

KALLISTOS WARE AND HIS DIALOGICAL APPROACH IN THEOLOGY*

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the notion of dialogue as it was promoted by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. The initial general description of the idea of dialogue and dialogical personalism is followed by the analysis of both theological reflections on dialogue and suggestions for its implementation as put forward by Ware. He is presented as a strong advocate of a dialogue from the positions of both personalist philosophy and Trinitarian theology, putting a special emphasis on love as a foundational principle of the relations. He stressed the importance of love for other people, God, and all living creatures. He argued for the importance of dialogue for the resolution of inter-Orthodox conflicts and was also a fervent supporter of and a participant in ecumenical dialogue. This article analyses his argumentation in favour of dialogue, as well as, at some points, its limits.

Keywords

Kallistos Ware; Dialogue; Personalism; Ecumenical movement; Love

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Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of Diokleia (1934–2022) became one of the most influential Orthodox theologians in Great Britain. Being born Anglican, he was enchanted early on by Eastern Orthodox ascetic spirituality and embraced Orthodoxy in 1957 after a few years of consideration. He interpreted and explained Orthodox

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tradition through the lenses of a modern Western intellectual. Moreover, his openness towards other Christian traditions and broader society contributed to both an ecumenical dialogue in Britain and the attractiveness of Orthodoxy within the Western world.¹ In this article, I would like to analyse his dialogical approach in theology. First, I discuss the idea of dialogue and its philosophical and theological exploitation. Then, I examine Ware's reflections on dialogue and the relational nature of a person in his published works and lectures. This is followed by the analysis of the implementation of dialogue in relations among Christian communities, as suggested by Kallistos Ware.

1. Dialogic Theology and Its Roots

The notion of dialogue is not as obvious as it may seem at first glance. The word 'dialogue' is derived from ancient Greek and most likely comprised of the words *διά* (*diá*, through) and *λόγος* (word, speech). Sometimes, instead of the prefix *διά*, another Greek prefix *δι-* (*di-*, two) is also considered, which leads to 'dialogue' being misinterpreted as a conversation involving only two subjects.² In contemporary English, according to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, the word 'dialogue' has two basic meanings: 1) 'conversation that is written for a book, play, or film'; and 2) 'formal talks between opposing countries, political groups, etc.'³ While other dictionaries suggest more nuanced meanings, they all, in fact, can be summarised as two main notions, 'conversation' and 'negotiation', where the former is information exchange between two or more people, and the latter is an exchange of standpoints between different parties, each presenting their own positions, trying to understand the other's position, and looking for ways to reach a solution acceptable to both sides. With reference to Jürgen Habermas' terminology, it can be stated that the word 'dialogue' can describe both communicative action

¹ For the account of his life, see, Andrew Louth, 'Biographical Sketch,' in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West (Festschrift for Bishop Kallistos [Ware] of Dioklea)* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003); also, an overview of his life and theology by Andrew Louth, 'Metropolitan Kallistos and the theological vision of Philokalia,' in his *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From Philokalia to the Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVanity Press, 2015), 332–48.

² 'Dialogue,' *New World Encyclopedia*, accessed January 14, 2024, <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Dialogue>.

³ 'Dialogue,' in *Cambridge Dictionary*, accessed on January 14, 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dialogue>.

and discourse.⁴ In extrapolating these notions of dialogue to theology, one can easily observe that dialogue as conversation might be applicable to any kind of personal interactions: between a person and God, among members of a community, and among communities themselves, while the notion of dialogue as negotiation could be more readily applicable to relations among confessions and faiths.

However, besides this initial linguistic perspective, the notion of dialogue has its own specifics and history in philosophy and religious thought. Dialogical philosophy and theology imply that to become a true person, one needs to enter into relations with other persons. In general, it was developed in the realm of German philosophical thought. Its origins can be traced either from the traditional Kantian philosophy of cognition or from the personalist movement.

A follower of Immanuel Kant, Johan Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814), for the purposes of accurate cognition, pointed out the difference between I and Not-I, explaining the latter to be a result of self-cognition. This line of thought led Fichte to further differentiations: between I and Things, and between I and Thou, where Thou is another person, but not a thing. In the latter type of relationship, ethics became obligatory. He made this discernment in the framework of differentiation between theoretical and practical philosophy, as he called them. Fichte came to the conclusion that a person could not become a complete personality in isolation and needs for this achievement other persons and, more broadly, society. In turn, a person becomes responsible to society.⁵

Moving in a similar direction, Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–72) asserted that a human being always thinks for others. This means that he or she tries to realise whether his or her thoughts would be understandable / acceptable for others. Apart from realm of the ideas, physicality is also formative for people. Harmonious wholeness can be achieved in the union, both emotional and physical, between a man and a woman. Similarly to Georg Hegel (1770–1831), he articulated the fact that true

⁴ See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 75–95.

⁵ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Principien der Wissenschaftslehre* (Jena and Leipzig: Christian Ernst Gabler, 1798); ‘Vergleichung des vom Herrn Prof. Schmid aufgestellten Systems mit der Wissenschaftslehre, 1795,’ in *Werke*, vol. 2, *Zur theoretischen Philosophie II*, ed. Immanuel Hermann Fichte (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 421–58. doi: 10.1515/9783110881844. Cited from Małgorzata Jantos, *Filozofia dialogu: Źródła, zasady, adaptacje* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo PAN ‘Nauka dla wszystkich’, 1997), 12–14.

connection between people is built by love (as a feeling).⁶ As it becomes obvious, similar ideas lie at the core of the later dialogical movement. So, it can be derived from German Classic philosophy.

The other source of dialogic philosophy is considered to be a personalist movement. As such, personalist philosophy regards a person as the highest form of reality possessing an ultimate value.⁷ The formation of this philosophical stream took its roots as well in the late 18th century in the realm of German Romanticism. Thus, Cyril Hovorun attributes the origins of personalism to Friedrich Schleiermacher, who first introduced the term *der Personalismus* in his work *Über die Religion* in 1799,⁸ while Jan Olof Bengtsson claims that the first employment of personalist ideas without calling them so can be found as early as in the 1780s in the works of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi.⁹ By the beginning of the 20th century, personalism became widely popular in the broad context of Western intellectual culture. Needless to say, it was not a strict and uniform system, but encompassed a broad set of ideas and different internal currents. One of its currents is considered to become a dialogical personalism. It was distinguished by its special emphasis on the idea that to become a true person, one needs to enter into relations with other persons.

The emergence of this dialogical personalism is often connected with interwar Jewish-German religious thought. Thus, its ideas were initially formulated by Hermann Cohen in his work *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*, published posthumously in 1919 and then followed and developed by Franz Rosenzweig (*The Star of Redemption*, 1921), Ferdinand Ebner (*The Word and the Spiritual Realities*, 1921), and, most famously, by Martin Buber (*I and Thou*, 1923). The new element in dialogical thinking, introduced by Martin Buber was the differentiation between relations of I-Thou and I-It, or between important

⁶ See, for example, Ludwig Feuerbach, 'Über den Anfang der Philosophie,' in Ludwig Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, Band 2, 'Philosophische Kritiken und Grundsätze' (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976); Jantos, *Filozofia dialogu: Źródła, zasady, adaptacje*, 18–30.

⁷ Van Harvey, 'Personalism', in *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 184.

⁸ See, Cyril Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology: Chronicles on Church Awareness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 130.

⁹ See, Jan Olof Bengtsson, *The Worldview of Personalism: Origins and Early Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10.

personal relations and all others.¹⁰ In the course of the development of these ideas, two other prominent Jewish thinkers, Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy and Hans Ehrenberg, organized in 1919 the so-called ‘Patmos Circle’, an intellectual group focused on the importance of interpersonal encounter. It was joined by Gabriel Marcel, Eberhard Grisebach, and Friedrich Gogarten among others. In 1926–1930 it published in Berlin its own journal *Die Kreatur*.¹¹ Although this circle is often considered to be the foundation of dialogic personalism, in fact, the latter flourished even earlier or simultaneously in many other settings as well.

One such setting, and notably an earlier one, was the intellectual movement of Slavophiles in the Russian Empire. It is considered to be initially inspired by German Idealism. Trying to criticise the West for its individualism and urbanization, Slavophiles shared dialogic ideas and developed their own notion of *sobornost’* (communality). These can be found in works by Alexei Khomiakov, Ivan Kireevsky, Vladimir Solov’ev, Sergii Bulgakov and others.¹² Moreover, Vladimir Solov’ev wrote in 1892–94 a special brief treatise, called *The Meaning of Love*, where he formulated the idea that relations between a man and a woman are foundational for the spiritual maturity of a person because they help to surmount own selfishness. The ideal goal of love is the creation of a new united personality. Since it is impossible in physical earthly life, sexual love at least helps to improve two personalities. Such and similar ideas would be also characteristic of later manifestations of dialogical personalism.

Nikolai Berdyaev, in his work *Solitude and Society*, published in 1934 in Paris, developed ideas of dialogical personhood, grounding them on both Russian tradition and Martin’s Buber contribution. He, however, went further and articulated the idea that the indispensable feature of any inter-human communication is solitude as relations with other people are never able to lead to the fullest psychological and intellectual

¹⁰ See Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, transl. by Ronald Gregory Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1937), part I, III.

¹¹ McNroy, ‘Karl Barth and personalist philosophy,’ 48–49.

¹² On Slavophiles and their influence on Orthodox theology, see, for example, Andrew Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers: From the Philokalia to the Present* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2015), 6–9, 65–67, 150–52; Parush Parushev, ‘The Slavophiles and Integral Knowledge’, in Ivana Noble, Katerina Bauerova, Tim Noble and Parush Parushev, *Wrestling with the Mind of the Fathers* (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2015): 121–55.

unity and are always limited by one's physical self. He concludes that the ultimate realization of dialogical relations is possible only between human being and God. The innermost desire for intimacy, inherent to every human, is, in fact, a desire for God. So, only religious experience can overcome solitude completely.¹³

All above-mentioned settings, i.e. German Idealist and Russian philosophy, Jewish-German religious thought, represent only some of the intellectual circles, where dialogical personalism was discussed. Simultaneously, it gained growing popularity in Christian theology, especially among its Orthodox wing. Unlike their either Jewish or secular counterparts, Christian thinkers from its very inception felt that the ideas of dialogical personalism could be convincingly justified and expanded within trinitarian, Christological, cosmological and eschatological perspectives. Moreover, many of them arrived at these ideas independently from one another. As a vivid example of this could serve Karl Barth. He was personally acquainted with many of the above-mentioned Jewish dialogical philosophers, and for a long time it was considered that his dialogical approach was inspired by them. However, as Mark J. McInroy proved in his research based on Barth's correspondence and other archival documents, he considered that he independently had come to similar ideas as Martin Buber but from a rather different Christian perspective. Karl Barth explained the need for deep personal relations between people in the light of trinitarian theology and Christology. He explained that Jesus Christ was 'a person for other people' (*der Mensch für die andere Menschen*), so, he lived *only* for others. His driving force was a deepest empathy, mercy for the fallen human beings, which motivated him to enter into relations with them freely and gladly (*gern*). And, of course, the foremost importance had the relations with God, as people were created to be God's allies (*Bundesgenossen*) and only in such a capacity they can fulfil their historical and existential mission.¹⁴ He also criticized Buber for his disregard of the moral responsibility for the dissolution of the relations.¹⁵

¹³ See Nicolas Berdyaev, *Solitude and Society* (London: The Century Press, 1938). First published in Russian under the title *Ya i mir obektov. Opyt filosofii odinochestva i obscheniia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1934).

¹⁴ Karl Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, vol. 3.2, *Die Lehre von der Schöpfung: Das Geschöpf*, § 45 (Zürich: Zollikon, 1948).

¹⁵ See McInroy, 'Karl Barth and personalist philosophy,' 59–60.

Since then, dialogical personalism appeared in the different denominational branches of Christian theology. As Hovorun puts it, together with Eucharistic ecclesiology, it became one of the ‘transconfessional ecclesiological languages,’ employed by each tradition in its own way.¹⁶ In Orthodoxy, this approach was most expressively formulated by Metropolitan John Zizioulas. He accentuated notions of personhood and *koinonia* (communion) as the most important features of the Holy Trinity. So, he gave preference to the communication between the persons of the Holy Trinity to their substantial identity.¹⁷ The idea that the persons of the Holy Trinity relate to each other due to their mutual love and represent the most perfect unity to be followed became particularly beloved by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware as well.

Among other Christian thinkers, who dealt with different kinds of dialogical personalism, there are such Catholic theologians as Hans Urs von Balthasar, Joseph Ratzinger, Jacques Maritain, Jürgen Moltmann, and most recently, Matthias Sharer and Bernd Hilberath; on the Orthodox side, there are also Vladimir Lossky, Dumitru Staniloae, Christos Yannaras and others.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hovorun, *Meta-Ecclesiology*, 26. He also made an account on personalism in modern Greek Orthodox theology on pp. 195–96.

¹⁷ See, John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985); Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2006). For the analysis of Zizioulas’ ideas on personhood see, for example, Louth, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, 214–20; Aristotle Papanikolaou, ‘Personhood and Its Exponents in Twentieth-Century Orthodox Theology,’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology*, ed. Mary B. Cunningham and Elizabeth Theokritoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Pantelis Kalaitzidis, ‘Dialogical Ethos of Trinitarian Theology, East and West: Theological and Political Implications,’ *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 5, no. 2 (2022): 223–51.

¹⁸ See, for example, Hans Urs von Balthasar, ‘On the Concept of Person,’ *Communio* 13 (Spring 1986): 18–26; Jacques Maritain, *Saint Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1942); Jürgen Moltmann, ‘God the Father in the Life of the Holy Trinity,’ *International Journal of Orthodox Theology* 1, no. 1 (2010): 38–48; Matthias Scharer and Bernd Jochen Hilberath, *The Practice of Communicative Theology: Introduction to a New Theological Culture* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008); about personalism in the works of Joseph Ratzinger, see Antonio Panaro, ‘The Personalism of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI,’ *Roczniki Teologiczne* 67, no. 2 (2020): 5–14. doi: 10.18290/rt20672-1; Nikolas Berdyaev, *Solitude and Society* (London: The Centenary Press, 1938); Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clarke, 1957); Dumitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God*, vol. 2, *The World: Creation and Deification* (Brookline, MS: Holy Cross orthodox Press, 2000); finally, Christos Yannaras defended his doctoral thesis in the University of Salonika exactly on this topic (‘The Ontological Content of the Theological Notion of Personhood’).

It is worth mentioning, however, that the theological perspective on dialogue is much less strict than the linguistic one. Its core idea, namely that a human being becomes truly a person only through relations with others, effectively confuses the notions of relations, communication, and dialogue. However, as theoretical as it may seem, the theology of dialogical personalism presupposes a series of implications for the life of Christians and the church. Thus, Pantelis Kalaitzidis describes its consequences as follows: ‘One could further describe dialogue as an inherent dimension of [this] theology, as being an integral part of it. This means that there can be no theology faithful to its Trinitarian ethos without entering into a constant dialogue with its surrounding setting, with realities and areas beyond the scope of the church. [...] Dialogue constitutes the most characteristic expression of the loving and perichoretic ethos, the ultimate testimony of Christian love and reconciliation.’¹⁹ He stressed, however, that genuine dialogue is impossible without metanoia – regret for the loss and lack of the other. And pointed to the interpretation that the very creation of the world by the Holy Trinity was a dialogical or conciliar act.²⁰ So, dialogical theology serves as a basis for the development of dialogical and ecumenical ethos that should be guiding for church’s and individual Christian attitude and behaviour towards the other and the world in general.

Now I will analyse the ideas of dialogical theology present in the works of Metropolitan Kallistos Ware.

2. Kallistos Ware on Theoretical Foundations for a Dialogue

Metropolitan Kallistos was always a strong proponent of dialogue, of engagement in relations aiming to bring parties closer. This concerned at least three dimensions: dialogue with other people, among Christian denominations and different faiths, and between a person and God. To ground his opinion, he drew upon at least three arguments – of a person as a relational being, of Christ’s commandments of unity and of the foundational importance of love. I would like to analyse his arguments one by one, emphasizing their implications.

First, Ware subscribed to a personalist approach in theology. He derived the need for dialogue from the belief that a person is created in

¹⁹ Kalaitzidis, ‘Dialogical Ethos of Trinitarian Theology,’ 234–35.

²⁰ Kalaitzidis, ‘Dialogical Ethos of Trinitarian Theology,’ 235, 225.

the image and likeness of God. On one hand, this means that human beings possess a set of features that distinguish them from animals, who do not share the image of God. In contrast to animals, a human being has the ability to think and to speak, to feel wonder and to pray to God. Further, a person has a strong need to have relations with other people. To support this idea, Ware mentioned: ‘We are also a “political” animal, created by God to live in the organized community or *polis*. We are, that is to say, a dialogic and a relational animal that becomes truly itself when it embarks on interchange with other relational animals.’²¹ To this point, Ware also referred to Scottish philosopher John MacMurray, who developed the idea that personhood is relational.²²

On the other hand, the image and likeness of God also means that a human being is the reflection of God, Who is revealed to us as a person and love at the same time.²³ Experience of God as a person denies the suggestion that God can be an abstract phenomenon, the assumption made by nominalists. Regarding love, Ware was an adherent of the view of God the Holy Trinity as a God of mutual and shared love. The teaching about the unity of three hypostases of the Holy Trinity lay at the heart of his set of ideas about the relational nature of human beings. Ware often mentioned this in his various works, however, he made the most comprehensive analysis of this issue in his article ‘The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity’.²⁴

The classical explanation of the unity within the Holy Trinity of early centuries, as formulated in the Nicene Creed, was based on the categories of Aristotelian logics, that is differentiation between the essence and particularities, where essence was divinity and particularities were hypostases of the Holy Trinity. That is why, the foundational term there was *homoousious*, or ‘consubstantial’ that showed that the hypostases of the Holy Trinity shared the same divine substance and were effectively the one God. It is important to accentuate here, that every

²¹ Kallistos Ware, ‘Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,’ *Sobornost* 38, no. 1 (2016): 9.

²² Kallistos Ware, ‘What Can Evangelicals and Orthodox Learn From One Another?’, a lecture delivered at North Park University in Chicago in February of 2011, *Ancient Faith Ministries*, February 25, 2011, https://www.ancientfaith.com/specials/kallistos_lectures/what_can_evangelicals_and_orthodox_learn_from_one_another.

²³ Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1986), 19.

²⁴ See Kallistos Ware, ‘The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity,’ *Sobornost* 8, no. 2 (1986): 6–21.

teaching about the Holy Trinity leaves space for the apophatic element because no human explanations are able to clearly and exhaustively reveal her divine mystery. To emphasize this, Ware reminded us that ‘all, then, that is implied in our limited understanding of a human person and of human love, this we affirm also of God the Trinity, while adding that in him these things mean infinitely more than we can ever imagine’.²⁵ However, as shown in the abovementioned article, even at this early stage, somewhat different understandings already existed. Namely, the Cappadocian Fathers, St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa articulated that the unity of the triune God is based on communion (*koinonia*) of the *hypostases*, which implies internal relationality or communication. St Augustine tried to express the mystery of the Holy Trinity with various comparisons, once more unipersonal as of different faculties of the human mind (memory, understanding and will), which led to a more wholistic interpretation as of one God with *hypostases* as his different properties, other time more interpersonal, describing the Holy Trinity as one, Who love (Father), other, Who is loved (Son), and love (Holy Spirit) between them. Kallistos pointed out that this approach might somehow hint at the Filioque, although Augustine himself was not a proponent of it, and depersonalizes the Holy Spirit, as love itself is not a person unlike those, who love and beloved one. However, Ware found Augustine’s approach very insightful as it clearly highlighted the relations of love within the Godhead.²⁶ The most important thing is that all later interpretations, which assert that the unity within the Holy Trinity is ensured by the mutual love of the Three Persons and their mutual indwelling, are derived from a solid theological foundation – the Gospel of John, which repeatedly articulates that God is love and that the relationship between the Father and the Son is, in fact, a relationship of love and *perichoresis*, or existing within each other.

Exactly this interpretation of the unity within the Holy Trinity was brought to the fore in twentieth-century theology. However, Ware based his argumentation in favour of this approach on strict historical and theological research, not just on popular theological trends. He investigated further into the history of Christian dogma and focused

²⁵ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 33.

²⁶ Kallistos Ware, ‘The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity,’ *Sobornost* 8, no. 2 (1986): 8–9.

attention on 12th-century Scottish theologian Richard of St Victor, who, in his treatise *De Trinitate*, interpreted the Holy Trinity as both mutual and shared love.²⁷ In his own theology, Ware favoured precisely this approach. In his book *The Orthodox Way*, he stated:

There is in God genuine diversity as well as true unity. The Christian God is not just a unit, but a union, not just unity, but community. There is in God something analogous to ‘society’. He is not a single person, loving himself alone, not a self-contained monad or ‘The One’. He is triunity: three equal persons, each one dwelling in the other two by virtue of an unceasing movement of mutual love.²⁸

Such an understanding of the Holy Trinity, however, implies that to become a true person in the image of God, a human being also needs to love others. And these others refer not only to other people but to God and all living creatures as well. Thus, in an interview about the relations between religion, science and technology, Ware pointed out the difference between people and machines: ‘Through loving other humans, through loving the animals, and loving God, we become ourselves, we become truly human. Without love we are not human. [...] You may love your computer but your computer does not love you.’²⁹

According to Ware, relations built on love help humans achieve at least three goals: to know the truth about another person, to gain proof of God’s existence, and to acquire deification. While hatred distorts someone’s worldview and leads to false conclusions, love becomes a key to a mutual understanding: ‘To know a person is far more than to know facts about that person. To know a person is essentially to love him or her; there can be no true awareness of other persons without mutual love. We do not have any genuine knowledge about those whom we hate.’³⁰ Love causes a need for communication or dialogue. In the article ‘Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes’, Ware referred to the story from the life of St Macarius of Egypt, who had a conversation with the skull of the dead pagan priest of idols.

²⁷ See Ware, ‘The Human Person as an Icon of the Trinity,’ 9–11.

²⁸ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 31.

²⁹ Kallistos Ware, *Religion, Science & Technology: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*, interview by MG Michael and Katina Michael (Wollongong, Australia: University of Wollongong, 2017), 26.

³⁰ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 20.

According to the story, the skull confessed to Macarius that he was suffering in hell but the saint's prayer gave him and his fellow priests respite. It turned out that the respite for those prisoners in hell was at least to see each other's faces. This became possible due to Macarius' prayers; otherwise, they are bound to one another back to back. Here Ware concludes that 'such is the essence of hell: not to be able to see the face of the other, not to be able to relate, not to be able to love',⁵¹ and continues that 'as the antithesis of hell, heaven is precisely communication, relationship, mutual love. And so, by engaging in dialogue, we set foot upon the path that leads away from hell, bringing us to heaven's gate.'⁵² Finally, he brings together both arguments for dialogue, personalism and following the image of the Holy Trinity, by stating:

Una persona, nulla persona: one person, isolated, cut off from others, refusing relationship and dialogue, is not a genuine person after the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity. The same point is plainly underlined in the word for 'person' in the Greek language: *prosopon* signifies literally 'face' or 'countenance'. I am not truly a person unless I 'face' other persons, looking into their eyes and allowing them to look into mine.⁵³

However, love gives rise not only to the relations of dialogue but to faith in God, as well. Ware considered three ways for a person to become aware of God's existence: by observing the created world and its harmony; by thinking over one's inner psychological life and wondering at the existence of consciousness; and by reflecting on relations of love. Regarding the latter, Ware explained: 'To say to another, with all our heart, "I love you", is to say, "You will never die"'. At such moments of personal sharing we know, not through arguments but by immediate conviction, that there is life beyond death. So it is that in our relations with others, [...] we have moments of transcendence, pointing to something that lies beyond.'⁵⁴ Thus, the interdependence between faith, the relations of love and the search for dialogue can be easily traced. On the one hand, the bonds of love with other people allow a person to realize the existence of God, to experience transcendence. On the other hand, as the Holy Trinity is the unity of Loving Persons, a Christian should

⁵¹ Ware, 'Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,' 9.

⁵² Ware, 'Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,' 10.

⁵³ Ware, 'Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,' 10.

⁵⁴ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 26.

follow its example and engage in relations of love and dialogue with other people.

Finally, the relations of love between a human being and God should bring a person as close as possible to the mystical life of the Holy Trinity, to facilitate the person's fullest participation in divine energies.⁵⁵ This fact emphasizes the next important dimension of communication that makes a person become a true human being: their relations with God. According to Ware, to become a true human being, it is not enough to have bonds only with other human beings; the relationship with God is no less important:

Most fundamentally of all, the image [of God] means that we humans have God-awareness, the possibility to relate to God, to enter into communion with him through prayer. And this to me is the basic meaning of the image, that we humans are created to relate to God. This is a direction, an orientation in our humanness. We are not simply autonomous. The human being considered without any relationship with God is not truly human. [...] We are created to live in fellowship and in communion with God the Creator. [...] Only then will you understand what is to be human.⁵⁶

According to Ware, dialogue as a conversation with God should be a part of a Christian's spiritual life. Such dialogue manifests itself in two ways – through reading the Bible and through receiving the answer to one's prayers. The Bible brings a person to a mystical place where he or she can meet God: 'As a book uniquely inspired by God and addressed to each of the faithful personally, the Bible possesses sacramental power, transmitting grace to the reader, bringing him to a point of meeting and decisive encounter.'⁵⁷ Moreover, as the Word that comes from God to people, it initiates real dialogue between God and a human being, thus counterbalancing prayer that comes from a person to God. To this point, Ware quotes St Tikhon of Zadonsk: 'Whenever you read the Gospel, Christ himself is speaking to you. And while you read, you are praying and talking with him.'⁵⁸

Finally, it remains to remember Christ's commandment for the unity of Christians, which is often used to promote the ecumenical

⁵⁵ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 34

⁵⁶ Ware, *Religion, Science & Technology*, 13

⁵⁷ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 149.

⁵⁸ Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 148.

movement. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware is no exception. He emphasized the heavy psychological atmosphere of the Last Supper, which Christ knew to be his last moments before enduring suffering. However, He bestowed upon us the call for unity. So seriously this call should be taken by Christians. 'If, then, we engage in [ecumenical] dialogue, it is because we seek to co-operate in the fulfilment of Christ's High Priestly Prayer,'⁵⁹ – concludes Ware.

To sum up, Ware supported and developed the idea that dialogue is crucial for a person to become a true human being. He grounded his idea both on personalist philosophy and the religious belief that a human being was created by God according to His image and likeness. He stressed that a person needs to engage in relations with both other people and God. However, the core of every deep relationship is based on love, which creates unity, opens the horizons of true knowledge about the other, and, in fact, makes a person truly human.

3. Kallistos Ware on the Practical Implementation of Dialogue

Apart from theoretical reflections on the foundations of dialogue and its importance for a Christian, Ware expressed opinions regarding the practical use of dialogue in both inter-Orthodox relations and in the ecumenical movement. In this section, I would like to analyze both of these spheres.

Despite the alleged unity of the Orthodox church, in reality, inter-Orthodox relations have long been polarized due to numerous conflicts over the jurisdiction of particular territories and claims of exercising pan-Orthodox power. While the See of Constantinople openly pursued claims to be the first among equals, with concrete legal consequences, its opponent, the Moscow Patriarchate, has promoted the agenda of pan-Orthodox consensus, exploiting latent and often illegal methods of putting pressure on lesser patriarchates and thus gaining a majority of voices in pan-Orthodox gatherings. Moreover, as it appears from leaked secret documents from the Soviet era, and as it is quite obvious from the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate, at least from the late 1920s, has become an instrument of the Russian

⁵⁹ Ware, 'Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,' 9.

state in achieving its political goals.⁴⁰ However, the facts that have become widely apparent in the recent war in Eastern Europe were not so clear to outside observers for decades. Moreover, while it is now easy to blame the Moscow Patriarchate, the Ecumenical one may also be subject to critique. It is worth noting that its claims for a specific kind of primacy are not universally and unreservedly accepted in the global Orthodox community because its canonical argumentation is sometimes inaccurate; canons considered the concrete historical context that existed centuries before but was different from the contemporary one. The state of pan-Orthodox unity, moreover, is weakened by smaller local conflicts between neighbouring patriarchates, such as the confrontation between Jerusalem and Antioch over the community in Qatar.

Thus, inter-Orthodox unity can hardly be described as a reality, but rather as a goal to achieve. Metropolitan Kallistos lived in concrete historical circumstances and articulated ideas that, in his opinion, could be helpful for maintaining visible unity. First, he considered dialogue and mutual consultations as preconditions for unity. In his article dedicated to the so-called Estonian crisis – a break in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate declared by the Moscow Patriarchate on 23 February 1996 in response to the former's granting autonomy to the Church in Estonia, Ware lamented the lack of mutual consultations between the Ecumenical and Moscow Patriarchates regarding this issue throughout the entire 20th century.⁴¹ Mutual attentiveness and dialogue, to his mind, would be able to prevent aggravation. He strongly condemned excommunication as a method of settling disagreements. However, in a manner untypical of Orthodox ecclesiology, he expressed scepticism about the possibility of pan-Orthodox gatherings to resolve similar conflicts and suggested establishing some kind of authoritative primacy within the global Orthodoxy:

It is easy to say that the Eucharist creates the unity of the church. But does not eucharistic ecclesiology prove in practice unworkable unless it is

⁴⁰ For the leaks concerning KGB interference in the life of the church see, for example, Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Regarding the further exploitation of the church by the Russian Federation since 1990s, see Marcel H. Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine* (London; Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

⁴¹ Kallistos Ware, 'The Estonian Crisis: A Salutory Warning?', *Sobornost* 18, no. 2 (1996): 59–63.

accompanied by a firm and viable doctrine of primacy? Of course, I'm not suggesting that we Orthodox should accept the ultramontane understanding of papal primacy, as endorsed in 1870 by the first Vatican Council. But even if we dislike Vatican I, do not we Orthodox need to articulate some alternative form of primatial authority?

When a new, and to some extent similar, crisis occurred in 2018 over Ukraine, Ware expressed the opinion that a pan-Orthodox meeting of the primates and pan-Orthodox discussion should have taken place. He criticized Patriarch Bartholomew's aim to render ecclesial independence to the Ukrainian church and the unilateral break in communion declared by Patriarch Kirill.⁴² On one hand, as mentioned above, Ware always regarded dialogue and mutual respect as essential in maintaining unity. On the other hand, compared to Estonia, he was more critical of Patriarch Bartholomew in the Ukrainian case. This can be explained by the widespread, although controversial, opinion that ordinations were invalid in the unrecognized Ukrainian churches, but even more so by Metropolitan Kallistos' deep personal involvement in narratives of Russian emigration to the West.⁴³ So, it seems that in the theoretical confrontation between Russia and Ukraine that existed before the 2022 aggression he somehow sympathized with Russia, considering it to be a great Christian state. That is why, perhaps, in the Ukrainian church crisis of 2018, he abandoned the above-mentioned idea of primatial authority and advocated a more dialogic and democratic approach, which could have favoured Russian claims.

As for ecumenical relations, Ware was strongly in favour of *inter-Christian* dialogue. He emphasized that dialogue with other Christians is important both due to the dialogical nature of a person and for the sake of fulfilling Christ's commandment for unity. As he stated:

⁴² Ware, 'Church Should Always Preserve Its Inner Freedom'.

⁴³ Before we was accepted to the Orthodox Church, he developed numerous Orthodox contacts in Oxford, mainly among Russian emigrants: Prof. Nikolai Zernov and his wife, Militza; Prof. Dmitiry Obolensky and his wife Elizabeth; Prof. Nadejda Gorodetsky; the priest of the Russian parish in Oxford, Archimandrite Nicolas Gibbs and his then assistant, priest and future Archbishop Vasily Krivoshein; finally in 1957, he met Mother Elizabeth (Ampenov), the abbess of the woman's community in London, who motivated him to make a final step towards Orthodoxy.

Dialogue is not a luxury or an optional extra. It is integral to our personhood. [...] The dialogues, then, in which as Churches we are involved – between Orthodox and Catholics, for example, or between Orthodox and Anglicans – are not something peripheral, of interest only to a theological elite, but they are matter of direct concern to every one of us as Christians and as human beings.⁴⁴

As a convert from Western Christian tradition, Ware never considered those Christians, who are not Orthodox, to be devoid of God's grace. He only insists that Orthodoxy possesses the fullness of it. Moreover, he believed that 'it may be that in His mercy He will grant salvation to many people who in this present life have never been visibly members of any church community.'⁴⁵ He emphasized that Orthodox and other Christians share a common belief in many articles of faith: in the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ and his mission of salvation, the authority of the Bible, the main sacraments and so forth. But to achieve full unity, it is important to know each other first.⁴⁶

According to Ware, dialogue is also useful because Christians may incorporate the good practices they learn from other traditions into their own. For example, in a lecture at an Evangelical-Orthodox meeting, he stressed that Orthodoxy might be enriched by the achievements of Evangelicals: a conscious and personal approach to faith and strong practical engagement in charity.⁴⁷ In this regard, his thoughts correspond to the idea of *receptive ecumenism* – formulated in the early 2000s by Durham University Professor Paul Murray and since then gathering popularity across Britain – that ecumenical talks should start by recognizing the positive achievements of other traditions and introducing them into one's own tradition.⁴⁸

However, ecumenical dialogue has its limits. Ware believed in a dialogue of truth not of compromise.⁴⁹ He often stressed the official posi-

⁴⁴ Ware, 'Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Obstacles and Hopes,' 11.

⁴⁵ Kallistos Ware, *How are we Saved? The Understanding of Salvation in the Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Light & Life Publishing, 1996), 72.

⁴⁶ Ware, 'What Can Evangelicals and Orthodox Learn From One Another?'

⁴⁷ Ware, 'What Can Evangelicals and Orthodox Learn From One Another?'

⁴⁸ About receptive ecumenism, see, for example, 'Publications and Resources on Receptive Ecumenism,' Durham University, accessed January 14, 2024, <https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/catholic-studies/research/constructive-catholic-theology-/receptive-ecumenism-/resources-and-publications/>.

⁴⁹ For his engagement with Evangelicalism, see Bradley Nassif, 'Kallistos Ware: Theologian Who Explained the Orthodox Way to Other Christians,' *Christianity Today*,

tion of the Orthodox Church that community in sacraments might come only after agreement in matters of faith. Still, he also clarified that ‘there is a vital distinction between Tradition and traditions, between the essential faith and theological opinions. We seek unity in faith, not in opinions and customs.’⁵⁰ Furthermore, while deliberating on the Estonian crisis, he expressed regret about the absence of communion between the Orthodox and other Christian traditions: ‘It [Estonian crisis] has led many of us Orthodox to reflect, as we had not done before, on the profound sorrow that we cause to other Christians when we insist that, for reasons of theological principle, intercommunion with them is not possible.’⁵¹

It is also worth noting that Metropolitan Kallistos was an active participant in ecumenical dialogue, in particular, with the Anglican Church. He gave numerous lectures at joint theological conferences and research centres, was a member of the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius and the co-editor of its periodical *Sobornost*. Concerning official dialogue, Ware was a delegate to the international Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue from 1973 to 1984 and its Orthodox Co-Chair from 2009 until 2016. In 2017, he was awarded the Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.⁵²

To sum up, Ware advocated dialogue in the relations among church communities. In the internal Orthodox milieu, he emphasized the importance of mutual consultations and conciliar gatherings on the inter-Orthodox level. However, he also indicated the beneficial role of primatial authority if this happened to appear within Orthodoxy. As for ecumenical dialogue, Ware emphasized that Christians are not only divided but also share many common beliefs. Following Christ’s commandment, it is important to seek full unity. This search should start from knowing each other, learning from one another, and be followed by an agreement on the essential matters of faith.

August 24, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/august-web-only/kallistos-ware-died-orthodox-church-way-evangelical-dialogue.html>.

⁵⁰ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to Eastern Christianity*, 3rd revised ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 306–10.

⁵¹ Ware, ‘The Estonian Crisis,’ 64.

⁵² ‘The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Awards: Citations in Alphabetical Order,’ *Archbishop of Canterbury*, 9 June 2017, <https://bit.ly/3pIMxIX>.

Conclusion

Being grounded in both Western and Eastern intellectual culture, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware effectively built bridges within divided Christianity. Following the ideas of personalist philosophy, he interpreted the notion of a person as a relational being within Orthodox tradition by engaging in Trinitarian theology. This included a special emphasis on dialogue and love for the broadly perceived other as the foundational principle for the formation of true humanity. At the same time, he not only reflected on but also lived a life of dialogue being actively engaged in the relations between Orthodox and other Christian traditions. He advocated for some kind of authoritative primacy within the global Orthodoxy, which in ideal should complement conciliarity and correct its shortcomings. Regarding the inter-Christian dialogue, he opted for closer acquaintance, cooperation and borrowing of useful practices. However, in matters of institutional dialogue, he warned on the importance of agreement in essential issues of belief. Nevertheless, he expressed hope for a possible intercommunion.

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