

Religion The Detroit News  
**detnews.com**

[Local News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Autos Insider](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Weblogs](#) | [Forums](#) | [Photos](#)

Search Detroit:

**Essentials**  
[Homepage](#)

Thursday, July 12, 2007

[Print this](#) | [Comment on this](#) | [E-mail this](#)

1-week archive:  
[Mon Tue Wed Thu](#)  
[Fri Sat Sun Today](#)

[Photo Galleries](#)

[Photo Store](#)  
[Multimedia](#)

[Weather](#)

[Horoscope](#)

[Lottery](#)

[Crossword](#)

[Sudoku](#)

[Contact Us](#)

**Opinions**

[Editorials](#)

[Blogs](#)

[Columnists](#)

[CyberSurveys](#)

[Forums](#)

**Autos**

[Autos Insider](#)

[Auto Shows](#)

[Autos Weblog](#)

[Drive](#)

[-- New Car Photos](#)

[-- Car Reviews](#)

[-- Latest Deals](#)

[-- Model Reports](#)

[Joyrides](#)

[Dream Cruise](#)

**Business**

[Business](#)

[Money & Life](#)

[Careers](#)

[-- Find a Job](#)

[Real Estate](#)

[-- Find a Home](#)

**Metro**

[Metro/State](#)

[Wayne](#)

[Oakland](#)

[Macomb](#)

[Livingston](#)

[Commuting](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[-- Death Notices](#)

[Schools](#)

[Detroit History](#)

**Nation/World**

[Nation/World](#)

[Politics/Gov](#)

[-- Election](#)

[Health](#)

[Religion](#)

[Technology](#)

**Sports**

[Lions/NFL](#)

## The pope's 'true faith' remark causes stir

Protestants say he discounts validity of other denominations

Gregg Krupa / The Detroit News

Advertisement

Protestant leaders in Metro Detroit fear that a recent pronouncement by Pope Benedict XVI about their denominations will discourage decades of ecumenical efforts and calls into doubt whether he desires a constructive dialogue between Catholics and Protestants.

"When I heard on the television and saw it in the paper, I was surprised, because there was so much freedom and a coming together of Protestants and Catholics through the 40 years of my ministry," said John Huhtala Sr., director of connectional ministries, for the Detroit Conference of the United Methodist Church. "Will these cooperative ventures cease or will they continue on with partnership in the local churches? It is a concern."

In issuing a statement Tuesday from the Vatican to clarify church policy on other Christian faiths, Pope Benedict XVI referred to the Protestant congregations as defective and not true churches.

The statement said, in part, "These separated churches and communities, though we believe they suffer from defects, are deprived neither of significance nor importance in the mystery of salvation. In fact the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using them as instruments of salvation, whose value derives that fullness of grace and truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church."

Some Catholic clergy interpret the document as a clarification of the status quo, and say it will have no effect on years of interfaith work, dialogue and worship.

"I think the statement is not saying anything radically new and different and was not meant to be offensive," said John Zenz, moderator of the

- [▶ Get free headlines by e-mail](#)
- [▶ Get text alerts on your cell phone](#)
- [▶ Get The Detroit News on your PDA](#)



"I think that it's a step backward for the Roman Catholic Church." - Rev. David Eberhard, Trinity Lutheran Church

### To know more

More information on Pope Benedict XVI's document on the status of other Christian denominations is available through both Vatican Information Services and the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Log on to [www.vatican.va/news](http://www.vatican.va/news) and click on "Tuesday,

Sta



[Pistons/NBA](#)  
[Red Wings/NHL](#)  
[Tigers/MLB](#)  
[Shock/WNBA](#)  
[MSU](#)  
[U-M](#)  
[More Colleges](#)  
[High Schools](#)  
[Golf](#)  
[Motor Sports](#)  
[Outdoors](#)  
[More Sports](#)  
[Scoreboards](#)  
[Entertainment](#)  
[Entertainment](#)  
[Events](#)  
[-- Events Calendar](#)  
[Movies/TV/DVD](#)  
[-- Movie Finder](#)  
[-- TV Listings](#)  
[Eats & Drinks](#)  
[-- Restaurants](#)  
[-- Wine Report](#)  
[Books](#)  
[CD Reviews](#)  
[Casino Guide](#)  
[Michigan's Best](#)  
[Living](#)  
[MichMoms](#)  
[Lifestyle](#)  
[Homestyle](#)  
[Fitness](#)  
[Forums](#)  
[News Talk](#)  
[Faith Talk](#)  
[Autos Talk](#)  
[Mom Talk](#)  
[Schools Talk](#)  
[Wings Talk](#)  
[Lions Talk](#)  
[Pistons Talk](#)  
[Tigers Talk](#)  
[Big 10 Talk](#)  
[High Schools](#)  
[Movie Talk](#)  
[Tech Talk](#)  
[Weblogs](#)  
[Blog Index](#)  
[Anime Blog](#)  
[Architecture Blog](#)  
[Autos Blog](#)  
[Big Ten Blog](#)  
[Bizarro News](#)  
[Bullard's Pundit Blog](#)  
[Crafts Blog](#)  
[Dads Blog](#)  
[Daniel Howes Blog](#)  
[Entertainment Blog](#)  
[Fashion & Shopping](#)  
[Food Blog](#)  
[Golf Blog](#)  
[Health Blog](#)  
[Henry Payne's Blog](#)  
[High School Sports](#)  
[Homestyle Blog](#)  
[Laura Berman Blog](#)  
[Lions/NFL Blog](#)  
[Moms Blog](#)  
[Motor Sports Blog](#)  
[Music Blog](#)  
[NASCAR/Racing Blog](#)  
[Neal Rubin Blog](#)  
[Nolan Finley Blog](#)  
[Outdoors Blog](#)  
[Photo Blog](#)  
[Pistons/NBA Blog](#)  
[Politics Blog](#)  
[Scott Burgess: Autos](#)

curia for the Archdiocese of Detroit. "It just says the Catholic Church would have the fullness of the teachings and (the Protestant denominations) would enjoy elements of it."

But even some Catholics say they fear the Pope's view may stifle interfaith cooperation.

"It is a very rigid understanding of the faith that doesn't leave any room for the kind of friendship that people of faith can provide, that will enhance the truth as we understand it," said Bob Bruttell, who teaches religious studies at the University of Detroit Mercy. "The pope is putting our Catholic faith into a place that is going to be very difficult for us to work out of."

Protestant clerics objected to the document.

"No one has the lock on the truth just because of a title or name," said the Rev. David Eberhard, pastor of Historic Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit. "I think that it's a step backward for the Roman Catholic Church. The term Catholic is not the sole property, ownership and title of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a universal church that believes in Jesus Christ as the savior."

The stated purpose of the document was to clarify church positions about Christian denominations first asserted by the Second Vatican Council, a three-year conference ending in 1965 that changed some policies of the church.

In his tenures as both pope and a cardinal, when he led the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Benedict has been perceived as in the vanguard of a conservative view that some of the reforms of the seminal conference were not intended as significant change. Whether re-authorizing the "old, Latin Mass," as many Catholics call it -- which he did last week -- or issuing a clarification on the status of Christian faiths, the pope is seen as stressing the continuity of the reforms with earlier church dogma.

Catholic clergy say, most emphatically, that the pope is not saying that salvation is unavailable except through the Roman Catholic Church. The other denominations provide a path to salvation, too.

But many Protestants say they believe the pope has discounted their faith for a second time in seven years, since he issued a similar statement when he was Cardinal Ratzinger.

When asked if he feels there is a forum in which the issues can be addressed, Huhtala was not hopeful.

"I don't even know what the avenue would be," he said. "I have always assumed that there was a sense of camaraderie and togetherness. But a couple of his comments seem to diminish anyone but the Roman church."

Catholic leaders sought to reassure other Christian denominations that the Pope has done nothing to discourage the interfaith work, which they assert he has long championed.

The document serves as instruction to Catholics involved in ecumenical efforts "to make sure they properly represent the church in the dialogue," said the Rev. James Massa, executive director of the secretariat of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic bishops.

"Catholics are not pulling out of the dialogue," Massa said. "We will continue to minister to inter-church families, continue to cooperate with our Protestant partners at the local level, continue to pray with them, continue to engage in works of charity and justice with them and continue to study with them ways in which we can advance the cause of religious unity," Massa said.

Some Protestants say they perceive a return to the old days, in the middle of the last century, in which some Christian clergy perceived a pitched battle among the congregations to attract new congregants.

"I think that Benedict is probably taking that as an opportunity to bring people into one true church," said John Keydel, canon for ministry and development for the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan. "I don't see it impacting the Episcopal church, at all -- unless we get disaffected

July 10, 2007" and then click on the document.

Log on to [www.aodonline.com](http://www.aodonline.com) and read "Vatican Document Released on Church Doctrine."

### Related Articles and Links

▶ [Does the pope's statement about Protestant churches not being "true churches" bother you?](#)

▶ [Printer friendly version](#)

▶ [Comment on this story](#)

▶ [Send this story to a friend](#)

▶ [Get Home Delivery](#)

[Sports Blog](#)  
[Sports & Celebs](#)  
[Sports Buzz](#)  
[Technology Blog](#)  
[Terry Foster Sports](#)  
[Tigers Blog](#)  
[Tom Long Movies](#)  
[Travel Blog](#)  
[TV Blog](#)  
[Wings/NHL Blog](#)

**RSS**  
 [Feeds](#)

Romans who want something very much like what post Vatican II liturgy has been like. We're not looking to take advantage of it, but we're certainly offering people a spiritual home."

Other Protestants said Benedict might be appealing to his conservative base of supporters.

"I do understand that he has pastoral challenge or debate within the Roman church and he is leaning towards the pre-Vatican II interpretation," said Gustav Kopka Jr., a pastor of the Lutheran churches in Metro Detroit, long active in ecumenical affairs. "The document will encourage those who have been wanting to have something more rigidly understood, all along."

*You can reach Gregg Krupa at (313) 222-2359 or [gkrupa@detnews.com](mailto:gkrupa@detnews.com).*

#### More Religion Headlines

-  [Pope: Only one true church](#)
-  [Young Muslims speak out](#)
-  [Pope's endorsement of Latin Mass spurs controversy](#)

---

© Copyright 2007 The Detroit News. All rights reserved.