Contents

Foreword .................................................................................................................. 13

A. Realisations of the Good News ................................................................. 17
   I. Basics of the Church ............................................................................. 17
      1. In the Beginning: Word and Deed ................................................. 17
         1.1 The Experience of Meaning ................................................. 17
         1.2 Biblical Stories of God ......................................................... 19
         1.3 Jesus's Practical References to God ................................... 21
      2. Christian Belief within Redeeming and Liberating Experience ........................................ 23
         2.1 The Benefitting Church ......................................................... 23
         2.2 The Practical Meaning of the Teaching ................................ 25
         2.3 The Unarbitrary Nature of Praxis ......................................... 28

   II. Church as Evangelisation ................................................................. 30
      1. Evangelisation ............................................................................... 30
         1.1 Integral Belief ......................................................................... 30
         1.2 Orientation to the Incarnation ............................................. 32
         1.3 The Competence of the Basis (“Basis Communities”) ........ 34
         1.4 From the Many Words to the Decisive Deed ...................... 37
      2. The Service of God and the Service of Humankind .................... 40
         2.1 Essential Realisations of the Church .................................. 40
         2.2 Synopsis .................................................................................. 41
         2.3 Diaconal Responsibility of the Church’s Ministers ............. 43
         2.4 Social (and) Pastoral Care .................................................... 47

   III. Church for Others ........................................................................... 49
      1. Introduction ................................................................................... 49
      2. Neighbourly Love in the Church and Its Limitations .......... 50
      3. The Fruitful Tension Between Fellowship and Service ....... 52
      4. The Scope of Service in the Community of the Church ........ 55
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. The Situational Priority of Service as Principle</th>
<th>58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. The Use of Theology</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Messiah’s Sensibility and Solidarity</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Jesus Deals with People in a “Physical” and Gentle Way</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Jesus Heals and Forgives</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Jesus Expects Decisive Messages from Those in Need of Help and Justice</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Jesus Supports the Suffering in Public</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 In Diaconia, Jesus Risks Becoming an Outsider and Oppression</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Jesus’s Relationship to the Diaconia of God</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Contexts and Challenges</th>
<th>71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Christian Identity as Non-identitarian Gift and Task</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Love As a Given?</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Love Enhances and Encompasses Everything</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Political Implications</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. From the Very Beginning: Theological Equality</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A Profligate Approach: Unchained and Unchaining</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. For the Sake of Other Identities</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Universalisation of Christian and Churchian Solidarity</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Rooted in the Life and Passion of the Cultures</th>
<th>83</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What Does “Contextual” Mean? Preliminary Clarifications</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contextualisation from the Very Beginning</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Context and Tradition</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Presence of the Resurrected Not Only with His People of Israel</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Contextualisation as Inculturation at the Grassroots</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Syncretism as a Necessary and Ambivalent Dynamic</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Passing on of Faith in Relation to the Bible, Church and Context</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. The Challenge of Plurality ................................................................. 106

1. Pastoral Care Projects in the Context of an Overall United Pastoral Conception ................................................................. 106
   1.1 Plural Places and Spaces for Pastoral Activity ......................... 106
   1.2 “Community” within the Joint Pastoral Conception ............... 110

2. Consequences of the Practice of Pastoral Care .......................... 114
   2.1 In the Context of Freedom ....................................................... 114
   2.2 In the Horizon of Grace ......................................................... 115
   2.3 A Strict Focus on the Addressees ........................................... 118
   2.4 Openness to “Transcendence” ............................................ 119

IV. Suffering in the Practice of the Christian Faith in God ............. 122

Introduction .............................................................................................. 122

1. Invocation: Dialectics of the Own Wish and God’s Will .............. 123
   1.1 Trust in the Prayer of Petition ............................................ 123
   1.2 Unfair Answering ........................................................... 125

2. Resistance ............................................................................................ 126
   2.1 Lamentation: Resistance and Hope ..................................... 126
   2.2 No Winner Discourse ......................................................... 128
   2.3 Eschatological Event .......................................................... 130

3. Dedication to God’s Secret ................................................................. 131
   3.1 The Doxology of the Praise of God ....................................... 131
   3.2 God Is Greater than “Everything” ........................................ 132

C. Hermeneutical Keys of Memory .......................................................... 135

I. Memory as Encounter .............................................................. 135

1. Encounter with the Past ................................................................. 135
2. Let Joshua 6:1–7.16–21 Be an Example! ..................................... 137
3. ... But with What Intention? ..................................................... 139
4. The Readiness to Repent ............................................................ 141
5. The Readiness to Be Compassionate and to Deal Justly ............ 143
6. Responsibility of the Churches .................................................... 145
7. Responsibility for Sensitive Liturgical Remembrance ............. 146
   7.1 Christmas Idyll and Child Murder in Bethlehem ................. 147
   7.2 Liturgical Instrumentalization ............................................ 148
   7.3 Subordinate to the Messiah? ............................................. 148
   7.4 The Empire Strikes Back .................................................... 149
8. Holocaust Remembrance as an Ongoing Breach ........................................ 151

II. Suffering as a Hermeneutical Key ............................................................. 153
1. Biographical Context .............................................................................. 153
2. Careful Awareness and Analysis ............................................................ 155
3. Sensitive Comparison or the Way to Find Options ............................... 156
4. Power of Compassion ........................................................................... 158
5. Christian Martyrdom ............................................................................. 159

III. How to Deal with Violence in Biblical Texts ....................................... 161
1. Introduction ............................................................................................. 161
2. Hermeneutical Explorations ................................................................. 163
   2.1 The Signature of God’s Eschatological Power over History .......... 163
   2.2 Not Imitation but Delegation .............................................................. 164
   2.3 Being Alarmed at Ourselves .............................................................. 165
   2.4 A Martyrial Criteriology ................................................................. 167
3. Outlook .................................................................................................... 168
   3.1 The Path of the Church .................................................................. 168
   3.2 ... Towards the Bible’s Fourfold Conception of Violence .......... 170

IV. Biblical Laments Wherever People Suffer ............................................ 171
2. A Topopractical Criteriology of Biblical Hermeneutics ...................... 172
   2.1 The Hermeneutic Force of Personal and Situative Circumstances .. 172
   2.2 Diaconal Awareness Instead of Ahistorical Ideologies .......... 175
   2.3 Election by God: Exclusive or Generative? ................................. 177
   2.4 Victims Caught Between Self-experience and Comparative Evidential Critique ................................. 179
3. Preconditions and Detailed Explication .................................................. 184
   3.1 Compassion’s Power to Touch our Hearts .................................. 184
   3.2 A Concrete Case: Solidarity in Prayer ........................................... 187
D. Towards a New Mission ................................................................. 197

I. Christian Mission in a Pluralistic World ........................................ 197

1. The Example of a Missionary ........................................................ 197
2. Mission as the Universalisation of Christian and Church
   Pro-existence (the Outside Aspect) .................................................. 201
3. Mission as Radicalisation of Christian and Church Existence
   (the Inside Aspect) ............................................................................. 203
3.1 Mission in “Martyrdom” (Martyrium) ........................................ 204
3.2 Mission in Unfanatical Devotion ................................................... 208
4. Result and Outlook ........................................................................... 210

II. The Role of Religion in the European Constitution ....................... 214

1. The Problem .................................................................................. 214
2. The Preamble: Memory and Re-shaping ........................................ 214
3. Taking Account of the Critique of Religion .................................... 216
4. An Explicit Reference to God? ......................................................... 218
5. God Supports Justice and Compassion ......................................... 220
6. God: Mystery of the World .............................................................. 221
7. God: Not a Shared Basis? ................................................................. 223
8. So What about Palestine? ................................................................. 225

III. The Churches’ Responsibility for the Media ................................ 227

1. The Kingdom of God as a Theological Point of Reference ............. 227
2. Forms of Religious Presence in Secular Products ............................ 228
3. Learning to Hear and See ............................................................... 231
4. Not Flight, but “Walking Upright” .................................................. 233
5. Economy and Coming of Age ........................................................ 234

E. Responsibility in Church Offices .................................................... 237

I. Pope Benedict and the Perception of Reality ................................... 237

1. What Is at Issue ............................................................................. 237
2. Spiritual Generalisation of Social Reality ..................................... 239
3. The Papering over of History and Politics .................................... 243
4. Leadership Guided by Principles that “Trample on Corpses”? ...... 246
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Not Inculturation, Rather Integration in a Specific Catholic Culture</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Generalising from One’s Own Biography?</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>God’s Wholeness as Grace?</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Pope Francis and the Grace of Preaching</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Heart to Heart</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Given and Giving in Freedom</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The Message as Empowerment</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Theological Background: Indicative Preaching</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Against “God” as a Term of Achievement!</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Diaconate Between Title and Implementation</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Diaconia Is Rooted in the Gospel</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dual Developments</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Contextual Meaning of the Titles</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Challenges Which Lead to Progress</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>In the Art of Networking</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td>Spiritual Traces</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>“Priest Mothers” and “God Mothers”</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Qualitative Empirical Approaches to the Image of God</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Empirical Social Research and Theological Choices</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Priest Mothers</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>God Mothers</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Avenues of Future Research</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>God Images</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>The Communicative Method of Empirical Research</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>The Pastoral Meaning of the Marital Rite</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ritual as “Liminal”</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The Pregiven Set Format of Ritual as an Experience of the Unconditional Absolute</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Marriage and Pastoral Care: Between “Inside” and “Outside”</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>A Plea for a “Sell-out”</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The Spirituality of the Gift</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

### III. Christian Eschatology and Pastoral Care

1. Survival in the Context of Christian Eschatology ........................................ 308
2. On the Level of a Theology of Justification ............................................. 312
3. Meaningful Consequences ........................................................................... 315
4. The Sinful Character of Guilt as a Liberation for Change ........................ 317
5. Pastoral Care in the Horizon of God's Grace ........................................... 320
6. Grace as Motivating Resource .................................................................. 322
7. Abandonment of Survival for the Sake of Survival ................................ 324
8. Conclusion: Easter – A Tremendous Victory of Love .................................. 327

### G. Translations

I. Poetry as a Deep Experience of a Different World: Goethe’s West-Eastern Divan ................................................................. 333

1. Mahomet: a Genius .................................................................................. 334
2. The Debate about Mahomet ...................................................................... 335
3. Poetic Appropriation ................................................................................. 337
4. A Journey into Open Space ....................................................................... 340
5. The Teaching Prophet Versus the Poet .................................................... 343
6. Removing of Boundaries .......................................................................... 347
7. Depth Relationships that Undermine Belief Systems .............................. 349

II. Sermons and Meditations

1. Christmas ................................................................................................. 353
2. Conversion of Paul (January 25) .............................................................. 355
3. Ash Wednesday ....................................................................................... 356
4. Holy Thursday, Eucharist ......................................................................... 357
5. Easter (with St. Francis) ........................................................................... 358
6. One God as Trinity ................................................................................... 361
7. Assumption of Mary .................................................................................. 364
8. Which Picture of God? ............................................................................. 366
9. The First Will Be Last (Mt 19:23–30) ....................................................... 368
10. Facilitating Grace ..................................................................................... 370
11. Ready for Rest (Mk 6:30–31) .................................................................. 370
12. The Coincidence of the Opposites .......................................................... 371

Appendix: Publication and Translation References .................................... 373