

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

An Ecumenical Calendar of Saints

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Address given at the Annual Meeting of the Church Service Society 14 May 2022

In April 2022, along with Lord Wallace, the then Moderator of the General Assembly, our President, John Bell, took a prominent part in an event to celebrate the life and work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh. Representatives of different faiths read extracts from the Archbishop's writings, focusing on lessons to be embraced – *Ubuntu*, Truth and Reconciliation, and human rights. The Archbishop's dynamism was recalled, and those present reflected on encounters with him and the inspiration and hope he had given them.

The event in St Mary's was an occasion of thanksgiving for the life and witness of one who had helped to shape us in our understanding of, and commitment to, the Gospel. He exhibited the marks of Christian discipleship – integrity, single minded pursuit of the truth, mercy, forgiveness, and peacemaking. Here were Presbyterians, among others, celebrating the life and legacy of an Anglican Archbishop – a crossing of boundaries, an example of learning from the saints and prominent figures of another tradition.

In this presentation we will explore a Faith and Order initiative which sought to encourage churches to celebrate each others' saints and prominent people.

Background

It was appropriate that the ecumenical event in St Mary's Cathedral took place in a worship and meditative setting. Members of this Society are aware of the immense contribution that ecumenical dialogue has made to our worship throughout the twentieth century and subsequently. Central to this has been the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. The Lord's Supper had been the focus of discussion in Faith and Order from its first Assembly at Lausanne in 1927.¹ A new phase was initiated

1 H N Bate, *Faith and Order: Proceedings of the World Conference Lausanne 1927*, New York, Doran 1927.

at the Montreal Conference of Faith and Order in 1963, when theologians of the Russian and other Orthodox Churches and Roman Catholic scholars joined the Commission. The study sought to overcome the theological and philosophical disagreements of the past and move towards a common understanding through returning to the sources and drawing on contemporary biblical scholarship.² At the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Lima in 1982, a convergence document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)³ was approved and sent to the churches for their action and reaction.

On that occasion in Lima, albeit unofficially, the Commission received a liturgy which had been created largely by Max Thurian of the Taizé Community. The liturgy reflected the order of the elements⁴ of the celebration of the Lord's

2 For an account of the Reformed contribution to these ecumenical developments see my 'Word, Sacrament and Communion: New Emphases in Reformed Worship in the Twentieth Century', in Lukas Vischer (ed.) *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 2003, pp.142-158. Prominent scholars in the study of the eucharist were Jean-Jacques von Allmen (on Epiklesis), Max Thurian (on Anamnesis), Franz J Lehnhardt, Oscar Cullmann (on worship in the early church), the Group des Dombes, and Lukas Vischer among others. In an earlier phase of the work of Faith and Order on worship, Donald Baillie, D W D Maxwell and T F Torrance were important – see D Baillie and J Marsh (eds.), *Intercommunion*, London, SCM 1952. It is important to note that, after 1962, Orthodox and Roman Catholic scholars played a prominent part in the work of Faith and Order: e.g. Vladimir Lossky, Nikos Nissiotis, Raymond Brown, Jean Tillard, and others.

3 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (the 'Lima Text'), Geneva, WCC 1982.

4 'The eucharistic is essentially a single whole, consisting historically of the following elements in varying sequence and of diverse importance: hymns of praise; act of repentance; declaration of pardon; proclamation of the Word of God, in various forms; confession of faith (creed); intercession for the whole Church and for the world; preparation of the bread and wine; thanksgiving to the Father for the marvels of creation, redemption and sanctification (deriving from the Jewish tradition of the *berakah*); the words of Christ's institution of the sacrament according to the New Testament tradition; the *anamnesis* or memorial of the great acts of redemption, passion, death, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost, which brought the Church into being; the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*) on the community, and the elements of bread and wine ; consecration of the faithful to God; reference to the communion of saints; prayer for the return of the Lord ... ; the Amen of the whole community; the Lord's Prayer; sign of reconciliation and peace; the breaking of the bread; eating and drinking in communion with Christ and with each member of the Church; final act of praise; blessing and sending.' From *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, pp.15-16, para. 27.

Supper outlined in the agreement and it included an accompanying detailed commentary on the meaning and relationship of the various constituent parts.⁵

Alongside this work on BEM and the liturgy, Lukas Vischer, the Director of Faith and Order, published an important monograph on *Intercession*.⁶ In this he stressed the importance throughout the Scriptures of intercession in the life of the people of Israel and of the early church. He emphasised that Jesus Christ is the Intercessor, his life a continuing intercession on our behalf. Vischer suggested that the entire work of Christ can be presented as intercession.⁷

This is well expressed in the BEM convergence statement:

The anamnesis of Christ is the basis and source of all Christian prayer. So our prayer relies upon and is united with the continual intercession of the risen Lord.⁸

The study by Lukas Vischer provided a theological backdrop for the creation of the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle *For All God's People*.⁹ In this, churches were, and are, invited to pray for each other in an annual cycle embracing all churches and continents. The nature of such intercession is well expressed in a prayer attributed to John Calvin:

May we be so caught up in love for those for whom we pray that we feel their needs as keenly as our own, and pray for them with imagination, sensitivity and knowledge. We ask this in Christ's name.¹⁰

5 Max Thurian (ed.), *Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 116, Geneva, WCC 1983, pp. 225-246. The liturgy was celebrated at the close of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver in 1982.

6 Lukas Vischer *Intercession*: Faith and Order paper no. 95, Geneva, WCC 1980.

7 op.cit. p.5

8 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, para. 9, p.12.

9 *For All God's People*, Geneva, WCC 1977. The latest version of this is entitled *Pilgrim Prayer: An Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*, Geneva, WCC 2021; available online at oikoumene.org.

10 In Dorothy Stewart (compiler), *The Westminster Collection of Christian Prayers*, Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, p.314.

By 1982, Faith and Order had brought into being a theological convergence on the Eucharist, a liturgy based on that statement, a biblical and theological study on Intercession, and a cycle of intercessory prayer. In addition to this, the Faith and Order Commission meeting at Bangalore in 1978 recommended that an ecumenical list of saints and martyrs be established:

The reading of the acts of martyrs and their presence in preaching serve to strengthen the churches in their witness today. It is desirable that an ecumenical anthology of both early and modern accounts of martyrdom should be published for the use of the churches, since the recognition of martyrs already transcends confessional boundaries and brings us all back to the centre of the faith, the source of hope and the love for God and fellow human beings.¹¹

This recommendation was not followed up by Faith and Order immediately. However, it was taken up by members of the Comunita di Bose, an ecumenical community founded to live out the insights of the Second Vatican Council. They were inspired by the Council's Decree on Ecumenism and especially by the insight that:

Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brethren. It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood.¹²

Already in the early 1970s the Community had been inspired by the Second Vatican Council to seek ways of commemoration that would conform to the Gospel and respect the convictions of other churches as they began to edit a small martyrology. They saw in the Bangalore recommendation a confirmation of the need to develop a calendar of saints. In doing this they were further encouraged by Pope John Paul's Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* which begins with a

11 *Sharing in One Hope: Faith and Order paper 92*, Geneva, WCC 1978, p.199 .

12 Austin Flannery (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, Dublin, Dominican Publications 1975: 'Decree on Ecumenism', chapter 1, section 4, p.458.

reflection on the importance of commemorating the saints and martyrs for the contemporary church.¹³ The Encyclical emphasised that

the courageous witness of so many martyrs of our century, including members of Churches and Ecclesial Communities not in full communion with the [Roman] Catholic Church, gives new vigour to the Council's [Vatican II] call and reminds us of our duty to listen and put into practice its exhortation. These brothers and sisters of ours, united in the selfless offering of their lives for the kingdom of God, are the most powerful proof that every factor of division can be transcended and overcome in the total gift of self for the sake of the Gospel.

In 2001 the Comunita di Bose published *Il libro dei Testimoni: Martirologio Ecumenico*.¹⁴ It integrates the saints and doctors of the church from diverse Christian traditions and includes, amongst others, St Columba, John Bunyan, Richard Hooker, Martin Luther, Etty Hillesum, John Calvin, Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The ecumenical calendar offers a brief account of each witness drawn from different Christian churches. Each day of the year is given over to one, or sometimes several, prominent figures of Christianity. The scope of the calendar is very broad; it presents not only those who clearly confessed Christ, but also patriarchs and prophets from the Hebrew scriptures. Included also are members of the Jewish faith and the 'righteous' of other religions. Through the volume we encounter a veritable 'cloud of witnesses'. The Calendar was translated from Italian into other languages but has principally been used in the worship and life of the Comunita di Bose itself.¹⁵

A Cloud of Witnesses

When this ecumenical calendar was published in 2002, Lukas Vischer, who had been Director of Faith and Order at the Bangalore Commission meeting, suggested that the Monastery of Bose and the Faith and Order secretariat work jointly on a project to produce a more extensive calendar of saints and

13 *Ut Unum Sint*, Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1995.

14 Enzo Bianchi (introd.), Comunita di Bose *Il Libro dei Testimoni: Martirologio Ecumenico*, Monastero Di Bose, 2001.

15 *Témoins de Dieu Martyrologue universel*, Paris, Bayard 2005; Ksiega Swiadkow Swiety Pawel, Czestochowa 2004 (Polish).

work with the churches to establish such a calendar in their life and worship. The work that was undertaken subsequently took as its theme, 'A Cloud of Witnesses', drawing on the insight in the Letter to the Hebrews that the Christian community is surrounded by such a 'great cloud of witnesses'.¹⁶

In 2004, representatives of various churches gathered to discuss the possibility of creating a common martyrology. From this meeting a letter was sent to the churches seeking their participation in the project and asking them to furnish a copy of their own calendar of saints. In 2007 as a response to this request, some churches proposed a list of saints for such a common calendar while others offered their initiatives and experiences of commemorating witnesses from different confessions. Yet others told of pilgrimages and special spaces set aside for commemorating saints.

In the light of this feedback, Faith and Order with the Comunita di Bose organized a symposium at the Monastery of Bose in 2008 over the period of All Saints Day. The overarching theme of the consultation was Christian witness, its biblical, spiritual, historical, confessional, contextual and liturgical expressions.¹⁷ There were three main elements in the consultation:

Firstly, reflections on the different approaches to the commemoration of the saints by different Christian traditions were presented. These different ways included an account of pilgrimages, encouraging groups and individuals to walk in the paths of a saint.

Secondly, the majority of papers emerged from regional case studies – martyrs from Germany, Romania, Latin America, South Africa, Korea, Russia, Melanesia and those commemorated in new statues in the niches above the West Door of Westminster Abbey.¹⁸

16 Hebrews 12:1 (the lead into this is in chapter 11).

17 Tamara Grzdelidze and Guido Dotti (eds.), *A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for Ecumenical Commemoration*, Faith and Order paper no. 209, Geneva, WCC 2009.

18 See Andrew Chandler (ed.), *The Terrible Alternative: Christian Martyrdom in the Twentieth Century*, London, Cassell, 1998.

A third element of the consultation covered liturgical reflections with presentations of liturgies and prayers from the Reformed, Lutheran, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions.

Throughout all the presentations, discussions, and worship, two major ecclesiological images explicitly or implicitly provided a theological basis for the various presentations – the Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints.

Communion of Saints

At midday prayers during the Bose symposium, the reading was taken from John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as was appropriate for Reformation Day. While the psalms of the day expressed well the theme of the body broken, of suffering and brokenness, the reading from Calvin focussed on the celebration of participation in the communion of saints:

When in the Creed we profess to believe the Church, reference is made not only to the visible Church, but also to all the elect of God, including in the number even those who have departed this life. ... All the elect of God are joined together in Christ that as they depend on one head, so they are compacted into one body, being knit together like its different members; made truly one by living together under the same Spirit of God in one faith, hope and charity, called not only to the same inheritance of eternal life, but to participation in one God and Christ.¹⁹

Calvin goes on to explore the term 'communion of saints' and to emphasise that the grace given to each is given for the sake of the entire community, and that as God is our common Father, and Christ is our head, 'they [the saints] cannot but be united in brotherly love, and mutually impart their blessings to each other.' The communion of saints of all ages and places is bonded together in baptism. Calvin uses the same expressions of bondedness for baptism, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the communion of saints. Through the Holy Spirit Christians are engrafted into Christ and bound together with all who have been baptized in his name. Baptism is a participation in the dying and rising of our Lord. a lifelong journeying in the community of the baptized. Baptism

19 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles), London, SCM Press 1961, Book IV, pp.1, 2-3.

is into the body broken and the fellowship of the Easter Saturday experience.²⁰ As Johannes Metz noted, we ‘stand in the event of the dying and rising of Jesus Christ’.²¹ The Church is a community of a body broken, a body continually challenged by betrayal and falsehood, a body tortured, a community which remembers that Christ is raised with the marks of victimhood. Our pilgrimage as the body of Christ is undertaken as the People of the Beatitudes.

The People of the Beatitudes

In his presentation at the 2008 Consultation, Marco Gnani, a priest of the Community of Sant’Egidio in Rome, opined that the saints and martyrs are ‘the authoritative exegeses of the Beatitudes’.²² It is significant that the Gospel for All Saints Day is St Matthew’s account of the Beatitudes. Through the grace of the Spirit, individuals embody integrity, humility, mercy and forgiveness, justice and peace even to the point of rejection and persecution. The various accounts of the martyrs shared at the Bose Consultation were of people and groups who have been persecuted because they exhibit the life of the Beatitudes – peacemakers in situations of conflict, integrity in times of ideological manipulation, selflessness in self absorbed societies, mercy and forgiveness when responding to exclusion, marginalization and violence. As Daniel Bruno noted at the Consultation, ‘The big cloud of witnesses in Latin America is composed of all those who were urged to live out the Sermon on the Mount’.²³

The pilgrim people, the Body of Christ, the Beatitude people, are called to be prophetic in word and life, to seek justice, to stand with the marginalized, and to offer a witness – a counter witness to societies and individuals who are self absorbed. The community of saints is called to a ministry to be the witnesses of self-giving embodied in Christ, a life of selflessness, of being for others. As the Bose consultation noted:

20 See Alan Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2001.

21 See Jurgen Moltmann and Johannes Metz, *Two Meditations on the Passion*, New York, Paulist Press 1979.

22 Tamara Grzdelidze and Guido Dotti (eds.), *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p.62.

23 op.cit., p.89.

Witnesses are for us signposts and models, sources of inspiration for the Christian life. They are people in whom the Spirit makes Christ visible.²⁴

The saints have shaped us and our understanding of and commitment to the Gospel. Their witness has strengthened us in our stance in society, and encouraged us to be for others. While the liturgical calendars of saints name a number of individuals who have been killed because of their stance and their faith, there are many others who are commemorated because as doctors of the church they have helped us to understand the Gospel better, others who have been missionaries, others who have exercised a ministry of compassion and healing and those who have been peacemakers.

Orators of the Spirit

In his address to the consultation, Archbishop Rowan Williams referred to an Orthodox hymn for Vespers on the Sunday of All Saints where the saints are addressed as 'Orators of the Spirit', those through whom the Spirit addressed and addresses the church and society.²⁵ He reflected on sanctity and holiness, on life in the Spirit as the defining character of those declared to be saints:

When a saint is recognized and commemorated, the church proposes to its own people and to the wider world a model of life in community with Jesus, and in community with all others who have been called; a saint is someone who is himself or herself shaped in discipleship by living in the body of Christ, and also someone whose own life feeds that body and draws it back to its heart and its calling.²⁶

To incorporate into a calendar of saints those seen as saints in another Christian tradition involves really listening to the experience and the insight of the other. It also involves a process to seek reconciliation. Some of the saints and martyrs of one tradition may have been the victims of the actions of other Churches. Some of those were victimised because one tradition or another regarded their witness as misleading and misguided. To incorporate these into an ecumenical

24 op.cit., p.309.

25 op.cit., p.22.

26 ibid.

liturgy requires the patient search for a reconciliation of memories – an act of forgiveness.

A number of international bilateral dialogues have led to such acts of forgiveness and reconciliation. From 1998 to 2003, the international Roman Catholic-Mennonite Commission examined the history of estrangement and persecution between their communities, leading to a healing of memories, with public statements of regret and challenge and the acknowledgement and recognition of Mennonites as martyrs.²⁷ The Bose ecumenical Calendar of Saints has included Meno Simons as a result of this dialogue. A similar impetus is evident in the Roman Catholic-Reformed International Dialogue where it is noted that efforts have been made by Roman Catholic historians to produce a new interpretation of the great Reformers, especially John Calvin, or the attempt of the World Alliance to give a new overtone to the memories of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.²⁸ Similar initiatives have been evident as a result of, among others, the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogues, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogues, and the various dialogues between the Roman Catholic and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The Millennium began with a significant event of commemorating the witnesses and martyrs of the churches. The Ecumenical Commemoration of Witnesses to the Faith took place in the Colosseum in Rome. In his Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, perhaps reiterating his introduction to *Ut Unum Sint*, Pope John Paul II wrote:

In our own century, martyrs have returned, many of the nameless ‘unknown soldiers’ as it were, of God’s great cause. As far as possible, their witness should not be lost to the Church. ... Their gesture cannot fail to have an ecumenical character and expression. Perhaps the most convincing form of ecumenism is the *ecumenism of the saints and of the martyrs*.²⁹

27 See Mennonite-Roman Catholic Dialogue: ‘Called to be Peacemakers’, in J Gros, T Best and L Fuchs (eds) *Growth in Agreement III*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 2007, Faith and Order paper no. 204, pp.206-267.

28 ‘Towards a Common Understanding of the Church’ in Gros, Meyer, Rusch (eds) *Growth in Agreement II*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans 2000, Faith and Order Paper 187, p.816.

29 *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, para. 37.

Thus at the beginning of a new millennium a more inclusive account of those who have helped to shape our commitment to the Gospel as the community of the Beatitudes was commemorated – a crossing of boundaries, of denominational lines. At the Bose symposium at the All Saints Day service, saints and martyrs of a variety of churches and communities were named.

Reformed reticence

However, if the initiative to create an ecumenical calendar of saints is to be truly ecumenical, it requires the participation of the churches of the Reformation, including those of the Reformed tradition. These churches have historically exhibited a reticence with regard to naming saints and have sought to ensure that there is no cult or culture of the saints. The veneration of saints is not evident in the spirituality of the Churches of the Reformation. The Confessions of Faith of these Churches affirm the Communion of Saints, but in the context of affirming that only Jesus Christ intercedes with God on behalf of humanity. The Lutheran Augsburg Confession asserts: ‘Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator’.³⁰ Similarly the Geneva Confession of 1536 affirms:

As we have declared that we have confidence and hope for salvation and all good only in God through Jesus Christ, so we confess that we ought to invoke him in all necessities in the name of Jesus Christ, who is our mediator and advocate with him and has access to him. Likewise we ought to acknowledge that all good things come from him alone, and to give thanks for them. On the other hand, we reject the intercession of the saints as a superstition invented by men contrary to Scripture, for the reason that it proceeds from mistrust of the sufficiency of the intercession of Jesus Christ.³¹

30 Augsburg Confession article XXI, in Theodore Tappert (trans. and ed.), *The Book of Concord*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press 1959, p.47.

31 Geneva Confession of 1536, article 12 in Arthur Cochrane (ed.) *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press 1966, p.123. See also Zwingli, *Sixty Seven Articles* XIX-XXI (1523); First Helvetic Confession, ch. 11; *French Confession of Faith* XXIV; *Belgic Confession of Faith* (1561), article XXVI – all in Cochrane, *ibid*.

Thus to avoid any deference to himself, John Calvin famously insisted on being buried in an unmarked grave in Geneva.³² However, two years after John Calvin's death, the Second Helvetic Confession, having reaffirmed that the Saints are not to be adored, worshipped or invoked for the same reasons that are given in the Geneva Confession, goes on to assert the importance of honouring the saints:

The due honour to be rendered to the Saints. At the same time we do not despise the saints or think basely of them. For we acknowledge them to be living members of Christ and friends of God who have gloriously overcome the flesh and the world. Hence we love them as brothers, and also honour them; yet not with any kind of worship but by an honourable opinion of them and just praises of them. We also imitate them.³³

The Confession goes on to quote St Augustine: 'they are to be honoured by way of imitation, but not to be adored in a religious manner'.³⁴

The Helvetic Confession's affirmation that the saints be honoured may be evident in three ways: firstly in hymns of praise, secondly in prayers for public worship, and thirdly in a Calendar of Saints and Martyrs.

'Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days'

In his hymn for All Saints Day, Frederick Pratt Green invites the church to give thanks for the life and witness of the saints, including those unpraised and unknown, since their way of self giving leads the community to Jesus Christ:

Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days!
A world without saints forgets how to praise.
In loving, in living they prove it is true:
their way of self-giving, Lord, leads us to you.³⁵

32 See Ryan Griffith 'Hero in an Unmarked Grave: The Unusual Modesty of John Calvin', <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/hero-in-an-unmarked-grave> (accessed May 27th 2022). Other Reformers had been buried in the churches with which they were most associated.

33 *Second Helvetic Confession*, Chapter V, in Arthur Cochrane (ed.) *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*, pp.231f.

34 *Ibid.*, quoting from his *De Vera Religione*.

35 *Church Hymnary* 4, hymn 742, v.4, set appropriately to Parry's 'Laudate Dominum'.

This hymn by a Methodist minister has provided a language and theology consonant with the understanding of the Reformed tradition – another crossing of boundaries, a learning from another tradition. While there are a number of hymns in the worship books of the Reformed Churches inviting us to be aware that we belong to the great cloud of witnesses, few name any individual saint. However, our President and the late Graham Maule penned a hymn to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Iona Community – a hymn which recalls the ministry and life of St Columba, and one of the very few in the hymnology of the Reformed Churches to name a saint.

From Erin's shores Columba came
to preach and teach and heal,
and found a church which showed the world
how God on earth was real.

The hymn goes on to point to the different aspects of Columba's ministry, and concludes with the exhortation:

God grant that what Columba sowed
may harvest yet more seed,
as we engage both flesh and faith
to marry word and deed.³⁶

This hymn, however, is not included in the most recent *Church Hymnary*³⁷. The saints who are included there are all biblical figures, with a particular place given to St Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland.³⁸

Inheritors of their witness³⁹

If there are few hymns in the Reformed tradition which mention post biblical saints, is there a different approach in the prayers, litanies, collects or services

36 In *Love from Below: Wild Goose Songs* 3, Iona Community 1989, vv.1,5.

37 This fourth edition (2005), abbreviated to *CH4*, was compiled by representatives of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland.

38 See *CH4* no. 339, 'Sing of Andrew, John's disciple' (Carl P. Daw, Jr); and no. 509, 'Jesus calls us ! O'er the tumult' (Cecil Frances Alexander).

39 Phrase taken from a prayer for All Saints Day in *Common Order*, Edinburgh, St Andrew Press 1994, p.448.

of worship in Reformed Churches? Are Reformed Churches still reticent to name individual saints in worship?

A number of Reformed Churches in their eucharistic liturgies include a commemoration of the saints in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. The Presbyterian Church (USA), for example, includes such a prayer in its service for All Saints Day but does not mention or leave space for the naming of individual saints.⁴⁰ The United Reformed Church includes in its Eucharistic Prayer for All Saints Day a remembrance of Abraham, Sarah, Ruth, Moses, and David the King and psalmist, but does not name any post biblical saint.⁴¹

While affirming the Reformed position that Jesus Christ is the sole mediator before God the Father, some Reformed Churches have now included the names of saints whose witness has inspired, enlivened, and guided the church – ‘orators of the Spirit’. The Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church, the Uniting Church in Australia, L’Eglise Réformée de France, Les Eglises Réformées de Suisse Romande, in particular Lausanne Cathedral, and three ecumenical communities which owe much to the Reformed tradition – Taizé, Crêt-Brérard and Iona – have all named individual saints in their litanies, collects or services of worship.⁴² This is a relatively recent development.

Both the 1940 and 1979 editions of the *Book of Common Order* of the Church of Scotland included for All Saints Day collects inviting us to follow the ‘blessed saints in all virtues and godly living’. No individuals are named. However, in the 1994 *Common Order*, a different picture emerges. For All Saints Day a prayer reads:

We bless you for Paul and Peter,
for Martha and Mary,
for Augustine and Theresa,
for Ninian, Columba, and Margaret,

40 Presbyterian Church (USA) and Cumberland Presbyterian Church *Book of Common Worship*, Louisville, Westminster/John Knox Press 1993, p.389.

41 *Worship from the URC*, ‘Exploring the Year’, p.22.

42 It would seem that the influence of ecumenical communities has been important for these developments. In addition to those named above, the Grandchamp Community outside Lausanne has had an important influence on the Churches in Canton Vaud and Canton Neuchâtel.

for all the saints of history and heaven,
and for those whom we have met here and loved,
whose lives won people for Christ
and confronted their societies
with the claims of the Gospel.

.....
inspire us by their example
to answer your summons as they did,
and so come ever closer to Christ.⁴³

Other prayers mention Patrick, Bride, Cuthbert, Luther, Calvin, and Knox in the context of thanksgiving for their lives which have shaped the church and society in Scotland.

A similar journey is evident in the worship materials of the Church of Lausanne, where some include a prayer of Wilfred Monod, Professor of Theology in Paris and Rouen:

At the holy table I commune with friends: with the disciples and those redeemed by the Lord – with St Paul, St John, St Augustine, St Elizabeth of Hungary, St Francis of Assisi, with Luther, Calvin, Pascal, Wesley, Oberlin, Livingstone, Collard, Viret, with the great cloud of witnesses, with those who live in invisibility on the other side of the veil, but also with all who have breath on earth, from the south pole to the north, those who struggle, love, pray, hope against hope, anonymous like leaves in a forest, but working night and day just as the leaves do, to purify the atmosphere of our globe.⁴⁴

The Reformed Church in France includes in its 1996 Liturgy the following Confession of Faith:

I believe, with all the women and men of yesterday who deciphered his steps in history. A people freed from servitude and scolded by

43 *Common Order*, p.447.

44 Wilfred Monod, *Pour communier*, Paris 1929, p.64, cited in Tamara Grzdelidze and Guido Dotti (eds.), *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p.256.

the prophets. A people who sang psalms and had the wisdom of proverbs. With the Palestinian crowd and the apostles who were witnesses to his human voice. I enter into the long line of those following the Nazarene; Paul of Tarsus, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Jean XXIII, Martin Luther King and all the others ... they did not believe in vain.⁴⁵

As with the prayers of other Reformed Churches, occasion has been taken to include martyrs and saints associated with other Christian traditions – those who have shaped and challenged us all in our understanding and commitment to the Gospel.

The Uniting Church in Australia has produced an extensive Calendar of Other Commem-orations. In this, Christian men and women of all ages are remembered alongside the recognized saints of the church, for ‘an outstanding contribution to church and society, including in the Pacific Region.’ There are nine categories, so described that they embrace established figures but also leave the door open for those whose contribution is not so well known, encouraging ‘(s)ynods and presbyteries, parishes and congregations ... to add to this calendar the names of significant Christians and of important events’.⁴⁶ The categories are:

apostle; martyr; witness to Jesus; faithful servant; Christian thinker; renewer of society; reformer of the Church; Christian pioneer; person of prayer.

On the accompanying website Bible readings, biographies, and collects for each category are offered.⁴⁷ The Uniting Church sees the importance of the Calendar of Commemorations not only for worship, but also as an educational tool for inspiring the contemporary church.

45 op.cit, p.259.

46 *Uniting in Worship 2*, Uniting Church Press, Sydney 2005, pp.566f. The compilers suggest: ‘This calendar may provide helpful resources for congregations which hold services during the week, or in Bible study, fellowship, or house groups. It may stimulate ideas for Christian education programs, for the work of the Sunday School, and particularly for an address to young people during the Service of the Lord’s Day.’

47 <https://assembly.uca.org.au/> > ‘Calendar of Other Commemorations (with biographical notes)’.

While Reformed Churches continue to emphasise that Jesus Christ is the sole Mediator before the Father, some have moved to include the naming of persons who have been ‘Orators of the Spirit’ and whose influence and insights have helped to shape the church and inspire Christian discipleship.

In October 2006, the Church Life Network of ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) circulated a *Draft Ecumenical Calendar of Commemorations* which it suggested ‘might be added to those already observed in each Church’. It consisted of those ‘who have contributed significantly to the life and health of Church and nation in Scotland over the centuries, ... representative both of our common heritage and of all the Christian communities which share in ACTS’.

Conclusion

The Cloud of Witnesses project of Faith and Order and the Comunita da Bose is an invitation to Churches and scholars to work together to produce an ecumenical calendar of saints, and in our worship life to celebrate those of different traditions who have in exhibiting the Beatitudes in their life and witness shaped and guided us.

We have noted that the Scottish Churches have already been involved in the preparation of a Scottish Calendar of Saints through ACTS. Would it now be appropriate for the Church Service Society to invite the Joint Liturgical Group to develop a calendar of saints to enhance our worship and commitment through those who have been orators of the spirit and exhibitors of living the Beatitudes?

Thus we might make our own the prayer by Graeme Maule and our President:⁴⁸

Holy and merciful God,
write the values of the Beatitudes
into our hearts and lives;
and help us,
with all your saints and angels,
to seek your face
and happily walk in your ways.

48 Tamara Grzdelidze and Guido Dotti (eds.), *A Cloud of Witnesses*, p.261.

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