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## THEOLOGICAL FOCUS

### Editor's note

In light of the fact that the Christian world is commemorating the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's Reformation in 2017 it seems appropriate to have a closer look at the Roman Catholic Church. Has the Roman Catholic Church really changed since the second Vatican Council, as some claim? Are the concerns the Protestant Reformers have raised about the Pope and the Roman Catholic faith still valid? Or have they become superfluous in the current ecumenical *Zeitgeist*? Is the Roman Catholic Church today closer to the New Testament ideal of early Christianity than it was during the Middle Ages and the time of Luther's Reformation? This article by Hans Heinz provides an insightful overview of the Roman Catholic Church and some of its cardinal teachings and shows where it has changed or remained unchanged over the centuries. While this article does not cover some of the most recent developments, its conclusions remain valid. Perhaps a later article can provide an update on more recent developments within the Roman Catholic Church since Benedict XVI. Hans Heinz taught Church History and Theology for many decades in Austria and Germany and is the author of several books.

# Roman Catholicism Continuity and Change

By Hans Heinz

**I**n terms of numbers the Roman Catholic Church is the largest Christian church in today's world. For a long time it had a say in the political history of Europe, and even today it is still an extraordinarily significant factor in many cultures. In this current age, characterized by ecumenism, it endeavors to be the voice for all Christians—even for all religions. In the contest with the modern spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*) it sides with the traditional values of Jewish-Christian ethics.

The center of the Roman Catholic world church, the Papal State, though geographically only a tiny entity today, is still considered to be a “world power” as measured by its influence.<sup>1</sup> Ostensibly small, the Vatican state constitutes an important “empire of this world.”

### Biblical or Historical Heritage?

Although the Catholic Church can look back on a long and varied history, it is not quite as old as Christi-

anity, having only developed into a papal church in late antiquity.<sup>2</sup> In many ways, it no longer resembles the ancient Catholic Church of the second to fourth century, and resembles even less the early Christian communities in the apostolic time. According to the judgment of one of its prominent pre-conciliar theologians, Roman Catholicism represents an attempt to adopt elements from many religions and cultures and to Christianize them. In this sense, “Catholicism is not simply identical with early Christianity,”<sup>3</sup> but it is open for a synthesis of elements from Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shintoism.<sup>4</sup> For that reason the religious studies scholar Friedrich Heiler (1892–1967), who converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism, describes the nature of Catholicism as “complexion oppositorium,”<sup>5</sup> a union of extremes, where basic biblical elements seem to be joined with ecclesiastical traditions (hierarchical structures, sacramental thinking, Mariology) developed later.

Today's Roman Catholicism is also different from the late medieval church, a church whose life and teaching Martin Luther wanted to reform. Through the rejection of the Reformation at the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, and through the introduction of doctrines such as Mary's immaculate conception (1854) and bodily assumption into heaven (1950), and the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope in the proclamation of a dogma when he speaks *ex cathedra* (1870), the Roman Catholic Church has developed into a church unlike that known by Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

Christian belief that is founded exclusively on the Bible will always compare historical developments with the biblical norm and evaluate everything by that norm,<sup>6</sup> in accordance with the principle *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church needs continual reform). The Roman Catholic faith, however, simply equates all historical doctrinal developments with the will of God.<sup>7</sup> The Catholic Church teaches that however the teaching and the cult of the church developed, God desired it to be so.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Post-Tridentine Church (Sixteenth to Twentieth Century)**

Following the rejection of the Reformation and the implementation of various internal church reforms, such as the prohibition of preachers of indulgences, the reform of mendicant orders, and the residency obligation of bishops, the Roman Catholic Church after the Council of Trent developed: it was called a "new planting of Catholicism" (Leopold von Ranke). With its militant character, as seen in the establishment of the Jesuit order and the renewal of the inquisition, it succeeded in halting the expansion of the Reformation in Europe. The Catholic world rallied around the renewed papacy and submitted itself to the rigid control of Rome, which was newly evident in the standardization of doctrine (Catechismus Romanus), the introduction of the index of forbidden books, and the refusal of the imperial wishes of the lay chalice and clerical marriage.

Those measures lent the post-Tridentine church that often quoted "monolithic character" with which it could prevail against the pluralistic nature of Protestantism and the free spirit of the Enlightenment. Only with the "aggiornamento," the church's modernization of itself, and with the "aperturismo," the opening to the world at the second Vatican council (1962–1965), did this period come to an end.

Though reinvigorated at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), Catholicism has paid a high price for its continued self-assertion and doctrinal coherence. It is post-Tridentine Catholicism that Ellen G. White had in mind and which she placed in the center of her critique in the writing of *The Great Controversy* in the nineteenth century.

In its defense against Protestantism, post-Tridentine Catholicism was not able to escape its medieval character of intolerance. The Counter-Reformation tried to enforce its views by means of war, such as the

French Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years' War, as well as through expulsions, including the forced emigration of the Waldenses to Switzerland in the seventeenth century and the displacement of the Evangelicals of Salzburg in the eighteenth century and the Evangelicals of the Zillertal in the nineteenth century. The post-Tridentine church acted totally in accordance with the views of Thomas Aquinas, the great scholastic of the thirteenth century, who believed firmly that "heretics could not only be excommunicated but could also justly be killed."<sup>9</sup>

Admittedly, voices raised in defense of freedom of conscience and religion during that time were also rare in Protestantism, but they did include such voices as those of Roger Williams in North America in the seventeenth century and John Locke in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such defenses of religious freedoms were, however, rejected with great indignation by the Roman Church. Even into the nineteenth century, Pope Gregory XVI referred to freedom of conscience as "madness" and "pestilential fallacy." The "freedom to err" was aggressively and severely condemned as "perdition of state and church."<sup>10</sup> The pope appealed to the church father Augustine (fourth to fifth century) to show that such a condemnatory attitude was in harmony with good Catholic tradition.

Intellectual ideas of the modern era, including the notions of democracy, popular government and socialism, were rebuffed with similar asperity as a "pestilential sickness" and a "deadly scourge of the human society" by Pope Leo XIII.<sup>11</sup> The modern demand for separation of church and state was unequivocally condemned by such popes as Pius IX<sup>12</sup> and Pius X. The latter viewed this claim as a "highly corruptible principle."<sup>13</sup> Some liberal ideas, including the historical-critical approach toward the Bible and the views of modern scientific scholarship, had entered Catholic thinking at the turn of the twentieth century through the influence of neo-Protestant theologians. However, they came under scrutiny in the so-called "Modernist dispute" and were decisively rejected. In 1910 Pius X required every Roman Catholic clergyman to take the so-called "Oath against Modernism," which was in force until 1967, two years after the Second Vatican Council.

In such a spiritual climate any form of ecumenical dialogue was obviously impossible. The Counter-Reformation's ban<sup>14</sup> against the followers of Huss, Wyclif, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the Anabaptists, who were lumped together in the same category as pirates and robbers, was upheld and did not change until the twentieth century. As late as 1910 Pius X denounced Protestantism as the "first step to Atheism and to the destruction of religion." The Reformers were castigated as "arrogant and rebellious people," and were even called "enemies of the cross of Christ," "whose God is their belly."<sup>15</sup>

The ecumenical movement,<sup>16</sup> which began within Protestantism at the beginning of the twentieth century, invited the participation of the Catholic Church, but Rome's reply was an exhortation to "return into the bosom of the Roman Church" (Pope Benedict XV),<sup>17</sup> and a confession that the "unification

of Christianity cannot be fostered in any other way than by encouraging the return of dissenting believers to the one true church of Christ, from which formerly they have unfortunately apostatized” (Pope Pius XI).<sup>18</sup> Rome’s basic condition remained the acknowledgment of the Marian dogmas and the acceptance of papal infallibility. Hence both Pius XI and Pius XII explicitly prohibited Catholics to take part in extra-Catholic ecumenical conferences.

At the same time that Rome steadfastly refused all ecumenical overtures, it strove to surround itself with an increasing aura of infallibility. While the papacy could no longer rule the political world as in medieval times, at least the religious world was supposed to submit to its infallibility. Views such as the Immaculate Conception (sinlessness) of Mary and her bodily assumption into heaven had been disputed for centuries, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they were autocratically elevated to the status of dogmas apart from any decision of a council. Although no biblical evidences or clear testimony from tradition could be invoked in support of either doctrine, Rome’s decision to promulgate these dogmas anyway were consistent with its claim to personify in itself both the Word of God and tradition.<sup>19</sup>

Then, in 1870, a high point of this arrogance was reached in the proclamation of the dogma of the pope’s infallibility in questions of faith and morals.<sup>20</sup> According to Vatican I, the pope has primacy of jurisdiction over both the entire church<sup>21</sup> and the world.<sup>22</sup> That this could refer just to an honorary primacy is explicitly repudiated.<sup>23</sup> As the “representative of Christ,” the pope not only claims to be the bishop of Rome but also claims to be lifted above all others as the “head of the church” and the “father and teacher of all Christians.”<sup>24</sup> Thus he is also above the councils, whose decisions are only valid through his approbation.<sup>25</sup> This dogma is considered to be a “teaching of the Catholic truth,” and its acceptance is necessary for salvation, for “no one can deviate from it without harm to his faith and salvation.”<sup>26</sup> If anyone does so, he is to be condemned with an “anathema.”<sup>27</sup>

The notion of papal infallibility, which until 1870 had been dismissed by the Catholic Church as a despicable Protestant insinuation, and which had been hotly debated in Catholic theology itself for centuries, now had to be accepted as definitive “truth,” as if it had been proclaimed by Christ and the apostles themselves. The “new dogmas” concerning Mary and papal infallibility were now regarded as having been “transmitted unscathed” from Scripture and tradition as well as “invincibly preserved”<sup>28</sup> and hence also “unchangeable”<sup>29</sup>—and all this despite the fact that they developed almost two thousand years after the biblical period.

From then on, to be Catholic meant more than ever not only to accept one or the other point of belief as ecclesiastically justified, but above all to be subject to the magisterium, whether or not it was speaking *ex cathedra*.<sup>30</sup>

With Pius XII (1939–1958), this period of the

post-Tridentine church came to an end, but not so its way of thinking, as even Vatican II and the time afterwards have proved. The reign of this pope can be described as the climax of Roman centralism, a centralism that still is alive and continues to be active. Currently Pius XII appears to be the last pope who attempted to rigidly instruct the world, to even boss it around,<sup>31</sup> and to set close boundaries to the sprouting ecumenical movement as well as to the modern Catholic theology (1950, encyclical *Humani generis*).<sup>32</sup>

### The “New Pentecost”—Second Vatican Council

The effort toward the opening of the Catholic Church to the modern world and to the rest of Christianity (“aperturismo”) came as a surprise in the middle of the twentieth century. It happened with John XXIII, the “pope of mercy” and successor of Pius XII. Although he reigned only little more than four years (1958–1963) and was rated by many as merely a transitional pope, his pontificate was one of the most important ones in modern times.

In his personal attitude this pope still was very conservative (he elevated the counter-reformer Lawrence of Brindisi to be a Doctor of the Church, warned against the writings of the Jesuit Evolutionist Teilhard de Chardin, and refused to dispense with the requirement of celibacy). However, his leadership was nevertheless geared towards renewal, towards the “aggiornamento”—or “bringing up to date”—of the church. The world and other Christians, the “separated brethren,” should no longer be approached in a spirit of resistance and rejection but be won in a spirit of love.

In this sense, the Second Vatican Council he summoned in 1959 (which lasted from 1962 to 1965 and was welcomed by many as a “new Pentecost”) was first regarded as a union council, an assembly focused on “the search for unity.”<sup>33</sup> A “mirabile spectaculum,” a magnificent spectacle of “truth, unity, and love,” should attract the “separated brethren” to return to the “one fold.”<sup>34</sup>

John XXIII’s intention in the council was not to speak *ex cathedra* or to develop new doctrines and condemnations, but rather to explain Roman Catholic teaching in a contemporary manner. Soon, however, it became apparent that the goal of a union council was set too high and hence Vatican II was transformed into a reform and pastoral council, a “council of the church about the church.”<sup>35</sup> It came to include doctrinal decisions on liturgy such as the introduction of the comprehensive use of vernacular languages in church services<sup>36</sup> and the celebration of the mass with church members,<sup>37</sup> and it also included decisions on the Bible movement and ecumenism, all of which were seen as “signs of the times.”<sup>38</sup> These decisions revealed a somewhat different face of the church than that which had been known hitherto. In its support of reading the Bible and in speaking vernacular languages during the liturgy, Catholicism became more “Evangelical/Protestant.” At the same time, however, the council magnified the church by declaring that the church is

necessary for salvation<sup>39</sup> and by comparing the church with Christ.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it also became more “Roman” in this respect.

The majority of the council fathers recognized the necessity of a church that was more down-to-earth, more tolerant, and more ready to engage in dialogue. Centuries after religious liberty had been granted in the American colonies of Rhode Island (1636) and Maryland (1649), and after the battle of the European Enlightenment (seventeenth to eighteenth century) against religious intolerance, even the Roman Catholic Church made a decision in favor of the principle of religious liberty which it had opposed for such a long time.

In the declaration “*Dignitatis humanae*” (religious liberty) the council conceded the right of religious liberty to the human individual.<sup>41</sup> Admittedly, the “only true religion is fulfilled in the catholic, apostolic Church,”<sup>42</sup> but human beings have the duty to search individually and to decide according to their conscience.<sup>43</sup> In this process no force should be exercised.<sup>44</sup> The state has the responsibility to protect this human right and to promote it.<sup>45</sup> All “religious denominations” need to benefit from it.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, religious liberty is not only a basic human right but also belongs to the content of the revealed faith.<sup>47</sup>

The council thereby incorporated a concern of John XXIII who had already declared religious liberty to be a human right in his 1963 encyclical “*Pacem in terris*.”<sup>48</sup> His successors—especially John Paul II (1978–2005), coming from the former communist realm—missed no opportunity to present themselves as the defenders of freedom of conscience and religion. Since the Catholic Church had suffered from Marxist intolerance in many countries of the former Eastern bloc, the pope did not shy away from calling on this right in the battle of worldviews as a “political weapon” (Ludwig Ring-Eifel)<sup>49</sup> against modern dictatorial regimes.

In the nineteenth century pope Gregory XVI still had viewed religious tolerance as “madness” and “perdition.”<sup>50</sup> After all, only the “truth” had privileges while error did not. This led the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner to the conclusion that he was the personification of “Catholic intolerance.”<sup>51</sup> But now religious freedom was defined by the council as an “inviolable right.”<sup>52</sup>

In a similar manner pre-conciliar Catholicism dealt with the issue of the separation of church and state. The post-Tridentine church had persistently refused to accommodate the ideas of the modern Western world. Until the twentieth century the popes rejected the separation of church and state<sup>53</sup> because the Vatican firmly insisted that the “state needs to care about religion,”<sup>54</sup> which simply meant that the state should give a privileged position to the Roman Church and should actively favor and support it.

The council broke with this point of view. Now, the state should no longer support only one single religion, but should defend the common “liberty of all citizens and religious denominations.”<sup>55</sup> State and church “are,

each in their area, independent from each other and autonomous.”<sup>56</sup> Although the papal state itself is still governed in an authoritarian manner, the council campaigned against despotism and totalitarianism.<sup>57</sup>

Totally new tones were adopted by the fathers of the council in respect to the recommended form of government. In the past the Roman Catholic Church had not committed itself to any specific political structure, but it usually followed the “normal theologian” Thomas Aquinas (thirteenth century), who advocated the monarchy as a constitution that had been given by God and was derived from natural law.<sup>58</sup> In like manner, Leo XIII at the end of the nineteenth century had rejected the idea of “popular government,” which had allegedly arisen from the “turmoil” of the reformation.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, the church now praised those political circumstances “in which as many citizens as possible participate in true liberty in the common weal.”<sup>60</sup> In order to reach this goal the citizens should “exercise the right and the duty of free choice.”<sup>61</sup> With this attitude, the church was obviously following the trend of the time, which, with the victory of democracies over twentieth-century dictatorships, had moved clearly in the direction of the once fiercely rejected “popular government.”

Similar tendencies were manifested also in the realm of social policies. Here Leo XIII (1878–1903), the “worker’s pope,” had, of course, already favored a new path with his encyclical “*Rerum novarum*” (1891) long before Vatican II. At that point, when the social question had long been neglected, Rome began to advocate a Christian social policy (Sunday rest, reduced work days, minimum wage standards) over against Marxist Socialism. Other popes such as Pius XI (1931, *Quadragesimo anno*, John XXIII (1961, *Mater et magistra*), and Paul VI (1967, *Populorum progressio*) have followed his lead. John XXIII, of course, uttered totally new ideas that followed the trends of the time, such as partial nationalization of the means of production, unionized co-determination, and the furnishing of developmental aid to the third world.<sup>62</sup>

The council also brought into focus other so-called social ideas of the time, such as a new socio-political order, a just distribution of goods, and the equality of women and men.<sup>63</sup> In response to the world’s lamentable social inequalities, the council recommended the “principles of righteousness,” which, according to the council fathers, have been advocated by the church for centuries.<sup>64</sup> A “cooperation in the social field” was presented as the proper mission of all humans, but especially of all Christians. Here, the council felt that room was given for the possibility of an ecumenical fellowship that might inspire an awakening to the “unity of all Christians.”<sup>65</sup>

With the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes*, where most of the ideas just mentioned are found, the council hoped to have arrived in the modern age. *Gaudium et spes* was therefore deemed the “climax of the council” by evangelical observers, while Catholic

traditionalists such as the Society of St. Pius X viewed it as the “most pernicious in the entire council.” Rome began to understand that its century-long infantilizing of humanity was no longer possible. The impossibility was especially obvious with respect to printed media, where the output had reached such a density that a thorough control had become impossible.

Since late antiquity (sixth century, *Decretum Gelasianum*), works that were critical of or hostile to the church had been prohibited. These prohibitions had reached their peak with the Tridentine *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Prohibited Books) in 1563.<sup>66</sup> The last edition from 1948 (supplemented until 1962) contained, for example, prohibitions of Protestant Bibles as well as condemnations of prominent works of philosophy (Spinoza, Descartes, Kant) and history (von Ranke). However, the index was now abrogated, and in the new 1983 Codex of Canon Law, it was no longer mentioned.<sup>67</sup>

With *Gaudium et spes* the council opened itself to the world, changing both societal circumstances and scientific progress. That corresponded seemingly well with John XXIII’s desire that the church be “brought up to date,” and since then it has found fervent proponents among reform-minded people, though also fierce opponents among the traditionalists.

The new spirit also manifested itself in the area of interdenominational relationships (ecumenism). The fathers of the Council of Trent had viewed the Reformers of the sixteenth century as pernicious “heretics,” who “boasted about the forgiveness of sins.”<sup>68</sup> Even modern popes like Pius X had called the Protestant Reformers “pace-makers of atheism.”<sup>69</sup> But now Vatican II praised the “separated brethren”<sup>70</sup> as having been incorporated in Christ, justified through baptism, and led by the Holy Spirit to unity. They are now “rightly” recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as “brethren in the Lord,” and they “stand in communion with the Catholic Church, albeit not in perfect communion.”<sup>71</sup> The ecumenical movement—a feature of modern church history—is also acknowledged as a “sign of the times.”<sup>72</sup> Catholics are encouraged to recognize this sign and to zealously engage ecumenically. Even before the council began, the “Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity” was established in 1960 and non-Catholic observers were invited to the council.

While pre-conciliar Catholic studies on Luther stigmatized the Reformer as a “philosopher of the flesh” (Heinrich Denifle)<sup>73</sup> and as an “abnormal character” (Hartmann Grisar),<sup>74</sup> modern scholarship prior to and following the council opened the way for a positive evaluation of Luther. Now the Reformer was seen as “a religious person” (*homo religiosus*) (Josef Lortz),<sup>75</sup> even as “a prophetic person” (*homo propheticus*) (Johannes Hessen),<sup>76</sup> and his teaching of justification by faith alone was recognized as constituting a “return to the gospel” (Hans Küng).<sup>77</sup> Hence it was argued that he should receive “citizenship” in the Catholic Church (Otto Hermann Pesch).<sup>78</sup>

True, the Second Vatican Council itself did not

comment on the characters of the Reformation, but a new attitude toward the Reformation was evident among representatives of the Vatican in 1970, when cardinal Willebrands, former chairman of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, called Luther a “deeply religious personality” who could be spoken of as a “mutual teacher” on the question of justification.<sup>79</sup> In 1996 during his visit to Germany, Pope John Paul II acknowledged Luther’s desire for the “spiritual renewal of the Church.”<sup>80</sup>

This break with old polemics opened the way to a new relationship with the Orthodox churches and Protestantism. Two post-conciliar events especially had far-reaching consequences: (1) the reversal of the reciprocal excommunication that had taken place in 1054 between Rome and Constantinople by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras at the end of the council (1965), and (2) the 1999 “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” between the “Lutheran World Federation” and the “Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity,” in which both parties claimed a “consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification.”

With the desire for ecumenism and the resulting new interdenominational climate, a “new style of the church” originated (Peter Neuner) that appears to be irreversible, since ecumenism is considered by many people on various fronts as an essential task of the churches for the present time and for the future.

### The New Restoration

When Vatican II came to an end, it was viewed as the “Catholic event” of the twentieth century (Gottfried Maron).<sup>81</sup> But people soon realized the ambiguity of the event, given that the council had both “evangelical” and “Roman” traits.

On one hand, Catholic reform-oriented voices welcomed the council as a “new Pentecost.” They were joined by some Protestants, such as the catholicizing Protestant Roger Schütz from Taizé, who regarded the council as the fulfillment of Luther’s demands for reform.

Since the council “by way of pilgrimage” supported a mindset of “continuing reform,”<sup>82</sup> such reform-minded theologians as Hans Küng even regarded the council as an impulse for further prospective reforms. In this context Küng even referred to the slogan of the famous Protestant theologian Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century: “The Reformation continues.”<sup>83</sup>

Yet for the traditionalist voices within the church, the council constituted a great lapse. With the statement on “Religious Liberty” and the decree on “Ecumenism,” for them the council became the “greatest disaster of the past century” in the eyes of the anti-Protestant and anti-modernistic bishop Marcel Lefebvre (1905–1991) and his followers in the so-called “Society of St. Pius X.”<sup>84</sup>

Even within the Vatican itself, indications of a conservative reaction became visible. “Pentecost”

made way for a “wintery period” (Karl Rahner).<sup>85</sup> Reform forces soon talked about the “betrayal of the council,”<sup>86</sup> and ultra-conservative forces within the Jesuit Order had already accused John XXIII that his politics would “lead to the downfall of the Church.”<sup>87</sup> His successor, Paul VI, a procrastinating “Hamlet,” as John had denounced him even during his lifetime, felt censure from both the progressives and the conservatives, and thus he carefully prepared a reversal from “Johannism” and a “return home” to traditionalism and Romanism. The pope was afraid that the “smoke of Satan had entered the church through one crack.”<sup>88</sup> Among Pope Paul VI’s successors there was an intensification of his restorationist program. Experts at the Vatican even talked about a “new counterreformation” (Giancarlo Zizola).<sup>89</sup> The lengthy pontificate of John Paul II, the Polish “traveling pope,” appeared like a “pontificate of contradictions” (Hans Küng).<sup>90</sup> On one hand he was deeply committed to fighting against oppression and war—and in this sense he did, as many say, give a conscience to the world<sup>91</sup>—but on the other hand he worked like a modern inquisitor, spreading repressive propaganda in favor of celibacy and antagonizing the movement for timely family planning; he was no John XXIV but rather a Pius XIII.<sup>92</sup> In common parlance he was “Papa Jekyll and Karol Hyde.”

Many points of this restorationist strategy in the theological realm, such as the rejection of the liberation theology and depreciation of the Reformation churches, stem from the prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the former “Holy Inquisition”—Josef Ratzinger, who would later become Benedict XVI.

Some had hoped that the celibacy of the priests—which is only an ecclesiastical law and not a dogma—would be eliminated. Yet, due to its delicate status in the life of the priests it did not constitute a matter of debate at the council. The council merely maintained the status quo.<sup>93</sup> Paul VI reserved for himself the privilege of addressing celibacy, providing his response to the issue in the encyclical *Sacerdotalibus caelibatus* in 1967. The encyclical affirmed celibacy and was meant to bring an end to the debate about elimination of the practice. In 1988, John Paul II again championed celibacy for both men and women in his apostolic epistle *Mulieris dignitatem*.<sup>94</sup>

Likewise, the modern demand for the opening of the priesthood to women was strictly rejected. Both Paul VI (1976, *Inter insigniores*) and John Paul II (1988, *Mulieris dignitatem*) justified their position based on the thesis of the “similarity between Christ and the male priest.”<sup>95</sup>

A spirit of repression was now manifested by the church hierarchy against theologians who were energetically questioning the dogma and who considered post-conciliar restoration efforts to be a “betrayal of the council.” To many the outward battle of the Vatican in favor of liberty of conscience and tolerance seemed to be like a foreign torso, for inside the Roman-Catholic Church a similar disciplining occurred

as during the time of Pius XII. With regards to those who were disciplined, the following names might be mentioned: J.-M. Pohier, Hans Küng, Ch. Curran, Bernhard Häring, Edward Schillebeeckx, Leonardo Boff, Eugen Drewermann, Tissa Balasuriya, Josef Imbach and others. Some of these men lost their offices; some were reprimanded, or even excommunicated. On the other hand, the 1988 excommunication of the so-called “Society of St. Pius X,” a group of followers of Bishop Marcel Lefebvre who reject Vatican II and are committed to the post-Tridentine church, was revoked by Benedict XVI in 2009. Not only single individuals but entire movements fell victim to the new repression. Indeed, a special excommunication hit the radical liberation theologians (1979, *Puebla Document*)<sup>96</sup> with their thesis of class conflict and the necessity of Marxist analysis of society (1984, *Libertatis nuntius*).<sup>97</sup>

One of the biggest disappointments in both the religious and secular worlds was caused by Paul VI in the area of family planning and sexual ethics with his controversial encyclical *Humanae vitae* (1968)—called the “pill encyclical” by common people—which prohibited the use of hormonal contraception and “harshly and imperiously cut off” all discussion of this question (Gottfried Maron).<sup>98</sup> Paul’s successor again urged this perspective in *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) as a “living tradition of the church.”<sup>99</sup> According to Benedict XVI condoms may only be used in “exceptional cases” such as in the case of homosexuals who are infected with AIDS. For contraception they are still prohibited.<sup>100</sup>

For a long time already the awakening in Catholic theology during the period of the council had appeared suspicious in the eyes of the traditionalistic forces in the Vatican. Now they believed the clock should be turned back in this area as well. By reasserting the indispensability of the dogmas and the commitment to the beliefs contained therein, Rome tried to intervene correctively to stabilize against both Protestant and liberal tendencies in the theology. For example, in 1968, Paul VI issued the “Credo of the People of God,” a statement of faith that pressed very strong traditionalist positions, emphasizing Mariology (Mary’s participation in the work of salvation),<sup>101</sup> papal infallibility,<sup>102</sup> the necessity of the Church for salvation,<sup>103</sup> the doctrine of transubstantiation,<sup>104</sup> and the comparison of the priests with Christ.<sup>105</sup>

The situation is similar with the new Codex of Canon Law issued in 1983 by John Paul II. In comparison with the Codex from 1917, the 1983 version constituted a modernization but still basically clung to the “old system,” offering a pre-conciliar spirit in post-conciliar phrasing. According to Hans Küng it was a “distinct signal of the restoration.”<sup>106</sup> While the council spoke with delight of “service” (*munus*), in crucial places the new canon law talks again of “power” or “authority” (*potestas*).<sup>107</sup>

Ten years later in 1993, the new world-wide catechism, “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” appeared, published by a commission chaired by Josef Cardinal Ratzinger. This catechism was intended to

be a “reference point” for the regional catechisms and was meant to provide “correct doctrine” in the context of modern life.<sup>108</sup> Often it follows Vatican II, such as in the sections concerning the doctrine of the church, but in significant other questions (that is, the indulgences) it emphasizes the post-conciliar traditionalist, restorationist tendencies.<sup>109</sup> This has led to discrepant situations in the area of ecumenical relations. Thus the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999), in which a “basic consent”<sup>110</sup> was agreed upon with the “Lutheran World Federation,” was followed by the announcement of a full indulgence in the year 2000, as if the Reformation which had arisen about the issue of indulgence had never taken place.

Also in this line was the relativization of a “central reform of Vatican II,”<sup>111</sup> namely the celebration of the Mass by priests and believers in the vernacular, which was severely opposed by the traditionalists. In order to prevent a schism, Benedict XVI again allowed the celebration of the old Tridentine Mass in the Latin language with the priest whose back is turned on the church members. The Pope consciously made this concession due to his desire for a reunion with the traditionalists.

Similar retrogressive tendencies can be seen in the area of ecumenism. Here the “blooming dreams” of the conciliar time have vanished away and made way for a new “ice age.” The post-conciliar period has shown that Rome is willing to have a dialogue with other Christians only on its own terms. The primacy of the pope and the necessity of the Roman Church for salvation are not negotiable. There is no doubt that Rome is and must remain the deciding center in matters of faith. In the encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) the Vatican developed its plan for the whole world. Starting from Rome the globe spans as it were in concentric circles from ecumenical-oriented Christianity to the non-Christian religions and beyond to all humans of goodwill. From the Catholic point of view, everything is oriented towards Rome, which constitutes the universal mental-spiritual center.

That is why the Catholic Church always demands that non-Roman Christians who are seeking full fellowship with the church must “acknowledge the continuity of the primacy of Peter in his successors, the bishops of Rome.”<sup>112</sup> It is explicitly pointed out that the progress of the ecumenical process is subject to the control of Rome.<sup>113</sup> In this ecumenical process, other Christians have to be led in such a way “that they attain all the fullness of the Catholic truth.”<sup>114</sup> The foundation of the desired unity remains the papacy,<sup>115</sup> which is the “visible principle” of unity, and which—as was already defined by the council—one can enter only through “integration.” This had already been defined by the council.<sup>116</sup> Thus, although Catholic ecumenism certainly strives for the “attainment of full fellowship” (John Paul II),<sup>117</sup> it can only be achieved through participation in the “fullness of salvific means,” which are owned by the papal church according to its own claim.<sup>118</sup> Fellowship and

communion can only be realized through Rome, for this is a “foundational requirement” of the process of unity.<sup>119</sup>

Looking at it from this standpoint, many of Rome’s snubs about other churches are understandable. While the schismatic Orthodox churches are still accepted as “sister churches”<sup>120</sup> and thus are true “particular churches,”<sup>121</sup> the churches of the Reformation are stripped of the attribute “church.” In the eyes of Rome they are only “ecclesiastical communities,”<sup>122</sup> since, according to Catholic understanding, they manifest “deficits” and are still in “search of God,” whom they obviously have not entirely found yet.<sup>123</sup>

A Eucharistic communion with Protestant churches and free churches is therefore ruled out. Intercommunion,<sup>124</sup> intercelebration as well as concélébration are not possible. In this manner, the Eucharistic problem stands alongside the issue of the pope as “the problem of the ecumenical movement.”<sup>125</sup>

No less disconcerting to the Protestant world must be the transfer of the entire ecumenical process to Mary. After all, John Paul II claimed in the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (1987) that only “Mary knows the way to unity.” She, who remains the continual virgin and mother of the church, is and remains the model for all Christians.<sup>126</sup> In order to “achieve a true agreement in faith,” such topics as the function of the ecclesiastical tradition in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s supper, the teaching office of the pope, and Mary as “Icon of the Church,” who pleads for all of humanity, are items entrusted to the dialogue partners.<sup>127</sup>

Furthermore, the inconsistency with which the Vatican evaluates its own missionary efforts versus those of other churches is amazing. While Rome endeavors to gain ground in Eastern Europe—representatives of Orthodoxy speak of an “expansion of Catholicism”—and is interested in a “progressive departure from the line drawn by Vatican II,”<sup>128</sup> it rebukes the missionary successes of Protestant free churches in South America and brands the followers of these churches as “rabid wolves.”<sup>129</sup>

Several confessions of guilt made by Paul VI and John Paul II are often mentioned as a rebuttal to the above mentioned points. It is claimed that Rome rehabilitated the dissenters and those who were persecuted by the Inquisition, and that thereby it has cleansed itself from its guilt. However, on closer inspection those statements of confession appear rather halfhearted. Either they were restricted by clauses such as: “if we have to be ascribed a guilt,”<sup>130</sup> or the question of guilt was shifted from the church hierarchy to its “sinful children.”<sup>131</sup> Critics such as Hans Küng have pleaded in vain for the inclusion of popes and the church hierarchy in those confessions of guilt.<sup>132</sup>

### **Semper Eadem—Unchanged in Substance**

If someone in the twenty-first century looks back on the Catholic awakening in the middle of the twentieth century and the time that subsequently has

elapsed, he has certainly gained enough historical distance to assess this period with fair accuracy. The result is disillusioning. While the Second Vatican Council, which was *the* Catholic event of the twentieth century, brought about some obvious changes—an opening to the world (freedom of conscience and religion) and an opening to other religions (ecumenism)—it also strengthened the position of the Roman Church. The council was unable to remove the typical Roman presumption, and in a certain sense has even increased it. While one could say that Vatican I was the council of papal hubris, Vatican II became the council of ecclesiastical self-aggrandizement.

The pastoral and irenic language of Vatican II, its ecumenical spirit, and its reversal of any kind of condemnation must not belie that fact. At its core, the Second Vatican Council (with its reaffirmation of all that the First Vatican Council had conferred on the papal teaching office, and with its equation of the Church with Christ) has continued and sealed what Karl Barth has called the “Vatican sacrilege.”<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the restorationist tendencies of the post-conciliar time were and are only a logical result of this unchanged fundamental position.

Paul VI had aptly said, “What has been, remains valid,”<sup>134</sup> and thereby he affirmed that Rome never did refine or change its dogmatic edifice or even call it into question—and does not intend to do so in the future. With the formula of the “hierarchy of truths”<sup>135</sup> Rome conceded that there can at most be different accentuations, but there can be no essential changes. Ecumenical optimists on both sides did not and still do not fully realize that the dogmatic substance of the Roman Church—what has been fixed “*ex cathedra*”—is considered to be “irreversible.”<sup>136</sup>

The euphoria of the Johannine turn with its seeming awakening to more gospel and less tradition has not touched the internal core of Catholicism. Only someone who nourished the unjustified hope that the decisions of past councils could and should be corrected<sup>137</sup> would be disappointed by the restorationist tendencies of the popes after John XXIII and would perceive these restrictions as a “betrayal of the council.” In fact, the council was never intended to do anything else than to formulate the old dogmas in new language. This had already been explained by John XXIII. In his opening speech for the council he emphasized the immutability of the inheritance that was now merely being presented in a new wording. It was not the “*depositum fidei*,” the deposit of faith, that was subject to change, but rather its “*modus enuntiationis*,” the form of the statement, which could be changed but had to maintain the “same sense and the same meaning” as the original.<sup>138</sup> This distinction has been called to mind repeatedly since then.<sup>139</sup> There could and can be no talk of a modification of the actual dogma.<sup>140</sup> That is why, although the council spoke of a “continual reform” of the Church, this reform was only applied to the human and earthly realm and excluded the “treasure of faith.”<sup>141</sup>

When Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, the famous pulpit orator of the seventeenth century and bishop of Meaux, contrasted the Protestant pluralism of his time with the Catholic unity of the post-Tridentine church, he emphasized the contrast with the proud words “*semper eadem*” (always the same) and intended to prove by this that the Roman Church (in contrast to Protestantism) has always remained the same.

Bossuet and all who have referred to him since then obviously did not realize how often popes and councils have contradicted each other in the past. There can be no question of a continuing homogeneity. However, “*semper eadem*” applies fully with respect to one essential element: the continuing effort to surround the pope and the church with an aura of infallibility, to somehow make them as representatives of Christ and thereby to talk up the Roman Church as an institution of salvation which is set above all and concerns all. The divine privilege of infallibility is adjudicated either to a human being as the bishop of Rome or to a majority of humans such as the Church, and thus the earthly-human is surrounded with the nimbus of the supernatural. The upgrade of the Roman teaching office and the Church at Vatican II and afterwards has proven that this way of thinking has not subsided but has rather been strengthened.

Everything that the First Vatican Council pronounced regarding the pope, his authority, and his infallibility was adopted in its entirety by the Second Vatican Council. According to the latter council, the pope is characterized by “infallibility” when he pronounces a doctrine of belief or morals in a “final act.”<sup>142</sup> Such doctrines are “unalterable” then.<sup>143</sup> But even when he does not speak with the highest teaching authority, one owes obedience to him.<sup>144</sup> Considered in this light, the collegiality of the bishops is reduced consequently to an approving panel, for there is no way around the bishop of Rome, the “head” of the bishops. The pope is also placed above the general council, whose decisions attain legal force only through him.<sup>145</sup> He is not only the “highest shepherd”<sup>146</sup> and the “infallible teacher,”<sup>147</sup> but also the “highest judge.”<sup>148</sup> Vatican II has forcefully reasserted all the claims made during Vatican I and has in no way revoked or even restricted the christification of the bishops of Rome.

The biblical evidence, however, shows that God alone manifests infallibility, and the sole foundation and head of the Church is Christ, who leads Christendom through the Holy Spirit, His representative (John 14:16–17). To Christ alone belongs the position of the “highest shepherd” (1 Pet 5:4) and “judge” (2 Tim 4:8). He appointed the apostles (1 Cor 12:28), who were basically equal (Eph 2:20). Thus the New Testament speaks only of one ministry as an apostle; a separate ministry of Peter was unknown to the first Christians. Peter described himself therefore only as “fellow elder” (1 Pet 5:1), who exhorted his colleagues against impenitence and greed (1 Pet 5:2–3). Rome’s continual reference to Peter as the first pope (cf. Vatican II,

Church III.22; DH 4146) is neither theologically nor historically justified. Everything that was promised to Peter (Matt 16:18–19) pertained also to the other apostles (Eph 2:20)—and even to the whole church (Matt 18:17–18). According to the most ancient sources, Peter was in Rome as an apostle rather than as a bishop. Hence 2 Timothy 4:21 mentions Linus as the first bishop of Rome (Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* III.3.3; Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III.2). Today's papacy does not trace back to early Christianity but is a creation of later antiquity.<sup>149</sup>

Infallibility is not one of the spiritual gifts imparted to the Christian church but is reserved to God alone and His word, which is considered to be “right, just, and truthful” (Ps 33:4). Christian preaching receives binding authority not by appealing to itself but only through appealing to God's word, for “no one is responsible to believe more than that which is found in Scripture” (Martin Luther).<sup>150</sup>

Although Vatican I had already lifted the Church above everything and moved it into the arena of divine “infallibility,”<sup>151</sup> now this excess found its climax with Vatican II. The long held conception that the “visible church” is the “Son of God appearing among humanity” (Johann Adam Möhler)<sup>152</sup> and therewith the “second Christ” (Pius XII),<sup>153</sup> which is needed for the “fullness and completion of the Savior,”<sup>154</sup> reached its culmination in the Second Vatican Council. Since the church is infallible, it resembles the “incarnated word,”<sup>155</sup> possesses the “fullness of grace and truth,”<sup>156</sup> and is “necessary for salvation.”<sup>157</sup> This “church” according to Catholic understanding is, of course, the church with the “successor of Peter as its head.”<sup>158</sup> It is manifested among the people as the “sacrament of salvation.”<sup>159</sup> Anyone who is able to recognize the church as such but does not enter it and instead perseveres in rejecting the church “cannot be saved.”<sup>160</sup>

Yet, this identification of the church with Christ cannot be justified when looked at it from the biblical point of view. It is true that according to 1 Corinthians 12:27 the Christian church is addressed symbolically as the “body of Christ” or abridged as “Christ” (1 Cor 12:12) but a more complete picture comes from Colossians 1:18a, where Christ is described as the “head” and the church as the “body.” Herewith it is stated that the body is ruled by the head and that the body must follow the head. Only when the church obeys Christ's word can it be identified with Christ. Thus the church is not intrinsically and unconditionally identical with Christ.

The resulting conclusion is rather simple: the papal and ecclesiastical christification at the councils Vatican I and II constitute the culmination of a process begun long ago. That process remains unaffected by the church's adaptation to certain necessities of modernity, in which the Second Vatican Council played a part. What post-Tridentine Catholicism had hoped for (the Jesuit Order had sought the declaration of the pope's infallibility as early as the sixteenth century) became a reality in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a human being and an institution were

proclaimed as the embodiment of divine truth!

The critique of this Roman Catholic presumption from the viewpoint of an exclusively Bible-based Christian faith is therefore justified and has not become obsolete. It gives *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White a lasting actuality and justification.



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## Abbreviations

- CIC: *Codex Iuris Canonici, Codex des kanonischen Rechtes*, 4th ed. (Kvelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1994).
- DH: Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen*, ed. Peter Hünermann, 37th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1991).
- JD: *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (Lutheran World Federation / Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, 1999).
- KatKK: *Katechismus der katholischen Kirche* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1993).
- RGG: Kurt Galling and Hans von Campenhausen, eds., *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 7 vols., 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957-1965 [reprint 1986]).
- S.Th.: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*.
- WA: Martin Luther, *Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 7 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1897).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ludwig Ring-Eifel, *Weltmacht Vatikan: Päpste machen Politik* (Munich: Pattloch Verlag, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> The “papocratic ruling principle”—the primacy of the pope in a universal sense—originated with Leo I in the 5th century; cf. Hans Kühner, *Lexikon der Päpste* (Wiesbaden: Fourier-Verlag, 1991), 49; similarly Karl Heussi: “In Leo I the Great (440–461) we encounter the first real ‘pope’ [. . .] The honorary title ‘Pope’ (papa, páppas) was commonly given to higher clerics in the East, especially to bishops; from the end of the 5th century onward the Roman bishops arrogated it to themselves exclusively.” *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, 10th ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949), 130; the title means “father” and Jesus forbade His disciples to use it (Matt 23:9). Jesus addressed only God as “Holy Father” (John 17:11).

With the transformation of the Roman World Empire at the end of antiquity Rome continued its claim to power over the world; cf. Johannes Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1965), 1:119. With the continuation of imperial Rome through papal Rome, the ancient catholic church changed (2nd–4th century). In the Latin west the imperial church of the 4th century developed into the papal church (5th century).

<sup>3</sup> Karl Adam, *Das Wesen des Katholizismus*, 13th ed. (Düssel-

dorf: L. Schwann, 1957), 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 12, 234.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Heiler, *Der Katholizismus: Seine Idee und seine Erscheinung* (Munich: E. Reinhardt, 1970), 12.

<sup>6</sup> According to the words of Jesus (Luke 10:25–26) and the statement of the apostles (Acts 17:11), the Bible is the only norm and source for our faith. The Old Testament was the Scripture of the early church (2 Tim 3:15–17) and in conjunction with the apostolic preaching it was the foundation of the faith of the first Christians. But this oral proclamation became part of the apostolic scriptures (1 John 1:3–4). These scriptures had been circulated (Col 4:16) and collected (2 Peter 3:15–16) in apostolic times.

When the postapostolic church in the second century reflected about the canon of the New Testament and tried to collect the scriptures of the apostle and the disciples of the apostles, the canon of the New Testament book came into existence. With the naming of the canon the early Christians wanted to express that these scriptures faithfully depict the teaching of Jesus and the apostles and therefore are the norm and source of all Christian teaching. Everything that cannot be proven by Scripture cannot be apostolic truth!

<sup>7</sup> That is why Catholic believers regard the Church to be “inerrant” (1870, First Vatican Council, Constitution *Dei Filius*, 4; DH 3020), and hence it can be compared with Christ (1964, Second Vatican Council, Church I.8; DH 4118).

<sup>8</sup> Walther von Loewenich, *Der Katholizismus und wir* (Munich: Evangelischer Presseverband für Bayern, 1954), 22.

<sup>9</sup> S.Th. II–II, q. 11, a. 3.

<sup>10</sup> 1832, Encyclical *Mirari vos arbitramur*; DH 2730f.

<sup>11</sup> 1881, Encyclical *Diuturnum illud*; Karl Guggisberg, *Die römisch-katholische Kirche* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1946), 338.

<sup>12</sup> 1864, Syllabus VI.55; DH 2955.

<sup>13</sup> 1906, Encyclical *Vehementer nos*; Guggisberg, 300.

<sup>14</sup> 1627, Urban VIII. Bull *In coena Domini*; Guggisberg, 337.

<sup>15</sup> Encyclical *Editae saepe*; Guggisberg, 338f.

<sup>16</sup> In 1925 the movement for “Practical Christianity” originated in Stockholm, Sweden, and in 1927 the movement for “Faith and Order” was born in Lausanne, Switzerland. 1948 saw the establishment of the WCC (World Council of Churches), which involved 137 churches, most of them belonging to the Protestant spectrum.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. George Tavad, *Geschichte der ökumenischen Bewegung* (Mainz: Matthias-Gründewald, 1964), 120.

<sup>18</sup> 1928, Encyclical *Mortalium animos*; Guggisberg, 341.

<sup>19</sup> In this connection, Pius IX hurled the following pretentious words at the critics of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council: “I am the tradition.” Cf. Walther von Loewenich, *Der moderne Katholizismus vor und nach dem Konzil* (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1970), 40.

<sup>20</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 4; DH 3074.

<sup>21</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 1; DH 3053.

<sup>22</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 3; DH 3059.

<sup>23</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 1; DH 3055.

<sup>24</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 3; DH 3059.

<sup>25</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 3; DH 3063.

<sup>26</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 3; DH 3060.

<sup>27</sup> Constitution *Pastor aeternus* 4; DH 3075.

<sup>28</sup> Second Vatican Council, Church III.25; DH 4150.

<sup>29</sup> Second Vatican Council, Church III.25; DH 4149.

<sup>30</sup> Second Vatican Council, Church III.25; DH 4149.

<sup>31</sup> While Pius XI (1922–1939) severely condemned the discrimination against the Roman Catholic Church under Germany’s National Socialists in the encyclical “Mit brennender Sorge” (1937), his successor Pius XII was silent in regard to the persecution of the Jews by the Nazi regime,

although he excommunicated the members of the communist party (1949) and spoke out frequently as a rigid mentor in questions of modernity. He gave instruction on issues of international law (1939), sterilization (1940), the so-called worthless life (1940), the purpose of marriage (1944), in vitro fertilization (1949), sexual intercourse (1952), and situational ethics (1956).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Gottfried Maron, *Die römisch-katholische Kirche von 1870–1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), 227.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Krister Ejner Skydsgaard, “Das kommende Konzil—Absicht und Problematik,” in Krister Ejner Skydsgaard, ed., *Konzil und Evangelium: Lutherische Stimmen zum kommenden römisch-katholischen Konzil* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962), 118, 121; David A. Seeber, *Das Zweite Vaticanum: Konzil des Übergangs* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1966), 32f.

<sup>35</sup> Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Kleines Konzilskompendium: Sämtliche Texte des Zweiten Vatikanums* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1966), 32f.

<sup>36</sup> Liturgy I.36; DH 4036.

<sup>37</sup> Liturgy II.49; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 68.

<sup>38</sup> *Ecumenism* I.4; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 234.

<sup>39</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* II, 14; DH 4136.

<sup>40</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* I.8; DH 4118.

<sup>41</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.2; DH 4240.

<sup>42</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.1; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 661f.

<sup>43</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.3; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 663.

<sup>44</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.3, 4; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 664f.

<sup>45</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.6; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 666.

<sup>46</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.6; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 667.

<sup>47</sup> *Religious Freedom* II.10; DH 4245.

<sup>48</sup> DH 3961.

<sup>49</sup> Ludwig Ring-Eifel, *Weltmacht Vatikan*, 174.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Endnote 10.

<sup>51</sup> Rahner and Vorgrimler, 655.

<sup>52</sup> *Religious Freedom* I; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 662.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Endnote 12 and 13.

<sup>54</sup> 1906, Pius X, Encyclical *Vehementer nos*; Guggisberg, 300.

<sup>55</sup> *Religious Freedom* I.6; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 667.

<sup>56</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* IV.76; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 534.

<sup>57</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* IV.75; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 533.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Loewenich, *Der moderne Katholizismus*, 380.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Endnote 11.

<sup>60</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* II.31; DH 4331.

<sup>61</sup> *The Church in the Modern* IV.75; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 532.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Loewenich, *Der moderne Katholizismus*, 389–395.

<sup>63</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* 9; DH 4309.

<sup>64</sup> *The Church in the Modern* III.63; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 518.

<sup>65</sup> *Ecumenism* II.12; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 240f.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. H. Barion, “Index,” RGG, vol. 3, 699.

<sup>67</sup> The ultra conservative “Opus Dei” however, still has an unofficial index.

<sup>68</sup> DH 1533.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Endnote 15.

<sup>70</sup> *Ecumenism*, Preface; DH 4186.

<sup>71</sup> *Ecumenism* I.3; DH 4188.

<sup>72</sup> *Ecumenism* I.4; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 234.

<sup>73</sup> Heinrich Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum in der erste Entwicklung*, vol. 7 (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1904), 787.

<sup>74</sup> Hartmann Grisar, *M. Luthers Leben und Werk*, 5th ed.

(Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1927), 79.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Lortz, *Die Reformation in Deutschland*, vol. 1, 5th ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1962), 191.

<sup>76</sup> Johannes Hessen, *Luther in katholischer Sicht: Grundlegung eines ökumenischen Gesprächs*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1949), 16.

<sup>77</sup> Hans Küng, "Katholische Besinnung auf Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre heute," in *Theologie im Wandel: Festschrift zum 150 jährigen Bestehen der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät an der Universität Tübingen* (Munich: E.ewel, 1967), 464.

<sup>78</sup> Otto Hermann Pesch, *Ketzerfürst und Kirchenlehrer* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1971), 42.

<sup>79</sup> Daniel Olivier, *Le procès Luther 1517–21* (Paris: Fayard, 1971), 217f.

<sup>80</sup> *Salzburger Nachrichten*, March 8, 2000, 10.

<sup>81</sup> Maron, 241.

<sup>82</sup> *Ecumenism* II.6; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 237.

<sup>83</sup> Hans Küng, *Kirche im Konzil* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1963), 31.

<sup>84</sup> Franz Schmidberger, "Die Zeitbombe des 2. Vatikanischen Konzils," Dokumentation Humanistischer Pressedienst (HPD), Stuttgart 2009, 2.

<sup>85</sup> Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowons, eds., *Glaube in winterlicher Zeit: Gespräche mit K. Rahner in den letzten Lebensjahren* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1986), 18. Cf. Also Hans Küng, *Ist die Kirche noch zu retten?* (Munich: Piper, 2011), 29.

<sup>86</sup> Norbert Greinacher and H. Küng, eds., *Katholische Kirche—Wohin? Wider den Verrat am Konzil* (Munich: Piper, 1986).

<sup>87</sup> Michael Serafian, *Der Pilger oder Konzil und Kirche vor der Entscheidung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1964), 164.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Helmut Krätzl, *Im Sprung gehemmt: Was mir nach dem Konzil noch alles fehlt*, 4th ed. (Mödling: Verlag St. Gabriel, 1999), 183.

<sup>89</sup> *Der Spiegel*, November 9, 1985, 164.

<sup>90</sup> *Der Spiegel*, March 26, 2005, 107.

<sup>91</sup> *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, April 4, 2005, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Greinacher and Küng, 20.

<sup>93</sup> *Ministry and Life of Priests* III.16; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 589. DH 4836.

<sup>95</sup> DH 4600, 4840.

<sup>96</sup> DH 4630.

<sup>97</sup> DH 4734, 4738.

<sup>98</sup> Maron, *Die römisch-katholische Kirche*, 236.

<sup>99</sup> DH 4708.

<sup>100</sup> *Salzburger Nachrichten*, November 22, 2010, 5.

<sup>101</sup> Paul VI, *Das Credo des Gottesvolkes*, 7th ed. (Leutesdorf am Rhein: Johannes Verlag, 1971), 14f.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>106</sup> Greinacher and Küng, 32.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>108</sup> KatKK, 30f.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, § 1471–1479.

<sup>110</sup> JD 5.43.

<sup>111</sup> *Salzburger Nachrichten*, February 3, 2009, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Josef Ratzinger and A. Bovone, *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion* (Vatican: Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith, 1992), 19.

<sup>113</sup> CIC, can. 755.

<sup>114</sup> Ratzinger and Bovone, 29.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>116</sup> *Ecumenism* I.3; DH 4190.

<sup>117</sup> 1995, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 86. How one-sided the Roman Catholic Church deals with the ecumenical question can be seen in its demand that Protestants should distance themselves from Luthers statements about the Antichrist, which are at the core of the question whether the church mediates salvation. Protestant concessions in this question are indispensable (cf. Kathpress, May 6, 2011).

<sup>119</sup> Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 97.

<sup>120</sup> Encyclical *Ut unum sint*, 56.

<sup>121</sup> 2000, Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, 17.

<sup>122</sup> 2000, Declaration *Dominus Iesus*, 17.

<sup>123</sup> *Ecumenism* III.21; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 247.

<sup>124</sup> CIC, can. 844.

<sup>125</sup> Ernst Lange, *Die ökumenische Utopie oder was bewegt die ökumenische Bewegung?*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1986), 73.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. *Lutherische Monatshefte* 26 (1987): 193–195.

<sup>127</sup> *Ut unum sint*, 79.

<sup>128</sup> *Die Zeit*, December 13, 1991, 16.

<sup>129</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 8, 1991, 6; *Die Welt*, October 16, 1992, 6.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Hans Küng, *Erkämpfte Freiheit* (Munich: Piper, 2002), 503.

<sup>131</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 31, 2000, 1f.

<sup>132</sup> *Salzburger Nachrichten*, March 8, 2000, 10.

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner, *Einigung der Kirche—reale Möglichkeit*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder Verlag, 1983), 73.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in G. C. Berkouwer, *Gehorsam und Aufbruch: Zur Situation der katholischen Kirche und Theologie* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1969), 73.

<sup>135</sup> *Ecumenism* II.11; DH 4192.

<sup>136</sup> First Vatican Council, Constitution *Pastor aeternus*, 4; DH 3074.

<sup>137</sup> Hans Küng, The Council in Action, in Jaroslav Pelikan, *Development of Christian Doctrine* (New Haven, CN.: Yale University Press, 1969), 145.

<sup>138</sup> Berkouwer, *Gehorsam und Aufbruch*, 73.

<sup>139</sup> John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, 81.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Hanspeter. Oswald, *Der deutsche Papst: Wohin führt Benedikt XVI. die Kirche?* (Munich: Piper, 2005), 165.

<sup>141</sup> *Ecumenism* II.6; Rahner and Vorgrimler, 237.

<sup>142</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* III.25; DH 4149.

<sup>143</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* III.25.

<sup>144</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* III.25.

<sup>145</sup> CIC, can. 338, 341.

<sup>146</sup> CIC, can. 333.

<sup>147</sup> CIC, can. 749.

<sup>148</sup> CIC, can. 1404.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Heussi, 130.

<sup>150</sup> WA 7.453.

<sup>151</sup> Constitution *Dei filius*, 4; DH 3020.

<sup>152</sup> Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolik, oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften*, 6th ed. (Mainz, 1843), 332f.

<sup>153</sup> Encyclical *Mystici corporis*; DH 3806, 3813.

<sup>154</sup> Encyclical *Mystici corporis*; DH 3813.

<sup>155</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* I.8; DH 4118.

<sup>156</sup> *Ecumenism* I.3; DH 4189.

<sup>157</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* II.14; DH 4136.

<sup>158</sup> *Ecumenism* I.2; DH 4187.

<sup>159</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* VII.48; DH 4168.

<sup>160</sup> *The Church in the Modern World* VII.48; DH 4168.

# Lessons from Matthew 1

By Clinton Wahlen

**T**he Gospel of Matthew heads the New Testament canon. This prominent placement, rather than being merely a historical accident, witnesses to its foundational significance for Christians. Just as the book of Genesis introduces us to our God and the Creator of all, so this first Gospel introduces us to Jesus Christ, “God with us,” our Savior and the Lord of all. In fact, the first two words of Matthew (*biblos geneaseōs*) could be translated “the book of Genesis” and may be intended to draw readers’ attention to Jesus as a new beginning and to the many connections that exist between these two biblical books.

Unlike epistles, which—in accordance with ancient letter-writing conventions—clearly identify the author, none of the canonical Gospels clearly identify their author; instead, they only hint at who wrote them. It is not hard to understand the possible reasons for this virtual anonymity. After all, the Gospels relate important events in the life of *Jesus* and *His* teachings—not those of their respective authors. Furthermore, this treasure, given through “earthen vessels,” belongs to all Christians because it is God’s revelation to them. As such, it is not any one person’s intellectual property, but is a witness that has been committed to each believer in order that he or she may share it with others.

The Gospel of Matthew gets its name from the tax collector identified only in this Gospel as having been the same as the disciple selected by Jesus to be among the twelve apostles (Matt 9:9; 10:3; cf. Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). Other Gospels call him “Levi” (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27). Thus, he is sometimes referred to as “Levi Matthew.”

## Structure of the Chapter

The first part of Matthew 1 introduces readers to Jesus as the focus of the book. It does this through a Hebrew construction known as a chiasm, in which the second half of the material mirrors the first but in reverse order<sup>1</sup>:

- |        |    |                                   |
|--------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1:1    | A  | Christ                            |
|        | B  | son of David                      |
|        | C  | son of Abraham                    |
| 1:2–17 | C' | Abraham begot . . . (v. 2)        |
|        | B' | David the king begot . . . (v. 6) |
|        | A' | Christ (vv. 16–17)                |

The remainder of Matthew 1 describes in detail the birth of Jesus as the promised messiah in fulfillment of Bible prophecy (vv. 18–25).

## Interpretation of the Chapter

- I. **Verse 1.** As the above structure of the chapter shows, “Christ” should be understood as more

than merely a second name to further identify Jesus. In connection with its use again in verse 16, it refers here to Jesus as “*the Christ*,” which means “anointed one” or Messiah. At His baptism, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for His messianic work (Matt 3:16; Acts 10:38).

- A. **The Son of David.** Jesus fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament that say the promised “seed” would be a king in the line of David (e.g., Isa 9:6–7; 11:1–2; Jer 23:5–6)—at His first advent through His suffering and death with a crown of thorns (Matt 27:27–29), and at His second advent as King of Kings with a crown of glory (Heb 2:9; Rev 14:14; 19:11–13).
- B. **The Son of Abraham.** Being descended from Abraham, Jesus was a Hebrew (cf. Gen 14:13) and able to fulfill the promise that in Abraham’s “seed” all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 22:18; Acts 3:24–26).

## II. Verses 2–17

- A. **Importance of biblical genealogies.** Modern readers might be tempted to skip over the genealogy that makes up the bulk of chapter one. But, as many Bible students have discovered, valuable gems of truth lie just beneath the surface of such seemingly “desert-like” passages of Scripture. Ever since God’s promise that the “seed” or descendant of Eve would crush the serpent’s head, thereby redeeming the human race from the Fall (Gen 3:15), God’s people have eagerly awaited the promise’s fulfillment. That is why the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 and elsewhere in Scripture are so important—they preserve the historical record by which the promise’s fulfillment can be traced.
- B. **Interruptions in the genealogical pattern** “A begot B.” These draw our attention to important elements in Jesus’ ancestry.
  1. **Verse 2, “Judah and his brothers.”** This phrase refers to the nation of Israel descended from Jacob’s twelve sons and, more specifically, to Judah, through whose descendants the “scepter” or kingdom of Israel would be established (Gen 49:10).
  2. **Jesus’ human lineage.** Matthew also seems to emphasize, by several references to women (who normally go unmentioned in genealogies), that, on His human side, Jesus’ ancestry was in no way better or

purser than those He came to save.

- a) **Verse 3, “by Tamar.”** When Judah refused to give his surviving son to Tamar in levirate marriage (a practice later codified in Deut 25:5–10), she tricked her father-in-law into having sexual relations (Gen 38). The twins who were born to her preserved Judah’s royal line.
- b) **Verse 5**
  - (1) **“... by Rahab.”** Although not an Israelite, and in fact a prostitute, Rahab played a vital role in saving the spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, expressing her faith in the God of Israel and acting on it (Josh 2).
  - (2) **“... by Ruth.”** Like Rahab, Ruth was also a foreigner who expressed her faith in the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16; 2:12). Like Tamar, her actions preserved the royal seed, becoming the grandmother of David (Ruth 4:21–22).
- c) **Verse 6, “by her who had been the wife of Uriah.”** It appears that, due to her affair with David, Bathsheba is not named (unlike the previous three women). The law required that the guilty partners be put to death (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22). But, in light of David’s repentance, God forgave this sin and it was through Bathsheba that Solomon was born.
- 3. **Verse 11, “Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.”** This verse records the end of Davidic rule because of Israel’s persistent disobedience to God and rebellion against His word (see 2 Chr 36:1–21; Jer 22:30). Royal succession would be continued through a different line—that of Shealtiel down to Jesus.
- C. **Verses 16–17.** Jesus’ birth was unusual as He was not biologically the son of Joseph but only of Mary (cf. Luke 1:35; 3:23). Rather than being “born of fornication” as the Jews in John 8:41 insinuate, Jesus was miraculously conceived through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The fourteen generations from Abraham to David (identically recorded in Luke 3:31–34) are taken as the pattern in summarizing (without being compre-

hensive) the royal line from David to the Babylonian captivity and from the captivity to the birth of Christ.

- III. **Verses 18–21.** While the birth narrative in Luke seems to reflect Mary’s perspective, Matthew’s narrative focuses on Joseph. Betrothal was as binding as marriage in Jewish circles, so Mary’s pregnancy poses a real problem for Joseph that is only resolved through divine revelation in a dream. He is instructed to make Mary his wife, accepting the child as his legitimate son, and to name Him Jesus, which means “Yahweh is salvation,” because “He will save His people from their sins.”
- IV. **Verses 22–25.** Joseph obeys the angel’s command. Jesus’ birth is identified by Matthew as fulfilling Isaiah 7:14, the first of twelve quotations from the Old Testament to show their fulfillment in Jesus (the others are Matt 2:6, 15, 18, 23; 4:15, 16; 8:17; 12:18–21; 13:14, 15; 13:35; 21:5; 27:9, 10). The mysterious Immanuel figure in Isaiah (Isa 7:14; 8:8) is here concretized in Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke emphasize that Jesus was born of a virgin (Matt 1:23; Luke 1:34). Thus, the birth of Jesus quite literally fulfills the expectation of “God with us” in that He has both a human side (through Mary) and a divine side (through His conception by the Holy Spirit).

#### Application of the Chapter

Many lessons can be drawn from this chapter. Some of the most important ones are: 1) God is in control of history and will bring His purposes to pass at the right time, as He did with the birth of Jesus “in the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4; cf. Rom 5:6). 2) Every part of the Bible is useful for our study—even passages that seem, on the surface, to have little relevance for us today. 3) Jesus understands us and can help us—because He is God, who knows all things and can do all things, and because He shares our human ancestry and experienced temptation from the cradle to the cross and was victorious over sin and death. This divine-human lineage uniquely qualifies Him as the one who can save us from our sins. 4) Finally, even clear commands of God that may seem, from a human perspective, to be difficult or even embarrassing to fulfill—such as Joseph taking Mary as his wife despite her not being pregnant by him—may be obeyed with the assurance that God will take care of the results.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless specified otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

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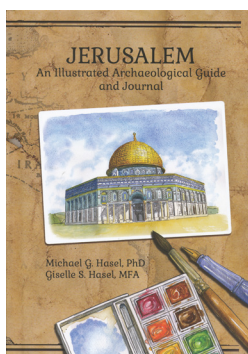
“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.”  
(The apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15, NASB95)

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# BOOK NOTES

## Michael G. Hasel and Giselle S. Hasel *Jerusalem: An Illustrated Archeological Guide and Journal*

(Collegedale, TN: Lynn H. Wood  
Archeological Museum, 2016),  
ISBN: 978-0-692-68497-9; 59 pp.  
US\$22.99



The book *Jerusalem: An Illustrated Archeological Guide and Journal* originated as a Master of Fine Arts thesis by Giselle Sarli Hasel at the Savannah College of Arts and Design in 2014 and has been expanded for this present publication. The book was co-written by Michael and Giselle Hasel and is divided into five sections in fifty-nine information-packed pages with an additional endnote section. The book provides archeological information about Jerusalem and Judah, but it is more than an archeological guide: it is a travel journal where one can jot down ideas and observations as he or she visits the ancient city. Throughout the book there are illustrations that beautifully pinpoint key historical sites and people connected with Jerusalem throughout its long history. The book begins with a summary of the history of Jerusalem through time, outlining the rulers and their nations who attacked the city. The city has experienced 118 conflicts over four millennia and has been captured or recaptured forty-four times.

In the next four chapters of the book some of the main characters in Jerusalem's long and varied history are briefly depicted: David, Herod the Great, Jesus, and Muhammad.

The historical timeline on pages 4 and 5 outlining the major events in Jerusalem's history is extremely helpful. It is a quick and easy reference to see the significant dates that shaped the city's destiny. Michael Hasel is a respected archeologist who connects the history of Jerusalem and Judah (Bethlehem, Masada, Herodium, Khirbet Qeiyafa, and Lachish) with some recent significant archeological discoveries and points out their relevance for biblical faith.

The descriptions of the Tel Dan stela mentioning the "house of David" on page 11 and the Ophel inscription on page 12 are fascinating. The recent discovery of the Ophel and the Khirbet Qeiyafa

inscriptions are the earliest references to Hebrew as a written language. The account of the excavations of Khirbet Qeiyafa on page 15 give evidence of an Israeli outpost city from which David left to slay Goliath. The skillful artwork by Giselle Hasel brings the history and some of the magnificent buildings of this ancient city to life and makes the content accessible to the non-specialist.

A valuable resource of some important archeological findings, this book draws repeated parallels to spiritual insights where the reader can learn from history. Perhaps the high point of the archeological guide is the chapter on Jesus of Nazareth. Focusing on the life of Christ is certainly the highlight of any tour to Israel. What impressed me most about this chapter is its succinct focus on Christ's ministry and the final days of Christ's life. The chapter provides a biblical backdrop and the historical context that enables the reader to understand much better the life and times of Jesus. The chapter concludes on pages 50 and 51 with a discussion of the Garden Tomb and first-century tombs, noting that it is difficult to point with precision to the exact location of Jesus' burial place.

The last chapter on Muhammad is the shortest in the book. The discussion of the history of the Dome of the Rock effectively condenses almost one thousand years of history into a few short paragraphs. In my opinion this is one of the strengths of the entire book. The authors have taken a wealth of material, condensed it, put it in readable language, illustrated it well, documented the archeological and historical facts, and given us a guide to Jerusalem that is invaluable. The extra pages for journaling are an excellent resource for notetaking and spiritual reflection.

Mark A. Finley

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"Never give up your faith and hope in God. Cling to the promises. Do not trust in your feelings, but in the naked Word of God. Believe the assurances of the Lord. Take your stand upon the plain 'Thus saith the Lord,' and rest there, feeling or no feeling. Faith is not always followed by feelings of ecstasy, but 'hope thou in God.'

Trust fully in Him." Ellen Gould White, *The Upward Look*  
(Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982), 176.

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# XII South American Biblical Theological Symposium

The 12<sup>th</sup> International South American Biblical Theological Symposium was held at River Plate Adventist University (Uni-

versidad Adventista del Plata), Argentina, April 27 through May 1, 2017.

Focusing of the book of Romans, the general

theme of the symposium commemorated the five hundredth year of the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther. Besides plenary presentations by members of the BRI and other theologians from North and South America, the participants had the

opportunity to gain new insights in forty-nine parallel presentations in systematic, historical, practical,

biblical, and interdisciplinary areas of study. The well-organized symposium was a theological and spiritual highlight and the major presen-



RIVER PLATE ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY — School of Theology — Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina

tations will be published in a forthcoming book by Universidad Adventista del Plata. At the end of the symposium the following consensus statement was voted and approved by the participants from South America:

## STATEMENT OF CONSENSUS

### “The Just Shall Live by Faith”

#### Approved at the 12th South American Biblical-Theological Symposium River Plate Adventist University, Libertador San Martín Entre Ríos, Argentina

In celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation led by Martin Luther, the School of Theology of River Plate Adventist University held the 12<sup>th</sup> South American Biblical-Theological Symposium, from April 27 to May 1, 2017, with the motto “The righteous shall live by faith,” in the context of the Epistle to the Romans.

Based on the “gospel of God” set forth in the mentioned epistle, the participants of the symposium approved the following Statement of Consensus:

As participants of the 12<sup>th</sup> South American Biblical-Theological Symposium, in the framework of the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan, and of the mission entrusted to God’s remnant Church,

1. We reaffirm that Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, sets forth the great principles of the gospel of God. There the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ is exposed (Rom 1:16–17; 3:21–31).
2. We reaffirm our firm conviction that God is the Creator of the universe and Sovereign over all things. However, in their liberty, human beings did not glorify Him as God. They changed the truth of God to a lie, honoring and worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, and falling under all kinds of perversions (Rom 1:7, 9–10, 18–19, 21–24; 16:25–27).
3. We reaffirm the Pauline teaching that all, without exception, have sinned and are destitute of the glory of God. Although they can do what is morally and ethically correct, human beings cannot solve the problem of sin and its consequence, which is death (Rom 3:9–18, 23; 7:14–24).
4. We reaffirm that what was impossible for the fallen human nature is made possible by God in sending His Son, so that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not in the flesh but in the Spirit (Rom 7:14–24; 8:3–4).

5. We reaffirm our strong conviction that God sent Jesus Christ as an atonement through His blood, so that He may be the just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Rom 3:21–26).
6. We reaffirm the certainty that we are justified freely by the grace of God, without the works of the law, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God interceding on our behalf (Rom 3:21–24; 8:34).
7. We reaffirm that by the law, which is holy, just, good, and everlasting, comes the knowledge of sin and the need of Christ for righteousness to everyone who believes (Rom 3:20; 7:7–8, 12; 10:4).
8. We reaffirm that in baptism we have been buried and resurrected with Christ to a new life of victory, so that we no longer serve sin (Rom 6:1–12).
9. We reaffirm that justification does not result in a license for believers to practice a sinful lifestyle. The transforming work of the Spirit in the believers is “for faith,” enabling them to think, act, and live according to the law of God, for sanctification (Rom 1:5; 6:1–18; 8:5–11).
10. We reaffirm that God reveals His love to sinners by adopting them as children and freeing them from the powers that are set against them in the present dimension of the great controversy. Moreover, He leads them to a state of coming glory in Jesus’ return, to the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom 8:18–21).
11. We reaffirm that we accept and choose to live the ethics of love that God proposes to His children. This can be made evident in fraternal relations and service through spiritual gifts on behalf of all the members of the body of Christ, one body, which is the church, the Israel of God (Rom 11–15).
12. We reaffirm that salvation in Jesus Christ is offered to all human beings without discrimination, and those who accept it through faith are called to become a part of the people of God (Rom 1:16; 2:11; 14–16; 3:22–25; 4:11–12; 12:4–5; 10:12–13; 11:17–24).
13. We reaffirm our confidence and assurance that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28–39).
14. We reaffirm our certainty that the consummation of our eternal salvation at the second coming of Jesus is closer than when we believed (Rom 8:18–20; 11:25–27; 13:11–12; 16:20).
15. We reaffirm our total commitment to the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, which is the power of God for salvation to all who believe. In its proclamation the grace and righteousness of God are being revealed, in conformity with the declaration of Scripture: “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:16–17).

RIVER PLATE ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY  
 School of Theology  
 Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina  
 May 1, 2017

## Chance Discovery of Assyrian Palace with Biblical Connections

The partial liberation of the Iraqi city Mosul, ancient Nineveh, from the control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in early 2017 by a coalition of Iraqi government troops, Kurdish Peshmerga fighters, and other paramilitary organizations brought to light a surprising archaeological find. In 2014, ISIL fighters had demolished the popular Nabi Yunus shrine, the location commonly believed by Christians and Muslims to contain the tomb of the prophet Jonah (Yunus in the Koran). Following the liberation of eastern Mosul, Iraqi archaeologists discovered an impressive network of tunnels, dug by ISIL fighters under the demolished shrine, that contained underground structures of what they

consider to be an ancient Neo-Assyrian palace dating to the seventh century BC.

It has long been recognized that one of the terror organization’s income streams has come from trafficking antiquities.<sup>1</sup> The tunnel network suggests systematic looting, as the Iraqi archaeologists found numerous ancient objects and underground architectural remains. Due to the precarious construction of the tunnel network, researchers and government officials fear the imminent collapse of the tunnels, which would result in major damage to the ancient site.<sup>2</sup>

News reports about the chance discovery in-

clude references to Esarhaddon, the youngest son of Neo-Assyrian king Sennacherib who reigned the Neo-Assyrian Empire from 681 to 669 BC. Esarhaddon is known from three references in the Bible (2 Kgs 19:37; Isa 37:38; Ezra 4:3) describing his ascent to the throne following the assassination of his father Sennacherib and referencing him in the later context of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

While no scholarly presentation of the discovered artifacts and architectural data has yet occurred, news reports quoting Iraqi archaeologist Layla Salih have suggested the discovery of a fragmented marble slab carrying a cuneiform inscription that uses terminology and phraseology exclusively associated with Esarhaddon's reign.<sup>4</sup>

Further stabilization of the haphazard tunnel network and the careful excavation and documentation of the palace structure will add to our knowledge about the Neo-Assyrian Empire and remind scholars and historians (who had read in the works of then-contemporary sources about this section of the Neo-Assyrian palace, which had not, however, yet

been excavated) that there are still many surprising discoveries to be made.

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<sup>1</sup> "ISIL and Antiquities Trafficking," <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/isil-and-antiquities-trafficking>; "ISIL Looting heritage Sites on 'Industrial Scale,'" <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/07/isil-looting-heritage-sites-syria-iraq-palmyra-150703010527634.html> (both accessed May 24, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> "A 2,600-Year-Old Palace has Been Discovered Under a Shrine Demolished by ISIS," <http://www.sciencelert.com/a-2-600-year-old-palace-has-been-discovered-under-a-shrine-demolished-by-isis> (accessed May 24, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Kirk Grayson, "Esarhaddon," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:574.

<sup>4</sup> "Previously Untouched 600BC Palace Discovered Under Shrine Demolished by ISIL in Mosul" <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/27/previously-untouched-600bc-palace-discovered-shrine-demolished/> (accessed May 24, 2017).

### Correction

*Reflections*, #58, April 2017, p. 12. "Book Notes" stated that that Matthias Dorn, author of the book *Daniel staunend begegnen* is a "part-time professor at Friedensau University." It should have read: "He has worked as a guest lecturer at Friedensau University." We apologize for this error.

## INDEX

## Index to *Reflections*

The first issue of *Reflections* was published in January 2003. Since then, we've published many articles.

While it's possible to use Acrobat to simultaneously search all past issues of *Reflections* for one word or phrase, some readers have asked for a formal index. From now on, you will find a pdf index at the end of each newsletter that you can download.

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