

Johannes Oeldemann, Friederike Nüssel, Uwe Swarat und Athanasios Vletsis (Hrsg.)

Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung. Sämtliche Berichte und Konsenstexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene. Bd. 4. 2001-2010. (Documents of growing agreement. All reports and consensus documents. Vol. 4. 2001-2010), Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2012, 1357 pp.

This fourth volume of the “documents of growing agreement” – by now indispensable for ecumenical theology – presents the results of the ecumenical dialogues of 2001-2010 on a global perspective: documents, reports and common declarations. While it contains fewer documents than the earlier volumes, it is more extensive due to the length of some texts. This represents a commitment to in-depth studies of the different subjects and gives testimony to the difficulties of the problems discussed. Since some bilateral dialogues have a long tradition whereas others started just a few years ago (like the dialogues between Anglicanism and Baptism, Mennonites and Roman-Catholics or Oriental-Orthodox and Roman-Catholics), the published documents differ greatly in content and method. While some texts draw on the results of decades of dialogue, others are dealing with a first common approach to fundamental theological questions and yet others concentrate on the history of separation. Naturally, many discuss ecclesiological topics but questions of Christology, Mariology, evangelisation etc. are also dealt with.

As in the first three volumes, the documents are organized in four parts – but not with a part reserved for the dialogues with participation of the Roman Catholic Church. Instead, the first and by far longest part consists of the documents of bilateral dialogue commissions, e.g. the dialogue between the Old Catholic and the Roman Catholic Church, several dialogues with participation of the Anglicans, Lutherans or Roman-Catholics but also the dialogue between the Organisation of African Instituted Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The second part presents nine declarations between church leaders, six of them common declarations of Pope John Paul II. and Pope Benedict XVI., respectively, and Orthodox Patriarchs or Archbishops. The third part – documents of the World Council of Churches – contains the Eighth Report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches from 1999-2005 with five appendices. Finally, the last part is dedicated to declarations of church fellowship, in this case the full mutual recognition of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Middle East and North Africa. With this huge amount of material, this volume shows the commitment of the different churches to the ecumenical movement and the importance of theological dialogue for church fellowship. It can thus be regarded as an essential tool not only for the study of ecumenical theology but also for the reception of the ecumenical dialogue.

(Thomas Fornet-Ponse)