



# **Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & II (Ut Unim Sint)**

*Hermann J. Pottmeyer*

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Since they seem to require a very centralized conception of the Church and its administration, the decrees of Vatican I are often taken to pose problems both for ecumenical dialogue and for discussion within the Catholic Church. Hermann Pottmeyer, however, shows that the centralist interpretation of Vatican I is neither the binding nor the correct interpretation. He undertakes a careful examination both of the historical conditions that gave rise to the conception of the pope as an absolute monarch and of the Council documents themselves. Moreover, in the documents of Vatican II he finds the foundation for a vision of papal ministry understood within the context of a Church conceived in terms of "communion." This ecclesiology of communion formulated at Vatican II, taken together with a correct interpretation of the teachings of Vatican I, points the way beyond a centralist understanding of the papacy and offers the framework for a new dialogue on papal primacy.

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