

The following piece, by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, is available in its entirety at [http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2010/cschonborn\\_threepillarsqshs\\_nov2010.asp](http://www.ignatiusinsight.com/features2010/cschonborn_threepillarsqshs_nov2010.asp)

## The Three Pillars of Christology: Scripture-Tradition-Experience

Three pillars together support Christology: Scripture, tradition, and experience. The soundness of these three determines the soundness of Christology. Our first chapter is devoted to this trio and to their reliability.

### 1. The Three Pillars

The first pillar is *Scripture*. What we know (historically) about Jesus of Nazareth derives almost exclusively (apart from a few mentions in Pliny, Tacitus, or Jewish writings) from the New Testament, above all from the Gospels. These, in turn, are traditions about Jesus, about what he did and said. The entire canon of the New Testament is reviewed, assembled, and filtered tradition. Scripture and tradition are indivisible from the very beginning; Scripture is unthinkable without tradition; it is itself a "product" of tradition.

Because almost everything we know about Christ derives from the Holy Scripture, the question of the trustworthiness of the Gospels is thus of fundamental importance. For hundreds of years, no one questioned it. People were convinced that the Gospels reliably transmitted the experiences of the first witnesses of Jesus, of his disciples, his companions, those people who were eyewitnesses and who heard for themselves. Scripture is thus itself tradition, tradition for which there is written testimony, and it transmits concrete experiences of the people who were with Jesus.

And yet this *tradition* continues, as *traditio apostolica*, as the handing on of the *depositum fidei*. It finds its particular expression in the great councils of the early Church, which unfolded and safeguarded the Christian confession of faith. The doctrinal tradition cannot of course be separated from the tradition of Christian living. Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373) not only defended the divinity of Christ, he also wrote the life of Saint Anthony, in whom the whole power of the mystery of Christ shines forth. ...

### 2. The Pillars Give Way

For hundreds of years this unity was seen and lived out without any problem. The current difficulties are all the more explosive. When one of these three pillars gives way, the whole of Christology—indeed, theology altogether—starts to totter. Today Christology must face the fact that in recent centuries—to be more precise, since the Reformation—one pillar after another has given way. We will now briefly outline this process, which characterizes modern Christology. In doing so, we will also be able to show, however, that in the struggle with the foundations of Christology, the living figure of the Lord also emerges with new clarity.

The first crack is the *Reformation*. It calls tradition into question and from there proceeds to the supposition that the original pure teaching, the "pure Gospel", has been adulterated, that "Rome", the papacy, the Catholic Church, has no longer preserved it in its pure form. It is therefore a matter of getting back to the original—this is the approach of Martin Luther (d. 1546)—bypassing tradition to go directly to the

Bible. Scripture alone is valid; it is the only criterion—*sola scriptura*! Yet how shall we attain certainty about Scripture if the interpretations of it contradict each other? ...

The *Enlightenment* breaks the next pillar. The *sola scriptura* also becomes questionable. From Hermann Samuel Reimarus (d. 1768) onward, radical historical biblical criticism puts Scripture on the side of tradition, which falsifies and retouches. [5] Scripture, too, conceals, falsifies, and covers up the original, which it is now necessary to ascertain by historical criticism: the Bible is subjected to merciless criticism. Little of the certainty that Luther believed he found in Scripture now remains. With Friedrich Schleiermacher (d. 1834) and Rudolf Bultmann (d. 1976), theology withdraws to the final sure pillar, that of experience, and abandons Scripture to historical criticism. For Bultmann it is not historical certainty concerning Jesus that is important but the existential effect.

With psychology, especially with Sigmund Freud, but even as early as Ludwig Feuerbach (d. 1872), religious *experience* likewise becomes problematical. It is exposed as a projection of human needs and, thus, as illusion, which basically is concealing something else that can now be laid bare: man's secret desires, which can be discovered as the real content behind these projections. Behind the religious projections stand, in reality, other needs, sublimations, and projections.

What can Christology build upon, then? If tradition can no longer be trusted, because it is seen to be merely a retouching with the tints of dogma that obscures the original simple figure of Jesus; if Scripture itself comes under the suspicion of already being tradition, which distorts the original Jesus; if, finally, personal experience is subject to the suspicion of creating the figure of a savior and redeemer from the projection of the person's own desires—what foundation is still sound? Upon what can Christology still be built?

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**John Chuchman offers the following reflection, “Do This ...”**

**Do this...**

**In the Eucharistic Meal,  
Jesus gave us a very ingenious message  
in the method.**

**He gave us something  
we do not need to think about,  
we do not need to agree upon,  
we do not need to gaze at,  
we do not need to worship.**

**Jesus just said,  
*Do This . . .***

**It was an action,  
an audio-visual aid,  
a sacred ritual for community,  
that summarizes His whole lasting message for the world,**

***Do This . . .***

**Do What?**

**Take my life in my hands as Jesus did that night,  
Thank God for this Gift of My Life,  
Break it, Let it be broken, give it away for others,  
Eat and Drink with each other as participants in the Life of God.**

**We have embroidered and surrounded Jesus' homespun ritual  
with candles, vestments, ancient music, incense, elaborate words, and  
cathedrals.**

**But we still don't get what it is we have to do.**

**It has been made into a rite of heavenly ideals  
instead of a simple embodiment of an ongoing transformation.**

**We have spent so much time arguing about  
the how and if and transubstantiation  
instead of simply learning how to be present  
and to *Do This . . .***

**We have made it into magic  
to be witnessed and believed  
instead of  
a Transformation of ourselves.**

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**Sal passes along the following commentary by George. Perhaps the bishops should consider a special contingent of exorcists just for the hierarchy.**

Can you believe that this weekend in Baltimore, The United States Conference Of Catholic Bishops, (USCCB), at their Semi Annual Conference are discussing and training over 50 bishops and over 60 priests to be orientated and trained in becoming Exorcists. Yes, The Church and our Country knows there is a great shortage of priests and the critical needs for the Sacramental life, the community and The Eucharist goes on. It appears the Bishops under the leadership of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Texas, are providing awareness training for more exorcist under the. "Needed: A few Good Exorcists" plan.. A few of us were amazed and sadly embarrassed for them that current Church leaders would even think that exorcism is a critical or crisis event in the life of our contemporary church. After all the current scandals and hidden politics and Episcopal Sex Abuse cover ups that are still developing, they would have examined in "Right Conscience" that Exorcism is not even an issue for people of Christian faith. Again I write, "Have the Bishops lost their way?"

The USCCB in their clandestine, non-public meetings appear to be afraid of Their People Of God, knowing what is going on with Episcopal Leadership in the U.S.? Schools, churches closings across the country, millions of faithful leaving the institution, no public accountability of Church finances, drastic shortage of active priests, Religious Sisters staying away from the controlling Bishops, Church

attendance down to 20-30 %, of the Faithful, most youth not participating in the public and sacramental life of the church, and the Bishops need more Exorcists? Through the ages, Demon Theology has been used by clerical strategists to control and place the people Of God in a "Fear Position" and utilize scare tactics and yet, do not question the hierarchy mentality, otherwise, "The Devil will get you." It is medieval archaic theology and does not speak of truth, openness and the mature teachings of the Vatican Council II.

A plea to USCC Bishops: Stop your Exorcist Training leave your Clerical luxurious vestments back home, leave your first class hotel suites and your secretaries and humbly and publically walk the streets of Baltimore and speak and listen to the people of Baltimore and tell them that you are sorry for having offended the poor and abused the children of our country. Stop blaming the people of the media for exaggerating and developing the sex scandals. The media did not put a spin on the sins of our clerical leaders. Remember, the Spirit of Bishop John Carroll, our first U.S. Bishop of Baltimore, A missionary giant and journeyman,. He accomplished and developed trustworthy priestly leaders for the good of the U.S. Church. If you are guilty of the Sexual Abuse cover ups and have done moral harm to our people, Please seek forgiveness from the People of our Church and our country and hear the "Call Of The Prophet."

Rise to Truth. The Prophets of old, Isaiah, called the American Bishops to be, "New Prophets." Is there not one Bishop, who will respond to the Call Of The Prophet? Is there not a Jesus, The Prophet, amongst you? We are all called to be Prophets by our Baptism. Please receive the Gift Of The Prophet. Live in Truth. Bear witness to the truth. No more Exorcists Training.

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**[A Memo to the Bishops, A call to preach the fullness of Catholic doctrine, by Vincent Miller, is available in its entirety at:](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12576)**  
**[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=12576](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12576)**

... Every Catholic and every American citizen knows the church's teaching on abortion and marriage. The same cannot be said for the rest of Catholic social teaching. This has consequences for both American public life and for the church.

Few Americans citizens or politicians, including Catholics, are aware of the church's teaching that government is necessary to serve the common good; the importance of solidarity with all of the vulnerable, not just the ones we consider innocent or worthy; and, most importantly at this hour, the fact that subsidiarity cuts both ways, limiting government intervention and demanding it when necessary.

These Catholic teachings are under fire: Glen Beck warns millions of faithful listeners to run from any church that preaches social justice. Anti-immigrant extremists like Sherriff Joseph Arpaio are folk heroes (a textbook case of the Catholic definition of causing "scandal"). Tea Party denunciations of socialism and tyranny form public opinion on the legitimacy and scope of government. A new Republican majority in the house, led by a Catholic Speaker, plans to respond to the economic crisis by extending tax cuts for the rich and defunding health care reform—which means those portions that subsidize insurance for the working poor. These profound rejections of Catholic teaching and

corrosion of the common good demand an effective episcopal response, yet too often, no response at all is given.

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## **Vatican government is a 'train wreck': Experts**

By Alessandra Tarantino, Associated Press

If you are waiting for the Vatican to make clear, immediate and transparent responses to the ongoing global sexual abuse crisis ... well, don't hold your breath, two Vatican experts said Monday at a media seminar.

Neither can you expect anything to come from the 30 minutes or so that the world's cardinals will address this topic, among five topics on their agenda at their business meeting in Rome on Friday.

The frankly grim visions of Vatican structure and function -- in crisis moments and daily governance of a church of 1.2 billion people -- came from George Weigel, biographer of Pope John Paul II and author of numerous books on the Church and John Allen, the *National Catholic Reporter* Vatican specialist for 15 years and a biographer of Pope Benedict XVI.

They agreed there is, essentially, no media strategy, no war room, no one with a handle on reforming communications or, worse, reforming the governing structure itself.

... This governance mess is why a great teaching pope's legacy -- brilliant speeches, letters and books -- could be lost in coverage of the schoolhouse on fire, he said. Allen concluded,

The papacy is adrift and has been for a long time...(It is) a papacy defined by its train wrecks.

Allen quoted a favorite Italian newspaper headline printed after the Vatican took 19 days to debunk a false rumor: "The Vatican denies everything. No one believes it."

Thus the irony. When Ratzinger was elected pope, some in the media, including USA TODAY revived the image of him as John Paul II's enforcer, as the Rottweiler. Said Weigel:

It turns out he's not a Rottweiler after all. People thought he would dramatically reform the Roman curia and that turns out to be an inadequate expectation. I think he thought he would die soon, so he would focus on what he knew best and leave the institutional rebuilding to the next guy.

And when that day comes, Weigel and Allen agreed, expect a long, long conclave as the cardinals look among themselves for someone with a demonstrated track record of managerial talent in the Vatican swamp.

[Full Article - click here](#)

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**American Catholic Church shoots itself in the foot—again**

**By Susan Jacoby**

On the heels of a small meeting to discuss the pressing need for better-trained priest-exorcists, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops convened in full splendor in Baltimore this week and elected New York's arch-conservative Archbishop Timothy J. Dolan president. Dolan's election was a victory for the most orthodox forces within the church. His overriding ethic was displayed this year when he had scathing words for Catholic hospitals and nuns who supported the health care reform bill in spite of the bishops' opposition (on grounds that it would allow more access to abortion). "We're pastors and teachers," Dolan said of the bishops, "not just one set of teachers in the Catholic community, but *the* teachers." *The* teachers. You can't get much clearer than that.

In a sidebar accompanying its front-page article about Dolan's election, *The New York Times* ran a typical, speak-no-evil-about-religion profile of the archbishop, who was described as a man "known to relish personal contact, whether one on one or in big crowds. He has made a dent in fulfilling his promise to visit every parish. After addressing fund-raising dinners, he likes to mingle for an hour or more, laughing at people's jokes, often with a beer in hand." Ah, whatta guy! He'll have a beer with you as long as you're not one of those uppity nuns with the temerity to think that their opinions should count for something too.

Here's what wasn't said about Dolan--who will now be the official voice of the Catholic Church before Congressional committees debating public policy issues--on the thrilling day of his election. If you can call an election by the unelected an election, that is.

\* On Palm Sunday this year, Dolan read a statement after Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral comparing criticism of Pope Benedict's role in covering up sex abuse allegations to unjust accusations against Jesus before his crucifixion. He said the progress the Catholic Church has made in the United States in dealing with sex abuse "could never have happened without the insistence and support of the very man now being daily crowned with thorns by groundless innuendo." Even for a defender of everything the Vatican does, comparing the pope to the suffering Jesus does seem a bit, well, over-the-top.

\* As bishop of St. Louis and archbishop of Milwaukee, before being elevated to archbishop of New York, Dolan was widely viewed by groups representing survivors of clergy sex abuse as one of those who participated in the long coverup of such cases. BishopAccountability.org reported in 2009--just before Dolan was promoted to the prestigious New York post--that in Milwaukee, he "did not forward to Wisconsin police direct admissions of guilt from clergy child rapists, even from clergy who were subsequently criminally charged and convicted." ...

[http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/spirited\\_atheist/2010/11/american\\_catholic\\_church\\_shoots\\_itself\\_in\\_the\\_foot\\_again.html?referrer=emalmlink](http://onfaith.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/spirited_atheist/2010/11/american_catholic_church_shoots_itself_in_the_foot_again.html?referrer=emalmlink) for the rest of the story.

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**They're beginning to understand.**

**Catholics in Belgium Start Parishes of Their Own**  
**By Doreen Carvajal, with Rachel Donadio**

BUIZINGEN, Belgium — Willy Delsaert is a retired railroad employee with dyslexia who practiced intensively before facing the suburban Don Bosco Catholic parish to perform the Sunday Mass rituals he grew up with.

“Who takes this bread and eats,” he murmured, cracking a communion wafer with his wife at his side, “declares a desire for a new world.”

With those words, Mr. Delsaert, 60, and his fellow parishioners are discreetly pioneering a grass-roots movement that defies centuries of Roman Catholic Church doctrine by worshiping and sharing communion without a priest.

Don Bosco is one of about a dozen alternative Catholic churches that have sprouted and grown in the last two years in Dutch-speaking regions of Belgium and the Netherlands. They are an uneasy reaction to a combination of forces: a shortage of priests, the closing of churches, dissatisfaction with Vatican appointments of conservative bishops and, most recently, dismay over cover-ups of sexual abuse by priests.

The churches are called ecclesias, the word derived from the Greek verb for “calling together.” Five were started last year in the Netherlands by Catholics who broke away from their existing parishes, and more are being planned, said Franck Ploum, who helped start an ecclesia in January in Breda, the Netherlands, and is organizing a network conference for the groups in the two countries.

At this sturdy brick church southwest of Brussels, men and women are trained as “conductors.” They preside over Masses and the landmarks of life: weddings and baptisms, funerals and last rites. Church members took charge more than a year ago when their pastor retired without a successor. In Belgium, about two-thirds of clergymen are over 55, and one-third older than 65.

“We are resisting a little bit like Gandhi,” said Johan Veys, a married former priest who performs baptisms and recruits newcomers for other tasks at Don Bosco. “Our intention is not to criticize, but to live correctly. We press onward quietly without a lot of noise. It’s important to have a community where people feel at home and can find peace and inspiration.” ...

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