

Abstract

The primacy of the bishop of Rome is an ongoing point of contention in the ecclesiologies of different Christian denominations. Some see it as one of the main causes of Christianity's historical divisions and as a major obstacle to its possible reunification in the future. On the other hand, there are voices that allow for an understanding of the Roman bishop's ministry as a ministry to Christian unity.

The first part of the work gives a detailed analysis of Bible passages invoked by both supporters and opponents of Rome's primacy, which evolved in the course of history.

This historical evolution is the focus of the second part of the work, attempting to map the most important milestones in the history of the Roman bishop's office, which have shaped both its own understanding of itself and its understanding in the external world, ecclesiastical and secular.

The concluding part tries to identify the possible ecumenical potential in the idea of the Roman bishop's primacy and sketches how this idea could enrich future directions of ecumenism.

The thesis strives to assess the topic as objectively as possible, without being weighed down by denominational considerations. It is the author's earnest conviction that only such an assessment can be found to be historically honest and theologically meaningful.

Key words: Christianity, Church, Bible, apostle Peter, ecclesiastical office, Rome, pope, primacy, council, theology, history, ecumenism