² Yves Congar, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. Maud A. Bousfield (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1939), p. 69.

even disavow previous positions, which becomes evident in Congar's understanding of the church's hierarchy.

Early on, and throughout his thinking leading up to Vatican II, Congar conceived of the ecclesial hierarchy along the lines of a vertical relation, whereby power and authority was transmitted downward. At the top of this line is the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, the possessor of all power and authority. Christ transfers this power to the apostles, who in turn, transmit this same authority of Christ, to the church's hierarchy. Finally, at the end of this line is stationed the church understood as the faithful. This hierarchical schema also may be geometrically visualized as a pyramid.¹³

Two examples of this hierarchical structure are found in his *Chrétiens désunis* (1937; English edition, 1939) and *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc* (1956; revised 1964).¹⁴ In *Chrétiens désunis*, Congar operates with a theological principle called the "law of incarnation." This law harkens back to the manner in which God interacts with humanity in order to save them, that is according to the law of human nature: "Redemption operates in an incarnation, where God acts according to human law and not according to the law of pure spirits . . . [God] enters the very fabric of human history, He takes our flesh . . . becoming what we are that we may become what He is."¹⁵ The law of incarnation similarly governs the church. According to this law, the church exists as one organic body, namely the mystical body, in which the church exists in a "twofold plane": (1) as the family of God, comprised of as the community of the faithful who equally share in the divine life of God; and (2) as the church exists in the world, the church militant, disposed to the conditions and contingencies of human existence. According to the first plane, the church is a unified organism, chiefly internal and spiritual, that is hierarchically structured only according to holiness and virtue—rather than external laws and governance—"where a Pope may be much less near to Christ than a humble and ignorant woman."¹⁶ In contrast, in the second plane, the church is an external, hierarchically ordered organization, consisting of "rulers and ruled," wherein structural divisions are based upon power and competence, and not worth or quality. Therefore, the church is one body, in two senses: vital, quickened by the Holy Spirit; and institutional and legal, operated by hierarchic offices and functions. Therefore, by way of analogy, the church is understood according to the incarnation, consisting of divine and human natures, united in one organic body. In this

¹³ Groppé, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 142.

¹⁴ The revised edition was translated into English as Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity*, trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1965).

¹⁵ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, pp. 68–69.

¹⁶ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, p. 77.

incarnational body the ecclesial hierarchy function *ministerially*, that is for the purpose of achieving an end: as part of the “machinery of the institutional church” it exists in order to “express and bring about the hidden and interior life of faith, sacramental charity and fraternal service which Christians lead with Christ in God.” In other words, the second plane of the church exists for the purpose of realizing, strengthening, and sustaining the first plane. It is one unified body, for there is only one Spirit who both “makes the believer a new man” (first plane), and likewise “animates the apostolic organism responsible for educating the faith of the children of God,” who, by virtue of the second plane, are submissive and obedient to the church’s external machinery.¹⁷

Jalons shows Congar describing the church in a similar manner. As in *Chrétiens désunis* the church consists of two different aspects: the church as *congregatio fidelium*, that is the total gathering of the society of the faithful; and the church as the entirety of divinely instituted means, that exist for the purpose of bringing people into the church.¹⁸ In the first aspect the church’s principle of unity is faith—the church herself is a *societas fidelium*—understood as “the total giving up and adhering of the human person to God.” In the second aspect the church is still united as a society constituted and unified, not through faith, but through an external “sovereign central authority” that exercises power and dominion over the society. Congar distinguishes these as the principle of collective life and the hierarchical principle.¹⁹ As the church journeys towards her eschatological fulfillment—where God will at last be “all in all” in the totality of his members—the church is governed by the “regime of mediation,” where “everything comes from the *acta et passa Christi in carne*, from the Incarnation and the Calvary of history, through a continuity of ‘sacraments’ in which the mediation of the man Jesus is prolonged.”²⁰ In this final dispensation the governance of the ecclesial hierarchy mediates God’s grace and truth. Hierarchical mediation is an established link in God’s visible economy of salvation that comprises

not simply the one only mediator, Christ, but the Church as the great sacrament of what he did for us... The root of the matter is that there is a divinely-appointed economy, joining the Omega to Christ as Alpha and as means, and that, if it is to be accepted, man’s inward spiritual sacrifice must (at least *voto*) pass through the *sacramentum* of which the hierarchical priesthood has been given the competence and ministry.²¹

¹⁷ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, p. 84.

¹⁸ Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p. 30.

¹⁹ Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p. 35.

²⁰ Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p. 113.

²¹ Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, pp. 180–81.

Although the hierarchy only functions in the “space-between,” and will ultimately pass away with all of the external machinery of the church, it exercises a necessary role in the mediation of the economy of salvation: “to show forth and make real to us that everything comes from the incarnate Christ, and him crucified.”²²

Congar's dilemma is how to retain Christ's earthly institution of the hierarchy, but in a way that resists collapsing the church's identity into the hierarchy. Congar is forthright in his desire to curb and restrict the scope of the hierarchy's power,²³ yet without compromising it by relocating its source of authority to some sociological notion of delegation or transferal. To this end he avails himself of the aspects/planes distinction that finds its foundation for unity in the incarnation. Eschewing any ontological association between the incarnate Christ and the church, Congar utilizes the incarnation to maintain the hierarchical order of the church, but to restrict the territory of its governance to the realm of the historical, contingent, and external. The hierarchy is an essential link in God's economy of salvation, as part of the “*loi de procession hiérarchique*”²⁴ but its location within this economy defines its *raison d'être*: the internal realization of the relationship between Christ and the baptized.

Congar's incarnational principle provides a means for curtailing the horizon of the hierarchy, yet the geometrical representation of the church is still triangular. The hierarchy is an essential mediatory bond between the historical incarnate Christ and the reception and realization of grace in the *congregatio fidelium*. The hierarchy functions in securing the church's apostolicity, catholicity, unity, and union to the incarnate Christ.²⁵

Similarities between Congar and Möhler's *Symbolik* are evident. In *Symbolik* Möhler defends the necessity of the visible church on the basis of the principle of the incarnation.

The ultimate reason of the visibility of the church is to be found in the *incarnation* of the Divine Word. Had the Word descended into the hearts of men, without taking the form of a servant, and accordingly without appearing in a corporeal shape, then only an internal, invisible

²² Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p. 171.

²³ In *Lay People* Congar goes to great lengths to demarcate the role and scope of the hierarchy's power, specifically in demonstrating that its ecclesial power is first and foremost Christ's power, mediated by the hierarchy, for the purpose of making “real to us that everything comes from the incarnate Christ, and him crucified” (p. 171). In *Tradition and Traditions*, Congar, in observing the authority of magisterium within the church, is explicit in limiting the magisterium by placing it after scriptures and tradition: “To return to the figure of the source, the magisterium must be declared secondary and dependent in relation to the *revelationis fontes*, Scripture and tradition.” Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and a Theological Essay*, trans. Michael Naseby (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967, originally published in two parts, 1960, 1963), p. 205.

²⁴ Nisus, *L'Église Comme Communion et Comme Institution*, p. 148.

²⁵ Nisus, *L'Église Comme Communion et Comme Institution*, p. 204.

church would have been established. But since the Word became *flesh*, it expressed itself in an outward, perceptible, and human manner.²⁶

As a divine institution founded according to the “Divine idea” of the incarnation,²⁷ the church is itself “the permanent incarnation” of the Son of God.²⁸ According to this ecclesiological structure, there is an incarnational necessity for the hierarchy. The church’s hierarchy is the means through which an individual receives divine grace. Although this grace operates internally and invisibly within a person, it is received by a “visible” act, which requires a visible church and hierarchy in order to mediate this grace.²⁹ Furthermore, the entire hierarchy, with the pope as its “centre of unity,” is the external and visible mark for the recognition of the church of the incarnate Christ.³⁰

Despite the obvious similarities between Congar and *Symbolik*, it must be kept in mind that even during this period it is Möhler’s *Einheit* and not the *Symbolik* that Congar elevates as a text and ecclesiology for contemporary theology. At first blush this appears puzzling: Congar’s law of incarnation bears the imprint of *Symbolik*, so then why is it that *Einheit* is given pride of place in Congar’s writings? On the one hand there was no need to rehabilitate *Symbolik* since it already enjoyed a positive and far-reaching reception, and neither had it been subjected to the censure that *Einheit* had.³¹ Yet, this solution does not account for everything found in Congar’s thought. Two potential explanations seem possible: either Congar believes that there is a complementary relationship—or at least a common principle—that unites these ecclesiologies, despite other differences; or, he employs *Einheit* in order to complement, or even to supplement *Symbolik*.

In 1938, at the same time that he was writing about the law of incarnation in *Chrétien désunis*, Congar, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, favorably commended the ecclesiology of *Einheit*, specifically Möhler’s depiction of the church as a living community of love, formed by the Spirit of Truth, which is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of communion and fraternal love.

²⁶ Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences Between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, trans. and ed. James Burton Robertson, intro. Michael J. Himes (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), §36 (p. 337). Emphasis original.

²⁷ Möhler, *Symbolism*, § 48 (p. 330).

²⁸ Möhler, *Symbolism*, § 36 (p. 337).

²⁹ Möhler, *Symbolism*, § 43 (pp. 304–05).

³⁰ Möhler, *Symbolism*, § 43 (p. 306).

³¹ *Symbolik* had twenty-five different editions, translated into Italian, French, and English. See Harald Wagner “Johann Adam Möhler: Die Kirche als Organ der Inkarnation,” in *Theologen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, eds. Peter Neuner and Gunther Wenz, pp. 59–74 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002).

Congar also draws attention to what Möhler identifies as the true “*principe du christianisme*,” the internal communication of a new spirit, affected by the Holy Spirit. There are two other important things to note in this short review. Congar favorably draws attention to the role of the hierarchy as inspired by the Holy Spirit, who serve the church in a service of mutual love in the Holy Spirit. Second, he goes on to critique Möhler’s conceptualization of the visible church. Möhler’s *L’Unité* is too disposed to characterizing the visible church as a spontaneous work of the Spirit of love, rather than as an establishment ordered by the incarnate Christ. This view, comments Congar, is an error of modernism.³²

Congar’s sentiments on Möhler in 1938 are surprisingly consistent twenty-five years later in *Sainte Église*. In this text Congar praises Möhler and his *L’Unité* for a theology and ecclesiology established, not upon the rationalistic foundations of juridical or philosophical categories, but rather imbued with the *l’esprit des Pères*. With this patristic breath Möhler elucidates what Congar calls “a great synthetic vision” of the church, which is nothing more than the “principle of Catholicism.” Möhler’s patristic vision is an ecclesiological unity created and sustained by the Holy Spirit: “This principle is the Holy Spirit. The Church is a creation of the Holy Spirit, and her life comes from the animation which she receives from him.”³³ In Congar’s estimation this principle encapsulates the hermeneutical key—the heart—of Möhler’s thought: the recognition that Christianity is not simply a body of ideas and teachings that must be taught and accented to by the faithful. Christianity, worked and affected by the Holy Spirit, “is not simply an idea, but a thing which embraces the entire man, which roots him in this way, which is not comprehensible apart from being experienced.”³⁴

Congar goes on to interweave this pneumatological reading of Möhler’s *Einheit* with his incarnational concerns. The upshot of Möhler’s ecclesiology is that the church is seen and realized as a living organism, whose liturgical cult, dogma, and organizational hierarchy “are an external expression, and are exactly an element of the communion of love, which is inspired and realized” by the work of the Holy Spirit. However, this pneumatological body of believers does not locate its existence in the Spirit alone, but “on the reality and on the work of the incarnate Word, and she herself is governed by the law of the incarnation.”³⁵

³² Congar, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 27 (1938), reprinted in Congar, *Sainte Église. Études et approches ecclésiologiques* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1963), pp. 509–10.

³³ Congar, *Sainte Église*, pp. 12–13.

³⁴ Congar, *Sainte Église*, p. 13.

³⁵ Congar, *Sainte Église*, p. 14.

In light of these two examples, spanning twenty-five years, it remains difficult to discern the nuances of Congar's thought on the relationship between these two works. The 1938 summary of *L'Unité* intimates at a perception that tends towards a perceived shortcoming in the hierarchical presentation of *Einheit*. This reading would suggest a relationship of supplementation, or even correction. However, it is possible that Congar openly distances himself from this position given its perceived association with the Modernist controversy. Moreover, the language and tenor of *Sainte Église*—e.g. “great synthetic vision”—leaves the impression that Congar, at least in this 1963 text, identifies a unifying ecclesiological principle between *Einheit* and *Symbolik*.

By the 70s and into the 80s Congar's thought had undergone significant alteration regarding the status of the hierarchy. While he had attempted to rejuvenate and reestablish the theological significance of the laity and their role in the life of the church, he later recognized that these attempts had not gone far enough. He identified his shortcomings, not in the manner in which he spoke of the laity, *per se*. Rather, he had undermined his own efforts by means of prioritizing the hierarchy. Even though Congar, in conceptualizing the church primarily through the concept of *communio*, had provided a theological avenue for restoring the value of the laity in recognizing the unity and equality of the communion that exists between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all of the baptized, in his allowance of the temporal priority of the hierarchical apparatus,³⁶ he allowed the hierarchy to retain its previous prioritization. Eventually, Congar saw that that geometrical structure of the church had to be conceptualized along a different model. Elizabeth Groppe explains this shift in spatial terms: “Congar now emphasized that the hierarchical ministries exist not apart from or before or above the members of the Church but *within* the ecclesial communion.”³⁷

A top-to-bottom translation of power and authority from Christ to the hierarchy, as shown above, results in establishing the hierarchy as a constitutive element within the church: the hierarchy becomes the incarnational and apostolic link between Christ, the apostles, and the church, that works to realize and support the internally-worked grace of God. In order to move beyond this top-down, or pyramid, structure, Congar availed himself to a fuller and more robust Trinitarian theology, specifically in a further reconceptualization of the church

³⁶ Congar provided the hierarchy both temporal and ontological precedence. The hierarchy was prioritized in the history of the church—Christ appointing the apostles, prior to the emergence of the post-Pentecost church—and in the life of believers, where one's entry into communion depended upon the hierarchy. See, Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, p. 326.

³⁷ Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 142. Emphasis original.

in its relation to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit had always maintained a role of prominence in Congar's ecclesiology. Already in *Chrétien désunis*, while speaking of the church as the "mystical body," Congar writes, "God Himself, under the aspect in which He is given to us, and therefore by 'appropriation' of the Holy Spirit . . . is the Soul of the Church." Yet the church remained primarily a Christological and incarnational body.³⁸ By the writing of *Je crois*, Congar had abandoned the designation "law of incarnation." He approvingly draws upon the thought of Heribert Mühlen, who dismisses Möhler's ecclesiology wherein the church is conceived of as the "continued incarnation."³⁹ Instead, Congar speaks of the two "missions" of the church, through which he more explicitly establishes both Christological and pneumatological links.

Congar's shift in structure, from an incarnational to a pneumatological ecclesiology, intimates at an identified awareness of a shortcoming with an incarnational structure. To be sure other factors influenced this pneumatological transition in Congar's ecclesiological thought; of these, the most important are: his interaction with Eastern Orthodoxy,⁴⁰ Protestantism,⁴¹ and his familiarization with

³⁸ Congar, *Divided Christendom*, p. 52. "We are remade in Christ and become in Him a new creation; we are members of Christ, intergral parts of the body in which He is the Head; we are the body of Christ and He the animating Spirit of this body; we are collectively the manifestation of this lifegiving spirit in one visible organic reality: the Church is the visible body of Christ, His *σῶμα*, a Christophany: she is His own flesh, His bride" (p. 61).

³⁹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, I (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 22–23.

⁴⁰ Congar developed a strong rapport with the Russian Orthodox community that had emerged within France during the twentieth century. He was active in theological dialogue and reflection with Orthodox theologians, who helped awaken in him a further appreciation of Eastern Christian thought. To be sure, the person and work of the Holy Spirit had been prominent in his thought already, but his interaction with the Orthodox, particularly regarding the issue of the *Filioque*, brought him to consider the Orthodox accusations of the Latin "christomonism." By this claim, the Orthodox asserted that Roman Catholic theology was guilty of an overreaching Christology, that overshadowed the person and work of the Spirit. "The Spirit is merely added to a Church, its ministries and its sacraments, all of which are already constituted. The Spirit simply carries out a function of Christ" (Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith [San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986], p. 113). Congar partially concedes the point to the Orthodox, but adds that this lacuna, at least since the council, is no longer as glaring as it had been.

⁴¹ Congar ecumenical interaction with the various traditions of the Reformation was groundbreaking for the Roman Catholic Church. For the subject at hand, a shift in his posture towards Protestantism occurs throughout his writings. Earlier Congar's attitude toward Protestant ecclesiology was sharply polemical. In his reading, Protestant ecclesiology in its essence is nothing more than an association of individuals, who have personally experienced the Holy Spirit. What is absent in their ecclesiological considerations is a Christological relationship between the incarnate Christ and the church. The rejection of any notion of the church as the "continued Incarnation," has resulted in an anemic ecclesiology of the church as the mystical body of Christ, with further implications to

contemporary New Testament studies, with particular attention given to New Testament Christology.⁴² Despite the significance of these influences, it would be shortsighted to overemphasize the ancillary pneumatological factors at the expense of underestimating the deficiencies that Congar recognized within the incarnational structure.

Even though Congar had attempted to mitigate the scope of the hierarchy's power, he found his efforts unsatisfactory. Looking back over his previous works, Congar acknowledged the shortcomings of his earlier attempts at renegotiating the relational structures between the hierarchy and the laity. Intrinsic to an ecclesiological structure modeled on the incarnation is an elevated status of the church's hierarchy. Congar's earlier criticism of Möhler's conceptualization of the hierarchy in *L'Unité*—specifically his omission of an incarnational relationship—drops out of his own position. In consideration of his relationship to Möhler, this transition is the admission that Congar arrived at the recognition of an irreconcilable difference between the ecclesiologies of *Einheit* and *Symbolik*.

II. REWRITING NARRATIVES

Whereas the reception of the pneumatological *Einheit* had been colored by accusations of Modernism and, consequently, was held in suspicion by some, *Symbolik*'s reception was overwhelmingly positive. Its influence was far-reaching, impacting the future development of the church's ecclesiology, particularly the Roman School. Michael Himes traces *Symbolik*'s path of influence in this school through Giovanni Perrone, Carlo Passaglia, Johannes Bap-

the concepts of apostolicity, tradition, and sacramental theology. Congar's assessment of Protestant thought bears similarity to Möhler's interpretation in *Symbolik*. (See Congar, *Tradition and Traditions*, 482–93). By the time of *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Congar has come to a greater appreciation of early Protestant ecclesiology, specifically on account of its pneumatological focus. Luther and Calvin, in having to wage a two-fronted theological war against a rigid catholic hierarchical ecclesiology and the Spirit-led radical reformers, each created a "synthesis" that attended to the role and immediacy of the work of the Spirit within an ecclesiological structure. See Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, I (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983), pp. 138–43.

⁴² In the third volume of *Je crois* and *La Parole et la Souffle* Congar engages in a study of the New Testament in order to demonstrate the correlation of Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology. Congar's goal is a serious reconsideration of New Testament Christology in light of the work of the Spirit. In his reading, the Holy Spirit plays a definitive role in the life of Jesus. Jesus' life as Messiah is marked by certain events that demarcate a new *kairos* in the history of salvation. These events, worked by the Holy Spirit, "are all moments when Jesus became—and was not simply proclaimed as—the 'Son of God' in a new way, that is, not from the point of view of his hypostatic quality or his ontology as the incarnate Word, but from the point of view of the plan of God's grace and the successive moments in the history of salvation" (*I Believe in the Holy Spirit* III, p. 170).

tist Franzelin, Clemens Schrader, and Matthias Joseph Scheeben. Möhler's *Symbolik* established an "incarnational perspective [that] allowed them to provide deep doctrinal grounds for the Church's institutional polity,"⁴³ with the result that "the church began more and more to be understood as a kind of incarnation, leading in practice to a divinization of the community."⁴⁴ In an ironic twist of history, Möhler, who had once characterized the church's understanding of hierarchy with the quip "*Gott schuf die Hierarchie, und für die Kirche ist nun bis zum Weltende mehr als genug gesorgt*,"⁴⁵ became an integral ecclesiological link in the development of thought that coalesced in Vatican I. Möhler's incarnational insight, siphoned through the Roman School, was taken up into a larger Ultramontane framework. Through the appropriation of his incarnational ecclesiology, the Roman School "laid the theological groundwork and colored the actual language of *Pastor aeternus*."⁴⁶ Möhler's ecclesiological legacy, due to the Roman School, was interwoven with the robust papal thought of the first Vatican Council. As Himes observes: "Möhler's derivation of a visible, hierarchically structured church from the doctrine of the Incarnation became in Perrone's hands an affirmation of the centrality of the *ecclesia docens*. He unintentionally brought the Christocentric ecclesiology of *Symbolik* to the support of the vision of the church which Möhler had taught in his canon law lectures in his first years on the Tübingen faculty and rejected."⁴⁷

Himes' ecclesiological genealogy helps to situate the historical significance of Möhler's ecclesiology up through the middle of the twentieth century. While Himes properly orders the names in this ecclesial family tree, his insight over the relationship between Möhler's ecclesiology and Vatican I was not novel. Nearly sixty years earlier Karl Barth made a similar observation between Möhler and the first Vatican Council. In Barth's estimation, the genius of Möhler lies in his systematization of "the whole divine dignity and authority ascribed to this complex [of Scripture, tradition, revelation, the incarnation, and Jesus] as a predicate of the Church." That is to say, "The Church is

⁴³ Michael J. Himes, "The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century," in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 45–67, 59.

⁴⁴ Michael J. Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation: Johann Adam Möhler and the Beginnings of Modern Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 327–330.

⁴⁵ Möhler, "Rezension," in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 5 (1823), pp. 495–502, 497.

⁴⁶ Himes, "The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century," p. 61.

⁴⁷ Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation*, p. 329.

Jesus Christ, speaking, ruling, acting, deciding to-day.”⁴⁸ Barth observes that Möhler waffles on the question over the concrete location of the church's authority, whether it is identified with the papal office or in the church's episcopacy. He believes that Möhler attempts to resolve the tension by establishing a dialectical relationship of the “most useful opposites” between “Conciliarism and Curialism,” where through a mutual system of recognition, a necessary balance is maintained. Yet, Barth sees that within Möhler's own thought this dialectic was already staged for future collapse: Möhler's admission of the necessity of an “indispensable head,” which is the “concrete culmination of the authority of the Church,” intimates the impossibility of maintaining this balance: “Had the Church a mouth by which it could speak with authority, infallible, ultimate, absolute authority, and possessing which it could preserve its identity with the living Jesus Christ?”⁴⁹

In Barth's reading throughout the church's history one is able to discern a trajectory of the transmutation of authority from the scriptures to the church. The culmination of this path is the declaration of papal infallibility. Barth observes that this turn, while novel in certain respects, has a “preliminary history” rooted in the growth of papal and Roman primacy, and the developments over the understanding of scripture and tradition. Therefore, the decision of Vatican I is the apogee of this threefold historical crescendo, which Möhler's ecclesiology enables: “It is the closing of that circle, the opening of which is marked by the dualistic formula of Irenaeus (repeated in the Tridentinum), the continuation by the triad of Vincent of Lerins, and the culmination by the synthetics of Möhler.”⁵⁰

Barth's placement of Möhler within the currents leading to Vatican I is an important historical marker. Although a Protestant and not a church historian, Barth's reading helps to validate Himes' historiographical point: the present image of Möhler as depicted through *Einheit*, his place at Tübingen, and his interaction with German idealism and Schleiermacher, differs greatly from his portrait within the early twentieth century.⁵¹ This helps to elucidate Congar's early work on Möhler. Congar's essays and, especially, his publication of *Einheit* should be interpreted as an attempt to broaden—if not wholly reshape—Möhler's theological legacy.

Moreover, the significance of Barth's argument is seen in that it corresponds to a similar genealogical argument made a little

⁴⁸ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I:2 The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G. T. Thomson and Harold Knight, eds. G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), pp. 564–65.

⁴⁹ Barth, *Church Dogmatics I:2*, p. 566.

⁵⁰ Barth, *Church Dogmatics I:2*, p. 567.

⁵¹ Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation*, p. 328.

more than twenty years later by Congar himself.⁵² In the essay, “L’Ecclesiologie de la Révolution française au Concile du Vatican, sous le Signe de l’affirmation de l’autorité,” Congar observes Möhler’s influence on the Roman school: “*Möhler genuit Passaglia; Passaglia genuit Schrader et Schrader genuerunt Scheeben et Franzelin.*”⁵³ Möhler’s key contribution, in avoiding the reigning juridical ecclesiology, is his construal of the church as a constituent element of the salvific mystery and his recovery of its sacramental character—both of which resulted from the church’s relationship to the incarnation. Congar shows how Schrader and Scheeben, specifically, provided a sacramental and incarnational foundation for the ecclesiology that emerged out of *Pastor aeternus*.

Congar’s association of Möhler’s incarnational thought with the Roman School, and their incarnational and hierarchical ecclesiology, helps to demonstrate that Congar had begun to distinguish between the ecclesiologies of *Einheit* and *Symbolik* in a manner that recognized a conceptual incongruity.⁵⁴ At the center of this disparity is the relationship between the ecclesiological structure and the hierarchy. In *Sainte Église* Congar, in addressing the idea of the church as the *incarnation continuée*, distances himself from two erroneous tendencies that have appeared in relation to this thought. Congar rejects an overly strong biological identification between the incarnate Christ and the church, where some manner of communication of properties between Christ and the church is affirmed. Congar also finds problematic a tendency that interprets the mystical relationship between the church and Christ in a manner that especially underscores the privileging of the hierarchy. This interpretation presents the hierarchy “as an organ of the body, which is the body of Christ,” whereby that which is owed to Christ—namely obedience and infallibility—is transferred to this organ of the body.⁵⁵

⁵² I am not implying that Barth’s thought directly impacted Congar’s. Such influence is within the realm of possibility, but at this point such argumentation cannot be substantiated. But Congar’s knowledge and interest in Barth is well known. In addition to a course he offered on Barth in 1934, Congar penned two small articles on Barth. See, Congar, “Barth” in *Catholicisme. Hier, aujourd’hui demain*, I (Paris: Letouzé et Ané, 1949), pp. 1267–68; Congar, “Karl Barth, un homme libre qui aimait Jésus-Christ,” in *Signe de temps* (January 1969), pp. 13–14.

⁵³ Congar, “L’Ecclesiologie de La Révolution Française Au Concile Du Vatican, Sous Le Signe de L’affirmation de L’autorité.” in *L’Ecclesiologie Au XIXe Siècle*, ed. Maurice Nedoncelle (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 1960), pp. 77–114, 107.

⁵⁴ In an earlier piece Congar explained the ecclesiological differences between *Einheit* and *Symbolik* by means of Möhler’s growing knowledge of Protestant ecclesiology. His interpretation of a Protestant ecclesiology of a solely invisible and interior church, drove Möhler to reevaluate his position of the external reality of the church. Congar, “Sur l’évocation et l’interprétation de la pensée de Moehler,” pp. 209–12.

⁵⁵ Congar, *Sainte Église*, pp. 96–97.

In *Sainte Église* one is able to sense uncertainty in Congar's thought over the nature of an incarnational ecclesiology, due to its relationship in establishing an organic connection between Christ and the hierarchy. While he had not yet dismissed this structure, he does qualify it, and repudiates an incarnational link between Christ and the hierarchy. What appeared as a feeling of uneasiness in the 1960s, had developed into disaffection by the end of his career. In one of his final works, *La Parole et le Souffle*, Congar addresses the Eastern Orthodox critique of a Western Christomonism and an underdeveloped pneumatology.⁵⁶ Admitting the validity of certain grounds for criticism, Congar acknowledges within the Roman Catholic Church there has been a comprehensive ecclesiastical correlation of the church as *unum corpus* under the *unum caput* of the papacy. Furthermore, the Catholic west has tended to bifurcate pneumatology between individual anthropology (i.e. "the inner life of believers") and the Spirit's role in securing the position of the church *qua* institution, "primarily that of the *magisterium*."

Congar identifies himself as having helped pave the way for the church to begin to develop a correlated pneumatology. For this end, he drew upon the thought of Möhler:

I must have had a premonition of what would have to be done when I wanted the first volume in my series 'Unam Sanctam' to be a new translation into French of Möhler's *Die Einheit in der Kirche . . . My reason was that I was reacting against a too juridical and too purely Christological ecclesiology*. Möhler provided an antidote to this, although his own reaction was very one-sidedly in favour of the Holy Spirit, who appears in his works as creating the Church as his corporification. He himself later tried to redress the balance in his thinking by making it more Christological.⁵⁷

What is not explicit in this statement is that the "too purely Christological ecclesiology" against which Congar reacted, was indebted to Möhler. In the first volume of *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint* Congar makes this point with more clarity. He observes Möhler's transition from a "radically pneumatological ecclesiology" to a "resolutely Christological ecclesiology," which inspired theologians like Scheeben and the Anglican convert, Manning. Scheeben and Manning represent ecclesiologies that incorporated strong Christological views, with certain pneumatological components. However, this pneumatological development is chiefly utilized to reinforce the authority of the hierarchy.

⁵⁶ This worked was translated into English as "The Spirit, the Spirit of Christ: Christomonism and the *Filioque*," in *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), pp. 101–21.

⁵⁷ Congar, "The Spirit, the Spirit of Christ: Christomonism and the *Filioque*," p. 115. Emphasis added.

By virtue of union, the Holy Spirit imparted an indefectible character to the church, specifically to the papacy and the hierarchy.⁵⁸

In Manning Congar finds many of the same elements that constitute his own ecclesiological thought—specifically the proper way to order the relationship of the church to Christ and the Spirit—except that they are deployed to fortify the church's hierarchical structure. Whereas Manning orchestrated these constituents for the service and defense of the papacy, in order to secure the church as “an absolute rock of truth,” Congar's aim was the development of a proper pneumatology wherein the often-segregated work of the Holy Spirit was integrated into a complete ecclesiological depiction; an ecclesiology that did not privilege the hierarchy above the laity. Ultimately, Congar concludes that his ecclesiology must be pneumatologically and not incarnationally centered. A pneumatological foundation allows for the proper maintenance of the institutional aspect of the church, without subordinating the foundational character of the Spirit-worked charisms. Congar has not excised all incarnational elements from his thought. Rather, he believes that a pneumatological ecclesiology enables the proper retention of a Christological component, for “a sound pneumatology always points to the work of Christ and the Word of God.” This pneumatological structure neither compromises the diversity of the Spirit's works and gifts within the totality of the church's life—and not just “a mere making present of the structures of the covenant proposed by Christ while on earth”—nor forfeits the church's connection to Christ.⁵⁹

For the mature Congar, the church is not the continued incarnation of Christ, wherein the hierarchy function as the essential link between Christ and the present day church. The church is more than a hierarchic society that functions according to the law of incarnation. The institution of the church exceeds this one individual act: “on the one hand of the institution of the Church by the incarnate Word during his presence in the flesh, and, on the other, of the permanent activity here and now of the glorified Lord, who is Spirit.”⁶⁰ Congar's pneumatological ecclesiology recognizes and accentuates the relationship that the Spirit possess with each member of the body of Christ, and elevates the Spirit's edifying work within the body, carried out through its non-ordained members. The hierarchy has a purpose: it “links[s] the community, which is living from its foundation, to the institution in its apostolicity and its Catholicity.” But the Church exists, apart from this, through the work of the Spirit, actualized in the people of God. So Congar can affirm that the “Church appears therefore to

⁵⁸ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* I, pp. 154–57.

⁵⁹ Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* II, p. 12.

⁶⁰ Congar, “The Spirit as co-instituting the Church—are the charisms structuring principles of the Church?” in *The Word and the Spirit*, pp. 78–84, 81.

come from the Word in his incarnation and from the Spirit," in both the hierarchy and the laity.⁶¹

III. CONCLUSION

Congar's extensive ecclesiological writings reveal a nearly lifelong contemplation over the relational dimensions between hierarchy and laity, in light of the church's existence as a Christological and pneumatological body. For Congar, pneumatology and hierarchy are not mutually exclusive, but he had observed a tendency amongst the members of the hierarchy to mitigate the significance of the work of the Spirit in favor of the church's magisterial authority. For example, Congar notes how during the Third Inter-Session of Vatican II, Sebastian Tromp, S.J., the secretary of the Preparatory Theological Commission, dismissed contemporary pneumatological concerns as a Protestant substitute for the absence of a hierarchy: Tromp claimed that the Observers' complaint of a pneumatological lacunae

is because they do not have a magisterium. For us, it is enough to have it said once and for all, '*Ego vobiscum usque . . .*' THEY insist on the Holy Spirit because they have eliminated the magisterium . . . —I [Congar] replied that this might be true, but WE should not do the opposite . . . —Tromp responded: Jesus Christ could have acted on human beings without the Church, through his Holy Spirit alone, but he chose to act on them THROUGH THE CHURCH, but putting the Holy Spirit in the Church.⁶²

Congar records a similar remark in 1962 by Archbishop Raffaele Calabria: "one speaks of a presence of Christ in the Church. There is only one, it is the Magisterium."⁶³ How similar these sound to Möhler's "*Gott schuf die Hierarchie, und für die Kirche ist nun bis zum Weltende mehr als genug gesorgt.*"

In Tromp's statement there is an awareness that pneumatology may be employed in order to unsettle the centrality of the hierarchy. Ironically, Tromp was partially correct. Congar grew to abhor the trampling of the work of the Spirit, through the elevation of the hierarchy—by the hierarchy itself! A pneumatologically

⁶¹ Congar, "The Spirit as co-instituting the Church—are the charisms structuring principles of the Church?" pp. 82–83.

⁶² Congar, *My Journal of the Council*, trans. Mary John Ronayne and Mary Cecily Boulding, eds. Denis Minns (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), pp. 711–12. Emphasis original.

⁶³ Congar, *My Journal of the Council*, p. 202. The quote continues: "And when I [Congar] replied that there is in the Church an experience of the mystery of Christ, he bellowed: Experience! That was talked about at the beginning of the century, it is Modernism!!!"

revitalized ecclesiology enabled Congar to attend to recovering the various works of the Spirit within the church, by radically restructuring the conceptual shape of the church—no longer pyramidal—without severing the function, but eliminating the ontological priority of the hierarchy.⁶⁴

This ecclesiological development reveals a shift in Congar's interpretation of Möhler: it is a step towards *Einheit* and away from *Symbolik*. It is the recognition of a dissonance between Möhler's ecclesiological thought as represented in these texts. It is Congar's admission that Möhler's incarnational ecclesiology has been more detrimental than helpful to a comprehensive ecclesiological renewal. The synthesis of *Symbolik's* incarnational ecclesiology into a larger framework, in order to buttress the authority of the papacy and the entire hierarchical mechanism, came at the cost of defining the church almost exclusively as a hierarchical organism. To be sure Congar's latter ecclesiology is not as "one-sidedly in favour of the Holy Spirit," as *Einheit* had been, but neither is it as unevenly slanted in an incarnational direction as *Symbolik*. The development of Congar's ecclesiology retains characteristics from both texts, but combined for the purpose of his own ecclesiological vision.

Congar wrote that Möhler functioned for him as an "inspiration and a source."⁶⁵ This is certainly true. But the relationship between Möhler and Congar transcends common understandings that typify a unilateral relationship. That Möhler and Congar by the end of their lives came to opposite ecclesiological positions cannot be overlooked or dismissed for the sake of emphasizing their similarities. Congar's final estimation of the hierarchy itself merits that the connection between Möhler and Congar be assessed in a historical context, drawing attention to points of correspondence and difference.

Despite the differences between Möhler and Congar, Möhler's influence of Congar is indisputable. As Congar admitted, he found within Möhler a source of inspiration. Möhler was a theological voice, which could help to breathe new air into contemporary ecclesiological considerations. Herein lies Congar's impact on this relationship. It is not that Congar rediscovered a forgotten theologian of the past, lost within a library or archive. Möhler was not forgotten—far from it. Möhler had a diverse and far-reaching reputation within

⁶⁴ Groppe observes that Congar, in some of his later texts, eventually stopped using the "priesthood/laity" distinction, in favor of "ministries/modes of community service." She writes that Congar "emphasized that the term 'ministries' takes the plural form, for the church is built up by a multitude of ministries, some ordained and some lay." Groppe, *Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit*, p. 142.

⁶⁵ See fn 4.

Germany, Italy, and France.⁶⁶ Congar did not reclaim Möhler from the dusty annals of the past.⁶⁷ Rather he actively and deliberately participated in rewriting Möhler's hitherto narrative. Throughout his life, Congar favored an interpretation of Möhler read through the lens of *Einheit*. Congar's work centered on reframing Möhler's importance around a pneumatological, and patristic bend that centered on the role of *communio*. Even when his own ecclesiological thought tended toward an incarnational structure, Congar exhibited a propensity to quote *Einheit* rather than the more fitting *Symbolik*. Although Congar ultimately comes to recognize the lack of parity between these works, earlier, he had argued for a more unitive reading, finding a Catholic principle as the common thread. Congar's prioritization of *Einheit* over *Symbolik* is demonstrative of his effort to recast Möhler within the creative Catholic thought associated with the Tübingen School, rather than the institutional legacy of the Roman School. Congar indeed has a part of the legacy of Möhler, but it is a legacy that he sought to reshape.

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⁶⁶ Congar was well aware of the Möhler's historiography leading up to his down day. Congar's "Sur l'évocation et l'interprétation de la pensée de Moehler" functionally serves as a literature review documenting the key works relating to Möhler.

⁶⁷ Warthmann narrates the changing statues of Möhler and the Tübingen School within France prior to the publication of Congar's essays on Möhler. Warthmann's work helps to show that awareness of Möhler in France, and beyond, was well documented. Warthmann, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule*, pp. 289–406.