2008 INTRODUCTION to

Richard T. Nolan, "The Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome" (fall semester, 1955)

for the required course History 101 – Western Civilization I

The professor was Dr. Philip C. F. Bankwitz, who was born on February 24, 1924, the son of Charles Edward Bankwitz and Elizabeth Farwell Bankwitz. Raised in Turners Falls, Massachusetts, he was educated at Harvard University (B.A., 1947; M.A., 1948; Ph.D., 1952). In 1954, he joined the History Department at Trinity College where he spent his career until his retirement in 1969.

A scholar of modern France, Dr. Bankwitz' fluency in French made possible his assignment to the French 2nd Armored Division, one of only thirty Americans to serve with this elite unit of the Free French Forces during World War II. For his service to France, he was awarded the French Croix de Guerre.

A long-time resident of Farmington, CT, Dr. Bankwitz died on 21 December 2003.

His published works:

***Maxime Weygand and Civil-Military Relations in Modern France*, Harvard University Press, 1967.**

***Alsatian Autonomist Leaders*, Regents Press of Kansas, 1978.**

from the Trinity College student newspaper *The Tripod*

Professor Bankwitz

(1924-2003)

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A 36-year member of the Trinity College faculty, Philip Bankwitz died at the age of 79 while traveling in the Bahamas.

Professor Philip C.F. Bankwitz joined the Trinity community in 1954 and was promoted to full professor in 1969. Bankwitz published two books during his career, both reflecting his knowledge of French history: Maxime Weygand and Civil-Military Relations in Modern France and Alsatian Autonomist Leaders, 1919-1947. His academic articles received great distinction, and one article was awarded the 1961 Koren Prize by French Historical Studies for the best article by a North American about French history. Bankwitz received numerous fellowships including one at Pierson College at Yale, and the other with the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France. A onetime member of the Free French Forces during WWII, his Harvard doctoral dissertation was based on questions he formed while in war.

Media Credit: The Ivy

Professor Philip C.F. Bankwitz

May, 2008, Nolan Comment

In 1955 I used a very basic electric typewriter with carbon paper to make copies. I am rather surprised that Dr. Bankwitz accepted the paper with its messy corrections. The penciled insertions are his. I was not a particularly good student during my freshman year. At the end of the first semester, I was placed on academic probation. Although he graded the paper "88" (B+), I believe that he was very generous to this disinterested student with personal matters absorbing my energies.

the supremacy of the bishop of rome

r t nolan '59

INTRODUCTION

The Roman Catholic Church's whole ecclesiastical position ultimately rests on the theory that Saint Peter was prime among the Apostles and the Bishops of Rome are his successors who retain this primacy. If this is so, then to Rome we must submit, as she demands for membership in her version of the Church. If it is not so, we must do our best to persuade her to work with the rest of God's Household to the end that we may again be one in mind, body and estate. She is in a position that is very embarrasing, however. She cannot under her current philosophy retract any of her errors, for under this philosophy she has none. The first matter she must consider is the theory upon which so much of her unique dogma rests. She must balance her heart with her mind in search of truth within the scope of true Biblical Philosophy.

In this paper we consider in a brief survey some of the criticisms of the Petrine Theory, enough though to raise justified doubt in the claim of the Bishop of Rome's Primacy.

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The Church of Rome rests its theory of the Supremacy of the bishop of Rome on the belief that Christ endowed Peter with primacy among the apostles. The Vatican Council of 1870 stated: 1. Saint Peter was appointed by Christ to be visible head of the Church, 2. Peter received from Christ a Primacy, not only of honor, but of jurisdiction, that is, he received from Christ supreme authority to teach and govern the whole Church, 3. Peter has, in virtue of the same divine institution a perpetual line of successors in the Primacy, 4. Peter's successors are the Roman Pontiffs.

The theory that Peter was appointed to be visible head of the Church is based upon the following portion of Scripture: "Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering to him: Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven;: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be also loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:15-19)

Let us now suggest that Christ refferred not to Peter as the rock upon which He will build His Church.
Ephesians II:20 reads: Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the first cornerstone." I Corinthinans III:11 says: "For other foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid; which is Jesus Christ." (The household of God is that which is built in the passage from Ephesians.) These passages indicate that Christ is the cornerstone or foundation upon which the Church is built.

What did Christ mean when He used the word Church? In the Book of Acts, chapter 7, verse 38 ("This is he that is in the Church in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the words of life th give into us.") church refers to the people of Israel whom Moses led through the wilderness. In the Old Testament the word church appears about a hundred times in this context: meaning the household of God, or the People of God,
The word appears only one other time in the Gospels, in the same book, Chapter 18, verse 17: "And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." Here the Old Testament meaning is also used. Is it not likely that Christ used the Old Testament meaning in the Confession at Caesarea Philippi?

"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it (the

church)." Hell is often used both as the the realm of the damned and the state of death, which is absence of life. In the New Testament sense I should like to suggest that hell is a combination of these meanings, as the damned suffer death, or lifelessness. With this definition the gates, which in the Bible signifies power, of death will not prevail against the people of God (the Church). In other words, the church will not suffer death.

The keys could well symbolize the authority which Christ has given to Peter and the other Apostles; that is, the authority of pronouncing God's forgiveness. The binding and loosing is the authority of the Apostles given by Christ to put under the ban (Rabbinical usage of bind and loose) a sinner, one who has openly and intentionally placed his allegiance with another god than Jahweh.

Since God and Jesus are referred to as a rock in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, considerable doubt is raised as to whether or not Christ meant Peter, as the rock. In context of the whole Biblical scheme the Biblical text may be paraphrased: After inquiring of the Apostles the belief of the disciples and others of His identity, He turned to them and asked them whom they thought He was. Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son God in whom is our trust. And Jesus answered him saying, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because men have not revealed this to you, but your

faith and trust in me. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon the very faith you display my church will be built with my Grace, and the power of death shall be helpless against it. And to you ((Christ gives this authority to the other Apostles, too. But, since the chronology of this event is not consistent among the Gospels, it is difficult to say when this event actually happened. It is also questionable if this happened in the manner recorded in Matthew, as the other Gospels make no mention of Peter's "appointment.")) I will give the authority with my Grace of pronouncing under the ban those who openly and intentionally place their allegiance with another than Me.

It is certainly much more within the Biblical philosophy to assume the above paraphrasing than to imagine Christ endowing any man or men with infallibility in the guiding of His people.

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Peter is depicted by the Gospels as a special friend and companion of Jesus. This is quite clear in the Gospels in several places, some of which are: Mark I:29; Matt 9:1; Matt 27:24; Luke 9:32; I Cor. 15:5.

After the death of Jesus, Peter stands as a leader of the Primitive Church in Jerusalem, but soon gives up this position to travel, spreading the Gospel. He preaches throughout the world and is martyred in Rome about 65 A.D. Christ spoke these words (Matt 16:18) to Peter before he went to Rome. Peter's

had been
See ~~was~~ at Jerusalem, and only there. No mention is made in Scripture or history that Peter did more than preach at Rome. No mention is made of any authority belonging to Peter being passed to any successor in any particular office. In the Acts of the Apostles the chief See is Jerusalem, not Rome, and its bishop, ~~James~~, not Peter,who ~~was~~ had resigned that office to preach, but James,presided at the first Christan Council.

Peter never established himself as the leader of the entire Church, and never made any reference to any local church except Jerusalem as a seat of his leadership. Peter founded many regional churches. If he had died at Antioch, would this make him in any way the bishop of Antioch, or make Antioch a head ~~Church~~ Church? I cannot see how. The only regional Church that has any possible right to claim Peter as its one-time bishop is Jerusalem.

For the first five centuries there was not the slightest indication that the Bishop of Rome was supreme in any way. In fact there are several indications of the opposite: Iranaeus, bishop of Lyons, rebuked Bishop Victor of Rome - about 190 AD- for excommunicating some Eastern Christians for not keeping Easter on the same day that it was kept by himself. Bishop Cyprian of Carthage - 248-256 AD - disputed with Stephen of Rome on theological matters. These two instances could be multiplied. There is no evidence in this period that the Bishop of Rome had any primacy or authority outside of his own dio-

cese.

Through the development of history the Bishop of Rome did receive political power. And gradually because of this political power in the Western world, the Bishop of Rome did exercise, though not rightly so, ecclesiastical sovereignty in the West. In the East, where the Roman Bishop had no political power, the Church refused to recognize him as anything but a diocesan Bishop; this attitude remains similar in the Eastern Churches today.

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We can find no legitimate ~~claim~~ basis for Rome's claim that: Peter was appointed by Christ to be visible head of the church, unless there be a play on words in the Scripture by trying to understand them out of context; Peter received from Christ a Primacy, unless companionship indicates such; Peter has a line of successors in the Roman Popes, unless it is assumed that Christ intended that there must be for all time in the church universal leadership from one episcopal see, which bannot be justified by Scripture or history of the Early Church.

If Peter was a rock, he is such in the temporal sense of laying the foundation of the earthly church as <u>an</u> Apostle. The succession of an apostolic ministry is ~~the~~ a means of the comtinual building of Christ's Church on the Apostolic Foundation; it is a means of preserving the Faith and safeguarding the faithful from heresy and false doctrine; it is a means of

symbolically uniting the Church in the present with the Church of the past and the future; it is not proveable by Holy Scripture that any Episcopate, however, was intended by Jesus to be special, prime, or infallible. Rome's contention that it is Prime and Infallible ex cathedra cannot be proved by Scripture or Early History, only by her own distortion and misunderstanding of God's Holy Writ.

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It is evident that God wants His people united in faith and life, in heart and mind. It is true that Jaweh is a God who participates in history. At one time the Roman Bishop was in position politically and ecclesiastically to unite most of the world in secular government and spiritual being. But his mind became slave to his misplaced heart and he became ambitious for worldly gain over the ecclesiastical as well as the secular. Is it possible that God acting in history strove to unite His people under the guidance of the Roman Bishop?

Is it not worth considering that a second attempt at unity is in the processing? Are not the United Nations and the World Council of Churches working at a parallel rate of progress in the secular and the ecclesiastical? And is it not ironical that the Bishop of Rome today provides great hindrance to ecclesiastical unification?

If the Roman Pope ever had any historical claim to leadership, he has it no longer, for his mind is still slave to his heart which continues to exist misplaced. However, if with some miracle (and I mean this literally) his heart and mind should become balanced in Christ, he could assume a leadership more powerful than any existing today in the unification of God's people, a unification for which he is greatly responsible.

Very interesting and well-written
& very good paper!

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