

Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church

Partners in the Pilgrimage to Unity

Steven R. Harmon


New City Press
Hyde Park, New York

Published by New City Press
202 Comforter Blvd.,
Hyde Park, NY 12538
www.newcitypress.com

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Cover design and layout: Miguel Tejerina

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Library of Congress Control Number:

ISBN 978-1- (paperback)
ISBN 978-1- (e-book)

Printed in the United States of America

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*For the members of the Baptist-Catholic Joint
Commissions for the Baptist World Alliance—Pontifical
Council for Promoting Christian Unity International
Dialogue, Phases II and III*

Acknowledgments

Not unlike the report of an ecumenical dialogue, *Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church* owes its publication to the contributions of a community that extends far beyond the work of an individual author. Here I will do my best to credit the people who have shaped not only this book but also the theologian who wrote it.

The earliest expressions of the material in this book were invited lectures for academic institutions and presentations for various academic and ecclesiastical conferences, details of which appear in the Introduction that follows. I am grateful to my hosts and hearers of these lectures and presentations, in particular the faculties of the Department of Theological Studies at Lourdes College (now University) and the Department of Theology at Creighton University; the members of the Baptist-Catholic International Dialogue Joint Commission—Phase III who participated in our Year 3 meeting in Warsaw, Poland; the members of the College Theology Society and the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion—Region at Large who attended our annual conventions in 2017 and 2018; the leadership of Eastern Area Community Ministries in Louisville, Kentucky and the Kentucky Council of Churches who planned events associated with the 2012 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as well as the participants in these events; the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, specifically the Plenary Commission that met in Crete in 2009 for work that shaped the convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* and also the working group tasked with the Commission's moral discernment project (thanks also to former Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Neville Callam for invitations to represent the BWA in the Plenary Commission

and in the moral discernment project); and the BWA Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity that tasked me with drafting the BWA response to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* as a contribution to its process of reception by the global church. Feedback received in question-and-answer sessions and informal conversations connected with these events has helped to express my thoughts with greater clarity and extend them in new directions in ways that are reflected in the pages of this book.

Several of these lectures and presentations underwent a penultimate stage of revisions for publication as articles and book chapters before material from them was further revised and adapted for incorporation into portions of this book. I am grateful to the editors and publishers of these publications for granting me permission to include revisions and adaptations of them in the text of *Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church*: “From Anti-Catholicism to Fellow Pilgrims: Baptist Identity, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and the Ecumenical Future,” *The South African Baptist Journal of Theology* 26 (2017): 139-56; “Baptists and Catholics Together—Twitter Edition,” *Baptist News Global* (February 13, 2014); “How Baptists Receive the Gifts of Catholics and Other Christians,” *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 6 (June 2010): 1/81-5/85; “The Healing of Memories in Bilateral Dialogues with Anabaptist (and Baptist) Participation,” *Journal of Baptist Theology in Context* no. 2 (Autumn 2020): 34-56; “A Eucharistically-Malnourished Baptist’s Desire for Intercommunion,” *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society* 45, no. 2 (December 2018): 399-402; and “Baptist Moral Discernment: Congregational Hearing and Weighing,” in *Churches and Moral Discernment, Volume 1: Learning from Traditions*, ed. Myriam Wijlens and Vladimir Shmaliy (Faith and Order Paper no. 228; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2021), 99-114. In addition, Elisabeth Newman, Chair of the

BWA Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity, granted permission to publish the text that I drafted as the BWA response to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* on behalf of that Commission as Appendix 1 of this book; it was published previously as “Baptist World Alliance Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity,” a chapter in *Churches Respond to The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, ed. Ellen Wondra, Stephanie Dietrich, and Ani Ghazaryan Drissi (Faith and Order Paper No. 232; Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 2021), vol. 2, 279-95.

I am indebted to the administration and trustees of Gardner-Webb University and its School of Divinity for granting me a sabbatical leave for Fall 2020 that provided me with the time free from teaching responsibilities that enabled me to propose and write this book. In particular, President William Downs, Provost Ben Leslie, School of Divinity Dean Robert Canoy, and School of Divinity Associate Dean Jim McConnell supported my application for a sabbatical leave and have encouraged and affirmed my work. I am grateful as well to the staff of New City Press for their interest in this project and assistance in transforming it into the present book and preparing for its promotion, especially Executive Director and Publisher Claude Blanc, Editorial Director Tom Masters, and Director of Sales Greg Metzger. Through them I have also come to have greater awareness of and appreciation for the remarkable ecumenical contributions of the Focolare Movement with which New City Press is associated.

The love and support of my wife Kheresa and son Timothy inform my theological work and inspire my writing in essential ways. I experience in my life with them the communion that is God’s gift to a fractured world, and I cannot imagine my own contributions to the ecumenical movement’s participation in God’s community-making work apart from

my life in community with my family. I have written this book in the context of a life lived more fully with them at home during the restrictions associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our life together is the better for it, and I believe that the book is also better as a result.

Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church is dedicated to my colleagues who have been fellow members of the Baptist-Catholic Joint Commissions for the Baptist World Alliance—Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity International Dialogue, Phases II and III, named here alphabetically (and including “observer” participants for particular dialogue meetings): Massimo Aprile, Nancy Elizabeth Bedford, Jeremy Bell, Brian C. Brewer, Sara Butler, Neville G. Callam, Peter Casarella, Fred Deegbe, Valerie Duval-Poujol, Gregory Fairbanks, Stephen Fernandes, Paul S. Fiddes, Curtis Freeman, Timothy George, Juan Usma Gómez, Avelino González, Derek C. Hatch, William Henn, Przemyslaw Kantyka, Glenroy Lalor, Lillian Lim, Denton Lotz, Nora O. Lozano, Tomás Mackey, Anna Maffei, Trisha Miller Manarin, Dennis McManus, Krzysztof Mielcarek, Elizabeth Newman, Anthony Peck, John Radano, Frank Rees, Marie-Hélène Robert, Teresa Francesca Rossi, Jorge Scampini, Arthur Serratelli, Rachael Tan, Lina Toth, Fausto Aguiar de Vasconcelos, Mateusz Wichary, Susan Wood, and Tadeusz Zelinski. May God bless the labors of these Baptists and Catholics, partners in the pilgrimage to unity, that the whole church and the whole world might receive God’s gift of communion, the unity that comes from the Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Steven R. Harmon

Boiling Springs, North Carolina, USA

Feast of Saints Bridget of Sweden and John Cassian, 2021

Foreword

This concise, informative, and readable volume by an expert on Baptist-Catholic ecumenical dialogue offers an insightful overview of our relationship on the pilgrimage to unity. Steven Harmon's prayerful consideration of the numerous surprising convergences and the remaining issues noted by the representatives of the Baptist World Alliance and the Catholic Church points the way forward. In these days when the volume of ecumenical agreements and reflections makes it almost impossible to keep up, he offers a helpful overview that extends in the appendices to two recent important documents of the World Council of Churches.

Harmon reviews the troubled history of Baptist-Catholic relations and how since the Second Vatican Council [1962-1965] the Holy Spirit has brought us together to begin to resolve our difficulties. The Baptist World Alliance decided not to send official observers to the Council though some individual Baptist leaders came to the Council as personal guests. However, by 1974 "Ecumenical Encounters" started to take place in the United States. The first international dialogue between the Alliance and the Vatican took place from 1984 to 1988 and the third phase of dialogue will conclude in 2022.

In chapter 4, Harmon discusses the need for healing. I believe that this is an important context for further progress. The Baptist communities are quite diverse; the Catholic community is noted for unity in doctrine and diversity in cultures. Healing involves examining together past conflicts

in a very honest way; acknowledging past mistakes and sins by both parties; repenting and resolving to act differently moving forward; and having a ceremony of healing and reconciliation. This process not only provides a foundation for further progress in mutual understanding but also can lead to a deep healing of the emotional roots of our estrangement from one another in the past and in the present.

The book touches on and elaborates on many important contemporary ecumenical foundations. These include an emphasis on the Trinity and the church as communion; the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the church as oriented to the future—the reign of God is anticipated but not fully realized; a concern for the religious liberty of all and freedom of conscience; an emphasis on the fact that we are pilgrims and that our knowledge of the depths of the Gospel could always go deeper; and the commitment to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and thus to reduce or eliminate the cacophony of Christian voices that confuses/confounds/discourages outsiders.

Two current approaches to ecumenism—Differentiated Consensus and Receptive Ecumenism—are highlighted in this volume. The method of Differentiated Consensus—which is rooted in the Lutheran-Catholic *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999)—was used in the Second Phase of the Dialogue between the Baptist World Alliance and the Catholic Church (2006-2010).

The Receptive Ecumenism Movement emphasizes that God has given gifts to all the Christian churches and that Christian churches should adopt the gifts/good practices of others. Some refer to this as the “Ecumenical Gift

Exchange.” Harmon tells us that Baptists have been doing this for centuries up to the present moment. His discussion of sharing gifts in chapter 3 is highly informative, detailed, and helpful—it is a resource for other ecumenists. He concludes with some practical suggestions to encourage reception at the local level.

With spiritual depth, pastoral sensitivity, theological acuity and personal examples, chapter 5 examines the always controverted question of intercommunion between Catholics and other Christians—Baptists in this instance. His entitling the chapter “The Cruciformity of Communion” speaks volumes. His section “Toward One Eucharistic Fellowship” is worth both meditation and contemplation. Chapter 6 balances consideration of the cross with consideration of the resurrection. The reign of Christ is present but not fully realized in us. We need to pray daily for God’s gift of unity and be willing to “be receptive to it and participate in it.” A deeper conversion to Christ and an acceptance of the grace of the Holy Spirit are necessary.

In the course of this work Dr. Harmon proposes his “ecumenical dream.” He hopes that Protestant Churches could be in full communion with the Catholic Church but without losing their distinctive Christian identity and distinctive gifts. He compares the Protestant Churches to religious orders, such as the Benedictines, with their distinctive identities and spirituality that are in full communion with the Catholic Church. Toward the close of chapter 6, he indicates that we may have to be patient for centuries—or even millennia—for full communion among the Christian churches to take place. Given that the Holy

Spirit can always surprise us, I would say that full communion could happen in a decade or two!

Father John Crossin OSFS is the former executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is currently on sabbatical pursuing his interest in Ecumenical Ethics.

Introduction

Since the 2006 publication of my book *Towards Baptist Catholicity: Essays on Tradition in the Baptist Vision*,¹ a period that included writing and publishing my book *Baptist Identity and the Ecumenical Future: Story, Tradition, and the Recovery of Community* in 2016,² I have enjoyed opportunities to apply the ecumenical perspective on Baptist identity that I hammered out in those more academic constructions of Baptist ecumenical theology to various contexts of concrete ecumenical encounter. These have included two series of international ecumenical dialogues between the Baptist World Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, invited ecumenical lectures delivered at Catholic universities, participation in and responses to the work of the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, the scholarly ecumenical partnership of joint meetings of the (Catholic) College Theology Society and a group of theologians from the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, and an ecumenical workshop and worship service connected with the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity by a local council of churches. This book *Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church: Partners in the Pilgrimage to Unity* harvests and presents the fruit of these more concrete applications of my theoretical work as a Baptist ecumenical theologian, informed especially by various experiences of Baptist ecumenical encounter with the Catholic tradition.

Baptists and Catholics

Chapter 1, “From Anti-Catholicism to Fellow Pilgrims,” had its origins in a keynote address delivered at Jesuit-founded Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska on February 7, 2015 as part of a symposium on the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its promulgation in 1964.³ It acknowledges that the anti-Catholicism embedded in the early polemic against the Anglicanism from which the Baptist tradition emerged and persisted in its DNA in subsequent centuries initially kept many Baptists from appreciating the ecumenical revolution launched by *Unitatis Redintegratio*. But the chapter also tells the story of how Baptists were nonetheless drawn to participate in this ecumenical revolution, even entering into formal ecumenical dialogues with the Catholic Church made possible by the Decree on Ecumenism. It also envisions additional ways in which Baptists might live into the vision of this Decree by joining Catholics as fellow pilgrims on the road that leads to the ecumenical future of one church under the rule of Christ.

The book then turns to two distinct but complementary forms of Baptist-Catholic ecumenical encounter: official bilateral dialogues between representatives of the two traditions and the less formal—but arguably much more influential—ecumenical paradigm of “receptive ecumenism” by which churches of one tradition may identify in other traditions the ecclesial gifts distinctively preserved by them that can help the receiving tradition form communities of more faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Chapter 2,

“What Do Baptists and Catholics Have in Common?”, summarizes the convergences between Baptists and Catholic identified during Phase II of the international ecumenical dialogue between the Baptist World Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (2006-2010), for which I had the privilege of serving as a member of the Baptist delegation to the joint commission. It began as the second of two lectures on “Baptists, Catholics, and the Ecumenical Future” that I delivered as the Mount Aloysius Fall Ecumenical Lectures at Mount Aloysius College (founded by the Sisters of Mercy) in Cresson, Pennsylvania on October 9, 2014.⁴ Chapter 3, “How Baptists Receive Gifts of Catholic (and catholic) Christianity,” identifies several ways in which Baptist churches and their members have been receiving into their patterns of Baptist faith and practice the gifts that have been preserved and stewarded beyond the Baptist tradition, in Catholicism and in lower-case “c” catholic Christianity. It is based on a lecture that I delivered as the Lourdes College Ecumenical Lecture at Lourdes College (sponsored by the Sisters of St. Francis) in Sylvania, Ohio on March 21, 2010.⁵ Chapter 4, “Ecumenical Healing of Ecclesial Memories,” explores ecumenical dialogues between the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation, respectively, that gave attention to the healing of memories related to the persecution of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists by Catholics and Lutherans as a precondition for further ecumenical convergence today. I presented material in this chapter as a paper delivered to the third annual meeting of the Baptist-Catholic Joint International Commission for

the dialogue between the Baptist World Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity—Phase III in Warsaw, Poland, December 9-13, 2019, during which we gave attention to this earlier work on the healing of memories in dialogues with a communion similar in many ways to the Baptist tradition as precedents for the ecumenical healing that Baptists and Catholics need to experience in their mutual relations en route to engaging in “common witness,” the theme of Phase III of our dialogue.⁶

Baptists, Catholics, and the Whole Church

The final two main chapters of this book are rooted homiletical applications of the perspective on Baptists, Catholics, and the whole church developed in the preceding portions of the book. Chapter 5, “The Cruciformity of Communion,” begins with a homily I preached in an evening prayer service at the annual joint meeting of the College Theology Society—an organization of professors of religious and theological studies in Catholic colleges and universities—and the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Region-at-Large at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, June 1-4, 2017. In that homily I addressed the pain felt by both Baptist and Catholic participants in the Eucharistic services during our joint annual meetings, at which Baptists are not able to receive communion along with their Catholic colleagues. The following year we held our joint annual meeting at Saint Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota, May 31-June 3, 2018. During that meeting one of the Baptist theologians presented a paper titled “Can Catholics and

Baptists Share Communion Without Breaking the Rules?” in a panel session of the “Evangelical Catholics and Catholic Evangelicals Consultation,” with responses to his paper by Catholic and Baptist theologians. My contribution to that panel, which referred back to the previous year’s homily, is also incorporated into chapter 5.⁷ The final chapter, “Unity as Christ’s Victory and Our Task,” concludes this main portion of the book with a homily I preached for a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Service sponsored by Eastern Area Community Ministries, a local ecumenical partnership of churches in Louisville, Kentucky, on January 22, 2012, inviting readers to join Baptists, Catholics, and the whole church as fellow pilgrims in the quest for the unity for which Jesus prayed.

Engaging the Whole Church

This book also includes two appendices that offer Baptist perspectives on ecumenical engagement with the whole church that includes Baptists and Catholics yet envision somewhat different readerships than the book’s main chapters. Nevertheless, I hope that many readers will find themselves interested in their subjects and read this final section as well. Appendix 1, “Envisioning the Whole Church,” offers a Baptist response to *The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCTCV)* issued by the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order in 2013 as the WCC’s second-ever “convergence text,” a designation given previously to the landmark multilateral ecumenical breakthrough *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982). I was commissioned by the Baptist World Alliance Com-

mission on Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity at its 2018 meeting in Zürich, Switzerland to draft a response to *TCTCV* on behalf of the BWA. I presented it to the BWA commission at its next meeting in Nassau, The Bahamas in 2019, and it was then forwarded to the WCC Commission on Faith and Order as one of the responses from Christian world communions solicited by the Introduction to *TCTCV*; appendix 1 reproduces the text of this response.⁸ Earlier I had been asked by Neville Callam, former General Secretary of the BWA, to present a paper outlining a Baptist perspective on ecclesial moral discernment on behalf of the BWA to the Moral Discernment Working Group of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order in Erfurt, Germany, July 24, 2016 (I did so remotely via Skype). Appendix 2, “Moral Discernment with the Whole Church,” is an adaptation of that presentation and addresses the ethical issues that on the one hand appear to have occasioned further divisions in the church but on the other hand call for each of the churches to draw on the resources of the whole church in their work of moral discernment.⁹

Readers of this book will encounter some repetition in the expression of concepts that have informed my perspectives on my own Baptist tradition, its relation to the whole church, and the ecumenical task. For example, a “pilgrim church” ecclesiology, Alasdair MacIntyre’s characterization of a “living tradition” as a constructively contested one, and the ecumenical paradigm of receptive ecumenism are mentioned and explained more than once, as is the WCC convergence text *TCTCV*, but they are developed specifically in relation to the focus of particular chapters and appendices. I have chosen not to eliminate completely this

repetition and overlap so that each chapter may stand on its own and as a way of highlighting the themes that weave these chapters into the thematic arc of the whole book as outlined above. If repetition is the mother of learning, as goes the old proverb, then hopefully a little of it in this book will advance the end of ecumenical learning.

Within the whole church, Baptists and Catholics might seem to be ecclesiological and liturgical polar opposites. Despite the commonalities and convergences highlighted in this book, these two traditions are arguably more dissimilar from one another than each is from almost any other Christian tradition. But this dissimilarity means that when Baptists and Catholics, through dialogue and other forms of ecumenical encounter, do succeed in drawing closer to one another, others in the whole church can envision their own patterns of faith and practice as included in these convergences. I offer this book in the hope that it will provide inspiration to Baptists, Catholics, and other Christians to travel further together as fellow travelers in the journey toward a visibly united church of Jesus Christ.

Chapter One

From Anti-Catholicism to Fellow Pilgrims

In 2015 I delivered a keynote address for a symposium on the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* held at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska (USA) during the 2014-2015 academic year in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of its promulgation on November 21, 1964. The fact that I as an ordained Baptist minister and professor of theology in a Baptist-related school of divinity was invited to deliver this address at Catholic-related Creighton University is one small piece of concrete evidence that the Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism accomplished something in the life of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church that left a lasting legacy both in the Catholic Church and in the Baptist tradition, for which anti-Catholicism had great historical influence in shaping its identity. This chapter tells the story of how some Baptists have been able to move beyond the anti-Catholicism that kept them from fully appreciating the significance and accomplishment of *Unitatis Redintegratio* at the time and identifies some ways in which both Baptists and Catholics can together live into the decree's promise as fellow pilgrims on the path to the ecumenical future.

Baptists and the Second Vatican Council

Back in 1964, the promulgation of *Unitatis Redintegratio* was an event experienced by Baptists incompletely and indirectly at best. Baptist Press staff writer W. Barry

Garrett, an accredited journalist for the second through fourth sessions of the Council, wrote this in his wrap-up reflections on the adjournment of the third session published on November 25, 1964 by the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC):

After twelve weeks of direct reporting on the council in action at the second and third sessions, this reporter finds it difficult to understand all he knows about what is going on. For those who have not been present it should be even harder to arrive at final conclusions of either approval or disapproval of what is happening.¹⁰

The difficulty many Baptists have had appreciating Vatican II in general and the Decree on Ecumenism in particular is not unlike Thomas the Apostle's difficulty with Jesus' resurrection—both difficulties are attributable not so much to a lack of perception as a lack of presence. Thomas was absent from the earliest post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to the gathered disciples, as were Baptists from the "Brotherhood of St. Longinus," the group of observers officially delegated by Christian world communions, who experienced the Council from the tribunal of St. Longinus in St. Peter's Basilica as well as through personal interactions with the Council Fathers and *periti* during their time in Rome.¹¹ On April 3, 1962, then-Monsignor Johannes Willebrands of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity met in Geneva with the heads of the Christian world communions, including Josef Nordenhaug, the General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). Monsignor Willebrands communicated plans that delegated observers

be included in the Council and asked the general secretaries to explore with their organizations the possibility of sending official observers. On April 25 General Secretary Nordenhaug received a letter from Monsignor Willebrands asking whether the BWA would send an observer if formally invited. Nordenhaug referred the letter to the BWA Executive Committee, which devoted a whole day of its meeting in Oslo, Norway on August 22, 1962 to debate on the matter. The Executive Committee finally decided, "It is not agreed it would be desirable for the Baptist World Alliance to encourage a formal invitation to the forthcoming Second Vatican Council," and voted to exclude the record of the day's debate from the minutes. It is commonly understood that opposition from the SBC, the largest Baptist union and most significant financial contributor to the BWA, was a major factor in this decision, along with opposition from Latin American Baptist unions that had their origins in Southern Baptist missionary work and whose ecclesial identities were largely formed in contrast to the Catholic majority in their context. While anti-Catholicism was involved, opposition to this particular ecumenical opportunity was also part of a larger pattern of resistance to the modern ecumenical movement within part of the global Baptist community.¹²

Thus, the Baptist World Alliance became the only Christian world communion not to send observers, and the global Baptist community lost the opportunity to understand what was happening more fully and even to shape what was happening. According to Yves Congar, "The presence of...observers from the non-Roman Catholic Christian Communions [was] one of the most important elements in the

conciliar situation”;¹³ throughout his *My Journal of the Council* Congar documented their many behind-the-scenes contributions.¹⁴ Anglican bishop John Moorman recalled that Monsignor Willebrands told him, “The presence of observers here is very important. You have no idea how much they are influencing the Council.”¹⁵ A 2014 journal article by Donald Norwood on “The Impact of Non-Roman Catholic Observers at Vatican II” concludes that they “helped the council evolve from what could have been a purely domestic affair and a rubber-stamping exercise. . . into a genuinely ecumenical, deliberative, debating and decision-making council of the worldwide Church.”¹⁶ “On many disputed questions,” Norwood argues, “the presence [of] and conversations with observers tipped the balance, [for example] in the case of what to say and not say about Mary or religious freedom.”¹⁷ The observers in turn played key roles in the post-conciliar reception of the Council by their own communions and beyond. Baptists missed out on the opportunity to have both kinds of influence, on what happened at the Council and on what happened in its aftermath.

Nevertheless, beyond W. Barry Garrett’s journalistic representation, there was a Baptist presence among the *ad personam* guests of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. These included J. H. Jackson, president of the historically black National Baptist Convention, USA;¹⁸ Stanley I. Stuber, a minister from the American Baptist Churches, USA who was then serving as Executive Director of the Missouri Council of Churches; W. Morgan Patterson, professor of church history at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; James Leo Garrett,