

break new ground so much as make scholarship accessible; it belongs in every significant theological library.

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Nikolaos Loudovikos, *Church in the Making: An Apophatic Ecclesiology of Consubstantiality*, trans. Norman Russell (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2016), pp. 296. \$29.00.

In ecumenical circles, the discussion of the very identity of the church is still in a 'pre-theological' stage. Although no clear definition of its identity is given at least during the patristic era, and taking into account that the twentieth century has been widely recognised as the 'century of the church' *par excellence*, the overall debate about 'who/what or where is the church' is still a fervent one, due to its various implications.

The lack of any systematic discussion of ecclesiology in the Eastern Orthodox context especially (pp. 11ff.) was mainly a result of the historical conditions faced by the Orthodox for nearly five hundred years. Given that ecclesiology still does not even officially feature in the curricula of seminaries and schools of theology (as is the case with Greece), the promising renewal of Orthodox theology that had taken place mainly in the West during most of the twentieth century enabled certain individual Orthodox theologians, like Nikolaos Loudovikos, to creatively engage in ecumenical ecclesiological debates.

This volume contains material that basically appeared more than a decade ago in Greek. Loudovikos mainly argues for a full and critical reconsideration of eucharistic ecclesiology, the still dominant ecclesiological model in ecumenical Christianity, by providing certain corrective suggestions and critical insights based on a detailed reading of the long history of theology.

In Loudovikos' first and programmatic historical and systematic study, through a selective overview of basic cornerstones of the patristic tradition (e.g. Dionysius the Areopagite, or Maximus the Confessor) and contemporary Orthodox theology (from Khomiakov to Zizioulas), the author points to the need for all the charisms of the baptised members of the church to be understood as 'direct participations in Christ himself' (p. 129), not belonging to anyone particularly (e.g. the bishop), as sorts of 'super-charisms'. Focusing on Maximus the Confessor, he praises him for the first 'complete connection between apophaticism and ecclesiology' (p. 43) on

the basis of the relevant concept of 'consubstantiality' (p. 44), transferred from the Trinity through Christ to church life. With consubstantiality, a key concept in Loudovikos' imagination of the church, the author seeks to go beyond the dominant role of personalistic language and ontology in contemporary Orthodox theology, by stressing the need to overcome its various current shortcomings, such as 'subjectivism or structuralism' (p. 99). Loudovikos is, therefore, adamant to add a third 'sacred' concept along with *Sophia* and *personhood* in contemporary Orthodox ecclesiological discussions.

In the second study, Loudovikos provides a critical evaluation of the emergence of communion (understood as 'trascendentality') in Catholic theology on the basis of Rahner's work, as well as the phenomenological tradition and Conciliar documents. Again, in the third study, the author explores the difficulty of western 'social ontology to raise itself to the level of first ontology' (p. 162) and its direct consequences for ecclesiology. Special attention should be given to studies four and five, where an unexpected (for an Orthodox), but positive appreciation of sophiology, by virtue mainly of the Maximian *logos/logoi* doctrine, takes place through the lens of 'a sophiology of consubstantiality', which expresses both 'God's unity' while it 'unifies things in God' (p. 208). At the same time sophiology's main concern, i.e. the 'divine character of creation' (p. 228), is fully appreciated. In study six, the early Wittgenstein is brought into dialogue with Maximus with regards to the liberating approach to the dialogical character of theological language as the 'linguistic coexistence of the community' (p. 246). In the seventh study, Loudovikos criticises the 'absolute ecclesiological sin' of nationalism (p. 251), pointing out the need for an eschatological transformation of nation in order to 'serve the anthropocentric transformation of Polis' (p. 270).

In his concluding study, Loudovikos comes full circle with his critical evaluation of eucharistic ecclesiology. Focusing again on the Origenic separation between the institutional and charismatic dimension of the church, he makes a plea for the importance of combining 'icon' with 'mimesis' to avoid any ahistorical, ecstatic tendency of Orthodox ecclesiology, preserving thus their complementarity and integrity (p. 272) in terms of a synergetic and participatory, i.e. dialogical, ontology (p. 273).

In this book, Loudovikos generally highlights the dynamic character of nature itself in theology in general, and ecclesiology in particular. The church, thus, is conceived more as an apophatic reality, in the making, rather than a fixed one. Loudovikos' revisionary historical and systematic account of patristic tradition, and of contemporary milestones of Christian theology, expresses a deep knowledge of the history of ideas. This does not mean,

however, that the book is impeccable. It is accompanied by an outdated secondary literature (the author does not take into account the most recent developments, or works by Roger Haight, 2004, in ecclesiology, by Paul Valiere, 2000, Brandon Gallaher, 2012, etc., on sophiology, or Zizioulas' moderate account of the dialectic of nature and personhood, 2013, strongly criticised in this volume, and Vgenopoulos detailed analysis on primacy, 2013, etc.) and the numerous references from Greek translations, together with the particular style of prose, render its basic arguments difficult to follow. Apart from the style, one could also question the objective historical value of the proposed ecclesiological model. How could it be really justified on the ground of the self-awareness of cognising subjects, the historical members of the post-modern Orthodox Church? Moreover, one could also refer for instance to various details like his otherwise genuine counter-proposal of a bishop 'named not after a certain city' but after immigrants (pp. 124–5), which does not seem to achieve the goal of overcoming the nationalistic tendency exemplified by the Orthodox Churches in the West, while it appears to jeopardise 'locality', as a *sine qua non* aspect of ecclesiology.

On the whole, despite the few aforementioned shortcomings, Loudovikos' book makes a unique contribution towards a comprehensive and a more finely balanced understanding of the church's identity.

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Donald K. McKim, *The Church: Presbyterian Perspectives* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), pp. xii + 95. \$16.00/£13.00.

Those of us who teach in areas of the Reformed tradition will be familiar with the work of Donald McKim. This new book is slim and accessible; pitched as much as introduction for more general readers as for students in the academy. The chapters started life as presentations to Presbyterian lay and clergy conferences across the United States. Throughout, McKim's focus is deeply theological and profoundly practical: 'What does it mean to be part of the people of God, the body of Christ, and the community of the Holy Spirit?' (p. ix).

The book's structure, as its author graciously acknowledges, reflects something of its origins as individual presentations in different contexts. That gives it a less coherent feel overall. These are snapshots expressed in the colours of a very personal account. It is no less significant and valuable, but